



ArchivesSpace

## **Pelham, Ruth; Papers**

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

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## Summary Information

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| <b>Repository:</b>               | M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives  |
| <b>Title:</b>                    | Ruth Pelham Papers   |
| <b>ID:</b>                       | apap408  |
| <b>Date [inclusive]:</b>         | 1978-2016  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b>     | 10.8 cubic ft.   |
| <b>Physical Location:</b>        | The materials are located onsite in the department.  |
| <b>Language of the Material:</b> | English .  |
| <b>Abstract:</b>                 | This collection contains documents concerning the work of Ruth Pelham, a singer/songwriter and educator in the Albany, New York area who has been performing for decades in an effort to bring about peaceful communities through music. From the late 1970's to circa 2016, Pelham traveled in a mobile music program called the Music Mobile; singing, teaching, and writing songs with the community. |

### Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Ruth Pelham Papers, 1978-2016. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Pelham Papers).

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## Biographical Note

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Born in 1949, Pelham grew up in Brooklyn, NY with ambitions to become a folksinger. When Pelham attended the University of Wisconsin in the Vietnam era, she became emboldened as a feminist and activist against injustice. Pelham began touring Albany neighborhoods with her Music Mobile as a friendship building initiative, and has even expanded internationally, touring cities in the Soviet Union and collaborating with Soviet artists. Pelham was also a consultant to the Havasupai tribe for ten years and part of an effort to stop the construction of a uranium mine on their land.

Pelham's folk songs have been published in folk music journals and recorded by over thirty musicians, including Pete Seeger and Ronnie Gilbert, Holly Near, Guy Carawan, and more. In 1997, Pelham received an Arts Award from the Albany/Schenectady League of Arts and was inducted into the Capital Area Music Association's Hall of Fame the same year. Pelham has also received an award for her work on behalf of women by The National Organization for Women's Albany chapter. Pelham has been featured in multiple documentaries, co-authored books, and is a co-founder and member of the board of directors of the Children's Music Network.

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## Content Description

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The Ruth Pelham Papers are divided into 3 series: 1.) Arts in Education (AIE), 2.) Grant Funding, 3.) Albany Housing Authority (AHA).

Most materials from the Arts in Education Series contain the totality of an AIE program experience. The Grant Funding series contains grant application packages, which includes financial and promotional materials as well as the grant application. The Albany Housing Authority series contains materials from several music and other creative arts projects that took place in the housing projects that comprise the Albany Housing Authority: Ida Yarbrough Homes, Ezra Prentice Homes, and Corning Homes.

Some files are restricted because they contain sensitive financial material or the personal information of individuals who were minors at the time of document creation.

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## Arrangement of the collection

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The Ruth Pelham Papers are divided into 3 series: 1.) Arts in Education (AIE), 2.) Grant Funding, 3.) Albany Housing Authority (AHA). AIE is arranged alphabetically. Grant Funding and AHA are arranged chronologically. Any audio-visual materials that originally accompanied the documents have been separated and rehoused in their respective series.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

### Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted with the exception of a select number of files noted on the finding aid. Many of these files contain PII related to minors who attended Music Mobile events. For the purposes of fulfilling her grant obligations, Ruth Pelham needed to secure and retain this data and it contextualizes the administrative aspects of her work. Although the individuals in question are no longer minors, they were children at the time, so the archivist elected to restrict this information.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ruth Pelham donated all materials to the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives in 2022-2023.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed between 2023 and 2024 by Cheyenne Watson.

### Copyright

Researchers do not have permission to publish or disseminate material from these collections without permission from an archivist and/or the copyright holder.

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming to the laws of copyright. Some materials in these collections may be protected by the U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) and/or by the copyright or neighboring-rights laws of other nations. More information about U.S. Copyright is provided by the Copyright Office. Additionally, re-use may be restricted by terms of University Libraries gift or purchase agreements, donor restrictions, privacy and publicity rights, licensing and trademarks.

The Department of Special Collections and Archives is eager to hear from any copyright owners who are not properly identified so that appropriate information may be provided in the future.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Pelham, Ruth
- Music Mobile
- Folk music-United States
- Music--Instruction and study
- Grant proposals
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Albany, New York
- Music
- Art

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## Collection Inventory

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### Arts in Education (AIE), 1978-2016

Physical Description: 3.7 cubic ft.

Language of the Material: English.

#### Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically.

#### Scope and Contents

The Arts in Education Series documents Ruth Perham's concerts, residences, workshops, and programs at various youth-centric and educational institutions. Included are song lyrics she distributed and/or developed with students in various stages of the writing process, legal and financial documentation, correspondence between Pelham and institutional staff (usually school faculty), photographs of events, personal notes, reflections on events, post-performance evaluations, and thank you notes from participants (usually youths). This series is a more intimate look at the inner processes that kept the Music Mobile's wheels turning beyond grant funding and fundraising.

Researchers should note that Pelham often included promotional materials in her files that predate the dates of her residencies. For example, her residency at the Clark Street Developmental Learning School took place in 1995-1996, but contains promotional material from 1991 and is dated accordingly.

The series is arranged alphabetically. Any audio-visual materials that originally accompanied the documents have been separated and rehoused in this series.

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### Grant Funding, 1978-2011

Physical Description: 5.8 cubic ft.

Language of the Material: English.

## **Arrangement**

### **Scope and Contents**

Grant applications are large packets of records and require several forms of documentation from applicants to serve as evidence of an individual or institution's ability to legally and responsibly utilize the monies that could be awarded to them. The grant applications and supporting documents featured in the Grant Funding series are no different and as such feature the same type of documents throughout, regardless of the year. The Music Mobile was prompted to provide financial information that almost always included papers dated from 1979 and 1986. It was also required to provide promotional information, which almost always included newspaper clippings (or copies of newspaper clippings) from a range of dates, some further from the application year than others, as well as flyers and posters, which were considered undated by the processor because they do not have print dates associated with them. All of these factors extended the range of dates featured on the folder titles.

Moreover, Pelham applied to and received several varieties of legislative grants with various (and sometimes similar sounding) names from several legislative officials. The archivist retained her naming conventions for these grants in the folder titles.

Researchers will see personal and inter-office communication interleaved in this series. They take many forms, from familiar post-its to napkins and paper plates—all evidence of the grant funding process in its lengthy, chaotic glory.

The series is arranged chronologically. Any audio-visual materials that originally accompanied the documents have been separated and rehoused in this series.

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## **Albany Housing Authority (AHA), 1986-2002**

Physical Description: 1.5 cubic ft.

Language of the Material: English.

## **Arrangement**

### **Scope and Contents**

The Albany Housing Authority series contains materials from several music and other creative arts projects that took place in the housing projects that comprise the Albany Housing Authority: Ida Yarbrough Homes, Ezra Prentice Homes, and Corning Homes. The folders are largely titled by project name and housing project, save for separate yet related projects and extra material.

The series is arranged chronologically. Any audio-visual materials that originally accompanied the documents have been separated and rehoused in this series.

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