

North American Working Class Autobiography

Compiled by Cheryl Cline

for **Payday: Working Class Life and Art**

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Anthologies

Collections of working class autobiographical essays, interviews, and oral histories

Andrews, William L., ed. *Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. 245pp.

Andrews, William L. and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. *The Civitas Anthology of African American Slave Narratives*. Washington, D.C.: Civitas/Counterpoint, 1999. 642p.

Anzaldúa, Gloria, ed. *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras. Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1990. 402pp.

Atkin, S. Beth, ed. *Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their stories*. Interviews and photographs by S. Beth Atkin. Boston: Joy Street Books, 1993. 96p.

Boyd, Jean Ann, ed. *The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 269p.

Buss, Frances Leeper, ed. *Dignity: Lower Income Women Tell of Their Lives and Struggles*. Oral Histories. Introduction by Susan Contratto. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985. 290pp.

Byerly, Victoria, ed. *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls: Personal Histories of Women and Poverty in the South*. As Told to Victoria Byerly. Introduction by Cletus F. Daniel. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986. 223pp.

Carlsson, Chris with Mark Leger, eds. *Bad Attitude: The Processed World Anthology*. Designed by Chris Carlsson and Jocelyn Bergen. London and New York: Verso, 1990. 281p.

Carson, Robert, ed. *The Waterfront Writers: The Literature of Work*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979. 198pp.

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Coles, Nicholas and Peter Oresick, eds. *For a Living: The Poetry of Work*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press

Coltelli, Laura, ed. *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press/Bison, 1990. 209pp.

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- Delacosta, Frédérique and Priscilla Alexander, eds. *Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry*. San Francisco and Pittsburgh: Cleis Press, 1987. 349pp.
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- Dublin, Thomas, ed. *Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830-1860*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981. 191pp.
- Eisler, Benita, ed. *The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-1845)*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977. 223p. Reprinted, New York: Norton, 1998.
- Foner, Philip S., ed. *The Factory Girls: A Collection of Writings on Life and Struggles in the New England factories of the 1840's. By the factory girls themselves, and the story, in their own words, of the first trade unions of women workers in the United States*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977. 360p.
- Gates, Jr., Henry Louis, ed. *Bearing Witness: Selections from African-American Autobiography in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1991. 385p.
- Grumley, Michael, ed. *After Midnight*. Drawings by the author. New York: Scribner's, 1978. 210p.
- Henderson, Bruce Griffin, ed. *Waiting: Waiters' True Tales of Crazy Customers, Murderous Chefs, and Tableside Disasters*. New York: Plume/Penguin, 1995. 255p.
- Hoffman, Nancy and Florence Howe, ed. *Women Working: An Anthology of Stories and Poems*. Illustrated by Ann Toulmin-Rothe. Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1979. 271p.
- Honey, Michael Keith, ed. *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation, Unionism, and the Freedom Struggle*. University of California Press, 1999. 402p.
- Hourwich, Andria Taylor, and Gladys L. Palmer, eds. *I Am A Woman Worker: A Scrapbook of Autobiographies*. New York: Affiliated School for Workers, 1936. 152pp. Facsimile reprint. New York: Arno Press, 1974. 152pp.
- Kahn, Kathy, ed. *Hillbilly Women*. Photographs by Al Clayton. Migrant photos by Franck Blechman, Jr. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973. 230pp.
- Kodama-Nishimoto, Michi, Warren S. Nishimoto and Cynthia A. Oshiro, ed. *Hanahana: An Oral History of Hawaii's Working People*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984. 196p.
- Kornbluh, Joyce L., ed. *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964. 419p. New and expanded edition, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1998. 447p.
- Lambert, Paul F. and Kenny A. Franks, eds. *Voices From the Oil Fields*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. 260p.

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[Lowell Offering] *Mind Amongst the Spindles: A Miscellany, Wholly Composed by the Factory Girls*. Selected from the Lowell Offering. With an introduction by the English editor, and a letter from Harriet Martineau. Boston: Jordan, Swift & Wiley, 1845. 214p.

Lynd, Alice and Staughton Lynd, eds. *Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working Class Organizers*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973. 296pp. Illustrated ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981. 296pp.

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Martz, Sandra, ed. *If I Had a Hammer, Women's Work: In Poetry, Fiction, and Photographs*. Watsonville, CA: Papier-Mache Press, 1990, 261p.

Michelson, Maureen R. and Michael R. Dressler, eds. *Women & Work: Photographs and Personal Writings*. Pasadena, Calif.: New Sage Press, 1986. 178p.

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Moore, Marat, ed. *Women In the Mines: Stories of Life and Work*. New York: Twayne Publishers; London: Prentice Hall International, 1996. 337p.

Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldúa, ed. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Foreword by Toni Cade Bambara. Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1981. 261p. Second edition, New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983. 261p.

Murphy, Sheila E., John G. Sperling, and John D. Murphy, eds. *Literature of Work: Short Stories, Essays, and Poems by Men and Women of Business*. Phoenix: University of Phoenix Press, 1991. 314p.

Myerhoff, Barbara, ed. *Number Our Days*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. 306pp. New York: Simon and Schuster/Touchstone, 1980. 306p.

Nekola, Charlotte and Paula Rabinowitz, eds. *Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1930-1940*. Foreword by Toni Morrison. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987. 349p.

Oresick, Peter and Nicholas Coles, eds. *Working Classics: Poems on Industrial Life*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990. 269p.

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- Raffo, Susan, ed. *Queerly Classed: Gay Men & Lesbians Write About Class*. Boston: South End Press, 1997.
- Reinhardt, Richard, ed. *Workin' on the Railroad: Reminiscences from the Age of Steam*. Edited with commentary. Palo Alto, Calif., American West Publishing Co. [1970] 318p.
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- Ryan, Jake and Charles Sackrey, eds. *Strangers in Paradise: Academics from the Working Class*. Boston: South End Press, 1984. 322p. Reprinted, Lanham: University Press of America, 1996. 308p.
- Santiago Baca, Jimmy, ed. *The Heat: Steelworker Lives and Legends*. Mena, Ariz.: Cedar Hill Publications, 2001. 157p.
- Santino, Jack, ed. *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989. 160p.
- Schorr, Thelma M. and Anne Zimmerman, eds. *Making Choices, Taking Chances: Nurse Leaders Tell Their Stories*. St. Louis: Mosby, 1988. 414p.
- Schorr, Thelma M. and Maureen Shawn Kennedy, eds. *100 Years of American Nursing: Celebrating A Century of Caring*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Publishers, 1999. 222p.
- Schroedel, Jean Reith, ed. *Alone in a Crowd: Women in the Trades Tell Their Stories*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985. 268p.
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- Seller, Maxine Schwartz, ed. *Immigrant Women*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. 347pp.
- Sessions, Robert and Jack Wortman, eds. *Working in America: A Humanities Reader*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992. 520p.
- Sheth, Jagdish and David A. Heffner, eds. *Voice with a Smile: True Stories from American Telephone Operators*. Barrington, Ill.: PERQ Publications, 1993.
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- Thomas, Sherry, ed. *We Didn't Have Much, But We Sure Had Plenty: Stories of Rural Women*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1981. 185pp. (Second edition subtitled "Rural Women in Their Own Words.")

Tokarczyk, Michelle M. and Elizabeth A. Fay, eds. *Working-Class Women in the Academy: Laborers in the Knowledge Factory*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993. 335p.

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Villani, Jim and Naton Leslie, eds. *Labor & the Post-Industrial Age*. Youngstown, Ohio: Pig Iron Press, 1990. 128p.

Wallace, Terry, ed. *Bloods, An oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*. New York: Random House, 1984. 311p.

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Wayman, Tom, ed. *A Government Job at Last: An Anthology of Working Poems, Mainly Canadian*. Vancouver, BC: MacLeod Books, 1975. 176p.

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Individual Autobiographies

Abbot, E.C. "Teddy Blue." [1860-1939] *We Pointed Them North: Recollections of A Cowpuncher*. With Helena Huntington Smith. Illustrated by Ross Santee, and photographs. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939. 281pp. Reprinted, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

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----- *Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1983. 210pp.

Acosta, Oscar Zeta. *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*. With an introduction by Hunter S. Thompson. San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972. Reprinted in paperback by Random House/Vintage 1989. 204pp.

Adams, Andy. *The Log of a Cowboy: A Narrative of the Old Trail Days*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903. [Fictional, but considered to be authentic and one of the best pictures of cowboy life]

Ahern, Nell Giles. *Punch In, Susie! A Woman's War Factory Diary*. Drawings by Alan Dunn. New York and London: Harper Bros., 1943. 143pp.

Allison, Dorothy. *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class & Literature*. Ithaca: Firebrand Books, 1994. 261pp.

----- *Two or Three Things I Know For Sure*. New: Dutton, 1995. 94pp. [Originally written for performance after the completion of her novel *Bastard Out Of Carolina*]

Almirall, Leon Vincent [1884-?]. *From College to Cow Country*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1956. 471p. [Cowboy]

Anderson, Mary. *Women At Work: The Autobiography of Mary Anderson*. As told to Mary Winslow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1951. 266pp.

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House, 1969. 281pp.

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----- *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas*. New York: Random House, 1976. 269pp.

----- *The Heart of A Woman*. New York: Random House, 1981. 272pp.

Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987. [Poetry and autobiographical/political/theoretical essays on what it means to be Mexican-American, female, and lesbian.]

Baca, Jimmie Santiago. *Working in the Dark: Reflections of a Poet of the Barrio*. Santa Fe: Red Crane Books, 1992. 168pp.

Baker, Russell. *Growing Up*. New York: Congdon & Weed/St. Martin's Press, 1982. Reprinted in paperback by New American Library. 278pp.

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Barber, Olive. *The Lady and the Lumberjack*. Introduction by Stewart H. Holbrook. New York: Crowell, 1952.

Bard, Floyd C. [1879-?]. *Horse Wrangler: Sixty Years in the Saddle in Wyoming and Montana*. As told to Agnes Wright Spring. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960. 296pp.

Barnard, Evan G. [1865-?]. *A Rider of the Cherokee Strip*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936. 233p. [Cowboy]

Barr, Roseanne. *Roseanne: My Life As A Woman*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989. 202pp.

Best, Norman. *A Celebration of Work*. Edited and with an introduction by William G. Robbins. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. 223pp.

Beverly, Bob. *Hobo of the Rangeland*. Lovington, N.M.: 1940. 87pp. [Cowboy]

Black, Jack. *You Can't Win: The Autobiography of Jack Black*. Boston: Macmillan, 1926. Reprinted, with a foreword by William S. Burroughs. New York: Amok Press, 1988. 394pp. Hobo. Burroughs based his novel *Junky* on Black's book.

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Blasingame, Ike [1884-?]. *Dakota Cowboy: My Life in the Old Days*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958. 317pp.

Block, Max [1909-]. *Max The Butcher*. By Max Block with Ron Kenner. Seacaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, 1982. 320pp. [Labor autobiography: Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America]

Bloor, Ella. *We Are Many: An Autobiography*. New York: International Publishers, 1940. 319pp. [Labor autobiography]

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Cohen, Lester. *Mom and Pop: A Portrait*. Philadelphia and New York: Chilton Books, 1963. 131pp.

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Davis, Alice Pauline. *Bayou Boats*. New York: New Voices Publishing Co., 1950. 143pp. [World War II work in Texas Shipyard]

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French, Emily. *Emily, The Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman*. Edited by Janet Lecompte. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. 166pp.

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Gazaway, Rena. *The Longest Mile*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969. 348pp. [Raised in Appalachia; returns as a social worker.]

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Gipson, Fred [1908-?]. *Cowhand: The True Story of a Working Cowboy*. New York: Harper, 1952. 216pp.

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Goodwin, Ruby Berkley. *It's Good to Be Black*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953. 256pp. [Daughter of coal miner; becomes a writer]

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