

Valley Women's History Collaborative Records

1971-2008

15 boxes (10 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 531

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During the early phases of second wave feminism (1968-1978), the Pioneer Valley served as a center for lesbian and feminist activity in western Massachusetts, and was home to over 400 hundred, often ad hoc, groups, such as the Abortion and Birth Control (ABC) Committee, ISIS Women's Center, the Mudpie Childcare Cooperative, and the Springfield Women's Center. The records of the Valley Women's History Collaborative document the activities of these groups as well as the efforts of the founders of the Women Studies program and department at UMass Amherst to preserve this history.

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[LGBT](#)[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)[Oral history](#)[Women and feminism](#)

Background on Valley Women's History Collaborative

The Valley Women's History Collaborate (VWHC) was formed in 1998 by Susan Tracy, Joyce Berkman, and Kaymarion Raymond in order to preserve contemporary local women's history through a collaboration among those who participated in the history and those who had the resources to document it. The Pioneer Valley has served as a center for lesbian and feminist activity in western Massachusetts, with over 400, often ad hoc, groups known to exist from 1968 to 1978, many continuing onwards with new groups ever forming.

The focus of the Collaborative is the history of feminist, lesbian, and progressive people's efforts to promote female equality and social justice as well as the freedom to express a variety of gender and sexual orientations. The VWHC seeks to document the period from 1968 to the present in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties. With the passage of time, there is an increased urgency to preserve the early history of the women's movement in this region. The VWHC hopes to capture this history before there is a significant loss of these memories as members of the community begin to age and die, relocate to other parts of the country taking their knowledge and stories with them, or discard documents of value to researchers and activists.

In 1999 an oral history project was established at the Collaborative through grants from the MacArthur Foundation awarded by Hampshire College and from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. In recent years, the focus of the Collaborative has steadily shifted from collecting physical documents to actively pursuing oral history interviews of feminists. While there are various projects underway, the collection currently includes oral histories of women who provided abortion counseling pre-Roe vs. Wade, lesbian musicians and DJ's, pioneering therapists, several politicians, a rural lesbian "matriarch," and members of the Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League, a lesbian softball league. With the help of historian David Cline, the group has collected and transcribed 23 interviews with the women and men involved in reproduction rights activism from 1960-1990s.

Scope of collection

The collection of the Valley Women's History Collaborative (VWHC) contains the group's organizational papers, including materials relating to events organized or sponsored by the VWHC, as well as the records of the Abortion and Birth Control (ABC) Committee, ISIS Women's Center, the Mudpie Childcare Cooperative, the Springfield Women's Center, Springfield Women's Union, and the Valley Women's Union. Also present are the personal papers of VWHC organizer Susan Tracy and of Collaborative participants: Alice Dembner, Robin Dizard, and Lorna Peterson. The collection contains, too, background information on feminist theory, socialist feminism and women's health issues.

In addition, the collection offers brochures on women's health issues and newspaper clippings from the *Amherst Bulletin* and the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, and full issues of the *Valley Women's Voice*. The 23 oral histories are preserved as audio

recordings with both full transcripts and edited versions. Oral history interviewees include: members of the Amherst Women's Liberation Movement and Abortion and Birth Control Group, Jean Baxter, Merry Boone, Robin Dizard, Rev. Franklin A. Dorman, Ruth Fessenden, Lorraine Florio, Elaine Fraser, Dr. Robert Gage, Dr. Merritt F. Garland, Rev. Samuel Johnson, Rabbi Yechiael Lander, Leslie Tarr Laurie, Meridith Michaels, Elizabeth Myer, Lawrence Siddall, Springfield Women's Health Collective, Ellen Story, Sam Topal, Susan Tracy, Rev. Richard Unsworth, Carol Wall, Dr. Jane Zapka D.S.

Finally, the records of the Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League, a women's modified fast-pitch softball league based in Northampton, Massachusetts, are also part of this collection. Formed in 1976 to provide lesbians and their friends a feminist sports center for social activity in the Pioneer Valley, the league's primary goal is simply to offer women a chance to enjoy the game. The league's founders, Jean Grossholtz, Eileen Stewart, Susan Tracy, and Maryann Jennings, initially fielded six teams: Common Woman, Hot Flashes, Woman Rising, No Nukes of the North, and a team from College Church and from Hatfield. Under Mary Vazquez's organizing efforts and skills, the league grew from six teams to sixteen at its height. Each team has its own personality, level of competitiveness, variety of sexualities, and unique history, but all have the common goal of having fun on the field while improving softball skills and playing fair.

Collection inventory

Oral histories	1999-2004	4 boxes
Abramson, Doris: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2001	Box 1
Abramson, Doris and Johnson, Dorothy: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2001	Box 1
Adams, Maurianne: Interview by Gigl, Erik: transcript	2001	Box 1
Amherst Birth Control: Interview by Tracy, Susan: transcript	1999	Box 1
Amherst Women's Liberation: Interview by Tracy, Susan: transcript	1999-2001	Box 1
Amherst Women's Liberation: Interview by Fonsh, Judi and Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 1
Avakian, Arlene: Interview by Cutler, Amy: transcript	2001	Box 1
Baxter, Jean: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 1
Berkman, Joyce: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2000	Box 1
Boone, Merry: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 1
Brown, Joanna: Interview by Thorton, Mike: transcript	1999	Box 2
Crosson, Pat: Interview by Peters, Catherine: transcript	2002	Box 2

Culley, Margo: Interview by Mohan, Jen: transcript	2002	Box 2
Demmin, Julia: Interview by Mitchell, Betty: transcript	2002	Box 2
Diamond, Arlyn: Interview by Berkman, Joyce: transcript	2004	Box 2
Dizard, Robin: Interview by Smith, Marilyn: transcript	2001	Box 2
Dizard, Robin: Interview by Cline, David, Marilyn: transcript	2004	Box 2
Dorman, Franklin: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 2
Dykewomon, Elana: Interview by Hope, Tryna: transcript	2001	Box 2
Edwards, Lee: Interview by Whitehouse, Suzanne Judson: interview	2000	Box 2
Ferguson, Ann: Interview by Berkman, Joyce: transcript	2004	Box 2
Fessenden, Ruth: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2002	Box 2
Florio, Lorraine: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 2
Ford, Mary: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 2
Fraser, Elaine: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	1999	Box 2
Fraser, Elaine: Interview by Fonsh, Judi: transcript	1999	Box 2
Gage, Robert: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2002	Box 2
Garland, Merritt F.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 2
Gorman, Cleo: Interview by Hope, Tryna: transcript	1999	Box 3
Green, Pat: Interview by Fonsh, Judi: transcript	2000	Box 3
Green Pat and Jones, Jeannie: Interview by Fonsh, Judi: transcript	2000	Box 3
Heath, Mary: Interview by Pasternak, Stephanie: transcript	2000	Box 3
Johnson, Samuel M.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 3
Lander, Yechiael, Rabbi: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 3
Laurie, Leslie Tarr: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2002	Box 3
Laurie, Leslie Tarr: Interview by Woll, Kris: transcript	2002	Box 3
Lewis, Patricia Lee: Interview by Berkman, Joyce and Tracy, Susan: transcript	2004	Box 3
Lillydahl, Sandy: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2001	Box 3
Lowenstein, Susan: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 3
McCord, Ann: Interview by Raymond, Kaymarion: transcript	1999	Box 3
Melcher, Dale: Interview by Cutler, Amy and Haley, Sandra: transcript	2000	Box 3

Michaels, Meredith W.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2000	Box 3
Myer, Elizabeth: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2002	Box 3
Nettler, Lydia: Interview by Tager, Gina: transcript	2000	Box 3
O'Brien, Judy: Interview by O'Hara, Meghan: transcript	2000	Box 3
Page, Anita: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2001	Box 3
Power, Bet: Interview by Hope, Tryna: transcript	1999	Box 3
Pritchard, Marietta and Crowe, Frances: Interview by Fonsh, Judi: transcript	2000	Box 4
Raymond, Kaymarion: Interview by Kaplowitt, Beth: transcript	1999	Box 4
Rosel, Deliah: Interview by Raymond, Kaymarion: transcript	2000	Box 4
Rossi, Alice: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 4
Siddall, Lawrence, Dr.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 4
Stewart, Eileen: Interview by Tracy, Susan: transcript	1999	Box 4
Stewart, Eileen: Interview by Tracy, Susan: transcript	2000	Box 4
Story, Ellen: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 4
Topel, sam, Dr.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2004	Box 4
Tracy, Susan: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	1999	Box 4
Unsworth, Richard, Rev.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	1999	Box 4
Vazquez, Mary: Interview by Raymond, Kaymarion: transcript	2000 Feb 12	Box 4

Restrictions on access:

Uncensored transcript and recording closed until 2025. Censored transcript open without restrictions.

Vazquez, Mary: Interview by Raymond, Kaymarion: transcript	2000 Apr 2	Box 4
Wall, Carol C.: Interview by Cline, David: transcript	2000	Box 4
Wentworth, Mary: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 4
Wolff, Sara Starr: Interview by Backes, Ruth: transcript	2000	Box 4
Women's Health Counseling Service, Inc.: Interview by Tracy, Susan: transcript	1999	Box 5
Zak, Anne: Interview by Gensler, Sharon: transcript	2000	Box 5

Series 2: Administrative	1999-2008	2 boxes	
Abramson, Doris	2001, 2008		Box 5
Advisory Board by-laws	2000		Box 5
Advisory Board meeting	2001		Box 5
American History Association Roundtable	2000		Box 5
Correspondence	1999-2000		Box 5
Correspondence: Miller, Marla	2000-2001		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Berkman, Joyce	1999		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Miller, Marla	ca. 1999		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Raymond, Kaymarion	ca. 1999		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Redmon, Sherrill	ca. 1999		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Seidman, Linda	1999		Box 5
Curriculum vita: Tracy, Susan	ca. 1999		Box 5
Documentation project repository visitsurvey form	ca. 1999		Box 5
Finances	2000-2002		Box 5
History brainstorm	2000		Box 5
Grants	1999-2001		Box 5
Grants: final report	2000-2001		Box 5
Grants: interim report	2000		Box 6
Guide to Donating Your Papers	ca. 2000		Box 6
Meetings	2000		Box 6
Notes	ca. 1999-2002		Box 6
Oral history project	2001		Box 6
Oral history training	1999-2002	2 folders	Box 6
Photographs	2000		Box 6
Planning documents	1999-2000	5 folders	Box 6
Raymond, Kaymarion: cartoon	ca. 1999		Box 6

Series 3: Research Materials and Subject Files	1971-2008	4 boxes	
Abortion and Birth Control (ABC) Committee	1971		Box 6

Alliance for Economic Justice: Protest and action flyer	1995	Box 6
Bourne, Kristina: The Paradox of the Green Street Shops	1999	Box 7
Brown, Judith: Toward a Female Liberation Movement	1968	Box 7
Co-authored by Beverly Jones.		
Chodorow, Nancy: Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots	1975-1978	Box 7
Cline, David: Creating Choice: A Community Responds to the Need for Abortion and Birth Control, 1961-1973	2000	Box 7
Cline, David: Public History and the Politics of Empowerment: the Public Historian as both Moderator and Activist	2000	Box 7
Communism	1971-1981	Box 7
Correspondence: Brown, Joanne	1972-1973	Box 7
<i>Cuba Review</i> : Women in Transition	1976	Box 7
Directory of Arts Activism	1984	Box 7
Dizard, Robin: Speeches and notes	1971-1987	Box 7
Dudley, Barbara: Wages for Housework?	1975	Box 7
Ehrenreich, Barbara: The Politics of Housework	1975	Box 7
Ehrenreich, Barbara: What is Socialist Feminism?	1976	Box 7
Feminist theory	1975-1978	Box 7
Greenfield Popular Union: More of the Same: Millers Falls Tools Threatens to Runaway	ca. 1977	Box 7
ISIS	1980-1982	Box 7
Kady: Panhandling Papers	1981	Box 7
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Acklesburg, Martha	2007	Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Babize, Mollie	2007	Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Carney, Maureen and Shaw, Linda	2007	Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews:		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Griffin, Pat	2007	Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Grossholtz, Jean	2007	Box 16

Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Pisano, Linda	2007		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Higgins, Mary Clare	2007		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Jennings, Mary Ann	2007		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Johnston, Lacey	2006		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Marchesani, Linda	2007		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: McClintock, Mary	2008		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Schmidt, Maxine	2006		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Sortino, Elaine	2006		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Tyler, Sue	2006		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League interviews: Vazquez, Mary	2007		Box 16
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League: minutes and schedules	1985-1996		Box 7
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League: photographs	1977-1987		Box 7
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League: Team Common Womon I	1989-1997		Box 8
Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League: Team Common Womon II	1983-1996		Box 8
Morris, David: Worker Self-Management	1978		Box 8
Mudpie Childcare Cooperative	1973-1975		Box 8
Newspaper clippings	1999-2000	2 folders	Box 8
Newspaper clippings: Student Homophile League, UMass	1970-2000		Box 8
Newspaper clippings: violence against women	1988-2001	3 folders	Box 8
<i>New Unity</i> (Springfield, Mass.)	1973, 1975		Box 8
Panel on Reproductive in the Valley: transcript	2003		Box 8
O'Hara, Meghan: Judy O, Dyke on the Mike	2000		Box 8
O'Hara, Meghan: Notes on Women in Radio in the Valley	1999		Box 8
Pioneer Valley organizations and events	1987-2000		Box 8
President's Interagency Council on Women: America's Commitment to Women 2000	2000		Box 9

<i>Queer Nation</i>	undated	vol. 1, no. 2	Box 9
Raymond, Kaymarion: Notes on Wendell (Mass.) lesbian history	1998-2000		Box 9
Raymond, Kaymarion: Student Homophile League	2000		Box 9
Slater, Miriam: Keynote address, Alumnae Symposium, Hampshire College	1999		Box 9
Social feminism	1967-1981		Box 9
Social Feminism Conference	1975		Box 9
Southwst Residential College course	1973-1976		Box 9
Springfield Women's Center	1965-1975		Box 9
Springfield Women's Union	1975		Box 9
Stewart, Eileen	1999		Box 9
Valley Women's Movement: a herstorical Valley Chronology	ca. 1984		Box 9
Valley Women's Union	1975-1976		Box 9
<i>Valley Women's Voice</i>	1988 Jul-1992 Mar		Box 9
<i>Valley Women's Voice</i>	1992 May-1993 Fall		Box 9
<i>Valley Women's Voice</i>	1993 Dec-1995 Feb		Box 10
<i>Valley Women's Voice</i>	1995 Feb-June		Box 10
Wentworth, Mary: What is Patriarchy and Why Is It the Most Powerful Force in the World Today>?	2008		Box 10
<i>Wingspan: Journal of the Male Spirit</i>	1991		Box 10
Wolff, Sara Starr: Phenomenology of Feminism	1975		Box 10
Women	1973-1976		Box 10
Women's health: printed materials	1969-1976	2 folders	Box 10
Women's Studies: Five Colleges	1978		Box 10

Series 4: Audio

1999-2008 4 boxes

Abramson, Doris: audiocassette	2001		Box 11
Adams, Maurianne: audiocassette	2002		Box 11
Amherst Women Liberation, Reproduction Rights: audiocassette	1999		Box 11
Amherst Women's Liberation: audiocassette	2000		Box 11

Anderson, Kelly: audiocassette	2002	Box 11
Avakian, Arlene: audiocassette	2001	Box 11
Averett, Brett, on Isabell Arnorld: audiocassette	undated	Box 11
Berkman, Joyce: audiocassette	2000	Box 11
Brown, Joanna: audiocassette	1999	Box 11
Crosson, Pat: audiocassette	2002	Box 11
Culley, Margo: audiocassette	2002	Box 11
Demmin, Julia: audiocassette	2002	Box 11
Diamond, A: audiocassette	2004	Box 11
Dizard, Robin: audiocassette	2001	Box 11
Dykewoman, E: audiocassette	2001	Box 11
Edwards, Lee: audiocassette	2000	Box 11
Ferguson, A: audiocassette	2004	Box 11
Fessenden, Ruth: audiocassette	2002	Box 11
Ford, Mary: audiocassette	2000	Box 11-12
Fraser, Elaine: audiocassette	1999	Box 12
Gage, Robert: audiocassette	2002	Box 12
Gorman, Cleo: audiocassette	1999	Box 12
Green, Pat, Abortion Clinic: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
Green, Pat, Florence Health Care Project: audiocassette	undated	Box 12
Heath, Mel: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
Laurie, Leslie: audiocassette	2002	Box 12
Lesbian Bazaar: audiocassette	1998	Box 12
Lewis, Patricia Lee: audiocassette	2004	Box 12
Lewis, Sara: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
Lillydahl, Sandy: audiocassette	2001	Box 12
Lowenstein, Susan: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
McCord, Ann: audiocassette	1999	Box 12
Melcher, Dale: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
Merrigan, Kate: audiocassette	2002	Box 12
Nettler, Lydia: audiocassette	2000	Box 12
O'Brien, Judy: audiocassette	1999	Box 12
Page, Anita: audiocassette	2001	Box 12
Pritchard, Marietta and Crowe, Frances re: Isabel Arnold: audiocassette	2000	Box 13

Power, Bet: audiocassette	1999	Box 13
Raymond, Kaymarion: audiocassette	1999	Box 13
Rossi, Alice: audiocassette	2000	Box 13
Redmon, Sherrill: audiocassette	2000	Box 13
Slater, Miriam: audiocassette	1999	Box 13
Smith, Helen on Isabel Arnold: audiocassette	2001	Box 13
Stewart, Eileen: audiocassette	1999-2000	Box 13
Springfield Women's Health Center: audiocassette	1999	Box 13
Unworth, Richard, Original: audiocassette	2002	Box 13
Vasquez, Mary: audiocassette	2000	Box 13
VWHC, Interview with Amy Brown: audiocassette	2000	Box 13
VWHC, Panel on Reproductive Rights in Pioneer Valley: audiocassette	2003	Box 13
VWHC, Training: audiocassette	1999-2000	Box 13
VWHC, Training: audiocassette	2002	Box 14
Wenworth, Mary: audiocassette	2000	Box 14
Wolff, Sara: audiocassette	2000	Box 14
Zak, Anne: audiocassette	2000, 2008	Box 14
Zapka, Jane: audiocassette	2002	Box 14

Series 5: Memorabilia

1977-1997 1 box

"50 Berkshire Conference of Women Historians": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Amherst Food Coop: Financial Coordinator": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Common Womon: Every ball missed helps another womon": t-shirt	1997	Box 15
"Common Womon": t-shirt Off-white t-shirt.	1997	Box 15
"Common Womon": t-shirt Red t-shirt.	1997	Box 15
"Common Womon": t-shirt Red t-shirt with flying baseball	1997	Box 15

"Common Womon": t-shirt Picture: women eating a star	1977	Box 15
"Girl Sleuth: an Original Musical Comedy": t-shirt	1977	Box 15
"Honey, I Shrunk the Team": pillowcase	undated	Box 15
"Never Again": banner	undated	Box 15
"New England Learning Center for Women in Transition": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"People Power: Unarmed Forces of the Philippines": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Radical History Review: Earn Big Money": t-shirt	1978	Box 15
"Smith: School for Social Work": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Sojourn": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"University of Massachusetts Amherst: Women's Studies": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Western Mass. Womens Softball League: M.V.P 10th Anniversary": ribbon	1986	Box 15
"Women of the Quad": t-shirt	1980	Box 15
"Womenrising": t-shirt Blue t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Womenrising": t-shirt Purple t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Womenrishing: From Victimization to Empowerment": t- shirt Maroon t-shirt	1978	Box 15
"Womenrishing: From Victimization to Empowerment": t- shirt Blue t-shirt	1978	Box 15
"Womenrishing: From Victimization to Empowerment": t- shirt	1978	Box 15

Yellow t-shirt.

"Yellow Fever": t-shirt	undated	Box 15
"Yellow Sun Natural Foods Co-Op-Amherst Mass.": t-shirt	undated	Box 15

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Susan Tracy in August 2007 and 2009.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Penni Martorell, November 2007.

Addition to collection processed by Kristen Johnson, 2009

Accruals

Since the Valley Women's History Collaborative is an ongoing organization, additions to the collection are expected.

Related Material

For additional material related to feminist activity in western Massachusetts in the Special Collections and University

Archives, see:

- [Valley Women's Union Records \(MS 201\)](#)
- [Social Change Periodicals Collection \(MS 306\)](#)
- [PFLAG Pioneer Valley Records \(MS 397\)](#)

Websites:

- [Mary Vazquez Women's Softball League](#)
- [Valley Women's History Collaborative](#)

Language:

English

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Valley Women's History Collaborative Records (MS 531).
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Search terms

Subjects

- Birth control--Massachusetts--Pioneer Valley--History--20th century
- Abortion--Massachusetts--Pioneer Valley--History--20th century
- Feminism--Massachusetts--Pioneer Valley--History
- Feminists--Massachusetts--Pioneer Valley--

Political activity--History

- Women--Massachusetts--Pioneer Valley--Political activity--History

Genre terms

- Oral histories
- Posters

Link to similar SCUA collections

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