

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection

SC.0003

**Finding aid prepared by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's
Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories
using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia..**

Last updated on November 09, 2012.

John J. Wilcox Jr. GLBT Archives of Philadelphia

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Summary Information

Repository	John J. Wilcox Jr. GLBT Archives of Philadelphia
Creator	Gittings, Barbara, 1932-2007
Title	Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection
Call number	SC.0003
Date [bulk]	1964-1975
Date [inclusive]	1964-2001
Extent	4 linear feet
General Physical Description note	5 record cartons and 1 flat box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Barbara Gittings (1932-2007) was an active member of the LGBT rights movement from the 1960s until her death. She worked as editor of <i>The Ladder: A Lesbian Review</i>. In the early 1970s, she was instrumental in lobbying the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a disease. Kay Tobin Lahusen (b. 1930) is a photojournalist, editor, author of <i>The Gay Crusaders</i>, and an active member of the LGBT rights movement. The Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection, 1964-2001, includes printed materials relating to LGBT issues and organizations, and audio/visual materials document attitudes and strategies prevalent in the Homophile Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.</p>

Biography/History

Barbara Gittings (1932-2007) and Kay Lahusen (b. 1930) are longtime activists and Philadelphia residents. Their relationship began in the early 1960s, after they met at a Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) picnic in Rhode Island in 1961.

Barbara Gittings attended her first DOB meeting in 1956 during a vacation in Los Angeles. Two years later, she helped to found DOB-New York, the first lesbian organization on the East Coast. In the mid 1960s, she edited DOB's magazine, *The Ladder: A Lesbian Review*. Gittings co-organized and marched in the annual July 4 homophile picketing at Independence Hall starting in 1965. In the early 1970s, she was instrumental in lobbying the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a disease. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, she was a driving force behind the American Library Association's lesbian and gay caucus.

Kay Lahusen (alias Kay Tobin) joined DOB-New York in 1961. She contributed photographs, articles and her editing skills to *The Ladder* from 1961 to 1963. Lahusen's photographs of 1960s homophile protests have been widely published and have appeared in numerous exhibits. In 1969, she was one of the twelve founding members of the Gay Activists Alliance in New York. She is the author of *The Gay Crusaders* (New York: Paperback Library, 1972). Lahusen used the pseudonym "Kay Tobin" in her gay community activities during the 1960s and 1970s.

Scope and Contents

This collection is comprised of clippings, pamphlets, brochures, ephemera, and audio recordings materials collected by Gittings and Lahusen relating to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) issues and organizations.

Paper materials in the collection include newspaper clippings on LGBT issues, pamphlets, brochures, and ephemera from LGBT groups. There are photographs of LGBT rights marches and Gittings and Lahusen at public events, as well as three VHS recordings of Gittings on "Dyke TV".

The audio materials in this collection, which include audio reels, compact discs, and audiocassettes, span the years 1955 to 1970 with the bulk recorded 1965 to 1967. These audio materials are copies of original reel-to-reel tapes in the possession of the Gittings and Lahusen, which were lent to the William Way Community Center in 1992 for the purposes of copying. The recordings in this collection, many of them unique (except for the donors' originals), document attitudes and strategies prevalent in the Homophile Movement. The movement's public face is preserved in tapes of conferences and meetings, as well as activists' talk show appearances and lectures. The movement's private face is reflected in interviews for *The Ladder: A Lesbian Review*, and in brainstorming sessions among activists such as Gittings, Franklin

Kameny and "Warren Adkins" (Jack Nichols). Mainstream attitudes toward homosexuality are preserved in speeches by theologians, lawyers and mental health professionals during conferences of the Daughters of Bilitis, the Mattachine Society of New York, the East Coast Homophile Organizations and other homophile groups. A smaller portion of the collection consists of gay community radio shows and a still smaller portion preserves symposia on homosexuality sponsored by such organizations as the Greater Hartford Council of Churches.

Administrative Information

John J. Wilcox Jr. GLBT Archives of Philadelphia

Finding aid prepared by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia..

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Access to some recordings of private interviews is restricted. Contact John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

The audio materials in this collection are copies of original recordings lent by Gittings and Lahusen to the William Way Community Center for the purposes of copying in 1992. An additional accession of paper materials was received from the New York Public Library in 2011.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2011-2012 as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR), using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. The HCI-PSAR project was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was done in the HCI-PSAR project.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials Note

New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division: Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs, 1855-2009, MssCol 6397.

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives: Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, 1962-2007, Coll2008-069.

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives: Kay Tobin Lahusen photographs, circa 1965-1972, Coll2012.074.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Philadelphia (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

- Gittings, Barbara, 1932-2007
- Tobin, Kay

Subject(s)

- Gay liberation movement
- Gays
- Homosexuality
- Journalists
- Lesbian activists
- Lesbianism
- Lesbians
- Sexual minorities