

WOMEN at the CENTER

**Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture
Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library**

Issue 19, Spring 2011

Theresa El-Amin: On the Job for Justice

Theresa El-Amin describes her political awakening as an “ah-ha” moment. In 1965, at the age of 17, she was sitting in a classroom at Tuskegee Institute listening to Stokely Carmichael speak about how black citizens in Alabama were being denied the right to vote. When a student in the class asked, “What are we going to do about it?” Carmichael replied, “I’m with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and I’m for Black Power! Will you join me?”

In response, says El-Amin, “I raised my hand and joined the freedom move-



Theresa El-Amin

ment that day and I’ve vowed to ‘never turn back.’ I was inspired by the commitment of SNCC organizers back then and remain inspired by students I meet who like me are interested in learning about organizing.”

Thanks to El-Amin’s recent donation of papers documenting her work with a variety of organizations, including the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Service Employees International Union, the Black Radical Congress, and the

Black Workers for Justice, among others, students will be able to learn directly from

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2011-2012 Mary Lily Research Grants

The Bingham Center is pleased to announce the recipients of this year’s Mary Lily Research Grants. These grants support the work of students, scholars, and independent researchers who will travel to Durham from all over the U.S. to make use of the Bingham Center’s rich collections. We would like to gratefully acknowledge our faculty reader, Kimberly Lamm, Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies, who offered insight and expertise as the committee reviewed a competitive pool of 40 proposals.

This year’s grant program received

additional support from the Program in Women’s Studies. Each year the Women’s Studies Program selects a specific topic as a basis for interdisciplinary research and discussion. The topic for 2011-12 is “The Future of the Feminist 1970s.” As many of our grant recipients focus on related research questions, we anticipate that they will help enrich the theme year conversation about how the multiple feminist paradigms of the 1970s continue to have an impact on feminist thought.

(Recipients listed on page 3)

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SALLIE BINGHAM CENTER
FOR WOMEN’S HISTORY AND CULTURE

Instruction & Outreach

Bingham Center staff taught a variety of instruction sessions this spring for students enrolled in the following courses:

Archival Appraisal
(UNC Library Science)

Comic Books & Zines
(Visual Arts)

Gender, Sexuality, and the Image
(Women's Studies)

History of Punk
(Music)

Huck Finn to Miley Cyrus: Children in Popular Culture
(History & Writing 20)

OB/GYN Pre-clerkship for Medical Students

Religion and Politics
(Writing 20)

Staging Sexualities
(Theater)

Women as Leaders
(Public Policy)

Women's Studies Senior Seminar

Theresa El-Amin cont'd

her own records about the effort and coordination required to work for justice in many contexts.

Currently, El-Amin is the Regional Organizer for the Southern Anti-Racism Network, an organization which she founded in 1999 after participating in a year-long, on-line workshop, "Challenging White Supremacy." After serving as the Durham, NC-based director, she is now taking up the challenge of expanding SARN's work into Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Among its other accomplishments, SARN succeeded in passing an anti-sweatshop ordinance in the City of Durham in 2000, and forming Strong Parental Involvement in Community Education (SPICE), an independent organization of parents devoted to closing the education

achievement gap and the digital divide. SARN also initiated the Ella Baker Tour to bring together veterans of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) with students from 13 campuses in the South and Northeast from February 2008 until March 2010 to create an inter-generational dialogue culminating in the SNCC 50th anniversary celebration held in April 2010.

When asked what sustains her work as a community activist, El-Amin says, "I've learned that social change happens when people self-organize and recognize that sustainable social change requires commitment and consistency. I'm motivated by young people who are beginning to see what's wrong in the world and decide they want to do something about it."

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/rbmscl/elamintheresa/inv/>

Profiles in Research: Dorothy Q. Thomas

During the month of March, Dorothy Q. Thomas spent many days at the Sallie Bingham Center combing through letters, photos, scrapbooks and other materials belonging to her grandmother that are now included in the papers of her aunt, Eleanor Elliott.

Thomas, founder of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch and a recent Franklin Humanities Institute Fellow at Duke, has been working on a book about changes in progressive American women's identity over the past three centuries. Her narrative focuses on three women from her own family: her great-great-great aunt, Dorothy Quincy Hancock, a mother of the



Dorothy Q. Thomas

American Revolution; her grandmother, Dorothy Quincy Hancock Read Thomas, a Colonial Dame and a suffragist; and herself.

Megan Lewis, our technical services archivist, and I worked together to arrange and describe Dorothy Quincy Read Thomas's papers for Thomas's visit.

She found the materials to

be so valuable that she will be returning in June to continue her research. "We lose our history so easily," Dorothy said, "The Sallie Bingham Center has made it possible for me to retrieve mine."

*Article contributed by Alexandra Krensky
Bingham Center Graduate Intern*

Peg Johnston Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Long-time leader in the abortion care community, Peg Johnston, received the David Gunn Lifetime Achievement Award at the Abortion Care Network's annual conference in February. A past president of this organization as well as of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers and the Abortion Conversation Project, Johnston recently donated records of each of these organizations to the Bingham Center, along with the first batch of her own papers.

Among her many other achievements,



Peg Johnston

Johnston is the primary author of several patient aides, notably the Pregnancy Options Workbooks, "Healthy Coping," "Mom, Dad, I'm Pregnant," and "Especially for Men." She has also written several influential essays, including, "Opting Out of the Abortion Wars," "We Have

Met the Enemy and S/he is Us," and "Lose the Adjective." All of these writings, as well as administrative, financial, programmatic and other files, are included in the collections now available through the Bingham Center.

2011-2012 Mary Lily Travel Grants cont'd

Marika Cifor, master's student, History and Library and Information Science, Simmons College, for master's thesis research that examines historical relationships of lesbians and prostitutes in the United States, 1869-1969.

Jessica Frazier, Ph.D. candidate, History, Binghamton University, for dissertation research on Vietnamese militiawomen and the interconnections of empire, race and gender in the feminist movement, 1965-1980.

Choonib Lee, Ph.D. candidate, History, State University of New York at Stony Brook, for dissertation research on militant women in the new left and civil rights movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

La Shonda Mims, Ph.D. candidate, History, Georgia State University, for dissertation research on lesbian community and identity in the cities of Charlotte, NC, and Atlanta, GA, from WWII to the present.

Jennifer Nelson, Associate Professor, Women's and Gender Studies, University of Redlands, for a book on community health

reform movements from the mid-1960s to the present.

Ally Nevarez, master's student, Book Arts and Library and Information Science, University of Alabama, for an artist's book that highlights the important role that women have in contributing to community and preserving culture.

Rose Norman, Professor Emeritus of English, University of Alabama at Huntsville, for research on lesbian feminist activism in the South, 1965-1985.

Robin Robinson, Associate Professor, History, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, for a book and article on transportation and transformation of female convicts as unfree labor in Colonial America.

Emily Thuma, Ph.D. candidate, American Studies, New York University, for dissertation research on prisons and the politics of resisting gendered violence, 1968-1984.

Elizabeth York, Associate Professor, Music Therapy, Converse College, for research on Atlanta women's music and culture, 1976-1986.

Recent Acquisitions

Ipas Records
Nongovernmental organization that works around the world to increase women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights

Sarah Maitland Zine Collection
Virginia-based zine writer and co-founder of Richmond Zine Fest

Jill Over Papers
Social worker and multi-issue activist based in Durham, NC

Betsey Sakelaridos Diary
24-year-old daughter of a Greek immigrant, Pennsylvania, 1946

Selected Print Materials

- Abortion Rights Movement of Women's Liberation: *A.R.M. Action*, vol. I, no.1, 1979
- Lynne Avadenka: *The Uncommon Perspective of M.E.J. Colter*, 1992 (Artists' book)
- Rev. James L. Gordon: *Race Suicide and Birth Control*. ca. 1920
- Agnete Holk: *The Straggler*, 1954. Translated from Danish (Lesbian pulp fiction)
- Woman's Institute of Domestic Arts and Sciences. *Children's and Maternity Garments*. ca. 1927

<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/bingham/grants>

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Carolina Wren Press and the Bingham Center Present:



Dorothy Allison • Shirlette Ammons • Jim Grimsley • Minnie Bruce Pratt

Out in the South: Writers in Conversation

7:00 p.m. • Friday, September 23
White Lecture Hall, East Campus

In celebration of the opening of the Dorothy Allison Papers and on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of NC Pride, please join us for this opportunity to hear four distinguished Southern authors discuss their lives and work.

<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/bingham/news>