

Collection #
M 1513
OM 0770

**DREAMS AND SWORDS BOOKSTORE
COLLECTION, 1984-1999, 2007**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript box, 2 photograph boxes, 1 oversized folder, 2 artifacts
COLLECTION DATES:	1984-1999, 2007
PROVENANCE:	Harriet Clare, 2019 and 2021
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Dreams and Swords catalog, 1988 (pam HQ1101 .D7); Mary Byrne Collection (M1474); Mark A. Lee LGBT Collection (M1157)
ACCESSION NUMBERS:	2019.0329; 2021.0152
NOTES:	A large sign from the store was initially accessioned into the collection but was transferred to the Indiana State Museum during processing.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Dreams and Swords bookstore opened in a small two-story house at 828 E. 64th Street in Broad Ripple, Indianapolis, in March 1983. The store's proprietress, Harriet Clare, had come to Indianapolis from Pennsylvania with her then-husband in the mid-1960s. She worked for B. Dalton Bookseller for close to a decade before mustering the courage to create a woman-centered independent bookstore of her own. She briefly sold books at WomanSpace (38th and Sherman) in 1982. Thanks to a \$5,000 startup loan from a silent donor, Harriet opened Dreams and Swords. The name of the store came from a 1914 poetry book by Amy Lowell called *Sword Blades and Poppy Seeds*. The titular poem reads in part, "All books are either dreams or swords. You can cut, or you can drug, with words."

When few comparable resources existed, Dreams and Swords immediately became an important landmark for the local LGBT community. In addition to printed sources, it provided a vital support network and safe haven. The store hosted popular feminist authors like May Sarton, Jane Rule, and Katherine V. Forrest as well as local authors. In 1996, Dreams and Swords was rated #7 on the top 100 bookstore sales list of lesbian literature publishing company Naiad Press. Harriet advertised the store in national publications like *Sojourner* and *Lesbian Connection*. A second location of the store briefly operated in Bloomington, Indiana from 1986 to 1988.

Sometime around 1986, Harriet sought a computer programmer who could create an affordable point of sale inventory control system for the store. Through a store connection, she found one in Becky Thacker. Harriet and Becky eventually began dating. Becky became an integral figure in the lives of both Harriet and Dreams and Swords. In 1994, at the National Women's Music Festival (NWMF) in Bloomington, the two held a commitment ceremony.

In March of 1992, Dreams and Swords celebrated its 10th anniversary. The store hosted musician Margie Adam (a favorite of Harriet's) and served brunch. Shortly afterwards, the store moved one block north to a larger building at 6503 Ferguson Street. The Grand Reopening was held in December of 1993.

However, a national chain bookstore soon moved to the area and drew many Dreams and Swords customers away. By 1997, Harriet could no longer afford to keep the store open. Dreams and Swords closed its doors for good on 25 April 1997. On 2 May, several friends of the store gathered to wish Harriet and Becky well and held a blessing ritual.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of documents and photographs from the Dreams and Swords bookstore, including incorporation documents, news clippings, and other store ephemera. A large piece of the manuscript portion is Becky Thacker's original inventory control system that she created especially for the store. Also included is the player handbook for the TLC (Tired Lesbian Cronies) Draggins, a casual softball team that organized as a result of contacts made through the bookstore. The Draggins met at Broad Ripple Park on and off for about five years in the 1980s.

For the store's 10th anniversary, Becky gifted Harriet an empty photograph album. Harriet filled the album with pictures of author visits and other memorable store events. These photos make up most of the visual portion of the collection. Of those from the album, Harriet's arrangement and captions have been maintained.

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Indianapolis Women's Chorus at Indiana Fever game,
circa 2007

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