

Mag Women: The first magazines published in the American colonies, there were two, appeared in 1741. These and subsequent early magazines were founded by men and directed to male readership. Articles focused on social life, politics, and women. The articles about women primarily debated women's roles in and out of the home, connecting notions of loyalty, morality, family, politics, and the new nation.

Women's magazines surfaced in the post revolutionary period and were primarily literary. The first, *Lady's Magazine and Repository of Entertaining Knowledge* founded in Philadelphia in 1792, contained no information on women and household work, fashion, nor beauty. The magazine's most notable feature was a tribute to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, itself published in 1792.

Still, the topics of household work, fashion, beauty, and fiction, came to define women's magazines in the more than 40 publications that appeared by 1830. Unlike men's magazines, women's magazines paid little attention to current events or non-fiction. Nonetheless, these early women's magazines provided an important outlet for women writers and editors and paved the way for future publications aimed at women.

The emergence and public presence of women writers and the new debates they engendered was evidenced in Nathaniel Hawthorne's [in]famous remark about the "damned mob of scribbling women" writers for these publications. And although many of the early women's magazines were short lived, their failures must be put in context recognizing that men decided family spending and which magazines were purchased, or not. Subsequently, however, circulation rates of women's magazines grew as advertising began to finance production costs.

Godey's Lady's Book was the most successful monthly magazine directed to female readership. Founded in 1830 in Philadelphia by Louis Antoine Godey, and edited by Sara Josepha Hale from 1836 until 1877, it was dedicated to "female improvement." Articles did not focus on household work but primarily on women's education. It ceased publication in 1898 but had laid a solid foundation for future women's magazines.

Mary Louise Booth founded and was editor of *Harper's Bazaar* from its beginning in 1867 until her death in 1889. Booth was a prolific translator into English the works of French authors and her *Harpers Bazaar* was America's first fashion magazine. It began as a weekly publication catering to women in the middle and upper classes. It showcased fashion from Germany and Paris in a newspaper-design format. In 1901 *Harper's* became a monthly publication. William Randolph Hearst, who formed the Hearst Corporation in 1887, purchased the magazine in 1912.

Ladies Home Journal began in 1883 as a single-page supplement titled *Women at Home* written by Louisa Knapp Curtis in a farm magazine published by her husband. A year later it became its own independent publication titled *Ladies Home Journal and Practical Housekeeper* with Knapp as editor. Knapp who dropped the last three words in 1886 published the work of muckrakers and social reformers such as Jane Addams. Within ten years *LHJ* became the leading magazine of its type with a circulation of more than one million and was known as the "monthly Bible of the American home."

Fundamentally, women's magazines continued the pattern of addressing white married women in the home, be they middle-class or upper-class. Magazine publications aimed at diverse women did not begin until the 1960s, with *Cosmopolitan* as one of the most notable. *Cosmopolitan* was first published in 1886 as a family magazine that transformed into a literary magazine. Revamped by editor, Helen Gurley Brown in 1965 it became a women's magazine that catered to the single woman.

The *Advocate* started in 1967 as a weekly publication aimed at gay and then lesbian audiences. *Essence*, the first mass magazine aimed at African American women, was founded in 1968 by Denise M. Clark and others. *Essence* Communications Inc. (ECI) began publishing in May 1970 with a circulation of approximately 50,000 copies per month.

Ms. magazine founded by Gloria Steinem began as a one-page insert in *New York* magazine in 1971 and as its own issue in 1972. *Ms.* responded to and helped popularize the women's liberation movement by publishing articles about politics, child care, women's health, lesbian issues, and violence against women.

The magazine *Working Woman* founded in 1976, appealed to women in the workplace, featuring financial and career issues. *Latina* magazine was founded in 1996 by Christy Haubegger then a 28-year-old Stanford Law School graduate, frustrated by a lack of Hispanic role models in the popular media who appealed to Hispanic American women like herself.

Lear's magazine was first published in 1988 and targeted "older women." Its slogan was "For The Woman Who Wasn't Born Yesterday." It covered celebrity interviews, women's issues, progressive issues, and had next to no fashion coverage. Advertisers were want to identify the readership to target, thus *Lear's* was want for advertiser funds. Despite a circulation of 503,000, *Lear's* was forced to close in 1994, 202 years after the first women's magazine sans household or fashion articles was published in 1792.

Sources: <http://www.answers.com/topic/magazines-women-s>, <http://www.answers.com/topic/harper-s-bazaar>,
Wikipedia for each magazine.