

Amelia Bloomer Project 2002
List of Recommended Feminist Books for Youth

A few years ago, a book by Shana Carey introduced nineteenth-century feminist activist Amelia Bloomer to the picture-book crowd. Published in 2000, [YOU FORGOT YOUR SKIRT, AMELIA BLOOMER!](#) uses humor and history to bring the life and work of this pioneering newspaper editor, feminist thinker, public speaker, and suffragist to a new generation.

In the spirit of Amelia Bloomer, the Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association proudly announces the first annual Amelia Bloomer List, a bibliography of appealing feminist books for young readers from birth to 18. Books eligible for this award must have been published in the United States during the 18 months prior to the selection in January of each year.

Set from prehistoric times to the present, these books, both fiction and nonfiction, provide role models of strong, capable, creative women. They introduce children growing up in the South during the Civil Rights Movement, photographers on the cutting edge of their times, young women surviving in today's Afghanistan, and pioneers in the fields of flying and space exploration. Others feature girls who outwit dragons, create petroglyphs to save a tribe, and train to win battles.

From a picture book using bear hair and other earthen materials in its illustrations to a biography written in graphic-novel format, these books show girls and women exploring exciting ways to solve practical dilemmas through the courage of their convictions. All of them spur the imagination and expand the limits of dreams while confronting traditional female stereotypes. And best of all, these books are fun reading!

For more information, please contact Jennifer Baltes, Amelia Bloomer Project facilitator, at jenny_baltes@hotmail.com or (443) 386-5268.

Picture Books

Fiction

Falconer, Ian. *Olivia Saves the Circus.* Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Anne Schwartz, 2001. unp.: illus. (0-689-82954-X).

Imaginative and intrepid, Olivia exudes confidence as she accessorizes her school uniform and embellishes her report about summer vacation.

Lasky, Kathryn; paintings by Rocco Baviera. *First Painter.* DK Ink, 2000. unp.: illus. (0-7894-2578-5).

Exquisite watercolors combined with earth and animal materials capture the birth of the artistic imagination as young Mishoo creates cave paintings to save her prehistoric clan from starvation and drought by catching a spirit.

Lipp, Frederick; illustrated by Ronald Himler. *The Caged Birds of Phnom Penh.* Holiday House, 2001. unp.: illus. (0-8234-1534-1).

A young Cambodian girl longs to buy and free a caged bird to fulfill her wishes for a better life for her family, but first she must learn to select the right bird, the one that chooses freedom instead of returning to its cage.

Littlesugar, Amy; illustrated by Floyd Cooper. *Freedom School, Yes!* Philomel Books, 2001. unp.: illus. (0-399-23006-8).

Burning down the church where Freedom School fighters teach kids and adults about Black heritage during the summer of 1964 doesn't stop its small Southern community—and one young girl named Jolie learns about fear and courage.

Woodson, Jacqueline; illustrations by E. B. Lewis. *The Other Side.* G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001. unp.: illus. (0-399-23116-1).

The fence that separates the black side of town from the white side is less of a barrier when one daring girl climbs to the top, invites the girl on the other side to join her, and finds that they have lots of company.

Nonfiction

Borden, Louise, and Mary Kay Kroeger; illustrated by Teresa Flavin. Fly High! The Story of Bessie Coleman. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2001. unpaginated: illus. (0-689-82457-2).

Determined to be somebody when she grows up, Bessie Coleman leaves her life as a cotton-picker in Texas in the early 1900's to become the first African American to earn a pilot's license.

Brown, Don. A Voice from the Wilderness: The Story of Anna Howard Shaw. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. unpaginated: illus. (0-618-08362-6).

From her childhood hacking out a life in the Michigan wilderness to her graduation from college as a minister and doctor, Anna Howard Shaw lived as a pioneer before she battled for woman suffrage.

Moss, Marissa, illustrated by C. F. Payne. Brave Harriet. Harcourt/Silver Whistle, 2001. unpaginated: illus. (0-15-202380-1).

In the early days of aviation, people said that a woman couldn't fly solo across the English Channel—so Harriet Quimby did it and made history in 1912!

Rockwell, Anne, illustrated by R. Gregory Chase. Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. unpaginated: illus. (0-679-89186-2).

Modern illustrations in the style of African American folk art dramatically illustrate Sojourner Truth's struggle under slavery and her fight for freedom for herself and all African Americans and women.

Wooldridge, Connie Nordhielm; illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers. When Esther Morris Headed West: Women, Wyoming, and the Right to Vote. Holiday House, 2001. unpaginated: illus. (0-8234-1597-X).

Esther Morris, a large woman with ideas to match, finds her place in frontier Wyoming when she gets elected to office after women win the right to vote in the state in 1869.

Intermediate Books

Fiction

Calhoun, Dia. Aria of the Sea. Winslow Press, 2000. 264 p. (1-890817-25-2).

In the kingdom of Windward, 13-year-old Cerinthe Gale dreams of being a dancer, but the anguish of experiences directs her toward her legacy of becoming a healer.

Ellis, Deborah. The Breadwinner. Groundwood, 2001. 170p. (0-88899-419-2).

Eleven-year-old Parvana faces death in the harsh world of Taliban-controlled Kabul as she masquerades each day as a boy to get food for her family.

Girls Got Game: Sports Stories and Poems. Edited by Sue Macy. Henry Holt, 2001. 152 p. (0-8050-6568-7).

Eighteen short stories and poems show girls learning, growing, dreaming, playing—baseball, stickball, football, soccer, basketball—and celebrating their lives through sports.

Joseph, Lynn. The Color of My Words. HarperCollins/Joanna Cotler Books, 2000. 138 p. (0-06-028232-0).

Rosa, a blossoming young writer struggling with oppression in a poor seaside village in the Dominican Republic, learns that her words have the power to transform the world around her in a country where words are feared.

Murphy, Rita. Black Angels. Delacorte, 2001. 163p. (0-385-32776-5).

As the town of Mystic, Georgia prepares for the arrival of the Freedom Riders, 11-year-old Celli Jenkins is torn between the love and loyalty she feels toward Sophie, the Black woman who helps out at her house, and her fear of being cut off from the white community.

Sturtevant, Katherine. At the Sign of the Star. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000. 140p. (0-374-30449-1)

Meg Moore, motherless only child of a bookseller in 17th century London, knows she will marry well—until her father remarries and Meg’s life is thrown into disarray.

Testa, Maria. *Some Kind of Pride*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 117p. (0-385-32782-X).

Ruth DiMarco, named after Babe Ruth, must come to terms with her mother’s heroic death as a firefighter, her upcoming interview with *Sports Illustrated*, her desire to play baseball in the major leagues, and her father’s comment about her incredible talent, “but I can’t help thinking what a shame it is that it’s all wasted on a girl.”

Wiles, Deborah. *Love, Ruby Lavender*. Harcourt/Gulliver Books, 2001. 188p. (0-15-202314-3).

Ruby fears she will have the worst time ever when her adventurous grandmother leaves Halleluia, Mississippi for a trip to Hawaii, but Ruby is resourceful and feisty—and in for some big surprises.

Nonfiction

Appelt, Kathi and Jeanne Cannella Schmitzer. *Down Cut Shin Creek: The Pack Horse Librarians of Kentucky*. HarperCollins, 2001. 58p.: illus. (0-06-029135-4).

The courageous women who delivered library materials to the impoverished people living in hills and hollows of Depression-era Kentucky to carry out the Pack Horse Library Project are shown through photographs and riveting text.

Gerson, Mary-Joan; illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. *Fiesta Femenina: Celebrating Women in Mexican Folktale*. Barefoot Books, 2001. 64 p.: illus. (1-84148-365-6).

Vibrant retellings of eight Mexican folktales, with illustrations inspired by Mayan and Mexican motifs, show strong girls and women beginning with the story of the Hungry Goddess and continuing through the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Jemison, Mae. *Find Where the Wind Goes: Moments from My Life*. Scholastic, 2001. 196 p.: illus. (0-439-13195-2).

Humor, courage, imagination, and a stubborn streak—that’s what it takes to go from a fear of heights to the world’s first woman African American to travel into space.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis; illustrated by Stephen Alcorn. *Let it Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*. Harcourt/Gulliver Books, 2000. 107p.: illus. (0-15-201005-X).

Profiles of ten revolutionary Black women from the 19th and 20th centuries who faced inequality, oppression, prejudice, and fear bring a story about challenges and triumphs of the battle for civil rights.

Savage, Candace. *Born to be a Cowgirl: A Spirited Ride Through the Old West*. Tricycle Press, 2001. 64 p.: illus. (1-58246-020-5).

Vignettes of women ranchers and cowhands combined with period photographs show a rip-roaring romp through their hard, yet adventurous, lives.

Tchana, Katrin; illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. *The Serpent Slayer: And Other Stories of Strong Women*. Little, Brown and Company, 2000. 113p.: illus. (0-316-38701-0).

Bold, dynamic ink and acrylic illustrations highlight eighteen folktales about girls and women who use their courage, wit and intelligence to overcome obstacles.

Young Adult Books

Fiction

Bauer, Joan. *Hope Was Here*. G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2000. 186p. (0-399-23142-0).

Moving with her aunt from the excitement of New York to rural Wisconsin, 16-year-old Hope never expected to find herself involved in the heated arena of small-town politics.

Murphy, Rita. Night Flying. Delacorte, 2000. 129 p. (0-385-32748-X).

Georgia Hansen's rapidly approaching sixteenth birthday is the date that she will use her own wings to fly solo for the first time, just as all the other women in her family do, but first she must navigate the personalities of her family of women, especially her recently returned Aunt Carmen.

Na, An. A Step from Heaven. Front Street, 2000. 156 p. (1-886910-58-8).

After her family emigrates from Korea to the United States, Young Ju must cope with not only the usual changes of growing up and learning about a foreign culture and unfamiliar language, but also with her father's increased verbal and physical violence against her mother and herself.

Naidoo, Beverly. The Other Side of Truth. HarperCollins, 2001. 252 p. (0-06-029628-3).

Smuggled out of Nigeria after their mother's murder, Sade and her younger brother are lost in London, terrified to tell anyone their identities for fear that the information will imperil their father.

Tingle, Rebecca. The Edge on the Sword. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001. 277p.: map. (0-399-23580-9).

In ninth-century Britain, 15-year-old Aethelfaed, daughter of King Alfred of West Saxony, must train for the battles that will come when she is betrothed to King Ethelred of Mercia.

Nonfiction

Bang, Molly. Nobody Particular: One Woman's Fight to Save the Bays. Holt, 2001. 46p.: illus. (0-8050-5396-4)

Diane Wilson, leading the fairly ordinary life of a commercial shrimper, takes on huge corporations that are dumping toxic sludge in the Texas bays and waterways in this biography in the form of a graphic novel.

Lannin, Joanne. A History of Basketball for Girls and Women: From Bloomers to Big Leagues. Lerner Sports, 2000. 144 p.: illus. (0-8225-9863-9).

From its beginnings in the 1890's to the beginning of the WNBA in the 1990's, this historical overview highlights the status and role of women in the society of the United States during those years.

McLean, Jacqueline. Women with Wings. Oliver Press, 2001. 160p.: illus. (1-881508-70-6).

Readers fly with the best in this history of women aviators told through six biographies from throughout the twentieth century.

Sills, Leslie. In Real Life: Six Women Photographers. Holiday House, 2000. 80 p.: illus. (0-8234-1498-1).

This exploration of the lives and work of these women describes how they pushed the limits of photography to create inspiring art.

Things I Have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls. Edited by Betsy Franco, photographs by Nina Nickles. Candlewick Press, 2001. 63p.: illus. (0-7636-1035-6).

This collection of writings by girls from 14 to 19 years of age shows the hope, disillusionment, anger, joy, sadness, and most of all, the strength of young women today.

Turner, Ann. Learning to Swim. Scholastic Press, 2000. 115p. (0-439-15309-3).

Haunting poems juxtapose the beauty and calm of Annie's family vacation at the summerhouse with her horrible secret of sexual abuse by a neighbor. Information on national hotlines for youth is included.

Yentl's Revenge: the Next Wave of Jewish Feminism. Edited by Danya Ruttenberg. Seal Press, 2001. 230 p. (1-58005-057-3).

Some of today's brightest Jewish women writers chronicle their search for ways to be feminist in a traditionally patriarchal culture and religion.