



Nellie Bly was a journalist known for her investigative reporting. Nellie Bly's real name was Elizabeth Cochran. She was born on May 5, 1864, in Cochran's Mill, Pennsylvania (a town founded by her father).

When she was six years old, her father died. In 1880, her family moved to Pittsburgh.

After reading an editorial in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* entitled "What Girls Are Good For," she wrote a rebuttal and signed it "Lonely Orphan Girl." The editor of the *Dispatch* was so impressed by the piece that he placed an ad asking the writer to please come to the newspaper.

Elizabeth visited Madden, and he offered her a chance to write another article. Upon reading *this* article, he offered her a job.

At that time, women who wrote for newspapers would write under a pen name. Madden gave Elizabeth the pen name "Nellie Bly" (after a popular Stephen Foster song).

Nellie Bly began her career as a reporter, in 1885, for the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*. Instead of writing articles for women, however, she was given the opportunity to write about controversial topics like divorce, poor working conditions for women, and treatment of journalists in Mexico.

In 1887, she left Pittsburgh for New York City. Nellie was hoping to land a job with one of the newspapers there.

At first she could not find a job, but eventually *The New World* hired her. Her first assignment was to go undercover as a patient in the mental hospital at Blackwell's Island Asylum. She faked insanity in order to be committed and spent ten days there.

Once out, she wrote a first-hand account about the poor condition of the hospital and the mistreatment of the patients. Bly's account brought about an investigation and improvements to the hospital.

Some of her other investigative reports were on the poor working conditions in factories, improper treatment of prisoners in jail in New York City, police corruption and the Pullman labor strikes.

In 1873, the famous French writer, Jules Verne, wrote the book *Around the World in 80 Days*. The main character, Phileas Fogg, attempts to travel around the world in 80 days. The book tells of his adventures.

In 1889, Nellie decides to try and beat the fictional character's trip. She traveled by ship, train, horse and rickshaw to make it around the world in 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes and 14 seconds. She also had time to stop in France and meet Jules Verne. In 1890, she wrote of her adventures in the book *Around the World in 72 Days*.

Nellie married millionaire Robert Seaman in 1895. Together they ran the Iron Clad Manufacturing Company. Upon his death in 1904, she took over the company. Unfortunately, in 1914 the company went bankrupt.

Nellie continued to write for the *New York Evening Journal*. She died on January 27, 1922 of pneumonia.

On May 5, 2015, Google featured Nellie Bly as a Google doodle in honor of her 151st birthday.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/The-Amazing-Nellie-Bly>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/The-Amazing-Nellie-Bly>



Elizabeth Cochran (Nellie Bly)

H. J. Meyers took this photo of Nellie Bly, circa 1890. [Online via the Library of Congress.](#)

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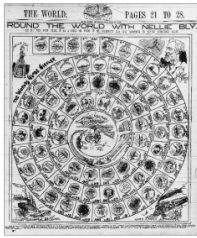
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Nellie Bly

Photo by H. J. Meyers, circa 1890.

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Round the World Game Board

Illustration of a Game Based on Nellie Bly's travels, The New York World, p.21, Jan. 26, 1890.

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Nellie Bly Stamp

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"Working Girls Beware"

The New York World, by Nellie Bly, Feb. 3, 1889.

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