
UCLA Library Special Collections
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Online finding aid last updated 23 August 2017.
Title: Elaine Mikels papers

Identifier/Call Number: LSC.1954

Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 1.6 linear feet (4 document boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1976-2004

Abstract: Elaine Mikels was born in 1921 in Los Angeles where she spent much of her early life. Similarly to other closeted women living in the 1940's, she had little concept of how to deal with her own relationships, much less build community though shared interests. In the late 1960s (approximately 1967), Elaine Mikels became, in her own estimation, political, joining the anti-war movement and lesbian-feminist communities while participating in peace action. This collection is comprised of over two-hundred photographs taken by Elaine Mikels of lesbian activist gatherings, lesbian social gatherings and sports clubs, lesbian writing groups, and self-published newsletters. The collection also includes materials related to the publication of Elaine Mikels' autobiography, as well as a copy of the final published version. Also included are personal papers, journals, correspondence and various personal materials.

Language of Materials: Materials are in English.

Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance through out electronic paging system using the "Request items" button.

Creator: Mikels, Elaine

Conditions Governing Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance through out electronic paging system using the "Request Items" button.

Conditions Governing Use and Reproduction
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Elaine Mikels Papers (Collection 1954). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Provenance unknown.

This collection is part of an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library.

Processing Note

The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA is an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library. These collections expand the pool of primary source materials available to researchers and to the community at large. This partnership was initiated by CSW and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to inventory, organize, preserve, and digitize more than eighty Mazer collections pertaining to lesbian and feminist activism and writings.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6956860

Biography
Elaine Mikels was born in 1921 in Los Angeles where she spent much of her early life. Although raised Jewish, she attended Flintridge, a Catholic boarding school. Through different mediums Mikels spoke about her early relationships with women, who identified as straight and later went on to get married. Similarly to other closeted women living in the 1940's, she had little concept of how to deal with her own relationships much less build community though shared interests. During this period she suffered from depression and was hospitalized for severe episodes.

After WWII, Mikels worked in Germany with the Quakers through the State Department. She was expelled from the program because of her psychiatric record. She returned to the United States and settled briefly in New York. She then travelled for the next several years throughout Europe and the Middle East. In 1951 she settled in San Francisco and pursued social
work. In San Francisco she became active in the Mattachine Society and ONE magazine. It was also during this period, in 1959, that she established the Conard House. The Conard House was the first halfway house in San Francisco, specifically conceived as a transitional community for people with mental illness who were returning to San Francisco from Napa State Hospital.

In the late sixties (approximately 1967), Elaine Mikels became, in her own estimation, political. She joined the anti-war movement, joined lesbian-feminist communities in Oregon and participated in peace action with lesbians in North Carolina. In her own words, "When I broke away from the system in the late 1960's, I went through an amazing personal transformation, not unlike many others during this time of civil strife and the war in Vietnam. I was no longer afraid of authority figures." In 1976 she founded the Older Women's Network in order to bring older lesbian feminists together to share resources and achieve their activist goals. She would go on to participate in similar groups and helped found the group Older Lesbians Organizing for Change later in her life.

1921  Elaine Mikels born
1951  Elaine Mikels moves to San Francisco
1959  Elaine Mikels founds Conard House
1976  Founding of OWN (Older Women's Network)
1977  Women's Gathering in Ashland, OR.
1981  Women's Pentagon Action
June 12, 1982  Nuclear Disarmament Rally
June 3 - July 4, 1983  PeaceWalk from Durham, N.C. to Seneca Peace Camp
1983  Dyke Olympics
1984  PeaceWalk from Gainesville, FL to Key West, FL.

Scope and Content
The Elaine Mikels papers are comprised of photographs taken by Elaine Mikels in several different locations and with different groups of people. Included are photographs of lesbian activist gatherings, lesbian social gatherings and sports clubs, lesbian writing groups, and self-published newsletters. The collection also includes materials related to the publication of Elaine Mikels' autobiography, Just Lucky I Guess: From closet lesbian to radical dyke, as well as a copy of the final published version. Also included are personal papers, journals, correspondence, and various personal materials. The pictures contained in the Mikels collection of Femininary writers, producers, and supporters reflect a new political imperative in Mikels' work. The most prominent participant in the Femininary editorial collective was Minnie Bruce Pratt; photographs of her are contained within the collection. Also represented in the collection are photographs documenting the Women's Pentagon Action, a two-thousand-woman protest that surrounded the Pentagon in 1981. Eventually, Mikels settled in Santa Fe, but most of her photographic collection represents her time in Oregon and North Carolina.

Organization and Arrangement
Photographs arranged in chronological order are first in the collection. Thereafter, materials are arranged chronologically with the exception of materials about Just Lucky I Guess that, as a continuous project, are kept together.

Related Material
Materials related to Elaine Mikels are also contained in two separate collections at Harvard University in the Schlesinger Library. Both the Cynthia Rich and Barbara McDonald, 1893-2004 collection and the Barbara Deming Papers: Series I-III, 1908-1985 contain photographs of Mikels's. Elaine also has a published memoir entitled, Just Lucky I Guess: From Closeted Lesbian to Radical Dyke.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA.
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.
Mikels, Elaine
Lesbian activists--United States--Archives.
Older lesbians--United States--Archives.
Photographs.
Social workers--California--San Francisco.
Box 1, Folder 1  Older Women's Network (OWN) 1976 - 1982
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
45 Miscellaneous photos of the Older Women's Network (OWN). Also includes a note from Elaine Mikels concerning the founding of OWN.

Box 1, Folder 2  Women's Gathering 1977
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
7 photos of the Women's Gathering in Ashland, OR.

Box 1, Folder 3  Carpentry Collective 1978-1980
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
17 photographs of the women's carpentry collective in Eugene, OR, with some annotations.

Box 1, Folder 4  Softball League 1978-1980
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
36 photos of the Carpentry Collective's softball league, in game and out.

Box 1, Folder 5  Eugene, Oregon 1978-1980
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
26 photographs from Mikels' time in Eugene, Oregon.

Box 1, Folder 6  Feminary 1981-1984
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
57 photographs of fundraising activities, a costume party, candid group photos, and promotional photos for the publication Feminary.

Box 1, Folder 7  Trial Protest circa 1981
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
9 photographs of protesters outside of the trial of a defendant of a hate crime committed in Durham, N.C.

Box 1, Folder 8  Women's Pentagon Action 1981
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
35 photos of the Women's Pentagon Action.

Box 1, Folder 9  Nuclear Disarmament Rally 1982 June 14
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size
Scope and Contents note
11 photos of the Nuclear Disarmament Rally in Central Park in New York, New York.
Box 1, Folder 10  **Peace Walk: Durham, North Carolina to Seneca Peace Camp 1983 June 3 - July 4**  
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size  
Scope and Contents note  

Box 1, Folder 11  **Dyke Olympics 1983**  
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size  
Scope and Contents note  
55 photos of the Dyke Olympics outside of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. One-day, one-time event on a woman's land, lesbians only.

Box 1, Folder 12  **Peace Walk: Gainsville, Florida to Key West, Florida 1984**  
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size  
Scope and Contents note  
53 photos of the Peacewalk from Gainesville, FL to Key West, FL.

Box 1, Folder 13  **Note to Degania and photographs circa 1984 - 1993**  
General Physical Description note: photographs of varying size, notes, cards  
Scope and Contents note  
1 note by Elaine Mikels to Degania detailing her intentions to donate materials to the archive, 27 photos, one flyer, and one card.

Box 1, Folder 14  **Published Photos 1981-1991**  
General Physical Description note: photos, photocopies  
Scope and Contents note  
Contains clippings, photos taken by Elaine Mikels, duplicate prints, publications in which her work was featured, and mock-ups.

Box 1, Folder 15  **Personal notes circa 1977 - 1992**  
General Physical Description note: handwritten and printed notes  
Scope and Contents note  
Personal notes about various subjects such as conferences, poetry, and gay pride.

Box 2, Folder 1  **Our OWN 1977 October - 1982 Summer**  
General Physical Description note: stapled, photocopied pamphlets  
Scope and Contents note  
21 issues of the newsletter *Our OWN*, the newsletter for the Older Women's Network.

Box 2, Folder 2  **Published Materials : Lesbians in the Media 1981-1999**  
General Physical Description note: newsprint, printed paper, photocopies, magazine  
Scope and Contents note  
Various articles about lesbians in popular culture, the legal system, politics and activist communities.

Box 2, Folder 3-6  **Journals 1984 Christmas - 1988 September 7**  
General Physical Description note: bound journal  
Scope and Contents note  
Elaine Mikels' personal journals, given as a gift to "Elana." Mikels was sometimes known as "Elana" and "Elana Freedom." Six journals included.
Box 3, Folder 1  Assorted programming materials circa 1987 August - 1999 Summer
  General Physical Description note: printed paper, photocopies, clippings
  Scope and Contents note
  Assorted flyers, brochures, postcards, and programming materials.

Box 3, Folder 2  Address books circa 1989 - 1995
  General Physical Description note: four bound address books
  Scope and Contents note
  Four bound, differently sized address books containing personal, professional, and activist contacts.

Box 3, Folder 3  Correspondence: Publishers 1989 March 8 - 1993 March 2
  General Physical Description note: typewritten letters
  Scope and Contents note
  Letters from and to publishers concerning the publication of *Just Lucky I Guess*, Elaine's autobiography.

Box 3, Folder 4  Profiles and Coverage of Elaine 1989 May - 1999
  General Physical Description note: newspaper clippings
  Scope and Contents note
  Profiles and articles about Elaine Mikels, mostly focused on her lifelong activism.

Box 3, Folder 5  Correspondence: Elaine and Jean 1990 October 30 - 1993 November 7
  General Physical Description note: typewritten letters, handwritten letters
  Scope and Contents note
  Correspondence between Elaine and her good friend Jean.

Box 3, Folder 6  Sonia Johnson materials 1991 August 10 - 1994 February
  General Physical Description note: printed paper, photocopies
  Scope and Contents note
  Materials related to Reactionary Lesbianism theorist Sonia Johnson, including editorials, opinion pieces, promotional materials.

Box 3, Folders 7-8  *Just Lucky I Guess*: Notes and drafts circa 1984 - 1993
  General Physical Description note: handwritten notes, printed paper
  Scope and Contents note
  Notes and drafts of *Just Lucky I Guess*, Elaine Mikels' autobiography.

Box 3, Folders 9-10  *Just Lucky I Guess*: Production 1991 August - 1994 March 22
  General Physical Description note: receipts, printed paper
  Scope and Contents note
  Documentation regarding the production of *Just Lucky I Guess*. The first folder contains printing and binding costs and receipts while the second folder contains distribution information.

Box 4, Folder 1  *Just Lucky I Guess*: Copyright information 1993 April - 1994 March
  General Physical Description note: printed paper
  Scope and Contents note
  Documents related to copyright and attributions related to *Just Lucky I Guess*.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 2</th>
<th><strong>Just Lucky I Guess: Published copy 1993</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: bound book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final published, bound copy of Just Lucky I Guess.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 3</th>
<th><strong>Just Lucky I Guess: Book reviews 1993 March 2 - 1995 May</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper, photocopies, clippings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews of <em>Just Lucky I Guess</em> from various publications.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 4</th>
<th><strong>Just Lucky I Guess: Promotional materials 1993 March 2 - 1994 March</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper, flyers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional materials for the book <em>Just Lucky I Guess</em>, including materials related to readings and signings.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 5</th>
<th><strong>Just Lucky I Guess: Manuscript undated</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: bound printed paper with handwritten notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript and acknowledgements page of <em>Just Lucky I Guess</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 6</th>
<th><strong>Submissions circa 1992 - 1994</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials submitted to different journals and newspapers for publication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 7</th>
<th><strong>Workshop materials circa 1993 - 2001</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper, handwritten notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaires, articles, exercises designed for meditation, and materials on self-help workshops.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 8</th>
<th><strong>Journal: Costa Rica 1995 March - April</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: individual handwritten sheets of paper, envelope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal journal documenting Elaine Mikels' travels in Costa Rica and photocopy of the envelope in which it was contained.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 9</th>
<th><strong>Clippings circa 1995 September - 1997 July</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: newsprint, photocopies, printed paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clippings of Elaine Mikels' editorials, articles, and other writings.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 10</th>
<th><strong>Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe, New Mexico 2000-2002</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper, flyers, bound directories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church directories, programs and other information for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe, New Mexico, of which Elaine Mikels was a member.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 11</th>
<th><strong>Obituaries 2004 February - March</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs for the funeral services for Elaine Mikels and Selma Mikels Lofgren.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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