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Accession number: 1996-21

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

San Francisco, California

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Processed by:
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Date Completed:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media Records,

Date (inclusive): 1977-1983

Accession number: 1996-21

Creator: Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media

Extent: 2.9 linear feet in 3 boxes


Language: English.

Acquisition

The Records (#1996-21) were acquired in 1996 in conjunction with the acquisition of the Women's Building Records (#1996-15).

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California.

Audio-Visual Materials

Box 3 contains cassette tapes and VHS tapes.

Preferred Citation


Historical Note

Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media (WAVPM) was founded in 1977 following the 1976 Conference on Violence Against Women, sponsored by the San Francisco Women's Centers. Initially based in the Berkeley Women's Center, WAVPM moved to the Women's Building in San Francisco after its purchase in 1979. Perceiving a link between the debasement of women in mass media representations and reported increases in the number and severity of violent acts...
against women, members aimed to raise public awareness of these conditions. WAVPM, along with Women Against Pornography (WAP) in New York City and Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) in Los Angeles, led women's groups of the late-1970s/early-1980s in crusades against pornography and promoted public discussion of the relationship between media depictions and sexist violence, bringing pornography to the top of the feminist agenda and exacerbating a division among feminists (and among leftists in general) between proponents of free speech and opponents of degrading images.

Major projects of WAVPM include a 1978 National Feminist Conference on Pornography, regular feminist tours of pornography theaters, a slide show illustrating the connection between mass media images and attitudes toward women, a monthly newsletter, and sponsorship of annual Take Back the Night marches. During the group's most active period from 1978 to 1982, the group grew from 35 members to over 1000.

On International Women's Day in 1977, WAVPM executed its first political action, the picketing of Ultraroom, a live sex show in which women performers used whips and chains on each other. The group sought to bring attention to a sexual economy "in which women beat each other for men's sexual stimulation." On-going difficulties faced by the organization included: negotiation of free speech issues, definition of the group's position on non-violent pornography, and reconciliation with dissenting poor and working class women and S/M lesbians.

Ultimately an organization of women working in the sex industry formally protested WAVPM members' attitude against pornography. WAVPM general membership meeting records end in 1983 with the protest of a visiting group, the U.S. Prostitutes Collective, which demanded that WAVPM respect sex workers' decisions, stop opposing pornography, and discontinue interference with sex work, the livelihood of many poor women. Problems with debt closed the records of the steering committee, which was trying to salvage a floundering door-to-door fundraising campaign.

Scope and Content

WAVPM Records document the affairs of this prominent feminist organization of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The collection is divided into five series: Administrative, Communications, Events/programs, Research, and Audio-visual. Dated materials are placed chronologically within each folder. Folders without dates either contain material spanning the life of the organization or undated materials.

Administrative records (1.25 linear feet) are the largest series in the collection, including minutes from general membership meetings, board meetings, and committee meetings as well as voluminous correspondence files and records of fundraising efforts, which include grant proposals to foundations. Administrative folders pertaining to the WAVPM slide show and the National Feminist Conference on Pornography are located in the Events and Programs Series. The Julie Greenberg (a WAVPM coordinator during the early '80s) Notes folder is largely undated and without clear organization, but these records may serve to fill gaps in other administrative folders. The correspondence extensively documents both the internal workings of WAVPM and much of their publicity and outreach work not documented in the Events and Programs Series.

The communications series includes a (nearly) complete collection of Newspage, WAVPM's widely circulated newsletter. Also included in this series are public statements made by the group and publicity for WAVPM-sponsored events. Publicity related to fundraising is located in the administrative series, and publicity related to events are contained in the Events and Programs Series.

The events and programs series contains materials related to the group's early protests of pornography theaters and sex shows in San Francisco and materials regarding San Francisco Examiner protests. Also included in this series are records of WAVPM's popular slide show of images culled from mass media depicting (or insinuating) violence against women. Records of the National Feminist Conference on Pornography are contained in this series as well. The latter constitutes the bulk of the second box of records, including correspondence with speakers or potential speakers, grant proposals, and conference evaluations. The correspondence folder features exchanges with Kathy Barry, Susan Brownmiller, Irene Diamond, Andrea Dworkin, Suzanne Lacy (representing the Ariadne Artists' Collective), Julia London (representing Women Against Violence Against Women, Los Angeles), Valerie Miner, Judy Reisman, Adrienne Rich, Diana Russell, and Marjorie Smith.

The research series is composed primarily of subject files, containing articles about violence and the media. Most address the proposed link between depictions of violence and acts of violence against women. These materials range in format from academic papers to newspaper clippings.

The Audio-visual Series located in box 3--apparently containing media clips and audio transcripts of slide presentations--remains unprocessed.

Title: Women's Building
Identifier/Call Number: #1996-15
Title: Lyon/Martin Papers
Identifier/Call Number: #1993-13
Box 1

Administrative Files

Statement of Purpose, 1978
Committee Records [including minutes] 1977-83
  General Meeting, 1977-83
  Core Group, 1978
  Board of Directors, 1979-82
Steering Committee, 1980-83
  Action Committee, 1979-82
Fundraising/Finance Committee
  Newspaper Committee, 1979-83
  First Amendment Committee, 1980
End of the Year Report, 1978
Financial Records, 1981-83
Operations Manual, 1980-81
Membership Guidelines
Structure Meeting Records, 1979
Retreat Records, 1982
Retired Senior Volunteer Program, 1983
Office-work Party Records, 1981
New Action Campaign Questionnaire
Logo Designs
Julie Greenberg’s Notes
Correspondence
  Internal
Other Feminist/Anti-Porn Groups
Critiques/Feedback
Protest Letters, WAVPM-sponsored
Protest Letters, Non-WAVPM-sponsored
Public Officials
Attorneys (Regarding First Amendment)
Media
Research Requests
Support Letters
Well-Known People
Wurtz, Mary & Don
Miscellaneous
Fundraising
  Guidelines
Resource Information for Grant Proposals
Grant Proposals
  Foundations
    Gerbode Foundation
    Bank of America
    Vanguard Foundation
    Playboy Foundation
    Youth Project
    Junior League
    Ms. Foundation
    Pittsburg Bridge and Iron Works
    Charitable Trust
Grassroots
  Membership Campaigns
Canvassing Information
Sample Grant Proposals

Communications
### Box 2

**Newspage Newsletters**

**Newspage Newsletters, Duplicate Copies**

**Press Releases**

**Position Statements**

**Flyers**

**Events/Programs**

**Broadway Protest, 1977**

**Slide Show**

Committee Records

Correspondence

Scripts

"Abusive Images of Women in Mass Media and Pornography," Queensland, Australia

**National Feminist Conference on Pornography, 1978**

Proposal Draft

Final Proposal

Workshop Plans (early notes)

Presentations: Proposals and Presenters' Biographies

Coordinating Committee Notes

Task Force Notes

Correspondence

Press Packet

Participant Packet

Staff Room Information Log Contents

**National Feminist Conference on Pornography, 1978 (cont.)**

Disability Workshop Transcript

Conference Evaluations

Forms

Letters

Workshop Evaluations (see Participant Packet for workshop codes)

A2 & B2

A4 & B4

A1, A3, A5, & A6

B1, B2, & B5

C1-C12

D1, D2, D4-D10

Miscellaneous

**Resolutions**

**Fundraising**

Foundations

Churches

Miscellaneous

Public Service Announcements

Lesbian Tide Correspondence

Final Report

First Feminist Papers on Pornography, 1979

Take Back the Night March

Miscellaneous


Participant Packet, Women Against Pornography Conference, NYC, 1979

**Research**

**Television**

**Media Violence**

**Child Pornography**

**San Diego State University Questionnaire for Study of Attitudes Toward Pornography, 1981**

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1996-21
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pornography in Britain</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Women Against Pornography, Canada</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Trends in Reporting Minor Sexual Offenses in Australia and Overseas, 1981</strong></td>
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