

About the International Women's Periodicals

This collection is from the archives of [Primary Source Microfilm](#) and the original collection was edited by **Kristin H. Gerhard, Associate Professor and Librarian, Iowa State University**.

The complete guide to the *History of Women* microfilm collection from **Primary Source Microfilm** is available at [Primary Source Media's History of Women](#).

The International Women's Periodicals is a tool designed to assist scholars and researchers on all levels achieve faster, easier and more flexible access to a world class resource in women's studies. Search, access and evaluate women's issues through first hand accounts in the most significant periodical database of its kind.

Magazine and journal publications were an important form of communication during the mid 1800s through 1920s. Written primarily for women by both men and women, these periodicals offer a wide array of views about the roles of women in society and business. Suffrage and anti-suffrage writing, domesticity columns, and literary genres from poetry to serialized novels are included in these periodicals.

The International Women's Periodicals offers researchers the opportunity to interpret social, political, economic, and literary aspects of women's history. Advertisements, letters to the editors, articles, stories and poems allow scholars to study the perceptions of the role women play in culture and politics.

Dating from 1786 through 1940, the periodicals gathered on this eCommons Community have been selected for their rarity and value to students and scholars in women's studies, American studies, European studies, advertising, journalism, religion, fashion, and even culinary arts.

In addition, some of the selected periodicals - *Women's Suffrage Journal*, *Woman's Outlook* - served as platforms for various women's organizations and humanitarian groups from the late 1800s and early 1900s. These periodicals are often the only remaining source reflecting the goals and methods of a particular movement. Our aim is to provide students and scholars with a wide range of periodicals, unique in their scope and contents and very different in forms, outlooks, politics and styles. Taken together, they open up a wealth of new research opportunities and will enable women's issues to be seen from a broader, international perspective.

The origins and development of the suffrage movement, both in the United States and in Europe, are strongly represented here. As Martha M. Solomon states, "Understanding the role of periodicals in the agitation for suffrage involves an appreciation for the nature of social movements, an understanding of the sources and particular rhetorical problems of the women's rights movement, and some knowledge of the diversity and extent of those publications."

Varied opinions are expressed, from anti-suffrage - *The Anti-Suffragist*, *The Reply* - to pro-suffrage - *The Woman's Standard*, *Women's Suffrage Journal*. The periodicals are important sources for constructing not only the political, but also the commercial, cultural and religious

lives of the women they sought to reach. *Woman's Missionary Advocate* and *Christian Lady's Magazine* addressed religious issues. *The Women's International Quarterly*, for example, proposed "to help the women of today in their interpretation of Christianity, and in the application of Christian principles for the conditions of their life and work¹."

Literary critics can analyze women's writings, since many of the periodicals include fiction. *The Freewoman*, for example, featured Rebecca West as a contributor.

For historians of advertising and business, this Web site offers the unique ability to search information on products, examine the evolution of companies and compare the development of business in the United States and in Europe. Mary Ellen Zuckerman shows how nineteenth-century women's periodicals shaped the content of ads and the nature of the business: "...The staffs experimented, trying out numerous promotional techniques, varying editorial content and format. Publishers used various ploys to court advertisers, offering better placement within the magazine, cleaner copy design, research into ad effectiveness and product markets, and editorial support of ads. By the end of the era, much of the experimentation had ended; relations between the publications and their advertisers and readers had settled into fixed patterns²."

In that respect, graphic design students will get materials enabling them to study the evolution of designs. Cultural studies scholars interested in consumerism, moreover, will get insights into the construction of gender, how women became a target for consumer goods and how beauty was sold to them. "As the products being advertised shifted from the pervasive, patent medicines of the 1870s and 1880s, to goods targeted specifically at women (soaps, food, clothing), manufacturers turned their attention to women's magazines, journals that efficiently reached this desired customer group³."

Journalists will be able to study the content of these early magazines, the portrayal of women in the media, and identify the individuals working in these periodicals. The periodicals included in this Web site had, for the most part, very marginal circulation but they are emblematic of a certain time in the history of the press. Evoking reform periodicals, Bertha-Monica Stearns, a journalism historian, states: "Most of them lived only a brief period and are totally forgotten today; many of them were wildly absurd; nevertheless, taken together, as a group, they make their little contribution to the ever changing American scene, and supply a chapter of their own in any account of American magazines."

¹ Solomon, Martha M. (ed.). *A Voice of Their Own. The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840-1910*, "The Role of the Suffrage Press in the Woman's Rights Movement", p. 3.

² Zuckerman, Mary Ellen. *A History of Popular Women's magazines in the United States, 1792-1995*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1998, p. 2.

³ *Ibid*, p. 59.

Finally, the periodicals, among them *Everyday Housekeeping*, *Daughters of America*, *The Home-Maker* and *Womanhood* offer a wealth of information on the daily lives of women and their involvement in society - through letters to the editors, ads, recipes, etc. The variety of opinions contributes to the richness of these periodicals. As Zuckerman explains: "In the magazines' early years, editors of necessity published a wide variety of materials, some sent in by readers, some written by the owners, some penned by professional writers. This mix inevitably led to the inclusion of diverse viewpoints, some contradictory⁴."

This contradiction is part of the appeal of the materials presented here. More than a century of the history of women - their social, political and personal growth - is represented in this one-of-a-kind online archive.

This digital format is well-suited to serve the needs of researchers and offers new research opportunities. The full text of every issue of every periodical is keyed for searchability and we offer a digital facsimile of every page. Users can search the entire database of periodicals for any word or phrase. Any search will lead the users to a digital facsimile. Easily accessible digital facsimiles can be downloaded and printed as required, opening up new areas of scholarship.

Our collection consists of

- 45 Journals
- 392 Volumes
- 3,674 Issues
- 111,071 Pages

Missing Issues

L'Action Féminine (Reel 237) Month unknown 1910 (Volume 1, Issue 9). Month unknown 1914 (Volume 6, Issue 35). Month unknown 1915 (Volume 7, Issue 38). Month unknown 1915 (Volume 7, Issue 39).

The Christian Lady's Magazine (Reel 29) December 1838 (Volume 10, Issue 6 is missing pages 497-512). January 1844-June 1844 (Volume 21).

Daughters of America (Reel 34) [Most issues have loss of print due to tears, stains, etc.] March 1888 (Volume 2, Issue 4). January 1892 (Volume 6, Issue 1). February 1893 (Volume 7, Issue 2). November 1893 (Volume 7, Issue 11). April 1894 (Volume 8, Issue 4).

Everyday Housekeeping (Home Science Magazine) (Reel 58) August 1904 (Volume 21, Issue 4).

Kvennablaðið (Reel 121) November 1912 (Volume 18, Issue 11). [July] 1915 (Volume 21, Issue 7). April 1919 (Volume 25, Issue 4). The issues for 1920 were not available for filming.

⁴ Zuckerman, Mary Ellen. *A History of Popular Women's magazines in the United States, 1792-1995*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1998, p.4.

National American Woman Suffrage Association: Headquarters News Letter (Reel 243) The issues for 1915 were not available for filming. June 1916 (Volume 2, Issue 6).

Progress (Reel 244) April 1903 (Volume 2, Issue 2).

The Temperance Educational Quarterly (Reel 251) July 1917 (Volume 8, Issue 3). October 1917 (Volume 8, Issue 4).

Womanhood (Reel 175) December 1898-November 1899 (Volume 1 through Volume 3, Issue 12).

The Woman's Bulletin (Reel 243) July-December 1912 (Volume 1, Issues 2-6). February 1913 (Volume 1, Issue 8).

Woman's Outlook (Reel 226) January 1920 (Volume 1, Issue 3).

The Woman's Standard (Reel 227) [Most issues have loss of print due to stains, tight binding and close trimming.] January-February 1901 (Volume 13, Issues 11-12). September 1904 (Volume 17, Issue 7). November 1910 (Volume 23, Issue 9). April 1911 (Volume 23, Issue 12). June 1911 (Volume 24, Issue 2). September-October 1911 (Volume 24, Issues 5-6).

Woman's Welfare (Reel 248)

January 1903 (Volume 1, Issue 1). March 1903 (Volume 1, Issue 2). June 1903 (Volume 1, Issue 3).

Woman's Work in Heathen Lands. (Reel 243) October 1887 (Volume [5], Issue 23). April 1888 (Volume [6], Issue 25). January 1889 (Volume [7], Issue 28). July 1890 (Volume [8], Issue 34).

Women and the City's Work (Reel 235)

May 2, 1916 (Volume 1, Issue 26). May 28, 1918 (Volume 3, Issue 35). April 4, 1922 (Volume 7, Issue 27).

Women's Suffrage Journal (Reel 228 and 229)

January-December 1870 (Volume 1). January-May 1871 (Volume 2, Issues 11-15, the first issue we have available is Volume 2, Issue 16, June 1871). February 1872 (Volume 3, Issue 24). April-May, 1873 (Volume 4, Issues 38- 39). October 1873 (Volume 4, Issue 44). January 1874 (Volume 5, Issue 47). March 1874 (Volume 5, Issue 49). January 1876 (Volume 7, Issue 71). August 1876 (Volume 7, Issue 78). November 1876 (Volume 7, Issue 81). February-December 1877 (Volume 8, Issues 84-94). July 1878 (Volume 9, Issue 101). July 1879 (Volume 10, Issue 113). January 1880 (Volume 11, Issue 119). March 1880 (Volume 11, Issue 122). December 1880 (Volume 11, Issue 131). December 1883 (Volume 14, Issue 168). September 1887 (Volume 18, Issue 213). November- December 1889 (Volume 20, Issues 239-240). February 1890 (Volume 21, Issue 242).