19th Century American Women Writers Web.

Access: http://www.clever.net/19cwww.

This is an attractive, well-organized site aimed at students and scholars of all ages who are interested in 19th-century American women writers. The "Books & Authors" section contains links to other Web sites that contain texts of 19th-century American women writers, such as Louisa May Alcott, Kate Chopin, Rebecca Harding Davis, Emily Dickinson, Susanna Rowson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and others. There are several links that go nowhere or are outdated, but the author plans to update the links in the immediate future.

The "Tools & Resources" section contains links to resources for the 19th-century women and women writers, and for 19th-century American studies. The user can also post and respond to messages on the 19cwww Message Board, as well as view announcements and calls for papers.

The "Journals & Presses" section contains links to electronic journals relating to 19th-century American women writers, and gives the user an opportunity to suggest presses or journals to be added.

There is a section called "Digital Potluck," in which the user can enter personal information and enter the text of a 19th-century American women writer's work. This allows for a broader base of material, and the user is entered into a drawing for CD-ROM prizes. The user also has access to the electronic library collection of 19th-century American women's writing. Some authors in this section include Lydia Maria Child, Eliza Lee Follen, Sarah Joseph Hale, and Mary Eliza Tucker Lambert.

One of the nicest features of the site is "Monthly Features on the Net." This contains one or two links to interesting and attractive sites that relate to the topic of 19th-century American women writers. Some examples of previous monthly features are: "19th-Century Medicine," from the University of Toledo; a commemorative of the 75th anniversary of the suffrage movement from the Susan B. Anthony Center; a hypertext collection of Florence Nightingale's letters; and an interactive exhibit on the art of the daguerreotype, from the National Museum of American Art. At the time of this review, the monthly feature was an interactive exhibit on the Civil War. Since the monthly feature changes periodically, it is a good idea to keep checking it.

The editors of the site plan to increase the holdings of the digital library and continue to create educational exhibits. These plans include creating a digitized project for 19th-century African American writing, and the creation of Web-based editions of 19th-century literature that are designed to be read easily on the computer screen.

The 19th Century American Women Writers Web has recently received a number of awards, and is well worth looking at, either for research or for pleasure.—*Mary Wise, Central Washington University; wisem@tahoma.cwu.edu*

Ed. note: *The following sites were brought to my attention via the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers, which will hold its annual book fair in San Francisco in September. See page 414 for details.*

Amazon Books. *Access:* http://www.amazon.com. **Books Out-of-Print.** *Access:* http://www.reedref.com. **Book Stacks Unlimited.** *Access:* http://www.books.com. **Library of Congress—Z39.50.** *Access:* http://lcweb.loc.gov/z3950/gateway.html.

There are several Web sites available for those wanting to locate that hard-to-find volume that isn't in the local bookshop. These range from Internet "virtual bookstores" to the Reed Reference Books Out-of-Print site, as well as one of the earliest sites I ever visited, the Library of Congress. The thing that really stands out about these sites is how similar they are when the frills are stripped away, but some of the extras are what may make these sites popular.

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The two commercial sites that I visited, Amazon Books and Book Stacks Unlimited, offer very similar services.

I personally liked Amazon Books the best, but the reasons are almost entirely based on its cosmetic appearance (and when content is close to the same on several Web sites, I, like most, generally go for something that I like to look at). Amazon is quite attractively laid out and easy to navigate. The centerpiece, of course, is a search engine that allows the visitor to search a million-title collection of items. This is managed by a forms-based search engine that quite simply prompts the user to fill in the blanks and select the "submit" key. I was quite pleased with the number of items I was presented with when I attempted a search on a relatively hard-to-find author. I was also offered the bonus of reading about the author, browsing "related titles," or reviewing the book. The ability to add items to a virtual shopping basket was always available. Amazon also offered some nice related services, including national bestseller lists, staff favorites, and a service that notifies you when books of interest to you are released. It is a very attractive and friendly package.

Book Stacks Unlimited is also quite a nice site with a slightly different focus and presentation. Some audio files are available (authors reading their works seem to be popular), recommendations and reviews can be read, a large news section can be viewed, and this site has a nice emphasis on poetry. Of course, what one really wants to do is search, and that is where these sites are remarkably similar. I once again filled in the blanks, submitted my search, found a pleasing number of titles, and was offered the option of saving these in my "bookbag." While this is all very easy to do, I once again stopped short of actually purchasing anything (which is the very reason for these site's existence). I always get a little nervous as I approach the area where I must enter valuable information on a Web site. Whether my fears are groundless or not (after all, I give out my credit card number over the phone regularly), I can only tell you that it appears that these sites offer quick, easy, and (we are promised) secure service. They are also fun to browse.

Reed Reference is now offering Books-Out-of-Print, the familiar library tool, free on the Web. This site is a little less flashy than the above commercial sites but allows a little more flexibility in searching its large database of titles. Once again the user is presented with a forms-based search engine that allows for the combining of various fields and the use of the boolean operators in a way that the user of BIP on CD should recognize. The user is also able to customize the record displayed (in BIP format, Catalogue Card format, etc.). This is quite a practical site for those who use Books-Out-of-Print regularly, and performs quite well. I welcome the convenience and availability of this tool as a front-end for *Books-in-Print*.

The final tool of this type that I looked at was the Web-based catalog of the Library of Congress, with a Z39.50 front-end. Having searched this catalog several years ago, prior to the popularity of Web technology, the new version is a joy to use. It has a very simple introductory page (which would have very little on it if not for a banner announcing it as a Z39.50 gateway), that quite simply provides the option of searching title and personal name, or a more complex combination. Once again, a form page appears and allows users to type in either a combination of terms from titles and names (in the simple search), or a more complex combination of elements. Having filled in the blanks, and chosen from "ands" and "ors," a search is performed on the huge collection of items in the library. I have used the Library of Congress many times to verify a title, and this front-end will make the job quick and simple.

Choosing between these Web-based tools will be based mostly on the purpose of one's search. The online bookstores are certainly cosmetically appealing, offer extras, provide the direct source of the items found, and will quite simply be fun to use. Books-Out-of-Print and large library catalogs will be used much more for the quick visit to verify a title, publisher, or other such information, and allow for more flexibility of searching. Over the long run, the practical, results-oriented sources may be visited more often, but as with all Web sites, I will want to go back to the commercial sites for the fun of the visit and to see what's new.—*Doug Horne, University of Guelph; dhorne@uoguelph. ca* ∎