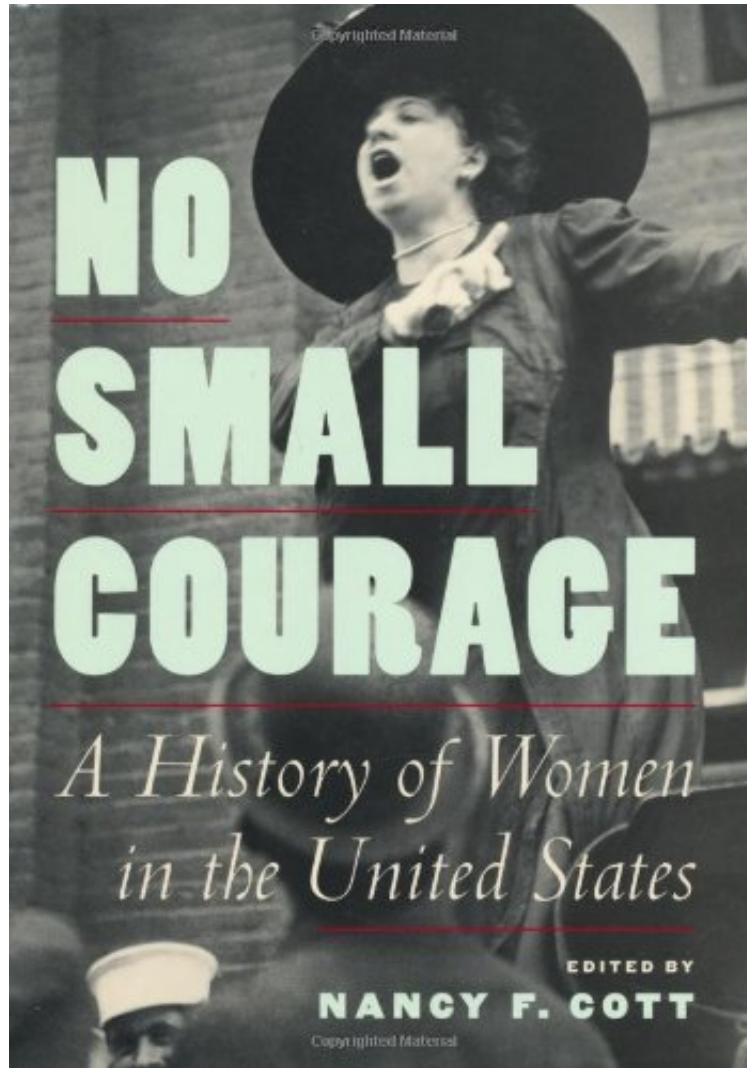


No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States

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in great condition0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Pink Gingergood

Enriched by the wealth of new research into women's history, *No Small Courage* offers a lively chronicle of American experience, charting women's lives and experiences with fascinating immediacy from the precolonial era to the present. Individual stories and primary sources—including letters, diaries, and news reports—animate this history of the domestic, professional, and political efforts of American women. John Demos begins the book with a discussion of Native American women confronting colonization. Leading historians illuminate subsequent eras of social and political change—including Jane Kamensky on women's lives in the colonial period, Karen Manners Smith on the rising tide of political activity by women in the Progressive Era, Sarah Jane Deutsch on the transition of 1920s optimism to the harsh realities of the Great Depression, Elaine Tyler May on the challenges to a gender-defined social order encouraged by World War II, and William H. Chafe on the women's movement and the struggle for political equality since the 1960s. The authors vividly relate such events as Anne Hutchinson's struggle for religious expression in Puritan Massachusetts, former slave Harriet Tubman's perilous efforts to free others in captivity, Rosa Parks's resistance to segregation in the South, and newfound opportunities for professional and personal self-determination available as a result of decades of protest. Dozens of archival illustrations add to the human dimensions of the authoritative text. *No Small Courage* dynamically captures the variety and significance of American women's experience, demonstrating that the history of our nation cannot be fully understood without focusing on changes in women's lives.

From Publishers Weekly Of the 10 weighty essays in this lengthy anthology edited by Yale University's Cott, perhaps the strongest is the opening piece, John Demos's incisive look at Native American women. Indian women, he points out, played a crucial role in the European settlement of North America: they made canoes for the traders, served as guides and translators, and participated directly in trade. In Jane Kamensky's essay on colonial women of European and African descent, we learn about demographics (just what did it mean for white women in the colonial Chesapeake that they were outnumbered by men?) and the complexity of colonial marriage. Kamensky also elucidates Dthough somewhat cursorily, Dthe hardships of slavery. Harriet Sigerman describes the 19th-century women's rights battles, looking at women's struggles to get an education, find meaningful work and, most importantly, gain the vote. Karen Manners Smith, writing about the fin-de-si cle, describes women's agitation for suffrage, the women's club movement and women's missionary activity. And in two rousing, if a touch triumphalistic, essays Elaine Tyler May and William H. Chafe introduce readers to women in the post-WWII era: suburban housewives, restless feminists, lesbian activists and ERA advocates. The volume is comprehensive, though perhaps already somewhat dated; it smacks of the 1980s cheerleading style of women's history, and does not reflect recent work that employs gender as a category of analysis rather than simply talking about women as a subject for historical analysis. Still, this volume will no doubt be read enthusiastically by armchair historians and be adopted for classroom use at colleges across the country. (Dec.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist *No Small Courage* is a survey of women's history in the U.S. John Demos opens with a discussion of Native women during colonization. Jane Kamensky contributes the chapter "The Colonial Mosaic," and Marylynn Salmon writes on "The Limits of Independence." The antebellum period (1800-48) is Michael Goldberg's subject. Harriet Sigerman takes on the Civil War in one chapter and the role of workers in "Laborers for Liberty" in the next. Karen Manners Smith addresses technological changes in "New Paths to Power: 1890-1920," and Sarah Jane Deutsch describes the years from enactment of women's suffrage through the Depression. The 1940s through 1961 are Elaine Tyler May's concern, and William H. Chafe authors "The Road to Equality," covering the last four decades. Chapter authors and editor are historians at respected universities. By examining the flow of American history as it has affected women, they illuminate aspects of the past that have often been neglected. Mary Carroll Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Illuminating and lively personal narratives.... Succeeds in giving a sense of how women have been 'active agents' in American history."--The New York Times Book "Details a rich store of female accomplishment over several centuries."--The Baltimore Sun "Significant additions to the history of women in the United States."--Dallas Morning News "Thoughtful, broad ranging, and engagingly written. A significant addition to literature in women's history. Accessible and inclusive, it will undoubtedly be an enormously useful volume for years to come."--Florida Historical Quarterly