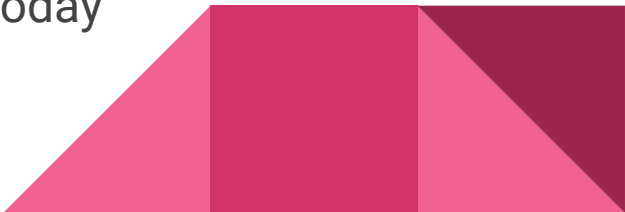


Edith Rickert-- The Mysterious Codebreaker

By: Ankita Khatri

Biography

- ❖ Edith Rickert (1871-1938) was a misrepresented but influential woman who is most well-known for her work in Medieval Literature
 - Chaucer-Life Records, and rewrite of the Text of Canterbury Tales
 - ❖ Born in Dover, Ohio, and graduated from Vassar College in 1891 with an A.B.
 - ❖ Went on to earn a Phd in English from the University of Chicago
 - ❖ Conflicting records of the exact timeline of her professional career after her education
 - ❖ I have conducted in-depth research to create a definitive timeline of her work throughout her lifetime, and its effects on the world today
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Brief Timeline

- ❖ Rickert traveled Europe for 9 years post graduation
 - Worked on a lot of short stories, novels, and studied Medieval literature
- ❖ Came back and worked in Boston as a magazine writer
- ❖ Eventually recruited by Professor John Manly to join the MI-8 during WWI
- ❖ Returned to the University of Chicago with Manly post WWI to work on Canterbury Tales and Chaucer
 - Remained at the University until she passed away



University of Chicago

- ❖ Rickert spent the majority of her professional life at the University of Chicago working on modernist and medieval literature with Manly
 - Advised and lead students in their studies as well, served as a professor on and off throughout the years
- ❖ Was most well known for her work here because her name is linked to Manly's, and there is, to this day, much speculation about the nature of her lengthy relationship with him



MI-8 and the American Black Chamber

- ❖ Rickert was recruited to be a Cryptographer for the MI-8 during World War I because of her modernist textual skills and experience
 - Her work here was important but overlooked
- ❖ In the Black Chamber, Yardley says that cryptographers have a certain way of thinking which makes them successful-- these people were called cipher-brains. He said that amongst the thousands that worked for MI-8, there were only a dozen or so cipher-brains, including Manly and Rickert.
- ❖ Rickert was mainly responsible for the arrest and prosecution of one of the most famous of the German spies of the first world war, Pablo Waberski, with her use of the Zimmerman cipher

Conclusion

- ❖ Black Chamber was supposed to be dismantled by the end of the war, but it wasn't
- ❖ Morphed from organization to organization, and eventually became into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and National Security Alliance (NSA)
 - Rickert is one of the main cryptographers responsible for the success of the MI-8 and its ability to become these organizations
- ❖ Rickert was an intelligent literaturist and cryptographer
 - Did all her work by hand, with her own brain power, no technology or computers
 - Changed wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_Rickert

