THE LETTER BY RADclyffe HALL

known as the “classic” lesbian novel, and the one she considered her “best book.” The letter appears to be written in response to a request from Germaine Greer, a literary scholar who died in 1969. It comes to us by way of a New York man who found the letter in his deceased parents’ closet. A lesbian co-worker urged him to donate the letter to the Archives, he did so in the spring of 1994.

Radclyffe Hall, 1880-1943, was born in Hampshire, England. At the age of 17, she inherited a large sum of money from her estranged father. Lady Mabel Batten, many years Hall’s superior, became her artistic mentor and lover, encouraged Hall’s work, and introduced Hall to London’s literary circles. Hall considered herself a congenital invert, reflecting the psychology of her time, and sought through her writing to allay the stigma of that identity. Following her liaison with Batten, Hall had a nearly thirty-year relationship with Lady Una Troubridge, which Troubridge recounts in a biography of her lover. With Troubridge at her side, Hall wrote The Well of Loneliness, which, Hall admits in the letter, draws “stupidly” from her own imaginative life, providing the novel with realism and sincerity. She explains that a goal of the novel was to realize an informative, sympathetic, and politically useful account of inversion. The Well reflects Hall’s notions about love, sexuality, and society; it also reveals her racism, classism, and anti-Semitism.

Hall’s reasons for writing The Well are remarkably familiar and resonant today. She hoped the novel would inspire “the inverted in general to declare them-
DONATING YOUR COLLECTION

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES PRINCIPLES

The Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation is a grass-roots, community-based, not-for-profit institution housing the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the largest and longest-lived collection of lesbian material in the world. Since our founding in 1974, we have been an all-volunteer organization, collectively run, with self-appointed coordinators making collective policy decisions for the organization. We distinguish ourselves from the other Herstory Archives by adhering to these principles:

1. All lesbian women must have access to the Archives. No academic, political, or social credentials are required to use the collection; race and class must be no barrier for use or inclusion.

2. The Archives is housed within the lesbian community, created and maintained by lesbians. The collection, or parts of it, will not be sold to a public or private mainstream institution that is by definition closed to many women. The Archives is funded by individual lesbians and radical funding sources rather than government or mainstream financial institutions. LHEF, Inc. is involved in the political struggles of lesbians.

3. All lesbians are important and welcome at the Archives. Every woman who has had the courage to face another woman deserves to be remembered here, as do lesbians from all places, from every century, and from any political or social background. The Archives aims to collect the full length of lesbian experiences, not just the lives of the famous or published.

4. The Archives is dedicated to building intergenerational and community connections through reciprocal education and through building respect. Archival skills will be taught, one generation of lesbians to another, breaking the illusory barrier of traditional archives.

PREPARING YOUR COLLECTION FOR DONATION

Whenever possible, we ask that you arrange your own collection. This organization is dedicated to the self-organization of lesbian history, to creating a legacy of our own stories. If possible, include an outline or time frame of the major events in your life in written or recorded form. Be as lengthy or as brief as you like, then organize your collection using your own outline. Identify the people whose letters appear in your collection, making clear who wrote what, and arrange the letters in sequence by time and/or correspondence. Arrange other writings, photographs, clippings, and memorabilia similarly. Use only blue ink, for example, FIRST NAME | LAST NAME: Dated 1974. If a newspaper, include the clipping, not the entire page. If a film, a clipping, or something expressed as a work-for-hire in a signed document. Upon your death, copyright of an unpublished work created on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically transferred for a period of fifty years to the managers of your estate (often the traditional "next of kin") unless you have specified otherwise. Fifty years after your death, unless another arrangement is made, copyright passes from your heirs into the public domain. Unpublished works created before January 1, 1978, are covered for the same length of time, but copyright protection will not expire before the end of 2022. Copyright protection for unpublished works is more complicated, check with the publishing company, a lawyer, or an archivist for more information.

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND COPYRIGHT

With the gift of your collection, you transfer physical ownership, or property rights, to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation. Copyright rights differ from copyright. Copyright is the exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies, publicly perform, or display published or unpublished works. This includes the right to publish significant portions of published works or unpublished works. Copyright belongs to the creator or to creators of a work (no matter who has physical ownership of the work), unless another arrangement about copyright has been made or the work is a "work-for-hire" (something prepared by an employee within the scope of employment or something expressly stated as a work-for-hire in a signed document). Upon your death, copyright of an unpublished work created on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically transferred for a period of fifty years to the managers of your estate (often the traditional "next of kin") unless you have specified otherwise. Fifty years after your death, unless another arrangement is made, copyright passes from your heirs into the public domain. Unpublished works created before January 1, 1978, are covered for the same length of time, but copyright protection will not expire before the end of 2022. Copyright protection for unpublished works is more complicated, check with the publishing company, a lawyer, or an archivist for more information.

We encourage you to make explicitly clear who is to possess copyright of the unpublished material you have deposited at the Archives both before and after your death, in order to prevent possible disputes. Call or write the Archives to obtain an Author Agreement form before you ship your collection here. On the form, indicate if you want to:

- Transfer copyright at this time.
- Retain copyright during your lifetime, assigning copyright of your material to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation upon your death, or:
- Make another arrangement, perhaps assigning copyright to a specific fragment individual upon your death. If you wish to specify another arrangement, you may indicate this on the Donor Agreement form as well. In order to prevent misunderstandings, be sure to create a will, and reinforce the terms of the arrangement there. It is not enough to prevent destruction of the history of a marginalized people. Even when everything is in proper legal order, heirs have been known to destroy or destroy letters, photographs, and diaries. It is safer to secure the records of your life before your death, in the place where you want them to be.

When you retain copyright to your archival collection, researchers and publishers bear the responsibility of obtaining your permission to use your written work to significantly reproduce any public forum - a book, video, recording, or whatever. This places an additional step between the research and the permitted publication of public display of your material, and it means that researchers will ask LHEF for information needed to contact you. If you wish to retain copyright to your works or work, please keep LHEF informed of your current address so that we may make contact in the future. Authors and writers have specific and distinct interests, and it is important that you clarify your wishes to the best of our ability. In the case where you do not possess copyright to material donated, LHEF reserves the right to restrict access, pending permission from the creator of the material. If you have significant concerns about your privacy or the privacy of others mentioned or pictured in your collection, we ask that you phrase reservations as specifically and as narrowly as possible. You may wish to provide us with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of others mentioned or pictured in your collection so that researchers may identify any privacy concerns.

TO THE ARCHIVES

Lesbian Herstory Archives

DONATING YOUR COLLECTION

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND COPYRIGHT

With the gift of your collection, you transfer physical ownership, or property rights, to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation. Copyright rights differ from copyright. Copyright is the exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies, publicly perform, or display published or unpublished works. This includes the right to publish significant portions of published works or unpublished works. Copyright belongs to the creator or to creators of a work (no matter who has physical ownership of the work), unless another arrangement about copyright has been made or the work is a "work-for-hire" (something prepared by an employee within the scope of employment or something expressly stated as a work-for-hire in a signed document). Upon your death, copyright of an unpublished work created on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically transferred for a period of fifty years to the managers of your estate (often the traditional "next of kin") unless you have specified otherwise. Fifty years after your death, unless another arrangement is made, copyright passes from your heirs into the public domain. Unpublished works created before January 1, 1978, are covered for the same length of time, but copyright protection will not expire before the end of 2022. Copyright protection for unpublished works is more complicated, check with the publishing company, a lawyer, or an archivist for more information.

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- Transfer copyright at this time.
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- Make another arrangement, perhaps assigning copyright to a specific fragment individual upon your death. If you wish to specify another arrangement, you may indicate this on the Donor Agreement form as well. In order to prevent misunderstandings, be sure to create a will, and reinforce the terms of the arrangement there. It is not enough to prevent destruction of the history of a marginalized people. Even when everything is in proper legal order, heirs have been known to destroy or destroy letters, photographs, and diaries. It is safer to secure the records of your life before your death, in the place where you want them to be.

When you retain copyright to your archival collection, researchers and publishers bear the responsibility of obtaining your permission to use your written work to significantly reproduce any public forum - a book, video, recording, or whatever. This places an additional step between the research and the permitted publication of public display of your material, and it means that researchers will ask LHEF for information needed to contact you. If you wish to retain copyright to your works or work, please keep LHEF informed of your current address so that we may make contact in the future. Authors and writers have specific and distinct interests, and it is important that you clarify your wishes to the best of our ability. In the case where you do not possess copyright to material donated, LHEF reserves the right to restrict access, pending permission from the creator of the material. If you have significant concerns about your privacy or the privacy of others mentioned or pictured in your collection, we ask that you phrase reservations as specifically and as narrowly as possible. You may wish to provide us with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of others mentioned or pictured in your collection so that researchers may identify any privacy concerns.

PRIVACY AND RESTRICTIONS

OFFERING YOUR COLLECTION TO THE ARCHIVES

Lesbian Herstory Archives is offering a reflection of yourself to the community. Lesbians and others who seek to know us by exploring our lives are eager to reach your works, know your handwriting, and view your images. (See the collection in the Archives is a courageous and /risk act, a coming out that will inspire lesbians for generations to come. We hope that you find it possible to let us unrestricted access to your archival collection. However, should you find it necessary to place restrictions on access, we will accommodate your request and forward your wishes to the best of our ability. In the case where you do not possess copyright to material donated, LHEF reserves the right to restrict access, pending permission from the creator of the material. If you have significant concerns about your privacy or the privacy of others mentioned or pictured in your collection, we ask that you phrase reservations as specifically and as narrowly as possible. You may wish to provide us with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of others mentioned or pictured in your collection so that researchers may identify any privacy concerns.

APPRAISALS AND TAX DEDUCTIONS

Most gifts of personal papers are not tax-deductible. You may wish to have an appraisal conducted for tax deduction purposes if you suspect your donation may have negative monetary value. LHEF volunteers will not do appraisals, but we may be able to suggest professionals who could do one.

To you and others who have offered collections to the Archives, Lesbian Herstory will live as a lifelong focus for generations to come. We thank you for your generosity, in memory of the voices we have lost.

Polly Thrallswke
Queer Covers from Lesbian Survival Literature

An exhibit from the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc.

Lesbian Survival Literature in the Archives

From its inception, the Lesbian Herstory Archives has housed a few dog-eared copies of pulp paperbacks with lesbian content. While coming out of the politics of the early ’50s in New York City, the founders decided to include all artifacts of lesbian lives that they came upon. This included three volumes, discolored by the politically correct of that period, which had been tucked away under mattresses, in the back of bookcases, and secreted in boxes in the back of closets. Joan Nolle, one of the Archives’ founders, called these works “survival literature.”

I see the artwork on these pulp as both a kind of lesbian camp and as icons of butch/femme. Some covers have been reproduced as lesbian greeting cards, and the genre itself played a role in the 1993 Canadian film “Forbidden Love.”

The cover art exhibited here represents only a small part of our collection of several hundred volumes. It was very difficult to make the selections. We could easily have done a whole exhibit of covers, such as those in institutions, three-ways, banner-on-bread seduction, butch-fem representation…. The Archives also has many paperbacks from the early 60s onward that are from porn publishers. The wildly illustrative covers uturns could be an exhibit in themselves. In “Queer Covers,” we have tried to focus on mainstream publishers and on those representatives of the classic lesbian pulp that were best known and most widely available from 1980 through 1985.

The art of taking one of these books off the drooping rack and paying for it at the counter was a frightening and difficult move for most women. This was especially true during the atmosphere of the McCarthy trials when hundreds of lives were destroyed by accusations of homosexuality.

Although many of today’s standards of lesbian literature and erotica, these volumes were so threatening that women hid them, burned them, and threw them out. At the same time, they were cherished and passed from woman to woman in the underground community. They helped many a Bohemian lesbian’s idea of what life might be like for her. And, perhaps, miraculously for that time and environment, happy endings could be found in the mainstream media.

A Short History of Lesbian Pulps

It’s important to examine these books in the context of the society that produced them. They are, of course, first and foremost, a product produced to make money—selling us that there was a large audience for them. Although most of the volumes of survival literature best loved by lesbians were written by women, the industry was controlled by straight men.

This exhibit starts with the dust jackets of these pulps that were the precursors of the first lesbian paperbacks. The paperback industry in the United States started in 1939. There were few volumes with lesbian content published in those early years. Then, as the war effort got underway, local censorship, carried on by police and the Legion of Decency, prompted paperback publishers to curb out stories. “Lesbian stories were reeled off as were stories involving homosexuals and transvestites.”

The golden age of lesbian pulps started with Fawcett’s decision to publish paperbacks with their imprint Gold Medal Books. “The new line would publish westerns, mysteries, and general novels and the emphasis would be upon sex. This included lesbian sex…” Women’s Barracks, published in 1936, was an instant success. Spring Fling, published in 1932, well-written and also by a woman, set the stage for another forty or so paperbacks that would follow over the next decades. Women Without Men was one of the top ten paperback sellers for 1937.

Although this type of mainstream paperback faded out in the perennial 60s, interest in the early paperbacks remained. In 1975 Arno Books reprinted two lesbian pulps. In 1983, Naid Press, run by Barbara Grier, a longtime collector and enthusiast of lesbian romance writing, reissued Ann Bannerman’s titles. As a publisher, Barbara has carried on the tradition of lesbian pulps, but in a lesbian environment. Sexual content in lesbian publishing has also blossomed. Now many titles of books with sexual activity, described in great detail, is available from a variety of publishers. Lesbian pulp was one of the starting points for these publishing movements and influenced many lesbian writers and publishers. Lesbian survival literature is one of the cornerstones of our pride and the focus of this exhibit.

The Archives is a place to commemorate lost lovers and friends. As a people, we have been deprived of the ritual of communal sorrow. Many lesbians have experienced the pain of silent mourning. Often in newspaper obituaries, a mention for the death of a lesbian is “There are no known survivors.” This is not true. We are each other’s survivors.

We hope that you will remember the lesbians in your community, your sisters, your friends, through memorials and letters to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, so that we may all honor their lives. Their voices and loves must not be lost or made invisible when we ourselves are no longer here to tell their stories.

December 31, 1990
December 28, 1990
February 25, 1994
August 13, 1993
February 23, 1994
August 14, 1992
August 13, 1993
March 15, 1993
December 31, 1990
December 28, 1990
February 25, 1994

Dear Sisters,

I am sending this personal note along with my contribution to your mortgage payment campaign.

When I first came out in 1972, I was very uncertain of how my Lesbianism would affect my life. Would I experience hatred from others? Even though I quickly found a place in the Lesbian community and began to make more and better friends than I ever had before in my life, this question persisted. Then, a couple of years after I came out, I went with some of my friends to a music festival in Michigan. Camping beside us on the festival was a group of Lesbians among whom was a Lesbian with a beard. Not just a few chin whiskers, a beard. As I observed this woman and her lover and friends over the weekend, it became obvious that she was in love, loved in return, validated, respected, included, and utterly at home in the embrace of her Lesbian family and community. And it slowly occurred to me that this bearded dyke, this “brek,” this woman being straight society would say could not and should not be loved, was far more loved than I had ever been when I had done everything I could do to be an acceptable and “attractive” straight woman. This dyke with a beard was genuinely loved as I never had been loved as a “straight woman.” It was then that I knew that being a Lesbian was going to be worth any amount of societal rejection.

I feel reassured in that same way when I think about the Archives. The existence of the Archives tells me that in spite of every persecution the Lesbian community can direct at us, we Lesbians are going to survive and be okay because we love each other far more than they will ever understand. Even though I’ve yet to visit the Archives (a fact which I hope will change next June), its message of caring is very much there for me.

Thank you for everything you do, and if you are ever discouraged by the homophobes, remember that in the hearts of millions of your own kind, you are, as Lesbians, an infinitely loved and cherished people.

Very sincerely,
Linda K. West
The periodical collection at LHA is broad and diverse. We have a range of publications encompassing titles with a national audience as well as titles written by and for lesbians (and sometimes gay men) in a specific state, city, or region. There are also periodicals for Lesbians of African descent, disabled Lesbians, Jewish Lesbians, and many others. Here is a sampling of what's in the collection:

**SOME OF THE EARLIEST LESBIAN PUBLICATIONS:**

- The Lesbro
- Matron-ic Review
- Vice Versa

**TO THE ARCHIVES, IN HER NEW HOME**

In memory of the voices we have lost,
To sustain and protect the collective voice we have gained,
The Lesbian Herstory Archives was established.
Born of our joy and sorrow, our pleasure and pain.
She holds the narratives of our hopes and setbacks,
The chronicles of our self-love and self-discovery,
The epic tales of women loving women,
The songs - long and short - of coming out.
In her magazines, diaries, books, and videos,
In her short stories, music, art, and poems,
She can look into the eye of each other, and ours.
We can learn about queer lives, loves, joys, and losses.
Here thrive the stories of bravery and feminism,
Here breathes the beat of all kinds of dykes.
Here flourish poems of our lust and our pride.
And pictures we've taken of women on films.
For the love of Lesbians all over the world,
For the living, the dead, and those yet born,
Our culture is collected, preserved, and shared.
Come home to your history through the Archives' front door.

- Joy Rich

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**LHA's, International Collection: From Algeria to Zimbabwe**

The International Periodicals Collection contains periodicals from countries the world over and holds the spotlight on the Geographical Files. It is arranged alphabetically by country and is located on the second floor in the room with the newspaper collection. Although primarily composed of periodicals, there are also other materials, such as an unpublished paper or article that is country-specific. We are currently putting all of our periodicals in a database and making them accessible by title, geographical region, or primary subject area. This means that within a year or so we will be able to print out a list of titles that say, come out of Asia or Latin America or Germany. Hardly any of these publications are indexed or abstracted anywhere, so they are virtually inaccessible unless you know exactly what you are looking for. By creating our own in-house database, we will be able to provide some access to this literature.

Country files located in this collection include:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Denmark
- New Zealand
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Japan
- Korea
- Mexico
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Peru
- Philippines
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Turkey
- Uganda
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Uruguay
- Venezuela

We are always very interested in acquiring new materials for the International Collection and welcome your material donations. Any information you may have or have collected on your travels about Lesbians in other countries or regions would be most welcome. Please give us a call first at (718) 368-DYKE, and we will get back to you.

- Lucinda R. Zee

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(Please note on the International Collection, See Newsletter 68, Winter 1984)
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

A small room and two closets on the second floor house Special Collections, the larger collections of personal and organizational papers and manuscripts. It is arranged by accession number, consisting of the year it was received, followed by a numeric designation. This collection houses the letters, diaries, photographs, personal papers, journals, and other documents of individuals, women, or organizations. A single man or organization's collection could consist of one small box or ten-large boxes of materials. A computer-generated list of special collections holdings is available both by accession number and alphabetically by first name.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: SOME NEW ACQUISITIONS, 1991-1994

Act Up New York 91-1
Coverpage: 1987 present
Organizational Papers
All papers, including announcements, flyers, press releases, letters, etc.
Includes original documents on all AIDS actions, the Lesbian Cares, and women and AIDS/HIV, 2-4 boxes.

Banya Weinmann 91-2
Coverage: 1983
Individual Collection
Collection includes books, articles, poetry, covers; social politics; some original manuscripts; subject files material.

E. Hilda Selzsave 93-1
Coverage: 1981-1987
Individual Collection
Includes diaries and manuscripts, scrapbooks, photos, poetry.

Susie J. Sturgis 91-4
Coverage: 1981-1990
Individual Collection
Includes letters (Rayleigh Ross) information on a lesbian feminist and counseling center, science fiction.

Rala Silverstri 91-5
Coverage: 1950s-1980s
Individual Collection
Includes poems, diaries, photos, artwork; 3 boxes.

Sarah Silvan 91-6
Individual Collection
Books of her writings, photos, some clothing (1980s); subject file material.

Committee to Free Sheron Kawasaki 91-1
Coverage: 1986-1990
Organizational Collection
Newspaper coverage, articles, video tapes, radio recordings, correspondence; letters, flyers, framed proclamations, minutes, financial records, reports, and publications; 4 boxes.

NY Gay Community Marching Band (Big Apple Corps) 91-8
Coverage: 1985-1970
Individual Collection
Organizational Collection
Includes posters, photographs, old gay and gay men's groups, 4 boxes.

Mickey Zecora 93-1
Coverage: Life span
Organizational Collection
Personal papers, journals, photos albums, trophies, medals, buttons, and books (integrated into overall LHA collection); 4 boxes.

Sally Gearhart 93-2
Coverage: 1960s-1970s
Organizational Collection
Manuscripts, reports, memoires, old gay and gay men's groups, 4 boxes.

Lyn Davis 93-3
Organizational Collection
Correspondence, memorabilia publications, twenty-Five T-shirts, buttons, posters integrated into Graphics Collection.

Texas Lesbian Conference 93-4
Coverage: 1990-1991
Organizational Collection
Organizing papers from this conference; very well organized and processed.
Includes all correspondence, financial records, flyers, minutes, plans, reports, tapes, 2 boxes.

Deil Williams—Eve's Garden 93-5
Individual Collection
Conference organizing papers from the KCW New York Women's Studies Conference 1979. Papers from the New Feminist Talent Organization and a large screen-printed T-shirt; an organization working to create a lesbian retirement community. Two original print; 10 pages; several posters, a few books, a painting; a 1979 calendar, additional memorabilia; 1 box.

Dorothy I. Mitchellee (Or) 94-1
Individual Collection
Numerous original manuscripts of poetry, fiction, and journal writings. Scrapbooks, photos, lifetime correspondence, a few books, videos, Donor from Kansas City, covers events, multiple themes.

National Lesbian Conference 94-2
Coverage: 1980-1980
Organizational Collection
Conference organizing papers; flyers, minutes, reports, subject file material; 1 box.

Israeli Lesbian Oral History Project 94-4
Coverage: 1990s
Project Collection
An oral history project; approximately 40-50 oral history tapes of Israeli lesbians; 1 box.