



Driver

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Jennifer Gibson of the St. Louis County Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Driver*.

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ADULT NON-FICTION

Adams, Patty. *Stories from a Female Trucker: 80s-90s*. Patty Adams, 2024.

Trucking in the 80s was a rough-and-tumble, boys-only industry that wasn't accustomed to women drivers. If a woman drove professionally, she usually partnered with her husband or boyfriend. Trucking companies were leery of hiring women, and women were often seen as far less than drivers. Patty Adams, an American female truck driver, began her truck driving career in 1985 at the age of 26. It was a time when female truckers were virtually unheard of. Although women weren't entirely welcomed in the world of trucking, Patty loved her job. She was determined to become a professional, solo female trucker and overcome every stereotype. Take a ride with Patty through a wonderful mix of adventure, calamity, and hard work.

Balay, Anne. *Semi Queer: Inside the World of Gay, Trans, and Black Truck Drivers*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Long-haul trucking is linked to almost every industry in America, yet somehow the working-class drivers behind big rigs remain largely hidden from public view. Gritty, inspiring, and often devastating oral histories of gay, transsexual, and minority truck drivers allow award-winning author Anne Balay to shed new light on the harsh realities of truckers' lives behind the wheel. A licensed commercial truck driver herself, Balay discovers that, for people routinely subjected to prejudice, hatred, and violence in their hometowns and in the job market, trucking can provide an opportunity for safety, welcome isolation, and a chance to be themselves--even as the low-wage work is fraught with tightening regulations, constant surveillance, danger, and exploitation. The narratives of minority and queer truckers underscore the working-class struggle to earn a living while preserving one's safety, dignity, and selfhood.

Through the voices of drivers from marginalized communities who spend eleven- to fourteen-hour days hauling America's commodities in treacherous weather and across mountain passes, *Semi Queer* reveals the stark differences between the trucking industry's crushing labor practices and the perseverance of its most at-risk workers.

Belzer, Michael H. *Sweatshops on Wheels: Winners and Losers in Trucking Deregulation*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Long hours, low wages, and unsafe workplaces characterized sweatshops a hundred years ago. These same conditions now plague American trucking.

Sweatshops on Wheels exposes the dark side of government deregulation in the interstate trucking industry. Since deregulation in 1980, median trucker earnings have dropped by 30%, and most long-haul drivers now earn less than half of their pre-regulation wages. With average workweeks

exceeding sixty hours, America's truckers are working harder for less than at any point in the last four decades.

Written by a former long-haul trucker and current industrial relations professor, this book raises crucial questions about the legacy of trucking deregulation and offers a provocative critique of government deregulation more broadly.

Bingham, Clara, and Laura Leedy Gansler. *Class Action: The Landmark Case That Changed Sexual Harassment Law*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2003.

The true story of Lois Jenson, a petite single mother, who was among the first women hired by a northern Minnesota iron mine in 1975. In this brutal workplace, female miners were relentlessly threatened with pornographic graffiti, denigrating language, stalking, and physical assaults. Terrified of losing their jobs, the women kept their problems largely to themselves—until Lois, devastated by the abuse, found the courage to file a complaint against the company in 1984. Despite all of the obstacles the legal system threw at them, Lois and her fellow plaintiffs enlisted the aid of a dedicated team of lawyers and ultimately prevailed. Weaving personal stories with legal drama, *Class Action* shows how these terrifically brave women made history, although not without enormous personal cost. Told at a thriller's pace, this is the story of how one woman pioneered and won the first sexual harassment class action suit in the United States, a legal milestone that immeasurably improved working conditions for American women.

Butcher, Amy. *Mothertrucker: Finding Joy on the Loneliest Road in America*. Little A, 2021.

Amy's memoir, *MOTHERTRUCKER: Finding Joy on the Loneliest Road in America*, is a white-knuckle journey across one of the most punishing and magnificent landscapes on earth, a search for truth and self-discovery in the treacherous Alaskan wilderness. Accomplished college professor, mentor, and writer Amy Butcher seemingly had her life together in 2018, but privately, she was the victim of domestic violence. Embarrassed and emotionally fraught by her partner's increasingly dangerous and explosive behavior, Amy reached out to Instagram celebrity Joy "Mothertrucker" Wiebe. Joy was a 50-year-old wife and mother and the nation's only female ice road trucker, a woman who maneuvered big rigs across the deadliest, loneliest, and most isolated road in America, Alaska's James W. Dalton Highway. She was everything Amy wanted to be: independent, fearless, and in charge of her life in a landscape dominated by men. After months of communication, Amy, desperate to escape her situation in Ohio, accepted Joy's invitation to ride shotgun as she drove her massive truck up the treacherous and exhilarating Alaskan highway, discovering meaning, strength, and friendship amidst a desolate Arctic landscape.

Cameron, Susan. *The L.T.D.: Lady Truck Driver*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

Recently divorced, age 46, and 106 pounds, Susan Cameron goes after her dream of driving one of the big rigs, an 18-wheeler. She goes through trucking school, then boards a bus bound for Kansas and a

driving job with a total stranger. You'll share her four years of experiences of life on the road, both good and bad. You'll laugh at some and be shocked by others. There's no pretense. She tells it like it was.

Cassedy, Ellen. *Working 9 to 5: A Women's Movement, a Labor Union, and the Iconic Movie*. Chicago Review Press, 2022.

Ten office workers in Boston started out sitting in a circle and sharing the problems they encountered on the job. In a few short years, they had built a nationwide movement that united people of diverse races, classes, and ages.

They took on the corporate titans. They leafleted and filed lawsuits, and started a woman-led union. They won millions of dollars in back pay and helped make sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination illegal.

Coleman, Penny. *A Woman Unafraid: The Achievements of Frances Perkins*. iUniverse, 2010.

President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Frances Perkins Secretary of Labor in 1933 during the greatest economic crisis in American history-the Great Depression. At that time, women weren't supposed to have careers, or be outspoken, or be powerful. But that did not stop Frances Perkins. With her familiar tricorne hat planted firmly on her head, Perkins prodded, pressured, and persuaded businessmen, labor leaders, and politicians to respond to the needs of the American people and end child labor, establish safer working conditions, fairer wages, reasonable working hours, unemployment insurance, and Social Security. Dedicated, disciplined, and often controversial, Frances Perkins exerted a far-ranging influence on twentieth-century America. To accomplish things, she said, "You just can't be afraid."

Dempsey, Mary Ellen. *Silly Woman, Big Rigs Are For Men*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

For the first time, here's an eye-opening look at the world of truck driving from the driver's seat. This book allows you to experience the reality of what it's like to drive one of those smoke-belching, monstrous 18-wheelers while sitting safely in your recliner. Mary Ellen doesn't realize that in her quest for financial stability, she's stepping out of the box and squarely into the all-male bastion of trucking. Still, our female protagonist finds the strength to come out of every situation ready to face the next challenge. Her experiences are all here, from navigating endless unfamiliar cities before GPS and cell phones, to backing her tractor-trailer into places she's sure a car wouldn't fit. Our protagonist overcomes it all. The Author takes you behind the wheel with her as you are swept from one adventure to the next, such as driving through a raging Wyoming blizzard to deliver to the infamous Hunt's Point Market in New York City. Where, for the first time, she considers carrying a gun. She shows the reader how this job is so much more than just driving; it is a lifestyle. This is a book you will find hard to put down.

Foner, Philip S. *Women and the American Labor Movement*. Haymarket Books, 2018.

Women and the American Labor Movement gives voice to the women who had to battle on the shop floor and in the union movement for dignity and respect, and who, through courage and tenacity, won significant victories in the struggle for equal rights.

Gay, Roxane, ed. *Not That Bad: Dispatches From Rape Culture*. Harper Perennial, 2025.

In this valuable and revealing anthology, cultural critic and bestselling author Roxane Gay collects original and previously published pieces that address what it means to live in a world where women have to measure the harassment, violence, and aggression they face, and where they are “routinely second-guessed, blown off, discredited, denigrated, besmirched, belittled, patronized, mocked, shamed, gaslit, insulted, bullied” for speaking out. Contributions include essays from established and up-and-coming writers, performers, and critics, including actor Ally Sheedy and writers Amy Jo Burns, Booker Prize-nominated Brandon Taylor, and Lyz Lenz.

Covering a wide range of topics and experiences, from an exploration of the rape epidemic embedded in the refugee crisis to first-person accounts of child molestation, this collection is often deeply personal and is always unflinchingly honest. Like Rebecca Solnit’s *Men Explain Things to Me*, *Not That Bad* will resonate with every reader, saying “something in totality that we cannot say alone.”

Greenhill, Karen. *Driven Crazy: A Female Truck Driver Dishes on Fun, Danger, and Quirkiness in a Semi*. Toe Hold Press, 2021.

Everything you wanted to know about trucking but were afraid to ask. “*Driven Crazy: A Female Trucker Dishes on Fun, Danger, and Quirkiness in a Semi*” is about the journey from nervous rookie to seasoned pro, by a driver who just happens to be a woman. At turns poignant or hilarious, these engaging accounts describe how a young woman overcame the physical demands of the job and the social expectations of being a female trucker. Along the way, readers share the ride and learn the Truisms of Trucking, little life lessons that remain long after stepping down from a truck, and find out how their narrator grows her “trucker’s backbone” of courage and tenacity in the face of whatever lies around the next bend in the road.

Hirshman, Linda. *Reckoning: The Epic Battle Against Sexual Abuse and Harassment*. Mariner Books, 2019.

Linda Hirshman, acclaimed historian of social movements, delivers the sweeping story of the struggle leading up to #MeToo and beyond: from the first tales of workplace harassment percolating to the surface in the 1970s, to the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal—when liberal women largely forgave Clinton, giving men a free pass for two decades. Many liberals even resisted the movement to end rape on campus.

And yet, legal, political, and cultural efforts, often spearheaded by women of color, were quietly paving the way for the takedown of abusers and harassers. *Reckoning* delivers the stirring tale of a movement catching fire as pioneering women in the media exposed the Harvey Weinstens of the world, women

flooded the political landscape, and the walls of male privilege finally began to crack. This is revelatory, essential social history.

Howard, Donya. *The Diary of a Female Truck Driver*. Independently published, 2024.

My name is Donya Howard, a proud resident of the small town of Atlanta, Texas. I am a graduate of Atlanta High School and will always be a proud Atlanta Rabbit. I am 53 years old, and I am the proud parent of two grown children, Dana and Micaiah, and my first grandson, Graysen, age 5. I have been through numerous life challenges, including breast cancer. I found out about my breast cancer when I found out I was pregnant with my daughter, Dana. God not only was with me during the whole breast cancer ordeal, but also kept me healthy and allowed me to not only have a little girl, but also my son Micaiah a few years later.

One of my most empowering endeavors emerged from mastering the art of driving an 18-wheeler OTR (Over the Road). This career not only proved remarkable but also dynamically altered the course of my life. Through its challenges and triumphs, it became a defining chapter that reshaped my trajectory in countless ways.

Johnson, Penny K. *Memories of a Female Truck Driver*. Amazon Digital Services, 2012.

Memories of a Female Trucker is written from the cab of an eighteen-wheeler, where Johnson lived for five years. The gist of the book takes place within the schism of the lush life of the 1950s and the rebellion of the 1960s. It uses the grid of interstate driving to deftly weave a collage of time and place. It is a nightmare, visitation, and new meanings where the past is squarely placed in the rearview mirror while the highway is always moving forward. This is a story of a woman and a man, as well as of a mother and daughter, in which the intellectual brutality is always offset by the juxtaposition of nature. It is a journey of healing and success.

Petelle, Gina. *Queen of the Road: Tales of a Female Truck Driver*. Independently Published, 2024.

Twenty years of truck driving experience, trials and tribulations of a female driver.

Shearer, Jill. *Eastbounders: Two Women Trucking Through the Barriers*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011.

In Michigan, there were two teachers who wanted to travel the United States. They went to Los Angeles to attend truck driving school in 1973 and found a job driving a semi-truck to Philadelphia. They soon realized they didn't have enough skills and training to do this feat. This is a hilarious story of their difficulties, struggles, and SUCCESS.

Viscelli, Steve. *The Big Rig: Trucking and the Decline of the American Dream*. University of California Press, 2016.

Long-haul trucks have been described as sweatshops on wheels. The typical long-haul trucker works the equivalent of two full-time jobs, often for little more than minimum wage. But it wasn't always this way—trucking was once among the best working-class jobs in the United States.

The Big Rig explains how this dramatic decline occurred and how companies maintain a compliant and dedicated workforce despite low pay and grueling hours. Drawing on more than 100 interviews and years of field research—including six months spent training and working as a long-haul driver—Viscelli explores how drivers are recruited, trained, and pressured into leasing trucks as so-called “independent contractors.”

He shows how deregulation and employer coordination reshaped labor markets once dominated by one of the most powerful unions in U.S. history. *The Big Rig* offers a revealing case study of the hidden costs of modern labor systems for workers and the public at large.

ADULT FICTION

Burk, J.J. *Woman's Work*. Outskirts Press, 2010.

Say "trucker," and you probably don't think of someone like Ella Marie Blackford. But this sassy, savvy female truck driver is one of KDX Transport's best haulers. And she won't let the male-dominated culture of truckers get her down.

Trekking hundreds of miles, it's just her, her cargo, and a close friendship with one of the rare sisters of the road-Sara Sommerfield. From the comfy perch of their cabins, they get a unique glimpse of the American landscape-and meet in diners and truck stops to discuss it all. Then a bizarre chance encounter interrupts Ella's predictable routine by putting her face-to-face with her thirteen-year-old cousin, Noel. The girl's bad decisions and worse relationships have led her down an unhealthy path-one that could ultimately lead to destruction. Suddenly, the cab of Ella's truck becomes a classroom for the lessons this troubled young girl never learned about life, love, and self-respect. And inside this roving behemoth is the insight that could help her get back on the right path.

A realistic portrait of the challenges and triumphs of being a woman in the macho world of trucking, *Woman's Work* is a moving account-literally-of this unique experience. Frank, funny, and at times maddening, it's a charming story that shows girls of all ages that women's work can mean just about anything.

Ryckman, Missy. *Mother Trucker: Because It's Never Too Late!*. AuthorHouse, 2021.

Sandy is a white-collar forty-five-year-old woman who finds herself in a rut. She's tired of the life she's been living and wants more. One night, while considering her midlife crisis, she has an epiphany and leaves everything behind to become an "over the road" truck driver.

It's not easy being a woman in a male-dominated occupation, but Sandy is lucky. She meets four other women at a night school training program. The five become fast friends and form relationships to last a lifetime. With the help of her pals and a new lease on life, Sandy discovers the passion she'd been missing.

Sweet and sassy *Mother Trucker* is Smokey and the Bandit meets Bridesmaids and is filled with comedy, emotion, and some embarrassing adventures across America. Author Missy Ryckman draws from her own life experiences in this hilarious, heartfelt book about rediscovering yourself.

Ryckman, Missy. *Oh, It's On, Mother Trucker!* AuthorHouse, 2023.

Sandy continues traveling America's highways as a happy, over-the-road truck driver. She commits to her company's training program with the required amount of experience under her belt. As a newly

minted certified CDL instructor, Sandy finds herself in a position of enthusiasm and uncertainty as she starts her training career.

Not only does she find like-minded women entering the industry with the same passion as herself, but she also finds the polar opposite. While training a new student, a sudden injury happens, forcing Sandy to question all her life decisions. Sandy ventures into a new life of uncertainty and healing.

YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

Marrin, Albert. *Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy*. Yearling, 2015.

On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City burst into flames. The factory was crowded. The doors were locked to ensure workers stay inside. One hundred forty-six people—mostly women—perished; it was one of the most lethal workplace fires in American history until September 11, 2001.

But the story of the fire is not the story of one accidental moment in time. It is a story of immigration and hard work to make it in a new country, as Italians and Jews, and others traveled to America to find a better life. It is the story of poor working conditions and greedy bosses, as garment workers discovered the endless sacrifices required to make ends meet. It is the story of an unimaginable, but avoidable, disaster. And it is the story of the unquenchable pride and activism of fearless immigrants and women who stood up to business, got America on their side, and finally changed working conditions for our entire nation, initiating radical new laws we take for granted today.

McCully, Emily A. *Ida M. Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business - and Won!* Clarion Book, 2014.

Born in 1857 and raised in oil country, Ida M. Tarbell was one of the first investigative journalists and probably the most influential in her time. Her series of articles on the Standard Oil Trust, a complicated business empire run by John D. Rockefeller, revealed to readers the underhanded, even illegal practices that had led to Rockefeller's success. Rejecting the term "muckraker" to describe her profession, she went on to achieve remarkable prominence for a woman of her generation as a writer and shaper of public opinion. This biography offers an engrossing portrait of a trailblazer in a man's world who left her mark on the American consciousness.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Crowder, Melanie. *Audacity*. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2016.

The inspiring story of Clara Lemlich, whose fight for equal rights led to the largest strike by women in American history. A gorgeously told novel in verse written with intimacy and power, *Audacity* is inspired by the real-life story of Clara Lemlich, a spirited young woman who emigrated from Russia to New York at the turn of the twentieth century and fought tenaciously for equal rights. Bucking the norms of both her traditional Jewish family and societal conventions, Clara refuses to accept substandard working conditions in the factories on Manhattan's Lower East Side. For years, Clara devotes herself to the labor fight, speaking up for those who suffer in silence. In time, Clara convinces the women in the factories to strike, organize, and unionize, culminating in the famous Uprising of the 20,000.

Paterson, Katherine. *Bread and Roses, Too*. Clarion Book, 2008.

Rosa's mother is singing again, for the first time since Papa died in an accident in the mills. But instead of filling their cramped tenement apartment with Italian lullabies, Mamma is out on the streets singing union songs, and Rosa is terrified that her mother and older sister, Anna, are endangering their lives by marching against the corrupt mill owners. After all, didn't Miss Finch tell the class that the strikers are nothing but rabble-rousers—an uneducated, violent mob? Suppose Mamma and Anna are jailed or, worse, killed? What will happen to Rosa and little Ricci? When Rosa is sent to Vermont with other children to live with strangers until the strike is over, she fears she will never see her family again. Then, on the train, a boy begs her to pretend that he is her brother. Alone and far from home, she agrees to protect him . . . even though she suspects that he is hiding some terrible secret. From a beloved, award-winning author, here is a moving story based on real events surrounding an infamous 1912 strike.

Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie*. Puffin Books, 1995.

When Lyddie and her younger brother are hired out as servants to help pay off their family farm's debts, Lyddie is determined to find a way to reunite her family once again. Hearing about all the money a girl can make working in the textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, she makes her way there, only to find that her dreams of returning home may never come true.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic, 2002.

Esperanza thought she'd always live a privileged life on her family's ranch in Mexico. She'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home filled with servants, and Mama, Papa, and Abuelita to care for her. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California and settle in a Mexican farm labor camp. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard work, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, or the lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick and a strike for better working

conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--because Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

Gilbert, Julie Kathleen. *The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and the Fight for Workers' Rights*. Capstone Press, 2020.

In November 1909, thousands of factory workers walked off the job to protest the terrible working conditions in New York City factories. Joining the picket lines was dangerous, with thugs and police officers harassing picketers, but the protests stirred action. Many factory owners finally agreed to some of the workers' demands and improved conditions. But nothing changed for workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and those workers would pay a high price for the company's dangerous conditions. In 1911, a devastating fire swept through the Triangle factory, killing 146 workers. In the months following the tragedy, the rights of workers finally gained real traction as the state government formed a safety commission and enacted new safety laws.

Heiligman, Deborah. *She Persisted: Clara Lemlich*. Philomel Books, 2021. Introduction by Chelsea Clinton.

In this chapter book biography by award-winning author Deborah Heiligman, readers learn about the amazing life of Clara Lemlich--and how she persisted.

Clara Lemlich immigrated to New York to escape danger in Ukraine, where she was born. She started working in clothing factories on the Lower East Side, only to realize that workers were being treated unfairly. So she stood up for the rights of workers, especially girls and women--and she won, changing the way factory workers were treated in America forever!

Krull, Kathleen. *The Only Woman in the Photo: Frances Perkins & Her New Deal for America*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2020.

Most people know about President FDR, but do you know the woman who created his groundbreaking New Deal? As a young girl, Frances Perkins was very shy and quiet. But her grandmother encouraged Frances to always challenge herself. When somebody opens a door to you, go forward.

And so she did.

Frances realized she had to make her voice heard, even when speaking made her uncomfortable, and use it to fight injustice and build programs to protect people across the nation. So when newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt finally asked Frances to be the first female Secretary of Labor and

help pull the nation out of the Great Depression, she knew she had to walk through that open door and forward into history.

In this empowering, inspirational biography, discover how the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet led the charge to create the safety net that protects American workers and their families to this day.

Markel, Michelle. *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*. Storytide, 2013.

The true story of the young immigrant who led the largest strike of women workers in U.S. history. This picture book biography about the plight of immigrants in America in the early 1900s and the timeless fight for equality and justice should not be missed.

Winter, Jonah. *Mother Jones and Her Army of Mill Children*. Anne Schwartz Books, 2020.

Here's the inspiring story of the woman who raised her voice and fist to protect kids' childhoods and futures-- and changed America forever. Mother Jones is MAD, and she wants you to be MAD TOO, and stand up for what's right! Told in first-person, New York Times bestselling author Jonah Winter and acclaimed illustrator Nancy Carpenter share the incredible story of Mother Jones, an Irish immigrant who was essential in the fight to create child labor laws. Well into her sixties, Mother Jones had finally had enough of children working long hours in dangerous factory jobs and decided she was going to do something about it. The powerful protests she organized earned her the name "the most dangerous woman in America." And in the Children's Crusade of 1903, she led one hundred boys and girls on a glorious march from Philadelphia right to the front door of President Theodore Roosevelt's Long Island home.

Winthrop, Elizabeth. *Counting on Grace*. Yearling, 2007.

1910. Pownal, Vermont. At 12, Grace and her best friend Arthur must leave school and go to work as "doffers" on their mothers' looms in the mill. Grace's mother is the best worker, fast and powerful, and Grace desperately wants to help her. But she's left-handed and doffing is a right-handed job. Grace's every mistake costs her mother and the family. She only feels capable on Sundays, when she and Arthur receive special lessons from their teacher. Together, they write a secret letter to the Child Labor Board about underage children working in Pownal. A few weeks later, a man with a camera shows up. It is the famous reformer Lewis Hine, undercover, collecting evidence for the Child Labor Board. Grace's brief acquaintance with Hine and the photos he takes of her are a gift that changes her sense of herself, her future, and her family's future.