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The role the LGBTQ+ Community Plays in Preserving Their Own History: The Rise of LGBTQIA+ Grassroots Archives

By Abigail Hollingsworth

Readers: Dr. Stacy Creel, Dr. Jeffery Hirschy

INTRODUCTION

The preservation of historical documents and artifacts is nothing new, however as archiving established itself as an academic principle the process of collection became more and more selective. For many, this meant that the history of their people and ancestors were excluded from the official documentation. This has led to the formation of grassroots archives for and by minority groups with institutions such as the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA), June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, The ArQuives (Canada LGBTQ2+ Archives), Stonewall National Museum and Archives, and the John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives (Way Gay Archives) all founded after the Gay Liberation Movement had begun.

The Gay Liberation Movement rose in the wake of the Stonewall Riots in New York City. In 1969, cops raided gay bars such as the Stonewall Inn frequently, however the week between June 28 and July 3, the New York queer community fought back and started protesting the unfair treatment of LGBTQ+ people. This sparked similar protests, as well as raising awareness for queer issues throughout the country, and the gay liberation movement was born (Corbman, 2019). For members of the LGBTQ+ community, there has been an emphasis on personal collection and preservation since the early twentieth century, leading to a plethora of queer community lead archives (Corbman, 2019). While there has been a rise in interest in LGBTQ+ materials in traditional archival institutions, if it was not for the original pioneers of queer life and academics saving important artifacts, much of queer history would be lost to time (Cooper, 2015).

However, issues can arise from developing archives with little to no professional guidance. For example, those without the proper training attempting to keep donations well stored and organized can become overwhelmed, and the process can be filled with errors in the beginning (Caswell, 2014). Most of these grassroots, LGBTQ+ community archives date back to the 1970s when it was still illegal to be a homosexual in many areas of North America. The idea of being “out and proud” was not widely

accepted, even as the activism and the formation of LGBTQ+ groups started to rise in the latter portion of the twentieth century (Corbman, 2019). Also, within a decade of these institutions being founded and the Gay Liberation Movement picking up traction, the AIDS/HIV epidemic began to wreak havoc on the queer community (Corbman, 2019). A sense of pride in collecting LGBTQ+ materials became a sense of urgency, as many within the queer community saw their loved ones struggle, and eventually lose their battle with the virus. However, the LGBTQ+ community has taken these hardships and turned them into beautiful narrative histories. Rather than seeing the historic exclusion of queer people as something to mourn, the LGBTQ+ community has taken in stride the ‘do-it-yourself’ mentality and many have created unique and authentic collections that truly represent the community and its history (Corbman, 2019). From milk crates inside apartments, to fully digital collections, the LGBTQ+ community has been shaping and preserving their own history for decades, with grassroots LGBTQ+ archives dating back to at least the 1970s.

Purpose Statement

This study conducted a collection analysis of five LGBTQ+ grassroots archives located in North America to exhibit how marginalized communities build and preserve their history on their own. By assessing the different collections for certain metrics and demographics such as the number of materials representing different aspects of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the types of materials prioritized from t-shirts to posters and books, this study highlights the role these community archives play in the representation of marginalized histories. By documenting these types of metrics, this study aimed to exhibit how these community led archives collect materials, and what it looks like to operate grassroots, volunteer archives for a marginalized group such as the LGBTQ+ community.

Research Questions

R1: How is each collection organized and presented? What are the differences and similarities?

R2: What do each of these collections consist of? What is most heavily represented within each archive: literature, photographs, physical items, or other ephemera?

R3: What are the demographics represented within each collection?

R4: How many years does each collection span? What time periods are the holdings of each collection from, and when did these repositories officially start a collection?

Definitions

Ally: someone who is in full support of the LGBTQ+ community, but is themselves straight and cisgender (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019).

Folx: a term commonly used by the LGBTQ+ community to denote its members in a non-gendered and inclusive way (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Grassroots: a community, movement, or organization that is started and supported by a group of laypeople. Starting from the ground up with no official institutional ties. Something that is for the community, by the community (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, etc. This is a term used to reference the community as a whole. This group includes anyone who does not fit into the heterosexual, cisgender binary. The plus sign is included to delineate any members not represented by the first five terms in the acronym. In older texts, before the AIDS crisis, the term may be seen in different iterations such as GLBT, etc. (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Queer: used in this piece as a shorthand term to mean anyone within the LGBTQ+ community (it is important to note that some within the LGBTQ+ community still find this phrase offensive, while others feel this term alone represents their experience, and its use in everyday life is still hotly debated) (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Ephemera: things that were manufactured to be discarded after use, however with time it becomes a collectible (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Delimitations

This study includes collection analyses of five grassroots or community archives throughout North America. There is also a particular focus on institutions that offer online catalogs or collection summaries, as this study will be conducted through internet searches, rather than in person. Excluded from this research are any repositories whose collections are not mainly in English, or are not located in North America.

Assumptions

It is assumed that all collections reflect, in some way, the community they are aiming to serve. As well, it is assumed that these institutions are operated at a communal level with little to no ties to established libraries or academic institutions, making them fit the definition outlined in this study of a grassroots archive. All of the archives researched are now, and always have been, established for the preservation and continued connection of the LGBTQ+ community. Each of these archives, while there may be overlap in the collections, are mostly unique and offer specific and diverse holdings that will further the goal of the study.

Importance of Study

As previously mentioned, the work of archiving for many minority groups has fallen to those within the group that have the time and resources available to maintain a collection. This can be full of trials and trepidations. The goal of this study is to assess the holdings of each archival collection in order to draw conclusions about the structure, history, and function of LGBTQ+ community archives. The hope was that in compiling these metrics from the collections of the five chosen repositories, patterns would emerge and highlight greater themes present in the preservation of queer+ histories. This study hopes to highlight the role grassroots archives play in the representation of marginalized history, as well as show that minority groups such as the LGBTQ+ community have successfully preserved their own history outside of a traditional setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LGBTQ+

There have been queer people throughout history that have fought to live openly and freely, even before there was a community or common identifiers.

Despite this, it was not until the twentieth century that the LGBTQ+ community came together in ways that would be recognizable today. Corbman (2019) observed this phenomenon and breaks down how the queer movement progressed during the twentieth century.

Starting around the 1950s, groups of LGBTQ+ people began to create their own records, newspapers, groups, and spaces specifically for the queer community. Commonly referred to by those active in the scene at the time, as the “homophile” movement. It was characterized by magazines, periodicals, and the formation of groups such as the Mattachine Society to educate other LGBTQ+ people and the public at large (Corbman, 2019). Some organizations at the time, such as the Daughters of Bilitis, even had their own library with inter-chapter loaning of lesbian and queer literature. A magazine from this time that has gone on to make a major impact in the field is *ONE* inc. Starting from a monthly publication in 1955, the group continued to grow, creating the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies in 1956. Eventually, in 1981 they were given accreditation by the state of California to issue graduate degrees. In 1994 the institute closed, and ONE merged with the International Gay and Lesbian Archives, which was maintained by a founding member of ONE. The University of Southern California obtained the combined collections in 2000 and still manages them to this day. Now known as the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, the collection is currently the biggest and most expansive LGBTQ+ repositories in the world (Corbman, 2019).

By the 1970s and 80s, the Gay Liberation Front, and the movement towards LGBTQ+ acceptance were in full swing. Many queer community archives arose because of this. Between 1973-1974 alone at least four LGBTQ+ archives were established in North America. The Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives were founded in Toronto at this time and still operate under the title The ArQuives (a recent change from the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives). This is still the biggest independent LGBTQ+ archive in the world. The Stonewall Library and Archives, and the Lesbian Herstory

Archives are some of the many organizations from this period that have stood the test of time and still function today (Corbman, 2019).

As time went on, there was a clear gap in educational or academic resources surrounding the LGBTQ+ community. Because of this, educational groups started to pop up such as the Lesbian and Gay History Project (originally The Gay History Group), the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project, and the GLBT Historical Society. All of these archives, publications, and educational groups formed around the same time and reached out to each other for help and support in order to create communication lines throughout the U.S. and Canada. This resulted in the 1980 *Lesbian/Gay History Researchers Network Newsletter*, in which these organizations took turns writing, creating, and producing each month. By the 1980s and 1990s, queer studies were starting to be implemented in colleges and universities, and with it, LGBTQ+ research centers, journals, and book series were now seen in the academic world. The political and social environment around LGBTQ+ issues also started to change with more people coming out and creating a market for queer materials. However, the AIDS/HIV epidemic also played a huge role in the development of LGBTQ+ issues. The work towards queer representation that was starting to become common in universities began to slowly trickle down to public libraries as well. For example, the New York Public Library did an exhibit titled *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall*, which was the largest showing of queer materials at the time to ever be displayed in a museum or gallery space (Corbman, 2019).

Today, universities and large public repositories tend to have the biggest collections of LGBTQ+ materials, even though many queer community archives are still around. Although this is the case, many of these smaller, grassroots collections are working towards becoming digital and creating open access to these LGBTQ+ holdings. For example, the ONE Archives are completely searchable through the Online Archive of California. It can be difficult for grassroots archives to create and maintain a web presence like this, as there are fewer resources available to those not connected to any institution. Despite this, many community archives have collection descriptions and finding aids available. Some, such as the Lesbian Herstory Archives have teamed up with academic repositories (in this case

the Pratt Institute Library) to begin the process of digitizing their collections. For queer individuals, these grassroots archives may be the only real connection available to a colorful, and many times, suppressed past (Corbman, 2019).

As previously mentioned, the Lesbian Herstory Archives is one of the oldest, and largest collections centering queer women. Corbman also helps paint a picture of the history of this archive within an entry in the *Global Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (2019). The founders of the LHA met at the Gay Academic Union in 1963, where they all expressed interest in creating a non-traditional archive focused on lesbian issues. Sahli Cavallaro, Deborah Edel, Joan Nestle, Pamela Oline, and Julia Penelope Stanley made up the original group of women who started collecting materials, as well as sending out newsletters calling for submissions to the archive. LHA was originally located in co-founder Nestle's New York City apartment for the first two decades of operation until the holdings outgrew the apartment and thousands of queer people had begun visiting the archives. In 1991, the LHA raised enough money to buy a three-story building at 484 Fourteenth Street and officially finished moving in in 1993. The collection is still in this building as of 2019 (Corbman, 2019)

The LHA was founded on the principle of "by the people, for the people." Nestle herself wrote articles insisting that using traditional institutions and academic repositories would be detrimental to preserving LGBTQ+ history. These large institutions were the same places that had erased, and not been interested in, queer existence for hundreds of years after all. The LHA, unlike most archives, does not have a cap on the amount of material they will receive and take in, as long as it has to do with lesbians or queer women. Also, the organization has always been all volunteer-based, and decisions are made on the basis of consensus (Corbman, 2019).

Another archive that has operated and thrived, despite being housed in a residential location, is the BC Gay and Lesbian Archives. For forty years this archive has been housed and operated by retired librarian Ron Dutton out of his Vancouver apartment (Cooper, 2015). This collection has mandated that they prioritize information relevant to the LGBTQ+ scene in British Columbia, not all of Canada. The archives also have no internet presence as of 2015

and are fully maintained and supported by Dutton. The collection is comprised of over 75,000 items and the archives are free to use and access. Dutton reported seeing around two researchers a week in person, but he received many more emails from journalists, scholars, authors, and curious members of the general public. Dutton networks frequently with other educational or LGBTQ+ groups to preserve more and more queer history. The local BC Simon Fraser University has shown interest in acquiring the archives, however, Dutton felt strongly that it was important to keep LGBTQ+ collections directly with and under the direction of queer people. That being said, in time he would like to partner with the Vancouver LGBTQ+ resource center QMUNITY (Cooper, 2015).

This collection highlights the importance of community-based, grassroots archiving within the LGBTQ+ community. However, it also raises questions about the issues of accessibility, sustainability, safety, and the concerns that come with public versus private collections. Cooper (2015) states, "Personal book collections and libraries and archives located in private homes are utilized by LGBT people because of the systemic barriers they, and by extension, the information relevant to them, have historically faced within institutional settings" (p. 262). While personal collections are vital for those in the LGBTQ+ community and may be the only way for some people to discover queer literature and history, many issues face these at-home archives. Some of these collections, such as the Sexual Minorities Archives, have been evicted from their homes and forced to crowd fund to save their collection, as well as their livelihood (Cooper, 2015, p.263). Until very recently, the only option for LGBTQ+ folk to collect and preserve their history was to create community lead archives, many times beginning within a queer person's home. However, while volunteer archivists should be praised for going the extra mile and putting in all the effort to maintain these collections, living spaces can be volatile and unstable. More and more queer community archives are starting to partner with local institutions to take some of the burdens off of volunteers, while also allotting for more resources to help these archives continue to grow and thrive (Cooper, 2015).

Though there are issues faced by grassroots archives, and partnerships with large institutions can be fruitful, these universities and other academic

organizations are not exempt from scrutiny. Schaller (2011) brings up the specific needs of LGBTQ+ students at American universities and discusses how often their needs are not met. Utilizing focus groups and interviews with individual students, the research conducted and summarized in Schaller's writing shows that LGBTQ+ students are a large and viable demographic, but that their access to information has many gaps and inequalities. This study was conducted at the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2011. There were mixed results in some areas. For example, it was clear that the need for queer representation is present, and that services need to be promoted for the LGBTQ+ community. However, some, especially the younger students, value discreteness. "The anxiety of possible disclosure and general library anxiety can turn into barriers to information for LGBTQ individuals" (Schaller, 2011, p. 111). This is a huge reason why libraries and other resources are not utilized by younger or closeted queer individuals. Something else uncovered was that despite the lack of "obvious" indications of homophobia or heterosexism, LGBTQ+ students reported that heteronormativity and heterosexual privilege were still massive issues and barriers that needed to be overcome. Students felt that the only information available had a heavy emphasis on the heterosexual experience, making any research they did feel alienating. Through this research, the library staff at UNCG was able to collect suggestions, ideas, and plans, in order to implement new projects to cater to the needs of the LGBTQ community. This included displays, subject guides, pathfinders, online tutorials, and workshops (Schaller, 2011).

Some issues of queer+ representation and classification bleed into both the institutional and community sectors of LGBTQ+ archiving. Kristine Nowak and Amy Jo Mitchell (2016) use their experience working at an LGBTQ+ center (the Gay and Lesbian Service Organization (GLSO) in Lexington, Kentucky) to analyze the effectiveness of their classification methods while proposing that a new system be created to classify and catalog LGBTQ+ materials. According to the researchers, the way libraries organize themselves and conduct cataloging can leave a lot of room for personal prejudices and can create systemic issues in the cataloging process as a whole. The Dewey Classification system, while effective in many ways, has been used for so long that it can pass down the

mentalities of oppression with it (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016). Certain topics within the GLSO catalog had a very small range of call numbers, making most of the queer collection categorized under random topics. They pointed out that this starkly contrasts the 99 numbers under which Christianity can be cataloged (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016). Upon even further investigation it was found that many of these queer titles were cataloged under wrongful information such as 'Marriage', 'The Family', and just 'Women' (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016, para. 2). These were some of the more tolerable categories found in the classification of the collection, but there were also some offensive subgroups. Because of the eye-opening experiences in trying to classify things at the Gay and Lesbian Service Organization, Nowak and Mitchell went about theorizing and constructing a whole new way to classify the 1600 volumes at GLSO. This experience highlighted those traditional methods used within the field of library sciences and archiving can be reductive, and straight-up offensive to those attempting to research LGBTQ+ materials. This raises the question, are community repositories better for classifying and preserving materials for minority groups? These types of grassroots institutions claim to be built and supported by a specific demographic, however, do they have the funding or communication needed to truly represent the targeted community?

A study by Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, and Cifor (2017) focused on these questions and asked how effective community archives are at representing the demographic they aim to serve. The researchers reached out to twelve different community archives in Southern California and set up interviews with seventeen people, ranging from volunteers and staff to organization founders. The goals of this research was to examine the range of community archives (both in type and impact) and to examine how this may reflect greater trends seen in the representation of marginalized groups. The group conducting the study posited that these community lead archives can have great effects on and for minority communities, whether that be those of race, sexuality, gender, class, ethnicity, or political positions.

There is inherent violence and isolation that can be felt when specific types of histories are erased. Many of those interviewed in the study considered themselves to be at the intersection of multiple identities. Those who find themselves in these

positions often have no resources or elders to look to when they are struggling or experiencing feelings of loneliness. It was expressed by participants that it can be very hard to survive when it seems like no one else has gone through the tribulations they face. The interviewees felt that they are trying to balance identities that are not socially understood or accepted (Caswell, 2017). Because of this, as stated in a quote by trans woman color and activist Reina Gossett, "There was a kind of historical isolation. And I think through doing this archival work...it made me think that that historical erasure is a form of violence and then it really made me feel that doing that work is even more important, right?" (Caswell, 2017, p. 5). These grassroots archives are vital to continued growth and representation in general while offering a place for under-served communities to learn about their past and establish connections for the future. This is not to say that larger, traditional repositories cannot help further representation, or that they poorly reflect these minority stories. However, for groups that have seen little to no academic attention in the past, it is important to open spaces that cater specifically to these under-served communities and to allow them full control of archival materials.

Grassroots

As previously stated, marginalized communities have struggled to gain representation within traditional academic institutions or repositories. However, when grassroots archives are eventually established for these communities, how can they know if their collections are properly representing the information needs of the target demographic? The goal of Caswell's (2014) study was to conduct an analysis of responses by South Asian American students who have, or could in the future, use the South Asian American Digital Archive. In these responses, Caswell hoped to understand what this demographic wanted to see in a community archive that was framed to directly represent them, as well as understand if this user group was satisfied with the offerings of the SAADA (Caswell, 2014).

The South Asian American Archive was founded in 2008 by Caswell and Samip Mallick. Both researchers at the University of Chicago, the pair noticed that no major institutions considered collecting for South Asian communities a major priority. Because of this, and the want to create a space that was operated and curated by South Asians, the two incorporated a nonprofit and began searching

for materials. As of 2014, the SAADA was home to the largest publicly accessible collection on South Asian Americans and was the only nonprofit focused on this work. The group was still working (as of the time of publication) to open a public physical location for the archive (Caswell, 2014).

Within this study, the researchers asked two major questions to South Asian American undergraduate students to gauge where the archive was at, and the areas it could grow in. The first question was, "What stories from your parents' or grandparents' lives do you wish you knew more about?" (Caswell, 2014, p. 4). This received 202 responses, with 137 creating usable data. Of these responses, two major themes emerged. Firstly, many students wanted to know more about South Asian history as a whole, and what roles their family played in this history. Secondly, participants were curious to know more about the cultural, economic, and racial backlash their grandparents or parents faced when immigrating to the U.S. Other points such as the reasons for the migration of their relatives, the roles of women and emerging technology, and the religious and cultural practices of their ancestors also arose within responses.

The second question researchers posited to the undergraduate students was, "What stories from your generation would you like your grandchildren to know more about?" (Caswell, 2014, p. 5). For this question, there were 95 usable responses. Many wished to further document South Asian American participation in the social justice movements of today. One of the biggest responses was students explaining the struggles of trying to be American while retaining their South Asian culture (Caswell, 2014). The next most popular response showed students revealing their struggles to fit into American society as a person of an ethnic minority. A small number of participants mentioned they wished there was more representation of LGBTQ+ issues and feminist activism in the community. Others stated technological change had a huge impact on the community, while some mentioned the importance of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the perceptions of Muslims and South Asians in America. Finally, a few participants went into the difficulty their community faces in choosing a nontraditional career, and that it can cause interfamilial conflict (Caswell, 2014). In asking the particular user group of interest these questions, the SAADA had a better idea of the

narrative that their archive should follow. Archives that center specific histories can easily identify and study their target demographic, as they continue to grow their repositories. However, when representation becomes a specified collection within a university or other large institution, the needs of the user community can be forgotten.

In order to assess the representation of African American poetry within the repository, Sarah Heidelberg (2013) took a deep dive into the University of Southern Mississippi's de Grummond Literature Collection, with a specific interest in youth and young adult literature. She started by offering a brief synopsis of African American poetry throughout history and gave many points as to why poetry has always been an important part of storytelling, especially in the black community, "One of the diverse needs of a cultural minority is to preserve its roots and history; therefore, the African-American community needs to have the formative years of its poetry in the collection as well as poetry that is being explored by African-American children in the present day such as Slam Poetry" (Heidelberg, 2013, p. 3).

Heidelberg's study completed several tasks, including finding out the number of books within the de Grummond Collection that are of African American origins and could be placed within the timeframe of The Harlem Renaissance or The Black Arts Movement. She then compared the results to a list of the most well-recognized titles from these periods to see how the USM collection holds up. Heidelberg also used metrics such as "publication date, whether illustrated or non-illustrated, whether for children or young adults, number of winners of Cave Canem Award or Coretta Scott King Award, a checklist comparison to Patten's 1991 list of African-American Poets Past and Present, what portion of the works are in anthologies, and what terms are used to index the works examined in this study" (Heidelberg, 2013, p. 4).

The results showed that through searching the USM OPAC Heidelberg was only able to find two books from the Harlem Renaissance, and three from the Black Arts Movement. Out of the 45 books referenced in this piece, 38 were illustrated and seven were not, while 69% of those titles were classified as children or juvenile, and 31% were young adults (Heidelberg, 2013, p. 7). Heidelberg also mentions,

"The de Grummond Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi currently holds one hundred percent of the poets from the Harlem Renaissance listed on Patton's List in anthologies. The collection holds only eight out of 21 poets from the Black Arts Movement on the poets.org list. For a more complete collection, de Grummond could acquire anthologies or other works by the poets on the poets.org list" (2013, p. 8). She found that the de Grummond Collection, while offering some titles for children and young adults that reflect these periods, ultimately could do more to accentuate the importance of the African American poetry movement. Unfortunately, it can be very common for larger institutions, or even governmental entities to lose track of their archival materials and collections. However, when these institutions fail, everyday citizens can step in and attempt to organize and classify.

A 2014 study attempted to present data that reflected a specific sentiment: If there is no local governmental structure for archiving, community archives will pop up to take its place (Collins Shortall, 2014). Ireland, at the time this piece was published, did not have an established model to create or maintain local archives; despite government mandates that this type of preservation was necessary. This meant that many places in Ireland had no archivists or archival plans, and had been forced to hand off the archiving work to untrained historic societies, national institutions, or even private collectors. The goal of this study was to use information about archiving practices throughout Ireland while questioning the stakeholders of the County Offaly to see the perspectives of those involved in local government.

Collins Shortall found, as many other researchers have suggested, that when governmental entities fail to perform, the community will step in and create their own institutions. In this case, lack of official interest led to the creation of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society. This new organization, responding to the lack of care in preserving records by the local library, and through exhuming government records became the "*de facto* county archive" (Collins Shortall, 2014, p. 151). One of the other things found in this study was that, to the community members in Offaly, the physical institution was more important than creating digital access. To those in the county, the tangible space would represent their history and the movement to preserve this history (Collins Shortall, 2014). It was also found that the library started its own collection

of materials that were recovered and that were donated, creating a symbiotic relationship between the community lead Offaly History and the Offaly Library. The responses gathered by stakeholders also suggested that this kind of collaboration would be preferable going forward than to have all of the county's archivable material handled by one entity (Collins Shortall, 2014). If the need and the passion are there, people will come together to serve the community. This principle can be seen throughout the world of archiving, even for unexpected user groups.

Composed of an extremely tight-knit community, the punk scene in Washington D.C. has retained a dedicated following since this music arrived in the nation's capital. Based on suggestions from D.C. punks, and to commemorate the impact the punk movement had on the area, The Punk Archive at the Washington, D.C. Public Library was born in 2014. Ray Barker (2020), the archivist for this special collection, wrote an article that laid out the origins of the repository while highlighting the importance of direct community involvement in the archival process. It is important to have a sense of collaboration when it comes to working with a scene that prides itself on an anti-establishment, do-it-yourself attitude, being close counterparts, and a group that centers around music and aesthetics. The collection, which resides in the MLK Library in the heart of D.C., contains 50 linear feet of material from about 25 different contributors (Baker, 2020).

As with many aspects of the movement, The Punk Archives came into existence because of conversation and shared interest. Special Collections Librarian Michele Casto happened to live in the same apartment complex as the D.C. documentarian James Schneider. One day the two met and struck up a conversation about the film Schneider was working on at the time, *Punk the Capitol: Building a Sound Movement*. He knew he could help Casto get in contact with people who would be willing to donate to and help form this special collection. Casto, with the DCPL archives team, formed the outreach and programming staff and worked with well-known members of the punk scene to create the archive and open it on October 2, 2014 (Baker, 2020).

The DCPL makes it a point to honor and respect the non-hierarchical and DIY nature of the movement. The punk scene is and has always been, about

localized communities, mixing the artistic with the political, and representing the underdog. The repository works with the donors and contributors to make sure the archive reflects the true nature of the punk movement. When creating a collection that represents a specific demographic, it is vital to make sure that those embedded in the subculture are heavily involved. Even groups that usually do not associate themselves with organizations or keeping strict records deserve to be represented and remembered. In order to accomplish this goal, archivists must engage with these communities. Studies such as Heidelberg (2013), Nowack and Mitchell (2016), and Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, and Cifor (2017) all contain certain methodologies that are similar to this study. The collection analysis work of Heidelberg and Nowack and Mitchell, though both studies focused on singular repositories, helped inform how the collections in this study were assessed. While Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, and Cifor interviewed subjects to show if the collection best served the user demographic (and this study included no surveys), the goals of their study and this one are similarly reflected. Each of the studies presented offered different goals and research, however, the methodologies, topics, or collections exhibited helped inform the proceedings of this analysis. It has been made clear that community archives are everywhere, and that they are thriving. While there may be some struggles associated with the creation and maintenance of grassroots collections, they are vital for the proper representation of minority or alternative groups. This is especially true for the LGBTQ+ community, whose history has been ignored and suppressed for years, despite the work of queer archivists creating and sustaining personal collections.

METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a collections analysis of five different LGBTQ+ Archives throughout North America. By comparing and contrasting the holdings of these different collections, the goal was to understand the collection patterns of these repositories and see what this said about LGBTQ+ grassroots archives.

Information Sources and Procedures

The collections of the following LGBTQ+ grassroots archives were assessed based on the criteria laid out in the research questions: Lesbian Herstory Archives, June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, The ArQuives

(Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives) Stonewall National Museum and Archives, and Jon J. Wilcox Jr. Archives (Way Gay Archives). These archives were selected because of the scope of materials available at each repository, as well as the accessibility of the archival collections. Also, each of these grassroots archives were founded in the latter half of the twentieth century, around the time the Gay Liberation Movement started to gain traction.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives

The Lesbian Herstory Archives is one of the oldest institutions specifically collecting materials focused on lesbians, queer women, and the feminist movement and is based in New York City. The founders felt that “Lesbian history was ‘disappearing as quickly as it was being made’” (LHA, 2022)

The June L. Mazer Archives

The June L. Mazer Archives, situated on the West Coast, wants to offer a vital link to the past, and encourage women to learn about, and even contribute to lesbian and feminist history. They hold the honor of being the “largest major archive on the West Coast dedicated to preserving and promoting lesbian and feminist history and culture” (Mazer Lesbian Archives, 2022). They want to encourage lesbians and feminists to fight against the historic erasure of these communities, and to make more people feel less alone in their journey of self discovery by offering a look into lesbians of the past.

Canada's ArQuives (Canada LGBTQ2+ Archives)

Canada's ArQuives is a non-profit repository and is the largest queer archive in Canada, with a vast amount of material available for viewing online. Their mission is to “acquire, preserve, and give public access to information and materials in any medium, by and about LGBTQ2+ people, primarily produced in or concerning Canada,” and “maintain a research library, international research files, and an international collection of LGBTQ2+ periodicals” (The ArQuives, 2022)

The Stonewall National Museum and Archives

The Stonewall National Museum and Archives, despite its namesake, is located in Florida with a mission to collect materials related to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, as well as inspire collaboration and offer a safe space. The archive is fifty years old, and claims to be one of the largest gay archives and libraries in the United States. This non-

profit has constant workshops, exhibitions, and other events at its South Florida location, as well as contributing to other LGBTQ+ events across the country (SNMA, 2022).

The John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives

Finally, the John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives represent the LGBTQ+ community of Philadelphia, while also gathering materials from around the United States. Starting as a library, the archive's records are extensive and cover a large number of years. This archive is a part of the William Way LGBT community center, and strives to uphold this dedication to supporting and uplifting the queer community (John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives, 2022).

There are different documents where the physical metrics of each archive can be observed and recorded. Each document will represent certain questions including: How many of each type of material fall into particular categories (photographs, documents, correspondence, etc.) (Appendix A)? What are the demographics contained within each collection (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc., as well as contributions by Black people and other individuals of color versus white people) (Appendix B)? and What time periods and dates are reflected in the collection (Figure 15). The archive's websites were used and their digital materials were inspected, as this is a remote study. These collections were examined by using a search feature when available, and reading through the collection materials when there was no search function. Throughout this search/examination the different metrics laid out in the research questions were documented. The grassroots archives were searched from February 1 to March 20, 2022. Once the documents were complete, the data was compared and contrasted for all of the different grassroots archives. These metrics were then converted into charts and graphics in order to get a clear representation of the data.

Limitations

The data collected was limited to remote access. The research was conducted in February and March of 2022. The information on the websites may have been different prior to or post collections.

RESULTS

R1: How is each collection organized and presented? What are the differences and similarities?

Each of the five archives, and their websites, were comprised of different materials and subject areas. The collections of the repositories were presented in unique ways that highlighted the fact that grassroots archives do not follow a traditional structure and use methods that work best for their holdings. For example, each website visited and collection exhibited were organized and presented differently. Some even had separate collections within the same repository offering differing insights, separate web pages for more processed collections, or sometimes just overviews of collections.

First, the Lesbian Herstory Archives offer both a collections overview of each of their major subject areas including: Books and Monographs, Video Collection, Biographical Files, Geographical Files, Organizational Files, Periodicals, Newsletters and Zines, Special Collections, Subject Files, Spoken Word, T-Shirt Collection, Banners, LHA Newsletters, Buttons, Unpublished Papers, Photo Collection, and Graphics. However, the Digital section of the website offers full access to the collections that have been digitized: The Special Collections Index, Herstories: Audio/Visual Collections, the T-Shirt Collection Catalog, the Button Collection Catalog, the Periodicals Collection Catalog, the Photo Collection Sampler, and the LHA Newsletters. These collections have their own links leading to digitized materials. Each section is hosted on different websites including WordPress and Airtable, however certain collections have been digitized by outside institutions. The archives partnered with the Pratt Institute to process and host the Audio/Visual collection, and the Photo Collection lives on the Digital Culture of Metropolitan New York's website.

Second, the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives divides their collections into five key areas: the UCLA Collections, Notable Collections, Digital Collections, Finding Aids, and Video Collections. The repository offers overviews of each collection on the main collections page, as well as links to the digitized matters. The UCLA Collections are detailed in a resource guide titled "Making Invisible Histories Visible" that the archives provide a link to. This is an e-book describing the partnership between the June

L. Mazer Archives and the University of Southern California, dating back to the 1980s, as well as essays and finding aids to the collection's holdings. There are also five collections fully available with finding aids through the UCLA Library's Digital Collections. These include: Connexus/Centro de Mujeres Collection, the Cruikshank (Margaret) Collection, the Faderman (Lillian) Collection, the Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) Collection, and the Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Collection. Next, the Notable Collections are described in short, with links to available collections or overviews when applicable. This section of the website contains overlap between the other collections, describing and linking to pages that are also available in other areas. For example, the five collections hosted on the UCLA Library's website are also linked under Notable Collections. The materials in this collection that are not available through the UCLA libraries are hosted on the Online Archive of California. The Digital Collections include two subsections: The T-Shirt Collection and the Mazer Buttons. There are links provided to the digitized materials available for each collection and these are both hosted directly on the June L. Mazer Archives website. The Mazer Archives Finding Aids consist of a combination of video overviews and written overviews. Again, there is overlap in this collection with items available in other collections. There are eight finding aids available in this collection, and each aid is offered directly on this collections overview page. Finally, The Video Collections are linked at the top of the collections overview page and lead to a different area of the archives' website where the video content is hosted.

Third, The ArQuives (Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives) offers a direct link to a database of their archive under the "Collections" section of their website that is searchable and detailed. They give an overview of the types of materials available in their collection including: textual records, audio-visual records, posters, photographs, artifacts, and artwork. The archive and the James Fraser Reference Library are operated under the same organization, and a short description of its holdings are given which cover: fiction and nonfiction, monographs (academic works, pamphlets, annual reports, or any unbound or not traditional bond publication), and LGBTQ2+ Serials (newsletters, zines, magazines, callers, and reoccurring publications). The Art and Artifacts Collections are explained in further detail as well as

the Artifact Collection containing the Button, Matchbook, and T-Shirt Collections and the Art Collection housing the National Portrait Collection. The Reference Material Section is also highlighted, which encompasses vertical files of international, Canadian, and American research files and public materials and the Newspaper Index consisting of newspaper clippings from LGBTQ2+ media. Finally, the collections page ends with offering collections guides, however, the only one linked is the guide to the Trans Collection.

Fourth, The Stonewall National Museum and Archive has descriptions of and links to collection materials under the “Archives” section of their website. The Fasana/Graham Archive is described in detail as focusing on the “last half of the 20th century to the present day, the Fasana/Graham Archive comprises over 2,700 linear feet (twice the height of the Empire State Building) of items documenting LGBTQ political, cultural and social history. It contains more than 6 million pages of materials” (SNMA, 2022) It is mentioned that the physical archive offers tours and scholarly use by appointment, as well as showing pictures of the physical archive and explaining how the loaning process works. The archive is sectioned off into seven different categories: Archival Files, Fine Art, Oral Histories, Posters, Pulp Fiction, Serials, and Textiles. A finding aid is available and linked, and it is divided by subject heading. Each of the seven categories are then described in detail and contain partial lists of each collection’s holdings or subtopics. Archival Files are categorized by subject

matter, or if they were collected by an individual or organization. The Fine Art section is divided into prints, photographs, and other items created by LGBTQ+ artists. Posters and Pulp Fiction have no subsections, but descriptions are included. The Serials encompass over 1,000 magazines, newspapers, and newsletters and are then grouped by subject matter. Each subject is listed and linked to the archive’s holdings that fit within that topic. Finally, the textiles collection is described as t-shirts, sweatshirts, and other pieces, and includes items worn by celebrities (all of the celebrities are listed).

Fifth and finally the William Way LGBT Community Center and John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives list their 62 digitized collections directly on their website. The webpage includes only three subject headings, each with direct links to the collection, as they are just different ways to organize the digitized materials. Researchers can search the holdings directly, go through the collections alphabetically or by date (ascending or descending), or they can peruse by subject or name (both individuals or organizations). Each collection includes finding aids and summaries with an Abstract, Dates, and Subjects, Creators, Conditions Governing Access and Use, Historical Background, Extent, etc. At the top of the description of each collection, there are tabs for “Collection Overview,” “Collection Organization,” and “Container Inventory.” If the holdings of the collection are digitized access is offered through the “Collection Organization” and/or the “Container Inventory.”

Figure 1: Exhibits the differences and similarities between the five archives.

Comparison of the Archives’ Websites	Lesbian Herstory Archives	John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives	June L. Mazer Archives	The ArQuives	SNMA
Searchable	Somewhat	Yes	Somewhat	Yes	Somewhat
Collection Overviews Offered	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Digitized Materials Directly on the Website	7 out of 17 collections offer digitized materials	62 out of 69 collections offer digitized materials	3 out of 5 collections offer digitized materials	110 out of 110 collections offer digital materials	1 out of 7 collections offer digital materials

Comparison of the Archives' Websites	Lesbian Herstory Archives	John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives	June L. Mazer Archives	The ArQuives	SNMA
Finding Aids Available	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partnerships with other Institutions	Yes: The Digital Culture of Metropolitan New York	None listed	Yes: UCLA Center for the Study of Women and the UCLA Library	None Listed	None listed, however the subtopics in the serial collection offer finding aids that provide links to other institutions that also have the serial

Each of these archives has vastly different ways of presenting its collections and holdings. Figure 1 lays out some of the main differences and similarities shown on each different website. Each website was navigated differently, and the amount of digitized material varied. For example, The LHA presents their collections by material type, the June L. Mazer Archives focus on dividing the collection by content, and the ArQuives, the SNMA, and the John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives all offer search features for their digitally processed collections. All five archives had differing amounts of materials digitized, for example the ArQuives offers thousands and thousands of digitized items and information, while the Stonewall National Archive and Museum is more focused on their physical collection and only offers finding aids for their holdings. These archives show how grassroots organizations, even with the same subject matter and goals, can vastly vary in their methods of collection and documentation. Despite this, each archive's collections were relatively easy to find, were divided by subject in some way, and offered detailed information on the materials available in each collection, even if the material itself was not digitized. Also, each of these repositories started from humble beginnings that can usually be traced back to a group or single individual. Every archive studied offered a brief history, and through this conveyed the passion and dedication it takes to create and uphold a community archive.

R2: What do each of these collections consist of? What is most heavily represented within each archive: literature, photographs, physical items, or other ephemera, etc.?

All five archives have large collections spanning many different categories. The data presented exhibits the information accessible to the public on each of the archives' websites (Appendices A and B).

The Lesbian Herstory Archives has an expansive collection, much of which is labeled and is easily identifiable. While their special collections are organized and sectioned out by year, there are over 400 individual collections designated as "Special Collections." The Audio/Visual Collection contains "over 3,000 oral history cassettes in the Archives' Spoken Word Collection and 950 videotapes in its collection. As of May 2021, over 385 hours or about 16 days worth of content has been digitized and made available to the public on the LHA Audio/Visual Collections website" (LHA, 2022). The T-Shirt Collection consists of 31 boxes and a total of 1119 t-shirts representing several different demographics. Other garments include the Button Collection, which consists of 2,286 pieces, also covering a wide array of demographics. The large Periodical Collection contains about 1,600 titles, with a breakdown of the number of journals, newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, and zines in Figure 3. The Photo Collection includes around 12,000 covering a range

of different topics, with 662 images searchable online. Finally, the LHA Newsletter Collection contains 19 items dated between 1975-2004.

The June L. Mazer Archives are more limited on the amount of information available online through their website. The Collections tab starts by stating that the collection contains “fiction and nonfiction items numbering more than 2300 titles” (JLMA, 2022). Within the archive’s work with UCLA, they have processed 82 collections according to the "Making

Invisible Histories Visible”. Out of that number 21 items are related to organizations or projects and 61 are personal collections. Under the Notable Collections, there are 38 collection descriptions that are labeled as follows: 22 personal paper/materials, one ephemera, three publications and clippings, one correspondence, seven organizational, one music, two artwork, two memorabilia, two videos, one pulp novel, one LP, two published book, one garment, two photos.

Figure 2: Special Collections of the LHA

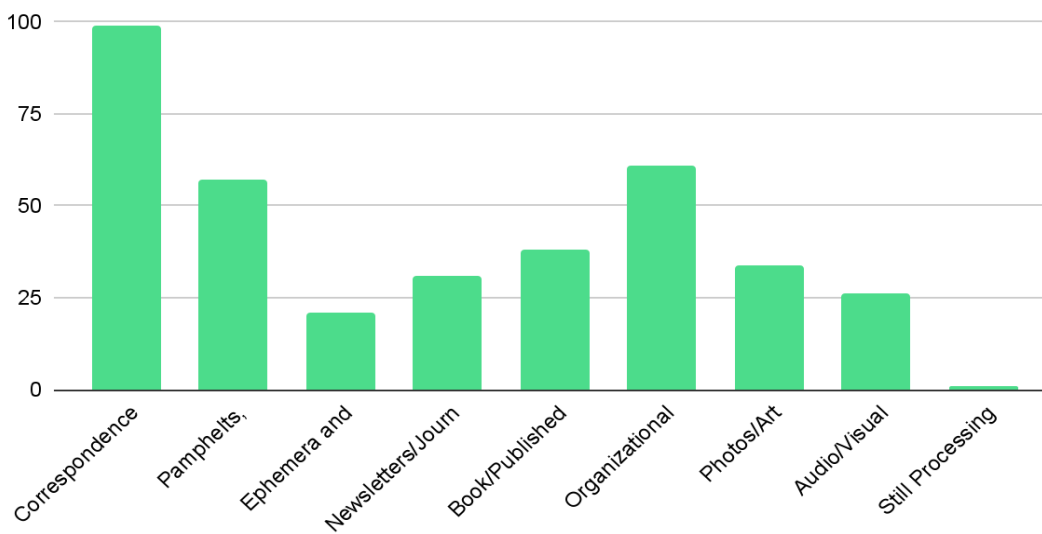
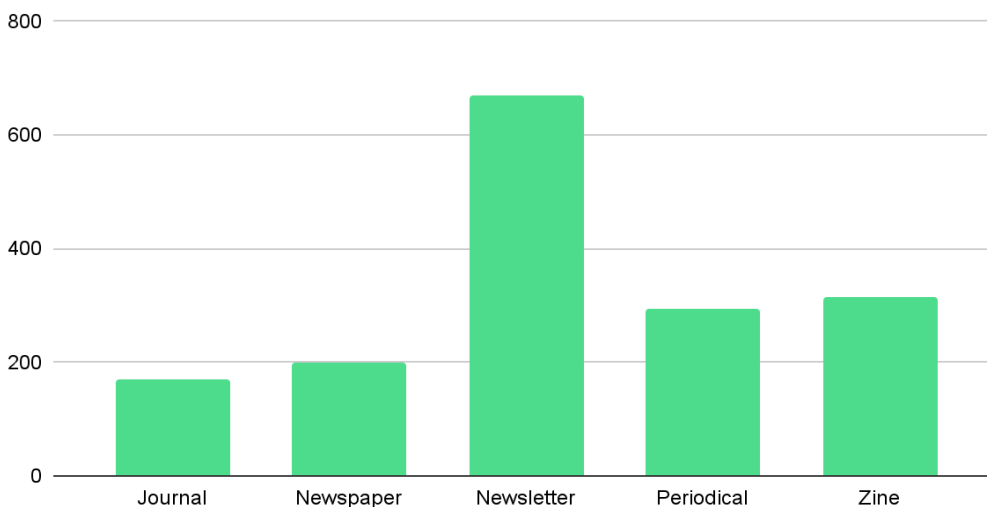


Figure 3: LHA Periodical Collection



The archive lists in the T-Shirt Collection that they have accrued more than 300 t-shirts. The General T-Shirts have eight viewable online and the Music and Film Festival T-Shirts have 18 viewable online. The largest collection available online is the Mazer Digital Button Collection. The buttons total 476, all of which are publicly accessible on the website.

There are nine Finding Aids directly available on the website with one video giving a general overview of the nine collections. The Betsy York Collection includes women's music in audio cassettes and 45 formats, concert posters, a scrapbook, an oral history, and personal papers. The Lillian Freedman Collection consists of 13 boxes of publications, three boxes of correspondence, eight boxes of printed matter, and one partial box of audio materials. This information was found through the UCLA collaboration, however, the exact number of items in each box was not given. The Margaret Porter Collection includes unpublished documents, research files, personal journals, newsletters, meeting minutes, her Army Corps uniform, photographs, and her personal book collection. There is a trailer for "Paris was a Woman" as well an image of the book *Trés Femmes*. There are no exact numbers available for this collection. The Ester F. Bentley Collection includes organizational materials for groups she was a part of, personal materials, professional materials, and photographs. Again, no exact numbers are available. The Gina Young Collections is organized by physical materials and digital materials. The physical collection contains program and event flyers, postcards, zines, performance programs, marketing materials, and DVDs and CDs. The digital collection comprises photos relating to Young's life and work. Fifteen images from the collection are viewable online. There are no exact numbers available for this collection. The Juanita Sanchez Collection is divided into two sections: her personal journals and diaries, and photographs. There are 53 personally written journals, as well as a copy of *Hard-Hatted Women: Life on the Job*. Three photos of Sanchez's journals are available on the website. The Diane F. Germain Collection consists of cartoons, her master's thesis, manuscripts and correspondences, buttons, clothing, and novelty items. This finding aid includes four of Diane F. Germain's comics, as well as four

documents related to Califia. The Dr. Marie Cartier Collection contains oral history projects from her students at the University of California Northridge, physical collections related to these projects, digital collections relating to these projects, and Dr. Cartier's personal clippings and ephemera.

Finally, the video collection is available through the June L. Mazer Website contains 73 videos divided into six categories containing: 42 event videos, 18 personal oral history videos, B-E collection with 39 videos, Mazer collection with six videos, five promotional videos, and two videos on "Preserving All of Our History."

The ArQuives, as their entire digital collection of 111,071 items are searchable, have much of the information needed readily available. On the collections site, there are options to search, advanced search, browse the collection, and browse materials types. In total there are 144 collections: 63 of these collections are personal records or fonds, and 81 are pertaining to a social group or are a more general collection (books, art, monographs, etc. Figure 4 contains all of the information of materials types by the ArQuives. In total there are 669 T-Shirts, 744 buttons, 4872 artifacts, 541 artworks, 1323 items in the audio collection, 924 books, 12 items in the moving picture collection, 10434 LGBTQ Serials, 3900 Monographs (one oversized), 1290 items in the music collection, 4861 items in the newspaper collection, 4162 items in the photograph collection, 3939 items in the posters collection, 722 rare books, 37,428 vertical files.

The Stonewall National Museum and Archives offers a finding aid for the entirety of their holdings. The finding aid is presented in PDF format and is divided by demographic category. The document is missing several pieces of information about the archive's holdings. The archive, according to the website, is categorized into seven topics: archival files, oral histories, fine art, posters, serials, pulp fiction, and textiles. There is different information offered for different entries, but the majority of the archive's holdings offer the demographic main heading, then list the files within that demographic, not the individual items.

Figure 4: Material Types from the ArQuives

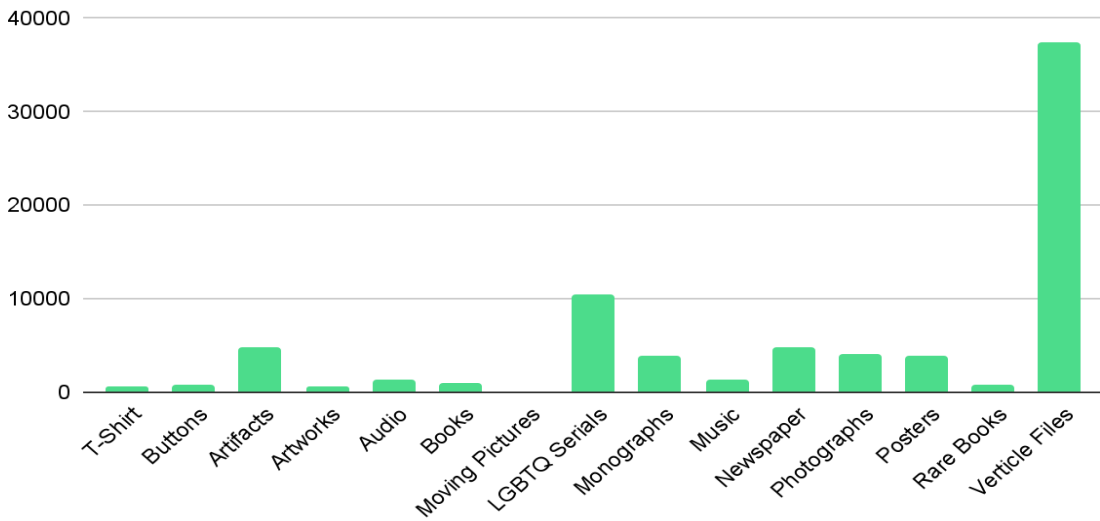
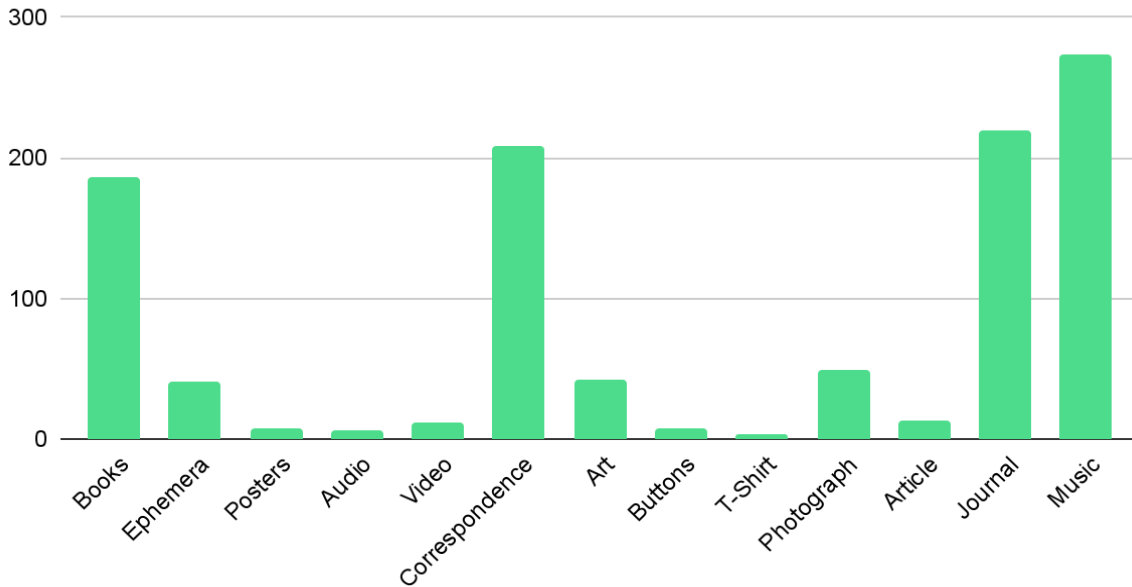


Figure 5: Material Types from the John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives



Within the finding aid, 41 collections are labeled “archival files”, two collections are labeled as “oral history”, four collections are labeled “fine art”, 24 collections have the label of “poster”, 30 collections are labeled as “serials”, one collection includes pulp fictions, and 62 collections are labeled as “lateral files.”

The John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives hosts their digitized collection on ArchivesSpace and offers a

search feature to explore their online materials. Since this website is essentially just a database, there is no general information offered in the collection as a whole, if it is stored or sorted by particular subjects or headings. Figure 5 includes the results from searching the key phrases: books, ephemera, posters, audio, video, correspondence, art, buttons, t-shirt, photograph, article, journal, and music.

Figure 6: LHA Demographic Information for the Periodical and Audio/Visual Collections

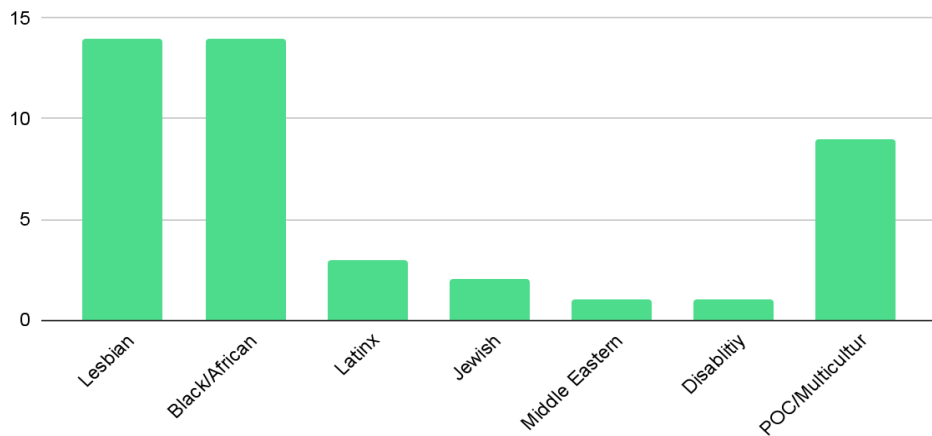
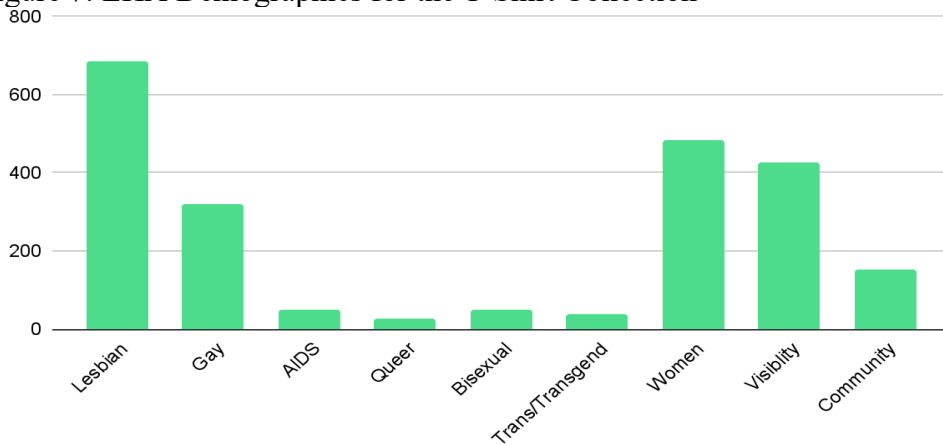


Figure 7: LHA Demographics for the T-Shirt Collection



R3: What are the demographics represented within each collection?

Demographic information was not as readily available for most of the archives as other forms of data. The archives were poured over and the available results are presented. No demographics were assumed, only what was explicitly laid out within the archives' collections are reported. The demographics included are gender, sexuality, race, and sometimes location. It is important to note that some of the demographics

may have overlap, as some entries may fit into more than one demographic.

For The Lesbian Herstory Archives, the demographic information is split between five charts. Figure 6 represents the data of the Special Collection, as well as the Audio/Visual Collection. Figure 7 encompasses the LHA T-Shirt Collection, while Figure 8 visualizes the Button Collection. Figure 9 shows the data from the Periodical Collection, and Figure 10 represents the Photo Collection of the LHA

Figure 8: LHA Demographics for the Button Collection

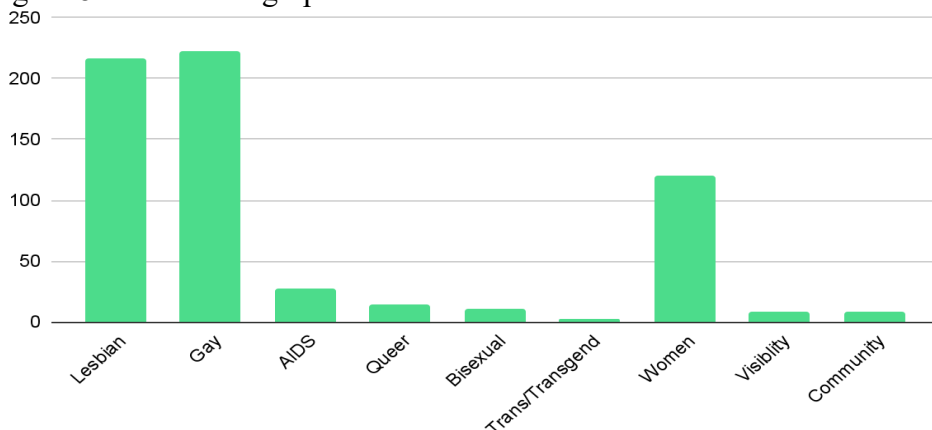


Figure 9: LHA Demographics for the Periodical Collection

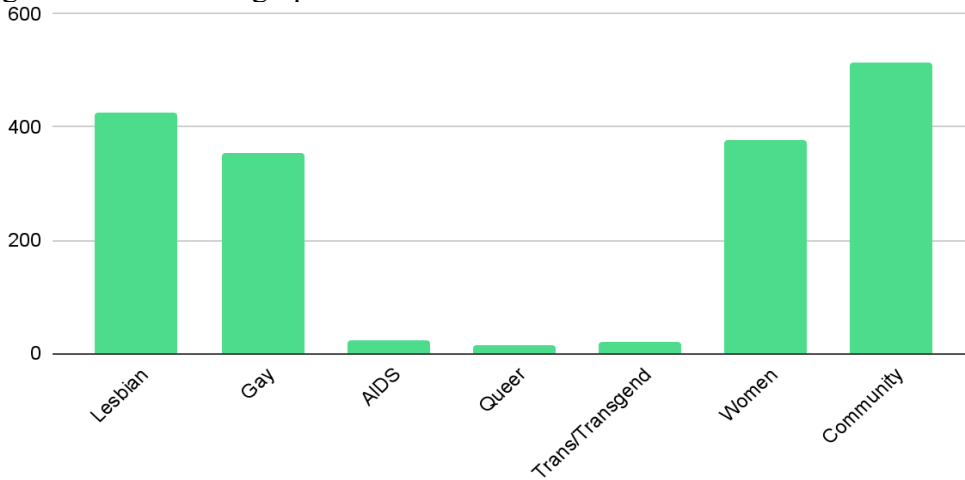


Figure 10: LHA Demographics from the Photo Collection

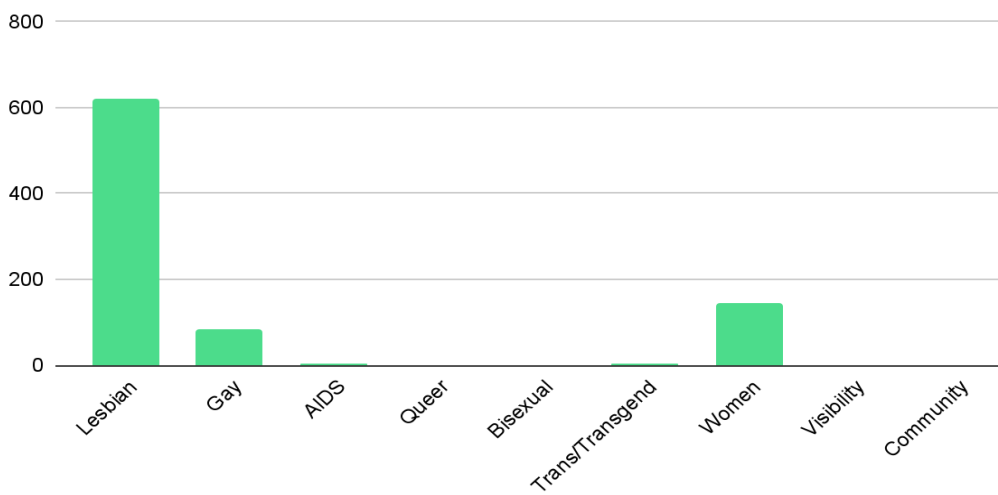
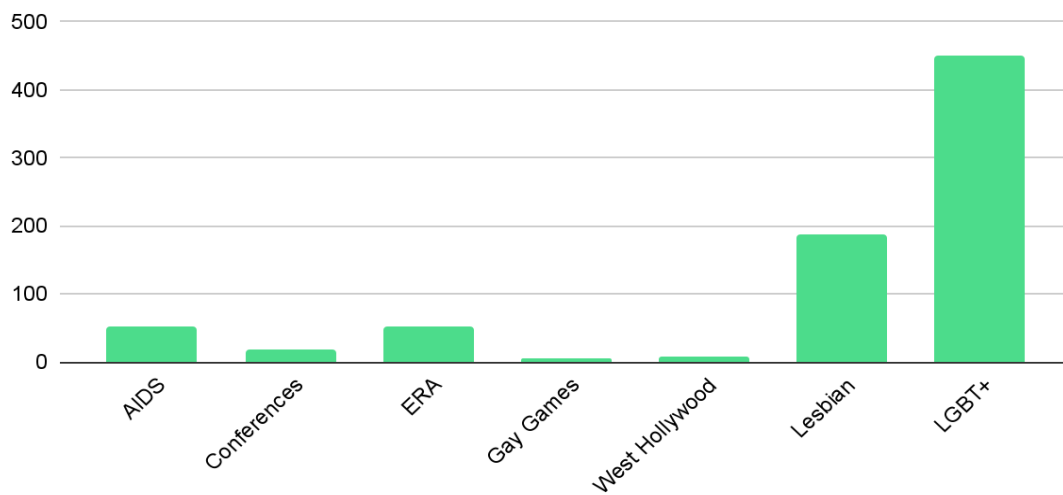


Figure 11. June L. Mazer Archives' Demographics for the Button Collection



The most concrete amount of demographic data from The June L. Mazer Archives comes from the Button Collection. The other collections do not offer clear demographic data. The collection was organized by subject matter, and those metrics are represented in Figure 11.

The ArQuives offered the most demographic information with its robust and easy-to-search collection. Though it has the largest collection, this archive offers the most user-friendly and accessible collections. The demographic information from the ArQuives is exhibited in Figure 12.

Figure 12: The ArQuives Demographic Information

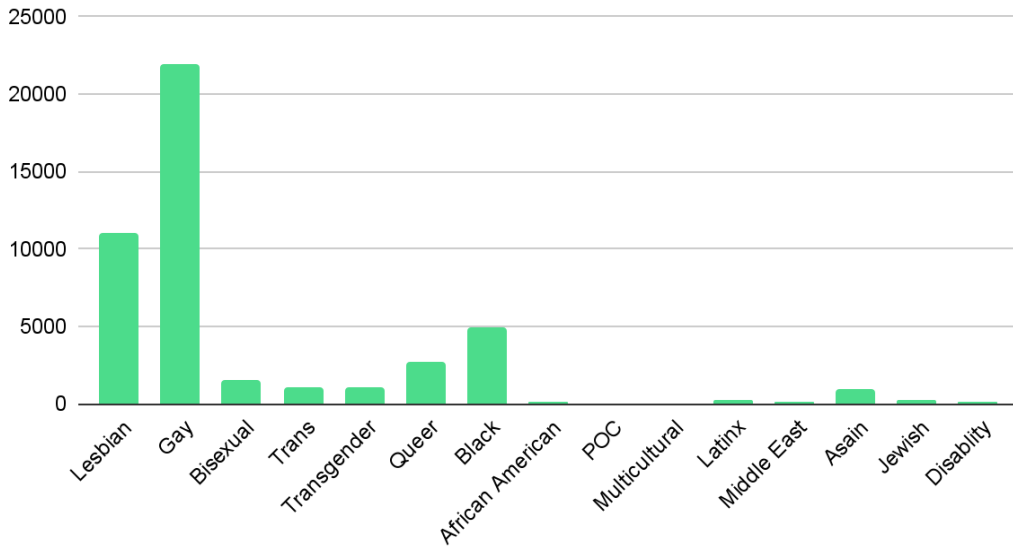


Figure 13: SNMA Demographic Information

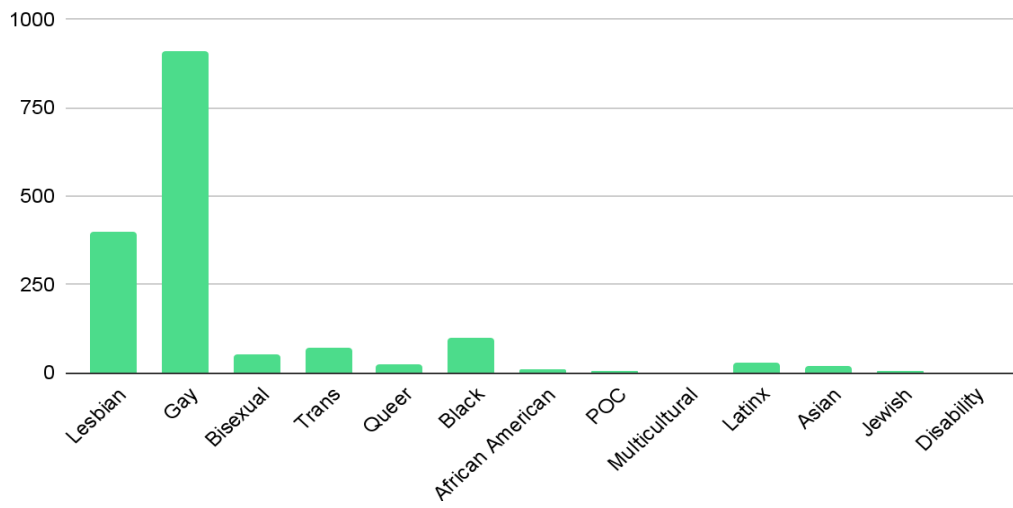
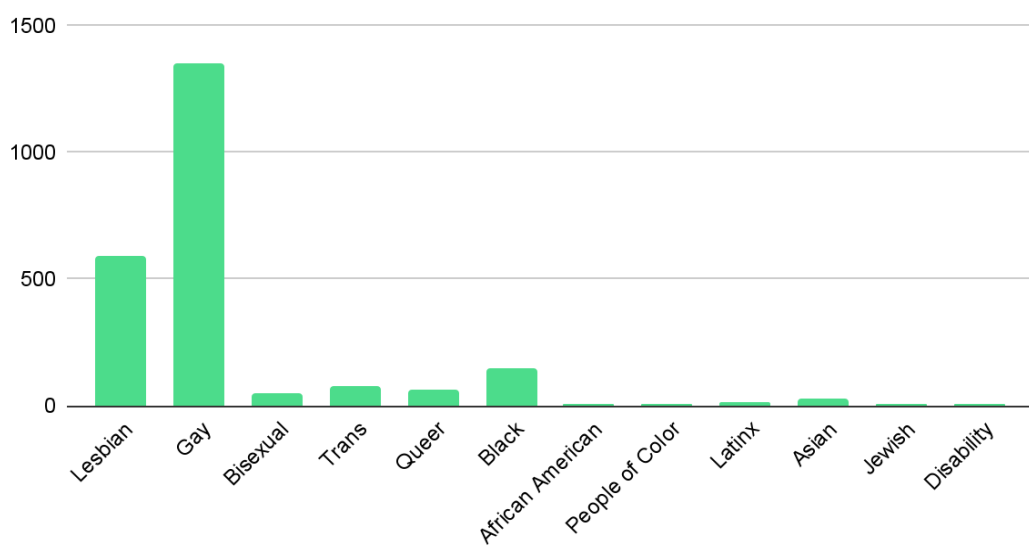


Figure 14: John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives Demographic Information



The Stonewall National Museum and Archives, while categorized by topic, does not have detailed information on the individual items within the collections. This data represents what was available through the SNMA’s finding aid and is more collection information than individual item demographics and are designated as “results.” The information retrieved is the result of searching the finding aid for the key phrases (Figure 13).

The demographic results from the John J. Wilcox, Jr. Archives were received by searching the archive’s collection on their website. The results of these searches are exhibited in Figure 14.

R4: How many years does each collection span? What time periods are the holdings of each collection from?

Each of these archives has roots in the latter half of the twentieth century with the rise of LGBTQ+ activism groups and the gay rights movement. As Figure 15 shows, the majority of these archives’ collections are focused between the 1970s and the 2000s. All of these archives are still active and are currently processing and documenting new materials constantly.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives began collecting and archiving materials in 1979, and their holdings span from the 1970s into the present day.

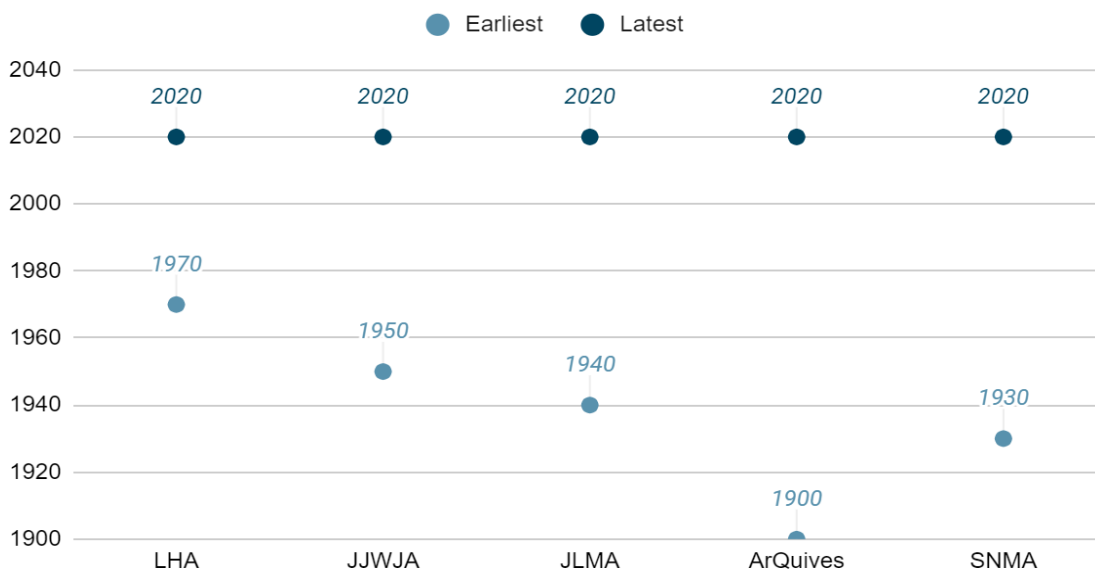
The John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives have materials dating back to the 1950s, though the William Way LGBT Community Center, the home of the archives, did not start collecting outside materials until the 1990s. They are continuing to expand their collections today.

The June L. Mazer Archives, originally named the West Coast Lesbian Collections, was founded in 1981. The collections of this repository date back to the 1940s and fifties, with the documented collections reflecting materials from well into the 2010s.

Canada’s ArQuives, previously known as the Lesbian and Gay Archives, started its vast collection in 1973. Their holdings go back to the early 1900s and continue through today.

The Stonewall National Museum and Archives, also operating under the title the Fasana/Graham Archive, came into existence in 1972. As stated on the archive’s website, the SNMA focuses on collecting materials from the 20th century, primarily around and after its founding. The earliest material found within their finding aid dates back to the 1930s, with the finding aid being updated in 2021.

Figure 15: Year span of the archives’ collections



CONCLUSION

While there have been many barriers to access for information on the LGBTQ+ community to become included in academic and archival institutions, grassroots archives have begun to fill in these gaps. However, the data retrieved from the selected archives exhibits that there is still some work to be done in the collection and processing of materials. Similar to the findings of Nowak and Mitchell (2016) at the grassroots LGBTQ+ archive they were a part of, many of these community archives have outdated search terms, websites, or have not processed their holdings into fully digital collections. For these homegrown-style institutions, there are issues of resources, funding, and staffing. The volunteer, grassroots nature of these archives was more clear in some institutions than others. There were vast differences in the organization and presentation of each of these digital collections, which highlights the fact that these community repositories are not required to follow a traditional archival structure. Each focused on different demographics, with two archives collecting mostly lesbian or feminist material, one archive retaining information related to the Canadian LGBTQ+ scene, one located within a home in Florida, and one reflecting both the local (Pennsylvania) and national queer community. It is recommended that these archives take similar steps to those in the study by Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, and Cifor (2017). Non-traditional archives have to prioritize materials and methods that reflect the needs of their demographic group. By reaching out to their user community with surveys and questionnaires on the collections and their organization, these LGBTQ+ grassroots archives can learn more about the areas that need improvement, and the types of materials they should prioritize. As exhibited in the work of the D.C. Punk Archives (Barker, 2020), the more the community is directly involved leads to more success in achieving the archive's mission. The LGBTQ+ community has continued to grow over the last few decades, and with it, the needs of this user group have also expanded. Though it can be difficult to keep up with a demographic expanding at such a large rate, if these archives were to reach out it would benefit both the institutions and their users. However, these archives, while potentially limited in resources because of their volunteer nature, strive to preserve and further LGBTQ+ history.

Every community deserves to see themselves represented within historical narratives and

community archives have been working, and continue to work towards more equality. The Lesbian Herstory Archives, June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, Canada's ArQuives, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, and Jon J. Wilcox Hr. Archives (Way Gay Archives) are prime examples of what passion and dedication can accomplish.

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Appendix A: Item Types	Lesbian Herstory Archives (search results on this website only led back to major collection headings, these metrics were counted by hand based on the information available digitally)	John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives (search results)	June L. Mazer Archives (search results, limited to the search results offered directly on the website as they have partner institutions)	The ArQuives (search results)	SNMA (search completed using a finding aid, the only digital material available for this collection)
Personal Papers/Correspondence	99 collection entries	209 search results	13 search results	4,255 search results	1 search result
Ephemera and Other Objects	21 collection entries	41 search results	9 search results	592 search results	2 search results
Books/Published Work	38 collection entries	186 search results	32 search results	924 search results	61 search results
Photos/Art	12,034 items	43 search results	22 search results	2,617 search results	109 search results

Appendix A: Item Types	Lesbian Herstory Archives (search results on this website only led back to major collection headings, these metrics were counted by hand based on the information available digitally)	John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives (search results)	June L. Mazer Archives (search results, limited to the search results offered directly on the website as they have partner institutions)	The ArQuives (search results)	SNMA (search completed using a finding aid, the only digital material available for this collection)
Pamphlets, Posters, Promo	57 collection entries	8 search results	6 search results	5,029 search results	57 search results
Newsletters/J ournal Articles	1,669 collection entries/items	219 search results	11 search results	2,097 search results	131 search results
Organizational Papers/Work	61 collection entries	17 search results	4 search results	146 search results	0 search results
Audio/Visual	3,976 items	292 search results	8 search results	83 search results	25 search results
Periodicals	1,600 items	13 search results	6 search results	1203 search results	8 search results
T-Shirts	1,119 items	3 search results	7 search results	1498 search results	1 search result
Buttons	2,286 items	8 search results	6 search results	2504 search results	1 search result

Appendix B: Demographic Information (what was publicly available and searchable on the archives' websites)	Lesbian Herstory Archives (overall collection not searchable, information found through detailed analysis of digital materials available)	John J. Wilcox Jr. Archives (search results)	June L. Mazer Archives (limited to the search results directly from the website)	The ArQuives (search results)	SNMA (search completed using a finding aid, the only digital material available for this collection)
Lesbian	1967 results	591 results	40 results	11005 results	379 results
Gay	980 results	1354 results	17 results	21921 results	909 results
Bisexual	84 results	52 results	4 results	1499 results	51 results
Trans/Transgender	65 results	78 results	5 results	1028 results	72 results
Queer	55 results	65 results	14 results	2753 results	22 results
Black/African American	15 results	149 results	0 results	4905 results	99 results
People of Color	9 results	10 results	0 results	61 results	4 results
Latinx	3 results	17 results	0 results	191 results	29 results
Asian	0 results	31 results	0 results	898 results	18 results
Middle Eastern	1 result	0 results	0 results	149 results	1 result
Jewish	2 results	7 results	0 results	280 results	5 results
Disability	1 result	4 results	0 results	175 results	1 result