



# **Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920 (Women in Culture and Society)**

*Martha Vicinus*

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## Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920 (Women in Culture and Society) Martha Vicinus

Martha Vicinus's subject is the middle-class English woman, the first of her sex who could afford to live on her own earnings 'outside heterosexual domesticity or church governance.' She wanted and needed to work. Meticulous, resonant, original, triumphant, *Independent Women* tells of the efforts and endurance of this Victorian woman; of her courage and the constraints that she rejected, accepted, and created. . . . The independent women are the 'foremothers' of any women today who seeks significant work, emotionally satisfying friendships, and a morally charged freedom."—from the Foreword by Catharine R. Stimpson

"Feminist insight combines with vast research to produce a dramatic narrative. *Independent Women* chronicles the energetic lives and imaginative communal structures invented by women who 'pioneered new occupations, new living conditions, and new public roles.'"—Lee R. Edwards, *Ms.*

"Vicinus is to be congratulated for her brave and unflinching portraits of twisted spinsters as well as stolid saints. That she stretches her net up into the '20s and covers the women's suffrage movement is a brilliant stroke, for one may see clearly how it was possible for women to mount such an enormous and successful political campaign."—Jane Marcus, *Chicago Tribune Book World*

"Vicinus' beautifully written book abounds in rich historical detail and in subtle psychological insights in the character of its protagonists. The author understands the complexities of the interplay between economic and social conditions, cultural values, and the aims and aspirations of individual personalities who act in history. . . . A superb achievement."—Gerda Lerner, *Reviews in American History*

"Martha Vicinus has with intelligence and energy paved and landscaped the road on which scholars and students of activist women all travel for many years."—Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Women's Review of Books*

"*Independent Women* can be read by anyone with an interest in women's history. But for all contemporary women, unconsciously enjoying privileges and freedoms once bought so dearly, this book should be required reading."—Catharine E. Boyd, *History*

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