
Search the Manuscript Collection (Finding Aids) **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+
Collection**

6-2023

LG MS 079 Steven G. Bull Papers

Jill Piekut Roy

Jeremy Rundstrom

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/lgbt_finding_aids



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), [Cultural History Commons](#), [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons](#), [Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ Collection at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Search the Manuscript Collection (Finding Aids) by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.



ArchivesSpace™
Powered by  ATLAS SYSTEMS

Steven G. Bull Papers LG-MS0079

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 02, 2023.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Special Collections

314 Forest Ave

PO Box 9301

Portland, ME 04104-9301

Business Number: 207-780-4269

susie.bock@maine.edu

URL: <https://usm.maine.edu/library/specialcollections>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Controlled Access Headings	7
Collection Inventory	7
Personal papers	7
Research papers	8
Organizational records	8
Parents of Gays records	9
Wilde-Stein Club records	9
Maine Gay Symposium records	10
Publications	11

Summary Information

Repository:	Special Collections
Creator:	Bull, Steven G.
Creator:	Maine Gay Symposium
Creator:	Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Creator:	Wilde-Stein Club (Orono, Me.)
Title:	Steven G. Bull Papers
ID:	LG-MS0079
Date [inclusive]:	1974-2016
Date [bulk]:	1974-1975
Physical Description:	1 Linear Feet (2 Boxes)
Physical Description:	1 Oversize Folders
Language of the Material:	English.
Abstract:	Steve Bull is a lifelong LGBTQ+ and civil rights activist of Maine and California. Papers include correspondence, photographs, publications, and ephemera documenting the beginning of the gay liberation movement in Maine and Bull's participation in the movement, especially through his involvement with the founding of the Wilde-Stein Club at University of Maine Orono in 1973 and his chairmanship of the first Maine Gay Symposium in 1974. Bull's research papers document the University of Maine's reaction to the Wilde-Stein Club and national media coverage and opposition leading up to the first Maine Gay Symposium, and the University's ultimate acceptance and support of the Club. Organizational records document Bull's parents' involvement in Parents of Gays, the Wilde-Stein Club's early activities and members (including Karen Bye, John Frank, and Sturgis Haskins), and include photographs of the first Maine Gay Symposium. Publications include contemporaneous coverage of regional and national gay liberation, Marxism, labor, and civil rights movements.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Steve Bull grew up in Kennebunk, Maine and was keenly aware of being gay from a young age. At 13, when his family moved to New Jersey, Bull secured a scholarship to attend Lawrence Academy, an all-boys boarding school in Groton, Massachusetts, where he read books by James Baldwin and Richard Wright, spurring a lifelong commitment to Black liberation and activism.

After attending Johns Hopkins University for two years, Bull transferred to University of Maine at Orono in 1973. He shortly met Karen Bye, John Frank, and Sturgis Haskins at a meeting of Gay Support and Action at the Unitarian Church in Bangor. The next week, they and four other students met in Coe Lounge at the Memorial Union at UMO to start what would become the Wilde-Stein Club.

After the Associated Press covered the Club's first dance on campus in December 1973, several fundamentalist preachers, in league with a few dozen state legislators, organized a vociferous opposition to their presence. For the next 6 months the issue polarized the state and made national news. In January 1974, the Board of Trustees of the University system met and, without naming the Club, reaffirmed a motion from years earlier endorsing free speech. With their status as a student group secured, they went on to organize the Maine Gay Symposium, the first state-wide gay conference, in April 1974. Bull's position as chair of the conference attracted media attention, which prompted him to formally come out to his parents. Floyd and Evelyn Bull subsequently became very active in the first chapter of Parents of Gays (later to become PFLAG).

After meeting other activists at the first Symposium, including Stan Fortuna, Steven Leo, Wendy Ashley, Susan (Mariah) Breeding and Peter Prizer, Bull worked with them to form a state-wide organization, the Maine Gay Task Force. The following month the group went to the Democratic Party's state convention in Bangor, and, with the help of Representative Gerald Talbot (D-Portland), they got a gay rights plank passed. That summer they established the Maine Gay Task Force Newsletter.

In August 1975, Bull left Maine to attend a radical new law school, Peoples College of Law, in Los Angeles, California, where he hoped to explore a growing interest in Marxism and gain a better understanding of the material basis of gay oppression. There, he met members of the Lavender and Red Union, a gay communist collective which he later joined. The group subsequently merged with the Spartacist League in August 1977.

Bull worked for AT&T in Los Angeles for 25 years before retiring to Lynn, Massachusetts in 2005 and joining the Advisory Committee for the LGBTQ+ Collection at the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine at University of Southern Maine. He has since relocated

to southern Maine, where he remains active in supporting the collection and sharing the history of social activism with younger generations.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

Papers include correspondence, photographs, publications, and ephemera documenting the beginning of the gay liberation movement in Maine and Steve Bull's participation in the movement both in Maine and nationally, especially through his involvement with the founding of the Wilde-Stein Club at University of Maine Orono in 1973 and his chairmanship of the first Maine Gay Symposium in 1974. Letters received by Bull and his friends, both personally and as Wilde-Stein Club officials, are evidence of the attitudes of both supporters of gay liberation and its opponents in the 1970s. Bull's research papers document the University of Maine's reaction to the Wilde-Stein Club and national media coverage and opposition leading up to the first Maine Gay Symposium, and the University's ultimate acceptance and support of the Club. Organizational records document Bull's parents' involvement in Parents of Gays, the Wilde-Stein Club's early activities and members (including Karen Bye, John Frank, and Sturgis Haskins), and include photographs of the first Maine Gay Symposium. Publications include contemporaneous coverage of regional and national gay liberation, Marxism, and labor movements, and communication within the gay and lesbian communities.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Arranged in 4 series: Series 1. Personal Papers, Series 2. Research Papers, Series 3. Organizational Records, Series 4. Publications.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Special Collections

314 Forest Ave

PO Box 9301
Portland, ME 04104-9301
Business Number: 207-780-4269
susie.bock@maine.edu
URL: <https://usm.maine.edu/library/specialcollections>

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Materials in this collection are the physical property of the University of Southern Maine Libraries. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the creator, or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult Special Collections staff.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Steven G. Bull, gift, 2010, 2014, 2023.

Existence and Location of Originals

Originals of some materials are located in: MssCol 1857, Jeanne Manford papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library; MssCol 1858, Morty Manford papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library; Raymond H. Fogler Library University Archives, University of Maine.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

Karen Bye Papers Sturgis Haskins Papers

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Gay liberation movement
- College students -- Societies, etc.
- LGBTQ + students' clubs
- LGBTQ + activists
- Bull, Steven G.
- Bye, Karen E., 1952-2013
- Frank, John B., 1951-2014
- Haskins, Sturgis, 1940-2012
- Maine Gay Symposium
- Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays
- Wilde-Stein Club (Orono, Me.)
- University of Maine at Orono

Collection Inventory

Personal papers, 1970-2015

Physical Description: 8 File Folders

Scope and Contents

Includes personal correspondence, recollections, buttons, and records of Bull's attendance at the Gay Academic Union Conference. Also includes the contents of a binder which Bull assembled for the 40th anniversary of the Wilde-Stein Club, containing a transcript of Bull's speech and a certificate of appreciation from University of Maine.

Title/Description	Instances	
Buttons, undated	box 1	folder 1
40th Anniversary of Wilde Stein (removed from binder, folder 1 of 2), 2014	box 1	folder 2
40th Anniversary of Wilde Stein (removed from binder, folder 2 of 2), 2014	box 1	folder 3
Karen Bye and John Frank memorial remarks, clippings, 1974, 2015, undated	box 1	folder 4
Notes, identities of people in photos and papers, undated	box 1	folder 5
Recollections of parents' response to Bull's sexuality, undated	box 1	folder 6
Gay Academic Union Conference correspondence, December 1974-May 1975 and undated	box 1	folder 7

Correspondence, 1970-1975 and undated

box 1

folder 8

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Research papers, 1974-1980

Physical Description: 8 File Folders

Scope and Contents

Includes Bull's historical research about the Wilde-Stein Club, Maine Gay Symposium, and his own early experience as a gay liberation activist. Chiefly photocopies of papers and archives held at other institutions, including the University of Maine Archives and New York Public Library, and clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
Clippings, Maine Gay Symposium and Wilde-Stein Club, approximately 1974-1975	box 1	folder 9
Photocopies, letters and statements, University of Maine Orono and Maine Gay Symposium (folder 1 of 5), 1974	box 1	folder 10
Photocopies, letters and statements, University of Maine Orono and Maine Gay Symposium (folder 2 of 5), 1974	box 1	folder 11
Photocopies, letters and statements, University of Maine Orono and Maine Gay Symposium (folder 3 of 5), 1974	box 1	folder 12
Photocopies, letters and statements, University of Maine Orono and Wilde-Stein Club (folder 4 of 5), 1974	box 1	folder 13
Photocopies, letters and statements, University of Maine Orono and Wilde-Stein Club (folder 5 of 5), 1974-1980	box 1	folder 14
Photocopies, correspondence from Marty Manford papers at New York Public Library, 1974-1975	box 1	folder 15
Photocopies from Jeanne Manford papers at New York Public Library about Floyd and Evelyn Bull, 1975-1977	box 1	folder 16

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Organizational records, 1974-1977

Physical Description: 14 File Folders

Physical Description: 1 Oversize Folders

Arrangement

Chronological

Scope and Contents

Includes organizational records and publications of Parents of Gays, the Wilde-Stein Club, and Maine Gay Symposium.

Parents of Gays records, 1974-1977

Creator: Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Physical Description: 2 File Folders

Arrangement

Chronological

Biographical / Historical

Parents of Gays was founded in 1973 in New York City in order to help parents support their children. New chapters were established beginning in 1976 and the group grew, later becoming PFLAG, "the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them."

Scope and Contents

Includes publications produced by Parents of Gays which reflect Bull's parents' involvement and the early history of the organization now known as PFLAG. Floyd and Evelyn Bull joined the first chapter of Parents of Gays shortly after Bull came out to them in 1974, and, among other efforts, made their contact information public in order to support other parents.

Title/Description	Instances	
Brochures and flyers, January 1974 and undated	box 1	folder 17
Brochure and booklet with contact information for Floyd and Evelyn Bull, 1975-1977	box 1	folder 18

Wilde-Stein Club records, 1974-1975

Creator: Wilde-Stein Club (Orono, Me.)

Physical Description: 4 File Folders

Arrangement

Chronological

Biographical / Historical

The Wilde-Stein Club was a student club at University of Maine Orono, founded in 1973 by Karen Bye, Steve Bull, John Frank, Sturgis Haskins, and several other students who were interested in the gay liberation movement. The Club attracted national attention in 1974 when their presence on campus, and their plan to host the first Maine Gay Symposium there, received public criticism and mainstream media coverage.

Scope and Contents

Includes incoming correspondence to members of the Wilde-Stein Club. Letter-writers include other clubs and organizations, people interested in attending the Maine Gay Symposium, friends describing

their own activist activities (such as protesting the Stowe House in Brunswick), and individuals and religious groups offering both support and criticism of their efforts. Also includes a letter of resignation from the Club's first president, Sturgis Haskins, shortly before the first Symposium, and an account of club expenditures.

Title/Description	Instances	
Sturgis Haskins resignation and accounting sheet, 1974	box 2	folder 19
Correspondence, March 1 - April 12, 1974	box 2	folder 20
Correspondence, May - October 1974	box 2	folder 21
Correspondence, 1975 and undated	box 2	folder 22

Maine Gay Symposium records, 1974-1975

Creator: Maine Gay Symposium

Physical Description: 8 File Folders

Physical Description: 1 Oversize Folders

Arrangement

Chronological

Biographical / Historical

Maine Gay Symposium, later known as Maine Lesbian and Gay Men's Symposium or similar variations, was a conference of LGBTQ+ activists and organizations which occurred annually from 1974 to 1999. The first conference was organized by the Wilde-Stein Club and held in 1974 at University of Maine Orono, as was the 2nd conference in 1975. Subsequent conferences were held at university and college campuses throughout the state and organized by various organizations.

Scope and Contents

Includes records of the first and second Maine Gay Symposium held at University of Maine Orono, including photographs, schedules, and posters. Also includes photocopies of University of Maine correspondence about Symposium, made by Steve Bull from originals in the University of Maine Archives, and a photocopy of the voting record of the Maine House of Representatives on March 8, 1974, when the University of Maine budget appropriation passed 113-20 after a letter-writing campaign threatened the budget and the University's approach to academic freedom and free speech was criticized and debated on the floor of the House.

Title/Description	Instances	
Symposium photographs, digitized by donor on CD, 1974	box 2	folder 23
Symposium photographs, 35mm film positives, 1974	box 2	folder 24
Symposium photo contact sheets, 1974	box 2	folder 25
Symposium photo prints, 1974	box 2	folder 26
H. P. 2024. Joint Order, Relative to University of Maine Budget, Regular Session Roll Call, Maine House of Representatives, 1974-03-08	box 2	folder 27

Photocopies, Wilde Stein Club press communications from University of Maine Archives, April - May 1974	box 2	folder 28
Symposium schedule, notes, speeches, April 1974	box 2	folder 29
Two Posters, 1974-04	folder 29a OS	
"Hear Dr. Howard Brown" sponsored by Distinguished Lecture Series and U.M.O. Wilde-Stein Club, April 17, 1974	folder 29a OS	
Maine Gay Symposium, April 19, 1974	folder 29a OS	
Symposium II schedule, 1975	box 2	folder 30

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Publications, 1972-1980

Physical Description: 9 File Folders

Arrangement

Chronological

Scope and Contents

Includes periodicals, clippings, ephemera, audio, and video collected by Steve Bull, chiefly contemporaneous coverage of the gay liberation movements in Maine and nationally, and its intersection with Marxist, labor, and civil rights movements.

The DVD includes three segments produced by Joseph Lovett with interviewer Sylvia Chase for major television networks. Track 1 is a 1977 segment about Parents of Gays, featuring the Bull family. Track 2 is a 1979 interview with James Baldwin, which, according to a June 15th, 2021 article by Esquire, never aired. Track 3 is a 1997 segment called Out in America, featuring Larry Kramer, founder of ACTUP.

Title/Description	Instances	
Editorials, 1972, 1980	box 2	folder 31
Factsheets, undated	box 2	folder 32
Newsletters & Newspapers, 1974, 1975, undated	box 2	folder 33
CD, This American Life Radio Disk: 81 Words, "Re: APA decision/homosexuality 1973-74", 2002	box 2	folder 34
Maine Campus, February 26, April 3, April 30, 1974	box 2	folder 35
Gay leftist newspapers, 1975, 1980, undated	box 2	folder 36
Newspapers clippings, 1974-1975	box 2	folder 37
Workers Vanguard, July 8, July 29, September 9, 1977	box 2	folder 38

DVD, CBS programs aired Apr 1977, I. Parents of Gays; II. James Baldwin; III. Out in America, 1977 box 2 folder 39

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)