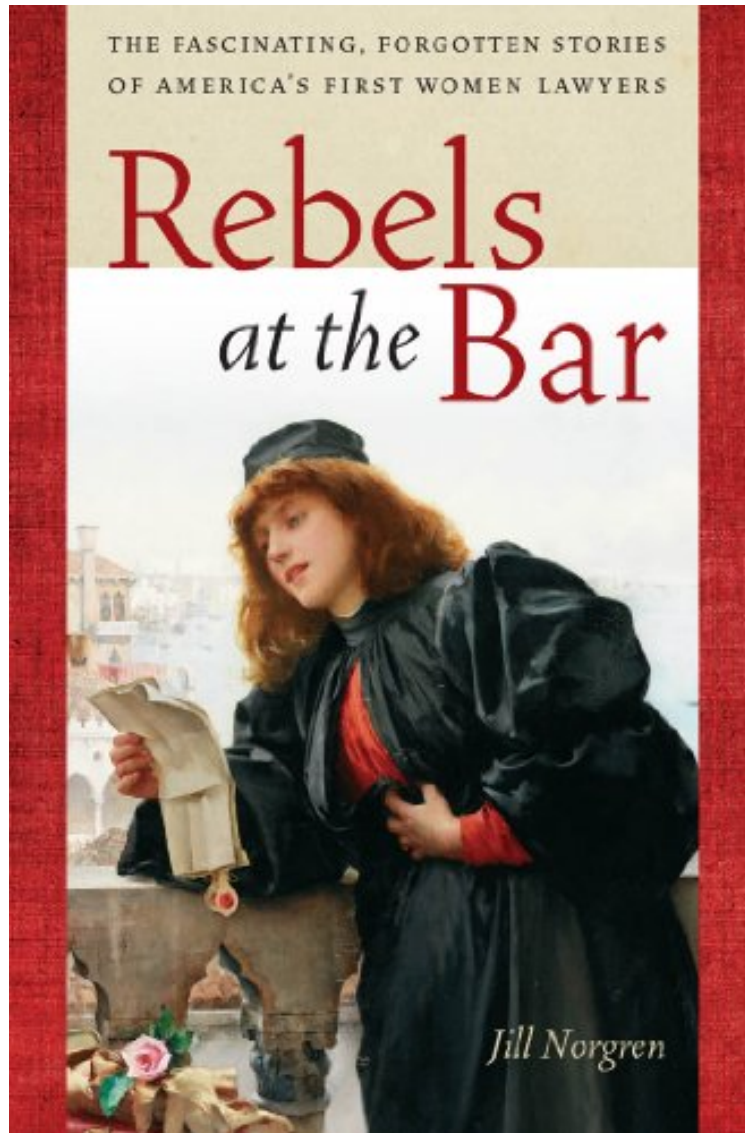


(Read free) Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of Americas First Women Lawyers

# Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of Americas First Women Lawyers

*Jill Norgren*

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**Jill Norgren : Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of Americas First Women Lawyers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of Americas First Women Lawyers:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good book!By CustomerI really enjoyed reading this book. It had a

lot of good information and provided a great view of the history of women as attorney's. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Historical Accounts By DLibrarian This book should serve as a reminder to all the young female attorneys who think it is hard to advance in today's world. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Reclaiming a mostly forgotten history By Todd Bartholomew After the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 women began to think differently about their identity and role in society. The patriarchal norms of society relegated most women to chattel, giving them few rights if any. Spurred by the rethinking of their role in society women began to agitate for a participation in non-traditional occupations, such as clergy, physicians, and lawyers. These women were trailblazers and their fascinating histories deserve to be told and recounted as they were truly exceptional women. With "Rebels at the Bar" Jill Norgren seeks to redress that by recounting the exploits of eight women who were amongst the first to break into the legal profession. Sadly these women are hardly household names, nor will most of them be familiar to many historians or legal scholars. They came from a variety of backgrounds and chose to pursue the legal profession for a variety of reasons, some out of desperation to provide for their family, others out of a desire to seek redress through the courts for women, others to fulfill personal ambition. By and large they were seeking to foster societal change, sometimes at great personal cost. In an age when women were marginalized they sought to prove themselves by advocating new ideas and concepts in the field that were often years ahead of eventual precedent. Clara Foltz's efforts at creating a constitutional right to counsel for criminal defendants almost 70 years before the time of *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), proving how farsighted she was and how progressive her thinking was. Many of these women clearly were Progressives whose ideas would eventually become legal precedent, but sadly not in their lifetimes. The passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments gave them further ammunition in their efforts as it implied giving women all the privileges of citizenship, but it quickly became clear that women were left out. This led to most of these legal pioneers putting their energies into women's suffrage that would eventually result in the 19th Amendment extending the franchise to women. Another fascinating subject is Belva Lockwood who overcame mixed family reactions to become a lawyer. Lockwood clearly wouldn't take no for an answer and Norgren provides a great example of this where Lockwood was denied her Juris Doctorate diploma by the National University Law School so she writes an appeal to the university's president ex officio, President Ulysses S. Grant, who orders the diploma be provided to her. Lockwood would go on to battle Congress to be admitted to the United States Supreme Court Bar, a battle she won. With the exception of Clara Foltz little has been written of these women individually or collectively and "Rebels at the Bar" wonderfully captures these forward thinking women and their struggles for inclusion in society. By turns inspirational, sad, and thought-provoking it will certainly provide greater insight into the Progressive Era and the women working to change society for the better. Reading over "Rebels" I was struck at the parallels women faced with those of the Civil Rights Movement and the recent LGBT struggles for equality. It's sad to think that it took so long for women to gain the franchise and to be accepted in so many occupations. These stories should matter deeply to anyone interested in equal rights and civil liberties.

Long before Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsberg earned their positions on the Supreme Court, they were preceded in their goal of legal excellence by several intrepid trailblazers. In *Rebels at the Bar*, prize-winning legal historian Jill Norgren recounts the life stories of a small group of nineteenth century women who were among the first female attorneys in the United States. Beginning in the late 1860s, these determined rebels pursued the radical ambition of entering the then all-male profession of law. They were motivated by a love of learning. They believed in fair play and equal opportunity. They desired recognition as professionals and the ability to earn a good living.

"Norgren has assembled and rendered accessible an impressive array of pioneering women." - Women's of Books Norgren's stories show that the fight for women's equality can never be defined by a single, central goal, for while these women's lives were deeply entwined with the fight for suffrage, their efforts were fueled by and helped to spark reform in a wide range of social justice movements. These biographies, with all their intimate detail and individuality, also remind us that, while feminist efforts are often characterized as a series of overarching waves, bounded by certain moments in time, the fight for equality is not propelled by some tidal force but by the resolve and practice of women and progressive men who are linked across history by their actions. - Journal of American Culture "Her history and biography have produced a valuable study that transcends disciplinary boundaries and should have wide appeal outside academia." - Law and Society "Bold, brave women with musical old-fashioned names Myra, Clara, Belva, Lelia, Lavinia are among the subjects of this lively and readable account of the first women lawyers. Some were famous in their times, but all were forgotten until recently when female attorneys started seeking their history, and found a Boswell in Jill Norgren." - Barbara Babcock, Judge John Crown Professor of Law, Emerita, Stanford Law School "Even after practicing law for 30 years I found this book fascinating." - Joan M. Burda, NY Journal of Books "engaging and beautifully written book" - Ms. JD Book Series "Rebellion was not on the minds of the extraordinary, first-generation female lawyers portrayed in Jill Norgren's engaging history, *Rebels at the Bar*... More than just a biography, Norgren's book also provides a snapshot of legal history and the professionalization of legal practice in the United States.... Norgren's thorough footnotes and extensive bibliography attest to the depth of research informing the

book. She places the lives of these women in the context of nineteenth century America, where they attempted to build their practices and institute social and legal reforms."-Christine K. Dulaney, Law Library Journal "Shedding light on a little-known chapter of American history and the women who blazed the trail for today's attorneys, this will be most enjoyed by students of history, women's studies, and law, along with interested general readers."-, Library Journal "Intriguing and enriching, Norgren's book on the first generation of women lawyers in America offers an in-depth look at the careers of eight notable women...this intersection of legal and feminist history is unquestionably inspiring."-, Publishers Weekly "Norgren's book will appeal to readers seeking to imagine the lives and work of the earliest women in the legal profession. By portraying women lawyers as ambitious human beings with complicated personal lives and real economic needs, Norgren enables these women's histories to speak to some of our persisting questions about gender, work, family, and professionalism. The book will make a good gift for some aspiring lawyers, helping them see into the struggles of earlier generations and questioning some of their assumptions about the entry of women into the legal profession."-Karen Leroux, Judicature "I read these stories of the first generation of women lawyers with awe and gratitude. We are all in their debt and in Jill Norgren's, too, for recovering this forgotten history."- Linda Greenhouse, Knight Distinguished Journalist in Residence and Joseph M. Goldstein Senior Fellow, Yale Law School "the stories of the lives of this first generation of women lawyers are so rich that they speak for themselves"- , The Federal Lawyer "In this pathbreaking account, *Rebels at the Bar* enlarges our understanding of women's entrance to the legal profession. With telling detail and lively prose, Jill Norgren profiles the courage, resilience, and challenges of America's first women lawyers. This is a compelling story and essential reading for anyone interested in women's role in legal history."-Deborah L. Rhode, Ernest W. McFarland Professor of Law, Stanford Law School "Rebels at the Bar is not just a story of movement. It is the story of individuals and the individual sacrifice they made in order to become lawyers. Next time I have a student who complains about a B+, I plan to recite one of these stories. Success comes with nerve and sacrifice. These women had both."-Laurie L. Levenson, LA of Books "I have read Ms. Norgren's book with profound gratitude. Being reminded of the brave, intelligent, controversial women who have broken through many barriers a good hundred years before the 1950's has been a fascinating experience."-, Senior Women Web "[A] conscientious history of the country's first female lawyers...The women who went first whose stories Norgren so capably tells matter deeply to the ones who came after."-Emily Bazelon, The Washington Post About the Author Jill Norgren is Professor Emerita of Political Science at John Jay College, and the Graduate Center of The City University of New York. She is the award-winning author of many articles and books, including *Belva Lockwood: The Woman Who Would Be President* (NYU Press, 2007); *The Cherokee Cases*; and *American Cultural Pluralism and Law* (with Serena Nanda).