Undaunted: Celebrating Two Women’s History Milestones

This year, in addition to marking the 25th anniversary of the Bingham Center, we will observe the 40th anniversary of Ipas, whose records we hold. From its founding in 1973, Ipas has been dedicated to ending preventable deaths and disabilities from unsafe abortion. Ipas works to ensure that women across the globe can obtain safe, respectful and comprehensive abortion care, including counseling and contraception to prevent future unintended pregnancies.

A letter written by Ipas President and CEO Elizabeth Maguire, states that “in the 40 years since Ipas was created, its comprehensive and innovative efforts have improved women’s health, increased women’s access to safe abortion and related reproductive health care, and protected women’s rights to make their own reproductive decisions and thus shape their own futures.”

The Bingham Center, in collaboration with the Human Rights Archive at Duke, received 25 years of Ipas publications in 2011, beginning our documentation of this organization.

The collection has grown to include 186 linear feet of files documenting Latin American, Caribbean, Asian, and African programs, as well as training, marketing, technology, logistics, product promotion and distribution, policy, and administrative files from the genesis of the organization to 2004.

In celebration of our collaboration and our shared anniversaries, we have organized a public dialog between U.S. reproductive rights pioneer and Bingham Center donor, (Continued on page 3)

Portals into Betsy Gamble Hansen’s Life

The Bingham Center is pleased to announce the recent acquisition of the papers of Betsy Gamble Hansen. Hansen was a Duke alumna, women’s rights activist, UNICEF national board member, and author. She belonged to Duke University’s Council on Women’s Studies and founded the Oglethorpe University Women’s Network.

In addition to drafts and other material related to her 2003 novel, Portals, Hansen’s papers include hundreds of letters received by her grandmother, E.B. Menzies of Hickory, NC, and Menzies’s immediate family. This correspondence provides a vivid account of the experiences of the Menzies family throughout the Great Depression, World War II, and the boom of prosperity in the 1950s, and illustrates the changing role of the matriarch in Southern families during the first half of the 20th century. Much of this history was used as the inspiration for Hansen’s novel.

A collection of Hansen’s papers documenting the Women’s Network has been donated to Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Ga.
Celebrating the Bingham Center’s 25th in NYC

Feminist activist and writer Ann Snitow recently placed her papers with the Bingham Center. Among these materials are recordings of the first feminist radio show, Womankind, which aired on WBAI-FM in New York starting in 1970. WBAI is a progressive station which has been referred to as “an anarchist’s circus” and has long included a commitment to multicultural feminist programming in its mission.

Ann Snitow produced the “New Women Writers” and “Diary” series, as well as film reviews and interviews with renowned feminists such as Selma James. Individual shows of note include an interview with Susie Orbach about Fat is a Feminist Issue (1973), and a poetic adaptation of Meredith Tax’s The Rising of the Women (1972).

These recordings have been digitized and are available for use. If you are interested in accessing this rare and unique resource, please contact us.

“The Archival is Political” panelists (left to right) Jaclyn Friedman, Carmen Rios, Eleanor Smeal, and Merle Hoffman shared a thoughtful conversation on the importance of documenting feminist history and the transformative power of having our stories preserved and told at this event on October 28.

Dr. Phyllis Chesler offered warm remarks honoring Merle Hoffman as “passionate, generous and visionary.” In 1992, Dr. Chesler placed her papers with the Bingham Center.

Bingham Center librarian Kelly Wooten (left) with Jenna Freedman, Barnard College zine librarian (center), and Emily Drabinski, coordinator of library instruction at LIU Brooklyn (right). Drabinski brought a group of library students from Pratt Institute to the event.
Instruction and Outreach

Bingham Center librarians taught a variety of instruction sessions this fall for students enrolled in the following courses:

- **Book Art: Form and Function** (Visual Arts)
- **Cultural Construction of Gender** (Cultural Anthropology)
- **Queer Writing Practices** (Writing 101)
- **Women, Gender and Sexuality in the U.S.** (History)

Profiles in Research: Robin Robinson

Robin A. Robinson, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, received a Mary Lily Research Grant to use plantation records and slave trade documents to support her study of British women who were trafficked to colonial America. Dr. Robinson was seeking more evidence for her thesis that “British colonial law, policy, and magisterial practice colluded to force and control thousands of young women convicts, transported for mostly petty theft from Britain to the American colonies, to produce a vulnerable workforce in the colonial enterprise.” According to her prior research in London criminal court records, a majority of transported British women convicts to America were of reproductive age, and later became recorded in American plantation daybooks and correspondence as “imported Christian servants.”

Plantation record books may seem like dry recordings of financial transactions or only useful for their obvious documentation of the slave trade, but Robinson’s work reveals many other hidden narratives among the ledgers. Robinson writes, “Colonial plantation owners’ diaries and ledgers reveal a wealth of social history detail, including appeals for relief from mostly younger women (including widows, ‘spinsters,’ and single mothers, apparent subjects, many of them, of a hefty use of euphemism in chronicling parish matters), tax records that distinguish black and white ‘tithables’—another euphemism—and provide plausible evidence of the apparent fiscal wisdom of the transportation sentence and subsequent purchase of young, white, ‘imported Christian women.’ Once they completed their sentences in bondage, women’s social place as unmarried or abandoned women with children left them to appeal for parish relief, subjecting them to further sentences of servitude, and their children to servitude into adulthood. Primary source evidence suggests motive and method for shielding important men from scandal as this practice continued, protected by statutes and magistrates alike.”

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Merle Hoffman, and Ipas Mexico country director, Dr. Raffaela Schiavon, moderated by Ipas Executive Vice President, Anu Kumar, with introductory remarks by Duke’s Dean of Arts and Science, Laurie Patton. The program will take place on Wednesday, December 4 at 6 p.m. in Perkins Library room 217 and feature a display of material from the Ipas records and other reproductive rights collections held by the Sallie Bingham Center and Human Rights Archive.

Ipas Collection Guide: library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/ipas

Several classes focused on zines like Bamboo Girl and Riot Dyke, pictured here.
Our 25th Anniversary Celebration Continues

Save the Dates for Spring 2014 Events!

“Women at Duke” Wikipedia Edit-a-thon
March 20, 2014, from 5-9pm
at the Duke Women’s Center

Envisioning the Future of the Sallie Bingham Center, featuring Sallie Bingham
March 27, 2014 at 6:00pm in the von der Heyden Pavilion, Perkins Library

Freedom Means Everybody:
A Lecture by Mab Segrest
April 17, 2014 at 6:00pm in the Richard White Auditorium, Duke East Campus
Co-sponsored by the Program in Women’s Studies

“Women Unite” detail above from a poster by Irene Peslikis, whose papers are preserved in the Bingham Center.

Featured speakers
Sallie Bingham (left) and Mab Segrest (right).