RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Volume 48 Fall September 2017 Number 3 Max 2861901 CHERRY HOR CONTRACTOR MAN MORSEN OF MAN WILLIAM OF WAR Number 14204 Petition, Volume_ Description of holder: Age, years; height, visible distinguishing marks Name, age, and place of residence of wife (NOTE:-AFTER SEPTEMBER 22, 1922, HUSBAND'S NATURALIZATION DOES NOT MAKE WIFE A CITIZEN.) Unite Beit remembered, that Theresa Ginliani then residing at number 109 Logan Street Renton naturalization was a SUBJECT OF the United States of Umerica purs by Sarah Samson exand that complied with the Naturalization Laws of the United States, and that s howas entitled

During a routine record search I came across a naturalization record for Theresa Delaurenti Giuliani. I knew Theresa was born in Utah and was very confused as to why she had a federal immigration document to her name. That single record sent me on a fascinating journey of discovery about Theresa and the other married women of Renton who were stripped of their American citizenship by the 1907 Expatriation Act. I would like to thank Louise Delaurenti George, John Giuliani, and Carol Frey for their assistance with this article.

nited States citizenship law has been on a long and winding road since we declared independence from Great Britain. Citizenship law for women, in particular, has followed a particularly potholed road. Historically women have often been treated by the law as less than equal to men; U. S. citizenship was no different. As early as the 1855 Naturalization Act, an American woman's citizenship began to hinge upon her husband's citizenship. Women who married citizens could automatically become citizens. This law set a

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Fundraiser History-| Making Party on October 17.



Museum Report by Elizabeth P. Stewart, Director.



President's Message | by Alexis Madison, | Board President.



Programs Report | by Kim Owens, Public Engagement Coord.



THE RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM

invites you to join us for a

HISTORY-MAKING PARTY



fter last year's fantastic event, the Renton Historical Society's annual fundraiser will again showcase Renton Makers & Doers with a very special Silent Auction. Explore locals' talents as you bid on their charming upcycled furniture and decor, specially made for our auction. One-of-a-kind gifts and home furnishings showcase Renton's handmade tradition. Dinner, Dessert Dash, raffle, and a special guest emcee Aunt Dottie!

Reserve your tickets now! The fundraiser is Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the Renton Senior Activity Center. Tickets are \$45 each. (http://brownpapertickets.com/event/3057197)

On **OCTOBER** doors open at 6:30 PM

WELCOME NEZY!

Next time you stop by the Museum, please welcome our new Museum Office Aide, Nezy Tewolde. Nezy was born in Los Angeles, CA but was raised in Kent. WA. After volunteering for a year in high school with our friends at the Kent Historical Society, she decided she wanted to pursue a career in History. She has a B.A. in History from Western Washington University, where she led a group called Western's Classics Club on campus. She recently completed a

fellowship with the King County Library System. She's been with us since June, providing support for the volunteer program and generally keeping the office operating smoothly. We're lucky to have Nezy on our team!



UNDER OUR SKIN

On November 2nd, we are partnering with King County Library System and City of Renton to help host an evening of conversation about race in Renton. Under Our Skin: What Do We Mean When We Talk About Race? is a program created by the Seattle Times to encourage candid cross-racial dialogue about what it means to live in a multiracial society. We'll hold a series of small group conversations around topics like colorblindness, safe space, and institutional racism, among others. The

emphasis is on respect and openness. Please join us at Renton Community Center on Thursday, November 2nd at 7:00 pm—watch our Facebook page for more details! More information about Under Our Skin available on the Seattle Times website.



MUSEUM REPORT

by Elizabeth P. Stewart, Museum Director

ast week a summer vacation visit by a museum colleague reminded me of how far the Renton History Museum has come. He shared early memories of this museum, tracing the progress we have made: gaining control of our collections; hiring professional staff; setting goals; and, most importantly, making sure that what we do here—our programs, exhibits, events, tours, and other services—meet the needs of our community. Our lobby renovation and the re-boot of our Renton River Days programming this year are evidence that we are continually trying to exceed our mission.

We depend on feedback from our community to know how we're doing, and two events recently made us stop and double-check whether we're on the right track. First, many of us put lots of personal time and energy into trying to help pass Proposition 1, known as "Access for All." The funds from Access for All would have doubled the Museum's budget for the next seven years, enabling us to expand our outreach to students, improve our building, and complete the exhibit updates that have taken us more than 10 years so far. Prop 1 failed by about 9000 votes—a disappointment for sure—so we will re-group and figure out how to move forward. Make no mistake about it: Access for All would have been gamechanging for small museums in King County, but the voters have spoken.

Our second eye-opening experience? This spring we hosted a groundbreaking traveling exhibit, *Sorting Out Race: Examining Racial Stereotypes & Identity in Thrift Store Donations*, that won us many new friends and was extraordinarily well-received. Taking racial issues head on is something new for the Renton History Museum so we prepared ourselves for any kind of reaction, but we were incredibly gratified by the wonderful responses from those who saw the exhibit. Many requested that we do more exhibits and programming like this in the future.

But one distant observer expressed distaste through the U.S. mail, repeatedly returning our membership mailings with dissenting comments. This commenter remains anonymous, so we cannot enter into a conversation with him or her about how our mission is to represent our community in ALL its glorious diversity. Everyone who lives here, works here, learns or plays here, is a part of Renton's history, and we are honored to try to share their stories.

Setbacks like the failure of Prop. 1 may slow our progress, but we will keep working towards updating our building and exhibits. New exhibits remind us to keep listening and the staggeringly positive response to *Sorting Out Race* tell us we're on the right track. Our mission means the world to us, and we will continue to set our sights high.

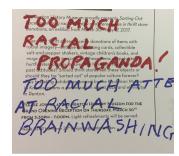


Elizabeth P. Stewart

—
Director



Renton High School teachers enjoying the Selfie Wall while their students toured *Sorting Out Race.* In all, 247 sophomores were able to view the exhibit.



Mail returned to us with dissenting comments.

QUARTERLY Fall 2017

RENTON HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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Nezy Tewolde
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RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM 235 MILL AVENUE S RENTON, WA 98057

P (425) 255-2330 F (425) 255-1570

HOURS:

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm

ADMISSION: \$5 (Adult) \$2 (Child)



UPCOMING



WHAT'S YOUR STORY? September 23 12:00-2:00 pm

Join us at the Storytelling Tent at the Renton Multicultural Festival to share your story!



GENERATING GENEALOGY September 30 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Learn the basics about starting a genealogy research project from Curator Sarah Samson.



SMITH COVE: A 1930s SHANTY TOWN October 21

11:00 am-12:00 pm

Archaeologist Dr. Alicia Valentino shares the story of a multicultural, low-income community from the 1930s.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN October 26 6:00-7:00 pm

Anthropologist Llyn De Danaan explores our origins and what it means to be human.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Alexis Madison, President

oming up on October 17th, the Renton Historical Society is hosting our annual History-Making ✓ Party at the Renton Senior Activity Center. The focus for the last few years has been "Renton Makers and Doers," drawing on the city's long history of innovation, industry, and creativity. Building on the popular Flea Market Flip idea, we're inviting local artists, craftspeople, and designers to donate upcycled furniture to our silent auction, giving them an opportunity to show off their talents. Any upcyclers who enter their piece early enough will have the opportunity to show off their piece in person—the top three pieces, as selected by our judges. will be live auctioned. Every upcycler who donates a piece will get one free ticket to our dinner auction, which includes dinner and an amazing evening.

If you are interested in seeing these items, you won't want to miss the results! Last year our biggest ticket item was a recycled bicycle converted into a bar. Tickets are available for \$45 each on Brown Paper Tickets at http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3057197. The evening includes dinner, a Dessert Dash, silent and live auctions, and entertainment by Aunt Dottie and her nephew Aaron. Proceeds support the Museum's mission to connect people to their community through history.

If you would like to support this or any of our activities, the Renton Historical Society is always looking for friends we haven't met yet. Our Board of Trustees still has a few open seats—we're in search of a Treasurer-in-training, fundraisers, and people interested in event planning. We're also in need of volunteers interested in greeting visitors on Saturdays and helping them have the best possible time during their visit. Other volunteer needs include oral history team leader and docents who will guide tours for the public. Contact our Public Engagement Coordinator, Kim Owens, by email at kowens@rentonwa.gov or at 425.255.2330 if you are interested in being a volunteer.

I am looking forward to the upcoming fundraiser, and I hope you'll come be a part of the fun!



Alexis Madison President



The fantastic Aunt Dottie: super singer and emcee extraordinaire!



Upcycled bicycle bar made by Dennis Conte, the hottest item auctioned at the 2016 fundraiser.



Continued from page 1

precedent that was then applied to American women in the 1907 Expatriation Act: American women who married non-American husbands instantly lost their citizenship.²

The 1907 Expatriation Act passed at a time when Americans were growing leery of the next wave of immigrants: Eastern and Southern Europeans. Italy, in the midst of a horrific depression, saw a quarter of their residents flee between 1890 and 1914.³ Italians began flooding onto United States soil. Renton went from hosting one Italian resident in 1889 to providing a home for 267 by 1910.⁴ American men who married immigrant women were lauded; the public believed that they would teach the women to be good American citizens. American women who married new immigrants, however, were viewed as borderline traitors. Federal hearings held ten years after the passage of the Expatriation Act illustrated this mindset, with one committee member remarking that the marital loss of citizenship was "a good lesson to our American girls to marry American boys."⁵

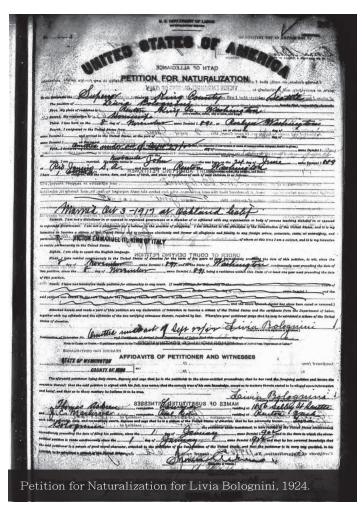
THE DELAURENTI SISTERS

Italians James Delaurenti and Maria Saineghi immigrated separately in the late 1880s and met and married in Utah in 1896. A coal miner, James followed the coal jobs to Utah, Illinois, and

Cover photo: Naturalization Certificate for Theresa Giuliani, 1928. (*Image courtesy of Carol Frey*)







eventually Newcastle, Washington. The Delaurentis had six children, all born in this country and thus American citizens: Joseph, Ida, Roland, Mary, Theresa, and James. When James Sr. died in Newcastle in 1908, Maria quickly remarried another Italian immigrant, Pio Carrolli.⁶ They were living just outside of Renton by 1910.

The three girls—Ida, Mary, and Theresa—all married Italian immigrants. Ida married Joseph Baima in 1917, ten years after the Expatriation Act. Luckily for Ida, Joe had been in the U.S. since 1899 and was already a naturalized citizen; because of this, she maintained her citizenship. Two years later, her sister Mary married George Delaurenti (no relation). George was unnaturalized. Both he and Mary are listed as aliens in the 1920 census. Just months later Theresa married John Giuliani and, like Mary, Theresa lost her citizenship.

THE GIOVANELLI SISTERS

The Giovanellis were another Italian family of coal miners. Stephen Giovanelli immigrated in 1882. He married Katherine Zucca in 1888. They had four children—Felix, Livia, Steve, and Matilda—all born in Roslyn, Washington. In 1910 nineteenyear old Livia married Lodovic Massetti, a naturalized Italian. After Lodovic drowned in Seattle in 1916, she married again in 1917 to John Bolognini, an unnaturalized immigrant of Italian descent born in Brazil.⁷ This time she lost her citizenship. Livia's sister Matilda married Italian immigrant Fiorenzo Delaurenti in 1916 in Seattle. The marriage also cost her her citizenship; she was listed as an alien in the 1920 census.



Losing their citizenship didn't immediately endanger the Giovanelli sisters since they married men already in the United States who were intent on staying and becoming citizens. Women who moved back to their husband's home countries had little hope of regaining their citizenship. Some expatriated widows were expelled from the United States with their children after their non-American husbands died.8

"REAL AMERICANS"

Public outcry in support of these Italian-American women was muted. Additional racist laws barred Asians and others from immigrating, but while Italians were allowed, there were not-so-subtle grumblings about whether they could really be considered "white." Sympathy and organized protest revolved around women who were seen as "real Americans." These women, usually of British descent, were held up as examples to show the cruelty of the law.

Ruth Burrows was born in 1894 in Missouri; she was at least a 4th generation American. Her father, Ferry Fay Burrows, brought his family to Renton in 1896 and ran a fishing resort on the Black River north of town. She was an American until August 12, 1918 when she married Austrian immigrant Joseph Venishnick. Despite the federal government's determination, Ruth was described in her obituary as a "daughter of a pioneer family."9

Though Ethel Rowe was the daughter of immigrants, she would also have been a sympathetic figure. She was born in 1887 in Pennsylvania to English immigrants Thomas and

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Minnie Rowe. The English were never subjected to the same suspicion and derision as other immigrants. At twenty years old, Ethel married Canadian James McDonald in January 1907 in Renton. When the Expatriation Act passed two months later she retroactively lost her American citizenship.

SUFFRAGETTES AND THE CABLE ACT

The Expatriation Act made many women think deeply about the meaning of citizenship for the first time. Prior to 1907 a few states had already given women the right to vote. After the act passed scores of American women were no longer able to vote, while non-American women who married American men were able to vote. 10 Immigrant men who naturalized were also immediately able to vote. Suffragists seized on the public's wariness of these new Americans by pointing out that the country needed "real" American women voting to prevent elections being swayed by recent immigrants who might not have assimilated American values, as they defined them. 11 "In the marriage ceremony not one word is said about change of status of the man toward his state," one member of the State Federation of Women's Clubs pointed out. 12 This argument came to a head in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment finally allowing all American women the right to vote.

For fifteen years American women were made to choose between their citizenship and marriage. Several efforts to repeal or amend the Expatriation Act failed, including one by Rep. Jeannette Rankin from Montana, the first female ever elected

Continued on page 10



Volunteer Amy Gorton and Board Pres. Alexis Madison at the craft station.

)GRAMMING REPORT

by Kim Owens, Public Engagement Coordinator



Kim Owens Public Engagement Coordinator

hile it may have been the 32nd year of Renton River Days, it was the Renton History Museum's first year of providing a special set of programs and activities at the Museum during the festival. The Museum took advantage of its beautiful grounds by setting up three stations outside to interact with the public. "The Historian is In" booth was by far the most popular station. In it Director Liz Stewart, Curator

Sarah Samson, and volunteers Nancy Fairman, Colleen Lenahan, and Elizabeth Edgerton took turns fielding questions from the public and handing out "Passport to History" activity books. Three craft stations offered opportunities to construct a bentwood box, create a moveable paper puppet, or color a postcard of a historic Renton photo from the Museum's collection.

The highlight of the event was Renton History Live! which took place on Saturday, July 23rd. Renton History Live! was a series of performances bringing to life two Renton residents from history. The Museum commissioned two scripts: one for Florence Guitteau and one for Charles Custer. These monologues were crafted by our talented volunteer, Sabella Curtis, drawing on the Museum's collection of letters and journals. Sabella spent over 50 hours researching, writing, and revising the scripts.

To cast the parts we turned to known theater groups and programs. By reaching out to Bellevue University, Theater Puget Sound, Fort Nisqually, and



Actors Spencer Peerson and Abby Lewis as Charles Custer & Florence Guitteau.





Renton Civic Theater, we recruited actors Abby Lewis and Spencer Peerson to bring the characters to life. With only two weeks of rehearsal the actors memorized pages of text and blocking. Museum volunteers Cathy Lim and Bridget Shew spent 90 hours to create the costumes and props for the performances. Dennis Conte also donated his time and talents by building props for the sets. Renton History Live! was truly a team effort.

Museum attendance was at a River Days high on the day of the performances. A total of 194 people took in the exhibits and the shows on Saturday alone. The response to the performances was overwhelmingly positive. It elicited responses such as "teary-eyed" and "wonderful!" Because of its success, the Museum plans to continue to develop Renton History Live for next year's Renton River Days events.

The Museum's River Days effort would not be possible without the commitment of our talented corps of volunteers. Volunteers, Board members, and staff filled 50 shifts during the River Days weekend, not to mention the hours and hours of work preparing activities, rehearsing actors, and getting passports ready. The results: Renton River Days provided a golden opportunity to introduce hundreds of people to Renton's history at the Museum!

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

May 16, 2017 - August 10, 2017

Norma Jean Cugini Larry & Jeannie Crook Louis & Pamela Barei

Kenneth L. Huckins Laurie Lent

Bill & Hilda McGarrigle Marilvn Hemman

Bruce Pickering Larry & Jeannie Crook

Marge Pellegrino Louis & Pamela Barei Laverne Schmolke Proctor Sturgeon Richard & Louise Major

Owen Proctor Richard & Louise Major

Ivan Puhich Richard & Louise Major

Lorine Roth O'Brian Larry & Jeannie Crook

Homer Venishnick William & Patti Bucher

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John Bertagni Eleanor G. Bertagni

Mike Lowry Denis & Patty Law

Velma Dragin McKean Shirley J. Moretti

King Parker Eleanor G. Bertagni Denis & Patty Law

Ann Porcello Eleanor G. Bertagni CORRECTION (from June 2017 quarterly):

MEMORIAL DONATION

Ed Bentley Hazelle DuBois Fraternal Order of Eagles, Ladies Aux. Renton #1722 Venishnick Family

Due to an error in formatting in the June 2017 Newsletter. it appeared that Hazelle DuBois had passed away. We apologize to Ms. DuBois for the inconvenience.

NEW MEMBERS

Monica & Dave Brethauer Carol Frey

BENEFACTOR **MEMBERS**

Sally Rochelle

GENERAL DONATIONS

Norm & Carol Abrahamson Karl Hurst Hazel Newing Barbara Nilson David Pickett Sally Rochelle

GENERAL DONATIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

Char & Jim Baker Glenn Garrett Dorothy M. Finley Kurt Hanson Arline McCready Janice R. Tanner

GENERAL DONATIONS OF \$1000 OR MORE

Monica & Dave Brethauer Jack Morrison



IN-KIND **DONATIONS**

The Edgerton family Bridget Shew





MATCHING **DONATIONS**







GIVING DAY: SEPTEMBER 21

Join your friends and neighbors in supporting the Renton Historical Society with a gift through the Renton Community Foundation (RCF)! The foundation has been our partner for over a decade in ensuring that Rentonites can connect to their history. On Sept. 21 RCF launches a special Giving Daythe "Under One Roof" campaign—on their web site, with opportunities to

have your dollars matched and chances to win free dinners at local restaurants. Learn more on our Facebook page or at http:// rentonfoundation.org/.



NORMA CUGINI (1928-2017)

Lifelong Rentonite Norma Denzer Cugini passed away on July 10, 2017. A descendant of Renton pioneers Thomas and Robena Rowe, Norma inherited a tradition of public service that she built upon throughout her lifetime. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the arts, volunteering for many Renton and Seattle arts and other charitable organizations, including co-chairing the very first Renton Annual Arts Show. In 2008 she earned the well-deserved distinction of Renton Citizen of the Year.

Her contributions to Renton culture are many and long-lasting, and her sound advice and calm demeanor will be missed by all.

Below: teenaged Norma Cugini (2nd from left in black sweater with white buttons) with the cast of Renton High's Ladies of the Jury, 1946.



Continued from page 7

at the national level.¹³ Finally, in 1922, a law was passed that ended the practice of stripping citizenship from American-born women who married non-citizens. The law was called the Married Women's Independent Citizenship Act, but came to be known as the Cable Act after the bill's sponsor, Rep. John Cable of Ohio.¹⁴

The Cable Act stopped women from losing their citizenship, but did very little for the women who had already lost theirs. Those women—like Mary, Theresa, Livia, Matilda, Ruth, and Ethel—still had to work through the naturalization process and were not allowed to regain their American citizenship if their husbands were deemed ineligible. 15 Additionally, naturalized citizens did not have the same legal protections as birth citizens. By making these women go through the naturalization process, the government could still later legally revoke their citizenship at any point, a final cruel legacy of the Expatriation and Cable Acts. 16

NATURALIZATION IN RENTON

There was nothing for Renton's expatriated women to do except to follow the naturalization process along with their husbands. All the women in this article had husbands who were eligible to naturalize and did so. This dramatically eased the process for the women; had the men been unwilling to naturalize the women would have had to attempt the process independently, subject to immigration quotas covering her husband's country of origin.¹⁷

Because of a provision in the Cable Act, Renton's expatriated women did not have to file a Declaration of Intent (to naturalize); they could skip that part of the process and go right to filing a Petition to Naturalize.18 Their forms all had the Declaration of Intent line scratched out and "Filed under Act of Sept. 22, 1922" (the date of the Cable Act) or similar text typed above it. They had to claim on the form the date at which they began residence in the United States: their birth date. One indicated she had "never lived outside the U.S." 19 The expatriated women also had to provide the names of two American witnesses who could vouch for them. Livia Giovanelli Bolognini's form lists a Seattle lawyer and John C. Marlowe, a prominent Renton real estate and insurance agent.²⁰

Immigrants attempting to naturalize usually had to pass a citizenship test. Renton, always a community of immigrants, had a large pool of residents in the process of naturalizing at any given time. Dutch immigrant Pieter Prins founded the Renton Americanization School to help people pass the citizenship test. Known to his students as "Mr. America," Prins had gone through the naturalization process himself, becoming an American citizen in 1912.21 Prins's school thrived. In 1936 the school held a picnic at Cottonwood Grove; it became an annual event, garnering mention in the Seattle Times.²² It is not clear if all of Renton's expatriated women had to take citizenship tests but Matilda Giovanelli Delaurenti's daughter remembers her mother taking citizenship classes from Prins.²³ Prins is listed as one of the witnesses on her Petition for Naturalization.²⁴

A FOOTNOTE IN HISTORY

It wasn't until 1940 that all of the women affected by the Expatriation and Cable Acts were finally allowed to regain American citizenship completely independent of their husband's status.²⁵ The full impact of the Expatriation Act is hard to uncover today. We don't know how many American women it affected during the fifteen years it was in effect, and we have little indication how they felt about being suddenly expatriated for love. In 2014 the U.S. Senate, spurred by Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota, passed a resolution formally apologizing for the act and its repercussions.²⁶ The six women highlighted in this article were the only expatriated Renton residents we could uncover. Doubtless there are more women out there whose stories are waiting to be discovered.



ENDNOTES

- 1 Candace Lewis Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 15
- 2 Meg Hacker, "When Saying 'I Do' Meant Giving Up Your U.S. Citizenship," Prologue (Spring 2014): 57.
- 3 David L. Nicandri, Italians in Washington State: Emigration 1853 1924 (N.p.: The Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1978), 18.
- 4 1889 Washington Territorial Census, 1910 Federal Census.
- 5 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 74.
- 6 Pio Carrolli and Maria Delaurenti, Marriage Certificate, 6 Oct 1908 (King County Marriage Records, 1855-Present, Washington State Digital Archives).
- 7 Livia Bolognini, Petition for Naturalization, 1 Jan 1922 (Washington, Petitions for Naturalization, 1860-1991, Ancestry.com).
- 8 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 174.
- 9 "Ruth Venishnick," Record-Chronicle, 15 Apr 1980, p.2.
- 10 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 64.
- 11 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 49.
- 12 Sophie L. Wepf Clark, "State Federation of Women's Clubs," Pullman Herald, 29
- 13 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 74.
- 14 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 98.
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