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The purpose of this project was to develop a selection tool and annotated bibliography of collective biographies of women written for children. This paper provides a research base for and rationale of an online resource that librarians may use to support children in their research of women throughout history. The tool may also be used to support collection development. The website invites librarians to submit completed schema for collective biographies outside the scope of this project. Included within this paper are the elements of this master's project: the descriptive schema, directions for its use, the coding scheme used within the schema, and guidelines for evaluating text for problematic representation.

Headings:

- Annotated bibliography
- Children's nonfiction
- Collective biography -- Women
- Collection development in libraries
- Juvenile biography

COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHIES OF WOMEN WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN: A
PROJECT TO CREATE A SELECTION TOOL AND ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY

by
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Introduction

In 2015 City Lights Publishing released *Rad American Women A to Z* by Kate Schatz and Miriam Klein Stahl. The *New York Times* bestselling book spurred an explosion of collective biographies of women for the youth market (Bird, 2018). From board books to young adult titles, more than thirty titles have been released in the subsequent three-year period.

As Bird (2018) notes, authors of these collective biographies have taken great pains to make these books as diverse as possible. Unlike “second wave” feminism with its white, hetero-centrism, these books align with a more inclusive vision of feminism. The identities of the girls and women featured in these books range from the dominant (white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied, neurotypical, Christian) to the historically marginalized (indigenous, women-of-color, transgender, lesbian or pansexual, disabled, neuro-atypical, Muslim, etc.)

While librarians may celebrate this plethora of resources available for readers, identifying the titles that match needs is a challenge. Some students will be seeking texts that allow them to envision their futures, while others may be looking to read about a specific woman. Perhaps that reader is completing an assignment about a particular historical

figure. Previewing these texts on Amazon, for instance, one can find the intended audience age ranges for texts and publisher summaries. This information does not, however, identify all biographies in a given book. If, for example, a librarian knew, based on her community profile, that transgender role models were needed, knowing which of these texts included transgender women would assist in selection. If the books were going to be used by teachers as mentor texts for writing instruction on how to craft biography, titles such as Chelsea Clinton's *She Persisted* would not be as good a fit as one of Schatz and Klein Stahl's three books.

School librarians are responsible for creating and maintaining collections that engage the students they serve. They have a specific charge to match their collections to the learning goals of the schools in which they are based. It is also their responsibility to manage acquisitions in light of limited resources. School library budgets in the United States have not yet returned to 2010 levels when there were dramatic cuts (Barack, 2016). A selection tool that identifies the contents, format, intended audience, and profiles, of these collective biographies would assist school librarians in making acquisition choices.

Historically selection tools for collective biography for children have served as tools for librarians to guide children to particular texts in order to find information about a given biographee. Barancik (2004) specifically addresses the purpose of the *Guide to Collective Biographies for Children and Young Adults* as an aid for students to locate information about historical figures in order to complete school assignments.

Conversely, selection tools for other text types have served to evaluate the quality of the writing, illustrations, and representations. Derman-Sparks' (2017) "Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books," aids caregivers, librarians, and other education professionals with critically assessing texts for racist, sexist, homophobic, and other problematic elements.

The intent of this project was to create a selection tool that would:

- serve the goal of identifying the people profiled in collective bibliographies for children and youth;
- identify the domains and identities (racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, ability, gender identity/gender expression/sexual orientation, family structure) of the entries;
- evaluate the texts as more appropriate for use as aspirational material or reference sources;
- identify problematic representations.

The selection tool was then used to create an annotated bibliography of collective biographies of women written for children and youth published between 2015 and 2018.

The bibliography has been published online at <https://collectivebiographiesforchildrenandyoungadults.wordpress.com>. Additionally, the tool has been made available on this site for use by library professionals and other educators to apply to texts outside of the scope of the current project.

Literature Review

1.1 Role of Literature in the Socialization of Youth

Socialization of children occurs through both intentional and unplanned interactions in their worlds. “Children’s literature presents children with society’s overt and covert values and often explains and justifies what is generally considered appropriate patterns of behaviors and beliefs” (Boutte, 2002, p. 147). Additionally, these texts inform readers what society believes about cultural groups (Naidoo, 2014; Crisp, Gardner & Almeida, 2018). Through intentional production and selection of literature that affirming of all cultural groups,

children’s literature become a means for the conscious promotion of human values that will help lead to greater human liberation. We are advocates of a society which will be free of racism, sexism, ageism, materialism, elitism, [ableism] and a host of other negative values (Guidelines, 1980, p. 9).

Conversations and research about the importance of introducing affirming and diverse texts to children has focused on fiction. With the introduction of the Common Core and research into the value of nonfiction texts in classrooms beginning in the earliest grades (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003), young readers began to explore nonfiction texts as part of their school curricula.

It is important to remain cognizant of the fact that, as cultural products, nonfiction books do not present readers with a neutral, objective view of the world. The texts (like all children’s books) are ideological constructions that present depictions that may possibly reflect reality, but also help shape and influence the ways in which readers view and understand themselves, the people they love, and the

individuals and life experiences by which they are surrounded (Crisp, Gardner & Almeida, 2018, p. 248).

1.2 Biography as a Tool for Children and Youth

Since the nineteenth century juvenile biographies have been used to inculcate youth with societal norms and values. These texts frequently promoted “nationalism, patriotism, loyalty to country and tribe, and religious allegiances” (Lukenbill, 2006, p. 3). Lukenbill (2006) posits that newer biographies aim to help youth “understand human experiences, social concerns, and history” (p. 3). Biographies now serve to expand awareness of potential life opportunities, as well as understanding of cultural groups that may be outside a young person’s own experiences. (Schoon, 2014; Lukenbill, 2006).

Biographies for children and youth have encouraged both traditional values, as noted above, and progressive ideas. “Juvenile biographies may be deemed ‘propagandistic’ or ‘progressive’ (or both), but they all reconstruct stories from a shared past for use by the public in the present” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 20). Authors highlight individuals who emulate or exemplify the standards of behavior they deem instructive for youth. “Many children’s biographies promote conservative images of selfhood, but they have also played a vital role in progressive social agendas, such as the women’s and African American civil rights movements” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 21).

While majority populations have traditionally been the focus of juvenile biography, “since at least the 1930s, scholars and educators have argued for biography as a

particularly powerful genre for conveying the histories of African Americans” (Marshall, 2008, p. 32). These books offer messages that are meaningful for children from both dominant and historically-marginalized groups. Biographies of black womanhood can demonstrate and inspire agency by demonstrating “consciousness, self-definition, and resistance” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 19).

Biography serves as a tool for the development of agency. Agency is “an experience of freedom and a recognition that acting within that freedom has the potential to effect real change in one’s world, whether in one’s own community or beyond” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 23).

By foregrounding the historical agent, biographical texts teach children about their own relationship with the past, the values of the present, and their responsibility to become the agents of the future.... Juvenile biographies thus instantiate and perpetuate public memories, in part as a source for models of judgment and action and to delineate an individual’s role in an unfolding drama of action (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 19).

In their work with young gifted African Americans, Floyd and Hébert (2010) found that through “exposure to high quality biographical materials, young African American children are provided with mirror images of themselves” (p. 40) and “serve to inspire and motivate young gifted culturally diverse children” (p. 41). Dorr (2011) asserts that the lives of those profiled serve as inspiration for readers to take action to “make the most” of their own lives (p.42).

As young people mature and begin to critically look at society, biography can serve as a model for the role individuals play within society. “Biographies personalize history by focusing on the motivations and driving forces behind personal actions. Through biographies, adolescents can see that while social constructs can be harmful to some individuals and helpful to other, these constructs can be challenged and changed” (Bucher & Hinton, 2014, p. 257).

1.3 Collective Biography

Collective (or collected) biographies are works “made up of brief life stories of several people who have a common element. Their common experiences may relate to any area of life—for example, occupation, physical abilities or disabilities, gender, age, avocation, or cultural identity” (Latrobe, Brodie, & White, 2002, p. 41). “Collective biographies differ from biographical dictionaries in that they tend to describe fewer people in greater detail” (Hannabuss & Marcella, 1993, p. 190). Since the beginning of publishing, these texts have been in demand (Searing, 2007). These texts celebrate “the lesser-known names without eschewing the famous ones” (Bird, 2018, p. 25). Hannabuss and Marcella (190) note that some biographees are only documented in these resources.

Collective biographies are typically organized thematically. They are “written to provide a brief explanation about specific groups of people, such as presidents, sports heroes and scientists. Some of these biographies detail the lives of lesser-known individuals who have performed some great contribution to their trade or had a great impact on their culture, others' lives or the world.” (Constantine & Hartman, n.d., n.p.).

Bishop (n.d.) examined 19th century collective biographies of women. Novels of the period presented traditional gender roles. These biographies

tend to dictate a different destiny for women than men—in their prefaces or narrative asides. But in part because the biographical and historical narratives have some factual fidelity to noteworthy actions, personalities, and circumstances, these narratives stretch what twenty-first-century readers have come to expect of proper women in the past. The standards of feminine conduct are waived for the saints, queens, politicians, warriors, nurses, writers, assassins, mistresses, explorers, artists, reformers, farmers, entrepreneurs, celebrities, educators, and mothers, wives, or sisters of famous men—all types of “women in all ages and all countries,” as a common phrase puts it. (n.p.)

By examining exceptional women, girls and young women can imagine options that are not constrained by societal norms.

1.4 Identity Development

Identity development is a complicated, ongoing process. “Books children read and interact with, including those used in classrooms and educational settings, can influence children’s self-awareness and help them develop a positive self-identity” (Koss, 2015, p. 32). Naidoo (2014) notes that “the work of Vygotsky (1986) informs us that language and culture play a significant role in a child’s social and identity development and construction of meaning. Cultural traditions and social practices have the ability to moderate the way children think and learn. A child’s self-esteem is largely influenced by

the way the child and overall society views the cultural group to which the child belongs. Vygotsky explains that children use expressive media such as books to understand the world around them” (p. 2). Lukenbill (2006) address the role of context in development of self-identity. “Biography is a major element in this social context that will influence our views of ourselves as well as of others” (p. 12).

Identity development is multifaceted. Among the ways people understand themselves is through the lenses of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, place, and economic status. Among the first questions asked of expecting parents is the sex of the baby. “Early experiences in the family and school contexts cumulate to shape self-concepts, choices and behaviours which in turn become part of the gendered social world that impact and mould individual experiences and perceptions.” (Schoon, 2014, p. 152). “Girls become girls through their negotiation of raced, classed and sexed feminities” (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2005, p.3). Gender Schema Theory (GST) “posits that depictions of female and male gender roles impact children’s development of gender identity” (Koss, 2015, p. 33). Children’s literature has had a history of presenting girls in stereotypically passive roles. “GST scholars assert that gender inequities as portrayed in text and image can provide boys with a sense of entitlement while lowering girls’ self-esteem” (Koss, 2015, p. 37).

Varga-Dobai (2013) examined the impact of feminism on children’s literature.

“As a result of the consciousness raising activities of the feminist movement, publishers and critics of children’s literature paid close attention to how children’s developing sense of gender was influenced by the patriarchal ideologies

embedded in children's books, and they welcomed books that challenged traditional gender-role portrayals (Varga-Dobai, 2013, p. 142).

She further notes that “qualitative studies have traced the social, political, and cultural contexts that contributed to the formation of certain female subjects in children's literature and scrutinized the socializing effects of such stories on girl readers. Critical insights on representation, prompted by Black and third-world feminists, further challenged feminist theory and gender portrayals in multicultural children's literature” (Varga-Dobai, 2013, p. 143).

1.5 Erasure/Invisibility: Who Has Been Missing in Biographies for Youth

In her 1970 index to juvenile collective biographies, Silverman examined 471 texts published between 1922 and 1968. Of the approximate 4,600 entrants, only 471 were women. Of those, 70% were American. When Barancik (2004) undertook to index collective biographies for children and youth published between 1988 and 2002, the percentage of women represented grew to 40%. Yet, the overrepresentation of American women within those profiled did not change. Bird (2018) notes that “collected biographies of *both* men and women offer a very different roster of women than those found in most children's biographies. Too often the number of men can overwhelm female contributions to the field” (p. 26).

The overrepresentation of white males in juvenile literature is not specific to biography. “Although children of color in the United States make up about 40% of the population, recent statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book center show a lack of

diversity in children's books" (Santora, 2013, n.p.). "Books have the potential to create lasting impressions. Not seeing themselves, and the groups to which they belong, represented in books can make children feel devalued. But, when books contain heroes and experiences to which children can relate, they set the scene for fostering children's positive self-concept and respect for diversity" (Santora, 2013, n.p.) "Most of the tools that teachers use for literacy instruction and to guide children's recreational reading choices advantage white children and marginalize children of color" (Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, & Koehler, 2009, p. 7). "Children's literature is still not authentically portraying our multiethnic world" (Koss, 2015, p. 36). "Results of this study show that children who interact with current picturebooks predominantly see White faces and receive the message that, according to scholars of [Critical Race Theory] to be White is to be better" (Koss, 2015, p. 37).

The historical erasure and minimization of the lives of women, both white and women of color, has had detrimental impact. If students of color do not see themselves in biographies and other nonfiction texts, they can't imagine themselves doing that thing. (Floyd & Hébert, 2010). Some communities work around the mainstream publishing industry to mitigate this erasure. "In the African American community, the writing of biographies has functioned in the projects of both historical recovery and racial uplift.... Teachers such as Mary McLeod Bethune and librarians such as Augusta Baker used biographical texts to bring the lessons of 'race history' to African American children" (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 21).

The Combahee River Collective (1977/2013) recognizes the importance of activists whose work preceded its own.

There have always been Black women activists—some known, like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frances E. W. Harper, Ida B. Wells Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell, and thousands upon thousands unknown—who had a shared awareness of how their sexual identity combined with their racial identity to make their whole life situation and the focus of their political struggles unique. Contemporary Black feminism is the outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice, militancy, and work by our mothers and sisters (pp. 116).

The LGBTQ community has been routinely erased from biographies for youth. Crisp, Gardner, and Almeida (2018) note the first nonfiction text with LGBTQ content was published in 1979. Their critical content analysis of Orbit Pictus Award books noted that biographies of six people known to be queer, failed to address or acknowledge this aspect of their identities.

The fact that none of these focal subjects is identified directly in the books as LGBTQ reflects larger patterns across children's literature, where heterosexual identities are promoted explicitly while a code of silence and invisibility often surrounds any inclusion of queer-identified people. Today, the invisibility of same sex desire in youth literature remains particularly evident in terms of bisexuality and other non-normative identities that threaten to destabilize the homosexual/heterosexual binary (Crisp, Gardner & Almeida, 2018, pp. 253-54).

Representations of other historically-marginalized groups have been poorly handled in nonfiction for youth. “The most neglected and stereotyped kinds of females have been women and girls from the Third World” (Guidelines, 1980, p. 17). Additionally, as Fresch (1996) notes, “many cultures have long traditions of oral storytelling as their only means to record history. However, these cultures may be voices that go unheard when history is recorded” (p. 441).

The lives of people with cognitive, physical, or emotional disability has not been adequately represented in texts for youth. “Although an estimated 20 percent of people in the U.S. have one or more type of disability, there are disproportionately few children’s picture books about people with, or addressing the issue of disability” (Myers & Bersani, 2008, n.p.).

It is imperative that “due to the relatively small number of children’s books about people of color, people who are gay and lesbian or people with physical and mental disabilities, adults should include high-quality children’s literature by, about and including these groups in their children’s book collections” (Santora, 2013, n.p.).

1.6 Problematic Representations

As noted above, it is vital that the quantity of representations of historically-marginalized people increases. However, the quality of those representations must be accurate.

Historically, there have been women profiled in juvenile biographies. The quality of

those entries was frequently problematic with “cursory treatment of (female) luminaries and an occasional tendency to dwell on women’s physical appearance, frail health, and domestic details” (Searing, 2007, p. 470). “Repeatedly exposing children to biased representations could have dangerous consequence; it could make such distortions become a part of their thinking, especially if reinforced by societal biases” (Santora, 2013, n.p.). Naidoo (2014) cautions that

children’s materials that provide inaccurate, stereotyped depictions of diverse languages and cultures can equally influence children. If children are consistently exposed to books and other media that negatively represent their culture, then it is likely they will internalize these social messages and develop a poor sense of self. Similarly, negative images or misinformation about a particular cultural group reinforces stereotypes in children outside the culture (Naidoo, 2014, p. 3).

Critical Disability theorists “focus on the misassumption that those with physical, emotional, or cognitive impairments cannot participate in mainstream social activities” (Koss, 2015, p. 34). In her examination of diversity in picture books Koss (2015) found that “ableism is still apparent in contemporary picture books, and having a disability is depicted as something that needs to be fixed or hidden” (Koss, 2015, p. 38).

The same handful of African American women (e.g. Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman) have been profiled in many biographies for youth. When the breadth of those profiled is limited, it creates essentialist views of African American women. Yet, there is no singular “African American female experience” (Marshall, 2008, p. 31).

Representations of all historically marginalized groups risk essentialism if only one or two stories are told. “In well-meaning attempts to teach diverse literature, we risk presenting a series of single stories. Such pedagogy can generate stereotypes” (Ehst & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2014, 24). As Adichie (2009) asserts “the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story” (n.p.)

1.7 Disrupting Stereotypes and Essentialism

Stereotypes and biases present in literature do not exist in a vacuum.

Books often contain the same stereotypes and biases that are part of other media.

Selecting good children’s books also involves the anti-bias approach of making an active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination. Good children’s books challenge stereotypes, provide a realistic glimpse into the lives of diverse groups of people, help children learn to recognize unfairness and provide models for challenging inequity (Santora, 2013, n.p.).

Through careful and intentional book selection, gatekeepers can help disrupt biases.

“Books also assist children in breaking and questioning stereotypes and help broaden their cultural perspectives” (Koss, 2015, p. 32).

Counterstorytelling is a path to disrupting biases through the telling of stories “often not told” (Koss, 2015, p. 33). “CRT scholars believe that by giving voice to the marginalized, counterstories validate their life circumstances and serve as powerful ways to challenge

and subvert the versions of reality held by the privileged” (Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, & Koehler, 2009, p. 6). Librarians and

teachers are in a unique position to disrupt the single story through texts they teach and by embracing social justice pedagogies. The human condition is not represented through a single story, and teachers enacting social justice pedagogy incorporate texts important to students’ lives that reflect the experiences and identities of *all* students (Dodge & Crutcher, 2015, p. 95).

Collective biographies can mitigate essentialism by representing a wide range of individuals.

In an effort to explore what students take away from biographical representations, Loewen (2001) asked “dozens of college students who Helen Keller was and what she did. They all know that she was a blind and deaf girl. Most of them know that she was befriended by a teacher, Anne Sullivan, and learned to read and write and even speak” (p. 42). They had learned an ableist message about how, with the help of Sullivan, Keller overcame her disability. Yet few of them were aware of Keller’s life beyond childhood. “To ignore the 64 years of her adult life or to encapsulate them with the single word *humanitarian* is to lie by omission. The truth is that Helen Keller was a radical socialist” (p. 42). “If we believe the role of schools is to confront societal biases, teach for equity and justice, and create hopeful glimpses of the kind of society we would like, we need not only to equip our classrooms with children’s literature that depicts disability, but also to find books that are of high aesthetic quality and accurately illuminate disability experiences” (Myers & Bersani, 2008, n.p.)

As noted above, the LGBTQ community has historically been erased from nonfiction literature for children and youth. “If we acknowledge gay people’s contributions in every area of our society, young people’s perceptions of what it means to be gay can go beyond the often-threatening issue of sexuality” (Johnston, 2001, p. 197). “Lifestyles vary widely in society, and as policy makers and providers of services, we must also consider other life options such as gay, lesbian, and transgender youth” (Lukenbill, 2006, p. 9). “From elementary school on, teachers need to talk about gay people so children learn they are a normal part of our society. Many students have lesbian and gay family members whom they love. They must not feel they have to hide or be embarrassed by these relationships” (Johnston, 2001, p. 197).

In selecting books for libraries or classrooms, it is essential to assure a wide range of people and communities are honestly characterized. “In order to avoid ‘distorted mirrors and windows,’ be sure the books contain accurate representations of other cultures and remember that no single book can adequately portray one particular group’s experience” (Santora, 2013, n.p.). Naidoo notes that “if children are not exposed to the lives, cultures, and languages of children from around the world, they miss the opportunity to learn how to function in a culturally pluralistic world. Global understanding is part of being culturally competent. Children that exhibit global understanding can acknowledge how cultural differences, personal decisions, and social issues impact lives at a global level” (p. 6).

1.8 Culturally Responsive Practice and Cultural Competence

“With increasingly diverse school populations comes a need to design school environments and experiences that are culturally responsive” (Floyd & Hébert, 2010, p. 40). “Ethnicity, race, family composition, ancestry, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language fluency, citizenship status, religious preference, age, gender expression, education level, and domicile are all aspects of a person’s culture” (Naidoo, 2014, p. 2). “Such an approach (CRP) is based on the belief that a positive self-concept, knowledge of and pride in one’s ethnic identity, and academic achievement are inextricable intertwined” (Floyd & Hébert, 2010, p. 40). “For culturally diverse students school is more engaging, motivating, and relevant when they examine their own culture as well as the culture of others” (Floyd & Hébert, 2010, p. 40).

Access to biographies of a diverse range of women can help prepare young people in the U.S. for the world in which they live. “As our nation continues to diversify, it is essential that children learn to understand the important role of their culture and the cultures of other people in creating an overall global culture respectful of differences” (Naidoo, 2014, p. 2). “Educators can guide students to develop cross-cultural understanding at an early age by using well-written picture book biographies which represent people from diverse backgrounds” (Morgan, 2009, p. 219). This will “lead students to understand and appreciate perspectives of people from different backgrounds can aid teachers to adhere to these standards when teaching” (Morgan, 2009, p.220). “Children’s materials that accurately portray diversity in multiple languages and cultures can have a positive influence on a child’s self-image and help him or her build bridges of cultural understanding” (Naidoo, 2014, p. 3). “When selecting books for the library collection or

to use in library programs, it is imperative that children's librarians choose materials representative of a wide range of perspectives and cultures. Opportunities should be provided for children and caregivers to hear stories and interact with characters whose lives and experiences are different from their own. Children need a global perspective on the world in order to develop cultural competence and move beyond their immediate environment. They need to hear more than one story once a year about a particular cultural group" (Naidoo, 2014, p. 6). "As nonfiction literature gains prominence in American classrooms and libraries, it is essential that we ensure the books we choose contain an array of authentic and nuanced representations" (Crisp, Gardner & Almeida, 2018, p. 261). "By showing the perspectives of the marginalized, it sends the message that all people's lives and cultures matter" (Koss, 2015, p. 33).

A wider range of texts provides an additional indirect benefit for students. Biographies increase teacher knowledge and cultural awareness which enhance "their ability to address, the needs of culturally diverse students" (Floyd & Hébert, 2010, p. 41).

As professionals work to create environments that prepare culturally-competent citizens "it is important to search for books that provide multiple perspectives to encourage acceptance of others, have compassion for multiple perspectives to encourage acceptance of others, have compassion for the lives of people different from themselves, develop a sense of fairness in how they deal with others, and recognize issues of social justice" (Fresch, 1996, p. 441). "Attention to diversity benefits all students. Because children of various races interact in the classroom, it is vital that they see not only themselves but also one another as all having equally high potential" (Floyd & Hébert, 2010, p. 40).

1.9 Changes in who is included

“Prior to the advent of the women’s movement, standard biographical sources slighted women” (Searing, 2007, p. 470). “The first few titles deeming it fit to include women were small chapbooks that completely sanitized their subjects and unabashedly promoted their pious Protestant ways. The first of such books was *Biography for Girls; or, Moral and Instructive Examples for the Female Sex*, published in London 1814. By the 1820s, a few authors began to include lives of famous women, but with the same purpose, and told in the same overly dramatic, sanitized fashion” (Dorr, 2011, p. 43). Second-wave feminism and the development of academic field of women’s studies led to notable increase in the publishing of biographies of women (Searing, 2007). “Hundreds of English-language biographical reference books devoted women subjects were published between 1966-2006. The works compensated for underrepresentation of women in standard sources and responded to the intense interest in women’s lives on the part of feminist scholars” (Searing, 2007, p. 469).

Gone are the days when kids would learn about the same six female historical figures over and over again. Those women haven’t disappeared from our books or history, nor should they. But at the same time, it’s marvelous to consider which women have become the standard bearers for the next generation of young readers (Bird, 2018, 25).

Bird (2018) found that “most of the women in [*Rad American Women A-Z*] had never appeared in a book for children before” (p. 25).

The civil rights movements of the mid-twentieth century also resulted in changes in publishing.

Children’s literature scholar Rudine Sims Bishop points out that, in fact, the entire enterprise of producing a body of juvenile historical literature by, about , and for African Americans was founded on the “desire to make Black children– and all American children–aware of the achievements of individual African Americans, the contributions of African Americans to this society , and the enduring struggle against oppression and discrimination” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 21).

“From the 1960s onward, the developing African American feminist tradition intensified the need for and the potential impact of juvenile biographies about women like [Sojourner] Truth” (VanderHaagen, 2012, p. 22).

Examining collective biographies of women published after *Rad American Women A-Z*, Bird (2018) found the authors “[took] pains to be as inclusive as possible, citing a wide range of religions, ethnicities, backgrounds, and occupations, though oddly very few books include transgender women” (p. 26).

1.10 Guides to Collective Biography

Reference tools for librarians and teachers that examine collective biographies for youth have been produced in the past (Silverman, 1970, 1975, 1979, 1988; Barancik, 2004).

These resources identified the titles of the texts and organized entrants according to a variety of subject guides. While none of these resources identified male entrants as a subject group, each contained a subject section for women. These sections were organized first by geography (and categories such as biblical and saints) then

alphabetically. Barancik (2004) included phrases identifying information about the entrants. No such indexes exist for books published after 2002.

1.11 Selection Tools

A variety of assessment tools and checklists are available to assist librarians and other educators with evaluating children's literature for bias and stereotypes. While some of these tools address nonfiction, they primarily focus on story elements typical of fictional narrative texts. There are guidelines, however, that may be gleaned from these sources that are useful in assessing nonfiction texts.

Selection tools applying anti-biases lenses to children's literature have common criteria (Santora, 2013; Derman Sparks, 2017; Myers & Bersani, 2008; Washington, 2009, Shiohita, n.d.; Boutte, 2002). These tools guide the evaluator to look for:

- Biased language, epithets, loaded words
- Stereotypes
- Invisibility or erasure
- Tokenism
- Imbalance
- Consideration of the inclusion and treatment of diversity in race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, gender expression and identity, disability, age, family structure, native language, occupation, body shape/size, culture, and geographic setting
- Accuracy

Santora (2013) provides guidelines for assessing book collections. While she created a list to examine across books, the criteria she names can be used to look within a single collective biography. Criteria such as representation of “people from a variety of cultural groups, age ranges, and sizes, including some with disabilities” (n.p.) can be applied when examining these texts for diversity.

Project Methods

1.12 Creation of Selection Tool

I created a selection tool by developing a schema based on the information identified in previously published guides to collective biographies (Silverman, 1970, 1975, 1979, 1988; Barancik, 2004) that enumerates the following elements of collective biographies (see Appendix A for the schema and directions for its use):

- Title
- Author(s)
- Illustrator(s)
- Copyright date
- Imprint and/or Publisher
- Recommended age/grade level
- Usefulness of text for research for students learning about historical figures
- Women profiled by name
- Identities represented in the work (LGBTQ, race/ethnicity, dis/ability, religion)

- Domain/reasons for fame/renown/acclaim; each entrant will be listed with the domain(s) for which she is known
- Critical Reviews
- Notes
- Issues to note

1.13 Emerging Patterns

As I described the collective biographies using the schema, I made adjustments to the directions for its use. I initially tried to create larger groupings for domains. For example, all women who fought for change were identified as activists. After reflecting on how the selection tool might be used by the intended audience, I decided to use the domain information as identified by the author of each text. An author might, for instance, identify an entrant as an activist, while another author might refer to the same woman as a suffragette. Now a librarian or teacher could help a reader find a text with suffragettes or abolitionists or peace activists. This change also created consistency between domain and identity code creation.

A later change to the directions for using the schema addressed potential erasures, as well as problematic language and illustrations. The section for additional notes at the end of the schema was separated into two categories: Notes and Issues to Note. The former category includes strengths, highlights, and neutral observations of the text. Issues to note may include stereotypes, problematic language or illustrations, erasures, or a failure to accurately address an area of identity. A common issue seen was the identification of someone as Native American without identifying tribal affiliation.

I used Derman-Sparks' (2017) "Guide for selecting anti-bias picture books", Myers & Bersani's (2008) "Ten quick ways to analyze children's books for ableism," and the "Washington models for the evaluation of bias content in instructional materials" (2009) to create the Guidelines for Evaluating Text (Appendix C). The original guides were not created specifically to evaluate collective biographies, so I adapted their criteria, eliminating factors that compared the relationships between characters in text.

If I were aware of a factor of an entrant's identity or life that was not enumerated in the text or shown in the illustrations, I did not name that identity. For instance, in an entry about Billie Jean King, if the text did not recognize that she identifies as lesbian, the schema would not reflect that she is part of the LGBTQ+ community.

1.14 Testing the Tool

To ensure that the schema and directions are clear, I gave the tool and one collective biography to three recent MSLS graduates from UNC-Chapel Hill. The annotations by these raters were assessed for interrater reliability. Based upon their use of the schema, both the directions for use and identity codes were revised.

1.15 Location/Identification of Texts to Include in the Annotated Bibliography

The 33 books identified for inclusion in the schema were found through the following sources:

- Amazon: children's books > biography > women
- WorldCat: J920.72

- NoveList advanced search: “collective biographies” AND women; published 2015-2018 for audiences: ages 9-12, ages 0-8
- The Newest Collective Biographies About Women in History from Book Riot

The scope of this analysis was limited to books that were not domain specific. For example, Rachel Ignatofsky published two collective juvenile biographies of women in the 2015-2018-time frame. These books were not be included in this schema, as one text was limited to women in science and the other to women in sports.

See Appendix D for a list of the texts included in the project.

Conclusion

The publishing trend that began with *Rad American Women A – Z*, has resulted in a plethora of texts for librarians, teachers, and parents to purchase for young readers. While some women, like Malala Yousafzai and Ada Lovelace, appear in both collective and stand-alone picture book biographies, these collective biographies create opportunities for readers to learn about less-well known entrants, as well. Many of these books are structured to inspire readers to be rebel girls, fearless changemakers, and rad leaders. Introductions to these texts often reveal the author’s wish that readers will be inspired to reach for their dreams and not let other’s expectations deter them.

It is my hope that the website will assist librarians with locating resources for patrons or students. The search function on the website allows quick identification of which books contain entries of a given person. In this way, the guide will provide the kind of information that was found in printed guides to collective biographies.

For the scope of the project I limited the years of publication and the intended audience of the books in the bibliography. I am hopeful that users of the website will use the schema to supplement the site with additional collective biographies.

As I created the annotated bibliography, I noticed several possible areas for future examination. Content analysis comparing representations of the same entrants across texts could provide further information about particular authors' biases or expectations about readers' readiness for different topics. Is a factor of identity only addressed when the entrant worked for equal treatment or was the first person of that identity to reach a particular milestone? How are issues of Colonialism addressed in different texts? How does Vashti Harrison's (the sole black author who had books in this project) lived experience impact how she writes about these women's lives? These are among the questions that are suitable for further research.

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Washington models for the evaluation of bias content in instructional materials. (2009, September). Retrieved October 1, 2018, from <http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/pubdocs/WashingtonModelsfortheEvaluationofBias.pdf>

Appendix A –Schema

Domain: Collective Biographies of Women Published for Children ages 0-12

Target audience: Librarians, teachers, and others who select texts for acquisition and use with students

Scope:

In order to be included

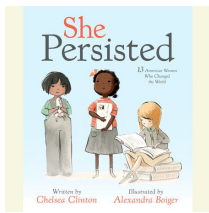
- Work must be written for or appropriate for children
- The work must be English-Language
- Published from 2015-2018

Not included

- Work that profile fewer than three people

Identification

Unique Identity: Works will be identified by the title of the book, the creators, publisher, copyright date, and ISBN

Field	Directions	Example
Title	<p>Use title case capitalization as designated by APA and MLA format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capitalize the first word of the title/heading and of any subtitle/subheading 2. Capitalize all major words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns) in the title/heading, including the second part of hyphenated major words (e.g., Self-Report not Self-report) 3. Capitalize all words of four letters or more. 	She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World
Image	Cover image	
Author(s):	<p>First Middle Last Suffix If two or more authors, list in order as on the book</p>	Chelsea Clinton
Illustrator(s)	<p>First Middle Last Suffix If two or more illustrator, list in order as in/on the book. If the author is the illustrator, list name in both fields.</p>	Alexandra Boiger
Publication information	Copyright date, Publisher	2017, Philomel Books
ISBN	Locate the ISBN from the book or from an online resource	9781524741723
Ages:	<p>Gather this information from one of the following resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indication on the book 2. School Library Journal 	4-8

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Booklist 4. Product details from Amazon 5. NoveList 6. Publisher's website 7. Goodreads <p>If no age range can be found, but a grade range is available, use the grade range.</p>	
Number of Entries	<p># full entries, # partial entries (if any)</p> <p>Count the number of entrees listed in the table of contents. Groups listed as a collective should be counted as one entry. For texts without tables of contents, count the number of discreet entries. Partial entries are people mentioned in the text in categories such as "other people you should know" and/or about whom less is written than the primary biographees.</p>	13
Use:	<p>Aspirational or Research – Is this text intended to inspire readers or serve as text appropriate for research.</p> <p>Aspirational text may be indicated by: text written in the second person, explicit statements in the introduction or the body of the text; entries written as stories. Research texts may give the reader more specific details. To be considered appropriate for research the author must address their research process through author notes or references.</p> <p>Some texts may be appropriate for both uses. If this is the case, indicate "aspirational and research"</p>	Aspirational

<p>Organization:</p>	<p>Bulleted list of the organization of the text from the beginning to the end.</p> <p>The following features should be noted without further description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author’s note • Acknowledgements • References • Table of Contents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening spread is an illustration of children in an art museum looking at paintings and sculpture of famous women. Writing is in second person telling the reader to persist when told they can’t do something. • Each entry includes a rich illustration with a quote from the woman profiled and a paragraph of text highlighting how she persisted. • Last page reinforces the importance of persistence with an illustration of the three girls pictured on the cover standing below paintings of themselves as adult women.
<p>Entrants:</p>	<p>Name (Domain(s), Identity Code(s))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List in order found in book • Name as identified in book • Domain(s) as identified in book with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any entrant whose domain can be described as Royalty (e.g. Queen, Princess, Empress, Pharaoh) list as Royalty • Note all entrants who traveled to space as Astronaut • See list of identity codes. Use only codes that are reflected in the text (words and pictures). For example, you may know that Billie Jean King identifies as lesbian, but if the text only describes her life as tennis player, do not code QL. • If an entry references the husband of the entrant, use the code QH for heterosexual. 	<p>Harriet Tubman (Activism, EB, STR)</p> <p>Helen Keller (Activism, EW, DS)</p> <p>Clara Lemlich (Activism, EW, SR, SP)</p> <p>Nellie Bly (Journalism, EW)</p> <p>Virginia Apgar (Healthcare, EW)</p> <p>Maria Tallchief (Dance, EN)</p> <p>Claudette Colvin (Activism, EB)</p> <p>Ruby Bridges (Activism, EB)</p> <p>Margaret Chase Smith (Politics, EW)</p> <p>Sally Ride (Astronaut, Science, EW)</p> <p>Florence Griffith Joyner (Athletics, EB)</p> <p>Oprah Winfrey (Media, EW)</p> <p>Sonia Sotomayor (Law, EL, DC)</p>

Editorial Reviews:	Include reviews from School Library Journal, Booklist, Kirkus, Publisher's Weekly if available	[Full reviews shown from Publishers Weekly and Kirkus Reviews]
Notes	Bullet list of any observations not addressed in the organization or entrant list. This is where to put any notes about particular facets of the book that may be of interest to people accessing this selection tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for read aloud
Issues to Note	Bullet list of problematic language or illustrations. See guidelines for evaluating texts. Quote the text or describe the illustration and name the problematic issue (e.g. stereotype). Note identities missing from the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Tallchief is identified as Native American rather than Osage • No attribution for the source material for the quotes • No Asian Americans are represented

Appendix B – Identity Codes

CODE	IDENTITY
E	RACIAL/ETHNIC
EA	Arab, Middle Eastern, North African
EB	Black, African, African American
EC	Central Asian, Central Asian American
EE	East Asian, East Asian American
EI	Itinerant or Traveling Ethnic Group
EL	Latinx, Hispanic, Latin American
EM	Biracial, Multiracial
EN	Native, Indigenous, Aboriginal
EP	Pacific Islander
ES	South Asian, South Asian American, Desi
ESE	Southeast Asian, Southeast Asian American
EU	Unclear, Unspecified POC
EW	White, European Descent

F	FAMILY STRUCTURE
FA	Adoption
FF	Foster family, group home, orphanage
FG	Raised by family member other than parent

CODE	IDENTITY
Q	LGBTQIA+
QA	Asexual
QB	Bi or Pansexual
QG	Gender nonconforming
QH	Heterosexual
QI	Intersex
QL	Lesbian
QT	Transgender

R	RELIGION
RA	Atheism, Agnosticism
RB	Buddhism
RCA	Catholicism
RCH	Christianity
RH	Hinduism
RI	Islam
RJ	Judaism
RP	Pagan, Wiccan
RSH	Shintoism
RSI	Sikhism
RT	Taoism

CODE	IDENTITY
D	DISABILITY
DA	Addiction
DC	Chronic Illness, condition, pain
DI	Intellectual, developmental, cognitive impairment
DM	Mental Illness
DN	Neurodivergence
DP	Physical Disability
DS	Sensory Disability (vision, hearing)
DT	Terminal Illness

S	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
SG	Government Assistance, Welfare, Public Housing
SH	Homeless, Transitional Housing
SI	Immigrants
SM	Migrant Workers
SP	Poor (rural or urban)
SPR	Prison, jail, detention
SR	Refugees
STP	Teen pregnancy/parenting
STR	Trafficked, Enslaved, Indentured

Appendix C – Guidelines for Evaluating Text

1. Check the Illustrations: Are there stereotypes promoted in this book?
2. Note loaded words or linguistic bias: A word is loaded when it has offensive overtones (e.g. crazy, idiot, etc); linguistic bias includes culturally loaded terms or sexist language
3. Look for tokenism
4. Look for invisibility or erasure
5. Look at the text as a whole. Does the book contain equal representation of diverse groups?
6. Questions to ask regarding depictions of people with disabilities:
 - a. Does the depiction promote empathy rather than pity?
 - b. Does the entry emphasize success rather than, or in addition to, failure?
 - c. Does the entry promote a positive image of a person with disabilities?
 - d. Does the entry address abilities and disabilities?
 - e. Does the entry assist children in gaining accurate understanding of disability?
 - f. Does the entry demonstrate respect for persons with disabilities?
 - g. Does the entry promote an attitude of “one of us” not “one of them”?
 - h. Does the language stress person first, disability second philosophy?
 - i. Does the entry characterize the person with disabilities in stereotypically positive ways that compensate for their “deficiency”, such as having unusual emotional or physical characteristics, special spiritual or moral insights, superior intellectual abilities or wisdom, or unnaturally inspirational qualities? (ADL)
7. Are indigenous or native people identified by tribal affiliation?

Adapted from Derman-Sparks’ (2017) “Guide for selecting anti-bias picture books”, Myers & Bersani’s (2008) “Ten quick ways to analyze children’s books for ableism,” and the “Washington models for the evaluation of bias content in instructional materials” (2009)

Appendix D – Text List

Adams, J., & Wright, L. (2018). *101 awesome women who changed our world*. London: Arcturus Holdings Ltd.

Babbott-Klein, L. (2018). *Baby Feminists*. New York, NY: Penguin Young Readers Group.

Bailey, E. (2018). *I am a wonder woman*. San Diego, CA: Portable Press.

Beevor, L. (2018). *Amazing women: 101 lives to inspire you*. London: Stripes Publishing.

Caldwell, S. A., Hibbert, C., Mills, A., Skene, R., & Parker, P. (2017). *100 women who made history: Remarkable women who shaped our world*. New York, NY: DK Publishing.

Calkhoven, L., & Castelao, P. (2016). *Women who changed the world: 50 amazing Americans*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Calvert, J. (2018). *Teen trailblazers: 30 fearless girls who changed the world before they were 20*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Cavallo, F., & Favilli, E. (2018). *Good night stories for rebel girls 2*. Venice, CA: Timbuktu Labs.

Clinton, C., & Boiger, A. (2017). *She persisted: 13 American women who changed the world*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Clinton, C., & Boiger, A. (2018). *She persisted around the world: 13 women who changed history*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Doyle, C. (2016). *Girls can do anything: From sports to innovation, art to politics, meet over 200 women who got there first*.

Favilli, E., & Cavallo, F. (2017). *Good night stories for rebel girls: 100 tales of extraordinary women*. Venice, CA: Timbuktu Labs.

Halligan, K., & Walsh, S. (2018). *Her story: 50 women and girls who shook the world*. London: Nosy Crow.

Harrison, V. (2017). *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

- Harrison, V., & Harrison, V. (2018). *Dream big, little one*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.
- Harrison, V. (2018). *Little dreamers: Visionary women around the world*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.
- Holub, J., & Roode, D. (2018). *This little trailblazer: A girl power primer*. New York, NY: Little Simon.
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- Reynolds, T., & Calver, P. (2017). *Fearless women: Courageous females who refused to be denied*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series.
- Schatz, K. (2015). *Rad American women: A - Z*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
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- Schatz, K., & Klein, S. M. (2018). *Rad girls can: Stories of bold, brave, and brilliant young women*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Tinari, L. (2018). *Limitless: 24 Remarkable American Women of Vision, Grit, and Guts*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.

Williams, M. (2017). *Three cheers for women!*. London: Walker Books.

Woodward, K., Archer, A., Higgle, A., Singh, J., Wan, J., Thompson, K., Posti, P., ... Burghart, S. (2018). *What would she do?: 25 true stories of trailblazing rebel women*. New York, NY: Carlton Books Ltd.