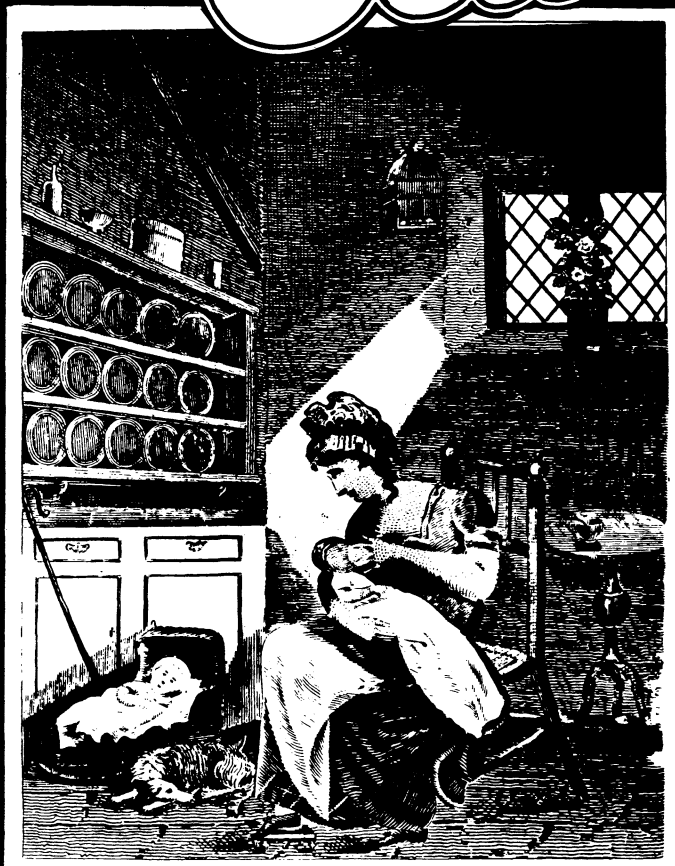


# Special Collections



Frontispiece from *The Wife* (London, 1756).

Doris Lewis Rare Book Room



Frontispiece from *The Polite Lady; or a Course of Female Education* (London, 1769).

Doris Lewis Rare Book Room

*University of Waterloo Library*  
*Special Collection*  
*Related to Women*  
**SUSAN BELLINGHAM**

**La bibliothèque des livres rares Doris Lewis de l'Université de Waterloo contient une grande variété de documents dans le domaine des études de la femme dont plus de trente collections d'archives ainsi que des livres rares, des périodiques et des publications du gouvernement.**

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What do the closely-written and faded pages of a shabby nineteenth-century diary, a 'camera-travelogue' written by the wife of Canada's Governor-General in 1893 and the report of the British Privy Council for October 18, 1929 all have in common? These items are all part of the collection of materials relating to women's studies housed in the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room at the University of Waterloo Library. Made up of rare books and documents, archives and personal papers, posters and photographs, the collection provides a unique insight into the life of women in an earlier era. The Rare Book Room collection is supplemented by the over 1.8 million items in the library's general collection of monographs, serials and government publications.

The 'special' materials, or those housed in the Rare Book Room, can be divided into two basic types—archival and book. The beginnings of the book collection relating to women can be traced back to 1967 and the unique centennial project of the National Council of Women of Canada. From 1954 to 1967 that group had been amassing a collection of books by and about women which they eventually named the 'Lady Aberdeen Library of the History of Women' in honour of Lady Aberdeen, one of the group's early presidents and president of the International Council of Women for nearly forty years.

Among the more valuable of the books in the collection is the 1852 edition of Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, which contains an additional chapter by her husband on current politics in Canada. There is also an 1879 edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which Harriet Beecher Stowe has added notes establishing the authenticity of the characters. The Lady Aberdeen Collection also contains Lady Mary Montague's letters, with her 'new cure' for smallpox as well as the dramatic journal by Lady Sale, who accompanied her husband to the disastrous 1841-1844 war in Afghanistan.

As is the case with most donations of large collections to libraries, 'collections beget collections.' Following the publicity and scholarly activity surrounding

the 1967 acquisition, many valuable gifts of books and archival collections of similar subject matter were made.

One of the most substantial gifts was a \$4,000 donation made to the library by the Canadian Federation of University Women in May 1968. The CFUW decided that a portion of the funds realized from the publication of their centenary volume *The Clear Spirit* (edited by Mary Quayle Innis) should be used to purchase books, pamphlets or other materials in English or in French by and about Canadian women.

The money has been used to purchase out-of-print and antiquarian materials, particularly those which do not appear on the market frequently. Representative of this group are the early poetical works of Katherine Hale, including *Legends of the St. Lawrence* (1926), *Morning in the West* (1923), *The White Comrade and other poems* (1916) and *The Flute and other poems* (1950). Other early works by women poets include Jean Blewett's *Heart Songs* (1898) and Charlotte Jarvis' *Leaves from Rosedale* (1905). Modern poetry has not been neglected and titles such as Marie Claire Blais' *Pays voilés* (1967) and Alice Munro's *Dance of Death* (1968) have also been added.

Of particular interest to researchers are the narratives of early settlers and in particular those of pioneer women. The best-known of this genre to be added to the collection is the 1869 edition of Catherine Parr Trail's *In the forest*. Several more obscure items of this type have also been added, including Sarah Tucker's *Rainbow in the North: a short account of the first establishment of Christianity in Rupert's Land* (1851), Flos Jewell Williams' *New furrows: the story of a Belgian immigrant girl's life in the Alberta foothills* (1926) and *Land of good shadows: the life story of Anauta, an Eskimo woman* (1950).

The 'political' woman has not been neglected and the library was able to acquire the two best-known works of Emma Goldman, entitled *The tragedy of woman's emancipation* (n.d.) and *Marriage and love* (1916). More modern political memoirs are represented by Judy LaMarsh's *Memoirs of a bird in a gilded cage*.

Probably the most notable acquisition purchased from CFUW funds was the reproduction and binding of *Le Journal de Françoise* (1902-1909), reputed to be the first Canadian 'women's magazine.'

The most recent donation of materials relating to women's studies has been that of the Canadian Women's Press Club's

1977 donation of its library. Included in that collection of over 200 books were items both written by and presented to club members as well as items by notable Canadian literary figures.

In addition to the books acquired by gift and donation, the library has been able to purchase, through departmental book budgets, a number of rare and valuable items. These acquisitions cover 374 years and reveal that the literature of feminism did not emerge 'full-blown' in recent years but is deeply rooted in past writings. One of the earliest items is the 1595 work of an early feminist, Simon Gedik, entitled *Defensio sexus muliebris, Opposita . . . Disputation: recens editae* (Leipzig, 1595). In this sixteenth-century treatise, Gedik, a German theologian and philosopher, refutes the denial of women's humanity.

Two major works of the seventeenth century are a compilation of laws and statutes relating to women entitled *The lawes resolutions of women's rights: or the laws provision for woemen* [sic] (London, 1632) and William Austin's famous treatise, *Haec homo, wherein the excellency of the creation of women is described* (London, 1637). The latter is present in the collection in its very rare first edition which contains several interesting woodcuts.

The eighteenth century, with its increase in the volume of publishing activity, germinated a host of materials relating to women and the output of that era is well displayed in the collection. The content of books published during that century goes from the 'conduct of life' treatises directed specifically at women, to cook-books of the day and includes a number of 'firsts' both by and about women. We find the first Canadian novel, *The history of Emily Montague* (London, 1769), written by Frances (Moore) Brooke and roughly based on her experiences in Quebec. The tag of 'first feminist' has often been attached to Mary Wollstonecraft, and several titles relating to this early champion of women's rights are found in the collection, including *Original stories from real life* (London, 1791) and *Memoirs and posthumous works* (Dublin, 1798). Women's studies and the University of Waterloo's strong interest in science and mathematics are merged in another unique volume—Francesco Algarotti's *Il newtonianismo per le dame* (Naples, 1773)—which has been described as the first explanation of Newtonian theories written specifically 'for women.'

In addition to these landmark volumes the collection includes many examples of

more mundane eighteenth-century titles relating to women, including those dealing with education and behaviour. Here are found Hester Chapone's *Letters on the improvement of the mind, addressed to a young lady* (London, 1764), James Fordyce's *Sermons to young women* (London, 1771) and Thomas Gisborne's *An inquiry into the duties of the female sex* (London, 1797).

Moving to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we find the volume of books in the collection increasing in both numbers and diversity of subject matter, but even more importantly, we find original material for women's studies, the really important sources—papers, manuscripts and archives. The literary and historical archives housed in the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room contain over thirty-five separate archival collections which have been created by women and reveal, as nothing else can, the historic record of women's life and contribution in our society.

The documenting of women's history in Canada is a newly-developing area. Although women have always participated in and influenced history, their contributions have often remained buried in their husband's papers, if indeed any documentation existed at all. The papers at the University of Waterloo shed new light on the feminine aspect of Canada's past and reveal women in their daily lives as poets, doctors, broadcasters, judges and mothers.

The smallest collection, the papers of Judge Emily Murphy, was of great significance to women's studies in 1979. Emily Murphy was primarily responsible for having women declared 'persons' under the terms of the *British North America Act*. October 18, 1979 marked the fiftieth anniversary of this historic decision of the British Privy Council. Although the bulk of Emily Murphy's papers is housed in Alberta, Waterloo does have some material relating to the 'Persons Case.' The library's collection contains the printed government documents relating to the Persons Case, a small amount of correspondence including a letter from Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, a number of photographs and newspaper clippings as well as two notebooks compiled by Judge Murphy during her term as police magistrate in Edmonton. Also included are several reviews of books written by Judge Murphy under her pen name 'Janey Canuck.'

The library also houses a set of papers relating to Dr. Elizabeth Smith Shortt, one of the first three women to graduate in medicine in Canada. Vast in both size

and scope, this collection documents Dr. Shortt's life from her thirteenth year, in which she first started keeping a diary, to the year of her death in 1949. Elizabeth Shortt's papers reveal the struggles of a young woman trying to obtain a medical education in Canada and her diaries, written in the frankest manner, vividly present for the modern reader scenes which took place nearly a century ago.

Legal decisions relating to the status and interests of Canadian women are the focus of another collection housed in the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room—the Dorothea Palmer Papers. Miss Palmer, an employee of the Parents' Information Bureau of Kitchener, was arrested in 1937 near Ottawa on a charge of distributing birth control information, at that time an offence under Section 207 Subsection 2 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Described as having 'established a record for cases heard in Magistrate's Court in Canada,' Miss Palmer's trial occupied twenty full days, the verbatim record of the proceedings extending beyond 750,000 words, the argument a further 120,000 words and the magistrate's written verdict some nineteen folio pages. Among the forty witnesses called was Kitchener industrialist A.R. Kaufman, the founder of the Parent's Information Bureau and the donor of the collection. Following Miss Palmer's acquittal on March 17, 1937, the Crown appealed the case and the appeal was dismissed on June 2, 1937.

Those who have chosen a literary career are also documented in the collection. The papers and manuscripts of women writing poetry in the first half of this century are available and include two notable figures—Elaine M. Catley, president of the Canadian Authors' Association for some years, and Isabel Ecclestone Mackay, who, in addition to her literary interests, was the first president of the Canadian Women's Press Club.

The papers of three women who have combined literary and broadcasting careers are found in the collection and represent the work of two early figures in Canadian broadcasting history. The over fourteen linear feet of the papers of Claire Wallace, the first woman to broadcast nationally over the CBC, includes the radio scripts for her 'Teatime Topics' and 'They Tell Me' as well as a small amount of correspondence relating to her career as a broadcaster. The second collection relating to broadcasting is that compiled by Elizabeth Long, the first woman to hold an executive position with CBC as supervisor of women's interests. A third CBC broadcaster whose papers are found

in the collection is Annie Hewlett, to whom broadcasting was one of many activities which included teaching, painting and writing. The collection contains the series of scrapbooks she maintained on Cannington Manor, the subject of her special series of CBC broadcasts, and which provide unique insight into this curious Canadian community from an insider's perspective.

An interesting sidelight on literary women writers is provided by a collection of letters purchased intact, entitled 'Literary Ladies.' The genesis of the major portion of the collection was a request from Edward Marsh and St. John Ervine for contributions for a presentation to be made to Thomas Hardy on his eighty-first birthday. The replies from women authors have been separated and arranged as one collection. Included in it are letters from Lady Gregory Sheila Kay-Smith and Stella Benson. Also included is a number of short letters from other 'literary ladies' including Vita Sackville West, Elizabeth Robins, Viola Paget and Rebecca West.

Papers and manuscripts related to several other careers and areas of interest are also represented in the archives. Both the 'politician' and the 'politician's wife' are roles reflected in the collection of Martha Louise Black, the wife of Yukon Governor George Black, who in 1935 was elected to the Canadian House of Commons. The times of modern Canadian missionaries are revealed through the letters of Beulah Misener Alloway, who died in Kenya in 1954. Nor are contributions of women to Canadian art neglected—the papers of potter Alice Mary Hagen and material relating to the sculptors Florence Wyle and Frances Loring are available to users of the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room.

In addition to the letters and manuscripts found in the archival collections, scrapbooks often reveal in a unique manner the interests and thoughts of the women who created them. Ranging from the magnificent scrapbooks compiled by the National Council of Women commemorating the life of Lady Aberdeen, to the simple books made up of newsclippings and jottings compiled by Damaris and Mauritania Smith, these volumes provide contrast and colour to any study of women's place in Canadian history.

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The materials in the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room are available to all interested researchers and readers. The hours of opening of the Rare Book Room are 9-12 and 1-4 each weekday. Additional hours are available by prior appointment.