"Women in History"
Ernestine Rose

Ernestine Louise Potowski was born on January 13, 1810 in a Jewish corner of Russian Poland called Piotrkow. As a Polish-born, Jewish American, Ernestine was an important part of many movements like women's rights and the abolishing slavery. From the beginning, Ernestine had more education and freedom than was typical for a Jewish female. At fourteen, Ernestine renounced the customs that exiled women to an inferior level. When her mother died when Ernstine was sixteen, she inherited a bounteous sum of property. Ernestine's father, arranged for her to marry a man without consulting her though. As dowry, Ernestine's inheritance was signed over. Ernestine refused to marry the man, took it to court, and won legal endorsement over her inheritance. The next year, at the age of seventeen, Ernestine left Poland and left the majority of her inheritance to her father.

She moved around Prussia, Berlin, Holland, Belgium, Netherlands, and Paris until she came upon England at the age of twenty-one. There, Ernestine met a jeweler and silversmith named William E. Rose, whom became her husband in 1836. The young couple took off for America soon after the marriage and settled in New York the following year. The nation was being plagued by slavery when Rose arrived in America. Ernestine Rose made many heartfelt speeches in New York, neighbouring states, and even down south. After having given speeches for "religious freedom, public education, abolition, and women's rights" she earned the reputation "Queen of the Platform." (jwa.org) Ernestine toured with Susan B. Anthony, and worked closely with people like "Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Paulina Wright, Sojourner Truth, William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass." (jwa.org) Ernestine abandoned her Jewish traditions, but still defended Jews when a newspaper editor struck out at them.

Rose and her husband moved back to England in 1869, where her health began to deteriorate. Though some tried, Ernestine refused to be persuaded into returning to America. Ernestine Rose advanced in her work for social justice, until, on August 4, 1892 in Brighton, England, Rose died.

Left with the title of "America's first identifiable Jewish feminist", (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org) Rose was an important figure in many movements that have shaped our country into what it is today. To me, Rose is a role model because of how strong she was. When she was only fourteen, Rose refused to believe that women were inferior to men, and when she was sixteen she fought for her inheritance then left the country the next year. That to me shows just how unyielding and tenacious she was. Rose's life relates to mine because I am a Jewish girl and I find it intriguing to learn how much of an effect one Jewish woman could leave on our whole society. I want to make a difference in the world just as Rose did while remaining true to Jewish culture. Rose is

an inspiring woman who showed the world that anyone can make a difference in the world, despite the religion or gender.