

Archives Annual

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AYN RAND® ARCHIVES VOL. 2 1999

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Archives Annual is the newsletter of the Ayn Rand Archives, a special department of the Ayn Rand Institute. The newsletter features material relevant to the Ayn Rand Archives, which houses the most comprehensive holding of documents related to the life, work and influence of novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand.

UPDATE—*from preservation to access*

Jeff Britting
Archivist

The Ayn Rand Archives was established in 1995 to preserve and make available the remaining papers of novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand (1905–1982). The Archives' primary holding is the *Ayn Rand Papers*.¹ In addition, the Ayn Rand Archives has acquired a wide range of new material organized as its *Special Collections*. (For a summary of its scope and content, see "[SPECIAL COLLECTIONS—an introduction](#).")

To date, the Ayn Rand Archives has focused on preservation and acquisition. The purpose of this effort is worth repeating:

While Ayn Rand's writings offer unique aesthetic experiences and original views on the nature of knowledge and value, comparatively little work has been directed toward organizing and making available a record of her intellectual development. Until now, her papers and commentaries have been privately held or scattered among various research institutions. The Ayn Rand Archives was established to assist serious archivists and scholars by creating new and comprehensive finding aids, surveying existing collections and otherwise preparing its own holdings for use by academic and general writers.

("The Value of the Ayn Rand Collection," *Archive Annual*, Vol. 1, 1998)

Currently, the Ayn Rand Archives is processing its collections, which means accessioning, describing and storing its holdings. However, processing is not an end in

¹ The *Ayn Rand Papers* includes: signed and unsigned typed and autograph manuscripts, letters, notes, journals, private lecture notes; clipping files; personal, administrative, business and legal correspondence in English, French, Russian, Italian, Danish and Arabic. In addition, the *Ayn Rand Papers* includes approximately 1,200 photographs, 60 hours of taped biographical interviews, 350 hours of radio and television interviews, 50 hours of private courses on fiction and nonfiction writing and transcriptions of some. (Approximately 100 linear feet of shelf space.) Researchers interested in drafts and galleys of Rand's novels may consult the *Ayn Rand Papers* at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. (A microfilm of the *Ayn Rand Papers* at the Library of Congress is now available at the Ayn Rand Archives.)

itself. The end is in making materials *available* to academic and general writers. Availability, or *access*, is defined as the “. . . opportunity, or means of finding, using or approaching documents and/or information.” (*A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Record Managers*, The Society of American Archivists, 1992.) Toward the end of providing access to the holdings, we are taking three steps.²

Step One: *Intellectual Access*

The Ayn Rand Archives preserves the direct and circumstantial evidence of Ayn Rand’s intellectual development: manuscript drafts, oral testimony, correspondence, clipping files and other documents. Since 1995 the staff of the Archives has described more than 300 linear feet of documents in all media. These descriptions are being organized into finding aids, which are essential to creating *intellectual access*. The range of these guides varies from the general to the specific. Conventional registers of papers, on the model of those developed by the Library of Congress, will offer a broad overview. Analytic inventories, similar to those in use at the Getty Research Institute, will provide considerably greater detail. An example of the latter will be the guide to the *Ayn Rand Papers*. This inventory will provide descriptions at the series, box, folder and item levels.

In addition to finding aids, other research/reference works are in preparation. The first of these is an essay on the *genesis* of the *Ayn Rand Papers* forthcoming in *Archives Annual*, Vol. 3 (2000). The essay examines how the papers were accumulated and arranged during Rand’s lifetime, and then deposited after her death. Reference works in the planning stage include an index to the Oral History Program, an integrated guide to papers at the Ayn Rand Archives and the Library of Congress, and documentary editions of the fiction and non-fiction manuscript drafts.

Step Two: *Outreach*

Throughout 1999 the Archives experimented with its first outreach to scholars and the general public through speeches, publications, exhibitions and other educational programs. Here are the highlights:

Archive Annual Vol. 1 (1998), the newsletter of the Ayn Rand Archives, was mailed to 100 university libraries throughout the United States. This newsletter provided summaries of the Archives’ goals and reproduced items from its holdings. Among these latter items were: an unpublished photo of Richard Neutra’s *Von Sternberg House* by photographer Julius Shulman, capturing the second floor reflecting pool; a c. 1926

² The Ayn Rand Archives is temporarily closed to outside researchers. Access policies will be published on the Archives Web site at www.aynrand.org/archives.

pencil drawing on paper by Ayn Rand of her future husband, Frank O'Connor, as he appeared on the set of Cecil B. DeMille's production *The King of Kings*.

Along with the newsletter, university librarians received a cover letter introducing *Archives Annual* as a forum for essays on the collections of the Ayn Rand Archives. (The newsletter is presently available online at no charge.) The letter also offered a reference service via postal and electronic mail. In recent years, the number of new books incorporating primary materials edited for the general reader has steadily increased.³ In turn, these works are creating further awareness of the Ayn Rand Archives and its collections. To date, reference has been provided to journalists, biographers and philosophers, as well as architectural and cultural historians, on a range of documentary and biographical topics.

In the spring of 1999 the Archives published its first monograph through ARI Press, *Russian Writings on Hollywood*. The book anthologizes the 1920s writings of a teenaged Ayn Rand (*née* Alisa Rosenbaum) about the American film industry. Translated into English, with facsimiles of the Russian texts, the book also reproduces her private "movie diary." In this diary Ayn Rand rated hundreds of silent films she attended in Russia, Europe and America. *Russian Writings on Hollywood* and other publications from Ayn Rand Institute Press were on display at the American Library Association (ALA) national meeting held in New Orleans during July of 1999.

In the summer of 1999 the Hoover Presidential Library invited the Ayn Rand Archives to contribute to its exhibition "American Women!" The exhibit featured 110 American women of distinction from Revolutionary times to the present, in such categories as "Government & Law," "Business & Leisure" and "The Arts." Seven items highlighting the writing of *Atlas Shrugged* were on display: a 1947 photograph of Ayn Rand at her desk; three single-page manuscript facsimiles: first notes on *Atlas Shrugged*, an early outline of Galt's Speech, and the final page of Galt's Speech containing his oath. Also on display: a facsimile first edition of *Atlas Shrugged*, featuring the first book and jacket design, and Ayn Rand's pen and ink set.

In the fall of 1999 the Ayn Rand Archives cooperated with the Library of Congress by funding the preservation microfilming of the *Ayn Rand Papers*. These papers comprise the holographs, typescripts and galley proofs of Rand's novella, *Anthem*, and three novels: *We the Living*, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. More than

³ *Letters of Ayn Rand* (Dutton, 1995), *Journals of Ayn Rand* (Dutton, 1997), *Ayn Rand's Marginalia* (Second Renaissance Books, 1998), *Russian Writings on Hollywood* (ARI Press, 1999) and *The Art of Fiction* (Plume, 2000).

17,000 manuscript pages were converted into microfilm, thus replacing crumbling manuscripts with a microform having a normal lifespan of five hundred years.

Finally, on December 11, 1999, the Ayn Rand Archives presented its first programming open to the general public: a combined lecture/screening to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warner Bros. film adaptation of *The Fountainhead*. The event's location—the Lloyd E. Ziegler Theatre at the Egyptian in Hollywood, California—was part of Ayn Rand's own Hollywood history: she attended silent films at the Egyptian Theatre, as we've learned from her "movie diary." The opening remarks and concluding lecture by archivist Jeff Britting traced Rand's experiences in Hollywood during the production of the film. The lecture's theme was Hollywood and creative integrity. Original *Fountainhead* film posters and memorabilia from the Archives were displayed in the theatre's poster cases and lobby. A print of the film was provided courtesy of Warner Classics. Also screened at the event was *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* (Strand Releasing, 1998), an Oscar-nominated documentary based upon materials in the Archives collections.

Step 3: *Physical Access*

The final step in making the Archives collections available to scholars involves creating physical access to its material holdings. That means establishing a research room, a photo-duplication service and a greatly expanded reference staff. Plans for a study center are in the development stage. Updates on the progress of this project and its opening date will appear in the *Archives Annual* and on the Archives Web site.

In sum, 1999 was a dynamic year for the Ayn Rand Archives: from preservation and arrangement to creating paths to access and, beyond this, planning new programs. Whether looking towards the future—or developing, in the present, a Web site and an electronic *Archives Annual*—the Ayn Rand Archives is committed to creating public awareness and access to its holdings on a worldwide scale. ■

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS—*an introduction*

Jeff Britting
Archivist

The Ayn Rand Archives preserves documents that comprise the evidence of Ayn Rand’s work and influence. This includes not only documents within the *Ayn Rand Papers*, but other documents as well. These other documents are acquisitions comprising the *Special Collections*: newly discovered manuscripts by Ayn Rand and others, letters, essays, oral histories, clippings and audiovisual materials.

The *Special Collections* contains primary and secondary documents related to the life and development of Ayn Rand, including information about individuals and organizations with which she had a significant connection. The collections consist of: audio and audiovisual materials, monographs, paper documents, photographs and some serials that span the years c.1920s to date. The collection contains writings translated into Afrikaans, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Hebrew, Italian, Marathi, Polish, Russian, French, Norwegian, German, Spanish, Swedish and Urdu. The *Special Collections* is currently measured in linear feet of shelf space occupied. As presently arranged, these are:

Category	Linear feet
Paper documents	73
Photographs	6
Audio (including Oral History, Leonard Peikoff Show, Objectivist Graduate Center collections)	116
Audiovisual	19
Total	214

During the 1990s, researchers at the Archives took advantage of two historic opportunities to gather more information about Ayn Rand’s life in Russia and America. The first opportunity was the opening of Russian archives to Western researchers, following the collapse of the USSR. The second was the locating of individuals with memories of Ayn Rand’s earliest years. The result was a wealth of new information gained from Russian documents discovered on obscure library shelves, and oral histories conducted with hitherto-unknown relatives and associates.

Acquisitions from Russian archives, which include civil and scholastic records, throw light on Alisa Rosenbaum’s home life and academic experience. There are also extensive interviews and summaries of conversations with her sister, the late

Eleanora Drobshcheva (1910–1999). These documents and testimonies provide evidence of Ayn Rand’s early interests (and possible influences) in literature, philosophy, education and art.

However, new information is not restricted to the Russian period. Documents and testimony regarding Ayn Rand’s life and professional development in Hollywood, from the ’20s to the ’40s, have been acquired as well. Literary discoveries from the 1930s include rare personal correspondence and previously unknown writings for motion pictures.

By far the largest acquisition—itsself a source of further investigations—is the Archives Oral History Program. The program has interviewed 170 individuals and has captured 276 hours of audio on tape. The topics cover every known phase of Ayn Rand’s life. These testimonies range from brief statements to interviews exceeding fifty hours in length. Full transcriptions of these interviews are nearing completion. An anthology of selections is currently being edited for publication.

In addition to primary documents, secondary literature has become a recent acquisition focus. This includes standard and little-known bibliographic items and other documents. Among these are monographs, articles and online material in a growing number of languages. The Archives also maintains an extensive clipping and picture file from 1982 to the present.

In developing the *Special Collections* over five years, numerous archivists, librarians, researchers, oral historians and translators in the United States and Russia have made significant contributions. The following individuals have played especially important roles:

Scott McConnell, researcher and oral historian, is responsible for the development of this holding, including his management of American and Russian research and acquisitions. Dina Garmong, doctoral candidate in philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, and native speaker of Russian, has uncovered illuminating details in her study and summary of the Rosenbaum family correspondence. Michael S. Berliner, during his tenure as executive director of the Ayn Rand Institute, encouraged the development of the basic archives program. His initial inventory of the estate materials provided clues that eventually led to substantial acquisitions. Simon Federman, archive assistant, has been thorough and conscientious in physically arranging these materials.

Apart from specialists associated with the Ayn Rand Archives, other institutions and collections have proven especially valuable: University of Southern California, Columbia University, the New York Public Library, the Margaret Herrick Library (Center for Motion Picture Study) and Brigham Young University. These institutions and their personnel have offered gifts of experience and time.

In addition, there is a growing number of donors and friends of the Archives—individuals who have shared rare clippings or entire libraries of materials. A more formal acknowledgement will be made in the 2000 edition of *Archives Annual*. Through the combined efforts of the above individuals, a growing body of information enriches the *Special Collections*. It has helped to create the definitive Ayn Rand-theme collection. ■

DOCUMENTS—*from the collections of the Ayn Rand Archives*

The *Documents* section features primary and secondary materials from the Ayn Rand Archives holdings.

The following items first appeared in “From the Archives,” a special section of the Ayn Rand Institute newsletter *IMPACT*. These short articles were written to acquaint the Institute’s donors with the Archives’ programs and collections. Since information of historic interest is scattered throughout, they are presented here for the benefit of a wider audience.

IMPACT: From the Archives, 1995–1999

NEW AYN RAND WORK DISCOVERED IN RUSSIA
July 1995 Vol. 1, No. 3

Sitting on the shelf of the St. Petersburg, Russia, public library for almost seventy years has been *Hollywood: American Movie-City* by A. Rosenbaum (Ayn Rand’s given name was Alisa Rosenbaum). The 43-page volume is a collection of essays written by Ayn Rand before she left Russia, and was printed without her permission in St. Petersburg in 1926.

The recent discovery of the work resulted from a clue found in a letter written to Ayn Rand by her family after she left Russia. The translation of this letter was part of ARI’s new Ayn Rand Archives project—an effort to organize, catalog, store and preserve all of Ayn Rand’s papers, and to eventually establish a library which will be available to scholars for research. ■

—*Michael S. Berliner*

NOVELIST FRANK SPEARMAN
January 1996 Vol. 2, No. 1

A number of novels by turn-of-the-century author Frank Spearman were found among Ayn Rand’s effects, along with a 1949 letter Ayn Rand wrote to her publisher in an attempt to locate copies of his novels. Some of his nineteen titles: *The Daughter of a Magnate*, *Whispering Smith* (made into a successful

movie starring Alan Ladd in 1947) and *Held for Orders* (which Ayn Rand wanted “very much to get”). Spearman’s novels are written in the spirit of *Calumet K* (Ayn Rand’s favorite novel) and would be foreign to today’s literary establishment: their heroes are railroad men, who are glorified for their competence and integrity. The novels are benevolently and distinctly American—in its original meaning, which is virtually lost today. ■

—Scott McConnell

AYN RAND’S FIRST PUBLISHED WORK FOUND

March 1996 Vol. 2, No. 3

“‘Movie Star.’ Had a dictionary of film terminology existed, this term would have approximately the following definition: ‘A beauty with flawless taste in clothing, who is light, tender, attractive.’ Francesca Bertini is a beauty contest winner; Pola Negri is unattractive. Gloria Swanson dazzles one with the sparkle and originality of her clothes. Pola Negri has no taste in clothes. Mary Pickford conquers hearts with childlike sweetness, simplicity, naivete. Pola Negri is a gloomy, cutting, cruel woman.”

Is this the beginning of an attack on Pola Negri? Not when the author is Ayn Rand—even a 20-year-old Ayn Rand.

These are Ayn Rand’s first published words. She wrote them in 1925 as the opening of a 2,500-word monograph about silent film actress Pola Negri. The monograph predates *Hollywood: American Movie City*, the volume described in the July 1995 issue of *IMPACT*. In contrast to that volume, “Pola Negri” was published—in Leningrad and Moscow—with Ayn Rand’s knowledge and permission.

“Pola Negri” has been housed in the Ayn Rand Archives, along with three other monographs in a series on American actors. However, we did not know that one of them had been written by Ayn Rand, since the monographs do not carry bylines. We have just learned that she discussed this very writing project in her 1969 nonfiction-writing course, which is currently being transcribed. The published version of “Pola Negri” was her revision of an earlier draft, which was criticized by the editor for its “uncolorful” writing style.

The Polish-born Negri was a superstar in Europe and America and one of the most controversial personalities of the silent film era. When Ayn Rand wrote

the monograph, Negri was her favorite actress, but Miss Rand's later list of movie favorites shows Negri in second place to Greta Garbo.

"Pola Negri" is a biography of the actress, with emphasis on her career. Topics identified by section headlines include: "Beginning of Her Career," "Her Marriage," "Pola Negri in Germany," "The Type of Character She Portrays," "Pola Negri in America," "The Struggle to Be #1," "Pola Negri's Partners," and "Pola Negri Speaks About the Movies."

[Objectivist Graduate Center student Dina Garmong is preparing a full translation of "Pola Negri."] ■

—*Michael S. Berliner*

AYN RAND ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM BEGINS **August 1996 Vol. 2, No. 8**

In April ARI began interviewing relatives and associates of Ayn Rand and Frank O'Connor. Ayn Rand Archives researcher Scott McConnell has interviewed seventeen people to date, including Rand's 1946 secretary, a 1930 next-door neighbor who was the inspiration for Peter Keating and for *The Fountainhead*, and five of her Chicago relatives.

Two of the relatives, Morton Portnoy and Fern G. Brown, a successful writer of children's books, first met Ayn Rand in 1926, just after Rand arrived in America, and was living with her Chicago relatives for six months. Two of Frank O'Connor's nieces, Marna ("Docky") and Connie Papurt, have also been interviewed.

The interviewees, Mr. McConnell reports, have been very cooperative and informative. "They provided extensive information on Ayn Rand's and Frank O'Connor's family trees and family histories. The interviewees' anecdotes range from the amusing, such as stories about Miss Rand training her cats, to the heartwarming, particularly about the love between Ayn Rand and Frank O'Connor, to the historically important, such as insights into Miss Rand's writing techniques."

Material from the Ayn Rand Oral History Program will be released in future books, lectures and ARI publications. ■

—*Scott McConnell*

AN ORAL HISTORY PROFILE**February 1997 Vol. 3, No. 2**

On November 5 Ayn Rand Archive researcher Scott McConnell interviewed June Kurisu as part of the Ayn Rand Oral History Program.

When Ayn Rand and Frank O'Connor lived at their San Fernando Valley, California, ranch in the 1940s, Miss Rand employed June Kurisu (then June Kato) as her secretary from 1947 to 1949. Miss Kato got the weekend secretarial job through her parents, who lived and worked on the ranch as the O'Connor's cook and ranch hand. A fourth member of the Kato family was 10-year-old Kenny, whom Miss Rand described as "my old scientific friend," and for whom she saved foreign stamps. First-generation Japanese-Americans, the Kato family had spent one year in an American internment camp during the war, before working for the O'Connors. Mrs. Kurisu's primary work for Ayn Rand was typing the *Atlas Shrugged* manuscript. When the novel was published, Ayn Rand sent a copy, with a dedication, to Mrs. Kurisu and her husband, George.

As part of our oral history program, ARI had been searching for Mrs. Kurisu, but with no luck. The only leads we had were Miss Rand's copy of the above dedication and photographer Julius Shulman's recollection that the woman in one of his famous photos of the O'Connor's Richard Neutra-designed house was Miss Rand's secretary. However, last November, a notice in the *Los Angeles Times* for our screening of the film *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* was seen by Mrs. Kurisu's son, who prompted his mother to contact ARI. They were invited to the premiere as ARI's special guests. Mrs. Kurisu was introduced to those who attended Scott McConnell's tour of the studio lot where Ayn Rand worked, and later to Leonard Peikoff, who talked to her about the O'Connor's California days. After the premiere, June Kurisu wrote ARI the following:

"I'll long remember the evening of November 2 as one of the pleasures of my life. I have been walking around with such a glow that I almost feel like standing in front of our shopping center and telling all who exit about my tiny bit of fame." ■

—Scott McConnell

PATRICIA NEAL**November 1997 Vol. 3, No. 11**

Patricia Neal, who played Dominique in the 1949 production of *The Fountainhead*, was recently interviewed by Scott McConnell, ARI's archives researcher. Mr. McConnell reports that Miss Neal was very lively, witty and informative during their 90-minute phone interview about her work on the movie. In one unrecorded introductory comment, Miss Neal referred to Ayn Rand as "that lovely lady."

In the interview, Miss Neal explained how she got the much-coveted role of Dominique—at age 22—after Greta Garbo, Miss Rand's first choice for the role, didn't take the part. Miss Neal discussed the shooting of key scenes in the movie, such as the first quarry scene, the scene with Roark, Dominique and Wynand under the tree on Wynand's estate, and the "rape" scene. Miss Rand's striking face, her friendly manner on the set, her skill as a writer and her loathing for Stalin-apologist Lillian Hellman, were also topics discussed during the interview.

Miss Neal said that she enjoyed very much working on *The Fountainhead* with Robert Douglas (Toohey) and Gary Cooper. She spoke very fondly of Mr. Cooper and of how much he loved the role of Roark. She noted that Mr. Cooper was "his own man," and had a lot of Howard Roark in him. He also seemed to get on very well with Miss Rand.

Miss Neal, who won an Academy Award for best actress in 1963 for her performance in *Hud*, still receives many fan letters. One quarter of them mention *The Fountainhead*. ■

—Scott McConnell

NIGHT OF JANUARY 16TH FIND**December 1997 Vol. 3, No. 12**

Photocopies of notes to producers about the 1936 Broadway production of *Night of January 16th* were recently donated to the Ayn Rand Archives by Shoshana Milgram [professor of English at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University]. Professor Milgram, who has worked on various archives projects for ARI, uncovered the notes during a recent visit to the British Library in London. The notes were written by Nathaniel Reeid, who was foisted on Miss Rand as a co-writer by Al Woods, the play's Broadway producer.

The eleven pages of Reeid’s notes include the following:

- Advice on getting publicity for the play, which highly recommended paying the jurors \$1.50, the play’s admission price.
- Advice to have “certain noted people” (i.e., VIPs) on the jury. According to the notes, on opening night in London there were “many Lords and Ladies in the jury box.”
- A sketch of the set design and notes on the jury box and prisoner’s cage.
- A list of names of famous jurors, including Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth and Helen Keller. On one occasion, four U.S. Congressmen were on the jury.
- An anecdote about Al Woods (whom Miss Rand loathed) being so convinced of Karen Andre’s guilt and so vexed by the many innocent verdicts that during one performance he had himself made a juror, determined to swing the verdict to guilty. He failed.
- A reviewer’s reference to famous composer and showman George M. Cohan, who had seen a New York City performance of the play and had told the reviewer that “*Night of January 16th* had alternatively chilled and fired his blood with the drama’s agues and fevers, more than any other masterpiece that has come within his experience.” ■

—Scott McConnell

AYN RAND’S SISTER, NORA, DIES **October 1999 Vol. 5, No. 10**

Eleanora [Nora] Drobyshev, Ayn Rand’s youngest sister, died March 15, 1999. Ayn Rand Institute researchers were in contact with Nora for a number of years, speaking to her last on March 8 and, recently, with the heirs of her estate.

During Ayn Rand’s early years in Russia, Nora was her favorite relative, sharing a passion for the movies, the West and the sense of life they represented. Miss Rand stayed in frequent contact with her family, including Nora, with more than [900] letters exchanged, and waged a tireless campaign from 1926 to 1937 to bring her family to America. The correspondence ended abruptly in early 1937 when Miss Rand saw a post office notice warning

Americans that letters to Russia would put recipients at risk due to the Stalinist terror.

After World War II, Ayn Rand gained news [of her family through third parties and] learned that her parents had died. In 1973, after a 35-year silence, Ayn Rand received a letter from Nora. After a short correspondence, Miss Rand invited Nora and her husband to America.

They soon arrived but Nora's sense of life had totally changed from what it had been in her youth. She rejected America and chose voluntarily to return to the USSR—to Miss Rand's bitter disappointment.

In 1995 ARI hired Russian researchers who contacted Mrs. Drobyshev in St. Petersburg and interviewed her. In three later interviews arranged by Scott McConnell, Nora was able to answer many questions about Ayn Rand's early life for the Ayn Rand Archives.

Nora destroyed all of her own personal papers prior to her death, and her estate has been inherited by a family member in Russia who knows nothing of Ayn Rand.

Transcripts of the interviews with Nora are now in the Ayn Rand Archives, and are a fascinating part of ARI's effort to secure for future generations a comprehensive record of Ayn Rand's life. ■

—Larry Salzman

LEO KOVALENSKY **November 1999 Vol. 5, No. 11**

“He was tall; his collar was raised; a cap was pulled over his eyes. His mouth, calm, severe, contemptuous, was that of an ancient chieftain who could order men to die, and his eyes were such that could watch it.” Such was Kira's description of Leo Kovalensky in Ayn Rand's *We the Living*.

Giving greater force to Ayn Rand's statement that *We the Living* “is as near to an autobiography as I will ever write,” ARI has mined numerous details of that book and uncovered striking similarities to true details of Ayn Rand's early life. The latest discovery is the real identity and history of the man who inspired the character of Leo Kovalensky. His name was Lev Bekkerman.

Ayn Rand's earliest known letter written in America was to Mr. Bekkerman in 1926. In part she wrote, “Regarding your coming to Chicago, I will meet you at the train station, even if you arrive in 1947; even if I am by then the greatest

star in Hollywood.” According to Archive records, the final question Nora was asked by Ayn Rand during a 1973 phone conversation was “What became of [Liolia B.]?”

[Scott McConnell traced Mr. Bekkerman] after he noticed a reference to an address in a collection of translated Russian letters to Ayn Rand. From this, ARI’s Russian researchers discovered details about him in Soviet housing records. The information there enabled us to track down his student records.

Born in 1901, he was not a party or union member but made his living doing translation and technical work; he was a medic during the Russian civil war. Mr. Bekkerman was arrested with a large group of students and professors for political offenses in 1924, but was freed when a search of his apartment turned up nothing incriminating. It appears that, as in *We the Living*, he was treated for tuberculosis in the Crimea. [The KGB executed him in 1937.]

In a letter to Ayn Rand in 1934, her cousin Nina reported that Mr. Bekkerman had told her that he “admired Ayn, says she’s the only person he knows who is so goal-directed, who strove unswervingly on the path she had chosen for herself and achieved everything she set out to achieve.”

—Larry Salzman

AUGMENTING THE AYN RAND ARCHIVES **November 1999 Vol. 5, No. 11**

The Ayn Rand Archives was officially established in 1995 as the repository of Ayn Rand’s papers and memorabilia. The collection has since been expanded due to the efforts of Scott McConnell and Michael Berliner. Below is a selection of the items that have been recently added to the Archive:

- Ayn Rand’s academic records including: transcripts from her secondary schooling in the Crimea, transcripts from the University of Petrograd and student records from the State Institute of Cinematography (which she attended after graduating from the University of Petrograd).
- Photos of Ayn Rand’s homes in Russia and America, theaters she frequented, and key places described by her in *We the Living*.
- Immigration papers and other legal documents, including literary contracts.

- Copies of previously unknown Ayn Rand articles written in Russia in the early '20s: “Pola Negri” and *Hollywood: American Movie City* [translated and published by ARI Press in 1999 as *Ayn Rand’s Russian Writings on Hollywood*].
- Photo and information on “Leo Kovalensky.” [See above.]
- Scripts, treatments and synopses of screenplays, written by Ayn Rand in Hollywood during the '20s, '30s and '40s.
- Interviews and photos of Ayn Rand’s family and friends.
- Letters to and from family members and friends from the '20s through the '70s.
- Dozens of Ayn Rand’s interviews and radio appearances—many never commercially available and some previously lost.
- Details on many people and places mentioned casually by Ayn Rand during interviews or in letters. For instance, details on the artist whom Ayn Rand enormously admired, who taught her to draw. (See “Art and Cognition” in her book *The Romantic Manifesto*.)

The Ayn Rand Archives’ first priority for these and many other recently discovered items is long-term preservation. These materials will eventually be made available to serious scholars. ■

—Larry Salzman

ORAL HISTORY OF AYN RAND **December 1999 Vol. 5, No. 12**

Ayn Rand Archives researcher Scott McConnell is now conducting the final interviews for ARI’s oral history project. Transcriptions of the interviews will become part of the Ayn Rand Archives, and are being considered for future publication.

The more than 300 hours of interviews with 130 individuals will provide future scholars and fans with a wealth of information—not about Ayn Rand’s philosophy—but about her business and personal life.

Many people who had never been interviewed, such as anti-communists who

were her allies during the 1940s and coworkers during Miss Rand's early years in Hollywood, offered new anecdotes about Miss Rand and their work together. Friends, fans, secretaries and her long-time cook have provided a portrait of Ayn Rand at work, at leisure, in informal discussion, responding to current events or personal matters. Her literary agent, doctors and professional associates have also related many unpublished stories about their experiences with Ayn Rand.

Oral history research has also led to donations of numerous important letters, recordings and photographs related to [Ayn Rand].

McConnell will deliver a lecture on some of the material at Second Renaissance Conferences this June. ■

—Larry Salzman

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