

feminist collections

women's studies library resources in wisconsin
vol. 2, no. 3 spring 1981

FROM THE EDITORS

. . . many publishers consider the white male viewpoint the traditional literary perspective. Books by blacks, other minorities and even by women are thought of as little more than fads and curiosities. . . . So bookstores become white ethnic bookstores; the predominant class represented there is white males.¹

In a recent article in the New York Times Book Review, Mel Watkins surveyed the difficult situation currently confronting black novelists in search of publishers.² After discussions with prominent black authors and publishers, Watkins concluded that the last decade has seen a "drastic shift" in the receptivity of commercial publishers to black writing. Whereas in the late 60's, black writers found themselves actively wooed by the publishing world, Watkins states that in the early 1980s, "Not only are publishers not taking black writers on their 'own terms,' increasingly they are no longer taking them at all."

The dismal state of black publishing contrasts sharply with the current publishing scene in women's studies. In fact, as we in this office struggle to stay abreast of all that's coming out, and to somehow summarize the current literature in our constantly expanding publication, New Books on Women & Feminism, we often feel we are about to be buried in the avalanche. The heyday of women's studies publishing has followed five to ten years after the latest black literary renaissance, just as the flowering of the current women's movement came upon the heels of the black movement.

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EDITORS: Linda Parker, Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large and Catherine Loeb,
Women's Studies Specialist. Graphic Artist: Catharina Schimert.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM 112A Memorial Library 728 State St. Madison, WI

NEWS FROM U.W.- LA CROSSE

The Institute for Women's Studies began at the University of Wisconsin--La Crosse in 1975 as an attempt to implement the recommendations of the University of Wisconsin Task Force on Women's Studies. Through the hard work of the early directors Judith Green and Vivian Munson and the Women's Studies Committee, six years later Women's Studies at UW-L flourishes both as a credit program and one that sponsors many activities on campus relating to women and their widening roles in society. Both the credit and non-credit programs, though they focus on women's experience, are intended for men as well as women.

A fifteen credit certificate in Women's Studies is available to students. Introduction to Women's Studies, an interdisciplinary course that allows students to explore many issues about women and their achievements, is one requirement of the certificate. Many experts from such diverse fields as mathematics, literature, and anthropology guest lecture in the course. Also required for the certificate is a women's studies seminar, offered for the first time spring semester, 1981. The topic for the seminar will vary. Currently it is on "Magic, Witchcraft, and the Healing Arts." Students can satisfy the other required hours for the certificate with such courses as women and literature, women in history, sex roles, women and society, etc., or by doing independent study with any of the women's studies faculty.

The Institute for Women's Studies also operates the Women's Studies Resource Center, which offers books, journals, magazines, pamphlets, and a clipping file. Students and other people in the University and the community can find information on women's studies, the current women's movement, legal rights for women, non-sexist education, and broadening career and life choices. To publicize the center and the women's studies programs, Women's Studies has hosted a number of events in the Resource Center. These have included an open house, evenings of women's creative writings, and weekly brown bag lunches. Sometimes these lunches have themes, such as services available to women on campus; other times they are purely social.

The Institute for Women's Studies also sponsors a number of other programs and events. In the fall of 1980, the Institute for Women's Studies, in coordination with the General Honors Program, initiated a colloquium series entitled "Conversations," in honor of Margaret Fuller. To begin the series, anthropologist Susannah Lloyd spoke about the religious implications of contemporary witchcraft. Other programs have included a lecture on Toxic Shock Syndrome, forums on women's experience on this campus that cut across race and age, and lectures on women's history. In April the Institute will put on a one day conference, funded by the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, on New Styles of Families. This conference, aimed especially at adults in the community, will have feminist journalist and poet Karen Lindsey as a key note speaker, workshops led by experts in the social service fields, and a panelist of humanists discussing the family in literature, history, and other cultures.

With a supportive administration, and the enthusiasm of students, faculty, and staff, Women's Studies at UW-L has developed into a vital part of the University community.

--Carole Levin, Director
Institute for Women's Studies
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

FEMINIST BOOKSTORES IN WISCONSIN

With this issue of Feminist Collections, we are pleased to be able to publish the first article in our new series on feminist bookstores in Wisconsin. We hope, of course, that through this series our readers will become more familiar with the bookstores that we have in Wisconsin. We are also hopeful that readers will gain deeper awareness of what a complex business feminist bookstores are and of the challenges these bookstores face if they are to survive. Finally, we hope that our readers will become newly committed to supporting these important resources for our feminist communities.

Rose Katz has written the first article in the series on A Room of One's Own in Madison. In upcoming issues of Feminist Collections, we plan to publish articles on Sistermoon in Milwaukee, Mother Courage in Racine, and Kaleidoscope in Oshkosh.

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A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN, MADISON, WISCONSIN

A Room of One's Own Bookstore in Madison is one of over 70 feminist bookstores around the country and one of eight in the immediate area between Minneapolis and Chicago (the other seven are Sistermoon, Mother Courage, and Kaleidoscope in Milwaukee, Racine and Oshkosh, respectively; Amazon Bookstore in Minneapolis, Plains Woman Bookstore in Iowa City, and Jane Addams and Women and Children First in Chicago). A Room of One's Own celebrated its sixth anniversary this past January. It was founded by a group of five women who brought a variety of talents and skills to the business, although only one had worked in a bookstore previously. They believed that there was a need for a woman-oriented bookstore in Madison and that Madison had a sufficiently active feminist community to support such a venture. In fact, the community showed its support before the store ever opened, by loaning and donating the capital needed to open. Business and inventory have grown steadily each year since. The bookstore is owned and operated as a worker's collective and all major decisions about the business are made by the seven staff-owners. Day to day decisions are delegated to the group-appointed manager.

A Room of One's Own is more than just a bookstore. As an integral part of the women's community, it plays an important role as an information and referral center for community events and services. It has provided books for sale at conferences on women's issues around the state in areas where feminist books are not readily available, and it handles mail orders from all over the country. Since its opening, A Room of One's Own has carried textbooks for Women's

Studies and related courses at the University of Wisconsin and UW-Extension. The bookstore provides a reading area with book reviews and resource materials, sells tickets for women's concerts, collects books for distribution to women's shelters and prisons, donates books for community fundraising events, provides gallery space for women artists, sponsors women's basketball and softball teams, offers a special discount to non-profit women's groups, and donates a portion of t-shirt and poster sales to the ERA and Women's Medical Fund. From time to time it has also hosted receptions and autographings for such authors as Mary Daly (Gyn/ecology), Flo Frankel (Whatever Happened to Cinderella), and Camille Yarbrough (Cornrows). It also promotes exposure to women's music by carrying and playing woman-produced records at the store.

A Room of One's Own specializes in books by, for, and about women. Besides fiction and poetry, it stocks a large selection of books on feminist theory, history of women, lesbian literature, parenting, work, violence against women and children, non-sexist children's books, books emphasizing the changing roles of men, and a selection of gay men's literature. It carries feminist press and small press titles and feminist journals, newspapers, and reviewing media from around the country. Like most feminist bookstores, A Room of One's Own relied heavily on Women in Distribution (WIND) for many of the small feminist press titles. Since WIND's closing two years ago, other small press distributors (notably Bookpeople in California, Crossing Press in New York, and Carrier Pigeon in Massachusetts) have picked up some, but by no means all, of these presses. Continuing to carry many of these titles now means many direct orders to small presses, rather than one order with WIND. Some titles from small presses are now ordered infrequently, if at all, where the necessary minimum order from that press may be too high to expect to sell over a reasonable period of time, or where the press may only have one or two titles of interest to our customers.

With regard to the larger publishing firms, A Room of One's Own suffers from many of the problems experienced by most independent booksellers; notably those of low discounts and spiraling shipping costs (which the bookstores, and not the publishers, absorb). Recent policy changes being adopted by many publishers include higher discounts, but larger penalties on returns of unsold books (or, for some publishers, no returns at all). The new changes generally should benefit small bookstores, where buyers know their customers' reading tastes and can judge fairly accurately what titles and quantities will sell at their stores. Problems with the new policies will occur to some extent with new releases (booksellers will be less willing to take chances on unseen new titles) and to a much larger extent with coursebooks, where large returns frequently occur, due to the unpredictability of actual class enrollments. A Room of One's Own uses some jobbers (notably Baker and Taylor), but for the most part orders directly from the larger publishers. With the exception of one publishing firm, all the major publishers extended credit to A Room of One's Own early in its history. We are visited regularly by publisher representatives from all the major publishers, although only those representatives who are themselves feminists seem to have much understanding of our philosophy or clientele. Other representatives often have little concept of appropriate titles and try to push books like 50 Ways to Flatten Your Stomach.

Libraries frequently purchase books and records for their women's studies collections from us. A Room of One's Own regularly handles purchase orders from public and university libraries, vocational and public schools, and women's centers and organizations around the state. Some publishers, however, such as Arno or Scarecrow Press, for example, which mainly publish reprints or bibliographies, primarily sell to libraries and offer little or no discount to bookstores. While these titles can be special-ordered if requested, librarians should bear in mind that we may have to raise the price of the book just to cover postage costs and break even! With publishers such as Arno or Scarecrow, therefore, a library would do better to order through its own acquisitions department rather than through a bookstore. We are happy to do special orders on titles we do not ordinarily stock. We do ask for a purchase order or small deposit on all special orders.

Plans for the future at A Room of One's Own include expanding mail order services by bringing out topical booklists or newsletters at quarterly or bi-monthly intervals. One obstacle to this endeavor is the incredible speed with which book prices increase and titles go out of print, making booklists obsolete almost as soon as they are printed. With the recent tax ruling which denies publishers depreciation allowances on warehouse stock, we anticipate that some titles will go out of print even more rapidly in the future. Other plans for A Room of One's Own include expanding certain sections of the bookstore and expanding non-book items in the store. Non-book items (feminist posters, postcards, t-shirts, bumper stickers, etc.) typically carry a larger discount and are needed to help support the book portion of the business. Although the store's rate of growth is still above the publishing industry's figures for inflation, indications are that our rate of growth is slowing due to the general state of the economy. Development of a more sophisticated system of inventory control will be crucial to regulating stock according to peak and slack periods during the year.

A Room of One's Own appreciates suggestions from customers on new titles we might carry and feedback on books which customers have read. Constructive criticism and suggestions for improving services are always welcome.

(A Room of One's Own Bookstore is located at 317 West Johnson Street, Madison, Wisconsin, 53703. The telephone number is (608) 257-7888.)

--Rose Katz

[Rose Katz, Assistant Manager at A Room of One's Own, graduated from the University of Wisconsin Library School in 1973. She is an active member of Madison's Lesbian/Feminist Community.]

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S HISTORY ---

WISCONSIN WOMEN: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC CHECKLIST

Mother mends my socks and shirts,
Mother mends my coat,
Mebbe she could mend some laws,
If she had the vote.

--Suffrage Banner
Campaign of 1912

This bibliography about Wisconsin women is the first in a series which will appear in Feminist Collections. The series will include references to books, periodicals, manuscripts, reports, government documents, and nonprint media which cover the history of Wisconsin women. This first checklist is published to commemorate Wisconsin Women's History Week, March 8-14, 1981. Additional copies may be obtained from Linda Parker, Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large.

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Danky, James P., and Eleanor McKay. Women's History: Resources at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Madison: State Historical Society, 1975.

Delgado, Jeanne Hunnicutt. "Nellie Kedzie Jones's Advice to Farm Women: Letters from Wisconsin, 1912-1916." Wisconsin Magazine of History, v.57, no.1 (1973), pp.2-27.

Dexheimer, Florence Chambers. Daughters of the American Revolution: Sketches of Wisconsin Pioneer Women. Fort Atkinson: W.D. Hoard & Sons Co., 1925.

Droste, Jean Rasmussen. Women at Wisconsin. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1968. (Thesis)

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Graves, Lawrence L. The Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Movement, 1848-1920. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1954. (Thesis)

Hass, Paul H. "Sin in Wisconsin: The Teasdale Vice Committee of 1913." Wisconsin Magazine of History, v.49, no.2 (1966), pp.138-151.

- Hinding, Andrea. Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States. 2vols. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1979. (Entries for Wisconsin will be found in v.1, pp.1061-1088. We will describe some of these local holdings in upcoming issues of Feminist Collections.)
- Hoeveler, Diane Long. Milwaukee Women Yesterday. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, 1979.
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- Struna, Nancy, and Mary L. Remley. "Physical Education for Women at the University of Wisconsin, 1863-1913: A Half Century of Progress." Canadian Journal of the History of Sport and Physical Education, v.4, no.1 (1973), pp.8-26.
- Swoboda, Marian J., and Audry J. Roberts, eds. University Women: A Series of Essays. Vol. 1: They Came to Learn, They Came to Teach, They Came to Stay. Vol. 2: Wisconsin Women, Graduate School, and the Professions. Vol. 3: Women Emerge in the Seventies. Madison: Office of Women, University of Wisconsin System, 1980.
- Thoms, Mildred Florence. War Work of Wisconsin Women 1860-1919. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1921. (Thesis)
- Waligorski, Ann Shirley. Social Action and Women: The Experience of Lizzie Black Kander. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1970. (Thesis)

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Madison: Women's Auxiliary, State Historical Society, 1971.

--Compiled by Linda Parker, Women's
Studies Librarian-at-Large for
the University of Wisconsin Sys-
tem, with the assistance of Donna
Vukelich and Carolyn Platt.

PERIODICAL NOTES

As much of the current issue of FC is addressed to the subject of feminist presses and publishing (see "From the Editors" and "Feminist Bookstores in Wisconsin"), I have chosen to focus in this column on Sinister Wisdom's recent special issue on "Lesbian Writing and Publishing." In addition, I bring word of yet another feminist periodical which has ceased publication.

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Sinister Wisdom no.13, Spring 1980: "Lesbian Writing & Publishing." Edited by Beth Hodges. Available from: Box 30541, 3136 R St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68503. Subscriptions: \$9.00.

This is the second special issue on lesbian writing and publishing published by Sinister Wisdom, the first having appeared four years earlier in Fall 1976 (v.1, no.2). Elly Bulkin opens this very full issue with her essay entitled, "Racism and Writing: Some Implications for White Lesbian Critics." Bulkin argues persuasively that white lesbian critics, though alert to most instances of homophobia in writings they critique, are often blind to traces of racism. In the course of this argument, Bulkin offers a careful and detailed reappraisal of Mary Daly's much acclaimed Gyn/Ecology, pointing out Daly's "leveling of difference" between the experiences of different groups of women. Melanie Kaye's "Culture Making: Lesbian Classics" tackles with wit and irony the question of how one might define a lesbian "classic." In "Dark Horse," Linda J. Brown discusses writing and publishing from the perspective of lesbians of color ("dark lesbians" is her preferred term), noting how drastically the conditions of women's lives shape their creative efforts. For example, Brown points out that poetry (as opposed to the novel) may be the preferred form for women who must work full-time jobs--over and above their writing--in order to survive: ". . . there is little or no time to undertake the production and distribution of a long work."

Five important new works of lesbian writing are reviewed in this special issue: Conditions: Five; The Black Women's Issue (reviewed by Ruth Farmer); Mother, Sister, Daughter, Lover by Jan Clausen (Crossing Press, 1980; reviewed by Irene Zahava); Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Joan Gibbs (February 3rd Press; reviewed by Michelle Cliff); The Black Unicorn by Audre Lorde (Norton, 1978; reviewed by Harriet Desmoines); Lesbian Peoples by Monique Wittig and Sande

Zeig (Avon Books, 1979; reviewed by Susanne Relyea); and True to Life Adventure Stories edited by Judy Grahn (Diana Press; reviewed by JR Roberts).

Perhaps the heart of the volume is the section on publishers and printers. Interviews conducted with the women of major lesbian presses--Spinsters, Ink., Persephone Press, Timely Books, Helaine Victoria Press, and Metis Press--make for inspiring reading, yet at the same time provide much nitty-gritty information about the heroic endeavor that feminist publishing is. This section begins with an interview with Charlotte Bunch on women's publishing, in which she states:

I think the real question that has never been answered is do feminists consider the existence of their own presses and publications important enough to subsidize them? Because unless the women's movement does subsidize those, most of them will not go on existing. Most of them are right now subsidized by a small group of people giving volunteer labor and money. Most of the presses survive on the money that comes from people working outside jobs.

Chris Johnson of Metis Press underscored this point in the course of her interview:

Every few months, I get a phone call or letter from somebody who has been referred to us asking for a job. They're asking us for a job when we are volunteers!!

A common theme running through these interviews is the need for all members of the feminist community to become more aware of the realities of women's publishing. For example, more women's studies courses must emphasize feminist press materials over books from the commercial publishers. More feminist writers need to be aware of the constraints that prohibit feminist publishers from offering their writers the kinds of amenities offered by commercial publishers.

A final contribution to this issue (please note that I have not mentioned everything in the volume) is part two of Beth Hodge's interview with Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel of the Lesbian Herstory Archives (P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10001). (Part one appeared in Sinister Wisdom 11, Fall 1979.) Nestle and Edel discuss their commitment to keep the Archives a grass-roots operation, open to all lesbians. Joan Nestle describes this commitment in moving terms:

Our concept is a living grassroots Archives that is open to all its people, the Lesbian people, that creates and supports the people's struggles while it preserves their memories. We cherish the stories and the materials of all women at all stages of their lives, from all political persuasions. One of our principles is giving access without judgment.

This special issue of Sinister Wisdom is a substantial contribution to the continuing discussion within the women's movement about the role of print and pub-

lishing in our communities and what we can do to help our publishers, writers and booksellers survive.

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Branching Out: Canadian Feminist Quarterly. v.1, no.1, March/April 1974-v.VII, no.2, 1980. (Preview issue December 1973). Editor: Sharon Batt. Address: Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8.

After seven years as a major Canadian feminist periodical, Branching Out has ceased publication. Branching Out consistently brought its readers editorials, letters, feature articles, reviews, poetry and fiction in an attractive format. The goodbye letter from the staff which appeared in the final issue serves to underline the concerns raised by Sinister Wisdom with regard to the survival of feminist publishing. They write:

. . . Branching Out has always been published entirely by volunteer staff. We were fortunate to have a full-time unpaid editor. Without that full-time person, Branching Out would never have survived as long as it did. It was our aim to produce a national feminist magazine and we did, the only remaining general interest feminist magazine in Canada.

We always hoped that we would be able to find funds to pay our editor and we believed this to be a realistic expectation. Our financial base consisted of subscriptions, advertising (what we could get), small grants from private foundations and government, donations and membership fees. Despite concerted attempts to raise more money, we have only been able to meet production costs and that just barely.

After six years without salary, our editor is getting thin and she has resigned to seek paid employment. The magazine needs a full-time person. No one else on our staff is able to work full-time without pay, so Branching Out is no longer able to continue. . . .

BOOK REVIEW

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Decade for Women, now past the half-way point, has not met with unqualified success. However, it has served to focus public attention on the position of women world-wide. The United Nations, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies involved in promoting economic development in third world countries have become aware that planned development has generally ignored women. The male supremacist development model followed in many countries has not simply left the position of women unchanged. In some cases the social and economic position of women has actually deteriorated as traditional structures have been disrupted by the process of "modernization." Development agencies, recognizing that a problem exists, have begun to push for the integration of women into the development process.

Most of the literature on women in development which is available in U.S. libraries reflects this point of view. Critical of the past performance of development agencies, it aims at improving their programs to make them more equitable. However, this approach is not unchallenged, particularly in the third world itself. The problem, critics say, is not just that women have been left out of development, but that the entire model of development endorsed by these international agencies is inappropriate. Why make matters worse, they ask, by applying this model to women, too? Instead, the women-in-development debate should provide an opportunity to reassess, restructure, and possibly replace the prevalent model of development.

Unfortunately for librarians and researchers interested in third world women and development, a definitive and balanced bibliography on the subject does not exist. This is not surprising, considering the enormity of the questions involved. The literature covers Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Near East, as well as minority women in Europe and North America. In addition, many important works are government or international documents which are traditionally under-accessible in libraries. Other important items are unpublished, printed in small quantities in the third world, or issued in series which are not indexed or cataloged as separates by most libraries. Under these conditions, bibliographies and resource sharing become very important. Most libraries must rely on the expertise of others who are better equipped to deal with this kind of information. Some recent bibliographies which may be of interest include the following:

Buvinic, Mayra. Women and World Development: An Annotated Bibliography. Washington: Overseas Development Council, 1976. 162p. \$2.50.

This bibliography grew out of the AAAS Seminar on Women in Development sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and held in Mexico City in 1975. It includes annotations for 381 items, mostly published in English in the 1970's. Arrangement is by subject categories such as: General studies; Education and women; Women; Law and politics; etc. These broad areas are further divided geographically. Also included are a list of special journal issues on women in development, a bibliography of bibliographies on women and development, and an author index.

Nilson, Nici. Why Has Development Neglected Rural Women? A Review of the South Asian Literature. Oxford, New York: Pergamon, 1979. 108 p. \$24.00.

This book is Volume 1 of a publisher's series entitled "Women in Development." It includes a 78-page study of rural development in South Asia and its neglect of women. This is followed by an unannotated bibliography of about 300 titles. These titles include monographs and journal articles in English from the 1960's and 70's. Its relatively high price of \$24.00, combined with its limited scope, will make this volume a questionable purchase for most libraries.

Rihani, May. Development as if Women Mattered: An Annotated Bibliography with a Third World Focus. Washington: Overseas Development Council, 1978. 137 p. \$3.00.

Prepared under the auspices of the Secretariat for Women in Development of the New TransCentury Foundation, this bibliography includes 287 entries, mostly for English language items issued in 1976 and 1977. Entries are grouped into subject categories and subarranged geographically. This bibliography is similar to Buvinic's, and there is a small amount of overlap between them.

Sajeski, Eleanor. "Women in Development: An Annotated Bibliography of Available Materials." Washington: Office of Women in Development, Agency for International Development, [1980]. 9 p. Gratis.

This brief bibliography lists about 100 free publications available from USAID's Office of Women in Development. It also includes names and addresses of other institutions in the United States which might serve as sources of information. In spite of the title, entries are annotated briefly or not at all.

Saulniers, Suzanne Smith. Women in the Development Process: A Select Bibliography on Women in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Austin, Texas: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1977. 287 p. \$6.95.

This bibliography is much more extensive than those mentioned above. It includes almost 3,000 unannotated entries for items in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese issued from 1900 through 1976. Arrangement is first by subject then by geographic area. There is no index, but a list of sources consulted is included.

Phillips, Beverly. "Women in Rural Development: A Bibliography." Madison, Wisconsin: Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979. 45 p. \$1.50.

I have left for last this bibliography based on the holdings of the Land Tenure Center (LTC) Library at UW-Madison. Included are about 500 books, published and unpublished research papers, journal articles, and essays in collections. The bibliography is not annotated, and arrangement is strictly geographical. In spite of these shortcomings, it should be of interest to many Wisconsin libraries, since all of the items included are available through the Wisconsin Inter-library Loan Service (WILS). Entries include LTC's call numbers. The LTC Library specializes in collecting fugitive materials from and about third world countries, and items on women in development are given top priority. There have been many additions to the collection since the publication of this bibliography, and inquiries about later materials are also welcomed. If you have any questions about the LTC Library collection, call me at (608) 262-7366, or write to:

Land Tenure Center Library
434 Steenbock Memorial Library
550 Babcock Drive
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI 53706

--Beverly Phillips

[Beverly Phillips has been a librarian at the Land Tenure Center Library since 1978. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois, where she received degrees in Spanish, Hispanic Literature, and Library Science. Before coming to

LTC she worked in the Geology Library and in Latin American Acquisitions at the University of Illinois, and in a medical library in Jackson, Tennessee. Her most recent project was a training program conducted for two librarians from the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform.]

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WOMEN'S LIVES, WOMEN'S WORK

Nancy Hoffman and Florence Howe, eds. Women Working: An Anthology of Stories and Poems. Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979. 304p. pap., \$5.95, ISBN 0-912670-57-6.

Alice Kessler-Harris. Women Have Always Worked: An Historical Overview. Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. 208p. \$14.95, ISBN 0-912670-86-X; pap., \$5.95, ISBN 0-912670-67-3.

Joan Jensen. With These Hands: Women Working on the Land. Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. 336p. \$17.95, ISBN 0-912670-90-8; pap., ISBN 0-912670-71-1.

These are three books in a series called Women's Lives, Women's Work, prepared by The Feminist Press for classroom use. Discouraged by corporate sluggishness in meeting demands for textbook revisions, the Press launched an ambitious project to make recent scholarship on women available to students. Judging by this sample of a list of twelve titles, the results are exciting.

Women Working is an anthology of imaginative literature dating from 1884. It establishes the importance of work for rendering women's experience in story and poem and provides a treasury of feelings about work. The editors are less interested in surveying literature or defining a social concept of work than in probing what work means in our lives. The oldest story may startle readers most. Sarah Orne Jewett's "Tom's Husband" tells of a couple swapping jobs--man at home, woman in business--and explores how much of character and self-respect follows work regardless of sex. Work at home predominates in the collection as it has in women's lives. In Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing," the chore is not described but instead provides occasion for an interior monologue. The ironer reviews another facet of her homework, motherhood. Nikki Giovanni's poem to Aretha Franklin honors the singer's public contribution to black culture most of all. The woman poet, however, imagines, and asserts the importance of, conflicts with mother's work that Franklin must endure. Woman to woman, Giovanni implies, requires that acknowledgement of common private work.

Women Have Always Worked is a social history of work at home, paid work, and good works in the United States. These spheres of woman's activity have received considerable attention in recent scholarship, and Kessler-Harris draws the findings together in a synthesis useful for any course in American or woman's history. The book exemplifies a task faced by historians of women, to reconstruct the narrative of American history into periods of time and categories of experience which best explain when and why women's lives changed. Work is emerging as one of the most useful themes for rendering a coherent narrative. Kessler-Harris differentiates women's work by race and ethnic origin and by shifting variables like social class and region of the country, as well

as by eras. Though responsibility for household work, for instance, was shared by all women, the tasks, tools, and time involved have varied enormously, as this book indicates. With regard to paid work, the book explores opportunities open to women in different periods and also attitudinal shifts toward women as wage-earners. Overall, the author argues that industrialism transformed women's work while leaving intact much that separated men from women, and she leaves readers with the question, whether recent increases in labor force participation will alter sex roles more dramatically than earlier changes did.

With These Hands, a documentary collection with excellent narrative introductions, is the first major work on the history of North American women in agricultural societies and families. Fiction, diaries, letters, oral histories, and observers' reports introduce readers to the details of daily life and to specific individuals performing their work in different settings. Although all three books set high standards for integrating racial and cultural diversity, Jensen's book is most impressive. It opens with Native Americans, closes with young women attracted back to the land in the 1960s, and in between considers Mormons, Asian Americans, Chicanas, and Euro-Americans, whose lives are shaped by demands of the land and by the politics and economics of agriculture in American history.

Each of these books is first-rate scholarship, in addition to bearing the credibility of careful testing in high schools and colleges. They should be brought to the attention of teachers and also put in the path of curious readers.

--Ann D. Gordon
Honorary Fellow, Women's Studies
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Editor's Note: Teaching Guides are available for each of the three books under review here. Ordering information is listed below.

Hoffman and Howe. Women Working: A Teaching Guide. 80p. pap., \$3.50, ISBN 0-912670-63-0.

Kessler-Harris. Women Have Always Worked: A Teaching Guide. 80p. pap., \$3.50, ISBN 0-912670-77-0.

Jensen. With These Hands: A Teaching Guide. 64p. pap., \$3.50, ISBN 0-912670-81-9.

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WESTERN WOMEN: RECONSTRUCTING OUR PAST

John Mack Faragher, Women and Men on the Overland Trail. New York: Yale University Press, 1979. \$17.50, ISBN 0-300-02267-0.

Christiane Fischer, ed., Let Them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West 1849-1900. Hamden, CT: Shoe String, 1977. \$15.00 ISBN 0-208-01645-7; pap., New York: Dutton, 1978. \$5.95, ISBN 0-525-47521-4.

Julie Roy Jeffrey, Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880. New York: Hill & Wang, 1979. \$10.00, ISBN 0-8090-4803-5; pap., \$4.95, ISBN 0-8090-0141-1.

L.L. Lee and Merrill Lewis, eds., Women, Women Writers, and the West. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1979. \$15.00, ISBN 0-87875-146-7.

The Western Writers of America, The Women Who Made the West. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980. \$10.95. ISBN 0-385-15801-7.

Last fall Redbook magazine published an article by Joanna L. Stratton called "Making the Best of Hard, Hard Times" about pioneer Kansas women. The inclusion of this article in a magazine for young women suggests, first of all, that the editors recognize the need to provide women with a usable past--models of women making it in hard times. Secondly, Stratton's article, which drew on some of the 800 reminiscences found in her grandmother's attic, reminds readers that women's history is all around us and that we can participate in the task of reconstructing the images and roles of women by investigating not only our own attics, but also by unwrapping frayed, yellowed manuscripts of poems and stories, taping the tales of our aging relatives and neighbors, and rummaging through the dusty files of local historical societies.

Five books published since 1977 revive portions of our usable past and suggest methods and issues for documenting and analyzing western women's history. The Women Who Made the West includes eighteen biographies of unusual women by women writers who have devoted large portions of their writing careers to researching and writing about western women. As the introduction notes, one purpose of the volume is to counteract the stereotype of the homestead-bound pioneer woman and to demonstrate that women were also doctors, stagecoach drivers, carpenter-architects, newspaper reporters, or horsetraders. A complementary approach is taken by Christiane Fischer in Let Them Speak for Themselves. Here the "ordinary" qualities of California, Nevada, and Arizona women are emphasized--their aspirations, their responses to a different environment, their ways of coping, their successes and failures.

Lee's and Lewis's collection of essays approaches the subject from the literary perspective. Several essays demonstrate that male versions of western women's experiences have been incomplete and occasionally inaccurate; other essays analyze little-known works by Nevada female fiction writers, Carolyn Gordon's Kentucky frontier novels, Virginia Sorensen's Mormon novel, Dorothy Scarborough's Texas prairie work, Gertrude Atherton's California fiction, as well as works by Nebraska writers, Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz.

John Mack Faragher and Julie Roy Jeffrey provide models in methodology. Both approach women's history from a feminist perspective. Faragher's central problem is the reconstruction of the relationships between men and women in marriage in the mid-nineteenth century Midwest through the analysis of 169 narratives of emigrants--females and males--on the overland trail between 1843 and the 1870s. Jeffrey's work covers a similar time period and uses over two hundred women's journals, reminiscences, letters, as well as a number of interviews in her study of women on the agricultural and mining frontiers, Mormon women, and women's participation in organizations on the "urban" frontier.

These five works take us a long way in reconstructing the histories of western women. Yet the stories of many women are still missing. Fischer's volume includes the only account by an Indian woman. The stories of "second wave" immigrant women from northern and eastern Europe are missing. Missing also are the Chicanas of the southwest who have been "making" the west for generations. Ob-

viously the task of reconstructing our past has just begun.

--Carol Fairbanks
Department of English
UW-Eau Claire

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BLACK WOMEN NOVELISTS

Barbara Christian, Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980. \$25.00, ISBN 0-313-20750-X.

Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976, by Barbara Christian, is a welcome addition to the growing bibliography of black women's writings. Christian firmly establishes the existence of a tradition among black women novelists and carefully traces the development of that tradition, opening up new avenues for further investigation in the process. Blending history and criticism, Christian delineates the evolution of the black woman heroine from stereotype to personhood, and the black woman novelist from a writer reacting to negative images of black women characters in American literature to a creator claiming her own space and defining herself.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is the history of the black woman heroine in literature from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Margaret Walker, and the second examines the novels of three contemporary black women: Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker. Zora Neale Hurston, the first black woman writer to break with the middle-class tradition of using fiction to "uplift" the race, provides a bridge between the earlier and the later writers.

Paule Marshall creates characters like a sculpturer, defining specific potentials of protagonists and writer. Her themes are large without sacrifice of individual characters. Her novels reveal that history is a creative and moral process, and that people compose their experiences in their minds as well as in the objective world.

Toni Morrison searches for the beauty of life within its restrictions using characters who look outward as well as inward in their search for continuity in their lives and the world around them. The hallmark of her art is her use of inversion and disorder to demonstrate the effects of destructive limits on the lives of black women.

Alice Walker's novels are like patch-work quilts constructed from the bits and pieces of life which are usually thrown away. Self-discovery and the importance of the past in understanding one's present existence are her main themes.

Barbara Christian's analysis of these works shows how racism and sexism have influenced the reality of black women writers. Earlier black women novelists tried to prove that black women were women in spite of the negative images to the contrary that appeared in much of American literature. Contemporary black women novelists, on the other hand, choose to project self-definitions which

are not always socially uplifting. This is an important book which students and teachers alike will find illuminating, and at times provocative. It is indispensable to any study of black women's fiction.

--Nellie McKay
Assistant Professor, Afro-American
Studies/ Women's Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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WOMEN'S STUDIES MONOGRAPH SERIES

Women's Studies Monograph Series, National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1980. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Allana Elovson. Women's Studies in the Community College (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0010.

Elaine Reuben and Mary Jo Boehm Strauss. Women's Studies Graduates (September 1980). NIE-P-79-0011.

Christine E. Bose and Janet Priest-Jones. The Relationship Between Women's Studies, Career Development, and Vocational Choice (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0012.

Blanche Glassman Hersh. Re-Entry Women Involved in Women's Studies (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0013.

Elizabeth Ness Nelson and Kathryn H. Brooks. Women's Studies as a Catalyst for Faculty Development (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0015.

Florence Howe and Paul Lauter. The Impact of Women's Studies on the Campus and the Disciplines (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0016.

Nancy M. Porter and Margaret T. Eileenchild. The Effectiveness of Women's Studies Teaching (February 1980). NIE-P-79-0017.

(Note: The eighth monograph, Minority Women in Women's Studies, has yet to be completed; it should be available in the late summer of 1981.

As Women's Studies enters its second decade, advocates and critics are assessing its impact on education and society. An essential reference tool for this process is the Women's Studies Monograph Series published by the National Institute of Education (NIE) of the U.S. Department of Education. Commissioned by the NIE in accordance with recommendations presented in Seven Years Later: Women's Studies Programs in 1975 by Florence Howe, the monograph series examines Women's Studies within the context of higher education in the United States.

While Howe's work documented the phenomenal growth of Women's Studies in America, the present series seeks answers to some of the most frequently asked questions: What is the impact of Women's Studies on campuses and disciplines? What do you do with a Women's Studies major? How effective is Women's Studies teaching? How does Women's Studies relate to re-entry women, minority women, or to faculty development?

The reader should not expect all the answers within these works. Women's Studies is presented by the authors as a developing field of interdisciplinary work. The authors are honest in the assessment of the state of research and, in some cases, that means exposing a dearth of research or the inadequacy of the research sample in a given area. In addition to appraisals of the current literature and candid assessments of past research, the monographs contain useful bibliographies and recommendations for the direction of future study.

Each of the authors in this series argues cogently for a national data base on Women's Studies. Informal surveys, impressions, or even their own attempts to survey persons or programs on a national level are viewed by the writers as inadequate for confirming or denying common assumptions about the character and efficacy of Women's Studies. Thousands of professors and students have been involved for the past ten years in an effort to change the curriculum. The assessment of gains and losses, as well as the research essential for the future development of Women's Studies, can no longer do without a nationally reliable base of information.

While waiting for the responses of government and private foundations to this need, historians of educational change, researchers, educators, and administrators are well-served by this early documentation of issues determined as central in the development of Women's Studies in the 70's. The monograph series has turned into an NIE best seller. Up to December 1980 most of the first printing has been exhausted. Copies may be ordered singly or as a series from the Government Printing Office and the ERIC system at cost.

--Rachel I. Skalitzy

[Rachel I. Skalitzy is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at UW-Milwaukee. She is the former Regional Coordinator of the Great Lakes Women's Studies Association. Her publications include articles on Greek, Latin and mediaeval literature.]

FROM THE EDITORS

continued from page one

Why have the big publishers become less receptive to black writers? It is often argued that there is no longer a substantial market for black writing. Audiences, however, can be created, as they are every day through the sophisticated marketing strategies employed by the major publishers. Erroll McDonald, editor at Random House, told Watkins that, in his view, a change in political climate underlies the resistance to black writers:

The economy obviously has something to do with publishers taking a harder look at black books, but the economic slump can be also used as a convenient argument for not publishing certain kinds of material. And it seems obvious that books that are clearly hopeless from a commercial standpoint are being published every day.

Will the current publishing boom in women's studies be just as transient as was the infatuation with black literature in the late 60's and early 70's? One wonders whether the bleak situation now confronting black writers only prefigures the future of women's publishing five to ten years down the line. One thing the recent history of black publishing makes clear is that marginal groups can expect no serious and sustained commitment from the commercial presses to their writing.

According to Watkins, black writers are increasingly falling back on the small presses. He notes that "these small independent publishers may be the salvation of minority fiction." It is ironic--and tragic--that the same hard times that create a more acute need for the small press among writers will send many of these presses into bankruptcy.

Of course, feminist small presses share this same economic vulnerability. It is encouraging, however, to report that our past discussions of feminist small press publishing and distribution in Feminist Collections have elicited very positive response from our readers, indicating that there is tremendous interest in and concern for the well-being of the feminist small press among feminists all across the country. We hope this interchange will grow, and we invite readers to continue sending us their thoughts and experiences with feminist publishing--whether as writers, bookstore workers, publishers, or readers--so that we can continue to share them with our other readers through FC.

With this issue, we are very pleased to initiate a series of articles on feminist bookstores in Wisconsin. Writing about A Room of One's Own in Madison, Rose Katz addresses many of the current concerns of the world of feminist publishing and bookselling. In our next issue, we will publish an annotated list of feminist reviewing media, an essential supplement to mainstream review publications for anyone seeking consistent information on feminist small press publications. And we are on the lookout for any feminist small press interested in writing an article for FC on feminist publishing in the 80's from the vantage point of the publisher.

¹ Ishmael Reed, novelist, poet and publisher (I. Reed Books, San Francisco), quoted in: Mel Watkins, "Hard Times for Black Writers." New York Times Book Review February 22, 1981, pp.3, 26-27.

² op. cit.

Feminist Collections is a publication of the Office of the Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large for the University of Wisconsin System, 112A Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. Phone (608) 263-5754. Editors: Linda Parker, Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large; Catherine Loeb, Women's Studies Specialist. Feminist Collections is published quarterly--Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer--and is available to individuals and institutions at no charge. Unsolicited articles or reviews are welcome.

The University of Wisconsin System



WOMEN'S STUDIES LIBRARIAN-AT-LARGE

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WOMEN'S STUDIES IN WISCONSIN: WHO'S WHO & WHERE Second edition, 1981

The Office of the Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large is currently compiling an updated and expanded edition of the directory, Women's Studies in Wisconsin: Who's Who & Where. This edition, like the 1980 edition, will include faculty, librarians, administrators, researchers, community activists and others with an active interest in the field of women's studies. If you would like to be included in the second edition of Women's Studies in Wisconsin, please fill out the following brief questionnaire. Persons who were included in the 1980 directory should also complete the questionnaire, as the new edition will be compiled from current questionnaire returns only. Thank you.

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_____ zip: _____ Home phone: () _____

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Work address: _____

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Community (volunteer) work related to feminism/women's studies: _____

Current research or subject(s) of particular interest in women's studies: _____

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Would you like to receive our office's mailings (if you don't receive them now)? Yes _____ No _____

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