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Just in time for the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts in 2012, a lavishly illustrated account of the fascinating life of the woman who started it all. Juliette (Daisy) Gordon Low was a remarkable woman with ideas that were ahead of her time. She witnessed important eras in U.S. history, from the Civil War and Reconstruction to westward expansion to post–World War I. And she made history by founding the first national organization to bring girls from all backgrounds into the out-of-doors. Daisy created controversy by encouraging them to prepare not only for traditional homemaking but also for roles as professional women—in the arts, sciences, and business—and for active citizenship outside the home. Her group also welcomed girls with disabilities at a time when they were usually excluded. *Includes author's note, source notes, bibliography, timeline, places to visit, the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and musical notation for the favorite scout Song "Make New Friends."*

First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low Details

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S.N. Arly says

This is a great book for those who want to know more about "Daisy" Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts in the USA.

This gives a good look at the entire life of Daisy, which really helps understand how Girl Scouts got started when it did, and how the organization has always had a fairly liberal, inclusive, and feminist bend. You can also see how the program has always served girls who did not come from privileged families, and where some of our modern day traditions come from (snack, which is written into all of our district's lesson plans, likely stems from both Daisy's British tea influence and the fact that she her first patrols included poorer members).

As a volunteer and leader new to Girl Scouting, this gave me some good context to the program.

Rachel Fellows says

I was a Brownie when I was little but I don't remember much aside from wearing the uniform. My 8 year old is currently finishing up her first year as a Brownie, and though I didn't continue with Girl Scouts after my time as a Brownie, I now find myself volunteering with my daughter's troop and really getting into the Girl Scout spirit.

I didn't know much about Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low, and so I was always a little taken aback whenever I would see these beautiful portraits of what appeared to be a delicate young debutante. The idea of Juliette Gordon Low--the woman who went on to create and lead the Girl Scouts--being a well bred Victorian Girl didn't quite mesh with the idea in my head that I had of the tough, outdoorsy stern faced uniformed woman that I had seen photos.

Ginger Wadsworth's anecdote and picture-packed book really gets to the heart of who Daisy was as a person, I think. She was indeed well bred and from a wealthy family. She was well educated and adventurous. She was charming and sociable. She was artistic and stubborn. But she also struggled. She struggled with spelling, driving cars, and ill health. She struggled with managing her money. She struggled in an unhappy marriage. And she struggled to find her place in the world until, in her 40s, she met Robert Baden-Powell, the creator of Boy Scouts, and was inspired to lead girls in a similar outfit. It was there that she found her purpose and there that she left a legacy that she would be thrilled with today.

I'm about to turn 40 later this year. And in a lot of ways I've struggled to find my own place and purpose in the world...but just as Juliette Gordon Low found her footing and inspired girls the world over, her life story has inspired this grown woman to keep trudging along to find my way.

Michelle Stimpson says

I have read other biographies of Juliette (Daisy) Gordon Low, so all I was hoping from this book was a few

new pieces of information. I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of new insight I gained about one of my greatest heroes, Daisy Low.

The book gives a summary of her ancestry, childhood, and early life, then delves more specifically into her work founding the Girl Scouts of America. I enjoyed details such as when the first troops for girls with disabilities, and troops for African American, Native American, and Mexican American girls were initially founded, the beginning of Girl Scout Cookie sales, the creation of World Thinking Day, Founder's Day, the creation of the first Girl Scout camps, and the creation of the Brownies. There were great details about Girl Scout service, particularly about how Girl Scouts volunteered during WWII and how after women got the right to vote, Girl Scouts were encouraged to babysit for women so they could have time to go and cast their votes. There are great historical photographs, including one of Babe Ruth advertising the Girl Scout cookie sale. I enjoyed learning about the tradition starting with Edith Wilson in 1917, that every American First Lady has served as honorary president of the Girl Scouts.

As a troop leader, one of the most inspiring accounts was of Daisy's work with her first troop of Girl Guides in Scotland. (Daisy founded two troops of Girl Guides before returning to America and founding the Girl Scouts.) In rural Scotland, most of the girls were destined to work as child laborers in factories. Daisy wanted to give them more options for their future, so she learned how to spin wool and then taught the skill to the girls. She found a farmer to teach the girls how to raise healthy chickens. She helped the girls find avenues for selling wool, eggs, and chickens, thus securing careers for them. This inspires me as a troop leader to meet the specific needs of the girls in my troop and find the resources needed to do so.

Often on Girl Scout forums and in comments on Girl Scout-related articles, I read people lamenting how the Girl Scouts organization has changed. But Daisy Low knew and understood the need for the organization to change and stay responsive to the needs of each generation of girls. She revised the handbook several times in her own lifetime. She also remarked that before she died, she knew others would add their own ideas and the organization would shift and change in front of her own eyes.

And as much as Girl Scouting has changed, it has also stayed the same. When you read the original Girl Scout Promise and Girl Scout Law, as well as the accounts of the troop meetings, field trips, and experiences, the core values of Girl Scouts have not changed at all.

My favorite quote from the book:

"Daisy explained that as Girl Guides, the girls would learn self-reliance and skills that would help them be successful adults both during their careers and at home as parents. In addition to honing their domestic abilities, the activities would expose girls to other useful knowledge, such as first aid. And they would encourage the girls to be physically fit.

In 1912, many women of Daisy's social status lived a restricted life. Daisy intended to break down those walls of tradition. She wanted the upcoming generations of girls to grow with the changing world - where some women were getting involved in local and national elections, going to college, and even seeking careers outside the home. Daisy believed that they could and should do anything they wished!" (Wadsworth, 115).

I think Daisy Low would approve of the fact that our current Girl Scout manuals include badges for First Aid, camping, physical fitness, babysitting, cooking, business management, philanthropy, and inventing. No, the core values of Girl Scouting haven't changed at all.

I've read a lot of quotes from Daisy Low, but here is a new one to add to my collection of favorites:

"To put yourself in another's place requires real imagination, but by so doing each Girl Scout will be able to

live among others happily."

This speaks to the effort of inclusion and the appreciation of diversity in the Girl Scout movement.

And finally, in addition to learning about herself and others, earning badges, and serving the community, Juliette Gordon Low wanted Girl Scouts to have FUN. This book did a great job of imparting how much fun Daisy Low was as a person and how much fun she had getting to know Girl Scouts, sharing ghost stories around a campfire, playing basketball, tromping through the woods, canoeing, swimming, fishing, singing, and most importantly, having tea parties. Daisy Low loved a good tea party and so does my troop of Girl Scouts!

Deanna says

An interesting biography of the founder of the Girl Scouts in the U.S.

The book is filled with photos, songs and music. letters and diary entries which make it an engaging read. However, I think it may have a limited audience as those not interested in Scouts might be loathe to pick this one up without strong encouragement. Suggested for the whole age range and especially those looking for a good read about a feisty (if disorganized) go-getter. Suggested for grades 5 - 8.

Barbara says

Born into a well-to-do, influential family, Juliette(Daisy)Gordon received her formal education in a New York boarding school, but she also spent much of her free time outdoors, climbing trees, canoeing, swimming, and hiking. She was close to her family, and often put on plays and painted. Since her mother was born in the North and her father fought for the Confederates during the Civil War, Daisy encountered different perspectives on the issues of the time. After her marriage to a wealthy British man who was friends with the future King of England, Daisy became a socialite and spent much of her time at parties and social gatherings. When her marriage began to fail, she realized that she wanted to do more with her life. Inspired by the Boy Scouts of Robert Baden-Powell and the Girl Guides, Daisy decided to start an organization designed to provide leadership opportunities for girls from various backgrounds. Not only did the girls engage in outdoor activities, but they also prepared for roles as professionals. Daisy herself became deaf as the result of illness, and she made sure to include girls with disabilities in the club she started 100 years ago. The author brings this intriguing woman to life, describing her love for animals, her talents and personality and including some of her dark moments as well as her character flaws; for instance, her difficulty in managing her own money properly and her proclivity for arriving late. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the text, examining the photographs, and pondering the path and personality that prompted a woman in her fifties to embark on this particular endeavor. Considering the times and social expectation for girls and women, Daisy was clearly a pioneer. Apparently, the organization to which she gave so much of her time and money had relevance and staying power since this year marks its 100th anniversary. Filled with family anecdotes, the book's seventeen chapters provide insight into the personality and upbringing of one woman framed alongside interesting periods of history.

Ellie M says

I loved this biography on the founder of the Girl Scouts of the USA. As a former Girl Scout, it was

fascinating to read about "Daisy" and what influenced her to create the Girl Scouts. Even more interesting was the deep look into her exciting, yet complicated, life. Definitely recommend for anyone looking for a great biography to read!

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low's life is a wonderful example of how you can find your passion late in life and still make a big difference in the world. She was a very talented and energetic lady, but she frittered away her early years with dilettantism and made a bad marriage that left her widowed but wealthy. It wasn't until she was over fifty that she was inspired by Sir Robert Baden-Powell to bring the Girl Guides program (later renamed Girl Scouts) to the United States. Once she'd finally found her life's purpose, she became a different woman. She was focused and unstoppable, even while battling the cancer that eventually took her life.

This book covers Juliette Gordon Low's entire life. It's full of interesting history, but the first half has almost nothing about Girl Scouts. That's not a criticism of the book, it's just the way Daisy's life unfolded. I do think I would have wanted to know that ahead of time if I'd been handed the book as a youngster. I would have grown impatient wondering when it was going to get to the part about Girl Scouts. Even as an adult I was eager to get to that part, and I enjoyed the second half more than the first.

Ginger Wadsworth has written several other books for young people, and she's also had a lifelong passion for the Girl Scout program. She's done a wonderful job with this biography. It's a must-read for anyone with a fondness for the Girl Scout organization, past and present. It's fun to compare your own experiences with those of the early Girl Scouts with regard to badges earned, service projects, and the uniforms they wore. The book has a lot of photos and copies of documents and advertisements to give you a real feeling for the era.

Juliette Gordon Low was a spirited and liberated woman way ahead of her time who set out to inspire and liberate women for generations to come. She wasn't able to have children of her own, but all of us whose lives were shaped by Girl Scouting are her girls. She really did change the world.

Srosch says

Great stories about traditions and history

New tidbits for thinking day!

Dana Davis-avants says

Juliette Gordon Low, known as Daisy, was a feisty and progressive woman who came from a high society family in Savannah, Georgia and was the founder of the Girl Scouts in 1912. Wadsworth's First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low not only celebrates the 100th birthday of Girls Scouts in the United States, but chronicles the life of a great, well educated and fearless woman who lived through the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and World War I. Low did have a few issues such as deafness in one ear and a severe impairment in her other ear, lack of organization, time management and financial skills, and her bad spelling and driving skills were known by all who were

close to her, but she never let any of these hold her back. After ending her marriage to a wealthy British man, William Mackay Low, who died shortly after, she longed for a purpose in her life. While still living in Britain she met Sir Robert Baden-Powell who was the founder of the Boy Scouts and his sister who began the Girl Guides. Low began several patrols in Britain, but brought the concept to America in 1912. She not only taught the girls domestic skills such as serving tea and spinning wool on a spinning wheel, but also skills that the Boy Scouts learned such as map reading and signaling with flags. She also made sure they were introduced to career ideas and learned skills from her childhood such as hiking, swimming, first aid, and personal hygiene. The uniqueness of the organization was that all girls were welcome no matter their race or disability. Upon her death, she was buried in her Girl Scout uniform as she had requested near her parents and her sister Alice. At the time of her death, Girl Scouts numbered about 168,000 in the United States. Wadsworth has done brilliant job telling the life story of Low through a well written prose with pictures, quotes and interesting anecdotes intertwined. In her author's note, she shares her experience as a Girl Scout and how she and her troop members still stay in touch and hold reunions.

Susan says

As a Gold Award recipient I was proud to learn more about the organization's past.

Alison Schmidt says

This was an engaging portrait of Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low. As a new Girl Scout leader, I read the book to have a better understanding of our founder. I was pleasantly surprised to find Daisy was a fascinating and complicated woman who lead an amazing life.

Coralee says

What a beautiful book about an amazing woman. I became WAY more engrossed in this book about the founder of Girl Scouts than I thought I would. Juliette Gordon Low (Daisy) defies, in my opinion, all the stereotypes of ultra privileged women at the turn of the century. She grew up in mansions, entertaining royalty and presidents, yet she had spunk and loved to get her hands dirty. My favorite quotes from the book:

"Many people felt that hiking and rigorous sports such as basketball were too strenuous and would make girls less ladylike. Daisy, who had been raised to be an independent woman, disagreed. She believed in fostering active, healthy, and strong-minded girls who would eventually make their own life choices about marriage, having children, and even careers."

and, in Daisy's own words, *"Girls will do no good by trying to imitate boys. It is better to be a real girl such as no boy can be. . . . Scouting for girls is not the same kind of scouting as for boys. The chief difference is the courses of instruction. . . . For the girls it all tends to WOMANLINESS and enables girls the better to help in the great battle of life."*

I was a girl scout for just a few years of my childhood, but learning about the program was fascinating and inspiring. I heartily agree with the importance of teaching girls outdoor skills, love of animals, first aid, child care, and career skills. This book made me want to go out and LEARN and DO!

Mary Alice says

Ginger Wadsworth makes light of Juliette Low driving her car into a building. To me this indicates Miss Low's irresponsibility. She also sounds like a rather difficult person rather than someone to emulate.

Maiella says

Easy read and interesting to read the story behind Girl Scouts.

Amber Bush says

Wadsworth, G. (2012). *First girl scout: The life of Juliette Gordon Low*. New York: Clarion Books.

The Amelia Bloomer Book List

Informational

This book combined historical texts and illustrations that documented the life of Juliette Gordon Low, or Daisy, as she made history in establishing an organization for girls around the world to join to become not only more independent individuals, but to expose them to life outside of what was considered the norm for that time. I saw this book and was surprised it took so long for this story to be widely recognized. As a girl scout alumna, I found this book interesting and thought that it was widely approachable from a young reader's mind. I think this book would be a great addition to a classroom library. I would not go as far as to use this book in whole group, unless there was a book about boy scouts that I could use as well. However, if the girls in the classroom were interested or were already Girl Scouts, this would be a great book to get them to understand the background of their organization and to have more respect and understanding. I thought that this book did a fantastic job at having accurate historical information and accounts of everything that was going on during that time period and it also used authentic photographs that truly established the time period the Girl Scouts were founded.
