



FAQ

Who is sponsoring this project?

This archival project is sponsored by the [Society of Biblical Literature](#), a learned society devoted to the critical investigation of the Bible from a variety of academic disciplines.

What is the purpose of this project?

This archival project is related to the forthcoming publication of SBL Press's *Women and the Society of Biblical Literature* (2019), which marks the 125th year since the first woman, Anna Ely Rhoads, joined the SBL. This volume gathers together more than thirty leading women biblical scholars from around the world to reflect on the accomplishments and challenges that women have encountered in the SBL over the last 125 years. The volume features a lengthy historical overview of women's experiences as a whole in the SBL and autobiographical reflections on the experience of individual women in different subdisciplines, communities, and professional aspects of biblical studies.

Although *Women and the Society of Biblical Literature* is expected to exceed four hundred pages in length and to contain thirty-plus contributions, it is necessarily selective: the volume will give voice to a relatively small number of members—most of whom are recognized leaders in the field. The SBL Women's Archive is designed to supplement the volume, in that it gives every member who identifies as a woman equal opportunity to have a voice heard, not just upon publication of the volume but as a lasting record in the SBL institutional archives.

Is this an ethnographic study?

This project's goals are not those of an ethnographic study: we seek only to give past or present members who self-identify as women the opportunity to submit their own perspectives and reflections on their unique experiences with the SBL. We are collecting stories, not evaluating them or studying the women who submit them or analyzing the SBL or the guild as a whole. We are not conducting fieldwork; we are not compiling a comprehensive report on women in the academy based on these submissions; and we have no overarching research question. We are simply inviting members to reflect on their own experiences. According to the guidelines provided by the [Oral History Association](#), the collection of these types of oral histories, which is not systematic and is not designed to provide "generalizable knowledge," is not subject to the review of the Institution Review Boards (IRB) (for more information, see [here](#)). Researchers who wish to utilize the materials in the archives for such purposes should contact their local IRB office for guidance.

In collecting these stories, we are not that different from a daughter collecting stories about family history from her mother, grandmothers, and great aunts. Nor are we that different from Ernest W. Saunders, who on the eve of the centennial anniversary of the SBL's founding, wrote letters to

individual members inviting them to share their memories of the SBL's early days and any documentation related to it. Many members answered his call; others did not. Participation was then, as it is now, completely voluntary. While we hope that the submitted material, when permission has been granted, will be of use to future scholars who wish to study the roles and experiences of women in the SBL, the primary goal is to preserve the stories of women in the guild so that they may remind us all of the roads we have traveled and guide us in our future directions. A single written volume, such as the forthcoming 2019 volume on [Women and the Society of Biblical Literature](#), can contain only so many contributors. Using [StoryCorps](#) as our model, this archive is our attempt to expand the invitation so that more unique voices can be preserved for posterity.

May I submit more than one piece?

Yes. You are welcome to submit as many pieces as you like.

Do I retain copyright on my piece?

Yes. You and any co-contributors retain full copyright on all submitted material. This means that you can share, distribute, and reuse your contribution in whatever manner you see fit.

Can I post my piece on Academia.edu or my personal website?

Yes. Since you retain full copyright, you may distribute your contribution on Academia.edu, Facebook, Twitter, your personal website, and any other print or online venue of your choosing. We recommend that you include a copyright statement wherever you share your piece and specify how others may or may not use your contribution. [Creative Commons](#) is a helpful resource for considering how you might license your piece.

What can the Society of Biblical Literature do with my piece?

That depends on the permissions you grant SBL. When you submit your piece, you will be asked to complete a form that specifies how you would like SBL to use your piece. The form enables you to choose from among several levels of accessibility and even to specify your own restrictions on what may or may not be done with your piece. For example, you may specify that your submission be listed under your name and “archived, edited, and used by SBL for educational purposes, including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations in perpetuity and throughout the world in any medium now known or later developed, without any obligation to pay royalties to display, edit, duplicate, sell, or distribute the reflection.” Or you may grant SBL permission “to use the reflection for archival purposes only, where it will be electronically housed in the SBL Archives and accessible only to researchers accessing the archives on-site.” Finally, you might add “additional restrictions,” such as that the material may be used for an online exhibition but not in a print publication; or that it may be used in publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations but deny permission to identify it as deriving from you; or that the material may be archived but not made publicly available until a certain date or event (e.g., your retirement or death).

How can others use my piece?

Pieces submitted for archival purposes only will be accessible only to researchers accessing the archives on-site. Those researchers may view and read the material on-site and cite it, but they may not copy or redistribute it. Pieces that are submitted to be archived, edited, and used by SBL

in publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations may be used by SBL only in such fashions. They will not be redistributable without your permission.

What if I share sensitive information? Can that be used against me?

The Society of Biblical Literature acknowledges that rape, harassment, racism, plagiarism, theft of research, and other such events are both real and serious problems within the academy. If a member has suffered one of these abuses as a woman in the Society of Biblical Literature, her reflection might well offer her account of this experience. If your contribution contains such sensitive information and you are concerned with how your piece may be used, we encourage you to specify one of our more restrictive permissions options.

Also keep in mind that, for legal reasons, the archive cannot permit accusations to be made against any individual by name or described in such a manner that he or she can be reasonably identified. We invite all members who identify as women to tell their stories in their own words, even when it reflects negatively on the SBL. Thus we encourage you to reflect candidly on the challenges that women have faced and continue to face as members of SBL, even when those challenges do not present SBL in a positive light. However, all this must be done within the limits of the law, so participants are asked to avoid personal attacks. We respectfully reserve the right to decline pieces that contain personal attacks. If a member submits such a reflection, it will not be accepted.

Rather, we will ask that member to follow the procedures outlined in the Professional Conduct Policy. The SBL is committed to the creation and maintenance of a discrimination- and harassment-free environment in all of its sanctioned activities. The professional conduct of all members who participate in such activities is essential for preserving this standard. SBL is also committed to preventing harassment by or toward its employees and third parties involved in its activities, including contractors, vendors, volunteers, or guests. Any person who desires to report a possible violation of the SBL Professional Conduct Policy should contact the SBL Executive Director, the Chair of SBL Council, or the Professional Conduct Committee Chair. SBL has established [Professional Conduct Investigation Procedures](#) that provide guidelines for gathering information, maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible, reaching an initial determination, allowing for an appeal, and determining disciplinary action. SBL will carefully investigate all complaints according to these guidelines. No individual will be retaliated against for making a complaint or assisting with the investigation of a complaint.

What happens if someone submits a contribution that contains racist, homophobic, or other offensive remarks?

The Society of Biblical Literature promotes the academic study of biblical texts to foster the understanding of religion and to cultivate empathy in our diverse world. We do not tolerate racist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive remarks toward any group. The archive is, of course, moderated and curated by SBL staff and Pitts archive staff. We respectfully reserve the right to decline pieces that contain offensive remarks. If a member submits such a reflection, it will not be accepted.

I do not self-identify as a woman. May I still participate?

Although this specific call is directed toward members who self-identify as women, we welcome contributions to the SBL Archives from all of our members. For more information on how to

submit to the archives outside of this call, please see <https://www.sbl-site.org/aboutus/archive.aspx>. At this time we cannot provide a separate archive for every group of members within the SBL; for now our focus is on observing the 125th anniversary of Anna Ely Rhoads joining the SBL. However, it is our hope to issue invitations for other segments of our membership in the future.

Who can I contact for more information?

Questions can be directed to sblarchives@sbl-site.org. The email will direct your inquiry to the current staff member tasked with curating the project. As this is not an ethnographic study, there is not a single lead researcher. The project is a Society-sponsored initiative that will be judged on its own merits by the membership at large.