

2010

From Jook Joints to Sisterspace: The Role of Nature in Lesbian Alternative Environments in the United States

Nancy Unger

Santa Clara University, nunger@scu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.scu.edu/history>

 Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Unger, N. (2010). From Jook Joints to Sisterspace: The Role of Nature in Lesbian Alternative Environments in the United States. In C. Mortimer-Sandilands & B. Erickson (Eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Biopolitics, and Desire*, University of Indiana Press, pp. 173-198.

This work was published as Unger, N. (2010). From Jook Joints to Sisterspace: The Role of Nature in Lesbian Alternative Environments in the United States. In C. Mortimer-Sandilands & B. Erickson (Eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Biopolitics, and Desire*, University of Indiana Press, pp. 173-198. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or distributed, in any form, by any means, electronic, mechanical, photographic, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Indiana University Press. For re-use, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center (www.copyright.com, 508-744-3350). For all other permissions, please visit <http://iupress.indiana.edu>.

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Sciences at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact rscroggin@scu.edu.

CHAPTER 6

From Jook Joints to Sisterspace: The Role of Nature in Lesbian Alternative Environments in the United States

NANCY C. UNGER

Despite the depth and breadth of Catriona Sandilands's groundbreaking "Lesbian Separatist Communities and the Experience of Nature," with its emphasis on communities in southern Oregon, Sandilands does not consider her article, published in 2002, to be "the last one on the topic." Instead she hopes "fervently that other researchers will enter into the ongoing conversation [about queer landscapes]" (136). This essay is an answer to her invitation to draw further "insight from queer cultures to form alternative, even transformative, cultures of nature" (135). It examines the role of place in the history of American lesbians, particularly the role of nonhuman nature in the alternative environments lesbians created and nurtured in their efforts to transcend the sexism, homophobia, violence, materialism, and environmental abuse afflicting mainstream society. Certainly such an investigation supports the challenge, detailed in Katie Hogan's essay in this collection, to the notion of queers as "unnatural" and "against nature." Lesbians' ways of incorporating nonhuman nature into their temporary and permanent communities demonstrate how members of an oppressed minority created safe havens and spaces to be themselves. In addition to offering mainstream society insight into the impact of place on identity, in some instances lesbian communities also provide some important working examples of alternate ways of living on and with the land.

Early Lesbian Environments

Place has played an important role in the creation of lesbian identity and community. Although modern urban environments, with their softball fields and lesbian bars and bookstores, are conventionally perceived as most conducive to lesbian life, pockets of safe spaces for women who loved women existed earlier, even in the more conservative rural south. Angela Davis's *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* details the explorations of sexuality granted to African Americans following their emancipation from slavery. Prohibited from frequenting white establishments by virtue of their race and economic status, rural African Americans danced, drank, and socialized to blues music in ramshackle jook joints, also called barrelhouses, frequently located in wooded, remote areas away from disapproving eyes and ears. These informal nightclubs "where blues were produced and performed were also places of great sexual freedom" (1998, 133). Davis examines in particular female African American blues performers who were "irrepressible and sexually fearless women," many of whom were openly lesbian and whose songs celebrated sexual love between women (137).

Most lesbians, however, associated sexual freedom with urban rather than rural life. To Mabel Hampton, a young African American lesbian who moved from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to New York's Harlem in 1920, the idea that non-urban, outdoor settings might prove to be a valuable partner in creating and fostering a positive lesbian identity would have been a total anathema. For Hampton, there could be no more nurturing and empowering environment for lesbians than the open atmosphere of Harlem, a small section of racially segregated Manhattan. "I never went in with straight people," she recalled decades later in the film documentary *Before Stonewall*. "I do more bother [have more contact] with straight people now than I ever did in my life." She summed up her memories of the clubs and nightlife available to openly lesbian women with a wistful, "[you had] a beautiful time up there—oh, girl, you had some time up there" (Rosenberg, Scagliotti, and Schiller 1984).

In Hampton's heyday, it was indeed cities, with their potent combination of proximity and privacy, that promised the greatest liberation for most homosexuals. The very notion of homosexuality as a lifestyle grew out of the urban centers of newly industrialized nations. Many cities included a more "bohemian" area in which people who were considered to be outside mainstream society found a home. In these centers lesbians found each other. They enjoyed the chance to experience nightlife in clubs

featuring lesbian entertainers, some of whom got their start in the jook joints of the rural south.

Private parties were far more common than nights on the town, however, because they were cheaper and provided both safety and privacy. During non-work hours “I didn’t have to go to bars,” Hampton recalled, “because I would go to the women’s houses” (quoted in Nestle 2001, 346). During periods when she was not working at the Lafayette Theater, Hampton and her friends “used to go to parties every other night. . . . The girls all had the parties” (quoted in Garber 2009). As Hampton recalled, lesbians “lived together and worked together. When someone got sick the friend [lover] would come and help them—bring food, bring money and help them out . . . I never felt lonely” (quoted in Nestle 2001, 346).

Urban lesbians created informal communities, providing places to connect with each other as well as generate emotional and financial support and solidarity. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, these urban (as opposed to rural) environments represented freedom and opportunity for lesbians (see Chauncey 1994, Atkins 2003). As Hampton noted, “[I]n a small town you wouldn’t have a chance to get around and meet [gay] people. Now in New York, you met them all over the place, from the theater to the hospital to anything,” concluding, “Yes, New York is a good place to be a lesbian” (quoted in Nestle 2001, 346). Urban environments, with their occasional lesbian bar and clusters of same-sex living spaces, including the YWCA and other women-only boarding and rooming houses, also offered the greatest potential for the creation of lesbian community.

An Early Alternative Environment: Cherry Grove

Urban life offered only fleeting and furtive opportunities for white middle- to upper-class lesbians to find each other (primarily in the form of visits to bars discreetly catering to lesbians) and to carry out relationships. Some of these women began to seek out environments more conducive to living as they desired. Esther Newton’s “The ‘Fun Gay Ladies’: Lesbians in Cherry Grove, 1936–1960” details the role that physical environment played in creating a unique lesbian community (1995). Cherry Grove is on Fire Island, a long, narrow sandspit about thirty miles long between the Atlantic Ocean and the southern coast of Long Island. It was, even in the 1930s, a relatively easy commute via boat from the New York metropolitan area and served as the perfect antidote to the huge, dirty, crowded, overwhelming—and in most sections overwhelmingly homophobic—city.

Few cars were allowed on the island, and it was "so wooded, and so beautiful, [with] a canopy of trees wherever you'd walk" (Newton 1997, 145). One-time resident Natalia Murray recalled coming to Cherry Grove in 1936: "[In] this place, so close to New York, you can breathe the fresh air; when we found it it seemed so secret, [so] wonderful." Its lack of electricity and running water dictated a simpler lifestyle. Island life allowed people to "breathe freer" (quoted in Newton 1997, 147). In addition to its refreshing physical characteristics, Cherry Grove was already home (at least in the summer and on weekends) to the same kind of arts-and-theater crowd that had helped to cement Harlem's bohemian reputation. The energetic white women who flocked to Cherry Grove "enjoyed independent incomes, professional occupations, or both. . . . [M]ost were connected to or identified with the theater world," making them, in the words of Murray, "Interesting, talented people . . . who had so much fun!" (quoted in Newton 1997, 147–48).

Being near the beach contributes to a more relaxed dress code. For women, time at Cherry Grove meant discarding the constraints of mainstream society, sometimes literally: "We could throw off our girdles, dresses, heels," elements of the uniform virtually required of middle-class women. Lesbians gloried in being able to "wear slacks and to be with and talk to others like [themselves]," providing "a simply extraordinary feeling of freedom and elation," unlike the rest of the world where "there was nothing" (Newton 1997, 149). Cherry Grove offered unprecedented freedom. Women could walk alone, even at night, without fear of violence, harassment, or arrest: "The Grove offered lesbians a breather from the strains of continual concealment, and from straight men's unwanted sexual attentions, in a glorious, natural setting" (Newton 1997, 150).

The results of all this freedom were more personal than political. Unlike the lesbians who sought alternative environments in the 1970s and 1980s, the "fun gay ladies" of Cherry Grove were not consciously political or inspired to activism. "Closeted Grovers had desperate reasons to go . . . where they could be what they felt was their authentic selves . . . to be openly gay—expressive, honest, and sexual" (Newton 1997, 150). Despite their appreciation of the natural beauty around them, they were not especially concerned with environmental protection. The negative environmental impact of the lack of indoor plumbing, for example, was never mentioned. Their goal was not to improve, let alone remake, the greater society, but simply to enjoy a respite from its incessant expectations that all women be heterosexual and conform to the demands of patriarchy. Nevertheless, compared to the elaborate housing developments that were

to come, their environmental impact was relatively small. They didn't come to transform Cherry Grove physically, to "civilize" the land, to tame or develop it. They sought privacy and were content to live in relatively simple dwellings that fit their budgets and blended with the natural setting rather than dominating it.

The early residents of Cherry Grove frequently spoke of it as another world, including Peter Worth, who gloried in being, for once, in the majority: "This was my world and the other world was not real" (quoted in Newton 1997, 149). Although the white middle- to upper-class lesbians at Cherry Grove were able to shrug off the homophobia of that other world, its racism and classism remained: they did not reach out to their working-class sisters nor to lesbians of color. As one resident recalled, "In those days, the Grove was like a very private gay country club" (Newton 1997, 156).

Beginning in the 1950s, the tenor of Cherry Grove changed. Early in the decade a younger generation, still middle-class but more committed to butch and femme identities, took up residence. After electricity and running water were installed in 1961, construction of new homes doubled, then tripled. "The old-timers looked on aghast as the 'unspoiled' natural setting of their 'gay country club' was 'raped,'" as Natalia Murray put it (quoted in Newton 1997, 156). The passage of the National Seashore Act in 1964 froze the limits of Cherry Grove, prohibiting further sprawl, but by then its transformation into what resident and film historian Vito Russo called "a Coney Island of [male] sex" was already complete (quoted in Newton 1995, 186).

An overwhelming percentage of the buyers of the newly constructed homes were gay men, who, by virtue of their sex, had more purchasing power than most women. The lesbian "country club" became a gay man's "sexual social club" (Newton 1995, 185). As Cherry Grove became a playground almost exclusively for gay men during the 1960s, virtually all of the original "gay ladies" of Cherry Grove moved on, many becoming part of the "Bermuda shorts triangle," so named to indicate the imaginary line between their apartments in Manhattan and their summer cottages in the Hamptons or near Westport, Connecticut. Significant numbers of lesbians of all classes began returning to the Grove only in the 1980s as a result of their greater purchasing power (Newton 1997, 157).

Despite the near total absence of communal activism, the history of Cherry Grove between 1930 and 1960 offers a glimpse into a pioneering experience, highlighting the way living a simple, more sustainable lifestyle in a natural setting can contribute to an exhilarating rejection of society's

condemnation of lesbianism. Cherry Grove was valued as an apolitical alternative environment offering its lesbian residents a sense of belonging in the more natural world, and respite from that other world: the artificial urban jungle of patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia. It became the work of a later generation of lesbians to tackle the myriad problems of that other world head on, and to create alternative environments not as respites, but as viable models of just how that other world might be recreated socially, politically, and environmentally.

Laying the Groundwork for a New Kind of Alternative Environment: *Silent Spring* and *The Feminine Mystique*

In 1954, best-selling naturalist and pioneer ecofeminist Rachel Carson publicly proclaimed women's "greater intuitive understanding" of the value of nature as she denounced a society "blinded by the dollar sign" that was allowing rampant "selfish materialism to destroy these things" (Lear 1997, 259–60). Just when the old lesbian environment of Cherry Grove grew obsolete, Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) used arguments featuring the traditional female emphasis on beauty, spirituality, and future generations to dramatically question the governmental fathers' wisdom concerning industrial waste and the vast reliance upon pesticides, especially DDT. Women in particular perceived Carson's work as an invitation to environmental activism.

The "female" values stressed by Carson were very much in evidence in *Silent Spring*. Chastening "man" for his "arrogant" talk of the "conquest of nature," Carson warned that the power to achieve that boast had not been tempered by wisdom. *Silent Spring*'s attack on the government's misplaced and ineffectual paternalism appeared just one year before Betty Friedan's assault on patriarchy, *The Feminine Mystique*. Many of the women originally "awakened" by Friedan's work to take themselves seriously were white and middle class, and took their first steps into finding a larger place in the world by responding to Carson's call, written in terms they could understand about a cause with which they could identify. Friedan's urging that women throw off patriarchy reinforced Carson's message that they no longer assume "that someone was looking after things—that the spraying must be all right or it wouldn't be done" (Lear 1997, 423). In response women questioned authority and embraced environmental activism. As environmental historian Adam Rome notes, "Carson cultivated a network of women supporters, and women eagerly championed her work" (2003, 536–37).

Rachel Carson herself chose not to identify as a feminist or as a lesbian, but her work contributed to the significant role that lesbians play in imagining environmental alternatives (see Unger 2004, 54–55). At the same time that *Silent Spring* was transforming environmental thought, the feminist movement was taking hold, dedicated to a rejection of prevailing gender spheres in favor of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. Although Friedan would betray lesbians by attacking them as the “Lavender Menace” in 1969 and purging them from the National Organization for Women, they remained at the forefront of the burgeoning women’s rights movement. As they promoted the rights of all women, lesbians openly claimed the right to their own sexuality.

The Birth of Ecofeminism

As the environmental movement became increasingly mainstream, many women believed that their traditional role as housekeeper, mother, nurturer, and caregiver made them uniquely qualified to contribute. In particular, the feminist and environmental movements of the 1960s contributed significantly to the environmental justice and ecofeminist movements of subsequent decades and to the role of lesbians within them.

The basic concept of ecofeminism is grounded in the movements launched to no small degree by the writings of Carson and Friedan, but its definition depends on which ecofeminist, scholar, or critic is asked (see MacKinnon and McIntyre 1995, Sturgeon 1997, Warren 1997). At its core, ecofeminism unites environmentalism and feminism, and holds that there is a relationship between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature. Some argue that, because of that relationship, women are the best qualified to understand and therefore to right environmental wrongs. In most parts of the world, women are the ones who are “closest to the earth,” the ones who gather the food and prepare it, who haul the water and search for the fuel with which to heat it. Everywhere they are the ones who bear the children, or in highly toxic areas, suffer the miscarriages and stillbirths or raise damaged children. According to one Brazilian ecofeminist, “Men have separated themselves from the ecosystem.” It therefore falls to women to fight for environmental justice and to save the earth (Merchant 1992, 205). Within the United States, a variety of mutually exclusive forms of ecofeminism rival for dominance. One branch emphasizes the power of goddess mythology. Practitioners of Goddess spirituality seek to reclaim ancient traditions in which, they assert, a Mother Goddess (rather than a Holy Father) was revered as the great giver of life. Some argue that de-

spite the efforts of the patriarchal Judeo-Christian tradition to eradicate this belief, all women, especially mothers, are the natural guardians of "Mother Earth."

Their horrified feminist rivals counter that these kinds of claims perpetuate old gendered stereotypes and are a violation of the egalitarianism of true feminism. Nature should not be anthropomorphized into a mother to be protected but instead be respected as a nonhuman, nongendered partner in the web of life. They argue that women and nature are mutually associated and devalued in Western culture and that it is strictly because of this tradition of oppression that women are uniquely qualified to understand and empathize with the earth's plight, and to better conserve and more fairly distribute its resources. These ecofeminists see the anthropocentrism that is so damaging to the earth as just one strand in a web of unjust "isms," including ageism, sexism, and racism, that must be destroyed in order to achieve a truly just world. In the words of 1980s activist Donna Warnock, "The eco-system, the production system, the political/economic apparatus and the moral and psychological health of a people are all interconnected. Exploitation in any of these areas affects the whole package." "Our only hope for survival," concludes Warnock, "lies in taking charge: building self-reliance, developing alternative political, economic, service and social structures, in which people can care for themselves . . . to promote nurturance of the earth and its peoples, rather than exploitation" (Warnock, circa 1985). Lesbians created some of the earliest and most comprehensive efforts to forge the kinds of earth-saving alternative communities Warnock proposed.

Back to the Land

During the 1960s a trickle of people, mostly white and middle class, including many lesbians, some of whom identified as ecofeminists, began moving to rural communities across the nation. They were determined, in becoming part of the burgeoning "back to the land" movement, to be the "hope for survival" by transcending the sexism, homophobia, violence, materialism, and environmental abuse afflicting mainstream society (Agnew 2004). The proliferation of ecological problems and the ongoing war in Vietnam significantly contributed to a radical lesbian-feminist vision of an American nation in such deep trouble that only drastic measures could reverse its course. Some women, convinced that the root causes of America's problems were male greed, egocentrism, and violence, believed that only a culture based on superior female values and women's

love for each other could save the nation. Others embraced separatism for different reasons: some lesbians insisted that “women-only” spaces were the only way to ensure that lesbians’ needs came first. Living in the country was considered superior to living in cities created and dominated by men because in urban centers both lesbian sexuality and efforts to transform society were constantly oppressed and diverted. The separation from cities and suburbia offered by country life was considered crucial in the creation of models that would allow women to reclaim their sexual and environmental rights (Agnew 2004; Splitrock 1985). Moreover, these women, although often derided as unnatural by the straight community and therefore suited only to urban life, confidently took a holistic approach to society’s problems by making nature central (see Cheney 1985).

In southern Oregon in 1972, the trickle of members of the back to the land movement became “a wave of women immigrants” (Corinne 1998). The lesbians who settled in rural Oregon between Eugene and California’s northern border were a far cry from the “gay ladies” of Cherry Grove. They sought not a temporary retreat into a kind of fantasy world but rather the creation of a new and viable alternative. Ideology rather than economics was the primary factor in their efforts to eschew sophisticated development and expansion in favor of simple dwellings. They strove to adapt to the natural environment rather than to transform it. In their early rhetoric, notes Sandilands, “rural separatists viewed the land as a place that could restore physical and spiritual health to a group of people sickened, literally, by (heteropatriarchal capitalist) corruption and pollution and thus as a sort of paradise on earth to which women could be admitted if they recognized their oppression at the hands, and in the lands, of men” (2002, 138).

Women erected (or adapted from existing shacks and cabins) small housing units that were easy to build and manage. These tiny residences (frequently less than ten by twelve feet—smaller than Thoreau’s cabin at Walden) represented safety, economy, and autonomy. These structures did not dedicate space to entertaining or child rearing due to the conscious rejection of traditional women’s roles. The emphasis tended to be collective rather than communal. One resident recalls that “so much of the back to the land movement was about coming out, and coming into our power and identities as Lesbians. We intuitively knew we had to get out of the patriarchal cities, and redefine ourselves and our lives. We actually tried to build a new culture . . . not [just] back to the land but back to ourselves” (Corinne 1998).

This new culture included “a desire to live lightly on Mother Earth and in sympathy with nature” (Corinne 1998). Instead of celebrating

unbridled production, it valued salvaged, recycled, and handcrafted materials over those industrially produced and store-bought. These women eschewed sophisticated technology, heavy machinery, and animal products in favor of solar power, hand tools, and vegetarian organic foods in their desire to protect the environment as part of a larger effort to combat the evils of patriarchy and heterosexism. As one informational pamphlet from the Oregon Women's Land Trust put it, "We want to be stewards of the land, treating her not as a commodity but as a full partner and guide in this exploration of who we are" (quoted in Sandilands 2002, 139).

Sandilands details the struggles as well as the triumphs of the various communities' efforts to remake the world: "After 27 years of Oregon women's lands, not a single lesbian I spoke to in the course of my research subscribed to the view of the women's lands as a utopia on earth" (2002, 140). Despite the communities' desire to create an inclusive and diverse lesbian society, few women of color came to Oregon, and the mountainous terrain proved a barrier to women with disabilities and to the elderly. Relatively poor soil and chronic water shortages contributed to the "ongoing dynamic between a separatist utopian ideology and an everyday practice of subsistence culture located in a particular place" (Sandilands 2002, 140). Residents were frequently divided over what constituted acceptable spiritual practices (see Kleiner 2003). And yet none of the lesbians in residence termed their efforts a failure. They spoke of the empowerment they found in doing things for themselves and their recognition that nature is not an abstraction to be idealized, nor an "other" to be feared, tamed, subdued, or exploited, but rather "a friend, a sister, a lover (not to mention a workplace, a home, a refuge, and on some days a nuisance)" (Sandilands 2002, 146). These lesbians proved that there were ways of living, however imperfect, that did not hinge on profit or patriarchy and that instead allowed lesbians to live openly, freely, and consciously as partners with nature.

The Pagoda: "An Island of Lesbian Paradise"

Just as the lesbians of Cherry Grove thrived due to their physical distance from mainstream society, the lesbian communities of the Pacific Northwest enjoyed the privacy rendered by isolation. Few lesbians were willing or able to live in such complete separation from the mainstream world. Even those who sought to create alternative communities were not necessarily drawn to rural life; others wished to pursue professions not

valued or practicable in rural collective settings. In contrast to the back-to-the-land lesbians of southern Oregon, a group of lesbians in Florida took an entirely different approach to creating a lesbian environment. In 1977 Morgana MacVicar, a ritual performer and matriarchal belly dancer, combined resources with three other lesbians, all in their early thirties and "very much impacted by the 60s revolution in America" (Greene 2009). On the Coastal Highway at Vilano Beach, they purchased four cottages that had originally been units in the Pagoda motel. This marked a new beginning for the Pagoda as a womynspace in St. Augustine.¹

The reborn Pagoda was less an effort to remake the world than an attempt to carve a uniquely lesbian residential and retreat space within the existing one. During its first four years the Pagoda served as a vacation destination for lesbians, then became increasingly residential. For both spiritual and financial reasons, the building at the community's center was granted tax-exempt status as a religious institution in 1979, strengthening the residents' communal identity and allowing the complex to exist legally as a women-only space. It took several years for the Pagoda to take shape as a community and ten years to complete its acquisition of properties. Because lesbianism was not an accepted lifestyle in St. Augustine and the Pagoda was not in a secluded location, the community did not publicly proclaim a lesbian identity. Residents necessarily kept a "very low profile" in the outside community (*The Womyn of the Pagoda*). Unlike the lesbians in southern Oregon who, weather permitting, enjoyed music, nudity, and sexual activity out of doors, Pagoda residents were prohibited from appearing nude on the grounds or on the beach and were urged to keep the volume of all voices and activities low, especially after dark.

Beneath the Pagoda's veneer of repression and orthodoxy was a vibrant experiment in lesbian community. "We maintain a very special energy here," noted Pagoda resident Elethia in 1982; "when I drive into the Pagoda, I feel like I've entered another space and time" (Morgana and Elethia 1985, 113). Emily Greene bought a cottage at the Pagoda in 1978. Looking back on her life there, her "memory was not of being overwhelmed by rules" because she saw them as necessary to the lesbian paradise being created (Greene 2009). She found the Pagoda to be "life transforming" for herself and for others: "There was a real desire for egalitarianism, [and an] openness to diversity." The "rich, deep bonds we formed as we worked, played, and struggled to keep the Pagoda going" helped her to realize that she "wanted to always live in community, especially with Lesbians" (Greene 2009).

This unique lesbian space was “amazing” according to founder MacVicar, “when you think of the fact that we own very little land—two fifty foot strips surrounded by development, [with] a busy street out front” (Morgana and Elethia 1985, 113). Pagoda residents bought the swimming pool they had originally shared with a third strip of cottages, and enjoyed a community space featuring Persephone’s garden and firepit. In addition, the community had a cultural center “open to ALL womyn,” housing a small theater and a store featuring natural foods and products handcrafted by women (The Womyn of the Pagoda). In the center building, called the Pagoda, the Temple of Love, residents were encouraged to participate in various activities and events celebrating women’s culture and spirituality.

Recalled early resident Emily Greene, “[I]t really did have the feel of an island of Lesbian paradise.” Significantly, the Pagoda was a one-minute walk from the beach, offering immediate access to all the natural beauty and sense of timelessness, wonder, and freedom that the ocean evokes. The ocean had “invaded the soul” of Greene at an early age, and she recalls that “the beautiful setting of the Pagoda by the Sea was a big draw for so many women: as we traveled through this uncharted territory [of creating an egalitarian lesbian community], the ocean was such a comfort.” Greene recounts walking on the beach “when life was almost overwhelming,” then returning to “my little cottage with renewed strength to carry on” (2009). “Rituals and bonfires by the beach were common and sustained community identity” (Rabin and Slater 2005, 175). The Pagoda’s “sweet little” beach cottages “needed a lot of fixing up,” but were, in the community’s early years, relatively affordable (Greene 2009). Measuring six hundred square feet, they boasted “rustic-tacky charm,” had heat and air-conditioning, and in addition to a stove and refrigerator were fully furnished. Lesbians at the Pagoda chose housing that offered convenience without extravagance, consciously living a relatively simple, environmentally friendly lifestyle. The dune grass that separated the structures from the beach, for example, remained undeveloped and without paved paths.

In this intimate environment, lesbians of the Pagoda were free to practice (or to reject) wide-ranging spiritualities, including goddess worship. Some residents who practiced Wicca participated in a variety of rituals, including Moon Circles, which honor the various stages of the moon’s appearance and draw from its power. Their beliefs, emphasizing the influence on humans caused by cycles in nonhuman nature, fostered

environmental awareness. Practitioners sought to protect the earth they viewed as a Holy Mother.

In this nonviolent, women-only “lesbian paradise” in a beautiful natural setting, members of the Pagoda sought to create genuine community (Kershaw 2009). Residents gathered together one evening each week to discuss any interpersonal issues. Differences or issues affecting the entire community received top priority. Support and feedback were also available to residents struggling with a particular need or problem (The Womyn of the Pagoda). In short, the Pagoda was not just a pretty place for lesbians to live while basically carrying on as if in the outside world. “It was a truly transformative experience,” according to Emily Greene. “We were all given the golden opportunity to delve deeply into our hearts and search our souls for what truly had meaning . . . learning to live cooperatively, helping to promote the cultural and spiritual expression of women” (Greene 2009).

The Pagoda’s inhabitants were not as pointedly environmentally aware and active as their separatist sisters in Oregon, but certainly they were more conscious of the need for the conservation and preservation of resources than were the early residents of Cherry Grove. The way of life at the Pagoda represented an effort to live simply and more in conscious harmony with nature. Residents sought to celebrate and protect the area’s wild beauty and to create a supportive sisterhood of like-minded lesbians who could pursue their chosen spiritual practices and offer each other support and guidance.

Six long-term community members made plans to expand the Pagoda in order to make room for the “Crone’s Nest,” a new kind of environment dedicated to the needs of aging lesbians (Greene 2009). It was not to be. The Pagoda’s physical environment, primarily its proximity to the beach that had been key to its success, contributed to its decline in the 1990s as a haven for lesbians living with an emphasis on simple, low-impact ways of living with nature. The dune grass providing the community easy access to the beach was replaced by condominiums, and a new bridge built directly in front of the property further diminished the peace and beauty that had played a large role in the community’s founding. Life at the Pagoda became more expensive and “things started to become difficult,” according to a former resident. “Newer women [did not] want to continue struggling to work [out] our issues through our feelings meetings and consensus” (Greene 2009). Beach erosion and the high price of local land contributed to the decision by three of the founding members to leave.

Although heterosexuals bought some of the Pagoda properties, in the first decade of the twenty-first century the remaining lesbian residents retain aspects of lesbian community, albeit in reduced form (Rabin and Slater 2005).

Temporary Alternative Environments: The Power of Women's Festivals

Most lesbians rejected the call to separatism and sought instead to find their rightful place in mainstream society. But this, too, often included a strong environmental element. Many closeted lesbians, emboldened by the women's rights movements that erupted in the 1960s, no longer felt compelled to live a lie and left their heterosexual marriages. Other women allowed themselves to honestly examine their sexuality for the first time. Free from the assumption that they must be heterosexual, they discovered, and celebrated, their same-sex desires. Many experienced this epiphany in a unique environment conducive to the empowerment of women: the women's music festival.

Women started performing in church basements and bookstores in the early 1960s, but soon were gathering larger audiences in bigger venues. The impact of hearing lesbian-themed music with an audience of other women is impossible to exaggerate. In the 1999 film documentary *After Stonewall*, Torie Osborn highlights the large number of women then in their mid-40s and 50s who remember vividly their first women's music concert. Osborn certainly had not forgotten hers:

I can remember piling six . . . women . . . into my little baby blue Volkswagen and driving down from Burlington, Vermont, where there was no gay subculture, to see my first [women's music pioneer] Cris Williamson concert. One [of the six women] quit her job as a nurse so that she could form Coven Carpentry, so she could do lesbian carpentry. One left her husband—we're talkin' this concert literally changed people's lives. The empowerment had an ongoing impact. It was an extraordinary force. (quoted in Scagliotti, Baus, and Hunt 1999)

Women's concerts grew into festivals, described by feminist scholar Bonnie J. Morris as "a vibrant subculture" welcoming "the female outsider in search of an alternative community." Women's festivals rejected "the material objectification of women in violent U.S. media" and celebrated "the female sphere as a source of empowerment apart from men's gather-

ings" (quoted in Scagliotti, Baus, and Hunt 1999; see also Ciasullo 2001). "The only place we really feel safe," reflected one festival attendee in 1983, "is on the land, not in the city run by men. A lot of times we don't realize it until we leave and then we get slapped in the face by the contrast" (Wiseheart et al. 1985, 97). Women camped out and had the opportunity to buy and sell arts and crafts, carry out a variety of spiritual rituals and practices, go naked, and make social and sexual contacts. Perhaps the best known of the variety of annual music events that began during the 1970s and 1980s and includes Pennsylvania's Campfest is the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Since its debut in 1976, the Michigan festival has been held every August, welcoming women of all nationalities, ages, races, sexualities, and physical abilities. In 1982 it moved to a private rural setting of more than 650 acres, where it consistently attracts thousands of women each year, and has been "celebrated for decades as a must-see destination for activists in lesbian cultural production" (Morris 2005, 623). Diversity is strongly valued. In addition to the Womyn of Color Tent, features include networking spaces for teens, over-40s, Jewish womyn, the Deaf, and womyn from other countries; dances, musical performances, a film festival, a crafts bazaar, and a wide array of workshops. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale to encourage attendance by women of all economic abilities. The festival's emphasis is on community: "Each woman [staying the entire week] does two shifts in a community area during her stay (one for the week-enders), adding her own splash of color to the fabric of the Festival. Every woman's personal involvement forms the foundation of the Festival spirit, built on the energy, ethic, good fun and challenge of living and working together" (General Festival Information 2007).

Part of that working together to create a truly alternative environment is dedicated to respecting the earth and leaving the lightest possible footprint. Central to the Michigan experience are the "forest, meadow, and sky [that] stretch out in all directions" (General Festival Information 2007). Participants are required to be "land stewards" and honor nature as a partner rather than a backdrop. This involves living simply for the duration of the festival, thereby consuming fewer resources and creating as little waste as possible. This creation of an "ecology consciousness," reflected one participant in 1983, offers a "real hands-on experience in 'what are we doing here? How are we living here?'" and a lesson in "how fragile the ecology is . . . thru more than a textbook." She spoke for many attendees when she emphasized her "vested interest in more and more women feeling connected to the land" (Wiseheart et al. 1985, 97).

For many participants an environmental consciousness is further fostered by woman-centered spiritual practices emphasizing women's "oneness" with the earth, with the moon, and with natural cycles. From its earliest beginnings, "[p]art of Michigan's radical mission," according to Morris, "was its safe space for woman-identified and woman-centered spiritual practice. Events and Goddess rituals . . . allowed women who had been hurt by their exclusion from (male-only) religious office or women recovering from male-dominated fundamentalism to find themselves in feminine images of the divine" (2005, 622).

Whether or not attendees participate in nature-centered spiritual rituals, all are required to clean up after themselves and respect their surroundings. The land is valued for its own sake, not merely for the special qualities it brings to the various events. Rather than create a permanent infrastructure on the land to facilitate the elaborate set-up procedures necessary to put on such a large event, after each Michigan festival much effort is expended to return the land as completely as possible to its natural state. All nonorganic materials are removed. The electrical boxes that power the festival are buried so that no visible trace of human activity remains. Nonhuman rather than human nature takes precedence and is sustained. "We reduce it all back to that meadow and ferns," notes organizer Sandy Ramsey. "If there is a very high impact deterioration happening somewhere . . . maybe we would do some mulching, seeding, landscaping. . . . We're very aware that we have to watch these things and do what needs to be done to make sure that we can continue to reuse them" (quoted in Lo 2005).

Morris calls the Michigan festival "a wonderland of cultural anthropology" offering "a record spanning two generations or more of musicians, dancers, technicians, craftswomen, comedic emcees, workshop speakers, healthcare workers, kitchen chefs-for-8,000, and land stewards [that] represents the opportunity to examine the absolute best in cooperative community and what might be called an ongoing city of women (akin to 'Brigadoon,' appearing magically at yearly intervals)" (Morris 2005, 627). A Michigan regular celebrates important differences rather than the similarities between Michigan and Brigadoon: "Unlike Brigadoon, where everything is clean, the weather is perfect, and everyone is rich, white, heterosexual, able bodied, politically homogenous (i.e., unaware), Michigan brings together a largely lesbian sample of *everyone*" (Morris 2005, 627; Wiseheart et al. 1985, 100). Despite the fleeting nature of the festivals themselves, the sense of community and lesbian sisterhood and environmental awareness they instilled was permanent. "We go," asserts

Morris, "because festivals offer the possibility of what our lives *could* be like year-round if we lived each day in a matriarchy actively striving to eliminate racism and homophobia . . . [while] living tribally" (1999, xiii). One 1990 attendee said simply, "The planet should be like this" (Morris 1999, 328).

Although attendance is down to about half of the 8,000–9,000 reached during peak years, and Morris laments the passing of some of the early leaders and guiding lights of the festival, more than thirty years after Michigan's debut, it lives on. Even late into the first decade of the twenty-first century, the festival continues to invite women "into the familiar comfort of a time and space where we celebrate all things female." "The magic of Michigan" is described as "a city built up from the ground up by feminist values," where "healthy food, clean air, green woods, art and music will recharge batteries you didn't know were fading." "Make it to Michigan one time," organizers promise, "and it will call to you each and every August" (General Festival Information, 2007).

Exclusively Lesbian Workshops and Meetings as Alternative Environments

Although lesbians flocked to Michigan, the festival is open to all women-born-women (that is, those who were born and raised as girls and who identify as women, excluding transsexual and transgender women—one of several policies generating heated debate within the queer community) (Lo 2005; Morris 1990). Many lesbians sought exclusively lesbian gatherings in which to meet, network, find strength, and create community. Lesbian meetings and political workshops, like Sisterspace, held annually in the Pocono Mountains beginning in 1975, and the ones organized in Gainesville, Florida, in 1984 and 1985 by LEAP (Lesbians for Empowerment, Action, and Politics), were frequently held at remote, outdoor sites that ensured privacy and encouraged "a passionate love for the natural world." LEAP organizers wanted lesbians to learn more about their connection to the earth. Seeking to heal both the environment and themselves they worked to create a community that "will give us energy and power in our work of transforming the effects of the white man's patriarchy on this achingly beautiful planet" (Next Southern Leap 1985, cover).

Two hundred and fifty lesbians gathered on October 19–21, 1984, at "a beautiful wooded private campground on the Suwannee River near Gainesville, Florida" where LEAP created its first "self-sufficient community by sharing . . . dreams, feelings, knowledge, skills, hopes, fears, art,

spirituality, food, chores, tears, support and love." The result, according to the organizers of the following year's event "has been enlightening, empowering, and is something we will carry through the rest of our lives" (Next Southern Leap 1985, cover). Key to LEAP's success in "shar[ing] our actions . . . shar[ing] our ways of living lesbian lives" was its emphasis on partnership with the land, which was "beautiful with shaded oak groves, huge pines, open sunlit clearings, patches of deer moss, [and] sprinklings of zillions of kinds of Florida plant life." "We are here among the long leaf pines to find out more about ourselves and each other [and] more about our connection to the earth," LEAP reminded attendees, and urged them to "Please enjoy the beauty of this land" but take care not to disrupt its delicate ecosystems. Further evidence of LEAP's emphasis on nature as partner is apparent in much of its literature: "We are . . . sharing this space with coral snakes, prickly pear cactus, and scorpions. . . ." "We are here," urged LEAP, "to help each other explore and discover the wisest, healthiest way to use the power that springs from our individual truths—for changing the world." A community vegetarian kitchen was partially dependant upon attendees' donations and "organized around the grand lesbian traditions of anarchy and chaos" (1985, cover-1). Because of the privacy the woods provided, nudity was "highly encouraged on the interior of the land," also contributing to the sense of being in a unique and accepting space (1985, 2).

LEAP's literature emphasized the power inherent in this alternative environment: "Coming into an all-lesbian space provides us with a particular kind of safety that is basically unknown in the world where most of us live. All of a sudden we are able to be ourselves in a truer way. The protective walls we keep up as we move through the patriarchal culture often come tumbling down—and sometimes real fast and dramatically. . . . Letting these feelings out is an important step toward our personal freedom and happiness and it also provides us with more energy for doing our political work" (1985, 6). Like the more inclusive women's festivals, LEAP was intended not as a temporary respite, but as a catalyst for creating permanent change, including awareness of the earth and its resources as a partner requiring respect, careful use, and protection. Attendees were warned that as they moved "back into patriarchal culture," they would likely find themselves "bombarded by the sickening truth of what . . . patriarchy is." LEAP organizers urged that attendees use the strength they gained through the LEAP experience: "[T]ake a clearer look at our lives and figure out ways we can change things to better express our power; organize groups for political action and consciousness-raising; constantly

validate ourselves and each other and the true incredible power of our presence in this world" (1985, 6).

Lesbian festival regular Retts Scauzillo

attended because it was crucial to my survival as a lesbian feminist. I needed to be with like-minded dykes, living and working together, to create our culture and practice our lesbianism. I went there hungry for love and sex and it was a place I could be all of me. I could take my shirt off, wear ripped or revealing clothes, flirt, be sexy, laugh, and talk lesbian feminist politics. We would agree on some things and disagree on others, but by the end of the night we were holding each other and dancing under the stars. I could be outrageous and radical, truly what they call high on life.

Such liberation could take place only if one felt truly free. For Scauzillo and thousands of lesbians like her, the lesbian festival offered "the safest place on the planet. It made the outside world tolerable. . . . I grew up at these festivals and learned lessons that are with me today. Plus it was FUN!" (2007).

Many of the women's and/or lesbian festivals that flourished in the 1970s and 1980s disappeared in the 1990s due to poor attendance, in large part due to the success of feminism and the gay and lesbian liberation movements. "The woman-identification of earlier festivals simply does not call out as spectacularly to young women who have grown up with more rights, with Title IX, with greater possibilities of becoming rabbis, lawyers, or politicians," notes Bonnie Morris (2005, 625). Festival regular Scauzillo acknowledged in 2007 that she had become part of the older generation and recognized that "it is the right [sic] of passage for the young queer women to rebel against us." She doubted that the 2007 festivals' intergenerational emphasis, such as Sisterspace's ODYQ (Old Dyke, Young Queer) forum, would succeed in bringing in substantial numbers of young lesbians: "I try to think as a young queer woman now, would I need or want to go to women's music festivals?" Scauzillo understood the draw of lesbian-only cruises, vacations, and Dinah Shore parties, and yet complained that "the F-word [feminism] is missing" from most of these retreats that are more in the pleasure-seeking tradition of Cherry Grove than Michigan-style consciousness raising. In her view, as "queer" replaces "dyke," "women are invisible in the new 'gender/studies' world." She recalled her recent positive experience at the Sisterspace festival, whose objectives focused exclusively on making women both visible and empowered. Features included education regarding issues of concern to the lesbian community

and the fostering of a positive self-image for lesbians. Scauzillo emphasized a trait conspicuously absent from the retreat activities enjoyed by younger lesbians: the communal aspect of traditional women-only festivals such as Sisterspace and Campfest. She singled out for praise “the unpaid workers, most of them lesbians who created these festivals and keep them going” and the sense of community that kind of participation produces. Also missing from most resort experiences (which frequently promote consumption rather than conservation) is the kind of environmental consciousness overtly cultivated and honored by back to the land lesbians, the residents of the Pagoda, and festivals such as Michigan and LEAP. Despite her doubts, Scauzillo hoped that “festivals will start popping up and young dykes will start [re]claiming these institutions as their own” (2007).

Back to the Land Redux: Alapine Village

Scauzillo's desire for a revival of lesbian institutions is shared by former members of the Pagoda. After leaving Florida in 1997, three Pagoda co-founders relocated to northeastern Alabama, where, over time, they acquired nearly 400 acres of rural land. They established a legal corporation and began developing about 80 acres into a lesbian community they named Alapine Village. On this land they carried out some of their original goals in far more isolation from the outside world than was ever possible at the Pagoda (Kershaw 2009). Former Pagoda member Emily Greene came to Alapine because she wanted “to be in nature” and to have lesbian neighbors. She was happy “to be back in community with people who want to live simply so that others may simply live.” Her dreams were “to help us age the way we want without leaving our community, to be good care takers of this beautiful land and save some of it for our fellow creatures, [and] to have as low an impact as I possibly can on my environment” (Greene 2009).

Environmental protection and sustainability were paramount at Alapine. In 2009 Greene sought to negotiate the swap of some Alapine land for an adjoining 60-acre forest that was home to “the trees, deer, coyote, squirrels, rabbits, and birds,” in order to permanently protect that “pristine forest” from development (2009). Like most Alapine residents, she practiced many environmentally friendly ways of living: she collected rain as her water source, and used a tankless hot water heater and a wood-burning stove. Vegetables grown in Alapine's community garden were another indication of the group's dedication to sustainability—and

to eating as nutritiously as possible, good health being at a premium to the many members without medical insurance.

Alapine residents valued the many additional benefits of their deep connections with the earth. Barbara Stoll shared many of Greene's dreams, and she too found in Alapine the opportunity to turn those dreams into reality. Stoll "just knew from an early age" that she was "meant to live in the woods." Finding "the consumerism and materialism of suburbia" to be "more than I could bear," she referred to Alapine as "my paradise." For Stoll, who had read "everything I could get my hands on regarding homesteading, alternative energy, sustainability, etc.," it was the place where she could "get back to the basics of life, the rawness of carving out a life that wasn't consumed by things and manmade ideologies." Life at Alapine allowed her to find answers to life's most important questions: "How little could I live on, how much could I produce myself, how might I take life down to its simplest elements so that nature could flow through me without hindrance?" (Stoll 2009).

Like the lesbians in rural southern Oregon, Stoll designed her small, one-room cabin "for the highest efficiency," allowing her to "live lightly on the land" because "the most important aspect of living on the land for me was having as small a footprint as I possibly could." Although she described herself as a hermit, Stoll rejoiced in her ability to live in a like-minded community and "visited other intentional communities in other states to learn about this much needed and wonderful way of life." Living at a "much calmer, more serene pace . . . surrounded by other like minded women," according to Stoll, allowed for "stretching of the mind and new ideas to be considered and possibly implemented." She refused, however, to romanticize her "very simple and frugal life," noting the psychological as well as the physical struggles at Alapine, where "the land brings emotion to the surface . . . [and] the woods do not let you hide from yourself," and where communal living in "a group of strong women with strong opinions" can be "very challenging" (2009). For all its difficulties, life at Alapine had profound meaning for Stoll: "I live an authentic life [because] I touch nature and the sacredness of life everyday." She vowed to "heal the planet and its non-human inhabitants with my every action," and hoped that even after she was "long dead," other women would "carry the torch and continue what we are trying to accomplish here, to preserve the beauty of life through nature and gentle, light-footed actions" (2009).

The community worried about who those women bearing torches into the future might be. While at the Michigan festival in 2005, Alapine

resident Emily Greene “became really aware and concerned about the lack of younger womyn attracted to living in community on the land” (Greene 2009). By 2009, her worry became more acute. Although home to only twenty residents, Alapine was nevertheless one of the largest of the remaining “about 100 below-the-radar lesbian communities in North America.” “We are really going to have to think about how we carry this on,” noted Greene, or “in twenty to twenty-five years, we [lesbians in alternative communities] could be extinct” (Kershaw 2009). At age sixty-two, Greene recognized that younger lesbians were not eager to withdraw from heterosexual society because “the younger generation has not had to go through what we went through.” Many Alapine residents were “deeply scarred” by the discrimination and persecution they suffered at the hands of an openly homophobic society. They felt in the 1960s and 1970s “a real sense of the need to strongly identify as a woman and have women’s space . . . the need to be apart” in order to draw on their own strength and empowerment. They recognize that “young feminists today recoil at the idea of identity politics” (Kershaw 2009).

Although the members of Alapine Village lived quietly and avoided publicity, in 2009 they were willing to be the subject of a feature story in the *New York Times* as one way of reaching out to younger lesbians in their efforts to remain a viable and vibrant community. The web version of the story included a multimedia presentation featuring Alapine residents and their natural setting.² To help achieve its shared goal of “expanding into an intergenerational community, especially welcoming younger women,” Alapine created a website (Alapine Community Association 2009). In addition to celebration of the many social features of community living, much was made in the inviting Web pages of the land’s rolling hills, hardwood and pine forests, flowing mountain river, and hiking paths, as well as the ready availability of outdoor activities (bicycling, canoeing, kayaking, camping, and gardening). The Web site also featured the community’s use of wood heat, solar energy, propane, composting toilets, and recycling, its self-sufficiency, and its work toward making “homes, gardens and community buildings sustainable, with the ability to survive off grid” (Alapine Community Association 2009).

Nature remained an important component in this lesbian alternative environment and, its residents hoped, one of the keys to attracting like-minded lesbians and assuring its future. The response generated by the *New York Times* was overwhelming. It “warmed the heart” of Greene, and convinced her that “we are not a ‘dying breed,’ and that our form of community is very vibrant and alive.” With “plenty of land [and] hard-

working women,” this former nursing-home care provider has renewed confidence that the women of Alapine can “create a new environment for Lesbians as we age” (Greene 2009).

Conclusion

Place matters. In times of oppression and intolerance, there were few spaces that allowed for lesbian sisterhood. Lesbians used existing built environments, such as the nightclubs of Harlem and beach cottages of Cherry Grove, to carve out rare opportunities for lesbian community. Following the rise of environmental and feminist consciousness, spaces were made into more than just enclaves of same-sex desire. Some lesbians made ambitious efforts to create settings in which they could also put into practice their ecofeminist philosophies. These efforts, whether temporary, like Michigan, or permanent, like Alapine Village, offered participants not just safety and freedom, but the opportunity to carry out experiments in both egalitarianism and environmental sustainability.

Such lesbian alternative environments are by no means obsolete, but no longer do they provide the only safe space in which lesbians can enjoy the freedom to be themselves, find solidarity, and build community. Esther Rothblum and Penny Sablove’s edited 2005 collection *Lesbian Communities: Festivals, RVs, and the Internet*, for example, includes an essay on virtual lesbian communities that do not even exist in physical space. Environmental consciousness and protection are, however, increasingly promoted in both gay and lesbian cyberspace and real-life communities. In 2008, *Out Front Blog* documented that as “consumer engagement in all things ‘green’ has taken off in the past year, engagement and recognition of gay and lesbian audiences with environmental issues has also increased. . . . For many gays and lesbians in 2008, green is the new pink” (Finzel 2008). According to Emily Greene in 2009, “lesbians as a group are more conscious of how they are impacting their environment now more than ever before.” Growing lesbian attention to environmental issues does not change the fact that many of their efforts to remake the world by creating environmental alternatives have fallen casualty to the rise of multiple new spaces and opportunities for lesbian sisterhood.

Through their efforts to transcend sexism, homophobia, and violence, lesbian communities sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently made important contributions to environmental history and environmental justice movements. Some groups’ recognition of nature as partner and de-emphasis on materialism make them particularly valuable

models of efforts to create sustainable ways of living. Further research on lesbian alternative communities, past and present, will not only shed light on important aspects of lesbian history, but also provide thought-provoking examples of new ways of thinking, living, and valuing both human and non-human nature.

NOTES

Minor portions of this essay originally appeared in Unger (2004). A Mary Lily Grant funded research at the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture at Duke University. Emily Greene, Barbara Stoll, and Morgana MacVicar contributed generously to this essay. Don Whitebread, Mary Whisner, and Susan Goodier provided editing expertise.

1. In the documents of many of these efforts to create lesbian alternative communities, "woman" is spelled variously as "womyn," "womon," and "wimmin." Those original spellings are maintained in this essay.

2. Article at www.nytimes.com/2009/02/01/fashion/01womyn.html?_r=2&scp=2&scp=sarah%20kershaw&st=cse. Multi-media presentation at www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/02/01/style/20090201-women-feature/index.html.

REFERENCES

- Agnew, Eleanor. 2004. *Back from the Land*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Alapine Community Association, Inc. 2009. <http://www.alapine.com>.
- Atkins, Gary. 2003. *Gay Seattle*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press.
- Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring*. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin.
- Chauncey, George. 1994. *Gay New York*. New York: Basic Books.
- Cheney, Joyce, ed. 1985. *Lesbian Land*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Word Weavers.
- Ciasullo, Ann. 2001. Making Her (In)Visible: Cultural Representations of Lesbianism and the Lesbian Body in the 1990s. *Feminist Studies* 27.3: 577-608.
- Corinne, Tee. 1998. Little Houses on Women's Lands. <http://www-lib.usc.edu/~retter/teehouses.html>.
- Davis, Angela Y. 1998. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Finzel, Ben. 2008. Earth Gay. *Out Front Blog: The Full Spectrum of Gay and Lesbian Communications*. <http://www.fhoutfront.com/2008/04/earth-gay.html>.
- Garber, Eric. 2009. A Spectacle in Color: The Lesbian and Gay Subculture of Jazz Age Harlem. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG97/blues/garber.html>.
- General Festival Information. 2007, 2008. *Michigan Womyn's Music Festival*. <http://www.michfest.com/festival/index.htm>.
- Greene, Emily. 2009. Personal correspondence with author.
- Kershaw, Sarah. 2009. My Sister's Keeper. *New York Times*, February 1, ST1.

- Kleiner, Catherine. 2003. Nature's Lovers: The Erotics of Lesbian Land Communities in Oregon, 1974–1984. In *Seeing Nature through Gender*, ed. Virginia. Scharff, 242–63. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Lear, Linda. 1997. *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Lo, Malinda. 2005. Behind the Scenes at the Michigan Womyn's Festival. <http://www.afterellen.com/archive/ellen/Music/2005/4/michigan3.html>.
- MacKinnon, Mary Heather, and Moni McIntyre, eds. 1995. *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*. Kansas City, Kans.: Sheed and Ward.
- Merchant, Carolyn. 1992. *Radical Ecology*. New York: Routledge.
- Morgana and Elthia. 1985. The Pagoda. In *Lesbian Land*, ed. Joyce Cheney, 111–15. Minneapolis, Minn.: Word Weavers.
- Morris, Bonnie J. 1999. *Eden Built by Eves: The Culture of Women's Music Festivals*. New York: Alyson.
- . 2005. Valuing Woman-Only Spaces. *Feminist Studies* 31.3: 618–30.
- Nestle, Joan. 2001 (1993). Black Entertainer Mabel Hampton Recalls Lesbian Life in the 1920s and 1930s. In *Major Problems in the History of Sexuality*, ed. K. L. Peiss, 345–46. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Next Southern Leap. 1985. Box 8. File 15. Atlanta Feminist Lesbian Alliance. Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library. Duke University.
- Newton, Esther. 1995. *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
- . 1997. The "Fun Gay Ladies": Lesbian in Cherry Grove, 1936–1960. In *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and BiSexual Community Histories*, ed. B. Beemyn, 145–64. New York: Routledge.
- Rabin, Joan S., and Barbara Slater. 2005. Lesbian Communities across the United States: Pockets of Resistance and Resilience. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 9.1–2: 169–82.
- Rome, Adam. 2003. "Give Earth a Chance": The Environmental Movement and the Sixties. *Journal of American History* 90.2: 525–54.
- Rosenberg, Robert, John Scagliotti, and Greta Schiller, prod. 1984. Motion picture. *Before Stonewall*. First Run Features.
- Rothblum, Esther, and Penny Sablove, eds. 2005. *Lesbian Communities: Festivals, RVs, and the Internet*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Sandilands, Catriona. 2002. Lesbian Separatist Communities and the Experience of Nature. *Organization and Environment* 15.2: 131–61.
- Scagliotti, John, Janet Baus, and Dan Hunt, prod. 1999. Motion picture. *After Stonewall*. First Run Features.
- Scauzillo, Retts. 2007. Women-Only Festivals: Is There a Future? *About: Lesbian Life*. <http://lesbianlife.about.com/od/musicreviews/a/WomenOnlyFest.htm>.
- Splitrock, Myra Lilliane. 1985. Traveling in Dykeland. In *Lesbian Land*, ed. Joyce Cheney, 167–68. Minneapolis, Minn.: Word Weavers.
- Stoll, Barbara. 2009. Personal correspondence with author.
- Sturgeon, Noël. 1997. *Ecofeminist Natures*. New York: Routledge.
- Unger, Nancy C. 2004. Women, Sexuality, and Environmental Justice in American History. In *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*, ed. Rachel Stein, 45–60. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Warnock, Donna. Circa 1985. Pamphlet. What Growthmania Does to Women and the Environment. Syracuse: Feminist Resources on Energy and Ecology. Box 14. File 6. Atlanta Feminist Lesbian Alliance. Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University.

- Warren, Karen J., ed. 1997. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wiseheart, Susan, et al. 1985. Michigan. In *Lesbian Land*, ed. Joyce Cheney, 96-98. Minneapolis, Minn.: Word Weavers.
- The Womyn of the Pagoda. (n.d.) The Pagoda. Box 10. File 26. Atlanta Feminist Lesbian Alliance. Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University.