

University of Wisconsin
Department of History
Fall, 1985-86

History 901 Reading Seminar
Thursday 1:20-3:20 P.M.
7117 Helen C. White

Gerda Lerner
5123 Humanities
Office Hours:
10-12 and by
appointment

SOCIAL HISTORY OF U.S. WOMEN: 1650-1870

In this seminar we will study the historical experience of American women in the 18th and 19th century, using a topical approach. Wherever possible we will be using primary sources, that is documents in which women speak for themselves about their lives and ideas. These will be combined with secondary sources and essays offering a variety of interpretations. Students will become familiar not only with content, but with the use of historical methodology.

REQUIREMENTS: Attendance at all classes; reading preparation prior to the class for which the assignment is given; participation in class discussions; one oral presentation; three written assignments.

READING: Students are expected to do all assigned readings, to take notes on them and are encouraged to add to their reading from the Additional Suggested Reading List according to their own interests. A typewritten report on the reading done from the Additional Suggested Reading List should be handed to the instructor. It should be no more than a 4 x 6 card, single spaced, briefly stating the book's thesis and a critical comment on it.

The Additional Suggested Reading List is intended to augment the reading for the course and to serve as a source for future study. Students in Women's History should make use of it for prelim preparation.

Students should use Notable American Women, 4 vols., as a general reference work. Each student should select three 19th century women and become our class expert on them.

Unless otherwise noted (HC), all assigned books are paperbacks. Books may be purchased at A Room of One's Own and Brown's Book Store. Some titles are also available at University Book Store.

ASSIGNMENTS:

(1) From your reading notes prepare three questions for discussion for each assigned unit. Put these questions in my box by Wednesday, 4:00 P.M. each week. You may, if you wish, also offer critical comments.

(2) Prepare an oral report (no more than 10 minutes) on the life of the women whose autobiography you have read. Interpret her life, using any of the criteria developed in this course. The main point of this exercise is to develop your ability to select. You should strive for conciseness and lucidity. We will set up a schedule for these oral reports to be presented to the class after Week 3.

3. Do a 4-6 page paper, comparing one aspect of the female life cycle of yourself or your mother (20th century women) with an 18th century woman. Use one of the women in the readings as a source or use NAW or any of the biographies and autobiographies in my bibliography. What aspect of the experience is typical for that period? What unusual? Who defined the female role? How did women act or decide? What constraints determined their decisions? Assignment due Week 7.

4. Using the readings from Units VII and VIII, discuss two or more interpretations of a topic from these units and offer your own synthesis and critique. You may use both assigned and supplementary readings. 6 page paper. Due Week 10.

5. From sources listed in the assignments up to Unit XI and/or from additional sources, select a problem for comparison, holding either class or race stable. For example, compare the work and/or activities of black and white middle class women in a given period. Or compare the work and family decisions of middle and working class white women. Bring in a 6-8 page paper, footnoted and with evidence that you have read a number of sources. Due Week 13.

 AR = Assigned Reading
 ASR = Additional
 Suggested Readings

WEEK I.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT WOMEN IN HISTORY

Assigned Reading:

Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck, eds., A Heritage of Her Own, Toward a New Social History of American Women (1979), Introduction, pp. 9-23.

Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," pp. 145-159, and "Women's Rights and American Feminism," pp. 48-62 in The Majority Finds Its Past (1979)

Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," pp. 137-165 in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., Becoming Visible: Women in European History (1977).

Robert Wells, "Women's Lives Transformed: Demographic and Family Patterns in America, 1600-1970," in Carol Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, Women of America, A History (1979), pp. 16-33.

Additional Suggested Readings:

Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buhl, Nancy Schrom Dye, "The Problem of

Women's History," pp. 75092 in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., Liberating Women's History (1976).

Sheila Ryan Johansson, "Herstory as History: A New Field or Another Fad?", pp. 400-430 in Berenice Carroll, ed., Liberating Women's History

Janet James, Introduction, Notable American Women.

WEEK 2 NATIVE AMERICANS, WHITE SERVANTS

AR:

Richard Morris, Government and Labor in Early America, pp. 310-389.

Cott, Root of Bitterness, pp. 59-64, "Suffolk Co. Court", pp. 89-90, "Letter from and indentured servant".

Cott/Pleck, pp. 25-57 (Carr-Walsh, "The Planter's Wife"), pp. 107-135. (Cott, "18th century family...")

XEROX readings on Native Americans

ASR:

Ulrich, Good Wives, ch. 2, 3.

Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America (Norton, 1975), ch. 3 and 7.

WEEK 3 THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

AR:

Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, ch. 4.

Cott, Root, pp. 34-36 (Ann Hutchinson); 65-73 (Mercy Short); 83-88 (Sarah Osborn).

Ulrich, Good Wives, ch. 12, pp. 215-235.

Janet James, Women in American Religion, pp. 27-110 (articles by Dunn, Moran, Ulrich, Ryan).

ASR:

James, pp. 111-126 (Welter)

Mary Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, ch. 2.

WEEK 4 WOMEN AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

AR:

Kerber, ch. 2, 3, 4, 6.

Norton, ch. 5, 6, 7.

ASR:

Kerber, chs. 1, 5.

Joan Hoff Wilson, "The Illusion of Change: Women and the American Revolution" in Friedman and Shade, Our American Sisters, 3d ed., ch. 5.

Mary Beth Norton, "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," in American Historical Review, vol. 89, #3 (June 1984), pp. 593-619.

WEEK 5 THE FEMALE LIFE CYCLE

AR:

Lerner, The Female Experience, ch. 1, 2, pp. 3-107; ch. 4, pp. 151-178.
 Cott, Root, pp. 113-116, (S. Jennings)
 Lebsack, Free Women, ch. 2.
 Ulrich, Good Wives, ch. 1, pp. 13-24.

ASR:

Harriet C. Brown, Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years, 1827-1927 (1930)
 Elizabeth Buffum Chace and Lucy Buffum Lowell, Two Quaker Sisters (1937).
 Eve Merriam, Ten Lives: Growing Up Female in America, esp. chapters on Stanton, Mitchell, Cooper, Shaw.

Consult biography and autobiography section in Gerda Lerner's bibliography for additional readings.

WEEK 6 WOMEN'S WORK

AR:

Lerner, Female Experience, ch. 3.
 Alice Kessler Harris, Women Have Always Worked (1981), pp. 20-51.
 Cott/Pleck, ch. 21 (Vanek), ch. 11 (Glasco).
 Virginia Yans McLaughlin, "Buffalo's Italians," pp. 136-151 in Michael Gordon, ed., The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective.

ASR:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics, (Reprint, 1965).
Radical America VII, nos. 4 and 5 (July-October 1973).
 Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good, ch. 5.

WEEK 7 DEFINITION AND CONTROL OF SEXUALITY

AR:

Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, ch. 5 and Conclusion (p. 230-242).
 Cott/Pleck, ch. 6 (Cott), ch. 8 (Smith-Rosenberg), ch. 9 (Smith), ch. 13 (Gutman)
 Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: in Jean Friedman and William Shade, eds., Our American Sisters, and in Michael Gordon, ed., The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective, pp. 224-250.

ASR:

Ronald Walters, Primers for Prudery: Sexual Advice to Victorian America (1974).

Regina Markell Morantz and Sue Zschoche, "Professionalism, Feminism, and Gender Roles: A Comparative Study of Nineteenth-Century Medical Therapeutics," The Journal of American History, 67 (December 1980), pp. 568-588.

Charles Rosenberg and Carroll-Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in 19th Century America", Journal of American History, LX, No. 2 (1973), pp. 332-356.

WEEK 8 HEALTH REFORM, BIRTH CONTROL, SEXUAL REVOLUTION

AR:

Nancy Cott, Root, pp. 263-308.

Lerner, Female Experience, pp. 87-103 (S. Grimke and M. Sanger).

Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right, ch. 1 and 3, pp. 3-94; 249-418).

Carl Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (1980), ch. 10, pp. 227-248.

ASR:

David Pivar, Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900 (1973).

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good, ch. 2, 3, and 4.

James Mohr, Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy (1978)

WEEK 9 THE RIGHT TO LEARN AND THE RIGHT TO TEACH

AR:

Ann Firor Scott, "What Then Is This American, This New Woman?", Journal of American History, LXV, #3 () pp. 679-703.

Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle, ch. 2, (pp. 23-40), ch. 8, (pp. 113-130).

ASR:

Mary Lyon, The Life and Labors of Mary Lyon (1885)

NAW essays on Zilpah Grant, Anne J. Cooper, F.I. Coppin, M. Carey Thomas.

WEEK 10 WOMEN'S WORK II: IN THE WORK FORCE

AR:

Cott/Pleck, pp. 182-196 (Lerner)

Cott, Root, pp. 148-156 (Ten hour workday).

Friedman/Shade, pp. 243-263 (D. Walkowitz).

ASR:

Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860.

WEEK 11

SLAVERY AND ABOLITION

AR:

- Lerner, Black Women in White America (BWWA), pp. 19-53.
 Lerner, The Majority Finds Its Past, ch. 5, and 8.
 Lerner, Female Experience, pp. 329-347, 471-492.
 Cott/Pleck, ch. 12 (Genovese)
 Leon Litvack, North of Slavery, ch. 7.
 Angelina Grimke, Appeal to the Christian Women of the Southern States, or Angelina Grimke, Letters to Catharine Beecher (Arno Press Reprint Edition). HC

ASR:

- Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll
 Lerner, The Grimke Sisters
 Scott, "Women's Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1840s",
Journal of American History, LXI, No. 1 (June 1974): 52-64.
 Jane H. Pease and William Pease, Bound With Them in Chains: A Biographical History of the Anti-Slavery Movement (Greenwood Press, 1972)

WEEK 12

WOMEN ORGANIZE FOR COMMUNITY AND WELFARE

AR:

- Ryan, ch. 10, pp. 105-144.
 Lebsack, ch. 7.
 Mary Beard, "Women's Work in Municipalities" (XEROX)
 Lerner, Female Experience, pp. 178-199.
 Ann F. Scott, The Southern Lady, ch. 6, pp. 135-163.
 Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood, ch. 4, pp. 126-159.
 Flexner, ch. 13.

ASR:

- Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City, (1978), ch. 7.
 Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House.
 Frances Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years (1889).
 Barbara Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity (1981).

WEEK 13

WOMEN ORGANIZE FOR EMANCIPATION

AR:

- Ann F. and Andrew Scott, One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage (1975), pp. 3-12, 56-59, 24-50.
 Ellen DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869, (1978), pp. 21-52.
 Flexner, Century of Struggle, ch. 6, (pp. 71-104); ch. 12, (pp. 164-178) and ch. 16, (pp. 216-228).
 DuBois, ed., E.C. Stanton, S.B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches, Parts I and II.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READINGS for those wishing to study the suffrage campaign to 1920:

- Scott, One Half the People, pp. 112-13, 129-141.
 Flexner, ch. 22 and 24.
 Alan P. Grimes, Puritan Ethic and Woman's Suffrage, ch. 1.
 William Chafe, The American Woman (1972), ch. 1 and 2.
 William O'Neill, The Woman Movement: Feminism in the United States and England (1969), Introduction.
 Aileen Kraditor, Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920, (1965).

WEEK 15

THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW WOMAN

AR:

- Lerner, Female Experience, pp. 401-418; pp. 471-492.
 Lerner, BWWA, pp. 563-583.
 Scott, Southern Lady, pp. 105-133.
 Mary Beard selections (XEROX)
 NAW entries on Alice Hamilton, Emily and Elizabeth Blackwell, Mary Putnam Jacobi, Belva Lockwood, Crystal Eastman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

ASR:

Read any one of the autobiographies or biographies.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

- Otelia Cromwell, Lucretia Mott (1958)
 Eleanor Hays, Morningstar, A Biography of Lucy Stone (1961)
 Gerda Lerner, The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery (1967)
 Elizabeth C. Stanton, Eighty Years or More (Reprint, 1971)
 Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher (1978)
 Rheta Childe Dorr, Susan B. Anthony
 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.
 Emma Goldman, Living My Life
 Mabel Dodge Luhan, Intimate Memoirs
 Agnes Smedley, Daughter of Earth
 Mary Field Parton, ed., Autobiography of Mother Jones
 Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House
 Alfreda M. Duster, ed., Crusader for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells.
 Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography
 Rose Cohen, Out of the Shadow

- Alice Hamilton, Exploring the Dangerous Trades: The Autobiography of Alice Hamilton
- Blanche Cook, ed., Crystal Eastman
- Gerda Lerner, Grimke Biography
- Ruth Landes, The Ojibwa Woman
- Abigail Scott Duniway, Path Breaking, An Autobiographical History (1971)
- Charlotte Forten, Journal of Charlotte Forten: A Free Negro in the Slave Era (1961)
- Bell Chivigny, The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings (1976)
- Elizabeth Griffiths, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1984)
- Frances Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years (1889)
- Harriet C. Brown, Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years, 1827-1927 (1930)
- William Chafe, The American Woman (1972)
- Olive Gilbert, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave (1850)

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FALL SEMESTER, 1985

History 901

Professor Gerda Lerner

Social History of U.S. Women, 1650-1890
ASSIGNED READINGS

Nancy Cott, In the Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)

* _____, Root of Bitterness

* Nancy F. Cott, Elizabeth H. Pleck, eds., A Heritage of Her Own, Toward a New Social History of American Women (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1979)

Carl Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (NY: Oxford University Press, 1980) PB

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics (NY: Harper and Row, 1966) PB

Alice Kessler-Harris, Women Have Always Worked (1981)

Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980)

Susanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860, (NY: Norton, 1984)

* Gerda Lerner, Black Women in White America, A Documentary History (NY: Vintage Books, 1973)

* _____, The Female Experience, An American Documentary (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977)

_____, The Majority Finds Its Past (NY: Oxford, 1979)

Eve Merriam, Ten Lives: Growing Up Female in America

Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (1980)

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750 (NY, 1982)

* Mary Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class (Cambridge UP, 1981)

Ann Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) PB

* Purchase suggested.