

# *Women and Intellectual History in the Twentieth Century, Part One: Rethinking the “Origins” of US Intellectual History*

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Intellectual history and the history of political thought are, perhaps unsurprisingly, fields preoccupied with their own formation. Since the early twentieth century, when historians in the US academy began using the term “intellectual history,” well over a hundred essays by some of the discipline’s most prominent figures have looked to chart its origins, pick out its distinctive

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traits, and lament its wrong directions.<sup>1</sup> For some, “intellectual history” has been synonymous with a specialized understanding of “the history of ideas”; others have insisted on its relationship with the history of philosophy; for others still it has been a more capacious category, including anything that might count as interesting or impactful intellectual activity.<sup>2</sup> From John Higham, Arthur Lovejoy, and George Boas, to name a few early examples, to Paul Conkin, Felix Gilbert, Robert Darnton, David Hollinger, Donald Kelley, and Dominick LaCapra in the 1970s and 80s to, more recently, Peter Gordon, Anthony Grafton, and Brandon Byrd, there is by now a long tradition of intellectual historians taking stock of the field in order to shape its future.

My own contribution to this genre began when I tried to answer some questions: when did intellectual historians start writing about, and taking seriously, women’s ideas? When did they start thinking about women as agents with creative, significant, or innovative mental lives? Within this, which women received attention, in what contexts, and why? I knew that women were poorly represented in intellectual history as I had been taught it, that the various methodological disputes I was brought up on were motivated by questions about how to write the history of men’s ideas, and that the discipline’s journals overwhelmingly contained essays written about men, by men. I was used to being in a small minority of women at disciplinary events, which would tend to focus on the thought of white European or North American men. Suspecting there was more to the story and hoping to find further leads, I returned to what is, by now, almost a century of historiographical reviews.

Here is what I found. None of the multiple reviews and methodological articles that I consulted included any serious account—if any mention at all—of work that recovers the history of women’s ideas.<sup>3</sup> The tacit implication is either that work on women simply did not exist or that, if it did, it was intellectually insignificant—perhaps too derivative or insufficiently innovative to be included. Indeed, on the basis of these review essays alone,

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<sup>1</sup> Though on Higham’s juniority when he wrote his first review essay see Angus Burgin, “*New Directions, Then and Now*,” in Joel Isaac, James T. Kloppenberg, Michael O’Brien, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, eds., *The Worlds of American Intellectual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 343–64.

<sup>2</sup> For the observation that “the history of ideas” was sometimes used as a synonym for “intellectual history” and sometimes to name Arthur Lovejoy’s approach, see Maurice Mandelbaum, “The History of Ideas, Intellectual History, and the History of Philosophy,” *History and Theory* 5 (1965): 33–66, at 33.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the few essays that have explicitly focused on the “emergence” of women’s intellectual history, see Part Two: “Women and Intellectual History in the Twentieth Century: Activists, Academics, and the Future.”

the obvious inference to draw is that writing the history of women's ideas is a minor and relatively recent phenomenon that emerged cautiously at some point in the 1980s (cautiously enough that, in 1992, the American Studies Association could host a panel on "Discovering Women's Intellectual History").<sup>4</sup> Could it really be true that for most of the last century there were no histories worthy of comment that addressed the ideas and intellectual lives, however construed, of women?

This emergence narrative appears to be supported by how few essays about women were published by the English-language journals most associated with intellectual history. In the first forty years after its foundation in 1940, the *Journal of the History of Ideas* published just five essays squarely on women thinkers: two on Christine de Pizan (1955; 1966), one on Jane Addams (1961), one on Margaret Fuller (1964), and one on Mary Wollstonecraft (1978).<sup>5</sup> There were seven more which centered women's ideas between 1980 and 1990, with essays on Elizabeth Fry (1981), Margaret Cavendish and Mary Astell (1982), de Pizan (1986), two more on Wollstonecraft (1989; 1990), Simone de Beauvoir (1990), and Sibilla Aleramo (1990).<sup>6</sup> The picture is little better when it comes to the early issues of other specialist publications that emerged in the 1980s, such as *The Intellectual History Newsletter*, which became *Modern Intellectual History*.<sup>7</sup> In its first decade,

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<sup>4</sup> "Panel Discussion on 'Discovering Women's Intellectual History' at American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Nov. 5–8, 1992, Costa Mesa, California," in *Intellectual History Newsletter* 15 (1993): 32–47. I discuss this in Part Two.

<sup>5</sup> Four further essays primarily focussed on male thinkers nonetheless included a substantive, though often brief, discussion of women's ideas: Emma Goldman in Charles A. Madison, "Anarchism in the United States," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6, no. 1 (1945): 46–66; Rosa Luxemburg and, fleetingly, E. D. Kuskova in Charles F. Elliott, "Quis Custodiet Sacra? Problems of Marxist Revisionism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28, no. 1 (1967): 71–86; the women of the rational dress movement in D. H. Monro, "Godwin, Oakeshott, and Mrs. Bloomer," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 4 (1974): 611–24; and most briefly Olive Schreiner, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Margaret Fuller in Flavia Alaya, "Victorian Science and the 'Genius' of Woman," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38, no. 2 (1977): 261–80.

<sup>6</sup> The 1990 article on Wollstonecraft pairs her with Malthus and the article on Elizabeth Fry pairs her with Jeremy Bentham. In addition, Ruth Caspar, "'All Shall Be Well': Prototypical Symbols of Hope," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42, no. 1 (1981): 139–50, offers a brief discussion of Julian of Norwich, and in 1984 the journal published a short review essay on recent work on "historical attitudes towards women" which I discuss in Part Two. Between 1940 and 1990 the journal published, by my count, fourteen essays on men's ideas about women, gender, sex, and sexuality.

<sup>7</sup> On women in the *IHN*, see Bill Fine, "Women and Gender in the Intellectual History Newsletter," Society for US Intellectual History Blog, November 15, 2011, <https://s-usih.org/2011/11/women-and-gender-in-intellectual/>. I discuss women's intellectual history in the *IHN* in more detail in Part Two.

1980 to 1990, *History of Political Thought* published four essays on women's ideas, three of which were on Hannah Arendt.<sup>8</sup>

To recover the historiography on women's ideas, one cannot simply look to intellectual history's journals or its field-defining reviews. The view from there—from, as it were, the very center of disciplinary authority—is at best radically partial and at worst seriously obfuscating. The more and more widely I read, the more I came to realize that each of the major re-views of intellectual history and the history of ideas failed to consider, and so to enter into the historiographical record, what is in fact a long and varied history of attempts to historicize the ideas and ideational activities of women. As a result, our understanding of the history of ideas—where it happened, who did it, how, and why—is woefully incomplete. Just because the field's journals were not taking women's ideas, theories, philosophies, arguments, and ideologies as their focus did not mean that no such work was being done. The failure to engage with this work is a crucial, but so far widely unacknowledged, feature of the history of intellectual history.

This research transformed what was meant to be a brief review into a much larger project. The history of historicizing women's ideas ranges across contexts and publications, and has been written by academics, journalists, activists, and archivists. Even across a two-part essay, there is too much material to discuss and too much to say about its methodological, substantive, historiographical, and indeed sociological interest.

Here I give a précis of the more detailed history I will tell elsewhere. I offer it neither as a last word nor as an attempt at a complete “corrective.” My hope, instead, is to offer readers a sense of the alternative ways we might approach the practice of the history of ideas in the twentieth century, and so, in turn, to invite further scrutiny of the historiographical narratives—and their underlying presuppositions—that intellectual historians rely upon across geographical and thematic contexts. This task raises theoretical questions that I cannot answer here—not least about gender, narrative, and power—and I hope that my failure to address these questions is not read as an endorsement of an overly positivistic approach to intellectual history's past.

By its very nature the historiographical review demands forms of generalization that stand in tension with my desire to acknowledge all the work that has gone unnoticed in contexts like this one. Because I am not looking to recover a single figure or a small group of thinkers, nor to focus on one brief period, but instead to suggest that we need to rethink how we approach

<sup>8</sup> The fourth was on Clara Zetkin.

the entire historiography of intellectual history, I cannot offer here the kind of close analysis that such a rethinking, done properly, requires. At times I proceed via assertion; while this is common to the historiographical review, it often obscures as much as it informs. My belief that it is valuable to see certain patterns repeated over several decades has trumped, in this essay, my desire to give each author the attention they are due and to address every possible objection. Those who are intrigued by—or indeed skeptical of—the detailed justifications of my generalizations will, I hope, soon be able to read more.

To tell this story, I look at two kinds of case: authors who wrote about women's ideas and explicitly named their work "intellectual history" and those who did the same but did not. The history of intellectual history is standardly (though, when it comes to men, certainly not exclusively) approached in what we might call a broadly "nominalist" fashion. On this view what matters is how people name themselves and their work. Here, "intellectual historian" is in part a sociological category: picking out individuals and their writing according to things like academic self-identification or departmental position. My point is not that this is an illegitimate exercise. Telling the history of the field requires attention to how people understood and presented themselves, under what titles they were employed, what conferences they attended or associations they joined, and who was taught and published under the sign of "intellectual history." Indeed, as we shall see, there were many cases—far more than is usually assumed—of work on women's ideas that went under that sign. My point, rather, is that the nominalist story is not the full story.

I propose that we also take what I want to call a "substantive" approach to writing the history of intellectual history. This means looking at the various principled criteria offered for what counts as "intellectual history" across contexts and asking whether a piece of contemporary historical writing met those criteria, regardless of whether it operated under the sign of "intellectual history." One of the central arguments of this essay is that whenever intellectual historians have offered criteria for inclusion in their discipline, there has always been work on women that met those criteria. That these works were not taken as significant contributions to the field—and often are still not—suggests either that intellectual historians were either curiously ad hoc in the application of their own principles, or that they were committed to the tacit methodological maxim that intellectual history, properly speaking, concerns only the ideas of men, usually constrained along the lines of race and, to a lesser extent, according to other factors like class and religious belief.

The systematic neglect and marginalization of work done on women's intellectual history by the most powerful, invariably male figures of the discipline makes it true to say that work on women's intellectual history was never central to the "field." Insofar as historiographical reviews are meant to highlight those scholarly interventions that have been maximally "impactful"—that have issued in the most sustained engagement by the widest disciplinary audience—the absence of women's intellectual history from such reviews might appear justified. But why should disciplinary "impact" be the sole or primary criterion for historiographical inclusion? Why not consider the intrinsic interest of scholarship, or its argumentative inventiveness, or indeed its impact outside the disciplinary mainstream? Some of the academic texts on women's ideas that operated under the sign of "intellectual history" received an extraordinarily wide uptake in feminist movement journals despite, in some cases, never being cited in specialist intellectual history journals.<sup>9</sup> To insist on a highly specified notion of "impact" is to guarantee, from the outset, that the scholarship that was largely ignored in the past—because of its authors and subjects—will itself be written out of the discipline's history. In turn, this sort of historiography recreates the very disciplinary distinctions—between inside and outside, center and margin, impactful and irrelevant—that it purports merely to represent.<sup>10</sup>

Four features of these essays are worth noting at the outset. First, due to constraints of space, I focus primarily on US intellectual history and on intellectual history as practiced in US contexts. I do signal some parallels in British and European cases, and I refer to methodological essays which take no explicit geographical focus. This first essay addresses the gendered and racialized exclusions of existing "origin" narratives in US intellectual history, with only passing reference to scholars also working on the intellectual history of women outside the US in the same period. The second essay, again for reasons of space, retains a focus on historical writing produced in the US, though its subjects are no longer exclusively US women. It is more attentive to the institutions and journals that were increasingly connecting scholars in intellectual history internationally and to the existence of broader

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<sup>9</sup> For scrutiny of the notion of impact and how its specification can unjustly privilege some audiences over others in the history of International Relations, see Patricia Owens and Kimberly Hutchins, "Women Thinkers and the Canon of International Thought: Recovery, Rejection, and Reconstitution," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 347–59, at 347.

<sup>10</sup> On the ways that historians construct meaning through exclusions see Joan Wallach Scott, "Introduction," in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018 [1988]), 7; 10.

transatlantic debates about the nature and future of intellectual history. A full consideration of various national historiographical cultures, their inter- sections, and of the global and transnational historiographies of women’s intellectual history, would issue in distinct stories (though not, I would wa- ger, without familiar themes).<sup>11</sup>

Second, I do not consider, or attempt to reconstruct, the much longer practice of writing the history of women’s ideas that goes back well before my starting point in the nineteenth century. As Natalie Zemon Davis noted in 1976, the genre of women’s history has existed, in one form or other, from at least Plutarch.<sup>12</sup> Within that, quite how far back you think the history of women’s intellectual history goes depends in part on how you stipulate the category. Late medieval and early modern Europe, for example, saw many attempts to include women in the history of philosophy and even more at- tempts to exclude them.<sup>13</sup>

Third, my focus here is exclusively on historical work to recover women’s ideas, in histories often but not always written by women. There

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<sup>11</sup> For an account with familiar themes from Latin America, see María Luisa Femenías, “Philosophical Genealogies and Feminism in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,” in Arleen Salles and Elizabeth Millán, eds., *The Role of History in Latin American Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012), 131–57. For recent work on women philosophers in ancient Indian, Chinese, and other traditions beyond the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian, see Katharine R. O’Reilly and Caterina Pellò, eds., *Ancient Women Philosophers: Recovered Ideas and New Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023); Mary Ellen Waithe and Therese Boos Dykeman, eds., *Women Philosophers from Non-Western Traditions: The First Four Thousand Years*, vol. 19, *Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences* (Cham: Springer, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “‘Women’s History’ in Transition: The European Case,” *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (1976): 83–103, at 83.

<sup>13</sup> Gilles Menage, *The History of Women Philosophers*, trans. and intro. Beatrice H. Zedler (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984). There have been many reflections on the place, or absence, of women in histories of European philosophy. For some examples see Michele Le Doeuff, “Women and Philosophy,” *Radical Philosophy* (Summer 1977): 2–11; Eileen O’Neill, “Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History,” in Janet A. Kourany, ed., *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 17–62; Mary Spongberg, *Writing Women’s History since the Renaissance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Tove Pettersen, “Texts Less Travelled: The Case of Women Philosophers,” in Isis Herrero López, Johanna Akujärvi, Cecilia Alvstad, Synnøve Skarsbø Lindtner, eds., *Gender and Translation: Understanding Agents in Transnational Reception* (Montreal: Éditions québécoises de l’oeuvre [Vita Traductiva 10], 2018), 153–78; Sabrina Ebbesmeyer, “From a ‘Memorable Place’ to ‘Drops in the Ocean’: On the Marginalization of Women Philosophers in German Historiography of Philosophy,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2020): 442–62; and Lisa Shapiro, “Canon, Gender and Historiography,” in Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern European Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 29–40.

remains much to be done on the contributions—and the struggles—across the twentieth century of women who wrote intellectual history but whose subjects were not primarily, or ever, women.<sup>14</sup>

Fourth and finally, while this is an essay primarily about gendered exclusions, it would be foolish to assume that all women in the US faced the same hurdles in writing intellectual history or becoming its subjects. Though middle-class white women, for example, faced many struggles for recognition, they secured tenure-track positions in the university earlier and in greater numbers than did women of color. When white women began writing and teaching women's intellectual history, it was not unusual for them to ignore race and to fail to look for or acknowledge existing sources by Black women (sometimes by their own retrospective admission).<sup>15</sup> In these essays I pay special attention to those who wrote histories of Black women's ideas. As women's historians taught us long ago, "woman" is itself a historical and historicizable category, and the story I tell here is not just about who has counted as a thinker but who in different contexts has counted as a woman, or at least, as the kind of woman whose ideas might be worth taking seriously.<sup>16</sup>

## THE "ORIGINS" OF US INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

The failure to think about histories of women's ideas as contributions to intellectual history—even when that work met the stated criteria of the time—extends to the beginning of US intellectual history as a self-conscious

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<sup>14</sup> A list which reflects some of my own interests includes, though is not limited to, Elsie Lewis, Lorraine A. Williams, Frances Yates, Rosalie Colie, Marjorie Nicolson (though see below, note 43, for her edition of the letters of Anne Conway), Beryl Smalley, Elizabeth Rawson, Eliza Butler, Marjorie Reeves, Caroline Robbins, Nannerl Keohane, Marcia Colish, and a great many others.

<sup>15</sup> Linda K. Kerber, "Interview with Marsha Weisiger," December 28, 2000, *Living U.S. Women's History Oral History Project*, Sophia Smith Collection, 44.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75; Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?" *Feminism and the Category of Woman in History* (London: Macmillan, 1988); for one of many reflections on the ways Black women were side-lined as both subjects of history and as historians in the US, see Deborah Gray White, "'Matter out of Place': Ar'n't I a Woman? Black Female Scholars and the Academy," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 1 (2007): 5–12; for failures to consider Black women in journal retrospectives focused on race and gender, see LaKisha Michelle Simmons, "Black Women Authors in the Journal of American History," *The Journal of American History* (2021), 1–8, <https://academic.oup.com/jah/pages/black-women-authors-in-the-jah>.

subdiscipline. The term “intellectual history” began to gain currency among professional historians in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> By the 1950s, the field was considered robustly established, with a growing literature on its nature and future.

What exactly “intellectual history” was was a matter of debate. However it was understood by its practitioners—as the closely specified mode of inquiry into “unit ideas” advocated by Arthur Lovejoy under the banner of “history of ideas”<sup>18</sup> and expanded upon by his sometime coauthor and cofounder of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, George Boas,<sup>19</sup> or the broader visions found in the essays and reviews of John C. Greene, Charles A. Barker, Franklin Baumer, Maurice Mandelbaum, and R. Richard Wohl—there was a widespread agreement, often implied but sometimes explicit, that intellectual history concerned itself with men.<sup>20</sup>

A useful case study is John Higham’s 1951 survey “The Rise of American Intellectual History.” The interest of this essay, for our purposes, is three-fold. First, Higham’s essay is a, if not *the*, canonical account of the early development of intellectual history as a discipline in the US.<sup>21</sup> Second, in its systematic exclusion and occlusion of women it is broadly representative of other contemporary and later surveys of the field. And third, despite its

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<sup>17</sup> Felix Gilbert, “Intellectual History: Its Aims and Methods,” *Daedalus* 100, no. 1 (1971): 80–97, at 80.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, “Reflections on the History of Ideas,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1, no. 1 (1940): 3–23. For Lovejoy’s approach see John Herman Randall, “Arthur O. Lovejoy and the History of Ideas,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 23, no. 4 (1963): 475–79; for an argument against reading Lovejoy as abstracting ideas from historical circumstances see Daniel Wickberg, “In the Environment of Ideas: Arthur Lovejoy and the History of Ideas as a Form of Cultural History,” *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 2 (2014): 439–64.

<sup>19</sup> George Boas, “Some Problems of Intellectual History,” in George Boas, ed., *Studies in Intellectual History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), 3–21.

<sup>20</sup> Reviewing ongoing dissertations in history, Charles Barker noted ongoing work on “race” but had nothing to say about gender: Charles A. Barker, “Needs and Opportunities in American Social and Intellectual History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 20, no. 1 (1951): 1–9. Richard R. Wohl, “Intellectual History: An Historian’s View,” *The Historian* 16, no. 1 (1953): 62–77, at 63.

<sup>21</sup> Gene Wise called it “the most notable essay ever written about American intellectual history,” in Gene Wise, “The Contemporary Crisis in Intellectual Historical Studies,” *Clio* 5, no. 1 (1975): 55–71. The broad contours of Higham’s early story are followed in many later essays, including Robert Darnton, “Intellectual and Cultural History,” in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 327–54, at 327–30. See too Tim Lacy, “Higham’s ‘The Rise of American Intellectual History’: A 56-Year Retrospective Review and Comment,” Society for US Intellectual History Blog (March 30, 2007), <https://s-usih>

.org/2007/03/highams-rise-of-american-intellectual.

commonalities with others in the same genre, Higham's essay is interesting for praising those historians who were engaging with non-elites: "making a more successful effort than ever before to fathom the ideas and attitudes of the humbler, less articulate groups in society."<sup>22</sup> Higham's praise for this disciplinary trend is all the more striking given that his survey contains no mention of women as the subjects of intellectual history, and only two fleeting mentions of women historians.

This cannot be because there was nothing to say. Higham began his study charting what he called "the preliminary phase of the study of American intellectual history."<sup>23</sup> Despite developments in eighteenth-century Europe where, he alleged, "for the first time, the history of thought assumed an importance in historical study," the few nineteenth-century scholars in the US who addressed the history of ideas demonstrated, Higham said, a "neglect of American for European themes." This neglect, for Higham, characterized most histories of thought in the US until at least the First World War, with one major exception: the publication in 1878 of Moses Coit Tyler's *History of American Literature during the Colonial Period*, which, Higham said, "inaugurated the critical study of American intellectual history."<sup>24</sup>

The partiality of Higham's account at this point could be shown from several directions. His insistence that "the American past failed to inspire historians of culture and ideas" excludes much nineteenth-century work on the ideas of "American" figures, including two books by Rufus Griswold— *The Prose Writers of America* (1847) and *The Female Poets of America* (1849)—which both invoked "intellectual history" and, under that title, included certain women.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, we might think that a history of the *critical* study of intellectual history should include work done across the nineteenth

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<sup>22</sup> John Higham, "The Rise of American Intellectual History," *American Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (1951): 453–71, at 467. Some of the authors Higham praised addressed women's history at some point in their work, though it goes unmentioned by him. See for example Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., "The Role of Women in American History," in his *New Viewpoints in American History* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 126–59.

<sup>23</sup> Higham, "Rise," 464.

<sup>24</sup> Higham, "Rise," 456.

<sup>25</sup> Rufus Griswold, *The Prose Writers of America* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847), 44. For women authors as part of "our intellectual history" see Rufus Griswold, *The Female Poets of America* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849), 38. See too Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Ida Husted Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage* (Charles Mann: New York, 1881–1922), 6 vols; Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church & State: The Original Exposé of Male Collaboration against the Female Sex* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1893). For the racialized exclusions of, especially,

the *History of Woman Suffrage* see Rosalyn M. Terborg-Penn, "The Historical Treatment

century on the intellectual and “civilizational”—the latter an important category for intellectual historians until at least the mid-twentieth century—“contributions” of African Americans.<sup>26</sup> Much of this work, sometimes read through the lens of “uplift” literature, is often treated with caution by contemporary scholars, skeptical of its promotion of a politics of “respectability,” classist premises, and, in cases where women were included, its constrained and constraining notions of Black womanhood.<sup>27</sup> These criticisms may be apt, but they are not reasons to exclude these works from consideration in the *history* of intellectual history. Many historical works on white thinkers that rest on outdated assumptions and offer narratives overturned by later scholarship are still read as important stages in the “development” of US intellectual history.<sup>28</sup>

Of all Higham’s nineteenth-century occlusions, one is especially stark. As Julie Des Jardins and Pero Dagbovie have shown, African American women faced often-overwhelming barriers to entry into the historical profession until well into the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> But, as they and other scholars

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of Afro-Americans in the Woman’s Movement, 1900–1920: A Bibliographical Essay,” *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 7, no. 3 (1974): 245–59, at 249–50.

<sup>26</sup> Henri Gregoire defended Phillis Wheatley in *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes*, trans. D. B. Warden (Brooklyn, NY: Thomas Kirk, 1810 [1808]), 236. Anna Julia Cooper’s *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Printing House, 1892) is regarded by many contemporary scholars as among the first historical treatments of Black feminist thought. See too Susan Elizabeth Frazier, “Some Afro-American Women of Mark,” *A.M.E. Church Review* 8 (April 1892): 373–86; Monroe A. Majors, *Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities* (Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1893).

<sup>27</sup> Terborg-Penn, “The Historical Treatment of Afro-Americans in the Woman’s Movement,” 245–59. On uplift and the politics of respectability see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. the treatment of Vernon L. Parrington and Ralph H. Gabriel (“early masters of our subdiscipline”) in Laurence Veysey, “Intellectual History and the New Social History,” in John Higham and Paul Conkin, eds., *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 3–26 at 21–22.

<sup>29</sup> Pero G. Dagbovie, “Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement,” *The Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (2004): 241–61; Pero G. Dagbovie, “Black Women, Carter G. Woodson, and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1915–1950,” *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 1 (2003): 21–41; Stephanie Y. Evans, *Black Women in the Ivory Tower 1850–1954: An Intellectual History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007); Deborah Gray White, “Introduction: A Telling History,” in *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2008), 1–27. In the early twentieth century, Black scholars were often denied entry

have also emphasized, this did not prevent Black women from writing history. One such woman, Gertrude Bustill Mossell, published in 1894 *The Work of the Afro-American Woman*, which included a brief meditation on a genre of historical inquiry that had recently received a name.<sup>30</sup> Tyler had offered his *History of American Literature* as an example of “the intellectual history of a nation.” Mossell began her chapter on “Afro-American Literature” with an epigraph from Tyler’s book that she followed immediately with a statement of her own:

The intellectual history of a people or nation constitutes to a great degree the very heart of its life. To find this history, we search the fountain-head of its language, its customs, its religion, and its politics expressed by tongue or pen, its folklore and its songs.<sup>31</sup>

In 1951 Higham would assert that Tyler had “no immediate successors.”<sup>32</sup> Yet anyone who reads Tyler’s account of the sources for intellectual history — which emphasized searching the record of “written words”—will hear Mossell’s challenge in these lines.<sup>33</sup> Slavery and its legacy meant, Mossell said, that to write certain periods of African American intellectual history, the historian might have to look beyond “laws and records” and “the written word.”<sup>34</sup> But she also implicitly pointed out that even on Tyler’s own

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to archival collections on account of their race, see Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 130. For the racism of the historical profession in the early twentieth century see August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3–4; Jacqueline Goggin, “Countering White Racist Scholarship: Carter G. Woodson and *The Journal of Negro History*,” *Journal of Negro History* 68 (1983): 355–56, at 358; Jacqueline Goggin, “Carter G. Woodson and the Collection of Source Materials for Afro-American History,” *American Archivist* 48 (1985): 261–71. On the experiences of African American women in higher education in this period see Linda M. Perkins, “‘Bound to Them by a Common Sorrow’: African American Women, Higher Education, and Collective Advancement,” *The Journal of African American History* 100, no. 4 (2015): 721–47.

<sup>30</sup> N. F. Mossell [Gertrude Bustill], *The Work of the Afro-American Woman* (Philadelphia: Geo. S. Ferguson Company, 1894), 9. Mossell’s husband was the physician Nathan Francis Mossell and she published under Mrs. N. F. Mossell. See further Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, “Gertrude Bustill Mossell,” in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (Brooklyn: Carson Publishing, 1993), 2:820–21.

<sup>31</sup> Mossell, *Work of the Afro-American Woman*, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 457.

<sup>33</sup> Moses Coit Tyler, *A History of American Literature* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons), 1:5.

<sup>34</sup> Mossell, *Work of the Afro-American Woman*, 49.

terms, intellectual history should include the works of African American authors: “The race has built up a literature of its own that must be studied by the future historian of the life of the American nation.”<sup>35</sup> Among Mossell’s aims was to show this literature included many works by African American women. One such author was Phillis Wheatley, who Mossell defended from a tradition of racist disdain that went back to Thomas Jefferson (“Religion, indeed, has produced a Phyllis Whately [sic]; but it could not produce a poet”).<sup>36</sup> Tyler ended his *History* in 1765. In 1897, three years after the publication of Mossell’s book, he picked up the narrative in *The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763–1783*. Where Mossell engaged Tyler, Tyler showed no signs of having read Mossell and, on the question of Wheatley’s poetic talent, he sided with Jefferson.<sup>37</sup>

Tyler would not be the last to shroud Mossell in silence. As far as I can tell, Mossell’s conception of intellectual history, and indeed Mossell herself, have never been discussed in the pages of a specialist intellectual history journal nor in any book or article reviewing intellectual history’s past.<sup>38</sup> And yet Mossell’s proposal—that the sources for intellectual history are in oral traditions as much as in written ones; in practices and “customs” as much as in treatises; in songs and in folklore—anticipates and, indeed, given its focus on the “works” of Black women, far extends the opening up of intellectual history praised by Higham in 1951. It might also be put in productive conversation with approaches increasingly attractive to intellectual

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<sup>35</sup> Mossell, *Work of the Afro-American Woman*, 49–50.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787 [1785]), 234.

<sup>37</sup> Moses Coit Tyler, *The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763–1783* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1897), 1:186. Mossell was not alone in defending Wheatley; see too e.g. Griswold, *Female Poets*, 31.

<sup>38</sup> Mossell’s place in this history is acknowledged but not explored in two important publications. She appears in a footnote, alongside other “late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century chronicles that recorded black women’s ‘contributions’ and ‘heroism,’” as an example of one “point of origin” for Black women’s intellectual history in Mia E. Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 3n9. Beverly Guy Sheftall uses the first line of Mossell’s characterization of intellectual history as an epigraph to *Words of Fire*, a collection Sheftall offers as a “retelling of African American intellectual history.” Beverly Guy Sheftall, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African- American Feminist Thought* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), xiii. See too the mention of Mossell in Lisa A. Monroe, “Making the American Syllabus: Hashtag Syllabi in Historical Perspective,” *Black Perspectives* (24 October 2016): <https://www.aaihs.org>

/making-the-american-syllabus-hashtag-syllabi-in-historical-perspective/.

historians today.<sup>39</sup> The point here is not that Mossell's book merely "con- tributes" to existing historiographical narratives and chronologies.<sup>40</sup> The point, rather, is that attention to the practices of women's intellectual his- tory often requires that we change those narratives and chronologies.

For Higham, the "foundations" for US intellectual history were laid by 1927, and the next two decades saw its efflorescence. This period in the academy that so preoccupied him—the 1930s and 40s—also saw attempts by white women who had gained some place in the historical profession to institutionalize women's history.<sup>41</sup> The Lakeville History Group, which be- came in 1935 the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, was founded in 1930 not only to support women in the historical profession who faced rampant sexism but also to promote women as the subjects of historical re- search.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps relatedly, we see several attempts to address the history of certain white women's ideas in the US (as well as outside of it), some even published in the *New England Quarterly*, established in 1928 and described by Higham as an outlet for intellectual history.<sup>43</sup> These historians of women were often preoccupied with the very categories that were of concern to in- tellectual historians, from the question of how to characterize the "minds" of their subjects to that of how prevailing "civilizational" stories might

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<sup>39</sup> Leslie M. Alexander, Brandon R. Byrd, and Russell Rickford, eds., *Ideas in Unexpected Places: Reimagining Black Intellectual History* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2022).

<sup>40</sup> For a classic discussion of the limits of "contribution" history, see Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 1–2 (1975): 5–14.

<sup>41</sup> Des Jardins, *Women*, 217.

<sup>42</sup> Des Jardins, *Women*, 217–25. The first meeting of the Lakeville conference was in May 1930, a decade before Marion Thompson Wright became the first Black woman in the US to receive a PhD in history. For Lakeville see Jacqueline Goggin, "Challenging Sexual Discrimination in the Historical Profession: Women Historians and the American Historical Association, 1890–1940," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992): 769–802, at 794, n. 69. For Wright, see Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians," 252–54.

<sup>43</sup> For a broader survey of women's history in the first half of the twentieth century, in- cluding women in economic and family history, see Gerda Lerner, "New Approaches," 55–56. There are also notable contemporary examples of academic intellectual history of non-US women; in 1930 Marjorie Hope Nicolson, an editor of the *JHI* from 1940, pub- lished the letters of Anne Conway with Henry More. A full account of women's intel- lectual history written by authors in the US in the first half of the twentieth century would also need to account for independent scholars working on non-US topics, like the medi- evalist Hope Emily Allen, who worked on the *Ancrene Wisse* and who first identified, and then edited the rediscovered *Book of Margery Kempe*.

My thanks to Jane Shaw for bring- ing Allen to my attention.

change when sources about women are included.<sup>44</sup> When the Sophia Smith Collection opened at Smith College in 1942 it was described as an archive of “the social and intellectual history of women” in the United States.<sup>45</sup>

One book from this period that it is striking to find Higham (and his colleagues charting the course of the field) ignore is Mary Sumner Benson’s *Women in Eighteenth-Century America* (1935), given its aims, arguments, and Benson’s own institutional proximity to intellectual history. In her acknowledgements, Benson thanks Dixon Ryan Fox for first suggesting she write a seminar paper on the topic.<sup>46</sup> Fox had delivered a paper at the first session of the American Historical Association’s annual meeting ever devoted to intellectual history and appears in Higham’s essay as among the generation of social historians who were “beginning to probe into intellectual problems.”<sup>47</sup> (Unmentioned by Higham is that Fox coedited, with Arthur Schlesinger Sr., the “History of American Life” series, which published volumes that included women in their analyses.)<sup>48</sup> While Benson did not describe her book about women “in theory and in fact” as “intellectual history,” her approach showed she was squarely within this new generation.<sup>49</sup> In chapters like “European Theory from 1700–1775” and “Early Developments of American Theory,” she charted, via sermons, periodicals, letters,

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<sup>44</sup> On the “minds” of her subjects see Alma Lutz, *Created Equal* (New York: John Day, 1940). Kate Campbell Hurd-Mead’s *A History of Women in Medicine* was described in the *AHR* thus: “It might almost be said that she has re-written the history of civilization in general and of medicine in particular from a militant feminist viewpoint.” Loren C. MacKinney, review of *A History of Women in Medicine from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* by Kate Campbell Hurd-Mead, *American Historical Review* 45, no. 2 (1940): 357–58, at 358. See too Anne Louise Kuhn, *The Mother’s Role in Childhood Education: New England Concepts, 1830–1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1947).

<sup>45</sup> *Annual Report of the Friends of the Smith College Library* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1947), 15. See too Jennifer Dunning, “Lives of American Women on Display,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1977, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/05/27/archives/lives-of-american-women-on-display.html> and “The Sophia Smith Collection,” in *Female Studies* 4 (1971): 52.

<sup>46</sup> Mary Sumner Benson, *Women in Eighteenth-Century America: A Study of Opinion and Social Usage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962 [1935]), 5.

<sup>47</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 463. See too Charles A. Barker, “Needs and Opportunities in American Social and Intellectual History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 20, no. 1 (1951): 1–9, at 2.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., Harold Underwood Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice, 1898–1914* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931).

<sup>49</sup> Benson, *Women*, 5. For one of many examples of the inclusion of men who did not name themselves intellectual historians in reviews of the discipline see David A. Hollinger, “The *MVHR*, the *JAH*, and Intellectual History: From Margin to Mainstream,” in Richard S. Kirkendall, ed., *The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 146–54.

and treatises, the history of influential ideas about women and their intellectual contributions in the US (including those that made their way over from Europe, offering the kind of transatlantic perspective that became important to some US intellectual historians in the 1970s). She also historicized the contrast between the claims about women in prescriptive literature and women's self-expression; by doing so, she offered an approach to women's history that is sometimes assumed to be a novel feature of work done in the 1970s.

The precise period of intellectual history's rise isolated by Higham also saw much important work historicizing Black women's ideas. The racism and sexism that limited Black women's access to the academy also helps to explain why the authors of these histories were usually Black women themselves, often involved in what Darlene Clark Hine calls "parallel institutions."<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth Lindsay Davis's *Lifting as They Climb* (1933) documented, for the first time, the activities—and many of the motivating ideas—of the women who built the National Association of Colored Women, whose projects ranged from aiding the unemployed to facilitating "intellectual improvement" and access to higher education.<sup>51</sup> Under the editorship of Sue Bailey Thurman, the *African American Woman's Journal* reminded its readers of the "remarkable contributions of Negro women to American Life and Thought."<sup>52</sup> As Kate Weigand has shown, across the 1940s and 50s contributors to communist magazines, latterly inspired by Claudia Jones's "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!" (1949), recovered Black women's writings and activism, moving beyond a "great woman" approach.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Professionals and Race Consciousness: Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, 1890–1950," *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (2003): 1279–94, at 1279. On the first Black women PhDs in history see Dagbovie, "Black Women," 252–55. For some further historical examples, see Mary C. Terrell, "The Progress of Colored Women," *Voice of the Negro* (July 1904): 292–94; the biographical sketches by Pauline Hopkins, "Famous Women of the Negro Race," in the *Colored American Magazine* between 1900–1904; Benjamin Griffith Brawley, *Women of Achievement* (Chicago: Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1919); Hallie Q. Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Publishing Company, 1926). For the limits of Brawley see Terborg-Penn, "Historical Treatment."

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Lindsay Davis, *Lifting as They Climb* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1996 [1933]), 315; 319.

<sup>52</sup> This quotation comes from the report on the Negro's Women's Archives exhibit at the summer 1940 "Negro Exposition" in Chicago in *The African American Woman's Journal*: "Women's Archives and Seminar Issue" (Summer and Fall 1940), 29.

<sup>53</sup> Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 109–10. We might also include here biographies, including Shirley Graham Du Bois's of Phillis Wheatley (1949) and the

Important contributions to Black women's intellectual history in the 1930s and 1940s came from Black women librarians, exemplified by Dorothy B. Porter.<sup>54</sup> Appointed in 1930 as librarian in charge of cataloguing the specialist Black collection at Howard University, which she helped to build into the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Porter expanded the collection from 6499 items in 1933 to over 180,000 catalogued items in 1973, while simultaneously writing multiple articles and bibliographies.<sup>55</sup> Porter's bibliographic and archival work has long been recognized as central to both the development of Black historical studies in general and to Black women's history in particular. She has received almost no attention among intellectual history's historiographers.<sup>56</sup> And yet, Porter should be considered not simply an important figure in African American intellectual history, but also an intellectual historian: for creating the conditions of possibility for so much later work in the field and for her writing, which often advertised the creative and intellectual work of Black women she thought deserved further attention, from Jarena Lee and Maria W. Stewart to African American

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domestic novels which Pero Dagbovie suggests were a more accessible avenue to Black women looking to write about history. Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians," 243.

<sup>54</sup> On librarianship as more open to Black women in the 1940s than a career in the historical profession see Des Jardins, "Black Librarians," 16. See too Melanie Chambliss, "A Vital Factor in the Community: Recovering the Life and Legacy of Chicago Public Librarian Vivian G. Harsh," *The Journal of African American History* 106, no. 3 (2021): 411–38.

<sup>55</sup> Harriet Jackson Scarupa, "The Energy-Charged Life of Dorothy Porter Wesley," *New Directions* 17, no. 1 (1990): 6–17, at 10; Helen H. Britton, "Dorothy Porter Wesley: Bibliographer, Curator, and Scholar," in Suzanne Hildenbrand, *Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In* (Norwood: Ablex Publishing Company, 1996), 163–80; Des Jardins, *Women*, 166; Janet Sims-Wood, *Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University: Building a Legacy of Black History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014); Laura E. Helton, "On Decimals, Catalogs, and Racial Imaginaries of Reading," *PMLA/ Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 134, no. 1 (2019): 99–120. See now too Laura E. Helton, *Scattered and Fugitive Things: How Black Collectors Created Archives and Remade History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2024) published just as this essay was going to press.

<sup>56</sup> Her name does not come up, for example, in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, though this is in part because its editors knew that new work was being done on Porter by a younger scholar and wanted to leave space for that work. (My thanks to Barbara Savage for clarification on this point.) Laura Helton has taken Porter seriously as a subject of intellectual history (if not an explicitly stated agent of it). See Helton, "Decimals," and Robert Greene II, "African American Print Culture: An Interview with Laura Helton," *Black Perspectives* (February 4, 2021), <https://www.aaihs.org/african-american-print-culture-an-interview-with-laura-helton/>.

For a fleeting but important citation of Porter's work on women—and a general exception among white women charting the course of the discipline—see Louise Stevenson, "Women's Intellectual History: A

New Direction," *Intellectual History Newsletter* 15 (1993): 32–38, at 37.

women's literary societies in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> In 1935 she reminded readers of *The Journal of Negro History* of the life and arguments of the abolitionist, public lecturer and "remarkable intellect," Sarah Parker Remond, a figure who would preoccupy Porter for the rest of her life.<sup>58</sup> While pursuing a master's degree at Radcliffe College in 1940, Porter is said to have chosen intellectual history as one of her fields of study.<sup>59</sup>

Porter was a direct contemporary of Benjamin Quarles, whose research she assisted and who has been recognized (albeit less frequently than his white contemporaries) as an intellectual historian despite (like Porter) not regularly using the term in his work.<sup>60</sup> Porter's reminders about African American women went unheeded in Earl Thorpe's 1961 *The Mind of the Negro: An Intellectual History of Afro-Americans*, in which Thorpe claimed that "there is no evidence" that the "thought" of Black women on "slavery, civil rights, love of country, devotion to education, culture and family has been significantly different from that of their menfolk."<sup>61</sup> Black women, Thorpe said, "have not spoken out publicly as often as have the men."<sup>62</sup> (His enthralment to this view might partly explain his attention across the book to Charles Lenox Remond, and his silence on Remond's sister, Sarah, the subject of Porter's 1935 essay.) There was no mention of Gertrude Mossell in a book whose opening lines announced that "the Afro-American . . . has an intellectual history which is in a number of ways unique."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Dorothy B. Porter, "The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1828–1846," *The Journal of Negro Education* 5, no. 4 (1936): 555–76.

<sup>58</sup> Dorothy B. Porter, "Sarah Parker Remond, Abolitionist and Physician," *The Journal of Negro History* 20, no. 3 (1935): 287–93. See too Dorothy B. Porter "Early American Negro Writings: A Bibliographical Study," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 39, no. 3 (1945): 192–268, which addressed the challenges of finding Black authors in catalogues and archives; the subjects were mainly men, but Porter did include details of editions of Phillis Wheatley's published and manuscript poems. For criticism of the *Journal of Negro History* for publishing so few essays on Black women, see Pauli Murray, "The Liberation of Black Women" [1970] in Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 186–97, at 188.

<sup>59</sup> Des Jardins, *Women*, 166.

<sup>60</sup> *Black Abolitionists*, for example, never self-describes as "intellectual history" though Quarles does feature in Brandon R. Byrd, "The Rise of African American Intellectual History," *Modern Intellectual History* 18, no. 3 (2021): 833–64. [Online first in 2020.]

<sup>61</sup> Earl Thorpe, *The Mind of the Negro: An Intellectual History of Afro-Americans* (Baton Rouge, LA: Orlieb Press, 1961), 362. August Meier thanks Porter for her assistance in his 1963 *Negro Thought in America*, though he cites none of her scholarship nor her bibliographic work. This is perhaps unsurprising given, as Brandon Byrd shows, he also failed to cite Earl Thorpe's book despite having reviewed it. Byrd, "Rise," 841.

<sup>62</sup> Thorpe, *Mind*, 362.

<sup>63</sup> Thorpe, *Mind*, xi.

Thorpe exhorted the emerging field of intellectual history—shaped, he noted, by figures like Vernon Louis Parrington, Merle Curti, and R. H. Gabriel (all praised by Higham in 1951)—to consider the ideas of African American men. In this he offered a radical challenge to the field’s racism. But, by neglecting Black women’s ideas, Thorpe only affirmed the field’s implicit commitment regarding gender—and, in the case of Black women specifically, reaffirmed their doubled exclusion.<sup>64</sup>

In Brandon Byrd’s recent and incisive account of “The Rise of African American Intellectual History” (2020)—a title that echoes and challenges Higham’s own—Byrd points to the failure of Higham and his contemporaries to engage with work, like Thorpe’s, primarily written by male African American scholars, on men in African American intellectual history. Byrd acknowledges that Thorpe’s comments on women represent a “patriarchal approach that has afflicted intellectual history.”<sup>65</sup> But Byrd does not point out that at the time Thorpe was writing there existed work on Black women’s “minds” that Thorpe, just like Higham, might have considered but which both men, instead, ignored.<sup>66</sup> Indeed the earliest text Byrd himself discusses in relation to Black women’s intellectual history was published in 1982. We might therefore worry that the prevailing story of the “rise” of African American intellectual history remains a story too narrowly focused on work done by men about men, too focused on invocations of “intellectual history” in academic contexts at the expense of attention to substantive investigations into the history of ideas. Such a narrative risks, in turn, perpetuating the myth that historical interest in Black women as the producers of significant ideas came much later than it in fact did.<sup>67</sup>

Defenders of Higham and his contemporaries might here suggest that even if our own histories of women’s ideas should include the sources I’ve

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<sup>64</sup> For Thorpe’s early exclusion of Black women see Deborah Gray White, “Telling History,” 12.

<sup>65</sup> Byrd, “Rise,” 839.

<sup>66</sup> Rosalyn Terborg-Penn pointed out in 1974 that though Thorpe engaged with Benjamin Brawley’s other work, he was silent on *Women of Achievement*. Terborg-Penn, “The Historical Treatment of Afro-Americans,” 247. For an example of historicizing Black men’s engagement with women’s issues from this period see Benjamin Quarles, “Frederick Douglass and the Woman’s Rights Movement,” *The Journal of Negro History* 25, no. 1 (1940): 35–44.

<sup>67</sup> We might also add to Byrd’s account the work of early African American women intellectual historians who did not write on women, like Lorraine A. Williams and Elsie Lewis; the latter was the first African American author to focus on African American subject matter in the *Journal of Southern History* (and only the second African American author to publish there) where she offered an account in 1955 of “the political mind of the Negro,” cited once by Thorpe. See Dagbovie, “Black Women Historians,” 254; n. 76.

so far discussed, Higham should be excused because he was primarily concerned with charting the work of a particular sociological group, a group that only happened to be predominantly male—the academic intellectual historians. It is instructive, then, to turn to one of the two women whom he does cite: Mary Ritter Beard.<sup>68</sup>

Beard herself never held a university position—as Nancy Cott shows, she was skeptical of academic “guilds”<sup>69</sup>—but she appears in Higham’s es- say as coauthor with her husband, Charles Beard, of *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), which Higham called the first survey of US history to integrate “intellectual developments.”<sup>70</sup> By the publication of *The American Spirit: A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States* (1942), the Beards had, Higham said, “shifted completely to the history of ideas.” By way of explanation, Higham cited Charles Beard’s fear of the threat of war to American values.<sup>71</sup> Nothing was said about why Mary might have made the shift along with her husband—or indeed the possibility that the shift might have been motivated as much by her intellectual preoccupations as by his.<sup>72</sup>

Higham was also silent on Mary Beard’s revisionist accounts of the history of women’s ideas and of ideas about women in history. A feature of *The Rise of American Civilization*, though not one Higham noticed, was its inclusion of women, for which Mary Beard was almost certainly responsible. Among her sole-authored books, *On Understanding Women* (1931) argued that throughout history women had been behind “civilizational” advances and in *America through Women’s Eyes* (1933), she compiled a selection of writings by women to argue, as Bonnie G. Smith summarizes, that “men had willfully distorted history by ignoring hundreds of books written by women about women’s past.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The other was Alice M. Baldwin, author of *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1928), whom Higham mentions briefly in a footnote.

<sup>69</sup> Nancy Cott, *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard through Her Letters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>70</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 463.

<sup>71</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 469.

<sup>72</sup> For Mary Beard’s complaint that her influence on their shared work was often obscured by contemporaries, see Ellen Nore, *Charles Beard: An Intellectual Biography* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 112. See too Nancy Cott, “Two Beards: Coauthorship and the Concept of Civilization,” *American Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1990): 274–300.

<sup>73</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, “The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France, and the United States, 1750–1940,” *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (1984): 709–32, at 726.

Then, in 1946—when, for Higham, intellectual history was in the ascendance—Mary Beard published *Woman as Force in History*, which she offered as a contribution to “the whole intellectual history of human beings.”<sup>74</sup> The “intellectual” and “philosophical” realms, she said, furnished her with multiple examples for her thesis that throughout history women “played a great role in directing human events as thought and action.”<sup>75</sup> One chapter investigated the history of the “ideas” of women; elsewhere she engaged with the emerging historiography of intellectual history. As an example of “how completely” Arthur Schlesinger Sr.’s “appeal of 1922 for some consideration of women’s contributions to the making of history” had been ignored, she offered Ralph H. Gabriel’s *The Course of American Democratic Thought: An Intellectual History since 1815*.<sup>76</sup> Higham would later describe Gabriel’s book as the “most perceptive” of its kind, praising Gabriel for “the many insights which a man with a broad background of religious, scientific, and sociological interests might bring to intellectual history.”<sup>77</sup> Beard’s assessment differed:

If women were doing any thinking in the period, it is difficult to find out from this treatise what it was like. “Equalitarianism” is treated . . . as if it were mainly or wholly a man’s affair. Even the women’s “Declaration of Sentiments” at Seneca Falls in 1848—a manifesto of a movement which developed into a conquering force—escaped Professor Gabriel’s attention or was discarded by him as deserving not even a page or two in a modern work on democracy. Professor Gabriel’s book stands as written; as far as democratic thought is concerned, women scarcely exist; they are negligible, if not exactly nothing.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Mary Beard, *Woman as Force in History* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 105. On women “amateur” historians see Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), chs. 2 and 6.

<sup>75</sup> Beard, *Woman as Force*, vi.

<sup>76</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, “The Role of Women in American History,” in his *New Viewpoints in American History* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), 126.

<sup>77</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 469–70. Higham notes in a footnote that he had been in correspondence with Gabriel about his intellectual trajectory, “Rise,” n. 44.

<sup>78</sup> Beard, *Woman as Force*, 60.

Beard's criticisms went unremarked by Higham—and indeed by the many others who would later decorate Gabriel as an “outstanding pioneer” of the field.<sup>79</sup>

Beard's proximity to the men of intellectual history (she was also a correspondent of Merle Curti) removes any plausible deniability on the part of Higham and other chroniclers of intellectual history's course.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, *Woman as Force* was advertised to those same men in the *Journal of Modern History* by Judith B. Williams who assessed it as “primarily a study in the history of ideas.”<sup>81</sup> In the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* Alice Felt Tyler summarized the book's thesis thus: “Women were playing as important a part as men in formulating and in carrying out the ideas and plans that influenced history.”<sup>82</sup> By contrast, when in 1966 Allan Skotheim offered his account of *American Intellectual Histories and Historians*—a book which made a virtue of including those who were not professional academics—Mary Beard appeared just once, in a footnote, as Charles Beard's “future wife.”<sup>83</sup> The section Skotheim dedicated exclusively to Charles made no mention of Mary's work; in the extended discussion of *The Rise of American Civilization*, her coauthorship was entirely erased.<sup>84</sup>

Higham closed his 1951 review expressing hope that future generations of American intellectual historians would offer a “deeper understanding” of the “American Mind”—a “Mind,” presumably, that partly contained or

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<sup>79</sup> John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, “Introduction,” in Higham and Conkin, *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, xi. See too, Robert Allen Skotheim, *American Intellectual Histories and Historians* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 212–44. For an earlier reflection on male historians ignoring Mary Beard, see Bonnie G. Smith, “Seeing Mary Beard,” *Feminist Studies* 10, no. 3 (1984): 399–416.

<sup>80</sup> Mary Beard destroyed most of her correspondence; for many of her extant letters see Cott, *A Woman Making History*. Curti's own work is an interesting but not uncomplicated exception in the history of intellectual history's gendered exclusions. He was, for example, the author of one of the few essays in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* to focus on a woman's ideas in Merle Curti, “Jane Addams on Human Nature,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 2 (1961), 240–53.

<sup>81</sup> Judith B. Williams, review of *Woman as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities*, *The Journal of Modern History* 18, no. 4 (1946): 344–45, at 344.

<sup>82</sup> Alice Felt Tyler, review of *Woman as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities*, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 33, no. 1 (1946): 136–37, at 137.

<sup>83</sup> Skotheim, *American Intellectual Histories*, 88, n. 29. See too Barton J. Bernstein's “Introduction,” in *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (Random House, 1968), vi, which refers to *The Rise of American Civilization* as Charles Beard's alone. For a sneering review of *Woman as Force* by an intellectual historian see J. H. Hexter, “The Ladies Were There All the Time,” *New York Times Book Review* (March 17, 1946), 5.

<sup>84</sup> It might not surprise readers to learn that Skotheim does not mention any of the other women historians we have looked at here.

supervened on the minds of American women. He called for a better understanding of “the incidence and intensity of widespread, popular attitudes,” and of the “rise, decline, or modifications of such concepts as democracy, nationalism, individualism, class consciousness, race prejudice, anti-intellectualism, and fundamental beliefs about God and nature.” Perhaps we can only infer that, by Higham’s lights, these were not concepts used by—much less “modified” by—women.<sup>85</sup> To understand the “American Mind”—even in its “widespread, popular” guise—was to understand the minds of white men.

The twenty years after Higham’s 1951 essay are considered the decades when intellectual history occupied the penthouse of American historical studies—only, as the 1960s came to a close, to be evicted by social and cultural history. The literature that charts the fortunes of the field across these decades does not mention that these were also significant decades for histories of women’s ideas. Many of the books and articles that focused on women’s history in this period, published across a range of contexts, show a special interest in the ideas of and about women: from Lillian O’Connor’s *Pioneer Women Orators* (1954) to Jeanne L. Noble’s *The Negro Woman’s College Education* (1965) to Jeannette H. Foster’s *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (1956)<sup>86</sup> to Eleanor Flexner’s *Century of Struggle* (1959) to Barbara Welter’s work on “the cult of true womanhood”<sup>87</sup> and Carl Degler’s on Charlotte Perkins Gilman (who he argued had “suffered a neglect in American intellectual history difficult to explain”).<sup>88</sup>

Of the books and essays on women’s ideas whose reception tells us something about the gendered exclusions of academic intellectual history in this period, one is especially illustrative: Aileen Kraditor’s *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement: 1890–1920* (1965). Kraditor, even more so than Beard and Benson before her, was squarely in the orbit of US intellectual history. That she meant her book as an intervention into that context was advertised in its opening lines:

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<sup>85</sup> For the erasure of women from Higham’s history of the profession in his book *History* (1965) see Joan Wallach Scott, “American Women Historians, 1884–1984,” in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018 [1988]), 178–98, at 189.

<sup>86</sup> My thanks to Terry Castle for bringing Foster to my attention.

<sup>87</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151–74.

<sup>88</sup> Carl N. Degler, “Charlotte Perkins Gilman on the Theory and Practice of Feminism,” *American Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1956): 21–39, at 21.

The ideas of the suffragists reflected their aspirations but were also weapons, and the history of a battle can hardly be understood if some of the most potent weapons used in it are ignored. Thus the history of the woman suffrage movement must be understood as a chapter in the intellectual history of the American people.<sup>89</sup>

Kraditor knew she was on to something that the men in her field had ignored. While preparing the manuscript for publication she wrote to her PhD supervisor William Leuchtenburg: “It’s amazing how neglected the intellectual history of obvious subjects is, even in a period in which intellectual history is supposed to be The Thing.”<sup>90</sup> In *Ideas* she argued that suffragists should be taken seriously for “their notions of the nature of the home, the state, religion, marriage, as they were and as they should be.”<sup>91</sup> The book’s analysis made good on its title, detailing, for example—on the basis of letters, diary entries, and public writing—the “conception of democracy”<sup>92</sup> and the competing “theories of history” offered by suffragists and their opponents.<sup>93</sup> Kraditor placed suffrage arguments in the broader contexts of American social and political thought, especially changing views of civic individualism, political liberty, and the purpose of the state.<sup>94</sup> (Here we might think of her as attempting, in fact if not in name, to give an account of the political theory of a social movement, an approach that has seen a recent resurgence of popularity among political theorists.)<sup>95</sup>

Higham’s 1951 essay encouraged studies that were “large-scale but nonetheless detailed.”<sup>96</sup> Kraditor saw in the suffrage movement an interesting case of such a challenge: given the sheer size and the comparative paucity of evidence, how could one say anything at once accurate and non-trivial about the ideas of “several million enrolled suffragists to say nothing of the

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<sup>89</sup> Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), viii.

<sup>90</sup> Aileen Kraditor to William Leuchtenburg, September 25, 1963, Box 26, William E. Leuchtenburg Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My thanks to William Leuchtenburg for his gracious help in making these letters available to me.

<sup>91</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, vii.

<sup>92</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, 249.

<sup>93</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, 250–51.

<sup>94</sup> For political liberty, Kraditor, *Ideas*, 52; for “changing conceptions of government,” Kraditor, *Ideas*, 73.

<sup>95</sup> See, among others, important recent work by Deva Woodly, Erin Pineda, Alexander Livingstone, and Mie Inouye.

<sup>96</sup> Higham, “Rise,” 471.

unknown millions of their supporters?”<sup>97</sup> While any study of the individual views of every suffrage activist would be, Kraditor thought, “manifestly impossible,” she disagreed with those scholars who thought that the views of members of the group could simply be inferred from those remembered as its most prominent figures.<sup>98</sup>

One answer Kraditor gave to this methodological puzzle still relied on isolating “leaders,” but with criteria of selection that went beyond mere reputation: she proposed to look at those she called the movement’s “long term” leading figures, women reelected at least twice to national office in the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Such individuals would have been associated with material put out in the group’s name, and so, Kraditor argued, it would not be unreasonable to infer from their reelection that at least the majority of the group were either satisfied with such statements or insufficiently dissatisfied as to vote them out. This could, she proposed, tell readers something about the ideas considered acceptable to those millions of women who cast their votes, in the absence of evidence of their specific views.<sup>99</sup>

Kraditor used her approach to chart how suffragist ideologies developed in response to changing circumstances, and especially to changing constituencies. She thought the history of women’s suffrage should be told in part—as R. G. Collingwood might have put it—as a series of questions and answers: challenges to suffrage met with a variety of responses contingent on both material and discursive constraints.<sup>100</sup> In time, she saw these responses developing into an “arsenal of arguments” from which “advocates selected those most suited to their own beliefs and the supposed predilections of their intended audience.” The objects of her study were women negotiating objections, limited in their responses not only by their own beliefs but also by the expectations of their interlocutors. Despite her Popular Front education, Kraditor did not treat ideology as simply determined by economic forces, and she looked to reaffirm its place in accounts of historical change.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, viii.

<sup>98</sup> One of her targets here was surely Robert E. Riegel, *American Feminists* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1963).

<sup>99</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, viii–ix.

<sup>100</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, viii.

<sup>101</sup> On Kraditor’s popular front education see Daniel Horowitz, “Feminism, Women’s History, and American Social Thought at Midcentury,” in Nelson Lichtenstein, ed., *American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 191–209. Daniel Horowitz is, as far as I know, the only historian to have interviewed Kraditor before her death in 2020;

The resulting analysis located a shift in suffragist arguments from those centered on “justice” to those motivated by “expediency,” from appeals to principles like “all men are equal” or that government must elicit the “consent of the governed” to arguments focused on the social benefits of extending the franchise.<sup>102</sup> On the one hand, Kraditor argued, as more immigrant and working women entered the movement it was no longer possible to continue, as suffragists had once done, “contemning” those women in their propaganda.<sup>103</sup> On the other, as the Southern suffragists who had been involved in abolition died off, and a conservative leadership arose, Kraditor observed a distinct willingness on the part of Southern suffragists to adopt instrumental arguments that emphasized not simply that the enfranchisement of white women would protect white supremacy but that *not* to enact women’s suffrage would be a danger to that supremacy.<sup>104</sup>

Several features of Kraditor’s arguments and approach might have caught the attention of an intellectual historian thinking about noteworthy developments in the field. There are resonances between her focus on suffrage women as ideological strategists searching for the rhetorical tactics that might win them support from a shifting audience and the approach to intellectual history and the history of political thought that would become, in the 1970s, associated with Quentin Skinner and the “Cambridge School” in the UK.<sup>105</sup> But where some came to feel (rightly or wrongly) that Skinner gave insufficient attention to the role of “non-linguistic features of a given historical context” in determining the meaning of ideas, Kraditor, for her part, was at least sensitive to the ways that changing material conditions— from industrialization to immigration— influenced, without determining, the development of ideas and helped to explain why certain groups formulated arguments as they did.<sup>106</sup> She was also interested in the economic and social

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my thanks to him for sharing his notes with me. I would be very grateful if readers who know of any of her extant papers would contact me.

<sup>102</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, esp. ch 3.

<sup>103</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, xi.

<sup>104</sup> An argument she explored further in “Tactical Problems of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in the South” [1966], reprinted in Nancy Cott, ed., *History of Women in the United States: Historical Articles on Women’s Lives and Activities*, vol 19, no. 1: *Women Suffrage* (London: K. G. Saur, 1994), 272–90.

<sup>105</sup> Quentin Skinner, “The Limits of Historical Explanations,” *Philosophy* 41, no. 157 (1966): 199–215. Kraditor also engaged with other questions that would, in this period, become fashionable with historians of political thought as well as with radical historians, including whether the purpose of history-writing was to provide contemporaries with a “usable past.”

<sup>106</sup> Peter Gordon, “What Is Intellectual History? A Frankly Partisan Introduction to a Frequently Misunderstood Field” (2012), <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/history/files>

limits on both the meaning and the effects of ideas: suffragists might have talked the talk of social revolution, but, set against certain material constraints, such talk was insufficient to change the economic and political structures of American society.<sup>107</sup> Despite the possibility of a fruitful methodological dialogue here with Cambridge School contextualism, such connections have never been made.<sup>108</sup> To consider them does not require that we force Kraditor into a false teleology or undermine the significance of Skinner's more philosophically engaged meditations. But it is to suggest our methodological histories are more complex, and more varied, than is often suggested by historians who are as likely to focus exclusively on other male historians in their historiographical reviews as they are on male subjects in their work.

Scholars like Richard Hofstadter (with whom Kraditor engages in *Ideas*) have been heralded by those surveying the field for "integrating the study of political ideas" into political history and insisting "that the ideological self-representation of political actors was vital to an understanding of their role in history."<sup>109</sup> But intellectual historians have had nothing to say about Kraditor's attempt to do this for one of the major political movements in US history. Twenty years after Higham's essay was published, in an almost equally famous review essay of his own, Felix Gilbert noted that recent work had indeed seen an increased interest in how to write the intellectual history of groups.<sup>110</sup> Kraditor's work and methodological reflections received no mention. Writing in 1975 about what he called the "contemporary crisis in intellectual historical studies," Gene Wise noted the critique of intellectual history offered by radical historians like Christopher Lasch—a correspondent of Kraditor's—who diagnosed the field's early focus on the so-called American Mind as symptomatic of a broader embrace

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<sup>107</sup> Kraditor, *Ideas*, x.

<sup>108</sup> Rush Welter's essay in *New Directions for American Intellectual History* connected Aileen Kraditor's suggestion in "American Radical Historians and their Heritage" (1972) that revolutionary exhortations must not be taken out of context nor must they "impose their own vision of class struggle on a society in which such struggles notably did not materialize" with Quentin Skinner and Peter Laslett's arguments that historical statements can only be understood when properly situated in their intellectual context. Neither Welter nor anyone else connected Kraditor's project on suffragist ideology to the Cambridge project. Rush Welter, "On Studying the National Mind," in Higham and Conkin, *New Directions*, 64–82, at 65.

<sup>109</sup> David A. Hollinger, "American Intellectual History, 1907–2007," *Magazine of History* 21, no. 2 (2007): 14–17, at 15. (Another survey essay to mention neither women historians nor historical work on women's ideas.)

<sup>110</sup> Felix Gilbert, "Intellectual History," 92.

of “cold-war liberalism” with its tendency to avoid the darker realities of “economic exploitation, political repression, social injustice.”<sup>111</sup> Had Wise considered Kraditor’s book, published in the same year as Lasch’s, he would have found at least one self-identifying intellectual historian who was trying to show how the study of ideas could be a way of engaging with, rather than deflecting from, the uglier parts of the nation’s past and present.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Kraditor’s acknowledgement of the racism of many suffragists, and the way that pro-suffrage arguments were often inflected by or dependent upon racist assumptions and tropes, brought her to the attention of a young historian of Black women and suffrage, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. As Terborg-Penn worked across the 1970s to construct her influential history of Black women as agents of suffrage, rather than simply as passive victims of white supremacy, she repeatedly engaged *Ideas*. Though critical of Kraditor for diminishing the participation of African American women in the suffrage movement, Terborg-Penn said it was thanks to *Ideas* that she came to have confidence in her own intuition that “there had been black men and women who had fought both racism and sexism simultaneously.”<sup>113</sup> These crucial historiographical exchanges and revisions in the development of what might now be called an intersectional intellectual history of suffrage have never been discussed in surveys of the field.<sup>114</sup>

The only historiographical essay from a self-identifying intellectual historian to mention Kraditor’s work on women was written by Kraditor herself.<sup>115</sup> In the nearly sixty years since *Ideas* was published, Kraditor has been

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<sup>111</sup> Wise, “Crisis,” 61.

<sup>112</sup> Despite his title, Lasch does not use the phrase “intellectual history” anywhere in his book, instead describing his biographical approach as “social history.” Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America 1889–1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), xvii. Lasch included women—and men who supported women—as central subjects of this study.

<sup>113</sup> Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women and the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 4. See too Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), 300, which cited Kraditor in support of the argument that “white feminists often acquiesced to racist ideology, undermining their own cause in doing so.”

<sup>114</sup> For the suggestion that Kraditor used an “intersectional” analysis see Louise M. Newman, “Reflections On Aileen Kraditor’s Legacy: Fifty Years Of Woman Suffrage Historiography, 1965–2014,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, no. 3 (2015): 290–316, at 291.

<sup>115</sup> Aileen S. Kraditor, “Women in History and Historiography,” in Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago:

Quadrangle, 1968), 2–24.

cited in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* just once, in 2007.<sup>116</sup> Her name has never appeared in *History of Political Thought* and crops up once, in passing in a book review, in *Modern Intellectual History*.<sup>117</sup> *Ideas* was also never cited in *MIH*'s predecessors, *Newsletter of the Intellectual History Group* (1979–84) then *Intellectual History Newsletter* (1985–2002), despite articles from the mid-1980s and early 1990s charting the “emergence” of women’s intellectual history.<sup>118</sup> As with Beard, Kraditor’s book was re-viewed almost exclusively by other women historians, who tried to advertise, in the words of Mary Sumner Benson in the *American Historical Review*, that what made Kraditor’s book a “new approach to woman’s rights” was that she studied “the ideas of the later stages of the woman-suffrage movement as a phase of American intellectual history.”<sup>119</sup>

The silence among the men of intellectual history rings louder when we consider the success of Kraditor’s monograph elsewhere.<sup>120</sup> The hardback had four printings between 1965 and 1973, a mass paperback was published in 1971, and the book was reissued with a new introduction by Kraditor in 1981. Women’s liberation magazines advertised her “intellectual history” to readers and it was repeatedly taught in new courses about women that

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<sup>116</sup> Kevin S. Amidon, “Carrie Chapman Catt and the Evolutionary Politics of Sex and Race, 1885–1940,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68, no. 2 (2007): 305–28.

<sup>117</sup> Mark Pittenger, “Considering Capitalism in American Social Thought,” *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no. 1 (2008): 179–94.

<sup>118</sup> Kraditor was cited twice across the *IHN*’s twenty-three year run: *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism* (1969) in a 1984 essay and in 1997 Nancy Cott cited Kraditor’s selected writings from the history of American feminism, *Up From the Pedestal* (1968), in a review of Linda Kerber’s *Toward an Intellectual History of Women* (1997). The relevance of this latter citation will, I hope, become clear in Part Two.

<sup>119</sup> Mary S. Benson, review of *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1920*, *American Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (1966): 715–16. See too Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger, review of *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1920*, *The New England Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1966): 102–4.

<sup>120</sup> A full account of Kraditor’s reception would have to address the support she received from male historians outside of intellectual history, including William Leuchtenburg and Arthur Schlesinger Sr., her mixed reputation among women’s historians in the 1970s, her apparent haughtiness (though, of course, having a “difficult” personality is, among men, perfectly consistent with significant disciplinary standing), her sharp turn to the right in the early 1970s (not unlike Eugene Genovese, her long-time friend, and recipient of far more historiographical attention), her sneering criticism of policies, like bussing, aimed at

racial inclusion, her objections to homosexuality, and her uneasy place in the historiographies of radical and left history.

took seriously the history of ideas, from Gerda Lerner's classroom at Sarah Lawrence<sup>121</sup> to Angela Davis's at San Francisco State.<sup>122</sup>

In the reviews of US intellectual history from the 1950s to the early 1970s we often find an appreciation of what John Hope Franklin once called "the connection between ideas and life."<sup>123</sup> Yet alongside the willingness to open up intellectual history to certain new constituencies was a paradoxical— but all too explicable—failure to acknowledge ongoing work on women's ideas. Many male intellectual historians might have been willing to move away from "great men." But they were not, it seems, willing to move away from men.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Gerda Lerner, "American Women 1790–1920," syllabus (taught in 1974), Papers of Gerda Lerner, 1924–2006, MC 498, Box 35, Folder 11, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

<sup>122</sup> "Women, Race and Class" syllabus, 1979, Papers of Angela Davis, 1937–2017, MC 940, Box 66, Folder 3, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

<sup>123</sup> John Hope Franklin, review of *Society and Thought in Early America*, *The Journal of Negro History* 36, no. 1 (1951): 84–86, at 86.

<sup>124</sup> This perhaps throws a different light on some of the language used in these survey essays. When, in his essay in *New Directions*, Gordon Wood spoke entirely of men, it can seem in retrospect that this wasn't an irrelevant piece of gendered language, but a statement about who the proper subjects of intellectual history really were: "to write fully satisfying intellectual history we will need a kind of zoom lens that will enable us to move easily back and forth from the small, close-up world of unique events and individual volition where men try to use ideas for their own particular purposes to the larger aggregate and deterministic world of cultural conventions and collective mentalities where ideas control men." Gordon Wood, "Intellectual History and the Social Sciences," in Higham and Conkin, *New Directions*, 27–41, at 37. In other cases, intellectual historians would refer to their subjects as "men and women" while giving sustained attention only to the ideas of men. For an analysis of the universal male subject in American historiography see Scott, "American Women Historians."