

With Courage and Common Sense: Memoirs from the Older Women's Legacy Circles



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Women who were sixty or older at the turn of the twenty-first century have lived through some of recent history's most momentous moments—and yet these women often believe that their personal lives and stories are insignificant, not worthy of being recorded for future generations. To change that perception and capture some of these life stories before they are lost, the Story Circle Network, a national organization dedicated to helping women write about their lives, developed the Older Women's Legacy (OWL) Circle Memoir Workshops. During the first two years of the project (1998-2000), nearly 500 older women participated in workshops that offered them the opportunity and encouragement to reflect on and create written records of their lives.

With Courage and Common Sense presents an extensive selection of memoirs from the OWL Circle project. Organized thematically, they describe women's experiences of identity, place, work, family life, love and marriage, loss and healing, adventures great and small, major historical events, and legacies to keep and pass along. Taken as a whole, the memoirs chronicle far-reaching changes in the ways that women participated in the world during the twentieth century. They show how women learned to surmount obstacles, to courageously make the most of the opportunities that came their way, and to move quietly and wisely beyond the limits that were imposed upon them.

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