

news
from the

Schlesinger Library

FALL 2002

Ida Pruitt and a Changing China

The Ida Pruitt Papers, a remarkable collection documenting the life and work of this daughter of missionaries who devoted her life to China, is now processed and open to researchers. The 74 boxes of papers of Pruitt and her mother, Anna Seward Pruitt, and more than 5,500 photographs, are especially valuable because so many images of Chinese life were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The collection covers nearly a century of change from the 1880s through the 1980s.

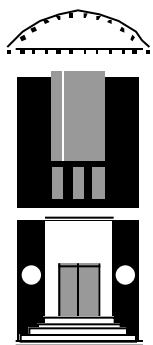
The first of six children, Ida Pruitt was born in the Shantung Province in China in 1888. The Pruitt children attended missionary schools in China, then attended colleges in the United States. Ida Pruitt went to Cox College in Georgia and received her B.S. from Columbia University Teachers College in New York in 1910. She returned to China, taught at a girls' school in Chefoo until 1918, then came back to study social work in Philadelphia and Boston. In 1921, she was hired by the Rockefeller Foundation to head the newly formed Department of Social Work at the Peking Union Medical College in Beijing. Pruitt left PUMC in 1938 and again returned to the U.S., where she helped launch Indusco, the American fundraising arm of the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives.

Raised in China by her "amah" or nanny, Pruitt grew up steeped in Chinese culture and strongly identified with the Chinese people. She had difficulty adapting to life in the U.S. Glynn Edwards, who processed this collection, observes, "Pruitt struggled to fit in. To the Chinese, she was white, and yet in America she felt very foreign." This sense of marginality honed her observational skills.

While in China she kept extensive notes about the people she met and the events in her life. These she turned into two biographies: *Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman* and *Old Madam Yin: A Memoir of Peking Life, 1926–1938*, and a three-part autobiography: *A China Childhood*, *The Years Between*, and *Days in Old Peking: May 1921–October 1938*, the latter two unpublished. Early in 2003, the 175-page finding aid to the Pruitt collection will be available electronically at <http://oasis.harvard.edu>. ■



■ *Ida Pruitt, China, c. 1915; Ida Pruitt with her parents, C.W. and Anna, being transported by litter, Chefoo, China, c. 1890*



Radcliffe

News from the Schlesinger Library is published from time to time to inform those interested in the Library about recent acquisitions, special projects, and the programs offered by the Radcliffe Institute's research library on the history of women in the United States. It is written and edited by members of the Library staff and designed by Jean Hammond.

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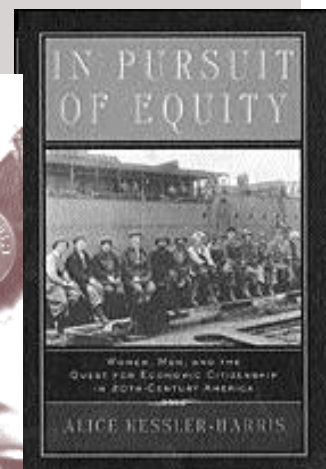
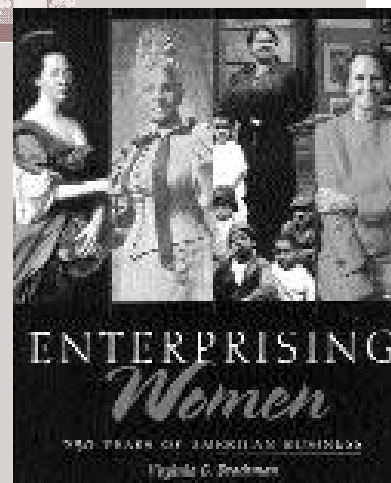
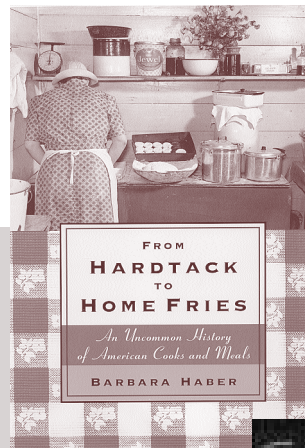
RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

A cascade of new books—three dozen and counting—published during 2001 and 2002 and citing the Library's collections has been flowing through our doors. In addition to *From Hardtack to Home Fries: An Uncommon History of American Cooks and Meals*, by our own Barbara Haber, and

Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business, the companion book to the national exhibit sponsored by the Library and the National Heritage Museum, by Virginia Drachman, R.I. '01, there are books on women's health, culinary, political, and social history, race and class, and radicals. These new titles deal with topics that span two centuries of American history, from the early 1800s through the Progressive Era and into the last decades of the 20th century. Whether about Emma Goldman or "the pill," women scientists or nursing and home care, the politics of gender and food or the politics of breast cancer, each book has been shaped in part by the materials its author found here. We are grateful for the gracious acknowledgements from these authors, proud of their accomplishments, pleased to have helped define and refine their studies.

You can view the impressive and growing list of books citing the Library's collections on our web site at <http://www.radcliffe.edu/schles/newsevnt/newbooks.htm>. We know that the list is incomplete, and we encourage you to let us know of others, perhaps your own book, in which the Library is cited. For a list of recent journal articles that cite the Library's collections, see <http://www.radcliffe.edu/schles/newsevnt/newart.htm>. ■

■ *Congratulations to two authors on the list, Alice Kessler-Harris, professor of history at Columbia University and 2002 winner of the prestigious Bancroft Prize in history for her book, In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America, and Nina Bernstein, noted New York Times reporter, whose book, The Lost Children of Wilder: the Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care, was a 2001 National Book Award finalist.*



Dear Friends of the Library:

It's a pleasure to write my first letter to you as director. This has been an exciting period of change and growth for the Library. In July, our new deputy director/librarian, Megan Sniffin-Marinoff, took up her post, and her expertise and capacities of vision are already re-energizing our staff and procedures. We are growing not just in vision but in size: the manuscript department acquired more material (431.5 linear feet) last year than in any previous year.

More generally, the Library is making news outside Radcliffe Yard. Many of the Library's treasures, ranging from E. Jane Gay's journal recording characteristics of Plains Indians of the 1880s, to Betty Friedan's high school autobiography, are currently on display in a handsome exhibit at Harvard's Houghton Library. A special issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin* on "Recent Acquisitions in Harvard's Libraries" included three essays on Schlesinger items by Kathryn Allamong Jacob, Anne Engelhart, and Mary Maples Dunn, former director of the Library.

The Schlesinger's resources will receive national exposure via the stunning exhibit, "Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business," now open at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Mass. Made possible by the indefatigable efforts of former acting director of the Library Jane Knowles and with major funding from AT&T, Ford Motor Company, and the Cabot Family Charitable Trust, "Enterprising Women" will travel the country between 2003 and 2005.

More poignant news: at the end of this year, both Barbara Haber, curator of books, and Sylvia McDowell, assistant to the director, will retire. Besides the many important services Sylvia has provided for the staff and the Library's users, donors and Friends, she has represented the Library to a

larger surrounding community. Barbara has devoted her talents, skills, and allegiance to the Schlesinger for more than 30 years, building our book collection, especially the culinary book collection, to its current outstanding excellence. The presence of both will be sadly missed, as we wish them good fortune in their next endeavors.

The coming months hold much promise. There are exciting projects afoot, including plans for a conference to mark the Library's 60th anniversary in 2003, that I look forward to sharing with you in future letters.

Nancy F. Cott
Director

■ *Drew Faust is surrounded by her students at the end of their week-long seminar.*

TEACHERS AND DOCUMENTS

This past July, I had the pleasure of leading a week-long seminar at Radcliffe on "Women of the Civil War Era, 1848-1876" for 32 middle and high school teachers and three National Park Service rangers. The group listened to lectures, engaged in lively discussion, watched films and took a walking tour of women's history sites in Boston. The highlight of their experience, however, was the opportunity to work with original manuscript materials in the Schlesinger Library. Each participant identified a topic, located relevant collections and, finally, selected two documents to use in the classroom. The teachers had the opportunity to be historical researchers, and their students will enjoy some of the riches of the Schlesinger Library.

On the last day of the seminar, the teachers gave me a leather-bound book in which each had inscribed a message about the course. Many chose to write about the Library. Here is a sampling of their remarks: "The opportunity this week to conduct research at the Schlesinger Library was exhilarating and I crave the opportunity to delve further into their resources;" from a teacher from Cambridge Rindge & Latin, "I am so happy that I have found this treasure in my own back yard;" from a teacher from Newton North, "I'm thrilled to have discov-



ered the Schlesinger!" and, my favorite, "I return feeling I can create change in my students and the world."

Drew Faust
Dean, Radcliffe Institute

Come On Up and See These New Collections Sometime

Among the Library's most recent manuscript acquisitions are the papers of the indomitable Mae West. This small collection containing scripts, contracts, affidavits, audiotapes, and family photographs documents the career of this glamorous stage and film star, who was also a writer of screenplays, novels, an autobiography, and, during the Depression, one of the richest women in America.

Our holdings on the involvement of American women at a global level have been augmented by the papers of Mildred Robbins Leet, social activist, expert on women, development, and technology, and founder, with husband Glen, of



Trickle Up, a program funding small business projects, many run by women, in developing countries. We have also added to our holdings the diaries and other papers of Bostonians Elizabeth Caldwell Stevens and Mary Stone Rousmaniere, the latter being the younger sister of educator Frances R. Dewing, whose papers are already at the Library.

The records of three organizations are among other recent arrivals: the Richmond Valley Garden Club, founded in the 1920s in western Massachusetts; Speculating Squirrels, a women's investment club founded in 1958 in Brookline, Mass.; and New Words, one of oldest and largest women's bookstores in the country and, from its founding in Cambridge, Mass., in 1974, a pioneer in making material by and about women available to readers locally, nationally, and internationally. ■



- Above right: The young Mae West
- Above: In this newly acquired 19th century drawing entitled "Masculine and Feminine Courage Compared," a woman calmly reads while her foot is amputated, while a man writhes in pain over a vaccination.
- Right: "Mona Lisas in Dorchester, April 14, 1991," is one of the images from Sisters: Photographic Portraits, an Exhibition, recently donated to the Library by photographer Birgitta Ralston.



BIRGITTA RALSTON

Schlesinger Library Awards and Grants, 2002-2003

Research Support Grants

Linda Bergmann, Purdue University: *Writing a College Alive: Radcliffe and the Discourses of Higher Education in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century*

Reverend Dr. Dorothy May Emerson, independent scholar: *Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice*

Joyce Follet, Smith College: *Bridges that Carry Us Over: Forging a Feminist Agenda*

Ann Silverberg, University of Nevada – Reno: *Mabel Daniels: Modernist Composer*

John Spurlock, University of Texas at Dallas: *The Culture of Heterosexuality*

Jeanne Theoharis, Brooklyn College: *Black Women's Struggles for Educational Justice in Boston, 1960-1976*

Dissertation Support Grants

Susan Ferentinos, Indiana University: *An Unpredictable Age: Sex, Consumption, and the Emergence of the American Teenager, 1910-1954*

Stephanie Gilmore, Ohio State University: *Rethinking the Liberal/Radical Divide: The National Organization for Women in Columbus, Memphis, and San Francisco, 1971-1982*

Rebecca Kluchin, Carnegie Mellon University: *Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America*

Cecily McDaniel, Ohio State University: *"The Law is No Mystery to Her": Law and Its Call to African American Female Lawyers, 1872-1940*

Alice Stone Blackwell Grant

Reverend Dr. Dorothy May Emerson, independent scholar: *Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice*

Carol K. Pforzheimer Student Fellowships

Arienne Cohen '03, Leverett House: *Zaum: Black Lesbian Legacies*

Caroline Dmochowska '03, Mather House: *Constructing Reproductive Rights in Poland: The Dismantling of Post-Communist Space toward an Eastern Feminism?*

Julia Fawcett '04, Dunster House: *The Women: The Idler Club and the History of Women's Theatre at Harvard*

Angela Freeburg '03, Cabot House: *The Black Graduates of Radcliffe from 1898 to 1950*

Nesrin Garan '03, Adams House: *Worthy Bodies and Reproductive Technology: Examining the Newest Challenges of the Women's Health Movement*

Rebecca Podolsky '03, Kirkland House: *Uncertain Victory: The Pro-Choice Movement, 1992-2000*

Prisca Shrewsbury '03, Winthrop House: *The Missionary Family: A Study of Family Atomization vs. Family Unity*

Elizabeth Thornberry '03, Eliot House: *American Influences in the Rise of South African Feminism*

Rachel Vessey '03, Adams House: *Women's Civic Engagement and the Settlement House Movement*



Cynthia Harrison, associate professor of history and of women's studies at The George Washington University and a recipient of one of the Library's research support grants, writes of her experience here this summer:

I was delighted to come home to the Schlesinger Library this spring to begin research for my new project. The pleasures were many: seeing old friends on the staff and meeting new staff members; talking with other researchers; participating in Library events. I enjoyed the April talk by Jean



Strouse on the women in the life of J. P. Morgan. The pleasures are, of course, always tempered by the realization that the amount of relevant material available at the Library is superabundant.

My research is for a book that will examine how feminist organizations dealt with federal policy with respect to poor and minority women. Among the collections that speak to this question are the papers of Betty Friedan, Pauli Murray, the National Abortion Rights Action League, the National Organization for Women, the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Women's Political Caucus and the Women's Equity Action League. Many documents confirmed that these organizations from the beginning worked tenaciously on issues particularly affecting poor women: publicly-funded abortion; paid family leave; and public support for child care, among others. True enough, they failed for the moment, but not for want of trying. I'm grateful to the Schlesinger Library for the research grant that helped defray some of the expenses of the five weeks I spent there. Needless to say, many more boxes beckon, so I am with pleasure contemplating a return trip.



JULIAN KEMP



SADLY WE NOTE that Betsy Shenton, assistant to the director of the Schlesinger Library for 23 years, died on September 15, 2002. Betsy's responsibilities included writing gracious, tactful letters, photograph and manuscript reference, management of all the

Library's events, the Friends, acquisitions, and much, much more. As Pat King noted at Betsy's retirement in 1990, she was "the Library's most important and least publicized asset."

◆ *Memorial gifts may be directed to the Robert and Elizabeth Owen Shenton Fund at the Library.*

STAFF NEWS:

This summer Ruth Hill was honored for 35 years of service and Anne Engelhart for 25 years of service to the Library. For her work with the Chinese-American women's oral history project, Ruth and the Library received the Chinese Historical Society of New England's 2002 Sojourner Award.

Congratulations to Stacy Braukman, assistant editor with *Notable American Women*, who won the 2002 A. Elizabeth Taylor prize from the Southern Association of Women Historians for the best article in the field of Southern women's history.

In addition to the retirement announcements of Barbara Haber and Sylvia McDowell that you will read about in this issue, there have been many other staff changes since the spring. Giordana Mecagni has joined the public services staff as a reference assistant; Marcela Estevez and Christine Clayton are new library assistants in the technical services department; and Cheryl Beredo and Johanna Carll are new manuscript processors with the NEH-funded "Second Wave" project. After a year in Florence, Jacalyn Blume is back as director of the Photo Access Project. And Jane Knowles was warmly welcomed back as archivist of the Radcliffe Archives after three action-packed years as the Library's acting director. Suzan Hirsch, a part-time library assistant, has taken a full-time position at Hebrew College in Newton, Mass.

UPDATE: THE PHOTO ACCESS PROJECT

The Library is pleased to announce that it has received an additional \$140,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the completion of the retrospective cataloging and digitization of a significant portion of its photograph collection. This brings to \$535,000 the generous support that the Foundation has awarded for the Photo Access Project since 1997.

This past year nearly 5,000 more photographs have been cataloged and added to the 10,000 Library images already in VIA, Harvard's Visual Information Access database (visit at <http://lib.harvard.edu> and choose VIA under "Other Catalogs"). The final images to be included in the project, prints made from never before available glass plate and nitrate film negatives in the Jessie Tarbox Beals collection, will soon be digitized.

Thanks to Kim Brookes, one of the originators of the Photo Access Project and now Director of Information Technology for the Radcliffe Institute, and her team at RITO, our photo databases were moved this summer to a server that increases our capabilities and flexibility. We look forward to the successful completion of the Photo Access



■ *In this 1919 American Red Cross photograph from the Corinna Putnam Smith Papers, little girls learn the proper way to salute.*

Dear Friends of the Library:

What a pleasure it is to be at the Schlesinger Library! Over the course of my career as archivist and archival educator, I have had the good fortune both to visit the Library and to collaborate on projects with the staff. I am delighted to get reacquainted as an "insider" at this remarkable repository.

The Library is normally a bustling place but it was especially so this past summer. Students from Nancy Cott's and Drew Faust's classes filled our carrels for several weeks, intent on using the Library's resources to fulfill class assignments. In addition, two of the 2002–2003 New England Regional Fellowship Consortium Research Fellows arrived. Karen Jessup, a Ph.D candidate at the Centre for Conservation Studies at DeMontfort University in the UK is examining women's roles in advancing our understanding of people's thinking about and interaction with their landscapes. Professor Kathleen A. Laughlin of Metropolitan State University in Minneapolis progressed in her work on the politics and culture of women's clubs in the 1950s and 1960s.

Last spring when the Library received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to process selected post-World War II women's movement collections, our announcement that the eight collections would be closing for research use beginning in September 2002 caused a mad dash to our doors. These researchers' commitment to their work and their eagerness to exult and commiserate over their "finds" with staff and other researchers, many of whom became new friends, remind us all what a remarkable place the Schlesinger Library is.

Megan Sniffin-Marinoff
Deputy Director/Librarian