

# The CCWH Newsletter

## The Newsletter for the Coordinating Council for Women in History

Volume 41, Issue 2

Fall 2010

### MESSAGE FROM CO-PRESIDENT: KATHLEEN BERKELEY

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The time for reflection is upon us as the CCWH membership is asked to consider the nomination of a new co-president. Elsewhere in this newsletter, candidate Susan Wladaver Morgan introduces herself to the membership. Susan is not a stranger to the CCWH. A long-time, active member of our organization, she currently sits on the Prelinger Prize Committee and has taken a turn as newsletter editor. Additional strengths include her stint as the president of the WAWH, her participation in the Pacific Coast American Historical Association and her professional duties as associate editor of the *Pacific Historical Review*. Susan will be invaluable in strengthening the CCWH's relationship with our regional sister organizations and we are fortunate that she agreed to toss her hat in the proverbial ring. I have every confidence that Susan will succeed me at the January meeting as she joins co-president Barbara Ramusack in planning for our organization's future

In the September issue of *Perspectives*, Nupur Chaudhuri and Barbara Ramusack review the considerable gains women have made in the historical profession over the past forty years, establishing the now robust fields of women's history and gender studies, and earning recognition as notable scholars and teachers from such venerable associations as the AHA and the OAH. Nupur and Barbara note, and rightly so, that organizations such as the CCWH played a vital advocacy role in obtaining these hard-fought accomplishments.

Even as we give ourselves a pat on our collective backs and revel in our accomplishments, our work is not done. When my colleagues (primarily the men, but also a few women) discover that I've served for three years as co-president of a professional organization whose mission is "to educate men and women on the status of women in the historical profession and to promote research and

interpretation in areas of women's history," they tend to ask if "my" organization has outlived its usefulness. My response is a swift and forceful "NO." Having vanquished the "invisibility" of women in history and in the historical profession, the next hurdle is to nurture, instruct, and advise the next generation of scholars who are struggling with the demands of managing a career and sustaining a family life. As Barbara and Nupur note, both anecdotal evidence and hard data indicate that work-life balance conflicts "continue to contribute to the departure of women from full-time employment in academia (as in other professions)."

At my home institution, where I serve as an associate dean, I am privy to any number of stories from stressed out faculty (men and women) desperate for some support (and wisdom) in dealing with such conflicts. Still, my "ah-ha" moment came in a recent meeting of "mid-level" administrators called together to review the summary results of my institution's 2010 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Career in Higher Education) study. Devised by Harvard's Graduate School of Education, the survey of full time tenure track faculty revealed SIGNIFICANT gender differences with respect to perceptions about the "nature of work," "policy effectiveness," and "clarity of tenure process." Lightning rod issues for women faculty included the amount of clerical and administrative work they performed, the amount of time they had to devote to research, childcare, the clarity of the tenure process, reasonable expectations about scholarship, and the lack of consistent messages about tenure from tenured colleagues. When asked to identify practices my institution could strengthen to improve the workplace, bolstering mentoring programs topped the list of five followed by consistent and

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## CCWH NEWS

### Newsletter by Email

Members now have the option of requesting an email copy of their newsletter rather than a paper copy. If you would like to request to receive an email copy of the newsletter, just email [newsletter@theccwh.org](mailto:newsletter@theccwh.org). If you have signed up for an email newsletter, please add [newsletter@theccwh.org](mailto:newsletter@theccwh.org) to your email address book so you won't miss an issue.

**The Coordinating Council for Women in History now advertises job announcements (\$25.00 per ad) on its website.**

**Please send ad copy to [newsletter@theccwh.org](mailto:newsletter@theccwh.org)**

## REMEMBERING PEGGY PASCOE

BY ESTELLE FREEDMAN, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

THIS ARTICLE WILL BE APPEAR IN THE NOV. 2010 *PACIFIC HISTORICAL REVIEW*

AND IS PRINTED HERE WITH KIND PERMISSION

Peggy Pascoe, the Beekman Professor of Northwest and Pacific History and Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Oregon, died at home in Eugene, Oregon on July 23, 2010. She leaves behind an exceptional professional legacy, not only in her prize-winning scholarship on women and multicultural relations in the West, but also through the careers of the students and colleagues she has mentored over the decades.

Born in 1954 in Butte, Montana, Peggy Pascoe received a B.A. in History from Montana State University (1977), which later named her one of the school's 100 most outstanding graduates. She entered the Women's History program at Sarah Lawrence College, studying with Professor Gerda Lerner, and earned her M.A. degree in 1980. That year she began the doctoral program in U.S. History at Stanford, where I had the great fortune to serve as her advisor and then to become her colleague and friend. Her cohort--which included David Gutierrez, Valerie Matsumoto, and Vicki Ruiz--pioneered a multicultural and gendered history of the West. Peggy's revised dissertation, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (Oxford University Press, 1993), set a high standard for these fields. Through careful case studies of female missionary campaigns throughout the West, she explored the ways that white Protestant women attempted to uplift Native American, Asian American, working-class, and Mormon women. Her balanced and subtle interpretation both credited the opportunities to challenge patriarchy and exposed the ways these efforts reinforced racial hierarchies.

After receiving her Ph.D. in 1986, Peggy Pascoe began her teaching career at the University of Utah, where she won a University Distinguished Teaching Award. She moved to Oregon in 1996, along with her life partner, Linda Long, who is Manuscripts Librarian for Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Oregon. In the courses Peggy taught in history and Ethnic Studies, she always made race and gender central. Here is the way she described her interests to students on her university web page: "I'm fascinated by the cultural and historical processes that make race, gender, and sexuality seem like 'natural,' common-sense differences rather than the power-laden hierarchies they really were (and are)." In 2009 she received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for fostering diversity at the University of Oregon.

Her teaching interests reflected the direction of her research. Beginning in the 1990s, Peggy investigated the history of interracial marriage in the American West, later broadening her scope to map shifting racial ideologies throughout the nation through the lens of debates over "miscegenation." Her skillful readings of court cases and laws provided the basis for several path-breaking articles that foreshadowed the impact her new work would have. "Race, Gender, and Intercultural Relations: The Case of Interracial Marriage" (*Frontiers*, 1991) won the Jensen-Miller Prize in 1991, and "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America" (*Journal of American History*, 1996) won the America: History and Life Prize in 1997.

Peggy was part way through the manuscript for her book on miscegenation law when she learned in 2005 that she had ovarian cancer. Initially she thought she would not be able to complete the study. In 2007, at a panel held in her honor at the Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, several colleagues commented on her draft chapters, which helped inspire her to go back to work on the book even as she endured multiple rounds of chemotherapy. The scholarly result was stunning. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, 2009), provides a sweeping and detailed account of the criminalization of interracial marriage and resistance to that process from the 1860s through the 1960s. It is also a superb history of the shifting meaning of "race" in American culture and the ways that gender and race are always mutually constructed. One of the most acclaimed books in U.S. social, cultural, and legal history, it received the Ellis W. Hawley and the Lawrence W. Levine Prizes from the Organization of American Historians, the John H. Dunning Prize and the Joan Kelly Memorial Prize from the American Historical Association, and the J. Willard Hurst Prize from the Law and Society Association.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It seems like only yesterday that I took the position of Executive Director and yet it has been six months already. The weather and the trees in northern Illinois have started to change. This is a beautiful part of the country in fall especially when the reds, yellows, and oranges seem to gently persuade us to get ready for the winter. That, of course, means that the AHA and the annual CCWH events will soon be here and so I wanted to take the opportunity to encourage members to register for the AHA and plan to attend the CCWH-sponsored events. All the CCWH events will take place in the Boston Marriott Copley Place.

Here are some of the highlights. The CCWH General Business meeting will take place on Thursday, 6 January from 3-5 p.m. All members are welcome to join the Board for the meeting. If you have any items for the agenda, please contact me in advance of the meeting. On Friday, January 7, the CCWH will host a reception from 6-8 p.m. co-sponsored by the Peace History Society and the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History. This will be an informal time to meet and catch up with old friends, to bring new ones to join the organization, or just to relax. The annual CCWH luncheon will take place on Saturday 8 January from 12.15-1.30pm. We are very excited to have Dr. Anne Waltner of the University of Minnesota give the keynote address, titled, "Les Noces Chinoises: An Eighteenth Century French Representation of a Chinese Wedding Procession." The AHA has tried to simplify things for affiliates this year. You will see that tickets for the CCWH annual luncheon are available for purchase on the AHA registration form for \$45. There will also be an opportunity to buy a luncheon ticket by checking the box on the CCWH membership renewal form that you will receive in the mail in a couple of weeks.

The CCWH is sponsoring two panels this year as well as a roundtable. The first panel, "Documenting Social History: The Stories of Three Archives," will take place on Friday, January 7, from 2.30-3.30 p.m. The second panel tackles teaching and technology. "History and Technology in and out of the Classroom," will take place on Saturday, January 8, from 2.30-4.30 p.m. The CCWH is co-sponsoring a roundtable with the Society for the Advancement of the History of South Asia (SAHSA) entitled "South Asia and the Future of feminist Historiography: A Workshop on the Politics of Comparison." Participants include Philippa Levine, Mrinalini Sinha, Nancy Cott, Afsaneh Najmabadi, and Wang Zheng. Please plan to attend these diverse and informative CCWH events.

As most of you already know, the CCWH has four annual awards, two graduate student fellowships, a new Chaudhuri first article prize and the prestigious Prelinger award. The new annual deadline for each of these awards is September 15. All awardees will receive recognition for their work and the monetary award at the annual CCWH luncheon. The funds for these prizes come from donations. If you would like to donate to any of the awards, please indicate this on your membership renewal form or send a check directly to the CCWH Treasurer, Kathleen Nutter, indicating which fund you wish to donate to. This is a tax deductible donation and you will receive a tax receipt for your records.

The CCWH membership renewal letter should arrive in your mailbox in the middle of November, along with the ballot forms to be returned with your membership check. If you wish to buy a luncheon ticket with your membership, please indicate this on the form. I would urge you to encourage colleagues and graduate students to join the CCWH for professional development, mentoring and collegial support.

The CCWH would like to welcome our new Public History representative. Lara Godbille comes to this position as the current Director of the U.S. Navy Seabee Museum. Sara Kimble has volunteered as the new CCWH website coordinator. Sara is a scholar-in-residence at the Newberry Library in Chicago. We are very excited to welcome both Lara and Sara to the CCWH team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Amy Essington for all her work coordinating the website in the interim. Also, please remember that the CCWH website posts job announcements. There is currently one job opening with a deadline of November 30, 2010. If your institution would like to post job announcements on the CCWH website, the cost is \$25 for 90 days. Please contact Sara for more information.

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### CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

clear expectation for tenure. As one might expect, with respect to "remedying deficits," salary and benefits were predictably first and second, respectively, with child and elder care third on the list of five.

What can we as an organization do to address concerns about work-life balance conflicts? Again, Barbara and Nupur point the way: "assess the work-life factors that impede women historians from achieving their full potential and develop a 'toolbox' for mentoring women historians from graduate education through the award of tenure, to the promotion to full professor."

Thank you for the honor of serving as co-president these past three years. I look forward to working with Barbara and our new co-president as they and our capable executive director, Sandra Dawson, set the course for the CCWH over the next two to three years.

Please come to Boston in January. I hope to see y'all at the CCFWH reception and luncheon. Cheers!

## CO-PRESIDENT CANDIDATE STATEMENT: SUSAN WLADAVER-MORGAN

I am honored to accept the nomination to become co-president of the Coordinating Council for Women in History, an organization with a proud history and many successes. The Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession (founded in 1969) and the Conference Group on Women's History (founded in 1974) faced and met challenges that are hard to imagine today. These challenges included hostility, resistance, and scorn for women's participation in history departments as professors and graduate students; the near impossibility of inclusion within the power structure, or even on panels, of the AHA and OAH; and active contempt for subjects deemed "not mainstream," including those having to do with women and gender. The CCWH and many of its affiliated organizations changed that by providing a basis for collective action within the profession, by offering venues and tools to help women historians build effective networks, and by legitimizing the fresh questions that women historians sought to ask and answer.

Given that women's and gender history are now well-accepted fields and that women are well-represented in the profession at every level, one might suppose that the work of organizations like the CCWH is done: We can declare victory and go home. But now we face other challenges, some related to the current economic situation, but others deeper and more systemic. The profession as a whole and many, if not most, departments have not satisfactorily addressed the problem of adjunct faculty who bear a disproportionate share of the teaching load at the expense of their research and writing (and job security!), and women are more likely to remain in adjunct positions. Departments have also not dealt adequately with the responsibilities of care-giving that fall most heavily on women, whether as mothers or daughters; partly because of this, even tenured women tend to get stuck at the associate professor level. All of these problems grow worse as support for education and humanistic learning in general declines in the face of financial stringency.

I have been actively involved in organizations of women historians for many years, editing the newsletter and serving on the Prelinger Prize committee for the CCWH, acting as treasurer for the Coalition for Western Women's History, and editing *The Networker* and serving on program, local arrangements, and prize committees of the Western Association of Women Historians, even doing a stint as its president. I believe that organizations like these have the power to do something even more important than getting women historians a bigger or better piece of the departmental pie.

In these organizations, I have found a commitment to work together to redefine what being "professional" means, to look beyond the challenges of our separate careers, and to approach the history we study as whole human beings. Some of us, when we began this journey, believed that our mere presence in the profession would necessarily transform it, and to a certain extent we have. Still, I think we can agree that there is more to be done.

One thing CCWH can do is make more of the first word in our name: coordinating. We have many affiliated organizations—just look at the list in this newsletter. We sometimes co-sponsor sessions at the AHA with a few of them. Yet most of the time our regional or topical affiliates operate in isolation from each other, even though we have much to learn by sharing our knowledge. I would like to see CCWH really become a site for coordinating professional activities among our affiliates, maybe even getting more of these affiliates explicitly represented in the programs of the AHA, the OAH, the Western History Association, and many other larger organizations. This would gain them the exposure they need to bring in new members who will benefit from the networks they find. These affiliates are doing wonderful work, nurturing women historians at every stage of their careers and fostering a sense of community in an increasingly alienating academic environment. As our affiliates support their members, so CCWH can support and nurture our affiliates, and together, one day, we really may transform the profession.

## CCWH MEMBER NEWS

**Carol Deboer-Langworthy** (Brown University) has a long biographical essay about the American writer Neith Boyce (1872-1951) forthcoming through Scribner's/Cengage *American Writers* series. It will be available online as well as in print in January 2011.

Returning to earlier research on the princes of India, **Barbara Ramusack** contributed an essay on "Kingship in India" to *Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts*, a book that accompanies an exhibition of the same title at the Victoria and Albert Museum that opened in October 2009 in London. She also delivered the keynote address, "Indian Princes Then and Now: Politicians, Celebrities and Entrepreneurs" at "Maharaja: Representation and Reality" a symposium at the Victoria and Albert held in conjunction with the exhibition in November 2009. A revised version of that exhibition will begin a tour of four sites in North America in October 2010.

## **BUILDING AN ARCHIVE FROM SCRATCH:**

**BY BARBARA WINSLOW, BROOKLYN COLLEGE/CUNY**

The Shirley Chisholm Archive of Brooklyn Women's Activism, an interactive oral and documentary history project, was launched in 2006. It is a repository of women's grassroots social activism in Brooklyn from 1945 to the present. In the spirit of Chisholm's legacy as a groundbreaking community and political activist, the archive traces the many paths she cleared, by including materials representing the wide range of women's grassroots activism throughout the borough. It is a resource for K-12 students, college students, community activists, public policy experts, scholars, and the general public. Its purpose is to expand understanding of the place of women in history and of the significance of social activism, itself. I refer to this project as interactive because like so many academic and activist endeavors it involves a wide range of participants – Brooklyn institutions and activists working together with academics and scholars.

The idea for this project came to me during my 2005/6 sabbatical leave. I had just been tenured and was looking for other ways to bring research and knowledge about working class, immigrant and women of color to larger interested populations. I was influenced by the work of Candace Falk of the Emma Goldman papers, Sarah Schulman of the ACT UP Oral History Project, History Ink, and the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, to name just a few. Naming the archive after Chisholm came to me immediately. After all, she was a 1947 graduate of Brooklyn College and one of its most distinguished alumni. But she was more than just a graduate of the college; she was most representative of the Brooklyn experience. Born in the U.S. of immigrant working class parents, she lived in the Caribbean as a child, returned to Brooklyn as a teenager, and matriculated at Brooklyn College. Immediately she plunged into activism with a variety of educational, religious, immigrant, community, political, and social organizations. In 1964, she was elected to the New York State Assembly where her great legislative achievement was the 1966 passage of the SEEK program which provided financial and counseling assistance to students entering college for the first time. The program was designed to help students succeed in a rigorous college setting in order to advance the cause of equality in higher educational opportunity at the City University of New York. In 1968 she was the first African American woman elected to Congress, representing Brooklyn's twelfth congressional district. In 1972 she was the first African American and the first woman to mount a serious campaign for the Democratic Party nomination for the Presidency of the United States. Her activism embodied almost every aspect of her constituents' lives: home, church, community, school, health, higher education, internationalism, connections to the Caribbean community, labor, and civil and women's rights.

When Chisholm died in 2005, I was appalled that so few people remembered her. There was no scholarly biography of her, nor was she remembered as a major figure in either the black freedom struggle or the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. When I announced the idea for the Shirley Chisholm Project at a Brooklyn College Woman's Studies Affiliate Faculty meeting, almost half the faculty did not know she had been a student at the college, and a handful did not even know who she was. Equally discouraging, Brooklyn College students, many of whom who benefited from SEEK, had never heard of her. That Chisholm was so erased from historical memory among women's studies faculty, Brooklyn college students and even in her own borough was shocking as well as depressing. That incident led me to ask why Chisholm was not that well known and what could be done to bring back this important historic figure back into the public imagination. These questions gave rise to the idea of an interactive oral history project.

In planning the project, I had an idea of what to do, but had no expertise, no formal training in any of the areas of archival studies, oral history, interdisciplinary courses in anthropology, archaeology, historical geography, folklore, business administration, policy studies, or information sciences. My technological expertise was equally lacking. I did not even know how to create a web page. I attended graduate school in the late sixties when projects like this were very rare. My formal training and area of expertise has been women's suffrage and contemporary women's politics. Understanding that I was 'flying by the seat of my pants,' so to speak, I had to develop a conceptual framework for all my ideas. First, I took a self-created crash course on Shirley Chisholm, New York State and Brooklyn history. My first "aha" moment about the direction of this project came from Julie Gallagher's, (currently a professor at Penn State Brandywine former CCWH graduate student representative and Chisholm scholar), PhD dissertation, where she wrote that when Chisholm ran for Congress in 1968, over 60% of the registered voters in her newly redistricted district were women. She argued that Chisholm's electoral triumph was due in part due to her extraordinary determination, confidence and political savvy. But equally crucial was her deeply rooted involvement in Brooklyn's social, religious, immigrant, educational and political organizations, of which women have always been the mainstay. Chisholm could not have been elected to Albany and then to the US Congress if it weren't for her involvement in the myriad of women's organizations, and these women were her base of support. I decided to create an archive, named after Chisholm, but devoted to Brooklyn women's activists and activism.

My lack of formal training in archival creation and oral history also meant that I had to give greater thought and research to some of the more methodological and theoretical issues involved in such a project. Fortunately, I was able to rely on articles in *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, edited by Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz and Mary Elizabeth Perry, three feminist scholars as well as CCWH activists. This collection of essays challenged the traditional assumption that archives are

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Submit your members news for the next issue. Do you have a new book, article, conference presentation, graduation, recent promotion, service, teaching award, or other professional news to share with the CCWH membership? Send it to [newsletter@theccwh.org](mailto:newsletter@theccwh.org) or [art5sv@virginia.edu](mailto:art5sv@virginia.edu) for publication in the next newsletter.

**SPRING DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2011**

## SUPPORT SAHSA AT AHA

The CCWH is sponsoring a workshop on comparative gender entitled “South Asia and the Future(s) of Feminist Historiography: A Workshop on the Politics of Comparison” at this year’s AHA conference in Boston.

SAHSA (Society for the Advancement of the History of South Asia) was formed in 2007 to give collective shape to growing interest in South Asia, and to represent the interests of South Asia scholars at the AHA. This year, SAHSA celebrates the presidency of Barbara Metcalf, a leading historian of the subcontinent, through a set of interlinked panels focused on the theme of “comparative gender,” an issue with special pertinence for Metcalf, who has written extensively on Islam, gender, and social reform. We would like to encourage the participation of members of the CCWH at the panels, which have been organized in workshop form to allow maximal audience participation, dialogue, and discussion. Mrinalini Sinha (Michigan) will deliver a formal talk on the relationship between feminist historiography on/in South Asia, with responses by: Nancy Cott (Harvard); Steven Pierce (Manchester); Wang Zheng (Michigan). Phillipa Levine (UT-Austin) will moderate. The panels are slated for Saturday, January 6, 2011, from 9-11AM (Panel 148), and again, from 11:30AM-1:30PM (Panel 186).

### PASCOE TRIBUTE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Peggy Pascoe served her university and the profession generously. In the words of her colleague, Professor Ellen Herman, she was “universally admired” by faculty in history, Ethnic Studies, Women's and Gender Studies and “in all the other units of the university where her calming presence was felt over the years and where both her scholarship and her unmatched diplomatic skills were respected and much appreciated. She was a quintessential professional in the best sense of the word.” For three years she served as the co-president of the Coordinating Council for Women in History. In 1996 she co-chaired the Program Committee for the American Studies Association, and in 2003 she was a member of the Program Committee for the American Historical Association. As a co-editor of the American Crossroads Series for the University of California Press she nurtured younger scholars through her careful editing of and support for their books. In addition to shaping the graduate program at Oregon, she mentored graduate students around the country, especially in the field of western women’s history. Her senior colleagues, myself included, also benefitted from her gentle and pointed insights into our work in progress. We realize how much better our future studies would have been had Peggy survived to continue our ongoing conversations about gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality.

In addition to Linda Long, her partner of thirty years, Peggy is survived by their daughters, Ellie Pascoe-Long (age 13) and Joie Pascoe-Long (age 11); her parents; four siblings; and her mother-in-law. A memorial scholarship has been established in her name to support graduate student research. Contributions can be made to the University of Oregon Foundation, 360 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 202, Eugene, OR 97401-3273 or online at <https://supportuo.uofoundation.org/> with a note designating the Peggy Pascoe Graduate Student Fund in History.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

It has been a pleasure to work with Co-president Kathleen Berkeley for the past few months. Her energy and support for the organization have been exemplary. Although she is stepping down as Co-President, she will continue to serve as an example to us in the CCWH. Many thanks for your leadership, Kathleen.

And finally, I want to let you know about the Peggy Pascoe Memorial Scholarship Fund. Peggy Pascoe was co-President from 1997-1999. She died in August and will be greatly missed by her family and colleagues. Peggy was always deeply concerned about her students and a memorial fund in her honor has been established for graduate student financial support. The CCWH plans to send a donation on behalf of the membership to the fund. Please consider donating 10 to fifteen dollars to this worthy memorial fund. If you would like to make a tax deductible gift to this memorial fund through the CCWH, please send a check, made out to CCWH but with Pascoe Student Fund in the memo line, to our treasurer, Kathleen Banks Nutter, Department of History, Stony Brook University, SBS S315, Stony Brook, NY 11794-4348.

~ Sandra Trudgen Dawson

**BUILDING AN ARCHIVE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5**

“simply immutable, neutral and [an] ahistorical place in which historical records are preserved.” Other scholars such as Antonette Burton, for example in her edited collection, *Archive Stories, (Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History)*, directly confronted the idea of the traditional archive for its power to “shape the narratives which are to be ‘found’ there.”

In my opinion, historical documents should not be private but public. Housing documents in private, semi public or inaccessible libraries, to be used by a select few, perpetuates the concept that some knowledge should be private. Furthermore, it perpetuates the idea that research and scholarship should be the province of a private and privileged group. Historical documents and artifacts located in public places such as historical societies, public libraries, and of course the web, breaks down these artificial barriers allowing all interested parties to have access to and read the material.

As of this writing, we have compiled 17 oral history interviews and 11 filmed events, including three conferences and presentations about Chisholm and Brooklyn activists. Our next interviewee will be Donna Brazile, Democratic Party strategist, activist and longtime friend of Chisholm. We have approximately 15 boxes of papers about Shirley Chisholm, one box of papers from the Brooklyn Pro Choice Network, a local reproductive rights advocacy organization that was active from 1985-2005, and about 100 video and 16 audio cassettes from Shola Lynch. We also have signed copies of her two books, lots of campaign buttons and flyers, historic posters, photographs, and telegraphs as well as personal letters from Chisholm to her constituents. Part of the archive is housed in the Brooklyn College library. The rest of the archive is located in the Project office at Brooklyn College. Both parts are accessible to the public at <http://shirleychisholmproject.brooklyn.cuny.edu/>.

I have come to the conclusion that one of the many purposes of this archive is not to “shape” narratives, but rather to bring to light and to life the voices, writings and other texts of people whose lives had hitherto been ignored or deemed by ‘professional’ archivists as not particularly important to the dominant historical narrative. The materials collected will hopefully enable scholars to develop their own interpretations of Chisholm and Brooklyn women’s activism.

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