

CONCERNING THIS ISSUE

Most Americans, even those who are not students of our past, can easily name a dozen heroes and villains who contributed to our unusual history. But few historians can accurately describe a similar number of American women. Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., writing in 1922 — two years after nearly a century of work and agitation to gain women's suffrage — noted that "(a)n examination of the standard histories of the United States and of the history textbooks in use in our schools raises the pertinent question whether women have ever made any contributions to American national progress that are worthy of record." What Schlesinger described in 1922 is largely true today.

The pertinent question, really, is not whether there were women worthy of inclusion in history, but why they have been — and continue to be — ignored by historians. This imbalance is gradually being rectified. As Civil Rights of the 1960s produced a wide range of Black history, so too the Feminist Movement of the 1970s makes possible the serious search for forgotten women and the recovery of ignored past. The uneven quality of any such works is inevitable at the outset because of the scarcity of data and the difficulties of overcoming long-standing historical prejudices. The significance of these efforts, however, is the increased availability and volume of materials. It is the fulfillment of the necessary first responsibility to show that there are historically significant figures among, and ideas which were generated from, women.

This issue of *Educational Perspectives* is a step toward sharing the work being done in Hawaii by students at the University of Hawaii, College of Education, in the general area of the historical contributions of women.

Linda Delaney Casey's article raises the question of the use of mythology as historical material. In an oral tradition, such as was Hawaii's, folklore materials may be the only available access point into a culture. For Blacks and women, such consideration may be crucial to the redemption of attitudes and events once thought unimportant or impossible for the culture to record formally.

How to weave together elusive fragments to re-create a very real Black woman educator working in early 19th-century Hawaii, is the focus of Carol Santoki Dodd's work on Betsey Stockton. Acknowledged as a beginning, and presented in order of discovery, Carol's paper offers leads to sources elsewhere.

Access to cultures and materials may also be complicated by physical distance. Penny Pagliaro's Master's degree thesis — from which her contribution here is extracted — required her to search elsewhere for all possible information about the early education of the famous Lucretia Coffin Mott. Penny's correspondence to elicit materials became almost as massive as her notes on Lucretia.

Michael Stepanek, in exploring the educational aspects of a 19th-century American commune — the Oneida Community — found a peculiar and important role for women which does not seem to have occurred in other experimental lifestyles, much less the society-at-large.

Finally, Joy Denman concentrated not on the fiery anarchism for which "Red" Emma Goldman was internationally famous, but on the dilemmas of an anarchist-educator as reflected in her attitude toward children.

If the human need for history is to better understand ourselves and to gain greater insight into the functioning of our own worlds, then the notion of "women with a past" will take on new meaning. The greater impact depends on the changes elected in response by bold men and women. As Leo Tolstoi wrote:

"They emancipate women in universities and in law courts, but continue to regard her as an object of enjoyment. Teach her, as she is taught among us, to regard herself as such and she will always remain an inferior being . . . High schools and universities cannot alter that. It can only be changed by a change in men's outlook on women and women's ways of regarding themselves . . ."

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