New Beginnings

As I write, my bookshelves are empty, and my sunny corner office on the first floor of the Schlesinger Library is piled high with boxes, awaiting our move to temporary quarters. Over the next nine months, the Library’s staff will acquire and process collections in the buildings of the former Bunting Institute on Concord Avenue; researchers will make use of a reading room relocated to Fay House. All the while, a thorough renovation will transform the Schlesinger. Next fall, we’ll return to a 1906 building restored and remade for a 21st-century library, with new spaces for teaching and learning, a digital research suite, and an exhibition gallery nearly doubled in size.

In many ways, this renovation, which begins at the close of our 75th anniversary year, marks the end of a long chapter of the Schlesinger’s history and the beginning of a new one. Over three-quarters of a century, our collections have grown in ways that would have been hard to imagine in 1943: from an initial gift of some 30 cartons of manuscripts focused on the campaign for American women’s suffrage to more than 4,100 manuscript collections and 150,000 printed volumes documenting many facets of the lives, work, and thought of American women from the nation’s beginnings to the present day. Researchers continually discover new American histories in our collections; this year, we hosted more than 3,500 visits to the Carol K. Pforzheimer Reading Room, an increase of 12.5 percent from the previous year. Even our oldest holdings are renewed by the scrutiny of new eyes with fresh questions.

But we also need new collections to tell new stories. In recent years, increasing the diversity of our collections along racial, ethnic, class, regional, and ideological lines has been our highest strategic priority. Last year, 60 percent of what we added to our holdings...
reflected that priority. Those acquisitions include the papers of well-known writers and thinkers such as Jennifer Finney Boylan (see page 11), Angela Y. Davis, and Lani Guinier along with the extraordinary records of more ordinary women from all across the United States, from the 19th century to the present.

This fall, as we ring out the old building, my colleagues and I have begun a new collections initiative to better honor our commitment to documenting the full breadth of American women’s experiences. In October, a working group on Asian American women’s collections convened for the first time. The group, composed of activists and community leaders, faculty members, and alumnae who represent a variety of Asian American experiences, is helping the Library develop particular emphases in our drive to document women and families who came to the United States from many parts of the Pacific Rim, and whose journeys, lives, and contributions have transformed modern America.

In recent years, increasing the diversity of our collections along racial, ethnic, class, regional, and ideological lines has been our highest strategic priority.

The Schlesinger’s Asian American collections initiative builds on small beginnings, much as the Library itself did in 1943. Our current Asian American holdings include the papers of the Beijing-born author, businesswoman, and Republican Party activist Anna Chennault and oral history projects centered on Chinese American women and Cambodian American women and youth. We also hold numerous Euro-American women’s collections documenting diplomatic, human rights, and missionary work in South and East Asia. These collections, while important, are plainly insufficient to capture Asian American women’s significance in areas of American life ranging from the arts to labor activism to higher education to the prevention of family violence to popular culture and the beauty industry. As the United States reckons with its place in what has been called the Pacific Century, the Library is excited to connect with new communities of immigrant women and their descendants in California, New York, the Midwest, and beyond. We hope that by the time we cut the ribbon on our refreshed space next year, we can report on the first fruits of this new collecting initiative. Asian American women are remaking the world every day. We expect that their archives will transform our understanding of American history for many years to come.

—Jane Kamensky
Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director,
Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History,
Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences

PHOTO BY DOROTHEA JACOBSON-WENZEL

Two young participants in the Chicago N.O.W. Walkathon on Women’s Equality Day, August 1980
It’s been a year since the hashtag #MeToo exploded on social media. Now the Schlesinger Library has committed to documenting the movement and its impact.
Over the past year, the hashtag #MeToo, created in 2007 by the activist Tarana Burke, has been used on social media as a vehicle for telling intimate, personal stories of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment. This chorus of testimonials and accusations has spread across industries—from Hollywood to politics to academia—and public, intergenerational conversations and debates about consent and coercion have become commonplace. The digital footprint of #MeToo in the past year measures more than 19 million English-language Twitter posts and thousands of news articles and personal testimonials.

Although #MeToo digital content has been multiplying at an exponential rate on a daily basis for more than a year, it is acutely vulnerable over the long term. Quantity is not a guarantee of permanence. The vast bulk of this content is being created on proprietary social media platforms, which offer no guarantee of preservation. It is entirely feasible that most of this content will disappear within the next decade, because the web and Internet-based companies thrive on change, not permanence.

Permanence is the purview of archives and libraries. In order to ensure that #MeToo digital content will remain available for scholars ranging from historians to data scientists, the Schlesinger Library, with support from a generous S.T. Lee Innovation Grant from Harvard Library, has started a large-scale project to comprehensively document #MeToo. The Library is collecting social media, news articles, statements of denial and/or apology, web-forum conversations, websites, and related hashtags, along with more-traditional papers and records.

The Schlesinger has collected paper-based archival materials for the past 75 years, and this project is a continuation of those efforts in a primarily digital sphere. As we acquire this content, we will store it in a system that acts like an archival vault for digital material, and we are exploring a variety of methods for making it available to researchers. This project also marks the Library’s first foray into the complexities of collecting large-scale data and social media content. We will use it to build a tool kit for rapid-response collection of web content. When the next web-based social movement begins, we will be ready.

The project is being guided by a steering committee of renowned Harvard experts in the fields of history, law, business, and data science as well as librarians and archivists with expertise in digital preservation and data analysis. The digital collection will be open for research in late 2019.

—Amanda Strauss
Manager, special projects and digital services

Want to help build the #MeToo collection?
Nominate material for us to collect or contribute your own data at schlesinger-metooproject-radcliffe.org.

SCHLESINGER LIBRARY
#METOO PROJECT
STEERING COMMITTEE

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Jennifer Weintraub, librarian/archivist for digital projects, Schlesinger Library
Scholars continue to flock to the Schlesinger to conduct research. Here we highlight three recently published books whose authors relied in part on the Library’s holdings.
Joyce Antler

*Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women’s Liberation Movement* (NYU Press, 2018)

Joyce Antler—the Samuel J. Lane Professor Emerita of American Jewish History and Culture and a professor emerita of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies at Brandeis University—has brought together her two specialties in her most recent book. “The role of Jewish women in the feminist struggle was never fully explained,” says the *Washington Book Review*. “*Jewish Radical Feminism* fills this gap both in the history of modern Judaism and feminism. This valuable study is a tribute to the struggle of these pioneer Jewish feminists.”

Antler relied on a number of Schlesinger collections in order to illustrate the impact that Jewishness and second-wave feminism had on each other, visiting the papers of the luminaries Wini Breines, Susan Brownmiller, Blu Greenberg, Nancy Grey Osterud, Ann Hunter Popkin, Susan Schechter, Naomi Weisstein, and Ellen Willis.

Sarah F. Rose

*No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1840–1930s* (UNC Press, 2017)

In *No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1840–1930s*, Sarah F. Rose integrates disability history and labor history. *Choice* magazine highly recommends the book, saying, “Accessible writing and evocative case studies across seven chronologically and thematically arranged chapters reveal the well-intentioned but paternalistic operation of early disability services.”

Rose, an associate professor of history and director of the disability studies minor at the University of Texas at Arlington, consulted the Crystal Eastman Papers during her research. Although Eastman is best remembered as a leader in the women’s suffrage movement, the social investigator, peace worker, and feminist also brought attention to the issue of work accidents and worker’s compensation.

Jacqueline H. Wolf


From 1965 to 1987, the cesarean section rate in the United States rose shockingly: from 4.5 percent to 25 percent of births. Jacqueline H. Wolf’s new book, *Cesarean Section: An American History of Risk, Technology, and Consequence*—called “absorbing” and “excellent” in a *Slate* review—is the first to chronicle the history of this surgical procedure, starting with its initial published account in 1830.

Wolf, who is a professor of the history of medicine at Ohio University, accessed the Schlesinger’s Nancy Wainer Papers while researching her book. An internationally known midwife who writes and speaks about childbirth, Wainer in 1973 founded the nonprofit C/Sec Inc. (Cesareans/Support Education and Concern), leading the charge to change hospital policies around C-section. Her work continues to be archived at the Library.

Since its publication, *No Right to Be Idle* has earned the 2017 Excellence in Research Using the Holdings of the State Archives Award from the New York State Archives and Archives Partnership Trust and the 2018 Philip Taft Labor History Book Award, and it was named a 2017 Choice Outstanding Academic Title.
The Radcliffe Institute’s first Mellon-Schlesinger Fellow explores the broader significance of the woman suffrage movement as we approach the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment.
In the Susan B. Anthony Papers at the Schlesinger Library is a souvenir pamphlet from February 1900 celebrating Anthony’s 80th birthday and her retirement from the presidency of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The pamphlet unfolds to reveal two portraits: the first a family daguerreotype from 1856, when Anthony was a relatively marginalized 36-year-old reformer, and the second an official photograph from 1900, when she had become one of the most famous women in the world. As the images are viewed from left to right, Anthony appears to escape an ornate but cramped frame and grow not only in maturity but also in stature. Her aged profile gazes back at her former self with pride in her achievements. Harsh light emphasizes the wrinkles on her face, the glint of her spectacles, and the whiteness of her hair. The composition of this image both celebrates Anthony’s long years of service to the suffrage cause and promotes a very specific understanding of female middle age—the years after 35—as the time of life when women can make the most of their experience, claim a public voice, and rise to positions of national influence. The image, in short, draws a connection between women’s aging and political empowerment. It is this connection that my current research seeks to explain.

As the inaugural Mellon-Schlesinger Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, I have been thinking about the broader significance of the woman suffrage movement in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, in 2020. The Susan B. Anthony birthday souvenir reveals that suffragists, as they fought for the right not just to vote but also to be voted for, realized that many Americans’ negative attitudes toward older women would be a major barrier to electability. They could have celebrated Anthony’s birthday by looking back at an image of her as a girl or as a young woman in her 20s, but they chose a portrait of Anthony at 36 for a very specific reason: candidates for president must be over 35. In practice, Americans prefer to elect men much older than that. In 1900, no man under the age of 45 had ever been elected president. Most had been in their 50s, many in their 60s. If a woman was ever to be elected to the nation’s highest office, she would certainly be past her youth and most likely well into middle age.

The composition of this image both celebrates Anthony’s long years of service to the suffrage cause and promotes a very specific understanding of female middle age—the years after 35—as the time of life when women can make the most of their experience, claim a public voice, and rise to positions of national influence.
This was a problem for women in the 19th century. By age 30, unmarried women became “old maids.” By 45, married matrons reported intense pressure to fade into the background of their family circles. Those who stepped onto public platforms faced ridicule as unattractive and foolish busybodies. To counter such misogynistic attitudes toward older women, suffragists staged public birthdays for their prominent leaders, circulated dignified images of mature women, ran advice on aging in their newspapers, and theorized the ways in which older white men retained political power in part by sexualizing young girls and then denigrating older women. Yet most Americans, including most women, never bought into the idea that they should value female maturity as a qualification for leadership or recognize old women as charismatic and authoritative. This may be one of the reasons that women won the right to vote but still have not been elected to the highest office in the nation.

Today, as in 1900, if a woman is to be elected president, she will be over 35, and most likely in her 50s. For that to occur, we may need to try a strategy employed by woman suffragists long before they won the right to vote. Like those who took home Anthony’s birthday souvenir, we might celebrate wrinkles, spectacles, and gray hair, embracing female aging not as a loss of youth but as an opportunity for gaining political power.

—Corinne T. Field
2018–2019 Mellon-Schlesinger Fellow, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and associate professor, Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality, University of Virginia
An Exhibition
Lives Online

Although the physical manifestation of 75 Stories, 75 Years: Documenting the Lives of American Women at the Schlesinger Library—which ran from February 5 through November 1, 2018—was dismantled and packed up along with the rest of the Library’s contents, it remains on view online.

The documents and objects in this exhibition, which marked our 75th anniversary, evoke the depth and breadth of the Schlesinger’s holdings. They tell 75 stories—harrowing, heartbreaking, pathbreaking, brave—about American women’s lives and about the history of the Library itself.

Visit today and marvel at the history of the United States through the remarkable, curious, and sometimes provocative items housed at the Library.

schlesinger75radcliffe.org

BELOW: These tiny vials of desiccated vaccine were central to the massive and ultimately successful effort launched by the World Health Organization in the mid-1960s to eradicate the scourge of smallpox from the world. At the vanguard of the campaign was a remarkable group of women Peace Corps volunteers (see photo at right), who traveled from house to house in remote areas of Afghanistan in 1969 and 1970 vaccinating women and girls who could not be seen—much less touched—by men outside their families.

Collection on Women Peace Corps Volunteers in Afghanistan’s Smallpox Eradication Program

AT RIGHT: In 1932, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935), one of the intellectual leaders of the women’s movement from the 1890s through the 1920s and an author, was diagnosed with incurable breast cancer. Long an advocate of euthanasia, Gilman committed suicide on August 17, 1935, choosing, she wrote, “chloroform over cancer.” Before her body was cremated, this plaster death mask was made.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers, Schlesinger Library
Evidence of Social Change? A Working Writer’s Papers Come to the Library

Jennifer Finney Boylan, the inaugural Anna Quindlen Writer in Residence and a professor of English at Barnard College, is a well-known author, trans activist, and television personality. Among her 15 books is the award-winning memoir *She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders* (Random House, 2003). In February 2017, the Schlesinger was pleased to host “Gender, Politics, and Imagination: An Afternoon with Jennifer Finney Boylan,” during which she spoke about privilege, politics, and poetics. She has since donated her papers to the Library, and they were added to the online catalog in August. We spoke to Boylan about her decision to entrust her papers to us.

**In your view, how will your papers enrich the Library’s holdings?**

You’re making me grin because you’re asking me to speak of my own work in an immodest, boastful manner, and that doesn’t really come naturally to me. Wasn’t there a character called Furious Frog in Aesop who kept puffing himself up larger and larger, to impress everyone else, until finally he exploded? I want to avoid that fate. But let’s just say that in my various manuscripts and artifacts, archivists and readers might find evidence of a change in the culture’s understanding of gender and of the fight for transgender acceptance in particular. My memoir, *She’s Not There*, was the first best-selling work by a transgender American, and I hope that that speaks to a sense of progress. One of the manuscripts I’ve donated to the collection contains handwritten edits and suggestions by my friend Richard Russo, who also figures as a character in that book. Since Rick won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, his annotations on a book that already has some historical significance are, I think, an additional treasure.

**What was it like—logistically, intellectually, and emotionally—to review your papers in preparation for the transfer?**

Well, in some ways it was grim, because I felt from the outset that it was like preparing for life after I’m gone. And as William Saroyan said, “Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case.” It felt like preparing for the grave. Jane Kamensky said to me, “Well, think of it more like picking out a nice burial plot”—a comment that failed to cheer me.

But after the initial sadness of it, there was joy, too, in part because now I know that some of the things I care about will have a good home. And there are a couple of manuscripts...
that I never published that will be available, and which may indeed find readers in years to come. There’s a novel titled “Sex in the Wilderness,” about a group of seven friends through-hiking the Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine, with the ashes of a friend of theirs; their intention is to sprinkle those ashes on top of Mt. Katahdin. Only one of the seven makes it all the way. It’s a book I love, and which I hope will bring joy to future readers.

**How did you choose what to archive and what to seal or immediately make public?**

I didn’t want to embarrass anyone, at least while I’m alive. I have a pretty vivid diary of my transition from male to female from 2000 to 2003 or so. That I’ll keep sealed up, since it names a lot of names. Also, there’s a manuscript of a screenplay called “The Language of Women,” which I wrote with Rick Russo before transition. There are some fairly raw things in that as well, and I wanted to make sure I didn’t complicate my friendship with him or anybody else. After I’m gone, of course, everybody’s on their own.

**What do you hope future researchers will take away from your personal effects?**

I hope they will provide snapshots of what it meant to be a working writer in the late 20th century. The first items I donated are short works I created while a graduate student in the 1980s; the collection goes right up to the current day (and more items will come in years ahead). I know that it’s my work on gender—and how that work is reflected in some of my fiction—that might catch historians’ eyes first. But I also hope that readers will be touched by the stories themselves—the memoirs and the short pieces and the fiction. I don’t know whether they will see these works as having been written by a man, or a woman, or someone who traveled between those realms. But I do hope people will be moved by these snapshots—some of them clear, some of them blurry—of what it meant to be alive during these strange, urgent years.

To watch video of Boylan’s 2017 appearance at the Radcliffe Institute, visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/video/jennifer-finney-boylan-gender-politics-and-imagination.
When Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett HRP ’54 sets her mind to something, she usually accomplishes it. After graduating from the University of Southern California in 1953, she sought a career in business and received a scholarship to Radcliffe’s Management Training Program. A native Angeleno and only child, Beaudry-Corbett remembers sharing a house with 12 women in Cambridge as being “quite a different environment,” but she credits Radcliffe with helping her launch a successful career.

Upon returning to Los Angeles, she quickly rose through the ranks at Audience Studies Incorporated, an influential marketing research firm, and traveled around the globe as the company expanded. “I was supposed to go to London for six weeks, and it ended up being six months,” she says, “but I didn’t mind at all.” In her travels, Beaudry-Corbett developed an interest in archaeology and began taking extension courses at UCLA. By the time she was a top executive at the company, she had begun to wonder whether she wanted to continue working at the same pace for another 15 to 20 years. In the end, she decided she’d much rather be an archaeologist.

A call with a graduate advisor at UCLA was less than encouraging (mid-career businesswomen fell outside the typical applicant pool), but Beaudry-Corbett was undeterred. She penned a letter to a professor of archaeology and looked up his office hours. “I told my staff that I was taking a long lunch hour, drove out to UCLA, got in line with the other real students, and sat down and introduced myself,” she says. The professor was receptive and recommended that she continue taking courses and get involved in local archaeology groups. The next year, Beaudry-Corbett was accepted into UCLA’s Interdepartmental Archaeology Graduate Program, where she went on to earn her PhD.

After stints as a postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Institution and a senior Fulbright scholar in Honduras, Beaudry-Corbett returned to UCLA, where she met Donald Corbett, a dentist who shared her passion for archaeology and enrolled in one of her courses. Shortly after a call made under dubious pretenses—“I thought he was calling to ask about his independent project,” she says, and “he was calling about his independent project, but that was me”—the two became engaged during a trip to Guatemala, where Beaudry-Corbett was conducting fieldwork.

In retirement, Beaudry-Corbett has started another new chapter: philanthropist. Driven by a desire to provide women with the same opportunities that she had, she has endowed a chair of Mesoamerican archaeology at UCLA, scholarships for women over 30 pursuing MBA degrees at USC, and now the Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett Schlesinger Fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute.

Her $2 million gift to the Institute will support scholars in its fellowship program who are working on projects related to American women’s lives. Beaudry-Corbett and her husband are passionate supporters of libraries and long-serving members of the Culinary Historians of Southern California, and she was motivated by the opportunity to support Radcliffe fellows working with the Schlesinger’s collections.

Beaudry-Corbett’s gift dovetails with the Schlesinger’s Long 19th Amendment Project, a four-year initiative commemorating the centennial of women’s suffrage that is being supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

—Mark Graney
Assistant director, donor relations and communications
The physical site of the Schlesinger may be shuttered for structural renovations until September 2019, but eager users need not worry: its holdings will still be available during the building’s closing. Researchers may access the Library’s collections by appointment in a temporary reading room located in Fay House, in Radcliffe Yard.

Because all collections are stored off-site and seating in the temporary reading room is limited, visitors must provide at least 48 hours’ advance notice. Want to schedule a visit? Please submit an appointment request using the form found at the URL below.

asklib.schlesinger.radcliffe.edu

**The Logistics of Moving a Library**

Preparing an institution like the Schlesinger for a large-scale renovation is no small feat. Aside from moving the physical contents of the Library, location records must be updated so that items can still be found while they’re displaced. Library staff members began working on the logistics with Harvard Library’s Access Services in 2016. All this planning ensured that collections would be relocated to the Harvard Depository, and their records changed—without inconveniencing visitors.

- Number of months of planning: 17
- Number of items moved, including photos, books, audio- and video-tapes, and manuscript boxes: 60,000
- Number of visitors during planning, packing, and moving: 1,299
Bill Baird Collection Now Open
When the Bill Baird Papers arrived at the Schlesinger, in 2015, it was the largest collection the Library had ever acquired: 700+ cartons, crates, and artifacts. The collection has now been processed and is open for research.

Baird, who has advocated for women’s reproductive rights since the early 1960s, documented both sides of the reproductive rights debate over the past five decades. Among the materials now at the Library are a number of soot-covered books and pamphlets rescued from his firebombed women’s health clinic, some of which are pictured here and on the front cover.

Explore the collection at http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990144365080203941/catalog.

Photos by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute