

*MW*  
MAINE WOMEN  
WRITERS COLLECTION  
1959-2009

50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

## Women in the Archives

*Using Archival Collections in Research  
and Teaching on U.S. Women*

University of New England • Portland, Maine • June 11-14, 2009





# Maine Women Writers Collection 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium

## Women in the Archives

Using Archival Collections in Research and Teaching on U.S. Women

### PROGRAM OF EVENTS

#### ONGOING EVENTS

**Research in the MWWC** Appointments are available for visit or study in the MWWC. See Cally Gurley, MWWC Curator, to schedule.

**Library Displays** Throughout the Symposium, the following displays will be available for viewing. All are located in the Abplanalp Library.

➤ ***Rose Marasco – Artist, Photographer, Teacher***

The Maine Women Writers Collection 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary image was created by the versatile and compelling artist and photographer, Rose Marasco, whose work addresses the complexity of photographic meaning from a refined place of personal inquiry. [Bulletin board in the Library lobby]

➤ ***The Maine Women Writers Collection: Documenting the Literary Heritage of Maine's Women for 50 Years!***

An introduction to the MWWC's founding curators and a number of the distinguished Maine women writers included in its collections. [1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway leading to the MWWC]

➤ ***"From the desk of Dorothy M. Healy . . ."***

Dorothy M. Healy was a busy Westbrook Junior College administrator in 1959 when she and English teacher Grace Dow founded the Maine Women Writers Collection. Healy's desk is re-created by MWWC intern Catherine Fisher. [Sarton Room, MWWC]

➤ ***Out of the Archives: Westbrook Seminary Women***

This series of exhibits is based upon the finding aids and research done by UNE students in the Westbrook College History Collection for their Fall 2008 "Topics in Women's History" class. This course examined women's quest for higher education through the lens of the young women who attended Westbrook Seminary from 1834 to 1934.

- ❖ Zelia A. Lunt (Westbrook Seminary, 1843–1846), Julia S. Quinby (class of 1863), Helen F. Spaulding (class of 1864), and Alice B. Ricker (class of 1894) [Large 1<sup>st</sup> floor display case]
- ❖ Addie R. Brightman (class of 1889) [Small 1<sup>st</sup> floor display case]
- ❖ Dorothy Jean Lowd (class of 1916) [Bulletin board on the stairway]
- ❖ Althea Chase Gould (class of 1936) [Bulletin board on the lower level]

➤ **MWWC Student Research Projects**

The Maine Women Writers Collection has been the site for a number of student research projects, including projects for American Studies courses, an Environmental Studies/Women's Studies Capstone Project, and English 310: "Writing and Women's Health." [Table display case, Reference Area]

## THURSDAY, JUNE 11

5:00–7:00 p.m.      **Registration and Opening Reception** – Holiday Inn By the Bay  
88 Spring St., Portland

## FRIDAY, JUNE 12

7:45 a.m.            **Shuttle Bus** from Holiday Inn to UNE Campus  
**Departs from Spring St. by main entrance**

8:00–8:30            **Registration and continental breakfast** – Parker Pavilion

8:30–8:45            **Welcome and opening remarks** – WCHP Classroom  
(in Parker Pavilion)

8:45–10:30          **Session 1: Recovering Archival Sources** – WCHP Classroom  
**Chair: Frances Smith Foster**, Emory University  
**Susan Belasco**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
    “The Responsibility is Ours: The Failure of Infrastructure and  
    the Limits of Scholarship”  
**Helen R. Deese**, Massachusetts Historical Society  
    “‘Who will care for these many papers?’ Caroline Healey Dall,  
    the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Longest Running  
    Diary in History”  
**Karen Kilcup**, University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
    “Reflections on the Lost and Found”  
**Carla L. Peterson**, University of Maryland  
    “Tracking Nineteenth-Century Black Women in New York City  
    Archives”

10:30–10:45        **Break** (with refreshments) – Parker Pavilion

10:45–12:30        **Session 2: Collecting, Archiving, & Curating** – WCHP Classroom  
**Chair: Cally Gurley**, Curator, Maine Women Writers Collection, UNE  
**Kathryn Allamong Jacob**, Curator of Manuscripts,  
    Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University  
    “‘Dear diary, no one will ever see these words but you’:  
    Issues of Privacy in Women’s Materials and their Impact on  
    Collecting, Access, and Scholarship”  
**Jean Pfaelzer**, University of Delaware  
    “Digging in the Archives to Curate *Chinese American Women:  
    A History of Resistance and Resilience* for the National  
    Women’s History Museum”

**Session 2 continued on next page**

**Sherrill Redmon**, Director, Sophia Smith Collection  
“Minding the Gap”

**Megan Sniffin-Marino**, Harvard University Archivist and Co-Director,  
Open Collections Program  
“Observed in Another Context: Some Issues in Digitizing  
Women’s Collections”

12:30–1:30 p.m.     **Lunch** – Alexander Hall

1:45–3:30     **Session 3: Material Culture & Ephemera** – WCHP Classroom  
**Chair: Karen Sánchez-Eppler**, Amherst College  
**Daniel A. Cohen**, Case Western Reserve University  
“Defacing *The Token of Love*: Sentimentalists, Sophisticates,  
and the Transformation of American Girlhood, 1862–1940”  
**Ellen Gruber Garvey**, New Jersey City University  
“What Makes Ephemera so Ephemeral?”  
**Jeffrey Steele**, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
“Women in Nineteenth-Century Advertising”  
**Shirley Wajda**, Ohio Humanities Council  
“Wish Books”

3:30–3:45     **Break** (with refreshments) – Parker Pavilion

3:45–5:30     **Session 4: Photography & Visual Culture** – WCHP Classroom  
**Chair: Laura Wexler**, Yale University  
**Ardis Cameron**, University of Southern Maine  
“Scandal in the Living Room: *Peyton Place*, Female Fame,  
and Live Television”  
**Shawn Michelle Smith**, School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
“Photographing Photography: Chansonetta Stanley Emmons”  
**Nicole Tonkovich**, University of California, San Diego  
“Counter-archives, Counter-narratives”  
**Margaret A. Toth**, Manhattan College  
“Seeing (And Not Believing) Archival Sources: Photography  
and Film of the 1901 Pan-American Exposition’s Midway”

5:45 p.m.     **Shuttle Bus** from UNE Campus to Holiday Inn  
**Departs from circular drive at Library steps**  
Dinner on your own



- 3:15–4:15 p.m.      ***The Maine Women Writers Collection: The First Fifty Years***  
A documentary film premiere – Ludcke Auditorium
- 4:30–5:30            **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception** – Josephine S. Abplanalp '45 Library
- 5:45 p.m.            **Shuttle Bus** from UNE Campus to Holiday Inn  
**Departs from circular drive at Library steps**  
Dinner on your own

## **SUNDAY, JUNE 14**

- 8:30–11:00 a.m.    **Chairs' Roundtable and Closing Brunch** – Holiday Inn By the Bay  
88 Spring St., Portland
- Archiving Women: A Chairs' Roundtable**  
**Zabelle Stodola**, University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
**Frances Smith Foster**, Emory University  
**Cally Gurley**, Maine Women Writers Collection, UNE  
**Karen Sánchez-Eppler**, Amherst College  
**Laura Wexler**, Yale University  
**Sharon M. Harris**, University of Connecticut

## ABSTRACTS

### **SESSION 1: Recovering Archival Sources**

**Chair: Frances Smith Foster**, Emory University

#### **“The Responsibility is Ours: The Failure of Infrastructure and the Limits of Scholarship”**

**Susan Belasco**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

As the editor of *Whitman's Poems in Periodicals* for the *Walt Whitman Archive* and the editor of *Stowe in Her Own Time*, a collection of biographical sketches, recollections, and memoirs by family members and friends, I've spent a good part of the last three years working with archival materials on two of the most well-known writers of U.S. literature. While Whitman scholars have access to dozens of biographies, numerous bibliographies, print editions of letters, standard editions of the collected works, as well as a large, well-funded electronic archive, Stowe scholars face significant challenges. We have an excellent, Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, a research library at the Stowe Center in Hartford, and an invaluable electronic project on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but there is no standard edition of Stowe's works, no reliable bibliography, and no edition of her letters. Using Stowe and Whitman, as well as other writers such as Margaret Fuller and Harriet Jacobs as examples, I offer a plan of action for scholars to develop the basic tools necessary for sustained research on women writers—an infrastructure of comprehensive bibliographies, scholarly editions of works, reliable collections of letters, and funded, electronic access to primary materials.

#### **“Who will care for these many papers?’ Caroline Healey Dall, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Longest Running Diary in History”**

**Helen R. Deese**, Massachusetts Historical Society

At least from the time she was twenty Caroline Healey Dall puzzled over how to preserve her papers. She eventually bequeathed them to the Massachusetts Historical Society, which has housed, protected, and organized them, albeit over the objections of some of its members. By the late twentieth century the Dall Collection, especially its correspondence, had become one of the most used of the Society's collections, for Dall's life touched those of many eminent figures of interest to scholars. But for decades Dall's own life story, told in the near seventy-five-year-long journal record of her daily life, received relatively little use, in part because of its daunting length and in part because, unlike the correspondence, it was not indexed. For some years now I have been engaged in a Society-sponsored project to edit and publish a multi-volume selected print edition of these journals. Thus this partnership of archivists and scholars is, a century after Dall's death, finally providing access to what is arguably the fullest account of the life of any nineteenth-century American woman. The project raises such typical editorial decisions as those relating to transcription, selection, and annotation, as well as ethical issues such as privacy concerns and practical issues such as length and costs.

#### **“Reflections on the Lost and Found”**

**Karen Kilcup**, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

With the emergence of the Internet and Google Books, more materials are available to more people than ever before, democratizing primary and archival research at least to some degree, and enabling easy conversation between scholars from New Hampshire and Hampshire, England, and Kansas and Kyoto. Yet this greater accessibility presents problems as well as benefits. For example, the challenges of surfeit, selection, and focus increase with “excess access,” while a nineteen-inch computer screen homogenizes dramatically different physical characteristics, diminishes or erases contexts, eliminates the serendipitous discovery, and may foster a kind of “drive-through reading” that diminishes our ability to fully appreciate archival materials. After considering some of the challenges presented by archival work today, I'll address several questions, including: What can we still learn



only from visiting archives? What do we need most from archives? How can archival research best complement our ongoing, collective recovery project? What are/should be the limits of recovery? As I ponder these questions, I'll share how some of my and my students' archival discoveries have informed my responses.

### **“Tracking Nineteenth-Century Black Women in New York City Archives”**

**Carla L. Peterson**, University of Maryland

My talk contrasts the experiences I've had while doing archival research for my last book, *Doers of the Word: African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)*, and my current project, tentatively titled *Black Gotham: A Family Memoir of African American Life in Nineteenth-Century New York City*.

By now, it's a truism to state that nineteenth-century black women have been doubly silenced, first as blacks, and secondly as women. But I've discovered that there are degrees of silence. *Doers of the Word* focused exclusively on women in antebellum northern black communities. The written record on them was scant, but I did uncover their presence in archives in such places as Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, Worcester, and Washington, DC. In striking contrast, as I researched *Black Gotham* I found documentation in New York City archives to be much more elusive. How can I account for this greater absence? Is it because New York's black women were less active in public in comparison to their Boston or Philadelphia sisters? Is it because black community leaders failed to record their presence? Has preservation of a black presence by either the white establishment or black institutions proved to be more difficult in New York than in other cities?

### **SESSION 2: Collecting, Archiving, & Curating**

**Chair: Cally Gurley**, Curator, Maine Women Writers Collection, UNE

### **“‘Dear diary, no one will ever see these words but you’: Issues of Privacy in Women's Materials and their Impact on Collecting, Access, and Scholarship”**

**Kathryn Allamong Jacob**, Curator of Manuscripts, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

Among the 3,000+ manuscript collections at the Schlesinger Library are the diaries of nearly 450 women—sea captains' wives, suffragists, housewives, school principals, feminists. We literally have thousands of volumes of diaries, fat and thin, in leather and pink plastic with cats with rhinestone eyes. We have even more letters by, to, and among women—courtship letters, letters home from camp, letters between sisters, activists, friends. And we have the records of dozens of women's organizations, from mainstream to radical, focusing on everything from genetics to the judicial system. Each diary, correspondence, and set of minutes opens a window onto a time, a place, a life, an issue, and nearly all from the post-WWII period raise questions of privacy and confidentiality with which we grapple. These questions have an impact on decisions ranging from acquisition to access to processing, which, in turn, effect scholars' ability to find, use, and quote from these often remarkably candid primary sources. How long is long enough to keep a diary, or letters, or records closed? What about the privacy of others—some diaries, letters, and minutes name abusive relatives, relate a friend's affair, reveal vicious infighting? Issues of privacy in women's collections will be the focus of my remarks.

### **“Digging in the Archives to Curate *Chinese American Women: A History of Resistance and Resilience for the National Women's History Museum*”**

**Jean Pfaelzer**, University of Delaware

This presentation will discuss the methods and challenges of collection, representation, and narration I faced as I curated my first cyber-exhibit, *Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance*, for the National Women's History Museum. How to locate, document and exhibit images and documents of Chinese American women during their first hundred years in the

United States? Where to find images, given that San Francisco's Chinatown burned in the 1906 earthquake, and given that thousands of letters, newspapers and photographs sent back to China vanished in the revolutions of the twentieth century? How to span the first generations of Chinese women, from those who arrived in the American West, kidnapped and enslaved and sold in "dens" to work as prostitutes, to merchants' wives who founded the early segregated Chinatowns and who fled enslaved prostitution, only to be rounded up in mass pogroms and returned to the towns of their owners? How to present to an invisible audience the complex effects of footbinding on women and its subsequent abolition? How to absorb the impact on Chinese American women of the vast political and generational tensions of the Chinese diasporas? And how to address a cyber-audience?

To view the exhibit, please go to [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org).

### **"Minding the Gap"**

**Sherrill Redmon**, Director, Sophia Smith Collection

My talk will focus on some of the challenges we met in implementing the Sophia Smith Collection's Voices of Feminism documentation strategy and some of the lessons we learned the hard way. Our goal with the Voices project, which began in 2002, thanks to a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, was to collect material that would broaden the scope of U.S. women's history, so that treatments of the United States in the late twentieth century moved beyond the experiences and contributions of white, middle and upper class, heterosexual women. If you read most textbooks you might well come away believing that only women within those demographics protested injustices, changed the laws, challenged established systems and assumptions—in other words, made history.

To counter this notion—which we knew from our own experiences to be false—we launched an ambitious oral history project designed to capture the stories of activists of color, low income women, grass roots community leaders, political radicals, and lesbian feminists. I will discuss the process of sleuthing out the representatives most likely to know their history and willing to talk about it candidly on tape and then to open their interviews for research.

### **"Observed in Another Context: Some Issues in Digitizing Women's Collections"**

**Megan Sniffin-Marinoff**, Harvard University Archivist and Co-Director,  
Open Collections Program

Over nearly four centuries, Harvard University has been building library, archives, and museum collections of extraordinary scope and breadth. One on-line window to these resources is through the Open Collections Program (OCP). Collaborating with Harvard's faculty, librarians, archivists, and curators, OCP staff have created subject-specific, web-accessible collections, open to anyone with an Internet connection. OCP digitizes historical materials that, with each new project, contains increasingly more archival, manuscript, and image materials. The first OCP project, begun in 2002, was *Women Working, 1800–1930*. With a focus on women's role in the U.S. economy, this material selected from ten different Harvard repositories, and provides access to approximately 500,000 digitized pages and images. I will discuss how, with this and each successive OCP project topic (other topics included immigration, contagious diseases, and expeditions/discoveries), staff have encountered and handled special challenges working with women's materials. Issues include privacy, identification, ownership, and the difficulties of providing appropriate context for materials entering the digital realm.

### **SESSION 3: Material Culture & Ephemera**

**Chair: Karen Sánchez-Eppler**, Amherst College

#### **“Defacing *The Token of Love*: Sentimentalists, Sophisticates, and the Transformation of American Girlhood, 1862–1940”**

**Daniel A. Cohen**, Case Western Reserve University

In 1862, a young woman from Oneida County, New York, was given a “friendship album” entitled *The Token of Love*—an ornately-bound blank book designed to be filled with autographs, verses, and affectionate notes from relatives and friends. Over the next two years, dozens of the teenager’s acquaintances, especially fellow students at the Utica Female Seminary, duly inscribed their signatures and sentiments onto the album’s pages. After that initial flurry, however, no further entries were made until 1936, when the volume somehow fell into the hands of the original owner’s eight-year-old great-grandniece. Showing no reverence for the old artifact, the youngster and her friends defaced many of the original inscriptions and filled previously vacant pages with a hodge-podge of writings and drawings relating to personal health, hygiene, fashion, and popular culture. Thus, a single volume came to juxtapose entries by two cohorts of girls from the same rural county in upstate New York, separated by more than seventy years. Those two groups—“sentimentalists” and “sophisticates,” respectively—expressed dramatically different cultural experiences, attitudes, and values, illuminating what historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg has described as a gradual, multi-generational transition from “good works” to “good looks” as the central priority in the lives of American girls.

#### **“What Makes Ephemera so Ephemeral?”**

**Ellen Gruber Garvey**, New Jersey City University

Nineteenth-century Americans who wished to preserve the important materials of their lives, records of their reading, and varied paper items often classified as ephemera often used scrapbooks for the purpose, thereby fixing their selections in an unchangeable order. Their scrapbooks were often intended as record repositories themselves—as archives or histories. But scrapbook makers had varying degrees of success in ensuring that the scrapbooks would survive, or survive in publicly accessible spaces, or that the meaning of the connections of their materials to their lives would remain intelligible. My presentation discusses the politics of preservation: the difficulty of ensuring the survival of works, like scrapbooks, made up of materials classified as trivial, ephemeral, or valueless. I will look at the interplay between what individuals have considered worth saving, and what institutions have saved, particularly in relation to scrapbooks.

#### **“Women in Nineteenth-Century Advertising”**

**Jeffrey Steele**, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In the 1880s and 1890s, lithographed advertising “trade cards” became the dominant form of American advertising. This explosion of advertising images took place during the “pioneer” period, before modern brands and trademarks had been stabilized. Utilizing eye-catching designs to promote their products, manufacturers disseminated a wide range of images which reveal the imaginary structures that were crystallizing into modern gendered and racialized postures. Mass-produced images were grafted onto pre-existing channels of sentiment, which they deepened and strengthened, even as they opened new conduits of consumer desire. Tapping into a powerful reservoir of cultural stereotypes, nineteenth-century trade cards disseminated hundreds of thousands of images of women—images that ranged from relatively realistic portraits to striking gender and racial fantasies. Examining a wide range of such images, this paper examines the ways in which female roles were codified in visual culture through representations of “happy,” white middle-class home life—a realm that was depicted through images of married women, housekeeping, “little housewives” (girls) being socialized into patterns of domestic labor, and women of color whose lives embodied what were perceived to be non-domestic qualities.

## **“Wish Books”**

**Shirley Wajda**, Ohio Humanities Council

In 1938 and 1939, May Swanson Fennell decided to chronicle in a large, cord-tied album her marriage to Joseph Fennell and their construction and decoration of their first house in Brookfield, Connecticut. In 45 pages, May recorded the couple’s housewares and furnishings—gifted and purchased—as well as their choice of architectural design for their home. May’s scrapbook was a personalized “wish book,” charting through image and text the young couple’s material life, as well as confirming their social network of friends and family members who showered them with gifts.

Prescriptions for Americans’ material life are abundantly available in advertisements, manufacturers’ lists, general store ledgers, and mail order catalogues, such as Sears, Roebuck’s famous “wish book.” Material culturists have explored cultural meaning and social relations through the physical qualities and exchange of objects. Historians and sociologists have charted the social, economic and political roles of women as the nation’s consumers. Nevertheless, scholars know relatively little about women’s actual domestic consumption, and even less about the gift economy of showers and weddings. What is at stake in archiving May Swanson Fennell’s scrapbook is the recovery of women’s material life in a world made meaningful through goods.

## **SESSION 4: Photography & Visual Culture**

**Chair: Laura Wexler**, Yale University

### **“Scandal in the Living Room: *Peyton Place*, Female Fame, and Live Television”**

**Ardis Cameron**, University of Southern Maine

In 1956, Grace Metalious published her first book, a long novel whose sales quickly made publishing history and whose title rapidly became part of America’s cultural vocabulary. *Peyton Place* rapidly edged out all-time favorites like *God’s Little Acre* and *Gone With the Wind*, to become at the time the best-selling novel of the twentieth century. “This book business,” Metalious wrote a friend, “is some evil form of insanity.”

Denounced as “wicked,” “sordid,” “cheap,” *Peyton Place* was banned in hundreds of American towns and throughout Canada. The *succès de scandale* made Grace Metalious a media scandal whose fame riveted a nation. How, fans and critics asked, could a wife and mother write such a book? This presentation will use recently discovered television footage of Metalious to explore new models of female fame in the 1950s. Juxtaposing Metalious with television’s popular femcees, it argues that Metalious, unlike the television “personality” and the screen star, became a potent discursive battleground over gender and sexual normalcy. It will raise as well questions about the role of live television in validating the female “speaking/viewing subject” and its significance for historical research on second wave feminism.

### **“Photographing Photography: Chansonetta Stanley Emmons”**

**Shawn Michelle Smith**, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

This paper examines photographs of photography. Studying Chansonetta Stanley Emmons’s early twentieth-century American photographs, it explores images of the photographer herself, and investigates the racial dynamics that call her uniquely into view. The most widely known image of Emmons with her camera is a formal self-portrait. Other images of the white photographer with her camera emerge primarily in the scenes in which she photographed African American men and women on plantations in the South. These latter images of Emmons are casual snapshots of her made by an unknown photographer. Using these images of Emmons as a touchstone, the paper explores how the process of picture making is framed and how photography itself is brought into view in Emmons’s archive.

### **“Counter-archives, Counter-narratives”**

**Nicole Tonkovich**, University of California, San Diego

The exhibitionary complex has not been friendly to Native America. Rather, as an arm of the state, museums and archives have expropriated, rewritten, and silenced Native cultures, subsuming them to its master narratives of expansion in the name of inevitable progress. Local collections and domestic practices produced by native peoples constitute a powerful counter-archive comprised of individual collections and family records, scrapbooks and photograph albums. For example, tribal elders assemble and curate their own house museums. These counter-archives also comprise family scrapbooks, collections of photographs and newspaper clippings that provide primary sources that can underwrite native histories as told by native subjects. Such efforts have preserved the histories of areas whose local newspapers will likely never be scanned into the Google Books project. Others of these scrapbooks collect family photographs—some of them studio portraits, others of them wonderful amateur snapshots—that offer suggestive correctives to exoticizing and stereotypical images of “vanishing Indians.” These collections, whether of material artifacts or of print and photographic records, offer a basis for seeing native histories through native eyes.

### **“Seeing (And Not Believing) Archival Sources: Photography and Film of the 1901 Pan-American Exposition’s Midway”**

**Margaret A. Toth**, Manhattan College

*The Pan-American Exposition and How to See It* (1901) opens with the exclamation, “I knew it! . . . Much as you may have read about the Exposition you had no conception of its real glory. How valueless are words to describe color, form, contrasts, grouping, dignity! *Seeing, only, is believing.*” Visual epistemology, the equating of seeing and knowing, governed the 1901 Buffalo Exposition’s displays, particularly the Midway’s live human exhibits. These exhibits, featuring humans labeled “other”—non-Anglo, differently abled, or otherwise “deviant”—were organized according to a strikingly similar epistemology, one that depended upon ferreting out, carefully observing, and taxonomizing bodily difference. This logic extended to visual documents created of the Midway performers. When we uncover such visual materials in the archive, then, we must approach them with care. How do we negotiate the fact that the photographic and filmic camera, typically situated as disinterested, mechanical recorders of “Truth,” can be used to exacerbate and even produce bodily difference? While I explore this question by examining archival materials of the Pan-Am Midway—in particular, photographs and short films of the ethnological villages—my paper raises larger issues, both practical and ethical, about engaging visual sources in the archive.

### **SESSION 5: Pedagogy and the Archive**

**Chair: Zabelle Stodola**, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

### **“The Lens of the Local: Using Traditional and Non-Traditional Archives to Increase Students’ Everyday Historical Awareness”**

**Libby Bischof**, University of Southern Maine

This presentation focuses on pedagogical methods for the utilization of local archives to foster a heightened sense of historical connection between students and their daily lives and local environments. By focusing on traditional physical archives as housed in libraries, museums, and special collections, as well as digital archives and archives embedded in the local landscape, I will discuss ways to engage students in traditional and non-traditional archival work as a means to better understand both local and national history. The lens of the local allows students an easier pathway to critically engage with and think about the past because they are better able to see and imagine the landscapes, lifestyles, cultures, and societies of past generations who occupied the same spaces they inhabit now. As I teach Maine history, this presentation will touch upon many local Maine archives, including the MWWC, as well as the Maine Historical Society’s Maine Memory Network.

## **“Archives Are Us: Teaching College Women(’s) History”**

**Elizabeth De Wolfe**, University of New England

Highlighting the resources of the Maine Women Writers Collection and the UNE Westbrook College History Collection, this presentation will examine the opportunities and challenges of teaching women's history with archival materials. History 337—“Topics in Women’s History: Women at Westbrook College”—offered UNE students the opportunity to study American women’s history through the lens of women’s pursuit of higher education at the seminaries, institutes, and colleges that accepted female students in the nineteenth century. As a case study, we turned to our own academic institution, which has taught women since the 1830s. The major project for this course, an archives-based study of the life of a female Westbrook student, forced students into unfamiliar territory—the archives. Studying the history of women at college, students connected past with present and saw themselves as one link in a long and powerful chain of educated women, stretching back to the origins of UNE and forward to the future as the work of these twenty-first century students was itself archived for the next generation to study. The archive, students realized, was not just a collection of dusty old papers. The archive was us.

## **“Activism and the Archive: Teaching and Difference from Coast to Coast”**

**P. Gabrielle Foreman**, Occidental College

As we all know, finding a way to incorporate our research into our teaching is one way to keep our eyes on the prize (and our hands on the ploughs) as we introduce students to the pleasures and challenges of recovering the presence of those seemingly disremembered and disappeared from public records. I will join Carla Peterson in my focus on the difference place makes—in this case in terms of the gloss and arc of incorporating nineteenth-century sources into twenty-first century teaching. In Los Angeles, where my institution supports engagement with non-profits and communities that (it took me years to realize) provide a direct bridge to my work, I link historical campaigns and characters to groups whose current work sprouts from the same seeds. In Maine, my class "Black Literary History and the Archive" has been both more conventional and more ambitious. What difference does institutional culture make in our teaching research? How do we negotiate economic, database, and community-based learning resources? I will highlight research on Baltimore's Amelia and Rev. Harvey Johnson and collaboration with L.A.'s Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), as well as recent teaching from my next book project, “Disruptive Narratives: Harriet Wilson and the Challenge of Representative Blackness” (title suggestions welcome).

## **“The Private and Public Archive in the Classroom”**

**Eve Allegra Raimon**, University of Southern Maine

Women's archives is a subject I've recently spent a lot of time thinking about since I spent time in one that holds special meaning for me—my own mother's. Specifically, my chief source was the contents of a 1940s accordion file box filled with my mother's notes when she was an M.A. student and instructor at Cornell. She earned her Master's in 1947 with a thesis on Jane Austen and died in 1958 when I was two. Having co-edited the 2007 collection *Harriet Wilson's New England: Race, Writing, and Region*, I have also been involved in recent efforts to shed light on the history of this now near-canonical New England writer. In class, I have shared recent discoveries connected with the ongoing Harriet Wilson Project and work by colleagues whose work appears in the collection.

In a future course, I will ask students to consider the differences between the experience of private reconstruction and public recovery. The class will consider such issues as the different audiences for both, the varying sources available, and public memory versus private memory. Encouraging students to direct a critical eye on a figure from their own past alongside discoveries about recognized writers can acquaint them not only with the textuality of history in general, but of their very own past. At the same time, the more students can recognize the fragmentary nature of private recovery efforts, the more they can recognize the challenges of investigating the archives of more public figures.

## **SESSION 6: Private Writing & Biography**

**Chair: Sharon M. Harris**, University of Connecticut

### **“Death-Defying Testimony: Women's Lives in Public Documents”**

**Lois Brown**, Mount Holyoke College

Women in the American public sphere often contend with substantial politics of representation and frequently must negotiate, for better or for worse, intense public expectations and critiques that are rooted in diverse socio-economic, religious, cultural, political, racial and ethnic realities and fictions. Throughout the nineteenth century, routes to self-expression were highly regulated and relatively limited, and these conditions were especially stringent for women, and even more so for women of color. Given the highly politicized and monitored routes to self-expression and authorship, then, how did women take their place in the cultural and historical record? In what ways did women, and in particular, women of African descent master dominant cultural, economic, and political forces of their times? How did they ensure that their histories—of origin and of experience in the New World—became visible and accessible narratives? This talk focuses on the politics of the public sphere and the innovative and sobering ways in which scholars of women's history, and especially African American women's history, reconstruct the public spheres and public records that these women haunt and inhabit.

### **“Recovering Women in the Records of Early Cherokee-White Contacts”**

**Theresa Strouth Gaul**, Texas Christian University

This presentation will examine the challenges and opportunities inherent in attempting to foreground the voices, experiences, and perspectives of Cherokee women when working with the vast manuscript archive of a missionary organization, the American Board, which established missions and schools in the Cherokee Nation beginning in 1817. While this archive represents a major source of information about Cherokee-white contacts during this era, it contains relatively few documents written by Cherokees, and even fewer written by Cherokee women. This presentation considers three dimensions of the ways Cherokee women's presence can be detected in the archive: 1) through the consideration of selected examples of Cherokee girls' letter writing within the context of the epistolary practices they were being taught in mission schools; 2) through the reconstruction of Cherokee women's mediation of male-authored texts; and 3) through the recovery of Cherokee women's voices and experiences as they echo through the reportage of male-authored journals and letters. The presentation bears relevance for researchers working in the fields of early Native studies and early women's writing who seek to advance methodological discussions on how to work with male-authored archives which cover over women's contributions and productions.

### **“Getting Women Out of the Archives: Publishing Letters”**

**Joan Hedrick**, Trinity College

Women have been pre-eminent in the genre of letters, a form that fits neatly with women's traditional social roles. However, it is my sense that their daily missives less often see the light of day than do those of their male counterparts. I propose to test this thesis for well-known American literary men and women. After gathering comparative data on whose letters are published, I will try to tease out the factors that influence publication. Are literary women who have had a standard edition of their works published more likely to have their letters published? Is there a bias toward modernist writers? How many nineteenth-century women writers have had their letters published? What presses are publishing editions of letters? If there is indeed a comparative imbalance between literary men and women, how might we address it?

***“In An Iridescent Time: An Undocumented Archival Journey with Ruth Stone, 1992–2002”***  
**Kandace Brill Lombart, Independent Scholar**

Ruth Stone will celebrate her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 8, 2009. This paper reveals the multiple challenges one literary scholar encountered while navigating the personal and public archives of this major American woman poet for over a decade. What are the major issues to address in recovering, editing, and accessing archival materials that remain in private hands? I experienced first-hand more than a decade’s commitment to the process of accessing and documenting archival materials not only in the poet’s home, but in major archival repositories such as Radcliffe’s Bunting Institute and the Library of Congress. Yet the most exciting opportunity was working side-by-side with the poet to document her papers, including small press literary journals, correspondence with major literary figures, notebooks, and ephemera (especially personal photographs), as well as to discover unpublished poems and to record a dozen taped interviews (which remain unpublished and untranscribed due to lack of funding). And this leads us to an essential question: without institutional or foundation support, what are the practical concerns, as well as the ethical issues, a scholar encounters in her commitment to literary preservation, especially if it is personally funded? To date, Stone’s papers, books, and ephemera—in spite of multiple national grant applications by this scholar—remain in perilous condition. What might the future hold for the repository of this major American poet’s archives?



## Women in the Archives

### Symposium Planning Committee

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