

## Condescension toward woman lawyers

Many mentions of women lawyers in The Woman's Journal seem to be the equivalent of pats on the head, expressing faint surprise that a woman could actually accomplish these feats. Some of the condescension seems to be reported in a state of awareness, tongue in cheek, but some of it not even The Woman's Journal seems to be alert to, so much perhaps were such attitudes part of the ambience of the day. From the "Women Lawyers--General" folder:

\* Quoting a dispatch from a Virginia paper: "There are not less than four or five of the most brilliant society women in the State who can prepare briefs. One wrote out opinions equal to those of some of the best lawyers at the bar."

WJ, 1/4/1890, at 1, col. 1-2.

\* The humiliating depths to which women had to go in their efforts to be admitted to the bar: "Mrs. Annie Smith, of Danville, Va., . . . presented a petition in the Virginia Senate, last week, for a license to practise law. The petition was in rhyme. It is described as witty, and evoked much laughter. The committee reported adversely on the bill, but it had many warm supporters in the Senate, and the speeches frequently elicited loud applause from senators and spectators."

WJ, 2/8/1890, at 41, col. 2.

\* "Mrs. Winona S. Sawyer . . . is regarded by the members of the bar as a well-read lawyer, with a well-balanced, judicial mind. At the annual banquet of the Lancaster Bar Association, held in February last, she responded ably and eloquently to one of the toasts."

WJ, 7/12/1890, at 219, col. 1.

\* Miss Effie Henderson, only woman graduate at Wesleyan College of Law at Bloomington, Ill., in 1892: "The faculty offered to excuse her from the work of the moot court, as she was the only woman in the class, but she did not wish to have any favors shown her on account of her sex, and she did so well in the moot court as to gain nearly all of the twenty-five or thirty cases which came up during the years of her course."

WJ, 7/2/1892, at 214, col. 5.