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Altri autori (Persone)	BellRudolph M Yans-McLaughlinVirginia <1943->
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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction / Bell, Rudolph M. / Yans, Virginia -- 1. Single Women in Ireland / Byrne, Anne -- 2. Virgin Mothers: Single Women Negotiate the Doctrine of Motherhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain / Yeo, Eileen Janes -- 3. Social and Emotional Well-Being of Single Women in Contemporary America / Carr, Deborah -- 4. Widows at the Hustings: Gender, Citizenship, and the Montreal By-Election of 1832 / Bradbury, Bettina -- 5. Business Widows in Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York, 1813-1885 / Ingalls Lewis, Susan -- 6. "His Absent Presence": The Widowhood of Mrs. Russell Sage / Crocker, Ruth -- 7. "Great Was the Benefit of His Death": The Political Uses of Maria Weston Chapman's Widowhood / Chambers, Lee V. -- 8. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate Widows, and the Lost Cause: "We Must Not Forget or Neglect the Widows" / Gross, Jennifer L. -- 9. Modernity's Miss-Fits: Blind Girls and Marriage in France and America, 1820-1920 / Kudlick, Catherine -- 10. The Times That Tried Only Men's Souls: Women, Work, and Public

Sommario/riassunto

Despite what would seem some apparent likenesses, single men and single women are perceived in very different ways. Bachelors are rarely considered "lonely" or aberrant. They are not pitied. Rather, they are seen as having chosen to be "footloose and fancy free" to have sports cars, boats, and enjoy a series of unrestrictive relationships. Single women, however, do not enjoy such an esteemed reputation. Instead they have been viewed as abnormal, neurotic, or simply undesirable-attitudes that result in part from the long-standing belief that single women would not have chosen her life. Even the single career-woman is seldom viewed as enjoying the success she has achieved. No one believes she is truly fulfilled. Modern American culture has raised generations of women who believed that their true and most important role in society was to get married and have children. Anything short of this role was considered abnormal, unfulfilling, and suspect. This female stereotype has been exploited and perpetuated by some key films in the late 40's and early 50's. But more recently we have seen a shift in the cultural view of the spinster. The erosion of the traditional nuclear family, as well as a larger range of acceptable life choices, has caused our perceptions of unmarried women to change. The film industry has reflected this shift with updated stereotypes that depict this cultural trend. The shift in the way we perceive spinsters is the subject of current academic research which shows that a person's perception of particular societal roles influences the amount of stress or depression they experience when in that specific role. Further, although the way our culture perceives spinsters and the way the film industry portrays them may be evolving, we still are still left with a negative stereotype. Themes of choice and power have informed the lives of single women in all times and places. When considered at all in a scholarly context, single women have often been portrayed as victims, unhappily subjected to forces beyond their control. This collection of essays about "women on their own" attempts to correct that bias, by presenting a more complex view of single women in nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States and Europe. Topics covered in this book include the complex and ambiguous roles that society assigns to widows, and the greater social and financial independence that widows have often enjoyed; widow culture after major wars; the plight of homeless, middle-class single women during the Great Depression; and comparative sociological studies of contemporary single women in the United States, Britain, Ireland, and Cuba. Composed of papers presented to the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis project on single women, this collection incorporates the work of specialists in anthropology, art history, history, and sociology. It is deeply connected with the emerging field of singleness studies (to which the RCHA has contributed an Internet-based bibliography of more than 800 items). All of the essays are new and have not been previously published.
