

HER-STORY – AAUW AND RACHEL CARSON
By Caroline Pickens

Your members might like to know that AAUW had a role in her writing Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring."

In the mid-50's Rachel Carson was AAUW's Achievement Awardee, which was the highest honor AAUW gave then. It came with a stipend. There was always the story among the AAUW staff and others that AAUW had a hand in the successful printing of that book, but no definite proof. About 6 or so years ago I was at AAUW working through a box that was a mess of archival documents and materials from the office of the retired public relations officer, Mary Boyette. Mary kept **everything**, including bits of paper with phone numbers on them or notes like "Meet Sharon at 3:00." And if one copy was good, 6 or 7 must be great. There were 7 boxes from her office that had been sent to the archives like that, and it took two of us two years to get those 7 boxes into archival shape.

Anyway--that is setting the scene. I groaned when I opened that box and saw what a jumble it was. I decided I would take everything out and try to put similar subjects together. I picked up a 5-page long, beautifully handwritten letter--and at the end I saw it was from Rachel Carson. She was thanking AAUW for the honor and telling us she was using the money for the research she was doing for her next book--which was "Silent Spring." Here was the proof--and we would have missed it if we hadn't decided those boxes had to be cleaned up and organized. I think it was one of the most exciting days in all my AAUW years.

Hope this finds you and the branch in good health and spirits.

Caroline Pickens
AAUW Funds Chair