

Education: A Guide to Engaging the Archives

Why the Archives

Archival research and primary source materials help students...

- Raise questions about epistemology and the construction and transmission of knowledge.
- Understand the relationship between materiality and meaning, evidence and events.
- Consider the perspectives of people interacting in different times and spaces.
- Reflect on individual and institutional legacies and their impact on the current moment.
- Connect larger historical narratives to regional and local history.
- Experience the excitement of discovery and original research.

Instructional Support

Instructors are encouraged to work with a staff archivist in planning and implementing a class session at the Archives and Special Collections. Archivists can discuss with students what sorts of materials are housed in archival repositories; what primary sources are; and/or how to navigate and search for collections. Archivists can also help devise in-class activities in order to allow students to handle and analyze historical documents. [Schedule a class visit](#) (please schedule at least two weeks in advance).

In-Class/Onsite Activity Ideas

- Choose 2-3 clippings from one of Helen Schleman's research files. What do these documents reveal about changes taking place for women both in the workforce and in education?
- Examine one item from the College of Education Records on Home Economics (chosen ahead of time by the archivist and instructor). Determine the following information about it: who (creator), when (date), where (location), what (form and subject), why (function), and for whom (audience).

Independent Assignments or Long Term Project Ideas

- Choose 1-3 items from the College of Education Records on Home Economics (listed below). How do they contribute to your understanding of pedagogy? Would they hold up now? Why or why not?
- Choose one of Purdue's former Deans of Women (Stratton, Schleman, or Cook) and read through some of her papers (e.g., speeches, clippings, meeting notes, etc.). Choose 2-3 items or documents you think are noteworthy. In a paper, analyze how your chosen dean attempted to meet the changing needs of women entering higher education and the male-dominated workforce.
- As a future teacher, how would you incorporate the local archives or primary sources into your teaching? Create an age-appropriate lesson plan that will engage students with primary source materials.

Possible Readings for Students

- Klink, Angie. *The Dean's Bible: Five Purdue Women and Their Quest for Equality*, Purdue Press, 2014.
- [Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly 3.4](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly) (Fall 2010). www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly

Links of Interest

- Archives homepage: <https://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol>
- Paulus, Michael. "What is Primary? Teaching Archival Epistemology and the Sources Continuum." *SPU Works*. Paper 18. <http://digitalcommons.spu.edu/works>

NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

[College of Education Records on Home Economics Education, 1931-1981](#). Documents the development of a pedagogy of home economics education. The collection reflects the specific means by which prospective educators in home economics were evaluated and how the evaluation rubrics were developed. This collection would be useful to researchers interested in home economics education, women in higher education, pedagogy, and the means by which women students and professionals were evaluated in the mid-twentieth century.

[MSF 366 Dorothy Stratton papers, 1935 – 2006](#). Stratton served as Dean of Women at Purdue from 1933 until 1946. During her tenure, she oversaw the creation of a liberal science program for women students in the School of Science as well as an employment placement center. Her papers include material about establishing a liberal sciences program for women students, concern for the post-war occupations of women, correspondence regarding the status of women on campus, and an emphasis on women as global citizens.

[MSF 334, Helen Schleman papers, 1920 – 2001](#). Schleman (1902 – 1992), noted "unapologetic feminist," came to Purdue in 1934 as director of the first women's residence hall. A notable Dean of Women at Purdue, Schleman is acknowledged for having fought for women's rights at Purdue, including terminating the curfew for women students and spearheading a freshman conference program for women. Schleman's feminist activism is documented throughout the collection.

[MSF 467 Barbara Cook papers, 1932 – 2007](#). Cook came to Purdue in 1956 as a counselor in the Office of the Dean of Women. Over the years, she served many roles at Purdue and has been nationally recognized for her efforts in promoting career opportunities for women. This collection also includes Cook's "Student Unrest Binders" from the 1960s. In Cook's [oral history interview](#), she mentions that her college advisor refused to write a letter of recommendation for her to attend grad school because he thought it was a waste for women to do so when they should just be homemakers.

[MSP 49 Council on Status of Women Records, 1988 – 2012](#). This collection documents the activities and impact of the Council on the Status of Women at Purdue University. The collection would likely be useful for researchers interested in women's rights, affirmative action, equality and diversity in the university, women in higher education, advocacy in the university, and prominent women at Purdue University.

[UA 7 Women in Engineering Program Records, 1935-2012](#). Documents the creation of the program, and its activities and successes. Also included is information on Dr. Lillian Gilbreth and the first woman to graduate in engineering at Purdue. The collection would be useful to researchers interested in women in STEM and traditionally male-dominated career fields, women's history, and the role of public universities in the women's movement.