



Smart Women: The Search for America's Historic All-Women Study Clubs

Ann Dodds Costello

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Hiding in plain sight throughout America are historic, highly private women's self-education groups. These clubs are fascinating survivors from an era following the Civil War when women couldn't apply to most colleges and were told they shouldn't leave the home. In their earliest days, the study groups also contributed to the welfare of their towns - often by helping to found their town's first library-and served to get women out of the house and into the world. Today's all-women study clubs have no civic component but still fashion their meetings as their founding great-grandmothers did, with members taking turns giving original papers. In *Smart Women*, author Ann Dodds Costello discusses her four-year quest to locate, often visit, and describe today's 100-year-old, all-women study clubs, all over America, even though they do not publicize and have no central organization or knowledge of each other. Included: an invaluable, first-ever directory of most of the book's ninety-plus clubs.

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