

# Iowa Women's Archives NEWS

## RURAL AND FARM WOMEN PROJECT

The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation has awarded the Iowa Women's Archives \$40,000 to hire an assistant archivist for one year to collect the papers of rural and farm women. This individual will travel around the state making presentations and meeting with people who might have materials to donate to the archives.

Contact curator Kären Mason if you know of any photographs, letters, diaries, reminiscences, or other documents that inform us about the lives of Iowa's rural or farm women, past or present.

## REAP/HRDP GRANT

Bringing the archives to you! Thanks to a grant of \$5760 from Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection/Historical Resource Development Program, the archives is making its collections accessible to users around the globe. The grant enabled us to hire Natalie Brody to process two large collections and Jessica Miller to prepare finding aids for the World Wide Web. Check it out. <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/>

## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

An increasing number of archives researchers are discovering our home page which includes:

- guides to over 80 collections
- a list of our collections
- notes on recent accessions
- press releases
- a virtual exhibit



## INDEPENDENCE DAY

July 4, 1899

*"Dawned upon this part of the universe a damp, dubious dragged sort of day, but nothing daunted the 'Daughters of Ceres,' a few of them calmly proceeded to fry their Spring chicken, pack their lunch baskets, and hie them away to 'Walnut Hill Farm,' the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Flynn, there among thoroughly congenial spirits to celebrate the glorious 4th in a most satisfactory manner."*

(Minutes, Daughters of Ceres records)

The Daughters of Ceres is a social and benevolent club founded in 1898 at the Martin Flynn home, now part of the Living History Farms in Urbandale. The club held a delightful celebration on its hundredth anniversary, May 19, 1998, at the Church of the Land, Living History Farms.

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.

## MARY LOUISE SMITH (1914-1997)

We were all saddened by the death of Mary Louise Smith in August 1997. We miss her warmth, her energy, and her insights. Her founding of the Iowa Women's Archives with Louise Noun exemplified her desire to recognize the achievements of women and to promote a broader public role for women.

Once the archives was up and running, she continued her enthusiastic support and looked forward to promoting the archives for many years to come. After a program in which she, Louise Noun, and I spoke about the archives, Mary Louise said "Let's take this show on the road!" Louise and I have carried on the "show," but it doesn't seem the same without Mary Louise Smith.

One of Smith's desires was that the archives intensify its efforts to collect the papers of farm women. Through a generous grant from the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and numerous donations received in Smith's memory, the archives will be able to carry out this wish.

Donations in memory of Mary Louise Smith may be sent to the University of Iowa Foundation, Levitt Center, Iowa City, IA 52242. Please signify that the contribution is to benefit the Iowa Women's Archives.

--Kären Mason, Curator

## A FEW OF OUR NEW COLLECTIONS

- Berry, Vern.** Cookbook editor.  
**Berry, Venise.\*** Writer.  
**Blake, Debra J.** Journalist.  
**Burleson, Jane.\*** City councilor.  
**Cech, Annette.** Mother of Nobel Prize winner.  
**Cohen, Gertrude S.** Legislator.  
**Egenes, Joan Vander Naald.** Entrepreneur.  
**Englert, Edna.** Organist.  
**Fowler, Gwendolyn.\*** Pharmacist.  
**Havel, Marie Tener.** Nurse.  
**Hawkins, E. Marie.\*** Teacher.  
**Iowa Cornets.** Basketball team.  
**Johnson, Ruth Pitkanen.** Artist.  
**Kazmer, Molly Bolin.** Basketball player.  
**Larson, Helen.** Writer.  
**Mays, A. Louise.\*** Social worker.  
**Miller, Opal L.** Legislator.  
**Moore, Mary Ellen.** Teacher.  
**Paul, Dorothy.** Director, United Nations Association, Iowa Division.  
**Paul, Margaret.** Chautauqua performer.  
**Pendleton, Roberta.** Sioux City resident.  
**Quota Club of Sioux City.**  
**Reed, Olabelle.\*** Teacher.  
**Rubel, Jane Christoffer.** Basketball player.  
**Schanke, Ruth.** Founded Spouses of Gays and Lesbians.  
**Shloss and Mannheimer Family.** Prominent Des Moines Jewish family.  
**Stevens, Harriet A.** Home economist.  
**Stone, Bette.** Telegrapher.  
**Tinsman, Maggie.** Legislator.  
**Wilson, Eva Donelson.** Nutrition professor.  
**Yates, Janie.** Teacher.  
**Zimmerman, Jo Ann.** Lieutenant Governor.

\*received as part of the African-American Women in Iowa Project

## APRIL IN ALGONA

Kären Mason spent two days in northern Iowa in April. She spoke to high school students, the Rotary Club, an Iowa history class at Iowa Lakes Community College in Algona, and the Palo Alto Arts Council in Emmetsburg. Many thanks to retired history teacher Jerry Yocum, who arranged these talks as well as visits to local historical sites (and kept Kären alert through her busy schedule with a visit to the local espresso café).

## EMMA THE RIVETER

*"We riveters worked in pairs and timing was of the essence in getting the rivets uniform. I used a rivet gun on the outside of the wing and the partner had a bucking bar on the back side. She would buck (flatten) rivets when I fed them in and applied the gun to them."*

Emma Lou Leeper Phelan, now of Cherokee, Iowa, describing her work as a riveter at Ryan Aeronautical Co. in San Diego, California just after finishing high school in Brooklyn, Iowa, 1945. (Emma Lou Phelan papers)

## SOJOURN TO SIOUX CITY

Curator Kären Mason and assistant archivist Kathryn Neal wandered westward last October, stopping in Fort Dodge to pick up the papers of Jane Burleson, the city's first African-American and female city councilor. In Sioux City Mason and Neal spoke to the Quota Club and were given the club's records for the Iowa Women's Archives. Mason also spoke at the Iowa Library Association's annual meeting, which took place in Sioux City, and acquired the papers of Sioux City resident Roberta Pendleton, a member of the Emerson Study Club.

## OUR FIRST PH.D.

Catherine Rymph received her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in May 1998, becoming the first person to write a dissertation based on substantial research in the Iowa Women's Archives. She became interested in women's roles in the Republican party while working at the archives in 1992 and 1993 as one of our first student employees. Her dissertation is entitled "Forward and Right: Women in the Republican Party, 1920-1967." Rymph will be teaching American history in the former East Germany in 1998-99.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS USE THE ARCHIVES

*"While I was reading the correspondence you donated, I came across a letter that shocked me. It was from a New York senator named Charles E. Goodell in 1970. He agreed with your views on the war, which opened a new door to my thinking. I never thought about the people in the senate protesting the war. I had always thought of hippies when I thought of protest, or ugly outfits."*

From a letter written to Peg Mullen by a Mt. Pleasant, Iowa high school student who studied contemporary American history in a course taught by Sharman Vermeer.

Vermeer annually brings her high-school students to the Iowa Women's Archives to examine the papers of Peg Mullen, author of *Unfriendly Fire: A Mother's Memoir*. Mullen's book describes her persistent attempts to receive an explanation from the U.S. government for her son Michael's 1970 death in Vietnam by "friendly fire." Mullen's papers contain hundreds of letters she received from Vietnam veterans and their families describing experiences of the war at home and in Vietnam.

## RECORDINGS AND REMEMBRANCES

Imagine taking a walk down memory lane as someone recalls her life experiences. That's precisely how assistant archivist Kathryn Neal and oral history assistant Julia Siverls spent part of the past year, interviewing women for the project "Giving Voice to Their Memories: Oral Histories of African-American Women in Iowa." Neal and Siverls interviewed ten women, most of them associated with the University of Iowa.

- Dora Martin Berry, Miss State University of Iowa 1955 and school social worker
- Louise Bolden, former cook and housekeeper
- N. June Davis, retired university administrator
- Madgetta Dungy, medical school recruitment officer
- Geraldene Felton, former dean of nursing
- Barbara James, alumna and former educator
- Dianna Penny, artist, musician, and secretary
- C. Vivian Stringer, basketball coach
- Adrien Wing, law professor
- Mary Wood, former YWCA administrator

The tapes and transcripts will be available for research use in the archives.

## CALLING ALL TEACHERS

Archives co-founder Mary Louise Smith hoped that the archives would build a strong collection of schoolteachers' papers. Please help us honor Smith's memory by donating teachers' contracts, lesson plans, school board records, letters, diaries, photographs, and other papers that document the work of Iowa's female teachers, whether from 100 years ago or yesterday.

## REMINDE YOU OF GETTING USED TO THE INTERNET?

Sarah Rhoad wrote to her sister Ellen Mowrer Miller in 1904: *"We have a phone, it is on the south wall in the dining room a suitable place accessible at all times. Some persons have them placed in the bedroom, lots of racket where they are. I have never yet spoken in ours."* (Ellen Mowrer Miller papers)

## TURNING UP THE VOLUME ON WOMEN'S VOICES

Scholars who attended the MidAmerica American Studies Association annual conference in Iowa City in April learned about various forms of "conversations" in archival collections, whether correspondence between mothers and sons, courtship letters, or oral histories. Kären Mason spoke on the topic "Letters, Diaries, and all that Stuff: Listening in on Conversations of Iowa Men and Women," while Kathryn Neal told the audience "What She Said! African-American Women's Words."

## USES OF SUFFRAGE: REPRISÉ

"The Uses of Suffrage: Women, Politics, and Social Change Since 1920" brought political activists and scholars to the University of Iowa campus in September 1996 for a series of stimulating discussions. If you missed this exciting conference, you can experience the two-hour edited videotape containing excerpts from sessions. Contact the archives if you would like to borrow or purchase a copy of the tape.

During the past year 999 students, scholars, and other researchers have visited the Iowa Women's Archives and made use of the collections.

## TRANSITIONS

When **N. June Davis** retired from her position as assistant vice president and quality coordinator in the University of Iowa's Office of Finance and University Services in June 1997, she asked that in lieu of receiving retirement gifts financial donations be made to the archives' African-American Women in Iowa project. We thank June Davis for her generosity.

The IWA lost an enthusiastic advocate with the passing of **Virginia Harper** (1929-1997) last September. Harper, a member of the advisory board for the African-American Women in Iowa project, was a native of Fort Madison and an x-ray technician and medical assistant in her family's clinic until 1977. Actively involved in civil rights issues since childhood, she most recently served as president of the Fort Madison NAACP. She will be missed.

**Margaret Richardson** will retire on July 31, 1998 after twenty-one years with the University of Iowa Libraries, the last two and a half years in the Iowa Women's Archives. Before joining the archives staff, Margaret ran the browsing room, the reserved book room, and the book stacks and was coordinator of the Friends of the Libraries.

Special thanks and farewell to **Julia Siverls** who earned her Ph.D. in education this spring and has left the IWA. Siverls was an oral history assistant for the African-American Women in Iowa project.

## HOW TO REACH US

**Phone:** 319-335-5068  
**Fax:** 319-335-5900  
**E-mail:** lib-women@uiowa.edu  
**Address:** Iowa Women's Archives  
Main Library  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

## AN IOWA BASKETBALL TIMELINE

*Sports history in the Iowa Women's  
Archives collections!*

**1893--(AMES)** Women's basketball introduced at Iowa Agricultural College, noted in speech by Professor Janice Beran, Iowa State University, 1983.

**1918--(FOREST CITY)** Malinda Huus plays on the Forest City High School girls basketball team (she was our curator Kären Mason's grandmother).

**1928--(IDA GROVE)** Sally White (later Sarah Longchamp) leads two state championship teams; named to Iowa Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, 1972.

**1971--(RUTHVEN)** Jane Christoffer Rubel successfully sues Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union to become the first married woman with a child to participate in Iowa interscholastic athletics.

**1973--(ADEL)** Shooting ace Julie Goodrich helps take Adel to "state" and makes the Iowa Girls All-State Basketball Team.

**1978--(CEDAR RAPIDS)** George Nissen purchases a franchise in the new Women's Basketball League, introducing the Iowa Cornets.

**1978--(MORAVIA)** Molly (Van Benthuyzen) Bolin first to sign a contract with the professional basketball team, the Iowa Cornets.

The Iowa Women's Archives  
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University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

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