



William Damon papers, 1965-1984 : Ms.Coll.1

Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. on

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Summary Information

Repository:	John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center
Creator:	Damon, William Forster, 1943-1985
Title:	William Damon papers
ID:	Ms.Coll.1
Date [inclusive]:	1965-1984
Physical Description:	2 Linear feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	William Damon was an active member of the gay communities of Philadelphia, Pa.; New York, NY; Key West, Fla., and Provincetown, Mass. Throughout his life he was active in the gay rights movement. He worked as an editor and writer for multiple publications. The William Damon papers, 1965-1984, contain items relating to Damon's personal life and are chiefly biographical.

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Biographical/Historical Note

William Forster Damon was born in October 21, 1943 in Philadelphia. After an active life in the gay communities of Philadelphia, Provincetown, MA, and Key West, FL, Damon returned to his native Philadelphia where he died in approximately 1985.

Damon was educated at the Wallingford School, Haverford School, Valley Forge Military Academy, and the Brown Preparatory School, where he graduated in 1962. He spent the next several years at the Pennsylvania Military College (1963-65), the Nathaniel Brandon Institute in New York (1965-66), and the Charles Morris Price School of Advertising and Journalism in Philadelphia (1966-67).

In September 1968, Damon became a staff writer and contributing editor of *DRUM* Magazine, the publication of Philadelphia's Janus Society, one of the city's most active lesbian/gay political organizations in the 1960s. During this period in Philadelphia, Damon served as the East Coast director of the Committee to Fight Exclusion of Homosexuals from the Draft (1968-1970) and as a member of the Homosexual Law Reform Society of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley Council on Religion and the Homosexual. During this time, Damon also attended the East Coast Regional Homophile Conference

in Washington. After *DRUM* ceased publication, Damon worked briefly for its successor magazine, *PACE* (July-August 1969).

After one year's work at *DRUM*, Damon toured Western Europe and North Arica (October 1969-May 1970). On his return, he moved to Provincetown, MA, where he worked for the Crown and Anchor Motor Inn (June 1970-May 1973) and the *Lower Cape Newspaper* (1972-1973), before becoming the owner/manager of the Owls Nest Inn (June 1973-December 1976). After more than three years there, Damon went to work for the Boatslip Motor Inn for a few months. While in Provincetown, Damon served as the director of the Homophile Assistance League of Provincetown (1970-1977) and a contributing reporter to *Gay Community News* in Boston (beginning 1974) and *Philadelphia Gay News* (beginning 1975). Damon also served as Massachusetts state director of Gays for Schapp in 1976 and as a political consultant in Elaine Noble's Senate campaign in 1977. While in Massachusetts, Damon also was a member of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts and the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce and was a Massachusetts delegate to the National Gay Leadership Conference, summer 1977.

In November 1977, Damon moved to Key West, Florida where he worked first at the Monster Discotheque and then became the president of Conch Wheels Ltd, Inc., an auto rental company. While there he worked against Anita Bryant's anti-gay campaign (1977) and served as a consultant on gay issues for the John Spottswood for State Senate campaign, a member of the Civil Liberties Union of Florida (1977-79) and the Key West Business Guild (1977-79), and a contributing writer for *Philadelphia Gay News*.

In 1979, Damon returned to Philadelphia. In 1980, he worked as the state director of Pennsylvania gay outreach for the Edward Kennedy for President campaign and as an assistant press secretary for the C. DeLores Tucker for US Senate campaign. In these years, Damon was a member of the Walt Whitman Democratic Club and the American Civil Liberties Union, worked with the Eromin Center and *Au Courant*, and was active in Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous groups.

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Scope and Content Note

The collection contains material from the 1960s through the 1980s and is of interest to scholars of gay life in the period. Most of the items relate primarily to Damon's personal history and are chiefly biographical. Insofar as Damon lived in Provincetown and Key West, two well-known gay resorts, these materials do offer glimpses of a larger gay world. And given that Damon spent about the first 10 and the last 10 years of his life in Philadelphia, these materials also offer scholars a window on the changes that Philadelphia experienced between the late 1960s and the 1980s.

The collection is arranged into seven series: "I. Biography"; "II. Organizations"; "III. Photographs"; "IV. Correspondence"; "V. Creative Writing"; "VI. Journals"; and "VII. Miscellaneous ephemera."

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center

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Conditions Governing Access Note

Access to this collection is unrestricted. Contact John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia for more information about accessing the collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Gift of William Damon, 1984.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2011-2012 as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR), using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. The HCI-PSAR project was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was done in the HCI-PSAR project.

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Related Materials

Separated Materials Note

The original collection contained much legal and financial materials not directly related to Damon's life as a gay man, and the archives has not saved these. Some materials were gay-related but had no apparent direct connection to Damon's life, and these have been removed to other parts of the archives. These included items from the National Gay Task Force (1974-77), the Human Rights Campaign Fund (1982-83), the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities (1982), the fund for

Human Dignity (1982), Exodus (1981-82), the Walt Whitman Democratic Club (1980), and the National Man/Boy Love Association (1982). Also removed to other parts of the archives were news clippings and magazine articles from 1976-1983, a set of which focused on the gay community in Washington, D.C., 1981.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Gay activists
- Gay men
- Gays
- Journalists
- Key West (Fla.)
- Philadelphia (Pa.)
- Provincetown (Mass.)
- Sexual minorities
- Damon, William Forster, 1943-1985

Collection Inventory

I. Biography

Title/Description	Instances
Resumes and family	
Health	

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II. Organizations

A. New York

Title/Description	Instances
Nathaniel Brandon Institute-Correspondence, 1965-1966	
Nathaniel Brandon Institute-Lecture notes, 1965-1966	
Nathaniel Brandon Institute-Publications, 1965-1966	

B. Philadelphia

Title/Description	Instances
<i>DRUM</i> -Correspondence	

C. Provincetown, MA

Title/Description	Instances
Lower Cape Newspaper, 1972	
Owl's Nest Inn, 1973-1976	

D. Key West, FL

Title/Description	Instances
Anita Bryant Campaign-Letters, 1977	
Anita Bryant Campaign-Campaign, 1977	
Conch Wheels, 1978-1980	
Kennedy, Edward for President, 1980	

E. Philadelphia

Title/Description	Instances
Walt Whitman Democratic Club, 1980	
Delores Tucker Campaigns, 1908-1982	
Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous, 1980-1982	
Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club, 1982	
Eromin Center by-laws and policies, 1983	
Eromin Center-General, 1983	
<u>Au Courant</u> , 1984	

F. Miscellaneous

Title/Description	Instances
Miscellaneous	

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III. Photographs

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IV. Correspondence

A. Personal correspondence

Title/Description	Instances
Blackshear, circa 1960s	
Kurt, circa 1960s	
Travaline, circa 1960s	
Miscellaneous, circa 1960s	
Travaline, circa 1970s	
Miscellaneous, circa 1970s	
Bridgeman, circa 1980s	
Grossman, circa 1980s	
K., John, circa 1980s	
Lee, circa 1980s	
Sansweet, circa 1980s	
Noble, circa 1980s	
Valconcellos, circa 1980s	
Miscellaneous, circa 1980s	
Undated	

B. Publications correspondence

Title/Description	Instances
Publications correspondence, 1972-1981	

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V. Creative writing

Title/Description	Instances
Autobiography, 1943-1970	
Autobiography, 1965-1978	
Autobiography, 1967-1969	
Autobiography, 1969-1971	
Autobiography, 1969-1972	
Falwell/Moral Majority	

Forum For Contemporary History

Astrology (*DRUM*), 1969

Marijuana and Homosexual Sex (*DRUM*), 1969

The Homosexuals' Greatest Enemy

Prohibido Center

Mike and Steve

Tolan Gay

Poetry

Butch

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VI. Journals

Title/Description	Instances
1975	
1977	
1978	
1979	
1980	
2 volumes, 1981	
2 volumes, 1982	
1983	
1984	
Journal pages, 1974	
Calendar page, 1977	
Calendar page, 1980	
Calendar page, 1982	

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VII. Miscellaneous ephemera

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