AMERICAN WOMEN'S HISTORY: A Basic Bibliography

This bibliography is designed both for teachers of introductory courses in the history of women in the United States and for teachers of survey courses in American history who are integrating women's history into their syllabi.

The bibliography is in four parts:

1. Reference and Inspiration: This section includes the most important bibliographies, directories, reviews, and other reference works for the study of U.S. women's history.

2. Texts: This section includes single-author studies of women's past roles in the United States. The emphasis is on historical overviews.

3. Anthologies of Primary Sources: This section includes collections of source documents that illuminate the historical experiences of women in America.

4. Anthologies of Secondary Sources: This section includes only readers that cover a variety of issues in women's history over a long time period.

Most of the items cited are currently in print.

This bibliography is by design highly selective. Works devoted to a single class or group of women are omitted, although there are many outstanding textbooks and anthologies that address the experience of Black women, rural women, immigrant women, women of certain regions, and so forth. Works focusing narrowly on the women's suffrage movement and the evolution of feminism have also been excluded from this list, since women's history encompasses much more than the struggle for liberation. Additional valuable information on women and relevant classroom readings can be found in the literature of family history; that broad specialty has not been tapped here.
REFERENCE AND INSPIRATION


For a thirty-year period, this bibliography cites more than two thousand personal narratives by women, including autobiographies, journals, letters, diaries, travel narratives, and memoirs. Annotated entries are arranged alphabetically by author. Subject and title indexes aid in locating less recognized women, as does an index that identifies writers by occupations and attributes.


More than a simple bibliography, this interpretative guide explores the major themes of women's history as revealed in both primary and secondary sources. The broad divisions are: American Culture and Society, 1750-1840; Industrialization, Women's Work and the Transformation of the Household, 1810-1910; Cultural Roles of Middle-Class Women in Industrializing America: Schools, Literacy, and Women's Intellectual Work; Women's Religious Life and the Reform Tradition, 1790-1860; Women and Politics, 1776-1930; Biology and Domestic Life: Evolutionary Thought and its Impact, 1830-1900. Under these categories are numerous topical subsections. Each opens with a critical commentary on the sources, followed by a straightforward bibliography. A companion volume covering the twentieth century is in progress.


A general guide to recent books compiled by the Curator of Printed Books at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College. Handily arranged by subject, the bibliography includes a long section on history. Haber's annotations are well written, and her selection is informed. The topics she covers are: abortion; Black women and Native American women; crime and imprisonment; education; feminism; health; history; law and politics; life styles; literature, the fine arts, and popular culture; marriage and related issues; prostitution; psychology; rape; religion; sex roles; sexuality; and work.

Harrison, Cynthia, ed. WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1979-1985. 2 vols. v.1, $58.00 clothbound; v.2, $64.00 clothbound.

Citing historical writings on all aspects of the lives of women in the U.S. and Canada, volume one covers materials from 1964 to 1977, and volume two, from 1978 to 1984. Topics range from women's roles in the political and economic spheres to their self-image and cultural participation. The organization of the two volumes differs. Volume one uses historical periods to order the bulk of its abstracts, while volume two emphasizes
subject categories. The set is a spin-off of the abstracting series, AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE, and features a very useful subject indexing system.

Herman, Kali. WOMEN IN PARTICULAR: AN INDEX TO AMERICAN WOMEN. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1984. 740p. $95.00 clothbound.

Fifty-four biographical dictionaries are indexed, yielding thousands of entries. Each entry gives the woman's name (including maiden name, nicknames, and pseudonyms), her birth and death dates, a few words describing her career, and abbreviated references to information in standard biographical sources. Additional data often include religious affiliation, place of residence and/or work, and racial or ethnic identification. Five indexes provide for multiple approaches by field or career, religion, ethnic/racial identity, geographical location, and name.


In her introduction, Lerner states, "This pamphlet will attempt to meet a variety of needs: it will try to provide an overview of the new field 'women's history'; it will try to discuss the methods and techniques for teaching the subject, with particular attention to interdisciplinary approaches; it will try to meet the needs of those wanting to incorporate women's history into existing survey or topics courses and of those wanting to teach separate units or courses on the subject; it will try to give an introduction to primary and secondary sources and to the bibliographies in the field." This concise work offers inspiration and pedagogical guidance to teachers of women's history, especially at the college level, and stands as the best comparative bibliographic survey of the field.

Lerner, Gerda, with Marie Labeuge. WOMEN ARE HISTORY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN WOMEN. Madison: Graduate Program in Women's History, 1986. $5.00 paperbound.

The fourth, revised edition of Lerner's helpful bibliography includes 1,358 entries. The outline of topics is diverse, encompassing reference works, theoretical writings, general histories, and works on historiography, as well as specific themes -- family, motherhood, women's bodies, women's roles, work, education, law, crime, the arts, lesbians, Black women, minorities, and autobiography and biography.


These tools supplement the Dictionary of American Biography by providing short biographies of nearly 2,000 American women of distinction in all fields. The entries are written by scholars and experts and generally
include a short bibliography to aid in further research. Arranged alphabetically with a subject index. The volume covering "the modern period" focuses on women who died between 1951 and 1975.


This teaching packet is organized around the traditional periods and themes of a 14 week post-Civil War survey course. Each section offers a lucid overview that highlights women's experiences, provides references to specific chapters of standard survey texts, suggests other readings appropriate for students, recommends background materials for the instructor, and proposes topics for class discussion. Audiovisual materials are also occasionally suggested. A similar unit on Western Civilization I is also available, and U.S. History I is in the planning stages.


A library research guide in the classic mold, this handbook provides a brief introduction to the field of women's studies, discusses the organization of library resources (including catalogs and indexes), and presents model research strategies. Major reference works in all the disciplines are cited and annotated, along with other key printed, online, and microform research tools.


A short survey of research and writing about women by historians in the United States, with a natural emphasis on American women's history. Covers 1965 to 1980.

SIGNS: A JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975-- (quarterly). $27.50/year (indiv.); $55.00/year (inst.)

The leading interdisciplinary journal in women's studies, SIGNS usually features one or more review essays in each issue. Especially relevant are Barbara Sicherman's overview of American history in the Winter 1975 issue, and Mary Beth Norton's in Winter 1979.


A selective, interdisciplinary guide to some 1,750 books and 15 periodicals that formed the core literature of women's studies through 1979. The annotated entries include many rediscovered older works, as well as recent scholarly and popular treatments of women's topics. Autobiography, biography, fiction, and poetry are well covered, along with
major works in all academic fields, including history. A supplement covering 1980 to 1985, by Catherine Loeb, Susan Searing, and Esther Stinem an, is now in press.


A new abstracting journal, offering full abstracts of women's studies books and articles from both feminist sources and the traditional disciplines. Each issue has around 200 items. There is a subject index in each issue, cumulated annually.

Tingley, Elizabeth; and Donald F. Tingley. WOMEN AND FEMINISM IN AMERICAN HISTORY: A GUIDE TO INFORMATION SOURCES. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1980. 289p. $60.00 clothbound.

An annotated bibliography of historical and contemporary studies of women in the U.S. In thirty-three chapters, the compilers approach the literature by type of material (bibliographies, manuscript collections, biographical directories, periodicals), chronological coverage, arenas of women's activity (politics, the arts, sports, etc.), and other topics such as ethnic and minority women, violence, psychology, health and so on. Not a definitive bibliography, but nonetheless useful.


This sourcebook combines annotated bibliographic references with reprints of primary documents, as an aid to college teachers hoping to incorporate materials on women into their courses. There are four major sections, within which a number of more specialized topics are treated: Colonial to Revolutionary Period; American Women in the Early Republic; Women and the Progressive Era, 1870-1920; and Women in Modern America, 1930-1980. Each section includes a short historiographical essay, suggestions for survey topics into which the material may be incorporated, and a list of suggested paper topics.

WOMEN STUDIES ABSTRACTS. Rush, NY: Rush Publishing, 1972-- (quarterly). $36.00/year (indiv.); $72.00/year (inst.)

A journal index devoted solely to women's studies, with a section on history. Articles from both scholarly and popular periodicals are listed, plus selected books, documents, leaflets, and unpublished materials. At present, each quarterly issue offers about 1,000 references. The majority of the entries are neither abstracted nor annotated. The arrangement is by broad subject categories, with a detailed subject index in each issue. Book reviews and bibliographic essays on topics of current interest are occasionally featured, and the tables of contents of thematic issues of journals are regularly reproduced. Cumulative indexes are available for some years.

A guide to materials on women in many formats, including newspapers, personal manuscripts, archives of organizations and businesses, government documents, photographs, films, and artifacts. The chapter on archives makes special note of private and public records relating to labor history, social action, theater, mass communications, and the history of Wisconsin. Includes practical information on using the Society’s collections.


This guide identifies more than 18,000 collections, contained in 1,600 libraries and repositories, which document the lives of American women from Colonial times to the present. It is an invaluable tool for locating primary source materials on individual women and women’s organizations. For each collection listed, the size, the existence of catalogs or guides, and any restrictions on access are noted. The contents and scope of the collections are described in annotations.


The most complete list available of women’s magazines and newspapers published in the U.S. Numerous indexes and a chronological chart facilitate the identification and location of nearly 1,500 periodicals that serve as primary sources for historical research.

TEXTS


This historical overview focuses on the "unexceptional" woman -- "the housewife, both middle-class and working-class and the common working woman." Four major sections treat domestic life, the labor force, the 19th century woman movement, and the new feminism. The most interesting feature of this work is a thirty-page chronology of American women's history that contrasts facts related to "unemployment, technology, inventions, health, home, morals, fashion, and education" with political and social advances for women.


This well-documented, illustrated history covers the period from 1890 to the present. The author states that her objectives are threefold: "to
explore the reasons why feminism rose and fell and rose again; to examine
the history of various groups of women, including the working class,
blacks, immigrants, farm women, and the middle class, each of which
responded to the pressures and opportunities of the times in a different
way; and finally, to focus on the dramatic and continuing struggle waged
by determined, innovative women to achieve their rights."

Degler, Carl A. AT ODDS: WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN AMERICA FROM THE REVOLUTION
TO THE PRESENT. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. 527p. $29.95
clothbound; $11.95 paperbound.

Combining chronological and topical approaches, this pathbreaking volume
attempts to integrate the two new fields of women's history and family
history.

Hymowitz, Carol, and Michaele Weissman. A HISTORY OF WOMEN IN AMERICA. New

A general history, written by non-specialists, that strives "to strike a
balance between describing the lives of average women and the lives of
extraordinary women."

Lerner, Gerda. THE WOMAN IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Menlo Park, CA:

An early history by a leader in the field. Chapters: The Colonial Woman;
Dissenters and Community Builders; Ladies and "Scribbling Women"; Women
Leave the Home to Work; The West and the South; Women Organize for Reform
and Welfare; Women Ask for Their Rights; Women in the Civil War; The
Educated Woman in a Period of Transition; Women Organize for Community
Betterment; Women in the Era of Reform; Three Pioneers of Woman's
Emancipation; The Twentieth-century Woman.

Rothman, Sheila M. WOMAN'S PROPER PLACE: A HISTORY OF CHANGING IDEALS AND
$8.95 paperbound.

In this carefully documented survey, Rothman contends that definitions of
women's place in American society have varied historically more than is
generally believed. Concepts of women's place underlie social programs
and thus strongly affect women's everyday experiences. The facts are
presented chronologically and cover such areas as employment, the family,
education, and health care.

Ryan, Mary P. WOMANHOOD IN AMERICA: FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT. New
print.

The author combines a study of the "prevailing images of what was
femininity" throughout American history with an examination of "woman's
actual societal roles as revealed by a variety of social statistics."
Chapters: Adam's Rib: Women in the Agricultural Settlements of the
Seventeenth Century; Patriarchy in Disarray; Women and Commercial
Capitalism: 1750-1820; Creating Woman's Sphere: Gender in the Making of


This history of the U.S. concentrates on the prevailing ideology of each period and contrasts it with the reality of the lives of women, children, blacks, American Indians, and foreigners (i.e., everyone except white Anglo-Saxon males).


This introductory text surveys women's history in the U.S. from the seventeenth century to the present. Each period is covered in a set of paired chapters, one describing a central event or individual in detail, the other providing historical background. The text is amply illustrated and includes review essays on each period to guide readers to additional sources.

ANTHOLOGIES OF PRIMARY SOURCES


Anderson reprints speeches by forty American women reformers, among them Anne Hutchinson, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, Mary McLeod Bethune, Dorothea Dix, Jane Addams, Mary Baker Eddy, and Sojourner Truth.


A chronologically arranged source book of contemporary writings from 1660 to 1975, centering on women's work. Chapters: To 1820 (The First American Women; Home Work; Servitude); 1820-1865 (Dissent; Protests; Journey: Controversy); 1865-1890 (Industrialization--The Price; Industrialization: The Consequences); 1890-1920 (Migrants and Immigrants; The Human Cost of Industry; Working-Class Power; Strikes and the Tradition of Struggle; Women's Consciousness and Class Conflict); 1920-1940 (Homemaking; Woman's Place/Work Place; The Depression; Women in the Union Movement); 1940-1955 (War Work; The Feminine Mystique; The Feminine Reality); 1955-1975 (Home and Job: The Double Day; Today and Tomorrow).

This is a hefty selection of 264 primary sources from Europe and America. Using diverse writings by philosophers, political figures, scientists, novelists, and religious leaders, as well as contemporary news accounts and public documents, the compilers reconstruct the international, interdisciplinary debate over the "woman question." Includes substantive essays introducing each group of documents and helpful contextual headnotes.


This collection of diaries, letters, court transcripts, and excerpts from published works is organized in sections, partially chronological and partially thematic. There is minimal commentary for each piece, but the introduction serves as a historical overview. Chapters: The Early Colonial Milieu: Goodwives, Shrews, and Witches; An Achieving Society: The Eighteenth Century; The Cult of Domesticity Versus Social Change; Slavery and Sex; Nineteenth-century Alternatives: Pioneers and Utopians; Sexuality and Gynecology in the Nineteenth Century; Industrialization and Women's Work; Legacy of Leisure: Discontent.


Culley brings together selections from the diaries of twenty-nine "ordinary" American women who, though not famed diarists, reveal in their writing a remarkable range of accomplishments and thoughts. An excellent primary and secondary bibliography is appended.


An examination of the experiences of American women from the 17th century to the present, using the concept of the life cycle as the organizing principle. Personal documents of "ordinary women," such as letters and diaries, are grouped in five chapters: childhood; adolescence; young adulthood; middle age; old age. Each chapter has an introduction, conclusion, and bibliography.


A topically divided selection of over ninety primary sources. Chapters: The Female Life Cycle (Childhood; Marriage, Motherhood, and the Single State; "Just a Housewife"; Old Age, Sickness, and Death); Women in Male-Defined Society (The Right to Learn, the Right to Teach, the Right to Think; Working for a Living; Women and Politics); A New Definition of Womanhood (Creating the New Woman; The Search for Autonomy).

Excerpts from autobiographical writings by American women of different periods and varying backgrounds. Included are: Eliza Southgate, schoolgirl (1783-1809); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founder of the women's suffrage movement (1815-1902); Maria Mitchell, astronomer (1818-1889); Mary Ann Webster Loughborough, wife of a Confederate officer (1836-1887); Arvazine Angeline Cooper, pioneer (1845-1929); Anna Howard Shaw, minister and doctor (1847-1919); Suzie King Taylor, born a slave (1848-1912); "Mother" Mary Jones, labor organizer (1830-1930); Elizabeth Gertrude Stern, Jewish ghetto resident 1890-1954; Mountain Wolf Woman, Winnebago Indian (1884-1960).


Each chapter of this sourcebook opens with several pages of text and illustrations, followed by reprinted primary materials. The volume is aimed at high school students but could also be useful in lower-division college courses. Chapters: Those Who Came First; Formation of a New Nation; Westward the Nation; An Era of Reform; Abolition and Woman's Rights; The Civil War and Reconstruction; Reform and the Progressive Era; Suffrage at Last; World War I and the Twenties; The Depression and World War II; Life in the Fifties; The Modern Women's Movement.


This early collection presents extracts from the writings by and about women from the late 19th and the 20th centuries, grouped under the four topics: Women's Work; Education; Reform; and Women and Men: Marriage, Family, Sex.

ANTHOLOGIES OF SECONDARY SOURCES


In addition to general essays on the historiography of women's history and its conceptual roots, several contributions to this volume focus specifically on the study of women in the U.S.


A collection of twenty papers treating the socialization of white middle- and upper-class women and their roles within and outside of the home. Four contributions focus on sources and methodology.

An inspiring compendium of research reports, all based on primary sources held at the National Archives.


A thick collection of essays, several of them classics, on the broad themes of women and family, women and work, and feminism, with an introduction tracing the theoretical and methodological currents of women's history.


27 essays are grouped in four chronological sections titled "Colonial Women," Victorian Images," "The Progressive Impulse," and "The Illusion of Equality." Each section has a bibliography and an introduction outlining the unifying themes of the period. The compilers have chosen "material bearing on the three most distinctive aspects of the history of American women: society's definition of the nature of women and their proper roles; the actual conditions of women and the social and economic functions that they performed; and women's response to their special intellectual, socioeconomic, and political problems."


A collection of primary and secondary sources, grouped broadly by period.


Seventeen studies of varying aspects of women's lives from the Colonial period to the twentieth century.


An anthology of writings on economic, political, biological, and ideological factors and their interaction in the lives of American women. The works are grouped by broad time period: 1600-1820; 1820-1880; 1880-1920; 1920-1980. A number of original documents are included.

This volume makes available 12 essays written since 1969 by the prominent feminist historian, Gerda Lerner. Some of the essays discuss theoretical issues in women's history; others address topics such as the history of women's organizations, anti-slavery women, the housewife, and black women. Lerner describes her writings as "sign posts" on the road of discovery, contributions to the creation of a new conceptual framework for women's history.


A group of articles, each accompanied by reprints of illustrative primary sources. The major sections are: Women and American History; Colonial America to 1800--The Myth of the Golden Age; Nineteenth-Century America--The Paradox of "Women's Sphere"; and Twentieth-Century America--Not Separate, Not Equal.


A collection of 16 articles tracing the history of the male role from Colonial times to the present.


Scott, a self-avowed "grandmother" of the new women's history, here gathers a collection of her articles, reviews, and lectures. Her candid and thoughtful introduction, "A Historian's Odyssey," links her personal life and professional work to the evolution of the field of women's history.


A provocative group of essays, organized around the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Compiled by Susan Searing, Women's Studies Librarian, 8/83. Updated 8/86.