

LESBIAN HERSTORY



This beautiful image is from the Lesbian Herstory Archives Graphics Collection. It is on newsprint, from an unidentified paper of the late '60s or early '70s, artist unknown. If you have additional information on this image please share it with us.

LHA Announces the Start of Its Building Fund

Let us ask the colonized [her]self: who are [her] folk heroes? [her] great popular leaders? [her] sages? At most [she] may be able to give us a few names, in complete disorder, and fewer and fewer as one goes down the generations. The colonized seem condemned to lose [her] memory.

—Albert Memmi

The Lesbian Herstory Archives is a concrete expression of a people's refusal to lose their memory. For 13 years, we have been nurturing and sharing a collection alive with voices that the larger society has judged obscene, or sick, or inconsequential. For 13 years the apartment of Deb and Joan, and now Judith and Joan, has been home to the collection and to the thousands of visitors who have come to see and to touch.

We have outgrown the apartment, just as in the past we outgrew rooms. The collection now spills over into another apartment and into storage vaults. The dream that called the Archives forth must now go one step further—the finding of a permanent home that is worthy of the women the Archives is dedicated to preserving.

We want the Archives to be housed in a space that is secure and temperature controlled, that will allow the collection to grow and that will be comfortable for its visitors. We want its new home to have gallery and performing space, a meeting room for communal use, and a living area for the women who will always be present as caretakers.

Toward this end, we announced the start of a building fund at our Fundraiser on April 15, 1986. This event was a combination dance and performance held at NYU. A large number of volunteers organized and carried out this event that was attended by over 700 women. Among the volunteers were supporters from New Jersey, the same women who organize Amazon Autumn each year.

The \$6,000 raised, after costs, went directly into a special account, the start of our building fund. Each woman who attended was presented with a special button in recognition of her contribution.

Owning our own building is a big dream which may take years to ac-

complish, which you can help make possible. The Archives has never and never will charge a fee for information use; and all our events are more/if or less/if (a wonderful Lesbian feminist tradition).

The national and international Lesbian Community are our people, and we are making a people's appeal. Help us raise the funds our home needs. We said at the fundraiser that our dream will come into being not because of two or three women giving us thousands of dollars (although large contributions are always welcome!) but because thousands of Lesbians each give us one dollar. We have always been a grassroots creation, rooted in the belief that a people's history belongs to all the people who lived it and that the collective story will fuel hope, resistance and understanding in the times to come.

Our request is that you cut out the label on the insert page and put it on an empty can in your home. Then drop in over the months, whatever you can spare. Share the story of our work and the label with friends. Each dime, each nickel that clunks into the can and is sent to us is a refusal to let our stories, our creations, our love, die. We also encourage other fundraising events you might want to organize in your community, such as a dance or raffle, to benefit the Archives.

And with the donation of money, please never forget that you—your voices, your faces—are needed in the Archives collection to make it worthy of the future. The supreme court has said we are an ancient vice, underserving of liberty... No, we are an ancient dream and an ancient courage. ▽

Well of Loneliness Cultural Survey Results Are In

Over 150 women responded to the cultural survey on *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall, which was included in the last newsletter. Although we have not completed a thorough analysis of all the surveys, we know you are eager to hear whatever results we have. So here goes...

We've reviewed 100 surveys and charted the basic age and demographic facts. The most frequent age-of-reading *The Well of Loneliness* was 20. Eleven out of 100 respondents first read it at that age. The youngest age was 10, by a woman who came out 26 years later in Brooklyn. The oldest age-of-reading was 40, reported both by a woman who had come out 22 years earlier, and one who came out of the closet the same time she read the book. All three of these women reported a positive response to the book.

About one third of the respondents reported coming out in New York City or Brooklyn, but a wide variety of locations were listed including Maui, Helsinki, Berlin, Salt Lake City, Hacıoçhis (Texas) and boarding school.

Although this project has turned out to be considerably more time-consuming than we had originally expected, it has been great fun to read the many responses. Many thanks for sharing with us, and special thanks to Beth L. for compiling and analyzing the results. Also, if you have ideas for other books/topics which you would like to see as the subject of another survey please let us know. We will start a new file of "Potential Surveys", and of course, if you visit the Archives, the surveys are available for reading. ▽

(Sampling of responses on page 5)

Lesbian Herstory Archives Newsletter—September, 1986

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The Lesbian Herstory Archives exists to gather and preserve records of Lesbian lives and activities so that future generations of Lesbians will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives. The process of gathering this material will also serve to uncover and collect our herstory. These materials will enable us to analyze and re-evaluate the Lesbian experience.

Newsletter Is Changing, Publications Are Added

Yes, this newsletter looks different—and you can lift it with *one* hand. We have changed our newsletter design, hoping we can publish a slimmer volume more frequently. We will focus on news about the Archives, primary lesbian herstory documents and other information. The bibliographies and listings which we have included in the past made the newsletter huge, long in assembly, and costly to print and mail. These important reference materials will not be lost however.

We will print extensive listings and bibliographies as individual publications. We believe they'll be more manageable, and more easily updated once we have them in the computer. The newsletter will announce their availability.

One of our current projects is to update and place in the computer

database the listings that have already appeared in past newsletters. Some of them are almost ten years old and will probably double in size once we bring them up-to-date. Obviously this is a long and tremendous task of keyboarding. We are asking our supporters in the NYC area who know, or would like to learn, basic computer skills to come and volunteer some keyboarding time, even if only a few hours.

We have already prepared a small pamphlet on basic preservation practices for at-home use and are finishing up another on the periodical holdings in the Archives.

We welcome any suggestions or information that you feel would be of interest to our community, either as a publication or an article in the newsletter. ▽

Some Statistics About The Archives Collection

We're always being asked about the size of the collection, here are some recent figures, assembled in the early summer of 1986:

• organization files	537
• subject files	648
• periodical titles total	1,274
• Lesbian	309
• gay	648
• feminist	497
• general	301
• books	5,520
• biographical files	1,269
• photography sub. files	255
• slides	2,000
• national mailing list	3,377
• international mailing list	255

On The Road: LHA Slideshows & Speaking Engagements

The purpose of the Archives slideshow, "Preserving Our Heritage: Issues and Challenges of Doing Lesbian History Research," is to give a brief history of LHA, focus on the most special parts of the collections, and explain how your own life and your Lesbian community can be part of the collection.

The slide show is 280 slides plus taped words, (sections spoken by one of the LHA coordinators) ending with a celebration of Lesbian faces and music showing the cultural complexity of our people. This makes showing the slideshow a dramatic, funny and often moving event. We always make a special appeal to Lesbian women who came out before 1970 because they give such strong testimony about how we survived as a colonized people.

However, up to now the slideshow has always had to travel with one of us, which limited the places it could be seen. We could only share the slideshow when one or more of us were able to take time from work and other commitments and when travel costs could be met by the sponsoring group. We have always tried to accept every invitation extended to us to show the Archives slideshow.

By spring 1987, we will have a shortened version available for rental or purchase which can travel without its mamas. In a way, that's a bit sad,

because some of our most wonderful memories of working with the Archives have come from interactions with Lesbians during and after a slideshow. It is delightful to meet women in their own communities, finding out the latest news and what issues are most important to them. Certainly, there will still be times when the sponsoring group can afford to have one of us come speak or do a workshop on preservation or other issues in researching Lesbian history. But soon even the smallest group and less accessible places will be able to enjoy diverse Lesbian images and a discussion of Lesbian herstory.

Since the last newsletter came out, we have shown the slideshow nearly 50 times, including presentations to the following groups:

- Amazon Autumn '84 & '85 Conferences (NJ)
- Buffalo State College (NY)
- Committee on Lesbian & Gay History, American History Assoc. '85 (NY)
- Gays & Lesbians of Brookhaven (GLID), (NY)
- Gertie Stein Salon (NYC)
- Gotham Greater Business Council (NYC)
- Huntingdon County NOW (NJ)
- Ithaca (NY)
- Lesbian Awareness (New Brunswick NJ)

- Lesbians & Gay Men of New Brunswick (NJ)
- Lesbians in Government (NYC)
- Michigan Womyn's Music Festival '85 (MI)
- North Shore Lesbian & Gay Alliance (Salem MA)
- San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Historical Society (San Francisco CA)
- Sisters (Atlanta, GA)
- Gay & Lesbian Group, U of C at Santa Cruz (CA)
- Lesbian group, Vassar (Poughkeepsie NY)
- Gay & Lesbian class, Yale Univ. (New Haven CT)

In addition to slide show presentations, several of us have spoken as individuals or for the Lesbian Herstory Archives about issues in Lesbian and gay history. These include workshops on: butch and fem relationships, sexuality, preservation of our community and individual history, preservation of photographs, censorship, privacy of documents deposited at the Archives, collection and access policies, and many other issues. Judith Schwarz represented the Archives at the Society of American Archivists 1985 Conference in Austin, Texas. Joan Nestle has been the keynote speaker at many events, including New York City's 1985 Gay Pride Day celebration. ▽

"At Home With the Archives" Returns

If you've been missing the distinctive Lesbianism of "At Home With the Archives," get ready for a brand new 1986-87 series. The Archives will be holding "At Homes" on a monthly basis starting September in the Women's Coffeehouse at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center of NYC.

These popular community events faded from the scene as the Archives collection grew and the meeting space shrank. Overwork of the core group of volunteers had prevented anyone from organizing a rebirth of the series outside the Archives space. Now, thanks to new volunteers able to take on such responsibilities and the availability of a low-rent, Lesbian space in the city, we are bringing back the "At Homes."

We should explain here to those who haven't heard—NYC now has its own Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, a former trade school in Greenwich Village (how appropriate!) which offers much meeting space and limited office space to community groups. It is a wonderful concept, and much needed. The Archives is happy to be able to utilize it as a resource and bring some of our aforementioned "lesbianism" to it.

The first "At Home" in 1979 featured an evening with poet Irare

Sabasu and singer Gwen Elliot. "At Homes" have always been a place for Lesbians to share our culture in the living room of the Archives, with the words and images of generations of Lesbians surrounding us. These gatherings were exciting both for their intimacy (sometimes over 50 women sat cheek to cheek munching popcorn) and for being "firsts" for many women to present their work.

Since then, over 80 women have shared their work "At Home" . . . one-third of them writers. Presentations have been diverse, including singers & musicians, filmmakers, photographers and other visual artists as well as discussions on butch-femme relationships, Lesbian ethics, Lesbians having babies, Black and white women working and loving together . . . whatever is of interest to the community. And of course, we can't forget an Archives trademark—slide shows, documenting Lesbians in Paris, the Village, on vacation, in the 50's and 60's, in ties or skirts, with friends and banners.

Come join us in September as we continue on in the tradition of "At Homes." We will announce specific dates and events in a mailing to our Tri-state list, as well as place ads in local papers and the Community Center mailing. ▽



Oz, on the porch of her New Orleans apartment at the time she met her lover Vee. (c. 1945) This photo is from the Oz Special Collection . . . watch for more on Oz and her journals in the next issue of the newsletter.

LHA Newsletter Recorded

The Archives is pleased to announce a new project: the recording of the *Lesbian Herstory Archives News* on tape for Lesbians who are print-disabled (blind, partially sighted, learning disabled, women who are physically unable to handle books, etc.). If you or anyone you know would be interested in receiving the newsletter on cassette, please call or write us.

The recorded edition, like the print edition, is free to all Lesbians. Currently, there are two newsletters recorded, this issue (#9) and #8, the International issue.

Part of the Archives is a large collection of cassettes: poetry readings, conference proceedings, concerts, and more. We are currently working on an index. Write to us for further information (send your request to the attention of Lynn).

If you live in the NY area or have access to recording equipment and would like to record part of a newsletter or other material please let us know. No experience is necessary.

Publications Available

- "Preserving Your Individual and Community History," a pamphlet by Judith Schwarz. Describes basic guidelines for preservation of your own photographs, letters, tapes, scrapbooks and other precious momentos of your life and the life of your community. (Publication: LHA-86-1)
- "Lesbian Periodicals in the Archives Collection" a listing of titles of all periodicals contained in the Lesbian Herstory Archives Periodical Collection. Includes a preface by Deb Edel and Joan Nestle on the history and importance of Lesbian periodicals and their indexing.

Special listings from old newsletters are also available. Topics included:

- Bibliography of Lesbian, Feminist and Gay Bibliographies (#1, '76)
- Lesbian Sexuality Bibliography (#7, '81)
- Lesbian Paperbacks, 1930s–50s (#3, '76)
- LHA Poetry Collection (#4, '78)
- LHA Short Story Collection (#5, '79)
- LHA Special Books Collection (#7, '81)
- LHA Special Collections (#6, '80)
- LHA International Collection (#8, '85)
- LHA Unpub. Papers (#8, '85)

Sampling of Responses to Our *Well of Loneliness* Survey

Read at age 13 In 1970

I love the book. It touches me deeply. Even though I am "Feminine" in appearance I identified with Stephen and admire her. The ending of the novel dismayed me so that I rewrote it.

Absolutely did not [discuss it with other people], however I left my writings about *The Well* in my locker at Catholic girls school where they were discovered by the Nuns.



Read at age 14 In 1959

My mother gave it to me to read on a long bus ride. She said it was the first book about Lesbians. I still don't fully understand her motivation.

I was frightened and stopped at page 50 (the first kiss)—picked it up and re-read it 2 years later.



Read at age 15 In 1946

I was absolutely rivetted and enthralled and read it over and over again, feeling hot and cold in turn. I was faintly suspicious of the account of the reasons for Stephen's Lesbianism, but in the end that didn't matter all that much. The most important things were 1) simply that the book existed and 2) it suggested that somewhere I might find a community, if only a small and beleaguered one—someday.

I identified with Stephen, really disliked her mother, and thought Mary was a bit wet and that Stephen could do better.

[I have not reread it] very recently. My reaction to it now is of course a little different, but I am grateful for the book and have a real affection for it. I see its flaws and its author's misconceptions of our nature—it is a bit melodramatic. But it is of its time, not of the present. Perhaps it points out how much things have changed.



Read at age ? In 1956

[I didn't discuss it with other people] at the time I read it. It was a real closet performance. When I was reading it, my mother happened to be in the city

where I was in school and stopped unannounced to visit. I remember vividly that she entered my room and found me reading *The Well*. She was upset and took it away from me, announcing that it was "one of the books we didn't want you to read." She threw it away after tearing it in half—there was no further discussion, and when she left, I went immediately to the drug store and bought another copy. I stayed up most of the night reading with my flashlight under my blankets to finish it to see what I wasn't supposed to read.



Read at age 18 In 1938

[I felt] Great relief! It seemed much more natural than the world I was living in. Wept copiously at Rafferty's death. Thought a lot about heredity and environment. But despite the heavy drama, I felt pretty much at home: a father's child with some of a boy's rearing, some maternal rejection. A bookish world, etc. I guess I came out immediately. [Discuss it with people?] No! What other people? All the other lesbians were in Europe.



Read at age 19 In 1930

[I heard about it when] Someone—not gay—mentioned it. I, of course, pricked up my ears. In 1930-31 I was at school in Paris, but extremely shy. I did manage to get myself to Adreinne Monnier's bookshop—circled timidly about, browsing—but could not find the courage to request the book from Mille. Monnier.

To my amazed delight, in the first year of my married life, and pregnant, I came upon a copy—without even looking for it—in the within-walking distance Public Library. I took it right home. (My husband also read the book and we both wept unashamedly.)

It struck me like the proverbial lightning bolt. The *Well* has always—though now dated—been the basic Lesbian novel. Apparently right now I am without a copy—have passed on many—but have reread it more than once and am always moved—as much by Rad. Hall's courage as by the dear book itself.

The book still can tear at our very core—at any American, British, French, Spanish, Swedish or young Italian gay heart.



Read at age 21 In 1971

I was overwhelmed by the ending. I found it impossible to sleep the night I finished the book. I had come to the realization that nothing had changed regarding Lesbian/Gay status in society since the time the plot was set in. I feel the book is a *real* downer. It was the first time I had cried, really cried from a story. I guess I had "read" in it that that was what was in store for all of us in our future. I was crying for myself, but just realized that now. I have since heard a discussion on WBAI [NYC radio] about *T.W.O.L.* and the speaker mentioned that things are much different nowadays since Stonewall. We have support groups and politically active kin that are trying to change our situation. The reason I reacted to the book as I did is probably because I feel that society hasn't changed a damn bit and never will. We will always be misfits and outsiders in their eyes. The only change possible is in how we feel about ourselves and what we do to change our position in society, i.e. political change. I think it's easier and more comfortable for us to come out but the others haven't changed their opinions or bought our "Gay is Good" slogan. We're in for hard times ahead when the backlash is unleashed.



Read at age 23 In 1970

The first place where I heard of the book was in Maya Angelou's autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, where she writes of her own reaction to reading it as a teenager. She made it quite clear that it was about Lesbian relationships.



Read at age 23 In 1980

I'd love to have access to Stephen Gordon's wardrobe.



Chicago Resource Center Funds LHA Computer

In 1983, on one of the hottest September weekends on record, about 20 Archives volunteers and 2 borrowed Kaypro computers got together in an un-air-conditioned apartment in Brooklyn and put the Archives 2,500 name mailing list on a database. This was the first step in the long-term goal of having a fully computerized Archives catalog system.

The original list had been handwritten on file cards, then handwritten onto envelopes and sorted by hand into zip code order for each mailing. It took countless hours of labor to do each mailing.

Now the computer sorts by zip code, (or alphabet or geographic area, as we desire) and prints labels for us. Since computerizing, we have sent out one newsletter and one appeal letter, with the result that we have a cleaned-up list. (If only y'all would stop *moving*.) Our current count of entries on the mailing list is 3,632.

In the Spring of '84 we decided to seek funding to purchase a "state of the art" computer system. It seemed in terms of long-term Archives activities that this was an item that would have wide-reaching benefits not only to our daily operation but to our community, our researchers and future growth. It also made sense to us that the sooner we were able to start converting material as it came to us, the less material we would have to handle.

So we put together a proposal and sent it to the Chicago Resource Center. They generously agreed to fund the purchase of an IBM-XT personal computer, printer, extras and furniture to hold it all.

Once the computer arrived we discovered that conversion from our original Kaypro mailing list to the IBM system was not possible. Or so the "experts" said. Thanks to a friendly computer advisor, who wrote a special program, we were able to convert the old mailing list database to the IBM and are now moving along with updates and new projects.

The volunteers working on the computer range from novices-at-the-keyboard to women who work with computers professionally. One of the side benefits of computer ownership which we hope to expand is the training of



Lee L. at age 1 (1946), notice the second book down . . . The Well of Loneliness. This photo was taken by a photographer at her home, who pulled down a stack of books off the shelf. Her mother still has all of the books . . . except one.

women in PC programs. We hope this will provide additional job skills and more employment opportunities.

In addition to the mailing list, the computer does word processing and has programs to create bibliographies. We are currently designing a periodical database that will computerize the catalog of the magazines and newsletters. In the future, when the book collection, manuscript collection and other collections are computerized we will be able to search these many areas for information on a specific research topic. This ability will benefit all researchers at the Archives.

In the meantime, you can help us with our mailing list by immediately sending us any change of address. Check the label on this newsletter and if there are errors, send us this label along with the changes or corrections. Our computer project coordinators, Beth Haskell and Judith Schwarz are also available to work out long-distance projects for those of you who have access to an IBM compatible PC and would like to assist the Archives from your own home. ▽

Archives Joins WFC

LHA was invited to join the Women's Funding Coalition in the spring of 1985. The coalition is dedicated to working towards breaking the hold United Way has on workplace donations by providing an alternative choice which will feed dollars to women's organizations. Still in its early stages, participation in WFC by member groups require many hours for few dollars return. However, we believe in the concept philosophically and that in the future it will provide direct, steady financial benefits to LHA as we get our fairshare of the workplace dollars coming to WFC.

There are workplace campaigners organized in many areas of the city, state and federal systems. When the United Way Check-off comes your way this fall, look for the Women's Funding Coalition and give a work-place check-off donation—know that part of it will be helping LHA. Next year the word Lesbian will be listed under WFC in several campaigns. Deborah Edel is the LHA representative to the Women's Funding Coalition. ▽

Economic Report For LHA Since 1984

Since its inception, funding & budgeting for the Archives has been based on the belief that we will do the best we can with what we have. Our existence will never hinge on economics. We believe if we show our commitment to preserving Lesbian culture then the Lesbian community will respond by sharing with us what resources they can. Finally, no woman will be denied access to any materials of the Archives or events run by the Archives due to lack of money. In our first few years a good part of our money came from a tithing by LHA founders as they could give. Over the years the balance has shifted, so that ongoing expenses are now being met by community donations.

How is it Possible For Us To Meet Our Expenses?

- All labor at the Archives is done by volunteers; it is a labor of love and many hard, long hours of work by a wonderful core group of women.
- The Archives has never had to fund-raise to pay rent. It is housed in an apartment where Joan & Deb and now Joan & Judith live. They pay the rent and have less and less personal space as the Archives spreads out all over their home.
- The basic electricity and phone bills are paid by the women of the household as part of their regular living expenses. Long distance calls are reimbursed by LHA.
- Though our vision & knowledge of what needs to be done is great, our decisions about expenditures are based on actual income that we do have in hand.
- The Archives is given generous donations of books and materials from the Lesbian community.

How Do We Get Our Money?

- We receive donations from individual women who visit the Archives, read our newsletter, hear us speak or meet us at conferences and believe in the vision of the Archives.
- Money comes from our donation can at LHA and conferences where women give us dollars and change anonymously, as well as donations for the photocopying which we do in response to information requested in letters and by visitors at LHA.
- We receive honorariums for the slide show and speaking engagements we

do about the work of LHA. We do not charge a set fee for presenting the slide show but ask that university and community groups which have access to funding respect our needs. We often show the slide show to the Lesbian community in situations where we pass the hat. All honorariums and donations we receive for speaking go into the Archives account after we are reimbursed for personal travel expenses.

● We also receive money from donations for our poster, t-shirts, buttons and postcards. Monies come from grants from within the Lesbian community and alternative funding sources.

● Monies come from other sources such as memorial funds, workplace donations, cultural events, donations from other organizations and donations earmarked for special needs.

How can you help?

- Undertake a fixed expense as your personal project. Let us know that you want to pay part or all of one of our expenses. We will gladly name it after you or a name of your choice if you desire, e.g., The Radclyffe Hall Memorial Storage Unit, the Ma Rainey Bulk Mail permit . . .
- Send a non-designated donation to the general fund.
- Send us basic supplies such as pencils, paper, blank mailing envelopes of all sizes, mailing tubes, etc.
- Talk to your local publisher, organization, women's bookstore and arrange for us to get free samples, review copies of books and journals.

Explanation of categories in charts:

Printed material includes pamphlets, posters, resource materials, op works, new publications. We thank individual authors/publishers & journals who have sent their work to us so that we haven't had to purchase books or subscriptions.

Equipment included over \$1,300 for new shelving, \$5,200 for the computer & its furniture, & a new answering machine.

Printing refers to ongoing costs of running the photocopy machine, occasional outside photocopying (often requiring reduction work), printing of fliers and announcements. In 1984 it included over \$3,300 for the newsletter, \$108 for the postcard series, & \$1,000 for the photocopy machine tune-up, & supplies.

Mailing includes the bulk mail permit, PO Box rental, bulk mailings, and postage for correspondence. In 1984 it included \$1,200 for mailing the newsletter and charges on returns.

Sources of Funding for LHA—1984 & 1985

	1984	1985
Individual Donations	3,266	2,668
Benefits		75
Taking Liberties	4,500	—
Front Runners	176	18
Alix Dobkin Concert	150	—
Honorariums From Slide Shows & Speeches	1,118	428
Postcards/Posters Project	184	71
T-Shirt Project	—	436
LHA Donation Can	162	401
Grants		
Chicago Resource Cntr.	7,800	—
Funding Exchange/Nat. Community Fund	500	500
Interest from Savings Acct.	369	268
Special Donations:		
Slides & Video	—	200
Bookshelves	—	400
In Memory of Isaaca Siegel	—	400
United Way-Harvard	—	23
Total	18,225	5,888

Where the Money Went 1984 & 1985

	1984	1985
Fixed expenses:		
PO Box Rental	260	260
Film/Video Storage Rent.	—	576
Gen. Matrls. Storage Rent.	280	360
Bulk Mail Permit	40	50
Photocopy Mach. Service	400	400
Av. Bank Serv. Chg.	120	120
Safe Deposit Box	60	60
LHA Membrshps. in Archival & Comm. Organizations	190	190
Other Expenses:		
Printed Material	1364	483
Equipment	5,755	1,649
Printing	4,777	533
Postage	1,771	772
Arch. Mat./Stationery	1,085	945
Audio/Visual	435	299
Other	740	1,538
Total	17,277	8,235

Archival supplies include preservation materials such as acid-free file folders, paper, Hollinger boxes, rust-proof staples, mylar book jackets, slide holders. Stationery supplies include envelopes, paper, pens, etc. Much of these costs are kept down through donations.

Audio/Visual includes cassette tapes for oral histories & events plus duplication, film for duplication & slide shows plus processing, and video tapes for projects & film & snapshot documentation.

Other expenses include paper goods for events, filing fees, long distance calls, calendar listings, conference fees & registrations, and T-shirt project.

These figures are averages and as accurate as possible. All financial records are open and available for reading to anyone interested. Contact Deborah Edel at the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

"In Memory of the Voices We Have Lost"

The Archives is a place to commemorate lost lovers and friends. As a people we have been deprived of the rituals of communal sorrow. Many Lesbians have already experienced the pain of silent mourning. Often in newspapers, a euphemism for the death of a Lesbian is "There are no known survivors". This is not true. **We are each other's survivors.**

I am very grateful to you for publishing the note "No Known Survivors" in your recent newsletter. It had not occurred to me before that there might be a way to commemorate my former lover . . . I know very well the "pain of silent mourning" which you describe—I was prevented even from attending her funeral on the grounds that her relatives might deduce that she was a lesbian. . . . —from a letter to the Archives

We hope that you will remember the Lesbians in your community, your sisters, your friends, through memorials and letters to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, so that we may all honor their lives. Their voices and lives should not be lost or made invisible when we are no longer here ourselves to tell their stories.

Arisa Reed, 1957–1986, NY, NY
Barbara Deming, 1917–1985, Florida
Caroline Shumaker, March 29, 1942–Jan. 21, 1984
Donna Marie De Rosier, Sept. 1956–Dec. 1978, Niles, IL
Eleanor Hakim, D. 1985, NY, NY
Elsa Gidlow, 1891–1986, Mill Valley, CA
Haikila, d. Feb. 23, 1980, NY, NY
Helen Mariska, d. Feb 12, 1984, Springfield, IL
Isaaca Siegel, 1938–Jan. 31, 1985, NY, NY
Jinx Johnson, Oct. 21, 1923–April 14, 1983, Summit, NJ
Julie Cordell, 1961–1983, Albuquerque, NM
Linda Maloney, 1953–1981, Milford, Delaware & Tulsa, OK
Lyn C. Campbell, 1955–1984, Berkeley, CA & NY
Margit Lasker, 1947–1977, Mannheim Neckarqu, West Germany & NY
Sally Tyre, d. August 2, 1983, Boston, MA
Colonel Shirley Roby, 1947–1981, Lincoln, NE
Sonny Wainwright, 1930–1985, NY, NY

This is not just a list of names and dates; it is the continuing of a people's history.



Arisa Reed at the Archives. (Photo © 1979 JEB—Joan E. Biren, first appeared in *Sinister Wisdom* #11, Fall, 1979)

**You say I am mysterious.
 Let me explain myself:
 In a land of oranges
 I am faithful to apples.**

—Elsa Gidlow

fr Amazon Poetry, *edd.*
Elly Bulkin & Joan Larkin,
Out & Out Books, '75

Naples Comm. Hosp.
Naples, Fla
July 21, 1984 6:15 pm

To so many of you:

*I have loved my life so very much
 and I have loved you so very much
 and felt so blessed by the love you
 have given me. I love the work so
 many of us have been trying to do
 together and had looked forward to
 continuing this work but I just feel no
 more strength in me now and I want
 to die. I won't lose you when I die
 and I won't leave you when I die.
 Some of you I have most especially
 loved and felt beloved by and I hope
 you know that even though I haven't
 had the strength lately to reach out
 to you.*

*I love you. Hallowed be (may all be
 made whole). I want you to know,
 too, that I die happily.*

Bobbie (Barbara) Deming

For Those of Us Who Know We're Dying

Those of us who know we're dying
 have a great appreciation for the past
 and high tolerance of the future.
 Those of us who know we're dying
 put small mean grudges aside
 put priorities into shape
 in separate orders.
 Those of us who know we're dying
 stay fiercely in love with life.

—Sonny Wainwright

excerpt from a manuscript in the
 Lesbian Herstory Archives collection.



Photos clockwise starting upper left: Barbara Deming (Photo by Diana Davies), Sally Tyre, 1983 (Photo by Harry Eberlin), Elsa Gidlow, and, Lynn Campbell, 1984 (Photo by Ann Blackstock)

Dear Isaaca,

Your comedy routine [at Gay Women's Alternative] when you read the mail was possibly a way of embracing lovingly all the crazy and sometimes funny and ingenious ideas women have that they try to communicate with each other. "Here's a leaflet from women offering a vacation adventure: Well, it might be wonderful or awful, it might be some adventure alright, would anyone really want to go? And here's a concern, well, you might want to do that, and a group looking for members, well, aren't they all, and pretty soon you'll forget to come back to GWA, so many alternatives to the alternative."

One of your jokes in particular stayed in my mind. After a program when it was refreshment time you asked who wanted to come into the kitchen to watch the popcorn machine with you. You said something like "We can watch the popcorn popping and think of things to come. This is only the beginning." I was amused by this view of romance: food, entertainment, at home with folks at GWA, then go home and pop your own corn in your head or in

bed, sharing that hopping, popping feeling with the one you love, open up and explode with pleasure that began in the ordinary world and snowballed into a whole bowl of special corn, a feast for two that might ultimately feed the community again. Like the look in your eyes, the tone of your voice, and the voluminousness of your body, your jokes and layers. And somewhere inside all of them was you.

I was sorry that at your funeral your family had to be protected from the words "lesbian" and "gay" and "lover" covered over by "friend." . . . I know the women's service for you . . . will correct this. I know you have not gone to your death as a partly anonymous person, it only seemed that way for a difficult moment. We are not anonymous. We are all threads in a stream of consciousness that moves and speaks and will not shut up. As in the joke about how the love that dared not speak its name now won't shut up. You probably heard that one and laughed at it.

—excerpt of letter from
Fran Winant to community

Farewell, Elsa Gidlow,

By Celeste West [excerpts]

Poet-philosopher and lesbian-feminist pioneer Elsa Gidlow died peacefully, June 8, 1986, in her mountain retreat, "Druid Heights," in the California redwoods. Born in England, in 1898, she immigrated with her family of nine to a French Canadian village. Raised in privation, she was mainly self-educated, allowing her what she called, "the untutored space to Be." Leaving Montreal art circles for Manhattan in 1920, Elsa became poetry editor for *Person's Magazine*. She sailed to San Francisco in 1926 with her older, aristocratic lover, Violet Henry-Anderson ("Tommy") with whom she lived until Tommy died.

Elsa led the precarious career of a freelance journalist, while often supporting family and others. In the 50s, she began building Druid Heights with her lover of 10 years, Isabel Quallo. It became a pilgrimage for women throughout the country. Of Elsa's large body of poetry and prose, 5 of her 13 books remain in print, including her luminous love poetry, *Sapphic Songs*.

She was North America's first published writer of a poetry volume openly celebrating lesbian love (1923). She was a radical feminist of the first and second waves, as well as an activist prosecuted by McCarthyites. Just before she died, she completed *ELSA: I Come with My Songs* (Booklegger Press), the first full-life, explicitly lesbian autobiography, a magnificent "portrait of the artist as an old woman." Elsa insisted her life was her art: "We consider the artist a special sort of person. It is more likely that each of us is a special sort of artist."

A "circle of care" was formed on May 12, when 87-year-old Elsa had an incapacitating stroke. Nine friends scheduled their lives to keep vigil with her at home and coordinate professional care. Elsa's "living will" forbade any attempt to interfere with the natural cycle of death. Elsa thus died as she lived: with grace, dignity, clarity—and Capricornian earthiness. In clarifying Elsa's last wishes, she shot back a fine zen koan: "Elsa, when you are gone . . ." "Where am I going?"

(Memorial donations may be made to the "Druid Heights Trust For Women Artists," Box 426, Larkspur, CA 94939. (415) 924-3822.



The Lesbian Herstory Archives banner and friends assemble at Adam Clayton Powell Plaza in Harlem, New York City, 1986, for an Anti-Apartheid March. (Photo © 1986 Morgan Gwenwald)

The Way We Were: Voices From Our Past

We are introducing a new column entitled "The Way We Were." It will contain excerpts from correspondence, diaries, essays and other documents that pertain to Lesbian experiences prior to Stonewall. We hope to capture both vivid and ordinary moments in the lives of women who represent our varied roots in the past. In so doing not only will their words be preserved for the future but they will also help shed light and provide perspective on our current lives.

Contributions are encouraged, so why not re-read some of your old letters and diaries or speak to friends with pre-1970 experiences. You need not identify the author but please include a short introduction which provides a context for the passages.

In 1975 I returned to my parents' home for Thanksgiving. They had also invited an old friend whom I vaguely remembered from my childhood. She was a woman with whom my father had worked and was almost 70 years old. There was absolutely no question in my mind that she was a dyke and I was thrilled by the realization. We had a lovely time together that day and began a correspondence which spanned about two years, after which it was physically too difficult for her to write. I last spoke to her on her 80th birthday and she sounded

as full of life as always. She died a few months later.

Following are excerpts from a few of her precious letters, written in 1976, when she was 70 years old and living out West. The entire correspondence is preserved at the Archives.

I've enjoyed the cards you've sent, and loved hearing of your trip to Northern California and San Francisco! How wonderful. My reaction was the same some 45 years ago when I first laid eyes on that magnificent country. As I recall it was in 1930 that three of us took a 10,000 mile auto trip in a Model A Ford roadster with rumble seat and most of the roads were still gravel. I don't suppose we drove more than 45 miles an hour—from Cleveland, Ohio to the west down the Columbia River Highway to San Fran., took in some 6-7 national parks, including Mesa Verde [sic]. Naturally, we had a glorious time—and have shared our memories over the years, and have revisited many of the sights of that memorable trip! . . .

Sorry about the uneasy time around New Year's when Debbie's parents visited you. As one becomes truly comfortable with one's sexuality, loves another and is loved in return, comments by those more constricted, roll over like so much fluff! . . .

Archives Banner Marks Ongoing Lesbian Presence

The Archives banner bearing the words "Lesbian Herstory Archives" and "In Memory of the Voices We Have Lost" was lovingly made by volunteers in 1977. Since then it has led our growing contingent at every NYC Lesbian and Gay Pride March. We had over 200 women marching with us this year.

We have also attended many other marches, demonstrations and conferences: U.S. out of Central America March in D.C., Anti-Apartheid March, National Gay Rights March on Washington, Anti-Nuclear Rally at Central Park, Pro-Choice rallies, and countless spontaneous demonstrations.

Often only two or three women are available to get the banner to an event, but once there we are soon joined by other Lesbians, both old friends and new. The banner is many times the most visible indication of a Lesbian presence at some of these events, and serves as a rallying point.

We always make an effort to get the banner out on the streets . . . so that the presence of Lesbians everywhere—from the past and present—will be felt. We invite you to join us whenever you see the Archives banner. It is your banner.

The result of all this action, is a somewhat tattered and dingy banner . . . so we are making plans to make a new one and retire our original banner to the Archives collection. We hope if we start planning now that we will find volunteers, materials, and a design so that it will be ready for next year's Gay Pride March. If you'd like to help on this project, or have design ideas please contact LHA. ▽

As for coupling being a function of society, or being innate, I find an either/or position not one easily taken, but rather that circumstances, feelings, caring which do lead to satisfying coupling need to be experienced as well as described, and analyzed, too, I dare say, before it can be labeled. In retrospect, I suppose one can view relationships (long since ended, if coupling was a meaningful expression) as both a function as well as being innate. Thank heavens I was one in my generation who both loved and enjoyed sex. Many of my peers were not so fortunate. ▽



Three views of Mabel Hampton: (above) with Joan Nestle in 1984 at Gay Pride Day, NYC (Photo © 1984 Morgan Gwenwald); (upper right) boating with a friend in Nantucket in 1944; (lower right) in 1919 when she was 17.

Mabel Hampton—Lesbian Herstory Archives Goodwill Ambassador: “Keep Up With It”

Mabel May Hampton, Lesbian Herstory Archives ambassador extraordinaire, continues to be a highly sought after guest in our Lesbian and gay communities. In the past year and a half Mabel:

- received an award from the Harlem Metropolitan Community Church, NYC, for special recognition of her excellent contributions to Black/Lesbian/Gay Pride (Feb. 1985);
- appeared in “Before Stonewall,” a gay film released in 1985;
- was a speaker at the National Coalition of Black Gays Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo. (Nov., 1985);
- attended the Men of All Colors Together Conference, NYC (July, 1986);
- began work on her memoirs as an Archives project with Joan Nestle.

Mabel, now 84 years old, has been “in the life” as long as she can remember. Her compassion and wit impress all who know her. It is not unusual for people to come up to Mabel at conferences thrilled to be meeting such a fine woman. Her presence is especially powerful as an older, Black Lesbian.

Mabel is an excellent traveler—often with more stamina than her much younger companions. She flew in a plane for the first time to the St. Louis conference and loved it. By the time she flew to Cleveland, her sec-

ond flight, she was a pro. As Mabel puts it “I like to look at all the people—they keep me going.” And does she go! In Cleveland, for example, her day began with an early breakfast at the home of her kind and generous host. Then, on she went to the conference where she answered questions from the audience after a showing of “Before Stonewall.” Immediately following, she participated in a workshop on Older Lesbians and Gays. In the evening, after dinner at a local restaurant with some Ohio women, Mabel attended a high spirited women’s music performance. Many of us would be ready for a good night’s sleep after such a day, but not Mabel! As she left the concert and walked out into the warm Spring evening under a gorgeous full moon, she asked “Do you girls want to go to the dance?”

Mabel has refined her style with audiences to a fine art. She first “gets her balance” by thinking about what they’re going to ask and what she’s going to say. When the questions begin, if she doesn’t know the answer right away —“I have an alibi—I say I didn’t hear the question—that gives me a chance to think while they repeat the question.” Mabel knows she can expect certain questions from the audience. “They always want to know when I started, how I met other wo-

men and of course, about relationships—I was with Lillian 40 years and they all want to know about that.” Audiences love to hear about the practical aspects of Mabel’s relationship, such as “Did you and Lillian have a joint checking account?” (Yes!)

If Mabel is asked, she may delight the audience with a song from her days on stage. Her rendition of “My Buddy” brought a crowd of 300 to their feet with a rousing ovation in Cleveland. And, of course, there is always great interest in Mabel’s life today. Mabel tells of her large fourth floor walk-up in the Bronx, her outings with *eight* different Senior Citizen groups to places such as the casinos of Atlantic City, her membership in Eastern Star, her participation in SAGE activities (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) and her special place in the Lesbian Herstory Archives family.

Mabel touches the hearts of those fortunate enough to meet and listen to her everywhere she goes. When asked about her approach to life Mabel’s advice is to “continue the good work—you’ve got to keep up with it.” She is truly a brilliant example of keeping up with it. In fact, she’s usually ahead of it. How does she feel about future travels?—“I’m ready to go wherever they want me!”. ▽

A Message From the Archives Coordinators on Recent Changes

During the last year and a half, all of us involved with LHA went through a process of personal and archival changes that have affected our personal lives. Judith Schwarz moved from Washington, D.C. in 1983 to Deb Edel's NYC apartment, six blocks away from the LHA apartment, doing coordinator duties and trying to adjust to the city. Deb and Joan Nestle were two of the co-founders, and the Archives has always been part of their daily lives: welcoming thousands of visitors, answering the phone, handling, cataloging and shelving the thousands upon thousands of pieces of paper, tapes, photos, t-shirts and so many other precious items.

In July, 1985, Judith moved to Joan's apartment, into the small back pantry behind the kitchen. This was the first LHA room (from 1974—1978). Deb moved back into her old apartment, retaining her work as co-ordinator and her loving relationship with Joan, Judith and the other volunteers. A major overhaul of the six-room Archives apartment began. Despite the falling plaster and dingy walls we were reluctant to even temporarily close LHA. But both the Archives and Judith needed more space. (So, what else is new in Manhattan?)

We decided to move the library and manuscript collection from the second bedroom where it had been since 1979, and make that Judith's room. Then, except for Joan's room, the rest

of the apartment was turned over to the needs of the Archives. Easier said than done. A team of Amazon Autumn N.J. Lesbians, and Manhattan, Bronx and Brooklyn faithful volunteers joined together for three months of moving, plastering, painting and cleaning. Thousands of books and other items were boxed, moved, then moved again as we worked around the rooms. It was a real mess, especially last October, when New York experienced a major hurricane scare. The living room, dining room and second bedroom were torn apart; everything was in boxes and under plastic drop-cloths. Judith camped out high above street level in Joan's room with the telephone nearby, listening to news reports and the strengthening gusts of wind beating through the worn window frames before the storm finally died down to a dull roar.

Now, the renovation is complete and looks great. The space is freshly plastered and painted, with new windows and an air conditioner that adds light and comfort. Tall steel shelves of books line the living room, with periodical boxes in the front entryway and hall. The "Special Collections" of manuscripts, letters and diaries are located throughout the house. Ten file cabinets, the computer and printer fill the dining room along with the large dining/work table. The original Archives room now houses the copy machine, a desk, and new materials waiting to be pro-

cessed. Photographs, posters and paintings cover all available wall space.

The t-shirts went to Brooklyn, to be stored at Beth and Jan's house. Deb's apartment has a small room now containing tapes and graphics. We also rent a temperature-controlled vault for the out-takes from "Silent Pioneers," "Neighborhood Voices," home-videos and movies, and commercial films by or about Lesbians. Duplicates of items in the collection are housed in two storage rooms in the neighborhood. When we hold work parties and two dozen women come to help process new materials, there is barely room to move. We want to begin microfilming precious parts of the collection that are rapidly falling to the ravages of time, but there is no room left to even set up a microfilm camera.

We are very lucky to live with the Archives on a daily basis. No one knows that better than we. But all living things need room to grow including the Lesbian Herstory Archives. With your help, LHA will have a home soon. The collections will be housed in one place available by public transportation, and the microfilming, cataloging, and other projects can be done without having to constantly clear materials away. When this happens "At Homes" can actually be held once again within this energized, empowering environment. ▽

—Deborah Edel, Joan Nestle and Judith Schwarz, Coordinating Committee of the Lesbian Herstory Archives

THANK YOU! To all the friends who have donated material and time to the Archives and to the many authors and publishers who have sent us copies of their works. A Special Thanks to the following:

The Amazon Autumn Committee ▽ SAGE ▽ Alix ▽ Audre ▽ Chocolate ▽ TeNaj ▽ Bonnie ▽ Frog ▽ Brooks ▽ Jacquelyn ▽ Kay Marion ▽ Jewelle ▽ Toronto Women's Press
Furies Collective ▽ Lesbian Defense Fund ▽ The Gathering ▽ Boston Women's Health Book Collective ▽ GCN Prisoner Project ▽ Womenspace Bookstore ▽ Silent
Pioneers Project ▽ Helaine Victoria Press ▽ Lesbian Center Madison, WI ▽ New Women's Times ▽ Neighborhood Voices ▽ Jacqueline ▽ G.L.A.S. ▽ New American
Library ▽ Beacon Press ▽ Blue ▽ Luna ▽ Jackie ▽ Word Weavers ▽ Eric ▽ Michiyo ▽ Mooneyan ▽ Marjorie ▽ Hillary ▽ Heron Press ▽ Avon Books ▽ Her Books
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