
Finding aid of the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection

Collection number: Coll2008-069

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives
Los Angeles, California

Processed by:

Loni Shibuyama

Date Completed:

December 17, 2008

Encoded by:

Loni Shibuyama

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection

Dates: 1962-2007

Collection number: Coll2008-069

Creator: Gittings, Barbara, 1932-2007

Creator: Lahusen, Kay Tobin, 1932-

Collection Size: 1.1 linear feet.(3 archive cartons).

Repository: ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Los Angeles, California 90007

Abstract: News clippings, journal articles, pamphlets, flyers, printed materials from activist organizations, a videocassette and a DVD, relating to pioneering lesbian activists Barbara Gittings and her partner of 46 years, Kay Tobin Lahusen. Active from the 1960s, Gittings marched in the first gay rights demonstrations at the White House, Pentagon and Independence Hall; she worked with Frank Kameny to persuade the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders; and she headed the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association from 1971 to 1986. The collection contains articles by and about Gittings and Lahusen; subject files covering a variety of topics, such as religion, mental health and education; and printed material from several activist organizations, including the Gay Task Force of the ALA, the Homophile Action League, the Mattachine Society, the Gay Activist Alliance and the National Gay Task Force.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish materials must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives as the physical owner. Researchers must also obtain clearance from the holder(s) of any copyrights in the materials. Note that ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold the copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials directly from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection , Coll2008-069, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Kay Tobin Lahusen, 2007.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, December 17, 2008.

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Biography

Barbara Gittings was born on July 31, 1932, in Vienna, Austria, where her father was stationed as a United States diplomat. Returning to the U.S., the family eventually settled in Wilmington, Delaware. She entered Northwestern University and soon came out as a lesbian. She left Northwestern after her freshman year, settled in Philadelphia and supported herself with clerical jobs.

In 1958 she began her long career as a gay rights advocate when she founded the first East Coast chapter of Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) and later edited its national lesbian magazine, *The Ladder*, from 1963 - 1966. It was around this time when Gittings met the woman who would be her partner for 46 years, Kay Tobin Lahusen. In the mid-1960s, Gittings marched in the first gay demonstrations at the White House, Pentagon and Independence Hall. During the 1970s, Gittings became a charter member of the boards of directors for both the National Gay Task Force (1973) and the Gay Rights National Lobby (1976). At this time, she was also active in the American Psychiatric Association, running gay exhibits at APA conferences and working with prominent gay rights activist Dr. Frank Kameny to persuade the Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Though she is not a librarian, Gittings became involved in the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association, the first gay caucus in a professional association. From 1971 to 1986, she headed the group and campaigned to get positive gay and lesbian materials into libraries and out to users and to end discrimination against gay library workers and patrons. In 2003, the ALA awarded her with a lifetime honorary membership.

Kay Tobin Lahusen is a photojournalist, writer and activist who was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1932. She later moved to Boston, where she worked in the reference library of the Christian Science Monitor.

Her life as a gay rights activist began in 1961 when she joined the Daughters of Bilitis, where she met the woman who would become her life partner, Barbara Gittings. Soon after, she moved to Philadelphia to live with Gittings. During the mid-1960s, Lahusen marched in the earliest picket lines for gay rights, and in 1970, she became one of the founding members of the Gay Activists Alliance in New York. She also worked in the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, wrote for the newspaper, *Gay*, and was active in the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association. In 1972, she co-authored a book of biographies of gay activists, *The Gay Crusaders* (1972).

Throughout their lives, Gittings and Lahusen continued to advocate for gay rights causes. Their 46-year partnership ended on February 18, 2007 when Gittings died of breast cancer at the age of 74 at their home in Pennsylvania.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection contains news clippings, journal articles, flyers, pamphlets, a DVD videodisc, a VHS videocassette, and other materials related to Gittings and Lahusen's activities in the gay and lesbian liberation movement. The collection is divided into two series: (1) Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Personal Materials, and (2) Organizational and Subject Files. The bulk of the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Personal Materials series consists of photocopies of their personal papers, including articles and speeches written by them; other materials include correspondence, and news clippings referencing them. The Organizational and Subject Files series contains news clippings, journal articles, a VHS videotape, a DVD videodisc, and other materials related to Gittings' work on the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association; advocacy on behalf of prominent gay rights activist Frank Kameny; public outreach and education on gay and lesbian issues; and participation in a number of gay rights organizations. The series also includes subject files on such topics as mental health and psychiatry, university education, employment discrimination, families, and religion.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Gittings, Barbara, 1932-2007

Lahusen, Kay Tobin, 1932-

Gay activists--United States--History
Gay and lesbian rights
Gay liberation movement
Gays--Civil rights
Lesbian activists
Lesbians--Civil rights

Related Material

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Gay History Papers and Photographs, Archives and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Separated Material

The following publications have been separated from the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection and entered into the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives' database:

Tobin, Kay and Randy Wicker. *The Gay Crusaders*. New York: Paperback Library, 1972.

The Advocate

Armed Forces Informer

Capitol Hill: The Newsletter of the Gay Rights National Lobby

Central Michigan Gayzette

Come Out! A Newspaper By and For the Gay Community

Concern: Newsletter of the Southern California Council on Religion and the Homophile

Connexion: UMHE

Daughters of Bilitis / New York Newsletter

Daughters of Bilitis Philadelphia Chapter Newsletter

Dorian Columns: Dorian Society of Seattle

Eastern Mattachine Magazine

Focus: Orange County

Gay Academic Union Journal: Gai Saber

The Gay Alternative

The Gay Blade

Gay Vue

Gayzette: The Weekly Philadelphia Gayzette

Homophile Action League Newsletter

Homosexual Counseling Journal: The Quarterly Journal of the Homosexual Community Counseling Center

Interchange: National Gay Student Center

The Ladder

Mattachine Midwest Newsletter

Metropolitan Community Church: Community News Calendar

Mother

Motive

New Gay Life

New York Mattachine Newsletter

On the Line: The Newsletter of the Gay Rights National Lobby

One: The Homosexual Viewpoint

One-to-One: A Lesbian / Feminist Journal of Communication

Our Community

The Phoenix: Midwest Homophile Voice

Pursuit & Symposium

Box: 1 : 1 - 10 Series 1. **Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Personal Materials 1966-2007**

Physical Description: 0.2 linear foot.

Series Scope and Content

This series consists of news clippings, correspondence, flyers, programs, typescripts, and other materials by or directly referencing Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen. The bulk of this material consists of photocopies of their personal papers, including articles and speeches written by Gittings and Lahusen, as well as programs from Gittings' memorial service.

Box 1 : 1 - 8	Barbara Gittings 1966 - 2007
Box 1 : 1	Biographical information 1994 - 2006
Box 1 : 2	Correspondence 1967 - 1974
Box 1 : 3	Flyers and programs circa 1975 - 2006
Box 1 : 4	Interviews 1981 - 2006
Box 1 : 5	Memorial service programs 2007
Box 1 : 6	Writings and speeches by Barbara Gittings 1966 - 1990
Box 1 : 7 - 8	Kay Tobin Lahusen 1970 - 2002
Box 1 : 7	Biographical information date unknown
Box 1 : 8	Articles by Kay Tobin Lahusen 1970 - 2002
Box 1 : 9 - 10	News clippings referencing Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen 1969 - 2007

Physical Description: 2 folders.

Box: 1 : 11 - 39 ; Series 2. Organizational and Subject Files 1962-2007

1 - 28 ; 3 : 1 - 3

Physical Description: 0.9 linear foot.

Series Scope and Content

This series consists of news clippings, journal articles, bibliographies, flyers, pamphlets, a VHS videocassette, a DVD videodisc, and other materials related in particular to Gittings' activities in various organizations in the gay and lesbian liberation movement, including the American Library Association's Gay Task Force, the National Gay Task Force, the Homophile Action League, as well as a number of other organizations and activist causes. The series also includes subject files on such topics as religion, university education, family, legal matters, police harassment, and mental health and psychiatry.

- Box 1 : 11 **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) 1967 - 1975**
- Box 1 : 12 **American Library Association Gay Task Force 1970 - 1988**
- Box 1 : 13 **Atlanta, City of. Proclamation: Gay Pride Day June 26, 1976**
- Box 1 : 14 **Bibliographies, book reviews and press material 1967 - 2004**
- Box 1 : 15 **Cartoons 1974 - 1978**
- Box 1 : 16 **Committee to Fight Exclusion of Homosexuals from the Armed Forces 1967 - 1969**
- Box 1 : 17 **Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) 1965 - 1974**
- Box 1 : 18 **Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) 1965 - 1970**
- Box 1 : 19 **Dignity 1971 - 1974**
- Box 1 : 20 **Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations 1967 - 1970**
- Box 1 : 21 **Employment discrimination 1964 - 1975**
- Box 1 : 22 **Essays on Homosexuality, No. 1 and 4 circa 1969 - 1970**
- Box 1 : 23 - 24 ; 3 : 2 **Film, video and media 1967 - 2005**
- 3
- Box 1 : 23 **General 1967 - 2003**
- Box 1 : 24 ; 3 : 2 - 3 **Gay Pioneers 2004**

Physical Description: 1 press kit + 1 videocassette (VHS) + 1 videodisc (DVD).

- Box 1 : 25 **Frank, Barney, State Representative for Ward 5 date unknown**
- Box 1 : 26 **Gay Academic Union (GAU) 1975**
- Box 1 : 27 **Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) 1970 - 1973**
- Box 1 : 28 **Gay Alliance Toward Equality date unknown**
- Box 1 : 29 **Gay Community Pamphlets, Vol. 1, No. 1 and 3 1975**
- Box 1 : 30 **Gay Community Services Center date unknown**
- Box 1 : 31 **Gay Liberation Front (GLF) 1970 - 1972**
- Box 1 : 32 **Gay Nurses' Alliance circa 1979**
- Box 1 : 33 **Gay pride festivals and parade flyers 1970 - 1973**
- Box 1 : 34 **Gay Support and Action Group 1974 - 1975**
- Box 1 : 35 **Homophile Action League 1969 - 1971**
- Box 1 : 36 **Janus Society date unknown**
- Box 1 : 37 **Fryer, John E., MD memorial photograph 2003**
- Box 1 : 38 **Kameny, Frank 1969 - 1971**
- Box 1 : 39 **Karlsson, Gene, Open Letter from 1965**
- Box 2 : 1 **Legislation and legal issues 1968 - 1975**
- Box 2 : 2 - 4 **Mattachine Society 1962 - 1969**
- Box 2 : 2 **Mattachine Society of New York 1965**
- Box 2 : 3 **Mattachine Society of Philadelphia 1965**
- Box 2 : 4 **Mattachine Society of Washington 1962 - 1969**
- Box 2 : 5 **Mental health and psychiatry 1964 - 1975**
- Box 2 : 6 **Minnesota Council for the Church and the Homophile 1970 - 1971**
- Box 2 : 7 **National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties date unknown**
- Box 2 : 8 **National Gay Mobilizing Center date unknown**
- Box 2 : 9 **National Gay Task Force 1969 - 1980**
- Box 2 : 10 **National Institute of Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality: Final Report and Background Papers 1972**
- Box 2 : 11 **National Organization for Women 1975**

Box 2 : 12 **North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) 1968 - 1969**
Box 2 : 13 **Parents, children and families 1973 - 1980**
Box 2 : 14 **People's Party flyer 1972**
Box 2 : 15 **Philadelphia Gay Movement Conference April 5 - 7, 1974**
Box 2 : 16 **Police harassment and entrapment circa 1971 - 1980**
Box 2 : 17 **Queens Liberation Front circa 1971**
Box 2 : 18 **Religion 1966 - 1976**
Box 2 : 19 **Society of Individual Rights (SIR) date unknown**
Box 2 : 20 **Stonewall Chorale program February 9, 1985**
Box 2 : 21 **Teachers, students and education 1970 - 1976**
Box 2 : 22 **Tretter (Jean-Nickolaus) Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies 2003 - 2006**
Box 2 : 23 - 25 **Universities 1965 - 1976**
Box 2 : 23 **Columbia University Student Homophile League 1967 - 1969**
Box 2 : 24 **"Gays on Campus," edited by J. Lee Lehmen of the National Gay Student Center for the United States
National Student Association 1975**
Box 2 : 25 **University course descriptions, student papers and educational outreach 1965 - 1976**
Box 2 : 26 **West Side Discussion Group 1967**
Box 2 : 27 **Women 1969 - 1974**
Box 2 : 28 **Leaflets and pamphlets circa 1965 - 1980**
Box 3 : 1 **News clippings 1964 - 2006**