

Special Collections and University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

Tom Weiner Oral History Collection

2004-2008

3 boxes (1.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 729



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Growing up in Elmont, Long Island and Teaneck, New Jersey, Tom Weiner attended Trinity College before facing the draft in 1971. After failing the physical and mental examination, Weiner studied alternative education in England, Europe, and Israel on a Watson Fellowship. Upon his return in 1972, he began study at NYU law school, but soon left the city for Northampton, Massachusetts. A life-long social justice activist, Weiner has worked as a 6th grade teacher for the past twenty-five years.

With a lottery number of 117, Tom Weiner knew for certain that he would be drafted immediately upon graduation from Trinity College. Decades later, Weiner was inspired to collect the stories of the men and women who came of age during the Vietnam War era. This collection consists of the oral history interviews, recordings and transcripts, Weiner collected, thirty of which appear in his book *Called to Serve: Stories of Men and Women Confronted by the Vietnam War Draft*.

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Oral history

Vietnam War

Background on Tom Weiner

A life-long activist and sixth grade teacher at the Smith College Campus School for more than thirty years, Tom Weiner was a student at Trinity College when the draft lottery was imposed, determining the order of call to military service for a generation of men during the Vietnam War. With a number of 117, Weiner knew for certain that he would be called to serve and the weight of this knowledge had a profound impact on him. Believing the war unjust, Weiner was determined not to fight in it; seeking the support of a draft counselor he filed a conscientious objector application and gathered letters from doctors that documented various physical conditions. Ultimately, he failed the physical and mental examination when he responded "yes" to two questions: "Have you ever smoked marijuana?" and "Have you ever had suicidal fantasies?".

Weiner's response to the draft was not unique, many others were also able to avoid serving in Vietnam. Nor was his response an easy one. Indeed each man affected by the draft knew firsthand that there were no easy responses. Fearing that these individual stories would be lost over time, Weiner was motivated to capture them first as oral histories and later as a book. A primary goal in collecting these stories: reflect the full range of responses to the draft from those who served and those who refused to those who loved, supported and counseled men facing the draft. Weiner was able to bring all of these perspectives together in his book *Called to Serve: Stories of the Men and Women Affected by the Vietnam War Draft* published in 2011.

Scope of collection

Consisting of 54 oral history interviews on audiocassette or DVD and a complete draft of a Weiner's book *Called to Serve*, which includes the transcripts of those interviews, this collection documents the stories of men who served, men who left the country to avoid serving, men who refused to serve, those who "beat the draft", and those who were conscientious objectors. Also recorded are the stories of women who loved, supported, and counseled men affected by the draft. While the interviews were conducted with men and women currently residing in the Pioneer Valley, the stories told reflect the experiences of men and women around the country, since very few the individuals interviewed resided in the area during the war. As such, this collection represents a full range of reactions and responses both to the draft and to the Vietnam War.

Inventory

Anderson, Doug

undated

audiocassette

Box 1

Bohdi, Charlie

undated

audiocassette

Box 1

Boody, Peter

2006 Apr 11

audiocassette

Box 2

Brill, Ernie

undated

audiocassette

Box 2

Brown, Bob

2006 July 7

audiocassette

Box 2

Brown, Judson

undated

audiocassette

Box 1

Carden, Richard

undated

audiocassette

Box 1

Caruso, David

undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Carrington, Art
2005 Mar 15
2 audiocassettes
Box 1
Chevannes, Don
2006 Aug 3
audiocassette
Box 2
Crowe, Frances
2004 Aug 2
audiocassette
Box 1
Crowe, Frances
2008 Aug
DVD
Box 1
Dreezen, Craig
undated
audiocassette
Box 1
Fratkin, Elliot
2004 July 19
audiocassette
Box 2
Gardner, Dan
2004 July 19
audiocassette
Box 2
Gardner, Tom
2006 Feb 5
audiocassette
Box 1
Girard, Scott
2004 Aug 24
audiocassette
Box 1
Goss, Gary
2004 Aug 24
audiocassette
Box 1
Goss, Gary
2008 July
DVD
Box 1
Guy, Steve
2004 Aug 2
audiocassette
Box 2
Haxby, Bob
2004 July 13
audiocassette
Box 2
Henle, Jim
2004 July 18
audiocassette
Box 2

Higgins, George
2004 Sept 4
audiocassette
Box 1

Holtzman, Jay
2007 Jan 19-20
audiocassette
Box 1

Holtzman, Libby
2007 Jan
audiocassette
Box 1

Hoogstraten, John
undated
audiocassette
Box 2

Hunter, Scott
2005 Mar 17
audiocassette
Box 1

Jessop, Peter
undated
audiocassette
Box 2

Kehler, Randy
undated
audiocassette
Box 2

Lasaponaro, Domenic
undated
audiocassette
Box 2

Laye, George
2005 Dec 22
audiocassette
Box 1

Lembcke, Jerry
undated
audiocassette
Box 2

Marotta, Frank
2004 Aug 23
audiocassette
Box 1

McLeester, Dick
2004 Aug 26
audiocassette
Box 1

Miller, Al
2006 June 28
audiocassette
Box 1

O'Connor, Vince
undated
audiocassette
Box 1

O'Dowd Charlie
undated
audiocassette

Box 1
Perlman, Michael
undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Richmond, Paul
undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Rock, Penny
2008 Aug 20
audiocassette
Box 1
Ross, Randy
undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Russell, Joel
undated
audiocassette
Box 1
Sample, Michael
2004 Aug 13
audiocassette
Box 2
Strickland, John
undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Surprenant, Alan
undated
audiocassette
Box 2
Sussman, Guy
2006 July 5
audiocassette
Box 2
Thompson, David
2004 Aug 3
audiocassette
Box 1
Towne, Tom
2005 Jan 2
audiocassette
Box 2
Trudel, Steve
2004 Aug 4
audiocassette
Box 2
Trudel, Steve
undated
DVD
Box 1
Wallace, Roger
2006 Aug 1
audiocassette
Box 2
Wiley, Paul
2004 July 12

audiocassette
Box 2
Williams, George
2008 July 7
DVD
Box 1
Zucker, Rob
2004 Sept 12
audiocassette
Box 2
Called to Serve typescript
ca. 2011
audiocassette
Box 3

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Tom Weiner, 2011.

Processing Information

Processed by SCUA staff, January 2012.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Tom Weiner Oral History Collection (MS 729). Special Collections and University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Search terms

Subjects

Conscientious objection--United States
Draft registration--Law and legislation
Draft--United States--History--20th century
Vietnam War, 1961-1975---Conscientious objectors
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Protest movements
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Draft resisters
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Personal narratives

Genres and formats

Oral histories

Link to similar SCUA collections

Oral history
Vietnam War



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