



**Joan Fleischmann collection on East
Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO),
Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile
Organizations (ERCHO), and others, 1963-1994
[bulk 1963-1969] : Ms.Coll.26**

Finding aid prepared by John Anderies on March 10, 2017

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	7
Administrative Information	7
Related Materials	8
Controlled Access Headings	9
Collection Inventory	9

Summary Information

Repository:	John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center
Creator:	Fleischmann, Joan, 1933-2013
Title:	Joan Fleischmann collection on East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO), and others
ID:	Ms.Coll.26
Date [inclusive]:	1963-1994
Date [bulk]:	1963-1969
Physical Description:	0.5 Linear Feet (1 document box, 1 oversized folder)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Joan Fleischmann was a homophile and gay liberation activist from late 1950s through the 1990s. The collection contains primarily organizational records collected over several decades by Fleischmann. These organizations include the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO), the Daughter of Bilitis (New York), the Mattachine Society of New York, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Lesbian and Gay Caucus, as well as Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) (Mountville and Reading, Pennsylvania) and Dignity (Philadelphia).

Preferred Citation

Joan Fleischmann collection on East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO), and others, 1963-1994 [bulk 1963-1969], Ms. Coll. 26, John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center, Philadelphia, PA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Joan Fleischmann

Joan Fleischmann (1933-2013) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to biological mother Margaret Monahan, and was adopted by George and Gertrude Fleischmann of Berks County, Pennsylvania. The family moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, where Joan received a traditional Catholic education. After 10th grade, Joan enrolled herself in Reading Public High School, and graduated in 1951. After high school her parents moved to Sun Harbor, New Jersey, and Joan got a job working in Atlantic City. She attended West Chester State College and in 1955 received a BA in education, and was certified to teach English and social studies. Joan's first professional job was teaching high school English in Summit, New Jersey. She eventually lost that job after refusing the advances of a man, who then revealed to the school principal that Joan was a lesbian. Her second teaching job was at Perkiomen Valley High School in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where she worked until her retirement in 1993.

Joan became involved in the homophile movement in the late 1950s, first with Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) (New York City), and later with the Mattachine Society (Philadelphia), the Janus Society (Philadelphia), and the Eastern Conference of Homophile Organizations (ECHO). She was caught up in the infamous Radnor Raid in 1960 and served as Secretary of DOB (New York) and both Secretary and Vice President of Mattachine (Philadelphia). She served as the Coordinator of the first ECHO conference held in Philadelphia in 1963. Joan wrote columns in the national lesbian magazine *The Ladder*, as well as for Clark Polak's *Drum* magazine, and the *Janus Society Newsletter*. She marched in the first Reminder Day picket at Independence Hall in 1965. Sometime after 1965 she left the homophile movement. Throughout this time she used the pseudonym of Joan Fraser for most of her activities as a homophile activist.

In the 1970s she became involved with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and was active in both its Gay Caucus and its Committee of Gay and Lesbian Concerns. She is listed in *Who's Who of American Teachers* and was a board member and legal advocate for the Women's Center of Montgomery County. She was also active in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) and the gay Catholic organization Dignity. After retirement from teaching Joan moved to Florida and joined the board of the Stonewall National Museum and Archives and chaired the Program and Services committee for the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of South Florida.

Joan Fleischmann's partner of 27 years was Jean C. Barron (1933-2014).

East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO)

The East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) was founded in January 1963 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when representatives of several area homophile organizations came together to form an alliance. Those organizations included the Janus Society of Delaware Valley, Mattachine Society of Washington, DC, the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., and the Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York. Their goals, as stated in a 1963 brochure, were the "facilitation of closer communication among homophile organizations," and "sponsoring a public convention on the problems of homosexuality."

The first ECHO convention titled "Homosexuality: Time for Re-Appraisal" was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 31-September 1, 1963, at the Drake Hotel. Speakers included Joan Fraser (Fleischmann), ECHO Coordinator; Donald Webster Cory, author of *The Homosexual in America*; R.E.L. Masters, author of *The Homosexual Revolution*; the Reverend Edward Lee, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Philadelphia; Albert Ellis, author of *Sex Without Fear*; Artemis Smith, author of *Hark the Pterodactyl*; Franklin Kameny, president of Mattachine Society of Washington; Charles Roisman, Esq.; and Wainwright Church, psychoanalyst. There was also a panel discussion on "Homosexuality -- Research Taboo" moderated by Wardell B. Pomeroy, Director of Field Research, Institute for Sex Research, Inc.

The second ECHO conference titled "Homosexuality: Civil Liberties and Social rights" took place in Washington, DC, on October 10-11, 1964, at the Sheraton-Park Hotel. Its speakers included Robert King, ECHO Coordinator; J.C. Hodges, President of Mattachine Society, Inc., of New York; Monroe H. Freedman, professor of law, George Washington University; Hal Witt, Esq.; Sidney Sachs, Esq.; John W. Karr, Esq.; Glenn R. Graves, Esq.; and David Carliner, Chairman, National Capital Area Civil Liberties Union. Panels on "The Homosexual and the Law" and "Alienation of the Homosexual from the Religious Community," were moderated by David Carliner and Joan Fraser (Fleischmann), respectively. And a debate was staged on "Homosexuality: Legislation vs. Education" between Kurt Konietzko, sociologist, and Franklin Kameny, President, Mattachine Society of Washington.

The third and final ECHO conference titled "The Homosexual Citizen in 'The Great Society'" was held in New York City, September 24-26, 1965, at the Barbizon-Plaza Hotel. Its speakers included Dick Leitsch, President-elect of Mattachine Society, Inc., of New York; Isadore Rubin, author and managing editor of *Sexuality Magazine*; James Collier, author of *The Hypocritical American*; Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek, psychologist; John V.P. Lassoe, Jr., director of Christian Social Relations for the Episcopal Diocese of New York; Gilbert Cantor, Esq., lawyer for Philadelphia ACLU; Clarence Tripp, clinical instructor in psychiatry; Ernest Van Den Haag, psychoanalyst; Franklin Kameny, co-founder and Past President of Mattachine Society of Washington; Paul Goodman, author of *Growing Up Absurd*; George Weinberg, psychotherapist; Ralph Gundlach, psychoanalyst; Gregory Battcock, artist and lecturer in art; and Margaret Lewis, President, Mattachine Society of Philadelphia.

All three of ECHO's conferences experienced problems with hotel bookings because of the nature of their subject matter. In Philadelphia in 1963, the conference was originally scheduled to take place at the Adelphia Hotel, but had to move to the Drake Hotel when the Adelphia refused their business. The same thing almost happened at the Drake, but Janus Society member Clark Polak intervened, saving the conference venue but receiving a rebuke from ECHO for his aggressive behavior. The Washington, DC, conference in 1964 went through two hotels (the Gramercy Inn and the Manger-Hamilton Hotel) before finding success at the Sheraton-Park Hotel. And the New York conference of 1965 planned to use the Hotel Biltmore until some "nastiness" occurred and it was switched to the Barbizon-Plaza Hotel.

Throughout its history ECHO delegates met once a month in the city of the host group for that season. Meetings were often divided into two sessions: the first for planning the annual conference and the second dedicated to discussing issues facing the movement as a whole. The second session of each meeting was open to the members of the host organization. Each conference session was led by a coordinator from the host organization, and officers of ECHO included secretary and treasurer. In reality, ECHO accomplished little else besides organizing its three conferences and sharing information among its constituent member organizations. Clark Polak, representing the Janus Society of Philadelphia, made

several pitches for ECHO to assist in the formation of other homophile organizations around the country. In 1965, at Franklin Kameny's behest, ECHO did put its weight behind several direct action events, sponsoring pickets at the Civil Service Commission in Washington, DC (June 26), the first Reminder Day picket at Independence Hall in Philadelphia (July 4), the Pentagon (July 31), and the White House (October 23).

Cracks in the alliance between the four original member organizations of ECHO can be seen as early as 1964. The Janus Society of Philadelphia had been effectively taken over by activist Clark Polak and he had a much more radical and national vision for the group than its earlier leaders. In February 1965 a new organization, the Mattachine Society of Philadelphia, created by cast-offs from Janus, was added as an affiliate of ECHO, and the Janus Society of Philadelphia was removed from membership. Later in the year the Daughters of Bilitis (New York) left ECHO over its growing use of direct action techniques. ECHO's delegates voted to dissolve the organization in March 1966.

Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO)

While ECHO was dissolved in 1966, it had inspired a national conference in its image, the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations (NPCHO), which took place in Kansas City, Missouri, February 19-20, 1966. It met again a year later in Washington, DC, and changed its name to North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO), and established three regional subsidiaries, including the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) (also sometimes called Eastern Regional Homophile Conference (ERHC)). The members of ERCHO, as of 1969, were the Council on Equality for Homosexuals (New York), Daughters of Bilitis (New York), Homophile Action League (Philadelphia), Homophile Youth Movement (New York), Institute for Social Ethics (Hartford, Connecticut), Mattachine Society of Washington, Student Homophile League (New York), and West Side Discussion Group (New York). The group was convened twice a year and was the sponsor of the 1968 and 1969 Annual Reminder Day pickets at Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Gay Caucus and Committee on Concerns of Lesbians and Gay Males in the English Profession

The NCTE was founded in 1911 to "create a representative body, which could reflect and render effective the will of the various local associations and of individual teachers, and, by securing concert of action, greatly improve the conditions surrounding English work." The Council has long been on the forefront of progressive values in society. The Gay Caucus was formed in 1976 at the Council's annual meeting in Chicago. Members of the Caucus proposed programming of gay and lesbian concern for future conferences. The Committee on Concerns of Lesbians and Gay Males in the English Profession met for the first time in 1977 in New York City. The Committee's initial goals were to study the problems facing lesbian and gay teachers; to prepare a publication that would raise awareness among the Council's general membership; and to draft recommendations for the Executive Committee on ending discrimination for lesbians and gay teachers and students.

(Sources: Internal; Marc Stein, *City Of Sisterly And Brotherly Loves: Lesbian And Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Marc Stein, Interview with Joan Fleischmann, May 31, 1994, on OutHistory.org: <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/philadelphia-lgbt-interviews/interviews/joan-fleischmann>)

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

The collection contains primarily organizational records collected over several decades by Homophile activist Joan Fleischmann. These organizations include the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO), the Daughter of Bilitis (New York), the Mattachine Society of New York, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Lesbian and Gay Caucus, as well as Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) (Mountville and Reading, Pennsylvania) and Dignity (Philadelphia). Among the materials of note are meeting minutes, programs, and presentation transcriptions from the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) and materials related to the Reminder Day pickets co-sponsored by Mattachine Society of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift, Tommi Avicolti Mecca, 1991. Detail from poster for ECHO conference, drawn by Frank Ventgen: gift, Marge McCann, date unknown.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

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

[Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection, 1950-2009 \[Bulk, 1964-1975\], Ms. Coll. 3](#)

[Tommi Avicolti Mecca collection, 1967-1992, Ms. Coll. 25](#)

"Daughters of Bilitis (New York)," "Daughters of Bilitis (Philadelphia)," "Janus Society (Philadelphia)," "Mattachine Society (New York)," and "Mattachine Society (Philadelphia)" in the [William Way LGBT Community Center ephemera files, 1972-present, Ms. Coll. 35](#)

At Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library:

[East Coast Homophile Organizations Records, 1964-1980, RL.00349](#)

At Library of Congress Manuscript Division:

[Frank Kameny papers, 1843-2012 \(bulk 1957-2010\), MSS85340](#)

At ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives:

[Clark P. Polak Papers, 1964-1980, Coll2008-028](#)

At New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division:

[Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs, 1855-2009 \[bulk 1963-2007\], MssCol 6397](#)

At UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library:

[Daughters of Bilitis records, 1955-1986, Collection Number 1946](#)

At University of Connecticut Libraries, Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center:

[Foster Gunnison, Jr. papers, 1945-1994, 1996.0009](#)

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Advertising fliers
- Conference materials
- Conferences -- Gay and lesbian
- Correspondence
- Ephemera
- Gay liberation movement
- Homosexuality
- Lesbian activists
- Pickets -- 1960-1970
- Fleischmann, Joan, 1933-2013
- Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations
- East Coast Homophile Organizations.

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) meeting minutes, 1963	box 1	folder 1
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) meeting minutes, 1964	box 1	folder 2
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) meeting minutes, 1965	box 1	folder 3
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) meeting minutes, 1966	box 1	folder 4
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) Convention, Philadelphia (brochure, program, transcription of address "The Church and Homosexuality" given by the Rev. Edward L. Lee, Jr.), 1963	box 1	folder 5
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) Conference, Washington, DC (program, treasurer's report, conference transcript), 1964	box 1	folder 6
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) Conference, New York (brochure, program, planning documents, treasurer's report, transcript of address "Anticipations - Legal and Philosophical" given by Gilbert M. Cantor, 1965	box 1	folder 7
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) stationery, undated	box 1	folder 8

East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) correspondence (including draft of letter explaining why the Janus Society of Philadelphia had been separated from ECHO), 1965, undated	box 1	folder 9
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) media coverage (including expose of 1963 conference by Confidential magazine, and coverage by the Washington Post), 1963-1964, undated	box 1	folder 10
Society for Individual Rights (S.I.R.) packet from ECHO conference (including "The S.I.R. Pocket Lawyer," venereal disease brochures, organizational chart, issues of Vector newsletter, The Council on Religion and the Homosexual publication "A Brief of Injustices"), 1965, undated	box 1	folder 11
East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) miscellaneous materials (including ECHO publication "How to Handle A Federal Interrogation," proposal by Kay Tobin, Daughters of Bilitis and Mattachine Society of New York documents concerning ECHO, handwritten notes among members), 1965-1966, undated	box 1	folder 12
Daughter of Bilitis (New York) materials (minutes and calendar of events), 1965	box 1	folder 13
Mattachine Society of New York, Reminder Day pickets (press release, statement of purpose, flyers), 1965, undated	box 1	folder 14
Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) materials (Reminder Day flyer, bylaws and amendments, minutes), 1967-1969, undated	box 1	folder 15
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Lesbian and Gay Caucus materials (correspondence, bibliographies, conference materials, membership cards), 1976-1982, undated	box 1	folder 16
Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) (Mountville and Reading, Pennsylvania) materials (correspondence, service programs), 1987-1994, undated	box 1	folder 17
Dignity (Philadelphia) materials (correspondence, newsletters), 1975-1977, undated	box 1	folder 18
Miscellaneous lesbian and gay related articles and clippings, 1970-1985, undated	box 1	folder 19
Miscellaneous personal material of Joan Fleischmann (flyers, XYZ Social Club brochure, poetry booklet dedicated to Joan Fleischman by Joyce Morris, "Gay Is Good" bumper sticker), 1974-1977, undated	box 1	folder 20
Detail from poster for ECHO conference, drawn by Frank Ventgen, undated	oversize- folder 1	