As a historian, I’ve spent much of the past quarter-century haunting archives and solving puzzles. I confess that I found my first such foray, a hunt for records of the speech crimes of 17th-century New England women in Salem, Massachusetts, bewildering and terrifying by turns. (Ask my husband sometime about the rescue mission he launched from New Haven at 4 A.M.) As I learned the ropes, I came to love the kinks and quirks of special collections libraries, big and small, in villages and cities across the United States and the United Kingdom.

Among scholars, libraries develop distinct reputations. They can be clubby or cold, stingy or generous, grand or shabby, familial or bureaucratic, sometimes all at once. When I teach the art of archival research, I send students on scavenger hunts to various area repositories, asking them to report back to the class about the minutiae of their visits: What kinds of ID does a patron need? Are the plug strips plentiful and the lighting decent? Is photography allowed? Do patrons dress up to enter the reading room? One way and another, I’ve amassed a lot of tales from the vault.

Imagine my surprise, then, to discover that I’ve learned more about the work of archives and about how archives work in the scant weeks since I became the Pforzheimer Director of the Schlesinger Library than in the previous two decades combined. With patience seemingly as deep as their excellence, the library’s superb staff members are teaching me, day by day, how to see the world from the other side of the desk. As a researcher, looking in from the outside, I’ve always valued speed. How many boxes of letters or volumes of deeds can be brought to my station at once, and how quickly can they get there? But now, looking out from the inside, I’m humbled to see the myriad tiny processes that move a request from a patron’s computer to the research services desk, to the manuscript vault, and finally to a cart in the glorious, sunlit second-floor reading room for which the Schlesinger is justifiably renowned among the members of my tribe.

Those processes, however complex and careful, represent in some ways an end point. The library’s work ends where the scholar’s begins. In this issue of the newsletter, we peel back the curtain to reveal the birth of a collection—the Schlesinger’s largest acquisition ever—as it moves with all deliberate speed from hundreds of barely organized boxes in the offices of its compiler to what will eventually be a fully processed resource, indexed and sorted and described in ways that will allow it to inform the work of scholars—and through them, to transform our knowledge of American history for decades, even centuries, to come.

To sit behind the library desk is to find new partners in the work of scholarship. But facing outward from the Schlesinger also means thinking about connections around Radcliffe Yard, across the Harvard campus, and far beyond. Perhaps the truest measure of the excellence of the staff is its hunger to do even more, even better, for students, scholars, fellows, and faculty members alike. That drive has engaged us in searching conversations about how to make our collections more accessible, our exhibitions more riveting, and our acquisitions more diverse. I cannot imagine a job more important or fulfilling than the task of documenting women’s lives, especially amid the urgency and fervor surrounding questions of gender and sexuality in today’s America, all the while knowing that readers in distant places and times will use those materials—will need them badly—to solve the puzzles of their own place and time.

—Jane Kamensky
Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director
Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Coming to the Schlesinger: Food Memories from *Waitress*

One woman remembered making croissants in Paris with her daughter. Another recalled the “incredible” meatballs she learned to make from a man she was seeing and how his cooking won her over. “It’s all about the food,” she wrote. Another person filled an entire page of a waitress’s order book with the words “I love food.”

The American Repertory Theater at Harvard completed its run of the popular musical *Waitress* at the end of September, but artifacts related to the play will live on at the Schlesinger Library. During intermission and after the play, attendees wrote food memories on waitress order sheets, and the theater hung the sheets in the lobby for all to enjoy. Now these memories will be archived at the Schlesinger, joining the library’s existing collections about waitresses and food, including the interview recordings and transcripts from *Hey Waitress! The USA from the Other Side of the Tray* by Alison Owings (University of California Press, 2002).

The ART’s *Waitress*—which is headed for Broadway—is the heartwarming story of Jenna, who works in a diner, where she bakes special pies, including Kick in the Pants Pie. Stuck in an abusive marriage, she is able to escape with help from friends and coworkers and start her own pie café. Based on the 2007 movie, written by Adrienne Shelly, the play features music and lyrics by the popular singer Sara Bareilles, in her first compositions for theater.

*Waitress* will open at the Brooks Atkinson Theater in New York City on April 24, 2016, with previews beginning in March.

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager
On a morning in early June, three large trucks and six brawny movers, who had been on the road since before dawn, pulled up in front of a low building in Allston near the Harvard stadium, to the great relief of waiting library staff members. Several hours later, the movers and their empty trucks drove off, leaving behind the largest collection the Schlesinger Library has ever acquired. The Bill Baird collection, all 700+ cartons, crates, and artifacts, was finally here. Its arrival isn’t the end of the story, though; it’s the beginning. We will update you as the next chapters unfold.

For years, rumors had circulated about the large collection of material that Bill Baird, an outspoken activist for women’s reproductive rights since 1963, was amassing. Because the history of women’s health and reproductive lives has long been among the library’s strengths, in 2009, we invited Baird and his wife, Joni—who was then writing his biography—to visit the library. Baird wasn’t yet ready to place his papers in any archive. In January 2015, at 82, he was. Several institutions expressed interest, and he invited their representatives to his home outside Philadelphia to see the collection. It consisted, he said, of “hundreds of boxes,” which we assumed was hyperbole. It wasn’t.

The two staff members who traveled to Pennsylvania in March were staggered by the sight of tilting towers of cartons and milk crates, hundreds and hundreds of them, and a long row of filing cabinets, which together filled the very large basement. In a day and a half, they sampled nearly 300 containers. The bad news? There was almost no order to the collection: boxes and drawers were filled with layer upon layer of loose papers; there were thousands of scattered photocopies and much duplication. The good news? Amid the chaff was the promise of a truly remarkable collection that would not only document one man’s four tumultuous decades of activism but also chronicle in rich detail all sides of the battles over contraception and abortion, from the 1960s to the present.

Material from antiabortion groups has been especially difficult for libraries to acquire, but Baird doggedly attended right-to-life conferences, from which he came away with newsletters, manuals for demonstrators, films, and cassettes that he added to his collection. It also contains, sometimes in the same boxes, materials documenting the run-up to the 1972 Supreme Court decision in Eisenstadt v. Baird, which established the right of unmarried people to possess contraception, and soot-covered books from Baird’s firebombed women’s health clinic.

We were thrilled when Baird chose the Schlesinger Library as the home for his collection, but we also recognized the challenges involved. First up: where to put it? We rented a large office space in Allston from Harvard for June, July, and August to conduct an initial rough sort. With the clock ticking, a team of seven manuscript, book, and audiovisual staff members set to work weeding and reboxing the collection, container by container. Gems were unearthed, privacy issues surfaced, recycling bins filled and emptied, and the initial assessment made in March was confirmed; the Bill Baird collection, whittled down to about 300 books and 300+ cartons containing much material available nowhere else, will indeed be a unique resource for scholars pursuing a wide array of topics. The next chapter? Processing. To be continued . . .

—Kathryn Allamong Jacob
Johanna-Maria Fraenkel Curator of Manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library
Laura Peimer, left, and Catherine Lea Holbrook processed the Holtzman Papers.

Available for Research: The Elizabeth Holtzman Papers

A 1979 press release announcing that the congresswoman and Radcliffe alumna (magna cum laude, Class of 1962) Elizabeth Holtzman had just selected the Schlesinger Library as the home for her papers concluded: “Committed to values of human equality, justice, and honesty, Elizabeth Holtzman is a remarkable human being and a leader with both scope and an unswerving conscience. Congresswoman Holtzman is a worthy mentor for American women today and for those in the future who will use her papers for research at the Schlesinger Library.”

After more than 30 years, Holtzman continues to lead by example. Her collection, which is still growing, documents her career as a feminist, an activist, and an advocate in and out of political life from the 1970s through the 1990s. Early in 2016, a new finding aid to Holtzman’s original gift, along with finding aids to addenda and to the audio and video material in the collection, will provide researchers with a detailed description of the Elizabeth Holtzman Papers and the light they shine not only on a life of public service but also on crucial decades of the 20th century.

Holtzman was in the thick of things in those years. After graduating from Radcliffe and then Harvard Law School (JD ’65), she was recruited to work for Mayor John Lindsay, becoming the first woman assistant to a New York City mayor. In 1972, Holtzman ran a grassroots campaign against the Brooklyn Democratic congressman Emmanuel Celler, a 50-year incumbent, and in a stunning upset, became the youngest woman ever elected to the US House of Representatives, where she served four terms. As a freshman, Holtzman served on the House Judiciary Committee and participated in the Richard Nixon impeachment proceedings. In 1978, she worked against long odds to extend the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. Four years later, she was elected as New York City’s first female district attorney and led successful efforts to reform New York State’s rape laws and strengthen whistle-blower laws. In 1989, Holtzman was elected New York City’s first female comptroller; she launched programs to encourage minority- and women-owned firms to bid for city projects and oversaw the divestment of millions of dollars of New York City’s pension fund assets from South Africa.

These milestones and the ups and downs of Holtzman’s career so far are documented in the collection already here. Although access requires her permission, and some government records are closed for periods determined by law, the story that unfolds is impressive by any standard, and it’s not over yet. Holtzman has coauthored three books with Cynthia Cooper: Who Said It Would Be Easy? One Woman’s Life in the Political Arena (Arcade Publishing, 1996), The Impeachment of George W. Bush: A Practical Guide for Concerned Citizens (Nation Books, 2006), and Cheating Justice: How Bush and Cheney Attacked the Rule of Law, Plotted to Avoid Prosecution, and What We Can Do about It (Beacon Press, 2012). She has blogged about politics, women’s rights, and the civil rights movement for the Huffington Post. These 21st-century endeavors will be reflected in materials yet to be added to the Elizabeth Holtzman Papers.

—Kathryn Allamong Jacob
Johanna-Maria Fraenkel Curator of Manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library
“Have you tried wonder bread lately?” a black speech bubble at the top of the bright yellow poster playfully asks, as if coming from an unseen heavenly source. The bold graphic poster advertises “an evening with god,” an event at a rock music club in Boston’s South End that took place in 1968. Planned by the artist Corita Kent, a sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the evening brought together the activist priest Daniel Berrigan, the musician Judy Collins, and the Harvard professor Harvey Cox for an evening of performance, conversation about the Vietnam War, and informal communion over store-bought bread and wine.

Discovering this poster in the Papers of Corita at the Schlesinger Library marked a breakthrough in my understanding of Kent’s life and work. More than a compelling example of her graphic design prowess, the poster reveals the ways in which her art, activism, and religious life informed and influenced one another. Kent made a number of serigraphs that drew on the iconic slogans and primary colors of the Wonder Bread brand, offering “wonder bread” as a vernacular term for the communion host. These prints suggest that communion can take place whenever people come together in celebration over ordinary bread. “An evening with God” put that idea into practice.

I first encountered the Papers of Corita while working as the Agnes Mongan Curatorial Intern for the Harvard Art Museum’s exhibition Corita Kent and the Language of Pop, now on view until January 3, 2016. I hoped that Kent’s archive would provide context for the bold pop art prints she made in the 1960s. Yet as I pored over the collection, I encountered many objects that not only deepened my understanding of Kent as an artist, but were so visually exciting that they deserved an exhibition of their own. The Schlesinger Library’s exhibition, Corita Kent: Footnotes and Headlines, which closes December 18, offered an opportunity to explore and illustrate Kent’s life, teaching, activism, and art through her writings, sketches, photographs, and correspondence.

Both exhibitions represent an attempt to raise Kent’s profile as an artist worthy of rigorous study. Susan Dackerman, the former Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Curator of Prints, who organized the Harvard Art Museum exhibition, sought to shift Kent from her traditional place at the margins of the art world—as an anomalous nun—to the center of the pop art canon, showing how the works of well-known artists such as Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg are in conversation with her prints. Kent’s papers offer a similar opportunity to showcase her deep engagement with the religious, political, and artistic currents of the 1960s, from the antiwar movement to the Second Vatican Council.

Kent’s theological innovation is evident in her visual
meditations on canned tomatoes as well as on Wonder Bread. One of her most memorable prints, and certainly one of the most controversial, is her 1964 *the juiciest tomato of all*. Inside block letters that spell out “TOMATO,” a hand-written text proclaims, “If we are provided with a sign that declares Del Monte tomatoes are juiciest it is not desecration to add: ‘Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato of them all.’” Kent’s papers illuminate her continual experimentation with the hyperbolic language of Del Monte and Hunt’s tomato advertisements to depict Jesus and Mary in new, modern ways. In Kent’s 1966 booklet of writing and photo collage, “Choose Life or Assign a Sign or Begin a Conversation,” she arranges Hunt’s tomato catsup advertisements cut from magazines. The clippings proclaim that Hunt’s tomatoes are “ripened on the vine for 40 days and 40 nights,” evoking the time that Jesus spent fasting in the desert. In the accompanying text, Kent calls the advertisements “very biblical” and recommends using them as bible covers. Two years after Andy Warhol made his plywood Heinz ketchup boxes, Kent’s suggestion of a Bible wrapped in Hunt’s catsup advertisements stands as a theological innovation as well as a fresh, sly take on a pop art theme.

The most recent addition to the Papers of Corita is perhaps one of the best examples of Kent’s commitment to blurring the line between art and everyday objects. Photos in the collection document an intriguing commercial commission, a set of printed canvas panels meant to adorn the sides of computers. Designed for the Digital Equipment Corp. in 1976, the bright swaths of color brought art into the quotidian space of the office. In August of this year, a fortuitous phone call from Joseph Nahil, the employee who commissioned the pieces, enabled the Schlesinger Library to acquire an extremely rare set of six panels.

After numerous hours working on the Harvard Art Museum and Schlesinger exhibitions, I still notice something new each time I look at Kent’s prints. The layers of meaning woven into her works are profound and only deepen when viewed in light of her rich archive. Doodles of flowers decorate the leaves of a pocket-size daily calendar, pointing to Kent’s continual process of visually interpreting the world around her. Newspaper clippings document her standoff with the sign painters who executed the Boston landmark *Rainbow Swash*—Kent’s rainbow-colored stripes arching over a 150-foot gas tank—after they took liberties with her design; the clippings highlight her fierce commitment to her artistic vision. And a small untitled print—a negative white circle surrounded by yellow ink, the phrase “round wonder” inscribed within—suggests that for Kent, the commercial meaning of advertising slogans was not a given, but rather provided an opportunity to show the sacred in the most mundane.

—Eva Payne

*Eva Payne is the curator of Corita Kent: Footnotes and Headlines. She is a PhD candidate in American studies at Harvard.*
Each year, dozens of researchers rely on Schlesinger Library materials during the course of their work. Here, we’ve collected the titles published since last July that have benefited from our collections. How are our many personal papers, manuscripts, and memorabilia used by scholars and writers? Read on to find out.

Mourning Lincoln
Abraham Lincoln was the victim of our young nation’s first presidential assassination, on April 15, 1865. Martha Hodes’s examination of intimate responses to this historic event, which she found in personal diaries and correspondence from the following spring and summer, culminated in *Mourning Lincoln* (Yale University Press, 2015). Hodes, a New York University professor of history, tapped many of the Schlesinger’s collections during her research, and members of the Albert Gallatin Browne family, hailing from New England, recur at various points in the narrative. The resulting book is the first of its kind, and it has landed Hodes on the nonfiction longlist for the 2015 National Book Awards.

To watch video of Martha Hodes talking about what she found in her research, visit [www.radcliffe.edu/video/martha-hodes-personal-responses-lincolns-assassination](http://www.radcliffe.edu/video/martha-hodes-personal-responses-lincolns-assassination).

A Forgotten Sisterhood
In *A Forgotten Sisterhood: Pioneering Black Women Educators and Activists in the Jim Crow South* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), Audrey Thomas McCluskey acquaints us with the legacy of four black activist women who fought discrimination from the late 19th to the mid 20th century: Lucy Craft Laney, Mary McLeod Bethune, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Nannie Helen Burroughs. The book relies not only on the women’s personal writings, but also on remembrances from their students. The Papers of Charlotte Hawkins Brown—a nationally recognized educator in the early 20th century who transformed a one-room school into the accredited school and junior college known as the Palmer Memorial Institute—are housed at the Schlesinger.

Too Hot to Handle
Jonathan Zimmerman has published the first truly international look at a controversial topic with *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* (Princeton University Press, 2015), in which he details more than a century of school-based sex education—how it developed and eventually became a hot-button issue. At the Schlesinger, he used the Papers of Mary Steichen Calderone, a medical doctor and public health expert who took up the sex-ed cause in the mid-1960s. A professor of education and history at New York University, Zimmerman received a 2009–2010 Research Support Grant, which helped fuel this work.
These books, also published in the past year, are based on research the authors conducted in Schlesinger Library collections:

- Michele Wehrwein Albion, *The Quotable Amelia Earhart* (University of New Mexico Press, 2015)
- Betty Luther Hillman, *Dressing for the Culture Wars: Style and the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s and 1970s* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015)
- Susan Christine Seymour, *Cora Du Bois: Anthropologist, Diplomat, Agent* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015)

For a continually updated collection of published books and journal articles researched at the Schlesinger Library, visit bit.ly/schles_books.
Today, we largely take for granted that most babies will survive to see their first birthday. But a century ago, that wasn’t the case. In the early 20th century, the high number of infants who died prompted many American newspapers to refer to the public health crisis as the “slaughter of the innocents.” Additionally troubling, a baby’s race significantly affected its chances of survival. African American infants died at a rate twice as high as that of whites, and although mortality rates for both whites and blacks have drastically decreased, this two-to-one disparity still exists today.

The road leading me to study the social and cultural history of infant death has involved several stops at Radcliffe. As a Harvard undergraduate, I spent part of my junior year as a Radcliffe Research Partner, working with fellow Martin Summers RI ’08 to examine the experiences of African American patients at Saint Elizabeth’s Hospital, a federal insane asylum in Washington, DC. The project sent us deep into Harvard’s libraries. We combed through slave narratives for descriptions of black healing traditions, analyzed how early-20th-century black newspapers covered stories on madness, and reviewed medical journals to see how physicians discussed racial differences in their diagnoses and treatment of mental illness. It was a crash course in the methods historians use to examine the intersections of race, gender, health, and society, and the experience helped me develop an appreciation for what historians do.

Such tools proved indispensable when I started researching the history of a birth-control clinic for my senior thesis. Margaret Sanger’s campaign for universal access to birth control led her to open a clinic in Harlem in 1930, and I became interested in the challenges the clinic faced as it attempted to serve the surrounding black community. Sanger sought the support of local leaders, including ministers and medical professionals, to help bolster the clinic’s reputation. Additionally, the clinic’s staff distributed pamphlets meant to address black women’s fears that scientific birth-control techniques could result in unwelcome medical experimentation and infertility. Descriptions of the debates that took place between Sanger’s white staff and black community members were scattered throughout the clinic’s records. I was amazed that old microfilmed documents could yield such details and took special pleasure in coming across a report that noted the clinic’s original location—a mere five blocks from where I grew up.

In 2008, I applied for and received a Carol K. Pforzheimer Student Fellowship from the Schlesinger so that I could figure out how the story of Sanger’s clinic fit within a broader history of the role of black communities in the early
reproductive-rights movement. Archivists pointed me to the library’s collection of periodicals, which included Sanger’s monthly magazine *Birth Control Review*. The magazine contained articles written by respected black intellectuals, such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Charles Johnson, arguing that birth control should be considered part of a “new emancipation” for blacks. And primary-source collections such as the Black Women’s Oral History Project Interviews, 1976–1981, offered invaluable insights into black women’s experiences with family planning, abortion, and labor throughout the 20th century.

As a doctoral student at Princeton University, I am returning to the library to analyze the racial and gendered politics of infant health work. Who were the individuals and organizations behind these early-20th-century efforts? What role did the “save the babies” campaign—as it was popularly referred to—have in drawing government attention to African American health experiences? How did the campaign affect the work and role of traditional lay healers, such as midwives?

Through their involvement with the US Children’s Bureau and the Sheppard–Towner Act (its official and more descriptive title, the Promotion of the Welfare and Hygiene of Maternity and Infancy Act), reformers such as Dorothy Kirchwey Brown and Martha May Eliot promoted infant health work throughout the country, including in southern regions where many African Americans lived. As an active member of the League of Women Voters and chair of its Child Welfare Committee, Brown was deeply engaged in child welfare legislation. She maintained correspondence with public health officials throughout the country, keeping abreast of the work carried out on the ground in rural counties. Having received reports on the work done among black midwives in the South, Brown found the accounts “so fascinating,” she noted, “that I should like to come and join a midwife class myself.” Instead, she focused her efforts in Massachusetts and the District of Columbia to lobby for the passage of Sheppard–Towner, the first federally funded program of its kind.

After Eliot graduated from Radcliffe (Class of 1913) and studied medicine at Johns Hopkins, she traveled between New Haven, where she taught at Yale’s School of Medicine, and Washington, DC, where she steadily rose through the ranks at the Children’s Bureau. Her initial bureau appointment in 1924 was as director of the Division of Child and Maternal Health, and she eventually served as the bureau’s chief director in the 1950s. While the bureau engaged in a number of projects—including health demonstrations, nutrition studies, child labor legislation, and juvenile court reform—Eliot maintained a deep commitment to protecting children’s health. Among the numerous awards she received was one from Mary McLeod Bethune, head of the National Council of Negro Women, who honored Eliot in 1949 for her lifelong work in maternal and child health.

The Eliot and Brown collections have allowed me to explore interactions among federal agencies, state boards of health, and black health professionals, including physicians, nurses, and midwives. And I hope such sources will shed more light on important moments in the history of American health and health care.

—Wangui Muigai

A doctoral student in history at Princeton University, Wangui Muigai earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard in 2009. The Schlesinger Library recently awarded her a dissertation grant to conduct research at the library.

PLAYBOY
THEN AND NOW

Cornelia Spelman, 1967

Cornelia Spelman, 2015
In 1967, when Cornelia Spelman was a theater and education major at Emerson College looking for a part-time job, a girlfriend talked her into applying to be a bunny at the Playboy Club in Boston. “It was,” she recalls, “essentially a waitress job, but you made a lot of money (for those days)—and it certainly was theater.” She got the job, and—lucky for the Schlesinger Library—she saved her pay stubs, Playboy Club Bunny Manual, Bunny Test, and more, which she recently added to the collection of her own papers and diaries and those of her mother, which are already in the library.

“I’d go in the back door with my short hair and glasses,” says Spelman. “And I’d put on my contacts, my makeup, my false hair, my bunny suit—and then I’d enter the room, like a stage. At the end of the night, I’d disassemble the whole costume and leave out the back door again.”

A bunny only briefly, Spelman moved on to become a clinical social worker and psychotherapist and the author of Missing: A Memoir (Northwestern University Press, 2010)—for which she delved into her mother’s personal diaries—and many books that promote emotional and social development for young children. She is currently reading through 35 years of her own diaries in preparation for another memoir.

Reflecting on her life today, Spelman quotes her friend the writer William Maxwell, who said, “The view from 70 is breathtaking.” “It’s wonderful to have a perspective not many of us get, here in these archives,” she added. “It’s not always pleasant, but it’s always interesting.”

For more about Spelman’s work, visit www.corneliaspelman.com.

Then
- Playboy magazine publishes its first issue in December 1953, with a nude centerfold of Marilyn Monroe. The magazine’s circulation peaks with its November 1972 edition, which sells more than 7 million copies.
- The first Playboy Club opens in Chicago in 1960, followed by clubs in other cities throughout the world, including Boston in 1965.

Now
- In October 2015, Playboy announces it will stop publishing photographs of naked women, and the New York Times reports that the magazine’s circulation has dropped to about 800,000.
- The chain of nightclubs owned and operated by Playboy Enterprises is defunct by 1991, although new clubs later open in other countries, including Finland.
When asked what her favorite thing is about being a historian, Claire Bond Potter, who recently joined the Schlesinger Library Council, says with some mirth, “Reading other people’s mail.”

It’s important, she adds more seriously, to understand the past, especially in an election season. “The task of history is to understand how we’ve ended up where we are and why it matters,” she says. “It’s an important civic task.”

Potter became interested in history during her undergraduate days at Yale University, where she majored in English. She went to Yale because of its English department, but increasingly, she says, “fell into the habit of taking history courses because they were so good.” She describes the faculty as an all-star cast: Nancy Cott, Howard Lamar, John Merriman, Jonathan Spence. Just amazing teachers.

Another Yale history professor, Ann Fabian, who now teaches at Rutgers, made a profound impact on Potter by saying she could write a much more interesting research paper if she went to Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library and explored a certain collection. “It sounds corny,” Potter says, “but the first time I held a 19th-century document in my hand, it was like my head exploded. I thought, This is what history is about—listening to the stories of the dead and figuring out what they mean.”

After graduating from Yale in 1980, Potter worked for three years in a New York advertising firm, where she wrote press releases and a newsletter, but didn’t believe in the accounts the company represented, such as Nestlé and De Beers. So she applied to graduate school in history at New York University, where she earned her doctorate in 1990.

For 20 years, Potter taught history at Wesleyan University, earning promotions from assistant to associate to full professor. During that time, she published her first book, War on Crime: Bandits, G-Men and the Politics of Mass Culture (Rutgers University Press, 1998), and a raft of articles and essays, including many on feminism, gay history, and digital issues.

Returning to New York City in 2012, Potter joined the history faculty at the New School, a progressive university located primarily in Greenwich Village and known for its experimental, student-directed curriculum. Also in 2012, she published a book she coedited with Renee Romano, Doing Recent History: On Privacy, Copyright, Video Games, Institutional Review Boards, Activist Scholarship, and History That Talks Back (University of Georgia Press, 2012).

In addition to teaching and writing, Potter works on two major projects at the New School. She chairs the school’s Digital Humanities Initiative and codirects OutHistory.org. The digital project includes a university-wide minor and a new program called Digital Across the Curriculum, in which student fellows work with faculty members and their students to create two- to three-week digital projects within courses, with the aim of spreading knowledge about how technology can help the humanities.

OutHistory started as a Wiki site by Jonathan Ned Katz—who wrote the first LGBT history, Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA (Avon, 1978)—and is now a website that he; John D’Emilio, of the University of Illinois, Chicago; and Potter codirect. They collect and publish a wide range of information about LGBT history.

For the past six years, Potter has been conducting research at the Schlesinger for a book on radical feminism, using the papers of Susan Brownmiller, Andrea Dworkin, and Catharine MacKinnon, along with the records of the National Organization for Women. She was thrilled, she says, to be invited to join the library council. “I’ve been in love with the Schlesinger Library my entire career as a scholar,” she says. “When I was first in graduate school, women’s history was just coming together as a field. The Schlesinger Library was the place where all of us knew we would find the things we needed to make the field what it is today.”

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager
A Life Devoted to Inquiry: Cecily Cannan Selby ’46

Cecily Cannan Selby ’46 had a childhood steeped in science. Her father, a distinguished British biochemist, was lured to the United States in Europe’s post–World War I “brain drain,” accepting a faculty position at New York University’s School of Medicine when Selby was three. An only child, she summered with her family in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where a community of scientists in diverse fields and from varied backgrounds encouraged her not only to ask questions, but also to expect to be taken seriously.

At home and at boarding schools in England and Canada, Selby reveled in texts such as *The Restless Universe* by Max Born. “I fell in love with the ideas,” she says. Selby came to Radcliffe College as a sophomore at age 16, in 1943, because her international education put her ahead of her class. She was eager to contribute to the war effort and decided to concentrate in physics, a growing field that was having a major impact on the war, with new technologies such as radar and the atom bomb. In physics at Harvard, Selby soared. Her favorite class, Philosophy of Physics, taught by Philipp Frank—who once studied with Einstein—illuminated for her the processes of inquiry not just in science but in all disciplines.

Although she was young and often the only Radcliffe student in the room, Selby was undaunted. “I approached my Harvard professors as I had my father’s friends,” she says, “expecting to respect them and wanting them to respect me.” Frank certainly did. His note to Selby regarding her final exam read, “A+. Radcliffe won this race.”

Selby went on to earn a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the new field of physical biology, applying wartime technology to the study of cells. She then spent a decade in New York laboratories, first at the Sloan Kettering Institute and later at Cornell University Medical College, studying skin and muscle cell structures at the sub-microscopic level.

But with three young sons and a husband building his medical practice, Selby felt disconnected from the ladder-climbing struggles of her male colleagues in academic science. “To advance in professional research,” she says, “I needed to wake up at night thinking about intercellular bridges—not about my boys’ chicken pox and my household responsibilities.”

Selby left the lab with no plans to pursue another position, but she soon received an unexpected offer to teach science part-time at a small independent school in the city. Within a year, she stepped up to become headmistress. Although her new role seemed far afield from her training, Selby says, “I had the confidence and competence in problem solving that science can give you.”

That confidence served Selby in later national leadership positions at organizations such as Americans for Energy Independence, Avon Products, Girl Scouts of the United States of America, the National Science Foundation, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), the Radcliffe College Board of Trustees, and RCA.

It was her work at NCSSM that brought Selby back to her roots in academia, opening the door to an appointment as a professor of science education at NYU’s School of Education. There, Selby spent more than 10 years in the classroom, helping public school teachers improve science literacy for all.

Throughout her career, Selby has circled back to the values instilled in her during her summers at Woods Hole and to the processes of scientific inquiry she observed as a young Radcliffe student in Harvard physics classes. “In science and in all human inquiry,” Selby says, “the investigator has multiple choices of questions and procedures available. How those questions are asked frames the answers the experiment delivers.” And if inquiry is highly personal, as Selby argues, it needs a full range of diverse perspectives to truly advance human development.

Selby has donated the papers documenting her remarkable life and career to the Schlesinger Library and hopes to finish her memoir next year. She has also made a planned gift to Radcliffe, in the form of a real estate bequest, to maximize her support for the place that has played, as she says, “a uniquely valuable role” in her life. 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.

—Danielle Griggs
*Development Communications Manager*
This fall, Rosa (Rosie) Gumataotao Rios ’87, Treasurer of the United States, visited the Schlesinger Library for a roundtable discussion about the challenges and rewards of redesigning currency. Rios is overseeing a new design for the $10 bill, which will feature a woman and is due out in 2020. A viewing of selections from Schlesinger Library holdings on women, money, and business followed the discussion.