



The Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women (CCSW) works in an inclusive manner to promote equality for all women and girls, and advocates on their behalf with other City departments and officials, local organizations, and state government to increase opportunities through policy and program recommendations and development, and to build public awareness of key issues affecting women and girls.

The Cambridge Women's Commission recognizes, supports, and advocates for all who self-identify as women or with womanhood, including transgender, gender fluid, and non-binary persons. We stand with and for women and girls of all sexualities, races, ethnicities, abilities, immigration status, or religions. For more on the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, visit our website at www.cambridgewomenscommission.org or contact:

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Dedication

This edition of *Mapping Feminist Cambridge* is dedicated in memoriam to Mary Catherine Deibel, Rachael Solem, and Sandra Graham for the indomitable feminist energy they brought to Cambridge.

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INTRODUCTION

The term "second wave feminism" refers to the feminist activity and thought that took root in the late 1960s and continued for approximately two decades across primarily industrialized nations in the West. As the women's movement sparked throughout the United States, Cambridge became a center of revolution and organizing, much like New York, San Francisco, and other major U.S. cities twice its size. At the turn of the new decade in 1970, many local protests demanded changes that resembled the national movement's calls. From the Bread and Roses March of 1970, to the protest of Harvard University's 1970 commencement led by Sandra Graham, to the famous 1971 takeover at 888 Memorial Drive, Cambridge activists were fighting for greater access to health and child care, racial equity, an end to the Vietnam War, denunciation of sexual violence, and so much more.

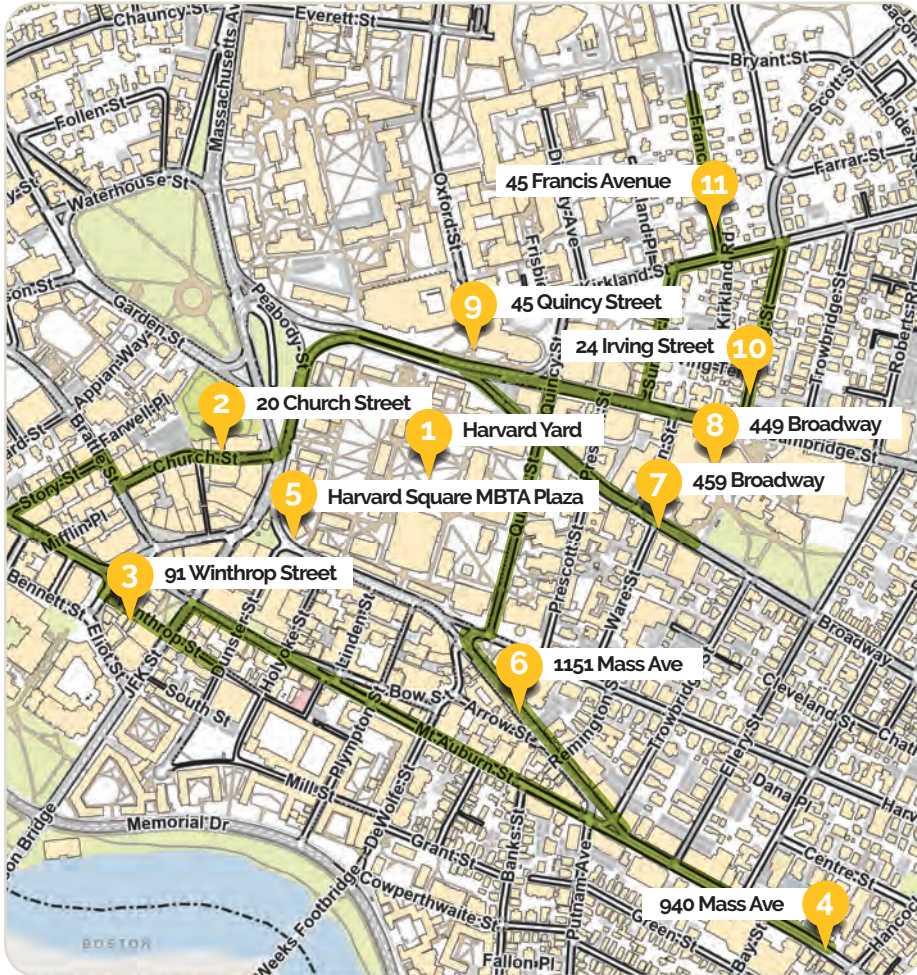
In Harvard Square, activists organized around labor rights, housing justice, education, lesbian advocacy, healthcare resources, music, and art, among many other social causes. In this guide, we highlight feminist, socialist, and educational institutions that emerged and thrived in Harvard Square from the late 1960s through the 1990s and recognize the unique contributions they made to Cambridge feminist history. While organizing at Harvard University is included throughout this tour, the primary focus is on local grassroots activism and organizing in this neighborhood.

We acknowledge that feminist organizing, while aspiring to inclusion, has experienced and continues to experience exclusions of race, class, gender identity, religion, and disability. Our work has led us to many stories from multiple perspectives, and we know there are always more to find.

Learn more about women's contributions to Cambridge by visiting the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project database at <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CWHP>



HARVARD SQUARE | TOUR



- 1 HARVARD YARD**
Protest of Harvard University
- 2 20 CHURCH STREET**
Women's Community Cancer
Project Mural
- 3 91 WINTHROP STREET**
Upstairs on the Square
- 4 940 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**
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Cell 16
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Old Cambridge Baptist Church
Harvard Union of Clerical and
Technical Workers
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Adbar Alliance
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- 7 459 BROADWAY**
Project 10 East
Young Women's Commission
Joan Lorentz Park
- 8 449 BROADWAY**
Cambridge Women's Heritage
Project
- 9 45 QUINCY STREET**
Annual Boston Women's Music
Festival
- 10 24 IRVING STREET**
Irving House
- 11 45 FRANCIS AVENUE**
Harvard Divinity School

Land acknowledgement: Harvard Square is located on the traditional and ancestral land of the Massachusett people, the original inhabitants of what is now known as Boston and Cambridge. We pay respect to the people of the Massachusett Tribe, past and present, and honor the land itself, which remains sacred to the Massachusett People.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

- 1969** The Women's Liberation Conference. Six hundred women meet at Emmanuel College in Boston.
- 1970** The Women's Strike for Equality March in Washington takes place.
- 1970** *Women and Their Bodies*, a 193-page booklet, later known as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is published.
- 1971** The takeover of a Harvard building at 888 Memorial Drive by local women to protest the lack of affordable housing in Cambridge and the need for a women's center leads to the purchase of 46 Pleasant Street, which becomes the Cambridge Women's Center.
- 1973** Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) is founded by a group of volunteers and survivors who created and staffed a hotline to answer calls from rape survivors. BARCC helped organize some of the first *Take Back The Night* marches in Boston, along with local students.
- 1976** Transition House, the first domestic violence shelter on the East Coast, is born after two women opened their apartment in Cambridge as a refuge for other women fleeing abusive relationships.
- 1977** The Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women is established as a department of the City.
- 1988** Project 10 East forms at the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, becoming one of the first Gay-Straight Alliances in the country.
- 1989** The Women's Civil Rights Rally in Boston acknowledges "women who have been victims of male violence."
- 1990** Emory University offers the first Ph.D. program in Women's Studies.
- 1991** Cambridge's first Pride Brunch takes place at City Hall, organized by the Cambridge Lavender Alliance with support from Mayor Alice Wolf.
- 1993** The March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-Equal Rights and Liberation takes place.
- 1995** The Fourth U.N. World Conference on Women is hosted in Beijing. Previously hosted in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985).



Tracy Chapman performing on Brattle Street in 1985. Photo copyright Joey Harrison.



International Women's Day Cambridge Tribute, 1985. Courtesy of the Cambridge Women's Commission archives.

HARVARD YARD

Protest of Harvard University | 1970



In 1970, 28-year-old Saundra Graham, a passionate housing advocate from Cambridge, made headlines when she rallied more than 350 Riverside neighborhood residents to protest Harvard University's plans to evict long-standing community members from their homes. During the university's commencement, protestors marched up Massachusetts Avenue toward Harvard Square, where they took charge of the microphones and interrupted graduation ceremonies for more than 15 minutes. Leading the charge was Graham, president of the Riverside Planning Team (RPT) who, along with fellow protesters and RPT members, vehemently opposed the university's real estate expansion into historically Black neighborhoods, and advocated for the preservation of their community.

Through unwavering determination and collective action, the group compelled Harvard to relent, ultimately securing a commitment from the university to construct affordable housing complexes for both elderly indi-

viduals and families over the ensuing decade. Saundra Graham's remarkable leadership exemplifies the power of grassroots activism in effecting tangible change and safeguarding the rights and dignity of underrecognized communities.

As co-founder of the Riverside Cambridgeport Community Development Corporation, Graham spearheaded initiatives to enhance existing housing and create new affordable housing options, championing the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. Her pioneering spirit led to groundbreaking milestones, including her historic election as the first woman of color to the Cambridge City Council in 1971, followed by her subsequent tenure as a State Representative starting in 1976. Throughout her illustrious career, Graham's impact extended beyond politics, as evidenced by the naming of the Graham and Parks Alternative Public School, which honored Graham alongside Rosa Parks. This recognition serves as a testament to her enduring legacy of advocacy and empowerment.

Saundra Graham's dedication to community service and social justice was evident in her multifaceted leadership roles, which ranged from her tenure on the board of directors of the Cambridge Community Center to her presidency of the Riverside Cambridgeport Community Development Corporation. As a Cambridge City Councillor from 1971 to 1989, and later as a State Representative, Graham remained steadfast in her commitment to uplifting under-

recognized voices and preserving Cambridge's cultural heritage. Notable achievements during her legislative tenure include her instrumental role in preventing the demolition of the historic East Cambridge Courthouse, which later evolved into the Multicultural Arts Center, a beacon of diversity in the arts community. You can learn more about Graham's impact through the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project and Cambridge Black Trailblazers.



Saundra Graham speaks into a megaphone during the protest of the 319th Harvard Commencement, June 11, 1970. Courtesy Cambridge Historical Commission.

20 CHURCH STREET

Women's Community Cancer Project Mural 1998 – Present

In the late 1980s, a group of women from across Boston, Lexington, and Cambridge joined together to form the Women's Community Cancer Project, a beacon of grassroots activism aimed at providing vital support to women diagnosed with cancer and their dedicated caregivers. Central to their mission was the groundbreaking work of Susan Shapiro, whose article, "Cancer as a Feminist Issue," printed in the feminist newspaper *Sojourner*, ignited crucial conversations and consciousness-raising efforts about the unique ways in which cancer intersects with women's lives.

Fueled by a fervent desire for change, the group tirelessly advocated for reforms in medical training and care by challenging existing paradigms and championing the cause of gender-inclusive healthcare. Amidst these grassroots efforts, a symbol of solidarity and remembrance emerged in Harvard Square: the Women's Community Cancer Project Mural. Conceived and brought to life by artist Beatrice "Be" Sargent, the mural stands as a poignant tribute to the indomi-



Women's Community Cancer Project Mural, 1998. Photo by Be Sargent.

WOMEN OF THE MURAL

Agnes Barboza, provided immigration services to Cape Verdean immigrants

Rachel Carson, environmentalist

Cindy Chin, domestic violence prevention activist

Audre Lorde, writer and activist

Esther Rome, women's health activist

Valerie Hinderlie, anti-racist daycare advocate

Myra Sadker, activist for gender equality in education

Jeanmarie (Jeannie) Marshall, cancer activist and writer

Susan Shapiro, founder of the Women's Community Cancer Project

Thelma Vanderhoop Weissberg, Native American rights activist and member of the Wampanoag tribe

Maria Luisa Alvarez, daycare advocate and teacher trainer

Jaqueline (Jackie) Shearer, independent filmmaker and media activist

table spirit of twelve extraordinary women who battled cancer and left an indelible mark as activists within the local community. Each brushstroke of the mural tells a story of courage, resilience, and solidarity, serving as a testament to the enduring legacy of those who fought cancer.

One of the featured women in the mural is Audre Lorde, renowned poet and activist, who published *The Cancer Journals* in 1980, chronicling her experience with breast cancer and setting the precedent for other women's memoirs about cancer to follow. Lorde also inspired Barbara Smith to start *Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press* (see *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Inman Square*) in 1981, which published notable collections of writings by Black, Latin American, and Asian American writers.

Dedicated in 1999, the mural not only commemorates the lives lost but also serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for equitable healthcare and support for those affected by cancer.

Rita Arditti

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on September 9, 1934, Rita Arditti, a Sephardic Jew, faced educational hurdles under Peron's regime, prompting her to pursue studies abroad. She briefly attended Barnard College in New York City before earning her Doctorate in Biology from the University of Rome, Italy. After settling in the United States in 1965, Arditti embarked on a distinguished career, joining Harvard Medical School's Department of Bacteriology and Immunology. Transitioning to activism, Arditti co-founded *New Words*, a renowned women's bookstore in Cambridge in 1974, which later evolved into the Center for New Words, a hub for progressive discourse. Throughout the 1980s, her involvement with the Argentine Human Rights movement led her to collaborate with the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, which culminated in the publication of her book, *Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina*, in 1999.

Arditti's battle with breast cancer catalyzed her founding of the Women's Community Cancer Project, an organization focused on cancer education and prevention, in 1989. Before cancer took her life in 2009, Arditti's tireless advocacy earned her numerous accolades, including the Peace and Justice Award from the City of Cambridge in 1999.

91 WINTHROP STREET

Upstairs on the Square | 1982 - 2013



Upstairs on the Square, a whimsical restaurant founded by Mary Catherine Deibel and Deborah Hughes, blossomed from the duo's shared passion for hosting dinner parties and organizing gatherings like baby showers, bridal showers, and afternoon tea. Originally hailing from England, Mary Catherine harbored a lifelong interest in the restaurant industry and music. Her journey into the culinary world was ignited early on when one of her professors launched a restaurant at the intersection of Kirkland and Beacon Streets; from its inception, Mary Catherine was deeply involved. Spurred by their collective entrepreneurial spirit, Deborah and Mary Catherine embarked on the venture of opening their own restaurant, originally named Upstairs at the Pudding.

Situated on the second floor of the Harvard Hasty Pudding Club, Upstairs at the Pudding quickly became a hub for the club's members, who frequented the establishment for parties and special events, contributing to its burgeoning success. The restau-

rant's allure extended outdoors with an enchanting al fresco dining area fondly referred to as the "pink garden," a testament to Deborah's passion for gardening. When Harvard University forced the relocation of the restaurant, Mary Catherine and Deborah's entrepreneurial vision transformed the new space and it emerged as 'Upstairs on the Square.' Mary Catherine led a comprehensive redesign of the interior, imbuing it with vibrant colors and personally hand-painting intricate details on the walls, while also introducing a distinctive private room adorned with zebra-patterned décor.

Mary Catherine was fondly referred to as the "Unofficial Mayor" of Harvard Square.



Owners Deborah Hughes and Mary Catherine Deibel (right) of Upstairs on the Square. 2012. Photo by Boston Globe/Globe Freelance.

Reflecting on her experiences, Mary Catherine recounts the challenges she faced as a woman in the male-dominated restaurant industry, recalling instances where wine salesmen assumed she was not the wine director due to her gender. However, gender perceptions began to shift in the early 2000s. Rachael Solem, former owner of Irving House (also featured in this tour), fondly recalls the innovative approach

taken by Upstairs on the Square when seeking investors, wherein they offered investors access to the restaurant for their philanthropic events and fundraisers. The arrangement paved the way for mutually beneficial partnerships that contributed to the restaurant's enduring success and community engagement.

940 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

The Menopause Collective | Early 1970s



The third floor of the Door Store was a pivotal gathering place for like-minded women to engage in discussions around feminist issues related to health and bodily autonomy. This group of women, affectionately dubbed “the menopause collective” by Beth Sommers, congregated in the early 1970s and contributed to the writing and development of the groundbreaking publication *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in 1973.

Across the Boston metropolitan area, numerous groups participated in the collaborative effort to produce this influential publication. These groups organically emerged following the 1969 Women's Conference at Emmanuel College, which left many women invigorated to continue the discourse on feminism and women's healthcare. Authored by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective and printed in 33 languages, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* attained widespread acclaim and sold millions of copies worldwide.

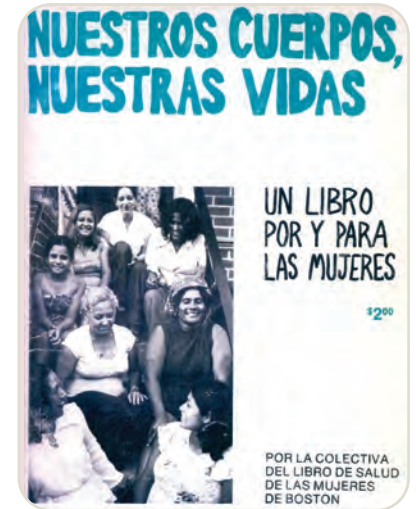


Photos from the Boston Women's Health Book Collective Records. Courtesy of Schlesinger Library.

The book and its success empowered women to assert ownership over their bodies and championed their right to information about their health and well-being.

When the collective formalized its structure under the banner of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, it facilitated

negotiations for publishing rights, securing a 70 percent discount for health clinics and obtaining funding for a Spanish-language version of the book. These efforts aimed to enhance accessibility to vital healthcare information, underscoring the collective's commitment to promoting equitable healthcare access for all women.



Boston Women's Health Book Collective Records. Courtesy of Schlesinger Library.



Photos from the Boston Women's Health Book Collective Records. Courtesy of Schlesinger Library.

HARVARD SQUARE MBTA PLAZA

ART, PUBLICATIONS, & FILM:



As home to many folk, blues, and rock clubs; art displays honoring women in fields ranging from science to weaving; and myriad activist journals and magazines, Harvard Square has long been a hub of the Cambridge art scene with countless individuals and institutions contributing to its vibrant creative culture.

Cell 16

Operating within the Boston metropolitan area, Cell 16 emerged as a prominent female liberation group following its 1968 founding in Somerville by Roxanne Dunbar and Dana Desmore. With Abby Rockefeller as an early supporter and active member, her Cambridge home became a regular meeting place for the group, where they used the mimeograph machine in the basement to create their publications. The genesis of Cell 16 can be traced back to an underground newspaper advertisement placed by Roxanne Dunbar, advocating for a "Female Liberation Front." The group's name, Cell 16, symbolized their belief that they constituted just one cell within a broader organic movement and paid homage to their original meeting place at 16 Lexington Avenue.

Cell 16 is widely recognized for laying the groundwork for "lesbian separatism," as their early works articulated the philosophy of separatist feminism. This strand of feminism posited that opposition to patriarchy could be effectively pursued through women's separation or disengagement from men, a concept that distinguished their ideology within the feminist landscape.

Over time, Cell 16 evolved into Female Liberation, which organized larger study groups and continued to exert influence within feminist circles. Notably, two influential publications of the women's movement, *No More Fun and Games: A Journal of Female Liberation* and *The Second Wave Magazine: A Magazine for the New Feminism*, emerged from the initiatives of Cell 16 and Female Liberation. Although Cell 16 eventually disbanded, Female Liberation persevered, sustaining *The Second Wave Magazine* until 1983.



No More Fun and Games: a Journal of Female Liberation (v. 1, no. 2) October 1968. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

Among Cell 16's founding members, Betsy Warrior played a pivotal role in the burgeoning "battered women's movement," a term synonymous with domestic violence activism at the time. Warrior spearheaded the Battered Women's Directory Project, which published the first international directory of individuals and programs advocating for battered women in 1975. The following year, Warrior, alongside Chris Womendez, Cherie Jimenez, and Lisa Leghorn, transformed their living room into Transition House, pioneering the first domestic violence shelter on the East Coast and the second in the nation. *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Central Square* includes more stories of domestic violence prevention work in Cambridge.

Mass. women plan fair to celebrate suffrage

By Ann Mary Curran
Globe Staff

Next Saturday, Aug. 26, will be the 52d anniversary of women's right to vote and Seneca in Boston plan to celebrate with a fair.

Janet Stone of the eastern Massachusetts chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) still talks about the circumstances that prompted strikes and demonstrations to the past two anniversaries. She said: "Now we're secure enough to have more fun."

"So much of what we do is heavy," Julie Wan, president of the chapter, said, "and it's in the thought of fun work with legislation."

From noon to 4 p.m. on the Cambridge Common, members of 14 women's liberation groups and their female and male friends will watch a troupe of women "act out" the "worst male chauvinism."

The only men participating will sell doughnuts. "Oh, a male sale," one woman said. "We've heard of that."

Nationally, women will celebrate the anniversary with fairs, rallies, parades, strikes, vigils and parties. In New York, female employees are being asked to "strike at 4 for more" on Aug. 26.

On Friday in Boston the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus and NOW will host women political candidates at a 2:30 p.m. reception at the Parker House Hotel.

On Saturday at the fair the Feminist Revue will perform the troupe of women "act out a state of absurdity that people will walk away laughing and decide later what they've been laughing about." Joan Walker of Boston said.

And Boston's Women's Abortion Action Council hopes that its display of a coat hanger and a can of Lysol will make people react to the horrors of illegal abortions.

Six unnamed celebrities have been nominated for "worst male chauvinism" on the basis of their quotes. Those attending the fair may vote as many times as they are willing to pay a penny. The women will present an award to the contest winner, but they won't say what the award will be.

Sponsors of the fair are Boston Women's Abortion Action Council, Cambridge-Goddard Feminist Studies, Cambridge Women's Center, Cambridge YWCA, Cell 16, Daughters of Bilitis, Female Liberation, Feminist Party, Feminist Revue, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, NOW, Planned Parenthood League, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom and ZNY.



TOWN & COUNTRY
Dining

This Dining Guide appears in the Tuesday and Thursday Evening Globe and in the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday Morning Globe

INTOWN BOSTON

AMBRIDGE'S 1972 ... (text continues)

OLD ARCH INN ... (text continues)

3-8's BEER-BREW ... (text continues)

FRENCH RESTAURANT

CHINESE RESTAURANTS

CHINA PEARL ... (text continues)

CHINA SALLY ... (text continues)

PENING GARDEN ... (text continues)

CHINESE POLYNESIAN

AND LOTS ... (text continues)

Article titled 'Mass. women plan fair to celebrate suffrage.' Cell 16 was among the many women's groups organizing the fair on Cambridge Common. August 19, 1972. Courtesy of the Boston Globe.

HARVARD SQUARE MBTA PLAZA

ART, PUBLICATIONS, & FILM:

The Rag: Radical Feminist Magazine

Founded in Adams House's Coolidge Room (26 Plympton St.) in 1990 and running until 1994, *The Rag* was a magazine celebrating self-expression through published essays, poetry, photography, fictional stories, and more. The members who gathered weekly would refer to themselves as being "on the rag" (referencing menstruation), and would grow to be very close to each other. They created a community and safe space for women to experiment with radical ideas and pressing issues, including those involving Harvard University. *The Rag* ceased to exist after three years, as many of the members graduated.



January 1991 cover of The Rag.



April 1979 cover of Seventh Sister. Courtesy of Schlesinger Library, Harvard Radcliffe Institute.

Seventh Sister: The Radcliffe Monthly Journal

Seventh Sister, a magazine crafted "by women, for women at Harvard," delved into a broad spectrum of inclusive topics ranging from sexual double standards, to the experiences of Salvadoran refugee women, to forced sterilization practices targeting Native American, Black, and Spanish-speaking women, to discussions on the 'gay lifestyle,' the experiences of mothers at Harvard, abortion rights, and beyond. Their meetings convened at One Harvard Yard within the Phillips Brooks House, an institution boasting a rich history of women's groups organizing at Harvard. These assemblies date back to as early as 1896 with the establishment of the Harvard Dames, followed by the formation of the Harvard Women's Club in 1913. By the 1970s, undergraduate students initiated the inception of a Women's Center within the Phillips Brooks House, further solidifying the institution's role as a hub for women's activism and advocacy on campus.

Seventh Sister also collaborated with various Harvard and Boston-based organizations, including the Abortion Action Coalition, which emerged from the Cambridge Women's Center between 1977 and 1980 (see *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Central Square*). Activists from the Abortion Action Coalition rallied in response to the tragic death of Rosie Jimenez, a victim of an unsafe abortion following the Hyde Amendment's enactment in 1976, which slashed funding for abortions. Their advocacy efforts focused on securing increased funding, reducing stigmatization, and ensuring safer procedures, particularly for women of color.

In April 1985, the magazine reported on a protest staged at Out of Town News in response to a recent *Penthouse* article depicting the torture of Latin American women. The protest, attended by over 100 women, had unfolded during the lunch hour on Thursday, March 21st; a statement circulated by the organizers denounced the *Penthouse* article for purportedly condemning the torture of women while simultaneously exploiting their suffering. This demonstration underscored the ongoing debates within the feminist movement regarding pornography, encapsulating the enduring complexities surrounding this contentious issue.

HARVARD SQUARE MBTA PLAZA

ART, PUBLICATIONS, & FILM:

The Pit and Street Music

Nestled between the Harvard T station and the present-day Smith Campus Center, "The Pit" emerged as a haven for a diverse array of artists in the early 1980s. Affectionately dubbed "pit kids" or "pit rats," these young people converged to revel in music, express their artistic endeavors, and forge connections. Clad in leather jackets, combat boots, or Doc Martens, sporting spiked hair, they hailed from various backgrounds, spanning high-income suburbs in the Boston metropolitan area to those experiencing homelessness, united in their search for belonging.

Amanda Palmer, lead vocalist, pianist, and lyricist of the Dresden Dolls, remembers their time at The Pit as a teenager, starting in 1989. Every weekend, she would take a bus to Alewife, then hop on the train to Harvard Square. In the summer, it became an almost daily destination. As she describes it, The Pit was "a rare physical space for freaks and weirdos" that felt like an outdoor music venue for all ages. Palmer says they care deeply about physical spaces for artists and performers to collaborate in real-time while interacting with their audience. "It's the missing ingredient in the Boston/Cambridge area now – that open plaza space," she says. "You can feel its absence when you're in Europe and they have outdoor spaces for artists."



Amanda Palmer performing in her Bride Dress in Harvard Square, US in 1999. Photograph: Robert Castagna. Courtesy of The Guardian.

Author Jen Deaderick fondly reminisces about the women who showcased their talents at the Pit over the years, from live music acts to living statues. While not an inherently feminist space – it was very male dominated – girls and women found camaraderie there and many women performers emerged.

Tracy Chapman, known for her soul-stirring anthems like 'Fast Car' and poignant ballads deeply resonant in the queer community, attended Tufts University during the 1980s and honed her craft through local

street performances. Her albums found a home at New Words Bookstore, a revered feminist bookstore and community gathering place in Cambridge (1974 to 2002). You can read more about New Words in *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Inman Square*.

In 2022, under the leadership of Councillor Marc McGovern, the City of Cambridge proclaimed June 25, 2022 'Pit Rat Day' to honor the history of The Pit and all of those who called it home.

Marching through Harvard Square for Women's Lib

Following a pornography festival at the Orson Welles Theater (1001 Massachusetts Avenue), Bread and Roses (featured in *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Central Square*) led demonstrators through Harvard Square shouting 'Off the Orson Welles!' According to Liane Brandon, independent filmmaker, photographer, and University of Massachusetts Amherst Professor Emerita, a *Harvard Crimson* article reporting on the festival provoked significant public outcry. In response, the Orson Welles agreed to screen films by women — and to host a benefit screening for the Women's Center.

500 Women Demonstrators March through Cambridge

By Judith Freedman
May 8, 1970

About 500 women marched from the Cambridge Common to Tech Square late yesterday afternoon in a demonstration sponsored by Bread and Roses for a Women's Solidarity Strike.

The City of Cambridge did not issue a permit for the march, and organizers feared that police might try to stop it. But the Cambridge Police left the marchers alone and held back traffic as they passed. By the time the marchers reached Central Square they had a one-car police escort.

Article '500 Women Demonstrators March through Cambridge' by Judith Freedman. May 8, 1970. *Harvard Crimson*.

BENEFIT FOR NEW WOMEN'S CENTER

THE ABORTION FILM
THE WOMEN'S HISTORY FILM
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHO I AM
MAKE-OUT
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL WHEN SHE'S ANGRY
BRITISH WOMEN'S FILM
PLANE-HUNTING
S.E. ASIAN WOMEN'S FILM
"SPECIAL ADDED SURPRISE"

SUNDAY JUNE 6 1pm - 3:30pm

WOMEN \$1.50 MEN \$2



ORSON
WELLES
CINEMA



A flyer for the Cambridge Women's Center benefit screening. June 1970. Courtesy of Liane Brandon.

1151 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Old Cambridge Baptist Church | 1844 – Present



The Old Cambridge Baptist Church (OCBC) has housed many social justice and human rights movements over the years, including civil rights groups, feminist collectives, and immigration reform organizations. One of the notable leaders, Rev. Ernst “Ernie” Klein (1959 – 1974), responded to the voices of local activists by supporting women’s leadership and implementing gender-neutral language.

In the early 1980s, Rev. Monica Styron, a lesbian, declared the church “Welcoming and Affirming.” She supported the efforts of Central American activist parishioners, including the Central

America Solidarity Association (CASA), which had an office in the basement. As a result, the church became a sanctuary for an undocumented trade union activist from El Salvador. Many women reverends have followed her lead, affirming OCBC’s commitment to social justice by housing chapters of notable activist organizations, including Bread and Roses (see *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Central Square*), the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion (see *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Inman Square*), and Daughters of Bilitis. In more recent years, the church has been a home to Spare Change News, founded in 1992.

Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers | 1989

The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) formed in 1989 in an effort to advocate and advance the rights of Harvard University clerical and technical workers. Among these employees were hourly workers, including secretaries, staff assistants, library workers, and

lab researchers. Eighty-three percent of these 3,650 technical and clerical jobs at Harvard were performed by women. The organization offered coaching and advocacy through contract negotiations, policy changes, and one-to-one organizing. As of 2023, the HUCTW represented

“I became a union activist after volunteering at the Cambridge Women’s Center, and continue to help women represent themselves, not in the old school way, being the mouthpiece, but by encouraging women to empower themselves by getting support.”

– Adrienne Landau

more than 5300 clerical and technical workers.

Hourly employees at Harvard campuses who went on to become members of the HUCTW Bargaining Unit took part in voting for the unionization of the HUCTW. It was a close vote following a particularly vigorous anti-union effort by Harvard leaders. “There was a rally in 1987 at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, and we were not officially a union yet, but we made a poster and had people sign it,” recalls former Harvard Medical School staff

member and Lead Organizer, Kris Rondeau, on the efforts to unionize. “It said, ‘we believe in ourselves,’ and we got 11,000 signatures! We unveiled the poster at the rally in that Church.” The poster was spotted by their soon-to-be parent organization, the American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which became pivotal in their unionizing efforts by providing much-needed funds for their campaign.

After the effort was won, HUCTW continued holding other rallies through the years. Kris Rondeau, Marie Manna, and Adrienne Landau remember a rally in which union members brought their children to demonstrate the need for childcare; these protests were called “baby picket lines.” Union leaders and members also held outdoor bake sales to humorously raise money for workers’ share of Harvard’s benefits, which were too high. Humor and singing have always been a hallmark of HUCTW rallies and protests.

1151 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE



Waitress Strike

The waitresses of Cronin Restaurant and Lounge, located at 114 Mount Auburn Street, initiated a strike spanning from 1971 to 1973, culminating in the formation of the Harvard Square Waitress Union and the creation of a comprehensive analysis detailing compensation differentials between men and women servers across 76 establishments in Harvard Square. The investigative report revealed a stark pattern indicating that larger restaurants predominantly hired men, while women were predominantly employed by smaller establishments. The findings underscored a significant wage gap, with women earning a mere \$9 per shift in tips compared to men's \$22 per shift.

During this period, waitresses not only grappled with the struggle for equitable pay but also with the broader issues of respect and fair treatment under the law. Instances of unwelcome physical contact, lack of overtime pay, absence of benefits, inadequate break times and facilities, among other grievances, were commonplace. Despite persistent strike actions and incremental victories, such as securing designated break areas and ending menial tasks like bathroom cleaning, the waitresses faced termination and legal challenges.

However, the Middlesex County Superior Court ultimately ruled in favor of the workers, ordering their reinstatement on the grounds that their dismissal violated minimum wage regulations, despite the fact that waitresses were not subject to minimum wage laws due to their reliance on tips. The strike persisted until 1973 when the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission intervened, mandating the reinstatement of the workers, and marking a significant triumph for the Harvard Square Waitress Union and a pivotal moment in the fight for workplace equality and dignity.

Women's Action for New Directions | Founded in 1982

Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) convened its inaugural meeting in Cambridge around a kitchen table with the explicit goal of involving women in discussions surrounding nuclear weapons. It then began meeting regularly in space within Old Cambridge Baptist Church, and later, in Boston. Over time, the organization underwent a name change to Women's Action for New Directions, with the aim of educating women about avenues for active participation in the anti-nuclear movement, including educational initiatives, legal lobbying, and endorsements of congressional candidates.

Founded by Australian physician Helen Mary Caldicott, who relocated to Boston in 1975 to accompany her husband during his studies at Harvard Medical School, WAND was propelled by her charismatic leadership and tireless activism. Using accessible language, Helen spoke at numerous anti-nuclear rallies and on television, clarifying the health implications of nuclear weaponry. The resulting public demand for more information underscored the urgency of WAND's establishment.



In 2003, WAND introduced Trailblazers, a network comprising former legislators whose connections and influence continue to shape national priorities and foreign policy agendas today. Presently, WAND endeavors to empower women to engage politically by addressing the disproportionate allocation of military resources and advocating for their redirection toward human and environmental needs. The organization now focuses on consciousness-raising efforts to foster greater awareness.



Early brochures from WAND. Courtesy of Liane Brandon.

1151 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Daughters of Bilitis | 1969 – early 2000s



Named in reference to Bilitis, a woman who lived on Lesbos at the time of Sappho (610–580 BCE), the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was founded in San Francisco in 1955 as one of the first lesbian organizations in the United States and one of the earliest national organizations of the gay liberation movement.

The Boston chapter was created in 1969 and became the longest-lasting chapter of the national Daughters of Bilitis. Without a headquarters in the area initially, the group held their regular consciousness-raising sessions and other social activities in churches around the Boston area. Included among these sanctuaries was Old Cambridge Baptist Church, which had a lesbian pastor in the early 1980s and offered space to the group.

The gatherings were a space for women to start feeling comfortable with being 'out' and to discover and navigate the obstacles and joys that came with that. "When they [new members] first

came [to the church] the women were scared. They had all kinds of things going on in their lives like, many things like 'how do I come out to my straight friends,' 'how do I come out to my family,' 'what happens if they reject me,' and 'if I have children will my husband take them away from me because I am gay?' Sarah Boyer, former oral historian at the Cambridge Historical Commission, explains. She also remembers DOB holding fun social activities, including special sessions on how to ask someone out, which were very popular, as well as body positive dance

"Everyone who tells her story here went on to fight for her personhood, in large ways and small, and to live her truth, loving women. May the next generation find the joy and strength in living with pride and acceptance of who they are."

– Sarah Boyer

parties and the annual Thanksgiving dinner, attended by as many as 150 women each year.

To reach more lesbians through their programs, the Boston chapter published a newsletter, originally entitled "Maiden Voyage," until 1971 when it was renamed "Focus." Running from December 1969 to October 1983, the publication not only kept members informed but also played a crucial role in the dissemination of educational materials that aimed to increase public understanding and support for lesbian rights. It included personal stories and experiences of members, which helped humanize and normalize lesbian lives during a time of significant social stigma and legal challenges.

In 2024, Sarah Boyer, along with Lois Johnson and Laura Catanzaro, published *Coming Out, Becoming Ourselves: Lesbian Stories from the Boston Daughters of Bilitis, 1969–1999*, which includes 21 interviews with Boston-Cambridge members



Coming Out, Becoming Ourselves: Lesbian Stories from the Boston Daughters of Bilitis, 1969–1999 by Sarah Boyer, Lois Johnson, and Laura Catanzaro. Savvy Press. March 2024.

of the DOB chapter. In Sarah's preface, she reflects on the documented stories and shares a vision for the future: "Everyone who tells her story here went on to fight for her personhood, in large ways and small, and to live her truth, loving women. May the next generation find the joy and strength in living with pride and acceptance of who they are."

1151 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance



Adbar, meaning 'female goddess' in Ethiopian, is the namesake of Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance, a non-profit founded in 1994 at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church. Founded by Ethiopian immigrant and refugee women, the organization seeks to create a safe space for women and their families by solving problems, building community, and empowering underserved women and their families. It was the first, and remains the only, Ethiopian women-led organization in the state.



Adbar Women's Alliance staff and organizers.



Students during Amharic lessons for tourists & adopted children.

With a mission of empowering low-income women, the organization helps launch and sustain businesses such as the Adbar Craft Cooperative, which supports women in gaining economic independence and learning valuable life skills by selling handmade jewelry and crafts. The Alliance also offers support with housing, orientation to the United States for immigrants, adoption services, a computer clinic, translation services, and social support.

Thinking About a Job ?

Come to a workshop for Cambridge Women and get help with your job search.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Rindge & Latin High School

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

TOPICS WE WILL COVER INCLUDE —

- WHAT ARE YOUR JOB SKILLS?
- CHILD CARE
- WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB
- SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING
- AFDC OR A JOB!
- RIGHTS ON THE JOB:
- RACE/SEX DISCRIMINATION
- OLDER WOMEN LOOKING FOR JOBS
- WHAT ARE YOUR JOB CHOICES?
- CHANGING JOBS! GOING BACK TO WORK!
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FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!

CHILD CARE PROVIDED.

LUNCH AVAILABLE AT \$2 OR BRING YOUR OWN.

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CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
51 INMAN STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139
PHONE 498-9014

Event Flyer, 1981, Cambridge Women's Commission Collection.

459 BROADWAY



As part of the Cambridge Public School District, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) has been a catalyst in fueling young women and queer

students to join or create their own advocacy movements, including Project 10 East and the Young Women's Commission.

Project 10 East | 1988 – Present

Project 10 East became the first school-based program on the East Coast for LGBT youth in 1988. In response to the suicide of a recent high school graduate at CRLS, Al Ferreira, a teacher at the school, came out to the school community and then went about creating a "safe space" for discussions about sexuality and identity. The group's name comes from Project 10, the earliest Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA, now more commonly referred to as Gender-Sexuality Alliance) in the country, founded by Virginia Uribe in 1984 at Fairfax High School in Los Angeles.

After eight years of being an informal organization made up of volunteers and activists, Project 10 East became an

official nonprofit in 1996 with the mission of creating a safe space for youth in schools and communities. The organization had an office at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church and held annual fundraising brunches in collaboration with other local organizations like BAGLY (Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth) and the



Photos of Project 10 East. Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. Photo courtesy of The History Project.

Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth. Arthur Lipkin, a CRLS teacher who came out at school in the early 1980s, went on to Chair the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth and work with GSAs across the state.

Activities of Project 10 East over the years included:

- A newsletter called "*Project Voice*"
- Off Broadway play productions
- A community service learning program
- Partnerships with the state of Massachusetts on gay-straight student alliances
- Zine workshops and a zine of their own titled, "*We'll Be Right Out*"
- Teacher resource packet distributions
- Projects addressing mental health resources and resources for homeless LGBTQ+ youth
- Banquets and fundraising
- Same-sex dating anti-violence projects
- 300-attendee youth-led conferences in partnership with local organizations
- HIV prevention program

Project 10 East also worked on specific issues that arose throughout the years. For example, when



Photos of Project 10 East. Courtesy of The History Project.

a wave of homophobia arose at Bedford High School (a nearby community), Project 10 East initiated a Sunday drop-in center at a nearby church. The program was so successful, the youth at the center began mentoring students from other local high schools also experiencing widespread homophobia.

The records of Project 10 East are stored at The History Project. Stephen Lane's 2019 book, *No Sanctuary: Teachers and the School Reform That Brought Gay Rights to the Masses* chronicles efforts by educators in Massachusetts to advance school policies and reform educational practices impacting LGBTQ students and educators.

459 BROADWAY

Young Women's Commission



**"A lot of logistics
and a lot of creativity
blossomed and then it
became codified as part
of the work of the Young
Women's Commission
once that began."**

– Linda Lipkin

In the 1980s, the staff and teachers at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School (CRLS) began a series of women-centered assemblies. The first honored the women of the cafeteria staff. "We brought them into the auditorium...they got their names read out loud; they got a rose. A lot of logistics and a lot of creativity blossomed and then it became codified as part of the work of the Young Women's Commission once that began," says Linda Lipkin, an educator at CRLS at the time. The assemblies honoring women, combined with a progressive curriculum and an atmosphere that encouraged students to be critical of gender roles, provided the essential setting for a student body interested and engaged in women's rights.

The inception of the Young Women's Commission began with teachers Linda Lipkin and Phyllis Bretholtz putting out a call for young women to come for an initial meeting. The idea was embraced by dozens of

students. "We met after school... the kids would write plays, and the plays were unbelievably rich and exciting. We did our version of Cinderella... we took magazines and looked at the ads that were geared towards the conventional version of beauty and we had the kids do an analysis. The kids were so perceptive," says Linda.

After a couple of years, the assemblies were so entertaining and exciting that the boys at the school asked if they could join the Young Women's

Commission. The school put it to a vote and ultimately decided that opening it up to all-gender discussions regarding the impacts of gender stereotyping was a meaningful opportunity for connection and learning.

The work of organizing women-centered education at CRLS had long-standing impacts, too. In 1995, CRLS became the first high school in Massachusetts to offer birth control pills and contraceptives to students through the school's Teen Health Clinic.

Nancy Ryan, Director of the Cambridge Women's Commission from 1980 - 2005, formally created the Young Women's Commission as an outgrowth of the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women (CCSW). While programming has changed over the years, the CCSW continues to offer youth-focused programming including Girls Sports Night at War Memorial and summer Consent Camp at the library. Other past programs include

Promptacular for high school girl-identified students, 5th Grade Girls' Sports Day at Danehy Park, GOLD (Girls Only Leadership Development) Mentoring group with the YWCA, and ENGAGE (Empowering the Next Generation of Girls About Gender Equality) program for upper elementary students.

You can learn more about the history of the Cambridge Women's Commission in *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Central Square*.



Lysistrata, a Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Feminist play. June 1986.

449 BROADWAY

Cambridge Women's Heritage Project



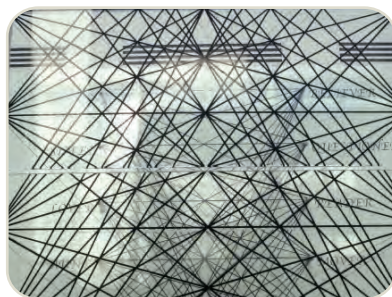
The Cambridge Women's Heritage Project began as a 1996 grass-roots community effort to recognize poet, memoirist, and novelist May Sarton. It culminated with the dedication of a tree and plaque in her honor at the Cambridge Public Library's main branch.

As the group expanded to mark the contributions of other Cambridge women, several members founded the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project Advisory Committee.

In 1997, the Committee, in collaboration with Lesley College, organized a bus tour of historic and contemporary women's sites in Cambridge. Community programs celebrating women of various neighborhoods have also been held at locales including the Pisani Center of the Newtowne Court/Washington Elms public housing community, the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, and the East End House.

In 2010, as part of the main branch renovation, Cambridge welcomed *Filament/Firmament*, a striking and poignant public artwork crafted by acclaimed sculptor

Ellen Driscoll, a longtime resident of the city. A collaborative effort between the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, the Cambridge Arts Council, and the Cambridge Public Library, *Filament/Firmament* serves as a living memorial honoring the invaluable contributions of women to the city's fabric. Evoking the importance of interconnectedness through weaving and sewing, the artwork also pay homage to remarkable Cambridge women through profiles accessible via a dedicated computer housed adjacent to the installation. *Filament/Firmament* serves as a permanent testament to their inspiring legacy. Further information can be found through the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project website.



Filament/Firmament by Ellen Driscoll.
Cambridge Public Library

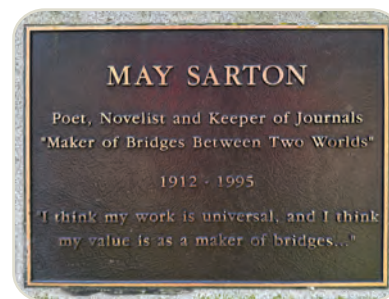
Joan Lorentz Park

Joan Lorentz Park, located at the Broadway/Ellery Street entrance to the Cambridge Public Library and dedicated on October 31, 1998, is a community-centric green space named after Joan Lorentz, a passionate advocate for the park and a prominent figure in local civic affairs. Joan Lorentz was known for her leadership within the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, and her efforts were instrumental in the park's creation and ongoing maintenance. Originally from Brooklyn, New York, she dedicated her professional life to teaching Deaf children, and was a Cambridge resident for 30 years.



Joan Lorentz Park entrance. Cambridge, MA.

The park, originally part of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, was redesigned and expanded due to community activism led by Lorentz and her fellow residents. It is designed to serve as a neighborhood park for public enjoyment, embodying the spirit of community and accessibility that Lorentz championed during her lifetime. The park's establishment and preservation reflect her commitment to ensuring that the neighborhood maintain a vibrant and inclusive outdoor space.



May Sarton memorial, Cambridge Public Library.
Cambridge, MA.

45 QUINCY STREET

Boston Women's Music Festival



While a graduate student at Harvard Divinity School (HDS), Emily Culpepper was a member of the Women's Caucus. During a visit to Washington DC with HDS alumna Jean MacRae and other friends in the Women's Caucus, they went to a feminist bookstore and saw a poster for a concert of feminist music. Inspired to attend the concert, Emily and Jean watched as two folk singers performed, later reflecting on how they wished someone would bring these performers to Cambridge.

Taking matters into their own hands after returning to Cambridge, Emily and Jean linked up with the Radcliffe Women's Center to reserve Paine

"Written in varied musical traditions and styles, the lyrics of the songs reflected diverse feminist themes, women's history, and lesbian love songs. There was a joyful and empowering feeling at the concerts where women celebrated sisterhood, new creativity, and shared information about women's movement organizing."

– Jean MacRae

Hall at Harvard, which could hold 600 attendees. "We learned as we went," Emily remembers. They reached out to singer-songwriters, music producers, and record distributors through their connections at New Words Bookstore. Jean contacted Betsy York, the Olivia Records representative, and Emily reached out to Andrea Gillespie, who represented a feminist musician. They booked enough artists for a three-day event, solidifying it as a full festival. To run the sound system, they hired an entirely women-led team, which included Myrna Johnston, one of the earliest women in sound engineering who went on to found her own company, MJ Audio. Artemis Productions was born from these efforts.

Founded by five women — Emily Culpepper, Linda Barufaldi, Andrea Gillespie, Jean MacRae, and Betsy York — Artemis organized the first Boston Women's Music Festival in October 1974. Performers at the festival included The New Harmony Sisterhood Band, Holly Near, Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Margie Adam, Willie Tyson, and others. The New Harmony Sisterhood Band members were Marcia Deihl,

Music Venues

Harvard Square has long been home to the folk music scene, with venues including Blue Parrot, House of Blues, and Club Passim (originally Club 47). Emerging women folk singers and songwriters have performed at Club Passim, among whom include Bonnie Raitt, who attended Harvard University (Radcliffe), and Joan Baez, who played there at the age of 17. Other icons who started their careers or performed on Club Passim's intimate stage and "listening room" include Shawn Colvin, Bob Dylan, Tom Rush, Joni Mitchell, Suzanne Vega, Muddy Waters, Jimmy Buffett, John Mayer, Matt Nathanson, and Brian Webb. Seemingly tucked away in a basement venue at 47 Palmer Street (originally at 47 Mount Auburn Street), this lively music venue continues to offer music performances, open mic nights, open jams, and Sunday music brunches.

Around the corner at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, "The Nameless" coffeehouse was founded in 1967 by students at Harvard, MIT, and Tufts. The volunteer-run coffee shop regularly hosted folk musicians in the early stages of their career.

Pat Ouellete, Deborah Silverstein, Kendall Hale and Katie Tolles, all students from Goddard Cambridge Graduate School for Social Change, which is featured in *Mapping Feminist Cambridge: Inman Square*.

In collaboration with the Radcliffe Women's Center, Artemis Productions sponsored a series of concerts and the Second Boston Women's Music Festival in Sanders Theater in Memorial Hall at 45 Quincy Street. For the cost of twelve dollars, one could attend three days full of music celebrating women artists. Women traveled from as far as California to attend. New Words Bookstore sold tickets and was a hub for visitors seeking feminist and lesbian books and records.



Holly Near at Harvard Book Store. 1990.
Photo courtesy of Diane Juster.

24 IRVING STREET

Irving House | 1960s – Present



Irving House is a unique hotel originally built as a large two-family home. Purchased in 1990 by Rachael Solem and two male business partners, Rachael recalls the home was physically neglected, with no office space on-site. She remembers it being difficult for guests to make reservations and that the only guests were people who already knew about the hotel. Rachael's business partners were silent partners and did not partake in the daily tasks at Irving House, making Rachael the president of the corporation and general manager of the hotel. "Sometimes you find employees who do not want to take direction from a woman, and they either adjust or they leave," Rachael explains with regard to being a woman in leadership.

Early on, Rachael took part in a women's business group in Cambridge to find community and support. The group gatherings, called "the executive dialogue," were arranged by the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce in 1992 and consisted of eight women entrepreneurs. The members



would take turns hosting and setting a topic of discussion for the session, ranging from loans, expansions, branches, and employee issues, to more general frustrations. Rachael remembers this group being extremely helpful and says, "When you run a business, there are many little things that come up, but you don't always have someone to talk to about it, and everything we talked about was kept confidential, so we could talk and we became each other's boards of directors."

In 2023, Rachael retired from running Irving House full-time and handed the reins to her daughter, Briana Pearson. Over her decades of community leadership, Rachel served on the Cambridge Local First board and was deeply



Rachael Solem, owner of Irving House Bed & Breakfast, 1990. Courtesy of Irving House at Harvard FB Page.

involved with the Harvard Square Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, History Cambridge (formerly Cambridge Historical Society), the Cambridge Hotel Association, and Massachusetts Lodging Association.

45 FRANCIS AVENUE

Radcliffe College | 1970



In 1894, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz founded the Society for Collegiate Instruction of Women, later chartered as Radcliffe College, as part of Harvard University's efforts to provide women with access to higher education. Not until WWII were Radcliffe students allowed to enroll in other Harvard courses beyond Radcliffe. In 1970, the first joint commencement ceremony was held for both Radcliffe College and Harvard University students. Joint admissions between the schools began in 1979 until the schools fully merged in 1999, creating the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, as it is known today.



Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, American naturalist, co-founder and first president of Radcliffe College. Courtesy of Radcliffe College Archives.

On Radcliffe's campus is the Schlesinger Library, now one of the largest archives documenting women's lives, which started in 1943 as a Woman's Rights Collection. It is home to the collections of June Jordan, Pauli Murray, Amelia Earhart, Julia Child, Adrienne Rich, Dorothy West, Boston Women's Health Book Collective, and many more. Between 1976 and 1981, Seventy-two Black women were interviewed for The Black Women Oral History Project. Today, all oral history interviews are available through Schlesinger's digital archive.



Radcliffe students commencement, 1971.
Photo by Peter Hunsberger.



Group portrait of Black Women Oral History Project. Courtesy of Radcliffe College Archives Picture Collection.

45 FRANCIS AVENUE

Harvard Divinity School



While women were only first admitted to Harvard Divinity School (HDS) in 1955, they comprised a third of the student body by the mid-1970s and a majority of students by the early 1980s. In 1973, the Women's Studies in Religion Program was founded in order to adapt to the new reality of increased women ministers and students of religion. Initially created as a research center, the program was funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and in 1995 initiated the endowment process to ensure permanency.

The Research-Resource Associates in Women's Studies program at the Divinity School would bring five racially diverse scholars to the school and ask them to explore the transformation of the school's curriculum. The Divinity School was home to the Women's Caucus, the first tenured woman professor Margaret Miles in 1983, and the first woman appointed Chair in 1988. HDS hosted conferences such as "Women, Religion and Social Change," which brought together women from around the world.

"There were no women studies then [at Harvard], but I already knew that religion was a very big enforcer of patriarchy. ...I basically wanted to create a way to have my own feminist studies program. And I said so in my application and told them 'if I cannot do this here, don't admit me!'"

– Emily Culpepper

The Women's Caucus started meeting weekly in 1971. Staff, students, and wives of faculty and students would find community, engage in intellectual conversations, and work on progressive projects together. The members of the caucus were active at the university and beyond. Two members of the caucus who were taking the class "Eschatology and Politics" proposed the use of kazooos for class members to use when using gender-exclusive language in class and to halt the exclusive use of male pronouns when referring to God and to the general public.

Many students at HDS published unique analytical pieces about women's issues. Emily Culpepper's thesis, for instance, explored menstrual taboos. Raised in the south and having witnessed racial injustices, Culpepper wrote about how her experiences radicalized her. In her early adulthood, she was part of Southern Students Organizing for Change (SSOC), a group she notes was so small, they were unable to discriminate against women being members.

When Culpepper came to the Divinity School, she was a social worker and became active in women's consciousness-raising groups in the area.

In her spare time, she would sit in on her husband's classes. She notes, "I always thought Harvard was something beyond my abilities, and I never even had a woman professor in college so it's that thing where if you don't see it, you think you can't do it." But when she started informally attending classes, she found herself unchallenged by the material and decided to apply to the Harvard Divinity School. In the 1970s, she studied, worked, and advocated for reproductive rights locally. She volunteered in an unplanned pregnancy center in Boston, where she provided help as a social worker by supporting women grappling with their religious beliefs and their moral conflicts with abortion.



Flyer for 'Menstrual Playtime'. Courtesy of Emily Culpepper.

LEARN MORE

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blackwomenssuffrage.dp.la

Cambridge Black Trailblazers
www.cambridgeblacktrailblazers.com

Cambridge Historical Commission
www.cambridgema.gov/historic

Cambridge Women's Center
www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

Harvard College Women's Center
hcwc.college.harvard.edu/education/history

History Cambridge
www.historycambridge.org

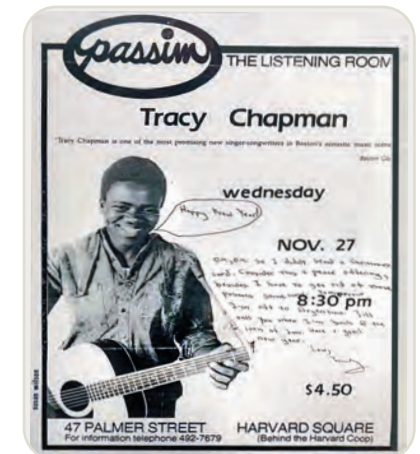
Cambridge Women's Heritage Project
www.cambridgema.gov/CWHP

The History Project
www.historyproject.org

Lost Womyn's Spaces
www.lostwomynsspace.blogspot.com



Cantabrigian Susan Wilson, celebrated photographer, author, public historian of music and feminist Boston, and lecturer, pictured with folk singer Bill Morrissey at Club Passim, 1990. Photo by Diane Juster.



Tracy Chapman, Club Passim 1985 concert poster. Courtesy of Diane Juster.