

An Invitation to Participate in the Preservation of the Legacy of Jean Shewolf Boudreaux



Did you know Jean Shewolf Boudreaux? Were you around lesbian land communities in the 1980s and 1990s? Are you willing to spend time looking at snapshots and providing additional information about them? If so, *Sinister Wisdom* and the Newcomb Archives at Tulane University would love your help providing richer descriptions of a trove of snapshots left by Jean Shewolf Boudreaux.

Click here to look at photographs:

<https://newcomb.saas.dgicloud.com/islandora/object/navlsc%3Ashewolf>

There are about 500 photographs. Click on the thumbnails of the images to go to the page with descriptive information. We are keen to know more about any of the images for future research purposes. In particular, we are interested in:

- Who are the people featured?
- What is the location?
- What is a description of the image?
- When was the snapshot taken?
- Where was the snapshot taken?
- What is the relevance of the image to Jean Shewolf's life and work?
- What else should we know about it?

If you have information about any of the images, please note one or all of these pieces of data about the image: the title, a weblink to the page, the identifier number (see the FAQ for that information) or the unique PID# (see the FAQ), and then:

1. Submit the information through a google form here: <https://bit.ly/3hNptL2>
2. Email the information to: newcombarchives@tulane.edu
3. Write a letter with the information and mail it to: Newcomb Archives, c/o Bernadette Birzer, 43 Newcomb Pl., New Orleans, LA 70118

Library staff at the Newcomb Archives will review the submitted information and add it to the database. In about two weeks from submission, you will be able to see the information you contributed on the image page.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the deadline for this project?

Please review and submit your comments on the images by January 31, 2022.

I have more information than you have asked for. What should I do?

Please share it! We are looking to add greater texture and detail to these photographs—and other materials that have been digitized from Shewolf's archive. Share what you are able, please!

I have photographs of Shewolf, Womonworld, or other material relevant to her. Is the Newcomb Archives interested in it?

YES! You can contact the Newcomb archivist here: craub1@tulane.edu (Please note: Chloe Raub is on leave until January 2022. She will respond when you return. If your need is urgent, please email Julie at the email address below and she will help you!) We are also looking for the electronic slide show of the materials Shewolf used when she traveled around the country inspiring women about the women's land communities. If you have information about that, please email Julie R. Enszer from *Sinister Wisdom* at julie@sinisterwisdom.org

I took one of the photos! What should I do?

Please let us know! We will make sure you receive proper attribution.

I cannot seem to manage reviewing these online or I cannot respond using the google form. What can I do?

We're sorry that the electronic tools are not working for you! You can email information directly to: newcombarchives@tulane.edu. Or you can send a letter to:

Newcomb Archives
c/o Bernadette Birzer
43 Newcomb Pl.
New Orleans, LA 70118

I only see the first page of images. Are there more?

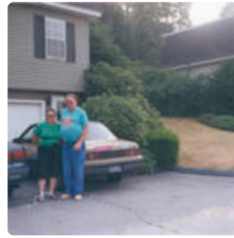
You can navigate through all of the photographs by clicking on the numbers on each page:



Kachina Dolls on Shelves



Red Tractor



Ann and Jay Standing Outside



Family Sitting on Couch

What is the identifier?

When you are on the page of an individual snapshot, scroll down until you see this information:

Identifier	NA431.01.03.043a
Finding Aid	https://archives.tulane.edu/repositories/9/resources/3624
Institution Website	https://newcomb.tulane.edu/archives

The identifier is the number circled in red above.

What is the unique PID #?

The unique PID # is a part of the URL at the top of the screen.

<https://newcomb.saas.dgicloud.com/islandora/object/navlsc%3A2694>

The unique PID # is the last four digits of the URL, so the unique PID # for this image is 2694.

What if there is an image of me in the collection that I want removed?

The Newcomb Archives and Vorhoff Library Special Collections respect the intellectual property rights, as well as ethical, moral and traditional knowledge concerns of the many individuals who contributed to the Jean “Shewolf” Boudreaux collection. Should the creators of any content in the archive prefer that it not be made digitally available to the public, please contact the staff of the Newcomb Archives to discuss options for redaction and controlled access: newcombarchives@tulane.edu.

Can you tell me more about Jean Shewolf Boudreaux?

Sure thing! Here is the description of the collection from the Newcomb Archives:

Jean "Shewolf" Boudreaux is a significant figure in lesbian-feminism in the 20th century and played a crucial role in building communication networks among lesbians living in land-based communities. Jean Boudreaux, better known as Shewolf in lesbian communities, was born March 19, 1932, on Desire Street in New Orleans and was raised there with her two brothers. Shewolf identified deeply with her Southern roots and loved to tell stories about what it was like in the 1930s and '40s in Louisiana. She went to college at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, then to graduate school in West Virginia where she earned a master's degree in Education, Psychology, and Speech. She earned her doctorate in Speech Pathology at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland, OH on an assistantship, after which she began her career at the University of Arizona in Tucson as a Professor of Speech Therapy, where she earned national recognition in the field. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette eventually recruited her for an open position. This is when she began her feminist lesbian political life.

Shewolf immediately found and started organizing the women professors of ULL to get equal pay and equal tenure. At that time, male professors made forty percent more than women professors. They also found inconsistencies concerning the promotions of female professors, with men getting tenured more quickly than their female counterparts. Her group was able to investigate this and prove these discrepancies, and shortly thereafter the university raised women's salaries and changed the system of promotions.

Shewolf knew no one when she first moved to Lafayette around 1970. She soon began searching for and organizing lesbians in Lafayette. Visiting a newcomers' group, she discovered that the group leader was a lesbian. They decided to start a potluck group for lesbians. This woman knew three or four lesbians and they talked to each other, and by the time the weekly potluck began they were a group of fifteen.

Shewolf left for California after retiring in 1985 and traveled back and forth across the country many times. She began doing research to find and stay with lesbians on the road, at their homes, or on lesbian land, before leaving. One of her sources for finding places was Joyce Cheney's Lesbian Land. Each lesbian home she came upon inspired the next stop in her travels. She realized she was compiling current information that she wished to share by printing her own directory of women's lands. Shewolf's Directory of Wimmin's Lands and Lesbian Communities was subsequently published six times (first in 1993), and her travel stories fostered connections between like-minded women. She photographed, made slides, and spread the word about women's lands. Her work inspired new lesbian lands, like Lake Annie Womonspace near Melrose, Louisiana, and the Carefree Community near Fort Myers, Florida. Her own Womonworld was a place where women, though invited to stay long term, came primarily for workshops, camping retreats, and short stays.

Kate Ellison described Shewolf as "our troubadour, carrying the news from one place to the next, singing the praises of what each community was accomplishing. Our lands were so remote, and we didn't know the other dykes who lived remotely too. She knew us all, and she sat in on all the meetings. She was careful not to spill the beans, not to gossip or tear down any of the communities she visited. She was as likely to say, 'Why, what did you hear?' To seemingly agree without adding to the question of someone's mistake or misbehavior. Her job was to bring women together on the land, to invite and connect. She called, wrote, cajoled and persisted to get all the lesbian land groups to write their entries in the book, Shewolf's Directory of Wimmin's Lands and Lesbian Communities. The first one was published in 1993, and she kept up her networking through the 6th edition in 2016. Other than Lesbian Connection, which occasionally published a listing, there was no other way to find our communities."

Shewolf bought a house among the "village community" of lesbians in Melrose, Florida in 2002 and moved there in 2004. Though not living on the same piece of land, the community had regular outings (that Shewolf called "Friday Fillies") as well as potlucks and card parties and organized mutual help with work projects. She began searching for gay-friendly retirement communities as independent living became increasingly challenging, with the desire to bring her wealth of woodworking tools wherever she moved. She settled in Sun City Center, FL, where she lived for three and a half years until her death on April 24, 2020, at the age of 88.

The Jean "Shewolf" Boudreaux digital collection consists of 497 photographs that provide vital documentation of Boudreaux's life and lesbian life during the 20th century. The Jean "Shewolf" Boudreaux papers include documents recording the work conducted by Jean "Shewolf" Boudreaux in creating Shewolf's Directory of Wimmin's Lands and Lesbian Communities, as well as documents that capture Boudreaux's life as an activist, publisher, and furniture maker/woodworker.