

Presenting...

"Intrepid Travelers: Women on the Road 1850-1950" is on view in the North Exhibition Hall of the University of Iowa's Main Library through August 31, 1997. The exhibition highlights women who traveled for a variety of reasons: work, pleasure, adventure, thrill and necessity.

Several peripatetic Iowa women whose papers are held by the Iowa Women's Archives are featured in the exhibition: Miriam Ruth Cowden, Martha Eimen, Marie Schultz Meyer, Martha Nash, Clara Steen Skott, and Laura Gibson Smith.

In The Reading Room

Dance cards and photos of Mason City native Esther J. Walls are on display in the Archives reading room through August.

One of five African-American women who integrated Currier Hall at the University of Iowa in 1946, Walls earned a master's degree in library science from Columbia University in 1951 and became



internationally prominent in her field. She resides in New York City.

Almost Pioneers

"It was actually fun to get settled in our own little basement house. Earle made a cupboard out of a couple of boxes, and a drop-leaf table from some leftover boards.

"... The wind blew constantly and continuously, hurling sand against the windows. . . There was always a little heap of sand on the window sills. Earle set a pail outside the doorway one night. The next morning it was gone. He finally caught up with it a mile away."

Laura Gibson Smith, on homesteading near Chugwater, Wyoming with her husband Earle from 1913-1916. Laura Gibson Smith papers.

Gifts: A Diversity of Riches

How do new collections find their way to the Iowa Women's Archives? After hearing Curator Karen Mason speak at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Athens History Circle in Iowa City, Ellen Donelson urged her husband Ken to donate the Civil War- era letters of his grandmother Ellen Mowrer Miller. These letters by a brother to his sister provide a fascinating glimpse of a soldier's life in the Civil War and of student life in Iowa City after the war.

Happily, we also receive financial gifts. Donations arrive as memorials to a college classmate, as a means of honoring a young woman's Bat Mitzvah, as a way to celebrate the memory of a special friend, family member or professor. Such financial support guarantees that the rich history of Iowa's women will always be preserved.

The Iowa Women's Archives is funded by a permanent endowment and the generosity of individuals and corporate sponsors. Monetary contributions are greatly appreciated. For information call (319) 335-5068.

Project Update

We are delighted to announce that Kathryn Neal who directs the African-American Women in Iowa Project, has received a two-year extension of her appointment as assistant archivist in the Iowa Women's Archives, thanks in part to a financial donation from the State Historical Society of Iowa, Inc.

This spring the project took on a new dimension when the Archives was awarded a \$3,000 grant by the University's Cultural Affairs Council for its oral history project, "**Giving Voice to Their Memories.**"

Assisted by Julia Siverls, a doctoral candidate in education, Neal will record interviews with ten African-American women who are or were affiliated with the University of Iowa. They will include faculty members, students, and the often-forgotten women who were housekeepers in sorority and fraternity houses or ran boarding houses for students.

The African-American Women in Iowa Project is an ongoing effort by the Iowa Women's Archives to document the lives and experiences of African-American women with Iowa connections.

One Friday in April

"Two Fridays in April," a series of talks sponsored by the Archives, became One Friday in April due to the fickle spring weather.

Monica DeMott, recent M.A. graduate in the School of Art and Art History, gave a slide lecture on the work of Eve Drewelowe, who in 1924 became the first person to receive a graduate degree in art from the University of Iowa. The talk accompanied the current Archives exhibition organized by DeMott, "Eve Drewelowe: Transformations Within Her Life and Work."

Mankato State University professor **Suzanne Bunkers** was scheduled to speak about editing a diary for publication, but was caught between a Minnesota flood and an Iowa blizzard. We hope to reschedule her talk.

Who, Me?

So you have an attic filled with memories. Who besides you cares about them? The diaries, photos, scrapbooks, school banquet menus, and notes on zealous political forays all represent a life you put together. They are clues to an important social history.

Imagine future researchers as you comb through your

past. Call or write the Iowa Women's Archives if you have questions about donations. We would love to take your life in our hands!

Virtual Chautauqua

On March 23, 1891, Rachel Katharine La Sheck was born in Iowa City. In 1911, after studying voice professionally, she began her career which included a stint with the Redpath Chautauqua as a member of The Four College Girls and the Marigold Quartet. To learn more about La Sheck, visit the Katharine La Sheck exhibit on our home page: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/exhibit/lasheck.htm>.

Who Does The Work Around Here Anyway?

- Karen M. Mason, curator
- Kathryn Neal, assistant archivist
- Margaret Richardson, librarian (half time)
- George Mullally, librarian (quarter time)
- Robert Jett, library assistant

Students and volunteers are a vital part of the Archives' operations. They organize and write guides to collections and perform a myriad of other duties, from assisting researchers to answering phones and performing simple preservation measures.

An Iowa Woman in Shanghai

August 1, 2, 3, 1946: Shanghai heat gets intolerable. Our usual breeze is no longer dependable. I wake in the night, dripping.

So wrote Clara Steen Skott (1888-1994) shortly after arriving in Shanghai to join her husband Hans Skott, who was working for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Six months later, when she began teaching high school home economics at the McTyeirean School for girls, she experienced the other extreme:

February 17, 1947: First day at school. Took taxi at 9. School heating plant or chimney not in working order, so left coat and suit on all day, besides wearing 2 union suits, wool stockings, and thick cotton plaid dress under my suit!

Skott is one of several Iowa women featured in the current exhibition "Intrepid Travelers: Women on the Road, 1850-1950" in the North Exhibition Hall of the University of Iowa's Main Library. Skott's diaries, photo albums, and newspaper columns are among her papers in the Iowa Women's Archives.

Clara and Hans Skott met while students at Iowa State

University. The Skotts farmed in Iowa during the 1920s and 1930s and moved to Madison in 1937. She made use of her home economics and journalism training throughout her life, writing for *Successful Farming* in the 1910s and for the *Middleton, Wisconsin*, newspaper in the 1970s.

Research use increases

Students of professors Linda Kerber and Jane Desmond and teaching assistant Rachel Bohlmann spent many hours conducting research in our reading room last semester.

Desmond's students undertook in-depth research for the American Studies/Women's Studies senior seminar, while Kerber's and Bohlmann's students each spent several hours examining a collection to get a taste of archival research firsthand.

During the months of February and March twenty-six persons studied the papers of women in professional careers, fourteen investigated social issues in women's papers, and fifteen analyzed the records of women's political or social organizations.

Since the Iowa Women's Archives opened in October 1992, 1,917 students, scholars, Elderhostel participants, and others have visited and made use of the collections.

Here and There in Iowa

Assistant Archivist Kathryn Neal continues to travel the state speaking to women's groups and meeting with African-American women. This past year she spoke in Davenport, Waterloo, and Des Moines and visited with Iowa women from Keokuk to Omaha.

Nearly thirty-five collections of photographs, letters, speeches, club programs, scrapbooks, and other items have been donated to the Archives as a result of the efforts of Neal and her advisory board.

Curator Karen Mason balances her time between administering the Archives and giving class lectures, talking to community groups, and visiting women across Iowa to gather their personal papers. Recently she spoke to the Arts Guild of Burlington, a PEO chapter in Des Moines, and a group of high school students participating in the National Scholars Academy at the University of Iowa.

If you would like Mason or Neal to speak to your group or wish to discuss donating items, please call the Iowa Women's Archives, (319) 335-5068 or email us at lib-women@uiowa.edu