

BEARD, MARY RITTER**(AUGUST 5, 1876– AUGUST 14, 1958)****PARENTS: NARCISSA LOCKWOOD AND ELI FOSTER RITTER****NATIONALITY: AMERICAN****COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE: UNITED STATES****EDUCATION**

DePauw University: Greencastle, Indiana, 1893-1897

AREAS OF ARCHIVAL SPECIALIZATION

Women's archives and history; women in history; activism in archives; suffrage movement history; labor movement history

ACHIEVEMENTS IN ARCHIVAL FIELD

Beard organized the World Center for Women's Archives (WCWA) in 1935 for published and unpublished women's records. She also collaborated with Margaret Grierson, an archivist at Smith College, to create the Sophia Smith Collection in 1942, one of the world's largest women's history manuscript collections. In addition she worked with Harvard historians to establish the Library at Radcliffe. Beard was an influential historian and significantly contributed to the area of women in archives.

CAREER HISTORY

- Organizer of the National Women's Trade Union League, 1907
- Organizer of the Wage-Earners Suffrage League, 1909
- Editor of *The Woman Voter*, 1910-12
- Co-founder and Executive Board member of the Congressional Union for Women Suffrage, 1913
- Director of the World Center for Women's Archives (WCWA), 1935-40

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

Mary Ritter was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on August 5, 1876. She attended DePauw University and graduated in 1897. While attending DePauw, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta and met her husband, Charles Beard, whom she married in 1900. Both Mary and Charles attended graduate school at Columbia University in New York, New York, but Mary did not finish her degree. Instead, she made a career out of her activism, specifically for wage-earning women. She joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the 1900s and played a role in organizing both the National Women's Trade Union League and the Wage-Earners Suffrage League. She acted as editor of *The Woman Voter*, a suffrage newspaper, from 1910-1912. Shortly thereafter, she co-founded the Congressional Union for Women Suffrage. Beard was also a member of the Militant Faction of the Suffrage Movement from

1913 to 1919. During that time, Beard was an avid writer and published several articles and two books. In 1917, Beard left the National Woman's Party and focused on writing and literary activism. She co-authored several books with her husband on the topic of the labor movement, social reform, and the working class. Much of Mary's writing addressed women's issues in relation to the labor movement and political activity. In 1935, Beard created the World Center for Women's Archives (WCWA) in New York, together with Rosika Schwimmer, to generate a space where the papers of women and their organizations could be preserved and contribute to women's history. The archives collected records from across the world representing women in many places; unfortunately, the archives ceased to exist in the 1940s. The collected records were transferred to Smith College and Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe, both of which Mary was instrumental in conceptualizing and establishing. Mary Ritter Beard voiced the importance of women being included in history and the historical record and advocated for archival institutions to save their histories, including her own contributions to women's history.

PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY LISTING BOOKS AND THEN ARTICLES

- *Woman's Work in Municipalities*. New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1915.
- *Why Women Demand a Federal Suffrage Amendment Difficulties in Amending State Constitutions: A Study of the Constitutions of Non-Suffrage States*. Rev. ed. Washington: Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, 1916.
- *Short History of the American Labor Movement*. New York: Workers Education Bureau of America, 1930.
- *Understanding Women*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1931.
- *Woman as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946.
- *The Force of Women in Japanese History*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1953.
- *The Making of Charles A. Beard*. New York. Exposition Press 1955.
- "An Appeal to the Reader." *The Woman Voter*, November, 1911, Vols. 1-2, p. 21.
- "Women and the War Habit." *The Women's Journal*, May, 1930, pp. 12-13
- "University Discipline for Women—Asset or Handicap?" *Journal of the American Association of University Women*, April, 1932, Vol. XXV, No. 3, pp. 129-33.

AUTHOR OF BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY/DATE OF SUBMISSION

Leanna Barcelona, November 2015

SECONDARY SOURCES FOR BIOGRAPHY

- Beard, Mary Ritter and Ann J. Lane. *Mary Ritter Beard: A Sourcebook*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.
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- Crocco, Margaret Smith. 1997. "Forceful Yet Forgotten: Mary Ritter Beard and the Writing of History." *The History Teacher* 31 (1): 9-31. doi:10.2307/494178.
- McFeely, Mary Drake. 1991. "A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters (Book)." *Library Journal* 116 (2): 83-83.

- Smith, Bonnie G. 1984. "Seeing Mary Beard." *Feminist Studies* 10 (3): 399–416. doi:10.2307/3178030.
- Trigg, Mary. 1995. "'To Work Together for Ends Larger than Self': The Feminist Struggles of Mary Beard and Doris Stevens in the 1930s." *Journal of Women's History* 7 (2): 52.
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EDITOR/EDITING DATE

Susanne Belovari, December 2015