prepared a romanticized "Address" about her adventures, which Deborah Sampson Gannett first presented at a public lecture in Boston in 1802, then toured to various New England and New York towns.

For her Revolutionary War services, Deborah Sampson Gannett received a pension from the state of Massachusetts and later, on the petition of Paul Revere, another pension from the United States government. After she died in 1827, the United States Congress passed an "Act for the relief of the heirs of Deborah Gannett, a soldier of the Revolution, deceased."*

2♀ 1829–91?: LUCY ANN LOBDELL, DR. P. M. WISE, and others;
Lucy Ann Lobdell
"I can not submit to see all the bondage with which woman is oppressed"

The life of Lucy Ann Lobdell is detailed from birth to death in several documents. Her inclusion here will be understood as her story progresses. The discovery of Lobdell's rare, extraordinary autobiographical Narrative of her early life, published in 1855, permits her to introduce herself.?

On December 2, 1829, a daughter, Lucy Ann, was born to Sarah and James Lobdell of Westerlo, in Albany County, New York. Their first offspring, a daughter, had died at the age of about two years, and Lucy Ann, their second-born, became, as she said of herself, later, "their pet—almost a spoiled child." In her Narrative, Lucy Ann Lobdell describes herself as an adventurous child, who at an early age often wandered into the woods alone and got lost, until the call of her distressed mother indicated the way home. Her mother finally tied "a bell on the little truant," the better to keep track of her whereabouts."

Lucy Ann Lobdell recalls that she was in her tenth or twelfth year (1839–41) when she

had the charge of some hundred chickens, turkeys, and geese, that I used to raise and sell, and then I had half the money I made in that business and in tending the dairy. . . . In consequence of my keeping poultry, I learned to shoot the hawk, the weasel, the mink, and even down to the rat. . . . 9

This activity early encouraged the young girl's independent and assertive spirit.

In 1843, the fourteen-year-old Lobdell, then in school,

possessed a temperament which made me foremost in mischief as well as in study. My delight in each was about equal. . . . I would frequently contrive, during the hours of study, to read from another book, which I would conceal from the teacher's eye, and still have my lesson more perfect than half the scholars who were more studious, but less vivacious.10
Lobdell soon found herself enjoying the constant company of a William Smith until her father began to look after and into my love affairs, as he termed them; at the same time he said I must discard Mr. Smith at once.

Both Lucy Ann and William felt that Lobdell had “no right to control,” and, finding that they were in love, the two young people concluded to see no more of each other for present, for we had decided to open a correspondence.

This secret correspondence continued until Lobdell’s sisters, Mary and Sarah, discovered William’s “dozen or more ‘love’ letters,” and all our sorrows and complaints became known. My sisters deeply sympathized with and pitied me, which roused my pride; and the result was, I got sick of the idea of loving Mr. Smith.

When Smith proposed to her, Lobdell wrote back, rather evasively, that she “was not my own mistress yet,” and too young to decide to marry. Lobdell also describes the mutual attraction between herself and a Mr. St. John, which ended tragically when St. John died of consumption.

In the 1840s, when Lobdell was still in her teens, she met and kept company with George Washington Slater for five or six months. Finally, she told Slater that she was obliged to discard him, as father was not willing that I should have anything more to say to him whatever.

As Lucy Ann Lobdell describes it, Slater immediately became “as pale as death,” and his sorrowful eyes bent upon mine with a pity which I mistook for love.

Slater wildly declared his love and left in great agitation, Lobdell promising to see him one more time. When the next visit occurred, Slater was just as agitated as before, and Lucy Ann watched him go “reeling away,” wondering if he could bear his pain without expiring. Lobdell continues:

Night came, and at nine o’clock, I retired to my bedroom, but not to sleep, for the God that made me gave me a tender heart, and nerved me with a daring spirit; I therefore waited till all was quiet, and then arose and dressed myself in my brother’s clothes, stole out of my bedroom-window, and went to the stable, and took one of father’s horses, and away I rode to learn what had become of Mr. Slater. I at length learned his whereabouts, without being discovered, for I saw someone was up in a room about five miles from my home. I at once alighted, and looked in at a window, and saw Mr. Slater and someone standing beside his bed that appeared to
PASSING WOMEN: 1782–1920

be a doctor. I then left and ran to where I had tied my horse, and jumped upon his back with a lighter heart than I had when I dismounted, for I felt that some kind hand would aid and take care of him. When I got within half a mile of home, it commenced raining very hard, and I got as wet as I could be. . . .

The next day, says Lobdell,

when I appeared before my mirror, I learned how much an adventure added health and beauty to the cheek.12

Despite her father’s strong opposition, she continued to see Slater, out of pity, it seems, for his distressed state and lonely, “outcast” position in the world. Fearing that she was forming too close an acquaintance with Slater, one which she might later regret, Lobdell “therefore made up [her] mind to leave home” and the district school she was attending, and go to a school then in Coxsackie, Greene County, New York, where she stayed with an aunt.

I had the money I had made in raising calves and poultry to pay for my schooling, and all the expenses I incurred in going to school.

Eventually, says Lobdell,

Father wrote and said if I wanted to live at Coxsackie he would sell out and come and buy there, if I wanted him to. I wrote him a letter and told him I was not going to stay there, and I at the same time told him of lands that were selling very cheap in Delaware and Sullivan Counties. . . .13

In a short time Lobdell was again living with her family in Delaware County.

Slater now appeared on the scene again. Lobdell told her father that she “had no joy” in Slater “for my early love was no more.” But because Slater was “a good workman, and an innocent boy,” Lobdell agreed to marry him, if he could get her father’s consent. Although her father wished her to wait, and Lucy Ann Lobdell agreed, Slater insisted on an early marriage, and this took place with the agreement of both of Lobdell’s parents. When it came to paying the five-dollar marriage fee, Slater told Lucy Ann Lobdell he hadn’t the cash, but “that he had some considerable money coming to him” for work done at Westerlo. Lobdell replied that her brother would attend to the matter of the money. “I told brother, as I handed him some cash, to settle the marriage fee. . . .”14

When a Methodist meeting was held in the neighborhood, the newly married Lucy Ann and George Slater attended, and after several more meetings

Slater, myself, and twenty or more others, experienced and professed religion.

As the ministers had visited our house very frequently I had become quite a curious person for them to talk with, as my sentiments varied from theirs with regard to their belief very much.

Lucy Ann’s assertiveness and intimate discourse with the preachers seems to have antagonized the less intellectual Slater, apparently making him jealous. A Dr. Hale, married to a cousin of Lucy Ann’s, also objected vehemently to her speaking up to
the preachers, and castigated her sharply for it. He later apologized, and Lucy Ann rather grudgingly told him I could forgive him if my heavenly Father could. But whether God had forgiven him or not is not in my power to say. But in a short time the news came to me that Doctor Hale was crazy, and soon after he was sent to the asylum at Utica. He appears to be quite rational at different times, but he is there now at the asylum, a poor crazy being.¹⁰

Lucy Ann sought for a time at the district school, and then moved with Slater into a home of their own nearby. Slater now became jealous of Lucy Ann’s friendship with a more intellectual male boarder, and even, it seems, of her ability to play the violin. She disliked Slater’s vulgarity, and that of his card-playing friends. The overt antagonism between George Slater and Lucy Ann continued to grow, and Slater began publicly to accuse his wife of paying attention to other men, saying he was sorry he had paid five dollars to marry her, and that he would pay five or ten dollars to be unmarried. Afraid of Slater’s anger, which he had displayed on several occasions, Lucy Ann decided not to live with him any longer, and moved back with her parents. In the fall of 1852, Slater moved out of the neighborhood, leaving the twenty-three-year-old Lucy Ann pregnant.¹⁰

Lucy Ann relates that after Slater went away, I used often to go hunting to drive care and sorrow away; for when I was upon the mountain’s brow, chasing the wild deer, it was exciting for me; and as times were hard, and provisions high, I was often asked by father, who had become decrepit, if I could not go and shoot him some venison, as he was obliged to stop hunting. I used to feel sorry to see my poor father so lame, and hear him ask me to shoot him some deer. I at length put on a hunting-suit I had prepared, and away I started in pursuit of some meat.¹⁷

Although she later became adept at hunting, Lucy Ann relates, with humor, one forcical first attempt to shoot a deer.

The rife went off, and so did the deer. I began to think that I should have to coax the deer to me the next time, and hold the rife against him in order to kill him.

Another time, what she thought was a panther started around a tree toward her:

As soon as I got a fair sight at his heart, I fired, and O horror! such a noise as I heard in an instant caused my hair to stand erect, I believe, for I felt a cold sensation crawl over me that seemed to freeze the blood in my veins. The moment I fired, the animal turned and jumped, and ran out of sight; I reloaded my rife, and ran after him.¹⁸

In 1853 and 1854, an account of Lucy Ann by Mr. Talmodge, a traveling peddler, was, she says, given much publicity in the newspapers, bringing many hunters into the area and many requests for her to play her violin. Lucy Ann gives one version of Talmodge’s account.

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"I must relate an adventure that I met with a few days since. As I was trudging along one afternoon, in the town of Freemont, one of the border towns of Sullivan county, I was overtaken by what I, at first, supposed was a young man, with a rifle on his shoulder. Being well pleased with the idea of having company through the woods, I turned round and said, 'Good afternoon, sir.' 'Good afternoon,' replied my new acquaintance, but in a tone of voice that sounded rather peculiar. My suspicions were at once aroused, and to satisfy myself, I made some inquiries in regard to hunting, which were readily answered by the young lady whom I had thus encountered. She said that she had been out ever since daylight; had followed a buck nearly all day, and had got but one shot and wounded him; but as there was little snow, she could not get him, and was going to try him the next day, hoping that she could get another shot, and was quite certain that she could kill him. Although I cannot give a very clear idea of her appearance, I will try to describe her dress. The only article of female apparel visible was a close-fitting hood upon her head, such as is often worn by deer hunters; next, an india-rubber overcoat. Her neither limbs were encased in a pair of snug-fitting corduroy pants, and a pair of Indian moccasins were upon her feet. She had a good looking rifle upon her shoulder, and a brace of double-barrelled pistols in the side-pocket of her coat, while a most formidable hunting-knife hung suspended by her side. Wishing to witness her skill with her hunting instruments, I commenced bantering her in regard to shooting. She smiled, and said that she was as good a shot as was in the woods, and to convince me, took out her hunting-knife, and cut a ring, about four inches in diameter, on a tree, with a small spot in the centre; then stepping back thirty yards, and drawing up one of her pistols, put both balls inside the ring. She then, at eighteen rods from the tree, fired a ball from her rifle into the very centre. We shortly came to her father's house, and I gladly accepted of an invitation to stop there over night.

"The maiden-hunter instead of setting down to rest as most hunters do when they get home, remarked that she had got the chores to do. So, out she went, and fed, watered, and stabled a pair of young horses, a yoke of oxen, and three cows. She then went to the saw-mill, and brought a slab on her shoulder, that I should not liked to have carried, and with an axe and saw, she soon worked it up into stove-wood. Her next business was to change her dress, and get tea, which she did in a manner which would have been creditable to a more scientific cook. After tea, she finished up the usual house-work, and then sat down and commenced plying her needle in the most lady-like manner. I ascertained that her mother was quite feeble, and her father confined to the house with the rheumatism. The whole family were intelligent, well-educated, and communicative. They had moved from Schoharie county into the woods about three years before; and the father was taken lame the first winter after their arrival, and has not been able to do anything since, and Lucy Ann, as her mother called her, has taken charge of, ploughed, planted, and harvested the farm; learned to chop wood, drive the team, and do all the necessary work.

"Game being plenty, she had learned how to use her father's rifle, and spent some of her leisure time in hunting. She had not killed a deer yet, but expressed her determination to kill one, at least, before New-Year's. She boasted of having shot any quantity of squirrels, partridges, and other small game. After chatting some time, she brought a violin from a closet, and played fifteen or twenty tunes,
and also sang a few songs, accompanying herself on the violin, in a style that showed she was far from being destitute of musical skill. After spending a pleasant evening, we retired. The next morning she was up at four o'clock, and before sunrise, had the breakfast out of the way, and her work out of doors and in the house done; and when I left, a few minutes after sunrise, she had got on her hunting-suit, and was loading her rifle for another chase after the deer. 19

Meanwhile, George Slater continued to publicize slanderous reports of Lucy Ann's "sprees" with other men. When he returned and wished to live together again, Lucy Ann told him she could care for herself and her baby daughter, Helen, without him. About this same time (1854), she began once more to use her maiden name, and in October she decided to leave her child and her parents' home to seek a living elsewhere. She explains the reasons for this decision.

First, my father was lame, and in consequence, I had worked in doors and out; and as hard times were crowding upon us, I made up my mind to dress in men's attire to seek labor, as I was used to men's work. And as I might work harder at house-work, and get only a dollar per week, and I was capable of doing men's work, and getting men's wages, I resolved to try, after hearing that Mr. Slater was coming, to get work away among strangers.

I accordingly got up one morning, and it seemed as if I must go that day. I did not dare to tell our folks my calculations, for I knew that they would say I was crazy, and tie me up, perhaps. So I went up stairs, saying I was going to dress, and go a hunting as I was accustomed to. I hurried and put on a suit of clothes, and then my hunting-suit outside. When I came down stairs, mother came toward me, and was going to take hold of me to see what made me look so thickly dressed. I saw her move, and stepped out doors saying that I must hurry, as it was getting late. I drove the cow up before I left, and then hurried up the mountain. I could not even kiss my little Helen, nor tell her how her mother was going to seek employment to get a little spot to live, and earn something for her as she grew up. So, I stole away with a heavy heart, for I knew that I was going among strangers, who did not know my circumstances, or see my heart, so broken, and know its struggles. As I was walking down to the Hankins Depot, I met one of our nearest neighbors. He called to me, and asked me where I was going. I made no reply, but walked on; and I had got but a few yards, when I heard him say, "There goes the female hunter." I kept on walking in the meantime a pretty good pace, and then I stepped a little one side in the bushes to change my hunting attire. I in a few minutes saw some one pass the road who appeared to be in search of me. After the lapse of a short time, I walked out of the woods in a different direction, and went to Miss Hawkins's, and she kept me over night. I arose in the morning at four o'clock, and walked to the Callicoon Depot, and bought a ticket for Narrowsburgh. 20

Adding that she intends to write another book on her adventures in male attire, Lucy Ann Lobdell, in a lost explicitly feminist appeal, further explains

the reasons for my adoption of man's apparel. The first reason, then, is this: I have no home of my own; but it is true that I have a father's house, and could be permitted to stay there, and, at the same time, I should be obliged to toil from

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morning till night, and then I could demand but a dollar a week; and how much, I ask, would this do to support a child and myself. I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, woman has taken upon herself the curse that was laid on father Adam and mother Eve; for by the sweat of her brow does she eat her bread, and in sorrow does she bring forth children. Again, woman is the weaker vessel, and she toils from morning till night, and then the way her sorrows cease is this—her children are to be attended to; she must dress and undress them for bed; after their little voices are hushed, she must sit up and look after the preparations for breakfast, and, probably, nine, ten, eleven, or twelve o'clock comes round before she can go to rest. Again, she must be up at early dawn to get breakfast, and whilst the breakfast is cooking, she must wash and dress some half a dozen children. After finishing up the usual morning's house-work, such as washing dishes, making beds, and filing the kitchen-floor, then comes the dinner as usual. Then comes the husband—the puddings have been burned a trifle when mother was busy at something else; then come complaints in regard to the pudding. Well, mother was busy with Bridget or Patrick, settling some quarrel or blows, and now mother has made father a little out of taste with the dinner. And this is the way the world is jogging along.

And, now, I ask, if a man can do a woman's work any quicker or better than a woman herself; or could he collect his thoughts sufficiently to say his prayers with a clear idea? No; if he was confused and housed up with the children all day, he would not hesitate to take the burden off his children's shoulders, and allow woman's wages to be on an equality with those of the man. Is there one, indeed, who can look upon that little daughter, and feel that she soon will grow up to toil for the unequal sum allotted to compensate her toil. I feel that I cannot submit to see all the bondage with which woman is oppressed, and listen to the voice of fashion, and repose upon the bosom of death. I cannot be reconciled to die, and feel my poor babe will be obliged to toil and feel the wrongs that are unjustly heaped upon her. I am a mother; I love my offspring even better than words can tell. I can not bear to die and leave that little one to struggle in every way to live as I have to do... 21

... Help, one and all, to aid woman, the weaker vessel. If she is willing to toil, give her wages equal with that of man. And as in sorrow she bears her own curse, (nay, indeed, she helps to bear a man's burden also,) secure to her her rights, or permit her to wear the pants, and breathe the pure air of heaven, and you stay and be convinced at home with the children how pleasant a task it is to act the part that woman must act. I suppose that you will laugh at the idea of such a manner of convincing; but I suppose it will not do to convince the man of feeling, who can see and pity, and lend a helping hand to release the afflicted, the child of your bosom, the choice of your heart, young man.22

Finally, in a few last theologically oriented paragraphs, Lucy Ann Lobsdell mentions the sorrows she has felt and wounds she has suffered during the course of her adventures:

though some do call me a strange sort of being, I thank God, in whom I believe, and in whom I trust, and who is my defence, and I can praise Him, that He has given me a heart, that He will mould and fashion after His holy will; and as nothing is more calculated to make a heaven on earth than the love of God, I can
say, that my affliction has taught me a thousand truths of His loving kindness; for whomsoever the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son and daughter of Adam. . . . If you love God, and keep His commandments, you will get to heaven in spite of professed preachers, or churches, or the devil and all his dominies; and though your name may be cast out as evil, you can rejoice, knowing that if you but endure to the end you will be saved. Amen!

Your humble servant,

L. A. LOBDELL.23

In 1855, in New York, there was "Published for the Authoress" the Narrative of Lucy Ann Lobdell, the Female Hunter of Delaware and Sullivan Counties, New York, an autobiography of forty-seven pages. Past personal history, port self-explanation and justification, port self-advertisement, port self-defense against Slater's public attack, port explicit feminist appeal, and small port religious invocation, Lucy Ann's is an extraordinary account.

Twenty-eight years later, in 1883, there appeared in a St. Louis medical journal, The Alienist and Neurologist, one of the earliest American reports of Lesbianism.

CASE OF SEXUAL PERVERSION.

By P. M. Wise, M. D., Willard, N. Y.,
Assistant Physician of The Willard Asylum for the Insane.

The case of sexual perversion herewith reported, has been under the writer's observation for the past two years and since the development of positive insanity. The early history of her abnormal sexual tendency is incomplete, but from a variety of sources, enough information has been gleaned to afford a brief history of a remarkable life and of a rare form of mental disease.

CASE.—Lucy Ann Slater, alias Rev. Joseph Lobdell, was admitted to the Willard Asylum, October 12th, 1880; aged 56; widow, without occupation and a declared vagrant. Her voice was coarse and her features were masculine. She was dressed in male attire throughout and declared herself to be a man, giving her name as Joseph Lobdell, a Methodist minister; said she was married and had a wife living. She appeared in good physical health; when admitted, she was in a state of turbulent excitement, but was not confused and gave responsive answers to questions. Her excitement was of an erotic nature and her sexual inclination was perverted. In passing to the ward, she embraced the female attendant in a lewd manner and came near overpowering her before she received assistance. Her conduct on the ward was characterized by the same lascivious conduct, and she made efforts at various times to have sexual intercourse with her associates. Several weeks after her admission she became quiet and depressed, but would talk freely about herself and her condition. She gave her correct name at this time and her own history, which was sufficiently corroborated by other evidence to prove that her recollection of early life was not distorted by her later psychosis.

It appeared she was the daughter of a lumberman living in the mountainous region of Delaware Co., N.Y., that she inherited an insane history from her mother's antecedents. She was peculiar in girlhood, in that she preferred masculine