

# Amelia Bloomer Project

## 2008

### Introduction

*Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life, whether the question is who must be in the kitchen or who could be in the White House. Gloria Steinem, "Women Are Never Front-Runners", Op-Ed Piece, The New York Times, January 8, 2008*

*"There's no doubt that women have made progress, but just because we get to vote and have the "right" to work doesn't mean things are peachy keen. Anyone who thinks women have "won," that all is well and good now, should ask why the president of Harvard can say that maybe women are naturally worse at math and then have people actually take him seriously. Or why a teacher can still get fired for being pregnant and unmarried." Jessica Valenti, Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters, p.9.*

In 2007, the United States recognized the 30th anniversary of the National Women's Conference, a celebration of women's history and a call for women to create the future. In addition, we saw the 35th anniversaries of Roe v. Wade and Title IX, and followed closely the Presidential candidacy of a woman. At the same time, restrictions on women's reproductive rights grew into a fight not about women's rights but about pharmacists' religious beliefs. Women still earned 77 cents for every dollar paid to men, and the high school drop out rate for American girls was at an all-time high. Politicians chose to spend billions of dollars subjugating foreign governments while starving social welfare programs at home. Feminism, a belief once woven tightly into the fabric of our "progressive" society, is unraveling at the hands of social and political conservatives. It is in this environment that the 2008 Amelia Bloomer Project honors the authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers who give life to books that encourage readers young and old to push the envelope and challenge what it means to be a woman, regardless of ethnicity or social-economic background.

This year's list includes books challenging the young women of today to take a new look at what it means to be feminist, showcasing who fought for our rights. These books bring to light the stories of women who break boundaries, from civil war doctors and journalists covering WWII to graffiti artists and girls demanding to be accepted for who they are. The 32 books on the 2008 Amelia Bloomer Project list encourage and inspire girls to be smart, brave, and proud.

We are frustrated by the small number of truly powerful, well-written feminist books for young readers, and by the small number of non-white, non-Western characters. We are also dismayed by the dearth of authentic feminist fiction for beginning and middle readers. We challenge publishers to develop thoughtful feminist books that will open the eyes of young readers to the possibility of equality for women. Jyoti says simply, "The battle has just begun."

2008 Amelia Bloomer Project: Jennifer Baltes, committee chair (WI), Amy Cheney, Alameda County Library, Juvenile Hall (CA), Jane Cothron, Lincoln County Library District (OR), Christie Gibrich, Grand Prairie Public Library System (TX), Helma Hawkins, Kansas City Public Library (MO), Brenda Kilmer, Felix Varela Senior High School (FL), Maureen McCoy, Brooklyn Public Library (NY), Beth Olshewsky, San Marino Unified School District (CA), Nel Ward, Central Oregon Coast Children's Book Preview Center (OR). The Amelia Bloomer Project is sponsored by the Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association.

# AMELIA BLOOMER PROJECT

## Recommended Feminist Books for Young Readers 2008

### Beginning Readers

#### Fiction

**Funke, Cornelia.** *Princess Pigsty*. il. by Kerstin Meyer. trans. by Chantal Wright. 2007. unpaginated. Chicken House/Scholastic, \$16.99 (978-0-439-88554-6/ 0-439-88554-X). PreK-2.  
Princess Isabella prefers scrubbing pots and feeding pigs to the boring life of a pampered, protected princess.

**Whelan, Gloria.** *Yatandou*. il. by Peter Sylvada. 2007. 32p. Sleeping Bear, \$17.95 (1-5852-6211-0). Gr. K-2.  
To help the women in her Mali village earn an income, eight-year-old Yatandou sells her beloved goat to help purchase a machine to grind grain.

#### Non-Fiction

**Atkins, Jeannine.** *Anne Hutchinson's Way*. il. by Michael Dooling. 2007. unpaginated. Farrar Strauss Giroux, \$17.00 (978-0-374-30365-5/ 0-374-30365-7). PreK-Gr. 3.  
Susanna tells the story of her mother, Anne Hutchinson, a pioneer for religious freedom who ministered equally to men and women despite social and political opposition.

**Barasch, Lynne.** *Hiromi's Hands*. 2007. unpaginated. Lee & Low Books. \$17.95 (978-1-58430-275-9). K-3.  
Hiromi Suzuki follows her dream and defies tradition to become one of the first female sushi chefs in New York.

**Kay, Verla.** *Rough, Tough Charley*. il. by Adam Gustavson. 2007. unpaginated. Tricycle Press, \$15.95 (978-1-582-46184-8). PreK-Gr. 2.  
Charley Parkhurst concealed her female identity to become a notable stagecoach driver and cast the first vote by a woman in 1868 Wyoming – one year before women there were officially permitted to vote.

**Slade, Suzanne.** *Susan B. Anthony Fighter for Freedom and Equality*. il. by Craig Orback. 2007. 24p. Picture Window Books, \$23.93 (978-1-4048-3104-9/ 1-4048-3104-5). Gr. 1-3.  
Susan B. Anthony fought for equality, including fair pay and opportunity for women.

**Shea, Pegi Deitz.** *Patience Wright: America's First Sculptor and Revolutionary Spy*. il. by Bethanne Andersen. 2007. unpaginated. Henry Holt and Company, \$17.95 (978-0-8050-6770-5/ 0-8050-6770-1). Gr. 1-3.  
While collecting clients in her wax sculpting business in the American Colonies and Great Britain, Patience Wright served as one of the most effective spies in the American Revolution, helping to change the course of battles.

## Middle Readers

### Fiction

**Perkins, Mitali.** *Rickshaw Girl*. il. by Jamie Hogan. 2007. 96 p. Charlesbridge Publishing, \$13.95 (978-1-58089-308-4). Gr. 4-7.

Through artistry and determination, Naima finds a way to earn money and help her family in spite of social strictures on girls in her Bangladeshi village.

**Springer, Nancy.** *The Case of the Left-Handed Lady*. 2007. 233p. Sleuth Philomel/Penguin, \$12.99 (0-399-24517-6). Gr. 5-8.

Enola Holmes relies on her wits and a knack for disguises to continue the search for her mother, evade her brother Sherlock, and locate a kidnapped heiress.

### Non-Fiction

**Batten, Jack.** *Silent in an Evil Time: the Brave War of Edith Cavell*. 2007. 135p. Tundra, \$16.95 (978-0-88776-737-1). Gr. 5-8.

World War I produced many unlikely martyrs, one of them Edith Cavell, a British citizen, nurse, hospital matron and wartime resistance fighter who saved thousands of soldiers.

**Gourley, Catherine.** *War, Women, and the News: How Female Journalists Won the Battle to Cover World War II*. 2007. 198p. Atheneum, \$21.99 (978-0-689-87752-0/ 0-689-87752-8). Gr. 5-8.

This moving and compelling historical account with period photographs and news clippings highlights the life stories of courageous female journalists during World War II.

**Havelin, Kate.** *Victoria Woodhull: Fearless Feminist*. 2007. 112p. Twenty-First Century Books, \$31.93 (978-0-8225-5986-3/ 0-8225-5986-2). Gr. 4-8.

The first woman to run for President of the United States, Victoria Woodhull was a controversial figure—lecturer, con artist, Wall Street broker—breaking society's boundaries of what a woman could be.

**Joinson, Carla.** *Civil War Doctor: the Story of Mary Walker*. 2007. 128 pages. Morgan Reynolds, \$27.95 (1-59935-028-9). Gr. 4-6.

Battlefield doctor Mary Edwards Walker fought for a military commission, fair pay, professional recognition, and a pension for herself, as well as dress reform, suffrage, and equal opportunity for all women.

**Krull, Kathleen.** *Marie Curie*. il. by Boris Kulikov. 2007. 142p. Viking, \$15.99 (978-0-670-05894-5). Gr. 4-6.

This penetrating portrait of a two-time Nobel Prize winner shows her phenomenal contribution to science.

**Reber, Deborah, and Lisa Fyfe.** *In Their Shoes: Extraordinary Women Describe Their Amazing Careers*. 2007. 411p. Simon and Schuster/Simon Pulse, \$12.99 (978-1-4169-2578-1/ 1-4169-2578-3). Gr. 5-8.

From activist to zoologist, Reber profiles the professions of 49 women: what it took for them to get where they are and how they advise women looking to break into the field.

**Woelfle, Gretchen.** Jeannette Rankin: Political Pioneer. 2007. 104 p. Boyds Mills Press/ Calkins Creek, \$18.95 (978-1-59078-437-2/ 1-59078-437-5). Gr. 5-8.

Quotes, photos and reproductions of primary documents chronicle the determination and courage of Jeanette Rankin: first Congresswoman in history, peace activist, suffragist and crusader for social justice.

**Woog, Adam.** Jyotirmayee Mohapatra: Advocate for India's Young Women. 2006. 48p. Kidhaven Press, \$26.00 (0-7377-3611-9). Gr. 4-7.

A young woman from a rural Indian village inspires people around the world when she creates a girl's club that transforms not only the girls involved but also communities throughout India.

## Young Adult

### Fiction

**Brande, Robin.** Evolution, Me, & Other Freaks of Nature. 2007. 268p. Alfred A. Knopf, \$15.99 (978-0-375-84349-5). Gr. 8-12.

Ostracized by her former church, friends, and parents because of her actions, 14 year-old Mena takes a stand for herself and her beliefs.

**Castelluci, Cecil and Jim Rugg.** The Plain Janes. 2007. unpaginated. Minx Books/DC Comics, \$9.99 (978-1-4012-1115-8). Gr. 7-12.

When Jane and her parents relocate to suburbia from Metro City after a terrorist attack, she forms a female guerilla force to bring art to the area, inspiring widespread youth action and stirring controversy over how far people need to go in order to be safe.

**Haddix, Margaret Peterson.** Uprising. 2007. 272p. Simon & Schuster, \$16.99 (978-1-4169-1171-5/ 1-4169-1171-5). Gr. 7-12

Stories of three girls of different ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds demonstrate the solidarity during the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory strike and fire.

**Lott, Tim.** Fearless. 2007. 263p. Candlewick, \$15.99 (978-0-7636-3637-1/ 0-7636-3637-1). Gr. 7-10.

One small, rather dirty girl changes her society when she escapes from the City Community Faith School to tell the truth about the lies and torture meted out to the “mindcrips” and “juvies.”

**Martinez, A. Lee.** A Nameless Witch. 2007. 320p. TOR, \$24.95 (978-0-7653-1868-8/ 0-7653-1868-7). Gr. 9-up.

Born undead and cursed with flawless beauty, the witch finds herself in a race to save the world with only the unlikely allies of a demonic duck, a troll named Gwurm, and a potential lover (or dinner)—one of the legendary white knights.

**Sayres, Meghan Nuttall.** Anahita's Woven Riddle. 2006. Harry N. Abrams, Inc./Amulet Books, \$16.95 (978-0-8109-5481-6/ 0-8109-5481-8). Gr. 7-12

In defiance of tradition, Anahita is determined to choose whom she will marry using a riddle in a rug.

**Tallman, Shirley.** *The Cliff House Strangler*. 2007. 320p. St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.95 (0-312-35756-7). Gr. 10-up.

In nineteenth century San Francisco, attorney Sarah Woolson fights opposition from family and society as she struggles to build her law practice and solve a series of violent murders.

### **Non-Fiction**

**Bollmann, Stefan.** *Women Who Write*. Foreword by Francine Prose. 2007. 152p. Merrell, \$24.95 (978-1-8589-4375-4/ 1-8589-4375-2). Gr. 8-12.

Bollman pairs stunning photographs with glimpses into the lives and work of pioneering women writers to illustrate their struggles and how they moved women toward equality in society.

**Bravo, Ellen.** *Taking on the Big Boys: Or Why Feminism is Good for Families, Business, and the Nation*. 2007. 294 p. Feminist Press, \$15.95 (978-1-55861-545-8). Gr. 10-up.

This blend of both research and personal experiences examines inequality for women in the workplace and shows how to combat these sexist inequalities.

**Chicago, Judy.** *The Dinner Party: from Creation to Preservation*. Photography by Donald Woodman. 2007. 308p. Merrell, \$49.95 (978-1-8589-4370-1/ 1-8589-4370-1). Gr. 10-up.  
Chicago describes the inspiration and history behind her groundbreaking art, *The Dinner Party*, which celebrates the significant contributions of women from prehistory through the women's revolution.

**Enslar, Eve.** *Insecure at Last: Losing It in Our Security Obsessed World*. 2006. 202p. Villard Books, \$21.95 (1-4000-6334-5). Gr. 10-up.

Enslar explores the concepts of security, safety and freedom through her personal experience with women in crisis around the world - from women in Bosnia to Afghanistan, from Ciudad Juarez to U. S. prisons.

**Ganz, Nicholas.** *Graffiti Women: Street Art from Five Continents*. 2006. 222p. Abrams, \$29.95 (0-8109-5747-7). Gr. 10-up.

Over 1000 images from more than 125 prominent female graffiti and street artists who challenge stereotypical perspectives show women succeeding in the male-dominated field.

**Hirsi Ali, Ayaan.** *Infidel*. 2007. 353p. Free Press, \$26.00 (978-0-7432-8968-4). Gr. 10-up.

Hirsi chronicles her life from a strict Islamic fundamentalist childhood of poverty to active participation in a "non-believing" American society as she survives civil wars, genital mutilation and atrocities against women and works toward ending the oppression of Muslim women.

**Levine, Ellen.** *Rachel Carson: a Twentieth Century Life*. 2007. 224p. Viking, \$15.99 (978-0-670-06220-1/ 0-670-06220-1). Gr. 6-9.

Despite overt sexism and overwhelming family responsibilities, Rachel Carson's writing brought the then esoteric science of biology to the attention of the American public, single-handedly birthing the environmental movement.

**Valenti, Jessica.** *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters*. 2007. 271p. Seal Press, \$15.95 (978-1-58005-201-6/ 1-58005-201-0). Gr. 10-up.

With powerful current information and historical context, Valenti motivates young women to identify as feminists, to fight injustice, and redefine our world.