

# Blake Slonecker Oral History Collection

ca.2008

4 items (0.25 linear feet)

**Call no.:** MS 795

## Read collection overview [Collection overview](#)

An historian of twentieth century social movements, Blake Slonecker received his doctorate at the University of North Carolina in 2009 and joined the history faculty at Waldorf College soon thereafter. In a dissertation examining the utopian impulses of the New Left (published in 2012 as *A new dawn for the New Left: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the long sixties*), Slonecker explored how the political and cultural activism of the 1960s helped reshape American political culture in the decade following.

In June 2008, Slonecker conducted oral historical interviews with four individuals who were part of the extended community centered on the Montague Farm and Packer Corners communes during the late 1960s: Tom Fels, Charles Light, Sam Lovejoy, and Richard Wizansky. In wide-ranging interviews, the former communards discuss topics ranging from the fraught politics of the era, political and cultural activism, gender roles and sexuality, and daily life on the communes.

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## Background on Blake Slonecker

An historian of twentieth century social movements, Blake Slonecker received his doctorate at the University of North Carolina in 2009 and joined the history faculty at Waldorf College soon thereafter. In a dissertation examining the utopian impulses of the New Left, Slonecker explored how the political and cultural activism of the 1960s helped reshape American political culture in the decade following. The center of his narrative was the Liberation News Service, a press

agency for the counterculture, as well as a series of associated communes in western Massachusetts and Vermont which Slonecker argues were structured as a "family" on a Thoreauvian ideal of "sincerity, accountability, and equality." His work on the New Left and the American counterculture has appeared regularly in historical journals, with his first book, *A new dawn for the New Left: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the long sixties*, appearing in 2012.

Slonecker has received recognition on several occasions for his outstanding teaching at Waldorf, and he continues to research the intersection of late twentieth-century social movements, including civil rights, student movements, gay and women's liberation, and pacifism.

## Scope of collection

The Slonecker collection consists of four substantial oral historical interviews with former members of communes in western Massachusetts and Vermont: Tom Fels, Charles Light, Sam Lovejoy, and Richard Wizansky, all of which informed his book, *A new dawn for the New Left*. In their wide-ranging interviews, the former communards discuss topics ranging from the fraught politics of the era, political and cultural activism, gender roles and sexuality, and daily life on the communes.

## Collection inventory

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<b>Fels, Thomas Weston: Oral history with Blake Slonecker, North Bennington (Vt.)</b>	2008 June 21	1 audio recordings ; 01:13:30
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Oral history interview with Tom Fels, writer and former resident of the Montague Farm community, discussing his background, daily life on the Farm; principles, practicality, and politics; Farmers' roles; ideology; alternative living; gender, sexuality, and homosexuality; women's roles; local politics and relations with local community; antinuclear activity; changes in the Farm and leaving the Farm.

<b>Light, Charles: Oral history with Blake Slonecker, Turners Falls (Mass.)</b>	2008 June 23	1 audio recordings ; 01:08:00
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Oral history interview with Charles Light, former resident of the Johnson Pasture and Montague Farm communities, discussing joining Johnson Pasture, the fire, and move to Montague Farm; beginnings in film-making and Green Mountain Post Films; Brotherhood of the Spirit; Elwood Babbitt seance featuring Marshall Bloom; roles at the Farm; communal decision making; antinuclear movement; Sam Lovejoy and film "Lovejoy's Nuclear War"; Musicians United for Safe Energy concert and film.

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**Lovejoy, Sam: Oral history with Blake Slonecker,  
Montague (Mass.)**

2008 June 22

1 audio  
recordings ;  
01:53:32

Oral history interview with Sam Lovejoy, former resident of the Montague Farm community: including discussions of Amherst College in the 1960s; Marshall Bloom; joining the Farm; SDS; antinuclear activity; MUSE; entering town politics in Montague; political corruption; significance of the Montague Farm.

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**Wizansky, Richard: Oral history with Blake Slonecker,  
Guilford (Vt.)**

2008 June 19

1 audio  
recordings ;  
00:56:38

Oral history interview with Richard Wizansky, former resident of Packer Corners Commune, discussing background; BU; radicalization and beginnings of Packer Corners commune; daily life on the Farm; division of labor and gender; women's liberation; being gay on the Farm; farming and self-sufficiency; changes in the Farm; relations with Johnson Pasture and Montague Farm; May Day celebration; Monteverdi Players theater troupe.

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## Administrative information

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### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Blake Slonecker, 2013.

### Digitized content

All material in the collection has been scanned and are **available online** through our digital repository, Credo.

### Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Feb. 2014.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use ([More information](#) )

*Cite as:* Blake Slonecker Oral History Collection (MS 795).  
Special Collections and University Archives, UMass Amherst  
Libraries.

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## Search terms

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### Subjects

- Antinuclear movement--Massachusetts
- Keller, Daniel
- Liberation News Service (Montague, Mass.)
- Light, Charles

- Communal living--Massachusetts
- Communal living--Vermont
- Dana (Mass.)--History
- Gay rights--Massachusetts
- Homosexuality
- Sex

## Names

- Amherst College
- Babbitt, Elwood, 1922-
- Bloom, Marshall, 1944-1969
- Brotherhood of the Spirit Community
- Clamshell Alliance
- Diamond, Stephen
- Fels, Thomas Weston
- Green Mountain Post Films
- Gyorgy, Anna
- Jezer, Marty
- Johnson Pasture Community (Vt.)

- Lovejoy, Sam
- Lovejoy, Sam
- Maroneck, Susan
- Montague Farm Community (Mass.)
- Monteverdi Artists Collective
- Mungo, Raymond, 1946-
- Musicians United for Safe Energy
- Packer Corners Community (Vt.)
- Porche, Verandah
- Rogers, Kathy
- Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.)
- Wasserman, Harvey, 1945-
- Wizansky, Richard

## Genre terms

- Audiocassettes
- Oral histories (document genres)

## Link to similar SCUA collections

[Antinuclear](#)

[Counterculture](#)

[Intentional communities](#)

[LGBT](#)

[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)

[Oral history](#)

[Political activism](#)

[Social justice](#)

[Vermont](#)

[Women and feminism](#)



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