Personal Writings By Women to 1900: a Bibliography of American and British Writers

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Luxemburger Gazette from 1871 to 1918, including a list of personal names, of Luxembourgish surnames, and of localities (in Luxembourg and America).

This revised edition of Gonner’s book is surely the best work on Luxembourg emigration to North America, and readers will be grateful that it is updated and available in English. The index volume should be a boon to genealogists. The only other similar work that exists on emigration to the United States from another very small European country is Norbert Jansen’s Nach Amerika, chronicling the story of emigrants from Liechtenstein to North America up to 1976.


REVIEWED BY JUDY NOLTE LENSINK, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

This reference work brings together citations of published personal writings by British and American women published from 1475 to 1900. The entries are drawn predominantly from three sources: the British Museum’s General Catalogue of Printed Books, the National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints, and the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) database. The compilers note, “Personal writing, as we define it here, covers a range of types and genres, from spiritual autobiographies to accounts of lawsuits, from explorations of the African continent to diaries of domestic life in villages. The main criteria are that these works represent women’s accounts of their feelings and pursuits in their own words and that they appeared in printed books” (vii). Thus, while correspondence and a wide range of autobiographical writing are included, biographies are not.

There are almost five thousand citations, including numerous cross-listings of women’s natal, married, and pen names. Each citation gives the title of the work, its publication date, a brief annotation, and the finding aid source. The chronological appendix groups texts in fifty-year categories. Index listings include subject matter (abolitionism to zenanas), geographical location, the author’s public role, and type of writing (captivity narrative, journal, memorial).

The appendix and index allow researchers to find similar writings by women previously listed in disparate reference works. On the other hand, this volume is only an intermediate finding aid, since the locations of the sometimes rare published writings are not included in the citations. If shelved next to the National Union Catalog of Manu-
script Collections and the British Museum reference work, it would be most useful to researchers. The editorial and typographic challenge of listing the myriad alternate names women acquired throughout life (and sometimes chose to obscure their true identities when pursuing the radical act of writing about themselves) is a graphic reminder of the numerous barriers to public authorship that did not deter early women from creating intriguing personal works.


REVIEWED BY MARVIN BERGMAN, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Four books related to Herbert Hoover published in the past couple of years deserve notice in these pages. Three were published by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association; the fourth was written by George H. Nash, who is preparing a definitive, multivolume biography of Hoover for that association.

In American Individualism, first published in 1922, Hoover struggled to define the essence of the American social system and to suggest how it should be reformed in order to be maintained in the face of challenges that threatened to reduce America to the chaos that he had witnessed in Europe during and after the war. He sought a balance between the need to curb the forces such as big business, which threatened equality of opportunity, and forces such as increasing government regulation, which threatened to stifle individual initiative. Twelve years later he renewed his defense, convinced that the activist government of the New Deal which had replaced his careful balanc-