

## **Cooking the Books:**

### **Feminist Restaurant Owners' Relationships with Banks, Loans and Taxes**

#### **Abstract:**

This article examines how feminist restaurant and café owners in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and Canada challenged management hierarchies, serving practices, and typical restaurant structure. Despite facing a political and economic system that was hostile to women's business ownership (particularly for women of colour and lesbians), the owners of feminist restaurants and cafés, crafted creative solutions to create the kinds of spaces they wanted. The owners founded these establishments even if it meant having to bend the laws, such as skirting health codes or manipulating tax statuses to their own advantage. Bolstered by archival analysis and oral history, this article re-centres feminist entrepreneurialism and challenges narratives of post-war feminism.

**Word Count: 12, 826**

#### **Keywords.**

Feminism; feminist entrepreneurialism; restaurant; ECOA (Equal Credit Opportunity Act); women; gender

#### **Supplemental online materials:**

Thefeministrestaurantproject.com

## **Cooking the Books:**

### **Feminist Restaurant Owners' Relationships with Banks, Loans and Taxes**

#### **Introduction**

*The money question was central. We were working under the tension of money ... And money is a very hard issue. And women get very uptight about that. And it's really painful. It's almost as bad as looking for a job. Pushing.*

*- Marjorie Parsons, Common Woman Club (1979)*

From 1972-1989, women founded over 250 feminist restaurants and cafés in the United States and Canada, identified by the founders as “feminist” in either their title, in flyers, in interviews, or in descriptions in restaurant reviews, magazines, or periodicals. Within these parameters, a central tenet of the restaurant owners’ philosophy was a focus on the needs of women and feminists above all other goals. The creation of these feminist spaces required innovative financial strategies. Founders of feminist restaurants and cafés had to secure funding creatively when banks were unwilling to provide loans. Financial laws constrained feminist restaurant owners and as a result, the owners sometimes faced pushback from the legal system. Navigating these constraints meant that the restaurants did not necessarily look the way the founders originally intended; however, the restaurants’ impact in individuals’ lives remained meaningful. These feminist restaurants and cafés were not isolated but part of a larger economy and society that was not always amenable to their aspirations. Feminist restaurants expanded economic opportunities for women. They ran counter to capitalism while operating within a capitalist system. Sometimes this process involved “cooking the books.”

The history of feminist restaurants addresses historical experiences regarding social enterprise formation, women's financial networks, and informal business financing. After placing

this research within feminist business historiography, this article begins by providing broader historical context in order to elucidate the paper's major themes. The main body of the article is divided into three parts: accessing bank financing, personal finance networks, and the experience of running a loss making enterprise. Within these sections, both the challenges for the feminist restaurants' successes and their attempted solutions are addressed.

### ***Literature***

Feminist restaurants and cafés in the 1970s and 1980s were unique spaces that have received little academic attention. Indeed, few texts mention feminist restaurants specifically. Historian A. Finn Enke in *Finding the Movement* wrote about feminist restaurants as part of a larger study about feminist businesses in the Midwestern United States (2007). William Belasco's *Appetite for Change* chronicles the 1960s counterculture food movement in the United States. Although he is mostly interested in the way that the food movement intersected with ideas of the New Left, the sexual revolution, and women's liberation, his book has two paragraphs about Mother Courage, the feminist restaurant founded in New York City in 1972. Neither text is specifically about feminist restaurants. In fact, historian Angel Kwolek-Folland argues, "despite the importance of service-sector activities, both to women and to the U.S. economy, services have not figured prominently in business history," hiding the integral relations between women's work and business (2007).

Though I do not conflate feminists and lesbians within my project, lesbian feminists owned and operated the majority of feminist restaurants. As a result, my project also speaks to the history of lesbians within the United States and Canada. Sociologist Becki Ross's work (1995), focused on Toronto, has likewise shown the way that businesses have been influential in

forming lesbian cultural identity. Stewart Van Cleve's *Land of 10,000 Loves* (2012) also pays attention to the importance of spaces of business. Van Cleve showcases the ways in which geographies and places have influenced activism, education, and community building by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer peoples in the American Midwest. This project follows suit. Depending on the terms the owners of the spaces used, the communities within the feminist restaurants, and cafés, in turn, looked different.

More attention has been given to the way that social enterprises and specifically, social enterprises run by women for women or social enterprises run for or by Black, Indigenous, and social entrepreneurs of colour, have always been outside the scope of male commercial banking. For example, in her book *Collective Courage: A History of African-American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (2014), Jessica Gordon Nembhard shows the role that worker or consumer-owned businesses acted as alternatives to finance networks dominated by white Americans. In *Black Business in the New South* (1973), historian Walter B. Weare drew attention to Black Wall Street of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in which Black commerce by and for the Black community thrived. However, the role of feminist restaurants and cafés within feminist business networks is largely absent in the existing literature.

While historians have done less research on feminist business networks in the late twentieth century, researchers from other fields have looked at how feminist businesses, organizations, and collectives connected to their communities. Although most of the research focuses on non-profit organizations, some work does focus on for-profit feminist organizations and businesses. In "Organized Dissonance as Hybrid Form," Karen Lee Ashcroft explored the ways feminist bureaucracies blended hierarchical and egalitarian models of power (2001).

*"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Business History, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"*

Author Susanna Sturgis wrote about Ladyslipper, the company devoted to the distribution of women's music and women's culture based in North Carolina in the 1970s and 1980s (1985). Her piece looks at the success of Ladyslipper and how it embodied feminist principles and was also attractive to the lesbian community. In particular, Ladyslipper connected women across the United States through shared art. Gender studies scholar Kristen Amber Hogan (2006) has looked at the way that feminist bookstores built communities around literature, the influence of feminist bookstores in the publishing world, and the importance of these spaces for the feminist community. As evidenced above, much of the work on feminist business networks looks at the United States. There is a gap in the literature regarding the connections formed between American and Canadian feminist businesses. Furthermore, while attention has been given to the women's bookstore, feminist restaurant history has fallen into obscurity. This means that the ways in which different kinds of feminist businesses interacted with one another and the ways that these businesses financially supported themselves have largely gone unacknowledged.

### ***Methods***

The research for this article is part of a larger project about feminist restaurants, cafés, and coffeehouses, which relies on archival sources, literature from the period, and oral history. To complete this project I assembled materials from nineteen archives around the United States and Canada.<sup>i</sup> At these archives I sourced textual sources such as periodicals, diaries, day planners, accounting books, notebooks, personal letters, newspaper and magazine articles, as well as posters, event promotional flyers, surveys, audiotapes, buttons, t-shirts, menus, photographs, napkins, travel guides, advertisements, ephemera, and other paraphernalia. As this article particularly focuses on the case studies of Mother Courage of New York City; Bloodroot

*"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Business History, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"*

Feminist Vegetarian Restaurant of Bridgeport, Connecticut; the Common Woman Club of Northampton, Massachusetts; Grace and Rubies of Iowa City; San Francisco, California's Artemis Society Women's Café; and the Women's Common of Toronto, Ontario, The Bloodroot records at Yale University, the Smith College Archives, Northeastern University Archives, the University of Iowa Archives, the Canadian Women's Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa, and the physical and digital archives of the San Francisco Public Library were particularly useful. These archives and libraries housed an assortment of business records, meeting minutes, newspaper and magazine clippings with publicity, legal documents, menus, and personal papers of the owners. However, such complete records were rare. For most of the feminist restaurants, cafés, and coffeehouses presented in this research, scant traces remained in the archives. A business card, an event poster, or a mention in a musician's liner notes was sometimes the only remaining trace of a feminist restaurant's existence. For this research project, I combed through thousands of flyers, the majority of which were photocopied, handwritten posters listing addresses, dates, and costs to see a performance or attend a special dinner. Knowing that a restaurant or café existed in a particular location encouraged me to contact archivists at the local lesbian, gay, queer, or social movement archives to seek further information about spaces that I would not have known existed otherwise. Additionally, I contacted every lesbian, gay, queer, and social movement archive in the United States and Canada listed on the Lavender Legacies of North America Directory produced by the Society of American Archivists: Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section asking if they had any information about feminist and lesbian restaurants, as these spaces would often not appear in finding aids but scant traces would exist in the fonds.<sup>ii</sup> This project would therefore not have been possible if archival materials were the only available source. I also relied on feminist literary materials such

as feminist and lesbian periodicals, magazines, and travel guides. In order to understand the impact of feminist restaurants, I built original databases, which showcase the locations and years of these feminist restaurants and cafés operation.<sup>iii</sup>

Oral histories complimented the archival work. The difficulty of writing a social history of marginalized peoples is that their records are less likely to be preserved in archives (Schwartz and Cook 2002). I conducted a series of hour-long interviews with 12 founders of feminist restaurants and cafés, asking them about their experiences running their businesses. While being able to conduct interviews with people who worked for or visited feminist restaurants could not have replaced the physical documents from the archives, these oral testimonies often answered the questions that business records and event flyers could not.

Case studies were also based on the availability of source materials. Businesses that have operated for a longer period generated a greater paper trail. Restaurants that went out of business after a few months of operation were less likely to retain their files and the owners were less likely to donate their files to an archive. Quick closure was not always a cause of historical erasure as demonstrated by Clementyne's of Toronto, which never officially opened. However, in that case, the founders had spent years planning, generated a large number of flyers for their fundraising events, and the Three of Cups coffeehouse that followed in its wake carried on with the project of creating a feminist space and utilized Clementyne's remaining bank account (interview excerpt, box 20). The preservation of Clementyne's and the Three of Cups' history also speaks to the role of archives and the privilege of who is able to have their materials deemed valuable by archivists (Caswell 2014; Wakimoto 2013). Furthermore, despite having gathered materials from nineteen archives and collections I was still very dependent on just a few women's recollections. For most of my case studies, even if the information came from flyers,

meeting minutes, and interviews, oftentimes the narrative of a restaurant's history was coming from a single perspective without corroboration. Large sections of this article pull from a 1979 recorded meeting between Marjorie Parsons of the Common Women Club and the women's collective that would form the Somerville Women's Coffeehouse. Just as there are challenges in piecing together a restaurant's history from a few scraps of text, it is also challenging to reconstruct a restaurant's entire history from the recollections of a single individual.

### ***Historical Context***

In the 1970s, as part of the women's movements in the United States and Canada, feminists began to critique gender inequity in a variety of workplaces, including restaurants. Particularly they believed that the relationships between restaurant managers and waitresses and between waitresses and customers systematically disempowered women.<sup>iv</sup> In urbanized America in the 1970s, restaurants, including both inexpensive fast-food establishments and high-priced restaurants, were mostly owned and operated by men. In the 1970s and 1980s, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), far fewer women managed restaurants than in 2017 (ownership was not studied by the BLS). In 1972, only 32.4 percent of restaurant, cafeteria, and bar managers were women and 8.9 percent were Black men and women.<sup>v</sup> In 2017, 46.3 percent of food service managers, the category that has replaced "restaurant, cafeteria, and bar managers," were women, 9.5 percent were Black, 11.7 percent were Asian, and 16.9 percent were Latino or Hispanic. Statistics Canada did not collect parallel data yet Canadian legislation indicates that women were likewise underrepresented.<sup>vi</sup> Traditionally, although women were cooks and waitresses, they have been noticeably absent from places at the decision-making level.



Relying on hard work and facing sexism as women business owners was not unique to feminist restaurants; however, the historical conditions in which the feminist restaurant owners operated, the founders' political motivations, and the important role that self-identifying as feminist played in their business models is what made feminist restaurants different. Feminist restaurants were not the only restaurants to exist as a result of "sweat equity," the increased value in property earned from labour toward upkeep or restoration. As the historiography of ethnic restaurants in the United States and Canada shows, new immigrants created restaurants as a way to establish an economic foothold in their new homeland and improve the family's economic status for future generations (Davis, 2002; Coe, 2009; Halkias and Adendorff, 2016; Light, 1972; Pearce, 2005; Roberts, 2004; Smart, 2003; and Uneke, 1996). Feminist restaurant owners were not the only women to own restaurants: as founder of New York City's Mother Courage Dolores Alexander remarked when she was asked, what did a "feminist" restaurant mean to her, "Well, a woman's space. There was no such thing... There was Schrafft's, the Tea Rooms... that kind of thing. But we didn't want to be a tea room. We wanted to be a space for strong, independent women who would be hopefully involved in the women's movement, and that did happen" (Anderson, 2005). Women owning and managing a restaurant were still less common than men; the percentage of owners and managers of women in the United States hovered around 33 percent in the United States between 1972 to 1989 and people of colour were underrepresented (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). However, feminist restaurant owners did not necessarily see themselves represented in the women restaurant owners due to different political leanings and because not all women restaurant owners were interested in assisting out lesbians and aspiring founders of feminist businesses.<sup>vii</sup>

Feminist restaurants, once operational, would provide economic opportunities for the women involved in them; however, securing the necessary start up capital could be prohibitive. Running a restaurant or café required significant funding to pay for rent, equipment, decoration, and supplies. Obtaining this amount of money was difficult for most of the women interested in opening these spaces. Choices made over location, management organization, staff, and menu options could lower costs. However, because most of these women had never run a food business before, the learning curve for these new business owners impacted profits. As founder Selma Miriam noted, the seeds of Bloodroot Feminist Vegetarian Restaurant were planted in 1977 when Miriam began hosting women's meetings in her home in Westport, Connecticut just after her divorce. She explained, "I did it for nine months and decided it was the only good thing I was doing in my life, short of picking up my mixer and hitching to San Francisco" (Whiting, 1996). Betsey Beaven met Miriam at a lesbian rap group and Selma invited her to be part of the business. Reflecting on her initial desire to create the restaurant, Beaven remarked, "We had this vision which is still grounded in feminism being a resistance movement. But in resisting you also have to create something. So that's what we did" (Whiting, 1996). Noel Furie, who separated from her husband around the same time as Bloodroot was founded, knew Miriam through the National Organization for Women (NOW) Chapter in Westport. Furie, who started working at Bloodroot shortly after it opened, commented, "I didn't know what I was going to do for a living but I thought it would be incredible to plan a lifetime of work around doing what I really liked with women I respected and loved" (Whiting, 1996). The women of Bloodroot, similar to the other feminist restaurants discussed in this article, wanted to use their businesses to create positive change in the world. But the enthusiasm to start a feminist restaurant did not necessarily

come with knowledge of the business world or the capital needed to create these spaces. As a result, the women who started feminist restaurants, such as Bloodroot, needed to turn to other sources of funding.

Despite the relative privileges of feminist restaurant founders, as they were able to access some form of capital to begin their businesses, it is also important to note how often feminist restaurant owners represented their own stories as a narrative of struggle. This is not to say that the owners of feminist restaurants did not struggle. They were operating with small starting budgets, having to buy everything second hand or build it themselves, and with a small available margin of error, all while facing sexism and homophobia. However, as will be discussed later in this article, they were able to access unique sources of funding made available through their employment of the term "feminist" and by being embedded in an already established feminist community.

### **Accessing Bank Finance**

#### ***Challenges***

When women who wanted to start feminist restaurants attempted to access traditional funding sources, they were usually denied repeatedly, citing sexism as the cause. As the 1974 American Senate and House Committees on Small Business and the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada reported, banks were notoriously discriminative toward women in their credit policies, especially without collateral. Restaurant owner after restaurant owner recounted stories in their interviews and in publications about being denied loans from banks and often facing scorn and ridicule. Sarah Lewinstein, founder of San Francisco's Artemis Society

Women's Café (1977-1984), speaking on the relationship between women and finances stated in 1981,

I think women are struggling. There's a long way to go. There always will be as long as women are trying to have businesses. I see it as a long struggle. Women don't have the money and the backing that men do. There is such a difference. You go to Castro Street and you see all these gay men's places. Every place you go to is a gay men's bar. On the weekend it is so packed that you can't get in. You don't have that same thing. You don't see so many women's bars (KGO-TV, 1981).

The women's community of San Francisco had less capital than gay men to invest in founding restaurants, bars, and other businesses. It was not that no women had money. The women who started feminist restaurants and cafés tended to have some form of available capital through an inheritance, extended family, or from savings from a previous "non-movement" job, unrelated to feminist activism. The owners' ability to secure traditional funding sources like bank loans depended on being able to pass as straight, white, middle-class, and not politically radical, even if they were not. One's marital status, or more specifically the lack of having a husband, still created difficulties due to legal discrimination in lending practices. Prior to 1974 in the United States and 1977 in Canada, it was especially difficult for single women to procure loans as lenders were legally allowed to consider marital status. The Equal Credit Opportunity Act in the United States came into effect in 1974 and the Canadian Human Rights Act passed in 1977. However, whether or not the owners were able to secure traditional funding sources, these restaurants depended primarily on sweat equity.

### ***Securing Bank Financing***

Some owners persisted and eventually found a banker to finance their enterprise, but most of the women interviewed for this project deserted the idea of creating their restaurants solely

through traditional funding avenues and utilized alternative sources. When she was trying to raise the initial capital for Bloodroot, Selma Miriam recounted in an interview with *Fairpress* that, "We had the down payment and money for renovations and a few commitments from investors, but it was still a hassle because banks don't want to give money to restaurants and some banks gave me a hard time because I'm a woman" (Cole, 1977). Nevertheless, she persisted. Miriam believed that Bloodroot was an especially hard pitch because "whether it was because it was women or a restaurant, nobody wanted anything to do with it. One day in great desperation, I called Harvey Koizim, the president of County General Savings and Loan. When I told him I wanted to start a women's center [the restaurant and bookstore], he started laughing, but he came to see it two hours later and gave us the mortgage" (Cole, 1977). Selma Miriam was able to secure a traditional loan after multiple rejections. Also, unlike the other restaurants in the article, as she revealed in an interview with *Gay City News*, she had recently secured an inheritance that she decided to fully invest into the restaurant because she had just received a medical diagnosis suggesting she would not live for longer than three years (Emin, 2005). Knowing of her breast cancer, she had the incentive to devote all of her resources into creating her dream, unlike other feminist restaurant founders.

The feminist restaurant owners that were able to secure bank loans found success when they could pass as white, straight, femme, and middle or upper middle-class, even when those attributes did not describe their actual identities. Members of the Common Woman Club of Northampton, Massachusetts collective went to a few banks before finally finding a bank that would support them. Marjorie Parsons of the collective attributes part of the collective's success to the fact that it had finally found a woman banker who was more amenable to its pitch. However, securing the loan still required a degree of performance. The collective needed to

appear to be a culturally legible group worthy of investing in rather than appearing too radical and presenting themselves as what they actually were: a countercultural radical lesbian separatist feminist collective that wanted to start a women's only restaurant. Parsons (1979) took pleasure in explaining how her collective had "played the system." According to her, the oldest member of the collective was forty years old and used her age and clothing to perform respectability. This elder member dressed in her most formal clothing and "acted grown up" when she went into the bank. In addition, the oldest member of the collective also got her mother to co-sign the loan in order to guarantee financial stability. The only other woman in the group that had a full time job was the second co-signer, so in Parson's words, "they looked relatively clean." Although most of the collective members were students or former students in their early twenties, lesbian, with little personal wealth, they could lean on their whiteness and education to perform in a way that visible women of colour and non-femme women could not.

Despite its success in securing a loan, the Common Womon collective still had to contend with a sexist society and deal with bank managers undermining its abilities. The bank that finally supported the collective charged a higher interest rate than the other banks that it had approached. Furthermore, the bank also lied to the women, saying that they had to use the bank's lawyer for the closing and title search, which was not legally true, so they "got taken for several hundred dollars by the lawyer at the bank" (1979). Marjorie Parsons remarked that the collective's mistake was embarrassing but that such incidents were a result of being naïve and new to business. The collective's lack of experience, matched with what Parsons perceived to be the bank's sexism, meant that the bank required a large down payment. The members put down \$10,000 on the \$38,000, which included real estate tax. The benefit of their large down payment was that it brought their monthly payments on the building down to \$350 per month.

### ***Finance Laws***

Time played an important role in being able to access bank financing. Although the social and cultural historical conditions in which these restaurants were operating changed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the differences between when the feminist restaurants were founded during this period seem most stark when it came to financing. The passage of legislation such as the Equal Credit Opportunity Act in the United States in 1974 and the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1977 helped women get credit in their own names, which was not a guaranteed right previously. This is not to say that unlawful discrimination on non-mortgage loans did not later occur but the passage of these acts on paper gave single, heterosexual women and lesbians trying to begin women-centred spaces legal protection. The changes between 1972 and the late 1980s are evident in Ruby's Café owner Mary Bahneman's account. When Bahneman opened her first café at the end of the 1980s and the second in the early 1990s she claims that she did not face the same extremely overt sexism as the restaurant founders did in the early 1970s. However, as Bahneman remarked in an interview, while a woman owning a café did not seem odd to lenders, her being a lesbian still created difficulties (2015). For her first café she did not require a loan because she rented a fully equipped and furnished space. However, for the second café she had to write a business plan and seek external funding. The first bank "wouldn't give [her] a loan since their clientele would be mostly gay" (2015). Even though these restaurants were founded less than fifteen years apart, the owners still faced discrimination; however, the issues shifted over time, and women who founded their restaurants later in the period benefitted from the earlier battles fought by their foremothers.

### ***Credit Unions***

Later-founded feminist restaurants and cafés had the benefit of having the potential to receive funding from feminist credit unions, which began in reaction to institutionalized sexism of mainstream banks. Feminist credit unions, credit unions oriented towards more social justice projects, and feminist moneylenders allowed feminists to obtain funding outside of banks. In California's Bay Area, the Cheese Board Collective served as an informal moneylender (Cheeseboard, 2007). In 1983, with the financial help of the Cheese Board Collective, in addition the efforts of customers and friends, the Brick Hut Café of Berkeley, California moved to a new location (Antonuccio, 2011). Ever the adaptable group, the Common Woman Club also got a \$1000 loan from the Massachusetts Credit Union. Parsons claimed that the union was very supportive of the collective and the members never missed a payment. Despite being ambitious, the collective had to bring its rates down. The collective initially thought that it could pay off \$150 a month between sales and rents, but it had to lower it to \$75 a month due to the initial operating expenses. The collective bought supplies from Western Massachusetts food cooperatives, some of which were as small of an operation as the Common Woman Club. The members also needed more capital to establish credit with people and organizations such as Flagstaff, a big restaurant supplier and a sub-core service organization. Only for a month or two was the restaurant able to operate "in the black," but it tended to run at a loss (Parsons, 1979). However, with little start up capital the collective was beholden to lenders and alternative fundraising.

### **Personal Finance Networks**

#### ***Friends, Community, and Self Financing***



Due to the difficulties of accessing both traditional funding sources and knowledge about corporate strategies, most restaurant owners had to secure funding outside of the banking system, primarily by relying on women in the greater feminist community, including themselves.

Opening a restaurant in New York City was not an inexpensive venture. In 1972, Jill Ward and Dolores Alexander of Mother Courage estimated that it would take a minimum of \$10,000 to begin their restaurant, which they probably would not recover for two or three years. They already had \$5,500 in personal savings and were faced with the problem of raising the rest of the money (unprocessed Dolores Alexander box). Every single restaurant case study examined in this article began with at least a portion of their initial start up costs coming from the founders of the restaurants and cafés. As Selma Miriam told the *Boston Sunday Globe*, she used her entire life savings of \$19,000 (Weitzel, 1998). At Wildrose in Seattle, Bryher Herak invested her own money and continued to hold a second job to help with finances (2016). Initially at the Common Womon Club, before approaching the bank, the collective of nine women assembled \$10,000 between them. At the time of its initial formation, Marjorie Parsons was a head resident for the housing residences at the local university and made \$6,000 a year. She remarked that she “was young and naïve” and invested all that she could into the restaurant (1979). In exchange, she retained a promissory note that stated if the building were ever sold, she would get paid after the bank. Not everyone in the collective gave the same amounts of money. One woman gave \$500, while another provided a few thousand dollars. Some women in the collective did not put in any money. The promissory notes differed from ownership in that they were six-year notes with the highest interest possible. The collective members wrote the promissory notes so that they could call the notes at any time, but due to their commitment to the collective and “their honour as women,” they made an agreement that they would never call their notes. Parsons (1979) went on

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

to further explain that she no longer considered that money as hers but as a "brick in the fireplace." However it took about \$30,000 to get the whole project going, and like other restaurants discussed in this article, the remaining money was raised through alternative methods such as fundraising and donation efforts.

Community fundraising or crowd-funding played an important role in financing these businesses. In addition to their own \$5,000 investment into Mother Courage, Jill Ward and Dolores Alexander decided to look for funding from women in their community. Because they believed in the project so wholly, they decided to share their idea of creating their restaurant with the larger feminist community of New York City. Ward and Alexander crafted a five-page business prospectus describing their concept, the reasons they felt a women's restaurant was needed, and their confidence in the financial prospects of the project. They circulated 125 copies to friends in the Women's Movement asking for loans of any amount on which they would pay 15 percent interest. Within the space of a month, 37 people had given \$6500 in amounts ranging from \$25 to \$1000 (Alexander and Ward, unprocessed). As they explained to journalists for a spread on women in business, "women responded so well we were actually turning money away by the time we hit our number. This is an incredibly good way for women to raise capital for their own ventures. We are surprised more women in the Movement haven't tried it" (unprocessed). In fact, other feminists interested in beginning feminist restaurants implemented a similar model. Raising money by directly borrowing money from friends was, not unique to Mother Courage. According to *The Daily Iowan: Iowa's Alternative Newspaper*, the founders of feminist restaurant Grace and Rubies of Iowa City gathered "loans ranging from \$10 to \$1500 from local women" (Mittlestadt, 1977). These individual loans allowed for restaurant owners to circumvent the barriers they encountered with banks.

Other restaurant founders secured money from friends. The founding members of Toronto's Woman's Common (1988-1994), Caroline Duetz, Val Edwards, and Kye Marshall, developed a fund-raising strategy using a video of women in various unusual work environments. They made a marketing booklet, which contained the goals of the club, and financial projections. Then a team of women went to individual women's houses where the hostess would invite her friends to listen to the presentation and encouraged them to sign up and invest in the creation of the Woman's Common (Duetz, Edwards, and Marshall, 2016). This strategy raised enough money to buy a building in downtown Toronto. According to a former employee who worked at the restaurant in 1988, the members of the Woman's Common were primarily white lesbians who were middle and upper middle-class professionals. Most of the lesbians who went to the restaurant bought \$100 memberships, two hundred women invested \$1000, and there was also one anonymous donor who donated even more money. These members were able to help provide necessary start-up capital. Wildrose of Seattle's owner Bryher Herak said that the collective faced inward and raised the money within its collective and community members. The members of the collective gave what they could and continued to work second jobs. On reflection, Herak wondered why they did not do any more formal fundraising. At the time she remembers thinking that "if we do this, we need to have the money" (2016). They went to the people that they knew had jobs and wanted a space like Wildrose. Eventually they were able to pay back every cent (Herak, 2016). In each interview, recording, and magazine article, the feminists who began these restaurants emphasized that they always repaid their debts to the women in their community.

For these alternative fundraising methods to work, there had to be trust in the community. As Marjorie Parsons (1979) of the Common Woman remarked, "There were a lot of honour systems back then. Loan us five bill [\$500] now – ok but you have to pay it back in six months when I

pay my tuition- ok." However, if the financing was done without contracts, additional problems could occur. Parsons continued that "again it was cash flow [problem] and we were always this short of falling off the edge. So, there was constant continuous low level anxiety." The women who began these restaurants already needed to be part of an established community to have the kind of trust necessary to have these exchanges. Such exchanges built upon emotions and personal connection, implicated people even more emotionally in the business. Emotions do not disappear when dealing with banks; a human aspect remains despite the motto of "it's not personal, it's business." The formality of banking transactions, however, obfuscates the human element of the exchange. In addition, what could seem like a neutral space for some people with privilege would be a dangerous space for others. When the feminist restaurant owners were unable to trust banks, they needed to rely on their larger network of feminists to support their ventures.

Women did more than donate money. Community members donated time, which lowered operating costs for the restaurants to function. Family members and friends of the founders of Mother Courage contributed significant personal time. According to a history of Mother Courage written by Jill Ward and Dolores Alexander, between December 1971 and May 1972, Ward's father and six feminists did the demolition work and installed the new ceiling, floor, and pipes (Ward and Alexander, n.d.). Two days before opening, her mother loaned her \$600 to buy food, and the day before opening her mother, father, and sister-in-law helped make 640 meatballs (Anderson, 2005). The Common Womon Club, as Marjorie Parsons (1979) commented, "got lots of volunteer time and energy which was as valuable as money and then that made a difference." For example, when the collective declared that the attic needed to be cleaned, local women gathered and cleaned it in an hour. The collective would make a big pot of soup to share and

cleaning became a social event. After months of operating, one collective member learned about restaurant auctions: when a restaurant goes bankrupt, the bank holds an auction. It was possible to buy refrigeration units for \$5 if no one else wanted them at the time. One time, a woman who was a fan of the restaurant mentioned that she was going to a big auction at the St. Regis and the collective went to get new glasses. Apparently this unnamed woman was particularly excited about a stove at the auction. The woman donated \$200 towards its purchase with an additional \$400 coming from the collective. The only problem was that the group now had a stove and no way to transport it. According to Parsons (1979), fifteen lesbians lined up and carried the stove on their backs seven blocks through downtown Northampton, stopping traffic because no one had the money to rent the truck to get it there. Parsons' story illustrates how there were the women who would donate their money and others who would donate their time.

Parsons' story is also a reminder that the lack of initial capital created more work. Women had to carry the oven on their backs. Since the collective initially could not afford a new oven, which could have cut its bread making labour in half for the first six months, the staff had to spend more time baking bread. Having more seed money makes it easier to make money. The process of producing newsletters and asking for donations was time intensive. Establishing a stable restaurant would have been simpler with more initial funding. Parsons admitted that the entire project would have been much easier if the collective had had more capital at the start, as the constant letter campaigns, cultural events, and membership sales became a drain on the members' emotions and energy (Valley Women's History Collective, 2016). Mother Courage's owners echoed this same sentiment and wished they could have bought an already established operation so that they would not have had to do so much hard labour (Artemis, 1975). The lower initial capital meant that the restaurants had a harder time making ends meet. After a feminist

restaurant or café gathered enough capital to start the restaurant either from banks or elsewhere, funding needs continued.

### ***Fundraising Events***

Some restaurants relied indirectly on friends by organizing community events to raise capital. When organizers wanted to raise money to begin feminist restaurants and cafés, one technique was to host coffeehouse nights and other events centred on music and dancing. The group of women attempting to start feminist restaurant Clementyne's of Toronto, Ontario hosted women's social events at local clubs, such as the Fly By Night, and in church basements in 1974 (Clementyne's, n.d.). The Common Womon Club of Northampton, Massachusetts fundraised by organizing dances and selling food. Before opening the restaurant, they held fundraising events every two weeks. The Common Womon Club was involved in many different side fundraisers. Marjorie Parsons (1979) advised, "I think when you are entering into a project where you need a good deal of capital and are trying to go about that is to connect with your sources within the community." For dances, the Common Womon Club collective would get a women's band to donate its time, the collective would get a women's group on the college campuses to acquire the space, and the publicity would take a minimum of fifteen hours, but the collective might get two hundred hours worth of wages out of it. They would only charge \$1 for entrance to the dance, but the event ticket also served the dual purpose of promoting the forthcoming restaurant.

At special events, restaurant founders had the opportunity to speak with potential donors. While at the dance, Parsons (1979), a self-described "hustler," would walk around the event getting people to donate money to the project. She usually would also use that as a time to assuage women's fears, because women were worried about "being taken." Parsons perceived

Northampton women as skeptical and worried about what would happen with their money and what the club would do with it; she believed that potential funders' trust was harder to earn because the Common Womon Club refused to sell stock as the collective wanted to retain all of the decision making ability. Her self-described "hustler" status was most apparent when she admitted that sometimes she would convince someone to donate money for a particular project, like painting, and then the collective would use the money for its salaries. She admitted that "on some levels it was not the truth," but the members had to prioritize where the money went and they would eventually paint the space as they had claimed. Constantly asking for money became emotionally tiresome. In addition to its initial funding, the Common Womon Club continuously asked for money in its monthly newsletter. As Parsons (1979) reflected:

I'll tell you one thing—our newsletter started to read like a begging sheet: *The Common Womon Newsletter* for Brunch. Please help us! – We need help on Tuesday cleaning the attic- and pay your dues this week and oh by the way there's a cultural event next week. ... It was too much asking—too much asking all the time. And it became a drain on people and it sets up an image that you aren't making it you know- why are you asking... it's a fine balance about the image you give people- an attitude.

And the collective knew that its restaurant was an important resource to the community and that the community did not want to lose it, but making ends meet was difficult.

More aboveboard fundraising techniques included throwing private parties and hosting special events. As the restaurant was located in a university town (part of the Five College Consortium of Western Massachusetts, which included Smith, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, and the University of Massachusetts), the Common Womon was a hangout spot for female academics. One woman scientist greatly appreciated the space and would host specialized women in science dinners at the restaurant, and each woman would pay \$6 or \$7 for her meal, a fee greater than typical dinner fare at the Common Womon (Smith, 1978). Another benefit of

being located within a university town from 1976-1982 was that the club could host dinners and cultural events like poetry meetings with prominent feminist figures. Special poets and activists who would come into town getting \$5000 as a special guest at one of the universities would then make an appearance for free at their restaurant. Lesbian theorist and poet Adrienne Rich, for example, came to brunch, and Parsons remarked that star-struck customers would want to just sit around her (1979). Patricia Hynes, who had founded Bread and Roses feminist restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1974, came to the Common Woman and spoke on feminism and vegetarianism. These events served to promote and finance both the restaurant and intellectuals within the feminist community.

### ***Memberships***

Membership fees also provided money to help finance feminist restaurants. The Common Woman Club, Tuxedo Junction of San Francisco, Chez Nous of Ottawa, and Grace and Rubies of Iowa City sold memberships. At Grace and Rubies, any female over the age of ten could become a lifetime member by reading and understanding the club's bylaws and paying \$0.50 (Mittlestadt, 1977). Tuxedo Junction was a restaurant conceived as an alternative to the bar scene and was marketed as an "elegant speakeasy" restaurant with an "exclusive atmosphere." Reservations were required except for members and their guests (Hickey, 2015). The restaurant club had 350 members by 1979. The club featured women musicians in a variety of formats from swing trios playing for "close-dancing couples," to quartets appealing to those with the "urge to rock." The club advertised "candlelight dinners" and "romance" for its patrons. Membership dues were initially set at \$120 (Horn, 1981). Such high fees affected the



class of the patrons that would attend. Memberships helped with fundraising but also affected who could and would use the space, serving as a form of gate keeping.

To circumvent issues of class inaccessibility, some feminist restaurants created sliding scale memberships. The founders of Chez Nous Café (1978-1980) created the café with the intention of it becoming a money generating body for the Ottawa Women's Centre. In order to fundraise, they sold memberships. As the organizers explained in an interview with *Upstream*, they created a sliding scale to make the club accessible to women despite their class backgrounds and still be able to financially support the business (Leclair and Gilhooly, 1978). On their bilingual promotional flyer they explained to potential members that "a sliding fee structure has been established that will allow all women to become members while encouraging the women's community to support its centre. Although the figures in the scale indicate[d] the kind of breakdown we would like to see in membership sales, it is not the intention of the Ottawa Women's Centre to stipulate what anyone will pay" (Chez Nous, n.d.). The organizers reassured the investors on the flyer that "in the event that Chez Nous does not open, all membership fees and donations will be returned." The organizers encouraged local women to make a membership part of their annual donation to the Ottawa Women's Centre. The Common Woman Club also utilized a sliding scale to accommodate every woman. The first paying dues member of the club was a seven-year-old girl who put down \$0.25, while in the same night someone put down \$1,000 (Parsons, 1979). While the dues were a fundraising technique, they also allowed the club to meet specific requirements of their 501(c)(7) status. As Marjorie Parsons (1979) remarked, "it is interesting that there is a certain number of women in the world who have money and needless to say because of varying politics they tend to keep it pretty quiet." But when they were able to donate and support a cause they could care about discreetly, some would.

### **Compromises Made to Secure Funding and Avoidance of Financial Rules**

Even if the restaurants and cafés aimed to serve as alternative, countercultural spaces, they still were embedded within the culture at large and were still held to the same laws as the rest of society. However, rules could be bent. The Common Womon Club collective demonstrated how knowledge of the law, particularly corporate status and tax structure, could benefit countercultural activities. The nine charter members of the collective incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation, Ceres Incorporated, under status of 501(c)(3) and later shifted to 501(c)(7) status.<sup>viii</sup> The collective created two sets of books: one for the corporation, Ceres, and one for the club itself. The corporation would pay the mortgage, and the club collected dues and money from the restaurant and would use that to pay the corporation for the space and use of the dishes and silverware. The corporation protected individuals from personal bankruptcy that could ruin their futures.

The philosophy behind this set up was that by having a mother corporation, the Common Womon established itself as a private club and could control who could enter the space, thus allowing the establishment to prevent men from being clients. If the establishment had been solely a restaurant, the collective would not have had the same control over its clientele. However, private clubs had to be non-profit. The Common Womon Club was always in debt to Ceres Incorporated, so Ceres “appeared philanthropic” by paying off the mortgage every month. Although the gross annual income of the club was between \$20,000 and \$30,000, after expenses the restaurant was always at a loss. Ceres Incorporated would forgive this loss and would also host fundraisers to help cover other costs. By organizing its structure and finances in this manner, the Common Womon Club collective always declared a loss, which protected its non-

profit status. Marjorie Parsons believed there was a tremendous advantage to running the business in this manner. Learning how to use the law to their advantage helped the members of the collective achieve their dreams of a women-only restaurant.

To maintain their tax status and ability to run a club, the collective members had to have a firm understanding of tax and corporate law. The collective members received legal advice to do all of this from their friend and lawyer, Nancy Brockwell, who wrote the initial incorporation papers. The collective paid her a "couple hundred dollars of legal fees but she also drank a lot of coffee and ate a lot of soup and got a lot of love and support" (Parsons, 1979). Part of the provision of this club status necessitated having a mailing list and newsletter. The government also required that clubs had a formal way of defining club membership, but the organizers were able to decide upon dues. The collective made it as easy as possible for any woman to become a member of the club. All a woman needed for membership was to provide her name and address to get the newsletter. In speaking to a group of women interested in beginning their own feminist restaurant or coffeehouse in the Boston area, Parsons (1979) explained that "501(c)(7) the tax status the club is under is incredibly easy to get"—much easier than having to deal with the costs of being a for-profit business.

One of the most fortunate aspects of this tactic was that when the original collective members were burnt out and left the restaurant, the new management was able to easily take over. Ceres Incorporated remained the corporation through which everything ran and Marjorie Parsons took a day to teach the newcomers the books. However, it appeared that the new managers in 1979 were better businesswomen than the former managers. The four women of the second collective made over \$90 each per week. As Parsons noted, "No one is going to the Bahamas there, but the fact that there are four women right now making a livelihood from a lesbian owned, lesbian

business brings tears to my eyes. It's all I ever wanted. It's all I ever wanted." Strategic planning enabled the collective members to protect themselves as individuals and safeguard their dreams of a feminist restaurant. As Parsons explained, "hipping yourself to the government" is strategic. Without knowledge of these strategies, obtaining financing from the bank would have been far less likely and the financial liability of running the business would have been greater.

### ***The Experience of Running Loss Making Enterprises***

Most feminist restaurants founders lived under constant stress as the majority of these restaurants struggled to survive. As a result, the founders attempted several solutions for their financial woes, including the creation of side businesses. However, the frustration and stress from financial difficulties was compounded when the restaurant owners faced harassment from government officials and individuals. These problems eventually resulted in the businesses closing.

#### ***Stress and Frustration***

By the second year of operating, the Common Women Club was unable to secure enough money to pay its mortgage. At that point, the collective was generating less than \$50 of income per person weekly. The other collective members would be frustrated with Marjorie Parsons as she was doing the books at the time. She remarked that people would get anxious and angry and scream at her, and she reflected, "And I would say "I'm sorry"" and then I would get enraged because I would think "what did I do?"-- I would go home with the same \$50 in my pocket" (Parsons, 1979). In the end, she was staying off not just her co-workers but also the moneylenders. She remarked that she "would write these letters where I would compromise my

English and my intelligence and my pride to say to a person we were in debt and that “we have screwed up this, this and this” and they would hold off another two weeks.” For Parsons, the constant stress about finances led to immense burnout and strongly contributed to her desire to sell the restaurant. Parsons was not alone in these feelings. However, many founders believed in their projects and thus attempted solutions by creating additional revenue streams.

### ***Side Businesses and Additional Revenue Streams***

Feminist restaurant and café owners occasionally ran businesses on the side to try to support the restaurant itself. According to early issues of *Gaia's Guides*, Bloodroot was an inn at one point (Horn, various editions). The Bloodroot collective also published a series of cookbooks, selling over five thousand copies of its first book, and it also sold calendars. Bloodroot also functioned simultaneously as a bookstore. Other feminist restaurants and cafes that were bookstores included: Wild Seeds Feminist Bookstore and Café of Rochester, New York (1989), Sisterspirit Café and Bookstore of San Jose California, Reader's Fest Feminist Bookstore and Café of Hartford, Connecticut (1985), Three Birds Feminist Bookstore and Coffeeshop of Tampa, Florida (1989), Jane Addams Bookstore and Coffeeshop of Chicago, Illinois (1981), and Community Café and Bookstore of Bethesda, Maryland (1983). Having a non-perishable good, such as books, to sell in the restaurant was a common practice.

Some restaurants tried to ease financial burdens by selling alcohol. Financially supporting a restaurant could be difficult, and alcohol is a fairly reliable source of income. Grace and Rubies of Iowa City served a variety of alcoholic beverages (Cherry, 1977). Mother Courage of New York City decided to start selling alcohol when food prices soared (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). In New York State in 1975, when the owners made the decision to sell alcohol, a liquor license

cost around \$1,600, a beer and wine license was about half that (Artemis, 1975). Despite the devastating effect of inflation from the food crisis, Mother Courage's adaptability by selling booze and loyal clientele helped it survive.

However, some feminist restaurants intentionally did not serve alcohol, as founders sought to be an alternative to bar culture. Even when restaurants did serve alcohol, the restaurant owners often tried to market their business as an alternative to bar culture. Sara Lewinstein, owner of San Francisco's Artemis Women's Café (1977-1984) stated that, "the reason that I had started the Artemis was for women having an alternative space to go to rather than just going to the bars. We're a women's community. It doesn't matter whether you are gay or whether you are straight. This is a women's community. And there needs to be alternative spaces where you can feel free enough to come in and not be hassled by men-- to have a glass of wine and not be picked up - and believe me I've been in that scene a long time and I know it happens" (KGO-TV, 1981). There is also a class dynamic to this discrepancy. Feminist and lesbian periodicals during the 1970s and 1980s often portrayed bar culture as the domain of working-class, "bar dykes," as opposed to the middle-class lesbians and feminists. As historian Heather Murray (2008) argues, "lesbian bar cultures, to be sure, were not central to lesbian feminist politics. For example, they tended to be associated with a more working-class expression of lesbianism than seen in most lesbian feminist organizations in the 1970s." Alcoholism in the lesbian community was rampant when so much socializing happened in the bars (Davis and Kennedy, 1993).

The choice many of these spaces made to be dry however made it even harder to survive financially. For the Common Woman restaurant, having a non-alcoholic space was a priority, although that did not mean that people did not bring in their own alcohol. As Marjorie Parsons (1979) remarked, "We could have done a lot better if we had alcohol." In fact, at one point the

she was willing to go through the process of securing an alcohol permit. The collective members asked its community six times in its monthly newsletter, and no one in the collective was interested either. The only feedback that the restaurant “ever got was an alcoholic who was sober saying don’t do it.” Parsons knew that she “could have filled out the papers” and she continued that she was “sure women would have come in and bought and I’m sure it would have made us stable,” but doing so would have undermined the Common Woman Club’s mission to remain open to women of all ages. While there was a divide between lesbian bars and feminist restaurants, sometimes in conducting this research distinguishing the difference could be difficult if the business was listed as a restaurant bar or a lounge. The main differences were the focus on alcohol, cruising, and the role of straight women in the space. The choice for restaurants and cafés to serve alcohol occasionally incurred resistance from government officials.

### **Harassment**

Restaurants already operated on a slim profit margin, and outside interference made the financial status of feminist restaurants even more precarious. Conflict over obtaining liquor licenses, zoning, funding, and taxes, affected financial stability. Bureaucracy could provide frustrating barriers for any business owner. For example, despite the Common Woman Club collective gaining a comprehensive understanding of how to structure its business model, the collective still initially applied for the incorrect type of restaurant license. Only after submitting its application did the collective learn that there was a license specially for serving passersby and one for customers who were seated (Parsons, 1979). These kinds of mistakes were understandable, but sexism and heterosexism created additional problems for the women running these restaurants. While the restaurant owners’ lack of experience sometimes meant that they did

not know how to fill out the proper forms, the owners also faced sexist regulatory officials that made matters more complicated. Despite doing everything by the books, Wildrose of Seattle was audited four times while Bryher Herak managed the establishment. She always assumed homophobia was the motivating factor. Over four audits, the Internal Revenue Agency only once found a discrepancy of \$126. (Herak, 2016). When Mother Courage's owners applied for a wine and beer license in September 1973, they were worried they would have difficulty because when they hand delivered the forms they were asked, "No men involved in the corporation? You may need the signature of a male relative" (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). The founders were worried that it would be another hassle like the one with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

To raise money for Mother Courage, as explained earlier, Jill Ward and Dolores Alexander sent out a four-page business prospectus to feminists and other friends where they asked for the small loans, totaling \$5,000 at 15 percent interest. The financial editor at *Newsday*, where Dolores Alexander once worked, telephoned, asking to do a story. Despite their own apprehension about media attention so early into their venture, the owners agreed (Anderson, 2005). The feature piece on the "money" page, entitled "Women's Lib Takes the Plunge--- Into Business," piqued the interest of a complaint officer of the New York office of SEC (1972). The SEC officer called to tell Ward and Alexander that their fundraising methods may have broken the law by making a public offering with their prospectus, as "any piece of paper, any form of IOU, which has no intrinsic value of its own, which is essentially worthless, is a security" (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). The SEC lawyers insisted that according to Regulation A of the 1963 Securities Act, the restaurant would need to be registered as a public offering and that it would cost them \$50,000 to do so (Securities and Exchange Commission, 1963). In recounting this stressful experience, Alexander and Ward remembered the roomful of men suddenly



opening booklets and quoting legal passages to them and insisting that they get a copy of No. 4552, which they later learned was a short statement issued in November 1962, which covered certain exemptions to Regulation A (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). After reading that section, Alexander and Ward knew that they had not broken the law. The lawyers and complaint officer then began to accost the restaurant owners asking them why they did not know about such regulations and also asking if they could even cook. When asked about the location of the money from the loans, Ward replied that it was in a separate checking account. Alexander explained that it was not in a business account because the bank would not let them open a business account without an EA form and that you cannot get one until you are incorporated, which they could not do as they were still at the initial stage of the process of creating their business. This explanation does not entirely make sense. EA forms are filled in by the employer for filing annual income tax returns of the employees from private sector companies. EC Forms are the equivalent for public sector companies. The EA or EC Form is generated at the end of the year and contains information on the personal details of the employee, his or her earnings for the year, and the amount deducted and remitted under the Schedular Tax Deduction (STD) scheme. Perhaps she misspoke and meant that she needed an Employment Identification Number (EIN) or her Articles of Incorporation, as both would have been necessary to open a business account. Alexander pushed back at the officer's comment that she looked depressed, responding that she was confused as to why they insisted on using jargon and buzzwords that only the four men understood. She further questioned why they needed four people to discuss \$5,000. Alexander felt that the men did not respond to the question; they did however explain what the women could do to avoid penalty. One of the SEC lawyers said that Alexander and Ward could return the money or SEC could freeze the money. In addition they could be jailed and fined up to

\$25,000 (Anderson, 2005). He suggested that they close the account and put out a letter saying that they have returned the money or have their lawyer do so. Alexander responded that they would go and consult with their lawyer. She later remarked on the irony that the meeting probably cost the government more than \$5,000 in salaries.

The clash with the government officials became a personal attack. After Alexander's lawyer called SEC, one of the SEC lawyers called Ward and said that their lawyer was acting like "some militant or something" and that they "had better straighten her out" (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). He then continued to threaten her. Ward responded that she had read release 33-4552 multiple times and she believed that she had complied with the requirements for a non-public offering under the private exemption clause of section 4-2 (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 1962). Despite having raised money from thirty-seven people and the expected number of investors being twenty, that numerical test was only to be applied under 4552 if people have the requisite association with and knowledge of the owners. As their investors were friends, Ward pointed out that they were still acting in accordance with the law. Even under the *Ralston-Purina* case that the SEC lawyer used to intimidate her, the decision was "based on whether a particular class of persons needed the protection of the act" (Anderson, 2005). She continued by saying "you mean to tell me that our friends who loaned us money, because they are mostly women, need protection-- that women don't have the intellect or ability to determine whether or not" to loan their own money (Anderson, 2005). She also refuted his claims that they broke the law by advertising in the paper because the article in the paper was not about fundraising and the piece clearly stated that they "were only raising money from sisters and friends" (Anderson and Ward, n.d.). The founders remained confident in their own abilities to understand the law and did not bend to the threats of SEC, which led SEC to eventually back down.

According to Alexander, eventually the government officials admitted that the entire incident resulted from sexist attitudes. She claimed that after all of these incidents the SEC lawyer confessed:

Let me tell you what happened. Word got out that two freaks in women's liberation were coming into the office and everyone in the office wanted to see them. I was happy to find out that you two weren't freaks at all. Incidentally I think you ought to know that most of the lawyers down here are under twenty-eight [like him] and more liberal [than the other officials.] And I wouldn't want you to get a bad impression of SEC (Alexander and Ward, n.d.).

The lawyer then said that all he wanted was a letter from their lawyer saying that they had returned the money so he could stick the letter into their file. Otherwise, he claimed that he would have no choice but to hand the case over to the law enforcement, and despite it only being \$5000, the federal government still could press charges. When Ward asked him to clarify if he meant that they should return the money, he responded,

That's your business. If you don't, don't tell anybody, especially your lawyer. Then I don't care how you raise the money again. But next time be more discreet. As far as I'm concerned, for this particular case, I just want the letter so I can close the case so it doesn't have to be turned over to enforcement (Alexander and Ward, n.d.).

Ward responded, "well that doesn't seem to comply with the spirit of the law. You're telling us to comply with the letter of the law. [But actually] you don't care about how we raise the money, as long as it doesn't come to your attention," to which he allegedly responded, "Look I don't want to get into a philosophical discussion. I'm working here for a few years, to make some money, get a good resume so I can go on from here" (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). Ward retorted, "I know what you mean. We're trying to survive too." The situation ended with their lawyer sending them a letter advising them to return the money and send a carbon copy to SEC as proof that they had done so. They never heard from the SEC again. Mother Courage owners also followed

through on their promise by returning the money and the fifteen percent interest promised one year later when the loans were due (Alexander and Ward, n.d.). This entire situation illustrates how personal relationships changed the ways that the law was applied: the law was never about justice but about upholding specific power structures. Mother Courage demonstrated that feminist alternatives to traditional fundraising were possible but also that the owners could face threats.

While Mother Courage was able to overcome the bureaucratic resistance, regulations meant the demise for other feminist restaurants. Clementyne's of Toronto was unable to officially open due to the zoning laws, which essentially killed the project. The owners were told that their space was not properly zoned but only after the owners had acquired the house and invested money into improving the structure. Repeated attempts to meet with city officials yielded no positive results and eventually the founders gave up on their dream (Three of Cups, n.d.). Paperwork did not prevent Chez Nous of Ottawa from opening, but it ultimately closed due to its issues with securing a liquor license. The organizers believed that serving alcohol was the only way to keep the café financially viable. This is ironic, as the only reason the women's centre even had to open a café in the first place was because of government policies. The women's centre originally was dependent on government funding, but the staff decided to no longer "accept government granting ... Since government granting [had] directly or indirectly meant government interference, a decision was made to continue pursuing a position of financial self sustenance" (Leclair and Gilhooly, 1978). At a January 1978 meeting, a group of thirty women actively involved in managing the women's centre "decided that if this was to happen, the Ottawa Women's Centre would have to examine the possibility of starting a business that would encourage women to direct some of their spending money back into the community" (Chez

Nouz, 1978). As *Upstream* reported on the meeting, the group discussed bookstores, pool halls, seminars, and coffeehouses as possible business ventures. The evening closed with the policy committee being asked to consider proposals for such a business, and the eventual result after months of organizing was Chez Nous café.

However, documentation was not the only barrier that led to closure for feminist restaurants. The owners of Grace and Rubies wanted to implement a simple, non-elitist, woman-only membership policy, but the Iowa City Council responded by trying to determine whether the membership policy was “discriminatory.” The argument was that Grace and Rubies did not charge enough to be a real private club and that the owners’ goal to be accessible for all women—but still meet the requirements as private club that charged memberships (and thus could exclude men)—led to problems. In the spring of 1976, *Dyke: A Quarterly* published this response to the issue:

Meanwhile, back in Iowa City, Grace & Rubies Restaurant is still alive, kicking and struggling to get out from under while the City’s new mayor, a woman, instructs the human relations commission to investigate the legality of the restaurant’s policy of refusing membership (and admittance) to men. The outcome of the investigation is unknown, but if it takes the commission as long to investigate Grace & Rubies as it does to investigate sex discrimination in employment claims, the restaurant will be around for a number of years, no matter what the outcome (Dyke, 1976).

Apart from the pushback Grace and Rubies’ owners faced from the local city council, they also dealt with the backlash from a story about their restaurant in *Penthouse*, the pornographic men’s magazine. Novelist T.C. Boyle, while still a student at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, became obsessed with *womyn's* spaces and his perceived “exclusion” from them. So in May 1977, he published a short story called “The Women's Restaurant.” The story explored his fixation on

Grace and Rubies and his unrelenting desire to invade that space (Boyle, 1977). The harassment of owners by private citizens and government officials led to their eventual closure.

This is not to say that some restaurants did not skirt the law, sometimes in part as a result of wanting to make a political statement. Marjorie Parson's entire presentation the Common Womon Club demonstrated that when people were empowered with the knowledge of what loopholes existed within the system, they could save a lot of money. Parsons also admitted to having few qualms crossing into illegal territory, citing her disappointment with the ways that the United States government used taxpayer money for exploitation of individuals and to fund wars overseas. As Marjorie Parsons explained, "See I'm pretty hip about staying out of the government's eye as much as possible" (1979). She believed that if the restaurant's nonprofit status did not hold under an audit, the Common Womon might have been liable for a state corporation fine, which according to her was only \$250 and worth the risk. She argued that "the legal liabilities aren't tremendous- no one has done anything significantly illegal." Her comfort level with lying to the government extended beyond how the collective structured its taxes. In order to survive on a \$50 salary each week, the members of the Common Womon Club had various sources of income. Parsons (1979) admits that she "was on unemployment and lived fairly illegally for awhile. Other women had savings. Other women had jobs. Other women had independent sources of income." With the Common Womon Club, the only restaurant in this article that admitted on record to committing a crime, legality was not the reason for the closure; the restaurant could not financially support itself.

In addition to conflict with government agencies, there was also resistance from private sources. The restaurants, even when they intended to operate as separatist spaces, still had to interact with the rest of society. For the Common Womon Club, the collective faced the "all boys

network” and the idea “that [only] men go into business” (Smith, 1978). While the other restaurants operated by men in the area would be able to get credit, one of the food distributors for the Common Woman Club, Flagstaff, never extended credit to the restaurant even though Parsons argued that the collective never missed its payments. It also took two years before the oil company would put them on an automatic fill (Parsons, 1979). These barriers made it even more difficult to be a successful business, as every step required more work. However, if it seemed as if lenders might be wary of the Common Woman based on its admittedly less-than-legal dealings, it was not the only feminist restaurant to face difficulties with the private sector. The founders of Mother Courage remarked that it was difficult to get credit and to get wholesalers to make deliveries. Even when wholesalers did deliver, the men would make sexist comments or look for a man to sign the receipts and order forms, not believing that women owned the restaurant, an issue mentioned by most owners of feminist restaurants. Facing the “boys club” mentality added additional strain to the regular ups and downs of restaurant management.

### *Closure*

Regardless of the ways that the feminist restaurants raised the money, many of the owners still had a difficult time making ends meet—not an uncommon issue within the restaurant business as a whole. In 1996, the Brick Hut Café of Berkeley, California fell into serious financial difficulties and filed for Chapter 11 status, the form of bankruptcy in which the owners propose a plan of reorganization to keep the business alive and pay creditors over time. However, in 1997, the owners filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, in which the debtor liquidates her assets to pay back the creditors, and closed its doors for the last time at 2:00 p.m. on March 24, 1997. As owner Antonuccio (2011) remembered, “Rather than tucking their tail between their

legs, they ended things with a big, crowded, raucous party.” Bloodroot’s founders did not do any direct fundraising, as they were able to borrow money. However, as they wrote in a letter, “at this point in time [1981] we have repaid those loans and have been able to raise our draw to \$700/month for each of the four of us. Since we are working over twelve hours a day, five and a half days a week we still make less than minimum wage” (Bloodroot collective, n.d.). Even forty-one years after the restaurant’s founding, Selma Miriam and Noel Furie are not making significant money. Regardless, in 2017 Selma Miriam and Noel Furie continued to repeat to reporters at the *New York Times* they had no intention of stopping (Rao, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

The apex of American and Canadian feminist restaurants was from 1976-1985.<sup>ix</sup> Most feminist restaurants closed after only a few years of operation; however, their histories are worthy of attention as they speak to larger discussions around feminist entrepreneurialism. The founders of feminist restaurants faced a number of barriers in securing financing and maintaining the financial stability of their businesses. The women who began these establishments navigated bank financing, personal finance networks, and the experience of running a loss making enterprise, while continually innovating new strategies in order to survive. American and Canadian feminist restaurants in the 1970s and 1980s are part of a larger history of social enterprise formation, women's financial networks, and informal business financing. This history speaks to present-day challenges that women entrepreneurs face when trying to raise capital from banks and venture capitalists.

### **References**



"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

Alexander, D. and Ward, J. (n.d.). Mother Courage history. Dolores Alexander Papers (unprocessed), Box 13, Smith College Archives.

Alexander, A. (2004, March 20 and 2005, October 22). Interview by K. Anderson. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project of Smith College. Retrieved from <https://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Alexander.pdf>

Antonuccio, J. (2011, June 23). Remembering the Brick Hut Café, part II. *Bay Area Bites*. Retrieved from <https://ww2.kqed.org/bayareabites/2011/06/23/lgbt-pride-remembering-the-brick-hut-café-part-2>

Ashcraft, K. L. (2001). Organized dissonance: Feminist bureaucracy as hybrid form. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(6), 1301-1322.

Bahneman, M. (2015, October 15). Interview by A. Ketchum.

Belasco, W. (2007). *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry*. Cornell University Press.

Bloodroot Collective, "Letter to Marge," personal papers lent to author.

Bloodroot Collective (1980). *Political palate: a feminist vegetarian cookbook*. Bridgeport, CT: Sanguinaria Publishing.

Bloodroot Collective (1984). *The Second seasonal political palate*. Bridgeport, CT: Sanguinaria Publishing.

Bloodroot Collective (1993), *The Perennial palate*. Bridgeport, CT: Sanguinaria Publishing.

Blume, M. (1974). The food's bad but the ideology is strong. *International Herald Tribune*, pp. 18-9.

Boyle, T.C. (1977, May). The women's restaurant. *Penthouse Magazine*.

Canadian Parliament, The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Canada, [Ottawa] September 28, 1970, <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pco-bcp/commissions-ef/bird1970-eng/bird1970-part1-eng.pdf>, 22.

Caswell, M. (2014). Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives and the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation. *The Public Historian*, Volume 36, no. 4. 26-37.

Cheese Board, "About Us," December 2017, Retrieved from <http://cheeseboardcollective.coop/about-us/about-main>.

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

Cherry, L. (1977). Grace and Rubies. *The Daily Iowan*.

Chez Nous. (1978, May 8). General meeting minutes. Chez Nous Box 509, Folder 18, Canadian Women's Movement Archives.

Cleve, S.V. (2012). *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota*. University of Minnesota Press.

Cobble, D. S. (1988). "Practical women": Waitress unionists and the controversies over gender roles in the food service industry, 1900–1980. *Labor History*, 29(1), 5-31.

Coe, A. (2009). *Chop suey: a cultural history of chinese food in the United States*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cole, G. (1977, March 16). Bloodroot: a dream on a shoestring. *Fairpress*.

Correspondents and ads. (1976). *Dyke: A Quarterly* 2, pp. 86. Retrieved from <http://seesaw.typepad.com/dykequarterly/issue-2/>.

Davis, M. D. and Kennedy, E.L. (1993). *Boots of leather, slippers of gold: the history of a lesbian Community*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Davis, N. (2002). To serve the "other": Chinese-American immigrants in the restaurant business. *Journal for the Study of Food and Society* 6, no. 1, pp. 70-81

Duetz, C., Edwards, V., and Marshall, K. (2016). The woman's common. Rise Up!: a digital archive of feminist activism. Retrieved from <http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/activism/organizations/the-womans-common>

Emin, D. (2005, June 2-8). For the love of food and women: two Bridgeport, Connecticut lesbians reflect on nearly three decades of a feminist space. *Gay City News* 4, no. 22. Retrieved from [http://gaycitynews.nyc/gcn\\_422/fortheloveoffood.html](http://gaycitynews.nyc/gcn_422/fortheloveoffood.html).

Enke, A.F. (2007). *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism*. Duke University Press.

Gaia flyer, Canadian Women's Movement Archives, Box 31.

Halkias, D. and Adendorff, C. (2016). *Governance in immigrant family businesses: enterprise, ethnicity and family dynamics*. London, UK: Routledge.

Herak, B. (2016, June 26). Interview by A. Ketchum.

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

Hickey, G. (2015, May 14). Interview by A. Ketchum.

Hogan, K. (2006). *Reading at Feminist Bookstores: Women's Literature, Women's Studies, and the Feminist Bookstore Network*, dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

Horn, S. (various editions). *Gaia's Guide*. San Francisco, CA: Women's UP Press.

Interview excerpt about Three of Cups, Canadian Women's Movement Archives, Clementine's (sic) Box 20.

Kent, E. (2014, September 14). A journey through "lesbian mecca:" Northampton LGBTQ history walking tour.

Kwolek-Folland, A. (2007). Gender, the service sector, and U.S. business history. *The Business History Review*, 81(3), 429-450.

Leclair, L. and Gilhooly, S. (1978, May). Canada's oldest women's centre plans change. *Upstream*, 2.

Lesbians: the invisible minority. (1981). KGO-TV. Retrieved from <https://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000400201>

Light, I.H. (1972). *Ethnic enterprise in America: business and welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

McDowell, L. (1999). *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. University of Minnesota Press.

Mittlestadt, M. (1977, February 27). Grace and Rubies "not private." *The Daily Iowan: Iowa's Alternative Newspaper* 108, no. 158. Retrieved from <http://dailyiowan.lib.uiowa.edu/DI/1976/di1976-02-27.pdf>

"Mother Courage Restaurant: Mother Courage," *title of periodical cut off*. Smith College Archives, Dolores Alexander Papers (unprocessed), Box 21, Folder 180.

Murray, H. (2008). Free for all lesbians: lesbian cultural production and consumption in the United States during the 1970s. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 2, pp. 251-75.

Nembhard, J. G. (2014). *Collective courage: A history of African American cooperative economic thought and practice*. Penn State Press.

November 23 Clementyne's Party Flyer. (n.d.). Clementine's (sic) Café (Toronto, ON) 1974-1976, Box 20, Canadian Women's Movement Archives.

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

Parsons, M. (1979). Coffeehouse meeting [Tape recording]. Northeastern University Archives, AV2316, M120.

Pearce, S.C. (2005). Today's immigrant woman entrepreneur. *The Diversity Factor* 13, no. 3, pp.23-9

Rao, T. (2017, March 14). Mixing food and feminism: Bloodroot is 40 and still cooking. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com>

Roberts, J.A.G. (2004). *China to chinatown: chinese food in the west*. Islington, UK: Reaktion Books.

Ross, B. (1995). *The House that Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation*. University of Toronto Press.

Smart, J. (2003). Ethnic entrepreneurship, transmigration, and social integration: an ethnographic study of Chinese restaurant owners in rural western Canada. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 32, no. 3/4, pp. 311-42.

Smith, R.B. (1978, September 11). Feminists operate club. *The Sumter Daily*.

Status of Women Canada, "The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada," June 1, 2016, <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/rc-cr/roycom/index-en.html>

Sturgis, S. (1985, May). Ladyslipper: Meeting the Challenges of Feminist Business. *Hot Wire: Journal of Women's Music and Culture*.

Three of Cups. (n.d.). Announcement about Three of Cups. Clementine's (sic) Café (Toronto, ON) 1974-1976, Box 20, Canadian Women's Movement Archives.

Uneke, O. (1996). Ethnicity and small business ownership: contrasts between Blacks and Chinese in Toronto. *Work, Employment and Society* 10, no. 3, pp. 529-48.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation by Sex and Race 1972-1982.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation by Sex and Race 1983-2002.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity," 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.

United States Consumer Financial Protection Bureau 6500. (1974). Retrieved from <https://www.fdic.gov/regulations/laws/rules/6500-1200.html>

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Business History*, forthcoming online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/>"

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. (1962, November 6). Final rule: non-public offering exemption: release 33-4552. Retrieved from <https://www.sec.gov/rules/final/33-4552.htm>.

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. (1963, August 5). Securities act. Retrieved from <https://www.sec.gov/news/digest/1963/dig080563.pdf>

Valley Women's History Collective. (2016). The valley women's movement: a herstorical (sic) chronology 1968-1988. Retrieved from <http://www.vwhc.org/timeline3.html>.

Wakimoto, D.K., Bruce, C, & Partridge, H. (2013). Archivist as Activist: Lessons from Three Queer Community Archives in California. *Archival Science*, Vol. 13, No. 4.

Weare, W. B. (1973). *Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the NC Mutual Life Insurance Company*. Duke University Press.

Weitzel, R. (1998, September 13). Review of the second seasonal political palate. *The Boston Sunday Globe*. pp. 27.

Whiting, R.N. (1996, April 27). Bloodroot: a feminist outpost on the sound.

Women's lib takes the plunge---into business. (1972). *Newsday*.

## Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> I assembled materials from nineteen archives around the United States and Canada, including The Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture at Duke University, The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America of the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, the Quebec Gay Archives (Les Archives gaies du Québec), the Canadian Women's Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa, the University of Iowa Archives, the University of Minnesota Archives, the San Francisco GLBT Archives, the San Francisco Public Library Archives, Northeastern University Archives, Smith College Archives, New York University Fales Archives, New York University Archives of the Tamiment Libraries, John J. Wilcox Jr. Gay Archives at the William Way Center in Philadelphia, the San Diego LAMBDA Archives, the Lesbian Herstory Digital Archives, and Yale University Archives. I worked with English, French, and Spanish sources.

<sup>ii</sup> "Lavender Legacies Guide," Society of American Archivists: Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section, 2012, <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/diverse-sexuality-and-gender-section/lavender-legacies-guide>.

<sup>iii</sup> In building my databases of restaurants, every mention of a feminist restaurant, café, or coffeehouse was useful; however, for the sake of consistency, I tracked every annual edition of the *Gaia's Guides* (a woman's travel guide) from 1975 to 1991, with the exception of the 1980, 1986, and 1987 editions as I could not locate a copy through any libraries, archives, booksellers,

or private collections. I confirmed over 250 feminist restaurants founded between 1972 and 1989 in the United States and Canada and listed another 150 potentially feminist restaurants but did not find enough information to verify. Additionally, I identified feminist restaurants in both the article section and in the advertisement sections in a variety of feminist and lesbian periodicals. Unlike my methodological approach to guidebooks, compiling a database of each edition of *Gaia's Guides* and supplementing it with additional guidebooks, for feminist and lesbian periodicals I did not seek out a dominant source. I utilized every available feminist and lesbian periodical housed at the archives I visited in order to see if there were any articles and/or advertisements about feminist restaurants, cafés, or coffeehouses. This required physically flipping through hundreds of periodicals and magazines, as well as newsclippings in archival scrapbooks. I went through every edition of Iowa City's *Ain't I A Woman* by Iowa City Women's Liberation Front Publications Collective (1970); *Amazon of Milwaukee: a Midwest Journal for Women* (1971); *Ca s'attrape* of Montreal (1982); *Country Women* (1973-1980); *Feminist Communications: Las Hermanas Coffeehouse Newsletter* (1975) in San Diego, California; *Goldflower: A Twin Cities Guide for Women* (1972-1975); *Hera's Journal: A Philadelphia Feminist Publication* (1978); *It Ain't Me Babe: Women's Liberation* of Berkeley, California (1970); and *Les Sourcieres* of Quebec (1980s). However, for some periodicals I could not locate every single edition. I still utilized all of the copies that I could find of the following periodicals: *Amazon Quarterly* (1972-1975); *Artemis* (1977); *Canadian Feminist Periodicals/ Periodiques Feministes du Canada* (1989); *Communique'Elles* (Quebec, 1980s); *Diversity*; *Dyke: A Quarterly* of New York City (1975-1978); *L'Evidente Lesbienne* of Quebec; *The Feminist Voice*; *The Fourth World*; *Furies* of Washington D.C. (1972-1973); *Herizons* of Winnipeg, Manitoba (1979-1992); *Hysteria* (1971); *Lavender Woman* of Chicago (1971-1976); *Lavender Woman: a Lesbian Newspaper* (1971); *The Lesbian Calendar* (1988); *Lesbian Connection of Michigan* (1974-); *Lesbian Ethics* (1984); *Lesbian Newspaper* of Ann Arbor, Michigan (1975); *Lesbian News* of Los Angeles (1975-); *The Lesbian Rag* (1988); *Ms. Magazine* (1971-2018); *New York Woman Tribune*; *Northern Women's Journal* (1979); *Off Our Backs: A Women's Liberation Biweekly* (1970-2008, looked every edition until 1990); *Open Road* (1976); *RAT* (1970); *Rites* (1987); *Sapphire* of San Francisco (1973); *Sinister Wisdom: A Multicultural Journal by and for Lesbians* published in Charlotte, North Carolina, Berkeley and Oakland, California, at various points, (1972- 2012); *Small Arms of Springfield Massachusetts* (date unlisted); *Through the Looking Glass* (1971); *Valley Women's Voice* (1979); *Wicce* of Philadelphia (1973-1974); *Women's Collective Press*; the *Whole Woman Catalogue* (1971); *Women's Newspaper* (1971); *Women and Revolution*; *WomaNews* (1985); *Woman's World* (1971); *Women's Undercurrents*; *Women United*; *Women's Way*; and the *Wree View* (1977). In addition to *Feminist Communications*, by the feminist coffeehouse Las Hermanas of San Diego, I also looked through three other publications, *Malapropo's Feminist Bookstore and Café Newsletter*; *Mama Bears News and Notes* of Oakland, California (1983-1986); *New Words' Bookstore's News and Notes* (1979), were linked to a feminist café that sold books. Although the majority of the editions I read through were published between 1970 and 1989, I also read copies of the editions that were also published in the early 1990s. I found them useful to search because feminist restaurants such as Bloodroot and the Brick Hut were founded during the period of study still appeared in feminist periodicals in the early 1990s. There were useful collections of periodicals at the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture at Duke University, the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America of the Radcliffe Institute at

Harvard University, the Gay Archives of Quebec (Les Archives gaies du Québec), the Canadian Women's Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa, the San Francisco GLBT Archives, the San Francisco Public Library Archives, Northeastern University Archives, John J. Wilcox Jr. Gay Archives at the William Way Center in Philadelphia, the San Diego LAMBDA Archives, and the Yale University Archives. However, the Smith College Archives and the New York University (NYU) Archives housed extensive collections. NYU's Tamiment Library's collection of feminist periodicals, in particular, provided access to more than half of the above listed periodicals. Although collections such as *Ms. Magazine* have been digitized, the majority of these feminist and lesbian periodicals are only accessible in physical form, scattered around the United States and Canada in incomplete collections.

<sup>iv</sup> Historian Dorothy Sue Cobble (1988) has traced the evolution of waitresses' attitudes towards feminist proposals such as the Equal Rights Amendment and shown the way that waitresses have been engaged in activism over works rights throughout the twentieth century.

<sup>v</sup> According to economist Lisa Williamson at the U.S. Bureau of Labor, detailed occupational employment estimates were first made available in 1972. There were considerably fewer detailed occupations in the classification system used for 1972-1982 than those used for more recent data (only about 150 occupations versus 535 in the 2010 Census classification). Many of the detailed occupations were of a miscellaneous or "all other" type. Lisa Williamson, "Data on Restaurant Employment by Sex/Gender," email correspondence with Alex Ketchum, February 26, 2018; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation by Sex and Race 1972-1982;" U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation by Sex and Race 1983-2002."

<sup>vi</sup> In Canada there was not an exact parallel committee, however in 1967, the government of Canada created the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. The commission had the mandate to "inquire into and report upon the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the federal government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society." On December 7, 1970, as a result of the work of the committee, the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was tabled in Parliament. This report included recommendations on updating the legislative system and addressing such critical issues for women as poverty, family law, the Indian Act, and the need for a federal representative for women. In the report, Table 1, "Income From Employment and Other Non-Investment Income Reported by all Individuals Stating Age, 1967," does not speak to the issue of entrepreneurs per se, but it does detail the income of women relative to the income of men from self employment. Women held 4.2 percent of the total income in Canada derived from self-employment in 1967. This collection of data on women's economic status did not end after the report: in 1976 the Status of Women Canada became a federal departmental agency and continued this research. While there are not exact parallels between the United States and Canada, governmental agencies were conducting research to understand the disparities between men and women in business.

<sup>vii</sup> This matter is complicated. On the one hand, there were situations like when Bloodroot's owners contacted the only woman in Connecticut that they knew of who owned a restaurant and that woman was not interested in mentoring them. At the same time, women's travel guides such

as *Gaia's Guides* noted if restaurants were women-owned-and-operated, even if the owners did not identify the space as feminist. These guides promoted women's businesses, reflecting the philosophy of the subset of lesbian feminists that believed it was important to support women's endeavors. Historian Heather Murray discusses the impact that this philosophy had on women-owned businesses in more detail (2008).

viii 501c (3) is the portion of the US Internal Revenue Code that allows for federal tax exemption of nonprofit organizations, specifically those that are considered public charities, private foundations or private operating foundations. 501 c(7) is the non-profit American tax status for social and fraternal organizations.

ix See the directory at [thefeministrestaurantproject.com](http://thefeministrestaurantproject.com)