

WILD MARES

1962

“My life in that little house set the course for everything that would come later.”



I remember telling my dad, “I’m scared.”

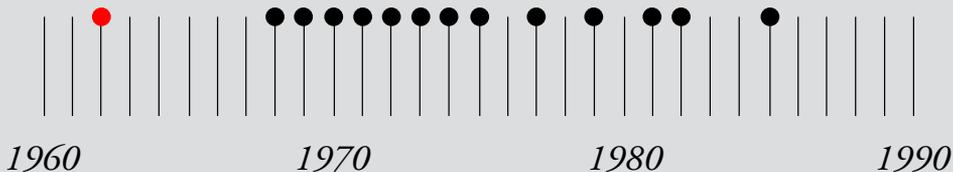
“Of what?” he replied, as if he had no clue what I was talking about.

“Dying,” I said.

That day in Minot, work and school went on as usual, and it wasn’t until much later that I began to understand that the adults felt as powerless against the war planners as I did.



It’s a mad, mad, mad, mad world as the Cuban missile crisis threatens to kill us all just after my thirteen birthday. My mother warns me to watch out for “queers” who might play softball on a women’s team that I admire in my hometown of Minot, North Dakota. I don’t know what the word means until she explains.



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1968

I shrieked, "I hate this society!"

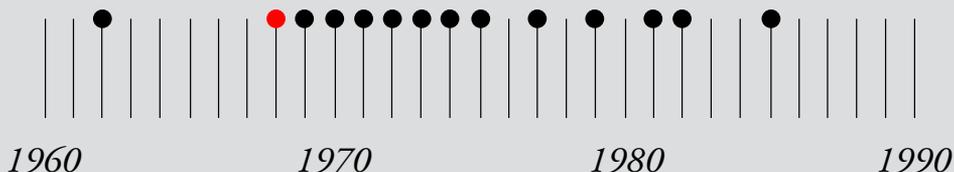
"Oh, honey!" my mother said.

"It's not the whole society."

*In her voice I could hear concern and grief,
not just for our country but for the daughter
who was changing into someone she feared she
didn't know.*



The Vietnam War and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy lead to widely shared angst and alienation among my friends at Macalester College in St. Paul. Movements for peace, civil rights, women's liberation, and gay and lesbian liberation open our eyes to new possibilities, while FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover uses his office to paint civil rights leaders and other activists as dangerous, un-American subversives.



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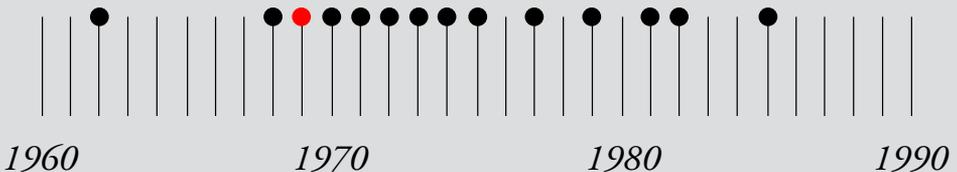
1969

Before reading the manifesto, I'd had no language to understand female subordination, male supremacy, or the ways that the gender system pinned us into narrow, socially constructed versions of ourselves.



Women's Liberation groups form around the country, producing a tidal wave of feminist thinking, writing, and actions. *The Redstockings Manifesto* declares, "After centuries of individual and preliminary political struggle, women are uniting to achieve their final liberation from male supremacy."

The manifesto: z.umn.edu/history1969



z.umn.edu/wildmares

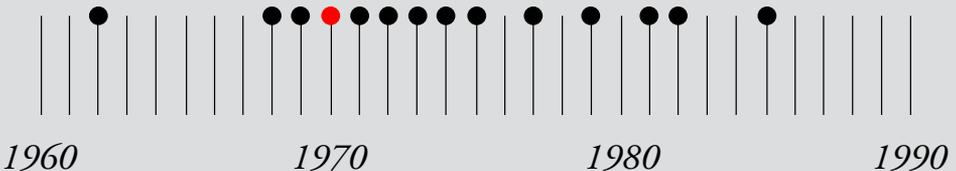
WILD MARES

1970

*As my feminist consciousness grew,
so did my generation's angst over the war
and the draft.*



I complete a self-designed independent study course called "Feminist History," and the Amazon Bookstore Cooperative opens in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, one of the first two feminist bookstores created in the U.S. during the second wave of feminism. Students are shot by National Guard soldiers and state police at Kent State University and Jackson State, and waves of protest come home to St. Paul as students take over the business office at Macalester and barricade the office of Hubert Humphrey, who has taken a visiting professorship in political science there after losing the 1968 election to Richard Nixon. The Macalester Committee for Peace in Viet Nam calls on Humphrey to give up his position because of his involvement (as Lyndon Johnson's vice president) in the war.



... HUMPHREY, NO!

Tonight Hubert Humphrey makes his first major Twin Cities speech since leaving office. But what he helped in as Vice President is still going on: the war in Vietnam, the racist oppression of black people, and the crushing of GIs and students demanding their rights. Are we to forget about Humphrey's part in these, any more than we can forget these crimes themselves? No. Humphrey has not suddenly become an "academic person"; he is still a politician working for the Democratic National Committee and pushing the same "Sick Society" on the American people.

Some people say Humphrey is a fine addition to the liberal reputation of Macalester. We say no; war crimes are committed by war criminals who add no prestige anywhere. The College administration selected this part-time (three days per two weeks, at \$20,000 a year) "professor" without so much as a consultation with the students and faculty.

The same lack of democracy was used in creating the "Humphrey Chair" in November 1967. In addition, a large proportion of the money supporting this professorship comes from Charles Engelhard, who owns a mineral empire in racist South Africa, exploiting the black people there.

Humphrey's praise for Mayor Richard "Shoot-to-Kill" Daley is most shame-

ful. Daley's brutal suppression of black people and antiwar demonstrators has shocked America, but Humphrey has said, "Quit pretending that Daley did anything wrong." "Hustling Hubert" has done a lot of pretending in four years; it's time he quit.

As students, we don't agree with the policy of rewarding people like Humphrey with a professorship as soon as they lose an election. We think that in doing this, the College lends support to policies

like the aggression in Vietnam. At the very least, the students and faculty have the right to vote on such propositions.

The alternative to Humphrey, who is only an example of the policymakers, now best represented by Richard Nixon, is the growing antiwar movement. GIs are joining it constantly in growing numbers. On April 5, a mass demonstration in Chicago will be led by antiwar GIs. We'll be going, and we hope you'll join us.

Humphrey Hails Daley as 'Truly Outstanding' Mayor



BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

MACALESTER COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

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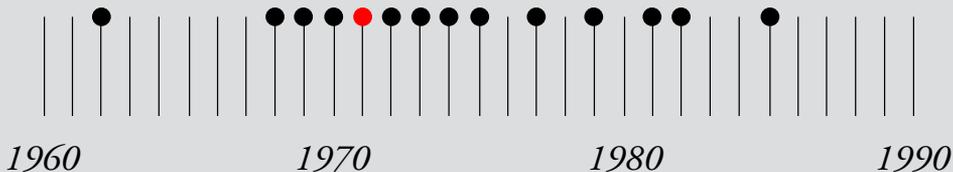
1971

I began to see that I'd been participating all along in a system that was stacked against me—and against all women.



Louisa May Alcott Collective in 1971. Left to right: Christine Wezeman Jenkins, Margaret Graham, Dianna Hunter, and Janet Petri.

As a student, I teach an interim term class on feminism at Macalester. Friends and I start a consciousness-raising group, sell books from the Amazon Bookstore on campus, and hold a women's dance. **That spring, my best friend comes out as a lesbian, and I also realize my lesbian identity and come out to others.** Friends congratulate me as if they had known all along. My college friend Karen meets a lesbian at work, and that woman and her partner introduce us to the lesbian social scene in the Twin Cities.



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1972

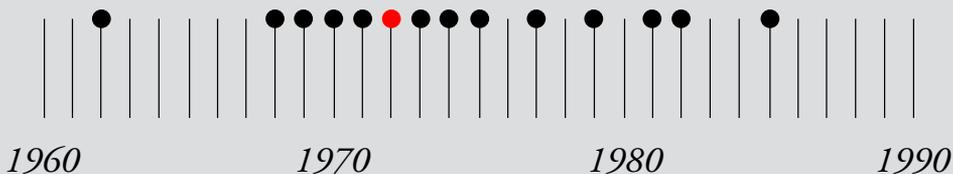
We changed the world by acting as if we had already changed it, but sometimes we stumbled because it was just so damn hard.



Most people saw us as mentally ill, illegal, and immoral. Making that phone listing (for the Lesbian Resource Center) was a bold move toward visibility and self-assertion.



On December 8, 1972, the Lesbian Resource Center opens at 710 W. 22nd St., Minneapolis, with Karen as director. It's the first place where we can gather with other lesbians in a self-defined space, socialize without the presence of alcohol, and organize for building community and creating social change.



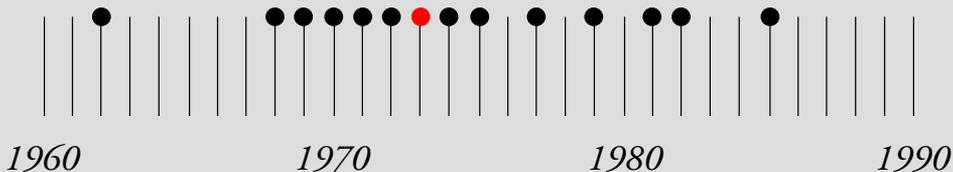
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1973

Many of us made clear in our creative work that we held society's institutions suspect. We could hardly imagine the old social structures changing fast enough to include and support us in the ways we wanted.



Jane Stedman and others launch the Lesbian Resource Center's journal *So's Your Old Lady*. My brush-and-ink drawings appear on the covers of the first two issues. In April, fourteen of us from the LRC attend the West Coast Lesbian Conference at UCLA, the first open, nationwide lesbian conference. In December, Family of Woman, a Chicago lesbian-feminist band, plays for a women's dance at the YWCA in south Minneapolis.



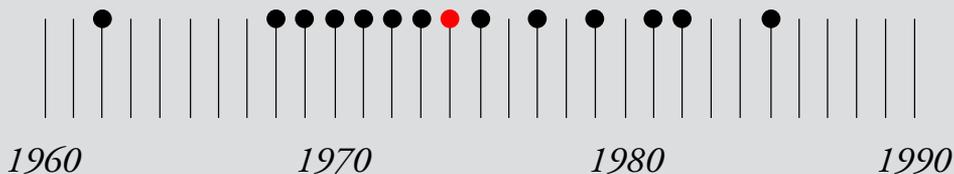
WILD MARES

1974

I often thought I should have been born to the early twentieth century instead of the frenzied, stressed-out, atomic second half of it.



After years of trying to find a home on a farm with other lesbians, I move in with four other women and two children at Haidiya Farm near Gilman, Wisconsin. In June, Shirley and I ride our horses 240 miles to live with other lesbians at Rising Moon, a 160-acre women's farm south of Aitkin, Minnesota.



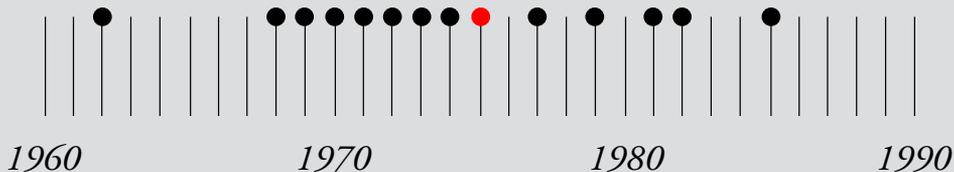
WILD MARES

1975

*In farming as well
as in feminism
the political was personal.*



Friends and I caretake a farm on the shore of a small lake near Rising Moon. We call the resulting women's farm Del Lago. The Vietnam War ends, and A Women's Coffeehouse begins as a weekend happening at the Lesbian Resource Center and then later at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis.



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1977

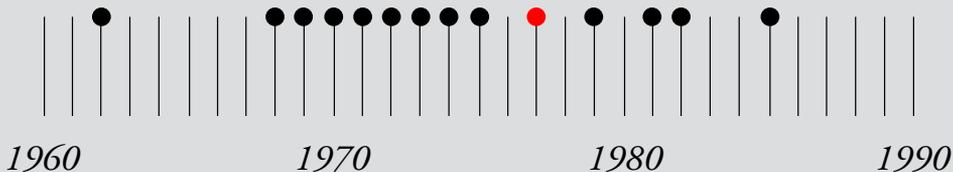
*Our new neighborhood was short on feminists
but long on hippie back-to-the-landers.*



I move my home and animals to Pliny Township and join the central Minnesota group Outstate Lesbians United. Blue hosts a lesbian square dance at Del Lago.



*I was still looking for love and afraid
that I might never find it. What if I had
never loved anyone? What if I didn't
have a clue how to love?*



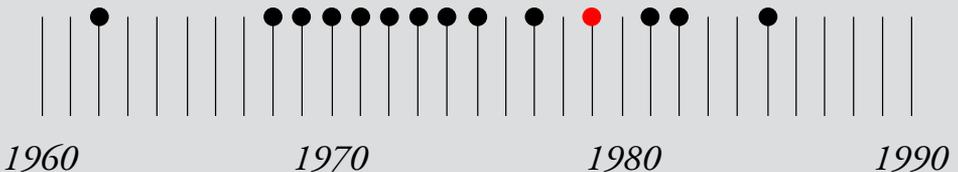
WILD MARES

1979

This was my first prom: My partner, Ellen, wore a full-length burgundy velvet dress, and I wore pants, a wool vest, a man's dress shirt, and a fedora.



The Women's Coffeehouse hosts a lesbian prom on New Year's Eve in Minneapolis.



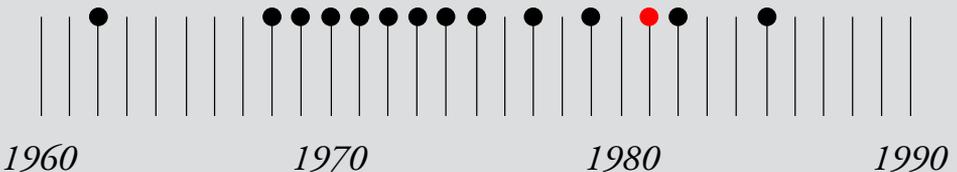
WILD MARES

1981

*Mortality hung heavy with me and made
our new life feel all the more precious
and desirable.*



I buy a working dairy farm that my partner, Ellen, and I name Happy Hooper Holsteins. Photo credit: Ellen Wold.



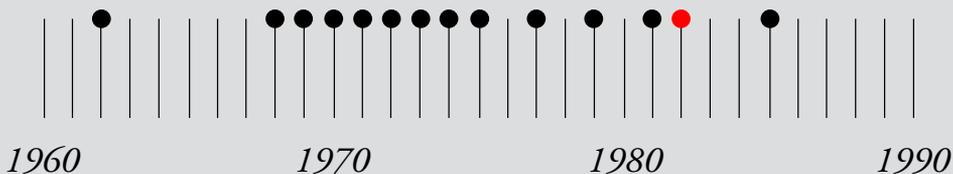
WILD MARES

1982

*The confluence of the
community radio movement
and the
women's music movement
opened a space
in the commercially
dominated radio culture.*



Ellen and a small group of other women start Wise Women Radio, a weekly women's music and talk program on KUMD-FM, Duluth. They showcase artists from the burgeoning women's music movement.



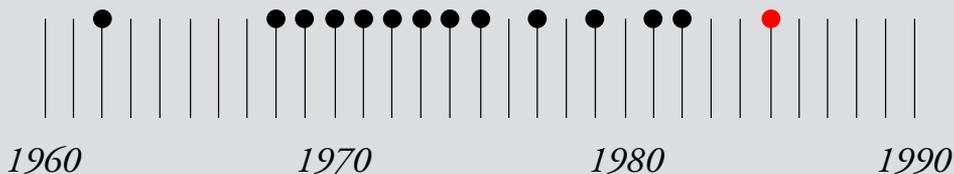
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1985

*I knew it was up to me
(as it truly always had been)
to pull myself together.*



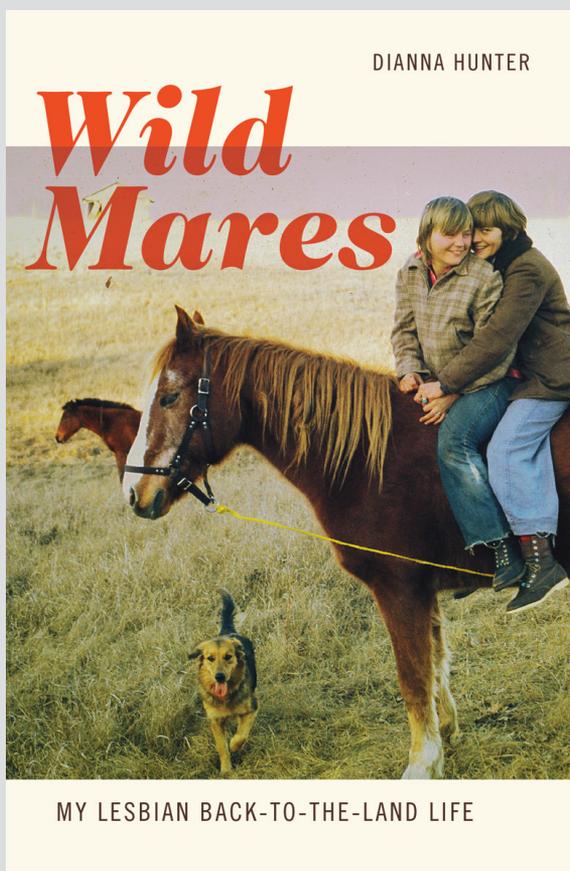
As farm prices fall calamitously, I connect with two activist farm women who hire me to become one of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Farm Advocates, farmers educating other farmers about their legal and financial rights, resources and options. **In learning how to help my neighbors stay on their land or leave with dignity, I find a path to my own future.**



WILD MARES

My Lesbian Back-to-the-Land Life

by Dianna Hunter



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