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Thomas W. Fels Collection

1953-2015
8 boxes (8 linear feet)
Call no.: MS 943

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Read collection overview

Background on Thomas Fels

Thomas Weston Fels is an artist, author, art historian, writer, and curator. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, 1946, Fels spent his teenage years at The Putney School, a private boarding school in Southern Vermont. Upon completion, Fels enrolled in Amherst College, and after graduating in 1967, moved to the Montague Farm commune. Fels lived on the farm from 1969 to 1973, and was an integral member of the larger communard community, extending from the Wendell Farm and Johnson Pasture, to Packer Corners and the Tree Frog Farm. While there, Fels associated with prolific writers, artists and photographers of 1960s counterculture, such as Harvey Wasserman, Ray Mungo, Peter Simon, and others.

Sometime after leaving the commune, Fels returned to school, attending Williams College. He graduated in 1984, earning a Masters in the History of Art. Following the completion of his degree, Fels was awarded multiple prestigious fellowships. In 1986, he became a Chester Dale Fellow of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, while between 1998-1999, he was a Fletcher Jones Foundation Fellow of the Huntington Library, California. His career has seen him employed by numerous museums across North America, ranging from the J. Paul Getty Museum of Art in California, the Elizabeth de C. Wilson Museum in Vermont, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Quebec. Fels has organized many exhibitions throughout his career, some internationally. In California, Fels' exhibition Carleton Watkins: Western Landscape and the Classical Vision was presented at the J. Paul Getty Museum of Art; while his exhibition Fire and Ice: Treasures from the Photograph Collection of Frederic Church at Olana, was shown at both the Dahesh Museum in New York, and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

In addition to his curatorial duties, Fels' work as a researcher and writer has led him to publish a variety of catalogs and companion pieces to his exhibitions alongside various articles and books. In 1989, he published *O Say Can You See: American Photographs 1839-1939*, and in 1994, he edited a single issue of *Farm Notes*, in some ways a successor to the Montague Commune's *Green Mountain Post* (formerly *New Babylon Times*). In 2008, Fels published the memoir *Farm Friends*, reflecting on his life, the counterculture era, and his time on the Montague Commune. In the same year, Fels helped found the 'Famous Long Ago Archive' at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; collecting the personal papers of several members of the communard community. These collections contain articles, manuscripts, photos, posters, oral histories, and more. He

continued to reflect on the Montague Farm, publishing *Buying the Farm* in 2012, providing an in-depth history of the commune, connecting with communards decades later, while chronicling the farm from its beginning in 1968 through the following thirty-five years of its existence.

Since 2013, Fels has been showcasing his unique cyanotypes throughout the American Northeast, and by 2015 his art would take him to Europe and the United Kingdom. In 2016, his large, life-sized renderings were subject to sale at one of the world's most renowned auction houses, Christie's London. Beyond his photography and historical work, Fels can be found giving lectures throughout New England, or at his home in Southern Vermont.

Scope of collection

The Tom Fels collection reflects the work of the many friends he made while living on the Montague Farm. Their works make up the bulk of the collection, containing articles, manuscripts, publications, photographs, posters, and audio recordings. Of particular interest is the 25th Anniversary reunion of the Montague Commune. The 10-day celebration is memorialized through photos, audio recordings, and a publication.

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Writings and Publications.](#)

1953-2015

4.5 boxes (1.88 Linear Feet)

This series features a selection of writings from Fels, as well as works from close colleagues and friends. The fliers, posters, manuscripts and publications almost all relate to the counterculture era. Fels' "Farm Notes" recounts the events of Montague Farm's 25th anniversary during the summer of 1994, while "Voices of the Farm" highlights a selection of work produced from various communards from 1960-2000. For example, early chapter drafts from "Harvey Wasserman's History of the United States" can be found alongside signed copies of Carl Olegsbys "A Raven in the Storm."

[Series 2. Audio-Visual.](#)

1967-2013

3.5 boxes (6.1 Linear Feet)

Life on the commune is documented through photographs from the quintessential counterculture photojournalist Peter Simon. Communard candids, group pictures, portraits and more highlight the various members of the commune. In addition, there are photos, videos, and audio recordings from the 10 day celebration of the Montague Farm's 25th Anniversary. 23 audio cassettes document small talk along with group discussions and meetings regarding the future of the farm. 6 video files are available, showcasing interviews with various communards throughout the anniversary.

Inventory

Series 1. Writings and Publications

1953-2015

Amnesty international flier

ca.1961

Box 1: 1

Art openings, book talks, dance, event flyers, Peter Simon memorial service

ca.1988-2019

Box 1: 2

Bento, William: "Prospects for the last quarter century"

1975

Box 1: 3

Bento, William: "Why study astrology?" *Psychic times*

1975 Jan

Box 1: 4

Buying the farm book tour

2015

Book By Tom Fells

Box :

Del campo al pueblo (libro II, nivel I): grammar school work book

1971

Box 1: 9

Diamond, Steve: *Journal*

2005

Box 1: 10

Dollars and sense, no. 7
1975 May
Box 1: 11
East Germany/GDR: Pamphlets, flyers, booklet, articles
1964-1989
Box 1: 12
Farm communards articles: Bloom, Davis, Diamond, Elliot, Gould
ca.1968-2011
Box 1: 14
Farm communards articles: Jezzler, Kornbunth, Lerner, Kopkind, Maslow, Mungo, McNeill, Saltonstall,
Wakefield, Wasserman
ca.1968-2011
Box 1: 15
Farm Notes
1994
Box 1: 17
Fels, Thomas: "Narrative of surprising conversions: Irv in New York"
1999
Box 1: 18
Fels, Thomas: "Voices of the farm"
2005
Box 1: 19
Fels, Tom: Hill County Observer "A Friend Who Revealed What the Trees Said."
2006 Sep.
Box 1: 20
Frazier, Reid: 1960s Communes in southern Vermon Ch. 1 and 2
2002 Oct
Box 1: 21
Frazier, Reid: 1960s Communes in southern Vermon Ch. 3 and 4
2002 Oct
Box 1: 22
Fuel crisis: Flyers
1973
Box 1: 23
GMP, LNS, NBT; Prints, Flyers, Covers
1969
Box 1: 24
Green Mountain Post No. 2
1970
Box 1: 25
Green Mountain Post No. 3
1971
Box 1: 26
Green Mountain Post No. 4
1972
Box 2: 1
Green Mountain Post No. 5
1977
Box 2: 2
Health, medicine, Greenfield MA: News clippings
1976-1977
Box 2: 3
James Cummins bookseller: "The archive of Paul Williams" catalog
2019
Box 2: 4
Johnson pasture, Montague Farm, Packers Corners, Tree Frog, Wendell Commune: Family tree
ca.2011
Box 2: 5
Katherine "Kit" Termaine: Montecito Property History
1997, Feb,
Box 2: 6
Lerner, Steve: "Trouble in the family, the liberation of Liberation News Service" the village voice
1968 Aug 22
Box 2: 7
Letter from "John" to "Tim"
2000
Box 2: 8
LNS: receipt, wire stories, RFK assasination, JFK investigation

1968-1969

Box 2: 10

LNS: Yippie! festival in Chicago; Article, bumpersticker

1968

Box 2: 9

Maslow, Jon: Sketchbook

2002

Box 2: 11

McMillian, John: Smoking Typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969 Afterword

2006

Box 2: 12

McMillian, John: Smoking Typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969 Ch. 1

2006

Box 2: 13

McMillian, John: Smoking Typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969 Ch. 3

2006

Box 2: 15

McMillian, John: Smoking Typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969 Ch.4

2006

Box 2: 16

McMillian, John: Smoking Typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969 Ch.5

2006

Box 2: 17

McMillian, John: Smoking typewriters, The new left's print culture, 1962-1969, ch. 2

2006

Box 2: 14

Montague Farm 25th reunion tapes: Inventory and descriptive summary

1994

Box 2: 21

Mother walter @ the pig tragedy

1972

Book By Mark Kramer

Box :

Mug Shots: Who's who in the new earth

1972

Book By Jay Acton. Alan LeMond. and Parker Hodges

Box :

Mungo, Raymond, Liberation News Service, The New Media Project

1968-06-07T00:00:00

Box 2: 23

New Babylon Times No. 1

1969

Box 2: 24

Nong Kimny, Cambodian ambassador: Christmas card

ca.1953-1963

Box 2: 25

O say can you see: American photographs 1839-1939

1989

Book By Tom Fells

Box :

Obsessive memories: Remembering my father yalek who never told me about love

2013

Book By Clara R. Maslow

Box :

Occasional Drop! No. 8

1969 Dec 21

Box 2: 26

Oglesby, Carl: A raven in the storm, typescript, signed pgs. 1-164

ca.2008

Box 2: 27

Oglesby, Carl: A raven in the storm, typescript, signed pgs. 165-302

ca.2008

Box 3: 1

Oglesby, Carl: A raven in the storm, typescript, signed pgs. 303-431

ca.2008

Box 3: 2

Oglesby, Carl: A raven in the storm, typescript, signed pgs. 432-629

ca.2008

Box 3: 3
Oglesby, Carl: Powerhouse act 1
ca.1976
Box 3: 7
Oglesby, Carl: Powerhouse act 2
ca.1976
Box 3: 8
Oglesby, Carl: Powerhouse act 3
1976
Box 3: 9
Oglesby, Carl: Season of the beast act 1
1956
Box 7: 1
Oglesby, Carl: Season of the beast act 2
1956
Box 7: 2
Oglesby, Carl: Season of the beast act 3
1956
Box 7: 3
Oglesby, Carl: The peace maker part 1
ca.1963
Box 3: 4
Oglesby, Carl: The peace maker part 2
ca.1963
Box 3: 5
Oglesby, Carl: The peace maker part 3
1963
Box 3: 6
Organizer Vol. 1 No.1
1975 Nov.
Box 3: 10
Question-Mark Vol. 2 No. 1
1977 Jan
Box 3: 12
Real paper, section 3
1977 Feb 12
Box 3: 13
Robert M. Ripley Sr., was highway boss maple sugar maker The Greenfield Recorder
1993 Jan
Box 3: 14
Rudhyar, Dane: "Astrological timing" & "Lunation cycle" [excerpts]
1967, 1972
Box 3: 15
Sevendays No. 1
1975 Mar 3
Box 3: 16
Sevendays No. 2
1975 Jun 2
Box 3: 17
Silva Mind Control International; articles, pamphlets
1972
Box 3: 18
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Abstract
2009
Box 3: 19
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Ch. 1
2009
Box 3: 20
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Ch. 2
2009
Box 4: 1
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Ch. 3
2009
Box 4: 2
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Ch. 4
2009
Box 4: 3
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 Ch. 5

2009
Box 4: 4
Slonecker, Blake: Living the movement: LNS, Montague Farm, and the new left, 1967-1981 conclusion
2009
Box 4: 5
Student Review Vol. 3 No. 2 and 4
1994
Box 4: 6
Surburg E., Robert, Jr. "Thinking Globally": Political movements on the left in Massachusetts 1975-1990"
Pages 1-298
2005 Jan
Box 4: 7
Surburg E., Robert, Jr. "Thinking Globally": Political movements on the left in Massachusetts 1975-1990"
Pages 300-515
2005 Jan
Box 4: 8
UFWA: Boycott Gallo Wines
1975
Box 4: 9
UMass, SCUA: Correspondence
2008-2023
Box 4: 10
Wasserman, Harvey: "All space to the people: a communalist manifesto" typescript draft
1970
Box 4: 12
Wasserman, Harvey: "American Communalism and beyond" typescript draft
ca.1972
Box 4: 13
Wasserman, Harvey: "Power to the cows: A case for vegetarianism" typescript draft
ca.1968
Box 4: 16
Wasserman, Harvey: "Revolt of the farmers" typescript draft
1968
Box 4: 17
Wasserman, Harvey: "Revolt of the workers" typescript draft
1968
Box 4: 18
Wasserman, Harvey: "Robber barrons" typescript draft
ca.1968
Box 4: 19
Wasserman, Harvey: "The cycles of American history" essay typescript draft
1970
Box 4: 15
Wasserman, Harvey: Astrological history of the U.S., typescript draft
1972
Box 4: 14
Williams, Paul: "Return of the prodigals" Soho Arts
1977 May 26
Box 5: 1
Win Vol. 10 No. 6
1974-02-21T00:00:00
Box 5: 2
Win Vol. 11 No. 04
1975-02-06T00:00:00
Box 5: 3
Win Vol. 11 No. 13
1975-04-17T00:00:00
Box 5: 4
Win Vol. 11 No. 24
1975 Jul 10
Box 5: 5
Win Vol. 11 No. 25
1975 Jul 17
Box 5: 6
Win Vol. 11 No. 27
1975-07-31T00:00:00
Box 5: 7
Witten, Leah: Contact info

1975-2000

Box 5: 8

Series 2. Audio-Visual

1967-2013

5th Annual colloquium on social change, Todd Gitlin and Raymond Mungo: "Radical democracy and the moral economy of social change"

2009 Oct 29th

Poster

Box 8

Alicia Bay Laurel: "Beyond living"

2009 Sep

CD

Box 6:

Alicia Bay Laurel: "More songs from living on the earth"

2013

CD

Box 6:

An inner-view special M.U.S.E.

1978

Box 7:

Animal take over at Tree Frog: Photograph

1971

Box 7:

Bloom, Marshall: Photographs

1968-1969

Box 1: 5

Clamshell "stop the seabrook nuclear plant", Hampton Beach State Park

ca.1978 Oct

Poster

Box 8:

Communard candids: Photographs

ca.1967-1969

Box 1: 6

Communard canoe trip: Photographs

1969

Box 1: 7

Communard groups: Photographs

1968-1969

Box 1: 8

Dinner at Tree Frog: Photograph

1969

Box 7:

Fall walk: Photograph

1969

Box 7:

Farm friends: Scans of photos and articles, disc 2

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:

Farm friends: Scans of photos and articles, disc 3

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:

Farm friends: Scans of photos and articles, disc 5

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:

Farm friends: Scans of photos, disc 1

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:

Farm friends: Scans of photos, disc 4

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:

Farm friends: Scans of photos, disc 6

ca.1967-1994

CD

Box 6:
Farm life: Photographs
1970
Box 1: 16
Gould and Stearns, The Prospect School benefit performance of MIME
ca.1980 Dec 20
Poster
Box 8:
I'm for IRA! Mayor Karasick, the only sensible choice.
1993
Poster
Box 8:
Jim Morrison, life, death, legend. Stephen Davis
ca.1985
Poster
Box 8:
Life in Vermont, As seen by Vermont authors: Bennington Free Library speakers' series
1982 Feb Mar
Poster
Box 8:
Martha's Vineyard, car: Photograph
1968 July 7
Box 7:
Mayday: Photograph
1970
Box 7:
Montague Farm 25th reunion - Negatives
1994
Box 2: 20
Montague Farm 25th reunion - Photographs & Negatives
1994
Box 2: 18
Montague Farm 25th reunion - Photographs & Negatives
1994
Box 2: 19
Montague Farm 25th reunion print
1994
Large print
Box 8:
Montague Farm 25th reunion: Audio cassettes
1994
23 Audio Cassettes
Box 6:
Montague Farm 25th reunion: Audio cassettes
1994
23 Tapes
Box 6:
Montague Farm 25th reunion: Videos
1994
CD
Box 6:
Mungo, Ray, and others: Photographs
1967-1969
Box 2: 22
No nukes: From the MUSE concerts for a non-nuclear future
1979 Sep 19-23
Box 7:
Original Tree Frog family: Photograph
1970
Box 7:
Pete Gould, Verandah + Doug Parker: Photograph
1976
Box 7:
Post Card, from "Laura" to "Tom"
1994 June
Box 3: 11
Praying for pot to grow, Tree Frog: Photograph
1969

Box 7:
Ray Mungo + Marcia Braun: Photograph
1967
Box 7:
Ray's brother, farm antics: Photograph
1970
Box 7:
Sam Lovejoy: "Nuclear power: The unfriendly atom" Tulane University Center
1977-09
Poster
Box 8:
Social change colloquium, Cape Cod Lounge
2009 Oct 29
Poster
Box 8:
Stephen L. Saltonstall Bennington College talk poster
2011 Apr 21
Poster
Box 8:
Ten reasons why we can't live with nuclear power, Public Media Center, Friends of the Earth
1970
Poster
Box 8:
The Farm - Photographs
1968-1970
Box 1: 13
The Iraq war, A glossary, The blood press
2005
Poster
Box 8:
The Seabrook atomic plant put the President, the Governor, and the citizenry on a collision course. The last resort, Toulouse St Theater
1979 Aug 6
Poster
Box 8:
They can't rob us blind if we open our eyes. (The oil companies and inflation), Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union
ca.1974
Poster
Box 8:
UMass, SCUA, 1968: A Life in the Year, A series of events to reflect on a tumultuous time in our nation's history
2008
Poster
Box 8:
Verandah, Porch: Photographs
1968-1969
Box 4: 11
Young boy: Photograph
ca.1970
Box 7:

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Thomas W. Fels, 2008.

Related Material

For materials related to the Thomas W. Fels Collection in Special Collections and University Archives see the various collections, including those of Ray Mungo, Carl Oglesby, and Steve Diamond, in the [Famous Long Ago Archive](#).

Additional materials include:

- Diamond, S. (1971). *What the Trees Said: Life on a New Age Farm*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Mungo, R. (1970). *Famous Long Ago: My Life and Hard Times with Liberation News Service*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- The [Liberation News Service Photographs](#) collection at Tamiment Library.
- The [Liberation News Service Records](#) at the Contemporary Culture Collection of Temple University Libraries.
- The [Marshall Bloom Papers](#) and the [Bloom Alternative Press Collection](#) in the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.
- The [Thomas Weston Fels Papers](#) in the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

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Search terms

Subjects

- Communal living--Massachusetts
- Communal living--Vermont
- Counterculture--United States--20th century
- Greenfield (Mass.)
- Montague (Mass.)
- Montague Farm Community (Mass.)
- Underground press publications

Contributors

- Fels, Thomas Weston [main entry]
- Oglesby, Carl, 1935-2011.
- Wasserman, Harvey, 1945 - .
- Simon, Peter, 1947- .
- Mungo, Raymond, 1946- .
- Slonecker, Blake, 1981- .
- McMillian, John, 1970- .

Genres and formats

- Alternative publications
- Audiocassettes
- Black-and-white photographs
- Negatives (photographs)
- Posters
- Printed materials
- Typescripts

Special Collections & University Archives

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