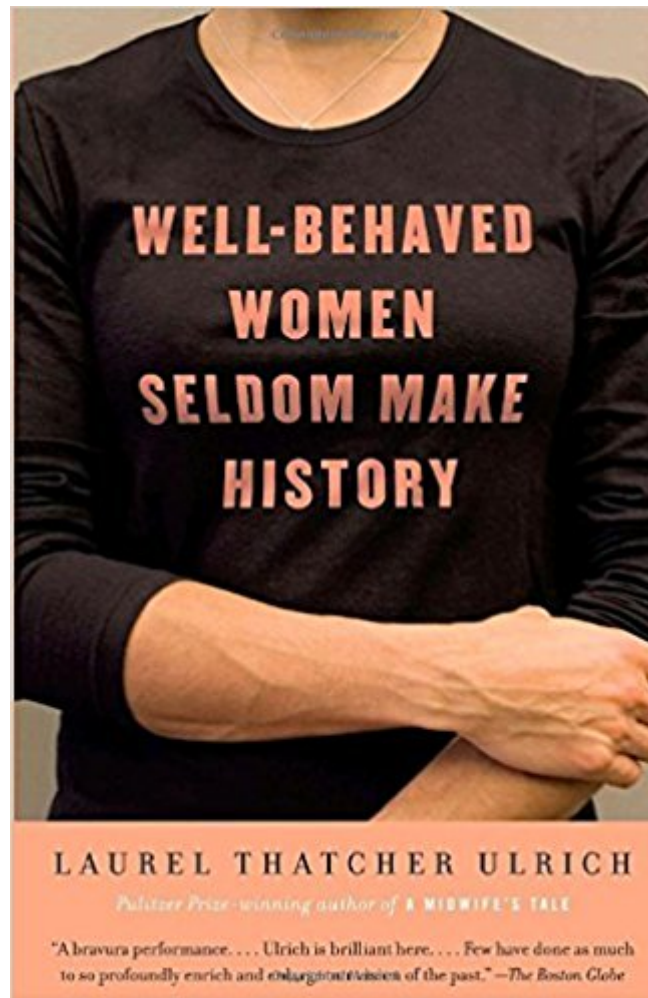




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Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History



Synopsis

From admired historian and coiner of one of feminism's most popular slogans "Laurel Thatcher Ulrich comes an exploration of what it means for women to make history. In 1976, in an obscure scholarly article, Ulrich wrote, "Well behaved women seldom make history." Today these words appear on t-shirts, mugs, bumper stickers, greeting cards, and all sorts of Web sites and blogs. Ulrich explains how that happened and what it means by looking back at women of the past who challenged the way history was written. She ranges from the fifteenth-century writer Christine de Pizan, who wrote *The Book of the City of Ladies*, to the twentieth century's Virginia Woolf, author of *A Room of One's Own*. Ulrich updates their attempts to reimagine female possibilities and looks at the women who didn't try to make history but did. And she concludes by showing how the 1970s activists who created "second-wave feminism" also created a renaissance in the study of history.

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Customer Reviews

In 1976, graduate student Ulrich asserted in an obscure scholarly article that well-behaved women seldom make history. But Ulrich, now at Harvard, made history, winning the Pulitzer and the Bancroft Prizes for *A Midwife's Tale* and her slogan did, too: it began popping up on T-shirts, greeting cards and buttons. Why the appeal, Ulrich wondered? And what makes a woman qualify as well-behaved or rebellious? Several chapters of this accessible and beautifully written study are brilliant. In one, Ulrich follows the lead of Virginia Woolf (who invented an ill-fated fictional sister of

Shakespeare) by digging into what we know "and don't know" about the women in the Bard's family. In another, she offers a piercing analysis of four 19th-century Harriets—ex-slaves Tubman, Jacobs and Powell, and novelist Stowe—to uncover the interplay of race and gender in questions of liberation. And in a third, richly illustrated chapter, she utilizes a medieval book of days as a window into women's labor through the ages. If other chapters, such as a wide-ranging exploration of the myth and a rumination on second-wave feminism, don't cohere as tightly or showcase Ulrich's strengths as an extraordinary interpreter of ordinary records, this can be forgiven in a work that is so often sharp and insightful. 26 illus. (Sept. 7) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Unlike her previous works, which focused on a single location, era, or life, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's fifth work of nonfiction takes a broad view of women's history. Though critics felt that her associations and organizing devices were clever, a few questioned some of the connections between stories. Critics also diverged over Ulrich's style: some found it dry and academic; others considered it clear and compelling. Ulrich, a pioneer in women's history in the 1970s and 1980s, continues to produce works that provide a fascinating peek into the past—"into what a woman's life was, and might still be, were it not for these spirited pioneers whose stories deserve to be remembered. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great read. It reinforced my belief in women AND history. I am a midwife, dedicated to women and their transitions in life, such as motherhood, grandmother hood, and the journey from maiden to mother to matriarch to crone. I learned much. And it reinforced my beliefs and knowledge.

This never felt like a high school history book but I think it SHOULD be one! I loved it and have recommended it to many women. It jumps across time, across cultures and across disciplines but isn't choppy. It steadily frames just how amazing the history of womenkind is.

The best feature of this book is the wide range of relatively unknown women whose stories are told. The book is very well researched, with vivid storytelling. A must read -- even a textbook -- as an introduction to women's studies at the college level.

Fantastic stories of defiant women. I read this during Hurricane Sandy and felt a sense of empowerment and gratitude for the women that sacrificed so much. I can't imagine a life of not being allowed education, employment & a fair wage, reproductive rights etc... A great gift for women.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich writes wonderful women's history books. Have learned a lot from her.

Wonderful book that gave perspective on various women in history woven together with touchstones of three stories. Absolutely loved this!

Well written and a pleasure to read. This was used as one of the textbooks for my college women's studies class and was very useful.

Meticulous scholarship in a book every woman should read. I was energized by it and want to go read many of the books authored by women that Dr. Ulrich mentions. Well-written and enjoyable.

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