

# Guide to the Julia Penelope Research Files on the Language of the Homosexual Community Study

MS 2041



compiled by Christy Tomecek

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 2041

**CREATOR:** Penelope, Julia, 1941-

**TITLE:** Julia Penelope research files on the Language of the Homosexual Community study

**DATES:** 1964-2001

**BULK DATES:** 1964-1972

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** The material is in English.

**SUMMARY:** The papers concern Julia Penelope's study of language used in gay and lesbian communities throughout the United States, specifically slang. The slang studied included terms for referring to members of these communities, outsiders of these communities, behavior, and actions, including sex-related acts. The results were used in her 1970 article "Homosexual Slang," published in the journal *American Speech* and her 1979 paper cowritten with Susan Wolfe, *Sexist Slang and the Gay Community* (Michigan Occasional Papers in Women's Studies, No. 14). The papers are dated from 1964 to 2001 and consist of anonymous questionnaires completed in 1967 and 1973, research notes, drafts, and unpublished and published reports of the studies.

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

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## 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/>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](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

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Bert Hansen, 2015.

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### Custodial History

Julia Penelope gave the papers from this study to donor Bert Hansen in 1983. He furnished the papers as a gift to Manuscripts and Archives in 2015.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Julia Penelope Research Files on the Language of the Homosexual Community Study (MS 2041).  
Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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### Related Materials

Associated material: Julia Penelope Papers, 1966-1999, are located at Duke University.

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## Biographical / Historical

Julia Penelope was an author, philosopher and linguist who focused on lesbian and feminist issues. She was born Julia Penelope Stanley on June 19, 1941 in Miami, Florida. She initially attended Florida State University, but was expelled for being a lesbian during the investigations performed by the Charlie Johns Investigating Committee on Communism and Homosexuality. She moved to the University of Miami, but was expelled from there in 1960 for similar reasons. She finally completed her BA in English and linguistics at City College, City University of New York and earned her Ph. D in English from University of Texas at Austin in 1971. After that she taught at several universities, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Penelope's work often focused on the erasure and visibility of women, especially lesbian women. She was also an activist who focused on community building. She was active in Modern Languages Association (MLA) and the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), often organizing events and panels related to feminist and lesbian literature and language. She also was one of the women who conceived of the Lesbian Herstory Archive, located in Brooklyn, New York. She was controversial, both inside and outside the lesbian community due to her separatist beliefs as well as for criticizing certain aspects of the lesbian community, such as those who participated in BDSM (bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism, and masochism) practices. Due to the divergence of beliefs and the resulting infighting between lesbians in the lesbian-feminist community, Penelope stopped writing and teaching after 1998 and became a freelance copy editor. She died on January 19, 2013 at the age of 71.

Penelope published several articles and books. Her earlier works were published under Julia P. Stanley while her later works were published under Julia Penelope. The data collected in the studies that comprise this collection was used in writing the article "Homosexual Slang" for the journal *American Speech* and *Sexist Slang and the Gay Community*," cowritten with Susan Wolfe and published as part of the Michigan Occasional Papers in Women's Studies series. Her books include *The Coming Out Stories* (1980) with co-editor Susan Wolfe, *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology* (1988) with co-editor Sarah Lucia Hoagland, *The Original Coming Out Stories* (1989) with co-editor Susan Wolfe, *Found Goddesses: Asphalta to Viscera* (1989) with co-author Morgan Grey, *Finding the Lesbians* (1990) with co-editor Sarah Valentine, *Speaking Freely: Unlearning the Lies of the Father's Tongue* (1990), *International Feminist Fiction* (1992), *Call Me Lesbian: Lesbian Lives, Lesbian Theory* (1992), *Sexual Practice/Textual Theory: Lesbian Cultural Criticism* (1993) with co-author Susan Wolfe, *Lesbian Culture: An Anthology* (1993) with co-editor Susan Wolfe, *Out of the Class Closet: Lesbian Speak* (1994), *Crossword Puzzles for Women* (1995), and *Flinging Wide The Eyed Universe: Poems by Julia Penelope* (1998).

Sources: Victoria Brownworth, "In Remembrance: Julia Penelope, Lesbian Theorist," *Lambda Literary*, February 1, 2013, <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/features/rem/02/01/in-remembrance-julia-penelope-lesbian-theorist/>

Trudy Ring, "Lesbian Author-Scholar Julia Penelope Dead at 71," *Advocate*, January 24, 2013, <http://www.advocate.com/society/obituaries/2013/01/24/lesbian-author-scholar-julia-penelope-dead-71>

Tracy Baim, "Passages: Author Julia Penelope Dead at 71," *Windy City Times*, January 24, 2013, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Author-Julia-Penelope-dead-at-71/41298.html>

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## Scope and Contents

The papers concern Julia Penelope's study of language used in gay and lesbian communities throughout the United States, specifically slang. The slang studied included terms for referring to members of these communities, outsiders of these communities, behavior, and actions, including sex-related acts. The results were used in her 1970 article "Homosexual Slang," published in the journal *American Speech* and her 1979 paper cowritten with Susan Wolfe, *Sexist Slang and the Gay Community* (Michigan Occasional Papers in Women's Studies, No. 14). The papers are dated from 1964 to 2001 and consist of anonymous questionnaires completed in 1967 and 1973, research notes, drafts, and unpublished and published reports of the studies. Also included is one file of correspondence between Penelope and donor Bert Hansen, as well as Hansen's notes regarding the materials. While a good portion of the questionnaires from both attempts of the study are present, neither run is complete. The 1967 studies are labeled solely by subject number, while the 1973 studies are also labeled with the gender and the birth year of the respondent. (Sometimes the year is approximate based on what the respondent provided.)

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## Arrangement

The papers are arranged by document type.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence with Bert Hansen Also includes notes by Hansen.	1980-1983, 2001
	Research notes and drafts	
b. 1, f. 2-3	Lists of slang words	1972
b. 1, f. 4-7	Research notes and drafts Includes a copy of the <i>Lavender Lexicon: Dictionary of Gay Words and Phrases</i> (1964) by Peter Tamony.	1964-1971, 1995
	Questionnaires	
b. 1, f. 8-9	1967 English	1967
b. 1, f. 10	Circa 1972	Circa 1972
b. 2, f. 1-5b. 3, f. 1-3	1973 English	1973

## **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**

Gay men -- Slang  
Gay men -- United States  
Lesbians -- Slang  
Lesbians -- United States  
LGBTQ resource

### **Names**

Penelope, Julia, 1941-