



## Archives Center

The Archives Center supports the mission of the National Museum of American History by collecting, preserving, and providing access to archival documents that complement the museum's exhibition, research, and collecting programs. This includes a variety of archival material related to women's history.

Below is a listing of selected women's history resources at the Archives Center. To view the entirety of their collections, browse the [Collections page](#) or search for keywords in the [Collections Search Center](#) and look for "Archives Center – NMAH" as the catalog record source/data source.

*Note: The Archives Center provides access to their collections regardless of ability to travel to Washington, D.C. Research can be done either in-person or remotely. For information about accessing collection materials from a distance and to obtain responses to specific inquiries, visit the [Research page](#).*

### Advertising



#### Alka-Seltzer Oral History and Documentation Project, ca. 1953-1986

The Alka-Seltzer Oral History and Documentation Project is a result of a one year effort supported, in part, by Miles Inc. Twenty-four oral history interviews and a variety of related materials were gathered to document Alka-Seltzer advertising, primarily from the mid 1950s to the 1980s. The project covers "Speedy" Alka-Seltzer, "Oh what a relief it is," "The Blahs," "Alka-Seltzer on the rocks," and "I can't believe I ate that whole thing" campaigns.

Look for:  
Mary Wells Lawrence  
Diane Maze  
Treva Van Solingen

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0184.pdf>



#### Syntex Collection of Pharmaceutical Advertising, 1962-1978

The collection consists of domestic and foreign advertisements--primarily tearsheets from medical journals--leaflets, and product literature from 1962 to 1978, maintained by Syntex to track its competitors' products.

Look for:  
Birth Control/Gynecological Therapy

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0821.html>



## Women's History



### Priscilla of Boston Collection, 1940-1996

Priscilla Kidder actively participated in every aspect of the wedding industry for almost fifty years. At R.H. White's she worked her way up from model to sales associate to assistant buyer in the bridal department. The limited selection of bridal gowns available to women in the early 1940s moved Priscilla Kidder to leave R. H. White in 1945 to start her own bridal salon. She opened "The Bride's Shop" at 129 Newbury Street. Priscilla of Boston company grew at a rapid pace, and quickly established a national reputation.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d9557.htm>



### Gladys Reid Holton Ephemera Collection, 1800- ca. 1978

Gladys Reid was born June 29, 1898 in Auburn, New York. Her original career was in teaching. Later, she was Curator of History at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences in the 1950s-1960s. She then worked at the Strong Museum, retiring from there around 1976. She died July 21, 1984.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0466.pdf>



### Cover Girl Make-Up Advertising Oral History and Documentation Collection, 1923-1991

The Cover Girl Make-Up Advertising Oral History and Documentation Project, 1923-1991, is the result of a year-long study in 1990, which examined the advertising created for Noxell Corporation's Cover Girl make-up products from 1959 to 1990. The objective of the project was to document, in print and electronic media, the history of Cover Girl make-up advertising since its inception in 1959.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0374.pdf>



### Maidenform Collection, 1922-1997

The history of Maidenform, Inc. began at Enid Frocks, a small dress shop in New York City owned and operated by Enid Bissett. In 1922 Ida and Enid decided that the fit and appearance of their custom-made dresses would be enhanced if improvements were made to the bandeaux style bras then in vogue. Maidenform advertising campaigns were enormously successful, and generated controversy as well as praise.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d7585.htm>



### Breck Girls Collection, ca. 1936-1995

The collection documents the development and evolution of the Breck Girl, a highly successful and long-lived advertising campaign whose hallmark was its vision of idealized American womanhood through correspondence, photographs, paintings, and print advertisements.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0651.pdf>



## Women's History



### The Joseph Magnin Poster Collection, ca. 1963-1968

In 1913, Joseph Magnin (son of Isaac Magnin, founder of the I. Magnin stores) founded a department store bearing his name. During the 1960s, Betty Brader (b. 1923) became one of the chief illustrators of Joseph Magnin posters; this collection is comprised primarily of her work. She also worked for Neiman-Marcus, Saks, Franklin Simon, and various advertising agencies. Her style of fashion illustration is copied widely today by fashion illustrators.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d7355.htm>



### Marion Harper Papers, ca. 1916-1994

Collection consists of notes, clippings, published and unpublished manuscripts on business and marketing and women. A substantial amount of the materials document the personal life of Marion Harper.

Look for:

Series 2, Subseries 2- Women

Series 3, Subseries 2- Women

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0394.pdf>



### Estelle Ellis Collection, 1944-1981

For over fifty years, Estelle Ellis advised American magazines, corporations, universities, and other institutions on the changing face of American society. She has helped these institutions to understand social change and to address the needs and interests of their customers, audiences, and constituencies. Her work has spanned social and economic change affecting women's lives. These shifts are apparent in her work for *Seventeen*, *Charm*, *Glamour* and *House & Garden* magazines and with clients including Kimberley-Clark Corp., Evan-Picone, and the Carter Hawley Hale group of department stores.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d7423.htm>

## Clothing & Accessories



### Jantzen Knitting Mills Collection, 1925-1977

Carl C. Jantzen and John C. Zehntbauer founded the Portland Knitting Company in 1910 as a retail store selling knitted products. Jantzen later invented an automated circular knitting machine that allowed the company to make light-weight materials for swimsuits. In 1916, the company first used the name Jantzen as their trademark and specialized in swimsuits.

Look for:

Advertisements and catalogues with women's swimsuit fashion

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0233.pdf>



## Women's History



### Dorothy Shaver Papers, 1922-1959

This collection contains the personal and professional papers of Dorothy Shaver, one of the best-known female executives in the 1950s; Shaver became the first female president of Lord & Taylor in 1945.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0631.htm>



### Virginia "Jimmie" Booth Collection, 1936-1998

Virginia Wagoner Booth, known as Jimmie Booth, studied printing and engineering at Syracuse University. An engineer with Pratt & Whitney during World War II, she entered the fashion world as a bridal consultant at G. Fox in Hartford in 1945. In 1952 Dorothy Shaver, of Lord & Taylor, hired Booth for the Hartford store and asked her to develop and manage The Country Clothes Shop in the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue store in New York. Booth also worked extensively with European designers. She frequently modeled the fashions herself. Her casual, yet elegant, style is the epitome of "the American Look" still popular today.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d7729.htm>

## Computers & Business Machines



### Grace Murray Hopper Collection, 1944-1965

Grace Murray Hopper (1906-1992) obtained her Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale University in 1934. She was an associate professor of mathematics at Vassar College when she joined the Women's Reserve of the United States Navy, Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) in 1944 and was assigned to the computing project at Harvard University. In 1949, she joined the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation as a senior mathematician. When Eckert-Mauchly became a division of Remington Rand, Hopper remained as senior programmer, a title she retained until 1959. Subsequently, she served as systems engineer and director of automatic programming development (1959-1964) and staff scientist in systems programming (1964-1971) for the UNIVAC division of Sperry Rand Corporation. Hopper retired from UNIVAC in 1972, having returned to active service in the U.S. Navy from which she eventually retired with the rank of Rear Admiral.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d8324.htm>

See also: Computer Oral History Collection

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0196.pdf> (look for "Hopper, Grace Murray")



## Cultures & Communities



### Jean Bartel Miss America 1943 Photographs, 1943-1970

Photographs of Jean Bartel during the Miss America Pageant in 1943 and her activities during her reign.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0902.htm>



### Maid of Cotton Records, 1939-1993

The Maid of Cotton (MOC) beauty pageant was sponsored by the National Cotton Council, Memphis Cotton Carnival, and the Cotton Exchanges of Memphis, New York, and New Orleans from 1939-1993. The contest was held annually in Memphis, Tennessee until the National Cotton Council and Cotton Council International moved to Dallas, Texas. Beginning with the 1985 pageant (held December 1984) the competition was held in Dallas. The pageant was discontinued in 1993 due to lack of funds, a sponsor, and changes in marketing strategies.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC1176.html>



### Joan E. Biren (JEB) Queer Film Museum Collection, 1931-2010

Joan E. Biren (JEB) is an internationally recognized photographer and documentary artist. She assembled this collection as her Queer Film Museum. It consists of a variety of materials about and associated with queer films, both foreign and domestic.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC1216.pdf>



### The Garnette Hamilton Collection, 1957-1987

Garnette Olive Hamilton was crowned Queen of the Hoboes for life in 1957. Hamilton's official title read, "Queen of the Knights of the Road, Air and Seven Seas Inc." Mrs. Hamilton's nephew had joined the Hoboes of America Organization in 1955 and mentioned the organization to her. In 1955, Mrs. Hamilton became one of the first women to be accepted into the organization. The Hoboes of America Organization was formed in 1908 by Jeff Davis. The organization's purpose was to act as a non-profit service group to aid local charities as well as to encourage runaways to return home. Mrs. Hamilton has been the editor and publisher of the Hobo Newsletter for at least the last seven years and still is Queen of the Hoboes (1987).

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0273.pdf>



## Government, Politics, and Reform



### Helen May Butler Collection, 1898-1937

Helen May Butler, woman bandmaster, directed an all-women traveling military band from 1898 to 1913. "Music for the American people, by American composers, played by American girls" was one of the band's mottoes. Born in New Hampshire in 1873, she pursued a variety of musical studies and became an accomplished performer in both violin and cornet. She announced candidacy for a U.S. Senate seat in 1936.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d5261.htm>

## Health & Medicine



### Marion O'Brien Donovan Papers, 1917-1999

The Donovan papers offer a near complete invention record, including both successes and failures, and include correspondence, photographs, patents, newspaper clippings, and subject files about various inventions and ideas. This collection documents direct marketing techniques for products designed especially for women and the home. It may be useful for researchers interested in women inventors and entrepreneurs, American culture from the 1950s through the 1970s, and advertising history.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d8721.htm>



### Patricia Bath Innovative Lives Presentation and Interview, 2000

Dr. Patricia Bath was born in 1949 in New York. She conceived of the LaserPhaco Probe in 1981 and patented it in 1988 (US Patent # 4,744,360 for an "Apparatus for ablating and removing cataract lenses"). The collection contains original and reference video footage of Dr. Bath's Innovative Lives Presentation documenting her work in the field of ophthalmology and her work creating and patenting the LaserPhaco Probe, an instrument to remove cataracts. Also included is an interview with Dr. Bath at her home in Los Angeles and an interview with her daughter, Eraka Bath and supplemental documentation assembled by Dr. Bath.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0753.pdf>



### Nobel Voices Video History Project, 2000-2001

Thirty-three videotaped interviews of Nobel Prize laureates, conducted in Lindau, Germany, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere in the United States. The interviews form the core of the Nobel Voices Video History Project and the exhibition "Nobel Voices." Documents and preserves examples of the quest for innovation and its important messages for future generations.

Look for:  
Gertrude Elion

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0771.pdf>

## Industry & Manufacturing



### Brownie Wise Papers, ca. 1928-1968

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Brownie contributed to a correspondence column of the *Detroit News* under the pen name "Hibiscus." During World War II, Wise got a job as an executive secretary at Bendix. After the war, Brownie and her mother, Rose Stroud Humphrey, began selling Stanley Home Products. Through this business, the mother daughter team distributed Poly-T (Tupperware), Stanley Home Products, West Bend, and other household goods through an innovative home party plan adopted by Brownie. In 1951, Tupper recruited Brownie to develop the Hostess party plan for Tupperware, and named her vice president of the company. She is credited with developing the party plan and sales organization, and with creating the annual Jubilee, a pep-rally and awards ceremony for dealers and distributors.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d7509.htm>



### Charlotte Cramer Sachs Papers, 1905-2002

Papers relating to Charlotte Cramer Sachs's life and career as an inventor mainly of food and household-related products: correspondence, photographs, business papers, awards, patents, printed materials, notes, and miscellany. The collection primarily consists of invention-related marketing materials including invention samples and prototypes, notes, clippings, business correspondence, and customer account records.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0878.pdf>



### Trade School Photographs, 1890

The photoprints which comprise this collection apparently were contact-printed from original negatives. The negatives seem to date from about 1890, but the prints are much more recent. A variety of subjects is included, as described in the container list, but the theme seems to be educational. Education in crafts, veterinary medicine, and mathematics or physics are included, although several of the scenes may be in industrial rather than educational settings.

Look for:  
Photos of women in educational environment

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0141.pdf>

## Music & Musical Instruments

### Ruth Ellington Collection, 1940-1991

Born in 1915, Ruth Ellington Boatwright was the sister and only sibling of Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington. In 1941, Duke Ellington established Tempo Music, and surprised his sister Ruth, by installing her as president of the company. Ruth's duties at Tempo included signing contracts, arranging some travel at Duke's request, and keeping Duke's music copyrighted. After Duke's death in 1974, Ruth maintained Tempo until 1995 when she sold 51% of the company to a New York publishing firm, Music Sales.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0415.pdf>

## Photography

### Katherine Joseph Papers, 1938-1944, 1962 (bulk 1941)

Papers document Katherine Joseph's career as staff photographer for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. The papers contain negatives and prints taken in Mexico, and some photographs of a White House event in 1938, featuring Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and images of American workers on the home front during World War II.

<http://sova.si.edu/record/NMAH.AC.0944>

### Lynn Turner Family Photographs Collection, 1865-1918

These photographs are from the collection of Ms. Evelyn (Lynn) Turner. The earliest photographs are probably tintypes, dating from approximately 1865, whereas some photographs have captions as late as 1918. Some of the portraits are identified.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0210.pdf>

## Popular Entertainment





### The Mildred Moore Collection, 1925-1975

Mildred Moore, the pen name for Mildred Galloway, later Mrs. Forest L. Moore, was born on a farm outside Cromwell, Indiana. In 1931, having become interested in what motivated people and in their philosophies, Mildred Moore began to write to famous people -- seemingly selected at random -- requesting a quotation or a bit of verse that had been important to them and the development of their philosophy. The resultant book, *Famous Personalities and Their Philosophies*, includes 160 responses to over 200 letters to people with some claim to fame during the 1930s.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0409.pdf>

## Science & Mathematics

### Janese Swanson Innovative Lives Presentation and Interview, 1998

Janese Swanson developed video game software, a website, and an array of toys and gadgets aimed at making technology more accessible to girls. The collection contains approximately six hours of original and reference video footage of Swanson's Innovative Lives Presentation, in which she discussed her background and demonstrated her inventions with her daughter, Jackie. The material includes a brief interview.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0642.html>

### Patsy Sherman Innovative Lives Presentation, March 12, 1997

Videohistory contains original and reference videos documenting a lecture program for children by Patsy Sherman, inventor of Scotchgard (R).

[http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record\\_ID:siris\\_arc\\_174493](http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:siris_arc_174493)

### Ellen Ochoa Innovative Lives Presentation, September 24, 1996

Dr. Ochoa was born in Los Angeles, Calif. B.S. in physics, San Diego State, 1975; master's and doctorate in electrical engineering, Stanford University, 1981 and 1985. Dr. Ochoa holds three patents in the field of optical processing and has worked as a research scientist at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) since 1988. In 1990 she became the first Hispanic woman astronaut selected by NASA. In April 1993, Ochoa flew as a mission specialist on the space shuttle Discovery.

[http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record\\_ID:siris\\_arc\\_174482](http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:siris_arc_174482)



### Stephanie Kwolek Innovative Lives Presentation, 1996

This collection consists of two and one half hours of original (BetaCam SP), master (BetaCam SP) and reference (viewing) copies (VHS), documenting a lecture program for children on March 25, 1996 by Stephanie Kwolek, inventor of Kevlar. Kwolek discusses her invention of Kevlar as well as her background and life experiences.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0596.pdf>



### Ann Moore Innovative Lives Presentation and Interview, 1999

Ann Moore is the inventor of the Snugli baby carrier and Air Lift oxygen carrier. The collection contains original, master, and reference videos, audiocassette recordings, and transcripts documenting Moore's inventive career.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0706.pdf>

## Sports & Leisure



### Joyce P. De La Hunt Papers, ca. 1860s-1950

Joyce P. De La Hunt was a horticulturist with a Davidsonville, Maryland, nursery and a hospital administrator, social worker, and newspaper writer. A graduate of Marquette University (Ph.B.) in her native Milwaukee, where she was a sports reporter and women's sports editor for the *Marquette University Tribune* (1943), Miss De La Hunt took a Master of Social Work degree at Catholic University. In 1944 she was working for the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, and, in 1945, for first the Atlantic City, New Jersey *Daily World*, where she was sports editor (also doing special assignments), then advertising manager for the Atlantic City *Jersey Times*.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d9573.htm>