Article Title: A Reader’s Guide to Women in Nebraska History Magazine, 1918-1977


Date: 7/13/2011

Article Summary: This article is a bibliographical guide to articles appearing in Nebraska History on a variety of topics. The sections include family life, hardships and dangers of the frontier, social life, intellectual and cultural life, women’s organizations, politics, law, science and medicine, education, Native American women, religion, garrison life, war, and biographies, autobiographies, reminiscences.
A READER'S GUIDE TO WOMEN
IN NEBRASKA HISTORY MAGAZINE, 1918-1977

By Jane Renner Hood

The recent interest in the history of women has generally illuminated, but occasionally obscured, the fact that in the past women's existence had often appeared in print. While it is true that the history of women has only recently received reluctant acceptance as a legitimate area of inquiry, it does not follow that woman's historic role has always gone unrecorded. But, consistent with the recent origin of the history of women as a recognized focus of research, is the reality that much information about women has been included—even hidden away—within studies detailing other historical developments.

Retrieving this material from obscurity, as well as keeping abreast of the voluminous amount of research currently being published, has prompted recent bibliographical guides. These range from the general surveys completed by Gerda Lerner and Joan Kelly-Gadol to the more narrowly defined ones documenting materials to be found within specific historical journals. This bibliography falls in the latter category.

First as a frontier territory and then as an agricultural state, Nebraska has provided women with opportunities to play a full and productive role in its development. Their activities have surfaced frequently in issues of Nebraska History. The nature of these records requires some explanation, however.

First, the sort of information included in Nebraska History has changed during the more-than-half-century of its publication. The early volumes seldom contained article-length essays on women. Information was usually in the form of a brief notice. But as the Journal grew more sophisticated, the articles tended to adhere more closely to the standards found in scholarly periodicals. So it must be remembered that titles referred to in the early years (the inaugural issue appeared in 1918) may be no more than a brief note submitted by an interested reader.

Second, many of the articles were written by nonprofessionals; for example, the prize-winning Native Sons and Daughters
essays often provided biographies of women or studies of their particular activities. To emphasize that many of the articles were contributed by non-scholars does not compromise their worth. Indeed, such sources are often reliable and occasionally the only means available to reconstruct woman's past. But the authors were not necessarily professional historians.

The last explanatory note deals with the editor's problems of deciding which articles to include and how to organize those chosen. Although many articles mentioned women—names of wives or mothers, for example—such brief references did not warrant their inclusion. Those with more substantive information were divided into sixteen distinct categories. Occasionally an article contained information on more than one topic. Biographies, autobiographies, and reminiscences, for example, would often record experiences documenting family life, social life, or pioneer hardships. In such cases the section preface has simply indicated that the entries in another general area are likely to contain information on the given subject. In other less obvious cases, they have been cross-indexed individually.

FAMILY LIFE AND DOMESTIC DETAIL

Observations about day-to-day living fill the pages of *Nebraska History*. This is particularly true for those articles dealing with pioneer Nebraska. The reader should also consult titles listed under Biography, Hardships, and Social Life for additional references to women and family life.

DeBell, Ella J. “The Bruner and Neligh Families.” XVI (April-June, 1935), 82-92. Domestic information about two families related through friendship and marriage who settled in Omaha and West Point in the 1850's and 1860's.


Harmer, Marie U. and Sellers, James L. “Charles H. Van Wyck—Soldier and Statesman, Part II.” XII (July-September, 1929), 190-246. Kate Van Wyck maintained a high social standard, complete with two maids and a butler, in her Nebraska City home in the 1870's and 1880's.


HARDSHIPS AND DANGERS OF THE FRONTIER

Although most women throughout recorded time could have found much of their personal history defined within the domestic sphere, the woman of the frontier experienced unique hazards in her day-to-day existence. Indian attack was the most terrifying of dangers and undoubtedly the most exaggerated. Nevertheless, the fear of potential attack added to the host of other problems facing the pioneer woman.


“Capture of Mrs. Frank Morton by the Indians,” XVIII (April-June, 1937), 146. Brief note on the Plum Creek Massacre from an August 12, 1937, letter to Nebraska State Historical Society from Mrs. Lulu L. Purinton, Grand Junction, Iowa.


Franklin, John F. “The Fort Kearney Block House Address,” XIX (September, 1938), 78-83. Tribute to trials and bravery of pioneer women.


READER’S GUIDE


Nuemberger, Ruth K. “Letters From Pioneer Nebraska by Edward Randolph Harden.” XXVII (January-March, 1946), 18-46. Harden’s attempt to persuade wife to follow him to Nebraska by diminishing the dangers assumed common to the territory.


Robinson, Harvey S. “A School Child in the Blizzard of ‘88.” XXIII (July-September, 1942), 205-209.


“Site of Plum Creek Massacre.” V (July-September, 1922), 47-48. Adventures of women settlers in Indian wars.

SOCIAL LIFE

Despite the perils and hard work of frontier life, women who settled in Nebraska did not face a life of unending fear and drudgery. The social life of the pioneers was reported in diaries, letters, and journals, and thus made its way onto the pages of Nebraska History.


Fite, Gilbert C. “Flight from the Farm,” XL (September, 1959), 159-176. Social life of pioneers as well as the hard life for women that resulted from the farmer putting all of his capital back into the farm.

Hicks, John D. “Then (1891) and Now (1966): Some Comparisons and Contrasts.” XLVII (June, 1966), 139-155. Women’s fashions.


INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

The line separating strictly social activities from attempts to bring the “finer things” to the frontier is often difficult to draw. Music, lectures, and stage productions all satisfied a need for social activity; but they also evidenced the Nebraska settler’s desire to re-establish the cultural advantages she had left behind in the more settled east. This section also includes articles detailing the artistic contributions made by such Nebraskans as Willa Cather, Bess Streeter Aldrich, and Mari Sandoz.
"A Nebraska History Study Class." XIV (October-December, 1933), 241-242.
Organization in 1930 of women interested in Nebraska history.
Pioneers’ attempt to re-establish cultural life on the frontier through clubs, societies, and newspapers.
Women and the press including Willa Cather and Bess Streeter Aldrich.
Glimpses of women interested in bringing culture to Brownville throughout its history.
Brown, Madeleine Packard. "The Pioneers," XXII (July-September, 1941), 243-266.
Illustrations by Cecil Rose O’Neill creator of “The Kewpies.”
Burrows’ interview of Nellie Bly for Kearney Enterprise.
Brief biography of deaf-blind musician born in Lincoln in 1895.
Women performers, including programs sponsored by Women’s Suffrage Association and temperance groups.
Harper, Robert D. "Theatrical Entertainment in Early Omaha," XXXVI (June, 1955), 93-104.
Traveling troupes including women performers in the 1850’s and 1860’s.
Amelia Bloomer’s appearance in 1858 in the Association’s lecture series.
Brief biography of French-Winnebago artist that includes photos of many of her works.
Women performers including lecturer, Victoria Woodhull.
Seymour, Margaret R. "The University of Nebraska School of Music, 1876-1894." LIV (Fall, 1973), 399-418.
Women faculty members in early years.
Turner, Martha. "Women Editors of Nebraska Newspapers." IV (July-September, 1921), 40.
Women exhibitors in a 1933 CWA art project.

BESS STREETER ALDRICH
Emphasis on her Hollywood activities.

WILLA CATHER
Cather’s memories of traveling performers in Red Cloud in the 1880’s.
READER'S GUIDE

MARI SANDOZ

“Some of the Tall Tales of Nebraska.” XXIV (January-March, 1943), 57-58. Mari Sandoz’ collection of remembered tales sent to Louise Pound in response to Pound’s request for Nebraska “strong men” stories.


“Nebraska Vignettes.” XX (July-September, 1939), 157. Brief tribute to Nebraska.

The Sheridan County Region—Origin and Early History.” XVI (October-December, 1935), 241-249. Tribute to Mari Sandoz.

WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS

Again, the distinction drawn between women’s organizations, social activities, and reform movements is sometimes not distinct to the historian trying to bring some workable order to a large amount of interrelated material. Essentially, the articles included in this section deal with women’s organizations whose purpose was more than simply social, and yet were not part of the great reform movements such as temperance or suffrage.

Alfers, Kenneth G. “Triumph of the West: The Trans-Mississippi Exposition.” LIII (Fall, 1972), 312-329. Woman’s committee in charge of entertainment and the philosophical and scientific subjects for the Omaha exposition in 1898; women of the Salvation Army deface nude statues.

“A Bit of Thurston County History.” I (March, 1918), 3. Organization of the Farmers’ Wives Society in 1885.


WOMEN AND REFORM

The nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed women’s involvement in a variety of reform movements. The women of Nebraska were no exception to this trend, and the focus of their attention ranged from the plight of the Indian to vice in the city. Related to the latter concern was the “social problem.” The study of prostitution has claimed much recent interest, and thus
a separate category has been included in this section for articles dealing with that topic.

Costin, Ula B. "Grace Abbot of Nebraska." LVI (Summer, 1975), 165-191. Brief biography of the reformer.

Fitchie, S. D. "The Fight for Prohibition in Nebraska." VI (July-September, 1923), 81-88. Woman's Christian Temperance Union and other women's activities.


Lawson, Michael L. "Omaha, A City in Ferment: Summer of 1919," LVIII (Fall, 1977), 395-417. The formation of the National Mother's Organization to repeal daylight savings time, unionization efforts, and other political activity during a "time of restless transition."


Rickard, Louise E. "The Politics of Reform in Omaha, 1918-1921." LIII (Winter, 1972), 419-445. Opposition of immigrants to south Omaha settlement house. Information on woman's detention hospital, institution to which women with venereal disease were committed.

PROSTITUTION


WOMEN AND POLITICS
Although historians traditionally have included woman suffrage within the general topic of reform activity, it can be seen just as easily as the most important political achievement of American women. Thus, those articles detailing the struggle of Nebraska women for political rights are considered here.

Bakken, Douglas A., ed. "Luna Kellie and the Farmers' Alliance," L (Summer, 1969), 185-205. Kellie's reminiscence describes her important role within the Alliance and her subsequent disillusionment with the movement.


Anti-imperialism stance taken by Federation of Women’s Clubs regarding the independence of the Philippines.

Paul, Justus F. "Nebraska’s Record in the Senate: Nine Senators in Three Years." XLVII (December, 1966), 399-402. Nebraska’s two women senators, Eva Bowring and Hazel Abel.

Rulley, William D. "The Loup City Riot of 1934: Main Street vs. the ‘Far-Off’ Left." XLVII (September, 1966), 295-327. Mother Ella Reeve Bloor’s support for the riot and the unsuccessful strike of the girl poultry workers.


WOMAN SUFFRAGE


M. "The Old Settler’s View." IV (January-March, 1921), 8. Poem commending woman’s role in settling Nebraska and advocating her right to vote.


WOMEN AND THE LAW
Although the frontier often has been described as a lawless land, pioneer women came into frequent contact with the law, particularly as land holders, occasionally as violators or practitioners of it.


Coletta, Paolo E. "William Jennings Bryan’s First Nebraska Years." XXXIII (June, 1952), 71-94. Information about Bryan’s wife, Mary Baird Bryan, a lawyer.

Dick, Everett N. "Free Homes for the Millions." XLII (December, 1962), 211-227. Donation Land Law of 1850 encouraged settlers to take child brides in order to claim a second half-section in their wives’ names.

Hicks, John D. "The Third American Revolution," XXXVI (December, 1955), 227-245. Concludes that as of 1955, "equality between the sexes has arrived."
"Judge Gaslin Stories." IV (July-September, 1921). 44-45. Series of anecdotes about Judge Gaslin, including one indicating his prejudice against women.


SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

Although the fields of science and medicine traditionally have been male professions, the occasional female practitioner surfaced in the pages of Nebraska History. Furthermore, rugged frontier conditions often dictated home medical care by the pioneer woman.


"Dr. Hetty K. Painter," XXIII (January-March, 1942), 72. Photograph and brief story of Hetty Painter, who served as a nurse and doctor for Union cause in the Civil War. (Article is partially in error. Mrs. Painter was no relation to John Brown and it is doubtful that she served as a spy. Editor, Nebraska History.)

"Dr. Georgia Arbuckle Fix," XVIII (April-June, 1937), 103. Brief note on first pioneer women doctor in western Nebraska during the 1880's.


Roosa, Alma Carlson. "Homesteading in the 1880's; the Anderson-Carlson Families of Cherry County," LVIII (Fall, 1977), 371-394. The author's mother was a practical nurse on the frontier; an early woman doctor in Cherry County is also mentioned.


WOMEN AND EDUCATION

A school marked the advance of civilization on the frontier, and it often remained the real focus of many small communities. Because education was one profession considered proper for women, and because of the nostalgic image of the pioneer schoolmarm, Nebraska History contains numerous articles relating to women and education.


Cutler, Anne Bemis. "The First School at Sutton." XXIII (July-September, 1942), 210-218. School days in the 1880's.

Dudley, Richard E. "Nebraska Public School Education, 1890-1910," LIV (Spring, 1973), 65-90. Information about school teachers, the majority of whom were women; disparity in male/female salaries; women school board members.

Fuller, Rosalie Trail. "A Nebraska High School Teacher in the 1890's: The Letters of Sadie B. Smith." LVIII (Summer, 1977), 447-473. Letters of a Nebraska high school teacher from the 1880's.

Hicks, John D. "My Nine Years at the University of Nebraska." XLVI (March, 1965), 1-27. Observations on southern co-eds in the 1920's; women students at Nebraska more favorably described.


Mears, Louise W. "Miss Eliza Morgan — A Short Biography." XVIII (April-June, 1937), 133-135. Morgan was a teacher and preceptress at Peru State Normal School from 1872 to 1898.


Seymour, Margaret R. "The University of Nebraska School of Music, 1876-1894." LIV (Fall, 1973), 399-418. Women faculty members in early years.

Siampos, Helen. "Early Education in Nebraska." XXIX (June, 1948), 113-133. Female teachers and women's colleges and schools mentioned in this history of education from 1822 origins of the Fort Atkinson school to the founding of Nebraska colleges.

Wilke, Phyllis Kay, "Physical Education for Women at Nebraska University, 1879-1923." LVI (Summer, 1975), 193-220.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN (INDIAN)

The Native American woman's history suffers from the same problem that much of woman's history in general faces: her story has been told by others. Those others who have observed her have been chiefly white males, and their observations have ranged from the sympathetic to the scurrilous.

Anderson, Harry H. "Indian Peace-Talkers and the Conclusion of the Sioux War of 1876." XLIV (December, 1963), 233-254. Role of Cheyenne, Sweet Taste Woman, as go-between in Sioux war.

… "The Letters of Peter Wilson, First Resident Agent Among the Teton Sioux, XLII (December, 1961), 237-264.


Blaine, Garland James and Martha Royce. “Pa-Re-Su A-Ri-Ra-Ke: The Hunters that were Massacred.” LVIII (Fall, 1977), 343-358. Reports on Massacre Canyon by Pawnee women survivors.

“Council at Sites of Surround.” XV (October-December, 1934), 279-287. Testimony of Susie Kills Above, Red Cloud’s daughter, at meeting between Oglala Sioux and State Historical Society in 1933.


“The Floral Design in Bead Work,” XXI (April-June, 1940), 113. Includes information on Sally Twist, mixed-blood woman.


“Massacre Canyon: The Last Nebraska Battlefield of the Sioux-Pawnee War.” IV (October-December, 1921), 53-60. Scattered discussion of Pawnee women during 1873 massacre.


Mattison, Ray H. “Indian Missions and Missionaries on the Upper Missouri to 1900.” XXXVIII (June, 1957), 127-154. Education of Indian children, including domestic education for girls.

———. “The Indian Reservation System on the Upper Missouri, 1865-1890,” XXXVI (September, 1955), 141-174. Information regarding education of Indian women as well as the criminal offenses committed against them and their general deprivation.


“New Chapter in Nebraska History.” VI (January-March, 1923), 1-40. Missouri Indian woman who went as a delegate to France in 1725.


“Notes on the Weeping Water.” VI (April-June, 1923), 49-68. Legend explaining the origins of Weeping Water river.

“Ponca Publicity.” XXIII (April-June, 1942), 139-141. Brief tribute to Susette LaFlesche (Bright Eyes).


“Quakers and Nebraska Indians in 1869,” VII (April-June, 1924), 59-61. Excerpts from report of Quaker delegation on Nebraska Indians. For full report, see next entry.


Wedel, Waldo R. “Preliminary Notes on the Archaeology of Medicine Southwestern Nebraska.” XIV (July-September, 1933), 145-165. Excavation of a “squaw cooler,” summer work area for women.

WOMEN AND RELIGION

By far the most material on women in religious groups deals with Mormon women. Other scattered observations about the importance of a church to the pioneer woman can be found in the section dealing with social life. Those articles dealing with the religious experience of Native American women have been included in the above section.

Baldwin, Orval E. “A Mormon Bride in the Great Migration.” LVIII (Spring, 1977), 53-71. The story of Olive Harriet Otto, a gentile who married a Mormon, illustrates her sorrow at leaving her family to follow her new husband to Utah in 1852.


WOMEN AND GARRISON LIFE

Although the life of a woman who found herself at a frontier garrison was similar in many ways to the pioneer experience of the civilian woman, the military wife faced unique circumstances.


**WOMEN AND WAR**

In times of war, even the most objective of institutions often has served patriotic ends. *Nebraska History* was no exception. Although many of the articles that appeared detailing women’s activities during the first and second world wars were intended to rally women to the war effort, they do help to describe Nebraska women’s role during global conflict.

“Base Hospital 49.” II (April-June, 1919), 2-5. Contains list of all Nebraska women who served in the hospital in Allereye, France.

“Evelyn Sharp, Pilot from Ord.” XXV (April-June, 1944), 79-81. The youngest woman to earn a commercial pilot’s license joined the Army Ferry Command during World War II.

Henninger, Guy N. “Manpower and Womanpower for National Defense.” XXIV (July-September, 1943), 154-157. General comments on pioneer women as a means to challenge modern women to go to work in war industries.


**BIOGRAPHIES, AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, AND REMINISCENCES**

The Native Sons and Daughters essay contests were responsible for a number of pioneer biographies in *Nebraska History*. In addition, other autobiographies and reminiscences of pioneer life appear in this category as well as those categories describing domestic and family life, hardships, and social life.


Davis, Kate Winslow. “Neighbor to the Mortons.” LIII (Spring, 1972), 15-34. Reminiscences of life as neighbors and employees of J. Sterling Morton in the 1870’s.


Danker, Donald F. “Columbus, a Territorial Town in the Platte Valley.” XXXIV (December, 1953), 275-288. Rosina Baker, an early business woman in late 1850’s and 1860’s.

Davidson, Levette J. “Folk Lore as a Supplement to Western History.” XXIX (March 1948), 3-15. Sacajawea, Wik-muk, Calamity Jane as well as other lesser-known heroines and “local characters.”

Duncan, Charles T. “Fremont in California: Hero or Mountebank?” XXIX (March, 1948), 33-54. Importance of Fremont’s wife, Jessie.


Robinson, Harry B. and Hulshizer, Nellie B. “Pioneering on the Niobrara at Meadville.” XXXIV (June, 1953), 91-114. Records on the vital role Sade Mead played in her husband’s successful management of a tavern-post office and the ferry in Meadville.


NOTES
