

Guide to the David Knapp Papers

MS 1940



compiled by Mary Caldera

June 2009

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition	4
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Collection Contents	6
Selected Search Terms	9

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 1940

CREATOR: Knapp, David, 1926-

TITLE: David Knapp papers

DATES: 1944-2014

BULK DATES: 1984-2014

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 linear foot (12 boxes)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1976.23 Megabytes

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of an oral history interview, newspaper clippings, correspondence, legal documents, and video recordings documenting the activism of David Knapp for gay and lesbian rights. The bulk of the papers concern Knapp's involvement in efforts to change the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) position on homosexuality. Knapp's oral history provides an overview of his life, providing a rich source of information on his youth, family life, career, discovery of his homosexuality, and activism. The papers also contain newspaper clippings on various gay and lesbian issues but very little on the gay and lesbian organizations in which Knapp is involved.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1940>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1940>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of David Knapp, 2009-2014.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Original audiovisual materials, as well as preservation and duplicating masters, may not be played. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist must pay for a use copy, which is retained by the repository. Researchers wishing to obtain an additional copy for their personal use should consult Copying Services information on the Manuscripts and Archives web site.

Copies of commercially produced audiovisual materials contained in this collection cannot be made for researcher use outside of the repository.

Original born digital files, as well as preservation masters, may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist request that they be made. Born digital files cannot be accessed remotely. System requirements include a Manuscripts and Archives computer and file viewing software.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

David Knapp Papers (MS 1940). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

David Knapp was born in New York City on September 2, 1926. He joined the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) at the age of twelve and later worked for the BSA in volunteer and professional positions for many years. He graduated from Wesleyan University in 1949. He has been an active church member throughout his adult life. Knapp married Mary Adelaide Wheeler in 1958, becoming a stepfather to her two daughters. A year later, they had another daughter. After he married, he left his professional position at the BSA and became a salesman. Knapp moved his family to Connecticut in 1970 to pursue career advancement.

Knapp discovered he was gay in the late 1970s at the age of fifty. Ten years later, he and his wife divorced. Knapp was outed to the BSA and to his church by family members and was consequently expelled by both organizations. His experiences prompted him to become an activist for gay and lesbian rights. He is engaged in a long term campaign to change the BSA position on homosexuality. He is involved in Scouting For All, an organization that also seeks to make the BSA welcoming of gay boys and men. He led his church, the First Church of Christ of Guilford, in its efforts to become open and affirming. He is a member and

former leader of Stonewall Speakers, a Connecticut-based lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender speakers bureau. Additionally, Knapp started GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) and PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) chapters in Connecticut. [Source: David Knapp Oral History, 2007]

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of an oral history interview, newspaper clippings, correspondence, legal documents, and video recordings documenting the activism of David Knapp for gay and lesbian rights. The bulk of the papers concern Knapp's involvement in efforts to change the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) position on homosexuality. Knapp's oral history provides an overview of his life, providing a rich source of information on his youth, family life, career, discovery of his homosexuality, and activism. The papers also contain newspaper clippings on various gay and lesbian issues but very little on the gay and lesbian organizations in which Knapp is involved.

Arrangement

The papers are arranged by topic.

Collection Contents

David Knapp, oral history conducted by Cynthia Braver

b. 1	Part 1 <i>1 Computer File Computer file (QuickTime)</i> Part 1 covers Knapp's boyhood in New Jersey, his parents and his relationship with them, his love of the outdoors and becoming a boy scout. Original born digital files, as well as preservation masters, may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist request that they be made. Born digital files cannot be accessed remotely. System requirements include a Manuscripts and Archives computer and file viewing software.	2007 November 10
b. 1U	Use copy <i>1 Audio Disc (CD)</i>	
b. 2	Part 2 <i>1 Computer File Computer file (QuickTime)</i> Part 2 covers Knapp's young adult years, living through the depression, attending high school during World War II, being a boy scout camp counselor, and student life at Wesleyan University. Original born digital files, as well as preservation masters, may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist request that they be made. Born digital files cannot be accessed remotely. System requirements include a Manuscripts and Archives computer and file viewing software.	2007 November 10
b. 2U	Use copy <i>1 Audio Disc (CD)</i>	
b. 3	Part 3 <i>1 Computer File Computer file (QuickTime)</i> Part 3 covers Knapp's trip to Europe after graduation, graduate work at Rutgers University and attaining his teaching certificate, student teaching, working for the BSA as District Executive, marriage, family life, work as a salesman, move to Connecticut, discovering he was gay, coming out, divorce, and being outed. Original born digital files, as well as preservation masters, may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist request that they be made. Born digital files cannot be accessed remotely. System requirements include a Manuscripts and Archives computer and file viewing software.	2007 November 10
b. 3U	Use copy <i>1 Audio Disc (CD)</i>	

b. 4	<p>Part 4 1 <i>Computer File Computer file (QuickTime)</i></p> <p>Part 4 covers Knapp's life after divorce, his move to Guilford, Connecticut, senior years, joining gay or gay friendly organizations, his relationship with his boyfriend, hiking, sailing, the Stonewall Speakers, the First Congregational Church of Guilford, GLSEN, being expelled from the BSA, publicity surrounding his expulsion, his activism, and Scouting for All.</p> <p>Original born digital files, as well as preservation masters, may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult use copies, or if none exist request that they be made. Born digital files cannot be accessed remotely. System requirements include a Manuscripts and Archives computer and file viewing software.</p>	2007 November 10
b. 4U	<p>Use copy 1 <i>Audio Disc (CD)</i></p>	
Boy Scouts of America (BSA)		
b. 5, f. 1	Writings by Knapp	1994, 1999
b. 5, f. 2	Articles featuring Knapp	1994-2014
Correspondence		
b. 5, f. 3	General	1944-2005, undated
b. 5, f. 4-5	Commission of Human Rights and Opportunities	1987-2003
b. 5, f. 6	Connecticut Civil Liberties Union	1999-2000
Scouting for All		
b. 5, f. 7	Printed material	circa 2002-2006
b. 7	<p>"The Boy Scouts," <i>Penn & Teller: Bullshit!</i>, commercially produced optical disk (DVD) 1 <i>Optical Disc (DVD)</i> English</p>	undated
b. 8	<p>Scouting for All Protest Connecticut--News August 21, 2000, commercially produced videotape (VHS) 1 <i>Videocassette (VHS)</i></p>	circa 2000
b. 9	<p>Steven Cozza speech; PFLAG Presents: Scouting for All; Scout's Honor 1 <i>Videocassette (VHS)</i></p>	circa 2000
General		
b. 5, f. 8	Pamphlets, miscellaneous printed material	circa 1980s-2002
b. 5, f. 9-11	Articles	1986-2006, undated

General (continued)

b. 10	"The Boy Scouts" (60 Minutes), commercially produced videotape (VHS) 1 Videocassette (VHS) English	2001 April 01
b. 11	Scout's Honor Tom Shepard, Director, Plus 60 Minutes BSA, commercially produced videotape (VHS) 1 Videocassette (VHS)	2001
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender issues		
b. 6, f. 1	Correspondence	1996, 1998
b. 6, f. 2-3	Newspaper clipping and printed material	1984-2003, undated
b. 6, f. 4	PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)	1993-2001
Stonewall Speakers		
b. 6, f. 5	General	undated
b. 12	Stonewall Speakers 1 Videocassette (VHS)	2006 December 8
b. 6, f. 6	United Church of Christ	1985-2002

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Coming out (Sexual orientation) -- United States
Gay men -- Connecticut
Gay men -- Family relationships
Gay men -- Legal status, laws, etc. -- United States
Gays -- Legal status, laws, etc. -- United States
Homophobia
LGBTQ resource
Outing (Sexual orientation) -- United States

Names

Knapp, David, 1926-

Corporate Bodies

Boy Scouts of America
Boy Scouts of America -- Legal status, laws, etc. -- United States