

# imposing evidence

*Newsletter of the*  
SOPHIA SMITH  
COLLECTION

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Smith College Libraries



## Sophia Smith Collection

Women's History Manuscripts at Smith College

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The Sophia Smith Collection is an internationally recognized repository of archives, manuscripts, photographs, periodicals, and other primary sources in women's history. It was founded in 1942 to be the College library's distinctive contribution to Smith's mission of educating women. Named to honor the founder of Smith College, today, the Collection consists of over 8,000 linear feet of material documenting the historical experience of women in the United States and abroad from the colonial era to the present.

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Visit our Web site or contact us by mail for more information about the Sophia Smith Collection and to learn how to help support our mission.

Please recycle this newsletter by passing it on to a friend or donating it to a school or library where it might be read with interest.

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Cover: Detail from  
"The World and the  
Girl" fund-raising  
pamphlet, 1932.  
*YWCA of the USA  
Records*



Constance Baker Motley, 1963.  
*Motley Papers*

## Constance Baker Motley,

the distinguished civil rights lawyer and judge, who died on September 28th, had a connection with Smith College stretching back to 1965 when she received an honorary degree for her "impressive efforts" to solve social problems

through law and the courts. The first installment of her papers arrived at the Sophia Smith Collection in 1971 and she spoke at the our 40th anniversary "Women and Work" conference in 1982. A generation of students and senior scholars have consulted her papers as did Motley herself while writing her 1998 autobiography, *Equal Justice Under Law*.

Judge Motley's career included many firsts: first black woman to serve in the New York State Senate, first woman to be Manhattan Borough President, and first black woman to serve as a federal judge. Even with such significant milestones on her resume, she is probably most renowned for her work as part of a team headed by Thurgood Marshall for the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Education Fund. In that capacity, Motley argued cases that ended segregation in Memphis restaurants and earned entry into southern colleges and universities for James Meredith and Charlayne Hunter-Gault, among others. She argued ten cases before the Supreme Court, winning nine of them.

At the funeral service in New Haven on October 5th, Hannah Motley read a poem authored by her grandmother when Hannah was fifteen. In the poem, Judge Motley described God's creation of a beautiful Earth, in which poor people saw only slums and never green grass, concluding: "Someday when my eyes are closed for good, I'll see the glory of the world the way I should." The SSC joins the many who lament the loss of one of the great ones.

— Amy Hague

## Greetings from the Director

A roomful of towering redheads exchanging hugs and conversation greeted Susan Boone and me when we entered the gala celebration of the 200th birthday of William Lloyd Garrison in Boston last August. What a singular pleasure it was to rekindle friendships with dozens of the abolitionist's far-flung descendents and to hear stimulating talks about his path-breaking works. Over the years the Garrisons have generously emptied their barns and attics of the letters, photographs, and speeches that have drawn dozens of scholars to the Collection. Some of these items were loaned for exhibits of Garrisoniana at the Museum of Afro-

American History and the Boston Public Library. The world rightly reveres WLG for his early, vocal, and relentless opposition to slavery, but I came away from this splendid memorial reminded that he was also far ahead of his time in advocating for women's equality in the 1820s.

- When the college chose as the 2005 summer reading assignment for entering students *Kettle Bottom*, a volume of Diane Gilliam



Cover of a General Defense Committee pamphlet about the Harlan County miners' strike, circa 1931. *Jessie Lloyd O'Connor Papers*

Fisher poems about a 1921 Appalachian coal strike, Julio Alves, Director of the Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching and Learning, gave me a call. He recalled having shown his students related items from another chapter in the American labor movement in the papers of Jessie Lloyd O'Connor and suggested that we exhibit some of them to introduce the Class of 2009 to the riches of the SSC. We were happy to comply with the exhibit "Which Side Are You On?" mounted in a

An 1876 Garrison Family gathering. William Lloyd Garrison seated with hat in his lap. *Garrison Family Papers*



high-traffic location in Neilson Library by Amanda Izzo (Smith '99).

- Last June five SSC staff took part in the 13th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women at Scripps College in southern California. These triennial events provide outstanding opportunities to network with scholars and to keep us current on the kinds of evidence they are using or wish they could find. Amy Hague, Karen Kukil, and Kelly Anderson attended the conference; Joyce Follet discussed teaching the history of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s in a session devoted to "Women's History Through Documentary Film," and I moderated a roundtable on "Emerging Sources in Women's History: Archivists Describe New Collections." We also contributed toward the travel costs of doctoral candidate and Grierson Scholar Tamar Wilder Carroll, who presented some of the results of her research on the National Congress of Neighborhood Women at a session on "Feminism on the Ground."

- Since our last issue, we bade a sad farewell to an unusually accomplished cohort of women who have helped us enlarge the resources available for the study of women's history:

**Constance Baker Motley**, civil rights lawyer, President of the Borough of Manhattan, and first African American woman to be named a Federal judge.

**Molly Yard**, former NOW national president (1987-91), lifelong civil rights and social justice activist.

**Geraldine Miller**, organizer of domestic workers, Brooklyn NOW officer, and longtime member of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women.

**Adaline "Penny" Satterthwaite**, physician, public health clinician, and reproductive health researcher in Puerto Rico, Bangladesh, and elsewhere.

— *Sherrill Redmon*

## Adventures in Film Preservation

Many visitors to our reading room have noticed the “Oscar” on display; perhaps you have even held it while you “thanked the Academy.” But how many know who won this Oscar and why?

The Oscar was awarded to Nancy Hamilton (Smith '30) in 1955 for best feature documentary for *Helen Keller in Her Story*. Since 1985, Hamilton's Papers, including 125 cans of film footage, have been housed at Smith College. In the last few years, graduate students, filmmakers, and film archivists have shown increased interest in the Nancy Hamilton Papers, which document the making of the documentary. The Papers have increased in scholarly value since the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center, which destroyed the literary archives of the Helen Keller International Foundation, located a block away. Because the film footage is in a very fragile state, it has not been open to research. Moreover, the rapid changes in technology over the last fifty years have meant that we do not have the equipment necessary to assess the quality or contents of the film reels.

In the spring of 2004, we were contacted by the staff of the Film Archive of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Academy was embarking on a project to restore Oscar-winning documentaries, and they wanted to know if we had the original 35 millimeter master negatives of the final cut of the film. Simply determining exactly what was on the reels in our collection required expertise about film production that no one on the SSC staff had. We needed someone with the specialized equipment and knowledge to help us.

Thanks to a gift from the Friends of the Smith College Library we were able to hire Julie Buck, a film preservation consultant from Harvard. She and I spent three days examining the footage to identify content and prioritize preservation needs. While it turns out that we do not have the original master negatives (and the Academy was unable to find anyone else who did), we do have work prints (copies of the original footage marked for editing purposes), as well as about two-thirds of the answer prints (the edited version of the film made to ensure that the final print is the correct density and color). By combining our footage with their



Helen Keller holding the Oscar, from an American Foundation for the Blind brochure about the documentary. *Nancy Hamilton Papers*

“The Papers have increased in scholarly value since the 9/11 attacks destroyed the literary archives of the Helen Keller International Foundation.”

copy of the documentary, the Academy Film Archive will be able to make a new 35 millimeter master negative of the film.

An unfortunate discovery we made while examining the footage was that it suffers from shrinkage and Vinegar Syndrome, a condition so-named for the smell it creates as a byproduct of the decomposition process. It needs to be stored in specialized frozen storage to prevent further decay. But before we send it off-site, we plan to make copies of some of the unique footage used in the film for our researchers. Luckily, a Smith College Library Preservation Fund has been created to help pay for such complicated preservation projects. We are currently exploring partnerships with organizations that have the facilities and expertise to preserve the originals and we hope in the near future to create research copies of these unique and valuable films.

— Kara M. McClurken

## Newly Processed Collections

**T**he **P. Lough O'Daly Papers** are the result of the research and collecting efforts of a Vietnam-era veteran and Smith alumna. Following a stint in the U.S. Air Force (1974–80), O'Daly became involved in veterans' organizations and governmental efforts to provide support and advocacy for other female veterans. The centerpiece of her papers is an oral history project undertaken as an independent research project while she was an Ada Comstock Scholar at Smith. The interviews with women who served in Vietnam reveal the challenges of service in a combat zone fraught with sexism, racism, and the controversial United States' military presence. The publications, correspondence, memoranda, and writings that stemmed from her volunteer and advocacy work for organizations like the Women Veterans' Information Network and the Women's Steering Committee of the Vietnam Veterans of America reflect the politicization of Vietnam veterans and the influence of the women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s. O'Daly's papers are valuable documentation of the still under-recognized concerns of female veterans.

**Frances Rich** (1910–), daughter of screen actor Irene Rich, has had a successful career as an artist, with interludes as a Lt. Commander in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Navy during World War II and Director of Public Relations at Smith College in the late-1940s. Her works include portrait busts (of famous individuals from Katharine Hepburn to Diego Rivera), wall and door panels, plaques and medallions, drawings, and statues. Her



Frances Rich working on a bust of Diego Rivera while Rivera works on a painting of Frances Rich, 1941. *Frances Rich Papers*



"West Whately Reservoir,"  
print by Olive Damon  
featuring the local scenery.  
*Olive Damon Papers*

papers focus primarily on her art career, and include a bust of Margaret Sanger which resides in the SSC reading room.

In the fall of 2005, the SSC received the papers of **Olive Warner Kellogg Damon** (1911–2003) from the estate of her son, Alan Damon Jr. Olive Damon was a farmer and self-taught artist. She represents a generation of women whose lives were largely defined by the Depression and World War II. Fifty-eight volumes of diaries begun in 1930 when Damon was 19, and ending a year before her death, reveal a world of hard work and the unpredictability of rural life revolving around home, church, and a close knit community of extended family and women friends. The diaries are supplemented by correspondence, artwork, and writings touching upon the history of Whately, Massachusetts, Damon's marriage, and her friendships.

The heavily used **Suffrage Collection** was revamped, preserved, and more fully described in recognition of its continuing popularity as a source for the study of this quintessential women's history topic. The strengths of the collection include the whimsical ephemera used to publicize the women's suffrage fight in the U.S. (Votes for Women playing cards, sewing accessories, sheet music, postcards, and the like), records of organizations like the National American Women's Suffrage Association and its anti-suffrage counterparts, and extensive files of clippings and biographical information that track the chronology and leadership of the seventy-year movement. In addition, the collection contains materials about the British suffrage movement and the cross-pollination between it and the U.S. struggle, as well as lesser amounts of materials from women's suffrage battles around the globe.

— Amy Hague

## Gems from the Stacks

**T**he principles of peace, social justice, and non-violence began guiding the life and work of Margaret Goddard Holt (1911–2004) at a very early age. Horrified by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Holt became increasingly alarmed as the Cold War gained momentum, and she resolved to dedicate her life to promoting non-violent solutions to domestic and international conflict. Her credo was “if you want peace, work for justice,” and she labored tirelessly to that end. She protested against biological weapons research, environmental degradation, the death penalty, nuclear arms proliferation, land mines, war in general, and U.S. involvement in every war and armed conflict since World War II.

Holt’s extraordinary collection of papers, which is currently being prepared for research, includes introspective diaries spanning from girlhood to old age; extensive incoming and outgoing correspondence; a wealth of photographs and scrapbooks; and voluminous subject files documenting more than half a century of grassroots activism. As an outspoken critic of government policy, Margaret Holt was also an inveterate letter writer—always passionate and incisive, and sometimes sardonic as well.

— Burd Schlessinger

### To Bill Clinton, criticizing his support of the 1996 Welfare Reform Plan:

Dear President Clinton:

We wish to express our profound sorrow and dismay over your ill-advised decision to sign the wicked Republican Welfare Reform Plan. Now there is no longer any use being a Democrat. Did you read the lead editorial in the NY Times urging you to stand up for the principles that have defined the party ever since the days of FDR?

With all the fervor we possess we urge you to reconsider your decision. Veto the Reform Plan when it reaches your desk! You can certainly do this in spite of your announcement because it will contain measures that are anathema to you.



Margaret Holt began keeping Sunday Peace Vigils in 1967, a tradition she was continuing 35 years later when Diana Davies took this photograph.

*Our daughter living in California writes by e-mail that she is furious at your decision since the Reform Bill demands that poor people all of a sudden get non-existent jobs at starvation wages. We are headed back, she writes, to the miseries of the workhouse system of Victorian England*

*We remember the days after World War I when starving beggars came to the back door asking for food or money: do we need to return to that?*

*The tragedy is that the wealthy in our country control you and the government and make themselves richer and richer while now refusing to use the power of government to end poverty. Have you ever heard of the Great Society championed by Lyndon Baines Johnson? Your task is to end poverty as we know it, Mr. President.*

Sincerely,

Margaret G. Holt, Lee E. Holt

**To Nathaniel Barley, prisoner on Death Row at Huntsville State Prison in Texas, who claimed he was innocent.**

**Barley died of complications from AIDS and non-Hodgkins lymphoma the day after Holt wrote this letter:**

January 19, 2000

My Dearest Nathan,

*I do hope it hasn't been so cold in Texas as it's been here -5 degrees below zero. I hate to think of how cold it is in your cell, and of you with no special warm socks and underwear. I wonder if you ever got the property back that they were holding months ago. On Sunday the weather warmed up a little so we had the vigil without freezing.*

*I think I told you that Kevin came by with a big bunch of Freddie's letters and we took them to the copy place today so somebody can have a copy to type and then we will go through them to find the ones that are most significant to tell about a wonderful individual and a terrible system. [Freddie Lee Webb, Jr., executed March 31, 1994]*

*No more now because the mail is going and I must get this off before.*

*I hope and PRAY you feel better and have some good news.*

Love always,  
Margaret

### 2005–06 Grierson Fellowships

Kimberly Hamlin, University of Texas at Austin  
*"Beyond Adam's Rib: The Impact of Darwin and Evolutionary Discourse on Gender and Feminist Thought in the United States, 1870–1925"*

Margaret A. Spratt, University of Southern Maine  
*"American Women and the Search for Identity during and after World War I"*

Elizabeth Johnston, Independent Scholar  
*"Choosing Freedom, Risking Slavery: African Americans Antislavery Advocates, and the Courts in Massachusetts, 1830–1860"*

### 2005–06 Bain Fellowship

Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, Blueberry Hill Productions  
*"Telling Women's Lives: A New Series of films About Women in the American Past"*

### 2005–06 Travel Grants

Angel Cortes, University of Notre Dame  
*"The Normative Origins of the Humanities: Moral Formation in Men's and Women's Collegiate Education, 1870–1910"*

Denise Lynn, State University of New York at Binghamton  
*"Women on the March: Gender and Anti-Fascism in American Communism, 1935–1939"*

Samantha Barbas, Chapman University  
history of women, dieting and body image in the U.S., 1880–present

Susan M. Hartmann, Ohio State University  
*"Gender and the Transformation of American Politics since WWII"*

Jennifer Nelson, University of Redlands  
reproductive health policy directed at poor African-American women in the post-WWII period

Patrick Selmi, University of South Carolina  
existence and persistence of radicalism and anti-radicalism in social work, 1889–present

Look for these new books using SSC materials:

- *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth Century American Culture* by Karen Sanchez-Eppler, University of Chicago Press, 2005
- *The Life of Elaine Goodale Eastman* by Theodore D. Sargent, University of Nebraska Press, 2005
- *Literary Dollars and Social Sense: A People's History of the Mass Market Book* by Ronald J. and Mary Saracino Zboray, Routledge, 2005
- *Other People's Letters: In Search of Proust* by Mina Kirstein Curtiss (reissue), Turtle Point Press, 2005

Heartfelt thanks to these special friends of the SSC who made generous monetary contributions since our last issue.

Caroline Dwight Bain (Smith '44)  
Marylin Bender Altschul (Smith '44)  
Charles Brush in memory of Ellen Brush  
Ernestine Gilbreth Carey (Smith '29)  
The Ford Foundation  
The John D. and Catherine T. McArthur Foundation  
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Margaret Mahoney  
Sherry Marker  
National Historic Publications and Records Commission  
The New York Times Company Foundation  
Elizabeth A. Nichols (Smith '90)  
Frances G. Pepper (Smith '62)  
Silvana Solano (Smith '83)  
Marlena Sweeney  
Susan von Salis (Smith '79)  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



Sketch cartoon for the Women Veterans Information Network newsletter, circa 1984. P. Lough O'Daly Papers

## Introducing Our New, Improved Web Site

Last summer we completed the redesign of the SSC Web site <http://libraries.smith.edu/libs/ssc>. Some bells and whistles were added (such as mouse rollover effects and drop-down menus) and the overall look was refined, but our primary goal was to produce a more informative and user-friendly resource for our researchers. The project began with a survey of potential and current users, including students, faculty, visiting researchers, and library and special collections staff. Armed with this feedback, the “SSC Web Team” (Sherrill Redmon, Amy Hague, Maida Goodwin, Margaret Jessup, and intern Jennifer Smar) identified problems and areas that could use improvement. The Team reviewed and updated the text, and added new information, plus many more photographs, artwork, posters, memorabilia, documents, and artifacts for a more varied sampling of the SSC’s treasures.

Both seasoned and new researchers will find the SSC Web site an excellent starting place for research projects. You can explore possible topics in the “Collections by Subject” section; or link to the Five College Online Finding Aids database and the Library Catalog to learn more about collections relating to a specific topic. You can contact us with reference questions, order photocopies and photographic images, arrange a research visit, get directions, or learn how to apply for a research grant. Researchers may also wish to follow the links to other Web sites related to women’s history and archival



resources, including sites that feature more digitized SSC documents and images. And for those brand new to archival research, the Five College Primary Source Research Guide is a useful tool for getting started.

Others may wish to view a complete list of our collections, read selected articles from past issues of *Imposing Evidence*, browse our online exhibits, read about the founding and history of the SSC, learn how to donate materials, or purchase SSC postcards and note cards.

Please take some time to explore our new, improved Web site and use the convenient email link to let us know what you think.

— Margaret Jessup

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Sticker, 1915. *Suffrage Collection*