Introduction

For most of her life, Ellen Dawson was an anonymous weaver, like thousands of other immigrant workers attempting to build a new life in America, but in 1926 this small, stoic woman emerged for a brief moment to become a prominent communist labor activist. Most notably, she was the first woman elected to a national leadership position in an American textile union. Then, in the early 1930s, as the Great Depression enveloped America, Ellen slipped quietly back into the shadows of anonymity, rarely speaking of her radical days and disappearing from the public record.

I discovered the elusive Ellen in John Salmond’s account of the 1929 Loray Mill strike in Gastonia, North Carolina. During the first two months of that strike, Ellen served as co-director of an organizing effort sponsored by the National Textile Workers Union, a communist labor union she helped to create. At the time of my discovery, I had just been accepted to the University of Aberdeen/University of North Carolina at Charlotte joint doctoral program in history, and I was searching for a thesis topic that would take full advantage of the transatlantic nature of the program. Scottish-born Ellen Dawson seemed an ideal candidate, since reconstructing her life would require significant research in both Scotland and the United States. While
Ellen appears briefly in the works of a few labor historians, no one had written much about her. I had the enviable opportunity of being the first historian to tell her story. In the three years since I began researching her life, my fascination with the complexity of Ellen the individual and with the dimension of the world in which she lived has increased almost daily. Appearing publicly for the first time in 1926, she quickly became a true labor evangelist, a woman who could climb atop an improvised platform and, speaking in her native Scottish brogue, mesmerize an audience of textile workers with ideas of cooperation, social equality and peaceful civil disobedience.

Fearlessly, for half a decade, in places such as Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia, she was a leader in the workers’ struggle. She marched at the head of picket lines, often confronting violent attacks by police and hired thugs. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, when the local police chief asked how many times she had been arrested, she answered, “So many times I can’t count them.” It was a simple response, but one that demonstrated the spirit of this courageous woman.

Ellen lived through some of the most turbulent periods in Scottish and U.S. labor history, and it seemed obvious to me that her story belonged in the annals of twentieth century women workers. Her experiences provide a meaningful example of the numerous forces that influenced the lives of immigrant women workers during this period; experiences that can help today’s scholars understand why women like Ellen made the decisions that they did.

As a child, Ellen was born and raised in the working class poverty of one of Scotland’s earliest industrial villages, an environment where the theories of socialism and cooperation were discussed and tested in an effort to resolve the economic problems of the working poor. As an adolescent textile worker she was witness to the most turbulent period of labor unrest in Scottish history – Red Clydeside – a time
when radical ideas were freely debated and openly practiced by many of Scotland’s workers. As a young woman, she migrated first with her family to England; later she led the family to the United States. Her journey provides a unique and very personal snapshot of the Scottish Diaspora immediately following the end of World War I, as well as the role one Scottish-born worker played in American labor politics during the late 1920s. As an adult, she was one of the leading women in a group of radicals – headed by Albert Weisbord – that formed during the 1926 Passaic, New Jersey textile strike, continued through the 1928 strike in New Bedford and ended shortly after the 1929 strike in Gastonia. This group sought to organize unskilled textile workers, workers who were being ignored by the more established American labor unions. As an associated of Jay Lovestone, leader of the communist workers’ movement in the United States in the late 1920s, Ellen climbed briefly to a top leadership position in the American communist party, but was almost immediately expelled when she joined Lovestone in protesting the Soviet takeover of communist activities in the U.S. Finally, as an American worker during the years from 1921 to 1966, she witnessed a period in which the status of the average industrial worker in the United States was transformed from virtual slavery to a new reality that included improved wages, increased protection from unsafe working conditions, health care benefits, pensions and a government sponsored social safety net. Despite this rather fascinating life, Ellen received little or no attention from most historians, even those who recorded the events in which she was a leading participant. My curiosity was aroused; I wanted to know why Ellen had been ignored.

My initial intent with this thesis was simply to correct the injustice of omission, to include someone who had been forgotten. In the 1970s, women’s historians liked to call this the “add women and stir” approach. I wanted to collect the
surviving details of her life and present them in a meaningful narrative. I wanted to write a “New Labor” biography in the spirit of British labor historian E. P. Thompson. More than forty years ago, Thompson changed labor history forever when he asserted that there was value in reconstructing the struggles of individual workers like Ellen. As he noted in his classic work, *The Making of the English Working Class*:

> Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience…
>
> Our only criterion of judgement should not be whether or not a man’s actions are justified in the light of subsequent evolution. After all, we are not at the end of social evolution ourselves. In some of the lost causes of the people of the Industrial Revolution we may discover insights into social evils which we have yet to cure.7

Certainly Ellen was one of the losers. Her cause – American workers’ communism – was lost long ago. However, her dream of improving the lives of textile workers was valid and her experiences offer transnational insights into a very important period of labor history.

To be embarrassingly honest, I assumed the task of writing a biography was comparable to the challenge of putting together a jigsaw puzzle. All I needed to do was empty the pieces on a card table and with patience and perseverance they would ultimately find their proper place. Perhaps some biographers have the privilege of writing about individuals so well documented that they can actually pursue this strategy. Unfortunately, I quickly discovered that I had selected a puzzle with a great many missing pieces. After three years of research – on two continents, in more than thirty archives, libraries and museums – I have reconstructed the basics of Ellen’s life, but there is much that remains a mystery. Only scraps of information survive – assorted public records, random accounts of her activities, the autobiographies of a few associates, historical accounts of the events in which she was a participant, fading photographs and patchy memories recalled by distant relatives. I have collected more
than enough to confirm her worth as an historical figure, but not enough to reconstruct a complete life. There are, I believe, at least two reasons for this. First, from a general perspective, records associated with the lives of the “unimportant” and the “powerless” are all too often not included in the historical archives that provide historians with access to the past. And, from the individual perspective, it has ultimately become clear that Ellen consciously retreated from the public world, intentionally erasing her years as a communist activist with silence.8

To fill the archival gaps, I began exploring the communities where Ellen lived and worked – the environment in which she existed, the social and political forces that influenced her development, the events she witnessed, the individuals who served as role models, her day-to-day associates, and other meaningful contemporaries. My strategy was similar to the approach used by an archeologist to reconstruct an ancient community from an odd assortment of surviving artifacts. As James Deetz noted, “in the seemingly little and insignificant things that accumulate to create a lifetime, the essence of our existence is captured. We must remember these bits and pieces, and we must use them in new and imaginative ways…Don’t read what we have written: look at what we have done.”9

This “life and times” approach to the telling of Ellen’s story is appropriate because it opens the door to the different categories of analysis available for examining Ellen’s life. Herbert Gutman, considered by many to be the father of the New Labor History in the United States, pointed toward this wider view with his oft-cited example of the “Irish born Catholic female Fall River Massachusetts textile worker and union organizer involved in the disorderly 1875 strike,” noting that this woman could be examined from nine different areas of historical study, and yet no
single view would ever capture the “wholeness that is essential to understanding human behavior.”

I found Gutman’s example particularly appropriate because Ellen was almost everything he conjured for his example. She was a female textile worker, the granddaughter of Irish born Catholics workers, who was a labor organizer in the disorderly 1928 strike that started in New Bedford and spread to Fall River. In a way, I felt as if Ellen’s biography had been blessed by one of the founders of the New Labor History.

This broader approach allowed me to complete the first draft of my thesis. It provided an additional dimension, but still there was something lacking. As Donna Gabaccia, my American supervisor, observed, “Ellen remains elusive.” Clearly, I needed to consider more options if I was going to help readers grasp the significance of Ellen and her world.

Fortunately, I was able to learn from others who had encountered similar problems. Labor historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall faced the same challenge in writing about Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin. Hall’s response was to make the problem part of the story. “In the face of that vacuum,” she wrote, “I tried to address my dilemma in part by embracing it, by allowing it into the text.” Just as I have struggled to reassemble Ellen’s life, Hall worked to rebuild the relationships between several southern women. “I pieced their life together scrap by scrap…What I lacked -- what we still lack – is a single word, in their voices, about the inner history…its pains and pleasures, its trajectory over time.” This is exactly what I faced with the elusive and deathly-silent Ellen. Hall further explained that while the facts biographers are able to collect may not provide “clear windows on the past,” they do “license historical imagination. They propel us onto the fine line between fiction and history,
imagination and reason, dreams and waking thoughts, each seeming opposition
required and defined by the other, all necessary to our impossible project: the
sympathetic reconstruction of the absent past.”13 Hall’s approach offered a viable
solution to the dilemma I faced in trying to provide a meaningful reconstruction of
Ellen’s life and the world in which she existed.

At first glance, such an approach may seem inappropriate for a traditional
academic work. There is, however, a small but directly applicable literature within
the genre of feminist biography that supports such a methodology. Feminist
biography is based on the premise that within every biography there is an internal, and
often suppressed, autobiography. This internal autobiography is the experience of the
individual who researches and writes the biography.14 From my own perspective,
feminist biography raised several important questions. First, and most significantly,
should my own experiences associated with this project be included in the thesis? If I
excluded my experiences, did I become a scribe and not a scholar? Was the role of
biographer, as I initially thought, simply to piece together a predetermined puzzle,
making no decisions on how the pieces ultimately came together? The more I thought
about these questions, the more I realized that creating a biographical account of
someone’s life is not at all like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Every biographer
makes countless decisions that directly influence the final image that is presented.
Discussing these decisions within the text allows for a more objective presentation of
the information, and for more meaningful comments by those who evaluate it. My
thinking about feminist biography seems to be supported by Lois Rudnick, biographer
of Mabel Dodge Luhan, who noted, “Our unmasking of our strategies and processes
as writers of biography should lead to the creation of more authentic texts and to more
probing and artful criticism of our work.”15
This approach seemed particularly relevant when writing the biography of a woman, because, as Rudnick observed, feminist biography developed as a distinctive genre. It “uncovered and restored ‘lost’ women, many of whom were not heroic in the traditional sense.” After all, heroes are masculine by the very definition of the word.16

Further, as a man writing the biography of a woman, I recognized that I was immediately open to the fundamental criticism of not being a member of the club. Here is a new version of the old question raised within many fields of scholarship: Can a group be understood by someone who is not a member of the group? Personally, I believe the answer is yes, and that it has been demonstrated many times by numerous writers. Distance often provides greater objectivity. However, I also recognize that there will always be some who will challenge the outsider’s view. By exposing my thought process, and discussing my approach to the research, I believe I can help to neutralize this issue as well, so that others may better assess my analysis and objectivity. Thus, I made the decision to invite the reader of this thesis to join me on my search for Ellen. By doing so, I am able to share my thoughts on key questions, presenting the available options and explaining my decisions.

I then turned to the next questions. First, why was Ellen ignored by most historians? And second, why does so little of Ellen’s life survive in the public record? It is logical to assume that one of the primary reasons Ellen was omitted from our historical memory was because of her gender. Until the 1970s, women simply did not figure prominently in historical accounts. Gender alone, however, is not an adequate explanation. Writing about another woman textile labor activist, the elusive O. Delight Smith, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall noted, “The forces that conspired against her ranged from personal betrayal to political defeat to historians’ assumptions about
significance and marginality. Indeed, the preoccupations of scholars guaranteed that she, and women like her, would be trebly eclipsed, for she exemplified a brand of feminist progressivism that has been marginalized by historians of women, (and) of labor.”¹⁷

As Hall suggests, exclusion is not the result of a single force, and such forces do not exist independently. They are interwoven into the multiple identities of each and every individual, and the associations that are created by those multiple identities. In Ellen’s case, I believe radicalism, class, ethnicity and religion are also important forces. It is here, into what Alice Kessler-Harris calls the “complex and frequently messy interaction of these components”¹⁸ that we must dig if we are to understand the reasons why Ellen was left in the dustbin of history.

Ellen’s radicalism provides a second explanation for why she has been ignored. Sympathetic views of American radicals, especially those associated with American communism, have long been taboo subjects within American universities. Few American historians have approached the subject objectively. Fraser Ottanelli is one of the few exceptions. He reconstructed the story of the American communist party in the 1930s and detailed the activities of several of Ellen’s associates. For the most part, however, communists such as Ellen are the victims of post Russian Revolution hysteria and Cold War politics, when all communists took the form of sinister villains seeking the violent overthrown of capitalist society and democratic government. There was no room for alternative views. As a result, it seems highly probable that records providing favorable pictures of individuals such as Ellen were destroyed. What scanty public records that survive are those that view these individuals through the eyes of their enemies. It is, after all, the “winners” perspective that survives in the public record, not that of the losers such as Ellen.
Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of terrorism as a replacement for communism as the antithesis of American capitalism has this begun to change. In an essay discussing her biography of Mary Heaton Vorse, a leading left-wing journalist of Ellen’s time, Dee Garrison noted that Vorse was “Erased from historical memory chiefly because she was a political radical of the female gender, (despite the fact that) she was deeply committed to realization of a world without war, privation, and hate...(Vorse was a woman) who changed her life in mid-passage, became radicalized, endured terror and pain to realize her ambition.”

Vorse worked with Ellen in both Passaic and Gastonia, and clearly Ellen, like Vorse, was ignored because of both her gender and her radicalism. There is, however, an important distinction that must be made between Ellen and Vorse. That distinction is class. Unlike many of the upper and middle class women who participated in the radicalism of the 1920s, including Vorse, Ellen was further marginalized because of her class. She was a working class woman who, even after her marriage, had to work in order to survive. As such, her experience lacked the romanticism that surrounded radical women in the more economically advantaged classes, and her position as a worker made it extremely difficult for her to continue her work as an activist, or even to write about her experiences. She had not the time, the energy, nor the financial resources.

Further, Ellen was a weaver, a job that was classified as unskilled, even thought it took her years to acquire the necessary training and experience to do the job properly. As such, she remained at the lower levels of the working class for most of her life.

Ethnicity is perhaps the messiest of the categories, at least with respect to understanding Ellen’s position in the world. She was Scottish, an individual who shared common ancestry with many native-born American workers. Yet she was an immigrant worker who lived in a community with more than thirty different
nationalities of immigrant workers. She married a Hungarian immigrant, and for more than thirty years, most of her adult life, she lived with an Hungarian surname -- Kanki. While many historians have focused on immigrant workers in the United States, few have studied Scots who immigrated into the United States during the twentieth century. Scots represented only a tiny percentage of immigrants to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time when the majority of immigrants came from Eastern and Southern Europe. Even those scholars who do study immigrant workers are often confronted with the same basic challenge -- few, if any, surviving records. This is further complicated by the fact that many documents created by immigrant workers themselves are in languages other than English and thus even less likely to survive.

With respect to religion, Ellen was born into a Roman Catholic family, died a Catholic, and lived most of her life as a devout Catholic. Her mother and the majority of her family were life-long Catholics, and her older sister Mary was a nun. The one question mark is what were Ellen’s religious beliefs during her days as a radical communist? This seems significant, since many communists of the period were atheists. To date, I have been unable to find a credible answer to that question. Regardless, culturally she was a Catholic, and this would have separated her from America’s Protestant majority, pushing her away from native-born Americans of Scottish descent, and pulling her toward her immigrant neighbors. Beyond this, most American labor historians have been reluctant to address the role religious faith played in the lives of the working class. I will confess that, at least for the moment, I am no exception.

Given these five different categories of possible analysis, my next question was which of these perspectives offered the most meaningful point-of-view for a
reconstruction of Ellen’s life? My conclusion was “all” and “none.” Each perspective – gender, radicalism, class, ethnicity and religion – is important, but to pick one would be to ignore the importance of the others. Thus, I began looking for a common thread that connected all five perspectives. The thread I discovered was power, or in Ellen’s case the lack of power. Throughout her life, she was on the weak side of gender, politics, class, ethnicity and religion.

Speaking of two equally radical women who lived during the same period, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall noted that, “they persisted on the margins, far from the centers of economic, political and culture power. They suffered for their beliefs.” Certainly this description fits Ellen as well, and it helps explains why the public record is so scanty. The powerless are rarely allowed to leave records of their lives. No one collected their thoughts. Their possessions are simply thrown away; rarely do families preserve the records. This is supported by my own frustrations in trying to gather information and insights from Ellen’s few surviving relatives. To them, except for a few fading photographs, she is hardly more than an enigma.

Mary Blewett, one of the leading scholars in the field of women’s labor history in the U.S., cited Herbert Gutman’s example of the Irish born textile worker, noting that “The multiple meanings of human identity also require a more inclusive use of the category of power to capture the tensions over changing relationships of gender, ethnicity, race, family, sexuality, religion, and generations, issues that remain central to the history of class and culture. Only then can the multiple but connected experiences of that Irish working woman be appreciated and evaluated.” I agree! Power provides the glue needed to hold all of the other perspectives together, at least when explaining a woman like Ellen. During her years as an activist, she struggled to take control of her own life, yet she was continually confronted with challenges
related to her gender, class, ethnicity and religion. Ultimately, her failure can be contributed to her inability to achieve the power necessary to successfully change the status quo.

Like many seemingly simple terms, power is, in reality, an extremely complex philosophical idea. It can be viewed from the perspective of individual relationships and it can also be seen as an independent force within a society or a culture. As Simon Blackburn noted, power “is the ability to achieve something, whether by right or by control or influence. Power is the ability to mobilize economic, social or political forces in order to achieve a result.”

A more omnipotent view suggests that power is an essential element within all social and cultural relationships. “Fundamental power is not exercised by individuals, but is a dispersed, impersonal aspect of society, and in particular is manifest in the modes of surveillance, regulation, or discipline that adapt human beings to the surrounding social structure.” This suggests that it is not necessary for the powerful to be conscious of their goals, or their actions. Often they simply respond to a real or perceived threat to the status quo. It is a knee-jerk response, a defense mechanism designed to halt, or at least slow, the onslaught of change. As a result, there is usually little or no serious evaluation of the proposed change, or consideration of the possible benefits change might bring. Here, I believe, one can begin to understand the significance that power, as a force within a society, has over human relationships, regardless of the perspective. Here too, one can recognize the “messy interaction” of these categories suggested by Alice Kessler-Harris and see the tides that create the ever “changing relationships” discussed by Mary Blewett. And we can begin to understand why the powerless leave so few records through which historians can access their stories and in turn tell those stories to present and future generations.
Ellen and her associates sought to build a force for change. They sought to challenge the power of those who held the workers down. They sought to empower the workers, but they failed. Ultimately, I believe it was this failure that forced Ellen to recognize her own powerlessness. It also motivated her to abandon the cause she fought for and to retreat into the safety of her family, her church and her waged work. Reluctantly, she reconciled herself to the restrictions placed upon her by the established power structure. As a result, she lived the remainder of her life in silence, accepting things she had once tried to alter. She became a silent witness.

Ellen’s failure does not mean that her life lacks significance. To the contrary, it is her lack of power that makes her such a fascinating case study, especially if we are willing to discard the conventionally accepted hero-model of biography. It is this very powerlessness, I believe, that makes her story worth telling.

Finally, I came to the point where I needed to establish a structure for the thesis. After considering several different approaches, I decided to divide the thesis into three major sections. The first section, Ellen Dawson, is a traditional biography of Ellen. It provides the facts surrounding Ellen’s life and seeks to build the foundation needed for the discussions that follow. The following two sections are divided by the Atlantic Ocean. The Making of a Radical focuses on Ellen’s life in Great Britain. The World of a Radical explores her life as a radical labor activist in the United States. My goal in separating these two sections was to provide balance to the two most important parts of her life. All too often biographies stop at national borders, pretending that there is little connection between the two sets of experience. In Ellen’s case, I believe her formative years in Scotland, combined with her experiences in England, significantly influenced her actions in the United States. And, her American activities provide the justification for studying her life in Britain.
The British section is divided into three chapters. **Barrhead** looks at the industrial village where Ellen was born and raised, seeking to identify the social forces that influenced her early development. **Red Clydeside** chronicles the labor history of the Glasgow region during the period between 1900 and 1919, perhaps the most turbulent in the history of Scotland. This chapter also includes brief biographies of Scottish labor activists whom I believe contributed to Ellen’s radicalization. **Migration** records the family’s migration to Lancashire. Although the family spent only a few years there, the experience is significant because this is the region of England where the Industrial Revolution began. This chapter also traces the family’s emigration to the United States.

The American section is divided into three chapters. **Passaic** examines the community where Ellen lived for more than forty-five years and the textile strike of 1926 where, as a worker, she began her career as a radical activist. **New Bedford** details her organizing activities in the 1928 strike there, where she transitioned from worker to labor organizer. **Gastonia** recounts her leadership in the first two months of the Loray Mill strike of 1929.

At several points in both the British and American sections, I have used the biography and collected poetry of Mary Brooksbank[^26] in an effort to better understand Ellen. Mary was a Scottish textile worker born in Aberdeen almost exactly three years before Ellen.[^27] Mary moved to Dundee, where she entered the textile mills as a young adolescent worker. Like Ellen, Mary became a communist labor activist. Unlike Ellen, Mary stayed in Scotland, where she wrote about her experiences. I believe that Mary’s voice provides meaningful insights that help to overcome Ellen’s silence.
This thesis ends with a Conclusion that provides personal observations and conclusions associated with my research and experiences. Finally, I have added a section of photographs. These visuals, I believe, are important records that help to tell Ellen’s story and provide additional information that can be found nowhere else. These are historical artifacts that help complete the portrait.

Ultimately, my goal for this thesis remains the telling of Ellen’s story. Certainly she was not the traditional hero, but her life had meaning. Her dream of improving the lives of textile workers was valid and her experiences offer transnational insights into both Scottish and American women’s labor history. And, as E. P. Thompson suggested, “we may discover insights into social evils which we have yet to cure.” Personally, I believe the life of Ellen Dawson does offer such insights, insights that can help current and future generations protect themselves from the suffering that she and countless other textile workers endured.
Ellen Dawson married Louis Kanki in 1935 and took his last name. All of her known radical activities occurred prior to her marriage, and all known historical references use her maiden name. Although her family and close friends often called her Nell or Nellie, she will be referred to simply as Ellen throughout this doctoral thesis because that is how she appears in the public record.

It was my partner, Cindy Wilkinson McMullen, who first noted Ellen Dawson’s Scottish connection. John Salmond’s book, *Gastonia 1929* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), provides the most comprehensive account of the Loray Strike, an event that many consider to be the most notorious strike in the history of the textile industry in the southern United States. The cause of this notoriety will be discussed later in this thesis.

The most comprehensive account of Ellen Dawson’s life can be found in Philip S. Foner’s *Women and the American Labor Movement from World War I to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1980). He is the only historian to connect her participation in the three communist-lead textile strikes of the late 1920s in Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia. He also notes her involvement with the Lovestoneites. Foner, who is one of the few American labor historians to research the American communist labor movement, mentions Ellen approximately half a dozen time in the forty-five pages he devotes to the three strikes. Even today, Foner remains a controversial figure because of his interest and often sympathetic view of communists such as Ellen. Although the quality of his research has been questioned by other scholars, my research within the original documents indicates that his accounts of these three strikes is accurate.

An undated and uncited newspaper article in the official scrapbook of New Bedford, Massachusetts mayor Charles F. Ashley (New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, Massachusetts).

Economic migration was a multigenerational aspect of the Dawson family. Two of Ellen Dawson’s grandparents migrated to Scotland from Ireland during the middle of the nineteenth century. The other pair of grandparents migrated to the Glasgow area from rural areas of Scotland. During the twentieth century, several members of her immediate family migrated back and forth across the Atlantic.

Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), pp. 12-13. It must be noted that from Thompson’s perspective, workers were almost always male, as he writes here. However, from my perspective, I see women workers as equally important and, because women were more often ignored in the past, I believe efforts to reconstruct their lives are essential to fully understanding working class history.

Ellen’s response was not unique. James Leloudis, one of the scholars who researched *Like a Family* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), a classic collection of oral histories of southern mill workers, found that many of the individuals interviewed for the book, individuals who had participated in some of the most violent textile strikes in the history of the southern U.S., refused to talk about what happened. In some cases, the worker developed a form of selective amnesia that erased the events from their conscious memory.


Donna Gabaccia pointed me toward Jacquelyn Hall’s essay, and we discussed this approach with Franca Iacovetta and Ruth Percy, who provided critical direction.

Hall discussed how she faced the challenge of trying to reconstruct the sexuality of southern writer Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin and her sisters Elizabeth Lumpkin Glenn and Grace Lumpkin. Interestingly, in 1932, Grace Lumpkin published *To Make My Bread* (New York: Macaulay Company, 1932), a novel about the Gastonia mill workers.


Rudnick, Lois, “The Life of Mabel Dodge Luhan,” Sara Alpern, et al, *The Challenge of Feminist Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 119. In this essay, Rudnick notes “the naïveté with which reviewers write about biographies…What they fail to notice is that biographers are active agents. Like fiction writers and historians they create their subjects with a particular angle of vision and with a particular set of strategies that help determine the outcome.”
22

16 Ibid, pp. 118-119. Interestingly, in Greek mythology Hero was a woman.
20 In the United States there is a wealth of literature on Scottish immigration to Britain’s North American Colonies prior to the American Revolution. However, very little is available on Scottish immigration after the early nineteenth century. In Britain, there is a growing literature on the Scottish Diaspora in the Atlantic world. Marjory Harper’s Emigration from Scotland between the wars: opportunity or exile? (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) is perhaps the most relevant to Ellen Dawson.
21 Hall, “To Widen the Reach of Our Love.” Hall was writing about Lillian Smith and Katherine Du Pre Lumpkin, two women born in 1897 who challenged the accepted standards of Southern society.
24 Ibid, p. 296. Michel Foucault was a leading proponent of this view of power.
25 I must credit Henry Binford for my understanding of the importance of change within a community. It was under his direction as a graduate student at Northwestern University that I first began to explore the significance of change and my Master’s Essay there uses change as a central theme.
26 Siobhan Tolland, a scholar at the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, introduced me to Mary Brooksbank and is researching Mary’s life. The two works of Mary are her autobiography, No Sae Lang Syne, A Tale of This City (Dundee: Dundee Printers, date unknown), and her collected poems, Sidlaw Breezes (Dundee: David Winter & Son, 1982).
27 Mary was born on December 15, 1897. Ellen was born on December 14, 1900.