World Center for Women's Archives
Rockefeller Center
1270 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Telephone Circle 6-3480

"No Documents; no History" - Fustel de Coulanges

Because we know you are interested in women's achievements, we are appealing to you.
In these critical times when our gains are threatened and even the record of our struggle and accomplishment is being destroyed, we need your help.
We beg you to read the following statement which is sponsored by many who believe in women's contribution to social history.

The purposes of this organization are:

To make a systematic search for undeposited source materials dealing with women's lives and activities, interests and ideas, as members of society everywhere. Included in such source materials will be letters, diaries, speeches, pamphlets and articles, manuscripts of books in special cases, notes and memoranda, programs of work and publicity.

To reproduce important materials, already deposited elsewhere, by means of microfilming and other modern processes.

To become a clearing-house of information with respect to the location and character of source materials on women in other libraries and institutions.

To encourage recognition of women as co-makers of history.
Who would use such available material?

THE SOCIAL HISTORIAN who deals with the history of countries, peoples, business, professions, labor, arts and sciences.

THE PLAYWRIGHT AND NOVELIST who seek background in which to place the struggle that makes fiction as well as history.

THE BIOGRAPHER who wants facts about a woman's life and her relations to the world in which she lived or lives.

THE EDUCATOR who has no basis for handling the woman's role in history, past or contemporary.

THE JOURNALIST who, writing the news of today, must have the background of yesterday.

THE CLUBWOMAN who wants to know what other women have done.

THE WOMAN ARTIST, SCIENTIST, DOCTOR, LAWYER, TEACHER, FARMER, INDUSTRIAL WORKER, BUSINESS WOMAN, who wishes to deepen her knowledge of women in her field of activity or in another field.

THE STUDENT who has papers or theses to prepare on subjects relating to women, or in fields of endeavor largely carried on by women.

THE GENERAL INFORMATION SEEKER who needs to supplement emotional reaction with factual knowledge.

Why is a new center needed?

Because existing institutions—even women's colleges—tend to specialize in men's materials. Often they have very little source material of any kind.

Because women are inclined to destroy their own documents, while carefully preserving the letters and other materials of their fathers and brothers. The Center will try to secure a more balanced picture of humanity in the interests of historic truth.

Because the public at large does not realize the extent to which history eliminates the story of women. Special attention has to be called to women's work, ideas, observations on life, and ideals to give them the consideration that their value carries in fact.

But wouldn't the Congressional Library be the proper depository?

No. Though the Congressional Library contains a copy of every book copyrighted in America and a magnificent collection of other books on every kind of subject, its unprinted materials are mainly political in character. In this relation it possesses some important materials on women in the abolition movement and in the women's suffrage campaigns. Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lydia Maria Child, Susan B. Anthony and Anna Dickinson are there. But neither in origin nor in continued support is the Congressional Library adapted to the building up of a great archive dealing with the broad history of women.
Twenty years ago, an eminent leader of the woman movement gave to a public library priceless documents concerning the movement for equal suffrage. Today, twenty years after, these papers lie crammed in drawers crumbling to dust . . . in such condition that readers cannot use them without injuring them. The institution had so little interest in these records that an investigator found them only after much searching and enquiry.

The direction of all public institutions is partly political and therefore subject to men's control in the main. Women need to direct the collection, preservation, and guidance of readers in women's materials to correct the balance—until such time at least as it acquires stability, through natural cultural discipline.

What is also true is that infinite waste of time, energy, and money occurs where researchers and general readers must seek materials among 48 states and many cities. Economy of education with respect to women will be served best by the World Center for Women's Archives.

Furthermore, the materials of women from other countries logically belong only in such a Center.

Not long ago an enquiry was made by the great Deutsches Museum at Munich concerning American women's contribution to Science. But no American was found who could answer that question.

Such questions the Center would try to be able to answer in time.

At present it is supported by sponsors, membership fees and contributions. To date this income has merely covered minimum office expenses.

An annual income of $35,000 a year would provide proper housing of records and a technically trained staff which would collect, preserve and make available the material to meet demands for service which are increasing daily. Such provision for three years, at least, would allow for development, unhampered by the immediate need for fund raising and would give the Board of Directors freedom to work toward an endowment, thus insuring the future of the Center.

Fire-proof space and proper equipment for the care of materials as they come in.

A trained technical staff to handle the search for materials and to care for them when they are deposited.

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