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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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**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

**Repository:** The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

San Francisco, California.

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Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California.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

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Feminism

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

Administrative Files

Box 1

- Statement of Purpose, 1978
- Committee Records [including minutes]
  - General Meeting, 1977-83
  - Core Group, 1978
  - Board of Directors, 1979-82
  - Steering Committee, 1980-83
  - Action Committee, 1979-82
  - Fundraising/Finance Committee, 1982-83
  - Newspage Committee, 1979-83
  - First Ammendment 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 Records, 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 Ammendment)
- Media
- Research Requests
- Support Letters
- Well-Known People
- Wurtz, Mary & Don
- Miscellaneous

Fundraising

- Guidelines
- Resource Information for Grants
- 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
Administrative Files

Canvassing Information
Sample Grant Proposals

Communications

Box 2

Newspage Newsletters
Newspage Newsletters, Duplicate Copies
Press Releases
Position Statements
Flyers
Events/Programs

Box 2

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

Box 2

Television
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Guide to the Women Against</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Violence in Pornography and the</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Records, 1977-1983</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Media Violence
- Child Pornography
- San Diego State University Questionnaire for Study of Attitudes Toward Pornography, 1981
- Pornography in Britain
- Women Against Pornography, Canada
- *Trends in Reporting Minor Sexual Offenses in Australia and Overseas, 1981*