



More than 20 years  
celebrating lesbian and  
gay history in the tristate.

To volunteer or invite  
us to visit your group,  
call or write to us at:

[olarchives@gmail.com](mailto:olarchives@gmail.com)

513.256.7695

# Ohio Lesbian Archives

*Volume 20:1*

*Fall, 2016*

## PHEBE'S COLUMN

Honestly, I have resisted writing my greetings for the newsletter this time. First, there are the ever important elections. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Ohio Lesbian Archives cannot recommend any politician. Just sayin'....

We completed our long and detailed project – the online periodical index. Nancy knows how many drawers and file cabinets were involved. I was there helping most of the time. It was tedious yet important work. We plan to make the directory available online soon. And we are proud of our accomplishment!

We have shelved unending boxes of books. We have found plenty of duplicates which we intend to offer to other archives. The Archives intends to hold onto more than one copy of those early pioneering novels from small presses like Naiad and Persephone, as well as precious chapbooks of poetry by both Vic and me, Adrienne Rich, Judy Grahn, Rita Mae Brown, and many lesser known lesbians.

See elsewhere in this newsletter for Nancy's summary of our presentations, collaborations, and other accomplishments.

And do visit our blog on WordPress and LIKE us on Facebook.

I am personally finding a need to pace myself better. The good news of this is that I will focus more, and what is exciting me lately is more events—for example, Poetry in the Parlor (LGBT poetry here at Clifton United Methodist Church's sweet old-fashioned parlor). We would like to have more readings and discussions. Where else can a small group sit and immerse ourselves in lesbian herstory? Not many places (maybe some Women's Studies classes).

Please contact us if you are interested in becoming more involved, have a great idea, or are just curious to visit and see what all we have in the collection! The best way to contact us is: [OLArchives@gmail.com](mailto:OLArchives@gmail.com)

Happy holidays, everyone!

Phebe

**Co-Directors: Karen Phebe Beiser & Victoria Ramstetter**  
**PO Box 20075**  
**Cincinnati, OH 45220**

All of us at OLA would love to extend our warmest thank you to the following:

Robert “Bob” Roehm from the Bob Roehm Foundation of The Columbus Foundation who we met when Nancy & Phebe gave a talk in Columbus.

Longtime Archives’ supporter Marsha Acheson – she donated tons of books, cds, women’s music programs, and other items. We are sad about the circumstances: her partner Ruth Rowan passed away too soon, in 2015.

Sarah Berman who faithfully volunteered and assisted with the online periodical index as well as being one of the fastest shelve of books. Sarah is now a student in Harvard Medical School.

Longtime volunteer Annabelle Arbogast. Not only did she assist with the online periodical index, she is one of the founding members of SAG (Senior Action Group for LGBTs). OLA has collaborated with SAG and looks forward to more in 2017. Annabelle is working on a PhD in social gerontology at Miami University (Oxford, OH).

And, last but not least, Nancy Yerian, who is has met regularly with Phebe at the Archives. She coordinated our online periodical index project and directory; offered countless ideas and suggestions, is our main “history nerd” and continues to remind us how vital acid free folders are. Nancy also “did” several talks and presentations. -- Phebe

## OLA Blog: 2015-16 Recap

Nancy Yerian

### What have we done in a year?

We realize it’s been a full year since our last blog post – yikes! It’s not because the Archives has been inactive. In fact, we’ve been neglecting the blog precisely because we’ve had so much going on this year and we’ve been too busy to write about it. Here are a few of the things we’ve been working on

- **October 2015:** Tabling and Running a Workshop at GLSEN Youth Summit. Every year, GLSEN Greater Cincinnati holds an amazing summit to give LGBTQ youth an opportunity to meet each other and learn about their community. In 2014 we hosted a table to let attendees know about the archives. This year, we decided to take it a step further and hosted a workshop for youth about the OLA and local LGBTQ history. Between 15 – 20 teens attended and got a taste of queer history. We even brought a

box of duplicate books for them to take home – those certainly didn’t last long!

- **February 2016:** *Golden Threads* Showing with Senior Action Group. All year long, we’ve been working hard on creating an inventory of the Lesbian Periodicals collection (scroll down for more updates). In the process of going through this collection, we’ve discovered so many fascinating publications, both local and national. One that really caught our eye was *Golden Threads*, a correspondence newsletter designed specifically to connect lesbians 50 years and older. A little research showed us that there was a documentary about the publication and its creator. The Archives decided this was the perfect opportunity to partner with Cincinnati’s LGBT Senior Action Group, and we hosted a showing of the film in February. About 30 women joined us for this beautiful exploration of aging and community.
- **March 2016:** Workshop encore for GLSEN Youth Group. GLSEN asked us to hold an encore of our October workshop for their weekly Youth Group. Phebe and Annabelle joined about 20 young people at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church for another discussion of the Archives, which even generated interest in some youth potentially volunteering with us!
- **July 2016:** Visit from UC History Class. In early July, we hosted a summer class from UC exploring local history and different archives in the area. The five students in “Local History Research Methods” got a taste of our collections, what it is like to do research here, and what it takes to maintain an archive. Their local history work will culminate in each of them writing text for an Ohio Historic Marker.



- **July 2016:** Visit from Gay Ohio History Initiative. Anthony Gibbs, from the Gay Ohio History Initiative and the Ohio History Connection paid us a visit to talk about “GOHI” and statewide efforts to preserve Ohio’s LGBTQ history. Anthony brought resources with him and we showed him the archives and discussed ways we might be able to collaborate.
- **August 2016:** Completed Lesbian Periodicals Inventory!!!! We have been working for over a year on creating an inventory of the Archives’ Lesbian Periodicals collection. The goal is to document exactly what the Archive has both for our own records and to make the information available to the public and to researchers. In early August, we finally made it to the end of the alphabet and documented all of the various lesbian newspapers, newsletters, and magazines – 3 full filing cabinets’ worth of materials. Now all we have left is to edit the document and we will be able to make it available at the archives and through this website for people interested in researching in our collection. We plan to have it edited and available for browsing online this fall.

**August 20, 2016:** Ohio History Connection LGBTQ Community Day with GOHI. Our last hurrah of the summer was to travel up to Columbus for LGBTQ Community Day at the Ohio History Center. Phebe and I gave a talk on the archives and we saw two other presentations: a talk on LGBTQ history projects by Stonewall Columbus and a living history interpreter speaking as Natalie Barney, “that Wild Girl from Cincinnati.” It was great to be able to share our work and connect with others around the state.



**December 11, 2016 -- Mary MacMillan Presentation**

**4 pm Upstairs Parlor Clifton United Methodist**

"Urban historian Anne Delano Steinert will present her ongoing research on local lesbian poet Mary MacMillan. Born in Ross, Ohio in 1878, MacMillan studied at Wells College and Bryn Mawr before returning to Cincinnati around the turn of the century. Here she completed a number of historical essays, published poems in six national magazines, compiled her own book of verse entitled, *The Little Golden Fountain*, worked for women's right to vote, and held influential roles in several local organizations including the MacDowell Society and the Ohio Valley Poetry Society. As president of the Ohio Valley Poetry Society MacMillan corresponded with many authors of national acclaim including Edna St. Vincent Millay who ultimately visited MacMillan here at her home on Telford Avenue in Clifton in 1927. As her poems detail, the love of MacMillan's life was University of Cincinnati Dean of Women, Loueen Pattee, who died suddenly at age 46 in 1922 after only four years in Cincinnati with MacMillan. Before coming to Cincinnati, Pattee had run a girls' school in Munich, staying on to work at a Red Cross hospital at the outbreak of World War I. Pattee is listed as MacMillan's "partner" in the 1920 census taken of their Telford Avenue address. This talk will be a presentation of work in progress followed by a discussion of the research presented and feedback on ways to move forward with the work."





### **Romaine Brooks 1874 -- 1970**

The striking, nearly monochromatic works of Romaine Brooks received a fourth major showing at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., which owns about half the known output of the American expatriate who lived in Paris. (She was also a long term lover of Natalie Barney “that wild girl from Cincinnati.”)

But the new exhibition, “The Art of Romaine Brooks” on view this past summer, speaks most frankly about her sexual identity—her work is almost exclusively about women, and her own self-portraits show her in men’s clothing and a top hat.

The exhibition included the 18 paintings and 32 drawings in the museum’s collections—works we’ve seen before—but Joe Lucchesi, the contributing curator, says “the thing that is profoundly different about this show is the framing around the artist’s life itself and the issues of gender and sexuality that are really at the core at the work.”

-- Reprinted in part from the Smithsonian website.

I was so excited when an ex-lover emailed me with the news that Romaine Brooks’ paintings would be on exhibit at the Smithsonian this summer. A dear friend and I immediately made reservations to spend a HOT August weekend in DC. I had been yearning to see these paintings since 1976 and my

dream was finally fulfilled. Even though I traveled the week Delta had the glitch in their system and spent all day Friday at the Cincinnati airport after an early flight out was canceled and another kept getting delayed, it was all so worth it!

The paintings were much larger than I could have imagined, having only seen them reproduced in books. Many of her portraits are really quite radical even for today. For instance, her self-portrait is easily my favorite lesbian painting. There are several other gender bending portraits of Romaine’s friends and lovers as well in the Smithsonian’s collection. (You can check it out on the museum’s website and see what was on exhibit for yourself.)

When Phebe and I went to Paris last year we pretty much ran to the Petit Palais where we knew quite a few of Romaine Brooks’ paintings had been donated. No one there knew what we were talking about (though they did speak English). Eventually we chatted up a beautiful French woman in the gift shop who looked online and was excited to find out that yes, there are quite a few of Romaine Brooks’ paintings in the Petit Palais but they are all in storage in the basement! Maybe next time we go to Paris Romaine’s work will be on exhibit.... – Vic



### **Ohio Lesbian Archives 2017 Preview:**

Next issue look for a recap of Vic and Phebe’s 2015 Lesbian Pilgrimage to Paris and an exciting announcement!

There will be a LGBT Open Poetry event in the church parlor in early 2017 – look for flyers. Bring your poetry to share and tell all your friends. Even if you aren’t a poet it is a good opportunity to make new friends and see old ones too. To help or for more information call Phebe at 256-7695.

### **Also, look for Phebe’s writing class spring, 2017:**

Phebe is a teacher at WWFC and taught a writing class last spring at Women Writing for a Change

for LGBTs that was enjoyed by all who signed up for the six week course. She will be offering another class this spring so check out the WWFC website or Phebe's blog and OLA's blog for more information:

<https://phebek108.wordpress.com>

<https://ohiolesbianarchives.wordpress.com>

## STUDENT INTERNS



*Earn college credit working in one of only four lesbian archives in the US. Contact us if you are interested in designing your own independent study program at OLA. Students from UC, Miami University, XU and UK have all taken advantage of this unique learning experience.*

*We are willing to work with your schedule!*

*513-256-7695 (phebe)*

*OLArchives@gmail.com*

## OLA NEEDS YOU!

Do you want to volunteer on a regular basis at the archives – filing, organizing, working on inventories, etc?

Would you rather put on a FUNdraiser for the archives such as a show, coffeehouse or dance?

Or would you rather donate much needed money (tax exempt) for rent and acid free supplies? Our donations have dwindled down to 0 since we moved from above the Crazy Ladies Bookstore.

We could also benefit by you leaving your house for the archives in your will..... Or a trust..... We also want to build an active, exciting board to help plan for the archives' future as well as the present.

## MOST IMPORTANT!

We have been in our basement room at Clifton United Methodist Church since Crazy Ladies closed and the Cincinnati Women's Building was put up for sale. However basements are notoriously damp and we need a new dry refuge. Do you have any ideas for another home for the archives? This is a priority -- sooner rather than later as we have been working to rid some materials of mold!



We are always happy to meet you or your group at the archives almost any time. Some of us are retired while some have flexible work schedules, etc. We are always happy to introduce you to our collection of lesbian books, periodicals, memorabilia and gay history of the tristate region (we have lots of material from many now defunct gay and lesbian organizations). Please call or email to arrange a visit. – Vic





***Sunday***  
***December 11, 2016***  
***4 pm***  
***Upstairs Parlor***

**Clifton United Methodist Church**  
Senator Place and Clifton Avenue  
(parking lot on Senator Place is on the right just past the church)

## **Urban historian Anne Delano Steinert will present her ongoing research on local early 20th century lesbian poet Mary MacMillan**

*(This talk will be a presentation of work in progress followed by a discussion of the research presented and feedback on ways to move forward with the work.)*

Donations to OLA will be gratefully accepted



.....also coming up from UC College Conservatory of Music:

## **Her Naked Skin: CCM** at University of Cincinnati Patricia Corbett Theater

London 1913. Women are demanding the right to vote. Thousands of suffragettes of all classes serve time in Holloway Prison in their determination to gain equality through the vote. Their willingness to suffer for social injustice serves as the backdrop for an unlikely love story set in a period of turmoil. Described by the Independent as "a great drama about women, by a woman," *Her Naked Skin* premiered to great acclaim at London's National Theatre in 2008. By exploring the hunger for political and personal emancipation, this play plants a defiant feminist flag center stage. **This production contains adult themes and is not recommended for young audiences.** (Written by Rebecca Lenkiewicz ; Richard Hess, director)

- **Preview Performance Discount:** Tickets to the 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, preview performance of *Her Naked Skin* are just \$15 per person! [ccm.uc.edu/boxoffice](http://ccm.uc.edu/boxoffice) or call 513-556-4183 -- **Tickets: \$27–\$31** adults
- Feb 9, 2017 at 08:00 pm (Thu)      Feb 10, 2017 at 08:00 pm (Fri)      Feb 11, 2017 at 02:00 pm (Sat)
- Feb 11, 2017 at 08:00 pm (Sat)      Feb 12, 2017 at 02:00 pm (Sun)

