Mary W. Lauman was born circa 1915 and grew up in the city of Ithaca, New York. Her father, George N. Lauman, taught rural sociology at Cornell University for many years, and with many other relatives associated with the University, Mary naturally followed when she came of age, entering with the class of 1937.

During the Second World War, Mary enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving from March 1944 through December 1945. A hard worker, she earned the title of company "Honor Girl" during boot camp at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and during ten months of service, she worked for the Army Personnel Department in Arlington, Va. Maze, as she was known to her close friends and family, appears to have been a caring, fun-loving young woman, always willing to lend a hand or join a game of bridge. After the war, she married John Progue Wheeler. She died in 2003.
Scope of collection

The Lauman collection contains twenty-three letters written by Mary W. Lauman to her mother Frances, while serving in the Marine Corps. The letters range in date from March to September 1944, and from October to December 1945. The collection also contains a single letter written by Mary’s cousin, Hilda Berry, to Frances Lauman.

The early letters in the collection (March-May 1944) detail Mary’s basic training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the later letters (June 1944-December 1945) discuss her daily life as a woman Marine working at the U.S. Army Personnel Department in Arlington, Virginia. The former group of letters offers insight into how women marines were expected to behave and interact with male Marines while on base, while the second group describes the actions and behavior of women serving in a less restrictive office environment. Throughout her letters, Mary refers to various, traditional roles of women in the 1940s: hostess, date, girlfriend, and even mother. Taken as a whole, her letters offer an interesting first-hand glimpse into the world of women serving in the military during World War II.

Collection inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter and Date</th>
<th>Box and Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berry, Hilda T.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Apr 5</td>
<td>Box 1: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Mar 23</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Mar 27</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Mar 27</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Apr 12</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Apr 16</td>
<td>Box 1: 6</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 Apr 23</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 May 11</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 May 25</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances 1944 June 5</td>
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<td>Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances</td>
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Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1944 Sept 30  Box 1: 17
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Oct 18  Box 1: 18
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Oct 25  Box 1: 19
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Nov 2  Box 1: 20
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Nov 9  Box 1: 21
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Nov 23  Box 1: 22
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Dec 3  Box 1: 23
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances  
1945 Dec 3  Box 1: 24

Administrative information

**Access**
The collection is open for research.

**Provenance**
Donated by Robert S. Cox in December 2007.

**Processing Information**
Processed by Rachael Avery, February 2008.

**Related Material**
For other personal accounts of service during World War II in the Special Collections and University Archives, see:

- William Manchester Papers (MS 433)
- Wayne G. Sharpe Papers (MS 462)
- G. Clifford Stamper Papers (MS 463)
- Robert and Waldemar Schultze Papers (MS 528)

**Language:**
English
Search terms

Subjects
- Camp Lejeune (N.C.)
- Women marines.
- World War, 1939-1945--Women.

Genre terms
- Letters (Correspondence).

Names
- Lauman, Mary W.

Link to similar SCUA collections
- Women
- World War II

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154 Hicks Way: Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275: Ph. 413-545-2780