A Joan Kahn Book

Briefly displayed in Sterling Memorial Library this spring were books and letters from the library and papers of Joan Kahn (1914-1994), whose editorial career spanned forty-odd years, first at Harper Brothers, then at Ticknor & Fields, Dutton, and finally St. Martin’s Press. While she is perhaps best known for her work with mystery and suspense fiction—the Mystery Writers of America presented her with the Ellery Queen Award and with a special Edgar Allan Poe Award—she edited books on many different subjects: history, travel, art, cookery, and the theater. Joan Kahn was also an author in her own right, publishing two novels, eleven anthologies, and several children’s books. The items on exhibit from the collections of Sterling Memorial Library and Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library were a representative and tantalizing selection from the gift recently made to Yale by her sister, Olivia Kahn. They provided a glimpse of a distinguished and dedicated editor at work.

After growing up in New York City where she attended the Horace Mann School, Joan Kahn spent one year at the Yale School of Art, a year her sister says she “adored.” At the end of that year she returned reluctantly to New York, studied at Columbia, did a stint with the Office of War Information, and, in 1945, applied for two jobs: one at the Museum of Modern Art, one at Harper Brothers. Harper called her first, and she began as a reader, although within a year or so she became an editor charged with starting a mystery department. She established the Harper Novels of Suspense series, the Joan Kahn Novels of Suspense, and Joan Kahn Books. Her editorial standards were old-school: she would not sign a book before it was finished, she turned down books that did not meet her expectations even if they promised to be money-makers, and she never stopped reading unsolicited manuscripts.

Joan Kahn is credited with making detective fiction respectable, and even a partial list of the authors she could call “hers” makes clear why this is so: Henry Cecil, John Creasey, C. Day Lewis, Peter Dickinson, Dick Francis, Nicholas Freeling, Michael Gilbert, Tony Hillerman, Julian Symons—and many more. That she inspired devotion is also clear; one has only to read a few of the letters included in this collection to be struck by her committed attention to her authors and by their constant gratitude for her support. They ask her for many things—money, advice, a carton of Bic pens—and thank her profusely when she provides. We at Yale are grateful as well: to Joan Kahn for giving the world so many fine books, and to Olivia Kahn for making sure that this library has copies of them. —MKP

Indian Affairs Records at Yale

Last summer, librarians at Sterling Memorial Library and Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library purchased over one thousand reels of microfilm documenting the activities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the nineteenth century. Originally organized under the arm of the War Department in 1824 and transferred to the newly founded Department of the Interior in 1849, the Office of Indian Affairs, as it was initially called, oversaw the growing network of superintendencies, agencies, and subagencies created to monitor Indian activities as
Americans pushed west. Yale’s microfilm purchase contains OIA correspondence from 1824 through 1881, giving readers access to the letters commissioners and clerks sent out into the field, as well as the letters, reports, and requests Indians and government employees sent to staff in Washington.

Part of National Archives Record Group 75, the three microfilm collections purchased, M228, M221, and M224, comprise registers of letters received, the letters received themselves, and letters sent, respectively. It takes a certain amount of perseverance to use this material. Letters sent are arranged chronologically so that researchers can read what OIA officials sent from Washington in a roughly sequential manner. However, letters received are often filed under somewhat arbitrary subject headings, making it extremely difficult for researchers to track down relevant materials.

The registers of letters received somewhat untangle the research process. Clerks maintained running, chronological lists of letters coming into the Washington offices. They kept record books of these letters, making an entry for each letter received, including place of origin, date written, author’s name, as well as a brief synopsis of a letter’s content. Scrawled in the left-hand margin of each entry is the clerk’s designated subject heading, indicating the letter’s destination in files. At times, subject headings correlate to a letter’s place of origin (Creek Agency, for instance, or Michigan Superintendency). At other times, the headings have to do with broad topics clerks found to be of interest (Schools, Indian Emigration, or Enrollment). Occasionally subject headings seem to have outlived their usefulness, so clerks later refiled letters without, however, indicating where they had put them. A letter initially filed with the subject heading “Piankashaw Nation,” for instance, now rests in the files of the St. Louis Superintendency.

Scholars committed to including native peoples in their depictions of American life will find a wealth of little-used materials in these collections. Those interested in researching American state formation, domestic policy, or internal affairs will be delighted by the collections’ Indian-centered view of events. Those documenting change over time may find information about trade and trade goods, annuity payments, Indian requests, and agency reports enlightening. Those concerned with American Indians will be pleased to find so much original material generated by Indians themselves.

These collections shed light on the everyday power relations that regulated interactions between Indians and U.S. officials. For example, in one exchange, an Indian dictated a letter to an interpreter, asking the government to make good on a treaty stipulation under which his tribe was owed an annual payment of salt. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent two letters in response to this request: one to the field agent in charge of carrying out the treaty agreements, the other to the Indian making the original request. The Commissioner wrote his letter to the agent in bland, declarative bureaucraticese, while his letter to the Indian was punctuated with flowery metaphors and moralistic prescriptions for righteous work and life. By coming to terms with the stark differences in language in letters such as these, researchers will be better able to understand the dynamics influencing interactions between Indians and governmental officials in the nineteenth century. –CAC

Catherine Corman is a graduate student in the American Studies Department.

JSTOR: Access to Journals Online
The Yale Library is pleased to announce access for members of the Yale University community to JSTOR: The Mellon Foundation Journal Storage Project. JSTOR aims to develop a digital library in support of the arts and sciences. At present it provides electronic access to nearly-complete files of fifteen full-text journals in the areas of economics and history. Approximately 750,000 journal page images are backed by fully-searchable ASCII text.

Established in August 1995, JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization created with the assistance of
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. To help the scholarly community take advantage of advances in information technology, JSTOR takes into account the sometimes conflicting needs of scholars, libraries and publishers. Focussing initially on core scholarly journals, JSTOR has among its primary objectives improving access to journal literature for scholars by linking bitmapped images of journal pages to a powerful search engine. In addition, the project hopes to mitigate some of the economic problems of libraries by easing storage problems (thereby saving prospective capital costs involved in building more shelf space), and also by reducing operating costs associated with retrieving and reshelving back issues. Moreover it will address issues of conservation and preservation such as broken runs, mutilated pages, and long-term deterioration of paper copy.

The titles currently available on JSTOR include full runs up to 1990 of the following titles:

- Ecological Applications
- Ecological Monographs
- Ecology
- Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society
- Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies
- The American Economic Review
- The American Historical Review
- The Journal of American History
- The Journal of Economic Perspectives
- The Journal of Modern History
- The Journal of Political Economy
- The Mississippi Valley Historical Review
- The Quarterly Journal of Economics
- The Review of Economics and Statistics
- The William and Mary Quarterly

Access to JSTOR is possible from any legitimate Yale IP (Internet Protocol) domain with a World Wide Web browser such as Netscape, Mosaic, or Lynx. The URL is: http://www.jstor.org/

Currently Yale, along with several other academic campuses and libraries, is a test site for the JSTOR project. When the test period ends in the fall of 1996, librarians will assess the use and continuation of the resource. Feedback about this exciting resource, the first offering of significant runs of important journals in the humanities and social sciences in electronic form, is thus welcome. Please send questions and comments to: Ann Okerson, Associate University Librarian (ann.okerson@yale.edu). –ASO

Victor Serge Archive at Yale

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library is pleased to announce its acquisition of the papers of the Franco-Russian novelist and revolutionary Victor Serge (1890–1947). The archive was purchased in Mexico last spring from Serge’s son, the painter Vlady Kibalchich.

When Victor Serge was repatriated to Soviet Russia in 1919, his credentials as a revolutionary were already extensive. Born into a family of Russian revolutionary intellectuals exiled to Belgium, Serge was associated as an adolescent with the socialist Jeune Garde in Brussels. He worked as an apprentice photographer, a typesetter, and an editor, and in 1912 was incarcerated when he refused to act as an informer in the Paris trial of the anarchist bank robbers known as the “Bonnot gang.” Exiled from France upon his release, Serge participated in the Barcelona uprising of 1917, then spent a year in a French concentration camp as a “Bolshevik suspect.”

Upon arriving in Russia in January 1919, Serge was put to work organizing the Communist International, editing foreign-language publications, and setting up the Comintern publishing house and print shop. From 1922 to 1926 he served as editor of Imprkorr, the Comintern press service in Berlin and later Vienna. An early supporter of the left opposition, Serge was finally expelled from the party in 1928; in 1933 he was deported to Central Asia, but released three years later after noisy protests at the Congress for the Defense of Culture in Paris, where his novels and essays were well known by writers like Malraux, Gide, and Romain Rolland, who interceded personally with Stalin in 1935.

Serge spent the next years vigorously campaigning against the Stalinist purges in Russia and in Republican Spain. He continued at the same time to write, and his 1939 novel about the Russian opposition Il est minuit dans le siècle (Midnight in the Century) was nominated for the Prix Goncourt. After the fall of Paris, Serge spent a year in Marseilles awaiting an improbable visa to his final exile in Mexico, where he arrived soon after the murder of Trotsky and where he himself survived an attempted assassination. Throughout this life of activism, hardship, and poverty, Serge wrote continuously.

The archive acquired by the Beinecke includes Serge’s research files and drafts of articles, largely from the Marseilles and Mexican periods (1940–47). Among his many books represented in the collection by manuscripts and typescripts are Il est minuit dans le siècle; Les derniers temps (The Long Dusk), a novel about the fall of France; Les hommes dans la prison (1928); Vie et mort de Léon Trotsky with manuscript notes by Natalia Trotsky; and two of his finest works, written in Mexico,
Mémoires d’un révolutionnaire and L'affaire Toulàev (The Case of Comrade Tulayev), a panoramic novel of Russia during the purges. The archive also contains unpublished drafts, photographs, clippings, and correspondence with such figures as Leon Trotsky, André Gide, George Orwell, and Dwight Macdonald. – CAS

News and Notes

CHAUCER FACSIMILE. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and Sterling Memorial Library have recently joined to purchase a splendid facsimile of the Ellesmere manuscript of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales published by Yushodo Company, Tokyo, and Huntington Library Press, San Marino, California. The facsimile’s original, the manuscript known as the Ellesmere Chaucer, is held by the Huntington Library. It offers one of the most reliable and complete texts of the Canterbury Tales, as well as portraits of the tellers of the tales, including what may be the earliest image of Chaucer himself. The result of international collaboration among scholars, conservators, librarians, and publishers, this full-size, full-color reproduction is housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where it joins a well-used copy of the collotype facsimile published in 1911 by Manchester University Press. All those scholars and students whose literary pilgrimages include study of Chaucer’s Tales have cause to thank the Library Associates and Robert J. Menner ’13 whose book funds made this magnificent addition possible. – MKP

ILARDI MICROFILM GUIDE ON THE WWW.
The Guide to the Ilardi Microfilm Collection of Renaissance Diplomatic Documents ca.1450–ca.1500 is now available electronically to interested scholars over the World Wide Web. The collection of nearly two thousand reels of film and several groups of photocopies was given to the Yale Library in 1990 by Vincent Ilardi, currently a Visiting Professor in the History Department. Described earlier in this newsletter (IV:3, Fall 1990), this collection assembles over one and one-half million documents filmed in the repositories of Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Barcelona, Paris, and other Italian and European cities. It reproduces most of the massive diplomatic records of the Sforza dukes of Milan who led the diplomatic revolution of the late fifteenth century. Their archives, though the most important source for the emergence of modern diplomacy, have been inadequately utilized by scholars for lack of a printed inventory.

The full text of the guide can be searched using the search engines built into most Web browsers; thus researchers can readily locate the documents (and the reels containing them) concerning individuals such as Bianca Maria Sforza or places like Naples. A small number of digitized images of documents selected from the collection accompanies the guide and illustrates the rich variety of information contained in Renaissance diplomatic series.

The guide’s availability on the Internet should encourage scholars to use this rich collection both locally and through interlibrary loan. The URL is: http://www.library.yale.edu/illardilil-bome.htm. – SFR

A portrait of Geoffrey Chaucer from The Ellesmere Chaucer reproduced in facsimile (Manchester University Press, 1911).
MEDICAL LIBRARY EXHIBITION. Herbert King Thoms was a Yale medical graduate and professor who had many interests and talents. Works of Herbert K. Thoms, M.D. (1885-1972): Artist, Author, Medical Historian, Obstetrician, Teacher and Devoted Yale Alumnus, an exhibit in his honor, is on display through July in the Medical Library rotunda. Organized by Arthur Ebbert, Jr., M.D., it includes paintings and dry points, photographs, and books; memorabilia range from Thoms' student scrapbook, ca. 1910, to the citation for the award of the Yale Medal in 1961.

A Yale gynecologist, Thoms made numerous important contributions to his field. These include studies in pelvimetry and infertility. In addition, in conjunction with Dr. Edith Jackson and the Department of Pediatrics, he developed the plan for infant "rooming-in" after delivery. He also established the natural childbirth program and the infertility clinic. A man of wisdom and imagination who loved life, he stressed to his students the importance of a humanistic approach to medicine.

- TAA

Nota Bene is published during the academic year to acquaint the Yale community and others interested with the resources and services of the Yale libraries. Please direct comments and questions to Susanne Roberts, Editor, Bibliography Department, Sterling Memorial Library (phone: 432-1762, e-mail: susanne.roberts@yale.edu).

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Scott Bennett, University Librarian
Susanne F. Roberts, Editor

RUSSIAN LIBRARY TRIBUTE. The National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg paid tribute to the Yale University Library during its 200th anniversary celebration in May 1995. Vladimir Zaitsev, its director, awarded a medal of appreciation to the Yale library for its continuous support—most notably in sending publications by Russian émigrés to the National Library of Russia, where the materials had previously been censored. One such gift was the private library of Russian-American aeronautical engineer Igor Sikorsky. The Russian library, originally created by Empress Catherine the Great, also gives the Yale Library books and other current publications for its collections. -TL

PLOWDEN ARCHIVE AT YALE. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and noted photographer and author David Plowden ’55, of Winnetka, Illinois, are pleased to announce their agreement to place Mr. Plowden's archive in the Yale Collection of Western Americana. Mr. Plowden has written and illustrated fourteen books and provided photographs for thirteen others. His photographs have appeared in dozens of periodicals, and his widely-exhibited work is represented in the permanent collections of numerous museums.

Since 1952, David Plowden has studied, documented, and commented upon the transformation of America. From the steam tug boats that once traversed the Hudson River to the iron and steel bridges that first spanned hundreds of American rivers, from the steel
mills of metropolitan Chicago to the small towns and farms of rural America, Plowden has photographed the vanishing artifacts from which the contemporary United States emerged.

Compiled over more than forty years, the Plowden archive provides an unparalleled visual record of post-World War II America. It includes more than ten thousand negatives and contact prints, several thousand exhibition and reproduction prints prepared by the photographer himself, his field notebooks, journals, correspondence, research notes, drafts of his various publications, and copies of virtually all of his published work.

Plowden’s entire archive will not come to the library until the photographer’s retirement, but a collection of prints is available for study in the Beinecke’s reading room. A major exhibit is planned for Fall 1997. –CAS

**SML RENOVATION UPDATE.** On June 1, 1996, one of the first visible results of the current renovation of Sterling Memorial Library will be completed with the reopening of the Memorabilia Room. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. James Hoak ’66, this exhibit area leading to the library lecture hall will provide a well-lighted, environmentally controlled, and secure space for the display of the many treasures in the library’s collections, particularly those related to the history of Yale. Highlighting Yale’s alumni, faculty, benefactors, and administrators, the opening exhibit, *Seen in a New Light: Selections from Manuscripts and Archives,* will focus on their contributions to the growth of the University and to society in general. The exhibit will run through the summer and be open for viewing during regular library hours. –RVS

**VIDEO ARCHIVE GRANT.** The Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies has received a $500,000 grant from the Righteous Persons Foundation to support the cataloging of more than 2,500 videotaped witness accounts of the Holocaust by 1999. The Fortunoff Video Archive holds over 3,600 such videotapes and provides primary source materials for researchers, educators, and media throughout the world. The cataloging information will be available through RLIN and through ORBIS, Yale’s online public access catalog, both of which are available over the Internet. The Righteous Persons Foundation was founded in the fall of 1994 by Steven Spielberg to distribute his portion of the profits from *Schindler’s List.* Additional information about the archive is available at: http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/homepage.html –JWR

**Woman to Woman**

The exhibition *Woman to Woman,* on view at the Beinecke Library until the end of June, presents a gathering of some two hundred original letters, each of them by hand and to a woman. “No letter can take the place of a good hug,” wrote Edith Wharton to her niece in 1935, but long after hugs have worked their good, letters remain, creating a historic record, preserving the wisdom of our sisters before us.

The letters in the Beinecke exhibition range from ancient papyrus fragments of the second and third centuries to the correspondence of twentieth-century women. Some of Yale’s best-known collections have provided material: letters that document the lives of novelists Fanny Burney and George Eliot, letters written in the bold calligraphic hand of Georgia O’Keeffe, and a group of letters by pioneer women of the American West.

Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edith Wharton, Marianne Moore, and environmentalist Rachel Carson are a few of the other women represented in the exhibition. Letters to Dorothy Peterson document her role as friend and supporter to many figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Rarely-exhibited love letters between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas are on display, as are letters from Violet Trefusis to Vita Sackville-West.

Correspondents of the historical novelist Bryher include her life’s companion, the American poet H.D.; her husband’s daughter Helen Wolff; and fellow-novelist Dorothy Richardson. Another group of letters centers on the Bennets, whose family papers constitute one of the Beinecke’s largest literary archives. Frances Rose Benét,
Gertrude Stein writing a letter. Some of her letters along with those of other women are on display in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

mother of the poet Stephen Vincent Benét, was a prodigious correspondent, and the exhibition includes letters to and from her daughters-in-law, one of whom was American poet Elinor Wylie.

In her introduction to an anthology of letters by women, mystery author P.D. James wrote, "Here is the intimacy of the heart and mind speaking to heart and mind across distance and across time." To bridge those gaps of time and space is one of the goals of Woman to Woman. –CAS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY POLICY

The Advisory Committee on Library Policy, appointed by the President, consults with the University Librarian on policies relating to library services. Its members are:

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Calendar of Exhibits

BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

Woman to Woman
through June

The Faerie Queene in the World

Banks' Florilegium
mid-July through September

DIVINITY LIBRARY

Vignettes of Men Memorialized in the Buildings of the Yale Divinity School
through September

STERLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Elms and Magnolias: Old Blue in a Coat of Gray:
Yale and the American South

Seen in a New Light: Selections from Manuscripts and Archives
through summer

MEDICAL LIBRARY

Artist, Author, Medical Historian, Obstetrician,
Teacher, and Devoted Yale Alumnus
through July

Salubrious Destinations: Spas, Sanitoria, and Other Places of Medical Retreat
August through September

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART RARE BOOKS

Francis Bartolozzi
through July 7

Elegance and Etiquette
July 9 through September 8

Check out the online version of Nota Bene where The Calendar of Exhibits will always be up-to-date! The most recent issues (x:2.83, and x:3) are now available on the World Wide Web, at URL http://www.library.yale.edu/NotaBene/hbbhome.htm

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