



## Archives and Records

### Finding Aid

**COLLECTION NUMBER:** Coll.17  
**TITLE:** Laura McMurry Papers

#### COLLECTION SUMMARY

**Creator(s):** Laura McMurry  
**Title:** Laura McMurry Papers  
**Extent:** .5 linear feet  
**Repository:** The History Project, Archives and Records Department

Finding aid prepared for The History Project, Archives and Records Department by Rachel Dwyer, student in the History/Archives masters degree program at Simmons College, under the supervision of Andrea Still, Libby Bouvier, and Andrew Elder, Fall 2008.

#### SUBJECT TERMS

##### *Subject Topics*

Cambridge Gay Neighbors  
Charles St. Meetinghouse  
Daughters of Bilitis  
Fag Rag  
*Gay Community News*  
Gay Male Liberation  
Gay Speakers Bureau  
Homophile Community Health Service  
National Gay Task Force  
Otherfund

Gay Liberation Movement-- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Gays -- Massachusetts -- Boston -- History.  
Lesbian activists -- United States.  
United States -- Armed Forces -- Gays.

##### *Document Types:*

Articles  
Flyers  
Letters  
Newspaper Clippings  
Pamphlets  
Position Papers  
Surveys

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Terms of Use/Copyright: Unrestricted, though some items in the collection are copyrighted by individuals and/or organizations outside The History Project.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Laura McMurry was born in Troy, New York, and grew up in Oklahoma and Idaho, before receiving her undergraduate degree at Reed College in Oregon. She moved to Boston in the mid-sixties to join Harvard's graduate program in biology, receiving her degree in 1971. In 1969, McMurry became involved with the newly-formed Boston chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis. McMurry was active in the Daughters of Bilitis from 1971-1975, at one time serving as secretary.

Through the Daughters of Bilitis, McMurry also became involved in political action, including protesting anti-sodomy legislation. In the 1970s McMurry became involved in many Boston gay and lesbian organizations such as the Gay Speakers Bureau and the *Gay Community News*.

In spring of 1970, she participated in *Come Help Us Celebrate*, and spoke at the first Boston Pride Celebration.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of one box of loose papers, newspaper and journal publications, and typescript and carbon copies of correspondence. The bulk of the material dates from 1972-1975. Three letters written by John Kyper in 1973 have been removed and placed in **Coll.39: Gay Legislation Collection**.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

### **Series I: Personal**

The first series consists of writing, correspondence, and an interview. The paper by McMurry entitled *A Non-Transsexual Looks at Transsexuality* is typed on the verso of a scientific paper and the second page of McMurry's book review of *Male Homosexuals: Their Problems and Adaptations* by Martin S. Weinberg and Colin J. Williams. The first page of this review is found on the verso of notes for the Gay Speakers Bureau (Series II Folder 8). McMurry's correspondence related to the military dismissal of Barbara Randolph and Linda Watson from Fort Devens includes correspondence with Massachusetts senators.

Notes from an interview of McMurry conducted by Libby Bouvier on May 18, 2003 are also included in this series.

**Series II: Material of gay and lesbian organizations (Cambridge Gay Neighbors, Gay Male Liberation, Gay Speakers Bureau, National Gay Task Force, Otherfund)**

This series consists of correspondence, flyers, pamphlets, notes, and newsletters related to Boston gay and lesbian organizations and the National Gay Task Force, which was based in New York. There is extensive material on two groups to which McMurry belonged: The Gay Speakers Bureau and Otherfund.

The Gay Speakers Bureau was founded in 1971 and operated under the auspices of the Homophile Community Health Services. The organization coordinated speaking engagements for members of Boston LGBT groups to speak about the experiences of gays and lesbians. Material includes flyers, correspondence, notes, reference material, and information sheets, as well as financial information recording the distribution of speakers' fees. The Community Service folder contains brochures about volunteer organizations, material which was presumably collected by the Gay Speakers Bureau. The verso of the notes includes the published calendars of the Daughters of Bilitis and the first page of a book review by Laura McMurry (see Series I).

Otherfund was founded by Ian Johnson 1974 and Laura McMurry served on the community board. Otherfund's mission was to serve as a self-described "Gay United Fund," raising funds and then distributing them to projects and organizations that benefited gays and lesbians. The material consists of funding proposals submitted by organizations such as Daughters of Bilitis, Fag Rag, Fenway Community Health Services, *Gay Community News*, and Homophile Community Health Services. The General Folder includes notes on the Board's funding decisions. McMurry stated, in a 2003 interview that generating sufficient funds for this organization was difficult, and is unsure if the awards were ever granted.

Also of interest are surveys that Cambridge Gay Neighbors sent to local politicians, seeking their position on various issues of interest to the Cambridge LGBT community.

**Series III: Newspapers clipping and other media concern LGBT issues**

This series contains newspaper and magazine articles, as well as photocopies of articles. Of particular interest are newspaper clippings regarding the Army's dismissal of Sergeant Leonard P. Matlovich, Pfc Barbara Randolph, and Private Deborah Watson. Randolph and Watson were stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts and discharged in 1975 after revealing their relationship. Laura McMurry's correspondence with senators regarding Randolph and Watson can be found in Series I. Also see the article in *It's Time* December 1973 (Series II, Folder 11).

Other articles range from Del Martin and Phyllis Lyons *The Realities of Lesbianism* to tabloid material, such as *I Married a Homosexual*. The

magazine article, *The Transsexuals: Male or Female* was originally placed next to McMurry's piece: *A Non-Transsexual Looks at Transsexuality*.

The series also includes a list of Boston media contacts and bibliographies on gay and lesbian issues.

**Series IV: Miscellaneous fake newspaper**

This series contains a fake, old-fashioned newspaper, which includes the headline "Laura McMurry Wins Nobel Prize."

**SERIES AND FOLDER LIST**

**Series I: Personal** (n.d, 1975, 2003)

**Folder 1:** Writing

**Folder 2:** Interview

**Folder 3:** Correspondence

**Series II: Organizations** (n.d.,1971-1980)

**Folder 4:** Cambridge Gay Neighbors

**Folder 5:** Gay Male Liberation

**Folders 6-10:** Gay Speakers Bureau

Folder 6: General

Folder 7: Correspondence

Folder 8: Notes

Folder 9: Financial

Folder 10: Community Service Flyers

**Folder 11:** National Gay Task Force

**Folders 12-19:** Otherfund

Folder 12: General

Folder 13: Charles St. Meetinghouse, Funding proposals

Folder 14: Daughters of Bilitis, Funding proposal

Folder 15: Fag Rag, Funding proposal

Folder 16: Fenway Community Health Services, Inc., Funding proposal

Folder 17: *Gay Community News*, Funding proposal

Folder 18: Robert G. Goodman, Funding proposal

Folder 19: Homophile Community Health Services, Funding proposals

**Folder 20:** Organizations, General

**Series III: Media** (n.d., 1968-1975)

**Folder 21:** Newspaper Clippings re: dismissal of Gay/Lesbian Military Personnel

**Folder 22:** Magazine and Newspaper Articles, General

**Folder 23:** Bibliographies

**Folder 24:** Media contacts

**Folder 25:** Flyers and press releases

**Folder 26:** Obituary for Vincent Saccardi

**Series IV: Miscellaneous**

**Folder 27:** Newspaper (fake), "Laura McMurry Wins Nobel Prize"