

Wellesley Vietnam Summer/Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project Papers
Wellesley Historical Society

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The Wellesley Historical Society
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Title

Wellesley Vietnam Summer/Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project Papers, 1967 – 1968

Date

1967 – 1968

Extent

1 linear foot, 2 boxes

Name of Creator

Wellesley Vietnam Summer
Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project

Historical Note

Vietnam Summer was a national movement with local involvement which gave a voice to individuals and communities who wished to express concerns about the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. It was launched on April 23, 1967 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, following a press conference and meeting with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and a group called the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. The vision of the movement was to gather perspectives and data on the war throughout the summer of 1967; the movement officially ended on September 20, 1967, though some local groups continued their activities.

Wellesley had a local chapter of Vietnam Summer, which formed in June 1967. An early prospectus for the group notes that its aims were to “draw together concerned people who have felt isolated, for mutual reassurance and support: a mobilization of opinion. To reach out to uncertain people through a program of community education, to enlist their participation with the actively concerned. To move from grass-roots self-education to measures of political action designed to help end the war” (from “Prospectus for a Wellesley Vietnam Summer,” June 2, 1967, in collection).

The original Wellesley Vietnam Summer steering committee included the Rev. Ward Smith, Frederick Hickler, Bradford Bachrach, Mrs. Stuart Meiklejohn (Treasurer), Dr. Jerome Regnier,

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Mrs. Edward Gulick, Mrs. Warren Little, the Rev. Harold Melvin, Mrs. Robert Peck, Mrs. Warren Gold, Dr. Abner Shimony, and the Rev. Landon Lindsay. The group met at the Wellesley Friends Meeting House on Benvenue Street, where they also had an office.

By July 5, 1967 they had a draft statement of intent, noting that, “Wellesley Vietnam Summer is an effort by local townspeople to reach out to the numbers of our fellow citizens who are worried about United States policy in Vietnam but whose voices have not yet been heard.” The group’s activities centered on “door-to-door canvassing with an opinion questionnaire about the war,” and the participants sought to “stimulate conscientious and responsible discussion, debate, education, and a broad range of concrete actions directed toward bringing the war to an end” (draft statement, July 5, 1967, in collection, drafted by The Rev. Landon Lindsay, Mrs. Robert Peck, The Rev. William Clark, and Mrs. Edward Gulick).

One of the activities central to the mission of the Wellesley chapter were study group meetings, which were held throughout the summer of 1967. The first study and discussion group was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Meiklejohn at 126 Brook Street on June 22, 1967. In addition to the education component, the canvassing activities were also central; the first training for canvassers and volunteers was held at the Wellesley Friends Meeting House on June 12, 1967.

The national Vietnam Summer project came to an official close in September 1967, but the Wellesley chapter decided to continue their activities. On August 17, 1967 the group voted to change their name to the Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project. While the focus of Wellesley Vietnam Summer was on canvassing and gathering data on viewpoints, as well as education and programs, the shift to Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project brought a broadened focus, which included more political action as well as involvement in supporting anti-war candidates for the 1968 presidential elections.

Similar to the mission statement of Wellesley Vietnam Summer, the successor organization drafted a conviction statement: “We believe that the Vietnam War is brutal and contrary to our national interests. We believe that the present purposes and policies of the United States government in Southeast Asia require fundamental change. We endorse no single solution but are united in the conviction that alternatives to present policies and trends need immediate and widespread consideration. We believe that there is widespread opposition to the war in our community and in the nation as a whole, which can be mobilized into a political force to hasten the end of the war” (from Conviction statement of the 1967 – 1968 Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project, in collection).

The group continued its activities into the autumn of 1968.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains a broad variety of materials relating to the founding and activities of Wellesley Vietnam Summer (WVS) and the succeeding Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project (WVPP). Materials contain papers reflecting the aims and goals of a national movement being organized at the local level.

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Index Terms

Conscientious objectors
Pacifists—Wellesley (Mass.)
Political activists
Society of Friends
Vietnam Summer (Organization)
Vietnam War, 1961-1975
Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Protest movements
Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Protest movements—Wellesley (Mass.)
Wellesley (Mass.)
Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project

System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into 12 series:

- I. Organizational Materials, Program Planning, Calendars
- II. Questionnaires, Surveys, Polls, Petitions
- III. Correspondence
- IV. Newsletters
- V. Study Group Materials
- VI. Newspaper Clippings
- VII. Financial Documents
- VIII. Political Papers: Candidate Support
- IX. Papers: Local Community Activism
- X. Papers: Regional Community Activism
- XI. Papers: National Community Activism
- XII. Papers: Vietnam History, Vietnam War Activism, Anti-War Movements

Conditions Governing Access

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.
info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org
(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2004.03

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Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

Related Materials

Swarthmore College Peace Collection: Vietnam Summer Records, 1967. Collection DG-067.

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in March 2018 by Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through grants from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB).

Bibliography

- Kutik, William M. "Vietnam Summer Evolves from Phone Call to Nation-Wide Organizing Project." Harvard Crimson, May 4, 1967. URL <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1967/5/4/vietnam-summer-evolves-from-phone-call/?page=1>.
- Lee, Melissa. "Vietnam Summer 50th Anniversary." American Friends Service Committee, October 10, 2017. URL <https://www.afsc.org/story/vietnam-summer-50th-anniversary>.
- Swarthmore College Library. Swarthmore College Peace Collection: Vietnam Summer Records, 1967. Collection finding aid, URL <https://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/DG051-099/dg067vietnamsum.html>.

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Container List

***I.* Organizational Materials, Program Planning, Calendars**

This series contains materials relating to the organization and planning of the group's activities. The materials contain meeting notes, programming plans, contact lists, and other papers. Included is a folder of materials relating to a program the group sponsored given by Dr. Benjamin Spock at the Wellesley Middle School on October 9, 1967. Note: in these materials, many of the calendars functioned as newsletters, and vice-versa; see Series IV.

Box 1

Folder 1: Organizational notes, program planning, calendars, member lists

Folder 2: Dr. Benjamin Spock program and visit materials

***II.* Questionnaires, Surveys, Polls, Petitions**

This series contains a variety of materials used by the organization to gather information from Wellesley residents. The series contains a number of signed petitions, completed surveys, and poll data. Also included are drafts of survey questions and canvassing instructions.

Box 1

Folder 3: Questionnaires, Surveys, Polls, Petitions

***III.* Correspondence**

This series contains correspondence between the group and a number of correspondents, including the broader Vietnam Summer movement, politicians, and town of Wellesley officials.

Box 1

Folder 4: Correspondence

***IV.* Newsletters**

This series contains newsletters distributed by Wellesley Vietnam Summer as well as the successor entity, the Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project. This is not a complete collection, but reflects the activities and concerns of the group. The newsletters are geared toward group members and participants, rather than the general public. Note: in these materials, many of the newsletters functioned as calendars, and vice-versa; see Series I.

Box 1

Folder 5: Newsletters

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V. Study Group Materials

This series contains reading lists as well as study group materials. One of the aims of the group was to educate and inform regarding the Vietnam War. To this end, members produced and updated reading lists, tracking articles, books and other writings on the war. In addition to the reading lists, the group hosted study and discussion groups during which the reading list materials were discussed; this series also contains some of the materials which guided discussion groups.

Box 1

Folder 6: Study Group Reading Lists
Folder 7: Study Group discussion materials

VI. Newspaper Clippings

This series contains newspaper clippings from local newspapers, mostly the *Wellesley Townsman*, which reflect the planning, organization, aims, and activities of the group. These newspaper clippings have been photocopied on to archival-quality paper.

Box 1

Folder 8: Newspaper clippings about group activities, found in collection

VII. Financial Documents

This series contains various financial documents generated by the group, including bank statements and financial reports, as well as payment receipts and bill statements.

Box 1

Folder 9: Financial reports
Folder 10: Bank statements and cancelled checks
Folder 11: Bills and receipts

VIII. Political Papers: Candidate Support

This series contains materials relating to the group's support of political candidates. While there are some general materials, most of them fall broadly into support for Eugene McCarthy, as well as local support to "draft" James M. Gavin, of Boston, who had served as Ambassador to France during the Kennedy Administration; Gavin was a World War II veteran as well, and the movement hoped to draft him into running as an anti-war candidate in the 1968 Presidential elections.

Box 2

Folder 1: WVS/WVPP Support for Eugene McCarthy
Folder 2: WVS/WVPP Support for "Citizens to Draft [James M.] Gavin" campaign

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IX. Papers: Local Community Activism

This series contains papers relating to Wellesley Vietnam Summer/Wellesley Vietnam Peace Project activities in Massachusetts and Massachusetts politics. Materials include position papers, flyers for events, and news of Boston-area activities in the peace movement. Included are some papers relating to the activities of Vietnam Summer groups in Needham and Newton.

Box 2

Folder 3: Papers: Local community activism

X. Papers: Regional Community Activism, Vietnam Summer

This series contains papers collected by Wellesley Vietnam Summer on New England regional activities of other Vietnam Summer chapters, as well as other anti-war groups in general. Papers include materials from New England Vietnam Summer chapters in Needham, Newton, and other area towns.

Box 2

Folder 4: Papers: Regional Community Activism, Vietnam Summer

XI. Papers: National Community Activism, Vietnam Summer

This series contains papers pertaining to the activities of Vietnam Summer on a national level. It includes contact lists as well as the *Vietnam Summer Organizers' Manual*.

Box 2

Folder 5: Papers: National Community Activism

XII. Papers: Vietnam History, Vietnam War Activism, Anti-War Movements

This series contains general papers on Vietnam and the Vietnam War which were collected by members of the group.

Box 2

Folder 6: Papers relating to the Vietnam War (mostly in protest)

Folder 7: Papers relating to the Vietnam War (mostly in protest)

Folder 8: Literature and pamphlets relating to aspects of Vietnam War activism

Folder 9: Literature on Vietnam history and Vietnam War background