

Transcript of *What'sHerName* Episode 29: [THE AERONAUT Sophie Blanchard](#)

00:00 - 05:01

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Olivia Meikle: Hi Katie!

Katie Nelson: Hi Olivia!

OM: In our [Halloween Episode](#), we already met one of the fabulous lady aeronauts...

KN: Oh, aeronaut - as in 'hot air balloonist.'

OM: As in hot air balloonist.

KN: Yay!

OM: So listeners might remember, we met Lily Cove, who is famous for going up in her bloomers, and riding on a trapeze underneath a hot air balloon.

KN: ...and coming *all the way* back down again.

OM: Yes. Sadly. [laughter] That might be what she's *most* famous for. Today, we're going back a little, to the very beginnings of hot air balloons.

KN: Oh, cool. So like, late 1700s? Do you remember... have you seen *John Adams*? The mini series? Remember that scene, where they're all standing there in Paris, watching that first hot air balloon go up?

OM: Oh yeah, I forgot all about that!

KN: That's always what I associate with the beginning of hot air ballooning. I think that was the first flight that they're watching in that scene?

OM: Yeah. That was the first untethered flight, which was in Paris in 1783.

KN: Oh, cool.

[theme music]

OM: I'm Olivia Meikle.

KN: And I'm Katie Nelson.

OM: And this is What'sHerName.

KN: Fascinating women you've never heard of.

OM: To learn about these daredevil divas, I talked to [Sharon Wright](#), who is the author of an amazing book, *Balloonomania Belles*.

Sharon Wright: I'm Sharon Wright, I'm the author of [Balloonomania Belles: The Daredevil Divas Who First Took to the Sky](#) [republished in 2021 as [The Lost History of the Lady Aeronauts](#)] which is the lost history of the lady aeronauts - really, the first women to fly!

OM (to KN): Sharon Wright is a longtime journalist, and this is her first book, although she's currently working on a [book about the Brontë's mother](#)

KN: Interesting

OM: which I realized no one has ever talked about. So I am very excited for that one.

This book is *so much fun!* It's so delightful that I was reading sections of it aloud to my husband on a road trip. And I ended up reading, essentially, half of the book to him. And then stole the book when we arrived and wouldn't give it back, because he wanted to read it. So it might provoke fights in your relationship, but it's totally worth it.

KN: [laughs] Cool.

OM: So let's talk about that first hot air balloon flight. The real history of hot air balloons has to go back a few years before the flights in Europe, because the Chinese were launching hot air balloons a *bit* earlier. About *1500 years earlier*, to be exact. [laughter] But there's no record of them ever launching manned flights. Although they certainly figured out the physics of the process a lot faster than the European inventors did.

The first [European] hot air balloon was invented by two brothers named the Montgolfiers. (I'm going to mispronounce everything in this episode because French is unfortunately not one of my languages.) [laughter]

The legend says: They were sitting in front of a fire and they noticed that the laundry, which was drying over the fire, was rising up in the air. Specifically, a woman's bloomers were rising up in the air.

KN: How appropriate.

OM: And they thought, 'This is amazing. What is happening?!' So they started playing around with it, trying to figure out what was making this happen, and how they could recreate it.

My favorite part of the legend says they were creating paper balloons, trying to get them to rise, and they kept just tipping over. Until finally a wise older woman from next door stuck her head in the window, laughed at them, and said, 'You fools! You have to taper the bottom in, to contain - what they thought was 'smoke,' that was making the balloon rise. And ta-da! The hot air balloon was born.

KN: Boy, France in the late 1700s-

OM: It was the place to be.

KN: Yeah. Just before the revolution ripped it all apart and... slaughtered everybody. [laughter]

OM: Unfortunately, yes. So the Montgolfiers were thrilled. They decided to publicly demonstrate their first large-scale hot air balloon. And they set it up at [Versailles](#) for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The balloon launch was a success, and a sensation was born.

05:02 - 10:08

OM: The French go *wild* for hot air balloons. It's a phenomenon, instantly. People cannot get enough of it - to the point where they call it the 'balloon influenza.' [laughter] 'Balloon fever,' 'balloonomania.' People are *obsessed* with hot air balloons and the people who fly in them.

KN: It makes sense. It must have been the equivalent of... landing on the moon. You know, like, *game changer*.

OM: Yeah. It seems utterly incomprehensible.

KN: Yeah. So this is the same time period, roughly, as [Caroline Herschel discovering comets](#). It seems like the same kind of thing, like - 'it seems like magic, but it's just science, and people can explain it and reproduce it.' I think I would have had the *balloona... fever... balloon...?*

OM: 'Balloon fever,' or 'ballonomania.'

KN: [laughs] I would have had it. I bet it was awesome.

OM: Oh, yeah. I would have been the first one out there. But it was also incredibly dangerous and extremely terrifying. They had *no idea* what might happen if you went up in a hot air balloon.

KN: Right! Yeah, I suppose the highest anybody had ever been was - what, the tower of a cathedral?

OM: or a tall mountain...

KN: Yeah.

OM: There was no way to know. And they were deeply concerned that you *might die* if you go up in a balloon.

KN: Like, yeah, 'The human body is not designed to go to such heights' or something like that?

OM: Exactly. They were very convinced at the beginning that your brain would *probably explode*

KN: Oh, yeah. Probably. [laughs]

OM: ...if you went up in the air. So the first living things to go up in a balloon - a tethered balloon - were not people. They were animals. They sent up a sheep and some other animals, and sent them *way* up. And then brought them back down and said, 'Okay. They're still alive, first of all. That's a good sign. They don't seem to have *exploded* in any way...' [laughter]

And so, eventually, some brave humans decided to risk it. *Not* the Montgolfiers. They invented it, they profited off of it, they became very well known showmen - they **never** went up in a hot air balloon.

KN: What? Really?

OM: In their entire lives.

KN: Oh, that is awesome.

OM: They, I think, realized the danger, and had no interest in participating in the experiment personally.

KN: I love that.

OM: But there were plenty of brave volunteers who wanted to be the first to go up. Many of whom actually did endanger their lives, not just from the obvious - crashing - but they had no idea what the limits were, so several of the early adopters of hot air ballooning passed out. They went so high that they passed out from lack of oxygen and only *just* made it back down. They could have died. I mean - your brain might not explode, but you *can* die from going up in a hot air balloon.

SW: After the very first flight had been made by the Montgolfiers, [Cavallo](#), who was an early historian, suggested that "a few years hence, the most timid woman will perhaps not hesitate to trust herself to the same experience." Well. 'Hesitate?' They *couldn't wait*, as we know! They're just well in there! [laughter]

The British actually tried to totally blank the whole thing for nearly a year! Just, 'Oh, it's ridiculous. What use is that?' They were *so angry* that the French invented it. [laughs] But there were lots of things flying about. And the Montgolfiers used smoke (as they thought) - I mean, it's obviously hot air, they came to realize, was doing the work - but they thought it was smoke. So they burned [stuff] to fill it with smoke. And then when it got to Paris, the news had got confused as well and they thought it was hydrogen. So those hydrogen balloons went up. Suddenly, there were two Italians and a French aeronaut, Pierre Blanchard, [Count Zambecari](#) (absolutely bonkers), and [Vincenzo Lunardi](#) (he was a young aeronaut, he became the first person to fly) - they're literally fighting to be the first people to fly. And *then* to get the first lady into the sky. And actually, the first women to fly in England were French - two little dancers called Leonora and Rosine Simonet. They were only thirteen or fourteen, and they were really brave - he [Pierre Blanchard] took them up, and it was a big deal.

OM: So the French are wild for this - they can't get enough of it. The British, perhaps, are... just really angry that the French thought of this first? *How dare they. We are superior.* [laughter] And so for about a year, they just stoically ignore the entire phenomenon.

KN: Maybe they're waiting to see if the French die, and then [laughter]

OM: I think they're secretly hoping that it will turn out to be a huge mistake. *That's why we didn't think of it.*

10:08 - 15:01

KN: Right, yeah.

OM: 'We're smarter than that.' But as it became apparent it *wasn't* a huge mistake, they started bringing hot air balloons over.

SW: It was all show-business. People used to try to make out that it was scholarly, but it was all show business.

OM: Using the science to give a show, to make money, to entertain crowds, to get famous. And nobody was better at that than the husband of the woman we're talking about today. Sophie Blanchard was six years old when the Montgolfiers first sent people up in a hot air balloon. So she is growing up right in the midst of this hysteria about this brand-new invention. When she is sixteen, she marries Jean-Pierre Blanchard, who was the world's first 'professional aeronaut.'

He grasps this very early on - this is a great way to make money. He was a brilliant showman, a spectacular performer, a terrible businessman and - it seems - a pretty... awful guy. [laughter] *But* he did introduce her to something that would completely change her life.

SW: Well, she was married to Jean-Pierre Blanchard, who was the first professional aeronaut and he was a real huckster and showman. He became famous, really, for crossing the [English] Channel with Dr. Jeffries, an American scholar who basically funded it. And he tried to get all the glory for himself by getting a lead-lined suit made by a tailor. [To make the balloon too heavy for Jeffries to be able to come along.] Unfortunately, the tailor delivered it to Jeffries, so that was a bit embarrassing. I can't imagine how awkward that was, when they just sort of looked at this suit and just ignored it. [laughter]

They managed to cross the channel by basically throwing all their clothes out, and then... weeing into jars? I thought, at that point, you think you would [unintelligible] if you're actually going to crash into the sea - but no, they did it very decorously.

So he became very famous, and that's when he met her, I think.

OM: I must say that's a lot of self-confidence to be wearing a *lead-lined suit* while crossing water in a hydrogen balloon. [laughter]

SW: So whilst Blanchard was this amazing showman, he's very famous - nothing happened without Blanchard being there, you know, sending his balloon up and all the razzmatazz - but he absolutely had no head for business whatsoever. And they were going bankrupt and he was blowing all the money. So basically, Sophie started going up with him at the displays to pull in the punters, to make money, because they were going bankrupt. To keep the Blanchard balloon on the road. [laughs]

Sophie's a really, really timid, small, small woman. She used to be really frightened of traffic. Loud noises used to make her jump. She used to cry if things were too loud. She's very very nervous and sensitive. The first time she went up in a balloon with him, she said it was an incomparable experience and she absolutely had found her element. She was a natural.

OM: So to me, this sounds like what we would now say is sensory processing disorder or generalized anxiety. At the time, they just called her 'nervy'. And so - this doesn't seem like the kind of woman that you would want to send up in a hot air balloon.

KN: Right.

OM: She absolutely *loved it*.

KN: Huh!

OM: When you think about it - if you're in late 18th century Paris, the only place to escape the noise and the people and the traffic and everything is hundreds of feet in the air.

KN: That's awesome.

OM: She liked to sleep in the air. She liked to sleep in the hot air balloon. It was the only place she could sleep well. She was peaceful, she was calm. I mean, people are *regularly dying* going up in hot air balloons, and this nervy, anxious woman is going up every chance she gets.

KN: What are they dying of?

OM: Crashing.

KN: So they're just in the basket, the balloon gets out of control...

OM: Nobody *really knows* how to fly a hot air balloon. Nobody *really knows* what's making it work or how you control it. There aren't safety protocols - flying these completely, unwieldy, brand new inventions that they still literally don't understand how they work.

15:02 - 16:54

OM: A little bit of wind, a little miscalculation, an unsteady landing... There's a huge ratio of injuries. Which I think is part of what people like - this is dangerous, literally death-defying to go up in one of these crazy contraptions.

Now, part of what happens at this point also, is that there's a little miscommunication. Somehow, a significant portion of aeronauts believe that these hot air balloons are *not* hot air balloons, they're hydrogen balloons.

KN: [laughs] Oh!

OM: So a large percentage of people going up in a balloon, are filling that balloon with hydrogen.

KN: Nice.

OM: You know, from our perspective now, [post-Hindenburg](#), our first response is 'Oh the humanity!' [laughter] They're not there yet. They're not realizing how dangerous this is.

And Sophie Blanchard's balloon is a hydrogen balloon.

KN: Whoa. [pause] Uh-oh. Um, does this have a terrible ending?

OM: Sorry.

KN: Oh, no.

OM: But it's... it's delightful along the way. So stay with me.

KN: Okay.

OM: She *lived her best life*.

KN: [rueful laughter] Okay. All right.

16:55 - 18:05 - Ad break

Let's pause for just a second to thank our sponsor, [Girls Can! Crate](#). So with the holidays coming up, a lot of people are looking for gifts that can help inspire the kids in their life with real life women heroes. And I can't think of anything better to send as a gift than a subscription, or a one time gift, of the Girls Can! Crate. The gift that teaches girls that they can be, and do anything. Every crate features an inspiring woman, and her own unique story of why she's awesome, a twenty page activity book, plus everything you would need to complete two or three hands-on STEAM activities, and more. This month, Girls Can! Crate is bringing back one of their most popular crates ever, the persevering painters, featuring incredible artists Mary Cassat, Frida Kahlo, and Lois Milou Jones. And if you order by December 15th, you can have your first crate delivered by December 24th and enjoy one of the best Girls Can! Crates back for a limited time, only. For our listeners, if you go to [Girls Can! C-R-A-T-E.com](#) and use the code HERNAME all caps, you'll get 20% off your first month's crate on any subscription. Check them out now at [Girls Can! C-R-A-T-E.com](#). And when you order, make sure you use the coupon code HERNAME (all caps) so that they know we sent you.

18:06 - 25:07

OM: On land, she is timid and fearful. In the sky, she is utterly fearless. She is the first woman in the world to fly a balloon solo.

KN: Period?!

OM: Period. And it was only her third time in the air *at all*. She's utterly fearless in the sky, she is every bit the aeronaut that her husband is. And after just a few years, Jean-Pierre is up in the balloon, has a heart attack, and falls out of the basket...

KN: What?

OM: and lands on the ground...

KN: Oh, karma. [laughs]

OM: I don't think he was wearing the lead-lined suit when he fell out of the basket... [laughter] He takes a **year** to die.

KN: [shocked noise]

OM: And she nurses him for this year.

KN: Woah.

OM: I don't even want to think about what that looks like.

KN: No. [gasps]

SW: On his deathbed, the legend has it, that he said to her: 'Look, you can either drown yourself or you can hang yourself, because basically there's no money and you're going to be destitute'.

So he died, and she was about thirty.

OM: Nice guy.

KN: [shocked laughter]

OM: Sophie decided, 'No. In fact, I think I'm pretty good at this. I think I have a *perfectly good* way to make a living, and I'm going to keep doing it.'

KN: Yes!

OM: And she went on to have a brilliant solo career.

KN: Yay!

OM: Now, as things are picking up here, it's no longer cool to just have a hot air balloon or hydrogen balloon. You need something flashy, you need something exciting. It's starting to get really competitive. And Sophie decided, 'You know what? I have a unique market here.'

SW: She had a little tiny gondola built, like a silver gondola, to stand on instead of a heavy basket. Which meant she could have a smaller balloon, which took less gas to lift, so it was a lot cheaper. She wore these beautiful white dresses, and she'd just balance there and she'd go up - and of course, she became a huge hit.

OM: And it really is shaped like a gondola, it's a little tiny ship...

KN: Oh! Like a [Venetian gondola](#), like a boat?

OM: Yeah, a Venetian gondola.

KN: I was envisioning, like - a ski gondola type of thing.

OM: [laughs] Oh, no. She decided, "This is fancier. I will look *fabulous*..."

KN: Yeah. Hah!

OM: And she would ride up under these much smaller balloons all by herself. And the crowds loved it.

Now, this ability to use a smaller balloon that fills up faster is good business sense. It's, you know, taking less time and less energy. It's also kind of a *safety strategy*. And not in the air! Balloonomania was so big that people started *losing control of themselves*, and there were many balloon riots. [laughter]

I already knew I wanted to do this episode just at the phrase 'balloon riot.' [laughter] I had no idea what that meant. People were so excited about seeing balloons go up, that when they *failed* to go up - because this is very inexact science still, if there's a hole in the balloon, if the fire's not hot enough, if something goes wrong, and the balloon fails to go up - there is a **riot**.

KN: [laughing] Wha-at?

OM: And many aeronauts were beaten and almost killed, and many balloons ripped to shreds, by angry crowds when they failed to perform as advertised.

KN: That is insane.

OM: Thousands of people on the ground waiting to watch balloons go up, and if they don't get their show... they're gonna find another kind of show. There was one famous aeronaut who announced that he was bringing the biggest hot air balloon that had ever been made, and that balloon would be going up. They're about halfway through filling up the balloon, and a rumor was spread - who knows by whom - that this *wasn't* actually his largest balloon. This was only the *second* largest balloon in his collection. And just on the strength of this rumor, the outrage was so huge that they *ripped his balloon to shreds* and almost killed him.

KN: [laughing] That is so crazy.

OM: They were not messing around, these balloon fans.

KN: No.

OM: The first American 'lady aeronaut' was named Madame J - we don't know her real name - and she... there was a balloon riot on Broadway when her balloon failed to go up.

KN: Wow.

OM: Really incredible. [laughter] I think we tend to think of this as a more civil time - 'It's not like *these* days, when people are all *uncouth* and...

KN: ...*crass*, yeah.

OM: They were ***ripping balloons to shreds*** because they couldn't make them go up fast enough.

KN: [laughs] So, Sophie Blanchard is a little bit safer because hers more reliably goes up?

OM: Yes. It's much easier to fill up a very small balloon. And so, you have much less risk...

KN: of getting ripped to shreds. Wow, wild.

OM: Me [being], as we have established, a firm physical coward - I cannot even begin to conceive of the appeal of this. At all.

KN: Ah, I would love to try it! Especially standing in a gondola. I think hanging from a trapeze would be too terrifying. But standing in a gondola, all by yourself up in the peace and quiet of the air? I would definitely try it at least once.

OM: Oh, not me.

KN: Well... I'd try it *now*. Now that we have safety measures in place. [laughs] And I - I wouldn't do it in a hydrogen balloon.

OM: There are actually five or six hot air balloons that go up every morning in my small town. So I've thought about going up in one.

KN: You should!

OM: I think I would go up in a hot air balloon *now*, run by professionals with... more than three decades of experience [laughter] ...but I definitely would not have gone up in one at this point. And I *definitely* would not go up in a gondola ever. Or a trapeze. Or parachute out of anything, ever, under any circumstance.

KN: At the end of every summer there's a hot air balloon festival in the mountain valley near where I live, and we go every year. And we go to the dawn launch, and it is so magical every year, just standing there surrounded by, like, forty hot air balloons, watching them fill up. And I think it's the mixture of terrifying and beautiful and magical and the... you know, the sun is just rising over the mountains... The whole thing is just this intense experience. Just from that, I think I can understand where the balloomania came from. But I *can't* imagine being so angry that one didn't launch that I rip it to shreds. [laughs]

25:07 - 30:02

OM: I mean - I guess I've been in concert audiences before that had to wait a long time for the... if it had been canceled, you know - we still have stampeding crowds at canceled concerts.

KN: Yeah, you're right.

OM: *We're no better than they were!* [laughs]

KN: Concerts is a good comparison, because you've paid so much money to go and see that, which they probably did back then. You've paid so much money, you've been expecting it for months. It's been built up into this big experience. And then you have just, 'mob mentality' all... I was gonna say, *ballooning* [laughs] ..snowballing?

OM: No! Say ballooning! Puns are a high form of comedy, period.

KN: [laughs] *Ballooning* into this huge phenomenon!

OM: It wasn't just the crowds that loved these aeronauts and Sophie in particular. [Napoleon](#) was quite obsessed with Sophie Blanchard.

KN: Whaaat?!?

OM: He was convinced that he could invade England - by balloon.

KN: Yay! Awesome.

OM: And he built an entire plan that *Sophie Blanchard* was going to lead France's invasion of England by balloon.

KN: Oh, I love that so much.

SW: Napoleon absolutely loved her. He was so enamored with her that he thought, 'Right, we're going to invade England by balloon. And Sophie's gonna do it with us.' [laughter] I can just imagine this timid little woman who, you know, bursts into tears if the traffic's too loud, being sort of [timid voice] "Um, um" and Napoleon going "Right, so let's..."

KN: That's wonderful. The first air invasion in history.

OM: In the late 1700s. [laughter] Napoleon made Sophie his 'Chief Air Minister of Ballooning.'

KN: That's so great!

OM: Official title and everything.

KN: Wow.

OM: She was alarmed. *Not a fan* of this plan. But luckily she didn't have to publicly decline because of [pause] physics! There are prevailing westerly winds across the English Channel, and it would be almost impossible to launch a balloon attack to England from France. So she could gently point out this *small* problem with what is otherwise a *brilliant* plan, express her regret at her inability to lead the invasion... [laughter] And, luckily, she stuck around longer than Napoleon.

SW: The [Bourbon king](#) was restored, Sophie was still the darling of everybody because she was this great symbol of French *elan*, I think, flying in the sky - a very unifying symbol. She was very clever, everyone loved her. She had masses of adventures, which are all in [the book](#), obviously. She went over the Alps and she got so high that she accidentally passed out. And she sort of 'came to' again when she was coming back down. [laughs] And there's a story that she used to like to sleep in the sky because it was so peaceful, she was so at home there.

OM: Her final appearance...

KN: No!

OM: ...was for a crowd of thousands at the [Tuileries](#). And she decided that this whole 'balloon' thing wasn't quite exciting enough anymore. And she thought, 'You know what would add some pizzazz to my ascent in a hydrogen balloon would be *fireworks*.'

KN: Oh, yeah, that would, wouldn't it? Add quite a lot of pizzazz.

OM: It added a little too much pizzazz.

KN: Oh no. [rueful laughter]

SW: And up she went with her fireworks strung from beneath the basket of her hydrogen balloon. And then something went wrong. We think there was a leak of the balloon. And then suddenly Madame Blanchard was on fire, and everybody was crying and screaming. Even then (and this is what I think is a measure of the woman) she did not lose it. She tried - and I can imagine it in my mind's eye actually - she tried to steer down, she tried to sort of 'surf' in with her little gondola and her flaming balloon on fire. And she didn't... she crashed into the roof of a house, and then she crashed onto the street below. And there was not a mark on her. Her little bonnet was hanging on the chimney, and one of her little slippers was on the roof... and that was it. *Bye-bye Sophie*.

It was an absolute shock to the whole of France. And the world actually - it made headlines everywhere.

OM: There's an iconic image of this moment - the flaming balloon crashing into the roof and Sophie Blanchard falling from the balloon - that we'll put [on the website](#). It's a pretty incredible image.

Her death rocked Europe. It rocked the world. She was an icon, she was so famous. And the crowds were so distraught and so horrified that they started a collection for her children. And then realized... she didn't have any children. [laughter]

30:02 - 34:12

OM: The mythology of 'the woman' was apparently so strong that nobody noticed that she did not *actually have* any children before they'd made the collection for her children.

KN: Wow.

SW: And better than that, she had been really canny. Unlike her useless huckster husband who'd gone bankrupt, she had a really good business head. And she'd got rich, really, and she left all that money to her friend's 8-year-old daughter.

OM): So instead, they used the money from the collection to build a memorial, which is at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

KN: What? That's my favorite cemetery! [laughter] I go there in Paris, every time. I've never noticed it, though.

OM: It's hard to miss. It's made to look like a hot air balloon on fire. [laughter] And it's inscribed, 'She was a victim of her art and her intrepidity.'

KN: Next time I'm definitely gonna look for it.

[music]

OM: When you think about it, this is astonishing that women are doing this. Women can't vote. Women can't own property. Married women have no rights at all over their own lives, over their own bodies. And yet they're up in the sky, flying around in magical machines, shooting off fireworks, [Lily Cove](#) jumping off of trapezes in the sky!

KN: Yeah, amazing.

OM: Think about the freedom that these women had - in charge of her fate, in charge of her body, in charge of everything about herself, in the only place she can be. It's easy for *me* to live a fairly safe, comfortable life now. It wasn't then. Going up in a hot air balloon was much less dangerous than giving birth.

KN: Yeah.

OM: One of the women who was the first in England to go up in a hot air balloon in May?

SW: ...by December, she was in her grave. Dead in childbirth. Here she was, leading her sex into the sky - but the dangers on the ground for women were just as bad as they ever were.

[music]

SW: It was a very liberating thing to do - if you had the gumption to do it, I think. They found a freedom in the sky that was nowhere on the ground.

[music]

33:30 - Credits

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If you want to learn more about Sophie Blanchard or see any of the amazing pictures we've been talking about, or find links to Sharon Wright's book, all of those are available at our website, what'shernamepodcast.com. Music for this episode was provided by Amanda Wilson, Nico de Napoli, and Bruno Walter. You can also follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) where we post lots of photos each week. If you enjoyed this podcast, please leave a review at iTunes or wherever you listen. It's much more important than you think in helping new listeners find us.

Our theme song was composed and performed by Daniel Foster Smith. *What'sHerName* is produced by Olivia Meikle and Katie Nelson and this episode was edited by Olivia Meikle.

We also wanna give shout out to another great women's history podcast [The Dead Ladies Show](#), and in particular, their fantastic episode on [Kaethe Paulus](#), a German aeronaut who not only made over 165 parachute jumps in her lifetime, but also invented the collapsible parachute and irrevocably changed air warfare forever. Check them out - we highly recommend them.