INTRODUCTION

This bibliography on Mary E. Walker, M.D. is an update from a reading list first created in Penfield Library in 1982. Since then, Dr. Walker has gained more notoriety and the interest in her life has spread across the United States. This guide, which focuses mainly on manuscript materials, is arranged by repository. Secondary sources of information within the repository have been listed if known. We have added some additional secondary sources at the end of the guide. If you know of other sources on Dr. Walker, please contact Penfield Library Special Collections, SUNY Oswego, Oswego N.Y. 13126.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Walker was born on a farm in the Town of Oswego, in upstate New York, on November 26, 1832, the fifth daughter of Alvah and Vesta Whitcomb Walker. Much of Dr. Walker’s tendency towards non-conformity may be attributed to her parents who, among other things, believed their daughters should receive a professional education. After working first as a school teacher like her sisters, Dr. Walker attended Syracuse Medical School from which she graduated in 1855. After practicing briefly in Ohio, Dr. Walker married a fellow physician, Albert Miller. They moved to Rome, New York, where they set up a medical practice. Dr. Walker did not take Miller’s name and they were separated two years later, Dr. Walker accusing her husband of infidelity.

Dr. Walker remained in Rome, running her small practice, advocating social causes and writing for the magazine Sybil. Dr. Walker was a supporter of Amelia Bloomer and dress reform. She chose to wear pants style bloomers as did so many other dress reformers in Western New York State. She was elected president of the National Dress Reform Association in 1866. For the rest of her life, Dr. Walker wore full male attire, claiming that she had been granted permission by Congress (no such claim has been documented). Dr. Walker later spent a year in Iowa where she unsuccessfully attempted to get a divorce. While in Iowa, Dr. Walker attended the Bowen Collegiate Institute where she precipitated a series of incidents which shocked the administration and resulted in her expulsion.
When the Civil War broke out, Dr. Walker traveled to Washington to offer her services. She worked first as a nurse in the improvised hospital in the U.S. Patent Office. Discovering the wives and mothers of soldiers on Washington park benches, Walker helped to found the Women’s Relief Association. In 1862, she began working in Virginia. In 1863, she went to Tennessee where she was briefly attached as a surgeon to an Ohio Regiment. Even after her dismissal from this post Dr. Walker remained dressed in an officer’s uniform. She roamed the countryside ministering to southern families. For a period of time between April and August of 1864, Dr. Walker was a prisoner of war who was exchanged for a Confederate officer. Finally in September of 1864, Dr. Walker was awarded a paid contract as Acting Assistant Surgeon with the Ohio 52nd Infantry. She left service in 1865 and served for a brief time as surgeon of a Women’s Prison Hospital in Louisville, KY. A short time later Dr. Walker was awarded the first Congressional Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service ever awarded to a woman. She was extremely proud of her medal and wore it often, especially when speaking in public.

Beginning in 1867, Dr. Walker’s activities become increasingly political. She lived for a few years with Belva Lockwood, a fellow women’s suffrage activist, mostly in Washington D.C., but also traveling extensively to promote women’s causes. In addition to her dedication to the cause of women’s suffrage, Walker had very progressive opinions regarding marriage and divorce. She was an outspoken opponent of alcohol and tobacco use but very tolerant in her religion. Suffragist organizations initially praised Dr. Walker for her Civil War service. However, Dr. Walker was soon alienated from most contemporary suffragists for what they saw as her growing eccentricities. Dr. Walker also disagreed with the women’s suffrage movement over their push for an Amendment to the Constitution allowing women to vote. Dr. Walker believed that the Constitution already gave this right to women. Dr. Walker also published two books during this time, the partly autobiographical *Hit* in 1871, and *Unmasked or The Science of Immortality*, in 1878.

From 1890 on, Dr. Walker lived in Oswego, New York, fighting personal and political battles for women’s rights. Later interviews with local Oswego residents reveal that it is her unusual style of dress and her mannerisms that are most often remembered about Dr. Walker. In 1917, Dr. Walker’s Medal of Honor was revoked (as were so many others) because there were questions surrounding the terms used to justify this prestigious award. Dr. Walker steadfastly refused to surrender the medal. Dr. Walker died on February 21, 1919. She was buried in a black suit in her family plot in Oswego Town cemetery. Through the efforts of her granddaughter and some members of Congress, her Medal of Honor was officially restored to her on June 10, 1977. The medal is now the property of the Oswego County Historical Society.
MANUSCRIPTS

ABSTRACT: The record contains the bankbook of Dr. Walker, issued by the First National Bank of Oswego, New York. It lists the deposits, withdrawals, and balance of her bank account from July 7, 1916 to July 1, 1919.

ABSTRACT: The collection consists of two letters, one written by Dr. Walker and the other received by her. The first letter (no date) was to Marriet E. Gifford discussing her observations of industrial change in Minetto, New York, and a brief visit to Fulton, New York. The second letter, dated October 10, 1915, is from a friend mentioning health problems and regrets for not attending a suffrage meeting.

ABSTRACT: The Adele Brown collection contains Dr. Walker stamps and a background history of the stamp is included in the collection.

ORAL HISTORIES

ABSTRACT: Narration of Dietz’s experiences in Oswego at the turn of the century and before.

ABSTRACT: A Massachusetts resident recalls the days when Dr. Walker used to visit his home in Greenwich.

ABSTRACT: Narration about life on a farm; recalls Dr. Walker.

ABSTRACT: Narration about teaching in the Oswego School District for over forty years. Recollections of Dr. Walker.

OH 143. Salisburg, Lena. Interview by Jeffrey A. Levine. N.D.
ABSTRACT: Narration of an Oswego Town native born in 1888.

ABSTRACT: A Greek immigrant discusses his life in Greece, and his life in Oswego.

ABSTRACT: Born in 1891, Turner discusses the many changes in Oswego including information about Dr. Walker.

ABSTRACT: A radio program featuring Dr. Walker and the fight to reinstate her Congressional Medal of Honor, with Ann Walker.

STUDENT PAPERS


Special Collections also maintains a Vertical File on Dr. Walker. Three inches of clippings from the popular media, photographs, and ephemeral material, are available.

BOOKS

Adams, George W. Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War. E6211. A3
Congressional Record, 50th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Report, 602, p.30 Washington, 1888. 4D-12D Documents/Law
Congressional Record, 55th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 9732. Washington, 1898. 4D-12D Documents/Law
Massey, Mary Elizabeth. Bonnet Brigades. E 628. M3
Schott, Joseph L. Above and Beyond: The Story of the Congressional Medal of Honor. E181. S35
Snyder, Charles M. Dr. Mary Walker: The Little Lady in Pants. R 154. W 18
Snyder, Charles M. Oswego: From Buckskin to Bustles. F129.O7 S65
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, et. al. History of Woman Suffrage. JK 1896. S8
Walker, Mary E. Hit. Spec Coll HN 64 W 17
Woodward, Helen Beal. The Bold Women. CT3260. W67
ARTICLES


OSWEGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
135 East 3rd Street, Oswego, New York 13126

The material in the Dr. Walker collection consists of about 100 items, including letters, newspaper and magazine articles, and several books covering the years 1861 to 1980. The letters comprise nearly half of the collection and consist of family correspondence, three letters from temperance societies, and one from Dr. Walker to “The Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.” The society has Dr. Walker’s two diplomas from the Syracuse Medical College to practice medicine and perform surgery, and the original Executive Order for Dr. Walker’s Medal of Honor signed by President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of War Edward M. Stanton. They have an oil painting of Dr. Walker attributed to A.J. Hubbell, 1878.

The artifacts with the collection include Dr. Walker’s Congressional Medal of Honor, the Medal of Valor, and another small medal identifying Walker as extra assistant Surgeon in the Army of the Potomac during 1861. Other artifacts include her silk top hat and two medical cases. Numerous photographs spanning her lifetime are also in the collection. Most of these are copies although some are originals. The Oswego Historical Society also has scattered diaries kept by Dr. Walker’s sister, Aurora (Walker) Coates, from 1886 to 1900. These diaries discuss her sister Mary.

BOOKS


Article dealing with Dr. Mary Walker in *My Opinion and Betsy Bobbet’s*. New York, 1884. [photocopy.]

PAMPHLETS


Walker, Dr. Mary E. *Crowning Constitutional Argument*. Oswego, 1907.

Essay concerning the building of a “Consumptive School Sanitarium.” n.p., 1900. [photocopy].
ARTICLES

“Should the President of the U.S. And Congress Legally Restore the Medal of Honor to the Only Woman Recipient, Mary Edwards Walker, M.D., Civil War Suffragette-Surgeon?” Alert Science-Medical Weekly. (June 16, 1975)

ONONDAGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
LOCAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT
The Galleries, Salina Street, Syracuse, New York 13202

The Onondaga County Public Library owns a scrapbook containing articles about Dr. Walker collected between 1931 to 1977.

GEORGE ARENTS RESEARCH LIBRARY
BIRD LIBRARY, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
Syracuse, New York 13210

The Walker papers span the years from 1799 to 1919 and consist of 4 boxes (2 feet) and one microfilm reel. The collection contains 339 items of correspondence from 1833 to 1913. The majority of these, covering the years 1852 to 1913, are addressed to Dr. Walker and discuss arrangements for her post-Civil War tours and lectures, her book Hit, her pension claims, and other subjects. Her correspondents include the reformers Lydia Sayer Hasbrouck and Belva Ann Lockwood; physicians Charles Alfred Lee, Ann Preston, and George Miller Sternberg; political wives Mary Baird Bryan and Frances Folsom Cleveland; military and political figures James Heaton Baker, Jacob Collamer, William Lawrence, and Edward Davis Townsend; and the novelist Mary Andrews Denison. There are eight holograph letters of Dr. Walker (1863-1877) and one undated holograph note. Very little of the correspondence deals with her medical practice.

Legal and financial documents include Dr. Walker’s bills and receipts, a deed to her farm, her divorce material, Pension Office records, and wills. A sizeable amount of memorabilia including an autograph collection, newspaper clippings, genealogical data, medical memorabilia, newspapers and photographs are in the collection.

BOOKS

Walker, Dr. Mary E. Unmasked, or The Science of Immorality. Jersey City, 1888. [microfilm].

PAMPHLETS

Walker, Dr. Mary E. Crowning Constitutional Argument. Oswego, 1907.
Walker, Dr. Mary E. Isonomy. Oswego, 1898.

UNPUBLISHED THESIS

This collection includes .2 cubic feet of relative information. Includes a research collection of articles and clippings about her life and career, 1939-1984; copies of pages from her personal scrapbook about her activities and speeches, 1855-1867; her obituary, 1919; and a bibliography of manuscript sources on Dr. Walker in Upstate New York repositories.

**ROME HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
200 Church Street, Rome, New York 13440

This collection contains microfilm and copies of papers chiefly related to Dr. Walker’s military career, including her service as a surgeon with the Army during the Civil War, her application for a pension, her reception of the Medal of Honor, and its reinstatement in 1977. There is also genealogical correspondence between Anne North Hinton, and Barbara Howlett, a Rome Historical Society researcher, and Helen Hay Wilson, a grandniece of Dr. Walker concerning Ms. Hinton’s possible relationship to Dr. Walker. The collection includes newspaper and magazine articles about Dr. Walker.

**ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**  
ALLEGHENY UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
3300 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19129

The Lida Poynter Manuscripts contains 30 linear feet of papers from 1850 to 1946 and 42 photographs. It consists of a typed (unpublished) manuscript by Lida Poynter on the life of Dr. Walker. There are also about 12,000 pages of notes on journal articles, newspaper articles and correspondence to and from Dr. Walker (19th century). The photographs were collected by Mrs. Poynter “from various sources.” Also housed is the manuscript collection of Ms. Jane Bliss Taylor. MS-148 is a handwritten manuscript of Taylor’s recollections of Dr. Walker.

**STATE LIBRARY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue, P.O. Box 1601, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

The Liliane Stevens Howard collection contains a biographical essay on Dr. Mary Walker. [source: Andrea Hinding (ed.), *Women’s History Sources*. New York: Bowker, 1979.]

**CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Clark Street at North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60614

The society maintains a women’s suffrage collection of about 25 items covering the period 1871-1910. Dr. Walker is represented in this collection. [source: Andrea Hinding (ed.), *Women’s History Sources*. New York: Bowker, 1979.]

**SCHERLESINGER LIBRARY, RADCLIFFE COLLEGE**  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Included in this collection is a postcard dated 1888, from Dr. Walker to William Bok concerning her attempts to vote. Also at this location is the Jessie Tarbox Beals photo collection. This photographer took pictures for many people including Dr. Walker, whose photograph is in this collection.
This collection includes an autographed letter to William H. Newell from Dr. Walker about a proposed lecture and included in the collection is a photograph of Dr. Walker and a printed page entitled “Extract from Dr. L.T. Frall’s Herald of Health.”

In this collection is one roll of 35mm duplicate positive microfilm of the selected military service records relating to Mary Walker, M.D.

OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS


ARTICLES

Wright, Fred P. “Dr. Mary E. Walker.” *Oswego County Historical Journal*. 1953: 46-53.