

# WOMEN at the CENTER

Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

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## The Robin Morgan Papers

### Did You Know...

- Our award-winning Web site makes our resources accessible world-wide.
- We offer research grants that enable scholars to work with our collections.
- Anyone who presents a photo ID can use our collections.
- Many of our collections come as gifts from people just like you!

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The Sallie Bingham Center recently received a major new collection, the papers of noted second-wave feminist Robin Morgan. For more than thirty years as an activist, political theorist, essayist, journalist, poet, and novelist, Robin Morgan has been one of America's most influential feminist figures. She has published 16 books (translated into 13 languages), but may be best known for editing the classic text *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*.

A substantial addition to our collections relating to the U.S. women's liberation movement, the Morgan Papers also help to put the movement in a global context. In 1985 Morgan was contributing editor for *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, an experience that led her to form the Sisterhood Is Global Institute together with feminist leaders from around the world. Morgan is also the author of *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism*. Originally published in 1989, the book was reprinted after the tragedies of September 11th. In a recent visit to Duke, Gloria

Steinem recommended *The Demon Lover* to all who wish to better understand the current climate of terror.

One of the founding editors of *Ms. Magazine*, Morgan served as its editor-in-chief from 1990 to 1994, during which time it re-emerged as an advertising-free publication. Morgan was also instrumental in the Feminist Majority Foundation taking on ownership of Liberty Media for Women, the publisher of *Ms.*, late last year.



Robin Morgan by Sally Tagg

The Morgan Papers include correspondence, diaries, datebooks, literary manuscripts, administrative files, governmental records (acquired through the Freedom of Information Act), and notes from her participation in activist organizations. Several folders of material on the 1968 protest of the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City provide an inside look at the event that launched the "bra burning" myth. Overall, the collection provides an intimate portrait of one of the central figures in the women's liberation movement.

## Mary Lily Research Grants Awarded for 2002-2003

The Sallie Bingham Center is pleased to announce the winners of this year's Mary Lily Research Grants, which support students, scholars, and independent researchers traveling to Duke to make use of the Bingham Center's holdings. From an exceptional group of applicants, this year's grants have

been awarded to the following individuals:

**Bebe Barefoot**, University of Alabama, Department of English, for work on her dissertation *The (Trans)Portable Acker*, an experimental biography of avant-garde author Kathy Acker.

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# WILPF: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Information on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom can be found on its website at <http://www.wilpf.org>.



Charlotte Adams, a founding member of the Chapel Hill branch of WILPF, getting out the vote in 1988. Photo by David Foster.

For more than half a century, members of the Chapel Hill branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom have been working to promote the principles and causes set forth by Jane Addams in 1915 when she was elected the first president of the International Women's Conference, WILPF's precursor. The records of the local WILPF chapter chronicle their efforts on behalf of civil rights, the environment, nuclear disarmament, social justice, and peaceful alternatives to war.

Charlotte Adams, one of its founding members and former presidents, began her life as a grassroots activist by organizing literacy classes during the depression. When World War II loomed on the horizon, she and her WILPF cohorts urged legislators to relax immigration laws for Jews fleeing the Nazi regime. In the '50s she helped establish racially integrated art and music classes for children, and in the 1960s marched in picket lines for civil rights. But many local residents remember Adams as the woman who led weekly peace vigils to protest

the Vietnam war. Every Wednesday from 1967 through 1973, Charlotte Adams stood with fellow protesters in front of the Chapel Hill post office in silent opposition to U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

In a recent phone conversation, Martha Drake, a member for over 35 years, recalled her 1984 trip to Japan as part of a WILPF delegation commemorating the 40th anniversary of the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A poignant group of materials documenting this trip is included in the collections at the Bingham Center. Drake is still active in the organization and has recently participated in vigils and protests against the war in Afghanistan.

The work of these women, and of other members of the Chapel Hill branch of WILPF, is documented by news-clippings, fliers, photographs, newsletters, meeting minutes, conference reports, and correspondence dating from 1958 to the present. The collection is a lasting tribute to their energy and dedication.

## Research Grants Awarded (cont'd)

**Brandi Brimmer**, UCLA, Department of History, for work on her dissertation *Gender and the Politics of Widows' Pension Claims*.

**Susan Ferentinos**, Indiana University, Department of History, for work on her dissertation *An Unpredictable Age: Sex, Consumption, and the Emergence of the American Teenager, 1910-1950*.

**Debra Herbenick**, the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, for work on a book that explores the history of language used regarding women's sexuality and reproductive health.

**Catherine Jones**, Johns Hopkins University, Department of History, for work on her dissertation regarding the expansion of public education and the experiences of African-American

and white women teachers in the post-Civil War South.

**Nancy Unger**, Santa Clara University, Department of History, for work on her book tentatively titled *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: Gender and American Women in Environmental History*.

**Linda Wayne**, University of Minnesota, Women's Studies Department, for work on her dissertation *Sexualities: From Second to Third Wave Feminism*.

**Dona Yarbrough**, University of Virginia, Department of English, for work on her dissertation *Real Queer: Sapphic Modernity and American Realism*, which examines precursors to the lesbian pulp fiction of the 1950s and 1960s.

Congratulations to all our grant winners!

Information on the Mary Lily Research Grant program can be found on our website at: <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/specoll/grants.html>.

## Merle Hoffman: Providing CHOICES for Women

One of the Bingham Center's most exciting recent acquisitions comes from Merle Hoffman, the longtime reproductive rights advocate and feminist publisher. This large collection documents the work of the CHOICES Women's Medical Center in Queens, New York, which Hoffman founded in 1971, as well as extensive materials from *On The Issues*, the feminist progressive magazine that Hoffman published from 1983 to 1999.

The CHOICES files offer a look inside the daily life of a women's health care center providing a broad range of family planning, gynecological, abortion, and other services to a diverse population. These materials document CHOICES' outreach efforts to clients who face economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers that might otherwise hinder their attempts to get adequate healthcare. The contents range from staff files, meeting minutes, and policy and procedure manuals to educational materials, correspondence with other feminist health professionals and associations, and architectural renovation plans.

Perhaps the most compelling holdings are those related to the abortion services provided

at CHOICES, especially during the late 1980s and the early 1990s when the anti-abortion movement was particularly active. Threats of violence against abortion providers are well-documented, with holdings showing how CHOICES fashioned a working relationship with local police and organized a volunteer escort service for women coming to the clinic. Related files also include security manuals and procedures for responding to bomb threats, research documenting Operation Rescue, the papers of the New York Pro-Choice Coalition, which Hoffman founded, and newspaper, radio, and television coverage of CHOICES.

A unique part of the collection is the material related to Hoffman's attempt to open a women's health center in Moscow. During the Soviet era, a lack of available contraception led to an average of six abortions over the course of a Soviet woman's lifetime. Bureaucratic obstacles eventually forced Hoffman to abandon her plans, but the collection opens a remarkable vista on the issues facing Russian women following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

- Ian Lekus



Merle Hoffman at a pro-choice rally in New York. Photo by Tom Beckett.

*Ian Lekus is a Ph.D. candidate in Duke's History Department, finishing a dissertation on homosexuality and antiviral activism in the 1960s. As the Bingham Center's Graduate Assistant, he helped to process the Hoffman Papers.*

## Recent Classes Make Use of Bingham Center Collections

The academic year has come to an end and, looking back, it has been quite a busy one. Several classes came to the Sallie Bingham Center for instruction and inspiration.

English graduate student David Woodard brought students from his course titled "It's Raining Men: Sex and Gender in African-American Culture" to the Bingham Center for a crash-course in zines. A house course on women and leadership came to hear about our efforts to collect women's private writing. And history professor Sucheta Mazumdar brought her class on technology and society to the Biddle

Rare Book Room to look at a selection of Bingham Center materials: cookbooks from our prescriptive literature collection documenting the introduction of a variety of domestic conveniences such as the electric refrigerator and the gas stove; the diaries of Elizabeth Ringgold illuminating the effects of the oil industry on farm life in Oklahoma between 1910 and 1924; and a broad selection of historical advertising help to map the spread of consumer culture.

Thanks to all our visitors for their interest in the Bingham Center.



Our mascot comes from a turn-of-the-century advertisement for a cure-all called Electrozone.



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## Digital Resources Are Just the Tip of the Iceberg



A photo of Elizabeth Johnson Harris from her handwritten memoir, which she began writing at the age of 55. Born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1867, to parents who had been slaves, Harris married at the age of 15 and was the mother of nine children. Several of her poems and vignettes were published in various newspapers during her lifetime. The clippings are included in the manuscript of her life story,

The Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture has a variety of resources available on its website. While they form just the tiniest tip of the iceberg, our online resources are representative of the kinds of materials you can find in the Bingham Center's collections.

In addition to numerous guides and bibliographies <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/bib.html> on subjects ranging from women in music to the history of sexuality, you will find materials that we have digitized and transcribed for research online, bringing a selection of primary sources to anyone with Web access. For example, Documents from the Women's Liberation Movement <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/> features transcribed texts and scanned images of over 40 articles, pamphlets, fliers, and booklets published from 1969 to 1974.

Our online archival collection of African-

American Women's materials <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/collections/african-american-women.html> presents the memoir of Elizabeth Johnson Harris (1867-1942) of Augusta, Georgia, a moving letter by Vilet Lester, a slave in search of her lost daughter, and the correspondence of Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson, two slaves on the estate of Virginia governor David Campbell.

We also feature the writings of women during the American Civil War <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/collections/civil-war-women.html>, including the 1864 diary of 16-year-old Alice Williamson of Gallatin, Tennessee, and the papers of Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow and Union spy Sarah E. Thompson.

We hope these materials will be useful in your research, and that they will tempt you to come visit the Bingham Center in person.