news from the
SCHLESINGER LIBRARY

SPRING 2015

ROCKPORT LODGE
Looking back over the course of my historical career, I see certain characters who entered early and have stayed for the duration. Charlotte Perkins Gilman is one of them. I encountered Gilman my first year in graduate school, when I wrote a seminar paper on the influence of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* on her later masterwork, *Women and Economics*, and drew on the recently deposited Gilman papers at the Schlesinger Library. My Harvard professor, who was notoriously hostile to women’s history, refused to grant Gilman a respected place in American intellectual history, but at least he gave me a decent grade.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was a key figure in my (and many others’) early days of teaching women’s history, mainly because her powerful short story “The Yellow Wallpaper,” reissued by the Feminist Press in 1973, worked so well in the classroom. I enjoyed teaching the text, but I was even more drawn to her books *Women and Economics* and *The Home* and to her autobiography, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Feminist insights in her writings, such as the importance of economic independence for women and the need for creative work for all human beings, have stayed with me ever since.

Gilman continued to be part of my life in the early 1980s, through a wonderful Cambridge biography group that happened to include the editors of all three volumes of *Notable American Women* (Janet James, Barbara Sicherman, and me, although mine was still two decades in the future), along with Joyce Antler and Ann J. Lane, who was writing a biography of Gilman. When Ann’s book was published, in 1990, I was enormously proud that its very first footnote referenced my unpublished seminar paper from 1973.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s prominence in the formative decades of women’s history led to a veritable cottage industry documenting her prodigious output of essays, verse, and books, including her feminist utopian novel, *Herland*, another favorite in the classroom. The publication of new work on Gilman, such as Helen Horowitz’s *Wild Unrest* (2010) and Judith Allen’s *The Feminism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (2009), signals the next stage of scholarly engagement with her life and work. A favorite personal memory: Helen Horowitz trying to catch the best natural light in the reading room so that she could read text that had been written over in one of her journals. Gilman scholars are a determined bunch.

As the main repository of Gilman’s papers, the Schlesinger Library has been at the forefront of fostering ongoing scholarly and popular interest in this complex historical figure. Gilman’s papers were among the first to be microfilmed and now have been digitized. In my role as senior advisor, I volunteered to craft a short overview of Gilman’s significance for users of the library’s website. And in one of the final events of this academic year, we will welcome the Sixth International Charlotte Perkins Gilman Conference to Radcliffe in June. I feel that Charlotte and I have come full circle.

—Susan Ware
Senior Advisor
Suite Spot: Update on Delivery of the Schlesinger’s Online Collections

In preparation for the Sixth International Charlotte Perkins Gilman Conference, the library has been working to provide simple and comprehensive access to the Gilman collection. We are pleased to announce that not only the conference participants, but also high school and middle school students preparing History Day essays—along with college students from across the country and scholars worldwide—can now access three of the library’s most important digital collections: the Papers of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the Papers of Dorothy West, and the Blackwell Family Papers. They can be searched at http://schlesinger.radcliffe.harvard.edu/onlinecollections/gilman/. (Substitute West and Blackwell for those collections, and use an updated browser; Google Chrome works well.)

For two years, members of the library staff have worked to further develop and enhance the Suite Spot system that was created at the Harvard Law School Library, adding such features as the capacity to search using a tablet or a mobile device. Suite Spot is an open-source delivery system that combines high-volume capacity, a Web 2.0 intuitive interface, and a digital preservation component provided by Harvard’s Digital Repository.

Scholars will continue to have access to finding aids and linked digital objects both in Suite Spot and through Harvard University’s online catalogs—HOLLIS, VIA, and OASIS. Meanwhile, the Schlesinger will focus on web development with images, historical interpretation, and tagging the collection for more precise search and retrieval. Additionally, researchers and students can add their own tags and also create a personal collection of documents to which they want constant access as they prepare essays and articles. The Schlesinger will continue to add digital collections, such as the Beecher-Stowe Family Papers and the Black Women’s Oral History Project.

Diaries from the Gilman collection are the first English-language materials to be part of the University of Groningen’s Monk system. This ground-breaking technology, based on pattern recognition, will allow scholars to search handwritten documents by keyword. The Schlesinger is continuing its pilot program to “Monk” the Gilman collection, and we will be pleased to demonstrate it at the Gilman conference in June.

—Marilyn Dunn
Executive Director and Radcliffe Institute Librarian

The elephant in the yard exits the Schlesinger Library in the afternoon as I stroll in mind-enlivening circles during my fellowship year at the Radcliffe Institute. The elephant, as I think of it, is the enormous fact that 18 cartons of my aunt’s papers are included among the library’s holdings on the history of women in America. Having had a personal relationship with the historical figure being studied makes research a different—and trickier—endeavor. Before digging into those cartons, I must be able to sit at a library table like an adult intellectual, not an obese nephew cringing in perilous rooms.

Sharon LeJoy Johnson, a chemist, was the mysterious aunt who purportedly “got away” from the family melodrama playing out in northern Illinois and eastern Iowa. She gardened and she traveled. She sent her older sister (my mother) an African thumb piano that made a sound like paper clips confessing secrets in tinkling code. I used to play it on the back stoop and wonder what.

My aunt had earned a black belt in karate and displayed the skill during rare visits. After being denied tenure by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in the early 1970s, she filed a sex discrimination suit and was represented by the civil rights lawyer Sylvia Roberts. The case became a cause—a losing cause, it turned out, but the ACLU, NOW, and celebrity feminists helped make it a tough battle.

I learned of the archive’s existence right before arriving at Radcliffe, while attending the wedding of Sharon’s younger son. The older, learning of my fellowship, mentioned that Sharon’s court
case papers were in Boston. “At the Schlesinger?” I asked. He wasn’t sure, but I braced for a head-on collision. They would be there waiting.

The previous year, after reading my memoir, River Bend Chronicle, these cousins had separately contacted me to express fascination at certain ways that my childhood in a home of ideals-gone-off-the-rails mirrored their own experiences.

My aunt graduated from MIT with a PhD in chemistry in 1959. Earlier, my mother had earned a law degree from the University of New Mexico. This educational success—at a time when few women felt free to enter either field—says everything about the audaciousness and intellectual force of the sisters. It is even more impressive when one considers that they came from an impoverished Midwestern family dominated by a violent male. Their mother could barely read.

The degree to which childhood abuse contributed to the personal and professional difficulties the sisters faced throughout their lives remains difficult to parse. It is essential to note, though, because I looked into their faces and saw the toll—one grief tangling with another—and the resulting confusion. Getting the schooling, hard as it was, turned out to be the easiest element of their respective journeys.

The sisters, who could confront and impress the professors (most of them), graduated and met faceless hordes of barriers to career success. Though aeons ahead of their times, they were also trapped by those times and by the gender-based prejudice (casual and formalized) that limited opportunities.

During this fellowship year, I’ve heard firsthand accounts—from colleagues in a startling array of fields—of obstacles still slowing the progress of women in male-dominated institutions. This has brought into revolting (what other word?) relief the situation that my mother and my aunt must have encountered in the early 1960s as they tried to utilize the education they had studied night after night to attain.

What logic could subdue such an irrational foe—the entrenched intolerance that kept reinventing its poisonous schemes and its linguistic veils?

Aunt Sharon and my mother reacted to their systematic oppression and the myriad ramifications in opposing ways. The precocious lawyer quit practicing law and married the wrong person, an ineffectual attorney to continually upstage. She brought six children into the world in swift, absurd succession—any dream of “getting away” more abandoned with each birth. The ideals that fired her educational achievement interestingly still simmered, while coupling with an abiding bitterness or antic despair that led her to detail for preteen me the adulterous affairs of any male leader I mistakenly voiced respect for—MLK to John Kennedy.

The chemist’s anger winged outward in some equally absurd ways (karate-chopping phallic lampshades), but she continued cultivating her true talent—working as a chemist in the 1960s at the Mellon Institute, Westinghouse Research Labs, and Vassar before arriving at Pitt and then filing the suit that brought her notoriety.

This was the sort of case, I believe, that my mother dreamed of filing versus the tyranny of men. Her checkout line rantings were a poor substitute for a seriousness lost, mourned by herself and any listeners to theatrical sighs punctuating the accusations.

Often I have paged through the voluminous finding aid document kindly sent to me by Ellen Shea, the head of research services. Between the listings for court testimony and photographs and “SLJ jottings,” I see my own memories of raucous visits, exotic gifts, and cruel family gossip fouling a sleek research apparatus like oily sand.

A slippery word, “home.” Many meanings collude in four letters. I am thinking here: Home is where the dream lives. The dream being the battle for equality, dignity, education, and health that must continue until every person receives their share.

At the end of the finding aid is a fascinating page called the Separation Record, which details items removed from the collection owing to redundancy or nonapplicability. One listed item is an “Oversize poster of Mark Spitz,” the multi–Olympic gold medalist. Is it the “silly Playgirl spread” I heard about as a little boy?

Memory, though, has no Separation Record. There is no reliable way to carve out all the subconscious imaginings and deletions that plague perceptions of events—no way, sometimes, even to filter surprisingly raw, decades-old emotions into an innocuous hum. And no juncture of ascendance can be honestly sequestered from the whole of mixed outcomes. What gets in stays in—and the gray weight of the vital and the non-vital lumbers into motion whenever the legacy is pondered.

For instance, I cannot “separate” from my SLJ record her bare foot hovering inches below the unshaven chin and lit Salem cigarette of her inebriated father. She executed one near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand. Each time, her leg halted in midair with such suddenness—a near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand. Each time, her leg halted in midair with such suddenness—a near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand. Each time, her leg halted in midair with such suddenness—a near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand. Each time, her leg halted in midair with such suddenness—a near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand. Each time, her leg halted in midair with such suddenness—a near-miss kick after the other that night, Bud can in hand.
callused heel looked paralyzed by black darts of his stare.

Mostly, though, my aunt preferred not visiting and instead sending us rambling accounts of the case and its positive effects on her life. She wrote about her growing collection of pig figurines, male chauvinist stand-ins, sent to her by women across the nation. She leafleted (by air!) a Pitt football game to stir up support. Amid impressive stories of clever lawyers and cold judges and fancy activist friends were too few mentions of my cousins. I always wondered how they were dealing.

One day, in a large stiff envelope, came a photograph of Sharon onstage with Lily Tomlin at a fund-raiser. At the time, I was incredibly impressed. I adored the disorganized, squinting telephone operator Lily played on *Laugh-In.* Now I believe the photo was, in part, not-nicely meant to taunt the sister who had stayed behind and given up her career for 10 years. My mother did not have the shot framed.

She did, though, wrinkle it expressively and prop it up in a corner of the bill-cluttered mantel, where the image oversaw our long-winded discussions of whether Kmart or Target was more likely to have what we, the family, lacked.

Part of me does not want to enter the library with the carton of my head packed with the sadder facts of the situation: the case’s effect on a loyal husband and sensitive sons, and my aunt’s career aftermath in various labs where the most toxic substance may well have been her knowledge that something priceless she had earned had been stolen from her and never returned. She died in 2013, at 79, in Annapolis, Maryland.

Part of me wants my aunt’s newsworthy struggle to rest pristine and untouched in the archive, without my reading between the lines. But I know she liked attention, and she deserves it too. In May I will start research certain to continue during future visits to the Radcliffe Institute, a campus corner I now consider another home.

A slippery word, “home.” Many meanings collude in four letters. I am thinking here: *Home is where the dream lives.* The dream being the battle for equality, dignity, education, and health that must continue until every person receives their share.

The presentations of scientists, scholars, and artists in the Radcliffe Institute Class of 2015 have offered remarkable glimpses into what might have been possible for two sisters had they been able to overcome challenges posed by bias and personal demons.

I have taken voluminous notes: lines of windows to revisit. It is no solace to see an injustice clearer, but it is always better when history’s smoke parts a little.

——Ben Miller

Ben Miller is a 2014–2015 Radcliffe Institute fellow and the author of River Bend Chronicle: The Junkification of a Boyhood Idyll amid the Curious Glory of Urban Iowa (Lookout Books, 2013). He is currently developing follow-up manuscripts and the public art project Mural Speaks!

——Ivelisse Estrada
Writer/Editor

THE TENURE DENIAL THAT SPARKED A COURT BATTLE

As 1971 came to a close, Sharon Leijoy Johnson probably had reason to celebrate. An assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine for more than four years, she had been awarded a number of grants from the National Institutes of Health and enjoyed a successful publishing record. But in January 1972, instead of receiving news of her expected tenure, Johnson learned that her appointment would be terminated in June 1973. She fought back, sparking an intense sex discrimination lawsuit backed by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund (now Legal Momentum) and the ACLU.

The next five years would bring a string of injunctions, suits, and countersuits over the university’s right to make “arbitrary and subjective judgments about women faculty.” Johnson’s pro-bono lawyer, Sylvia Roberts, sued the University of Pittsburgh for sex discrimination, and Pitt in turn sued Roberts for professional misconduct. Johnson succeeded in keeping her professorship during litigation, but in August 1977 the state found that the university had not discriminated against Johnson on the basis of sex, citing teaching and research concerns as legitimate reasons for denying tenure. Johnson left Pitt for good at the end of June 1978, moving on to the New York Polytechnic Institute and then the National Institutes of Health.

At the conclusion of the case, Johnson donated her case materials to the Schlesinger Library. In addition to transcripts, exhibits, depositions, notes, and publicity, the collection includes files from Roberts, at the time a NOW attorney well-known for taking on sex discrimination cases.
Anita Diamant finds inspiration for her best-selling novels in a variety of sources. Sitting down to write her first novel, *The Red Tent* (St. Martin’s, 1997), she wondered what happened to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah in the Bible. Before *The Last Days of Dogtown* (Scribner, 2005), she came upon a pamphlet in a Gloucester bookstore about the settlement named Dogtown and pondered why it had become a ghost town and who the last residents were.

Her most recent novel, *The Boston Girl* (Simon & Schuster, 2014), started in Rockport, Massachusetts, where Diamant, a resident of Newton, Massachusetts, has vacationed since the early 1990s. One morning she drove past the Rockport Lodge and spotted a friend from Boston walking out the door. Her friend was working as the lodge’s cook that summer and told the novelist about the place—that it was “women only” and incredibly inexpensive. Diamant was intrigued by the vacation resort for low-income women, which had opened in 1906.

During the 1990s, Diamant watched the lodge deteriorate. After it closed, in 2002, she learned that the Schlesinger Library owned its records. The committee that oversaw its final days and sold the lodge had donated its records to the library. Today the lodge is a private home, the only trace of its fascinating past a faded sign over the door.

When Diamant contacted the library, she learned that the records hadn’t been processed and therefore weren’t accessible to researchers. But the Schlesinger librarians also told her that they would go through those records before others on the processing list so that she could do her research. “That was amazing,” Diamant says. “There was a long queue, and they put the Rockport materials at the top.” She expressed her gratitude to the library and three Schlesinger staff members—Susan Earle, Sarah Hutcheon, and Kathryn Allamong Jacob—in the acknowledgments of *The Boston Girl*.

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**INSPIRED BY ROCKPORT LODGE**

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*Rockport Lodge, Summer 1913*
The 47 boxes of Rockport Lodge records contain all sorts of organizational materials—including articles of incorporation and board meeting notes—along with scrapbooks and photographs. “A lot of it, such as the kitchen correspondence, I skipped through,” says Diamant. “I focused on the scrapbooks and photographs. Those were the richest parts for me.”

She also conducted research at libraries in Gloucester and Rockport and interviewed a woman whose grandmother had gone to the lodge as a girl and had been a member of the Saturday Evening Girls’ Club in Boston’s North End, which figures in the novel.

“I had never been so smitten by my research,” Diamant wrote in The Women’s Review of Books. After a year of reading, she had barely gotten to the mid-1920s. But she had begun to assemble a cast of characters who “came from various backgrounds—Jewish, Italian, and Irish—reflecting the ethnic diversity (unusual for the times) of the Saturday Evening Girls’ Club and Rockport Lodge.”

One of the memorable characters is a potter, Filomena, who is a close friend of the main character, Addie Baum, before she falls in love with a dashing artist and moves to New Mexico with him. The women’s friendship remains important to both of them throughout their lives, even though they rarely get to see one another. Diamant says the potter is a composite of a couple of girls she read about who painted pottery at the Saturday Evening Girls’ Club, which was based at the North Bennet Street School. The novelist makes clear that Filomena’s parents were dead and she had no brothers, because, Diamant says, “for her to be gallivanting around like that—for an Italian girl in particular—was really transgressive.”

Women breaking out of bounds is one of the charms of The Boston Girl. Addie and her pals are coming of age during the early part of the 20th century, a time when women were entering the workforce, going to college, and finding their voices. Addie and her friends face more obstacles at work and home than women do today, but the challenges are similar: finding work and love, remaining true to friends and family while forging your own path.

Although four of the five novels she has written are historical, Diamant says she doesn’t consider herself a historical novelist. “I find the story first,” she says, “and that’s what calls to me. It’s not that I seek out a period piece about a particular time.”

The Schlesinger Library helped Diamant tell that story, and her publisher, in its online resources for book clubs, encourages readers to explore the library’s materials. Perhaps other novelists will find inspiration in its collections about women’s history.

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager

The Rockport Lodge Records/Schlesinger Library
Wikipedia has name recognition second only to Google’s. Since the website’s creation, in 2001, more than 31 million articles have been posted. Although anyone can contribute to Wikipedia, one of the most salient criticisms of its content and culture is that the majority of its editors are white men. Women and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the content of its articles as well.

Librarians and archivists at the Schlesinger Library are determined to help address these imbalances. We have been engaged in adding information about our collections—and about women and women’s history in general—for several years. We’ve held three Wikipedia edit-a-thons at the library, and have participated in training and hands-on sessions for other Harvard libraries, Simmons College women’s history classes, and a New England Archivists conference.

Our most recent edit-a-thon was by far the largest and most successful. On March 2, 2015, 30 people gathered in the library to learn how to add and improve entries on women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields and to tour the library and learn about its holdings. A featured event of Harvard College Women’s Week, the edit-a-thon was cosponsored by Harvard Women in Computer Science. Students and staff members from the Harvard College Women’s Center helped to organize and publicize the event. Schlesinger Library staff members created a robust list of possible biographies to add or improve, focusing on women whose papers we hold, Radcliffe College graduates, and former Bunting Institute science fellows.

In a packed room that buzzed with excitement, Harvard undergraduate and graduate students, few of whom had been to the Schlesinger before, learned to make edits in Wikipedia and shared the entries they worked on. Several students focused on improving the pages of their mentors at Harvard, including the computer scientist Radhika Nagpal, an advisor to Harvard Women in Computer Science and the 2012–2013 Radcliffe Alumnae Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute.

Although we envisioned this edit-a-thon primarily as a way to engage Harvard College undergraduates with the library, deep Radcliffe connections were everywhere. Sarah S. Richardson, the 2012–2013 Hrdy Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, attended with students in her Harvard College course Gender and Science: From Marie Curie to Gamergate. Fernando Berdion Del Valle, a fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, came to learn how to improve the Wikipedia entry for Berta Lutz, a Brazilian biologist, feminist, and diplomat who was one of four women to sign the United Nations Charter in 1945. Berdion is working with Kathryn Sikkink, the 2014–2015 Carol K. Pforzheimer Professor at the Radcliffe Institute, on her project about international human rights.

Pupa Gilbert, the 2014–2015 Perrin Moorhead Grayson and Bruns Grayson Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, came with a specific request: she did not have a Wikipedia biography and wanted to create one. Wikipedia discourages individuals and entities from creating their own pages, so Shaun Chaudhuri ’15 volunteered to write an entry for Gilbert, a biophysicist whose research focuses on seashell formation.

Attendees created new entries for the theoretical physicist Cynthia Roberta McIntyre, the botanist Alice Rich Northrup, and the historian of science Helen Meriweather Lewis Thomas. Students strengthened a number of other articles by conducting extra research and adding links to related topics. And participants learned how easy it is to edit Wikipedia—which we hope they will continue to do, with an eye toward correcting the gender imbalance among entries and editors.

—Jennifer Gotwals
Lead Archivist
Wikipedia is a crowd-based encyclopedia, and anyone with Internet access can edit or create entries for it. Wikipedia has a volunteer group of experienced editors who review new entries and provide feedback on how they can be improved.

We recommend that new editors create an account in Wikipedia. You don’t have to use your real name or even give an e-mail address. All edits you make will be tracked with your account name, and other editors can use it to contact you to clarify edits or suggest improvements to articles.

Every Wikipedia entry has an “edit” tab at top right. If you click on this, you can see the “back end” of Wikipedia, where you can make changes to an entry. If you want to correct someone’s birth date, for example, or make additions to an article, this is the quickest way to do it.

We find that it’s easiest for new editors to model their first entry on an existing one. If you’ve created an account, you will have a “sandbox” link to the right of your user-name at the top of the screen. The sandbox is where you can work on new entries, and it looks a lot like a word processor. Wiki mark-up language is a modified version of HTML; when you edit in Wikipedia, you’ll see a guide in the editing window that looks very similar to that in a word processor, with buttons for adding links, italicizing text, and adding references.

A helpful online tutorial is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Tutorial. A few guidelines to follow: Because Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, the editors take care to respect its neutral point of view. Partly as a result of this stance, Wikipedia entries require secondary sources for factual verification. These include published books or articles, newspaper articles, websites, and finding aids. If you want to add some factual information, you need to include the source of your knowledge. Entries may not use material (text or images) that has been copyrighted by someone else.

Have fun editing!
Before women had the vote, they had petitions, and they used them to great effect. The biographer and historian Louise Knight, who spoke at the Radcliffe Institute in late February, described the sustained efforts of Sarah and Angelina Grimké of South Carolina, who joined a national campaign to use petitions in the fight to end slavery. They were the only southern white women to serve as agents and organizers for the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Knight, who has written two biographies of Jane Addams, is writing *American Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké and the First Fight for Human Rights*, to be published by Flatiron Books, a new imprint of Macmillan, in 2018.

In her introduction of Knight, the historian Susan Ware AM ’73, PhD ’78, who has served as a senior advisor to the Schlesinger Library since September 2014, observed that many people know the Grimké sisters through the work of Gerda Lerner, a women's history pioneer whose papers are housed at the Schlesinger.

Lerner wrote her dissertation on the Grimké sisters and followed up by publishing a best-selling biography titled *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967). Although Lerner’s biography strongly influenced feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, the sisters have not been widely discussed in recent years. That is, until Sue Monk Kidd published *The Invention of Wings* (Viking, 2014), a best-selling novel based on the early lives of the elder sister, Sarah, and her slave. The popularity of Kidd’s book created a buzz that had publishers vying to sign up Knight’s biography.

Born in Charleston to a wealthy family that owned several plantations, the Grimké sisters had nine brothers and sisters. Their father, who served as chief judge of the state's supreme court, encouraged his daughters to learn, though within strict bounds. After studying her father’s and brothers’ law books, Sarah longed to become a lawyer. When her father told her that this wouldn’t be possible, she was heartbroken. He is reputed to have said that if she had only been a boy, she would have made the greatest jurist in the country.

Defying her father and South Carolina law, Sarah taught her black maid to read. “I took an almost malicious satisfaction in teaching my little waiting-maid at night, when she was supposed to be occupied in combing and brushing my long locks,” Sarah wrote in her diary, quoted by Lerner.

Sarah was 12 when Angelina was born, and her baby sister became Sarah’s charge. Not surprisingly, the two grew up to be of like mind—rebellious, religious, and determined. Seeking a faith that believed slaveholding was a sin, first Sarah and then Angelina became a Quaker and moved to Philadelphia. By 1829, both were living there.

In 1836 the American Anti-Slavery Society invited the Grimké sisters to New York City for a two-week training conference for antislavery agents. “The national leadership had noticed the remarkable fact that some two-thirds of the
signatures on the petitions being submitted to Congress were women’s,” Knight said in her talk. Angelina’s name was familiar to abolitionists because the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison had published a letter she wrote to him, saying abolition was “a cause worth dying for.” After the American Anti-Slavery Society asked Angelina to come to New York, she requested that it invite her older sister as well.

Everyone assumed that the sisters would speak “only in parlors or homes and only to women,” Knight said. But the Grimkés—defying convention—spoke to large audiences that sometimes included men in New York City and New Jersey, believing that their campaign to end slavery served God’s will.

The following year, the Grimké sisters helped organize the first ever national convention of women in the United States. When the interracial Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women met in New York City in the spring of 1837, approximately 200 women from seven northern states attended. The sisters “gave some of the most stirring speeches and proposed some of the most controversially feminist resolutions,” Knight said.

The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society wasted no time in recruiting Sarah and Angelina to do some organizing in Massachusetts. Arriving in Boston in late May, the sisters followed an arduous schedule, speaking at one meeting and soon two meetings nearly every day. “Everywhere they went,” Knight said, “the crowds turned out, some all white, some all black, and some racially integrated.”

From the Boston area they began traveling in a wider arc: to Salem, where they spoke to a gathering of 600; to Lynn, with 800 in the audience; and to Lowell, before 1,500. In Newburyport, Knight said, 1,800 people showed up. Many of the venues were churches, where people crowded the aisles and stairs and windows.

Wherever they went, the sisters collected names on petitions. In Dorchester, for example, 325 women signed after the Grimké sisters spoke. And the number of antislavery societies in the state almost doubled. By the end of 1837, Massachusetts had 47 female antislavery societies, far more than any other state. In 1837–1838, 80 percent of the signatures on Massachusetts petitions to Congress were women’s, and Bay State women led those of other northern states by a wide margin.

In these campaigns, “the women of Massachusetts embraced a new role for themselves in national politics,” Knight said. “Ignoring not only their lack of the vote, but their lack of standing in the public square and the firm barriers of custom that blocked their participation in civic debate, the women of Massachusetts organized themselves to press for political change.”

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager

Digital Website of Antislavery Petitions

Petitions generated by Angelina and Sarah Grimké’s Massachusetts lecture tour of 1837 are newly accessible in a Harvard database, The Digital Archive of Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions.

Daniel Carpenter, the Allie S. Freed Professor of Government and the director of the social sciences program in Academic Ventures at Radcliffe, has launched a digital website of almost 4,000 antislavery and antisegregation petitions submitted to the Massachusetts state legislature.

Many of these petitions were thought to be lost but had been lying uncataloged at the Massachusetts State Archives for more than 150 years.

Scholars will now be able to study these petitions to improve our understanding of women’s political activism and the history of the antislavery movement. And genealogists may find that their Massachusetts foremothers signed antislavery petitions.
Library Acquires Papers of Susan Griffin and Ruth Rosen

Within the first few minutes of the terrific new documentary She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry, produced and directed by Mary Dore, it becomes clear why the Schlesinger Library is thanked in the credits at the end. Inspiring, powerful, funny, and poignant, the film captures the birth of the post–World War II women’s movement in the 1960s and moves through the early 1970s and the emergence of more-radical factions of women’s liberation.

It’s a story that can be told only with the help of papers and records of women and organizations at the Schlesinger. Footage and stills of Betty Friedan, Flo Kennedy, and Ellen Willis and recollections and analyses by Susan Brownmiller, Marilyn Webb, and the National Organization for Women officers Mary Jean Collins and Muriel Fox—all movement leaders whose papers are here—enhance the film from start to finish.

Within the past year, two more movement leaders and “stars” of She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry have committed their papers to the library. We’re honored to welcome the papers of Ruth Rosen and Susan Griffin and eager to see what new perspectives they will offer to the ongoing dialog about feminism and cultural change.

Ruth Rosen is a pioneering historian of gender and society, an award-winning journalist, and a professor emerita at the University of California, Davis, where she taught American history, women’s history, history and public policy, and immigration studies for more than two decades.

As a columnist for the Los Angeles Times and an editorial writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, Rosen has promoted the rights of women, lesbians, and gays and written about women, the Iraq war, freedom of expression, the homeless, and the mentally ill. You may have heard, seen, or read her commentaries on radio, television, or social media. Rosen is also a key figure in another documentary, the 1990 award-winning Berkeley in the Sixties, in which she discusses her activism and analyzes the social movements in which she was involved.

Rosen is no stranger to the Schlesinger Library. Her first book was based on letters she found here written from 1910 to 1922 by Maimie Pinzer, the daughter of an immigrant family and an ex-prostitute, to Fanny Quincy Howe of Boston, in which Pinzer described her efforts to leave “the life” and create a shelter for “ruined girls.” The Feminist Press published The Maimie Papers in collaboration with the Schlesinger Library in 1977.


The radical feminist philosopher, poet, playwright, and screenwriter Susan Griffin was born in the midst of World War II and the Holocaust, events that have shaped her work on nature, women, racism, war, and terrorism, for which she received a MacArthur Grant for Peace and International Cooperation.

Griffin’s groundbreaking first book, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (Harper & Row, 1978), credited with founding the ecofeminist movement, is an extended prose-poem that the poet Adrienne Rich, whose papers are also here, called “perhaps the most extraordinary nonfiction work to have emerged from the matrix of contemporary female consciousness.”

Griffin’s A Chorus of Stones: The Private Life of War ( Doubleday, 1982) blends history and memoir to explore the psychological aspects of violence, war, and womanhood. In The Eros of Everyday Life: Essays on Ecology, Gender, and Society (1995), she looks at the connections between religion and philosophy and science and nature. Wrestling with the Angel of Democracy: On Being an American Citizen (Trumpeter, 2008), a Pulitzer finalist, charts the rise and fall of our society’s highest values—equality, truth, and freedom—from the Declaration of Independence to the Iraq war. Transforming Terror: Remembering the Soul of the World (University of California Press, 2011), an anthology coedited with Karen Lofthus Carrington, offers a new paradigm for moving the world beyond violence as the first and often only response to violence.

Griffin’s poetry, known for its minimalist style, has won many awards. Her play Voices (1975) won an Emmy. Griffin cowrote and narrated Berkeley in the Sixties.

The 20 cartons of Rosen’s papers that arrived in July 2014 include research for her books and articles, editorials, speeches, reviews, photojournalism, correspondence, and teaching material. The collection will continue to grow.
Griffin’s papers began arriving in December. Thus far they include notebooks, notes, research material for several of her books, journals, material for film scripts, lecture notes, audio/visual material, correspondence, and memorabilia. Both collections are closed until processed.

At one point in She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry, Rosen says of the 1960s, “We began to realize that we knew nothing about ourselves. I was in the history department at Berkeley and I knew zip, nada, zero, about women’s history. We realized we didn’t know very much about women as a social group, or women’s literature, or women’s art.” In the intervening decades, Rosen and Griffin have been and continue to be at the center of efforts to illuminate our past, present, and future.

To learn more about She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry, visit www.shesbeautifulwhensheangry.com.

—Kathryn Allamong Jacob
Johanna-Maria Fraenkel Curator of Manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library
A’Lelia Bundles ’74 felt the presence of her remarkable ancestors throughout her childhood. She remembers eating Thanksgiving dinner off china that once belonged to her great-great-grandmother, Madam C.J. Walker, an entrepreneur who pioneered hair-care supplies for African American women and built her empire by empowering thousands of other women as agents promoting her product. And A’Lelia Walker, Madam’s daughter and a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance, left behind the baby grand piano that Bundles played as a child, as well as her name.

But it wasn’t always a given that Bundles would take ownership of her distinguished family history. As an undergraduate at Radcliffe College, she preferred to keep her ancestry in the background. But if any family member appealed to her more than the others, it was her namesake A’Lelia, who ghosted through the syllabi of the African American literature courses Bundles took as a student.

One day, deep in the stacks at Widener Library, Bundles came across an issue of The Crisis, the NAACP’s magazine, that featured Madam Walker’s obituary. It was written by W.E.B. Du Bois PhD 1895 and read, “It is given to few persons to transform a people in a generation. Yet this was done by the late Madam C.J. Walker.” Du Bois was Bundles’s intellectual hero, and his praise made her reconsider her great-great-grandmother’s legacy. In graduate school at Columbia, at the urging of her advisor, Phyl Garland, Bundles focused her thesis on Madam Walker.

The story could have ended there, as Bundles’s career took her in another direction—first to Houston and then to Atlanta, where, as a field producer for NBC News, she had little opportunity to do her own writing. But she was preparing to turn 30, and she wanted a byline before her birthday.

So Bundles called Aida Kabatznick Press ’48, who was then the editor of the Radcliffe Quarterly, and asked if she could write an article comparing the experiences of her classmates after graduation with those of the class of 1954, whose members were facing their 50th birthdays. The piece, which ran in the September 1982 issue of the Quarterly, was for Bundles a key moment that showed her “the power of raising your hand and getting involved.”

Five years later, Bundles wrote another article for the Quarterly, “America’s First Self-Made Woman Millionaire: A Letter to My Great-Great-Grandmother, Madam C.J. Walker.” The biographical note accompanying the piece proudly proclaimed that Bundles was working with the famed author of Roots, Alex Haley, on his biography of Walker. Haley was never able to turn his full attention to the Walker story, so Bundles decided to take it up herself. Working diligently during brief sabbaticals from her career in broadcast journalism, Bundles published On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker (Scribner) in 2001.

Now she is hard at work on another book, this time telling A’Lelia Walker’s story. Bundles balances her writing with philanthropy and volunteer leadership. She is the chair and president of the National Archives Foundation, where she did some of her research, a Columbia University trustee, and a member of the Schlesinger Library Council.

“I love the fact that the Schlesinger Library has always been interested in the papers of African American women,” she says. She plans to give her personal papers to the library. “There is nowhere else I would rather have them,” she says.

—Danielle Griggs
Development Communications Manager
A Tribute to Vera Micheles Dean, an Expert in International Relations

Vera Micheles Dean '25, PhD '28 was a leader in international relations whose involvement in world affairs began at an early age. She fled St. Petersburg with her family during the Russian Revolution, settling with them for two years in Finland before embarking for Boston alone when she was just 16. Her family later sought refuge in London.

Already fluent in three languages—Russian, French, and English—she came to Radcliffe College as a freshman in 1921 and excelled in her courses. Perhaps the biggest impediment to achieving her bachelor’s degree was the swimming exam required before graduation: Each student had to swim from one end of the pool in Radcliffe Gymnasium to the other, and Dean had never swum in her life. By some miracle, she passed the test and graduated summa cum laude in political science. She never swam again.

With support from a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace fellowship, Dean went on to earn a master’s degree from Yale University. She then returned to Radcliffe for her doctoral studies in the burgeoning fields of international law and international relations. Dean conducted much of her dissertation research at the New York Public Library—women were not yet allowed into the Harvard Law School library—and following completion of her PhD, she relocated to New York City.

“Radcliffe played a huge role in her life.”

There she began a nearly 30-year career in the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), became an American citizen, and married the attorney William Johnson Dean. When her husband died, in 1936, leaving her a widow at age 33 with a three-year-old daughter and a yet-to-be-born son, Dean threw herself with even more vigor into her already impressive career as FPA’s director of research and editor of publications. Through her work at FPA, Dean not only supported her family, but also influenced public opinion during a time of seismic shifts in foreign affairs.

The FPA was founded on the premise that laypeople, not just elite experts, had a role to play in major foreign-policy issues—a democratic concept that greatly appealed to Dean. In Foreign Policy Reports and the Foreign Policy Bulletin, she wrote and commissioned articles to inform and persuade the public about the events of the day. And what a day it was: Dean’s tenure at the FPA saw the United States recognize the Soviet Union, turmoil in Europe and Asia in the 1930s and early 1940s, World War II and its aftermath, the founding of the United Nations, the rise of McCarthyism, and the height of the Cold War.

By the time Dean resigned from the FPA, in 1961, she already had a robust teaching career, having developed innovative programs on what she called non-Western studies following her extensive travels to Asia and Africa. Her courses focused on Asia, Latin America, and the Soviet Union and were the first of their kind at many institutions. Dean held professorships at Smith College, the University of Rochester, and New York University, where she remained until 1971.

Through it all, her heart remained at Radcliffe, where she was a founding member of the executive committee for the Bunting Institute. She seriously entertained the possibility of becoming president of Radcliffe College in 1943, after being invited by Ada Louise Comstock, who was the College’s first full-time president. Dean and her children, Elinor Dean Wilder '56 and William J. Dean '59, gave her papers—including manuscripts, speeches, correspondence, and the outline for an autobiography she never had time to write—to the Schlesinger Library between 1953 and 1973.

In honor of his mother, William Dean has made a planned gift to Radcliffe. “Radcliffe,” he says, “both provided an important learning experience for Mother and served as a haven for her as she made the transition from Russian refugee to becoming an American. Radcliffe played a huge role in her life.”

—Danielle Griggs
Development Communications Manager

For more information about planned giving, please contact John Christel, Radcliffe’s liaison at the University Planned Giving Office, at 617-384-8231 or john_christel@harvard.edu.
Announcement

The accomplished historian and author Jane Kamensky RI ’07 will be joining the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study as the new Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. In addition to her Institute appointment, she will be a professor in the History Department at Harvard University. For more information about Kamensky, visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.

Photo by Nina Subin