



Alternative Energy Coalition Records

1960-1981 (*Bulk:* 1976-1980)

8 boxes (12 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 586

Collection overview

A product of the vibrant, progressive political culture of western Massachusetts during the early 1970s, the Alternative Energy Coalition played a key role in the growth of antinuclear activism. In 1974, the AEC helped mobilize support for Sam Lovejoy after he sabotaged a weather tower erected by Northeast Utilities in Montague, Mass., in preparation for a proposed nuclear power plant, and they helped organize the drive for a referendum opposing not only the proposed plant in Montague, but existing plants in Rowe, Mass., and Vernon, Vt. Forming extensive connections with other antinuclear organizations, the AEC also became one of the organizations that united in 1976 to form the Clamshell Alliance, which made an art of mass civil disobedience.

The AEC Records provide insight into grassroots activism of the 1970s and 1980s, galvanized by the seemingly unrestrained growth of the nuclear power industry. The records, emanating from the Hampshire County branch, contain both research materials used by the AEC and organizational and promotional materials produced by them, including publications, minutes of meetings, correspondence, and materials used during protests. Of particular interest are a thick suite of organizational and other information pertaining to the occupation of the Seabrook (N.H.) nuclear power plant in 1979 and minutes, notes, and other materials relating to the founding and early days of the Clamshell Alliance. The collection is closely related to the Antinuclear Collection (MS 547).

See similar SCUA collections:

[Alternative energy](#)[Antinuclear](#)[Famous Long Ago](#)[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)[Peace](#)[Political activism](#)

Background on Alternative Energy Coalition

On Washington's Birthday in 1974, a local organic farmer and member of the Montague Farm commune, Sam Lovejoy, committed an act of civil disobedience. In the early morning hours he used hand tools to fell a weather-monitoring tower erected by Northeast Utilities, the corporation that was planning to build a massive nuclear power plant in town. Leaving the wreckage behind, Lovejoy flagged down a passing patrol car and turned himself in to face the consequences, hoping to spur a public debate about the use of nuclear energy. In that he succeeded. During the weeks that followed, Lovejoy's trial garnered national attention and catalyzed the formation of antinuclear organizations such as the Alternative Energy Coalition (AEC).

Founded in Montague, the AEC offered support for Lovejoy during the trial as well as for the larger aim of building broad-based opposition to nuclear power in the wake of Richard Nixon's "Project Independence," which included a plan to build 1,000 nuclear power plants by the year 2000. From the outset, the AEC used a range of tactics to achieve their goals, from political engagement, to petitions, public awareness campaigns, and direct action. The activist Harvey Wasserman, a co-organizer of the AEC, and several of his associates created a political party to influence local elections, supporting Lovejoy as he ran for representative to town meeting, and Anna Gyorgy (another AEC founder), Marc Sills, Nina Simon, and Janice Frey for other spots under the antinuclear "No Party" ticket.

By the early spring, the AEC began collecting signatures to place a dual referendum on the ballot for the state senatorial district, the first instructing the senator to oppose the proposed plant at Montague, the second instructing him or her to "sponsor and support a resolution aimed at closing and dismantling" the region's two active nuclear power plants at Rowe, Massachusetts, and Vernon, Vermont. They were successful, gathering over 3,800 supporters.

In 1976, the AEC chose to affiliate with several antinuclear organizations to form the Clamshell Alliance, a New England-based coalition of antinuclear activists. Through acts of non-violent civil disobedience, most notably the 1976 and 1977 occupations of the Seabrook Nuclear Power plant in New Hampshire, the Clamshell galvanized the antinuclear movement and became one of the major factors in radically slowing the growth of the nuclear industry in the United States. The AEC continued as a separate organization with chapters in both Hampshire and Franklin Counties, until disbanding in about 1981. By that time, dozens of other groups were active in opposition to nuclear power, aligned with the AEC's principles of non-violent direct action.

Scope of collection

The Alternative Energy Coalition Records document the organizational life of the Massachusetts-based antinuclear activist group from approximately 1974 to 1981, centered on the Hampshire County Branch. Reflecting the AEC's dual commitment to promoting the use of renewable energy resources and opposing nuclear power, the records provide an indication both of the high degree of decentralization characteristic of the early antinuclear movement and the impressive coordination maintained between like-minded organizations.

In addition to administrative records of the Hampshire County chapter of the AEC, the collection contains fliers, newsletters, leaflets, and other promotional materials, information on alternative energy, correspondence with allied organizations, and some realia used in protesting nuclear power. Of particular interest is a thick sheaf of notes, memoranda, and minutes of meetings from the organization and early years of the Clamshell Alliance, including minutes of the Coordinating Committee and a variety of materials relating to the occupations at the Seabrook (N.H.) Nuclear Power Plant between 1977 and 1979.

The collection is organized into three series:

- **Series 1: Organizational Materials**
- **Series 2: Research**

- **Series 3: Affiliated Groups**

Series descriptions

Series 1. Organizational Materials	1973-1981	66 folders (3 linear feet)
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Series 1 contains documents produced by the AEC for its own use and day-to-day operations, including flyers, meeting announcements, project proposals, handbooks, training session materials, meeting minutes, and member contact information. The organization also created extensive planning materials, including reconnaissance maps of New England nuclear sites for non-violent protest actions and outgoing petitions to the President against nuclear power. This series contains some artifacts, including black armbands worn by AEC members during site occupations as well as handmade hitch-hiking placards. Of special note in this series are three office logbooks that AEC members annotated and used to communicate with one another during direct action engagements, and a pad of paper used by AEC and affiliated members to document--in real time--the actions of the October 6, 1979 Seabrook occupation. (This pad is in the folder entitled, "Clamshell - Seabrook Occupation, October 6th, 1979.")

Series 2. Research	1960-1980	132 folders (7.5 linear feet)
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Series 2 contains materials collected by the AEC on a wide range of alternative energy sources. Enclosed are magazine articles, newspaper clippings, and pamphlets elaborating on nuclear issues, including nuclear weapons use and the environmental impacts of nuclear energy. The AEC was committed to gathering information about non-nuclear energy sources like solar, wind, electric power, and fossil fuels. In addition, the AEC maintained a small library of books, brochures, fact sheets, catalogues, and product listings exploring practical energy conservation methods, this last intended for use of private citizens. Brochures in this series investigate topics ranging from improved house construction to composting toilets, from hot water heaters to energy-efficient fireplaces. The AEC also received weekly reports from the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (from 1976-1979) and the Department of Energy (from 1978-1979). A few representative reports are preserved in this series. The AEC also collected legislative materials denoting Massachusetts alternative energy policies.

Series 3. Affiliated Groups	1977-1980	109 folders (3 linear feet)
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Series 3 contains material relating to the AEC's extensive connections to other environmental and antinuclear activist groups, both local and national. The AEC collected newsletters, news articles, and correspondence from groups with similar objectives. The AEC's strongest link was to the Clamshell Alliance; this organization's mission, membership, planning, and operations overlapped with those of the AEC after Clamshell's founding in 1976. As such, most material in this series is devoted to the Clamshell Alliance. Other selected affiliated organizations include the Abalone Alliance (California), Crabshell Alliance, Palmetto Alliance, Potomac Alliance, Tennessee Valley Energy Alliance, Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance, and the Rocky Flats Truth Force. The AEC also kept documents relating to other ideologically aligned social issues, such as the Red Power, Women's Rights, Mohawk Sovereignty, and Peace Movements.

Inventory

Series 1. Organizational Materials	1973-1981	66 folders
Artifacts: Logbooks (1976-1979) and songbook, "Songs of Seabrook"	1979	Box 1: 1
Artifacts: Four (4) Black Arm Bands	1979	Box 1: 2
Artifacts: Hitchhiking Signs	ca.1979	Box 1: 3
May 6th Coalition March on Washington	ca.1979	Box 1: 4
June 24th Occupation (1978)	1978	Box 1: 5
July 21st-22nd, 1979: Legal Seabrook	1979	Box 1: 6
October 7th Occupation Tactics and Site Access	ca.1979	Box 1: 7
November 11, 1978, Car Caravan and Demonstration	1978	Box 1: 8
AEC: 1 June 1979 Recycling Memo	1979	Box 1: 9
AEC: Finances	1978-1979	Box 1: 10
AEC: Mailing Lists	1979	Box 1: 11
AEC: Meeting Minutes	1976-1977	Box 1: 12
AEC: Meeting Minutes	1979-1980	Box 1: 13
AEC: "Nuclear Power and Alternative Energy Info Book," Office Copy	1973-1977	Box 1: 14
AEC: People Lists	ca.1979	Box 1: 15
AEC: Press Releases and Newspaper Articles	1979-1981	Box 1: 16
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Conferences, Speakers, Public meetings	1978	Box 1: 19
Correspondence	1977-1981	Box 1: 20
Congress File (Temporary)	1979	Box 1: 21
Danbury Federal Prison Bibliographies, etc.	ca.1979	Box 1: 22
Evaluations: No Nukes	ca.1979	Box 1: 23
Facilitating	ca.1979	Box 1: 24
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Hampshire County AEC News Release	1977-1978	Box 1: 26
Hampshire County Petition Forms	1979	Box 1: 27
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Montague LPV Task Force	1977	Box 1: 35
Neutron Bomb Petitions	ca.1979	Box 1: 36
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Nuke Moratorium Petitions	ca.1979	Box 1: 39
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Plymouth	1978	Box 2: 4
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Public Education Task Force (NUKES)	1979	Box 2: 6
Railway Express Agency and Co. (Building Lease) - 1948/1958	ca.1979	Box 2: 7
RATE Hikes	1979-1980	Box 2: 8
Seabrook 1978: A Handbook	1978	Box 2: 9
Seabrook Nuke Plant	1978	Box 2: 10
Seabrook Occupation: Chronological Press Folio	ca.1978	Box 2: 11
Seabrook Petitions	ca.1978	Box 2: 12
Subscription Requests to Periodicals, etc.	1978-1979	Box 2: 13
Sun Day	1978	Box 2: 14
Survival Summer - Info	ca.1979	Box 2: 15
Three Mile Island - President Carter Petitions	ca.1979	Box 2: 16
Trident Teach-In Materials (AEC)	1977-1978	Box 2: 17
Unity Committee, April 26, 1980	1980	Box 2: 18
Valley Advocate (Newspaper)	ca.1979	Box 2: 19
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Plant	1979-1980	Box 2: 20
VYDA - March 30th 1980 - News Clippings	1980	Box 2: 21
VYDA - Proposals and Meeting Info	ca.1979	Box 2: 22
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Western Mass Trainers	1979	Box 2: 24
Yankee Power Plant Petitions	1979	Box 2: 25
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Series 2. Research

1960-1980

132 folders

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Energy Analyses	1979	Box 3: 6
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Energy (General Info)	1977	Box 3: 8
Energy House	1975	Box 3: 9
Energy Task Force Alternative Currents / A.T.A.C	1979	Box 3: 10
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Environmental Policy Center	1978	Box 3: 13
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Hudson River	1977-1979	Box 3: 21
Hydro Electricity Dam Inventory W. Mass	1979	Box 3: 22
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J. P. Stevens (Corporation)	1977	Box 3: 26
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Nuclear - Breeder Reactor (LMFBR Program)	1974-1978	Box 3: 44
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Nuclear Safety	1978-1979	Box 4: 5
Nuclear Waste I	1975-1978	Box 4: 6
Nuclear Waste II	1974-1976	Box 4: 7
Nuclear Waste Disposal	1976-1977	Box 4: 8
Nuclear Waste Management	1960-1979	Box 4: 9
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Research - Journals, Newsletters, Newsclippings	1976-1980	Box 4: 23
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Rural Education Center	1980	Box 4: 25
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Scenic Hudson - Clearwater Sunday	1978	Box 4: 27
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Solar Energy Institutes of America	1977-1980	Box 5: 9
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Solar - Photovoltaics	ca.1979	Box 5: 12
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Series 3. Affiliated Groups

1977-1980

109 folders
(3 linear
feet)

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Clamshell: Rally, October 23	ca.	Box 6: 15
Clamshell: Resources: Reading Lists, films, magazines	ca.1979	Box 6: 16
Clamshell: Seabrook Action	1978	Box 6: 17
Clamshell: Seabrook Action, May 24	1980	Box 6: 18
Clamshell: Seabrook Occupation, May 30	1977	Box 6: 19
Clamshell: Seabrook Occupation, Memos	ca.1977	Box 6: 20
Clamshell: Seabrook Occupation, Oct. 6	1979	Box 6: 21
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Municipal Power Advocacy Coalition	1979	Box 7: 6
MUSE - Musicians United for Safe Energy	1979	Box 7: 7
Natural Guard	ca.1979	Box 7: 8
NECNP - New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution	1975-1977	Box 7: 9
Nuclear Power Resources (New York PIRG, etc.)	1977-1978	Box 7: 10
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Rath Proposal	ca.1979	Box 7: 19
Regional Environmental Council - Worcester, Mass.	1977-1978	Box 7: 20
Rocky Flats Truth Force	1979	Box 7: 21
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Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance	1979-1980	Box 7: 34
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Workers Alliance	1977-1978	Box 7: 36

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Gary Tartakov, December 2008 (Accession number 2008-295).

Processing Information

Processed by Katherine Barrett, Cameron Brown, Rebecca Guernsey, and Morgan Hubbard, December 2010.

Related Material

Among several other collections in SCUA relating to the antinuclear movement, see:

- Antinuclear Collection (MS 547): includes materials stemming from the Franklin County chapter to the AEC.
- Citizens Awareness Network Records

See also the **Clamshell Alliance Papers** (MC 77) at the University of New Hampshire Library, Milne Special Collections.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- Antinuclear movement--Massachusetts.
- Hampshire County (Mass.)--History.
- Nonviolence--Massachusetts.
- Nuclear Energy--Massachusetts.
- Pacifists--Massachusetts.
- Political activists--Massachusetts.
- Renewable energy sources.
- Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant (N.H.).
- Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.

Contributors

- Alternative Energy Coalition. **[main entry]**
- Clamshell Alliance.

Genres and formats

- Realia.

Link to similar SCUA collections

[Alternative energy](#)

[Antinuclear](#)

[Famous Long Ago](#)

[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)

[Peace](#)

[Political activism](#)