each page reminds you of your search criteria, and searched-for words are highlighted. Each transcribed document is annotated with, for example, links to related topics and identifications of any person mentioned. And every document has a button for a printable version, which includes all necessary citation information.

What can we learn from these women’s papers? Months of research in the collection could not provide an exhaustive answer, but a quick search gives a start. On 17 July 1776, Thomas Pinckney, who was particularly close to his sister and longing for home, asked Harriott to take a little time every day (he suggested 11:00 a.m. as ideal) to write him a letter: “You may choose your Subject from Ethics & Metaphysics down to Scandal & Fiddle Faddle.” He knew her well. Like her mother, Harriott Horry wrote with aplomb about politics, education, social life, agricultural innovations, family relationships, travel, slavery, military maneuvers, courtships, economics, and local gossip. Doubling back to the genius of the project’s design, from this letter I could search for additional letters based on the two siblings’ locations and conversation topics, identify all the people they mentioned, and look up “Fiddle Faddle”—which meant what I imagined but was still delightful to confirm in a click.

Even historians quite familiar with Eliza Pinckney because of her published letterbook (Elise Pinckney, ed., The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney 1739–1762, Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1997) will discover here a much deeper understanding of a fascinating woman. Pinckney’s recipe book, for example, is a revelation of foodways and medicinal practices. Her daughter, Harriott Horry, is just as compelling, and more than deserving of the biographical studies that will doubtless emerge from this digital collection. Horry’s accounts of her travels—largely unknown until now—showcase her capacious curiosity about the world and the trademark conscientiousness and competency she inherited from her mother. Anyone interested in early America will profit from getting to know Eliza Pinckney and Harriott Horry and be grateful to Constance Schulz and all her partners for making it possible.

LORRI GLOVER

Saint Louis University

Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America by SUSAN REYNOLDS WILLIAMS. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013. xvi + 315 pp.; images, notes, Morse chronological bibliography, index; clothbound, $80.00; paperbound, $28.95.

Alice Morse Earle (1851-1911) was an amateur historian and bestselling author who wrote seventeen books and many magazine articles for popular outlets such as Atlantic Monthly, Outlook, and Scribner’s Magazine between 1891 and 1904. The histories she produced took many forms—biographies, antiquing guides, historic garden books, and anthropological investigations of
early American customs and material culture—but all made domestic life a subject of serious historical study and all treated women as historical actors.

Susan Reynolds Williams’s *Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America* is the first book-length study of Earle. Williams admits that she had hoped to produce a cultural biography but was thwarted by the fact that Earle did not preserve her own personal papers. Instead, Williams relies on Earle’s published works to tease out her beliefs and goals. She describes the book as a “biographically grounded study” of Earle’s intentions, methods, and significance” and treats her subject as both “a cultural product and as a cultural producer” (7, 14).

Although at times frustratingly scant, the biographical material Williams is able to provide illuminates Earle’s work as a historian. Earle grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in the manufacturing city of Worcester, Massachusetts. Her parents belonged to a generation that had fled rural northern New England to find prosperity by embracing an urban, industrial, business culture. As an adult, Earle married a stockbroker and moved to affluent Brooklyn Heights, New York, where she raised four children and became active in women’s literary and patriotic clubs.

Earle constructed a past compatible with the market-driven and materialistic world of the city. Although the Puritans were important to her and the subject of many of her writings, she did not portray them as overly pious, intellectual, or stern. Instead, Earle’s Puritans had humor, empathy, and human foibles—traits that her middle-class neighbors would have recognized in themselves. Earle also diminished Calvinist notions of determinism, a belief at odds with modern business culture and the cult of the individual.

Williams argues that Earle employed a “reformist ideology” and that she used history as a tool for social change (14). As a woman, the reform tradition likely would have been important to Earle. It permeated the culture of the middle class women’s clubs in which she participated. It also marked the writings of domestic advisers such as Catharine Beecher, whose belief in the importance of the domestic environment Earle shared. But as Williams demonstrates, Earle’s histories suggested only mild reform and primarily sought to strengthen the culture of her white, middle-class audience against disruptions caused by immigration, urbanization, and the impact of geographic mobility on family ties. Throughout her writings, Earle valued social hierarchy as a means of promoting stability. Indeed, this theme emerged with surprising frequency. Earle’s guide to china collecting included an implicit endorsement of the class divisions that enabled certain families to own fine things; her genealogies reconstructed kinship networks and provided a biological base for social distinction; even her writings on historic gardens became a metaphor for society’s ability to maintain continuity in the face of change.

Earle was similarly conservative in her personal life. Writing gave her a professional career and a personal income, but family appears to have come first. She didn’t start writing until she was almost forty, an age when her children were older, and not until the economic downturn of the 1890s
brought financial difficulties to her family. Women’s suffrage was a hotly debated subject among Earle’s peers, but she avoided taking a distinct side on the question.

Today’s professionally trained historians tend to have an uneasy relationship with amateurs such as Earle. Williams quotes Linda Kerber dismissing the work of Earle and her peers as “descriptive and anecdotal” and without broad significance (2). But Williams clearly respects Earle and depicts her as a proficient historian—one who cared about authenticity, based her work on primary sources, and prefigured the introduction of social history with her emphasis on the subject of ordinary domestic life. Williams also makes a claim for Earle’s lasting significance by demonstrating that her work informed popular displays of the past such as those found in historic house museums and historic pageants. Seeing Earle as a kind of public historian facilitates such a reassessment by valuing her ability to reach a mass audience and provide them with an engaging and compelling interpretation of the past.

**Briann Greenfield**

Central Connecticut State University

---


When historians first began to work for the National Park Service (NPS), during the busy, inventive 1930s, Chief Historian Verne Chatelain sought individuals willing to become a new type of historian. What was needed, in Denise D. Meringolo’s words, were men who were “as good on the ground as they were in the books.” That phrase is a useful reminder to today’s leaders of the American Historical Association, who have of late rediscovered public history as an outlet for PhDs unable to find academic jobs, that good public historians are not made in elite PhD programs but through “on the ground” work with the historical resources and interaction with the public. In this welcome addition to the literature on the origins and nature of public history Meringolo narrates the emergence of a new type of “public service” historian in the National Park Service of the New Deal era.

Meringolo’s concise study has two purposes and in some ways reads as two books joined in a single binding. Her overarching goal is to add to the necessary, and perhaps never-to-end, debate about how we define the public history enterprise. Her second goal is to explore the origins of history in the United States federal government.

In her prologue and in her conclusion Meringolo succinctly summarizes the attempts by the founding generation of the National Council on Public History (NCPH) to define “public history,” and the lukewarm response of many federal government historians to the new name and the academicians