

Guide to the **Community Activism Collection**

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Throughout the years, residents of Tompkins County have been affected, inspired, and motivated by the political and social trends and events surrounding them. In response, they have formed coalitions, committees, and organizations, ranging from AIDS awareness to eco-friendly food co-ops, all with the intention of positively impacting their world and the people in it. Tompkins County has long boasted wide-ranging political activity, partially as a result of the influences of two of the educational institutions in the community, Cornell University and Ithaca College. This trend has continued throughout the decades and into the 21st century, when Ithaca, as part of Tompkins County, is known as the second most progressive city in New York State, after New York City.

This collection details the campaigns that Tompkins County activists have undertaken, from 1956 on. For example, an early initiative, the Economic Opportunity Corporation, was introduced in 1966 as a facet of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society reforms, which professed to wage a war on poverty and resulting inequality. The Economic Opportunity Corporation has evolved to encompass the progressive ideas that locals hold dear: equitable housing, youth education, community service, and economic opportunity for marginalized demographics. Twenty-three years later, a case known as *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* was taken to the Supreme Court as a threat to the precedent set by *Roe v. Wade* on the legality of abortion. A group of Cornell students formed an organization called Coalition for Choice and organized a rally to demonstrate their support for abortion rights. A third example of such activist initiative is the Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival, whose original purpose was to raise funds for AIDSWORK of Tompkins County, an organization that provided information and support in the wake of the AIDS epidemic. This collection includes many more records of activist campaigns on the issues of the environment, economic and political activity, community, women's rights, housing, public health, and peace and antiwar activity.

CONTAINER LIST

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Box 1:

Environment

- Water, 1956-1988
- Environmental Management Council, 1971-1991
- Recycling, 1986-1991
- Waste Disposal and Landfills, 1988-1992
- Finger Lakes Green Fund, ND

Economic and Political Issues

- Tompkins County Economic Opportunity Corporation, 1966-1993
 - First General Conduct and Administration Proposal, 1967
- July 4th Coalition, c. 1976
- Stop Wal-Mart, 1994-1996
- Agora – small business development, c. early 21st century

Community

- The People's Yellow Pages, 1974
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program, 1974
- Educational Activism, 1976
- Newspapers – *Grapevine*, *Collage*, 1976, 1989
- GreenStar Co-op Members' Materials, 1986-1993
 - GreenLeaf Newsletter, 1989-1996
- Offender Aid and Restoration, c. 1990
- Literacy Volunteers of Tompkins County, 1990-1993

Women's Issues

- Working Women, 1975-1976
- Childcare, 1976-1993
- Displaced Homemakers of Tompkins County, 1988-1991
- Abortion – Coalition for Choice, c. 1989
- Ithaca Rape Crisis, 1991-1992
- Tompkins County Task Force for Battered Women, 1993

Box 2:

Housing

- INHS, 1977-1989
- Housing and Homelessness, 1989-1993

Health Issues

- Drug Abuse, Alpha House, 1986
- AIDS Awareness and Activism, 1986-1997
 - Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival, 1990-1997

Mental Health Services, 1988

Peace and Antiwar

Antiwar Activism, 1988-1991

Peace Child, 1989-1991