

# Guide to the Ithaca Community Poets Collection

*The History Center in Tompkins County*  
110 North Tioga Street, Suite 204A  
Tompkins Center for History and Culture  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
607-273-8284  
[www.thehistorycenter.net](http://www.thehistorycenter.net)  
[archives@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:archives@thehistorycenter.net)

## Collection Number V-30-1-1

Updated 2023

### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Ithaca Community Poets (ICP) was an organization that aimed to serve the Ithaca community's creative needs through workshops and reading series, providing spaces for poets and writers to share their work. Ithaca has long been a place where the arts flourish, and the members of ICP hoped to preserve this by making poetry accessible to the wider Tompkins County community, especially as government funding for the arts became scarce.

The organization began in the fall of 1974, when some poets in the Ithaca area—many of whom were involved in local community activities such as the poet-operated New York State Poets in the Schools program—decided to start a reading series unaffiliated with Cornell University. This became Poetry Downtown and consisted of sixteen Saturday afternoon readings in the DeWitt Mall, attracting crowds of fifty people or more and garnering an enthusiastic community response.

In the spring of 1975, ICP received its first major funding from a private arts foundation called the America the Beautiful Fund, Inc. This grant allowed members of the ICP to rent a three-room space for the Poetry Center, which functioned as an office, headquarters, library, and workshop space for the organization. By November of 1975, ICP had successfully run three ten-session workshops and collected over two hundred books and magazines of poetry for its browsing library, in addition to continuing its seasonal reading series. Over the years, ICP participated in festivals, hosted music nights and readings at bookstores and cafés, and even contributed to staged performances, all of which was funded by organizations such as the New York State Council for the Arts, Poets & Writers, Inc., and local businesses. ICP eventually disbanded in 1988.

This collection primarily consists of ICP correspondence and introductory promotional materials, as well as posters and flyers advertising local ICP events and workshops. It also includes: six ICP postcard series from 1977-1986, financial records from 1975-1988, and newspaper clippings from 1974-1988.

## CONTAINER LIST

<i>Description</i>	<i>Folders</i>
Correspondence and Introductory Promotional Materials	1
Ithaca Community Poets History, 02/1977 - 02/1985	2
Postcard Series #1, 1977	3
Postcard Series #2, 1978	4
Postcard Series #3, 1979	5
Postcard Series #4, 1982	6
Postcard Series #5, 1985	7
Postcard Series #6, 1986	8
Posters A	9
Posters B	10
Financial Records 1975-1988	11
Newspaper Clippings 1974-1988	12