

**Fiction and Nonfiction Picture Books with Strong Female Characters**  
**(if you need additional titles the Amelia Bloomer Project has a good website to consult:**  
**[www.ameliabloomer.wordpress.com](http://www.ameliabloomer.wordpress.com))**

**Allegra, Mike.** *Sarah Gives Thanks: How Thanksgiving became a national holiday.* 2012. Sarah Hale campaigned to make Thanksgiving a National Holiday and worked as the editor of women's magazines, highlighting articles on history, science and new schools for women. **J394.2644 (Holiday)**

**Angelou, Maya.** *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken and Me,* 1994. "Hello, Stranger-Friend" begins Maya Angelou's story about Thandi, a South African Ndebele girl, her mischievous brother, her beloved chicken, and the astonishing mural art produced by the women of her tribe. With never-before-seen photographs of the very private Ndebele women and their paintings, this unique book shows the passing of traditions from parent to child and introduces young readers to a new culture through a new friend. **JJF**

**Bedard, Michael.** *The Divide* , 1997. When Willa Cather was a girl, her family moved west to the open prairie of Nebraska, leaving behind a world Willa loved dearly. Gone were the wooded hills and the meadows marbled with sheep. In their place was a flat, empty land, as bare as a strip of sheet iron. Willa felt she had come to the end of things; she felt the land did not want them. But then spring came, and the silent land stirred to life. Summer followed, long and hot, and Willa roamed free over the open fields on her pony. Slowly she began to explore the hidden delights of this strange new countryside, and to make friends with her fellow settlers on the Divide. By the time autumn came, with its splendid sunlit colors, Willa understood that what she had thought was an ending was really a new beginning. **JJF**

**Bedard, Michael.** *Emily,* 1992. A young girl who lives across the street from the reclusive Emily Dickinson gets her chance to meet the poet when her mother is invited to play the piano for Emily. The girl sneaks up to Emily's room and exchanges a small gift for an authentic poem, which is included in the book. **JJF**

**Bingham, Mindy.** *Minou,* 1987. A charming story about a cat learning to become self-reliant and self-supporting. Minou lived a Cinderella life. Her owner, Madame Violette, saw to her every need. Minou might have lived "happily ever after," but tragedy strikes and Minou finds herself on her own, completely unprepared to take care of herself. As she learns the skills to become self-sufficient, she takes us on a gorgeously illustrated exploration of the sights and architecture of Paris. **JJF**

**Brown, Tami Lewis.** *Soar Elinor!,* 2010. Elinor Smith was six when she first went for a ride in a rickety "flying machine," and she was just sixteen when she earned her aviation license in 1928. But not everyone thought that girls should fly. When male pilots and newspapermen mocked her, Elinor decided to perform an aerial maneuver they thought was impossible: flying under all four bridges that span New York City's East River. **JB Smith**

**Browning, Diane.** *Signed, Abiah Rose,* 2010. Although she is a talented young artist, Abiah Rose is told that serious painting is "not girl's work". Undaunted, she secretly finds a way to sign her name to her art, while dreaming of an independent future. **JJF**

**Burleigh, Robert.** *Night Flight: Amelia Earhart crosses the Atlantic,* 2011. This uplifting picture book recounts Amelia Earhart's sky-breaking solo trip across the Atlantic in 1932. **JB Earhart**

- Cole, Babbette.** *Princess Smartypants*, 1986. Princess Smartypants doesn't want to get married; she'd rather live with herpets. Commanded by her parents to find herself a husband, the Princess sets tasks for her horde of suitors. . . . All of the potential husbands fail miserably as the gleeful Princess looks on—until Prince Swashbuckle appears. . . .**JJF**
- Cooney, Barbara.** *Miss Rumphius*, 1982. Seeking adventure in faraway places, Miss Rumphius fulfills her dream and then sets out to make the world more beautiful. **JJF**
- Corey, Shana.** *Here Come the Girl Scouts: the amazing all-true story of Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low and her great adventure*. 2012. “Whatever you take up, do it with all of your might”. This vibrant portrait of the intrepid founder of the Girl Scouts conveys the sense of purpose the organization fostered in young women in the early 1900’s. **J369.463 Girl**
- Corey, Shana.** *Mermaid Queen: the spectacular true story of Annette Kellerman, who swam her way to fame, fortune and bathing suit history*, 2009. In the late 1800’s, Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman splashed and made waves while breaking down gender barriers and showing exactly what girls could do in the water. **JB Kellerman**
- Corey, Shana.** *Players in Pigtails*, 2003. Did you know that one of America's favorite songs, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," was written about a girl? And that in the 1940s girls all across America were crazy for our country's favorite game? These little known facts inspired Shana Corey to imagine a story about how one determined girl made her way to the big leagues & found a sisterhood of players in pigtails. With the same exuberant spirit that fueled the formation of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League, joyful text & jubilant pictures celebrate these brave girls' love of the game & the league they called their own. **JJF**
- DiCamillo, Kate.** *Louise, the Adventures of a Chicken*, 2009. Louise, a courageous hen longing for adventure, leaves her home to sail the high seas, joins the circus, and saves herself and others along the way. **JJF**
- Engle, Margarita.** *Summer Birds: the butterflies of Maria Merian*. 2010. Born in the seventeenth century, young Maria was blessed with artistic talent and an inquisitive mind which led her to solve the mystery of butterfly development. **J595.78 Engle**
- Fleming, Candace.** *Imogene’s Last Stand*, 2009. When her local historical society building is scheduled for demolition, Imogene takes dramatic action, mobilizing the townspeople to save the building and preserve the history of their town. **JJF**
- Fosberry, Jennifer.** *My Name is Not Isabella*, 2009. In the course of an ordinary day, Isabella imagines herself in the roles of extraordinary women such as Sally Ride, Rosa Parks, Annie Oakley, and others. **JJF**
- Gerstein, Mordicai.** *A Book*, 2009. Once upon a time there was a family who lived in a book. All but the youngest had stories they belonged to--fighting fires, exploring space, entertaining in the circus--but she didn't have one yet. Walking through all the possibilities of story types Mordicai Gerstein presents her quest in unique and changing perspectives: readers look down into the books below at the characters in their worlds. A funny and touching celebration of books, stories, and finding yourself. **JJF**

**Glaser, Linda.** *Emma's Poem*, 2010. Emma Lazarus wrote the poem engraved on the Statue of Liberty, and she devoted her life to the respectful treatment of immigrants. **JB Lazarus**

**Hartland, Jessie.** *Bon Appetit!: the delicious life of Julia Child*. 2012. Feminist icon Julia Child led an unexpected and exciting life culminating with her success as America's favorite chef.

**Hoffman, Mary.** *Amazing Grace*, 1991. An exuberant girl who loves drama, Grace doesn't understand why her classmates tell her she cannot be Peter Pan in the school play because she is a black female. The strong women in her family bolster her courage as Grace defies obstacles and earns the starring role. **JJF**

**Hopkinson, Deboarh.** *Stagecoach Sal*, 2009. When her father falls ill, young Sal gets her wish to drive the mail alone across the wilderness relying on her skills as a crack-shot and driver. Yet, in the end, it's her quick thinking that defeats the famous bandit, Poetic Pete. **JJF**

**Houston, Gloria.** *My Great Aunt Arizona*, Arizona was born in a log cabin her papa built. She grew into a tall girl who liked to sing, square-dance, and -- most of all -- read and dream of the faraway places she would visit one day. Arizona never did make it to those places. Instead she became a teacher, helping generations of children in the one-room schoolhouse which she herself had attended. Gloria Houston's joyous recounting of her great-aunt Arizona's quiet yet meaningful life reminds us of the magical place a special teacher can hold in our hearts. **JJF**

**Isaacs, Anne.** *Swamp Angel*, 1994. Boldly illustrated by highly acclaimed Paul O. Zelinsky, this tall tale depicts Angelica Longrider, also known as Swamp Angel, a tall tale character from Tennessee. In addition to wrestling bears, with her amazing strength, Longrider creates the Great Smoky Mountains, the Shortgrass Prairie of Montana, and a constellation in the sky. **JJF**

**Kellogg, Steven.** *Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett*, 1995. Kellogg's talents as both writer and illustrator show in his rendering of Sally Ann, wife of Davy Crockett. She fears nothing – and proves it when braggart Mike Fink tries to scare her. **J398.2 Kellogg**

**Krull, Kathleen.** *Wilma Unlimited*, 1996. Before Wilma was five years old, polio had paralyzed her left leg. Everyone said she would never walk again. But Wilma refused to believe it. Not only would she walk again, she vowed, she'd run. And she did run--all the way to the Olympics, where she

**Kulling, Monica.** *In the Bag! Margaret Knight wraps it up*. Despite societal expectations, Margaret Knight fights sexism to become an inventor with multiple patents to her name. **J609.2 Kulling**

**Lakin, Patricia.** *Helen Keller and the Big Storm*, 2002. In relating one incident, Lakin reveals many facts about Keller and Annie Sullivan. In this story, Helen is caught in a tree during a storm and is rescued by her teacher. It is then that the child learned of "the power of Nature" and "the power of friendship." **JB Keller**

**Lang, Heather.** *Queen of the Track: Alice Coachman Olympic high-jump champion*. 2012. As the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal, Alice Coachman overcomes the obstacles of class, gender, and race.

**Lester, Helen.** *Author: a truth story*, 1997. So begins the story of Helen Lester, author of Tacky the Penguin and many other popular books for children. By sharing her struggles as a child and later

as a successful author, she demonstrates that hurdles are part of the process. She even gives writing tips, such as keeping a "fizzle box." Helen Lester uses her unique ability to laugh at her mistakes to create both a guide for young writers and an amusing personal story of the disappointments and triumphs of a writer's life. **JJF**

**Light, Steve.** *Zephyr takes Flight*. 2012. Zephyr adores airplanes and lets her imagination soar to amazing heights. The author flips gender stereotypes and imbues his heroine's tale with the clear meaning that no dream is ever out of reach.

**Malaspina, Ann.** *Heart on Fire: Susan B. Anthony votes for President*, 2012. Susan B. Anthony's bold action to vote inspired like-minded friends to do the same even though it meant facing arrest. **J324.6 Malaspina**

**Markel, Michelle.** *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Maker's Strike of 1909*, 2013. **J133.4 Markel**

**McCully, Emily.** *Beautiful Warrior*, 1998. An enlightened father provides the foundation for his daughter to learn kung fu and earn the name Wu Mei, "Beautiful Warrior". Meanwhile, a young girl's future is in danger, and she appeals to Wu Mei for help. Rather than fixing the situation for her, Wu Mei teaches her the art of kung fu, giving her the tools she needs to defend herself. **JJF**

**McCully, Emily.** *Mirette on the High Wire*, 1992. Mirette was always fascinated by the strange and interesting people who stayed in her mother's boarding house. But no one excited her as much as Bellini, who walks the clothesline with the grace and ease of a bird. When Mirette discovers that fear has kept him from performing for years, she sets out to show him that sometimes a student can be the greatest teacher of all. **JJF**

**McDonnell, Patrick.** *Me...Jane*, 2011. Young Jane Goodall, brave and determined, dreams of living in Africa and helping the animals she loves...until the day her dream comes true. **JJF**

**Medina, Meg.** *Tia Isa Wants a Car*, 2011. A car means freedom to Tia Isa, but saving the money to buy one seems ridiculous to Tio Andres. She and her resourceful niece set out to prove him wrong. **JJF**

**Moss, Marissa.** *The Bravest Woman in America*, 2011. Ida Lewis loved the sea since she was a girl. She worked hard at her family's lighthouse in Rhode Island and eventually became the courageous lighthouse keeper, saving many people from terrible fates. **JB Lewis**

**Munsch, Robert N.** *The Paper Bag Princess*, 1992. The Princess Elizabeth is slated to marry Prince Ronald when a dragon attacks the castle and kidnaps Ronald. In resourceful and humorous fashion, Elizabeth finds the dragon, outsmarts him, and rescues Ronald --- who is less than pleased at her un-princess-like appearance. Full color throughout. **JJF**

**Nivola, Claire A.** *Life in the Ocean: the story of oceanographer Sylvia Earle*, 2012. Earle bucked societal expectations by living in a deep-sea laboratory for two weeks, walking 1,250 feet below the ocean's surface, and starting three companies to design and build devices which let researchers dive deeper. **JB Earle**

**Ochiltree, Dianne.** *Molly, by Golly!: the legend of Molly Williams, America's first female firefighter*, 2012. When a fire breaks out and many of the volunteer firefighters are too sick with influenza to leave their houses, Molly Williams rushes to help and becomes America's first female firefighter. **JB Williams**

**Paterson, Katherine.** *The King's Equal*, PW starred this "entertaining and enchanting" story of a conceited prince in search of a bride who is his equal, and who then discovers he is the one who must prove his worthiness. **J398.2 Paterson**

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis.** *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride*, 2009. Sojourner Truth's long purposeful strides carried her across the country to spread the message of freedom and equality. **JJF**

**Quattlebaum, Mary.** *Pirate vs. Pirate*, 2011. Bad Bart and Mean Mo – two fierce pirate captains – compete to claim the title of “biggest, burliest, maddest, mightiest pirate in the world”. **JJF**

**Rappaport, Doreen.** *The Boston Coffee Party*, 1988. This book tells a story based on an account from Abigail Adams in a letter to her husband John Adams during the revolutionary period. A greedy store owner in Boston holds back his stores of goods until there are shortages and then raises his prices higher than other merchants' prices. The community feeling is that the greedy merchant is being unpatriotic and not pulling with the community, but rather using the tides of war to enrich himself. So the women take action and force him to open his stores of coffee to them, to which they help themselves without payment at all. I like the book for telling a story that is historical, shows some of the difficulties of war, and portrays women as doers and solvers. **JER-3**

**Rappaport, Doreen.** *Dirt on their Skirts: the story of the young women who won the world championship*, 2000. You had to be really, really good to play in the 1946 championship game between the Racine Belles and the Rockford Peaches. Sitting in the stands, Margaret thrills to every crack of the bat. Someday she hopes to join her heroes like Sophie "the Flash" Kurys and Betty "Moe" Trezza. As the ball hurtles toward the plate, Margaret can almost feel what it would be like to be in that batter's position, arms tensed, bat held high. Based on written accounts and on the memories of the players themselves, this exciting story is for all those sandlot sluggers whose hearts beat a little faster whenever they hear the words?"Play ball!" **JJF**

**Rappaport, Doreen.** *Eleanor, Quiet No More*, 2009. Stunning illustrations combined with Eleanor Roosevelt's own words in a picture-biography bring to life a woman who overcame a lonely childhood to become one of the world's most beloved and effective humanitarians. **JB Roosevelt**

**Roop, Peter.** *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*, 1985. In the winter of 1856, a storm delays the lighthouse keeper's return to an island off the coast of Maine, and his daughter Abbie must keep the lights burning by herself. **JER-3**

**Ryan, Pam Munoz.** *Amelia and Eleanor Go For a Ride*, 1999. An inspiring true story of Amelia Earheart and Eleanor Roosevelt -- and a thrilling night when they made history together! On a brisk and cloudless evening in April 1933, Amelia Earheart and Eleanor Roosevelt did the unprecedented: They stole away from a White House dinner, commandeered an Eastern Air Transport plane and took off on a glorious adventure -- while still dressed in their glamorous evening gowns! This large-format lavishly produced picture book celebrates the courage and pioneering spirit of two friends who defied convention in the name of fulfillment, conviction, and fun. **JJF**

**Shirin, Yim.** *Ruby's Wish*, 2002. Ruby is unlike most little girls in old China. Instead of aspiring to get married, Ruby is determined to attend university when she grows up, just like the boys in her family. Based upon the inspirational story of the author's grandmother and accompanied by richly detailed illustrations, Ruby's Wish is an engaging portrait of a young girl who strives for more and a family who rewards her hard work and courage. **JJF Bridges**

**Stauffacher, Sue.** *Tillie the Terrible Swede: How one woman, a sewing needle, and a bicycle changed history*, 2011. Tillie Anderson dreams of riding a bicycle – but not like a lady! Tillie's dreams of

the “speedy, scorch, racy kind of riding” inspire her to create her own aerodynamic cycling clothes and to compete in the first women’s cycling races. **JB Anderson**

**Steig, William.** *Brave Irene*, 1986. *Brave Irene* is Irene Bobbin, the dressmaker's daughter. Her mother, Mrs. Bobbin, isn't feeling so well and can't possibly deliver the beautiful ball gown she's made for the duchess to wear that very evening. So plucky Irene volunteers to get the gown to the palace on time, in spite of the fierce snowstorm that's brewing-- quite an errand for a little girl. But where there's a will, there's a way, as Irene proves in the danger-fraught adventure that follows. She must defy the wiles of the wicked wind, her most formidable opponent, and overcome many obstacles before she completes her mission. Surely, this winning heroine will inspire every child to cheer her on. **JJF**

**Tanaska, Shelley.** *Amelia Earhart: the legend of the lost aviator*, 2009. Ever searching for the next adventure, Amelia Earhart took to the skies and captured America’s heart, imagination and curiosity. **JB Earhart**

**Yep, Laurence.** *The Khan's Daughter: a Mongolian folktale*, 2002. In ancient Mongolia, Mongke, a poor shepherd, heard a prophecy: he would become a rich man and marry the khan's daughter. Mongke goes to the court but the khan laughs at him. However, if he can perform three tasks, he may marry the princess. Through luck and chance, he completes the first two tasks, but then the khan's daughter sets the third. He must defeat the bandit Bagatur. Mongke is defeated. Disgraced he returns to the court only to learn that Bagatur is really the princess. Now that he has learned humility, the princess agrees to marry him. They rule in equally and in harmony. **J398.2 Yep**

**Young, Ed.** *Lon Po Po*, 1989. A Red Riding Hood story from China. After their mother leaves them alone to visit their grandmother, three young girls must contend with a crafty fox of bad intent. Oldest daughter Shang, with the help of her sisters, devises a clever plan to get rid of the fox. **J398.2 Young**