Coalition on Low Altitude Flights (COLAF) Collection,  
1.50 linear ft.  
Mss. Coll. No. 127

History
COLAF is a social action group that was formed by private citizens in St Lawrence County, NY in January of 1989 in response to proposals made by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) to use the airspace above St. Lawrence County as a Low Altitude Flight training grounds. The plan was for B-52 bombers and FB-111 fighter-bombers to cross the Adirondacks and enter St. Lawrence Country at altitudes as low as 500 feet above ground level. The jets were supposed to fly three times over the county in a racetrack loop during which they would practice low-altitude weapons delivery, dropping simulated bombs over the Fort Drum Weapons Range. Residents of the county would have been subjected to flights traveling as fast as 560 mph, producing noise levels of up to 114 decibels, 300 times a month.

The purpose of COLAF was “to educate the citizens of St. Lawrence County and their elected representatives about the effects of low-altitude military flights so they will take action on this important issue.” The steering committee for COLAF consisted of 13 people. Initially, the chair was Peter Van de Water, Vice Chair/Publicity was Suzanne McTaggert and Vice Chair/Volunteer Coordinator was Steve Molnar. Although COLAF still exists today and participates in discussions involving the Air Force, the main efforts were sustained for about two years opposing abusive low altitude flights above St. Lawrence County.

The culmination of COLAF’s efforts was an Ad Hoc Committee formed by Governor Mario Cuomo in July 1989 involving several local citizen groups and state agencies. The SAC agreed to mitigate their original proposals, which along with other cutbacks eventually led to the “race track loop” being dissolved by 1991. COLAF was a one of the first citizen action groups in the nation to have a seat at the table during the political dealings of the military.

Scope and content
This collection contains notes, printed materials, fliers, brochures, newspaper publications and correspondence pertaining to Low Altitude Flights and COLAF. Included is material about the Innu (Naskapi or Montagnais) people from Labrador-Quebec who were fighting legislation permitting NATO forces to conduct low altitude training over their traditional lands.

Organization and arrangement
This collection is arranged in 7 series:
1. Administrative
2. Background information
3. Correspondence
4. Innu (Naskapi-Montagnais) correspondence
5. Public awareness and campaign
6. COLAF-action
7. Miscellaneous

Provenance
This collection was donated to the St. Lawrence Special Collections along with the CAPP collection by Steve Molnar of Canton, NY on February 25, 2000.
BOX 1

Series 1: Administrative
1.1 Constitution
1.2 Untitled (Steering Committee)
1.3 Major Donor Workshop 8/89
1.4 Untitled (other concerned citizens)
1.5 Untitled (volunteers)

Series 2: Background Information
2.1 General Flight Rules
2.2 Airforce info sheet July ’89
2.3 Landowner rights
2.4 Forest service and national part service
2.5 Information Sheet Environmental Assessment
2.6 Noise
2.7 Research
2.8 Indiana crash
2.9 Children West Germany
2.10 Dec. Blake Memo 4/20/89
2.11 Resolutions-Rossie Ear
2.12 Map
2.13 Rev Bob Jones- Heu
2.14 Meeting With David McAfeer
2.15 Draft-history
2.16 Untitled (Rural alliance for military accountability)
2.17 Untitled (Newspaper Clippings)
2.18 Untitled (Research material from Skyguard)
2.19 Untitled (Scrapbook)

BOX 2

Series 3: Correspondence
3.1 Letters out
3.2 Contacts AF St. Law Log
3.3 Untitled (with politicians, airforce)
3.4 Untitled (with law firms)
3.5 Griffiths Peace Community

Series 4: Innu (Naskapi-Montagnais) Correspondence
4.1 NATO Airspace
4.2 Petitions

Series 5: Public awareness and campaign
5.1 Newsletters/Brochures
5.2 Coalition Fliers
5.3 Current, Steve Molnar
5.4 Bill in Congress
5.5 Public Comments Received by the St. Lawrence County Planning Office
Series 6: COLAF-Action
6.1 Canton Meeting 5/10, notes
6.2 Consensus
6.3 Air monitoring
6.4 Demands, Request, AF monitoring ’89
6.5 Ad Hoc Commission

BOX 3

Series 7: Miscellaneous
7.1 Petitions
7.2 416th Bombardment Wing Griffiss AFB, New York – Information Kit Folder
7.3 COLAF and IGNPPE
7.4 Staff Comments SAC Low-Altitude Flights
7.5 COLAF newsletter / brochure 1989
7.6 Additional Pamphlets and Newsletters Pertaining to Low Altitude Flight Testing