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Jay Goldspinner Collection

1921-2019 (*Bulk:* 1973-2012)
3 boxes (3 linear feet)
Call no.: MS 909

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Read collection overview

All social change and cultural movements have their associated resources for the exchange of information, ideas, stories, and art. Particularly in the women's movement, the effort to create newsletters, journals, and other forms of art and information dissemination was a proactive step taken to assert women's stories and to locate the power of the press within women-run communities. These periodicals and artworks, both large and small in scale, reveal the ways women connected to each other, to nature, and to larger spiritual and cultural concepts. Local artist, activist, and self-identified "LFW" or Lesbian Feminist Witch, Jay Goldspinner was engaged with many of these communities, particularly those characterizing the spiritual elements of the women's liberation and feminist movements, and collected and saved their periodicals, books, and music. Her collection includes journals and art focusing on feminist linguistics, goddess myths and spirituality, Wiccan and witch traditions, progressive politics, and women's spirituality and community in local and international settings. They are unique windows into discourses of women's history and creativity, feminist movements, women's and lesbian community making, and social change work.

The Jay Goldspinner Collection consists of issues of feminist and progressive periodicals, journals, and newsletters from four decades, along with correspondence, ephemera, and scrapbooks from Goldspinner's life, especially documenting her work as a storyteller. Published titles represented include: Always in Season, Goddessing, The Lonesome Node, The People's Voice of Franklin County, Themis/Thesmophoria, Wicked Word, and an almost complete run, including the two indexes, of the seminal magazine of feminist spirituality, WomenSpirit.

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Background on Jay Goldspinner

1977 Spring Equinox cover of WomenSpirit.

All social change and cultural movements have their associated resources for the exchange of information, ideas, stories, and other creative works. Particularly in the women's movement, the effort to create newsletters, journals, and other forms of art and information dissemination was a proactive step taken to assert and center women's stories and to locate the power of the press within women-run communities. These periodicals and artworks, both large and small in scale, reveal the ways women connected to each other, to nature, and to larger spiritual and cultural concepts.

Local storyteller, activist, artist, and self-named "LFW" or Lesbian Feminist Witch, Jay Goldspinner (also known as Joan Wattles) was engaged with many of these communities, particularly ones concerned with the spiritual elements of the women's liberation and feminist movements. She collected their periodicals, books, and music. A researcher, teacher, and teller of global goddess stories, Jay was foremost a storyteller. She began in 1981 to tell stories to women - "because we don't hear enough of our woman-strong stories" - in women's festivals, coffeehouses, craft fairs, and homes. She continued for almost 40 years for telling stories to women, children, and men to build peace and community in the world. In 1978, Jay and other Worcester women created "Parthenogenesis" to put on women-focused events in that Massachusetts city. For many years she was an active member of the Eastern Cooperative Recreation School, which uses traditional games, songs, dances, dramatics, and crafts to encourage people of all ages to have fun together as well as learn leadership skills and build community. Jay is a writer and visual artist. As noted in a short description,

"Jay teaches dramatics, games, art and storytelling, is a mother, paperhanger and painter, writer, crafts person, witch and wonder woman. Her loving concern for the earth and for women shines through her stories, her art and her life."

Her collection includes documentation of her personal life and work as a performing artist as well as her collection of published materials such as journals, books, and music focusing on feminist linguistics and art, goddess myths and spirituality, Wiccan and witch traditions, and women's spirituality and community in local and international settings. They are unique windows into women's history and creativity, women's and lesbian community making, and social change work for women's issues and for peace and community in the world, and especially into the work of a practicing storyteller.

Scope of collection

The Jay Goldspinner Collection consists of issues of feminist and progressive periodicals, journals, newsletters, books, music and limited-edition chapbooks, from local and self-published items to nationally and internationally circulating titles. A growing amount of personal material, including scrapbooks, ephemera, and correspondence documents Goldspinner's activities and interests as an activist, storyteller, traveler, and community member and organizer. Her work as a storyteller in Massachusetts, New England, and across the country is especially well documented through notebooks, newsletters, workshop materials, and audio recordings.

Books and chapbooks:

- Antiga (ca. 1980). Lucina. Minneapolis, MN: SISTERS.
- Austen, H. I. (1991). The heart of the goddess: Art, myth and meditations of the world's sacred feminine. Berkeley, CA: Wingbow Press.
- Bonilla, B., Dodd E., Martin, B., McCullough, M. M., Mellen, S., Mo, L., Patton, L., & Spruill, J. (1988). Many Voices: The Journal of a Women's Touring Company at the Nairobi Conference, 1985. Roxbury, MA: Streetfleet Publications.
- Broumas, O. (1978). Beginning with O. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Budapest, Z. & Beardwomon, H. (Ed). (1976). The Feminist Book of Lights & Shadows. Los Angeles, CA: Luna Press.
- Budapest, Z. (1979). The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Part 1. Los Angeles, CA: Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1.
- Cheatham, A. & Powell, M. C. (1986). This Way Day Break Comes: Women's Values and The Future. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers. [Author note and signature]
- Conway, A.R. (1989). For the Goddess Within
- Gidlow, E. (1973). Makings for meditation. Mill Valley, CA: Druid Heights Books.
- Gidlow, E. (1975). Ask no man pardon: The philosophical significance of being lesbian. Mill Valley, CA: Druid Heights Books.
- Gidlow, E. (1982). Sapphic sounds: Eighteen to Eighty (Revised ed). Mill Valley, CA: Druid Heights Books.
- Goldspinner, J. (1985). The Goddess Comes in Living Color: A Coloring Book for All Ages. Greenfield, MA: Rootwomen Press.
- Goldspinner, J. (2009). Becoming Anna. Greenfield, MA: Rootwomen Press.
- Great Women Paper Dolls. (1977). San Francisco, CA: Bellerophon Books.
- Monaghan, P. (1994). O Mother Sun!: A New View of the Cosmic Feminine. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Stein, D. (Ed.) (1991). The Goddess Celebrates: An Anthology of Women's Rituals. Freedom, CA: The

Crossing Press.

- Walker, A. (1973). *Revolutionary Petunias & Other Poems*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Inc.

Long Playing Records:

- Christian, M. (1974). *I Know You Know*. Los Angeles, CA: Olivia Records.
- Clemmens, G. (1976). *I am Looking for Some Long-Time Friends....* Chicago, IL: Open Door Records.
- Culver, C. (1976). *3 Gypsies*. Los Angeles, CA: Olivia Records.
- Gardner, K. (1984). *A Rainbow Path*. Durham, NC: Ladyslipper Records.
- Lavender Jane. (1975). *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. New York City, NY: Alix Dobkin.
- Near, H. (1978). *Imagine My Surprise!*. Ukiah, CA: Redwood Records.
- New Harmony Sisterhood Band. (1977). "... And Ain't I a Woman?". Brooklyn, NY: Paredon Records.
- Sweet Honey in the Rock. (1978). *B'lieve I'll Run On..., See What the End's Gonna Be*. Ukiah, CA: Redwood Records.
- Williamson, C. (1975). *The Changer and the Changed*. Los Angeles, CA: Olivia Records.

Inventory

PUBLISHED MATERIALS

Always in Season: Living in Sync with the Cycles

1999-2001

Box 1: 1

9 issues of the quarterly journal put out by Donna Henes, a ceremonial artist and urban shaman. The full run was 32 issues from 1999-2006.

The Blatant Image: A Magazine of Feminist Photography

1982

Box 1: 24

Issue number 2, published by The Blatant Image out of the home of Jean and Ruth Mountaingrove in Oregon.

Common Lives/Lesbian Lives

1984

Box 1: 25

Issue number 13 (Autumn 1984) of a quarterly published by a collective of lesbians in Iowa City, IA, from 1981 to 1996.

For the Goddess Within

1989

Box 1: 26

Original research drawings by artist Ann Rosemary Conway, director of Dream Hill Studio in British Columbia, Canada. Second edition.

The Goddess Comes in Living Color: A Coloring Book for All Ages

1985

Box 1: 27

Coloring book by Jay Goldspinner, with drawings of goddesses from around the world, with extensive references.

Goddessing

1993-2005

Box 1: 2-6

17 issues of the international women's spirituality newspaper put out by editor Willow LaMonte.

Great Women Paper Dolls

1977

Box 1: 28

Coloring and activity book with cutout figures and clothing, some already colored/painted. Figures range from Sappho ("Around 600 B.C.") to Bessie Smith (1898-1937) chronologically.

Heresies: The Great Goddess

1978
Box 1: 29

The Spring 1978 issue of *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*. The Heresies Collective was a group of New York-based artists, performers, academics, writers, and critics who published the influential feminist arts journal *Heresies* from 1977 to 1993. All 27 issues are available online:
<http://heresiesarchive.org/>

The Lonesome Node
1992-1993
Box 1: 7

7 issues of the newsletter published by the Ozark Center for Language Studies (OCLS) and written by linguist Suzette Haden Elgin (Patricia Anne Wilkins), known for her scholarly work in linguistics, the development of a feminist language called Láadan, and her publications in science fiction and other genres.

Lunatics Calendar
1978
Box 1: 30

Lunar calendar, published in Baltimore, MD by Debbye (last name unknown) and Mary Ellen Keniston.

Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism
2004
Box 2

Volume 4, Number 2, 2004. Indiana U Press.

The People's Voice of Franklin County
2001-2012
Box 1: 8-10

26 issues from a local newsletter put out by the Franklin County Progressive Network, based in Greenfield, MA. Formerly The Franklin County Progressive Newsletter.

Sacred Source: Ancient Images and Ancient Wisdom
ca.1985-1999
Box 1: 31

2 issues of the retail mail-order sales catalog from JBL Devotional Statues.

Sinister Wisdom
1979
Box 1: 32

Special issue (Summer 1979) "on being old & age," published by the Iowa City Women's Press. Also available online through <https://www.sinisterwisdom.org/archive>

Sinister Wisdom
1983
Box 2

Special issue (22/23) from 1983 "A Gathering of Spirit" of the "Journal of Words and Pictures for the Lesbian Imagination in All Women," published by the Iowa City Women's Press. Also available online through <https://www.sinisterwisdom.org/archive>

SpindleWeed
1997
Box 1: 33

Issue 2 (Autumn 1997), of a quarterly published magazine by editors/publishers Brenda Yang and Sally King and Spinsters Publishing Company in Seattle, WA. "SpindleWeed is a magazine exploring the weaving of the green plants into our daily life and a tradition of healing and living where we are seen and cherished for being whole and perfect in the present moment."

Themis/Thesmophoria
1979-1987
Box 1: 11

28 issues of the newsletter put out by the Susan B. Anthony Coven, the first feminist, women-only, witches' coven, founded by Zsuzanna "Z" Budapest. The name was changed from Themis in 1981 after Budapest

learned the name was covered by a sorority held copyright, but continued its numeration from that title into the new one.

Wicked Word
1997-1999
Box 1: 12

7 issues of a local Neopagan and Wiccan inspired newsletter put out by editor Mark Roblee, based in Shutesbury, MA.

WomenSpirit
1974-1984
Box 1: 13-22

An almost complete run (36 issues), of the seminal magazine of feminist spirituality, produced by a transient group of volunteer women, feminists, and lesbians who migrated through the home of editors Jean and Ruth Mountaingrove in southern Oregon. Printed quarterly through the decade 1974-1984, the magazine featured writings and art from women, covered women's culture, spirituality, rituals, healing, life stages, feminism, politics and much more, and was international in scope and contributors.

WomenSpirit Index: A Comprehensive Guide to a Decade of Women's Spirituality 1974-1984
1984
Box 1: 23
women of power
1989-1991
Box 1: 34

Issues 14, 15, and 21 of the quarterly "magazine of feminism, spirituality, and politics," published in Cambridge, MA. Was published by women of power, Inc. 1985 until at least 1994.

Books and Chapbooks
1973-2009
Box 2
Long Playing Records
1974-1984
Box 3
PERSONAL MATERIALS

Bios, CVs
ca.1985
Box 2: 1
Cartoons
2010-2012
Box 2: 2
Correspondence - Africa
1997-2000
Box 2: 3
Correspondence - Africa
2001-2005
Box 2: 4
Correspondence - Africa, Lamu Project
1998-1999
Box 2: 5

Project spearheaded by Goldspinner to raise funds for the Mungano Women's Group in Kenya to purchase an engine for their dhow (boat).

Correspondence - Goddess Stories
ca.1977-1989
Box 2: 6
Correspondence - Storytellers
ca.1989-2005
Box 2: 7
Correspondence - Women
1981-1994
Box 2: 8
Correspondence - Women
1994-1997
Box 2: 9

Correspondence - Women

1998-2004

Box 2: 10

Correspondence - Women

2005-2019

Box 2: 11

Goddess Workshops

1984-1994

Box 2: 12

Parthenogenesis

ca.1978-1980

Box 2: 13

Scrapbook - "Holy Holes and Sacred Sites"

ca.1995

Box 2: 14

Goldspinner's scrapbook of photographs documenting places people created or recognized (usually in stones) a presence or sacredness. Majority are in New England region.

Scrapbook - "Women"

ca.1921-2004

Box 3

Goldspinner's scrapbook documenting her family, friends, activities, and also clippings related to women or groups she admired or emulated. Bulk dates 1981-1999.

Seneca Women's Encampment

1983

Box 2: 15

Storytelling

ca.1988-1997

Box 2: 16

Storytelling - Advertisements

ca.1987-1990

Box 2: 17

Storytelling - Audiocassettes

ca.1990

Box 3

Three self-published audiocassettes: Rootwomen Stories: Stories of strong women...; and Spinning the Tales of the Goddess, parts 1-2.

Storytelling - Calendars, Programs

1987-1993

Box 2: 18

Storytelling - Compact Discs

ca.2006-2009

Box 3

Recordings of Goldspinner's storytelling on local Greenfield, Mass. radio station WMCB LP 10.7.9FM on Michael Pollitt's show "Spinning Tales from All Walks of Life."

Storytelling - Newsletters

1986-2000

Box 2: 19

Storytelling - Notebook

1983-1985

Box 2: 20

Storytelling - Notebook

1986-2004

Box 2: 21

Storytelling - Thank Yous

ca.1990

Box 2: 22

Women's retreat, activism

ca.1976-1981

Box 2: 23

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Jay Goldspinner, 2016 and 2023.

Processing Information

Processed by Blake Spitz, 2016 and 2023.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Jay Goldspinner Collection (MS 909). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Feminism--Periodicals
- Franklin County (Mass.)--Periodicals
- Goddess religion--Periodicals
- Neopaganism--Periodicals
- Spiritual feminism--Periodicals
- Storytelling
- Wicca--Periodicals
- Witchcraft--Periodicals
- Women and spiritualism--Periodicals
- Women's rights and spiritualism--Periodicals

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