



January, 2017
Volume 12 Number 1

TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION



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The Tretter Collection welcomed five visiting colleagues from Norway this past August to the University of Minnesota. From Left to Right, Simon Mitternacht, Tone Hellesund, Heidi Rohde Rafto, Hannah Gillow Kloster, Runar Jordåen from Bergen, Norway. Read more about this in From the Field.

Inside this Issue:

- Tretter Materials Included in Umbra & Digital Transgender Archive
- From the Field (ALMS Conference, Norwegian Visitors, TC Pride 2016 and more)
- Twin Cities Public Television Visits Tretter for Documentary on Minnesota GLBT History
- Transgender Oral History Project Update
- New Acquisitions

FROM THE CHAIR

By Anne Hodson, Chair

Welcome to the winter edition of the Tretter Letter. The past six months have gone by fast. It seems like it was just Pride weekend. This past year I had a wonderful opportunity to get to know the Tretter Collection better than I had in the past. I was asked to produce a short video for Twin Cities Pride, which ran in the Pride history pavilion along side the Tretter display that looked back at the early days of TC Pride. I was fortunate to be able to interview several people that were at our first Pride marches and rallies, and get a better understanding of what was like to be at the very beginning of what grew into pride events around the world.

In order to better illustrate the events, I went to Tretter Collection curator Lisa Vecoli and asked to look at some of the early Pride materials. I knew we had a wonderful collection, but I really did not know the depth and breadth of the archive. Lisa arranged a number of boxes for me to view in the reading room. After checking in at the office, I put my coat in the provided locker and was assigned a desk in the room. Along the walls were carts lined up with boxes of materials for people to examine. I moved the first box from my cart to the desk, opened

it, and started to examine the first document. Like Alice falling down the rabbit hole, I was immersed in the past. I was there, marching down Nicollet Avenue with others carrying banners. I was sitting in Loring Park listening to speakers talking about our rights. Document after document, box after box, I was mesmerized by the fact that I was holding in my hands the very first Pride Guides, photos of the first march, and reading first-hand stories from people that were actually there. I returned a number of times to gather more information.



Anne Hodson, Chair

In the end I had more material than I needed for my project, but my interest was piqued by the amazing amount of available historical records. We truly are fortunate to have such a world-class collection available to us here in the Twin Cities. I urge everyone - even if you do not have a specific project you are working on - to spend some time looking through the archives. Send Lisa an email and let her know what you would like to look at, and spend a few hours absorbed in our amazing history. We can be very proud of our contributions to the history of LGBTQ people.

You Can Help!

The Tretter Collection relies on the support of organizations and individuals, like you! Please consider making a charitable donation to the Tretter Collection using the enclosed self-addressed envelope as part of your giving plan. Your support will help to preserve GLBT history now and for future generations.

Thank you.

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THE TRETTER COLLECTION

<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/tretter.phtml>

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Tretter Letter January, 2017

Thanks to the generous support of our donors.....

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their support and give thanks to countless others whose generous spirits have made our work possible. *If we neglected to include your name in the list in this issue, please send us a quick note and we will gladly make sure to include your name in our next issue.*

- American Library Association-GLBT Roundtable, Prize for the Newlen Symonds Award – IL
- Roger Arvid Anderson – CA
- Sanford Berman – Edina, MN
- Allen Bernard – OH
- Terry Brock – Golden Valley, MN
- Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities – MN
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- East Central Minnesota Pride – Centerville, MN
- Andrew Eddy – FL
- David Eder – CA
- Francis Gagliardi – CT
- General Mills – Golden Valley, MN
- HIV/AIDS Healthcare Providers Oral History Project (Part 2) – Minneapolis, MN
- Richard Hewetson – CA
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- Pam Mindt – OR
- Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra – Minneapolis, MN
- Meadow Muska – Savage, MN
- Bill O’Dowd – Minneapolis, MN
- Pink Singers – London’s LGBT Community Choir – England
- Dan Quillin – West St Paul, MN
- Richard Scarlett – Edina, MN
- Laurie Simon – St Paul, MN
- Ruta Skujins – Minneapolis, MN
- Richard Sorbel – St Paul, MN, in honor of Bonnie Sorbel
- Molly Spillman – Falcon Heights, MN
- Synchrony Financial – St Paul, MN
- Tawani Foundation – IL
- Carter Thurmond – Minneapolis, MN
- Bradley Traynor – Minneapolis, MN
- Jean-Nickolaus Tretter – St Paul, MN, in memory of Merlin Hoefl
- Lisa Vecoli – Minneapolis, MN
- Phil Willkie – Minneapolis, MN



From the field....



What’s happening in national & international circles.....

Norwegian visit – This past August the Tretter Collection was pleased to welcome five colleagues from Norway who were touring US archives for ideas on how to form a Norwegian Queer Archive at the University of Bergen. Like the Tretter Collection, the Norwegian Queer Archive is within the University Libraries which lead to an engaging day of conversation and sharing. *(featured on front cover photo)*

London Conference –

Curator Lisa Vecoli traveled to London for the 2016 LGBTQ ALMS (Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections) Conference in June. This conference was started by the Tretter Collection, Quatrefoil Library and the University of Minnesota Libraries in 2006. The most recent conference was also a tri-part collaboration: Bishopsgate Institute, the University of Westminster, and the London Metropolitan Archives collaborated to host the three day event with 130 people from around the world. In addition to the United Kingdom, U.S. and Canada, attendees came from throughout Europe and from India, South Africa, Israel, and Australia. Discussions covered archives new and old, large and small, both community and institutionally based.

During the conference, Lisa was on a panel “This moment in collecting: From the Field, continued on page 6

Twin Cities Public Television Documentary

By Daniel Bergin, Senior Producer & Partnership Manager, TPT

A forthcoming Twin Cities PBS documentary will explore the untold past of the state's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. We hope the stories from the state's LGBTQ history will surprise, inform, entertain and inspire audiences from the time of closeted, oppressed, and denied to an era of 'out', empowered, and everyday. These little-known histories will defy stereotypes, honor lived experiences, and preserve this part of our shared past. Who were the pioneers of politics, empowerment, and pride in these communities? Where were the places LGBT people gathered long before gay venues were mainstream? While urban living presented its own challenges, what was it like in greater Minnesota to be queer on the prairie? The stories found in the documentary will shed light on the hidden history our neighbors, friends and family members from the diverse spectrum of LGBT experiences and identities.

As the latest addition to Twin Cities PBS' important body of work on Minnesota's history, the film will explore the past through people and place, personal moments and major milestones. Rather than a focus on the issues, these stories will tilt towards the human story and lived experience and not simply a review of politics and policy. The documentary will include familiar barrier-

breaking politicians and early activists like Brian Coyle and Karen Clark. The film will also surface lesser known personas like St. Paul's WPA artist Clement Haupers, and organizer Koreen Phelps, who went from wrongly institutionalized teen to

harassment and real danger to out queer Minnesotans - consider the fact that it was still illegal for men to dance together in the state in the early 1970s.

LGBT history is often rooted in place. The documentary will reveal finding safe space



Daniel Bergin (seated) interviews archive founder, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter for the documentary.

founding mother of the LGBT movement.

We will explore important events and moments in time. The world looks to the Stonewall riot as the first shot in the 'gay revolution.' But Minnesota can claim an earlier, more enduring opening salvo with the founding of FREE, one of the first LGBT college organizations in the nation. Like this important movement-building moment, the Pride celebrations in Minnesota are as familiar and well attended as any summer festival in the state. But these visible expressions began in a time of

and common ground for Gays and Lesbians was delicate and sometimes dangerous. There was great value in establishments like The Dugout in Minneapolis, Kirmser's in St. Paul, and the establishments run by enigmatic bar Lesbian bar owner Honey Harold. But LGBT stories did not reside solely in these spaces. The film will highlight the effort to create community space beyond bars, like Lesbian created communes in greater Minnesota. Eventually, entire neighborhoods would take on the queer identity when LGBT homeowners gathered.

on Minnesota's GLBT History



Daniel Bergin interviews Curator, Lisa Vecoli, in the stacks.

The narrative of this history has been dominated by gay, white men. So the documentary will feature pioneering stories from the Native American Two Spirit experience as well as other histories of other queer communities of color.

The film will be told through chapters that capture key themes of the history like activism, the arts, and place-based storytelling. The narrative will build on the growing body of research and writing on Minnesota's queer history. Biographies of some of the pioneering LGBTQ Minnesotans will be explored within these chapters. The history will be brought to life with the rich visual materials on LGBT experience housed at the University of Minnesota Libraries Tretter Collection. The feature length documentary will be released in the community and on the air in 2017.

History and backstory are the focus but contemporary bookends will also be included to show the growth, diversity, and rising power of the queer community. This documentary will underscore the diverse range of cultures, identities, and experiences that make up today's broad and dynamic and

evolving queer community while revealing the less known, surprising history.

Editor's note: The Tretter Collection is proud to be collaborating with Daniel Bergin and TPT on this documentary. The immediate impact will bring tremendous visibility to local GLBT history and activism. Minnesota has played an important role in the fight for GLBT civil rights and we hope more people will be aware of and take pride in that fact.

Beyond that, there will be profound long term benefits to the project. The Tretter Collection is thrilled that TPT has agreed to give us copies of unedited interviews once production is complete. Documentaries

often use only a small portion of the material they collect in a finished project, but in the archive all of the content will live on. We have not had the resources to record interviews with people across the state as TPT has done for this project and we are profoundly grateful for their generosity.

Archive founder Jean-Nicolas Tretter and Curator Lisa Vecoli have both done extensive interviews for the project. Several activists with material in the archive, such as Rep. Karen Clark, Jack Baker and Michael McConnell have also been interviewed. We encourage you to see our newsletter next summer for an



TPT crew tours the collection.

update and "like" the Tretter Collection's Facebook page to get updates!

From the Field, continued from page 3
reflections on generations of



LGBTQ collecting in the USA.” She was joined by colleagues Gerard Koskovich (GLBT Historical Society of San Francisco), Brenda Marsten (Human Sexuality Collection, Cornell University), and Jenny Gotwals (Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.) (photo above) In addition to insightful panels, there were many engaging conversations in hallways and between formal events.

Telling Queer History – On October 9, the Tretter Collection was proud to host Telling Queer History at Andersen Library. Tretter Transgender Oral History Project staff Andrea Jenkins was joined by Phillipe and Lane Cunningham to discuss the project and trans experiences. Topics included trans-masculine privilege, the dynamics of an interracial couple, what it was like for two transmen to marry, and their professional work in City Hall and the University of Minnesota. A video and transcript of the event will be included in the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project. In the coming months it will also be added to the Tretter Collection webpage as one of the Telling Queer History events we have hosted.

Jack Baker and Michael McConnell recognized by the

Minnesota Human Rights Campaign – On September 24, Jack Baker and Michael McConnell were honored as marriage pioneers at the annual HRC dinner in Minneapolis. The Tretter Collection was delighted to display a small portion of our exhibit on Jack and Michael’s ground breaking fight for marriage during the event.

Exhibits Travel – The Tretter Collection has two exhibits, both of which are available for display in organizations and schools. “Framing GLBT Lives” includes 28 panels providing a very brief overview of GLBT history. These are usually in the history pavilion during TC Pride. Our second exhibit, new this year, is “America’s First Gay Marriage” which documents the Minnesota roots of the fight for marriage equality, starting in 1970 with Jack Baker and Michael McConnell. This exhibit is 25 panels. This fall the exhibits have been to Duluth and Rochester. Both exhibits may be reduced in size to fit smaller locations. We request a small donation to use the exhibits but understand that not everyone has access to a budget. For information, please contact curator Lisa Vecoli at lvecoli@umn.edu or 612-624-7526.

TC Pride 2016 – This summer over 1,700 people visited the Tretter History Pavilion during Pride weekend. They enjoyed our new exhibit on “America’s First Gay Marriage” as well as samples of material from the archive. Some fortunate attendees even visited with archive founder Jean-Nickolaus Tretter during his visit to the Pavilion.

Tretter Material Included in National Search Efforts

As an archive, our first goal is to collect and preserve material, but having it is only half of the challenge. Our mission is to provide a record of GLBT thought, knowledge, and culture for current and future generations. We only accomplish that when people are able to locate what we have and use it in their research.

We try to make things findable by cataloging our books and periodicals. Organizational records and personal papers are processed and finding aids are on our website. This all helps researchers locate relevant material in the Tretter Collection.

To help highlight material that can be even harder to find, we are collaborating with two projects designed to search across collections and make hidden voices more accessible. The Digital Transgender Archive (DTA) was organized to “to increase the accessibility of transgender history by providing an online hub for digitized historical materials, born-digital materials, and information on archival holdings throughout the world.” The Tretter Collection has linked our relevant finding aids to DTA so that our holdings are more available to researchers.

Closer to home, the Givens Collection at Andersen Library has initiated a search project for African American materials. Umbra Search African American History seeks to make African American History more broadly accessible through a freely available widget and search tool, umbrasearch.org; by digitizing African American materials across University of Minnesota collections; and supporting students, educators, artists, and the public through residencies, workshops, and events locally and around the country. The Tretter Collection has identified several collections (including items from the Minnesota Men of Color Records and Allan Spear Papers) and with relevant materials and those have been digitized for inclusion in Umbra.

DTA continued on back page

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New Acquisitions

1



Pam Mindt (Colonel, Retired) Papers – In 1992 Pam Mindt became one of the first targets under the military policy “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” She was a Captain when she told her commanding office that she was a lesbian and proceedings were started to withdraw her federal recognition. A Board of Officers recommended that she be discharged, but proceedings were stopped and she continued to serve until her retirement as a full Colonel in June, 2015. (Editor’s note – remembering the discussions and press coverage of Pam’s case in the early 90s, it was very moving to see not only Pam’s certificate of retirement, but also the certificate of appreciate presented to spouses, in this case her wife.)

East Central Minnesota Pride Records – We recently received a box of material from the organizers of East Central Minnesota Pride, which was the second rural Pride celebration in the U.S. In the weeks ahead the material will be organized and a finding aid will be added to our website to help researchers locate the material.

2

Rep. Karen Clark Papers – A recent flood in the State Office Building forced Rep. Karen Clark to find an emergency home for some of her records. The Tretter Collection is honored to archive her materials which cover legislative materials from the past 25 years, including material on marriage equality in Minnesota. In the future we hope to add her materials from her on community organizing!

3

4



Bi+ Stories – The Bisexual Organizing Project collected both surveys and short video interviews with dozens of members of the Bi+ community. These have now been donated to the Tretter Collection to be preserved and made accessible. In the months ahead we will be determining which portions may be posted on-line and which will be available only at the archive. There is little in the way of bi focused oral history available anywhere so our goal is to make the materials as widely available as permissions allow. This content dramatically increases the material we have documenting the Bi+ experience and we are grateful to BOP for collecting the content and allowing us to archive the Stories.

HIV/AIDS Healthcare Providers Oral History Project – Part One of this project, funded by a Legacy Grant, was added to the archive in mid-2014. The 10 interviews from that component have now been joined by 29 additional interviews done as part of Part Two. These interviews with people in Minnesota document how healthcare providers responded to HIV/AIDS during the early part of the epidemic. Part One of the oral histories has been widely used and we expect the expanded material will be in even more demand by researchers.

5

In the past year we have also made significant additions to our existing collections including:

- Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus – this collection grew from 2 boxes to 15 boxes, offering a much deeper look at the Chorus.
- MN AIDS Project – MAP moved to a new location and took advantage of the change to add materials to the archive. The result has doubled our holdings and we now have 82 boxes of material documenting the work and history of the Minnesota AIDS Project.

Tretter Letter *January, 2017*

The Tretter Collection Transgender Oral History Project Update

By Andrea Jenkins

This article is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Osiris Coleman who passed to the next realm on June 3, 2016 at the age of 45. Osiris was one of the early narrators for this project, and I am so glad we got the chance to capture his story. R.I.P. my friend.

October marked the half way point in the 3 year Transgender Oral History Project. That makes it a good time to assess what we have accomplished and what remains in the 18 months ahead.

What a year it has been thus far. We reached a milestone in October surpassing the 100 interview mark. I was in Chicago interviewing another Trans Oral Historian, André Perez. Perez is an oral historian, educator, filmmaker, and community organizer. He founded the Transgender Oral History Project in 2008, and created a traveling multimedia historical exhibit about transgender activism in 2009. It was a fascinating conversation that I am sure you will enjoy as he interviewed me as well. We also talked on film together about the importance of honoring the stories that we have been entrusted with and importance of preserving these brave voices for future Trans identified young folks to connect with.

Since my last update, The Tretter Collection has co-sponsored the City of Minneapolis Trans Equity Summit which was presented at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Over 250 registrants participated in this years’ Summit, the most we’ve ever had. I conducted a live interview onstage during the summit with the beautiful and talented Ms. Tona

TOHP, continued on back page



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corrections to lvecoli@umn.edu*



TOHP, continued from page 7



André Perez and Andrea Jenkins

Brown. Brown is the first Transgender woman to perform at Carnegie Hall. She is also the first African American Transgender woman to perform for an American president. Tona created her own show, and built an artistic life for herself within the classical world.

That was not the only live interview conducted in front of an audience, I also interviewed Phillipe and Lane

Cunningham in another community sponsored project called “Telling Queer History,” which was hosted here at Andersen Library. It was a great discussion about marriage equality, trans/gay identity, and interracial relationships.

The project has been amazing in the level of diverse voices that we have been able to include thus far and breaks down as follows:

- Military Service: 15 participants
- White: 64
- African American: 23
- API (Asian Pacific Islander): 4
- Latinix: 11
- Native American: 2
- Age: 18-25 (16)
- Age: 45 and up (32)
- Youngest participant (19 y/o)
- Oldest participant (84 y/o)

With a little under a year and a half to go we are well on our way to achieving the goal of 200 interviews or 300 hours. So far we have travelled to: Chicago, IL.; Lacrosse WI.; Fargo N.D.; Washington D.C.; St. Joseph, MN; and New York, NY. There are

plans to travel to: Duluth MN.; Madison, WI.; St. Petersburg, FL. (to interview a prominent local activist who recently moved to Florida); Milwaukee, WI.; Des Moines, IA.; and Ann Arbor, MI.

Soon we will upload our first set of interviews to the web for your viewing enjoyment and begin working on the online digital exhibition for next fall. I am so excited about the project and so grateful for the participants and supporters who make it happen.

DTA, continued from page 6

Both of these projects help highlight material that has traditionally been difficult for researchers to locate. By collaborating with colleagues, the Tretter Collection is making our material more findable and helping researchers locate items they may never have thought to look for.