

Reflections on Our First Decade

Kären M. Mason, Curator

It hardly seems that ten years can have passed since that lovely October day in 1992 when we gathered in the Old Capitol Senate Chambers to celebrate the opening of the Louise Noun – Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives. But when I look around the archives, it's clear how far we've come and that there is great cause for celebration. Our shelves are filled with letters, diaries, photo albums, scrapbooks, and club records. Our reading room is busy with students processing collections or researchers reading them. And the archives has become a model for other institutions wishing to start their own women's archives. Like a ten-year-old girl, the archives is spirited and fresh, just coming into its own.

As this year of celebration begins, we should all take a moment to give thanks for the wonderful gift Louise Noun and Mary Louise Smith provided the women of Iowa in founding the archives. In the coming year we'll celebrate this achievement with a Friends of the Libraries event featuring filmmaker Marian Rees, a major exhibition, and a symposium highlighting the collections in the archives.

As we prepare for our second decade, I'm excited about what lies ahead. In the coming years we will continue the special projects we've begun: documenting the history of African-American and rural women and collecting records of girls' and women's sports in Iowa. And we will carry on our basic mission of documenting Iowa women of all walks of life. But we look forward to branching out into new areas as well: preserving the history of Iowa's Latinas and other underrepresented groups, further developing our website to make information about our collections more widely available, and reaching out to K-12 students.



Mary Louise Smith (1914-1997) and Louise Rosenfield Noun, co-founders of the Iowa Women's Archives. Photo by Jon Van Allen.

The success of our first decade has been due in large part to the assistance we've received from those of you who have donated papers, told friends about the archives, and made financial gifts. To make our dreams for the future come true, we will continue to need your help. With so many rich collections coming in the door, there is ever more work to be done in the archives. We're anxious to hire a permanent assistant archivist and are working to raise the endowment to accomplish that. We'll need your financial support as well as your ongoing assistance in spreading the word about the archives.

To help support the Iowa Women's Archives, contact Deborah Dreusicke, Director of Development for University Libraries at the University of Iowa Foundation, (319) 335-3305 or (800) 648-6973, deborah-dreusicke@uiowa.edu

And now, let the celebration begin!

Marian Rees to Speak in Honor of Iowa Women's Archives 10th Anniversary

Chances are that if you saw the recent television movies "Cora Unashamed" and "Ruby Bridges" you didn't realize they were produced by an Iowa native. Marian Rees is an award-winning film producer, philanthropist and University of Iowa alumna ('51) born in Le Mars, Iowa. Early in her Hollywood career Rees worked with Norman Lear on projects such as "All in the Family" and the pilot for "Sanford and Son." Eventually disillusioned by the lack of socially redeeming material on television, Rees founded her own production company, Marian Rees Associates, in 1981. Since that time, she has produced several made-for-television films, which have been recognized with numerous Emmy Awards and Golden Globe awards, among other honors.

Rees has donated scripts, publicity materials, correspondence, and other records of her production company, Marian Rees Associates, to the Iowa Women's Archives, along with papers documenting her involvement in such organizations as Women in Film.

Marian Rees will speak at a free public event on April 12th honoring the 10th anniversary of the archives and the 4 millionth acquisition of the University of Iowa Libraries.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2002

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Richey Ballroom

3rd floor, Iowa Memorial Union

For more information call (319) 335-5867



Marian Rees (center) with Carol Burnett and Elizabeth Taylor on the set of "Between Friends." Courtesy of Marian Rees Associates, Inc.



Shirley Briggs at Hawk Mountain, PA, 1945. Photo by Rachel Carson. Iowa City native Shirley Briggs, a naturalist, artist, and photographer, was a close friend of Rachel Carson. Briggs has donated her letters, diaries, photos, and writings to the archives.

African-American Women in Iowa

During the three and a half years Kathryn Neal was project archivist for the Iowa Women's Archives, she created a solid foundation of collections on which the archives will build for years to come. Fifty collections and 11 oral history interviews document the experiences of a wide range of African-American women, including actresses, social workers, professors, librarians, dancers, cooks, filmmakers, and civic activists. Students, scholars, and journalists have used these collections.

In February 2001, the IWA teamed up with the Johnson County Historical Society to present two public programs in Iowa City featuring the life of Bettye Tate, who operated a boarding house for African-American male students at a time when they were prohibited from living in University of Iowa dormitories.

Neal left the IWA in 1999 to head the Givens Collection of African American Literature at the University of Minnesota. The Iowa Women's Archives continues to seek material documenting the history of Iowa's African-American women.

Recent Research in the Archives

Dr. Suzanne Bunkers, University of Minnesota-Mankato, published *Diaries of Girls and Women* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), which includes excerpts from the Martha Ferguson Nash and Gwendolyn Fowler diaries.

Dr. Jennifer Gunn, University of Minnesota, is using Iowa women's letters, diaries, and memoirs to study rural perceptions of health and medicine in the early 20th century.

Dr. Katrina Sanders, University of Iowa, used the Dorothy Schramm papers in her article, "The Burlington Self-Survey in Human Relations: Interracial Efforts for Constructive Community Change, 1949-1951," *Annals of Iowa* (Summer 2001).

Dr. Shelley Lucas, Boise State University, recently defended her UI dissertation "Courting Controversy: Gender and Power in Iowa Girls' Basketball" on the transition from 6-on-6 to the 5-on-5 game.



Recovered History

In 1956 Dora Lee Martin became the first African-American woman elected Miss SUI at the State University of Iowa (now the University of Iowa). In an oral history interview in the Iowa Women's Archives, Dora Martin Berry tells "the story behind the story."



Thirty elementary school girls visited the IWA in May 2001 as part of the University of Iowa's "Prepare Our Daughters for Life" day. The girls learned about four Iowa women from different eras and received trading cards with biographical information and a photo of each woman.

Preserving Rural Women's History

The Rural Women's Project, with major support from the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and Land O'Lakes Foundation, hired Doris Malkmus as project archivist in September 1998. She spoke to almost 2,500 people in the next three years in 82 of Iowa's 99 counties, resulting in over 100 new collections from and about rural Iowa women.

These collections emphasize both the changing fabric of rural life and the impressive degree of rural women's organizational talents, community building skills, and diverse interests. They include the complete records of the Iowa Porkettes; papers of farmer and Farm Bureau columnist Bessie Newcomer; and the Civil War-era letters of Florinda Wakefield More. These are only a few of the reminiscences, diaries, scrapbooks, and letters that span the state and the century, giving rich accounts of the changes in women's lives in rural Iowa.

To augment these collections, Doris Malkmus interviewed twenty-nine rural women whose lives exemplify the changing roles of women in rural Iowa. The oral history project was funded by the State Historical Society, Inc. and the Historical Resource Development Program. Malkmus recently moved to Michigan, where she hopes to undertake similar work.

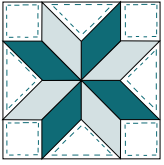
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The Louise Noun- Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives preserves the history of Iowa women and makes it available to the public by gathering letters, diaries, photos, speeches, minutes, scrapbooks, and other materials by or about women who were born or educated in Iowa or lived some part of their lives in the state.



Louise Noun's most recent book, Iowa Women in the WPA, was published by Iowa State University Press in 1999. Her next work, a biography of Iowa suffragist Annie Savery, will be available through the Iowa Women's Archives later this year.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 4, 2002

Kären Mason speaks at Chrysalis Foundation luncheon, Des Moines.

April 12, 2002

Filmmaker **Marian Rees** speaks at the Friends of the Libraries annual event.

October 2002 - January 2003

Exhibition highlighting Iowa Women's Archives collections. Main Library, University of Iowa.

November 15 - 16, 2002

Symposium in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Iowa Women's Archives, Iowa Memorial Union.

For further information about these and other events during the coming year, please contact the Iowa Women's Archives at (319) 335-5068.

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