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### **Title**

Grier Periodical Collection and Diana Press Records

### **Permalink**

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/26h9g1xt

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### **Publication Date**

2013-03-01

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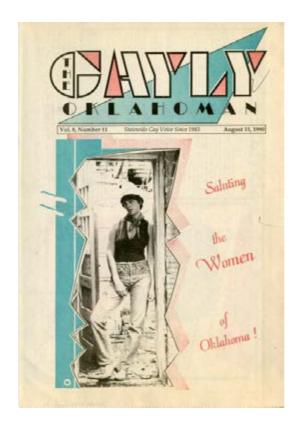


# MAKING INVISIBLE HISTORIES VISIBLE

## collection notes from the NEH/Mazer project

## GRIER PERIODICAL COLLECTION AND DIANA PRESS RECORDS



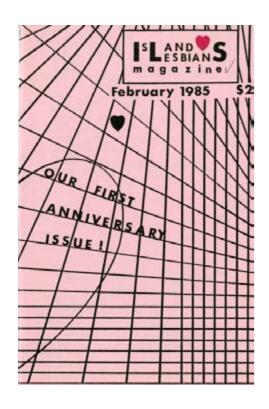


ver the course of the winter quarter I had the opportunity to work with two different collections from the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives. The first collection I processed was the Barbara Grier Periodical Collection. Barbara Grier (1933–2011) was a lesbian-feminist activist, writer, and publisher. She is perhaps best known for her work with *The Ladder*, the monthly magazine published by the Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian organization in the United States. Writing under the pseudonyms Gene Damon, Vern Niven, and Lennox Strong, Grier began contributing copy to *The Ladder* in 1957, and continued until 1968 when she assumed the role of editor, and then publisher, in 1970. In 1973,



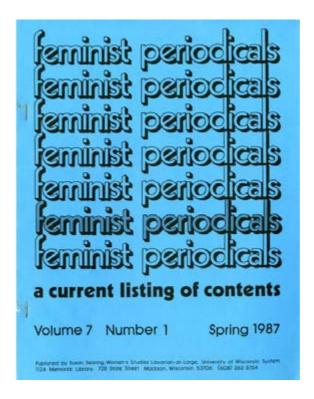
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Grier co-founded Naiad Books, which later became Naiad Press, the preeminent lesbian book publisher that opened up lesbian writing to the world.

The Barbara Grier Periodical Collection represents a rich assemblage of feminist and lesbian themed newspapers, magazines, journals, and small press publications



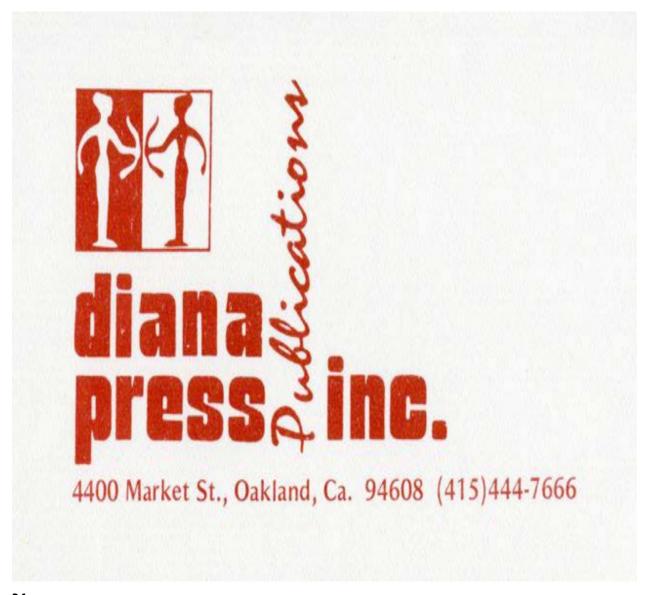
amassed by Grier over the years. Spanning from 1969 to 1992, the bulk of the material is from the 1980s and features periodicals from large United States metropolitan areas as well as smaller towns. A notable strength of the collection is the range in type of periodical- ad heavy weekly LGBT newspapers such as Pittsburgh's *Out*, news-



letters from organizations like Seattle's Lesbian Resource
Center, bibliographic resources including the University of
Wisconsin's *Feminist Periodicals*, and personal publications such as Dorothy Feola's *Women's Network*.
The second collection, which is still being processed, is the Diana Press Records. Diana Press was a lesbian-



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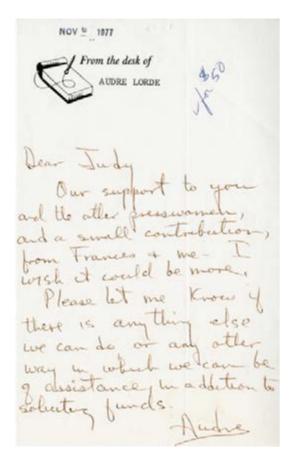


feminist printing and publishing house which was started by Coletta Reid and Casey Czarnik in Baltimore, Maryland in 1972, then relocated to Oakland, California in 1977. Most notably, Diana Press published titles by the likes of Rita Mae Brown and Judy Grahn, and reprinted Jeannette Foster's pioneering Sex Variant Women in Literature. However, the press was also plagued by a series of misfortunes including a fire in 1975 and a crippling incident of vandalism in 1977. Economic setbacks, coupled with disagreements amongst leadership, led to a cease in publication in the late 1970s.

The Diana Press collection contains an assortment of administrative materials, author files, unpublished manuscripts, press materials, and a substantial amount of correspondence. The correspondence is fascinating in terms of its scope and content, documenting everything from simple requests for catalogs to major business disagreements with authors. The assemblage of letters of support following the 1977 vandalism of the Diana Press office is a particular highlight of the collection, featuring



# MAKING INVISIBLE HISTORIES VISIBLE collection notes from the NEH/Mazer project



Letters of support written to Diana Press by Audre Lord and Adrienne Rich

All of us are from different parts of the Feminist movement, many holding differing political opinions. But because of the recent vandalisation of Diana Frees, we are joining together to say that we about this act and any act of violence against Feminists of Feminist institutions. Such sous as the demaging of megatives and plates, present and books of one Seminist press are seriously destructive to us all. Because of this act of vandalism which probably took only one half of an hour to committ, we are faced with the loss of the writing which Diana Frees would have published this year (representing years of thought and work), all of the books which the Frees has given us over the past five years, and the resources, equipment and knowledge which Diana Frees has continually provided for our community, and we are also faced with the inevitable feelings of defeat, anyer and desperation which accompany such senseless destruction. committed this violence did so in secresy and in defiance of the feelings of the vast majority of women who have given years of our lives to building this movement and the still young years of our lives to colliding this movement and the still young and precarious institutions within it. As our movement has gained in strength we have seen increasingly organized and heavily funded efforts to destroy it. We reque to allow those efforts to intimidate us, whether to drive us into self-destructive factions or to drive us to a dead-en ded "correct-line" sterility. Within the movement, we essent the power and richness of our differences, our right to criticize and argue with each subset our necessity to reach and preserve our diversity. But we insist that our internal natual criticism he carried on responsibly and with a respect for process. We unite in deploring, rejecting and condemning the destruction by force of our means of communication and the spaces in which we attempt to create new institutions. Some of us joining in this statement have been heavily critical of the politics of the Feminist Economic Metwork, with which Diana Fress has been associated; some of us were strong supporters of F.E.N. The signing of this statement does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of any specific policial faction in the movement. But our agreement now transcends that difference. We want to make But our agreement now transcends that difference, We want to make it clear that we do not consent to such violance. We consider that whether perpetrated by men, or women acting as the agents of men or by women expressing misdirected anger, such acts are acts of hatred toward women and women's culture. In signing this statement we may a group seriuse the desperation which such acts expender and ask that we all work to transform this attack into an affirmation of the power and significance of our work together by supporting blank Freez in this crisis. If the Freez is to survive they must have the moment with which to restaurs the somework dense their the money with which we restore the encommons domage does to their equipment. materials and books. We sak that you sign this statement, circulate it to others, do everything in your power to help raise funds, and above all send whatever money you can to Diens Pesson. 4500 restored Street, obliand, California

correspondence from feminist luminaries such as Adrienne Rich and Audre Lorde.

Both the Grier Periodical Collection and the Diana Press Records represent narratives that are too often excluded from the historical record. I'm excited to be a part of preserving and making these materials available.

—Courtney Dean

Courtney Dean is a graduate student in the Department of Information Studies