

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN: WOMEN'S ARCHIVES IN THE YEAR 2000

BY KÄREN M. MASON AND TANYA ZANISH-BELCHER

ABSTRACT: The number of repositories dedicated to collecting women's papers has grown substantially in the past quarter century, with no fewer than 15 established after 1990. This article analyzes that trend, arguing that activists—as well as scholars and archivists—have been at the forefront in establishing these new archives. As the fields of women's history, women's studies, and gender studies have matured, and as women's historians have broadened their vision to include diverse groups, geographic regions, and topics, significant gaps in the documentary record have become evident. Scholars, archivists, and activists have responded to that need with new collecting initiatives and new archives. The authors contend that woman-centered repositories will continue to play an important role in the archival landscape in the coming decades.

Introduction

In 1973 *American Archivist* devoted an entire issue to the theme of women in archives. In addition to pieces on the status of women in the profession, the issue included an article by Eva Moseley on women's collections. She focused primarily on the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College and on the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, but included discussion of a number of other women's collections. She also raised questions about the nature of separate women's collections that retain their relevance today: Should women's repositories exist at all? If so, what should they collect? Should the work of documenting women's lives and activities be left to women's archives alone? Moseley suggested that women's repositories were an important step forward, but that there might come a time when separate women's collections were not needed.¹

In the quarter century since Moseley's article, the number of repositories dedicated to collecting women's papers has grown substantially, with many established after 1990. Certainly, the growth of women's studies programs and the establishment of women's history as a legitimate field of study are a large part of the explanation for this phenomenon. But the reasons for founding women's collections have been varied and have come from outside the academy as often as from within. Some recent collections have been started at the request of women's studies programs, others by archivists or

library directors to meet a perceived research need or to focus collecting on a neglected area. Other women's collections have been founded by benefactors offering endowments to support the establishment of women-centered archives. This article discusses some of the women's collections founded in the past decade, examines the reasons for their establishment, and considers some of the archival issues raised by the existence of such collections.

A note on definitions is in order. When we speak of "women's collections," what do we mean? In a 1986 issue of *Special Collections* devoted to women's library and archival collections, Suzanne Hildenbrand commented on the imprecision of the category:

The definition, classification and selection of women's collections pose numerous problems. Some of these collections stand alone in separate buildings, others are the contents of a file cabinet or two in rooms used primarily for other purposes. Some consist of books that circulate with the general collection, distinguished only by a bookplate. The only guide to whether or not a collection is a women's collection is if the sponsoring institution describes it as such. Most women's materials, of course, are in general collections.²

For Hildenbrand, the problem was deciding which repositories to include in her survey of women's collections. The challenge of definition remains today. As the membership of the Society of American Archivists' Women's Collections Roundtable illustrates, "women's collections" can encompass freestanding buildings, endowed positions for women's studies archivists, and mainstream repositories that include women's papers as a significant collecting focus. We confine our analysis to archives that are clearly identified as women's collections, usually by the inclusion of the word "women" in their names. Our discussion highlights trends and provides examples of women's archives founded in the 1990s, but is not exhaustive.

Should Women's Repositories Exist?

The question "Should women's repositories exist?" is really two very different questions, depending on who is asking. Each has its own subtext, posing a challenge to the foundation upon which women's archives have been and continue to be built. The first form of the question challenges the notion that women merit their own repository. It views the very existence of women's archives as privileging women and, in consequence, discriminating against men. The second form of the question sees women's repositories as ghettoizing women, thereby placing women in a secondary status rather than incorporating them into the mainstream of academic study. Both concerns are important and must be addressed.

We suspect that everyone who works in a women's collection has at one time or another been asked—usually by a man, and only half in jest—"When are they going to start a men's archive?" The flip answer is that for most of history archives have been "men's archives": they have collected almost exclusively the papers of men. But a more thoughtful response is that, until recently, archives neglected the papers of women and non-majority groups, instead concentrating their collecting on the papers of men

who held positions of power or influence in American society. As Debra Newman Ham wrote, American cultural institutions, including our archives and historical societies, have been shaped by Euro-Americans. From the colonial period on, the papers that were preserved "tended to focus on literate Euro-Americans, particularly the lives of great men, such as presidents, statesmen, and military leaders."³ Women's archives help to redress this imbalance.

In its second form, the question "Should women's repositories exist?" speculates on the potential adverse effects of separatism: Does having a separate repository for women's papers marginalize women? This parallels a debate among academics over the merits of separatism versus integration. Judy Lensink made a compelling argument for women's history remaining a separate intellectual field within mainstream academe. In essence, she contended that remaining separate can be an important intellectual tool, allowing scholars to view old subjects with fresh perspectives. Lensink warned that "A highly suspicious subtext is embedded in the ongoing call by concerned historians for 'synthesis,' in which the 'subfields' of women's and ethnic history are cajoled to reenter the confines of History writ large, to 'wrestle inside the ring. A major strength of feminist history," she argued, "is that thinkers stand on the *margins* of 'the' story so as to see it as freshly as possible."⁴ We believe that the separatism of women's collections likewise enriches the possibilities for collecting and for documenting groups outside the mainstream. The very notion of a women's repository frees us from some of the blinders of traditional collecting, encouraging us to think in new ways about how to document various groups and subcultures. Iowa State University's Archives of Women in Science and Engineering, for example, seeks the papers not only of prominent and successful scientists, but of those who had patchwork careers, that is, careers interrupted by the demands of family life (moving with a spouse for his job) or curtailed because of discrimination against women by colleagues or employers. This effort to document the social history of women scientists brings a new and oft-neglected dimension to the history of science.

We contend that separate women's collections are critical for two reasons. First, they provide a means of rectifying the earlier neglect of women's papers and preventing such gaps in documentation from occurring in the future. Second, they provide a vehicle to promote and enhance the study of women's history. Women's collections are established for the same reasons that other special subject repositories exist: to document an underdocumented subject or group and thus call attention to it.

Women's archives have a meaning greater than the collections they house. It is symbolically significant to have "a room of one's own," in Virginia Woolf's words, that is, a physical space set aside for women's papers, whether it be a separate building such as the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, or stacks and a reading room within a university library, such as the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa.⁵ Likewise, establishing a program to collect women's papers, even without a separate physical space, like the Archives of Women in Science and Engineering at Iowa State University, validates women's experiences. These tangible commitments to documenting the lives of women make it clear that women's lives and experiences are valued by society. By so doing they encourage women who might never have thought themselves worthy of being remembered through history to donate their papers to an archives.

A Brief Look at the History of Women's Collections in the United States

The creation of repositories dedicated to collecting women's materials has gone through several phases in the twentieth century. As Anke Voss-Hubbard noted in a 1995 *American Archivist* article, the 1930s and 1940s witnessed a heightened effort on the part of the federal government and academic institutions to preserve primary sources. This concern rarely extended to material by or about women. That work was left to feminists. According to Suzanne Hildenbrand, "... the 1930s and 1940s saw a remarkable trend towards the establishment of women's collections, as veterans of the feminist campaigns of the early Twentieth century anxiously sought institutional homes for their private papers, and other materials they had collected, in a world suddenly disinterested in, or hostile to, the cause to which they had devoted their lives." Most notable was Mary Ritter Beard and Rosika Schwimmer's attempt to launch a World Center for Women's Archives in the 1930s. Their goals were to promote research on women and to ensure that a record of their campaigns for women's rights, peace, or other issues would be preserved. They hoped that the archives would also serve as an example of activism for other women. The archives foundered in 1940, but Beard had managed to interest librarians at Smith and Radcliffe in collecting women's papers. The Woman's Rights Collection at Radcliffe College and the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, both established in the early 1940s, ultimately grew into the premier collections of primary source material on women. The Woman's Collection of the Texas Woman's University Library was started in 1932 to collect writings by and about women in literature, the arts, and politics; in the 1970s it acquired its first large manuscript collection and has become a major repository of the papers of women in Texas and the Southwest.⁶

Martha S. Bell's 1959 survey of special women's collections in libraries included several established in the 1940s and 1950s, such as the Afro-American Woman's Collection at Bennett College, founded in 1946, and the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Library in Red Cloud, Nebraska, founded in 1955. Bell defined women's collections as materials segregated from the main holdings of a library or constituting a special library in their own right. While primarily concerned with collections of published volumes, most of the 38 collections on Bell's list also included manuscript materials. Bell reported that "Several excellent collections of books, files of papers, letters, journals, etc., offer scholars extensive and invaluable source material on the history of women, their contribution, collective or individual, to the social, political, and intellectual problems of their times." But as Suzanne Hildenbrand wrote, many of the collections founded prior to the 1970s "languished for decades, poorly supported and understaffed" until "[t]he upsurge of feminist consciousness . . . stimulated enormous growth and development of women's collections."⁷

As women's history emerged in the late 1960s and grew rapidly in popularity during the 1970s, scholars and archivists reluctant to accept this new field of study asserted that there were not enough primary sources to support historical research. Some archivists did take note of the increasing numbers of women's history courses and began actively soliciting women's papers.⁸ Others compiled guides to their holdings on women.

These guides were usually brief, typewritten, self-published lists of women's papers held by a particular repository. When the Michigan History Division published a *Bibliography of Sources Relating to Women* held by seven major repositories in the state in 1975, it listed fewer than three hundred collections. Clearly, the vast majority of primary sources by and about women in Michigan remained "hidden from history." A guide published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the early 1970s took the form of a narrative essay in which the authors discussed not only specific collections, but how to locate sources by and about women buried in the society's other collections. This guide grew out of a series of classroom presentations given by the authors for a graduate women's history seminar at the University of Wisconsin.⁹

It was *Women's History Sources*, published by Bowker in 1979, that finally exploded the myth that there were insufficient primary sources to support the study of women's history. In the late 1970s, Andrea Hinding and her staff at the University of Minnesota's Social Welfare History Archives conducted this sweeping survey. They sent questionnaires to repositories around the country asking staff to describe their holdings on women. Field-workers followed, scouring stacks for material on women buried within collections. The resulting guide listed over 18,000 collections of personal papers, organizational records, and oral history collections in more than a thousand repositories representing all 50 states. The scope of the finished product surprised observers and participants alike, as did the realization that this guide represented only the tip of the iceberg. The impact of *Women's History Sources* was, in fact, much greater than the published guide itself. The project caused many archivists to rethink the way they organized and described their holdings, eventually bringing to light countless women's materials hidden in the papers of husbands, fathers, and sons. It could no longer be asserted accurately that there were few resources for the study of women's history.¹⁰

The 1970s were thus characterized by the reexamination of existing holdings for sources on women, followed by revisions of card catalogs and finding aids to reflect these discoveries. There was also a heightened effort by many repositories to collect women's papers. Some repositories compiled guides to the women's papers among their holdings, and others established discrete women's collections as a subset of their holdings. At the same time, a few distinctive new archives were established to collect the papers of groups not likely to be documented in traditional repositories. The Lesbian Herstory Archives, founded in 1974 in New York City, was staffed entirely by volunteers and housed in a private apartment. The Bethune Museum-Archives for Black Women's History, established in 1979 in Washington, D.C., was the culmination of four decades of work by the Archives Committee of the National Council of Negro Women.¹¹

The trend toward separate women's collections accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s. By 1989 there were enough archivists involved with women's collections to support the establishment of a Women's Collections Roundtable in the Society of American Archivists.¹² Archivists sent information about their holdings to the first directory, published in 1992. These archivists represented a wide range of repositories, including distinct women's collections as well as mainstream repositories with a special collecting focus on women. By the time the third directory was published electronically in 1997, the number of entries had grown to 119 individuals and repositories. It was clear

by this time not only that the Schlesinger Library and Smith College could not collect everything, but that a greater effort to document women on local, regional, and state levels was needed. The Schlesinger Library surveyed archives around the country in the early 1990s to locate local and state women's organizational records and to distribute the information to potential donors. The guide that resulted included 78 repositories, reflecting the sea change that had taken place in attitudes toward women's history in the preceding quarter century.¹³

Reasons for the Blossoming of Women's Archives in the 1990s

By our count, no fewer than 15 women's archives have opened their doors since 1990 (see appendix). Two related factors explain this flowering of women's collections in the past decade. First, as the generation that founded the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s ages, these "second wave" feminists have become concerned about preserving the history of the movement. Concomitantly, some are at a stage in their lives or careers in which they have significant financial resources at their disposal and can provide funding for efforts to preserve this history. Second, the maturing of women's history, women's studies, and gender studies as fields of scholarship has created a need for broader and more diverse primary source materials. Scholars, archivists, and activists have responded to that need with new collecting initiatives and archives.

The involvement of aging feminists in founding women's archives is not surprising. As Anne Firor Scott writes, "women's history in this country has developed in close relationship with women's activism and has itself affected that activism, providing the inspiration and encouragement for many efforts to broaden women's world." Along with their demands for new social, political, and economic roles, feminists of the 1960s and 1970s sought to reclaim their past by uncovering the hidden history of their foremothers. Like their feminist forebears who placed the papers of the suffrage and peace movements in archival repositories, these activists of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s now seek to preserve a record of their struggles as inspiration for younger women.¹⁴

In fact, several of the women's archives founded in the 1990s were born of the same goal that spawned the earliest women's archives in the 1930s and 1940s. That is, activist women outside universities offered endowments to support women-centered archives in order to preserve a record of the women's movement. The Louise Noun-Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries was founded in 1991 by two prominent Des Moines women. They were Louise Noun, an art collector, historian, and social activist, and Mary Louise Smith, who had chaired the Republican National Committee in the mid-1970s. In the 1960s, Noun had conceived the idea of a women's archive for Iowa while researching *Strong-Minded Women: The Emergence of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (1969). In 1991 she shared her idea with Smith, who believed the papers in such an archives would both preserve the history of women's achievements and spur young women to become involved in public life by the examples they provided. Noun sold the Frida Kahlo painting "Self-Portrait with Loose Hair" at auction in May 1991, netting \$1.5 million for an endowment for an Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa. The University of Iowa

Foundation then undertook a campaign to raise an additional half-million dollars for the archives, which opened in 1992.¹⁵ Another example is the Women's Movement Archives, a component of the Women's Collections in the Georgia State University Special Collections Department. This archives was founded in 1995 when a wealthy benefactor donated her personal papers and an endowment to fund a half-time archivist. The collection documents the women's movement in Georgia, but the department also offers other women's materials. In contrast to the Iowa Women's Archives, which has its own staff, stacks, and reading room, the Georgia Women's Movement Archives is a collecting focus within the Special Collections Department at Georgia State.¹⁶

There is at least one women's archives conceived by university administrators. When Mundelein College, the last four-year women's college in Illinois, merged with Loyola University Chicago in 1991, the college wanted to maintain the women's college tradition of empowering women. To do this they established the Ann Ida Gannon Center in 1994, consisting of a women's studies program, a Heritage Room, and the Women and Leadership Archives. The archives holds the records of Mundelein College, as well as personal papers and the records of such organizations as Women-Church Convergence, Homemakers for the Equal Rights Amendment, and Deborah's Place, which operates shelters for single, homeless women in Chicago. The Women and Leadership Archives collects materials primarily in Chicago and the Midwest.¹⁷

With the proliferation of women's studies, women's history, and gender studies programs have come increased demands for historical documentation to support research on women. Once viewed as a passing trend, women's history is now recognized as a legitimate field of study. As its practitioners have broadened their vision to include diverse groups, geographic regions, and topics, significant gaps in the documentary record have become evident. Both scholars and archivists have taken note of these deficiencies and have responded by establishing archival programs to fill these gaps. Female faculty members have been instrumental in founding several archives in Texas and the Southwest. Examples abound. Women's history faculty took the initiative in founding a statewide project, resulting in the Nevada Women's Archives at the University of Nevada-Reno (1992) and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (1994). The Women's Archives at the University of Houston was initiated by the University of Houston Women's Studies Program in 1996 to document Houston area women's organizations. The Archives for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Texas at San Antonio is a joint initiative of the Special Collections and Archives Department and the Center for the Study of Women and Gender. Its mission is to make available primary source materials on women and gender in San Antonio and South Texas.¹⁸ The Center also sponsors the electronic "Guide to Uncovering Women's History in Archival Collections," (1993) (<<http://www.lib.utsa.edu/Archives/links.htm>>).

In other cases, archivists and library directors have established women's archives in order to meet a perceived research need or to help focus collecting in a neglected area. The Archives of Women in Science and Engineering at the Iowa State University Library was created in 1993 in response to researcher requests for information on women engineers. The Special Collections staff analyzed the collecting scopes of repositories around the country with a science or engineering focus and found that, while some university archives were collecting the papers of their women faculty in engineering

and the sciences, no effort was being made to document the social history of women engineers and scientists. This new archives also supported the goals of a land-grant university and complemented its Program for Women in Science and Engineering.¹⁹

What Should Women's Repositories Collect?

The challenge for women's archives in the future will be to define, or refine, the collecting scope of their repositories. They must strive to document gaps in the historical record, while avoiding the mistakes of the past. They must not fall into the habit of collecting only what is easy, such as the papers of middle- and upper-class white women and the records of mainstream women's organizations. In a 1994 issue of *American Archivist* speculating on the future of archives a quarter of a century hence, Nancy Sahli suggested that

Perhaps this is as it has always been, that the dominant culture has defined what will be preserved and transmitted to future generations. For dominant cultures have held the keys to power and to those institutions that both create and preserve the historical record. What we have been witnessing in the past thirty years, however, is the increasing diversification of that culture, accompanied by rising self-consciousness of particular groups in society, groups eager to document their own history and gain access to those bits and pieces of their history that have survived in traditional repositories.²⁰

If women's repositories are to alter the archival landscape significantly, they must widen their scope, making it a priority to document hitherto neglected groups. They must promote understanding and knowledge of women from various ethnicities, classes, sexual orientations, political affiliations and beliefs, occupations, and religions. Women's archives must also work together to provide representation for historically disenfranchised groups. Archivists must reach the members of these groups, explain the repository's interest in their lives and experiences, and persuade them to donate their papers. This demands a significant commitment of time and energy on the part of staff. Collection development is a labor-intensive process. It includes publicizing the repository, networking with community leaders, public speaking, and writing to, calling, meeting, and following up with individual donors. To acquire substantial holdings rather than a few scattered collections in each area may well require a special project. Fortunately, projects to document underrepresented groups are often good candidates for grants and other forms of special funding.²¹

Archivists must also work together. The increasing number of archivists specializing in women's collections has resulted in numerous new links between repositories and groups. Archivists at Bowling Green State University and the University of Toledo have launched a collaborative project entitled "Women in Politics in Northwest Ohio: The Historical Legacy."

This bi-partisan, cooperative project . . . seeks to document the historical role women have played in the political culture of our region. The

goal of the project is to collect, preserve, and make available records of women political leaders, women's political organizations, and women who have been important behind-the-scenes in political parties and advocacy groups.²²

The Web pages of each institution alert users, donors, and other archivists to the project and encourage would-be donors to contact the archives.

Archivists at Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa, and the State Historical Society of Iowa met in 1998 to discuss their efforts to document agriculture in Iowa. Afterwards, each repository drafted a statement of its collecting focus and submitted it to the Special Collections Department at Iowa State. The Department then created Technical Leaflet #1, "Documenting Agriculture in Iowa," which was distributed throughout the state by the Iowa State Extension Service. The meeting and the leaflet helped determine how the Iowa Women's Archives would define the parameters of its project to document rural women in Iowa in cooperation with, rather than in competition with, the other archives in the state.²³ Archivists can also work together on the national level, thanks to the Women's Collections Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists. The round table holds meetings annually at the SAA conference and, since 1992, has periodically published a directory of individual members and institutional repositories. It is an important avenue for sharing information about materials documenting the experiences of women.

As women's collections archivists consider the scope of their collecting, they must pay special attention to record formats that women have tended to create, such as written reminiscences, recordings of oral traditions, personal scrapbooks, ephemera, and artifactual material. Scrapbooks are often regarded by archivists as more trouble than they are worth because of their size, preservation problems, and ephemeral contents. Yet, they often contain information that would otherwise have been lost. Scrapbooks illuminate the personal memories of individuals and illustrate the context of women's identity and experience. Reminiscences written for family members often contain substantive historical information of interest to a wider audience. Likewise, oral histories are particularly important in documenting the lives of women who have not kept written records because they did not perceive their experiences as historically significant. In the words of Judy Lensink, "When women tell their life stories in their own words, a distinct enthusiasm, engagement, and affirmation emerges from within the dominant discourse in which ordinary women's experiences are at best perceived as a subculture. These are stories in which women are the central actors, even if their stories are camouflaged by modesty and disclaimers."²⁴ Indeed, the real challenge is to persuade women that their reminiscences, ephemera, and oral histories have value and interest outside their families.

Finally, women are taking advantage of new electronic technologies to preserve and disseminate these ephemeral formats. One example is the Jewish Women's Archive, which presents an alternative model for archivists attempting to document a particular subject or group. This virtual archives digitizes primary sources by or about Jewish women from across the country, leaving the originals with their owners. The value of such an endeavor is that it pulls together fragments in far-flung collections and creates

an easily accessible body of primary sources. The archives will also provide resource links to repositories containing archival collections by or about Jewish women. The Jewish Women's Archive is not a project *solely* of professional archivists, but rather of a group of interested persons who wish to educate society about the experiences and contributions of Jewish women:

The Jewish Women's Archive is for scholars. For activists. For mothers and daughters. For fathers and sons. For researchers, historians, and community members. For people who believe that everyone with a stake in history is a keeper of it and a partner in its transmission.²⁵

Providing Access to Women's Collections

The Jewish Women's Archive skirts the boundary between collecting and access, helping archivists to think about some of the problems and possibilities in providing access to their holdings. In the past, researchers faced a number of obstacles when trying to locate women's papers. Women's materials were often not identified as such, or were "hidden" in the papers of male family members or colleagues or in organizational records.²⁶ As Judy Lensink noted, "... many lesser-known and unknown peoples' writings, particularly by women of color, are not being read because they lie obscured in historical archives. The terms, 'fragments, small collections and ephemeral writings' are signposts to unutilized women's documents."²⁷ Archivists' growing knowledge of women's history has resulted in better finding aids and catalog records for women's papers over the past 20 years.

Since the development of MARC-AMC in the early 1980s, the number of archival repositories cataloging their materials and submitting records to RLIN and OCLC has increased significantly. Researchers' greater access to bibliographic utilities and their familiarity with on-line searching has enhanced their ability to locate relevant collections. The availability of *ArchivesUSA* in electronic form has vastly simplified the use of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) and the National Inventory of Documentary Sources (NIDS), providing yet another avenue of access to women's collections. The exponential growth and use of the World Wide Web has also furthered access to collections while the new Web-based interfaces, such as Endeavor and Horizon, provide a direct link from the on-line catalog record to individual finding aids on the World Wide Web. The continuing problem of subject access is being addressed by the use of Encoded Archival Description (EAD), which holds great promise because of its powerful subject-searching capabilities and its standard for finding-aid metadata. Currently, the usefulness of EAD is limited by the small number of institutions that have the technological, financial, and staff resources to implement it.

We envision an increase in networking among archivists of women's collections and other activists, scholars, and researchers. The H-Net women's history Listserv and the Women's Liberation Research Network are an examples of this trend. Archivists will also creatively utilize the World Wide Web to create new methods of access and interaction. Various institutions currently maintain lists of women's repositories on their Web sites, giving directory information, describing collecting scope, and providing

links to the Web sites of these repositories. In addition to the electronic "Guide to Uncovering Women's History in Archival Collections," mentioned previously, there are also numerous women's history Web sites that link the user to sites all over the United States and the world. There will also be an international component to this process that will connect women from every continent. The recent Mapping the World of Women's Information Services project, sponsored by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (Amsterdam), offers electronic and book-form links to women's information resources around the globe. We imagine that all of these ideas will be expanded and furthered in the years to come.²⁸

Conclusion: Where Do We Go from Here?

The Internet has, thus, already demonstrated its potential for improving access to archival collections. But archivists must take care not to become so infatuated with technology that they forget those who have no access to the Internet; lack the knowledge or skills to use it; or choose not to use it. Women's history grew out of a desire to recover lost voices and experiences; archivists must continue this commitment to inclusivity through our outreach efforts. By making presentations, attending conferences, and producing exhibits, they can publicize their holdings and reaffirm their interest in documenting the lives of women from across the socioeconomic, racial, cultural, and geographic spectrum, representing a diversity of experiences and voices.

We believe that woman-centered repositories will continue to flourish and play an important role in the archival landscape. But women's repositories are not enough and they cannot do it alone. Mainstream repositories still have a responsibility to document the experience of women and, just as importantly, provide access to their holdings. Archivists must analyze their collections to determine what information about women (and other underrepresented groups) they contain. These institutions must also have knowledge of related collections at other repositories—or know how to locate such information—and inform researchers about it. In addition to providing access to these materials, archivists have a wider responsibility to educate the public about these collections and to suggest how they might be used. Archivists must also work to integrate primary sources, including resources for women's history, into K–12 and college curricula²⁹, and into community and organizational collaborative projects. Sharing the historical treasures we manage by creating finding aids and Web sites, speaking to public groups, coordinating a History Day workshop, or producing exhibits is part of the joy of being an archivist. These activities help assure that people learn of our collections, use them, and understand their cultural value.

The "rooms of their own" that have been established will be joined by others, more likely dedicated to documenting specific groups of women identified by their shared characteristics and experiences. Such archives will be established because each of these groups will need a room of its own, a place (whether physical or virtual) where its identity is affirmed by the history that has been preserved there. These repositories will accomplish the goals of providing documents for research and scholarship, and also fulfill the promise of women's history, giving women a voice.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Tanya Zanish-Belcher is Assistant Professor and Head, Special Collections Department, at Iowa State University Library. She is also Curator for the Archives of Women in Science and Engineering. Kären M. Mason is Curator of the Louise Noun-Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries.

Women's Archives in the United States: Repository and URL	City	State	Est'd. Before 1970	Est'd. 1970s	Est'd. 1980s	Est'd. 1990s
Archive of Women in Architecture of the American Institute of Architects < http://www.e-architect.com/reference/library/wominarch.asp >	Washington	DC			X	
Archives for Research on Women and Gender, University of Texas at San Antonio < http://www.lib.utsa.edu/Archives/ >	San Antonio	TX				X
Archives of Women in Science and Engineering, Iowa State University < http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/wise/wise.html >	Ames	IA				X
Armenian Women's Archives	Berkeley	CA				X
Brown University, Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives < http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library/general/guides/archives.html >	Providence	RI				
California State University Women in Music Collection < http://library.csun.edu/~spcoll/hpsclist.html >	Northridge	CA				X
Chicana-Latina Archives, UCLA < http://cnet.ucr.edu/women/archives.htm >	Los Angeles	CA				X
Daughters of the Republic of Texas < http://www.drtl.org/ >	San Antonio	TX	X			
General Federation of Women's Clubs, Women's History and Resource Center < http://www.gfwc.org/whrc.htm >	Washington	DC			X	
Georgia State University, Georgia Women's Collections and Georgia's Women's Movement Archives Project < http://wwwlib.gsu.edu/Collections/spcoll/woman/wom.htm >	Atlanta	GA				X
Hadassah Archives	New York	NY				X
History of Women in Home Economics, University of Wisconsin at Madison	Madison	WI				X
International Archive of Women in Architecture, Virginia Tech < http://scholar2.lib.vt.edu/spec/iawaspec/iawaguid.htm >	Blacksburg	VA			X	

Women's Archives in the United States: Repository and URL	City	State	Est'd. Before 1970	Est'd. 1970s	Est'd. 1980s	Est'd. 1990s
Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries < http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/ >	Iowa City	IA				X
Jewish Women's Archive < http://www.jwa.org/main.htm >	cyberspace					X
June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection < http://www.lesbian.org/mazer/ >	Los Angeles	CA			X	
Lesbian Herstory Archives < http://www.datalounge.net/network/pages/lha// >	New York	NY		X		
Lesbian Legacy Collection Library & Archives < http://isd.usc.edu/~retter/one.html >	Los Angeles	CA			X	
Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Westbrook College Campus < http://www.une.edu/library/mwwc.html >	Portland	ME				
Midwest Women's Historical Collection, University of Illinois at Chicago	Chicago	IL		X		
National Archives for Black Women's History, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House < http://www.nps.gov/mamc/bethune/archives/main.htm >	Washington	DC	X			
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Library and Resource Center < http://www.nmwa.org/ >	Washington	DC			X	
National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution	Washington	DC	X			
National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection < http://www.lib.gsu.edu/Collections/spcoll/woman/wom.htm >	Columbia	MO			X	
Native American Women Playwrights Archive, Miami University < http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/nawpa/ >	Oxford	OH				X
Nevada Women's Archives, University of Nevada, Las Vegas < http://library.nevada.edu/women/index.html >	Las Vegas	NV				X
Nevada Women's Archives, University of Nevada, Reno < http://www.library.unr.edu/~specoll/womarchp.html >	Reno	NV				X

Women's Archives in the United States: Repository and URL	City	State	Est'd. Before 1970	Est'd. 1970s	Est'd. 1980s	Est'd. 1990s
Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University < http://www.tulane.edu/~wc/ >	New Orleans	LA				X
Rutgers University, Women in Public Life Archives < http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rulib/spcol/women.htm >	New Brunswick	NJ				X
Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College < http://www.radcliffe.edu/schles/index.htm >	Cambridge	MA	X			
Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College < http://www.smith.edu/libraries/ca/home.htm >	Northampton	MA	X			
Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University < http://twu.edu/www/twu/library/wscripts.html >	Denton	TX	X			
Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University < http://www.luc.edu/orgs/gannon/archives/ >	Chicago	IL				X
Women Artists Archive, Sonoma State University < http://libweb.sonoma.edu/special/waa/ >	Rohnert	CA				X
Women's Archives, Special Collections Department, Duke University < http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/ >	Chapel Hill	NC			X	
Women's Missionary Union	Birmingham	AL				
Women's Movement Archives	Cambridge	MA			X	
Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University < http://www.library.okstate.edu/dept/scua/women/women.htm >	Stillwater	OK				X
Women's Archives, University of Houston < http://info.lib.uh.edu/speccoll/archwom.htm >	Houston	TX				X

NOTES

1. Eva Moseley, "Documenting the History of Women in America," *American Archivist* 36 (1973): 215–222.
2. Suzanne Hildebrand, "Women's Collections Today," *Special Collections* 3:3–4 (1986): 7.
3. Debra Newman Ham, "Commentary" on "Decolonizing the Body: Kinship and the Nation," by Ramón A. Gutierrez, *American Archivist* 57:1 (1994): 106.
4. Judy Nolte Lensink, "Beyond the Intellectual Meridian: Transdisciplinary Studies of Women," *Pacific Historical Review* (1992): 463–480.
5. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1929).
6. Anke Voss-Hubbard, "'No Documents—No History': Mary Ritter Beard and the Early History of Women's Archives," *American Archivist* 58:1 (1995): 17. (See also Mary Trigg, "To Work Together for Ends Larger than the Self: The Feminist Struggles of Mary Beard and Doris Stevens in the 1930s," *Journal of Women's History* 7:2 [1995]: 52–85); Hildenbrand, 2; Elizabeth Snapp, "The Woman's Collection; The Texas Woman's University Library," *Special Collections*, 3:3–4 (1986): 101–114.
7. Martha S. Bell, "Special Women's Collections in US Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 20 (May 1959): 235–242; Suzanne Hildenbrand, 2.
8. At the University of Iowa, for example, archivist Robert McCown began soliciting the papers of women active in politics and of feminist organizations in the early 1970s. As a result, the University's Special Collections Department acquired substantial collections of the papers of women legislators, party co-chairs, local politicians, and persons active in the women's movement, as well as records of organizations such as the Iowa Women's Political Caucus, the League of Women Voters, pro- and anti-ERA groups, and National Organization for Women chapters. These collections became the foundation of the Iowa Women's Archives' holdings when it opened in 1992.
9. Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State, *Bibliography of Sources Relating to Women* (Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of State, 1975). The phrase "hidden from history" comes from Sheila Rowbotham's book *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1973). James P. Danky and Eleanor McKay, "Women's History Resources at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin" (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975, Second Edition). Danky and McKay viewed the State Historical Society of Wisconsin as unusual in the depth and breadth of its sources on women: "The recent interest in women's history has presented problems for historians that parallel those faced by many minority, urban, and working class history researchers—the lack of documentation. This shortcoming has resulted from many collecting agencies using traditional formats and gathering traditional types of items. The outcome has been a lack of materials appropriate to the research task. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin constitutes an exception to the general pattern. Since its founding nearly 130 years ago the Society has collected books, manuscripts, archival materials, pictures, and museum artifacts that detail the accomplishments and positions of women in North American society." Danky and McKay, 1. Another example of this sort of guide is Catherine E. Thompson, "A Selective Guide to Women-Related Records in the North Carolina State Archives" (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History, 1977).
10. *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States*, ed. Andrea Hinding (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1979). Coauthor Kären Mason was a writer on the Women's History Sources staff. She recalls the constant sense of wonder and excitement felt by the project staff at the number and variety of collections the project was uncovering. The compilers of *Women in the West: A Guide to Manuscript Sources* remark that "The publication of Women's History Sources marked a significant moment in the field of [women's history.]" Whereas once it had been assumed that there was not enough source material to allow research in women's history, "[t]he guide pointed scholars to the enormous possibilities and challenges of women's history as it identified available materials, suggested new questions, and spurred research." *Women in the West: A Guide to Manuscript Sources*, ed. Susan Armitage, Helen Bannan, Katherine G. Morrissey, Vicki L. Ruiz (NY: Garland Publishing, 1991), xiii.
11. Polly Thistlethwaite, "The Lesbian Herstory Archives: Chronicling A People and Fighting Invisibility Since 1974," *Outweek* (September 24, 1989): 36–39. Brenda Marston, "Women's History Archives: Documenting Women's Lives and Women's Organizations Today," *Feminist Collections* 10:1 (1988): 5–8.

12. Personal conversation, Tanya Zanish-Belcher with Lucinda Manning, one of the founders of the SAA Women's Collections Roundtable, October 5, 1999. The electronic version of the Roundtable Directory is located at <<http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/womens-collections/index.html>>. In its application to SAA, the Women's Collections Roundtable noted its purpose as: 1) to identify and address the concerns of archivists who are interested in or responsible for women's collections; 2) to promote the development, preservation and cooperative acquisition of women's papers and archival collections; 3) to develop a network of interested archivists, librarians, and historians to push for increased funding and support for women's historical collections and archival projects.
13. May Lee Tom, comp., "Directory of Repositories Collecting Records of Women's Organizations" (Cambridge, MA: Schlesinger Library, 1994). The introduction states that the objectives of the network (formed in 1988 to identify repositories interested in collecting records of local, state, or regional affiliates of national women's organizations) and the survey were to: 1) improve sharing of information about organizational archives and coordination of collecting activities among repositories; 2) help organizations find appropriate repositories for their records, and 3) provide information about the location of archives of women's organizations to potential researchers.
14. Anne Firor Scott, "Unfinished Business," *Journal of Women's History* 8:2 (1996): 118. Joan Hoff has also noted the interrelation between women's history and feminism: "Since the 1970s, women's history in the United States has been strongly rooted in the politics of women's liberation—acknowledging the need to find a collective past for the purpose of contributing to a praxis whose goal is women's autonomy and self-realization." Hoff, "Introduction: An Overview of Women's History in the United States," *Journal of Women's History Guide to Periodical Literature*, comp. Gayle V. Fischer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992): 9.
15. For a discussion of the founding of the Iowa Women's Archives, see Kären M. Mason, "History Through Women's Eyes: The Iowa Women's Archives," *Books at Iowa*, Number 59 (November 1993): 15–22. Also see <<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/>>.
16. Georgia Women's Collections (Special Collections Department, Georgia State University): <<http://www.lib.gsu.edu/spcoll/woman/wom.HTM>>.
17. Valerie Browne, "Women and Leadership Archives for Women's Studies Research," *Feminist Collections* 18:3 (1997): 10–11.
18. University of Nevada–Reno: <<http://www.library.unr.edu/~specoll/womenarc.html>>; University of Nevada–Las Vegas: <<http://library.nevada.edu/women/>>; The Women's Archives, University of Houston: <<http://info.lib.uh.edu/specoll/archwom.htm>>; Archives for Research on Women and Gender, University of Texas, San Antonio: <<http://www.lib.utsa.edu/Archives/arwg.html>>.
19. For a recent article describing the Archives of Women in Science and Engineering, please see the *Women Historians of the Midwest* newsletter, 28:1 (1999): 4–5. Also see the WISE Web site: <<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/wise/wise.html>>.
20. Nancy Sahli, "Commentary" on "Decolonizing the Body: Kinship and the Nation," by Ramón A. Gutierrez, *American Archivist* 57:1 (1994): 100.
21. The Iowa Women's Archives received corporate and foundation funding in 1995–1997 to support a project to document the history of African-American women in Iowa. Archivist Kathryn Neal, hired for the project, acquired some 50 collections for the archives during her tenure on the project. Neal also received a small grant from the University of Iowa's Cultural Affairs Committee, which enabled her to hire a graduate student to conduct 10 oral history interviews.
22. "Women in Politics in Northwest Ohio: the Historical Legacy" is located at <<http://www.wbgsu.edu/colleges/library/cac/politicalwomen/site.html>>. For additional information, please contact Ann Bowers (Bowling Green State University) and Barbara Floyd (University of Toledo).
23. Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Special Collections Department, Technical Leaflet #1, "Documenting Agriculture in Iowa," ed. Tanya Zanish-Belcher (January 1999): <<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/leaflet/01-jan99.html>>. The Iowa Women's Archives received funding in 1998–1999 from the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and Land O'Lakes to collect the papers of Iowa's rural women. Archivist Doris Malkmus has traveled around the state publicizing the project and soliciting papers for the archives. For more in-depth discussions of documentation strategies, please see Joan Warnow-Blewitt and Larry J. Hackman, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and Case Study" (American Institute of Physics, 1986) and Andrea Hinding, "Creating a Concept of Documentation," *Journal of American History* 80 (June 1993): 168–178.
24. Lensink, 472–473.

25. The Jewish Women's Archive is available on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.jwa.org/Jwa-1999/index.htm>>.
26. For more discussion of this issue, please see Dianne Beattie, "An Archival User Study: Researchers in the Field of Women's History," *Archivaria* 29 (winter 1989-1990): 33-50, and Jacqueline Goggin, "The Indirect Approach: A Study of Scholarly Users of Black and Women's Organizational Records in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division," *Midwestern Archivist* 11:1 (1986): 57-67.
27. Lensink, 471.
28. Examples include: A Guide to Uncovering Women's History in Archival Collections: <<http://www.lib.utsa.edu/Archives/links.htm>>; Archival Sites for Women's Studies: <<http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mfpankin/archwss.htm>>; American Women's History: A Research Guide: <<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~kmiddlet/history/women.html>>; and Women and Gender Studies Web Sites: <<http://www.library.yale.edu/wss/>>.
 For information on the Mapping the World of Women's Information Services project, please contact the following: E-mail: mapping@iiav.nl; International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement/ Mapping the World, Obiplein 4, 1094 RB Amsterdam, The Netherlands, <<http://www.iiav.nl/mapping-the-world/mtwintro.html>>. Examples of a growing trend: International Center for Research on Women: <<http://www.icrw.org/>>; the Canadian Women's Movement Archives: <<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/library/cwma/holdings.html>>; and Women's International Electronic University: <<http://www.wvu.edu/~womensu/>>.
29. Please see the Iowa State University Library's Carver Trust Project, a three-year project designed to integrate electronic resources into core undergraduate classes: <<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/index.html>>; and the University of Iowa Library's TWIST/Teaching with Innovative Style and Technique Program, another three-year project to create a model training program for librarians and faculty on networked information sources: <<http://twist.lib.uiowa.edu/>>. Both of these projects are funded by the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust. Archivists will need to become involved with providing selected primary resources electronically as well as utilizing these Web sites to assist in documenting the learning experience. See these Web sites for ISU's experimentation efforts: Architecture 271, Human Behavior and Environmental Theory: <<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/archsyll.html>> and Women's Studies/Zoology 383, Women in Science and Engineering: <<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/ws383/1999Fall/home.html>>.