

Valley Women's History Collaborative Mission Statement

The VWHC's purpose is to find, share and preserve contemporary local women's history through a collaboration between those who have participated in this history and those who have knowledge and other resources to contribute. The initial 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. We are documenting the period from 1968 to the present in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties of Western Massachusetts. This includes work done in alliance with others.

We feel a particular urgency in this task as members of our communities are aging and dying, or moving to other parts of the country taking their knowledge and stories with them and/or discarding critical documents which would help researchers and activists learn from the past. Since our project will be a community-based effort we will be employing the skills and resources of myriad professional and community women.

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Acknowledgments

Portions of this text are drawn or adapted from the Society of American Archivists. The SAA website (www.archivists.org) contains additional information that may be of use to potential donors. We would like to thank Allison Bell who donated her graphic design skills in the production of this brochure and Five Colleges Inc. for the funding necessary for its publication. All photographs courtesy of the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

A Guide to Donating Your Papers

The Documentation Strategy

If people across the state and nation know little else about western Massachusetts, they may know that this area has cultivated, since the 1960s, an unusually vibrant flowering of the women's movement and has witnessed the evolution of a thriving lesbian community with few parallels. As such, it is a critically important chapter of both Massachusetts' and national history. Since the women's movement and related lesbian movement have profoundly transformed culture

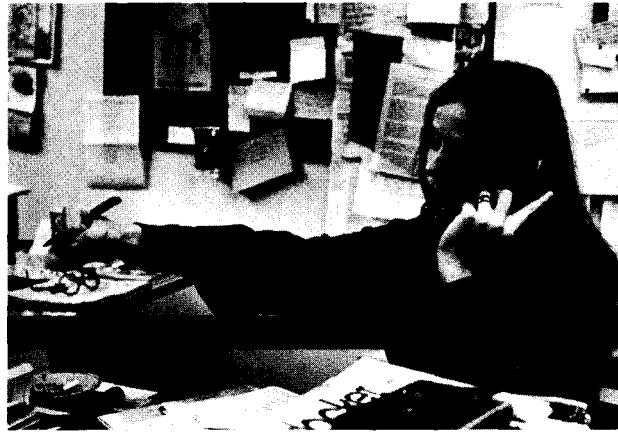
and society, their histories must be collected fully and carefully for use by both present and future scholars as well as by individuals and communities eager to understand their own past experience. It is our aim to help preserve those materials by providing individuals with useful information on the donation of these important documents for their ongoing preservation. Several local repositories, public and private, large and small, with varying missions, have agreed to cooperate in documenting the Valley's women's movement and lesbian history. Ultimately, the VWHC will produce a comprehensive guide that will lead researchers to relevant materials in these various repositories.

Archives, Manuscripts, and the Public

Historical understanding depends first and foremost on the preservation of documents. Through letters, diaries, and unpublished writings of many types, and also through the audible and visual records of recent times, researchers have been able to study and understand much about the history of women, families, communities, businesses, and organizations, the history of specific events and broader societal trends, and the history of the United States in general.

Letters, diaries, photos, and other material collected over the years give vital and unique information regarding your life or the history of your community. And while these papers obviously matter to you, they may be important to your community, state, or nation, too. Whether or not people attain any degree of fame, they contribute to the heritage of a certain place and time. When you donate your personal or family papers to a manuscript repository, your history becomes a part of your community's collective memory.

Photograph,
Valley
Women's
Center
Records



Manuscript repositories - also called archives, historical societies, and special collections libraries - carefully preserve collections of written, visual, and audible material created by individuals and organizations both past and present. Such repositories ensure that personal and family papers will be available for research by everyone for generations to come.

A manuscript repository is run by professionals - archivists, curators, or librarians - whose first priority is the preservation of historical materials. They can discuss with you the historical value of your papers, and advise you on which repository would be best for your papers. In addition, once you donate papers the staff will continue to work with you as you locate or identify other materials to donate.

If the materials you have correspond with a repository's collecting mission, and you agree to donate them, you stand to gain many benefits. A repository can provide the papers with environmentally-controlled, secure storage and can oversee their proper handling and use. Equally important, it can provide research access to the contents of the papers, both to you and to the scholarly public. In future years, researchers - including students, teachers, professors, genealogists, journalists and many others - may thus find your papers both interesting and of value to their work.

Most repositories accept donations of as little as a single item and as large as dozens of boxes. Material need not be organized; it need not be "old"; and it need not relate to a famous individual, event, or organization in order for it to be historically significant. Generally, however, repositories are more interested in a coherent body of material rather than individual items. Photos, tapes, and films should be identified. Repositories usually ask that historical material not be mailed or dropped off without first consulting with the staff; a repository must evaluate all material offered and ask the donor to sign a donation agreement.

about meeting of social space was
 - Separating office & social space was
 discussed. It seems that in the long
 run read space needs and how
 professional organization can help and how
 they (we) do or don't relate to practice
 and how this affects relating to practice
 * is it appropriate to separate office
 1- The separability of office needs to be down
 position & work. What needs to be down
 2- separate social space
 new social space needs to be down
 3- have social space perhaps needed for all.
 Decision to merge space list & library upstairs.
 social space to be shared including kitchen
 space. (This was done the following
 Friday 7/12/12)

- The issue of men in the center was
 discussed. Should men have access
 to center to contribute to services?
 This was discussed. A rather touching
 story about dead and opposing men.
 - Do men have with more traditional
 ways of thinking openness in a society
 would include men.

Minutes, Valley Women's Center Records

be transferred to a repository or manuscript library and determining an arrangement that will best suit the needs of future researchers. Because the research value of records may be diminished if items are removed or if the records are rearranged, donors are encouraged to contact the repository staff before weeding, discarding, or reorganizing their papers and records.

I'm not yet near "retirement" age, and am still active in many of the areas and issues reflected in my papers; isn't it too soon to be considering the disposition of my papers? When is an appropriate time to begin talking to repositories, and when would I transfer the actual materials?

The commitment can be made much sooner than the actual gift. It's best to talk to someone as soon as it is convenient, but you need not send things for a long time. You can send things when you're ready (you might, for example, part with childhood materials early, and send more active records later). Meanwhile, alert your family to your wishes, and put a copy of your Certificate of Gift in a safe deposit box along with your will, deeds, and other vital records.

I have some materials left from my activities with a local women's organization, but other members also may have things; how should I proceed?

Contact a representative of one of the participating Valley repositories. If what you have is the only copy of a document generated by the organization, she/he will help you find out which local repository preserves the records of the organization and may advise you to donate this portion of the material to that repository. If what you have consists entirely of copies of newsletters or meeting minutes that were distributed to members of organization, the material may remain part of your own papers and can go wherever you decide to place them.

Once I'm ready to start talking to archivists, how do I choose which repository to approach?

The most important thing when donating your papers to an archive is that you feel confident that this repository will provide a good home for your papers, and that the archivists there will be careful curators of them. At the same time,

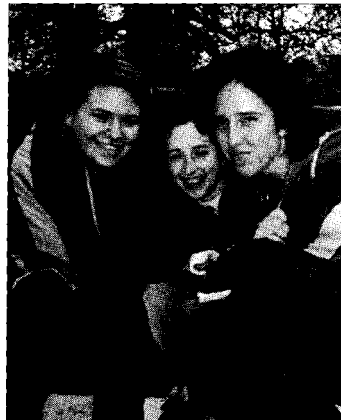
donors should be aware that different repositories have different collecting missions and priorities. What you want to find is a good match between your needs and the repository's strengths. To get started, the first thing you should do is read the descriptions of participating archives provided at the end of this brochure, noticing which repositories' collecting priorities best match your materials. Next you might want to gather further information, from institutional website or by visits if possible. When choosing an archive, some issues you might want to consider are: where are they located and what hours are they open - do you find them to be accessible? What kinds of descriptions does the institution provide of their collections - do you find them to be useful? When will they be able to "process" your papers, that is, make them available to the public? What preservation and conservation resources are available -will fragile items be properly handled and stored? And finally, what kinds of security measures are in place - will your papers be well cared for?

Once in an archive, who will have access to these materials?

Access to donated papers is governed by the repository's written policies regarding availability, photo duplication, and publication. A prospective donor should become familiar with such policies and discuss any special needs or concerns with the curator before completing the donation agreement.

I'm concerned that there may be information in my papers that shouldn't be made public. Can I remove items that worry me, or black out sensitive parts?

One of the primary responsibilities of an archivist is to work with donors who worry that they have sensitive materials in their papers. As a result, they have developed an array of strategies to protect people's privacy while still preserving as much access to the papers as possible. Sensitive material that may exist in individual or family papers should not be removed by the donor. Instead, the donor should discuss with the archivist the possibility of restricting part of the collection to protect the privacy of the donor or others. Archivists have a number of solutions to this common concern: they can close parts of a collection to the public for a number of



Photograph, Northampton State Hospital Housing Rights Squatters, Diana Davies Papers.

years (usually enough time that any individuals mentioned will no longer be living) and they can require researchers to refrain from making public any personally-identifying information. Generally a mutually agreeable solution can be worked out between the donor and the archive.

After I donate the material, who will hold the copyright?

Copyright law is complex and fast-changing, and you should work with the repository staff to clarify issues of copyright ownership. Generally, copyright belongs to the creator of writings and other original materials (such as photos and music), but it can be legally transferred to others. Moreover, ownership of copyright is separable from ownership of the physical item (the letter or photo). Curators often ask donors to donate not only the physical papers but also any copyright in them that the donor might own. When archives own copyright, researchers in future generations will not need to track down the donor's heirs in order to quote passages from the papers in their work.

Once my papers have been given, how quickly will they be available to the public?

All of the VWHC repositories are non-profit organizations. Preparing papers for use by researchers is the most expensive operation in a repository and takes time. Sometimes, there is a significant backlog of acquisitions waiting to be "processed," that is, prepared for research. In order to facilitate that the processing of their papers, some donors make a financial contribution to the archive that will help pay for the time and skill of a manuscript processor. Although such grants are *never a* prerequisite for the acceptance of a collection, donors who are able to assist repositories by making grants toward the arrangement, cataloging, and conservation of their papers are encouraged to do so.



Pamphlet, The Women's Liberation Subject Collection

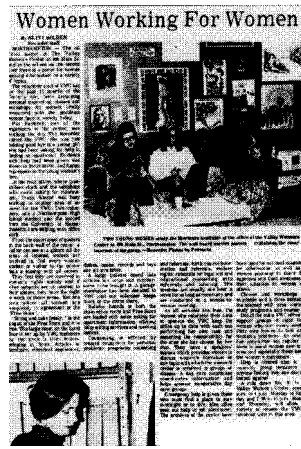
I would like to see my materials placed on display in the archive. Can I require that as part of my gift?

While archives regularly present exhibits featuring their holdings, a repository usually is not able to promise that donated materials will be placed on permanent exhibit or used in some other specific fashion as a condition of accepting the gift.

Will a repository take everything you offer?

Although a repository may not accept everything that is offered (whether because of staff and space constraints or because the papers are not within the collecting mission of the particular institution), it welcomes the chance to review all of your material. If it is not appropriate for one repository, there may be another one to which it could be referred. Some material, though, may be of more sentimental than historical value and should be kept by the individual or family itself. Archivists can best assist you if you make an appointment in advance. For contact information, see repository descriptions at end of brochure.

The web site of the Society of American Archivists (www.archivists.org) or its email address info@archivists.org can also provide you with suggestions.

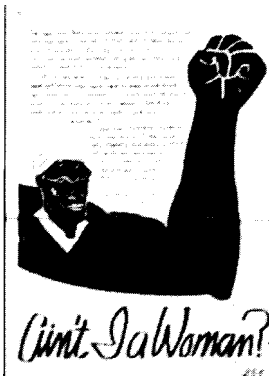


Newspaper clipping, Valley Women's Center Records

Is there any financial benefit to this donation for tax purposes?

In certain circumstances, it may be possible for a donor to take a tax deduction for the donation of a manuscript collection to a repository. Donors are encouraged to speak with their tax accountants or attorneys about this possibility. Curators cannot give tax advice, nor are they permitted to appraise the monetary value of a collection. The curator may be able to provide donors with a list

of local manuscript appraisers who can (for a fee) make monetary appraisals for the donor. It is up to the donor to arrange for and bear the cost of any such appraisal, although the repository will make the collection available to an appraiser hired by the donor.



Poster, Valley Women's Center Records

I've read in the news about papers being purchased by an archive. Is it possible that a repository will pay me for my papers?

While the papers of nationally-prominent poets, novelists, and other literary figures are sometimes purchased, the paper of social activists and historical figures of equal stature



Poster, Valley Women's Center Records

— both women and men - are almost always acquired as donations.

I'd like to see my materials made available to others, but I'd like to retain ownership of them. Is that possible?

Most archives can only invest materials and labor in the preservation of items which they own. Therefore, most archives accept donations of individual or family papers but will not accept such material on deposit or on loan. Donors are asked to sign a donation agreement, which formally signifies that the papers become the actual property of the archives.

How do I choose where to donate my papers?

The Valley is particularly rich in archival resources. The VWHC encourages the best use of all of them to make this history accessible locally. We are working toward strengthening existing collections as well as developing new options, building collaboration between, as well as with, Valley repositories. Where something is housed is not as important as the fact that records are preserved; our longterm goal is to produce a guide to this history that links all existing Valley collections.

Each repository has its own collecting mission, which may or may not relate to your papers. In order to help donors choose appropriate places to deposit their papers, the VWHC is collecting mission statements that describe local repositories' various policies, but donors are free to approach the repository of their choice at any time. In some cases collecting areas overlap, and so there may be several repositories that would each be an appropriate place to donate your papers. A list of currently participating repositories is included at the end of this guide.

As you review your options, there are a few general ideas you should consider. For example, are there papers or records related to yours that are already on deposit somewhere? Archivists as a rule try not to split or duplicate collections. If a person's or organization's papers are already collected somewhere (or future arrangements made), any related papers you have should probably join them. If you don't know whether any such materials have already been collected by a Valley repository, the archivists participating in this effort will be able to help you find out. If you or the group you've been part of have been associated with an institution that has its own archives - such as the University of Massachusetts and all the area colleges - then you should consider approaching that institution first. Are you an alum, staff member or faculty of one of the

Five Colleges? If so, then that institution is most likely to be interested in preserving your papers.

Finally, you may wish that your papers remain in your local community. Generally, local libraries and historical societies have few resources and are very limited as to what sorts of materials they can accept or the access they can provide. If your local repository is unable to accept archival materials, the guide to Valley collections, once available, can be placed on deposit locally so that it will lead people in your community to your papers, wherever they reside.

**Manuscript
Repositories
of the Pioneer
Valley**

As part of a project funded in part by a grant from the Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the VWHC contacted all of the repositories, including the libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives, in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties. We asked which of these would be interested in collecting archival materials pertaining to the related histories of their feminist and lesbian communities since 1968. Below are the repositories who are eager to accept such material, along with their collecting strengths and contact information. While it is not the VWHC's role to act as brokers between record holders and repositories, we are available to help potential donors consider their various options.

Amherst College Library Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College, Amherst:

Archives and Special Collections at Amherst College holds materials related to Amherst College and its history. The collection serves as the official repository for College records, including those pertaining to academic programs and courses of instruction, academic departments and committees, and administrators and administrative offices. The department also collects a wide range of historical and biographical material. It welcomes letters, diaries, photographs, scrapbooks and academic work of alumni and alumnae which chronicle day to day life on campus, as well as personal and family papers of alumni and alumnae, faculty, administrators, and others associated with the College.

The Archives and Special Collections is located in the Robert Frost Library on the main campus quadrangle. The reading room, College History Room and exhibition area are located on Level A, at the base of the main lobby stairway. The collections are open Monday-Friday, 9-noon and 1-4, year round; they are closed on some national holidays. Contact college archivist Daria D'Arienzo at (413) 542-2299 or (413) 542-2068. www.amherst.edu/-archives

Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, 220 State Street (at the Quadrangle), Springfield:

The Connecticut Valley Historical Museum's Library and Archives has two collecting missions; it serves as a regional resource for New England and French Canadian Genealogy, as well as being the repository for Local History materials for the city of Springfield. In that capacity, it actively collects materials which document the organizations, activities and individual lives of the citizens of Springfield, and the surrounding area, from settlement period through present day. Collections pertaining to women's history currently include the YWCA, the Springfield Women's Club, the Springfield League of Women Voters, the Junior League, the Cosmopolitan Club, and the records of the Greater Springfield Business and Professional Women. Personal papers include those of Springfield's first woman mayor, Mary Hurley, and other local figures.

The Museum and Library Hours are Wednesday through Sunday, noon-4, though during school vacation week their hours change to Tuesday through Sunday, noon-5. There is a \$3 fee to use the library. Admission is free on Fridays to Springfield residents with a current Springfield Library card. Springfield students and teachers receive free admission with a specially-validated Springfield Library card. Contact Margaret Humberston at (413) 263-6800, extension 311. www.amherst.edu/-archives/

Historic Northampton, 46 Bridge Street, Northampton:

Over the last century, Historic Northampton has gathered a collection of approximately 50,000 objects. These objects include photographs and daguerrotypes, documents and manuscripts from the 17th to the 20th centuries, fine art, furniture, ceramics, glass, metals, toys, tools and implements, and an important collection of textiles and costumes. Together the collections represent the history of Northampton, and to some extent, the Connecticut River Valley, from the time of its earliest inhabitants, the Native Americans, to the present day. Many of the collections have item level finding aids available in the

Reading Room at Historic Northampton. The 17th, 18th and most of the 19th century collections are cataloged in a searchable database. The Museum is open from Tuesday through Friday from 10-4 and on weekends from noon-4. Historic House tours are available from noon-4 on Saturdays and Sundays. Researchers are welcome by appointment. The Museum is closed on Mondays and holidays. The Museum Shop is open weekends from noon-4. For more information call (413) 584-6011, fax (413) 584-7956. www.historic-northampton.org



Button, Peace Collection

**Jones Library, Special Collections,
43 Amity Street, Amherst:**

The Special Collections Department of the Jones Library collects in the fields of local and regional history, genealogy and Amherst authors. As space permits, the Library desires primarily to acquire gifts of the papers of persons engaged in the governmental, political, economic, social, religious, literary or artistic life of the Town of Amherst. Secondly, it desires gifts of materials documenting the history of the Connecticut River Valley and of western Massachusetts; and thirdly that of the rest of Massachusetts. It generally restricts its focus to documentary materials and usually refers artifacts and fine art to museums and historical associations.

The hours that the Special Collections department is open are as follows: Monday 10-1, 2-5; Tuesday-Friday 10-5; Saturday 10-1, 2-5. Special Collections are closed Sundays. Appointments for conducting research are not necessary but are strongly encouraged. Call (413) 256-4090.

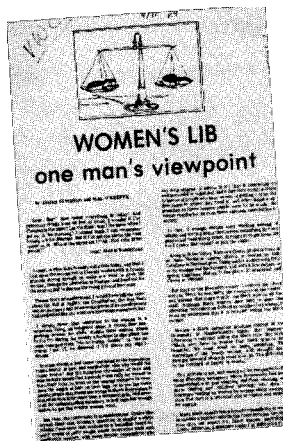
www.joneslibrary.org



Poster, Valley Women's Center
Records

**Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections,
South Hadley:**

The Mount Holyoke College Archives collects records and other material that reflect the history of Mount Holyoke College. The Archives collects official college records, including, but not limited to, the records of administrative offices; academic departments; faculty, administrative and student committees; faculty and student clubs; college and student publications; photographs and slides; memorabilia and other ephemeral materials. The Mount Holyoke College Special Collections collects, although not exclusively, rare books and manuscripts. Rare books accepted into the Special Collections must reflect one of the major subject areas in which the collection already has a strength. Manuscript materials actively collected by Special Collections include: the personal papers and other non-print or ephemeral materials of selected alumnae and faculty, the records and other non-print or ephemeral materials of other institutions and organizations related to the history of, or disciplines taught by, the College. While the repository's primary purpose is to serve the Mount Holyoke Community, their collections are open to the general public. They recommend that all visitors call or write in advance to make an appointment. When classes are



Newspaper clipping, Valley Women's Center Records

in session, the archives are open from 9-5 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and Friday; on Wednesdays they are open 9-9. During the summer and for most of January, the collections are open from 9-5, Monday-Friday. For more information contact Peter Carini at (413) 538-2441. www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/library/arch/index

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield:

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library has acted as a repository of books and manuscripts relating to Deerfield, Franklin County, and the Connecticut River Valley since 1880. Extensive holdings of papers representing more than 150 families from the

Deerfield area and western Massachusetts comprise one of the greatest strengths of the library. These collections range in size from two or three items to more than 120 boxes. The library owns over 500 account books and ledgers kept by merchants, professionals, farmers, craftsmen, and business firms. These documents, created by people in Deerfield and other Franklin County towns, range in date from the early 18th to the mid-20th century. A collection of 200 diaries provides an intimate and often detailed view of life in an earlier day. Represented are the writings of 80 individuals: men, women, and children who recorded their personal and family concerns, and their activities as farmers, politicians, artists, physicians, ministers, craftsmen, and travelers. An extensive miscellany of 17th- to 19th-century Deerfield town records and documents from other western Massachusetts towns provide additional research opportunities. Finally, the Collection is rich in material pertaining to women's history, including diaries, correspondence, scrapbooks, and photographs from the 18th to the 20th century, as well as the records of local women's organizations, including the records of the AAUW of Franklin County Records (1935-78) and the Deerfield Women's Club Records into the 1990s. The Library is located at 6 Memorial Street, and is open Monday-Friday, 9-5. Contact: David Bosse, Librarian, (413) 775-7126; dbosse@historic-deerfield.org

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton:

The nation's oldest women's history collection, the Sophia Smith Collection preserves and makes accessible the historical experience of women in the United States and abroad from the colonial era to the present. Subject strengths

include birth control, women's rights, suffrage, the contemporary women's movement, U.S. women working abroad, the arts (especially theatre), the professions (especially journalism and social work), and middle-class family life in nineteenth- and twentieth-century New England. It actively documents Valley women's history; regional women and women's organizations include the papers of Frances Crowe, Margaret Holt, Diana Davies, Pat Schneider and Betty Bell, and the records of Tapestry, Inc., Sojourn, Necessities/Necesidades, the Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts, and the Northampton League of Women Voters. The Sophia Smith Collection and College Archives are open for research daily 10-5 Monday-Friday, Wednesday evenings 5-9, and selected Sunday afternoons during the academic year from 1-4. (call for exact dates). Reference and paging services are limited on Sundays; please make your first visit on a weekday if possible. Contact Sherrill Redmon at (413) 585-2970. www.smith.edu/libraries/ssc

Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst:

As the principal public archival repository in the western part of the state, the department acquires, preserves, and makes available material pertaining to the history of Massachusetts and the region that might otherwise be lost or destroyed. In particular, the collections focus upon papers of people representing the broadly cultural - political, social, economic, literary, or artistic - life of the Commonwealth; organization records documenting the social history of the people of Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on the western part of the state; documentation of the history of the labor movement in Massachusetts; documentation of the state's economic development, especially in the Connecticut River Valley region; papers of people prominent in African-American culture and politics; personal papers and organizational records documenting the history of immigrants to Massachusetts, especially Southeast Asian and East European. Such historical manuscript collections relevant to the VWHC project include the records of PFLAG, Valley Women's Union, Amherst League of Women Voters, oral histories of 1960s regional social justice movements participants, and the Haymarket People's Fund Western Mass. Board. Additionally, the University Archives holds materials important to the Valley women's movement and lesbian history, such as the records of Everywoman's Center, the Women's Studies Program, and People's Gay Alliance. The repository, located on the campus of UMass-Amherst on the 25th floor of the Du Bois Library, is open to the public Monday-Friday 10am-3pm. Contact Melissa Waterworth at (413) 545-2780. www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/spec