

Proposal: "Right and Serious": The Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore, 1890-1920
Aperio Series of Humane Texts

Faculty supervisor: Jean Lee Cole
Student Project Manager: Hunter Flynn '18

I have 4 students interested in working on the project this summer-- a combination of EN and HS majors. They are Hunter Flynn, Katie Kazmierski, Ellen Roussel, and Sydney Jones.

In 1890, a group of highly educated women established the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore to "encourage," in their words, "right and serious views of life & literature." For twenty years, they met weekly between September and May, presenting their own poems and essays, listening to invited lecturers, and promoting each other's literary efforts. The Club was one of many organizations that sprang up during the national woman's club movement of the late nineteenth century. It was unusual, however, in its focus on literary pursuits, its Southern orientation, and its meticulous record-keeping.

Over 3000 handwritten pages of meeting minutes, as well as membership lists, scrapbooks, and a complete set of programs printed for the weekly meetings are held at the Maryland Historical Society (MDHS). These documents provide a rare look at the intellectual aspirations of women who are known today—if at all—primarily for their marital or familial connections to male business and civic leaders. The members of the Club included Francese Litchfield Turnbull, wife of then-president of Johns Hopkins University, Lawrence Turnbull; Lizette Woodworth Reese, Maryland's first female poet laureate; Henrietta Szold, who founded the Zionist women's organization Hadassah in 1909; and members of Baltimore's most elite families, including Eliza Ridgely, Hester Dorsey Richardson, and Lucy Hall Harrison.

An Aperio grant will enable a group of student researchers to transcribe the meeting minutes of the Club. These materials will become a focal text for a seminar examining shifting gender roles and American literary culture during the Progressive Era. The seminar will produce an exhibition placing the Woman's Literary Club within its social, historical, and literary contexts; this exhibition will be displayed in the Loyola Notre-Dame Library in spring 2018 and online thereafter. Both the online exhibition and an accompanying catalog/anthology produced by Loyola's Apprentice House Press will feature essays and biographical profiles compiled by seminar members.

This project also includes the participation of a year-long senior history seminar at the Friends School of Baltimore. These students will be trained in archival transcription by history teacher Josh Carlin, who will supervise their transcription of papers from the Woman's Literary Society archive at MDHS as well as letters from Eliza Ridgely, her sisters, and her mother held in the Hoyt-Ridgely Papers at MDHS. These letters provide additional primary-source documents on gender roles relevant to the spring Aperio seminar. The Friends School students will transcribe documents in class for 2-4 hours each week during the fall and spring

semesters, and will collaborate with Loyola seminar students to compile biographical profiles of the Ridgely family women that will become part of the exhibit.

Seminar students will read several important works of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American literature that portray shifting gender roles at the end of the nineteenth century, as the forces of modernization provided women opportunities for employment and education outside of the home and new ways of expressing female companionship, solidarity, and sexuality. These literary works will work together with their historical research to provide students with an in-depth, nuanced understanding of how gender roles underwent transformation during this period, how women actually experienced those transformations, and how the conflicts between modern and traditional gender roles continue to be played out today.

Timeline:

- Summer 2017: Working 20 hours per week for 10 weeks, five students transcribe documents from the Woman's Literary Club papers held at MDHS under the supervision of Professor Cole. The reading room is only open on Thursdays and Fridays; each researcher will spend 6 hours each of those days transcribing documents, and the remaining 8 hours each week reviewing others' transcriptions and doing historical and biographical research in other archives and libraries including the Hampton National Historic Site (longtime home of the Ridgely family) and the Baltimore Museum of Industry (Baltimore Electric and Gas and Mt. Vernon/Woodberry Mills employee newsletters). Researchers will receive training in the Omeka online exhibition platform.
- Fall-Spring 2017-2018: Friends School students finish transcription of Woman's Literary Club materials and transcribe materials relating to Helen Stewart Ridgely, Margaret Ridgely, Eliza Ridgely, Juliana Ridgely Yeaton, under the supervision of history teach Josh Carlin.
- Spring 2018: Aperio Seminar, Gender in American Literature 1890-1920. Literary texts will include:
 - Henry James, *The Bostonians* (1886)
 - Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)
 - Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (1905)
 - Lizette Woodworth Reese, *A Victorian Village* (1929) and selected poetry
 - Ellen Glasgow, "The Shadowy Third" (1913)
 - Winnifred Eaton, *Me: A Remembrance* (1915)
 - Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (1925)

During the seminar, students will compile biographical profiles of members of the Woman's Literary Society including Francese Litchfield Turnbull, Eliza Ridgely, Lydia Crane, Henrietta Szold, and Lizette Woodworth Reese. They will select artifacts from MDHS and other archives to include in the exhibit and exhibition catalog. These artifacts will be uploaded to the class Omeka site, which will be used to generate the online exhibit. One student in the seminar will be the liaison to Apprentice House; another student will serve as Omeka site manager.

- Late spring 2018: Loyola/Notre Dame Library exhibition; exhibition catalog/anthology produced by CM Book Design and Production course in time for the exhibition. Proposed elements of exhibition:
 - Introductory exhibit label briefly describing the history of the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore (expanded essay included in catalog and online)
 - Photographs and biographical profiles of 6-8 Woman's Literary Club members (expanded profiles included in catalog & online)
 - Page images and transcriptions from Woman's Literary Club programs and minutes (fuller excerpts of transcribed documents included in online exhibition)
 - Books, poems, music, and authors featured in Club meetings, with exhibit labels written by students explaining their significance (included online; an essay describing a typical club meeting included in print catalog)
 - Passages from relevant literary texts and student commentary (included online)
- Summer 2018: Online exhibition goes live on Omeka.net.

Budget:

\$12,500.00	Research stipends for 5 students, 20 hrs/wk for 10 weeks
\$956.25	FICA
\$1500.00	Photography fees (\$.50/image at MDHS)
\$4000.00	Summer research stipend for Prof. Cole
\$1000.00	Online publication fees (10-15 items)
\$1000.00	Reproduction fees for items included in LND Library exhibition
\$600.00	Transportation fees (\$3.50/day) for summer researchers
\$500.00	Student/faculty training in Omeka
\$500.00	Publicity and other residuals
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\$22,556.25	TOTAL