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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Patricia Lucille Nelson was born in Montreal on December 12th, 1953. Although both her parents are from the West, Nelson and her four siblings grew up in Laval West and St-Eustache (Québec). She studied the humanities and languages at Vanier College in Saint-Laurent, printing at Ahuntsic College in Montreal and worked at Classic Books before moving to the West in 1974.

Nelson quickly settled in Vancouver and started working in a screen printing shop, a coop house and, in 1975, she joined Press Gang. Here she worked on a voluntary basis and she became a press operator. This is also the time when she came out as a lesbian and decided to change her name to Lou, a shortened version of her middle name, in honor of the occasion. It is also when she became involved more actively in the feminist, socialist and unionist movement that prevailed in Vancouver in those years. For example, she joined the NDP in September 1974. The following year, she participated in the occupation of the Vancouver Canada Manpower Centre Office to pressure the Canadian Government to make real changes regarding women and work. She supported Press Gang by involving herself in numerous fundraising activities and helped organize the 1979 Conference on Women and Work. “In order to sustain herself”, she ran Simon Fraser University Student Society’s printshop for four years. While working at SFU, she also got involved with the feminist union Service Office and Retail Workers Union (SORWUC).

In 1983, she moved back to Montreal where she entered the Translation Program at Concordia University. During her studies there, she worked part time at Concordia’s student society print shop. She graduated in 1987 and became a freelance translator. Still loyal to her feminist beliefs in this new profession, she translated works from Anne-Marie Alonzon, Nicole Brossard, Louise Dupré and Monique Bégin.

Nelson’s love of words goes a long way back. For instance, she kept diaries for years. In 1978, she even wrote in one of them that she would like to become a fiction writer by age 35. Part of her diary was also published in the anthology Our Lives, Lesbian Personal Writings (Second Story Press, 1991). She was actively involved with an organization called Women and Words throughout the 1980’s and, in 1988, she also published her first poem.
Lou Nelson left her last lesbian partner in 1989. Later, after a few years of celibacy, she married Thomas Chaplain. She is now based in Sutton (Québec) where she works as a freelance translator.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY

The documents were donated by Lou Nelson in 2004.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The fonds is divided into five series: Diaries, Agendas, Correspondence, Subject Files, and Memorabilia.

Diaries: 15 cm of textual documents. – 3 photographs. – 1972-1982 (Box 1376)
This series contains six diaries dated December 31st, 1972 to August 17th, 1982. The first one starts shortly before Nelson leaves St-Eustache for Vancouver. They provide a very intimate insight into Nelson’s life. They also give an interesting view into the flower power way of life, Nelson’s experience when coming out as a lesbian and the Vancouver feminist movement, especially relating to Press Gang. Some passages make reference to Canadian painter Robert McInnes. The diaries are mostly written in English with some French and German. Portions of the diaries have been published. They are arranged in chronological order.

Agendas and Calendars: 19 cm. of textual documents. – 1975-1987, 1992 (Boxes 1376-1377, HF-52)
This series contains feminist agendas and calendars used by Lou Nelson. They provide brief and uneven information on Nelson’s day to day life, meeting, courses, social life, etc. The agendas precede the calendars. Each type of documents is arranged in chronological order.

Correspondence: 28 cm of textual documents. – 1 photograph. – 1974-1993 (Boxes 1377-1379, HF-52)
This series contains personal correspondence received by Lou Nelson from her friends and family. Nelson has divided her correspondence between male and female friends. There are references made of to these friends in the diaries. Many of the women are also feminist activists. The correspondence includes a letter from Canadian painter Robert McInnes. The correspondence is arranged in chronological order.

Subject Files: 23 cm of textual documents. – 3 photographs. – 1973-1997 (Boxes 1379-1380, HF-52)
This series contains files on various subjects such as International Women’s Day, lesbianism, Press Gang, Women and Words (Les femmes et les mots) just to name a few. The subject files are arranged in alphabetical order.

Memorabilia: 5 cm of textual documents. – 59 buttons. – 38 posters. – 1 shirt. – 1 drawing. – 1958, 1975-1990 (Boxes 1380, HF-52)
This series includes theater programs, poems from friends, button on all kinds of feminist subjects, a cut-out dolls kit from Nelson’s childhood and other material. The files are arranged in alphabetical order while the posters, shirt and buttons are in numérical order.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Most of the material is in English with a very small portion in French, German and other languages.

NOTE ON ACCESS

Files preceded by a red dot have access restrictions.
LOU NELSON

X10-34

DIARIES

BOX 1376

1376.1 Diary, December 31\textsuperscript{th}, 1972 to October 11\textsuperscript{th}, 1973
1376.2 Diary, October 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1973 to August 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1974
1376.3 Diary, August 28\textsuperscript{th}, 1974 to June 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1975
1376.4 Diary, June 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1975 to [December 21\textsuperscript{st}, 1976]
1376.5 Diary, February 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 1977 to January 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1978
1376.6 Diary, February 12\textsuperscript{th}, 1978 to August 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1982

AGENDAS AND CALENDARS

1376.7 Herstory, A Canadian Women’s Calendar, 1975
1376.8 Everywoman’s Almanac, Appointment calendar and handbook, 1976
1376.9 Everywoman’s Almanac, Appointment calendar and handbook, 1977

BOX 1377

1377.1 Everywoman’s Almanac, 1978
1377.2 Everywoman’s Almanac, 1979
1377.3 Everywoman’s Almanac, 1980
1377.4 L’Agenda des femmes, 1985
1377.5 The 1986 Sylvia Book of Days, An Appointment Calendar for the Discriminating Person, 1986
1377.6 L’ agenda des femmes, 1986
1377.7 The Women Writers Desk Calendar, 1987
1377.8 Agenda des infirmières, 1992
1377.9 Women’s Calendar from Vancouver, 1978
1377.10 Vancouver Women’s Calendar, 1979
1377.11 Women and Health Wall Calendar, 1980
1377.12 Credit Union Appointment Calendar, 1982

CORRESPONDENCE

• 1377.13 Personal Correspondence: letters mostly written by men to L. Nelson including a few letters from painter Robert McInnis, 1973-1992 (1 of 3)

• 1377.14 Personal Correspondence: letters mostly written by men to L. Nelson including a few letters from painter Robert McInnis, 1973-1992 (2 of 3)

• 1377.15 Personal Correspondence: letters mostly written by men to L. Nelson including a few letters from painter Robert McInnis, 1973-1992 (3 of 3)

• 1377.16 Personal Correspondence with Women’s Friends, 1974-1984 (1 of 4)

BOX 1378

• 1378.1 Personal Correspondence with Women’s Friends, 1974-1984 (2 of 4)

• 1378.2 Personal Correspondence with Women’s Friends, 1974-1984 (3 of 4)

• 1378.3 Personal Correspondence with Women’s Friends, 1974-1984 (4 of 4)
1378.4 Correspondence: 1 letter re. rental of the film Better Active Today, 1978

1378.5 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (1 of 7)
1378.6 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (2 of 7)
1378.7 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (3 of 7)
1378.8 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (4 of 7)
1378.9 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (5 of 7)
1378.10 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (6 of 7)
1378.11 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends, 1982-1993 (7 of 7)
1378.12 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends. Also includes Papers #1 and #2 of Dykes for Dykesom, 1983-1988 (1 of 4)
1378.13 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends. Also includes Papers #1 and #2 of Dykes for Dykesom, 1983-1988 (2 of 4)
1378.14 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends. Also includes Papers #1 and #2 of Dykes for Dykesom, 1983-1988 (3 of 4)

BOX 1379

1379.1 Personal Correspondence with Women Friends. Also includes Papers #1 and #2 of Dykes for Dykesom, 1983-1988 (4 of 4)

SUBJECT FILES

1379.2 Constructive Criticism: handbook, background material, notes, exercise regarding workshop on constructive criticism, 1976-1993 (1 of 2)
1379.3 Constructive Criticism: handbook, background material, notes, exercise regarding workshop on constructive criticism, 1976-1993 (2 of 2)
1379.4 International Women’s Day: memorabilia including leaflets, programs of events, song sheets and notes in preparation of a march, 1978-1986

1379.5 Lesbianism: articles, texts, programs, reports and song sheets relating to various events including the 1979 and 1981 lesbian conferences, 1981-1984 (1 of 2)

1379.6 Lesbianism: articles, texts, programs, reports and song sheets relating to various events including the 1979 and 1981 lesbian conferences, 1981-1984 (2 of 2)

1379.7 Lesbianism: mostly leaflets about numerous lesbian activities, associations and publications in the Montreal area, [1981]-1992

1379.8 Occupation of Canada Manpower Centre Offices in Vancouver: brief, press releases, clipping and other material, 1973, 1975


1379.11 Take Back the Night: 1 leaflet and 1 song sheet, 1984

1379.12 Women and Words 1983 Conference: agenda, minutes, reports, evaluation and other material, 1982-1984 (1 of 2)

1379.13 Women and Words 1983 Conference: agenda, minutes, reports, evaluation and other material, 1982-1984 (2 of 2)

1379.14 Women and Words Task Force: 1986 2nd pan-Canadian conference and Pan-Canadian Women and Words Association – correspondence, draft constitution and other material, 1983-1986 (1 of 2)

1379.15 Women and Words Task Force: 1986 2nd pan-Canadian conference and Pan-Canadian Women and Words Association – correspondence, draft constitution and other material, 1983-1986 (2 of 2)

1379.16 Women and Words: mostly promotional material found in other files, 1983 W&W Conference Program, 1983-1987
1379.17 Women and Words: mailing lists, constitution, correspondence and other material mostly for Montreal and West Coast Society, 1984-1986 (1 of 3)

1379.18 Women and Words: mailing lists, constitution, correspondence and other material mostly for Montreal and West Coast Society, 1984-1986 (2 of 3)

BOX 1380

1380.1 Women and Words: mailing lists, constitution, correspondence and other material mostly for Montreal and West Coast Society, 1984-1986 (3 of 3)

1380.2 Women and Words: originals of correspondence and promotional material found in other files, and membership and mailing lists, 1984-1986

1380.3 Women and Words Core Collective (Montreal, Qc.): notes of meetings correspondence, 4th Annual Summer School / Retreat evaluation and other material, 1985-1988

1380.4 Women’s Print Media Conference (Eugene, Oregon, USA): 1 leaflet, 1975

MEMORABILIA

1380.5 An Account to Settle – the Story of the United Bank Workers (SORWUC): 1 leaflet advertising this book, published and printed by Press Gang, 1979

1380.6 The Artist – Central Island Arts Alliance (Vancouver, BC): vol. 1, no. 1 issue

1380.7 B.A.A.N.N. Theatre Centre (Toronto, On): program for play “Dany’s Gift”, 1990

1380.8 The Bridge Poem by Donna Kate Rushin, [198-]

1380.9 Cut-Out Dolls Kit: 1 Kit of the Lennon Sisters-singing stars of the Lawrence Walk TV Show, 1958

1380.10 Displacement: a poem by Helen Potrebenko, 1980
1380.11  *Flying Tsitra* – Official Publication of Central of Central Island Arts Alliance (Vancouver, BC): vol. 2, no. 1 issue


1380.13  Pat Smith: two leaflets paying tribute to the deceased feminist, [between 1976 and 1985]

**CALENDARS (CON’T)**

**BOX HF-52**

HF-52.1  Pages of a calendar, April to July [1975?]


HF-52.3  Pages of the 1977 Vancouver Women’s Calendar, 1976

HF-52.4  Calendar, 1977

**CORRESPONDENCE (CON’T)**

HF-52.5  Birthday card made as a collage, [198-?]

**SUBJECT FILES (CON’T)**

HF-52.6  *Constructive Criticism*, p. 13 to 16, [between 1976 and 1993]

HF-52.7  Material from Constructive Criticism file, [between 1976 and 1993]

**MEMORABILIA (CON’T)**

HF-52.8  Drawing of Lou Nelson by Lorna [?] (other women’s face on back), 1975

HF-52.9  International Women’s Day, [1977]

HF-52.10  *The Link – lesbian and gay supplement*, vol. 7, no 33, February 17, 1987
| HF-52.11 | The People’s Self-Help Centre (Vancouver, B.C.): program for April, May and June 1976 |
| HF-52.13 | Women Look at Psychiatry: uncut cover??, 1975 |