

Nellie Bly (1864-1922) was an investigative reporter in an era when female reporters were few and mostly confined to writing for the society pages. Not Nellie! It all began when she read an 1885 column in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* titled "What Girls Are Good For," which argued that working women were immoral. Eighteen-year-old Bly wrote an anonymous letter to the editor, passionately arguing that women could help support a family in need. After an interview with the editor, she was hired. After writing about her travels to Mexico, she left Pittsburgh to work for the *New York World*. Her first big story exposed the cruel treatment of inmates and corruption in a New York insane asylum. Next, inspired by the Jules Verne novel, she made a bet with her editor that she could travel around the world in less than 80 days. Among the famous people she interviewed for the paper were Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eugene Debs, Susan B. Anthony, Illinois governor John Altgeld, and prize fighter James Corbett. She rode a horse in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. and covered Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. In August of 1914, she went to Austria to visit a friend and wound up staying a whole lot longer covering battles of World War I. (Not to mention, she ran a manufacturing business and had some of her products patented!) In her final years, she used her column to help orphans and single mothers. Truly, a self made woman.