



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Butterworth Farm collection

1958-2012 [bulk 1973-2004]

MssCol 4842

Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2010. Additional material integrated by Kit Fluker in 2017.

Summary

Creator: Young, Allen, 1941-

Title: Butterworth Farm collection

Date: 1958-2012 [bulk 1973-2004]

Size: 7.68 linear feet (20 boxes)

Source: Donated by Allen Young, 2000-2010.

Abstract: Butterworth Farm is an intentional, "back to the land" community. Located in Royalston, Massachusetts, it was founded in 1973 by five friends: Allen Young, Bob Gravley, Steve McCarty, Carl Miller, and Arthur Platt. The Butterworth Farm collection contains photographs documenting the daily activities of life on the farm and a small amount of personal papers of two of the farm's original founders, Allen Young and Carl Miller.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Butterworth Farm records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

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Creator History

Butterworth Farm is an intentional, "back to the land" community. Located in Royalston, Massachusetts, it was founded in 1973 by five friends: Allen Young, Bob Gravley, Steve McCarty, Carl Miller, and Arthur Platt. Thought the farm was initially conceived as a commune, during its early years there was a shift towards more privacy, separate housing, and a focus on community spirit if not communal living. In the early 1980s, the land was divided among the founders into five ownership "homesteads" of 10 acres each, leaving 44 acres to be communally owned. The residents earn a living through outside employment, including writing, real estate, textile design and construction. Many residents of the farm are contributors to RFD, a reader-written gay quarterly focusing on rural life. (While RFD originally appeared as Rural Free Delivery, the acronym remains unchanged and the formal title changes quarterly - examples being Really Feeling Decadent and Ranting For Days.)

Although the original founders were all gay, Butterworth Farm has never identified solely as a homogenous community, and there are often straight couples living on the farm full time. Residents from the farm make a point to interact with locals, joining local food cooperatives, working with community theaters and non-profits, area newspapers and hospitals, and getting involved in local politics. The members of the Farm believe that their activities in the community help to educate locals about LGBT culture.

Scope and Content Note

The Butterworth Farm collection contains photographs documenting the daily activities of life on the farm and a small amount of personal papers of two of the farm's original founders, Allen Young and Carl Miller. The collection includes photographs, both snapshots of farm life and Miller's photography; Allen Young's correspondence with friends and family and with Karla Jay, his co-editor; and ephemera. Notable items include an AIDS journal kept by Carl Miller's caretakers and photographs of a 1975 New York University gay rights protest.

Key Terms

Subjects

AIDS (Disease) -- Social aspects -- United States
Communal living
Homosexuality -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Names

Miller, Carl, 1940-

Container List

I. Butterworth Farm photographs 1975-2009

Dating from 1975 through 2009, the photographs of Butterworth Farm depict life on the commune as well as outside activities in which the residents participated. Both in albums and loose photographs, there are scenes of building the buildings at Butterworth, cookouts, swimming parties, drag parties, trips to Provincetown and Gay Pride events and other examples of day to day life on the farm.

- b. 1 f. 1 1983
- b. 1 f. 2 1991
- b. 1 f. 3 1992
- b. 2-10 1975-2009
- b. 18 f. 3 1975-2009

II. Carl Miller papers 1958-1999

Carl Miller (1940-1999) was an award-winning textile designer and amateur photographer. Miller attended the Rhode Island School of Fine Arts and was a chief designer for Mastercraft Fabrics. Miller was a member of the Gay Liberation Front in New York City, a founder of Butterworth Farm, and was on the board of directors of AIDS Project Worcester. He maintained homes in both Provincetown, Massachusetts and at the farm, where he designed his own home. Miller passed away due to AIDS-related complications in 1999.

The Carl Miller papers contain personal papers, art, and photography created by Miller between 1974 and 1996. Correspondence mostly contains cards and notes, most with pictures attached. Personal papers contain materials relating to Miller's education, his plans for his Butterworth Farm house and a map of the property, and most notably an AIDS journal, kept by Miller's caretakers from 1998 through 1999. His art and photography includes shots of a 1969 Central Park Be-In, a 1975 New York University protest for gay rights, as well as many shots of people and places, including some erotic photographs.

- b. 11 f. 1 AIDS Journal 1998-1999
- b. 11 f. 2 Butterworth Farm 1981-1982
- b. 11 f. 3-4 Education 1958-1963, 1984
- b. 11 f. 5 Exhibit 1994
- b. 11 f. 6 House plans 1974
- Photographs
- b. 18 f. 1-2 Central Park Be-In 1968
- b. 11 f. 7 New York University Protest 1975
- b. 11 f. 8-10 Art
- b. 12 f. 1-5 Art
- b. 17 f. 1-6 Art - oversized
- b. XX-13 f. 1-2 Art - oversized

III. Allen Young correspondence 1974-2012

Allen Young is a New Left journalist and prominent gay liberation writer and activist. Born in Liberty, N.Y. in 1941, he received his history and journalism degrees from Columbia University and Stanford University. After graduation he spent time as a freelance journalist in South America. Upon his return to the United States in 1967, he became a writer and editor for Liberation News Services, and then joined the New York Gay Liberation Front. In 1973 he moved to Butterworth Farm, where he co-edited three gay-themed anthologies with Karla Jay. While living at the farm, Young took a job writing for the *Athol Daily News*, contributed to RFD and also joined local conservation groups. Young still resides at the Farm.

- b. 19 f. 1-6 Jay, Karla 1974-1975

III. Allen Young correspondence (cont.)

General

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| b. 12 f. 6 | 1989 |
| b. 13 f. 1-5 | 2001-2002 |
| b. 14 f. 1-5 | 2002-2004 |
| b. 15 f. 1-4 | 2004-2006 |
| b. 16 f. 1-4 | 2006-2009 |
| b. 20 f. 1-2 | 1987, 2007-2012 |