

# WOMEN at the CENTER

Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture  
David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

Issue 30, Fall 2016

## Alice Margery New and the Great Suffrage Pilgrimage

Contributed by visiting scholar,  
Jane Robinson, Senior Associate,  
Somerville College, Oxford.

Earlier this year I was lucky enough to visit the Sallie Bingham Center to use the Lisa Unger Baskin Collection in support of *Hearts and Minds*, a book I'm writing about women's suffrage in the UK, to be published on the centenary, in 1918, of the first British women winning the vote. My focus is not on the militant suffragettes, but on their more peaceful sisters, the suffragists. Suffragists formed the majority of campaigners at the time. They fought for the vote as law-abiding activists, using courage and imagination to further their cause in the face of damaging publicity arising from suffragette violence. Central to their campaign was a six-week demonstration undertaken in 1913 and dubbed the Great Pil-



Clipping from Alice New's scrapbook, showing the pilgrims' progress at Oxford.

grimage. It's also at the core of my book, which is what brought me to Duke. Here I was delighted to work with two scrapbooks and a diary in the Lisa Unger Baskin Collection. The diary is among the few first-hand accounts of the Great Pilgrimage known to exist and its author, Alice Margery New, is an absolute star. She came from near Liverpool, and walked hundreds of miles from the north-west of Eng-

land to London, describing her adventures along the way. This image, taken from a contemporary newspaper account pasted into Alice's scrapbook, shows the pilgrims' progress at Oxford.

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## Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of *The Ladder*

Contributed by Valerie Szpaya, Technical Services Intern.

The Bingham Center recently acquired 47 issues of *The Ladder: a Lesbian Review* (1956-1972) more than doubling our run for a total of 79 issues spanning the years 1957 to 1972. We are especially excited about this opportunity to expand our holdings of this groundbreaking publication sixty years after the first issue was released.

*The Ladder* was the first nationally distributed lesbian periodical in the U.S. Preceded only by a local Los Angeles newsletter *Vice Versa*, *The Ladder* began in October 1956 as a publication of the San Francisco group Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), which was founded in

1955 as a social group for lesbians who wanted to avoid public scrutiny. As their numbers grew, DOB chapters formed in cities across the country, including New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. The DOB evolved into a highly influential lesbian activist organization providing a “feminine viewpoint,” educating women about “female homosexuality and positive self-image.” The DOB worked closely with groups that were primarily focused on gay men, such as the Mattachine Society and ONE, Inc.

Partners Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, co-founders of DOB, both had educational backgrounds in journalism and worked as reporters.

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## Recent Acquisitions

### Manuscript:

**An 1808 Case of Rape** Bill of Indictment against an African-American Woman for perjury: accused of falsely claiming she was raped, she pleads not guilty. An appended list of 10 witnesses in the case includes seven women.

### Personal papers:

#### **Martha O. Adams Papers**

North Carolina poet and writer.

#### **Sally Tatnall Papers**

Cleveland-based lesbian feminist activist.

#### **Susan Wicklund Papers**

Long-time abortion provider in the Midwestern U.S.

#### **Print material: Stein, Gertrude. *Three Lives: Stories of the Good Anna, Melanctha and the Gentle Lena.***

N.Y.: Grafton Press, 1909. First American Edition (1 of 1000 copies).

Early feminist comics including: ***Girl Fight Comics* by Trina Robbins.** Berkeley: Print Mint, 1972. First Edition.

**Board game: WHAT SHALL I BE? The Exciting Game of Career Girls.** Bay Shore, N.Y.: Selchow & Richter Co., 1966

## Love and Liberation in the Archives

*Contributed by Jennifer Scott, Public Services Intern.*

Several years ago, while working on a project on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) history in Wilmington, NC, I was encouraged to visit the Rubenstein Library to view its wide-ranging LGBTQ+ collections. While I was not able to go to the library for that project, I was soon offered the opportunity, as the Public Services Intern for the Bingham Center, to explore the library's LGBTQ+ holdings in ways I could never have imagined.

Because of my experience with LGBTQ+ local history projects, I was excited about the recent launch of "Love and Liberation: A History of Durham's LGBTQ+ Community," a virtual exhibit organized by Durham County Library's North Carolina Collection ([durhamlgbtqhistory.org](http://durhamlgbtqhistory.org)). Exploring the website, I was struck by the synergy between the collections of our two institutions and the vivid and complex portrait of the LGBTQ+ experience these materials create.

Engaging with the exhibit prompted me to discover the Rubenstein Library's long commitment to documenting LGBTQ+ life and culture. About 35 years ago librarians here began collecting the papers of LGBTQ+ people and organizations whose work intersected with Duke's already established strengths such as literature, social justice movements, and the South. Some of these first collections acquired by the special collections library were the papers of internationally-renowned Southern authors, artists, and activists such as Mab Segrest and the records of the North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project.

Our local and national collections have grown steadily with the acquisition of papers

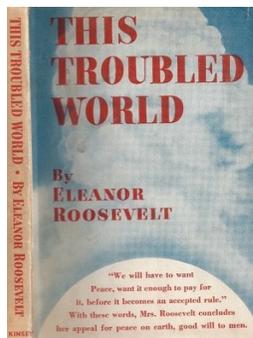


**Jennifer Scott and Kelly Wooten fold mini-zines about Duke Libraries' LGBTQ collections during Coming Out Day celebrations.** (Photo courtesy of April Dudash.)

from Mandy Carter, Catherine Nicholson, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and others. Organizational collections have also grown, with the addition of records from groups such as the Common Woman Chorus, a lesbian feminist choral group established in the Triangle area in 1983 and still performing today; Ladyslipper, Inc., a distributor of women's music and independent record label founded in 1976; and SONG, an organization focused on connecting and sustaining Southerners who believe in liberation across all lines of race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality.

The stories captured within these collections, as in the pages of *Love and Liberation*, reveal and celebrate decades of work by dedicated individuals and groups committed to creating communities, addressing injustices, and gaining equal rights. And, Durham's LGBTQ+ history is being carefully, thoroughly, and wonderfully preserved for generations to come.

Read more: [guides.library.duke.edu/lgbtstudies](http://guides.library.duke.edu/lgbtstudies)



### Recently Cataloged

***This Troubled World* by Eleanor Roosevelt** New York : H.C. Kinsey & Company, Inc., 1938. Part of the Lisa Unger Baskin Collection.

Mrs. Roosevelt's meditations on the world just entering WW II. Ten years later, as the chair of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Roosevelt was the driving force in creating ***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights***.

## *The Great Suffrage Pilgrimage* continued from page 1

The Great Pilgrimage was a spectacular achievement and inspired many similar demonstrations both in the UK and the US. Thousands of women from all classes, all backgrounds, and of all ages took part, holding meetings with local audiences along the way to explain what the vote might mean to women and to their communities. Crucially, they showed the public that not everyone fighting for enfranchisement was a violent

suffragette. Alice writes of the importance of their work, and of a powerful sense of sisterhood shared by the pilgrims.

Sadly, the bravery and adventurousness of the Pilgrimage has largely been forgotten, eclipsed by the more sensational activism of the suffragettes. I hope my visit to Duke, and inclusion of Alice Margery New's powerful story in my book, will go some small way towards changing that.

## *The Ladder* continued from page 1

Lyon decided to publish *The Ladder* as a way to advertise the group—since they were forbidden from doing so in newspapers—as well as to spread awareness about social issues affecting the wider lesbian community.

According to some, the magazine was titled “The Ladder” to symbolize a way to escape the “well of loneliness,” a phrase popularized by Radclyffe Hall's influential novel of the same name. By 1957, there were hundreds of subscribers on the mailing list, and the magazine was available on select newsstands in major cities. By the publication of its last issue in 1972, it had a subscription of over 4,000 worldwide. It is difficult to estimate total readership, however, because the issues were frequently shared and read aloud at gatherings.

Early content included information from DOB meetings, “Lesbiana” literature reviews, creative prose, poetry, social experiments, etiquette advice, community events, and reader responses. The editors avoided including any overtly sexual content, but quickly began rallying around political issues and publishing news about the Homophile movement.

From 1956 through 1972, the magazine underwent drastic changes. The first major transformations began after Barbara Gittings, DOB New York chapter president, became



editor in 1963. Gittings added the subtitle, “A Lesbian Review” in 1964, signifying the word “lesbian” as something that was no longer unspeakable. Kay Tobin Lahusen, a photojournalist who was Gittings' partner and assistant editor, began using photographs of lesbians, rather than the illustrations typical of past issues. Regardless of the changes in its appearance, *The Ladder* was issued in a brown paper covering for the duration of its existence.

The last issue was published in September, 1972. In 1975, Arno Press released a nine-volume compilation of *The Ladder* in hardback as part of their series “Lesbians and Gay Men in Society, History, and Literature.” *The Ladder* was a lifeline for those women who read it, providing one of the first formal spaces for lesbians to come together in dialogue and artistic expression. Today, it stands as an important artifact of 20th century lesbian and feminist movements and a valuable resource for scholarship.

## Fall Instruction

**Creative Writing**  
Durham School of the Arts (High school)

**Feminist Theory**  
UNC Women's Studies

**Introduction to Trans Studies**  
Sexuality Studies

**Men, Women, and Sports**  
History

**Printmaking**  
Visual Arts

**Shades of Gray: Coming of Age in the Era of Population Aging**  
English

**Stories for Social Change**  
Theater Studies

**Women and Memoir**  
Writing 101

**Women in the Economy**  
Economics

**Women's Prison Writing**  
Writing 101

**Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Duke**

This fall, the Duke Program in Women's Studies officially changed its name to the Program in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. This program is now also offering a Sexuality Studies minor.

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Save the dates for Spring 2017 events!



## Sharing Our Stories:

### The Second Wave Feminist Movement

Thursday, March 30-Friday, March 31

The Veteran Feminists of America are organizing a multi-generational conference with feminist historians and activists to be held in Durham. Featured speakers include **Dr. Nancy MacLean** (Duke, History Department), **Mandy Carter** (National Black Justice Coalition), and others. The gathering will also feature a reception at the Bingham Center and a Salute to Southern Feminists.

## Re-Imagining: Revisited and Revived

Tuesday, April 18-Wednesday, April 19

Join the Bingham Center on **April 18** when Distinguished Historian **Sara M. Evans**, WC' 66, will provide a history of the Re-Imagining Movement nearly 25 years after 2000+ theologians, clergy, and laity assembled at the first Re-Imagining conference to address injustices to women and promote equal partnership with men at all levels of religious life.

On **April 19**, **Dr. Evans** and Feminist Theologian, **Dr. Sherry Jordan** will facilitate a conversation on the future of the Re-Imagining Movement.



[library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham](http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham)