

VERMONT ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS

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This occasional section alerts researchers to the rich resources acquired regularly by Vermont's historical repositories. News of accessions and openings of processed collections, as well as longer evaluative descriptions of research collections are welcome. Please send submissions to the Editor, Vermont History.

The Vermont 1970s Project Archives

By JACQUELINE CALDER

In 2015 the Vermont Historical Society began work on a project to collect materials documenting the era of the 1970s in Vermont. The project, funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Grant #MA-10-14-0279-14), focused on what has come to be called the “counterculture”—a combination of political protest, social activism, and cultural change throughout the United States, in part stimulated by the Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation movements of the 1950s and 1960s, largely motivated by opposition to America’s war in Southeast Asia, but also reflecting widespread and wide-ranging generational malaise and a shift in priorities and lifestyles from the 1950s and early 1960s. Our goal was to capture and preserve for future generations the memories and materials from this period of turmoil and change. We also hoped that our efforts to collect and preserve

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memories and objects from this mostly informal and loosely organized movement would allow researchers looking through these materials to find the interrelationships between the people active in the counterculture, details about important organizations and businesses they helped create, and resources for assessing their impact on and legacy for Vermont.

In response to the VHS's widely publicized call for personal recollections and memorabilia from the period, people generously gave their time to record oral histories; donated photographs or allowed the VHS to copy their images for the digital archive; or presented VHS with personal diaries, letters, graphic materials, institutional archives, pamphlets, and books. These materials are being preserved and are accessible for research as part of the VHS library's collections. What follows are highlights and brief overviews of some of these collections.

Vermont 1970s Counterculture Oral History Project

A primary goal of the Vermont 1970s Project was to record oral histories from participants, and in some cases observers, of this period in Vermont's history. Over sixty people agreed to be interviewed, many of them activists in the counterculture. Their memories provide a rich resource of the histories of Vermont's communes, back-to-the land homesteads, food cooperatives, non-profits, businesses, farms, and some of the networks that developed between these groups that supported their community activism. In addition to encouraging the people we interviewed to talk about the 1970s, we asked them to speak about their formative years, how they felt the era influenced Vermont, and how it influenced them for the rest of their lives. Fifty-one of these recordings (some with transcriptions) along with photos (when provided) of the speakers from the 1970s and today are available online. To access them go to VHS's Digital Vermont website: <http://www.digitalvermont.org/vt70s>.

Vermont 1970s Counterculture Project Images

Many people kindly gave or loaned personal photographs to VHS for the Vermont 1970s Project. Some of these are also accessible on the VHS Digital Vermont website: <http://www.digitalvermont.org/collections/show/8>. Currently over sixty images are online, featuring photographs donated by Rick Levy of the Maple Hill community in Marshfield and photos taken by Lucy Horton and donated by Mary Mathias of the Frog Run commune in East Charleston, Vermont (see front cover). More images will be uploaded as staff time permits.

Poster, Sow the Seeds of Revolution, printed by Free Vermont, ca. 1971. Sylvia Manning Collection.

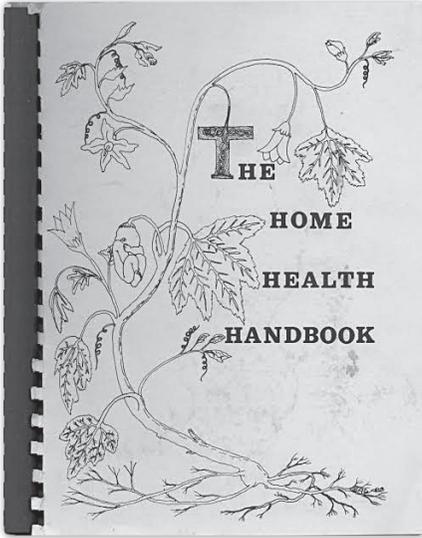


**The Sylvia Manning Collection
(donated by Sylvia Manning), MSA 813-814**

This collection consists of the letters, diaries, newspapers, and other miscellaneous materials of Sylvia Manning, at the time a young mother, teacher, and commune member. She became involved with Free Vermont, a statewide collective of activists that worked to implement their counterculture ideas in programs and institutions. Manning's focus was on children, and she worked to help create and teach at the Red Paint Children's Collective. This short-lived effort primarily served children of commune members who were looking for an alternative to public education and traditional—what the counterculture called “establishment”—child-rearing practices. In addition to Red Paint, this collection covers Manning's brief teaching career in North Troy, Vermont; her involvement with a commune in Fletcher, Vermont; the Mullein Hill and Franklin communes; and the Mount Philo Collective. Rare copies of newspapers and posters printed by Free Vermont as well as Red Paint Children's Collective newsletters can be found in this collection.

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**The Dr. Stuart [A.] Copans Collection
(donated by Dr. Stuart Copans), MSA 815**



The Home Health Handbook, *edited by Dr. Stuart Copans (1st ed., 1971). Stuart Copans Collection.*

Copans was a medical intern at the University of Vermont hospital during the early 1970s who became involved with a wide variety of people and institutions concerned with providing health services to communities in need. These communities included the poor in Vermont cities as well as members of the ever-increasing numbers of communes around the state. Copans edited *The Home Health Handbook*, a compilation of articles on a broad range of health topics from basic sanitation and first aid to prenatal care that was distributed throughout Vermont. The book also includes an article by Copans about the small medical corps he

helped create and train that traveled around the state providing basic medical services in the 1970s. This collection consists of copies of the first two editions of the book as well as Copans's research and testimony about health care services in the United States and Israel in the 1960s and 1970s. Copans participated in the Vermont 1970s Counterculture Oral History Project and his interview can be found on the VHS Digital Vermont website.

**Vermont Speaks for Itself
(donated by Peter Huber), Video C-472**

This is a DVD remastering of the 1973 multi-media presentation created by the Vermont Media Collective. The original presentation used slides, audio of Vermonters telling their stories, narrators, and live music. The program toured the state during the 1970s, telling the story of the decline of Vermont's small family farms and businesses as a result of the actions of large development corporations, banks, and real estate invest-

tors. The project was made possible by a coalition of commune members, small farmers, labor organizers, Quakers, and social justice organizations.

The Vermont Media Collective members were Joyce Bressler, Joy Catalano-Grabow, Hilary Dirlam, Peter Huber, Jane Melnick, and John Ment. The DVD remaster of the original thirty-minute black-and-white documentary was produced in 2016 by Jesse Drew and Peter Huber, under the auspices of the Vermont Speaks for Itself Digital Restoration Project.

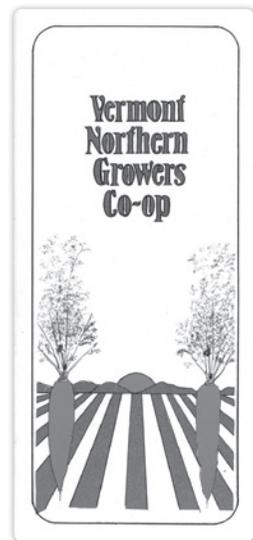
The Gene Bergman Papers (donated by Gene Bergman), MSA 799-800

Gene Bergman came to Vermont in the 1970s to attend the University of Vermont. He participated in campus protests in 1972 and in the same year dropped out of college. Soon after leaving school he became involved with the Burlington grassroots low-income advocacy group, People Acting for Change Together (PACT). He eventually became director of that organization. These papers document PACT's attention to urban development in downtown Vermont communities and its impact on the people it displaced, low-income housing issues, child welfare, protests, and educational efforts. The papers also include information on the food co-op started by PACT as well as pamphlets, newspapers, and booklets dealing with the many social justice activities and organizations in Burlington and elsewhere in Vermont during the 1970s.

Gene Bergman was interviewed as part of the Vermont 1970s Counterculture Oral History Project, accessible online at the VHS Digital Vermont website: <http://digitalvermont.org/vt70s/AudioFile1970s-21>.

The Brian Henehan Collection (donated by Brian Henehan), MSA 816

Brian Henehan came to Vermont after graduating from Boston College to live with friends at the short-lived Apocalypse Farm commune in Walden. He became involved in the local food cooperative movement in the Hardwick area in the 1970s. He served as a Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) volunteer from 1978 to 1979, working with the



*Brochure, Northern Growers Co-op, late 1970s.
Brian Henehan Collection.*

Vermont Northern Growers Co-op. These papers include pamphlets and reports from the Vermont Northern Growers Co-op, Northeast Organic Farmers Alliance (NOFA), Vermont Bread and Law Task Force, and Vermont Chapter of the Haymarket Fund. There are also materials from the Buffalo Mountain Coop. Oversize materials include posters from the Bread and Puppet Theater and a fundraising dance for the Northern Growers Co-op. Henehan also donated digital copies of black-and-white photos of Vermonters at an anti-nuclear protest in New York City in the early 1980s.

**David McCauley, Anti-Nuclear Movement Photos and Posters
(donated by David McCauley), MSA 731:22**

McCauley was a member of the American Friends Service Committee and participated in the anti-nuclear movement in Vermont that started in the late 1970s. The items in this collection all date from the 1980s and include posters by Sabra Field and Kate Pond; a photograph of the Washington to Moscow (Vermont) Walk, August 6-8, 1981; and a photograph of Vermonters at the 1980 New York City Nuclear Freeze March.

Roger Fox Collection (donated by Roger Fox), MSA 731:21

Roger Fox moved to Vermont in the late 1960s and with friends founded the Apocalypse Farm Commune in Walden. He left the commune but stayed in Walden and started a graphic design and printing business. This is a collection of materials printed by the business during the 1970s and 1980s including stickers, posters, bumper stickers, and other graphic materials for the anti-nuclear movement, the Northeastern Organic Farmers Alliance (NOFA), the Vermont Alliance, and other community action groups.



Poster, Fundraising dinner and dance for Vermont Alliance, a Central Vermont community action organization, early 1970s. Roger Fox Collection.



Unknown man in his home in the Mad River Valley, 1966. Harvey Geiger Collection.

**Harvey Geiger Photo Collection
(donated by Harvey Geiger), FB-137**

Harvey Geiger was a recent graduate of the Yale School of Architecture when he moved to Vermont in the mid-1960s. The black-and-white photographs in this collection date from 1966 and were taken in the Mad River Valley and Washington County, Vermont. They primarily depict exteriors and interiors of deteriorating rural Vermont buildings and some of the people who lived in them. Geiger includes some captions and stories related to the photographs.

Some of the materials described above, in addition to excerpts from oral history interviews, video tapes, posters, and objects related to the project are included as part of the exhibit, "Freaks, Radicals & Hippies: Counterculture in 1970s Vermont," on display in the Vermont Heritage Gallery at the Vermont History Center in Barre, Vermont, through December 2017. For more information about the exhibit, see <http://vermonthistory.org/visit/vermont-heritage-galleries/#FreaksRadicals>.