Finding aid of the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection
Coll2008.069Coll2008-069

Loni Shibuyama
ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
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http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt287032nj
No online items
Abstract: News clippings, journal articles, pamphlets, flyers, printed materials from activist organizations, photographs, 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.

Physical Description: (3 archive cartons).

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

Processing Information
Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, December 17, 2008.

Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

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, photographs, 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 photographs, 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.

**Related Material**


**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:

- 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*
*Wicce: A Lesbian / Feminist Newspaper*

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Lesbians -- Civil rights
Lesbian activists
Gay and lesbian rights
Gay activists -- United States -- History
Gays -- Civil rights
Gay liberation movement
Gittings, Barbara
Tobin, Kay
Gittings, Barbara
Tobin, Kay

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<th>Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series Scope and Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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</tbody>
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| Box 1, Folder 1 | Biographical information 1994 - 2006 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Correspondence 1967 - 1974 |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Flyers and programs circa 1975 - 2006 |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Interviews 1981 - 2006 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Memorial service programs 2007 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Writings and speeches by Barbara Gittings 1966 - 1990 |

| Box 1, Folder 7 | Biographical information date unknown |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Articles by Kay Tobin Lahusen 1970 - 2002 |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | News clippings referencing Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen 1969 - 2007 |

| Physical Description: 2 folders. |

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Photographs 1965-1972

Scope and Contents
Seven Kay Tobin Lahusen black-and-white photographic prints. Includes images of the 1965 protest of the Pentagon and White House; 1966 protest at Independence Hall, Philadelphia; and Philadelphia Gay Activists Alliance, undated; as well as images of Barbara Gittings, Phyllis Lyon, and Del Martin.

Organizational and Subject Files Series 2. 1962-2007

Physical Description: 0.9 Linear Feet

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.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) 1967 - 1975
Atlanta, City of. Proclamation: Gay Pride Day June 26, 1976
Bibliographies, book reviews and press material 1967 - 2004
Cartoons 1974 - 1978
Committee to Fight Exclusion of Homosexuals from the Armed Forces 1967 - 1969
Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) 1965 - 1974
Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) 1965 - 1970
Dignity 1971 - 1974
Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations 1967 - 1970
Employment discrimination 1964 - 1975
Essays on Homosexuality, No. 1 and 4 circa 1969 - 1970
Film, video and media 1967 - 2005

General 1967 - 2003
Gay Pioneers 2004

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

Gay Academic Union (GAU) 1975
Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) 1970 - 1973
Gay Alliance Toward Equality date unknown
Gay Community Pamphlets, Vol. 1, No. 1 and 3 1975
Gay Community Services Center date unknown
Gay Liberation Front (GLF) 1970 - 1972
Gay Nurses' Alliance circa 1979
Gay pride festivals and parade flyers 1970 - 1973
Gay Support and Action Group 1974 - 1975
Homophile Action League 1969 - 1971
Janus Society date unknown
Fryer, John E., MD memorial photograph 2003
Kameny, Frank 1969 - 1971
Karlsson, Gene, Open Letter from 1965
Legislation and legal issues 1968 - 1975
Mattachine Society 1962 - 1969
Mattachine Society of New York 1965
Mattachine Society of Philadelphia 1965
Mattachine Society of Washington 1962 - 1969
Mental health and psychiatry 1964 - 1975
Minnesota Council for the Church and the Homophile 1970 - 1971
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<th>Box 2, Folder</th>
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<td>National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties date unknown</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>National Gay Mobilizing Center date unknown</td>
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<td>National Gay Task Force 1969 - 1980</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>National Institute of Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality: Final Report and Background Papers 1972</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>National Organization for Women 1975</td>
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<td>North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) 1968 - 1969</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Parents, children and families 1973 - 1980</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>People’s Party flyer 1972</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Philadelphia Gay Movement Conference April 5 - 7, 1974</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Police harassment and entrapment circa 1971 - 1980</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Queens Liberation Front circa 1971</td>
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<td>Religion 1966 - 1976</td>
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<td>Society of Individual Rights (SIR) date unknown</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Stonewall Chorale program February 9, 1985</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Teachers, students and education 1970 - 1976</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Tretter (Jean-Nickolaus) Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies 2003 - 2006</td>
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<td>Universities 1965 - 1976</td>
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<td>Columbia University Student Homophile League 1967 - 1969</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>&quot;Gays on Campus,&quot; edited by J. Lee Lehmen of the National Gay Student Center for the United States National Student Association 1975</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>University course descriptions, student papers and educational outreach 1965 - 1976</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>West Side Discussion Group 1967</td>
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<td>Women 1969 - 1974</td>
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<td>Leaflets and pamphlets circa 1965 - 1980</td>
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