

## Collections and Resources Related to Women's Studies



The purpose of this annotated guide is to provide the researcher, teacher, and student of Fairfield with information about the resources available on the topic of women's history. While students of Fairfield history may be familiar with a few notable women whose contribution to the town have been duly researched and recorded, there were countless women who participated in the town's life and growth but whose stories remain untold. Yet women from all across the social spectrum – rich and poor, housewives and factory workers, native born and immigrant- helped to influence and shape modern Fairfield, through work, club membership, volunteerism, and politics.

This guide covers the time period from the Revolutionary War to the 1950's. The topics covered include colonial life in Fairfield for women, the overtly political (the battle over women's suffrage and prohibition repeal) social life (marriage and childbearing), women at work, education, conservation and community involvement. I have also included collections where women's participation might equip the feminist researcher with a lens through which to view a particular occupation or avocation, i.e. landscape architecture, photography and civic involvement.



## Vertical Files

Jennings, Annie B. 1855-1939

Fairfield – Mill Plain Improvement Society

*-An improvement society founded in 1921 and comprised only of women. A 1922 article describes the society's activism, from the laying of sidewalks to the installation of streetlights.*

Fairfield- Southport Women's Club Home Tour- 1954

Fairfield - Women

*-Fairfield Women Remembered by Marcia Miner; a series of bibliographical sketches of Fairfield women, including Mary Fish Silliman, Kate Moore, Annie B. Jennings, Mabel Osgood Wright, Margaret Rudkin, Charlotte Alvord Lacey, Finette Nichols, Elizabeth Banks, excerpts of Gertrude Jelliff Perry's 1908 diary.*

*-Paper: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fairfield Women: Breaking the Mold and Making a Name for Themselves. Text from PowerPoint: vignettes of 20<sup>th</sup> century Fairfield women.*

Fairfield- Witchcraft

Flanagan, Mary Louise (1891-1959)

SUBJ Witchcraft

SUBJ WWII Home front

Wright, Mabel Osgood 1859-1934

## Books & Other Resources

Alcott, William Andrus. *The young woman's guide to excellence.* 170.2 A355

Allen, L. A. Mrs. L. A. *Allen's appeal to the legislature of the state of Connecticut, for the protection of women.* 396.2 A427M

Case Lockwood and Brainard Company. *Report of the Work of the Board of the Lady Managers from "Connecticut at the Columbian Exhibition of 1893."* 606C532c

Cott, Nancy F. *The bonds of womanhood : "woman's sphere" in New England, 1780-1835.* 301.41 C846

Daughters of the American Revolution. *Chapter sketches, Connecticut Daughters of the American revolution; patron saints.* 974.6 D238CS

*Fairfield Historical Society Scrapbook.* 974.6971 FH673s 1903-1908

*-Fresh Air Association fundraiser Jul 18, 1903; Description of Fresh Air Home July 23; DAR, marriages, schools, current event clues, Meeting of Audubon Society Oct. 29, 1906, Unquowa Club (Mrs. William B. Glover Pres.) Discussed current events and literature. Consumer's League Meeting Nov. 5, 1907 at the home of Mrs. William B. Glover objectives: "abolish the sweating system...promote the well-being of employees...labels for products...Nov 7, 1907 Meeting of Audubon Society; discussed of Italians and songbirds.*

*Fairfield Historical Society Scrapbook.* 974.6971 FH673s 1908-1913

*Aug. 4, 1908: Funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Burr Gould, with instructions for homestead; Jan 1, 1909: Title to Grasmere transferred to BPT Land & Trust- fear that "a Very undesirable class of residents would be attracted to the spot...destined to become a settlement for small tar paper houses and all nationalities huddled together." March 2, 1909: Recognition of Mabel Osgood Wright as famous, local author; Red Cross; DAR meetings; May 19, 1901: Description of series of books at Fairfield Library on household economics for "the intelligent housekeepers and mothers of Fairfield."; August 27, '09: announcement of opening of Gould Homestead. Sept. 13, 1909: Long article about Gould Homestead and generosity of Gould sisters. March 24 1910: Box of Hungarian books given to Fairfield Library; Hungarian population at 400 in town. Dec. 10. 1910: Consumer's League Meeting at home of Mrs. William Glover; Nov. 16, 1911: Socialists(!) meet and organize: Dec. 11: Suffragists hold enthusiastic meeting. April. 27, 1912: Meeting of Equal Franchise League; May 10: Meeting at home of Mrs. Samuel Wheeler about protection of immigrants (speaker from the Immigrants Protective League.) c. 1912: Editorial about suffrage, anti-suffrage in Fairfield in the Middletown Sun; April 1913: Text of anti-suffragists circular stating reasons to oppose suffrage for women.*

*Fairfield Historical Society Scrapbook.* 974.6971 FH673s 1921-1926

*This contains an address presented to Miss Annie Burr Jennings by James T. Roche.*

Greenwood, Kira. *Seventeenth Century Witchcraft in Fairfield County.* [unpublished paper] 133.43097 G744s

Gregory, John. *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters.* 390.1 G822F

Fennelly, Catherine. *Connecticut women in the Revolutionary era*. 974.6 AB15

Hanaford, Phebe A. *Daughters of America; or, Women of the century*. 920 H233D

Houde, Mary Jane. *Reaching Out: A Story of the General Federation of Women's Clubs*. The Mobium Press, Chicago, 1989. Oversize 305.4 H836r

*The story of the growth and development of women's clubs and organized volunteer service from 1889 – 1989. Clubwomen were involved in every aspect of the national, state and local community.*

Maher, Kathleen. *Heroes of the home front : life north of the battlefield ; a Civil War exhibition focusing on women's contributions to the war effort*. 973.7 L817H

McCain, Diana. *Black women of Connecticut : achievements against the odds*. 920.7 B632

Moeller, Madelyn K. *Ladies of Leisure: Domestic Photography in the Nineteenth Century*. Thesis. University of Delaware, 1989. Print. 770.9 M 693  
*A research paper about women photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; includes a section about the nature photography of Mabel Osgood Wright.*

More, Hannah. *Strictures on the modern system of female education : with a view of the principles and conduct prevalent among women of rank and fortune*. 376 M835S

Moynihan, Ruth Barnes. *Coming of age : four centuries of Connecticut women and their choices*. 974.6 M938C

Schechter, Steven. *Mary Silliman's war [videorecording]*. 973.38 M393

Shuldiner, David Philip. *Connecticut speaks for itself : firsthand accounts of life in the Nutmeg state from colonial times to the present day*. 974.6 C752

Spring, Gardiner. *The excellence and influence of the female character : a sermon, preached in the Presbyterian Church in Murray-Street, at the request of the New-York Female Missionary Society*. 252.4 S769E

## **Manuscript Collection**

### **Personal Diaries, Letters, and Papers**

American Red Cross (MS B53 Boxes 1&2; OS 1)

Diaries of Sally Banks 1875-1823 (MS 26 Boxes 2 & 3, Series AA, Folders 1-8)

Diary of Hellen Bradley- 1808-1809 (MS 7 Box VIII, B-6)

Ruth Mills Bradley Collection, ca 1940-1995 (MS B80)

*First woman from Fairfield, and the first from Connecticut, to join the Women's Army Corps (WAC) after the bombing of Pearly Harbor, Hawaii in 1942. The collection includes military records, newspaper articles about her enlistment as well as photographs.*

Bridgeport Women's Organization (MS B53 Box 40)

Diary of Eunice Dennie Burr, ca 1915-1919. (Ms B20, Box XII)

Lillian Burr Papers c. 1902-1908 (MS B20, Boxes XVII & XIV)

*Boxes contain the Mount Holyoke papers, including notes and blue books of Lillian Burr. Also contains letters from her parent and younger siblings in Greens Farms describing their lives at home. There are also letters from MHC friends, describing their teaching careers at the turn of the century in Virginia and California, post-graduation.*

Connecticut Audubon Society (MS B53 Boxes 2 & 3)

Connecticut Society of the Colonial Dames of America (MS B53 Box 40)

D.A.R. Eunice Dennie Burr Chapter (MS 53 Boxes 38 & 39)

Fairfield Emergency Relief Fund (MS B53 Boxes 18 & 19)

Fairfield County Republican Women's Association bulletins, ca. 1920's & 1930's. (MS B31, Box VII)

Fairfield Democratic Women's Club (MS B53 Box 40)

Fairfield Fresh Air Association (MS B53 Box 18)

Fairfield Garden Club (MS B53 Boxes 18 & 19)

Fairfield Literary Club Records 1896-(MS B95 Box 1)

Fairfield School Records 1628-1952 (MS 14)

Fairfield Teachers Association (MS B53 Boxes 25 & 26)

Fairfield Temperance Society (MS B53 Box 26)

World War I Papers of Mrs. William B. Glover (MS B24, boxes 1 & 2)

*Helen Wardwell Glover, married to attorney William B. Glover, was involved in virtually every society and club in Fairfield during this time period: Audubon, Red Cross, D.A.R., and during the Great War organized the "home front" effort by the women in town: canning kitchens, knitting etc. She was also very active in the anti-suffrage effort, serving as the vice president of the Connecticut League opposed to Women Suffrage and as secretary to the Fairfield branch of the same organization. (Annie B. Jennings was President)*

Gould Homestead Papers (MS 6 Boxes 1 & 2)

*Folder X contains documents relating to the Gould Summer Home which opened through the bequest of the Gould sisters as a summer home for single, white, Protestant working women from 1909 until 1956, including general rules for visitors, application cards, both blank and completed; writings of Katherine Moody Spaulding, the third hostess of the homestead. Of particular interest is an autobiographical document in which Spaulding, spelling out her qualifications for the job as summer home hostess describes her background as a journalist and editor for the Bridgeport Morning Telegram. Folder Y contains newspaper clippings from the creation of the homestead in 1908 until its demolition in 1956 and through its conversion to a scholarship fund in the 1960's. One article from the Bridgeport Post (c. 1930's) describes Katherine Spaulding as the first woman editor in Fairfield County in 1899. The guest books cover most of the years of the homes existence and many contain comments and thank-you notes from the guests; at first mostly from Bridgeport and then from other Fairfield County towns, especially Danbury and Stamford.*

Greens Farms Female Auxiliary Society (MS B53 Box 32)

Pro-Suffrage Scrapbook of Clara Mossman Hill and Elsie M. Hill. (MS B84 Box 6, Folder 7)

1909 Diary of Charlotte Alvord Lacey (MS 37, Box A, Folder D)

*Daily diary that describes in great detail the birds and nature that the author encountered at her home in Southport. She also writes of social engagements, civic involvement, and efforts to have artwork recognized. Participated in many social aspects of Fairfield life.*

League of Women Voters of Fairfield (MS B53 Boxes 31-35)

Landscape Architecture Collection (MS B51)

*This collection consists primarily of landscape drawings, elevations and sketches of gardens in the Fairfield area designed by landscape architects including:*

*Breed, Vera Poggi*

*Clark, Agnes Selkirk*

*Coffin, Marian Cruger*

*Farrand, Beatrix*

*Jones, Helen Swift*

*Payson, Louise*

*Ray, Eloise A*

*Shipman, Ellen McGowan Biddle*

*Smith, Alice Orme*

*Weeks, Susan H.*

The collection also includes research correspondence of the compiler, Dona E. Caldwell.

Landscape Architecture Records of Agnes Selkirk Clark (MS B51)

Susan Lightbrown Papers. 1950's (MS B120)

*Susan Lightbrown was elected as Miss Fairfield and later crowned Miss Connecticut in July of 1957. Her collection consists of newspaper clippings, correspondence and photographs.*

Mill Plain Improvement Association (MS B53 Folders J-N)

Mill Plain Library Association (MS B53 Box 27)

Needlework Guild of America, Fairfield Town Branch (Box 29; O/s item 44)

Diary of Susan Warner Nichols, ca 1886. (MS 23, Box III)

Emma S. Nichols Scrapbook, ca. 1942-1943. (MS B81)

O'Dwyer Family Papers (MS B102 Series A)

*Letters/ papers of Sylvia O'Dwyer regarding efforts and activism by local residents and members of the W.O.N.P.R. and the Women's Alfred E. Smith Club to repeal prohibition in the early 1930's- efforts that were largely nonpartisan and crossed party and class*

*lines. Includes letters to various people, including Annie Burr Jennings, newspaper clippings and pamphlets.*

#### Oral Histories of Hungarian Immigrants (MS B111)

**Mary Katona;** *discusses memories of WWI, the Depression, Hungarian presence in Fairfield.*

**Margaret Kranyik-***Born in 1908. Discusses her voyage to America; Ellis Island; education; ethnic lines and barriers; customs & foods.*

**Elizabeth Messinger;** *Born in Hungary in 1894 and came to the U.S. at five years of age; discusses differences between her mother (born into a wealthy family & her father, into a poor family; mother worked at Warner's during the Depression while her father stayed home; moved from Bridgeport to Fairfield when married; adoption of second daughter; first world war with ethnic groups; ambulance corps fundraising; WW2 interpretation work for the VOA; work at Warner's prior to marriage to a German; courtship; Church activities and church as a center of the Hungarian community.*

**Betty and Frank Toth:** *Betty came in 1920 at the age of nine; discussed working during the Depression; went to Business College & got an office job; her father didn't "keep it like most of them did. He kept records, and he just deducted a small amount for room and board, and he saved the rest for us, and bought our clothes out of what we had..." Gardening, canning and preserving.*

**Ella Toth:** *Born 1891; discusses work, community life, marriage, voting for the first time, Hungarian presence in Fairfield, change in town over the years, WWI; gardening.*

**Irene Wargo**

#### Oral Histories of Fairfield Residents born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (MS B110)

**Mrs. Morris Lyon Burr** *b. 1896*

**Hattie Hamilton:** *b. 1882; a housewife's recollection of growing up in Fairfield; speaks of farming, cooking, marriage, school, the roles of the sexes.*

**Sally Mercurio Malafrente:** *b. 1905; first generation American born to Italian (Sicily) immigrants. The family operated Mercurio's. Recalls family life, low expectations for girls; and that "Italians were not accepted too well in Fairfield when we were young...I was invited to about two parties when I was in school."*

#### Oral Histories of Fairfield Residents from 1958-2005 (MS B112)

*Elizabeth Banks*

*Florence Bullard*

*Lottie Burr*

*Ana Butkus*



*Sophia Caco  
Margaret Decker  
Muriel Friedman  
Virginia Hayes  
Bertha Instone  
Dorothy Kish  
Frances Krewson  
Alice Longstreth  
Eliza Park  
Janice Park  
Mattie Parson  
Libby Reeves  
Elizabeth Trotter  
Elinor Wilbur*

Pequot Yacht Club (MS B53 Box 40, 41)

1908 Diary of Gertrude Jelliff Perry, ca 1873-1951 (MS B55)

*Daily diary that spans the year of her daughter's birth from 01/01/1908 through 12/31/1908 while living at her parents' home. Includes descriptions of post-childbirth recuperation, breastfeeding, daily weather and activities, town and church events, weather, paid work (typing) for her father, and a six-week trip with her husband and daughter to his hometown in Kentucky.*

Diary of Helen Prentice Perry 1935 – 1939 (MS B97)

Reeve Family Papers of Tapping Reeve, ca 1744-1823. (MS 18)

*Tapping Reeve was a noted advocate of equal education and equal legal rights for women. The collection includes personal correspondence of Tapping Reeve to various individuals.*

Papers of Ada Birdsey Rockwell Sanford, ca 1878-1892. (MS B 11)

*Papers that include business and family correspondence from 1878-1884. Her wedding invitation from 1885 and her 1892 appointment as administrator of her husband's estate.*

Emily Judson Sanford, ca 1880-1968-Photographs. (MS B11)

Saunders Family Papers- DAR Papers of Lois Julia Saunders 1911-1993. (MS B30 Boxes V-IX)

Sasquanaug Association for Improvement [Southport] (MS B53, Box 9)

Correspondence of Abigail Sherwood, ca 1857-1860. (Ms 7 Box IV, Folder D-1)

1880 Diary of Emma Sherwood, (MS 7) Oversize item R- Audio tape of Emma Sherwood's diary.

*Recollections written later that detail the girlhood of the author, who was the daughter of the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church.*

Southport Women's Club (MS B53, Boxes 11-12)

*The Southport Women's Club (originally named the Current Events Club) was formally established in 1915; in 1918 it became affiliated with the Federation of Women's Clubs. A complete and detailed set of minutes reveal the activities of the club, which originally focused on self-improvement and culture through speakers and lecturers who addressed the group on a wide ranging collection of topics, from antiques to economics to foreign affairs. (But never politics) As club membership grew, so too did the range of their civic activities.*

Scrapbook of Mary A. Sturges 1839-1905 (MS B82)

Unidentified Association [a women's club] (MS B53, Box 17)

A. Maria Wakeman's School Papers, 1888-1938. (MS 15, Box 1, Folder 1)

Recollections of a Southport Girlhood of Isabelle Guilbert Wales. (MS 37 Box VII Folder M)

Diaries of Sarah White, ca 1825-1874. (MS 43, Box 1, folder B)

Mabel Osgood Wright Photograph Collection, ca 1890-1920. (MS 54)

Visiting Nurse Association (MS B53, Box 5)

Young Ladies Education Society (MS B53, Box 28)

