

November 11, 1936

Dear Mrs. Beard:

If I had not been out of town and without a secretary and with a crippled right arm you would have had an earlier answer to your letter of November first. It interested me very much. In the first place let me say how glad I am to hear from you personally. I have been long interested in your fine work. I have ~~hoped~~ someday our paths would cross.

Now as to your World Center for Women's Archives. Of course you may put me down as a sponsor if you think my name would be of any service to you. I can see a real piece of work to be done there, though I do not feel so strongly as you and my friend, Inez Irwin, do about the need of it. That, however, is because I have always, as perhaps you have gathered, been obsessed with the idea that the intellectual activities of women should go along with those of men and that special collections such as this belong in great human archives.

However, I know well the difficulties of getting anything of value on women at any period though I do not know that it is any greater than the difficulty I have found in getting material on men whose lives I have tried to study. But that is neither here nor there. If you feel the need of it why it is something to do and I will go along so far as I can.

As to my own papers I do not know that I have anything that would be particularly useful to you. I have what I hope will be the nucleus of a good Lincoln collection but that goes to my old College - Allegheny in Meadville, Pa.

My Standard Oil papers will probably go to the Drake Museum in Titusville, Pennsylvania unless

the conservative gentlemen who run that institution think there may be a little too much dynamite in them.

What I have on women, scattered and unsatisfactory as it is, I would be glad to turn over to you if you carry out your Archives.

Are you planning a library? One thing, if I had had money, I think I should have tried to bring together was a really good library on women so far as they have been preserved in literature. You know what the Boston Public Library has - pretty good - the best collection I know.

Kathleen Norris, the novelist, tells me she has two or three thousand books which she started gathering after a talk we had together once about the need of such a collection. It is possible, if you carry out your plan that Mrs. Norris would feel like turning the collection over to you eventually. If you want to write her you may use my name or I will write her myself after the thing is under way.

I am afraid, dear Mrs. Beard, this is an unsatisfactory letter. I hope one of these days you and I and Mrs. Irwin can have a talk about it.

Very sincerely yours

Mrs. Mary R. Beard
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New York City