

## Women's History Month: "If it isn't fun, what is it?"

contributed by Lizette Royer Barton; to access on WordPress, [click here](#).

I asked my colleagues who their favorite women were in our collections. Here are a few of the responses.

Processing Archivist Emily Gainer replied with Erika Fromm. Emily processed the Fromm papers a few years ago and you can review the finding aid for the 115-box collection here: *Erika Fromm finding aid*. Emily told me, "At one point, she [Erika Fromm] had a student harassing/stalking her. Campus admin told her if he called, not to answer. She said she would answer, because that's what she does – help people."

Erika Fromm (1909-2003) earned her PhD in experimental psychology in 1933 from the University of Frankfurt while studying with Max Wertheimer (Emily processed those papers too); worked as a research associate in clinical psychology in the Department of Psychiatry, Wilhelmina Gasthuis (University Clinics), Amsterdam; established the first psychology laboratory in a Dutch state hospital; fled the damn Nazi's; and eventually emigrated to Chicago, IL where she established a private psychotherapy practice and became a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago.

Being a foremost expert on hypnosis and hypnoanalysis, Erika Fromm was approached by psychologists in Germany requesting permission to translate some of her work to German. The Erika Fromm papers contain several folders of correspondence with the journal editors and correspondence she received from readers (both positive and negative) regarding her decision not

to allow the translation. Instead, she wrote a paper titled, *Personal Feelings of a Nazi Refugee: Why I do not Want to be Honored by Germans*, which was published in the German journal *Hypnose Und Kognition* instead of her translated work on hypnoanalysis. Fromm considered the translation of her work an honor, but was deeply conflicted about receiving such an honor from a German journal. Her paper is hard to read and harder still to fathom what she survived. And while we all hold our own feelings about forgiveness, perhaps sometimes, we have to simply respect when a person just can't do it.

Scanned document reads:

Published in German in

HYPNOSE UND KOGNITION

April, 1992, 9, pp.51-57.

PERSONAL FEELINGS OF A NAZI REFUGEE: WHY I DO NOT WANT TO BE

HONORED BY GERMANS

Erika Fromm

University of Chicago

Some months ago, Dr. Burkhard Peter and Dr. Monika Amler asked me for permission to translate one of my books on hypnoanalysis the combination of psychoanalysis and hypnosis-- and a journal article, into German. The article would then be re-published in their journal *Hypnose und Kognition*. Their request threw me into deep conflict. I struggled with my emotions for three months. To have your work translated into another language is always an honor. But I do not want to be published in German or honored by the Germans.

I am Jewish. My ancestors, on both sides, lived in Germany since the beginning of the 17th Century, probably longer. Because of the Nazis, I fled Germany in January, 1934, and became a Nazi refugee, first in Holland, then in the United States. In both countries I starved during the first year. But at least I escaped the fate of the six million Jews whom the Nazis killed in concentration camps for no other reason than that they were Jewish.

End of document. *Erika Fromm papers, box M5199, folder 10.*

Dr. Cathy Faye, Director of the CCHP, couldn't give me just one name.

*"I've always liked Ruth Cruikshank Bussey. Mostly because I liked the photos of her in the collection. I think there were a couple good ones of her from her time in the WAVES and personal journals and scrapbooks. I just remember browsing those and liking her a lot. I'd love to know more about Jewish psychologist Sylvia Scribner... early on, she was quite a union activist, I think. Not sure if the collection reflects any of that."*

Ruth Cruikshank Bussey (1911-2007) earned her BA at Elmira College and went on to earn her MA and PhD from Brown University. During the Second World War she served in the Air Service Command (ASC) and later enlisted with the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), a division of the Navy. She continued her work in psychological testing at the Psychological Corporation. And Cathy was right, the scrapbooks and journals in this collection are incredible. Bussey has letters, report cards, clippings, announcements, and more glued and taped to the pages alongside her handwritten words in scrapbooks and journals from her time in high school well into old age. There are hundreds of treasures but this assignment from her Elmira College course, "Life Work Choice" is among my favorites. The assignment

was for students to list their first three choices for work to which Ruth Cruikshank answered, “My work must be with science...I know of its hardships for I have a family none too eager to see me as a woman doctor, stepping in a career belonging only to men.”

Scanned documents read:

What Shall I Do With My Life – Donnelly.

List first three choices for life work.

Write in notebooks what you have found most helpful about the course. Suggestions to improve it.

Doctor’s work

Get in touch with a doctor?

Disposition

Fine – humorous

My work must be with science.

1. Doctor of public health
2. Chemist
3. Teacher in higher school of education of science.

I have studied most of the sciences except the mental sciences which I have just begun to read.

Practically I have been able to investigate the career I should like. I know of its hardships for I have a family none too eager to see me as a woman doctor. Stepping in a career belonging only to men. I have o such belief.

I have needed some other side of the question that its economic and practical side. Has it a spiritual value? It was for that purpose that I took this course.

I have obtained my answer. I believe I can help others to a better life.

*Thank you. There is a wide field for the woman doctor and if the course seems too exceedingly difficult plenty of opportunities for scientific work along that line – I wish we might have had a few minutes interview. E. L. H.*

End of documents. *Ruth Cruikshank Bussey, box M4963, folder 6*

Sylvia Scribner (1923-1991) was the valedictorian of her class at Smith College in 1943 and went to work as the research director for United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. She later returned to school, earning her MA from the City University of New York (CUNY) and a PhD from the New School of Social Research in 1970. She was on the faculty at CUNY, worked as a senior research associate at Rockefeller University, the associate director of the National Institute of Education, and as a senior scientist at the Center for Applied Linguistics. She focused on cultural literacy and learning, worker's rights, women's issues in society and the workplace, minority concerns, and labor practices and the more I learned about her, the cooler she became.

Scribner took up a research project at a dairy processing plant to study learning and knowledge through recall between different groups at the dairy – customers, office workers, warehouse workers, and delivery drivers. The collection has detailed interview notes and materials from the study. In her published work from the study, Scribner writes that the observations at the dairy were useful in that they, "...stimulate new ways of thinking about knowledge and practice that avoid the old entrenched dualisms" and "social knowledge is differentiated from, but not opposed to, individual knowledge." Scribner conducted similar recall research studies in Liberia

and concluded, "...recall output tends to reflect the organizational structure subjects impose on material" and regardless of culture, age, or geography these processes seemed to be universal.

Image: Photo of two people seated at a table: Sylvia Scribner, a White woman with short dark hair wearing a white shirt, and Hamidu Getaweh, a Black man with short dark hair wearing a green collared shirt. They are both holding pencils, which are pointed toward a piece of paper on the table. Papers and other objects are scattered across the table.

Notation on back: 1/15/1977. Sinkor. Hamidu Getaweh and Sylvia. *Sylvia Scribner papers, box V81, folder 8*

In describing Scribner's research to Dr. Faye she said to me, "It's the human and social element. Each place has its own society and its own forms of social knowledge that work for *that* place and *those* people."

Dr. Jodi Kearns, Director of the Institute for Human Science & Culture told me Molly Harrower was her favorite because, "she seems badass." Also, when asked by T. Kraweic in his oral history series about her philosophy of life, Dr. Kearns told me that Harrower gives the "Best. Answer. Ever."

Molly Harrower (1906-1999) took some psychology classes while at Bedford College, University of London with Beatrice Edgell but never earned a psychology degree. She worked with Charles K.

Ogden and with a helpful letter from him, Harrower arrived at Smith College on a fellowship to work with Kurt Koffka. She earned her PhD in 1934 and went on to work with Wilder Penfield at the Montreal Neurological Institute, established a private practice and did work in psychodiagnostics and psychotherapy, consulted in the military, served as Research Director of the Children's Court of Manhattan, wrote poetry, and eventually joined the faculty at the University of Florida, teaching clinical psychology until her retirement.

The Molly Harrower papers include numerous still images and I asked Dr. Kearns to pick a couple of her favorites.

Image: Black and white photo of Molly Harrower, an older White woman in a patterned dress and pearl necklace, grinning and waving to the camera. Two other older White women are seated in armchairs in the background on either side of Harrower.

Image: Black and white photo of Molly Harrower standing outside of a large brick building. She is smiling at the camera and wearing a patchwork patterned coat and a matching hat.

Image: Color photo of Molly Harrower seated on a leopard-print couch or loveseat and grinning at the camera while holding a young tiger and lion on her lap. She is wearing a blue dress and smiling.

Image: Black and white photo of Molly Harrower and another woman, both young with short dark hair, standing outside. Harrower is holding a small long-eared dog and the other woman is holding an infant under her arm.

Image: Black and white photo of a convertible car parked by the side of the road. Two women and a man are seated in the car, and another woman is sitting with her legs crossed on the rim of the car.

*Molly Harrower papers, box V53*

And Dr. Kearns was right. When T. Kraweic asked at the end of an hour long oral history interview her philosophy of life, she laughed and gave the best answer ever. *“I practically have no prohibitions....If it isn’t fun, what is it? There are millions of things you can do and doing one you don’t like doesn’t help anybody....If you can harness all your energy and all your enjoyment and all your creativity into some form of action that’s what you should take. And that’s what I try to do.”*

Hearing Molly say these words is mostly certainly better than reading them.

So listen here:

[Audio transcription. See blog for original audio.]

*T.S.: Our last question is, what is your philosophy on life?*

*M.H.: [laughs]*

*T.S.: Well, I got a chuckle out of you.*



*M.H.: Well, I guess I have only, I practically have no prohibitions. I think One thing I am against is cruelty. I would try never to hurt a person or an animal. I think there's enough hurt to go around. Outside of that, I think if it isn't fun what it is? That there are millions of things you can do and doing one you don't like doesn't help anybody more, probably helps them less than doing something that you do like. And if you can harness all your energies and all your enjoyment and all your creativity into some form of action that's what you should take. And that's what I try to do.*

*Theophile S. Krawiec collection, box A13, tape 40*

There are numerous inspiring and important women in the collections here at the Cummings Center. Women who changed the course of the history of the field. But when it comes down to brass tacks, “numerous” isn’t actually very accurate. Of the 466 processed manuscript collections we house, just 81 of them are the personal papers of women. So, who is my favorite woman in the collection? I’m not sure and maybe her papers aren’t here yet.

To twist Molly’s words a bit, “If history isn’t inclusive, what is it?”

Happy Women’s History Month.