

Women of Library History [at Tumblr]

<http://womenoflibraryhistory.tumblr.com>

Reviewed by Katharine Phenix

From bibliography to blog, typewriter to Tumblr, the work of remembering and celebrating women in librarianship is continuing. Starting with Women's History Month in March 2013, the American Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) Feminist Task Force (FTF) has taken on the task, started by Kathleen Weibel and Kathleen de la Pena McCook almost 40 years ago with their *Role of Women in Librarianship: 1876-1976: The Entry, Advancement and Struggle for Equalization in One Profession* of documenting the significant contributions of women to libraries, librarianship, and the public good.

In February the FTF sent out a call to collaborate and contribute to this project with these words:

Is there a woman in librarianship who was near and dear to you and your library's heart? Who has made history at your library? Perhaps a group of women who helped shape you or your community's interaction with libraries? Maybe even someone whose portrait you pass every day?

Highlight the legacy that you still see alive today and share a piece of your library's history with your patrons and library lovers everywhere in celebration of Women's History Month. The write-up will be perfect for your library's own blog. Its inclusion with the submissions of other libraries to this project will illustrate the breadth of contributions women have made to their communities through libraries.

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Every day throughout the month a new post informed us of another fascinating woman or women who changed history. Although “historical” submissions were encouraged, the FTF recognized that women are making history every day, and noted

While we fully appreciate that there are women who have recently done and/or are currently doing amazing things for libraries, only submissions regarding historic women of libraries will be included at womenoflibraryhistory.tumblr.com. However, if there is interest we would be more than happy to also collect submissions for a companion (sister!) site to highlight and celebrate women MAKING history in libraries!

On March 1, Peggy Sullivan submitted the names of three school librarians, Mary Gaver, Virginia Matthews, and Francis Henne, who stood out as leaders of the Knapp School Libraries Project, which demonstrated the importance of school media centers in education. By March 31st, the blog had linked to the Oxford University Press Tumblr site which was also highlighting women from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for Women’s History Month. On March 22nd it had featured Eileen Hilda Colwell, a children’s librarian who for one thing, fought to get a librarian on the committee to choose the Carnegie medal for outstanding children’s book of the year, and for another, called a meeting in 1937 which led to the Association of Children’s Librarians.

In between those dates, we learned of the WPA-funded Pack Horse Library Project, Nettie Taylor, a WWII Army librarian and later the “guru of Maryland libraries”, and the Everett Women’s Book Club which founded the Everett (WA) public library in 1894. These were submitted by Kristen Hogan, Dr. Joyce Lathem and Lisa Labovitch, respectively.

By March 31st, Katelyn Brown, who, along with Charlotte Gerstein, midwifed and delivered the idea, noted on the FTF Facebook page:

We had a phenomenal response to our call for submissions, so we’ve still got a lot to share. We will be celebrating Women’s History Wednesday for the next several months so that we can post everything we’ve received. (If you haven’t seen your submission on the blog yet, you will!) I’ll be adding the tag “women’s history Wednesday” to all of our Wednesday posts going forward; feel free to join in the fun each week with your own women’s history posts.

Since then another woman has been highlighted every Wednesday, the most recent at this writing is Carol Seajay and the Feminist Bookstore Network, which was submitted by Kristen Hogan, from the University of Texas-Austin.

It is all archived at the Tumblr blog <http://womenoflibraryhistory.tumblr.com> and brought to you by this group:

The Feminist Task Force is proud to bring voice and efforts to the intersection of feminist perspectives with issues related to libraries, librarianship, information services, and ALA. To find out more and get involved, please visit us on any of our websites and virtual spaces:

Discussion list: <http://libr.org/ftf/ftflist.html>

Wiki: <http://ftfinfo.wikispaces.com/>

ALA Connect: <http://connect.ala.org/node/65369>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/121097054767/>

This is 21st century work born from the commitment of the ALA Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) to continue collecting and compiling material on the work of women and their status in the profession.

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