

Our Archives, but Not Ourselves: Filling the Gap of Research about Women Archivists

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Abstract: The Research Forum's first ten years reveal topical breadth, but also a gap: women in the profession. Of all the contributions, only one focuses on women archivists. This is particularly egregious given that 73% of SAA's 2015 Employment Survey respondents identified as women. We seek to rectify this by presenting our ongoing research, initially given as two panels at the 2015 SAA WAR Annual Meeting.

Bred by its feminization, the archival profession braves the duality of a demographically female-dominated profession with women archivists facing traditional gender limitations. Bearing a resemblance to descriptions in Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, this archival mystique takes many forms: few women leaders; disproportionate workplace stress; professional development concerns; hidden, split, and ignored women's collections; and inadequate understanding of professional identity and awareness of archives outside the profession's private sphere.

The research presented will examine the origins of the archival mystique and its consequences, and propose advocacy-based solutions. Specific attention will be given to the role of gender and workplace stress, as the team's research moves toward an evaluation of how gender factors into the change paradigm.

The desired outcome is to increase awareness, discover new connections, and gain insight that will lead to a cohesive publication. The team also hopes to garner feedback that will assist in the development of a survey, currently underway in consultation with faculty in Wayne State University's Department of Psychology.

About the Authors:

Kristen Chinery is the Reference Archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, where she manages manuscript reference services. She received a Master of Arts in History, Master of Library and Information Science, and Archival Administration Certificate from Wayne State University, and a BA in History from Adrian College. Ms. Chinery serves as a member of the Regional Archival Associations Consortium (RAAC) Steering Committee and chairs the Grant Development Committee. She will begin her term as RAAC's co-chair in August 2016. Ms. Chinery's research activity includes women's labor history and industrial organizational psychology as it relates to archivists.

Alexandra Orchard, CA is the Technical and Metadata Archivist at the Reuther Library, Wayne State University. She is the Editor of *Archival Issues*, the SAA Description Section Newsletter Editor, and the outgoing Reviews Coordinator for the SAA Reviews Portal. She serves as Vice Chair of the Wayne State University President's Commission on the Status of Women and as a member of the University Gender Equity Workgroup. Ms. Orchard received her MLIS and Archival Certificate from Wayne State University, and has a background in English, art, and computer science. Orchard's research interests include labor, women, pop culture, and archival theory and technologies. She has presented at SAA, MAC, and the Michigan Archival Association.

Alison Stankrauff has served as the Campus Archivist at the Indiana University South Bend campus since 2004. She is a lone arranger, and inherited an archives that had not had an archivist for ten years. Previous to her current position, she served as a reference archivist at the American Jewish Archives, and previous to that, as a technician at the Reuther Labor Archives at Wayne State University. Alison interned at the Rabbi Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El in metropolitan Detroit. She graduated with her Masters in Library Science with Archival Administration concentration in 2002 from Wayne State University, and has a Bachelors degree in history from Antioch College.

Leslie Van Veen McRoberts is the Local History Archivist at the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University. In addition to maintaining the history of Maryland's Eastern Shore, she also is the archivist for Perdue Farms, Inc. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science and a graduate certificate in Archival Administration from Wayne State University and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University. Currently, she serves as the Co-Chair for the Women Archivists Roundtable for the Society of American Archivists and as an advisory board member for the National Digital Newspaper Program for the state of Maryland. Previous to her experience at the Nabb Center, Leslie was a Processing Technician at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs and a Digitization Technician at the Detroit Historical Society.