A. May Henry’s memoir concerns itself primarily with chronicling A. May’s actual life, drawing attention to many details considered by the author as important. Details such as how homemade soap was made using leftover fat trimmings and ash, as well as how this soap was later used to scrub sliver-prone softwood floor, and later the more attention-requiring hardwood floors. This piece of writing also covers several decades of the author’s life and includes her participation in military service and her experience of two world wars. This piece, unlike the others included in this reading journal, is a primary source created solely for the purpose of attempting to capture the actual experience of this person during this critical period in history. In contrast, the work done by Rooke et al. documents not only the experience but also the contributions of Charlotte Whitton to the feminist movement, attempting to analyze Whitton’s contributions to the feminist movement, looking at the historical struggle for women to become participants in public life, employment, and politics. This piece of writing also concerns itself with how the argument for such change has historically been argued, calling attention to the supposed uniqueness of woman, and a woman’s importance and unique potential for contribution to public life. This piece therefore has a longer lens, looking at Whitton’s life not only for the actual subjective experience of Whitton, but also by looking at her contributions in the long-term, and how her life has impacted those who proceeded her. This piece looks also at the struggle of women simply to involve themselves in typically masculinized realms of society, such as all realms considered public. While A. May Henry’s memoir chronicles her actual experience of an important era in Canadian history, Rooke et al.’s work looks at how one woman’s life may be seen in the wider context of History, how such a life reflects current and past mentalities and how these perspectives have evolved over time. Rooke et al., then, by looking at Whitton’s struggle for employment, and in defining herself and her life based on her own opinions and achievements, rather than those of a man whom she corresponds with the wider world through, aims to give an interpretation of one woman’s life within the wider context of it’s historical significance.

The works by Nick Salvatore, as well as Lois Banner, look at the significance of biography to history, arguing that biographies (such as A. May Henry’s) are historically relevant and should be considered as extremely valuable from a historical perspective, and should be cherished for the unique contribution that they may provide in understanding a particular era in history. This article argues that each individuals unique subjective experience is valuable, and that in analyzing these works, one may be able to better understand underlying social perspectives and concepts. This article also makes the argument that all human experience is of historical significance and value, and that thus to dismiss one individual’s biographical recollections would be dismissive not only of that single individual’s subjective experience, but would also be in a large way elitist, valuing the experience of the powerful and influential over the less powerful and less influential. By focusing on the ‘big’ as well as the ‘little’ people’s experience, Salvatore therefore argues that a biographical approach to history may help to control the unwanted erasure of those whose perspectives may be considered less relevant or historically significant based on their social standing. Thus, by valuing the biographical contributions of all individuals in a given historical era, we may better understand the struggles and experience of individuals, such as women like A. May Henry or Charlotte Whitton, and through this analysis better understand the period of time in question.