Women in the Archives: Women’s Collections at the University of Texas at El Paso Library’s Special Collections

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Women in the Archives: Women’s Collections at the University of Texas at El Paso Library’s Special Collections

5th Annual Women’s History Month Conference: April 2, 2015
University of Texas at El Paso
Why it’s important to collect materials for women’s history

– Women’s history is a popular research topic
– Most collections we receive relate to male businessmen, professors, writers, and politicians
– Women have played a large part in the community
Early days of the UTEP “Archives”

Until 1991, all the archivists and department heads were men. Leon Metz, Wallace Brucker, Larry Sall, Cesar Caballero, Bud Newman
An early version of the collection policy called for the acquisition of the papers of “important people.” Usually, that meant men.
In 1992, only a few of the collections were about women. Some examples:

- Josephine Clardy Fox—Collector and philanthropist
- Florence Cathcart Melby—Donor and collector
- Maud Isaacks—Teacher and State Legislator
- Eve Ball—Writer and expert on Apache Indians
- Sister Aloysius Williams—Director of the Hotel Dieu School of Nursing
- Lucille Ballew Pillow—Nurse and civic leader
The UTEP Library also held records of certain women’s organizations

- UTEP Woman’s Auxiliary
- Woman’s Department, El Paso Chamber of Commerce
- El Paso Graduate Nurses Association
- El Paso Realtors’ Auxiliary
We feel that it is part of our mission to preserve the records of El Paso women’s organizations.
We have added several important collections of records of women’s organizations

- Woman’s Club of El Paso
- Pan American Club—El Paso Chapter
- American Association of University Women—El Paso Branch
- Philanthropic Educational Organization (El Paso Chapter M)
- Ysleta Women’s Club
- Syrian American Ladies Club
Most collections were received as direct donations from the organizations

☑ Best option!

- Woman’s Department of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce records
- Philanthropic Educational Organization (El Paso Chapter M) records
- El Paso Realtor’s Auxiliary scrapbooks
- The Woman’s Club of El Paso records
Sometimes the records were first kept at another repository

- AAUW El Paso Branch
- Pan American Round Table of El Paso, Texas
- Eleanor Duke papers

Mary Carmen Saucedo,
Pan American Round Table of El Paso

Dr. Duke experiments
El Paso Woman’s Club

- We had referred researchers to them
- We had provided plans of their building from the Thorman papers when they were doing renovations
- Carolyn Breck approached us about a possible donation
- The collection was received in 2009
Sometimes collections are acquired through co-workers’ contacts.

Esperanza Acosta Moreno, nursing librarian
The UTEP Library’s Special Collections has several nursing-related collections

- Sister Aloysius William papers
- Eileen Wilson papers
- Ramona De Laney papers
- Jean Rodehaver nursing papers
- Margaret Beard Abraham papers
- Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society, Delta Kappa Chapter records
- Lucille Ballew Pillow papers
- Esperanza Acosta Moreno papers
especially in the area of nursing education
Family papers document the roles of women

- Stephenson Flores family papers
- Huthsteiner family papers
- Kohlberg family papers
- Burges-Perrenot family papers

Family papers are often donated by women.
Business records also record the activities of women

El Paso Herald-Post
(Eva Hogge)

Kohlberg Cigar Company
(Young women packing cigars)
Artists, writers, and photographers can leave valuable legacies to archives

- Mago Gandara, artist
- Cynthia Farah Haines, photographer and writer
- Diana Molina, photographer, artist
- Gertrude Fitzgerald, photographer
Several women writers have donated papers to UTEP

- Lois Hobart, writer
- Pat Mora, writer
- Nancy Hamilton, writer
- Betty Ligon, journalist
- Nancy Herndon, writer
Women academics sometimes donate their papers and research files

- Leslie Ullman
- Eleanor Duke
- Kathleen Staudt

Dr. Duke with electron microscope
Women as collectors and researchers

- Barbara Keagy Dent—researches the history of the medical community in El Paso
- Eva Antone Ross—compiles information about women in El Paso
- Eve Ball—researched and wrote about Apaches
- Leona Washington—collected photos of the African-American community in El Paso

Photo of Apache girls from the Eve Ball collection

Leona Ford Washington
Women as elected officials

• Susie Azar mayoral papers
  – First woman elected mayor of El Paso

• Anita Blair papers
  – First blind woman elected to Texas legislature

Anita Blair and her seeing-eye dog (Samuel Fant photograph)
Other collections of women’s personal papers

- Maria Norma Montellano papers
- Annie Ray Moss papers
- Saramé Raynolds papers
- Elsie McElroy Slater papers
- Renate Caldwell papers
- Yvonne E. Greear papers
- Eva Spencer Osterberg papers
- Betty Mary Smith Goetting papers
- Belle Christie Critchett papers
Other materials for research on women include

• Diaries
  – Emily Albee travel diary
  – Jessie W. Hawes diaries

• Scrapbooks
  – Ada Tharp photo album
  – Helen Cunningham scrapbook
  – Emma Beard Saucedo WWII scrapbook

• Collections of music
  – Vera Bohne
  – Katherine Moore Brown
Elusive collections

• Minority women
  – African American women’s organizations
  – Hispanic women’s organizations

• Very early organizations

• Later organizations—like consciousness-raising groups from the 1970s
Example: Ladies’ LULAC

Belen Robles papers
Chums, an African-American women’s organization
WHAT'S COOKIN'? 

IN 

THE EL PASO CHAPTER 

OF 

THE LINKS, INC. 

EL PASO, TEXAS 

1981 

Cookbook from Links, another African American women’s organization
Visit our website
Special Collections

The C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department is located on the sixth floor. The book collections include the Chicano Collection, the Judaica Collection, the S. L. A. Marshall Military History Collection, the Southwest and Border Studies Collection, as well as collections of art and rare books. In addition to printed sources, the department has manuscript and archival collections available. There is also an oral history collection documenting the region.

The Friends of the University Library have established the "Friends of the University Library Special Collections Endowment Fund" to support the department's programs and operations.

For more information please call (915) 747-5697.

Links:
- Transformations: The UTEP History Blog
- Hertzog Award Winner Announced
  - Past Winners
- User Policies (Versión en Español)
- El Paso City Directories (1885-1905)
- Request for Publication form
- Antiquarian Book Resources
- Institute of Oral History

http://libraryweb.utep.edu/special/
Thank you for your attention.

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