HISTORICAL SKETCH

New Vocations Project, a nonprofit enterprise organized in late 1971, was a part of the 1970s emphasis on regenerating community life--including neighborhoods, housing, small businesses, environmental concerns, arts, and newspapers--in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The Project’s aims were to find the means whereby individuals could gain greater control over their own vocational and occupational welfare; to celebrate community life; to create congenial workplaces aimed at community needs; to utilize community resources to solve local problems; to organize and develop skills in starting community-based businesses; to provide vocational training; and to develop women’s resources. Much of the funding came from private foundations headquartered in the Twin Cities.

Its publication, the magazine Common Ground (edited by Ken Meter), carried articles written, for the most part, by non-professional writers in the community who related activities and events in their neighborhoods. The magazine acted as a means to link neighborhood interests, to protect neighborhood environments and ensure neighborhood survival, and to interest individuals in the history of their communities.

Box 1 contains a folder that provides more background information.

Kathryn A. Johnson
September, 1994
DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

The records are organized into three sections: grant files, New Vocations Project files, and Common Ground files. There may be overlapping of materials within the sections.

The records begin with files documenting grant proposals submitted by Common Ground and the New Vocations Project to various foundations and other granting organizations in the Twin Cities (1972-1976). These files contain drafts of proposals, some correspondence, newspaper clippings, published materials, and related records. Some of the foundations approached include the F.R. Bigelow, Otto Bremer, Bush, Minneapolis, and Saint Paul foundations. Also included are requests to two religious groups: Christian Sharing Fund of Minneapolis and the United Methodist Voluntary Service, New York City.

Administrative records for the New Vocations Project include correspondence, a few financial records, copies of its directories (1973 and 1974/75), and subject files containing information on community newspapers, the councils, the Southside Community Garage (Minneapolis), Elliot House Gay Community Center, Hennepin County Bicentennial history proposals, and three articles written by Ken Meter for other publications.

The remainder of the collection relates to Common Ground and consists of articles for the magazine arranged alphabetically by author or, if anonymous by title. They cover all aspects of the Project’s activities and contain details on individual neighborhoods, environmental concerns, arts organizations, and book and movie reviews. At the end of the collection are Common Ground subject files containing information on similar topics.
CONTAINER LIST

Box 1. 147.A.6.4F

Grant Proposals:
General File (including drafts of proposals), 1975-1976.

New Vocations Project:
Background Materials.
Correspondence, 1973-1975.
Directories: Vocational Skills, 1973, 1974-1975. (2 v. in folder)
Community Events, 1975.
Cooperative Print Center, 1974.
Council of Community Councils, 1975.
Funding Proposals (New Vocations Project), 1972-1975. (3 folders)
Hennepin County Bicentennial History Proposals, 1976.
Meyer, Ken:
   Article for Youth Magazine, 1975.
   Article for Institute of Self-Reliance, undated.
   Article for Communities Magazine, 1975.

Common Ground:
   Background Information.
   Correspondence Supporting Publication, 1974-1976.
   Community Councils Booklet, undated.
Box 1. (cont.)

New Directions Budget, 1976.
Drafts and Notes of Magazine Articles:

- Ampah, Kokayi and Others, "Open Space for The People," undated.
- Barnum, Anne, "Luxtton Park (Prospect Park)," undated.
- Bowen, Sandy and George, "Chautauqua Circuit," undated.
- Branan, [?], "Stevens Square," undated.
- Bransberger, Barb and Others, "Model City Mini-School," undated.
- Caan, Jack, "Housing and Open Space," undated.
- Caspar, Tom, "Towns Meetings," undated.
- Coyle, Brian, "Hubert H. Humphrey in '76?," [1975?].
- Coyle, Brian, "Some Questions About Pornography in our Community," undated.
- Gehan, John, "Community Councils," undated.
- Johnson, Jeff [?], "Interview with Lynn Hinkle," undated.
- Keillor, Steve, Bicentennial Article, [1976?].
- Matlack, Carol, "Full Cycle Women's Restaurant," undated.
- Meter, Ken, "Preventative Medicine (Cedar-Riverside)," undated.
- Meter, Ken, "Wind Power," undated.
- Niedenfuer, Jeri, Review of Building the Future from the Past (St. Paul's Historic Hill District), undated.
- Ryan, [?], "Linden Hills Neighborhood, Minneapolis," undated.
Box 1. (cont.)

Selvaggio, Joe, "Neighborhood Rehabilitation, Minneapolis," undated.
Tordoff, James, "Bluegrass Music," undated.
Trimble, Steve, "Populist History," undated.
Wroblewski, Al, "A False Prophet Comes to Town," undated.

Drafts and Notes of Anonymous Magazine Articles:
"Alive and Trucking Theatre, Minneapolis," undated.
"Community Garden Program, undated.
"Criticism/Self Criticism," undated.
"Group Contracting for Services (Neighborhoods)," undated.
"Maryland House Cafeteria, Minneapolis, undated.

Box 2.

"Minneapolis Cab Drivers Strike," 1975.
"Minneapolis Homefires Calendar: Review, undated.
"Neighborhood Councils," undated.
"People’s Clothing, Minneapolis," undated.
"Powderhorn Puppet Theatre, Minneapolis," undated.
"Walker Community Video, Minneapolis," undated.
"Wittier Coalition, Minneapolis," undated.

Other Records:
Notes and Drafts for Issues No. 3 (1974), No. 4 (1975), and No. 7 ([1976?]). (3 folders)
Article Ideas and Suggestions, 1976.
Article Submissions, 1974.
Box 2. (cont.)

Subject Files:

Back to the City Conference, 1975.
Community Councils, 1975.
Community Development Corporation, 1974.
Community Newspapers, 1974.
Cooperative Organizations, 1976.
Cooperative Ownership in Housing, Summit-University, St. Paul, 1976.
Local History Conference, 1975.
Parade of Neighborhood, Minneapolis, 1975.
Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood, Minneapolis, 1975.
Workers’ Control Book Research, 1974-1976.
Correspondence and Miscellaneous Records, 1974-1975.