Abigail Adams
Judith Sargent Murray
Mary Wollstonecraft
Frances Wright
Harriet Martineau
Margaret Fuller
John Stuart Mill
Sarah Grimké
Angelina Grimké
Elizabeth Blackwell
Emily Blackwell
Antoinette Brown Blackwell
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Susan B. Anthony
Friedrich Engels
August Bebel
Emma Goldman
Margaret Sanger
Suzanne LaFollette
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Jane Addams
Virginia Woolf
Margaret Mead
Simone de Beauvoir

THE FEMINIST PAPERS

From Adams to de Beauvoir

edited, with a new preface, by

ALICE S. ROSSI

The Feminist Papers:
From Adams to de Beauvoir

Edited, with Introductory Essays and a New Preface, by

Alice S. Rossi

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For my mother and daughters

Preface: Feminist Lives And Works

This book has been in the making for not quite two years. When the publisher approached me about editing the "essential works of feminism" in October 1970, my first response was the claim that it would be more appropriate to seek a historian rather than a sociologist as editor. The magnitude of the task—to select and abridge the critical documents in feminist history over the past two centuries—seemed overwhelming. On the other hand, there were few intellectual tasks that had given me as much pleasure as the research and writing for an introduction to John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (Rossi 1970). The enlarged scope suggested for this book held the promise of more of the same intellectual pleasure of discovery and analysis. Then, too, perhaps it was precisely because I was *not* trained as a historian that I had the audacity to undertake the project.

Most anthologies have a format of an interpretive introductory essay followed by a series of abridged documents, with at most a brief headnote for each entry, and a concluding bibliography. In preparation for writing such headnotes, I began to read memoirs and biographies of the feminists whose work I had abridged. In the course of this reading the plan for the book changed. My sociologist's and feminist's imagination was fully engaged by the attempt to trace out the connections among the ideas expressed in a published work, the personal life behind an essay or book, and the larger time and place in history in which both the life and the work were anchored. The idea grew to precede each abridged selection with an essay that would serve one or more of several ends, depending on the nature of the selection. In some cases the mode was a chronology of the personal life, placing the work in the context of that life and selecting a few issues for special exploration that seemed to speak in a lively way to our contemporary situation. In other cases it seemed more appropriate to write a sociographic rather than a biographic analysis. Here the focus was not the life of one person, but of two or more: sisters, in the case of Sarah and Angelina

Grimké; friends, in the case of Susan Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton; a whole sibling set, in the case of the Blackwells.

It was not certain that this attempt to integrate the personal lives with the published essays and books would have as much appeal to others as it clearly did to me. To test this question, I conducted an experiment in undergraduate seminars during the spring of 1971 and again in 1972. The first seminar was on the sociology of the family, and its object was to explore the family backgrounds of a number of women prominent in the nineteenth century, applying what was known from sociology and psychology about family structure and personality formation to see if these findings provided clues to the subsequent achievement of the individual women we studied. Both the students and I found this venture fascinating, and seminar discussions which tried to compare the individual cases suggested a number of additional themes to be explored with yet another sample of lives. By the spring of 1972 the work on the book was further advanced, and a different experiment was undertaken in a seminar on women's movements. For two of the early nineteenth-century feminists, the seminar members read their work first and then learned about the lives of the authors. For the next two feminists we reversed the order, and I described the personal lives before the students read the published work. The seminar members unanimously concluded that both their interest and comprehension were increased when they knew something of the personal lives before grappling with the published work.

The third test was a harsher one. Since I was neither a historian nor a biographer, I submitted samples of the essays to several friends experienced in biographic analysis. Here, too, their reaction confirmed my hope that a sociologist could indeed illuminate new aspects of familiar fields of historical inquiry. This was particularly the case when the focus was closest to the sociological tradition—in studies of such social relationships as marriage, sisterhood, parenthood, or friendship—or on a larger scale, in a search for the social structural roots of the woman's-rights movement in the decade before 1848. My colleagues also concurred with my experience that contemporary readers find the early feminist works far more interesting if they are first acquainted with the lives of the authors.

The search for selections and the writing of the essays for

this volume was a source of great personal and intellectual gratification. For one thing, it represented a return to an old love for history, but of a very different quality from previous excursions into the past. Except for the work on John Stuart Mill and his relationship to Harriet Taylor, I had never studied history with a focus on women; the more I read, therefore, the greater was my sense that there was a whole host of like-minded women who had preceded my generation in American history. I had never before experienced so keenly a sense of continuity with previous generations. The closest analogy was my mother's visit shortly after the birth of my first daughter, when there was a tangible awareness in the house of three generations of females whose lives were closely connected and which would span more than a century. I did not then appreciate what a "woman's culture" meant, and hence I could not understand then, as I do now, why my mother said it meant something more special to her for me to have a daughter than it had when my son was born the year before. As an activist and a feminist scholar, I have felt the wish for continuity, but until this project, it had been only a continuity from the present through my daughters and women students to some hoped-for future when our contemporary visions might be realized. Now I have acquired a long line of feminists in the past. There is strength in the vision of a sisterhood that has roots in the past and extends into the future. I hope this volume enables its readers to share in that vision.

The second ingredient of the intellectual pleasure was the release from the confines of my own particular training as a sociologist. Sex and age are such fundamental human attributes that they are central to almost any field of human inquiry, from physiology through sociology to art and literature. The training we have received in higher education these past forty years has been so excessively specialized that a scholar is poorly prepared to undertake any synthesis of problems involving the variables of age or sex; instead she is often paralyzed in trying to deal properly with a major variable that cuts across the artificial boundaries separating the disciplines. The emergence of departments of human development released much intellectual energy for addressing problems involving aging and human maturation. It is the hope of many feminist scholars that the emergence of women's-studies courses and research programs may do the same for problems

involving sex roles. Having had the good fortune to count historians and literary scholars among my friends, my own professional work as a research sociologist was compensated for by contact with their lively interests. But in the work for this volume I had a first experience of moving naturally across whole bodies of materials and engaging in a dialogue that drew ideas from history, psychology, sociology, and literature. It was like a whole women's-studies program inside my head —a program in which I was both student and teacher, bringing to bear countless questions from one discipline after another on the lives of the many women of the past whom I studied. Precious summer nights of the most gratifying intellectual experience I have ever known have gone into the making of this book.

One decision concerning the content of the volume was clear from the start. If a feminist in the past considered her ideas in need of two or more hundred pages to develop, it would not do at all to try to compress those ideas into a few abridged pages. I have found for myself, and my students concur, that such shallow treatment has the effect of blurring all distinctions among the early writers. Any abridgment is a violation of an author's intent, no matter how judicious an editor tries to be. But at least there should be enough of Mary Wollstonecraft or Margaret Fuller or Sarah Grimké for the reader in the 1970s to gain a sense of how these women thought, what arguments they brought to bear on their analysis, and so on. The selections, therefore, would have to be extensive enough to give each author a fair hearing. Accordingly, however, either the book would have to move into several volumes, which it could not do, or very careful screening would have to be applied to the final selections.

A second critical issue was the framework within which the selection would be made. My first surprise was to realize that after more than a month of reading nineteenth-century feminists, I had not found a single one who used the word "feminism" or "feminist." I had been misled by O'Neill's claim that "feminism is an older term and was always used to describe the woman's rights movement as such" (O'Neill 1969:x). In point of fact, the term "feminism" was rarely used in the mid-nineteenth century and referred simply to the "qualities of females." It was not until the 1890s that a concept of feminism emerged; it meant, as we mean it today, the "opinions and principles of the advocates of the extended

recognition of the achievements and claims of women," to use the somewhat awkward language of the unabridged Oxford dictionary. As near as we know, the term "feminism" was first used in print in a book review in the April 27, 1895, issue of a British journal, *The Athenaeum*. The review dealt with a novel by Miss Sidgwick, a popular writer of the day. *The Grasshoppers* tells the story of three "delicately nurtured women" who are plunged into an "abyss of poverty, privation and dependence." One of the central characters was a young woman:

> whose intellectual evolution and . . . coquettings with the doctrines of "feminism" are traced with real humour, while the poignancy of her subsequent troubles is enhanced by the fact that . . . she, alone . . . has in her the capacity of fighting her way back to independence. [Anonymous 1895].

There were assorted usages of the terms "feminism," "feministic," "feminist," and even "femininism" in European periodicals during 1895. By the turn of the century—but not until then—feminism and feminist no longer required quotation marks in the public press.

Until very recently it has been traditional to consider feminist history the equivalent of the story of the American woman's rights or suffrage movement, with perhaps a bit of attention to the more militant Pankhurst movement in England or the Woman's Party led by Alice Paul in the United States. This view seemed totally inadequate to me as a sociologist and a contemporary feminist. The emancipation or liberation of women involves more than political participation and the change of any number of laws. Liberation is equally important in areas other than politics; economic, reproductive, educational, household, sexual, and cultural emancipation are also relevant. A feminist history must include Emma Goldman as well as Elizabeth Stanton, Margaret Sanger as well as Susan Anthony, Virginia Woolf as well as Lucretia Mott—despite the fact that anarchism clearly had priority over feminism to Emma Goldman, as temperance had priority to Frances Willard and literature to Virginia Woolf. This implied that the framework of the selections would have to include not just writers and activists for whom woman's liberation was a central passion, but also those who were

equally if not more concerned with issues other than the rights of their own sex.

These considerations suggested two criteria by which to judge candidates for inclusion. For one, the book would not be confined to the movement for political rights for women but would include feminist efforts to secure economic, sexual, educational, and reproductive liberation as well. Secondly, room would have to be made for those whose contribution was made by activity, rather than including only those with skillful pens, who left books and essays for us to examine. In this book, then, an "essential work" could be a published book or a life or outstanding participation in some pioneering action dedicated to expanding the life options of women.

There was, of course, a primary list of "musts" from the very beginning of the project. A volume of "essential works" had to include selections from Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller, Sarah Grimké, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Stuart Mill, Charlotte Gilman, Virginia Woolf, and Simone de Beauvoir. By the first criterion, which broadened the spheres of concern from politics to education, sex, maternity and the economy, this basic list was quickly supplemented by Friedrich Engels, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Blackwell, Emma Goldman, and Jane Addams. The second criterion, which urged inclusion of activist as well as writing feminists, brought in Frances Wright, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Susan Anthony, and Margaret Sanger. Along the way I encountered figures unknown to me whose work and whose lives were of sufficient interest to merit inclusion; Judith Murray, August Bebel, Antoinette Brown, and Suzanne LaFollette joined the list in this way.

The lives of the feminists represented in this book span the years from 1744 to 1972, from the birth of Abigail Adams to the three women still alive and well in 1972—Suzanne LaFollette, Margaret Mead, and Simone de Beauvoir. Figure 1 may help readers to link individuals to this larger historical canvas.

There were many other feminists one would have liked to include, but to do so would have detracted from the balance sought in the design of the book. It is with great regret that I have had to omit entries for Florence Kelley, Emmeline Pankhurst, Olive Schreiner, Isadora Duncan, Margaret Dreier Robins, Mother Jones, Alice Paul, Elise Clews Parsons, Carrie Chapman Catt, and many, many more. In some cases there

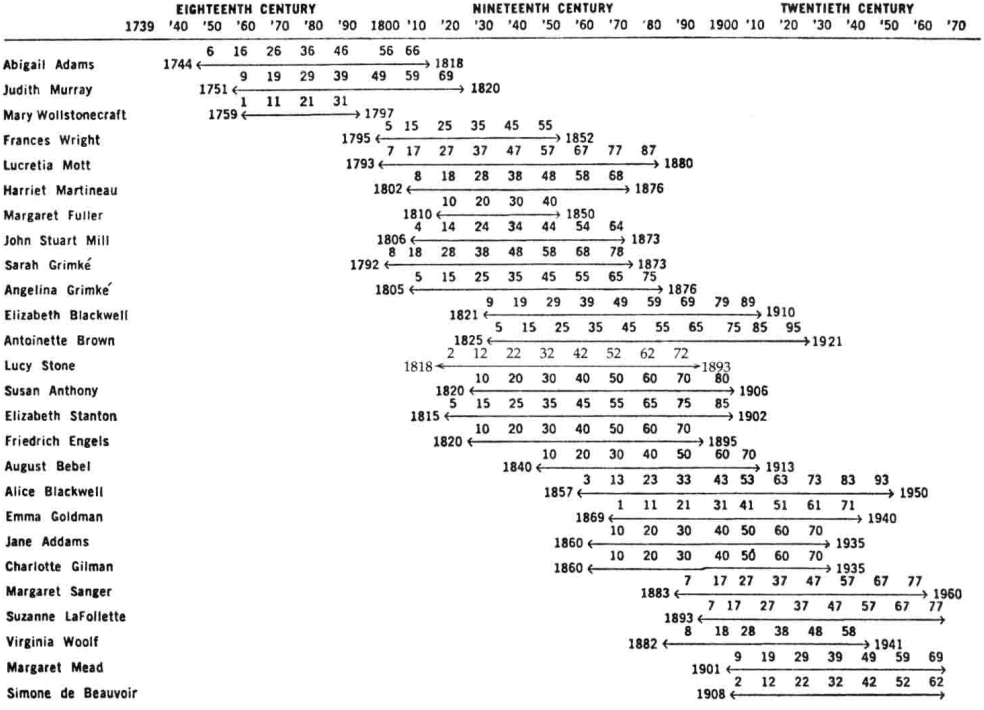

FIGURE 1: *Life Lines of Major Writers and Activists Covered in this Volume*

were no good or easily available written works or accounts of their activity. In other cases, they duplicated too closely a kind of work already better represented by someone else.

It is also with some regret that I have omitted the contemporary period. The most recent selection is from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, which in my view stands as the end of an older feminism, during a transitional period that is described in the introduction to Part 4. But we are probably too close to the contemporary scene to judge what will merit inclusion in a collection of "essential works of feminism," and in the interim a great many books and journals are now easily available in bookstores and libraries.

It is hoped that the selections, together with the interpretive essays that accompany them, will communicate the diversity that has existed under the feminist banner in the past. The feminist movement has included deeply religious women as well as atheists; conservative moralists as well as radical reformers and revolutionaries; women in deep rebellion from their families and the larger society as well as women in comfortable happy circumstances, who chipped away gently at some social expectation of appropriate behavior for women. As Margaret Fuller pointed out more than a hundred years ago, some pioneers in the cause of women are passionate rebels who serve as harbingers of future change, while others are leaders of reform who must be "severe lawgivers to themselves" if they are to seek change in the legal and social structure of their society.

Pioneers in any movement for social change will include persons with disturbed family histories and sometimes unusual personality tendencies, for the wellsprings of societal change tend to be fed, not by conformists, but by individuals who are alienated from the world around them. That is as true of men pioneers as of women pioneers, though there has been an unfortunate tendency to view such men as deeply *creative* and the women as deeply *neurotic*. It serves no purpose to sketch our feminist predecessors in rosy colors or to write filiopietistic biographies suggesting a Great Woman theory of feminist history. Such a hypothesis will serve us no better than the Great Man theory of history has done. No interpretation we place on a life or a social movement can detract from the past achievement, sometimes made at great personal cost. If we hope to see increasing numbers of lives touched by feminist ideas, we need to see our predecessors

sharply as the women they actually were, with all their weaknesses as well as their strengths. There is charisma enough in their lives and writings to pass along to another generation. If those records and the lives behind them are also to stimulate a new generation to "go and do likewise," then they must be portrayed in terms that facilitate identification with them. Since none of us is flawless, it is comforting to sense human weaknesses as well as strengths in those we admire.

Acknowledgments

There are a number of people and facilities whose assistance contributed to the making of this book. I have relied almost exclusively on the library resources of Baltimore, Maryland for the numerous books and journals necessary to the project. When I first began this work, I doubted that this source would be adequate, but I had underestimated the contributions of past generations of Baltimorians. The Enoch Pratt Library is one of the finest public libraries in the country, and its staff gave enthusiastic help to me and my principal student assistant, Sally Zulver, in tracking down numerous materials, particularly from the early nineteenth century. Secondly, my own institution, Goucher College, is a women's college, and the library holdings give silent testimony to that fact. The Goucher library is rich in all the mainstream suffrage-movement materials from the Civil War period to the early 1920s. Then there is a sad falling off, and only a rare holding from the radical and reformist tradition of feminism. The period from 1940 to 1969 projects a silent message by the sheer absence of literature on women: the college did not consider the sex of its student body relevant to a liberal education. It was a good feeling, however, to establish connections with my predecessors on the faculty from an earlier period. I do not know if they dealt very much with women's rights in their courses, but they filled the shelves of the library with feminist books, in which students could find some analysis of their own history as women. The Johns Hopkins University library was of very little use on the subject of women, reflecting the male bias of that worthy institution of higher education, though its general history holdings were of enormous help in preparation for the writing of the introductory essay to Part 2, on the social roots of the women's-rights

movement in the nineteenth century. Neither time nor funds permitted the use of special collections, unless they held a particular manuscript it seemed important to examine. Thus the Schlesinger Library was used to secure a copy of an unpublished biography of Antoinette Brown, and the Library of Congress for a famous pamphlet on family limitation by Margaret Sanger.

Goucher College was a most congenial context in which to conduct the research underlying this book. As a small college with easy access to colleagues in fields other than one's own, it was a great help to pop across a hall or climb one flight of stairs to seek an answer to a question of a history or literature colleague. I am in particular debt to Rhoda M. Dorsey, academic dean and herself an American historian, and to the Committee on Publication and Research, which awarded me the Mary Wilhelmine Williams Fellowship that permitted me to pay my dedicated assistant, Sally Zulver, during the summer of 1971.

Special thanks to the students who experimented with me in the two seminars described above. Their papers and discussions contributed in numerous ways to the progress of the book. These included, in the seminar on the sociology of the family: Lucy Amerman, Barbara Antonazzi, Nancy Brandt, Sharon Freiberg, Angela Gilbert, Amy Hurwitz, Gayle Johnson, Ellen Lipton, Sherry Nelson, Anne Ostroff, Robin Schoen, Marilyn Schwartz, Joan Urken, and Sally Zulver. More recently, in the seminar on women's movements, the collaborating students were: Joan Barth, Phyllis Braudy, Laura Cram, Katherine Edmunds, Deborah Goldberg, Caryl Goodman, Heidi Hanson, Donna Leach, Sydney Roby, Marsha Sterns, and Barbara Zetlin.

I am deeply indebted to my friend, former colleague at Goucher College and sister-feminist, Florence Howe. Her own standards of excellence in biographic and feminist analysis have been an important source of encouragement to an essentially loner-type scholar like myself. At several critical junctures in the course of my work she gave freely of her emotional support and intellectual encouragement. Her knowledge of and commitment to the growing field of women's studies has been an important prod to the sense of urgency that helped keep me at my typewriter when other commitments tempted me away.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Toni Bur-

bank, whose editorial support contributed yet another source of pleasure to the work, and to Ruth Hein, whose superb pen caught errors, suggested important additions, and smoothed many sentences.

Finally, I have the rare good fortune to have a very tender comrade in my husband, Peter, and three warmly supportive children, Peter, Kris, and Nina. They have seen little but the back of my head bent over a book or a typewriter for the past two summers. Behind my own head and ten fingers were four other heads and forty fingers that washed, cleaned, sewed, picked up, Xeroxed endless pages, and listened with interest as I shared with them the lives and ideas of past feminists and my attempts to find meaning and connections among them. "The book," as it was known on the domestic turf, has been in many ways a family enterprise.

Jemand and Julius gave a friendly and furry presence to many a night of work that ended at dawn.

ALICE S. ROSSI

Baltimore, Maryland

Preface to the 1988 Edition

It is eighteen years since I undertook the work that led to the publication by Bantam Books of *The Feminist Papers*. The initial plan for the book was a special anthology of the "essential works of feminism," with one rather short introductory essay by myself. As explained in the preface to the first edition (see p. ix–xix), the project was transformed over a two-year period to include interpretive introductions to each of the four sections of the book and a biographic essay on each of the two dozen figures whose works were abridged. The effort to join together the *lives* of feminists with their *work* is the essence of a sociological analysis, so long as you accept, as I do, the perspective of one of my early mentors, C. Wright Mills, that sociology is best located at the intersection of biography and history. I believe it was this special sociological blend of biography, history, and direct exposure to the abridged work of these major figures in feminist history and thought that has given the book its lasting appeal to readers.

It was a nostalgic experience to settle down with *The Feminist Papers* one recent evening, and to re-examine what I had written more than fifteen years ago. It was an invitation to review what has changed in my own life and work, in the scholarship on women, and in the position of women in American society, between the 1973 publication of *The Feminist Papers* and the 1988 republication of the book by Northeastern University Press. On all three counts, the changes have been very great indeed, and I wish to share my sense of the more significant of these changes in this Preface.

Books do not grow out of a vacuum, but from a fortuitous connection between a motivated author and a publisher, both responsive to the social and political climate of their time and place. The two years from 1970 through 1972, during which I worked on *The Feminist Papers*, were years of social and political ferment in the United States over sex and gender issues, as well as over race and the war in Vietnam. In 1970, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was only four years old, and women's caucuses in professional associations were