



**BARBARA GITTINGS AND KAY TOBIN LAHUSEN
COLLECTION**

Coll2008-069

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Descriptive Summary

Title

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection

Creators

Gittings, Barbara, 1932-2007
Lahusen, Kay Tobin, 1932-

Extent

Number of containers: 3 archive cartons
Linear feet: 1.1 linear feet

Date

1962-2007

Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

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.



Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner of the material. Note that permission to publish does not constitute copyright clearance. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation

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

Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

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

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Kay Tobin Lahusen, 2007.



Processing Information

Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, December 17, 2008.

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 Collumns: 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



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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

Wicce: A Lesbian / Feminist Newspaper

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*.

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

The Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection contains news clippings, journal articles, flyers, pamphlets, a DVD, a VHS videocassette, and other materials relating 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 relating 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.

Series Description and Container List

Series 1: Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Personal Materials

Dates: 1966 - 2007

Extent: 0.2 linear foot

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 Folder

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



Series 2: Organizational and Subject Files

Dates: 1962 - 2007

Extent: 0.9 linear foot

This series consists of news clippings, journal articles, bibliographies, flyers, pamphlets, a VHS videocassette, a DVD videodisc, and other materials relating 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 Folder/Item

1	11	American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 1967 - 1975
1	12	American Library Association Gay Task Force, 1970 - 1988
1	13	Atlanta, City of. Proclamation: Gay Pride Day, June 26, 1976
1	14	Bibliographies, book reviews and press material, 1967 - 2004
1	15	Cartoons, 1974 - 1978
1	16	Committee to Fight Exclusion of Homosexuals from the Armed Forces, 1967 - 1969
1	17	Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH), 1965 - 1974
1	18	Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), 1965 - 1970
1	19	Dignity, 1971 - 1974
1	20	Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations, 1967 - 1970
1	21	Employment discrimination, 1964 - 1975
1	22	<i>Essays on Homosexuality</i> , No. 1 and 4, circa 1969 - 1970
1	23-24	
3	2-3	Film, video and other media, 1967 - 2005
1	23	General, 1967 - 2003
1	24	
3	2-3	<i>Gay Pioneers</i> [1 press kit + 1 videocassette (VHS) + 1 videodisc (DVD)], 2004
1	25	Frank, Barney, State Representative for Ward 5, date unknown
1	26	Gay Academic Union (GAU), 1975
1	27	Gay Activist Alliance (GAA), 1970 - 1973
1	28	Gay Alliance Toward Equality, date unknown
1	29	<i>Gay Community Pamphlets</i> , Vol. 1, No. 1 and 3, 1975
1	30	Gay Community Services Center, date unknown
1	31	Gay Liberation Front (GLF), 1970 - 1972
1	32	Gay Nurses' Alliance, circa 1979
1	33	Gay pride festivals and parade flyers, 1970 - 1973
1	34	Gay Support and Action Group, 1974 - 1975
1	35	Homophile Action League, 1969 - 1971
1	36	Janus Society, date unknown
1	37	Fryer, John E., MD, memorial photograph, 2003



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- 1 38 Kameny, Frank, 1969 - 1971
- 1 39 Karlsson, Gene, Open Letter from, 1965
- 2 1 Legislation and legal issues, 1968 - 1975
- 2 2-4 Mattachine Society, 1962 - 1969
 - 2 2 Mattachine Society of New York, 1965
 - 2 3 Mattachine Society of Philadelphia, 1965
 - 2 4 Mattachine Society of Washington, 1962 - 1969
- 2 5 Mental health and psychiatry, 1964 - 1975
- 2 6 Minnesota Council for the Church and the Homophile, 1970 - 1971
- 2 7 National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, date unknown
- 2 8 National Gay Mobilizing Center, date unknown
- 2 9 National Gay Task Force, 1969 - 1980
- 2 10 National Institute of Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality: Final Report and Background Papers, 1972
- 2 11 National Organization for Women, 1975
- 2 12 North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO), 1968 - 1969
- 2 13 Parents, children, and families, 1973 - 1980
- 2 14 People's Party flyer, 1972
- 2 15 Philadelphia Gay Movement Conference, April 5 - 7, 1974
- 2 16 Police harassment and entrapment, circa 1971 - 1980
- 2 17 Queens Liberation Front, circa 1971
- 2 18 Religion, 1966 - 1976
- 2 19 Society for Individual Rights (SIR), date unknown
- 2 20 Stonewall Chorale program, February 9, 1985
- 2 21 Teachers, students, and education, 1970 - 1976
- 2 22 Tretter (Jean-Nickolaus) Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies, 2003 - 2006
- 2 23-25 Universities, 1965 - 1976
 - 2 23 Columbia University Student Homophile League, 1967 - 1969
 - 2 24 "Gays on Campus," edited by J. Lee Lehman of the National Gay Student Center for the United States National Student Association, 1975
 - 2 25 University course descriptions, student papers and educational outreach, 1965 - 1976
- 2 26 West Side Discussion Group, 1967
- 2 27 Women, 1969 - 1974
- 2 28 Leaflets and pamphlets, circa 1965 - 1980
- 3 1 News clippings, 1964 - 2006