“Silent Cycles: Unveiling 19th-Century Perspectives on Menstruation, Women's Agency, and Societal Transformations”

Anna Bennethum

Dr. Diller

Research Methods Final Draft

December 12, 2023

The 19th century was a transformative period in American history, characterized by sweeping changes in societal norms, gender roles, and economic structures. Medicine became established as a profession, fields of obstetrics and gynecology became established, and understandings surrounding women's bodies were changing. Much literature has been published concerning women's bodies, specifically focusing on reproductive health, hysteria, and other maladies. Few have focused on menstruation, and the understandings women, society, and the medical community had in the 19th century surrounding the monthly cycle. This paper aims to provide insight into such menstrual understandings through a study of medical journals, women's periodicals, religious publications, and other literature, focusing specifically on how women navigated menstrual understandings and restrictions during the time period. In gaining knowledge of menstruation and subsequently their reproductive systems and bodies, women gained greater autonomy and agency in the 19th century.

Historiography

In the 1970s, historians began to reexamine factors such as sexuality, medicine, gender roles, and economic changes in the 19th century. This reexamination focused on how general attitudes and beliefs of the time influenced understandings of the role of women (and men) in society and the home and connected these beliefs to societal understanding of women's bodies (and subsequently menstruation). Among the most prominent revisionist scholars were historians Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, who wrote numerous articles discussing the intersection of class, sexuality, and gender. Rosenberg's research established a marked change in attitudes toward sexuality between the 18th and 19th centuries, as connotations surrounding

sexuality became increasingly negative.[1] Smith-Rosenberg attributes the rigidity of gender roles and sexuality to the rapidly changing landscape of the United States during the 19th century, focusing her scholarship on the rise of hysteria as a response to the inflexibility of gender roles and the overwhelming unpreparedness that women faced for familial and spousal duty.[2]

Building on the methods of Rosenberg and Smith-Rosenberg, historian Laura Briggs adds further understanding to 19th-century hysteria by highlighting concerns of "race suicide" and the stark contrast between "civilized" women (white and upper-middle class) and "uncivilized" women (non-white or working class) as the background for the study of obstetrics and gynecology in the 19th century.[3] Historians Sara Delamon and Lorna Duffin highlight the growing professionalization of medicine in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with male physicians establishing their knowledge as objective and indisputable. Delamon and Duffin argue that women possessing knowledge of their bodies undermined male physicians' authority and removed his expertise.[4] In connection, historian Melissa Rampelli discusses the rise of the "New Woman" (women who worked outside of the home, sought higher education, or desired any larger participation in society) and the threat this posed to male physicians who strived to regulate gender roles.[5]

Specifically regarding the establishment of the field of gynecology, Historian Deborah Kuhn McGregor details its origins, describing J. Marion Sims, often hailed as the "father of gynecology," who conducted experiments on enslaved women in his work on vesico-vaginal

---

[1] Charles E Rosenberg. "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America." *American Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1973): 137.
[2] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg. "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-Century America." *Social Research 39*, no. 4 (1972): 656.
[3] Laura Briggs. "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology." *American Quarterly 52*, no. 2 (2000): 246.
[4] Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin. *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013: 31.
[5] Melissa Rampelli. *Narratives of Women's Health and Hysteria in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. 1st ed. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023: 149.

fissures. Gynecology primarily focused on the reproductive health of white, middle, and upper-class women, with enslaved women becoming the subjects of physicians' experiments. McGregor highlights the conflict between centuries of women's expertise as midwives and the emergence of gynecology as a male-dominated field.[6] Despite reduced agency in matters of reproductive health, women played crucial roles in 19th-century reform movements, as historian Regina Markell Morante notes in her exploration of "self-help" literature and women's participation in health reforms. Women's engagement in hygiene, diet, temperance, and physiological matters reflected their role in shaping the modern family.[7] In connection with self-help literature, historian Jennifer Phegley describes the rise of women's periodicals and the height of both woman readers and writers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Despite the belief that women readers were dangerous and that their reading material needed to be regulated, women's literary magazines established an intellectual community of female readers, writers, editors, printers, and contributors who were empowered to make their own choices.[8]

Beyond domestic realms, women challenged traditional gender roles in the medical field. Historians Ellen S. More, Elizabeth Fee, and Manon Perry highlight women's agency in running hospitals, dispensaries, and clinics at a time when women physicians faced harsh criticism and extreme pushback from male physicians and society.[9] Specifically focusing on Mary Putnam Jacobi, the first woman admitted to medical school in the United States, historian Carla Jean Bittel highlights feminist pushback against menstrual theories of the day in their various

---

[6] Deborah Kuhn McGregor. *From Midwives to Medicine : the Birth of American Gynecology.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998: 30.
[7] Regina Markell Morantz. "Making Women Modern: Middle Class Women and Health Reform in 19th Century America." *Journal of Social History* 10, no. 4 (1977): 497.
[8] Jennifer Phegley. *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines & Cultural Health of the Nation*. Ohio State University Press, 2020: 23.
[9] Ellen Singer More, Elizabeth Fee, and Manon Parry. *Women Physicians and the Cultures of Medicine*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009: 2.

publications and clinical studies.[10] Historian Lilian Furst in her research on women, health reform, and the medical field further argues that women's attempts to enter the field of medicine mirror the larger struggle for self-determination and that women were able to challenge the confines of society through medical knowledge.[11]

Beyond the economic, medical, and gendered landscape of the 19th century, historians Vern Bullough and Martha Voght highlight the medical understanding of the day and its evolution concerning menstruation. Bullough and Voght trace 19th-century understandings of menstruation back to ancient Greece and connections to the lunar cycle while also detailing emerging scientific understandings, such as theories of the connection between ovulation and menstruation. Especially highlighted in their work is the response of physicians and other academic professionals to the threat presented by women seeking higher education and greater societal autonomy. The "theory of menstrual disability" emerged as the idea that women's bodies were governed by their reproductive systems and any interference (namely mental stimulus) would yield dangerous physical and mental outcomes.[12] Bollough and Voght detail the specific physicians and medical publications of the day, while also highlighting feminist pushback and subsequent studies that disproved such theories.

Sociologist Johanna Foster presents the menstrual cycle as a social construction. She details the modern scientific understanding of menstruation and presents the various ways in which menstruation has been "mapped" throughout time. (For example, 19th-century understandings of menstruation assigned the cycle anywhere from four to eight stages). Foster highlights the misconceptions present in the 19th century, such as the misunderstanding that the

[10] Carla Jean Bittel. *Mary Putnam Jacobi & the Politics of Medicine in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009: 123.
[11] Lilian R. Furst. *Women Healers and Physicians Climbing a Long Hill.* Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997: 222.
[12] Vern Bullough and Martha Voght. "Women, Menstruation, and Nineteenth-century Medicine." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 47, no. 1 (1973): 69.

menstrual phase was the only time women could conceive. The pinnacle of her work concerning menstruation is that the very naming of the female biological cycle as the "menstrual cycle" emphasized the (misplaced) importance of fertility above all other biological functions and the very "marking" of the female cycle created an understanding that women were tied to natural processes and needed to be regulated, as men's biological processes were unmarked and thus superior.[13]

The above scholars contribute to the exploration of menstruation in the 19th century, each highlighting interconnected factors that shaped the experiences and perceptions of women during this era. Economic shifts, the evolving attitudes toward sexuality, the rigidity of gender roles, and the emerging fields of obstetrics and gynecology create a complex foundation that contributed to the understanding of menstruation - impacting women's health, societal roles, and even their own self-perception. This paper seeks to further the historiography of the 19th century by focusing on women's menstruation, both by researching its expressions within the medical community, women's periodicals, religious literature, and society at large, and by highlighting how women navigated menstrual understandings and pushed for further societal autonomy.

Medical Understandings

The 19th century saw the creation of medicine as a professional field, especially in the post-Civil War era.[14] This professionalization brought greater status and autonomy to male physicians and was a direct reflection of both industrialization and shifting gender roles. The emerging medical theory, which often included heroic science, such as bleeding with leeches and

[13] Johanna Foster. "Menstrual Time: The Sociocognitive Mapping of 'The Menstrual Cycle.'" *Sociological Forum 11*, no. 3 (1996): 543.
[14] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 28.

using drugs such as opium and mercury, aimed to reinforce gender roles, especially those of women.[15] White, middle-class women were seen by society as perpetually prone to disease, invalid, and weak, which only aided in the professionalization of medicine, as male doctors saw them as the ideal patients. Their illnesses were rarely severe but required frequent visits and long-term treatment, and they had almost inexhaustible financial resources from their husband. At the same time, it was also white, middle-class women who posed the greatest threat to heroic medicine and the male physicians.[16]

White, middle-class women in the 19th century increasingly sought autonomy through higher education, in part as a response to the emerging idea of a "modern family" and the responsibility of raising "the future of the nation," utilizing the ideals of domesticity to navigate changing social structures.[17] As women pushed for further educational opportunities, the beginning of the 19th century saw the creation of female academies, and in the 1830s the first colleges for women were proposed. There were even women who were accepted into medical school, though the overwhelming response to this admittance was negative. As women increasingly sought educational opportunities, as well as increased voting and property rights, the medical community published rhetoric that characterized female education as dangerous and unhealthy.[18] In response to the threat posed by women gaining greater societal autonomy, physicians warned of the educational strain that would entirely disrupt puberty, ovulation, and menstruation.[19]

One of the most prominent medical publications of the time was the book *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*, written by Harvard Medical School professor Edward

[15] Carla Jean Bittel. *Mary Putnam Jacobi & the Politics of Medicine in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009: 13.
[16] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 33.
[17] Morante. "Making Women", 493.
[18] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 28.
[19] Bullough, "Women", 69.

H. Clarke in 1873. His work of one hundred and eighty pages enumerated the distinct differences between boys and girls, stating that girls can learn everything boys can, but not without retaining ". . . uninjured health and future secure from neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria, and other derangements of the nervous system if she follows the same method boys are trained in."[20] His main argument was that in pursuing education in the same manner as men, women would invariably succumb to horrific diseases of both the mind and the body that could be entirely avoided if women would cease to neglect their bodies's "organization."

What was this "organization" of the female body Clarke was referring to? As was common amongst medical understanding of the day, Clarke referred to the ideals of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Hippocrates as official views on menstruation and the biological makeup of human bodies, and these form the basis for his argument.[21] Clarke described Hippocrates' idea of the "tri-partite" life, in which the human life is divided into three stages: the first takes place from birth to the end of puberty, the second lasts until the age of forty-five, and the third stage consists of the final portion of human life. Clarke made the argument that the transitions between these stages were critical, and if they were mishandled, the reproductive system would be irreparably damaged.[22]

Further contributing to the importance of "threes", Clarke depicted the biological makeup of human beings as being governed by three critical systems: the nutritive system, the nervous system, and the reproductive system. Whereas the first two systems are identical between men and women, the third system is entirely peculiar to women. According to Clarke, girls' ovaries experience rapid growth during puberty, entirely unlike men's biological maturations that occur

[20] Edward H Clarke, *Sex and Education, or, A Fair Chance for the Girls* (James R. Osgood and Company, 1873), 17.
[21] Bullough, "Women", 67.
[22] Clarke, *Sex Education*, 33.

"steadily, gradually, and equally" throughout the course of life (re: Foster's idea of the menstrual cycle as a social construction).[23] Clarke believed that by engaging in rigorous mental stimulation, women would irreparably damage their body's "organization" and reproductive systems which would lead to various bodily consequences throughout their lives. Clarke's enumerations directly reflect the concerns of male physicians and wider society with the emerging idea of the"New Woman", wherein women's participation in education and broader society would "de-sex" them and inevitably lead to hysteria, menstrual disorders, and cause irreparable harm to her reproductive system.[24]

Other medical publications followed similar beliefs and the discussion of menstruation amongst the medical community in the 19th century usually centered around disorders, maladies, and irregularities. There was some scientific understanding surrounding menstruation, and medical journals and articles attempted to provide medical frameworks and explanations for menstrual disorders. Firstly, medical writers often paralleled the biological understandings of women to observed animal behavior. Dr. A. Guerin, writing for the medical publication *The Clinic* (1874), began his discussion of menstrual disorders with this connection: "By observing attentively the organs of the female of an animal about to enter the period of rut, you will realize the condition of the genital organs of a human female at the menstrual period".[25] Dr. Hubbard Winslow Mitchell in describing a case of absent menstruation for the publication *Medical Record* (1892), details the process in the animal kingdom, stating "It is this production of an egg in the ovary that constitutes her a normal animal with normal and complete physiological functions".[26] Excessive menstrual flow or the absence of menstruation was identified as being most prominent

[23] Clarke, *Sex Education*, 36.
[24] Rampelli, *Narratives*, 149.
[25] "Menstruation." *The Clinic* (1871-1878) 7, no. 20 (Nov 14, 1874): 238.
[26] Hubbard Winslow Mitchell. "Report of a Case of Complete Non-Menstruation." *Medical Record* (1866-1922) 41, no. 12 (1892): 311–.

in “races or tribes that are least removed from animals”[27] by Dr. Andrew P. Currier in the *Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery* (1889) which implies that there are races or tribes more closely related to animals than others and that such races or tribes are less likely to have menstrual disorders. Such ideas as presented by Currier reflected larger concerns of male physicians and society as a whole, who were increasingly worried about the “decline of the race” and the ability of white, middle-class women to reproduce effectively (often connected to parameters of the menstrual cycle).[28]

Along with attributing menstruation to animal behavior, medical professionals also drew parallels between menstruation and factors such as race, ethnicity, climate, and other geographical factors. Menstrual disorders were connected to “those races further removed from animals” (meaning White people), but symptoms were thought to be even more closely concentrated geographically. There were doctors who said higher elevations caused excess menstruation, those who stated those living in northern parts of the world lost significantly less blood during menstruation than those in southern parts[29], and others who connected humid, tropical climates with early menstruation while cold climates could cease menstrual cycles entirely.[30]

19th-century physicians used these ideas to bolster ideas surrounding race, gender, and sexuality. This is evidenced in the connection between menstrual disorders and lifestyle. Not only did climate and geography affect menstruation, but so did wealth, status, and luxury. It was thought that excess excitements, such as the theater, pictures, and education caused disorders in menstruation, particularly in young girls.[31] Furthermore, it was believed that non-traditional

[27] Andrew P. Currier. “The Disorders of Menstruation.” *Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery* (1851-1920) 43, no. 3 (1889): 96–.
[28] Bittell, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 118.
[29] “Menstruation”, 238.
[30] Currier, “The Disorders”, 97.
[31] “Menstruation”, 238.

activities, especially those of adolescent girls, directly caused menstrual disorders and contributed to the overall degeneracy of society.[32] The all-encompassing nature of the perceived factors surrounding menstrual disorders can be summed up from an article titled "Development of Hereditary Maladies" published in the lifestyle newspaper *Frank Leslie's Weekly* that listed the following: "Thus, age, sex, temperament, practices, habits, hygiene, and surrounding conditions, act a part in the development of hereditary morbid activities."[33] The article goes on to warn against education and the peculiar danger to women of developing insanity from such reproductive maladies. Male physicians were specifically threatened by adolescent girls, who challenged the boundaries of the home and the outside world and subsequently challenged the boundary of dependence on men and independence through the activities they engaged in.[34]

The connection between menstrual disorders and insanity was also a widely recognized scientific understanding. Because it was believed that women's reproductive systems governed the entire body, disorder in the reproductive system inevitably caused dysfunction in all other parts of the body as well (this of course was the basis for the medical push to keep women out of higher education).[35] But not only were menstrual disorders seen as evidence of female weakness, but the very existence of the menstrual cycle in and of itself was often seen as a "pathological condition".[36] For 19th-century physicians, illness, and subsequently menstrual disorders, was evidence of moral or physical quandary and thus was always a state to overcome. Curing an illness (in this case, a menstrual disorder) therefore corrected not only individual morality but contributed to improving the morality of larger society.[37] This is evidenced in an article titled "Importance of Menstruation In Determining Mental Irresponsibility", published in *The*

[32] Rampelli, *Narratives*, 150.
[33] "Development of Hereditary Maladies." *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, February 7, 1874.
[34] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 37.
[35] Clarke, *Sex and Education*, 40.
[36] Bullought, "Women", 67.
[37] Rampelli, *Narratives* , 6.

Cincinnati Lancet and Clinic, 1894. The article describes the utmost importance of connecting women's menstrual cycles to their criminal history. Menstrual disorders of the 19th century could be equated to modern-day understandings of mental insanity, with the author stating: "When the offense of a crime has, in a person whose mind is impaired, occurred during the menstrual period, she must be declared irresponsible, for there is every reason to think the act due to emotional impulse."[38] Not only did women have to always be conscious and on guard against menstrual disorders, but the very presence of their cycle marked them unfit to regulate their own bodies and put them outside of rational control, as physicians saw menstrual disorders as evidence of moral disruptions.[39]

As seen above, the professionalization of medicine and the emergence of distinct gender roles cast a profound shadow over women's autonomy. The medical community's preoccupation with women's bodies extended to impact ideas of women's participation in education and larger society, permeating discussions on menstruation. Anxieties regarding women's reproductive capabilities and the perceived connection between menstrual disorders and insanity underscored the pervasive belief that women's reproductive systems governed their entire beings, and any deviation from the norm was construed as evidence of moral or physical deficiencies.

This section of the paper illuminates the multifaceted ways in which medical understandings of the time concerning menstruation were deeply entwined with societal expectations and the evolving roles of women. The medical discourse, shaped by gender biases and societal anxieties, sought to limit women's agency by pathologizing their pursuit of education and independence through their menstrual cycles. In confronting the perceived threats

[38] Brooklyn Med Journal. "Importance of Menstruation In Determining Mental Irresponsibility." *The Cincinnati Lancet and Clini*c (1878-1904) 33, no. 6 (1894): 156–.
[39] Foster, "Menstrual Time", 543.

posed by women's increasing autonomy, the medical community's responses were not merely clinical but deeply rooted in preserving traditional gender roles and societal norms.

Women's Periodicals and Publications

As medical publications grappled with societal expectations and anxieties regarding women's bodies and their menstrual cycles, women's periodicals emerged as a distinct platform challenging these norms, reflecting the changing landscape of women's rights and health. Newspapers and other publications were the main method by which information was disseminated in the 19th century. There were publications for every demographic, influenced by class, race, gender, and various other factors. Important to recognize was the popular opinion that women reading was dangerous. With the explosion of inexpensive and accessible publications came the necessity of regulating women's literature as related to her moral state. Nevertheless, the second half of the 19th century saw the creation of women's literary and home magazines, which both played a role in women's intellectual developments and cemented their middle-class identities.[40]

Columns specifically for women addressed a variety of topics and issues, and as the century progressed, the tone and content of women's publications evolved, reflecting the changing landscape of women's rights and the feminist movement.[41] The intersectionality of menstruation with issues such as suffrage, education, and employment became more pronounced, amplifying the impact of women's periodicals on shaping a holistic understanding of women's lives. The late 1800s saw an increased emphasis on women's reproductive health within the

[40] Phegley, *Educating*, 1.
[41] Phegley, *Educating*, 1.

context of broader social and political changes. Women's periodicals not only continued to provide practical advice on menstrual hygiene and health but also delved into discussions about the societal implications of menstruation. Articles began addressing how menstrual cycles intersected with women's roles as mothers, workers, and citizens.[42]

Despite the rapidly emerging fields of obstetrics and gynecology, menstruation remained a topic veiled in societal silence. Women's periodicals and publications emerged in response as a medium for disseminating information about menstruation, offering a platform for women to discuss and redefine their understanding of their bodies and health.[43] Women's periodicals, such as *The Lily*, *The Woman's Advocate*, and *Godey's Lady's Book*, became instrumental in shaping the discourse on women's health in the 19th century. These publications provided a space for women to express thoughts, share experiences, and engage in discussions about matters crucial to their lives, and subsequently, these publications discussed menstruation.[44]

The content of these publications reflects a multi-faceted approach to disseminating information about menstruation. Educational articles and medical advice formed a substantial portion of the content dedicated to menstruation in women's periodicals. Furthermore, women's periodicals placed the responsibility of disseminating both societal cultural norms and information on their women readers.[45] Authors and editors took on topics ranging from menstrual hygiene to the physiological aspects of menstruation, aiming to educate women about their bodies. For example, married couple Anna Manning Comfort (M.D.) and George Comfort (A.M.) co-published a book in response to Edward Clarke's *A Fair Chance for the Girls*, which perpetuated the idea of "menstrual disability". Their book, titled *Women's Education and*

[42] Morantz, "Making Women", 492.
[43] Phegle, *Educating* , 16.
[44] Morantz, "Making Women", 490.
[45]

Women's Health, was entirely committed to refuting Clarke's argument and promoting the capability of women in education. In speaking on Clarke's proposal that women should not seek higher education to their reproductive system, they highlight the error of Clarke's ideology, focusing on women who successfully sought higher education:

> Probably not less than half a million of these women have not only followed 'the boy's way' of uninterrupted study, as Dr. C. [Clarke] expresses it, but they have done this in academies seminaries, high schools, and colleges, which were attended by boys and young men, being subjected to the same strict regimen as these boys and young men were. . .[46]

Manning Comfort and Comfort's work is an example of the broader societal pushback against menstrual disability and women's capabilities in the educational sphere. Mary Putnam Jacobi, one of the 19th century's first female doctors, also wrote a rebuttal against Clarke, titled "The Question of Rest for Women During Menstruation", which would go on to win Harvard's Boylston Prize. Jacobi, along with women's rights activist Anna C. Brackett and others, also published a collection of essays titled "The Education of American Girls", in which they created their own clinical study of twenty women in higher education, finding that only six of them experienced menstrual pain, directly contradicting Clarke's findings.[47]

Another way women's periodicals played a role in challenging the societal expectations placed on women during menstruation was through advertisements. As women were the primary consumers of home magazines, many women's periodicals sought to "cure" women's bodies with both products and advice.[48] Advertisements and articles encouraged the development and use of new products, such as sanitary napkins and menstruation underwear, signaling a shift towards acknowledging and accommodating women's needs during their menstrual cycles.

---

[46] Anna Manning Comfort and George F. Comfort. *Woman's Education and Woman's Health* (Thos. W. Durston and Co., Publishers., 1874): 25.
[47] Bittell, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 125.
[48] Phegley, *Educating*, 15.

Advertisements boasted: “For home use, delicate health, for ladies traveling. . .”[49], “the greatest invention of the century for Women’s Comfort”[50], and that “they possess health advantages that are a boon to womankind.”[51] This commercial aspect of menstruation began to be openly discussed, further contributing to the normalization of the topic.

The language used in women's periodicals also evolved to reflect changing attitudes. While earlier publications might have employed euphemisms and veiled references, later periodicals became more direct and assertive in their language. An advertisement in *The Woman’s Tribune* featured a testimonial from Mrs. J. J. Callender, detailing her painful menstruation. She states: “For twelve long years I suffered from prolapsus and ulceration of the womb. . . I was greatly troubled with leucorrhoea and painful menstruation, but thanks to your timely remedy, I am free from both.”[52] Another advertisement in the same publication details the experience of Mrs. Ferguson, who said: “My daughter has been a sufferer from suppressed menstruation for over two years. . . For days before her monthly periods she would walk the floor and wring her hands in agony, but never uttered a word.”[53] Speaking about menstruation and disorders directly, rather than using veiled euphemisms, mirrored the broader feminist assertion of women's voices in public discourse, challenging the notion that menstruation was a topic to be shrouded in secrecy.[54]

The impact of women's periodicals extended beyond the pages into the daily lives of women. By fostering open discussions, these publications contributed to the empowerment of women, encouraging them to understand their bodies and challenge societal norms. Women began

[49] “Hartmann’s Hygenic Wood Wool Diapers”, *Chatto and Windus*, 1885.
[50] “Southall’s ‘Sanitary Towels’”, *Sharp, Perrin, and Co*., 1894.
[51] “Southall’s Towels”, 1913.
[52] Extracts From Correspondence.Warsaw N. Y.— Two hundred. *The Woman's Tribune. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, November 18, 1893.
[53] Extracts From Correspondence.San Antonia Texas:—I send. *The Woman's Tribune. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, December 2, 1893.
[54] Bittell, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 8.

to gain control over their health, marking a significant shift in societal perceptions of menstruation. Moreover, women's periodicals played a role in challenging prevailing myths and stigmas associated with menstruation. Through the dissemination of medical knowledge, these publications helped dispel misconceptions, contributing to a broader feminist movement.[55] A letter to the editor titled "To Suffer or Not to Suffer" details the recent medical practice of removing women's reproductive systems (uteruses), along with the "assiduous" practice of experimenting on dead bodies. The author (unnamed) raises the following questions concerning such medical developments: "There is a certain inconsistency here, because these same men refuse women membership in their societies and in other ways discourage any aberration from the purely sexual type of womanhood."[56] Speaking on the all-consuming quest male physicians had with resolving reproductive maladies, the author also stated that "The danger to which this woman is subjected by her disease [her reproductive system] is not greater than that from an attack of rheumatism or even a bronchitis of a severe form."[57] In this way, women themselves countered medical ideas surrounding reproduction and menstruation through publications of the day.

Along with medical publications, women's periodicals served as a space for sharing personal narratives and experiences related to menstruation. As seen above, letters to the editor, first-person essays, and testimonials created a sense of solidarity among women, fostering a community where shared experiences helped destigmatize menstruation. The normalization of menstruation became a part of the larger conversation about women's rights, as women demanded control over their bodies and health. The era of women's periodicals saw the peak of women writers, as it gave them both greater personal and professional opportunities as readers,

[55] Bittel, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 8.
[56] Hygiene and Medical. "To Suffer or Not to Suffer." Editor of the The Woman's Tribune. *Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, March 16, 1889.
[57] Hygiene and Medical. "To Suffer".

writers, editors, and overall contributors to literary publications, creating an intellectual community of women readers. Women's periodicals also presented a solution to the void of medical and menstrual information available to 19th-century women, which empowered them to make their own decisions about their bodies.[58]

Adventist Health Reforms: A Case Study

Besides medical journals and women's periodicals, religious literature was also a mode of disseminating menstrual information. Influenced by the Second Great Awakening and the increasing fervor surrounding "self-help" literature specifically pertaining to health reforms, many religious publications had health columns, with some religious organizations even dedicating entire issues to medical topics. This was especially true for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which was officially organized in 1863 with origins directly tied to the Millerite movement of the Second Great Awakening. Its early years were marked by a focus on health reform, including discussions about diet, dress, and overall well-being. Adventist reform movements were connected to the "Christian mainline" through temperance, vegetarianism, and medical reforms, and reflected the larger presence of health reforms in the 19th century, as reformers sought to transform the United States from a "spiritual wilderness" to a religious and morally guided nation.[59]

One of the most prolific writers of the early Seventh-Day Adventist church was Ellen White, who authored thousands of publications including books, articles, and letters. White's

[58] Phegley, *Educating*, 6.
[59] Emily J Bailey. "Promises of Purity: Adventist Approaches to Sanctification through Health Reform." *International journal for the study of new religions* 10, no. 2 (2019): 159–184: 178.

writings, often considered by Adventists as inspired counsel, emphasized the importance of a healthy lifestyle and made a connection to the organization of the body and subsequently menstruation. There is only one implicit instance in which White speaks on menstruation, and it is in a personal letter in which she details the menstrual disorder of a young girl she was traveling with.[60]

All other instances in which White references menstruation are offhand or implied. Synonymous with Clarke and other physicians, White believed in a "critical period" for girls (the beginning of menstruation).[61] In conjunction with the common understanding of the day, White warns against frivolities that could impair adolescent health, and she lists the possible consequences for failing to properly prepare for womanhood:

> If the practice is continued from the ages of fifteen and upward, nature will protest against the abuse she has suffered and continues to suffer, and will make them pay the penalty for the transgression of her laws, especially from the ages of thirty to forty-five… Some of nature's fine machinery gives way, leaving a heavier task for the remaining to perform, which disorders nature's fine arrangement, and there is often a sudden breaking down of the constitution, and death is the result.[62]

The ages that White speaks to mirror discussions of menstruation of the time period directly. The age range from twelve to fifteen was especially concerning to physicians of the day, with the concern that menstrual disorders would be especially prevalent during that life stage. The ages of thirty to forty-five were seen as the fruition of failing to protect the reproductive system in puberty, and therefore women would be faced with a variety of diseases, or the "breaking down of the constitution".[63]

White speaks further on this bodily "constitution", a term used by physicians of the day to discuss menstruation and the subsequent dangers of misaligning the body's organs through

---

[60] Ellen White. *Letters and Manuscripts - Volume 8*. Review and Herald Publishing (1893): Letter 96.
[61] Ellen White. *An Appeal to Mothers*. Review and Herald Publishing (1870): 18.
[62] White, *An Appeal*, 18.
[63] Clarke, *Sex*, 25.

strain on the reproductive system (refer to Clarke's idea of menstrual disability).[64] White directly spoke to the idea of education interfering with the body's constitution, stating " the most delicate of all organs, the brain, has often been permanently injured by too great exercise. . . Of those children who have apparently had sufficient force of constitution to survive this treatment, there are very many who carry the effects of it through life."[65] She goes on to discuss the breakdown into nervousness that many of these children will experience through overexertion of the brain, which directly supported the theory of menstrual disability of the day. The language that White uses, seen in terminology like "constitution", "critical period", and "womanhood", is synonymous with discussions surrounding the intersection of menstruation, health, and education held in the 19th century.

While White might not have explicitly said much on the topic of menstruation, another 19th-century Adventist health reformer did. John Harvey Kellogg, physician, and director of the Adventist Battle Creek Sanitarium, authored numerous books on various medical topics. Two of them, *Plain Facts About Sexual Life* and *The Ladies Guide in Health and Disease*, strongly mirror prevailing medical theory of the day concerning menstruation. As previously mentioned, menstrual disorders were believed to be a pathological condition and a direct reflection of both the individual's physical and moral condition.[66] According to Kellogg, a girl's first period was "critical" (note the word usage as connected to White and other physicians of the day), and during her first menstrual cycle she would be "especially susceptible to morbid influences" with the risk of serious derangements throughout her lifetime.[67] In regards to 19th-century discussions surrounding menstruation and education, Kellogg did believe that women's constitutions could

[64] Clarke, *Sex*, 17.
[65] Ellen White. *Healthful Living*. Review and Herald Publishing (1873): 44.
[66] Rampelli, *Narratives* , 6.
[67] John Harvey Kellogg. *Plain facts about sexual life*. Good Health Pub. Co., 1885., 52.

be permanently injured by excessive mental strain. However, he also explicitly stated that a "moderate amount of sound study required by a correct system of teaching" should never seriously harm a "healthy young woman."[68] Kellogg's approval of women's education and his medical theory concerning menstrual disability mirrored the larger Adventist support of women's participation in higher education and broader society, as seen in the presence of female Adventist nurses, missionaries, and in attendance of female seminaries.[69]

Kellogg's medical theory concerning menstruation also mirrored another, broader Adventist ideology. Present both in the 19th-century Adventist church and other religious reformist sects was the belief of the physical state intertwined with spiritual purity.[70] Closely connected to the symbiotic relationship between physical health and one's spiritual state was the belief that the body was sustained by a "vital force" contained in sexual fluid. The depletion of this vital force would inevitably lead to disease, deformity, and even death.[71] While this is mostly reflected in Adventist warnings against masturbation, this belief is present in Kellogg's admonitions concerning sexual intercourse during menstruation. According to Kellogg, the height of both a woman's fertility and her sexual desire was centered around the menstrual cycle. One would assume this to reflect positive connotations surrounding menstruation and sexual intercourse, as Kellogg and other physicians believed the sole purpose of sex to be reproduction and the "continuing of humanity".[72] Quite the opposite was true. Not only did Kellogg believe intercourse during the menstrual cycle to be a manifestation of "sexual depravity", but he also believed the character of children was directly influenced by the menstrual condition of the mother during conception, creating offspring that would be physically deformed, sexually

[68] Kellogg, *Plain facts*, 54.
[69] David A. Dean. "The Role of Women in the Early Adventist Movement." *Priscilla Papers*, April 8, 2008.
[70] Bailey, "Promises of Purity", 60.
[71] Laura L. Vance. "Converging on the Heterosexual Dyad: Changing Mormon and Adventist Sexual Norms and Implications for Gay and Lesbian Adherents." *Nova religio* 11, no. 4 (2008): 56–76. 58.
[72] Kellogg, *Plain facts*, 137.

depraved, and immoral.[73] As previously mentioned, such ideologies concerning menstrual blood in connection with sexual intercourse and the resulting consequences of losing that "vital force" reflect 19th-century Adventist beliefs of physical health, spiritual purity, and gender roles.[74]

Outside of Kellogg's work, Adventist publications leaned on the more practical side when it came to discussing menstruation. Seventh-Day Adventist publications such as *The Health Reformer*, *The Pacific Health Journal and Temperance Advocate*, and *Good Health: A Journal of Hygiene* frequently ran columns answering health-related questions from readers. Many women wrote in to these columns asking for advice on menstrual pain, disorders, and related issues. The varied responses from the publications illustrate common understanding surrounding menstruation, what was believed to cause menstrual disorders, and proposed remedies to treat such disorders. These responses reflect the health reform culture of 19th-century Adventists, especially concerning the publications' focus on menstrual home remedies and their strong denouncement of pharmaceutical drugs to cure menstrual disorders.[75]

The Health Reformer itself defined deranged menstruation in one of its columns, stating "Deranged menstruation has several causes. A very common cause is taking cold about the time the function commences. Displacement and congestion of the uterus also causes it."[76] This understanding of menstruation as connected to other physical ailments (especially colds) is reflected in women's write-ins to the publications to ask questions concerning menstrual disorders. It also reflected medical understandings of the day, as Kellogg himself described colds and sudden chill after perspiration to be the "most disturbing to menstruation".[77]

---

[73] Kellogg,*Plain facts*, 65.
[74] Vance, "Converging", 58.
[75] Bailey, "Promises of Purity", 178.
[76] "To Correspondents." *The Health Reformer*, July 1872: 198.
[77] Kellogg, *Plain facts*, 52.

This belief is reflected in the May 1871 edition of *The Health Reformer* where "A. L." detailed her experience with developing "deranged menstruation": "I am nineteen years of age, well-developed, and had highly colored cheeks until I took a cold during a menstrual period. This caused me to decline in health for eight months."[78] She goes on to detail the pain she experienced thereafter, including severe headaches, irregular menstruation, and a descent into nervousness that caused her to leave school.[79] In June of that same year, "P. L. K." had a similar story: "Some two years ago, I took cold from exposure to wet, and since then have been troubled with irregular and painful menstruation. Last fall, I became so bad that I could not walk five rods without stopping to rest."[80]

In a similar vein, "F. H." wrote to *The Health Reformer* in July of 1871 to ask for remedies concerning her menstrual pain, detailing what caused her ailment: "I have been treated by an allopathic physician, and health seemed much improved until the past winter, when my difficulties were again brought on by a too close application to painting in water colors. Menstruation regular, but accompanied with extreme pain for one or two days."[81] The understanding of menstrual disorders as connected to the respiratory system reflects the 19th-century understanding of the reproductive system as intertwined with the entire body, evidenced by the following column advice in response to a mother's query concerning her daughter's menstrual pain and its possible connection to operating a sewing machine: "She has from some cause depleted her blood, and has not sufficient vitality to carry on the process of menstruation."[82] As seen in the above articles, it was thought that any disruption of the body could have a direct effect on the reproductive system, specifically menstruation. This

[78] "A Complicated Case —A. L.". *The Health Reformer*, May 1871: 245.
[79] "A Complicated", 245.
[80] "To Correspondants". *The Health Reformer*, June 1871: 272.
[81] "To Correspondents". *The Health Reformer*, June 1871: 272.
[82] "Irregularity.—Mrs. A. C. K." *The Health Reformer*, June 1873: 167.

understanding reflects the 19th-century idea of the body's "constitution", and the danger present in "throwing the body out of order".[83]

For each of these queries, the columns responded with medical advice. The varied responses of the columns in response to questions concerning menstruation illuminate both societal understandings surrounding menstruation as well as the peculiar focus of the Seventh-Day Adventist institution concerning health reforms. One of the main pieces of advice given by the above publications concerning menstrual disorders was a change to the diet. The Adventist emphasis on nutrition, specifically vegetarianism, occurred during an era of health reforms in the late half of the 19th century. Vegetarianism became more mainstream after the Civil War and was further introduced to society through the influence of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. With the rise of "restaurant culture" due to increasing urbanization, health reformers were particularly concerned with the use of white flour, as well as excessive salt and sugar.[84] This nutritional concern was directly connected to menstrual disorders, reflected both in feminist rhetoric of the day as well as Adventist health publications. Doctor Mary Putnam Jacobi (see above medical section) particularly focused on the connection between nutrition and the reproductive system, in which she believed inadequate nutrition was the cause of menstrual disorders. This directly contrasted with the medical belief of menstrual disorders as a strictly pathological condition.[85]

The connection between nutrition and menstrual disorders is reflected in the 1869 edition of *The Health Reformer*, where the health column responded to a question from "P. C. R.". She detailed menstrual pain accompanied by headaches and constipation. The column's response was

---

[83]

[84] Talea Anderson. "Disability, Race, Class, and Gender in Seventh-Day Adventist Health Publications, 1880-1910." *Disability studies quarterly* 42, no. 3–4 (2023): 3.

[85] Bittell, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 118.

the following: “We would recommend for her to make a thorough and radical change in her diet. . .Commence the use of graham flour, and learn to love it. Let alone the salt fish, diminish the salt in the food until it amounts to—none at all. . . we venture to predict a change for the better in her . . . periodical condition.”[86] The April 1871 edition of the same newspaper promoted “fruits, grains, and a moderate use of vegetables”[87], while an August 1870 edition recommended to “Discontinue the use of sugar and milk, and adopt a simple fruit and farinacea diet”[88] in response to queries of easing menstrual pain. In this way, Adventist health reforms and the advice given regarding menstrual pain mirrored feminist ideology of the time. By providing women with practical, physical changes they could implement to counteract menstrual disorders, Adventist literature counteracted the prevailing medical theory of menstruation and its disorders as a pathological condition.

Besides changes to diet, Adventist health columns promoted home remedies and continually discouraged the use of drugs and medicine. At the forefront of alternative health practices in the 19th century was the water cure movement, which is reflected in Adventist reforms and medical literature.[89] For example, in response to a case of menstrual insanity, *The Health Reformer* column recommended the following home remedies: “Hip baths, foot baths, and fomentations at the monthly periods, are the specialties of treatment. The patient should quit taking drugs, and adopt the hygienic dietary.”[90] An August 1870 edition of *The Health Reformer* encouraged their reader to “wear the wet girdle two hours each day during the middle of the day,

[86] “P. C. R. writes from R. I.”. *The Health Reformer*, July 1869: 13.
[87] “To Correspondents”. *The Health Reformer*, April 1871: 208.
[88] “Disease of the Liver and Spleen.—M. E. S”. *The Health Reformer*, August 1870: 29.
[89] Bailey, “Promises of Purity”, 166.
[90] “Menstrual Insanity.—J. F. B.” *The Health Reformer*, June 1871: 277.

and apply fomentations to the regions over the liver and spleen for ten minutes at bed time twice a week,"[91] while an 1871 edition said to "take care to envelop the head in a cold wet cloth".[92]

Another common theme across column responses concerning menstruation was a strong opposition to drugs. Various column responses to menstrual pain addressed medicinal usage, stating that "The patient should quit taking drugs"[93] and "Medicines are not what you need."[94] The most illuminative column response concerning drugs was in response to a father writing in about his daughter who began menstruating painfully after receiving morphine and chloroform from a physician. In their response, *The Health Reformer* stated the following:

> It is not only the right, but the duty, of all parents whose eyes are opened to the falsity of the drug medical system, to refuse to let the drug doctors poison their children when they are sick. The morphine and chloroform subdued the pain for a time, by deadening the sensibility and exhausting the vitality; but their ultimate effect will be to aggravate the disease. But, until the masses of the people are hygienically educated, this drugging business must go on. The doctors will dose as long as the people will swallow, and foot the bills.[95]

The 19th-century Adventist position on drugs (viscerally opposed) directly opposed heroic science and the professionalization of medicine. Despite the fact that White, Kellogg, and Adventist health reforms as a whole were mostly in line with the modern medicine of the day, it was their stance on drugs that further separated the two.[96] White can be quoted as being opposed to all forms of drugs such as alcohol, opium, and morphine, and Kellogg believed drugs to be the "devil's potent means for ruining the bodies of humanity".[97] Many advertisements of the day promoted the use of drugs, tonics, and other substances to menstruating women (see above section on women's periodicals), and the prescribing of drugs allowed male physicians to retain

---

[91] "Disease", 29.
[92] "F. H. writes from New Hampshire". *The Health Reformer*, June 1871: 272.
[93] "Menstrual Insanity", 277.
[94] "Suppression. —L" *The Health Reformer*, June 1873: 166.
[95] "Druggery in the Public Schools". *The Health Reformer*, January 1871: 125.
[96] Bailey, "Promises of Purity", 171.
[97] Kellogg, *Plain facts*, 54.

their power and control over women, as they held their medical knowledge as entirely objective and indisputable.[98] A distinct counterculture emerged in 19th-century Adventist health reforms, as their publications presented alternative medical treatments concerning menstruation, such as nutrition, water cures, and the avoidance of drugs. This was the way in which heroic science was countered, with rival medical advice from lay people made accessible to women, who could then make their own decisions.[99]

Conclusion

It was this knowledge that frightened male physicians of the 19th century. The authority of medicine as a profession rested on the fact that physicians possessed knowledge inaccessible to the rest of society, namely women. When knowledge of menstruation was made accessible to women, whether that be through the medical reasoning behind menstrual disorders, having a platform to discuss their own experiences with menstruation, or having the availability of alternative medical practices, they both challenged and transcended the confines of society.[100] Having a knowledge of their own bodies concerning menstruation undermined women's reliance on male physicians and removed his expertise.[101]

Having highlighted the background of medical beliefs and practices surrounding menstruation, as well as providing evidence of how women engaged in discussions of menstruation through women's periodicals, my conclusion focuses on the case study of Adventist health reforms and publications. Adventist health publications were a disseminator of

[98] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 45.
[99] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 45.
[100] Furst, *Women Healers*, 2.
[101] Delamont, *The Nineteenth-Century*, 31.

menstrual knowledge. They effectively removed authority from male physicians and placed it in the hands of the woman reader, who in most cases could easily implement dietary changes and home remedies to relieve menstrual disorders without ever even consulting a doctor. The presence of Adventist alternative medical approaches to menstruation also undermined 19th-century beliefs of menstruation as a pathological, gendered disorder. Rather than focusing on perceived gender weaknesses or the immorality of the individual, Adventist health publications presented practical, implementable solutions that targeted the physical well-being of women.

This is not to say that 19th-century Adventist health reformers never aligned with medical theory concerning menstruation. As seen above, two of the most prolific Adventist health reformers, White and Kellogg, often paralleled menstrual medical theory, attributing menstrual disorders to morality and connecting physicality to spiritual health. However, the practical implementations evidenced in Adventist publications reveal that Adventist reformers aimed to revitalize the physical health of women, and often saw physicians and their methods as causing further damage to women and their menstrual health. Furthermore, the presence of women in health reforms, both in Adventism and broader 19th-century society, became integral to disseminating new scientific principles, and Adventist publications aided women in gaining menstrual knowledge, both as "hygienic homemakers" or as literal health professionals.[102] The gaining of medical knowledge, both menstrual and otherwise, would be integral to women's efforts to participate more fully in society and the larger struggle for self-determination.[103]

Turning now to the big picture, the purpose of the above research has been to delve into 19th-century perspectives on menstruation, shedding light on a topic often overlooked in

[102] Bittell, *Mary Putnam Jacobi*, 5.
[103] Furst, *Women Healers*, 222.

historical studies. The significance of this exploration lies in its contribution to the broader understanding of women's agency during a transformative period in American history. As societal norms, gender roles, and economic structures underwent profound changes, the study of menstruation becomes a crucial lens through which we can comprehend women's experiences, challenges, and responses to evolving circumstances.

The connection between menstrual disorders and insanity, as well as the pathologization of the menstrual cycle itself, illustrates the societal challenges women face. The above sources emphasize the role of publications, both medical and women's periodicals, in disseminating information, fostering solidarity, and challenging stigmas surrounding menstruation. Despite societal constraints, women actively engaged in discussions about their bodies, health, and societal roles. The pushback against medical warnings about the dangers of female education, the rejection of pharmaceutical solutions in favor of natural remedies, and the establishment of discourse through publications all underscore women's agency in navigating societal expectations. This research serves as a testament to the resilience and activism of women in shaping their own narratives during a pivotal period in history.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Brooklyn Med Journal. “Importance of Menstruation In Determining Mental Irresponsibility.” *The Cincinnati Lancet and Clinic* (1878-1904) 33, no. 6 (1894).

Clarke, Edward H. *Sex and Education, or, A Fair Chance for the Girls* (James R. Osgood and Company, 1873).

Comfort, Anna Manning and George F. Comfort. Woman’s Education and Woman’s Health (Thos. W. Durston and Co., Publishers., 1874).

Currier, Andrew P. “The Disorders of Menstruation.” *Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery* (1851-1920) 43, no. 3 (1889).

Extracts From Correspondence.San Antonia Texas:—I send. *The Woman's Tribune. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, December 2, 1893.

Extracts From Correspondence.Warsaw N. Y.— Two hundred. *The Woman's Tribune. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, November 18, 1893.

“Development of Hereditary Maladies”. *Frank Leslie’s Weekly*. February 7, 1874.

“Hartmann’s Hygenic Wood Wool Diapers”, *Chatto and Windus*, 1885.

Health Reformer

“Disease of the Liver and Spleen.—M. E. S”. August 1870.

“Druggery in the Public Schools”. January 1871.

“F. H. writes from New Hampshire”. June 1871.

“Irregularity.—Mrs. A. C. K.” June 1873.

“Menstrual Insanity.—J. F. B.” June 1871.

“P. C. R. writes from R. I.”. July 1869.

"Suppression. —L". June 1873.

"To Correspondents." July 1872.

Hygiene and Medical. "To Suffer or Not to Suffer." *Editor of the The Woman's Tribune. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association*, March 16, 1889.

Kellogg, John Harvey. *Ladies guide in health and disease: Girlhood, maidenhood, wifehood, motherhood*. Health Publishing Company, 1883.

Kellogg, John Harvey. *Plain facts about sexual life*. Good Health Pub. Co., 1885.

Mitchell, Hubbard Winslow. "Report of a Case of Complete Non-Menstruation." *Medical Record* (1866-1922) 41, no. 12 (1892).

"Menstruation." *The Clinic* (1871-1878) 7, no. 20 (Nov 14, 1874): 238.

Southall's 'Sanitary Towels'", *Sharp, Perrin, and Co*., 1894.

"Southall's Towels", 1913.

White, Ellen. *An Appeal to Mothers*. Review and Herald Publishing (1870).

White. Ellen. *Healthful Living*. Review and Herald Publishing (1873).

White, Ellen. *Letters and Manuscripts - Volume 8*. Review and Herald Publishing (1893): Letter 96.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Talea. "Disability, Race, Class, and Gender in Seventh-Day Adventist Health Publications, 1880-1910." *Disability studies quarterly* 42, no. 3–4 (2023).

Bailey, Emily J. "Promises of Purity: Adventist Approaches to Sanctification through Health Reform." *International journal for the study of new religions* 10, no. 2 (2019): 159–184.

Bittel, Carla Jean. *Mary Putnam Jacobi & the Politics of Medicine in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Brown, Gillian. *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America*. Berkeley, Calif, CA: University of California Press, 1992.

Bullough, Vern, and Martha Voght. "Women, menstruation, and nineteenth-century medicine." Bulletin of the History of Medicine 47, no. 1 (1973): 66–82. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44447512.

Briggs, Laura. "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology." *American Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2000): 246–73. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30041838.

Coryell, Janet L. "Superseding Gender: The Role of the Woman Politico in Antebellum Partisan Politics." In *Women and the Unstable State in Nineteenth Century America*, edited by Alison M. Parker and Stephanie Cole, 84-103. College Station: University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A & M University Press, 2000

Dean, David A. "The Role of Women in the Early Adventist Movement." *Priscilla Papers*, April 8, 2008.

Delamont, Sara, and Lorna Duffin. *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

Foster, Johanna. "Menstrual Time: The Sociocognitive Mapping of 'The Menstrual Cycle.'" *Sociological Forum* 11, no. 3 (1996): 523–47. http://www.jstor.org/stable/684899.

Furst, Lilian R. *Women Healers and Physicians Climbing a Long Hill*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

McGregor, Deborah Kuhn. *From Midwives to Medicine: The Birth of American Gynecology.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

More, Ellen Singer, Elizabeth Fee, and Manon Parry. *Women Physicians and the Cultures of Medicine*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009.

Morantz, Regina Markell. "Making Women Modern: Middle Class Women and Health Reform in 19th Century America." *Journal of Social History* 10, no. 4 (1977): 490–507. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786765.

Phegley, Jennifer. *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines & Cultural Health of the Nation*. Ohio State University Press, 2020.

Sklar, Kathryn Kish. "Reconsidering Domesticity through the Lens of Empire and Settler Society in North America." *The American Historical Review*, Volume 124, Issue 4 (October 2019): 1249–1266. https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz646.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll.. "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-century America." Social Research 39, no. 4 (1972): 652–78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40970115.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll, and Charles Rosenberg. "The female animal: Medical and biological views of woman and her role in nineteenth-century america." *The Journal of American History 60*, no. 2 (1973): 332–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/2936779.

Rampelli, Melissa. *Narratives of Women's Health and Hysteria in the Nineteenth-Century Novel.* 1st ed. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

Rosenberg, Charles E. "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America." *American Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1973): 131–53. https://doi.org/10.2307/2711594.

Vance, Laura L. “Converging on the Heterosexual Dyad: Changing Mormon and Adventist Sexual Norms and Implications for Gay and Lesbian Adherents.” *Nova religio* 11, no. 4 (2008): 56–76.

Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860.” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151–74. https://doi.org/10.2307/2711179.