
***Black Lesbian Newsletter / Onyx Collection, 1979-1989*GLC 102**

Finding aid prepared by Tim Wilson

James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street

San Francisco, CA, 94102

(415) 557-4400

info@sfpl.org

2015

Title: *Black Lesbian Newsletter / Onyx* Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1979-1989, undated

Date (bulk): 1982-1984

Collection Identifier: GLC 102

Physical Description: 22.0 folders(0.25 linear feet)

Contributing Institution: James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library

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Abstract: *Black Lesbian Newsletter*, later titled *Onyx*, was published in San Francisco and, later, Berkeley from 1982-1984. The newsletter includes poems, drawings, political perspectives, photographs, book reviews, event listings, personals, and some business listings. There is one letter to the newsletter and two mounted newsletter covers. The collection also includes related materials on the Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus and BAST Cafe (Bay Area African-American Sisters Together).

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Access

The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], *Black Lesbian Newsletter / Onyx* Collection (GLC 102), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance

Provenance unknown.

Historical note

Black Lesbian Newsletter was published in San Francisco and, later, Berkeley from 1982-1984. Its working title changed to *Onyx* as the result of suggestions from its readership. The newsletter was the brainchild of Laverne Gagehabib, A. C. Barber and Vivienne Walker-Crawford.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes a nearly complete set of issues of *Black Lesbian Newsletter* and *Onyx*. There is one letter to the newsletter and two mounted newsletter covers. The collection also includes a few folders with related materials on the Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus and BAST Cafe (Bay Area African-American Sisters Together).

Arrangement

Arranged into two series: Series 1. *Black Lesbian Newsletter* and *Onyx*; and, Series 2. Subject Files.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

African American Lesbians--California--Periodicals

African American lesbians--Periodicals.

African American lesbians--United States.

Racism.

Series 1 **Black Lesbian Newsletter and Onyx, 1982-1984**

Scope and Contents

The first issue of *Black Lesbian Newsletter* begins with a "Dear Readers" column which describes the purpose of the publication. The newsletter includes poems, drawings, political perspectives, photographs, book reviews, event listings, personals, and some business listings. There is one letter to the newsletter and two mounted newsletter covers.

Arrangement

Arranged into 4 subseries: Subseries 1A. *Black Lesbian Newsletter* issues; Subseries 1B. *Onyx* issues; Subseries 1C. Correspondence; Subseries 1D. Mounted Front Covers.

Subseries 1A **Black Lesbian Newsletter issues, 1982**

Physical Description: 4.0 folders

Folder 1

[volume 1, number 1] "first issue," June 1982

General note

2 copies. Includes: drawings by Storme Webber; a photograph by Joan Franklin; "Dear Readers" an introduction to BLN by Laverne Gagehabib, A. C. Barber, Vivienne Walker-Crawford; "Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual?" by Vivienne Walker-Crawford; and a review by Mary Hope Whitehead Lee of *Black Lesbians: an Annotated Bibliography* by J. R. Roberts (1981).

Folder 2

volume 1, number 4, October 1982

General note

Includes: drawings by Sarita Johnson; photographs by Joan Franklin; poems "Pass The Word," "Songs of the Hummingbird," "Changes," and "Wonder...ment" by Nedra Williams; "We Sound Like This" by Vivienne Walker-Crawford.

Folder 3

volume 1, number 5, November 1982

General note

2 copies. Includes: a drawing by Sarita Johnson; a drawing by Alicia Stiles; "Coming Out in '61" by Joyce Penalver; "Black Lesbian Theatre" by Paula Ross; and "Observation" by Ka'ni. One issue has notes in margins.

Folder 4

volume 1, number 6, December 1982

General note

3 copies. Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "Encounter at Ollie's" by Marlene Bonner; "Our Demands" and "Update" related to Ollie's; "Farewell" from BLN to Vivienne Walker-Crawford; "Letter to My Sisters" by Anonymous.

Subseries 1B **Onyx: Black Lesbian Newsletter issues, 1983-1984**

Physical Description: 10.0 folders

Folder 5

volume 2, number [1], February [19]83

General note

Numbered "7" should be "1." Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; editorial "Onyx"; drawing by Praylo; poems "Act More Like a Human Being" and "Untitled" by A. S.; poem "Sister, My Heart Cries" by Windy Sky; a book review by Paula Ross of *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo* by Ntozake Shange (1982); a photograph by Helen Keller; announcement including "Conference: The Future of Women in the Trades"; Black History Month; "Lorraine Hansberry" by Paula Ross; Follow up--Oroville: March Against Attacks Against Ourselves and Our Children; Ollie's Update; and "Just Wanna Be Seen as Sane" by Camille Barber.

Folder 6

volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83

General note

Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "Dear Readers" letter regarding the Ollie's encounter and a letter written by Bea Morris that was published in *Plexus* and *Coming Up*; "New Notes on Lesbianism" by Cheryl Clarke; "Occupation: Ornament (or) How to Be Used at Your Own Expense" by Sarita Johnson; "Cassie Lopez: Runs for North Oakland Council Seat" with photograph; Letter to the Editor from Storme Webber regarding a d. j. at Amelia's, with Camille Barber's reply on behalf of Onyx; and announcements including "Black Women's Health Conference."

Folder 7

volume 2, number 4, August/September [1983]

General note

2 copies. Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; a review by Paula Ross of *The Color Purple* (1983); "Miss Burma" by Raymina Y. Mays; and, Local news: Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference, Pat Norman Candidate for Supervisor in '84, Casselberry-Dupree Plan Tour, Linda Tillery, Sisters Bonding Together, National Lesbians of Color Conference, Ollie's Update, Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays (BAYBLAG).

Folder 8

volume 2, number 5, October/November [19]83

General note

Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "A Report About the Lesbians of Color Conference"; "Writing As A Lesbian: The March on Washington, August 29, 1963 and August 27, 1983" by Cheryl Clarke; "They Sing Life Into Their Music" about J. Casselberry and Jaque DuPree; "Casselberry-DuPree" photograph by Orlanda; "Coming Soon...Black Lesbian Herstories"; a review by Sarita Johnson of *The Color Purple*.

Folder 9

volume 2, number 6, December [1983]/January [19]84

General note

Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "Dear Readers: You Took a Chance on Us: A Look Back--A Look Ahead"; "National Third World People Of Color Conference Postponed"; "Kwanzaa" by Sarita Johnson; "The Abolitionist, 9979 (for my sisters)" by Doris Davenport; Letters to the Editor...from Virginia Harris, San Francisco, about the Lesbians of Color Conference, and from Gale Golden, San Francisco, about the newsletter; and announcements including "Strength in Diversity: A Black Feminist Conference."

Folder 10

volume 3, number 1, February/March [19]84

General note

Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "Journal Entry: Reminders" by Lucille Hunt; "You speak of my manner or better yet / you speak of my response to them as that of a REVOLUTIONARY / TELL ME..." poem by Suasuarana; "Lesbianism Is A Reality" by Tania Abdulahad; announcements; and "February--Black History Month."

Folder 11

volume 3, number 2, April/May [19]84

General note

Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; " *Home Girls* in Review" by Synthia E. Green [book review of *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* edited by Barbara Smith]; "Audre Lorde speaks on Grenada" by Cara Vaughn; "A Tribute to You," a poem by Suasuarana; "Personal Statement: Number 2" by Dezeria Collins, a. k. a. "Dimples;" and "The Black Women's Anti-Violence Project."

- Folder 12 **volume 3, number 3, June/July [19]84**
General note
2nd anniversary issue. Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; Letters from Jeannette, Hawaii, from Barbara Smith, New York regarding " *Home Girls*, and from Joann Washington, Oakland; Letter to Audre Lorde from Yasmin A. Sayyed; "Passages" by Mayrann Turner; and "Coming Out In '61" by Joyce Penalver.
- Folder 13 **volume 3, number 4, August/September [19]84**
General note
Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; Report on 3rd National Third World/People of Color/Lesbian/Gay Conference; Human Rights Commission Report; "Passages" by Mayrann Turner; "Trouble with the Term of with the Lying" by Yasmin A. Sayyed; and "Lesbian Moan," a poem by Terri L. Jewell.
- Folder 14 **volume 3, number 5, October/November [19]84**
General note
Includes: cover design by Sarita Johnson; "Passages" by Mayrann Turner; "Open Letter To The Black Lesbian Community" by Helen L. Keller; "Spoken From the Heart" by Vivienne regarding S. E. P. S. (Separatist, Enraged, Proud and Strong); "Que Viva La Musica" about poet/musician/vocalist Avotcja; and "Today," a poem by Avotcja.

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- Folder 15 Subseries 1C **Correspondence, 1983**
Physical Description: 1.0 folder

Subseries 1D **Mounted front covers**
Physical Description: 2.0 folders

- Folder 16 **Black Lesbian Newsletter, volume 1, number 4, October 1982**
Folder 17 **Onyx: Black Lesbian Newsletter, volume 2, number 3, June/July 1983**
Series 2 **Subject Files, 1979-1989, undated**
Scope and Contents
The subject files contain materials on the Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus. The group was formed by Vivienne Crawford, Joyce Penalver, and Brenda Crawford, and the Caucus materials include a grant proposal sent to the Vanguard Public Foundation in 1989 and the minutes of the first meeting. In addition there are some notes related to BAST Cafe (Bay Area African-American Sisters Together), flyers for different events, and some notecards and postcards.
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

- Folder 18 **BAST Cafe [Bay Area African-American Sisters Together], 1989**
Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus, 1989
Scope and Contents
The collection also includes two mounted newsletter covers, as well as related materials on the Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus. The group was formed by Vivienne Crawford, Joyce Penalver, and Brenda Crawford. The Bay Area Black Lesbian Political Caucus materials include a grant proposal sent to the Vanguard Public Foundation in 1989 and the minutes of the first meeting.

- Folder 19 **Grant proposal, Vanguard Public Foundation, June 1989**
Folder 20 **Minutes of first meeting (Oakland, California), June 20, 1989**

Folder 21

Flyers, 1980-1989, undated

General note

Includes: "Becoming Visible: The First Black Lesbian Conference, San Francisco Women's Building, October 17-19, 1980"; "Partnering: A One-Day Seminar to Develop Fulfilling Personal Relationships through Interdependence. Presented by Prime Performance and The Berkeley Community YWCA, April 8, 1989"; "Kallmar, Storyteller, Alameda," undated; "In Celebration of Black History Month A Woman's Place Bookstore Presents: Vivienne Louise and Winn Gilmore...Sunday, February 26th, Oakland" [probably 1984 or 1989].

Folder 22

Notecards and postcards featuring lesbians and lesbian themes, 1979-1983, undated

General note

Includes: 4 cards by Willow Moon Designs, 3 are from the "Womyn in Patterns" series; "Lovers in Kapok Tree, Virgin Islands" by Nadine Rosenthal (1980); "Feminist Against Anti-Semitism, Fight Racism" by Jewels Joyce Marcus (1983); Gertrude Stein, 1946, copyright Horst P. Horst (1979); Pagan & Kady, photograph by JEB, 1979; "Family Affair, congregating after the parade, Sunday, June 25" photo by Denise Macias; silkscreened notecard; postcard "Designs by Judith;" postcard "Pepin Pictures;" "Rue Abriot, Paris, 1975. Photograph by Helmut Newton" (1982); "Cees van Gelderen (1980) Maja;" postcard "Anna May Wong...photograph by Carl Van Vechten;" "Amazon Reality (1983) Arleen Olshan;" "In My Studio, Paris, 1978. Photography by Helmut Newton" (1982); and, "David Hurn. Les Amies (1970). Friends, Editions Agathe Gaillard."