

Introduction

This annotated bibliography summarizes the biographies and collections of the under recognized women in history who wrote for the purpose of making lasting changes in society. These women resisted oppressive social standards of their day and wrote their impressions about the world as they saw it or the way it should be. Women unafraid to talk about women's rights, mental illness, and particular aspects of human behavior.

An often-underappreciated writer was Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who wrote the story in an effort to reveal the suffering slaves had to endure in the South. This brought enough attention to the issue that something had to be done. The result was the Civil War. Other notable women are Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Amelia Jenkins Bloomer were the founders of women's suffrage. These women wrote and spoke in a determined effort to change women's rights by advocating for voting rights and reproductive control. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, writer and spokesperson, started at the early age of 16 trying to create better work environments for men and women by becoming active organizer for the International Workers of the World (IWW) union and a member of the communist party. These women placed themselves in unfavorable political positions in their social causes, and were often incarcerated for their beliefs. Their efforts are detailed in autobiographies and online finding aids that hold their large collections.

The second group of women suffered from the dominating hand of society. Largely misunderstood, these writers experienced a variety of mental illnesses in the effort to express themselves. One notable example is Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the author of *The Yellow Wallpaper*. This autobiographical gothic piece revealed first hand

the effects of a male dominated medical practice where in her case the cure was worse than the initial illness. The poet Emily Dickinson developed stress related eyesight problems and depression when she could not get published. She became very reclusive and only managed to publish anonymously or under fake male pseudonyms. Many poems discovered after her death hinted at her anger and frustration with the male dominated elitist nature of publishing. Kate Mansfield wrote stories about the sadder side of the human condition. In writings like *The Garden Party* and *Miss Bliss*, disillusionment, loneliness, and concerns about social elitism were a common theme in her stories. As her empathetic writing style developed, her personal life suffered.

Some of the most talented writers were noticed only for work that appealed to the masses, while their best critical work was ignored. Louisa May Alcott who is most recognized for her feel good book *Little Women*, actually preferred to write striking stories such as *Behind a Mask* focusing on the darker side of human behavior. Alcott found the prim lady like behavior expected of girls to be completely boring and had no use for it. She believed her best writing were the stories that shocked her audiences. Another creative writer was Daisy F. Baber. She wrote two serious historical research novels: *The Longest Rope* and *Injun Summer*, but only received official recognition from her community for her poems and short stories that were published in the *Lyons (Colorado) Recorder*. These lighthearted stories were usually filled with gentle humor surrounding the crusty tales of the 'Old West.' Even though Baber believed in writing stories that gave people a little joy in a world filled with sorrow, she wanted to be remembered as a serious researcher.

Conclusion

One of the most difficult aspects of this assignment was choosing which writers would be included in the annotated bibliography. Sometimes I found myself skimming 400 hundred-page biographies before deciding they did not fit within a particular category. I wanted writers who somehow punched a hole through a social barrier. All of these women wrote powerful tales, letters, speeches, and poems, but rather than focusing on a single literary work, I was more interested in who they were as people. Thus, this annotated bibliography is a summary of their biographies, collections, digitized manuscripts, and compilations.

All attempts were made to follow the Chicago Style for Citation as consistently as possible by referring to the official *Chicago Manual of Style-Citation Quick Guide*, http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

1. Alcott, Louis May 1975. *Behind a mask: The Unknown thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*. Ed. by Madeleine Stern. NY: William Morrow and Company.

This book, compiled by Madeleine Stern, includes an extensive introduction about Louisa May Alcott, the famous writer of *Little Women*. Rather than discussing this still popular piece of children's literature, Stern focuses on Alcott's thrillers penned under the pseudonym A. M. Bernard. Incorporated into the book are notes pointing to the primary sources used to discuss Alcott's work as well as a scanned copy of a publisher's letter to L.M. Alcott.

2. Alpers, Antony. 1980. *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*. NY: Viking Press.

This is an expansive biography with Alpers putting together a descriptive narrative about Katherine Mansfield. Drawing on manuscript collections, private papers, and exclusive personal contacts, the biographer reinterprets the life of a volatile and vulnerable writer. The biographer includes a large collection of photos, a timeline, other Mansfield bibliographies, and notes explaining the abbreviations that identify the location of collections.

3. Bedard, Michael and Barbara Cooney. 1992. *Emily*. NY: Doubleday Books for Young Readers.

This illustrated children's book offers a rare glimpse into the poet's private world through the eyes of a neighborhood child. The first part of the book does not reveal the nature of the timid woman's character and reads like a children mystery. In the afterward, a brief but detailed description about Emily Dickinson is provided. Emily, a noted recluse often befriended the neighborhood children offering bits of poetry and gifts of gingerbread through her kitchen window or lowering a basket on a string from an upstairs window.

4. Council Bluffs Public Library. "Bloomer, Amelia Jenks. 1818-1894 Correspondence." Council Bluffs, IA. (accessed April 10, 2007) <http://catalog.cbpl.lib.ia.us/search>.

This collection consists of 298 letters written and received by Amelia Jenks Bloomer between 1851 and 1894. Bloomer was one of the pioneers in the women's rights movement and worked closely with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Most letters in the collection were written while Bloomer lived in Council Bluffs where she helped organize the Iowa Woman's Suffrage Association in 1870 and became the honorary Vice President of the American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890. Council Bluffs Public Library uses WebPAC PRO © Innovative Interfaces, Inc as their online catalog, thus the online collection finding aid is much less detailed.

5. Evans, Sheryl Baber. 2007. The Daisy F. Baber manuscript collection. Topeka, KS: NP

Daisy Baber was an avid poet and kept all of her original copies and second drafts. The template drafts later appeared as a daily feature “Penny Thoughts” in the *Lyons Recorder* local county newspaper. Daisy Baber’s collection also includes the first drafts of many short stories and the first draft of her first book, *The Longest Rope*. However, the primary draft of *Injun Summer*, the second and final book published after her death, is not in the collection. An intriguing addition is a letter written to her children in short story form describing her trip to Illinois where she provides the details and difficulties of settling her parent’s estate. Another intriguing manuscript is a handwritten page, perhaps given as a speech, explaining the reasoning and passion behind her writing and the pride she feels for each of her children.

6. Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley. 1955. *The Rebel girl: An Autobiography, my first life. (1906-1926)*. NY: International Publishers.

This autobiography details the first twenty years of Flynn’s life as an agitator for workers and women’s rights. Written during her imprisonment for being a communist, Flynn was unable to make changes or see the final product. The book covers her early years then expands to her activities as an IWW agitator and involvement in various strikes. Photos of the author at rallies, socialist friends, and mementos are included. The book also includes a scanned copy of a letter from Joe Hill, an agitator and songwriter who was executed for a crime he did not commit. Flynn never finished the second half of her autobiography as she chose to focus on her experience in prison and speak at rallies.

7. Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. 1892. “The Yellow Wallpaper.” In *The story and its writer: An introduction to short fiction*, ed. Ann Charters, 306-318, 873-878). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003.

“The Yellow Wallpaper” is one of Gilman’s best-known works. She wrote it shortly after suffering a nervous breakdown. This frank depiction of mental illness became a landmark account of her suffering and exposé of the treatment provided by supposedly expert physician S. Weir Mitchell. Mitchell was known for prescribing inactivity as a cure to women who strived beyond the bounds of the status quo. Gilman’s gothic element of style combining fantasy and autobiography with a twist woke up a 19th world that was not aware of the misunderstanding and misdiagnosing of intellectual women. Also included in Charter’s (2003, 873-878) text are related commentaries “A Feminist Reading,” “Undergoing the Cure for Nervous Prostration,” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper.”

8. Hedrick, Joan. 1994. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Joan Hedrick tells the absorbing story about the woman who was determined to write one of the most influential stories ever written. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* became a call to arms regarding the oppressive nature of slavery. The biography offers a lively narrative of the parlor societies popular during Harriet’s time, the harsh physical realities that governed women’s lives, and the great social upheaval accompanying the socialist movement. Included are photographs of Harriet and her family, a select bibliography

listing where Hedrick found her primary sources, a listing with Harriet's other works, and a expansive list of secondary sources.

9. Houghton Library, Harvard College Library. "Alcott Family: Additional Papers, 1707-1904." Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. (accessed April 4 2007).
http://oasis.harvard.edu:10080/oasis/deliver/advancedsearch?_collection=oasis

The Alcott family was based in Concord, Massachusetts. Its best-known writer was Louisa May Alcott. Papers include diaries, compositions, correspondence, business papers, and clippings. This database offers the researcher the opportunity to see the summary or full finding aids. While not the most detailed finding aid, the Alcott Family full finding aids include the basic scope of the collection, as well as a container list detailing the series, the items by type of document, who it was for, and the dates.

10. Jones Library Special Collections. "The Emily Dickinson Collection Finding Aid." Jones Library, Inc. Amherst, MA. (accessed April, 4 2007).
<http://www.joneslibrary.org/specialcollections/collections/dickinson/>

The Jones Library collection of Emily Dickinson was begun in 1921 by Charles R. Green, the first librarian of Jones Library. The collection includes manuscripts, editions, newspaper clippings, prints, photographs and other artifacts to document the life of the poet. The collection is unique in that it places the poet within the context of her community in the mid-nineteenth century. This collection's finding aid is very extensive and the collections' list is item specific and includes dates.

11. Kansas State Historical Society. "Margaret Hill McCarter: A Kansas Portrait." Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS. (accessed February 21, 2007)
http://www.kshs.org/portraits/mccarter_margaret.htm and
<http://lib.wuacc.edu/search/aMcCarter%2CMargaret+Hill+/amccarter+margaret+hill/1%2C1%2C13%2CB/frameset&FF=amccarter+margaret+hill+1860+1938&10%2C%2C13>

A Kansas Portrait is a brief biography of Margaret Hill McCarter. She was a Topeka author who became well known during the early 20th Century for her novels set against a background of the Kansas Prairies. In addition to her writing, McCarter devoted a lot of time to her work with civic organizations and clubs. She also became well known as a public speaker. Through ATLAS, the KSHS online catalog, a summarized finding aid is available with brief notes about the contents and the donor.

12. Rochester Public Library, Local History Division. "The Susan B. Anthony Collection: Manuscripts: Digital image of May 1900 letter to American Unitarian Association." Monroe County Library System, Rochester, NY. (accessed April 10, 2007)
<http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/SBA/LetterVar.htm#1>

Scanned by the Rochester Public Library in 2006, this letter was written to the President and Officers of the American Unitarian Association in session at Boston, Massachusetts during May of 1900. The typescript has been written on the National American Woman Suffrage Association letterhead sheet. Since the Historical Division of the Rochester Public Library uses a basic online catalog format rather than a finding aid set-up, little detail on the scope of the collection, arrangement or description of details about the manuscript are found either within the digitized documents themselves or the catalog summary.

13. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1845-1961, Papers and Finding Aid." Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (accessed February 28, 2007)
http://oasis.harvard.edu:10080/oasis/deliver/deepLink?_collection=oasis&uniqueId=sch00019

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, independent thinker, prolific writer, and gifted speaker, was the intellectual leader of the women's movement from the late 1890s through the mid-1920s. The present collection adds to the published evidence Gilman's rich personal life and shows the consistency of her ideas throughout her life. In the unpublished manuscripts, one can see the later development of these ideas. This full finding aid includes an extensive biography, scope of the collection, acquisitions, a container list detailing the series, the items by type of document, who it was for, and the dates.

14. Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. "Guide to the Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers: 1896-1964." Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York, NY (accessed May 1, 2007)
<http://dlib.nyu.edu/eadapp/transform?source=tamwag/flynn.xml&style=tamwag/tamwag.xsl>

The microfilm edition of the Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers contains 12 linear feet of correspondence, published and unpublished articles, speeches, poems, diaries, itineraries, and documents pertaining to legal proceedings and files produced by various government agencies. This finding aid includes an extensive biography, detailed scope and series description, and itemized collection list. An acquisition notation clarifies that an additional 4 linear feet of government records were obtained as a result of the Freedom of Information Act.

15. Walsh, John Evangelist. 1971. *The Hidden life of Emily Dickinson: A Biography*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Walsh delves deeply into Emily Dickinson's life by retelling a very moving story of the reclusive existence of the famous poet. The author intersperses this riveting tale with bits of poetry revealing the mood and thoughts of Dickinson and her family members. Exhaustive research is reflected in the detailed telling of the poet, most of which comes from diaries, letters, and unpublished bits of poetry. Notes in the back of the book further details the location of primary sources and additional explanations.

16. Ward, Geoffrey. 1999. *Not for ourselves alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: an illustrated history*. NY: Alfred A. Knope.

A compelling story about two of the most important but underrated figures in American history. Written as a companion volume to the PBS documentary film, this biography looks closely at the lives of Elisabeth Cady Stanton, both a mother and an uncompromising revolutionary, and Susan B. Anthony, an unmarried plainspoken woman and uncanny political tactician, who were lifelong friends. The volume contains numerous illustrations, list of credits, selected historical sources, and an acknowledgement to the families who opened up their private collections and the Seneca Falls Historical Society located in New York.