

**The Emergence, Development and Survival of
Four Lesbian and Gay Archives**

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Lesbian and gay archives, particularly those established within the context of the homophile, gay liberation, and lesbian feminist movements, serve as social movement organizations (SMOs). That is, they are organizational and administrative members of activist communities that acquire, manage, and share resources for the purpose of collective action for social change. Archives are nevertheless absent from literature on social movements and social movement theory. This project was designed to expand on current research in the fields of archival studies, social movement studies, and sexuality studies to better understand the experiences of lesbian and gay archives. A multiple case study was conducted at four community grown archives: The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, and the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Site visits took place over six months in 2013 and 2014, during which time interviews were conducted with 33 community archivists, volunteers, and community partners. In addition, more than 20,000 pages of organizational records related to the founding and development of these archives were reviewed.

By tracing the emergence, development, and resource struggles of four lesbian and gay archives, this dissertation shows how these organizations have been shaped by broader movement goals, local geographies, socio-political structures, and the particular interests and energies of those who have nurtured their collections over the years. I examine how these archives have sustained themselves over time. Discussions with community archivists, volunteers, and community partners

have generally confirmed that the four archives that inform this study are SMOs, but have also raised important questions about the sustainability of archives established by and for social movements. The dissertation tells a history of each archives and comments on the common challenges that they have faced over the past forty-plus years. Engagements between these archives and their local academic institutions are also explored, as are their continuing relationships with the communities they serve. By tracing the emergence and development of these organizations, this project uncovers representational politics, institutional pluralism, generational divides, shifting national politics, interpersonal relations, and challenges with sustainability, both financial and otherwise.

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NOTE ON REFERENCING STYLE

This dissertation references secondary and primary sources according to the rules and conventions established by the American Psychological Association (APA). APA citation style requires both in-text and a reference list; however, I have elected to modify this approach. Secondary sources, including journal articles, books, Internet resources, and newspaper articles, have been cited in accordance with APA style and appear both in-text and in a references list. Primary sources are referenced in APA style, but appear as footnotes throughout the text. Interviews conducted for the purpose of this project are also referenced as footnotes.

The decision to treat primary and secondary sources in this manner satisfies two problems that developed during the course of this interdisciplinary study. First, sociological literature is commonly written according to APA style; however, historical research traditionally follows rules and conventions established by the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which involves footnotes and/or endnotes. This project incorporates both a sociological theoretical framework and historiographical work. While APA is more than adequate for acknowledging most secondary sources, it does not always provide a clear guide for referencing archival records and finding aids, especially if these primary sources are unprocessed or in personal collections. Footnotes allow me to offer helpful notes to assist others to access any of the unprocessed materials or personal collections for further research. Second, I wanted to present my dissertation in a written form that was legible and easy to access for readers. I did not want to inconvenience readers with disruptive in-text citations, which would be required if APA style were to be followed explicitly for referencing primary sources. Thus, I made the decision to cite primary sources as footnotes only and they do not appear in the reference list.

PREFACE

Lesbian and Gay Archives in a Queer Time and Place

A few months into this project, I attended an event at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) to celebrate the institution's 40th anniversary. During a facilitated discussion about representation and identity politics in the archives, a mid-career cultural theorist announced to a room of older community archivists that the “queer archive is a failed project.” Consider this for a moment.

Did you immediately think of Judith Halberstam? In the book, *The Queer Art of Failure*, Halberstam (2011) has argued that there are “ways of being and knowing that stand outside of conventional articulations of success and failure” (2). Success, she argues, is measured by its alignment with the heteronormative capitalist societies in which we live. As a result, queer and trans* identified people are forever failing because we are unable to reproduce—both physically and symbolically—the kinds of families and cultural products that endorse heteronormativity and capitalism. Building on work by Butler (1990), Duggan (2003), Edelman (2004), and Muñoz (2009), Halberstam encourages us to embrace failure as a form of resistance, as a means to examine our own complicity in the affirmation of oppressive and repressive social systems, and as a way to engage in more creative and cooperative approaches to being in the world. Since its publication in 2011, *The Queer Art of Failure* has spurred an entire repertoire of writing, art, and activism encouraged by the connections between failure, creativity, and resistance. As O’Gorman and Werry (2012) note, both academic literature and popular media are consumed with exploring how failure shapes our lives and the social institutions with which we interact. While popular business media instructs us to become comfortable with failure as part of the innovation process, often quoting Samuel Beckett’s aphorism, ‘Fail big. Fail better,’ the academic inter-disciplines, especially queer theory, art criticism and performance studies, have focussed on failure as the “inevitable and critical

counterpoint to modernity's empty promises of progress and betterment" (p. 1). As O'Gorman and Werry suggest, this is failure's big moment. If you consider failure within Halberstam's rubric, the queer archive proudly stands as a failed project, not only existing as a counterpoint to state-run or public archival enterprises, but also as a place where the documentary heritage of queerness has been preserved.

If you are an archivist, perhaps you thought about Helen Samuels and documentation strategy. More than a decade before Derrida (1996) called attention to archives as cultural objects with *Mal d'archive: Une impression Freudienne*, the North American archival community was already asking difficult questions about the role of archives in society and the power of archivists to shape the historical record (Ham, 1975; Cook, 1979). Beginning with the groundbreaking article, "Who Controls the Past?" Samuels (1986) issued a provocation to archivists challenged by "modern, complex, information-rich society" to reconceptualize their work as passive "keepers" of records to active "selectors" of documentary heritage (p. 110). She urged archivists to work more closely with records creators and to develop a documentation strategy to ensure that ongoing activities would be properly documented and that records of enduring value would be transferred to an archives for long-term preservation. The concept of documentation strategy was refined by Hackman and Warnow-Blewett (1987), Alexander and Samuels (1987), and Cox (1989) in a number of case studies. In a 1991 article that revisits her earlier work, Samuels further defines documentation strategy as a methodology, involving a plan of action or policy that is "launched by an individual or institution to remedy the poor documentation for a specific sector of society" (126). In practice, a documentation strategy might include, for example, a mandate to seek out records of previously under-documented groups, such as racial, ethnic, or religious minorities, to collaborate with records creators, or to prioritize certain kinds of acquisitions to enhance holdings in a particular area of interest. Nevertheless, it is precisely through the implementation of a documentation strategy that its inherent problems become visible. A documentation strategy requires that archivists not only identify and prioritize specific sectors of society to better document, but also take on the

responsibility of determining how these sectors are identified, who is responsible for choosing them, and how they are documented. Paradoxically, this work to build a more representative archives actually reaffirms the archivist's role as gatekeeper by further obscuring this power. Even Samuels admits that these are "not only intellectual but also political issues" (p. 115). As a result, documentation strategy has failed in practice, as archivists remain skeptical about its utility to ensure that archival holdings adequately and accurately represent a plurality of experiences. From an archival orientation, the suggestion that the "queer archive is a failed project" might simply extend the problems with documentation strategy to a more specific case. Even though queer archives mostly exist outside of a traditional archival system, they are haunted by many of the same problems with representation and power. In some cases, they are dominated by homocentric, gay and male experiences; in others, they are resolutely lesbian and separatist. The queer archive is a failure because it can never fully represent the experiences of all queer people; someone or some group of people will always be left out.

Maybe you thought that the statement about the failure of the queer archive was an assessment that institutionalized lesbian and gay archives are no longer able to sustain themselves as independent or autonomous organizations. This is perhaps a more literal interpretation of the comment. As I looked around the room in the quiet moments that followed this proclamation, attempting to gauge the reaction of the crowd, my mind wandered from Halberstam to Samuels, and to the many conversations that I have had with the community archivists in that room about how they "just can't keep up with technology," with activism that has moved online and off the streets, and with new conceptions of queerness and trans* identities that challenge the basic premise of gayness and lesbian-ness as identity categories. We have also talked about intersecting identities, racialization, and Western imperialism. We have talked about how the archives is always one step behind activism, scooping up the detritus of communities as they come together and break apart. And yet the archives is so often the target for direct and pointed criticism for failing to collect records that represent the here and now. If we look to the archives as a reflection of

ourselves today without contextualizing the impact of shifting socio-political and demographic realities, then the queer archive can indeed be read as an utter failure.

What I read on the faces of the community archivists in that room was altogether something else. What I saw were grimaces in response to a knee to the gut, a confirmation that the work that they set out to do was not enough and never would be. A validation of the accusation that this small group of community archivists had failed to do the work that was needed to steward their Archives from a cupboard of books to a world-class institution. A dismissal of the labour they have contributed to making it possible for all of the critiques they accept to even happen at all. I saw disappointment. And I saw anger.

And here we sit at a critical juncture in the history of the queer archive.

On one hand, the queer archive is an intellectual space that has never before achieved so much attention. Derridean and Foucauldian approaches to the study of culture and society have encouraged new ways of thinking about how knowledge is constructed, organized, and preserved. As Schwartz and Cook (2002) note, postmodern theorists have invoked ‘the archive’ as “a central metaphorical construct upon which to fashion their perspective on human knowledge, memory, and power” (4). Likewise, the *queer archive* has been used to describe the ways in which queerness has been constructed, organized, and remembered. This term has been adopted by queer theorists, such as Cvetkovich (2003, 2008) and Ahmed (2010), writing within a particular genre of affect theory, as well as within the emerging field of queer domesticity studies led by Rohy (2010), Murphy (2013), and Cook (2014). The queer archive is an abstract place where the evidence of non-normative sexualities and gender non-conformity has been preserved. It is a space where queer people can begin to construct and reconstruct our heritages in a world that does not always value queer experiences. It is where we can produce, store and access queer knowledge that challenges heteronormative and homocentric ways of being and knowing.

As Hardiman (2009) explains in her succinct review of postmodernism and its impact on record keeping professions, archivists have responded to the postmodern destabilizing of

objectivities and truths by calling into question traditional and positivist archival methodologies. Brothman (1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2001), Cook (2000, 2001), and Harris (1997, 2000, 2002) have written extensively on the influence of Derridean and postmodern thinking to produce what Cook (1997) has described as a “paradigm shift” in understanding how archives function in society (p. 4). Taking into account these new sensitivities to the ways in which archives construct memories, Bastian (2003), Carter (2006), Ketelaar (1999, 2005, 2009), Jimerson (2009), and Caswell (2014) have each written about the power of archives to both affirm cultural identities and silence those left out of the historical record. More recently, McKemmish, Gilliland-Swetland, and Ketelaar (2005) have explored ways in which archival systems and practices can respect and empower local and indigenous knowledge systems and “communities of memory” (p. 146).

Although archival literature has paid limited attention to queer archives until recently (see Averill, 1990; Maynard, 1991), *Archivaria*'s 2009 Special Issue on Queer Archives appears to have broken ground for a number of other journals to bring together scholarship around similar themes (Barriault & Sheffield, 2009). *Radical History Review* has published a two-volume special issue on Queering Archives (Marshall, Murphy & Tortorici, 2014) while the newly founded *TSQ: Trans Studies Quarterly* is planning to publish its fourth volume on the subject of archives (Devor & Rawson, forthcoming). The term ‘queer archive’ is now frequently invoked by archival scholars, cultural theorists, and queer theorists alike.

The confluence of theoretical and philosophical invocations of the ‘queer archive’ are inherently tethered to, what Lymn (2012) has called, “archives proper,” the brick-and-mortar institutions that collect, preserve, and make accessible documentary heritage. These include the Lesbian Herstory Archives, The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, The June L Mazer Lesbian Archives and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, which were established outside of the traditional archival system because of a real or perceived failure on the part of this system to accurately and adequately reflect the experiences of gay and lesbian people.

Presumably, the history of collecting evidence of queerness stretches back much farther than we can imagine with personal and research collections appearing and disappearing over time. By the 1950s, however, political and intellectual developments in North America had made space for the development of a queer social movement, and by the end of the 1960s, activists were beginning to consider the importance of preserving the documentary evidence of their work and other forms of queer cultural production (See Carmichael, 1998). Concomitant with the emergence of the homophile movement, the gay liberation movement and later, a lesbian feminist movement, historians such as Faderman (1993), Chauncy (1995), and Duberman (2002) were actively seeking out evidence of gay and lesbian histories in a traditional archival system that tended to obscure or destroy evidence of queerness. As Maynard (1991) suggests, the establishment of gay and lesbian archives not only marks the coalescence of a social movement, but also “the beginning of a self-conscious gay history movement” (p. 198). By the beginning of the 1980s, more than a dozen autonomous gay and lesbian archives had been founded in the United States and Canada, providing physical spaces to house the documentary heritage that was being produced throughout the process of lesbian and gay collective action for social change, as well as evidence of queerness reclaimed through the rescue of ephemera, photographs, journals, and other artefacts created by and for queer people (SAA, 2012). More than thirty years later, this cohort of community archives has matured to a point at which some institutions are considering their sustainability for the future. Some archival initiatives have disappeared; others have formalized or institutionalized. Some have donated their collections to academic or public libraries, effectively becoming special collections. Some others remain autonomous as a political principle despite the limitations of their own communities to fully support the work that they do.

It is within this particular moment of self-reflection and intellectual attention to the queer archive that my own project has emerged. As a professional archivist, I have been inculcated in traditional archival practices and methodologies. I have been introduced to archival theory and have a good understanding of how and why it has evolved as it has over the past two hundred years, or

since the time of the French Revolution and the founding of the *Archives nationales* (Posner, 1940). I have worked as an archival consultant, establishing archival programs for small businesses, arts organizations, and government offices. I have also undertaken additional training in archival administration, including the management of copyright and intellectual property and the development of digital archival platforms. I have developed a healthy respect for the administrative and financial challenges that archivists face and share common concerns about the impact of rapidly changing technologies on our ability to preserve the trustworthiness of archival records.

Since beginning my first graduate degree in archival studies, I have also served as a community archivist with the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), gaining hands-on experience working in a community-based archival institution. I have witnessed remarkable growth in this organization and contributed to a significant expansion of outreach and advocacy programming over the past seven years. In addition, I have been made aware of the constraints of this organization and common criticisms that it receives about its capacity to reflect the diversity of Canada's queer and trans* people, its failure to represent intersectionality and racialized experiences, and its persistent prioritizing of gay men's experiences. I have watched carefully the ways that long-serving community archivists have navigated these criticisms and resisted reactionary responses, even when pressured. I have felt the frustration of those left out of the archives, whether by design or through neglect, and I have been disappointed by the bureaucratic inertia that appears to stymie productive discussions about how to address the silences that are produced in the collections when so many voices are left out. How might an archives established within the gay liberation movement and carried forward by the gay and lesbian rights movement continue in such queer times? Or, has the CLGA become emblematic the liberalization and de-radicalization of lesbian and gay movements over the past twenty years?

As a doctoral student, I have been part of a collaborative program offered by the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies. From the first moments of my first class in queer theory, it was obvious that I had a steep learning curve ahead of me—a Master of Information

Studies degree had prepared me well for a career as an archivist, but unfortunately, left me ill prepared for a rigorous interdisciplinary study of queer theory. My undergraduate work in Women's and Gender Studies was more closely aligned with Simone de Beauvoir than Judith Butler. I sometimes felt that I was the only practitioner in a room full of philosophers. And yet, as I pored over the works of José Muñoz (2009), Heather Love (2007), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003), and Tim Dean (2009), I began to notice the attention that queer theory was paying to the archive. Wherever I turned—geography, anthropology, communication studies, cultural theory, critical race studies, feminist studies, postcolonial studies, media and film studies, material culture studies, performance and visual arts studies—scholars were talking about the archive. Except, the archive (note the lack of 's') is not the same as the archives (note the presence of the 's'). As a metaphorical construct, the archive has abstracted the work of archives to initiate meaningful and important conversations about the ways in which knowledge is constructed and used, but it has simultaneously obfuscated the very rational and practical work that archivists undertake to collect, preserve, and make accessible records of enduring value. This is why the suggestion that the queer archive is a failure can be read in so many ways, but is ultimately understood by practitioners as a critical comment on their capacity to perform their professional duties. This is also why I have situated my project within an interdisciplinary space where sexuality studies, archival studies, and queer theory collide. I hope that this project might serve as a “boundary object,” a body of empirical evidence about the experiences of four gay and lesbian archives that can be interpreted differently across various academic and activist communities (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393). I have designed this study as a normative political project that will provide practitioners with insight into the experiences of a particular cohort of community archives, give community archivists a sense of the challenges and opportunities that they and their colleagues have encountered, and to contribute to both archival theory and archive theory by strengthening the tether between the two. I hope that I have not failed in performing the kind of “boundary spanning” work that I set out to achieve (Tushman, 1977, p. 587).

“No archive arises out of thin air. Each archives has a ‘pre-history’, in the sense of prior conditions of existence. Constituting an archive represents a significant moment, on which we need to reflect with care. It occurs at a moment when a relatively random collection of works, whose movement appears simply to be propelled from one creative production to the next, is at the point of becoming something more ordered and considered: an object of reflection and debate. The movement of the archive represents the end of a certain kind of creative innocence, and the beginning of a new stage of an artistic movement.”

— Stuart Hall¹

¹ Hall, S. (2001). Constituting an archive. *Third Text*, 15(54), p. 89.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“I got hooked, I guess, on empowerment, the transformation of The Helpless Queer with no history and an unlikely future into Someone, into a *group* of Someones, who uncovered a history, who founded heroes, who grabbed today and shook it till tomorrow fell out of its pockets and there was a place there in it for us.”

— Gerald Hannon²

The material culture preserved within lesbian and gay archives is a vital resource for creating transformative politics; however, these organizations are an understudied aspect of grassroots social movements. Despite their importance to social movement activities, such as providing evidence of social exclusion or discrimination, encouraging scholarship that promotes movement ideology, and serving as a meeting place for movement participants, lesbian and gay archives have rarely been studied within the context of social movement theory. Further, archival literature does not yet provide an adequate vocabulary for understanding the work of lesbian and gay archives because it fails to acknowledge that these organizations are constituted not only to confront archival silences, but also as participants in collective action for social change. We have little information about how these initiatives emerge, grow, and formalize, and what strategic actions they take to sustain themselves as movements progress.

This project is designed to expand on current research in these two different fields by filling in gaps at their intersection. To better understand the experiences of lesbian and gay archives, I have looked closely at the histories and organizational cultures of four of these institutions: The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE), The June L Mazer Lesbian Archives (The Mazer), and the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA). This multiple case study pays particular attention to how these four organizations have responded to resource constraints, strategic dilemmas, and changes to the socio-political

² Hannon, qtd in Jackson, E. (1982). Introduction. In Jackson, E. & Persky, S. (Eds.). *Flaunting It! A decade of gay journalism from The Body Politic* (pp. 1-6). Toronto: Pink Triangle Press, p. 3.

environments that influence the social movements from which they emerge. By positioning my analytical lens to emphasize the activist orientations of these institutions, my dissertation initiates a dialogue between archival studies, sexuality studies, and social movement studies to build on the many modes of understanding lesbian and gay archives and their relationships to the communities they serve.

My dissertation supposes that the constitution of any archives with activist roots is in itself recognition that a social movement has fermented and coalesced to the point at which its adherents have become aware of the importance of their actions. This follows Hall's (2001) attestation that "no archive arises out of thin air," and that each has a "sense of prior conditions of existence" (p. 89). My examination of lesbian and gay archives also respects Appadurai's (2003) claim that an archives is a "deliberate project...based on the recognition that all documentation is a form of intervention..." (p. 24). That is, the work of a lesbian and gay archives is not just about collecting the detritus of queer lives, but a political project to both legitimize the claims of queer social movements and as a creative endeavour that reflects the values of these social movements.

The ideology of a social movement is rarely presented systematically, but rather is implicit in the archival records, literature, and documentary evidence that comes out of social change. As Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) point out, the methodical analysis of movement ideology is often the work of counter-movements, as in the case of Fr. Enrique Rueda's classic 1986 study of the gay movement. In *The Homosexual Network: Private Lives and Public Policy*, Rueda identifies the key claims of the gay movement as the desire to change the ways in which homosexuality is understood, to re-characterize homosexuality as an immutable and morally inert expression of sexuality, and to position homophobia as an undesirable condition that must be eradicated. My dissertation is not only sensitive to these claims, but also to the contestation of these claims over time and by movement factions, related movements, and counter-movements. I consider how lesbian and gay archives have (or have not) aligned with movement claims, as well as the tensions they have produced in their archival work and strategic actions.

I am also interested in understanding what accounts for the differences among these institutions. Why, for example, do some lesbian and gay archives seem to have become largely bureaucratic instruments of the liberal gay and lesbian rights movement while others have rejected mainstream intervention into their archival work? Why have some lesbian and gay archives decided to transfer custody of their records to other heritage or academic institutions, while others have risked obsolescence or reduced capacity to remain autonomous? What kinds of partnerships and coalitions do lesbian and gay archives build with other social movement organizations or heritage institutions? Why have some embraced digital technologies and social media while others have remained largely offline? Why have some developed robust outreach programming and others remain concentrated on the traditional archival tasks of collecting, preserving, and making accessible records of enduring value?

Considering Jasper's (2004) idea of strategic dilemma, I examine how the four lesbian and gay archives that inform my study are restricted in their capacities to achieve their goals by a range of cultural and institutional factors. According to Jasper, strategy is central to the decision-making in social movement organizations. For example, organizations must decide on how to deploy limited resources to increase the effectiveness of mobilization. They must also determine how they will present themselves to their members and to the public—Jasper notes, for example, how the liberal gay and lesbian movement has distanced itself from organizations such as the controversial North American Man / Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) as a means to gain legitimacy. Movement organizations may also form alliances with one another as a strategy to improve or maintain legitimacy and share resources, even if these alliances appear to compromise some movement goals. They can also shift their goals to align better with those of major funders or supporters. Jasper suggests that social movement organizations might also chose to keep their decisions “off the table” as a way to continue their activist work while appearing to serve a less contentious purpose (p. 11).

I recognize that the queer social movements concerned with the expression of non-heteronormative sexualities and gender variance have emerged within particular historical, social, and political circumstances. As these circumstances change over time and across geography, social movements have also changed in response. The North American homophile movement, for example, began in the early 20th century in response to increasing criminalization and medicalization of homosexuality (Stein, 2012). Its decline is usually attributed to the rise of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s, which shifted the focus of collective action away from the goal of social integration towards liberationist modes (Stein, 2012). As Gould (2009) notes in her study of affect and AIDS activism, the emergence of AIDS in the mid-1980s, effectively dulled the liberationist sentiment and triggered a new kind of politics fuelled by anger, grief, and eventually, a desire for reconciliation. Nevertheless, intensifying neoliberalism has since produced a political environment that makes room for an equal rights platform for liberal gay and lesbian activism (Duggan, 2003; Harvey, 2005; Fraser, 2013). At the same time, related queer movements have also emerged in response to bureaucratization of the liberal gay and lesbian movement and in resistance to its claims. Although the above examples are sweeping oversimplifications of the relationships among macro-political and cultural contexts and social movements, I suggest them if only to draw attention to the ways in which social movements are either facilitated or hindered by what Tarrow (1998) refers to as the political opportunity structure. I therefore consider the extent to which the trajectories and strategic actions of lesbian and gay archives have also been influenced by the ebb and flow of social movements, and by their bureaucratization and decline.

Which Archive(s)?

Before embarking on this study about archives, I want to situate my work in what Jessie Lymn (2012) has called the “archives proper.” That is, the archives that I am interested in researching are those brick-and-mortar institutions broadly concerned with the tasks of acquiring, preserving, and making accessible records of enduring value. These are what Derrida (1996) calls

arkbeions and Steedman (2002) refers to as “dusty reading rooms” in her book *Dust*. Like Lynn, I acknowledge the important multidisciplinary work that is unfolding to re-imagine the archive as a space outside of institutional walls, as in the work of Cvetkovich (2003), Merewether (2006) or Ferguson (2012). I prefer to look at archives proper as key sites of inquiry because they lend themselves to answering my research questions in ways that studies of *the archive* as an abstract concept do not. This is in part because I am concerned with the institutionalization of grassroots archives and therefore necessarily interested in the archives proper, but also because the abstraction of archives is tethered to perceptions of the very work of those archival institutions that I want to investigate. Thus, anchoring my research to brick-and-mortar institutions allows for cross-pollination of rigorous theoretical approaches from different fields and is also useful as a way to add dimension to the sometimes idiosyncratically subjective cultural studies model from which the abstraction of archives in the form of *archive studies* has emerged.

Lesbian and/or Gay Archives

In previous work (see Sheffield & Zieman, 2005; Barriault & Sheffield, 2009), I have used the term *queer* in its most inclusive meaning as a way to discuss all people whose gender and sexuality have been historically understood as non-heteronormative. This includes, but is certainly not limited to those people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and two-spirited. I have since reconsidered. Queer is easily adopted as a catch-all for the myriad sexualities and genders that have been recognized and those that have yet to enter consciousness. The application of queer as an umbrella term is nevertheless problematic for at least two reasons. First, the popularity of the term in mainstream literature fails to recognize the divergent histories of those whom queer is meant to describe. For example, as Stryker (2008) has poignantly argued in *Transgender History*, the experiences of trans* people have not always coincided peacefully with the politics of lesbian or gay activism. In fact, the political struggles of trans* people have often been overshadowed by the work

of gay and lesbian activists who have privileged sexual expression over gender expression. As Ross (1995) has argued in *The House That Jill Built*, the politics of gay men have also been, at times, incommensurable with the plight of lesbian women. During the 1980s, for instance, the political goals of lesbian feminist anti-pornography activists conflicted with the anti-censorship movement led by gay men. The second way in which the uptake of queer can be problematic is that it is often used to identify populations that are better described as lesbian, gay, and/or trans* (or another self-identification). As Love (2009) asserts in *Feeling Backward*, the development of *queer history* and *queer biography* (e.g., Erin McHugh's series *The Portable Queer*), which aim to uncover queer sexual desire in the past, tends to dismiss the contributions of the "sad old queens and long-suffering dykes who haunt the historical record" (p. 32). The application of queer to describe same-sex desire is, at times, anachronistic and can even be harmful.

For these reasons and with the guidance of Stein's (2012) recognition of the importance of using vocabulary that is considerably more precise and contextual, I have decided not to refer to the four organizations that inform this study as queer archives. In fact, these archives are not necessarily queer. The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, for example, can trace its beginnings to a gay liberation movement that did not always make space for the experiences of lesbian women. It was not until 1993 that the organization changed its name to reflect the long-standing involvement of women in the archives. At the time of this writing, the organization has yet to amend its name to reflect the participation of trans* identified or bisexual people or those who do not identify with the homocentric categories of lesbian or gay. Referring to this organization as a queer archives would not only imply that the organization has the capacity to represent the myriad experiences that one might understand as queer, it would also obscure the importance of *gay* and *lesbian* as cultural and political identities through which the Archives clearly operates. Likewise, the June L Mazer Archives was established within the context of lesbian separatism and has historically excluded transgender women and cis-gender men from accessing the collections, regardless of their sexual orientation. This organization prides itself on being a lesbian feminist space in a period of

movement abeyance and some of the community archivists who work with the collections have outright rejected the term queer as a totalizing and damaging concept to lesbian mobilization. It would therefore be inappropriate to apply the term queer to an archives that does not purport to be a queer organization. For these reasons, I have used the term *lesbian and gay archives* to describe collectively the four archives that inform this study. I use the term *lesbian archives* to describe the Lesbian Herstory Archives and the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, which do not actively collect or represent the experiences of gay men.

I nevertheless acknowledge that the term queer has various meanings of significance within and outside of the academy. Although a thorough exploration of these meanings is well outside the scope of this project, it is worth noting that this study not only benefits from the disruptive potential of the term and its various manifestations in queer theory, but queer has also provided some adjectival utility in my writing. I use the term *queer social movements* for example, to broadly describe the many manifestations of social movements that have emerged in response to the shared interests of sexual minority and gender variant people. I hesitantly include trans* social movements within this rubric. The term *queer archive(s)* is also part of the linguistic tool kit that I have used to describe the multidisciplinary approaches to understanding archives and their role in society. Queer as a noun can refer to a person who does not comply with heteronormativity. As an adjective, queer can describe gestures made to counter heteronormativity. As Muñoz (2009) claims, queer is also utopia, a thing-that-is-not-yet-imagined. This notion of queer futurity implores theorists to look beyond the “pragmatic sphere of the here and now, the hollow nature of the present,” and begin working toward potentiality (p. 21). I use queer to discuss and speculate on the future of the archives in my study. Thus, queer is not absent from this project, but rather deployed only when it is the best term to describe the experiences of the four archives that I have studied or the contexts in which they perform their work.

What is Sustainability?

The concept of sustainability is germane to archival practices, which are predicated on the core functions of acquiring, preserving, and making accessible records of enduring value. Archivists are responsible for ensuring the reliability, integrity, and usability of historical documents and developing programs to extend the lives of records in their care through conservation and preservation practices. Archivists who work with digital information are particularly concerned about sustainability because digital formats require more complicated and active interventions to validate technical integrity than are necessary to care for most traditional paper-based records. Future preservation actions might include, for example, migration to new formats or emulation of obsolete software (Library of Congress, 2013). Although the four archives that inform this study are concerned with the sustainability of their collections and collecting practices, this dimension of archives is not the focus of this project. This study looks at how the organizations have sustained themselves and not necessarily how they have approached their archival tasks of preserving and making accessible the materials in their care. My project is grounded in curiosity about how these organizations have managed to survive when so many other community archiving initiatives are short-lived, and a concern about their future sustainability as community-led archives.

For the reasons noted above, I understand sustainability as it is commonly used in ecological or organizational environments. Caradonna (2014) writes that sustainability emerged as a social, environmental, and economic ideal in the late 1970s and 1980s, and by the 1990s, had become a “familiar term in the world of policy wonkery” (p. 2). In *Sustainability: A History*, he traces the etymology of the word back to the Latin *sustēre*, which mean to “maintain,” “sustain,” “support,” and “endure,” or to “restrain” (p. 7). Concepts such as *sustainable growth* entered common usage in the 1960s, and in relation to an economics that was concerned with “maintaining human society over the long term” (p. 7). Dove and Kammen (2015) add that sustainability is often used conceptually in its negative, as a way to discuss the failure of societies to develop conservation practices that are sustainable or that certain ecological practices are unsustainable. Although

Caradonna admits that *sustainability* is currently a “buzzword,” he also acknowledges the long cultural history of the concepts that underly sustainable practices, such as diversification and developing adaptive strategies to cope with unanticipated change. Bromley (2008) notes that, when the concept of sustainability is applied to organizational or business environments, it “concerns the specification of a set of actions taken by present persons that will not diminish the prospects of future persons to enjoy levels of consumption, wealth, utility, or welfare comparable to those enjoyed by present persons.” This project is concerned with how actions taken by community archivists, volunteers, and community partners have (or have not) allowed for their archives to maximize use of available resources and adapt to pressures or changes, and ultimately build resilient organizations that can sustain their work into the future for the enjoyment of new generations.

Case Study Research

I started my research for this study by reviewing the existing literature on community archives and queer social movements. Between June 2012 and March 2013, I collected and reviewed literature from across a range of disciplinary approaches, beginning with the emerging archival studies literature that pays attention to the work of community-based archival initiatives and the role of archives in the construction and affirmation of cultural and political identities. I reviewed the interdisciplinary literature on memory studies and community heritage. I began revisiting foundational gay and lesbian history books, as well as more recent works on queer expressions and queer communities. At the same time, I began informal conversations with community archivists at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), where I have served as a volunteer since 2008. I collected anecdotes about the history of the Archives and asked long-serving volunteers about their concerns for the future sustainability of the organization. I attended the 2012 GLBT ALMS Conference (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections) in West Hollywood and met with community archivists and information professionals from around the globe. I gathered personal stories about grassroots archival initiatives and the ways

in which lesbian and gay archives have contributed to collective action for social change. By spring 2013, I had decided to design this project as a multiple case study and worked with committee members to identify suitable archives to include as participating case organizations.

My first decision was whether or not to include my home institutions, the CLGA, in my dissertation research. Social movement theory encourages researchers to study organizations with which they are already aligned for two main reasons. First, researchers who are embedded within social movement organizations have existing relationships with other members of these organizations and can more easily develop a sense of trust needed to gain access to participants and organizational resources. In addition, researchers with already existing relationships enter into projects with some insight into the organizational culture and can therefore navigate this culture more easily. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2005) suggest a principle of “starting where you are” and recognize that an embedded researcher is better positioned than an outside researcher, at least at the beginning of the study, which makes “getting in” to private or quasi-private settings more feasible (4). They caution embedded researchers, however, to also recognize the potential to exploit already existing social ties and encourage anyone interested in studying their own organizations to make their intentions known and remain transparent about your work to those who will be impacted by it. A second reason to conduct research in a familiar setting is that, as Kirby, Greaves, and Reid (2006) argue, there is value in producing knowledge that has sociological meaning. That is, research on social movements is not undertaken in a theoretical abstract, but is almost always done as a way to contribute empirical evidence to support collective action for social change. I became a volunteer at the CLGA as a way to contribute my professional skills to an institution that served the lesbian and gay community that I am part of and to help preserve the material evidence of the social changes that my generation and those that came before me fought to create. I wanted to use my dissertation research as a sustained period of inquiry that would not only produce knowledge for other researchers, but would also contribute to further development of the institution that I lovingly serve. Thus, after careful consideration, I made the decision to include

my home institution and did so with the support of its members. The richness of my experience working at the CLGA has guided me in not only understanding this organization better, but has also allowed me some insight into the other three archives that inform this study.

I then established criteria to help me select suitable case institutions to inform my study. I was particularly interested in the experiences of institutionalized lesbian and gay archives that had been established as autonomous, community-based organizations. I was less interested in private collections or those that existed within the auspices of larger heritage organizations. My study is designed to learn more about community organizations that were founded as such, even if they initially began as small private collections. Because my study also assumes that queer archives are part of queer social movements, each participating archives had to support a mandate that aligned with queer social movement ideology, although I did not necessarily have a vested interest in one ideological approach over another. Due to time and financial constraints of my own, I also needed to work with archives that were accessible and interested in working with me. This limited my work to North America and to those archives that are supportive of academic research. Because my project borrowed from ethnographic methods, I needed to have access to the archives for site visits, during which time I could conduct in-person interviews, take part in guided tours of the facilities, and make copies of organizational records for future study, as well as observe ongoing activities in situ.

After reviewing *Lavender Legacies*, a directory of resources compiled by the Society of American Archivists' Lesbian and Gay Round Table (SAA, 2012), I selected six potential institutions and began contacting community archivists to introduce myself and my research. I received responses from five of these organizations. By the summer of 2013, I had selected three of these organizations and began making plans to make site visits in fall 2013. The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE), based in Los Angeles, California, was selected because it met the criteria I had established and it serves as a good comparison to the work of the CLGA. Both are national organizations in their collecting scope and have mandates to collect materials related to

lesbian and gay experiences. I then chose the West Hollywood-based June L. Mazer Archives (Mazer) and the Brooklyn-based Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) because they each collect materials related to lesbian experiences and have similar mandates; however, they are located in very different geographical and socio-political contexts. Although the LHA is well known and has been subject to a number of previous studies, the Mazer remains under-studied. Both the ONE and the Mazer have formal partnerships with their local universities; the CLGA and the LHA did not have formal partnerships with universities at the time of my study. The CLGA has since established formal partnerships with the University of Toronto and Ryerson University, both located in Toronto. All four organizations were established as community archives, they are all charitable organizations with special taxation considerations, and each institution was established because of a real or perceived failure on the part of mainstream or public archival institutions to collect the documentary heritage of lesbian and gay people.

Between September 2013 and February 2014, I collected and reviewed archival material related to the founding and development of each organization. In all, I reviewed more than 20,000 pages of documents. Most of the necessary documents were located on-site at the institutions; however, I also visited the Charles E. Young Research Library at the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) for additional material related to the history of the ONE and the Mazer. In all, I met formally with 33 community archivists, volunteers, and community partners. The bulk of these conversations took the form of semi-structured interviews, while two took place over e-mail with participants who would have been otherwise unreachable. Three of the interviews took place using video conference calls. Three of these interviews included guided tours of their respective archives, which allowed for an exchange of information about the facility, the collections, and the organization in a manner that allowed for unstructured conversation as well as a semi-structured interview. Where possible and with permission, I have identified my participants by name. I have done this not only because most of these individuals are already publicly affiliated with the archives,

but also to acknowledge their affective and physical labour in the founding and development of these institutions.

As Jackman (2013) found in his study of gay liberation activism in Toronto, interviews and formal research exchanges are often supplemented with casual conversations that provide greater insight into the experiences of social movement communities. This is true in my research as well. I sustained numerous casual conversations with volunteers, community archivists, professional archivists, and community partners about each organization. These conversations have been invaluable contributions to the research process and have helped me to better understand the organizational cultures and specifically socio-political, geographical, and historical contexts in which each of the four archives exists. While some of these people are recognized in my acknowledgement section, many are not.

Structure of the Project

In the eight chapters that comprise this dissertation, I examine the histories of each of the four lesbian and gay archives that inform this study and the ways in which they have sustained themselves over time. I also look at how these archives have responded to changes in the social movements from which they have emerged and the broader political opportunity structures in which they are situated. I also look at the relationships that they have with their local universities and the tense relationships that exist between community archives and academic institutions.

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of relevant literature and describe my research design. This includes a brief overview of social movement theory and a description of how I have adopted this language to discuss my dissertation research. Because the body of social movement literature is vast, I have focussed on specific tendrils of theory most relevant to this project. In particular, I have considered literature related to resource management and mobilization, social movement organization, and movement abeyance structures. I also briefly look at relevant archival literature and multidisciplinary approaches to understanding queer archives that have aided in conceptualizing

this study. In the last section of this chapter, I provide an overview of my research design and the methods that I have employed.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 trace the trajectories of the four institutions that inform this study and comprise the largest sections of this dissertation. In Chapter 3, I look at the history of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, from its founding in 1973 to its current manifestation as the largest autonomous lesbian and gay archives in the world. This chapter also establishes my connection to the project and a grammar with which to discuss what I describe as a cohort of lesbian and gay archives. Chapter 4 looks at the history of the ONE Gay and Lesbian Archives and Chapter 5, the history of the June L. Mazer Archives. Chapter 6 examines the emergence and development of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

Chapter 7 focuses on the factors that have contributed to the survival of these four archives. I draw out parallels among these organizations in how they have coped with common challenges of securing adequate space, raising funds to support their work, and attracting and retaining expertise to manage their archival work. I also highlight notable differences between each organization and discuss these in relation to the particular cultures within each archives, as well as local and national political opportunity structures. This chapter also pays attention to the strategies that each institution has developed over time to sustain itself and the work that it does to acquire, preserve, and make accessible the materials in its collections.

In Chapter 8, I look at the engagements that the four participating archives have had with academic institutions. In particular, I look at the failed partnerships between the CLGA and the University of Toronto, and the Mazer and the University of Southern California (USC). I also look at the recent donation of materials from the ONE to USC and the informal relationship between the LHA and Pratt Institute. I provide some background on each of these cases with regard to their positions on autonomy and partnerships, and explore some of the implications that this has had for long-term and short-term sustainability. This background provides context for the discussion on the future of lesbian and gay archives at the end of this chapter and in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 9 concludes the project and raises key questions about the role of lesbian and gay archives in queer social movements, and about the impact of liberalization on the trajectories of these institutions. I suggest that lesbian and gay archives are emblematic of changes in the political opportunity structures that have made it easier for liberal gay rights movements to achieve their goals for social changes, but have foregrounded the politics of recognition over the politics of redistribution. I argue that lesbian and gay archives can serve as abeyance structures, providing the organizational scaffolding to bridge one cohort of social movement actors to the next and the documentary evidence to support new understandings of representation, identity, and difference for queer and trans* identified people.

Throughout this dissertation, I have used the term *community archivists* to identify those people who have donated their time and, in some cases, their money and homes, to building and sustaining community-based collections. I have adopted this term because it distinguishes this group of people from professional archivists, who have undertaken graduate-level training in archival theory and methodologies and / or work in a professional archival institution, such as an academic archives, special collections library, or a public archives. Although there are two professional organizations for archivists in North America, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA), these do not provide professional accreditation or designation for members. Likewise, professionals working within archival institutions are not required to register with any one of these professional organizations. Consequently, there is no accepted vocabulary for distinguishing between an archivist who has undertaken graduate-level training from those who are self-taught, or those who work with professional institutions from those who volunteer their time at community archives. In my dissertation work, it became clear that some of the community archivists that I met with did hold graduate-level degrees in archival studies or archival science, and many others had developed archival expertise through formal training opportunities, such as advanced diplomas, extension programming, or other professional organizations. Some community archivists worked as

professional archivists, librarians, or curators. Most, however, had developed expertise informally and as necessary to continue collecting, managing, and making accessible their community collections. I want to recognize the labour and expertise that volunteers at these four lesbian and gay archives have developed—they *are* community archivists, even if they do not necessarily self-identify with this term.

CHAPTER 2

Lesbian and Gay Archives as Social Movement Organizations

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of social movement theory and how I have adopted this language to structure my dissertation research and discuss findings. Because the body of social movement literature is vast, I have focussed on specific tendrils of theory most relevant to this project. In particular, I have considered literature related to resource management and mobilization, social movement organization, and movement abeyance structures. I also briefly look at relevant archival literature and multidisciplinary approaches to understanding queer archives that have aided in conceptualizing this study. In the last two sections of this chapter, I discuss my research design and methods.

Relevant Literature and Theoretical Frameworks

Defining Social Movements

In this study, I am not concerned with defining queer social movements or making any claims about the nature of these movements. It is useful, however, to have a working definition of social movements to help distinguish localized action by groups of ordinary people from the type of enduring and organized social action that social movement researchers consider social movements. There are multiple understandings or conceptualizations of social movements as social phenomena. Snow, Soule, and Kriesi (2007) intervene into what they see as a glut of literature that grapples with the task of defining social movements. They note, “Although the various definitions of movements may differ in terms of what is emphasized or accented, most are based on three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra- or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity” (p. 6). This definition aligns with Tilly’s (2004) assertion that a social movements in the

Western world combines three elements: (i) a sustained, organized campaign designed to bring about collective claims on a target audience; (ii) a combination of strategies and tactics that comprise a repertoire of collective action; and (iii) public representation or displays of the worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment of movement participants (p. 53). Social movement claims may be based on shared identity, political standing, or marginalization, or stated support for or opposition to a particular program or action (e.g., marriage equality, immigration). Tilly also understands social movements as one form of contentious politics and recognizes that social movements rely on freedoms associated with democracy, such as the rights to assembly and association, which facilitate collective action in public space. It is within this rubric of understanding social movements as sustained, organized campaigns that I consider queer social movements as a form of contentious politics motivated by a desire to create and affirm public representation for queer and / or trans* identified people.

Themes in Social Movement Theory

My project positions lesbian and gay archives as social movement organizations (SMOs). Before embarking on a review of more specific literature, however, it is important to briefly outline three major themes in social movement theory, both as context for the emergence of SMO theory and as a way to introduce concepts that inform the literature on SMOs. These themes fall under three broadly defined theoretical approaches to social movement analysis: collective behaviour, resource mobilization, and new social movement theories.

Although the bulk of literature on social movements has grown out of the protest cycle of the late 1960s and early 1970s, collective action has been a subject of sociological inquiry since at least the mid-1800s (Staggenborg, 2011). The rise of industrialization and the growth of cities in Europe and North America produced significant and rapid change, resulting in fundamental challenges to traditional hierarchies of authority (e.g., the church, the family) (see Tönnies, 2001; Durkheim, 1951, 1984; and Weber, 2001). Anxiety about modernity features prominently in early

work on collective action that forms a subfield of inquiry known as collective behaviour theory (Lofland, 1985; Buelchler, 2007). Early theorists taking this approach study crowds, fads, disasters, panics, and social movements as pathological outcomes of the disruption of social order due to mass society (Durkheim, 1951, 1984; Blumer, 1979). Later writing alleviates some of the anxiety around the breakdown of society by insisting that social movements emerge either as an adaptive response to social strain or stress or as a result of a collective sense of relative deprivation (Smelser, 1972). Staggenborg (2011) also argues that collective action is not undertaken by the most marginalized, but by those who seem to have some agency and expect to have more. It is the “best off within an aggrieved group” who exhibit the capacity and will to partake in collective action (p. 17). They join social movements with the hope of redressing their grievances. The value-added theory and relative deprivation theory underpin many early feminist studies, (e.g, Freeman’s (1975) work on women’s expectations for access to higher education and salaries) and the political economy of Polanyi (2001), who argued that relative differences in economic wealth are more important than absolute deprivation, and that these differences are more significant in determining human quality of life. In this study, I do not draw heavily from collective behaviour theory, but I recognize that many of the participants in my study could be described as the “best off within an aggrieved group.”

The second theoretical approach, resource mobilization theory (RMT), is more attuned to conflict theories that emphasize the social, political, or material inequality of a social group (Zald and Ash, 1966; Staggenborg, 2011). RMT attempts to explain social movements by viewing participants as rational actors engaged in instrumental actions supported by formal organizations and to secure resources and facilitate mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, 1987). Oberschall (1973) was among the first to articulate a challenge to previous approaches that emphasized the importance of pre-existing grievances on social movement action. Drawing from economics and sociology, Oberschall shows that social movements can coalesce around a shared grievance, but only gain momentum when participants have access to resources that can be mobilized, converted,

and transferred from one group or arena of action to another for the purpose of collective action. McCarthy and Zald (1977) were among the first to develop this resource mobilization approach further in their groundbreaking paper, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.”³ Like Oberschall, they argue that social movement action is better understood through an examination of how social structures manage and allocate resources. Thus, they introduce a theoretical framework for social movement analysis that is more broadly focussed on the structural, organizational, and political environments that encourage or discourage action. McCarthy and Zald also emphasize the importance of the aggregation of resources to collective action, which requires some minimal form of organization. The resource management approach is further supported by Coleman (1969, 1990); Gamson (1990), and Tilly (1973), who also contribute to mounting empirical evidence that underscores the importance of access to resources to the development of social movements.

Within RMT, there is some discrepancy among scholars about the types of resources considered relevant for social movements. Cress and Snow (1996) identify a typology of social movement resources, which includes moral, informational, human, and material resources. Edwards and McCarthy (2007) take a more narrow political economic view on resources. They remove *informational* from their typology, but add social-organizational and cultural resources, which includes social networks, tacit knowledge, social movement ideology, and other intangible resources that help movement actors engage in collective actions, and develop solidarity and sympathetic support systems. In this study, I am not only interested in the material resources available to lesbian and gay archives (e.g., space, finances, and expertise), but also the intangible resources that Edwards and McCarthy suggest.

The third theoretical approach, new social movement (NSM) theory, comprises a more recent set of theories that departs significantly from traditional resource mobilization theories and moves

³ McCarthy and Zald’s groundbreaking article, “Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory,” was published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1977, and re-published as part of a collection of essays in 1987. Although I referenced the version republished in 1987, I have included both citations in the references list.

beyond the materialist claims of proletariat revolution (Buechler, 1997b; Carroll, 1997; Staggenborg, 2011). As Staggenborg (2011) points out, these new forms of social movements include feminist and queer social movements. Carroll (1997) explains how NSM theory has emerged in response to the inability of RMT to adequately account for post-industrial, post-Fordist, and postmodern social movements that are based “not in material interest but in the discursive practices that construct new political subjects and create new political spaces in which to act...” (p. 17). While RMT is sensitive to the materialist *shared interests* of modern movements and useful in analyzing state-centred action, it remains focussed on centralized organization, and therefore neglects the role of collective identities and decentralized organizations. NSM theorists ask *why* participants join social movements and pays more attention to movement culture and identities in relation to culture, ideology, and politics (Buechler, 1997a). Buechler (1997a) warns, however, that NSMs are generally mobilized from within the new middle class, a constituent base not bounded by class, but by common ideology and political expressions. As a result, these movements can be heavily influenced by libertarian and populist themes that run counter to modernist movements based on social justice and collective grievances. Movement actors can also face accusations that they are already privileged members of society and their grievances do not merit further attention. Nevertheless, Buechler suggests that movement actors have a considerable level of self-awareness and, perhaps in response to anticipated criticisms, consciously avoid institutionalized politics and are more likely to engage in apolitical introspection and personal, transformative political activity.

Although this is not an appropriate place to engage in a fuller discussion of collective identities or identity construction, it is important to note that NSM theory draws heavily from Melucci’s theory of collective identity. Melucci’s (1980) Habermasian constructivist theory acknowledges ways in which the complex societies of late modernity have become more preoccupied with the “production of signs and social relations” than material production and class distinctions (p. 45). New social movements arising from within a complex society do not act as a unified collective of rational actors pursuing shared interests through political action; rather, they

are better characterized as “networks of meaning” with tentative collective identities embodied in everyday practices (p. 58). The central task of a NSM is to expose “that which is hidden or excluded by the decision-making process...[and] bring to light the silent, obscure or arbitrary elements that frequently arise in complex systems decisions (Melucci, 1995, 185). This theory can shed light on why movement actors engage in new cultural practices such as consciousness-raising and the production of alternative media, because each of these helps render the invisible visible and open up new discursive and ideological spaces. Melucci also acknowledges the importance of framing processes that reconcile individual identities and bind group members to one another. Group cohesion motivates movement actors to address global concerns that transgress local and national boundaries, as long as they find solidarity in collective identity.

Because I position lesbian and gay archives as part of queer social movement communities, I am sensitive to the notion of collective identity and the theoretical scaffolding that NSM theory provides. In particular and despite criticisms from Fraser (1990) and Pateman (1991), Habermasian social ontology is helpful to understanding postmodernity in ways that the materialist Marx or Weber could not have predicted. Nevertheless, NSM theory is not sufficient on its own to answer my research questions. It can reveal and expose the motivations of individuals who join social movements, including those who take on leadership roles or form a cadre within social movement organizations, but it is inadequate for understanding the broader political and cultural contexts that both hinder and facilitate change. Further, while NSM theory might help explain why the cadre continue to support social movement organizations in times of movement abeyance—as a way to reinforce collective identity and reward social cohesion—it is less adept at assessing how these organizations sustain themselves when resources are constrained and, as a corollary, if they can respond when the political opportunities emerge. To reiterate, my interest lies in the work of lesbian and gay archives as organizations, however formal or informal, and the trajectories of these organizations over time. Thus, resource mobilization theory is more appropriate to answer the questions I have asked. Nonetheless, I take up this framework with careful consideration of the

importance of collective identity to the people who participate in the actions of these organizations, a point that I will discuss again in more depth later in this paper.

Social Movement Organizations

The classical definition of a social movement organization (SMO) is attributed to McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977), who define one as a “complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals” (p. 20). The central task of an SMO is to aggregate otherwise dispersed resources for the purpose of engaging in action to promote social change based on the broadly held preferences and diversity of sub-preferences of the social movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). At one level, resource mobilization is the task of converting adherents—individuals and other organizations that believe in the goals of the movement—to constituents who can provide resources to the SMO (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). On another level, resource mobilization is the task of converting non-adherents and bystander publics (neutral witnesses) to adherents (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). At a minimum, an SMO must possess some resources, no matter how few nor what type, and claim some form of legitimacy for the work that it does (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). Most SMOs depend on volunteer labour, although some purchase labour, and their staff will vary tremendously in the efficacy with which they translate resources into action (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). McCarthy and Zald distinguish between three types of people who are involved with SMOs: (1) potential beneficiaries who will directly benefit from goal attainment; (2) conscience adherents who will not benefit directly from goal attainment, but remain supportive of the SMO; and (3) conscience constituents who provide resources to the SMO but do not directly benefit from goal attainment. An SMO’s ability to mobilize resources might also depend on the support of authorities and delegated agents of social control (e.g., the police, representatives of government), but these authorities and agents of control do not normally become constituent groups (McCarthy & Zald, 1987).

More recent studies of SMOs take into account the body of scholarship that has developed in the wake of McCarthy and Zald's foundational papers on the organizational processes of social movements. Jenkins (1995) and Lofland (1996) add that SMOs are those that rely on contentious action. Lofland goes on to add that tactics are less important than the types of claims made or the ideological basis of the organization. By way of illustration, this appropriately distinguishes between a corporate organization that, for example, invests in sustainability with green packaging or land management processes, and a not-for-profit environmentalist organization such as Greenpeace or the Sierra Club, which engage in action for the purpose of making social change. The tactics may be similar—using green technology or mobilizing farmers to engage in more ethical and humane practices—but the ideological underpinnings are distinct. No matter how environmentally conscious, the for-profit organization exists to aggregate capital for personal gain; the not-for-profit aggregates resources to achieve social movement goals.

In this study that considers queer social movements, it is also critical to understand the ways in which SMOs have been theorized within the growing body of literature on new social movements that do not always focus on political change as their central goals. As Bernstein (1997) notes, movements concerned with cultural and political identities also focus on cultural, social, and economic change. This is particularly important for the NSM theory and the cultural and cognitive theories that employ an interpretive lens to understand social movements. Caniglia and Carmin (2005) suggest that:

Participants are motivated to join movements, at least in part, because they resonate with their personal values and beliefs. Analyses of new social movements advanced and crystallized this view as scholars noted that membership in the women's, environmental, and gay and lesbian movements, to name a few, often is better explained by identity affiliation than by social class. Movement mobilization is a challenge from this vantage point, especially since identity movements often do not focus on political change but strive to achieve social, cultural, and economic transformations. As a result, movements must craft identities and frame their goals in ways that not only encourage participation and adherence, but that promote transitions in prevailing societal norms. (p. 205)

Identity is thus central to the study of SMOs that are part of new social movements, such as the feminist, gay rights, and more recently, the disability and trans* movements. Collective identity has been used to refer to the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms of behaviour that are present within a given social movement (Johnston, Larana, & Gusfield, 1994; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Taylor & Whittier, 1992).

Gamson (1991) and Melucci (1989) both claim that the same collective identity present in social movements is also present in the organizational culture of SMOs. This identity can shape the processes through which meanings are negotiated and the ways in which constituents collectively make sense of the organization and its purpose. In addition, the organization's repertoire of action is shaped by its constituents' shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms of behaviour. As Jasper (1997) shows, SMOs adopt certain ways of organizing or mobilizing based on what is familiar to the larger population affected by or participating in the movement, the perceived efficacy of these tactics, and the messages they wish to convey to the broader public. Clemens (1997) notes that identity can also connect an SMO to other organizations, institutions, and areas of activism, so that coalitions can be built around, for example, the peace movement and environmentalism, or gay rights and feminism. According to Brulle and Caniglia (1999), the SMO projects an image that will help it appeal to potential constituents. As Armstrong and Cragg (2006) note in their study on the myth of Stonewall and its importance to the gay rights movement, the framing of a grievance can have serious consequences for how successful the movement will be in mobilizing for collective action. Organizations are essential to this framing process. Polletta (2004) also warns that when SMOs move from participatory organizations to hierarchical bureaucracies, they can adopt attributes that might not align with the collective identity of their constituents. The professionalization of anti-poverty and homelessness advocates, for example, discouraged participation from the very people that its organizations were meant to help. As Polletta points out, homeless people often do not feel welcomed or encouraged by overly structured organizations that further marginalize those who do not comply with their bureaucratic authority structure. Caniglia

and Carmin (2005) stress the importance of attending to the “interpretive and sense-making processes” within SMOs in order to explore the ways cognitive and cultural factors such as ideology, values, and beliefs shape SMO practices (p. 206). Cognitive and cultural theories may also bridge RMT’s micro-level organizational theory, Tarrow’s (1998) political opportunity structure, and the emerging body of literature on new social movements.

Lesbian and Gay Archives as Social Movement Organizations

It is my working premise in this study that lesbian and gay archives serve as social movement organizations within queer social movements, and this assumption allows me to utilize a particular grammar for writing about these organizations. There is a significant body of literature related to SMOs concerned with the rights and well-being of those people whose sexuality has been historically understood as non-heteronormative. This includes Sears (2006) work on the Mattachine Society, and Gallo’s (2007) history of the Daughters of Bilitis, among others. To my knowledge, social movement theory is silent on the role of lesbian and gay archives as social movement organizations. Eichhorn (2012) has recently argued that archives are often neglected in discussions about culture and society. Although she is speaking specifically about Bourdieu’s field of cultural production, her criticisms are seemingly applicable to social movement organization theory. She writes,

Unlike the gallery, art museum and even academy, which more often than not endow literary or artistic work with value in the present, the archive’s work is more often than not retroactive. In other words, it is uniquely located to the extent that it permits works to migrate across the fields of cultural production at different points in history...The archives, then, is not only an institution that Bourdieu overlooks in his theorizing on the field of cultural production but also the institution that arguably holds the greatest potential to disrupt... (p. 25)

If, as the literature on new social movements insists, the central goals of these post-industrial, postmodern movements focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic well-being, but on issues related to collective identities and human rights, then cultural institutions are essential to movement politics and mobilizing for collective action. In particular, lesbian and gay archives,

which both preserve and provide the material tools necessary for the construction of collective identity, are fundamental to sustaining a movement. While they do not explicitly mobilize resources for collective action, the scholarship that is produced from the evidence they preserve makes possible the social cohesion necessary for queer social movements to develop shared queer and/or trans* heritages that strengthen otherwise loose ties among participants.

Lesbian and Gay Archives as Abeyance Structure

The central task of an archives is to preserve documentary heritage for posterity. Although each lesbian and gay archives will differ in its approach to collecting, they share a common goal to keep the materials in their collections safe and accessible for future generations. To this end, I suggest that lesbian and gay archives function not only as social movement organizations, but also as abeyance structures that help carry on and carry forward evidence of one activist cohort to the next. Taylor (1989) was among the first to show that movements can be understood as occurring in cycles, with periods of abeyance. During movement abeyance, she argues, indigenous organizations sustain movement continuity by providing a space to preserve networks of social movement actors and knowledge of movement histories, tactics, and goals. Taylor borrows the term *abeyance* from Mizruchi's theory of social control, which states that abeyance structures emerge when society lacks sufficient capacity to cope with marginalized peoples and, thus, organizations "absorb, control, and expel personnel according to the number of status positions available in the larger society" (p. 762). Although Taylor's framework is based on the single case of the National Woman's Party (NWP), the concept of abeyance structures has been thoroughly tested in subsequent studies by Lofland (1996) and Sawyers and Meyer (1999). The concepts of movement abeyance and abeyance structures have also been wholly incorporated into social movement literature. I consider the concepts of movement abeyance and abeyance structures to understand the current circumstances of lesbian

and gay archives, namely those that emerged within the contexts of social movements that have since entered a period of decline.

Limitations of Social Movement Theory

Social movement theory provides a framework that I have found to be particularly useful in examining the trajectories and sustainability strategies employed by the four archives that inform this study. The utility of this grammar is nevertheless limited to the discussion of queer social movements and lesbian and gay archives that have emerged within the North American context. Staggenborg (2011) points out that part of the reason for this North American centrism is that social movements require some of the social and political freedoms supported by Western post-Industrial countries: the rights of freedom of speech, freedom to assemble, and freedom of the press. As Zald and Ash (1966) argue, if repression is too severe, adherents to a social movement may not be able to mobilize in the same ways or to the same extent as those who do not have as much to risk. Yet, even as social movement theorists continue to grapple with movement politics initiated in the West, they are also aware of parallel movements in non-Western places, as well as the continued increasingly transnational influence of Western movements. In addition, the proliferation of the Internet and new digital technologies has opened up new communication channels that did not exist when Zald and Ash's foundational work on resource mobilization were published.

Although it appears that new movements, such as Arab Spring, China's pro-democracy Jasmine Revolution, or South Africa's Landless People's Movement, have not entered into the academic literature, they are often discussed by academics through informal channels. Sociologist David S. Meyer, for example, frequently writes about these non-Western movements on his blog, Politics Outdoors (<http://politicsoutdoors.com/>). Similarly, the International Center for Protest Research's

website aggregates grey literature⁴ by a group of international scholars to highlight research on various forms of protest and dissent all over the globe (<http://www.protest-research.org/>). Because movements are dynamic processes, editorials, blogs, and digital media are important resources for identifying collective action and providing initial albeit not traditionally peer reviewed analysis.

With regard to this project, it is also worth noting that queer social movements are no longer limited to Western countries, if they ever were. From 2004 to 2007, I lived in South Korea, where a recognizable gay and lesbian rights movement was just taking its tentative first steps. At gay pride parades in 2005 and 2006, both of which I attended, protesters typically wore masks to protect their identities and to reduce the risks of participating. Each event drew no more than a few hundred people. In 2012, the group Korean Queer Culture Festival (KQCF) organized a gay pride parade that attracted an estimated 3,000 protestors and is expected to grow (KQCF). By the same token, the *Grupo Arco-Iris* reported that an estimated 1 million people took part in the 2012 pride parade in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Grupo Arco-Iris, 2012). *The New Yorker* also reported a gay rights protest in Entebbe, Uganda, despite pending legislation that would make the crime of homosexuality punishable by death (New Yorker, 2012). Whether these actions should be considered part of increasingly global queer movements or serendipitous parallel actions is up for consideration. For the purpose of my project, I limit the scope of my research to queer social movements in North America for two reasons. First, it is infeasible to attempt a thorough review of literature about queer social movements across all nationalities, cultures, and languages. The literature on the North American movement is already cumbersome and challenging to distil. Furthermore, I do not believe it to be appropriate to discuss the collective actions that have occurred outside of North America without first contextualizing each instance within the broader cultural and politics processes that have contributed to the action. This is not possible within the constrained space and ideological

⁴ The term *grey literature* is used variably by the intellectual community, librarians, and medical and research professionals to refer to a body of materials that cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers, but which is frequently original and usually recent. Examples of grey literature include technical reports from government agencies or scientific research groups, working papers from research groups or committees, white papers, or preprint. The term grey literature is often employed exclusively with scientific research in mind. Nevertheless, grey literature is not a specific genre of document, but a specific, non-commercial means of disseminating information.

commitments of this paper. A second reason that I have chosen to limit my project to North America is exactly because the literature on social movements is thusly limited. Collective actions that take place outside of North America remain under-theorized. This is a limitation that I acknowledge and do not want to perpetuate by applying the social movement theoretical framework to contexts for which it has not been adequately tested.

Multi-disciplinary Ideas about Queer Archives

Literature about lesbian and gay archives began to circulate as early as the 1970s; however, the first serious discussions and analyses did not emerge until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Joan Nestle's work on the Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York is notable. Although Nestle has written previously about the exclusion of lesbian culture from popular history, her article in the *Feminist Review's* special issue on perverse politics in Spring 1990, presented a clear reflection on the importance and organizing strategies of the archives she helped found. As both an intensely personal initiative—Nestle lived in the home that also housed the collections of the Archives—and a community project to collect, preserve, and make accessible the material culture of the New York lesbian community, the Lesbian Herstory Archives was intimately tied to the lesbian feminist movement that had emerged in the wake of the Stonewall uprising. As Nestle explains, the Archives grew out of a consciousness-raising group called the Gay Academic Union, and a concern that patriarchal historians would continue to ignore the experiences of lesbians. The Archives was thus consciously constituted as an intervention into this systematic forgetting and as a way to preserve the material culture that was being produced by the lesbian feminist movement. Nestle writes:

We remembered a world of lesbian culture that had nourished us but that was rapidly disappearing. We also knew, in this early heyday of lesbian publishing, that our presses and publishers were fragile undertakings and we were concerned about preserving all their precious productions. But the strongest reason for creating the Archives was to end the silence of patriarchal history about us - women who loved women. Furthermore, we wanted our story to be told by us, shared by us and preserved by us. We were tired of being the medical, legal and religious other (p. 87).

Nestle goes on to describe how the founding collective, worried that the word *archives* would alienate working-class lesbians, created a slide show of lesbian memorabilia and travelled with this to women's conferences across the country to show the importance of preserving these documents as archival records. The model for these slide shows and for the LHA was the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture which, as Nestle explains, started as one man's refusal to accept the notion that Black people have no history.

Since Nestle's article, the interest in lesbian and gay archives has grown considerably across several academic literatures and in the popular press. Carmichael's (1998) edited anthology, *Daring to Find our Names. The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, collects some of the early writing on queer archives. The anthology, however, does not move much beyond a simplistic, laudatory introduction to lesbian and gay archives as one of the ways in which community archivists have attempted to confront the omission of queer experiences from historical narratives. In fact, much of the early writing on queer archives takes a similar approach. Averill's (1990) study, "The Church, Gays, and Archives," addresses the dearth of records documenting homosexuality in the church, while praising the work of the Canadian Gay Archives (now the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives) to preserve what little records do exist in their collections. Maynard's (1991) examination of the challenges historians face when attempting to excavate queer experiences from the archives also commends the work of the Canadian Gay Archives, the founding of which he claims marks the beginning of a "self-conscious gay history movement in Canada" (p. 196). The 1990s was also the first time that queer archives begin publishing organizational histories in archival literature. The Australian journal *Archives and Manuscripts*, for example, published a history of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives in its May 1995 issue (Carbery, 1995); the *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* published a history of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California in its April 1999 issue (Meeker, 1999). More recently, Zieman's (2009) overview of outreach programming at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) and Corbman's (2014) study of the Lesbian Herstory Archives' collecting practices are other examples.

Indeed, literature on lesbian and gay archives remains noticeably uncritical until the late 1990s, when scholars from both within and outside of archival theory begin responding to the constructivist turn in many disciplines, including literature, art, economics, and philosophy. Within archival theory, studies on lesbian and gay archives have grown out of more wide-ranging work on the impact of postmodern thinking on archives, a turn worth exploring briefly here. As Cook (1997) notes in his sweeping assessment of contemporary archival thinking, the postmodern emphasis on pluralism and relativism has prompted shifts in thinking about the construction of knowledge and understanding. He suggests that postmodern thinking, in particular that introduced by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, has affected archives in two ways. First, it has challenged archivists to think of an archives as a reflection of a society's political, economic, social, and cultural milieu. This disrupts the long-standing notion that archives, and by extension archivists, exist in neutral space without instrumental purpose or even interest in the records they keep. Second, postmodern thinking probes into the very nature of knowledge and the construction of history. In *Archive Fever*, for example, Derrida (1996) makes explicit the role of archives in the creation of an official or sanctioned memory. What Cook calls a 'paradigm shift' is also examined by Harris (1997), in a critical appraisal of the traditionally positivist approach to archival 'science', and Ketelaar's (1999) and Brothman's (1993, 1999) sustained analyses of Derrida's work on archives. The year-long Sawyer Seminar, held at the University of Michigan in 2000-2001, brought together hundreds of scholars across multiple disciplines to investigate the complicated relationships between archives, documentations, and the construction of social memory (see Blouin & Rosenberg, 2007). In each study, the impartiality of the archivists is confronted and the universalizing potential of the archives is rejected. The social aspects of record keeping are foregrounded, opening up new opportunities to address not only the ways in which archives construct collective memories, but also what experiences and feelings they discard or repress. It is within these conversations that the potential of identity-based collections—queer or otherwise—becomes apparent. Although published after my data collection was completed, Caswell's (2014) framework for understanding identity-based

community collections takes the next critical step in understanding the relationship between archives and communities. Likewise, Gilliland's (2014) work on reconceptualizing archives and archival work for the digital age has been helpful in validating and testing some of my perceptions of the challenges and opportunities my case institutions have experienced.

The most relevant work within archival studies has been that undertaken by Flinn and Shepherd (2009). Based on data collected during their three-year project, the UK-based Community Archives and Identities, these researchers have published a number of articles that pay particular attention to the political and social contexts that give rise to community archives. Case studies examine how these community organizations have contributed to the production of public histories, exhibitions, and other interactions between and among the local communities. In the final report, Flinn, Shepherd, and Stevens (2009) recognize a growing interest in community archives as a "new and rich source" of heritage material and note a significant number of collaborations between community groups and professionals to preserve, catalogue, and make accessible community-based collections (p. 2). They also find that community archives are heterogeneous in their composition, collecting practices, and political attentions. What these organizations share is a "bottom-up rather than top-down" quality; each was constituted in response to a real or perceived failure on the part of traditional archives to represent or accurately convey the experiences of those who are documented by these community-based collections (p. 3). This is not to say, however, that some community-based collections do not receive some kind of support from another heritage institution. As Flinn, Shepherd, and Stevens (2009) discovered, some community-based collections may be sustained entirely by the communities they serve, while others may receive funds, space, and resources from heritage organizations. Some sustain autonomous governance and others form partnerships with, for example, libraries, museums, or universities. What ties these community-based collections together under the umbrella of *community archives* is that their collections are gathered primarily by members of a particular community and members of this community maintain some level of control over the management of these collections. As Flinn (2007) has

stated, “Community archives are the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential” (p. 153). He goes on to suggest that certain community archives might be better understood as heritage practices that are a component of social movement activism and a means to support the activities of redress, self-determination, and critical thinking about the past, present, and future. Gilliland and Flinn (2013) revisited this discussion in their keynote at the 2013 CIRN Prato Community Informatics Conference, adding that community archiving practices often have a heritage or archival activism component.

Some archival literature has employed the term *autonomous archives* as a way to recognize the ways in which community archival initiatives operate outside of traditional archival systems (Hogan 2012; Lymn, 2013). First introduced by Moore and Pell (2010), autonomous archives describes community-based collections that are constituted as social and political acts by and for emergent publics. On a very basic level, autonomous archives describe community-based collections that are collected, curated, and preserved without interference from another authority. They are constituted as conscious acts and bring together evidence to support critiques of dominant historical narratives. Moore and Pell admit, however, that this description does not waver significantly from the traditional conceptualizations of community archives; the boundary between their framework and more established community archives is imprecise. What distinguishes the framework of autonomous archives is its insistence that these collections serve emerging publics whose constituent members have been traditionally excluded from or denied full participation in public discourse. Moore and Pell argue that autonomous archives are sites of potentiality where “emergent publics” create the shared memories and heritage necessary to develop into a cohesive and recognizable community (p. 257). They write, “Autonomous archives present a framework for understanding the archive as a creative, world-making process that contributes to shared knowledge of the past and has the power to transform modes of public engagement” (p. 256).

The autonomous archives framework is most successful when it forces archivists to look at community-based collections as manifestations of the archival aspirations of local organizers (Moore & Pell, 2010; see also Evans, McKemmish, Daniels & McCarthy, 2015). Although such artificial collections are not traditionally understood as archival in nature, the autonomous archives framework reads the activities of gathering, curating, and making accessible records as social and political acts that spring from a similar desire to memorialize and preserve evidence as would underpin the work of any archival project (Moore & Pell, 2010). Thus, under this framework, community-based archives cannot be dismissed as simply curated collections, but must be recognized as archival spaces. Moore and Pell's (2010) work also complements Flinn and Stevens (2009), because neither project cleaves to a particular definition of community archives, but rather suggests a research framework for investigating the genesis and evolution of community-based collections.

In addition to scholarship that examines the work of community archives, a growing body of multidisciplinary literature has turned more inwardly critical as it attempts to understand the ways in which queer communities themselves consciously construct and actively mediate what Ketelaar (1990) has called the "archivalisation" of social memory. In *An Archive of Feeling*, Cvetkovich (2003) explores the construction and maintenance of queer archives as emotional and political investments. Although her theory moves away from the brick-and-mortar of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, where the narrative begins, Cvetkovich sustains a prolonged meditation on the nature of lesbian archives and the implications of these institutions for contemporary lesbian public cultures. She sees the archives as a material practice that satisfies a psychic need to construct a history and redress institutional erasure. Cvetkovich acknowledges that the records kept by a queer archives—ephemera, photographs, matchbook covers, personal diaries, zines—offer an alternative mode of knowledge to that embodied in official documentation. That gay and lesbian history even exists remains a contested fact. Similarly, Halberstam (2005) writes about transgender archives as both repositories of material culture and as rhetorical sites. She asserts, "[T]he archive is not simply

a repository; it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory, and a complex record of queer activity. In order for the archive to function, it requires users, interpreters, and cultural historians to wade through the material and piece together the jigsaw puzzle of queer history in the making” (pp. 169-70). This literature more broadly looks at the constitution of queer archives as part of a reparation process that allows queer people to construct and mediate their own histories.

Some of this multidisciplinary literature investigates what Rawson (2009) has called “queer archival logic” and how queer ways of collecting, preserving, and making accessible records of queer experience offer new ways of thinking about how other community-based groups can engage in activities that purport to reclaim particular voices and subjectivities of the past. Studies by Hogan (2007) and Rawson (2012) represent just a sliver of the growing body of literature that looks at how queer critiques of the archives and archival practices have disrupted traditional notions of the archival subject, presumably neutralized through the lens of history. In the two-volume special issue *Radical History Review* (2014, 2015), editors Marshall, Tortorici, and Murphy ask readers to think about how the notion of queer archives has radically altered the ways activists, scholars, and archivists think about history.

A small segment of literature also looks at the process of archival homonormativity. The term *homonormativity* is most commonly associated with the work of Duggan (2003), and has come to represent the imposition of gay and lesbian norms that privilege neoliberalism and perpetuate heteronormative standards. Cooper (2015) has developed the concept of archival homonormativity to describe the process by which queer archives underrepresent the experiences of those whose sexuality and gender do not comply with homonormative conceptions. As Cvetkovich (2012) points out in a recent assessment of queer archival repositories in the Los Angeles area, many of these collections have emerged out of the personal collections of prominent gay activists, whose political attentions on social movement goals such as anti-discrimination law, marriage equality, and other civil rights, have skewed the collecting focus toward the experiences of gay men. She also notes the

work of Hogan-Finlay to bring attention to the lesbian absences in the archives. Hogan-Finlay's (2011) dissertation also introduces the idea that "queerness is a shadow in the predominantly gay white male narrative of recorded LGBT histories" (p. vii). Similarly, Fullwood's (2009) study of the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and Stevens' (2009) interview with rukus! founders Ajumu X and Topher Campbell, bring attention to the absence of black voices in queer archives (X, Campbell & Stevens, 2009). Stein's (2014) work on the ways in which particular archival projects have canonized homophile respectability is useful to understanding how lesbian and gay archives have contributed to archival homonormativity. Lee's (2015) research on queer/ed archival methodology also posits that heteronormativity, homonormativity, and the politics of respectability come together to produce normative narratives, even within the context of the queer archives.

Bly and Wooten's (2012) anthology, *Make Your Own History. Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the 21st Century*, appears to be the first instance of scholarship that brings together conversations about community-based collections under the rubric of DIY (Do-It-Yourself). Contributions by Eichorn (2012) about the Riot Grrrl collection at the Fales Library, and Brager and Sailor's (2012) discussion of the Queer Zine Archives project, are helpful in unearthing some of the motivations for collecting this material. Whether DIY collecting is done as a rescue mission or as a way to control and preserve a particular narrative about an activist movement, many have taken up the task with serious fervour. The implication of strong DIY foundations, however, is that these archives likely serve few outside of their records creators/members. The point of these projects, whether implicit or made explicit, is to make something whole without and in resistance to state intervention (and often commercial intervention). This crafting spirit is what makes DIY archives so exciting and also what makes them vulnerable. As Moore and Pell (2010) note, community-based collections are also vulnerable to the ebb and flow of archival aspirations; should members of the archives lose interest in the records or decide that housing the collection is no longer possible, the archival project may simply cease to exist. Nevertheless, as Bly and Wooten's

collection has shown, many of these DIY collections end up in special collections in public and academic libraries, and occasionally as fonds in academic or state archives. The implications of this transfer of custody remain under-theorized.

Methodology and Research Design

Researching Lesbian and Gay Archives as Social Movement Organizations

For this project, I have adopted a multiple case study design because this project will produce the first known study to position lesbian and gay archives as SMOs, and it was therefore appropriate to select a research strategy that has been well tested in the literature. In following an established research strategy, evaluators of this study are able to compare my findings to other studies on SMOs and assess any coherence or discordance among studies. This, in turn, may contribute to more generalizable knowledge. Though it is not my goal to produce a generalizable theory, it is useful to have more than one research site so that I might attempt to normalize cases as a rhetorical device to argue that particular strategies or organizational compositions were typical of the movement and activity related to the movement unfolded in fairly predictable ways (Staggenborg 1991). As such, I will be able to compare experiences across my cases as either foreseeable or counterpunctual. While Krensky's (2011) dissertation on the partnerships between queer archives and academic institutions does not explicitly employ social movement theory, she does use a normalizing case rhetoric to suggest that queer archives can and have engaged in meaningful partnerships with mainstream institutions with some amount of predictability.

As Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) have shown, social movement research is an active and diverse area of scholarship with a tremendous amount of sociological literature, as well as cross-fertilization with work from history, political science, psychology, and anthropology. In each discipline, there are preferred methods for data collection and analysis. Historical work, for example, relies heavily on interpretivist textual analysis; anthropology uses ethnography and participant observation (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). Sociology employs a range of

methods, both quantitative and qualitative, including surveys, interviews, and observation (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). Such varied approaches to research have enriched the study of collective action and produced a number of theoretical advances. The development of resource mobilization theory, political process theory, and new social movement theory has been particularly fruitful in triggering an expansion of social movement research (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). As Klandermans and Staggenborg suggest, because of these theoretical innovations, we know much more about why people participate in social movements and how these movements are structured than we did thirty or forty years ago.

Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) report that case study design is a commonly used strategy for the study of social movement organizations. Research on social movement organizations has grown out of resource mobilization theory (Zald & Ash, 1966; McCarthy & Zald, 1987), though it has been more recently influenced by political process theory (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 2011) and new social movement theory (Buechler, 1997a, 1999; Pichardo, 1997). While some research has looked at individual characteristics of movement leadership and volunteers (Kleidman, 1994; Morris & Staggenborg, 2004) or collective identity and personal commitment (Hunt & Benford, 2004), most organizational studies employ a case study approach. As Snow and Trom (2002) explain, the case study method has been rewarding for social movement researchers because it can capture data on a particular movement over a particular stretch of time. As a research strategy, case studies have “empirical and theoretical utility” because they produce a detailed, rich, and holistic elaboration of an interesting entity at a particular instance (p. 147). Because social movements are dynamic processes, the case study offers a way to acknowledge micro-, meso- and macro-level contexts that affect the work of an SMO. The goal of a case study is thus to “understand and illuminate how the collective actions, events, and/or processes are produced and reproduced or changed by examining their ongoing interaction within other elements within the particular context” (p. 150). A “thickly contextualized and embedded” case helps researchers understand the phenomenon or system under investigation (p. 150).

Case studies can also be defined in terms of their capacity to produce a “richly detailed, ‘thick’ elaboration of the phenomenon under study and the context in which it is embedded” (Snow & Trom 2002, p. 149). This elaboration is done through a triangulation of multiple methods of data collection, data sources, and investigators, as well as the deployment of different theoretical perspectives on the case under study (Snow & Trom, 2002). As Yin suggests, “multiple sources of evidence” are used because “social reality is too complex and multifaceted to be adequately grasped by any single method” (qtd in Snow & Trom, p. 158). Oftentimes, social movement researchers use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including ethnography and participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and analysis of documents and archives, particularly those that are created by the organizations being studied. As Snow and Trom point out, any method of data collection must be relevant to the case as it is “grounded in real-life situations and settings” (p. 151). Considering that triangulation of multiple methods is a defining characteristic of case study, it should also be clear that this approach should not be considered a method on its own.

The major drawback of case study design is also embodied in its strength as a strategy for obtaining a thick, descriptive, holistic understanding of a system of action, an event, or a process. If conducted in accordance with “accented procedural and analytic guideline,” and methodological triangulation, a case study should generate a richer, more detailed and multiperspectival analyses than any single methodology (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 163). As Snow and Trom warn, however, a case study can become “bound up in itself in a fashion that does not allow for or facilitate generalization” (p. 163). That is, a case study should not only document the more mundane characteristics of the case, but also highlight its idiosyncratic or particularistic qualities. Such attention to distinctiveness is counterproductive to sociological research that aims to produce generalizable knowledge. This contention about the weakness of case studies is not particularly troublesome because, as Snow and Trom contend, the type of generalizability that case studies pursue is analytical or theoretical, not statistical. Thus while case study does not lend itself easily to

enumerative generalizability, for which it is most commonly criticized, it does participate in theoretical development. Thus, the utility of a case study is not only to produce a thick, descriptive, holistic understanding of some phenomenon, but also as an “important mechanism for theoretical generalization” (p. 166).

It is worth commenting on the process of theoretical development as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and outlined by Snow and Trom (2002) as a path of discovery, extension, and refinement. Single cases, such as those undertaken by Goodwin (1997) and Armstrong and Cragge (2006), provide insight that has formed the basis for theoretical postulates. These ‘discovery’ cases were followed by subsequent studies that enriched or ‘extended’ the original postulates. Further case studies might also refine theoretical generalizability based not on the single discovery case, but a number of cases that have, when taken together, contributed to theoretical formulations. The goal of this project is to better understand the trajectories and strategies of lesbian and gay archives through the lens of social movement theory and to contribute an empirical study that bridges the fields of social movement theory and archival studies. The project is best described as theoretical extension in the context of an inductive, qualitative research study because it extends theory about social movement organizations to account for the role of lesbian and gay archives in social movements. In the future, the study might also be used to extend theory about queer archives or refine theory about social movements generally.

Narrating the History of Lesbian and Gay Archives

Using a case study research strategy, I have employed three complementary data collection methods to research the four archives that inform this study. Thirty-three interviews with community archivists, staff, and community partners have provided information about the histories and cultures of each organization. In addition, these conversations pointed to the ways in which each archives has managed its resources and responded to changes in the political opportunity structure. Second, I have reviewed more than 20,000 pages of organizational records and, where

available, looked at the personal papers of community archivists who are either deceased or otherwise inaccessible. I was especially interested in annual reports and meeting minutes that confirm and complement participants' recollections of organizational histories, as well as records related to the management of resources, such as space, money, and expertise. Third, I made site visits to each of the archives that inform this study. With the exception of the CLGA, my on-site visits have been limited to two-week periods; however, this field experience has afforded me some opportunity to observe community archivists and staff in their daily work. Embedding myself physically in the archives has also helped me gain tacit knowledge about organizational culture and how decisions are made.

Interviews took the form of guided discussion around several open-ended questions (see Appendix B). These questions were derived from Lofland's (1996) list of major questions to ask about social movement organizations, which are designed to elicit discussion about strategic dilemmas, resource constraints, political opportunity structures, tactical interaction, causes of repertoires of collective actions, and factors affecting strategic options. Participants who serve in decision-making positions were also asked about the types of strategies employed by the organizations. In each interview, participants were given the opportunity to discuss the relationship between lesbian and gay archives and queer social movements, and reflect on how their own institution has contributed to or been shaped by these movements. Additional questions designed to probe framing issues, local amelioration, action, and dramaturgical dimensions were also asked. Open-ended questions were intended to draw out participants' subjective, nuanced understanding of their own social world in their own natural language.

Blee and Taylor (2002) suggest that semi-structured interviews are advantageous for researchers attempting to collect data about organizations that have been "loosely organized, short-lived, or thinly documented" (p. 93). Although all four of the archives that inform this study are now formal institutions, this was not always the case. As I discovered in my analysis of organizational records, documentation of early organizing is not always available. I also did not limit

my interviews to current participants. Former volunteers were able to reflect back on their time with the archives and provided insight into past activity that current participants were not familiar with. Community partners, including librarians and staff of local university programs were also included, where applicable. The technique of qualitative interviewing also allows researchers to include the perspectives of social movement actors who are not necessarily involved in leadership activities. As Blee and Taylor (2002) note, organizational records and official communications are usually produced by core volunteers in leadership positions and do not always reflect the motivations or attitudes of all volunteers.

Where possible, I conducted interviews in person at each participant's home institution, although several conversations took place over Skype or by email. Most interviews took the form of one-on-one meetings in office spaces or other quiet settings. In one case, I interviewed a participant in a processing room while he continued to work on regular volunteer tasks; he agreed to participate in the study only if it would not disrupt his archiving work. One interview was conducted at a participant's home because she was recovering from a recent surgery. Two interviews were conducted at the University of Toronto, where both participants worked during the day. See Appendix A for a list of interview participants.

Prior to making site visits, I identified key participants at each institutions. These included, for example, current staff, founders, and community archivists who had previously been associated with the archives. I also relied on key participants to help me identify other community archivists who would be helpful to the research project. In one case, I identified two founders who were no longer affiliated with the archives and contacted them directly to discuss my project. With the exception of the CLGA, I began each site visit with a guided tour by one or more community archivists and, in each case, recorded these tours and the following discussions. Although my data collection methodology was undertaken prior to encountering Thomson's (2014) work on guided tours as a research method, I have since come to understand how valuable this technique was in my own study. As Thomson notes, "Guided tours hybridize aspects of observation and less-structured

interviews, and involve a researcher's relatively shortened, non-spontaneous entry into a field site" (p. 2). During these tours, I asked participants to describe our location and explain the importance of each feature. I also allowed study participants to use this opportunity to tell me about the history of the organization in a casual, free-form, and conversational manner. This experience not only introduced me to the archives as a space of work, but also generated trust between and among us. Guided tours also helped me become familiar with the nooks and crannies of the facility, which was vital knowledge when searching for organizational records that were not always systematically filed.

In all but one case, participants have been identified by name. It was important for me to identify my participants by name for a couple of reasons. First, in most cases, community archivists receive no financial compensation for the work that they do to create, develop, and manage their community archives. I wanted to celebrate their contributions to lesbian and gay archives by acknowledging them by name. I also recognize that the work that these community archivists perform requires significant expertise, which is often undervalued. They are experts in their field and should be acknowledged as such. Second, many participants are already associated with their archives and have served in a variety of public offices related to their organization's governance. Community archivists are, for example, directors, treasurers, presidents, or public contacts for reference services. That is, they are already known by name in the research community and would be easily identified as community archivists. Consequently, participants who consented to interviews were also given opportunities to review descriptive summaries of our conversations to ensure that they were comfortable with the data that we had generated and renew their consent to be named in any writing that had been produced through this research. Participants were also given the opportunity to identify particular statements made during their interview that they did not want attributed to them by name. With two exceptions, all participants also agreed to have copies of their interviews and my accompanying notes donated back to their home institutions to be made available for future research.

CHAPTER 3

The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

I first met Alan Miller on a soggy November evening in 2007. I had just returned to Canada from Seoul, South Korea, where I had lived and worked for several years as a technical writer. Library school had lured me back to Toronto and I was two months into my first term of a Masters degree when a friend asked me to come with her to a meeting at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. “There’s a gay archives?” I responded. “Yes,” she said. “It was news to me too, and I’m a gay archivist!” We travelled together by subway to Toronto’s Wellesley Station and then walked over to the corner of Church and Wellesley, the intersection frequently called the ‘heart of the gay village.’ There, above a bank, in a nondescript brick building known as the Churwell Centre, the Archives occupied two conjoined offices on the second floor. I knew this building well because it had once been home to ‘The Steps,’ a wide set of stairs leading from Wellesley Street up to a coffee shop on the first floor, made famous in the sketch comedy of *The Kids in the Hall* (see Velasco, 2013). It was one of the city’s most notorious cruising spots in the late 1980s and ‘90s, but had been paved over during one early 2000s push toward gentrification in the neighbourhood. We met with Miller, and he asked me a few questions. I don’t recall a single one of my answers because I was too busy gawking at my surroundings. Books, posters, pin buttons, Hollinger boxes, stacks of periodicals—was that a boxing championship belt?—t-shirts, and drag gowns. I was immediately smitten, and that initial attraction has never waned. Throughout the process of this study, I have learned that I was having a very common experience; once the Archives seduces you, it owns a piece of you for as long as you will allow it. Miller first encountered the Archives in 1977, and has been involved ever since. Long-time volunteers Harold Averill and Gerald King came in around the same time and have never left. Don McLeod began working at the Archives in 1985, and continues to work there at least once a week, providing reference service for researchers and visitors.

I have also been a volunteer since that very first evening and, as I noted in the previous chapter, this has undoubtedly given me insider knowledge about the Archives and its history. My role within the organization has also afforded me access to organizational records and other materials that an outside researcher would not necessarily discover. Interviews with long-time volunteers, staff, and community partners have not only corroborated some of my own understandings about the Archives' history, but have offered new insight into the trajectory that the organization has taken over the past forty-plus years. Narrators for this history include Ed Jackson, Jearld Moldenhauer, and Ken Popert, three members of the publishing collective that established the Archives in 1973; long-time volunteers Harold Averill, Alan Miller, Gerald King, and Donald W. McLeod; former directors Miriam Smith and Elizabeth Bailey; and current board directors Dennis Findlay and Robert Windrum. I am also aided in this study by Marcel Barriault's 2009 case study of the Archives, "Archiving the Queer and Queering the Archives," and Norman G. Kester's 1997 interview with Harold Averill, published in the ground-breaking book, *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Librarians*. Aimee Brown's 2010 essay on queer archives is also insightful and includes a discussion of the CLGA and its history. A flurry of media coverage that coincided with the archives' move to its now permanent home at 34 Isabella Street in 2010, has also helped point me to important moments in the history of the organization.

One important voice remains absent from this project: James Fraser, for whom the CLGA's rare book library is named, has been described by many people I interviewed as the 'guiding spirit of the archives.' From the mid-1970s until his death from AIDS in 1985, Fraser clocked hundreds of hours in the Archives and was passionate about collecting the detritus from Canada's gay movement activism and the emerging queer communities across the country. I rely on the memories of those who worked with him to help me understand the vital role that he played in nurturing the Archives from a few filing cabinets to the largest autonomous collection of queer and trans material in the world. He was the first professional archivist to work at the CLGA.

A One-Cupboard Reference Collection, 1973-1976

The development of lesbian and gay archives is inherently tied to the need for lesbian and gay people to both preserve the documentary evidence of their lives and to develop a shared heritage from which to build a public and political community. Historian Rick Bébout (1979) has described this urgency as such:

A conspiracy of silence has robbed gay people of their history. A sense of continuity, which derives from the knowledge of their heritage, is essential for the building of self-confidence in the community. It is a necessary tool in the struggle for social change (p. 21).

It is within this context of desiring a shared history and a public and political community that a small group of “rag-tag Lefties” founded the Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives in 1973.⁵ Before moving on to discuss how this one-cupboard reference collection grew into the CLGA, it is germane to provide a brief overview of the social history that contextualizes these first gestures toward building an archives.

By the early 1970s, significant changes to Canada’s regulation of sexuality had made it easier for gay men to organize and participate in public social activities. On December 21, 1967, then Justice Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau introduced an omnibus bill that would introduce major changes to the *Criminal Code of Canada* (McLeod 1996, 34). Known as Omnibus Bill C-150, the new legislation proposed, among other things, to decriminalize homosexual acts, specifically “buggery” and “gross indecency” (p. 34). The massive 126-page document would take almost two years to pass through the House of Commons, but was finally passed on May 14, 1969, earning legal status as the *Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1968-69* (SC 1968-69, c. 38). Trudeau defended the act by telling reported that “there’s no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation” (CBC Television, n.d.). As Warner (2002) suggests, Trudeau’s statement had a lasting impact across the country, as many young gay men became increasingly more confident in their sexual expression and public with their activism. From the early 1970s onward, Canada’s gay communities experienced incredible growth;

⁵ Dennis Findlay, Interview. October 8, 2013.

gay membership clubs and service organizations formed in several cities, providing new ways to socialize and celebrate new political consciousness (Warner, 2002).

The City of Toronto experienced prolific community building during this period. As Warner (2002) notes, the first gay and lesbian group to emerge in Toronto was the University of Toronto Homophile Association (UTHA), which worked to confront homophobia and discrimination against homosexuals at the University of Toronto. The group first met in the fall of 1969, after University research assistant Jearld Moldenhauer placed an advertisement in the student newsletter and was contacted by Charlie Hill and Ian Young. UTHA continued to meet throughout the next year and, in December 1970, member George Hislop helped establish a second group, Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT), which would address the concerns of gays and lesbians outside of the academic campus. By early 1971, CHAT had moved into an office and began offering social services to gays and lesbians in distress. Later that year, CHAT received a federal grant to hire six students to develop a street outreach program, and was given a second grant in 1972, to continue offering its supportive services. Recognition of CHAT was emblematic of a major cultural shift in the treatment of homosexuality, despite persistent criticism from a homophobic public. On August 1, 1971, Toronto's first gay picnic, held at Hanlan's Point on Toronto Islands, attracted more than 300 people around an old lace tablecloth bearing the words "Canada, the True North and Gay" (McLeod 1996, p. 74). Later that month, members of Toronto Gay Action (TGA) wrote a 13-page brief and delivered it to Ottawa, asking for additional amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code and that gay people should be allowed to serve openly in the military (McLeod, 1996, p. 75). The action, known as "We Demand," sparked a number of protests and rallies across the country, which are considered the first large public gay demonstrations to be held in Canada (McLeod, 1996, p. 77). Warner explains:

In the short period between 1970 and 1974, the new ideology blossomed on several fronts: breaking through isolation and loneliness; rejecting the notions of sin, sickness, and criminality that previously defined homosexuality; asserting pride in same-sex sexuality as good and natural; engaging in aggressive public advocacy for social and legislative reform; and building both a community and a culture based on a commonly shared sexuality (p. 61).

The emergence of gay and lesbian social spaces in the early 1970s, also led to the rise of a new business sector as gay people searched for new ways to communicate to and support one another. These businesses included registered not-for-profit membership groups, such as Calgary's Carousel Club and Edmonton's Club 70, which operated as private clubs to put on dances and other social events, as well as mail-order companies and other innovative businesses (Warner 2002, p. 86). A significant gay press was also developing in the United States, including *Gay Sunshine* from San Francisco, *Fag Rag* in Boston, and *Gay Liberator* in Detroit, and more and more small publishers were beginning to produce monographs for gay and lesbian audiences (Jackson, 1982). In August 1971, UTHA founder Jearld Moldenhauer announced at a meeting of TGA that he wanted to establish a Canadian newspaper that would reflect the consciousness of the growing gay community and communicate across the country the activities and events that were taking place in the gay liberation movement in Canada (McLeod 1996, p. 78). The following month, a few people attended the first planning meeting at Moldenhauer's apartment and decided on the title *The Body Politic* (Jackson & Persky, 1982). The magazine would become "Canada's gay liberation newsmagazine of record" from 1971 to 1987 (Barriault 2009, p. 99). As Jackman (2013) describes in his history of the newspaper, the entire endeavour would be done with a collective model of governance. The first contributors were young men—only a handful of women ever participated in the collective—and most of these contributors identified with white Left social movements, second-wave feminisms, and liberation movements unfolding in other parts of the globe.

Although the full history of *The Body Politic* is outside the scope of this study, it is important to underscore the significance of this newspaper and its collective members to the emergence and development of the CLGA. In fact, for many years, the Archives was organizationally and legally intertwined with the publication of *The Body Politic*; even today, the CLGA continues to receive financial support from former collective members. As some of the few public gay activists in the Toronto area, collective members were affiliated or had engagements with other gay activist groups

and these networks had produced significant documentary evidence of their collective organizing. In an interview for this project, Moldenhauer explained that he was acutely aware of the importance of forging coalitions with other social movement organizations and activists as a means of “nurturing the growth of the political movement.”⁶ Community building also required a resource centre to collect and make available important information about gay history and contemporary gay activism. Moldenhauer described how, by 1973, he had already amassed a small library of gay literature and had come to the realization that some of these books had entered into subsequent printings, suggesting that they had made an impact on the communities of people who bought and read them. He also collected titles that were printed in small editions because he knew they would disappear quickly, “even though they might have had a major influence on a certain sector of the intellectual class before falling into obscurity.”⁷

The need for an archives became even more apparent by the middle of 1973, when Moldenhauer moved to a new apartment at #4 Kensington Avenue, and began operating Glad Day Bookshop and a gallery space in his store front. *The Body Politic* collective operated out of the back room. After two years of producing the newspaper, Moldenhauer came to the conclusion that the materials that he had accumulated were important, both as reference materials and because they documented the activities of gay liberation activism and queer experiences around the world. They needed to be preserved. As Moldenhauer recalled, fellow collective member Ron Dayman assisted him in the day-to-day work on the newspaper. One day, while the two men were going about their regular business, they “quite naturally ‘saw the light’, realizing that so much of what was passing over our desk on a daily basis needed to be preserved and organized.”⁸ Moldenhauer credits Dayman with initiating the Archives, which began simply with a few boxes where they “carefully placed anything and everything we sensed would someday be of value to the generations of social

⁶ Jearld Moldenhauer, Interview. September 13, 2013.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

historians and others who came after us.”⁹ Dayman took on the role of the collection’s first community archivist.

Former collective member Ed Jackson also recalled the first gestures toward starting the archives.¹⁰ *The Body Politic*, he explained, was a print-related organization and members of the collective began to trade publications with other journals and newspapers around the world, particularly in the United States and increasingly across Canada and Europe as well. He also emphasized that the newspaper was publishing in a time prior to the advent of a fax machine or the Internet—even long-distance phone calls were too costly for the collective—and hence, the materials it acquired from other organizations came by “snail mail” or were picked up by members on their travels to other parts of the world.¹¹ Jackson also noted that, around the time that Dayman and Moldenhauer were beginning to work on the archives, *The Body Politic* had been working with historian James Steakley to publish a series of essays about homosexuals and the Third Reich. Steakley’s work on the experience of homosexuals in Nazi Germany was the first English-language account of early German homosexual emancipation and was first published in *The Body Politic*. Jackson and Persky (1982) write in their introduction to a reprint of the third article in the series:

The discovery of the existence—and abrupt disappearance—of this first wave of homosexual organizing has had a lasting impact on the contemporary movement’s sense of its place in history. Perhaps no other *TBP* article has so jolted the imagination and political consciousness of gay activists and other readers (p. 84).

When the collective began to come to terms with the knowledge that an early gay movement had existed and been systematically removed from the historical record, they began to worry that a similar fascism could disrupt the progress of the gay liberation movement at any time, destroying the evidence of this work and the people who were involved. In fact, the articles made such an impact that in 1975, the collective of *The Body Politic* formalized and named themselves Pink Triangle Press in honour of the pink triangles that homosexual men were forced to wear when

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ed Jackson, Interview. October 2, 2013.

¹¹ Ibid.

imprisoned by the Nazis. Jackson underscored that there was an increasing anxiety over the instability of the gay press and movement organizations, despite what appeared to be greater tolerance for homosexuality among the general population. He explained, “We began to realize that there was a history here. We had a sense of this because we knew that we were doing pioneering work making this magazine and involved with this movement and that things were sort of precarious.”¹² There was little guarantee, however, that a traditional archives would take in any of this material and so it would fall upon the activists involved with the movement to make sure that a record of their activities was preserved.

Dayman made the first public announcement of the formation of the Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives (CGLMA) in October 1973, while attending a national gay conference in Quebec City (Bébout, 1979). A month later, a second announcement was published in Issue 10 of *The Body Politic* (1973). The announcement described the importance and urgency of creating a place for “restructuring the history of gay people,” and called on readers to donate printed matter that would support “accurate historical research...and make available resource material relevant to all aspect of gay history” (TBP, p. 2). Notably, this announcement also indicates that the organizers expect to find a permanent house for the archives with a university or government library once the materials have been accumulated and catalogued. That is, the intention of the founders was not necessarily to create an autonomous social movement organization, but to develop an archival collection that would counteract the paucity of resources available in traditional archives and libraries. The question of donating materials or remaining autonomous would be raised several times throughout the development of the organization and I return to the question in more detail in Chapter 8.

After the announcement of the formation of the CGLMA, it was overwhelmed by donations of materials, both validating Moldenhauer and Dayman’s notion that there was a deep need for a gay archives and testing the limits of their capacity to organize and care for such a

¹² Ibid.

collection. Moldenhauer recalled that neither he nor Dayman had any formal archival training. As a bookseller, Moldenhauer was more focused on published material and had developed a good knowledge of the 20th century literature on homosexuality. He had also some limited experience working in a library while a student at Cornell University. Dayman likely followed general guidelines gleaned from library cataloguing systems and began a system of using index cards to compile records as they were being collected.

Despite limited expertise in archival practices and the encroachment of the collections on his personal space, Moldenhauer continued to support the work of the archives. As he explained, the archives were an extension of his activist work and relatively easy to incorporate into his day-to-day life. In 1973, Moldenhauer moved to a house at 139 Seaton Street, where his long-time housemate, John Scythes, built a partition wall in the basement to create a separate space where the Archives could be stored.¹³ Dayman continued to work on the collections, while Moldenhauer split his time between *The Body Politic* and Glad Day, which earned him a subsistence living. He explained, “Neither of us were paid and I had made it clear that I saw the role of Glad Day and *The Body Politic* as two halves of a greater whole in educating and reaching out to people interested in what we called the ‘new gay consciousness.’”¹⁴ In our interview, Moldenhauer pointed out that, because all three organizations operated out of his personal home, they had no overhead expenses, such as rent or utilities, which “allowed and made it easy for everything to grow from nothing to a state where success demanded that they leave the house to find larger commercial space from which to operate,”¹⁵ This situation was nevertheless short-lived. In early 1974, *The Body Politic* and the archives were moved into a shared office with Toronto’s Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) in a storefront location at 193 Carlton Street, just around the corner from the Seaton Street house

¹³ Bébout (2003) describes 139 Seaton Street as a “collective household,” where a number of gay men shared living space. Throughout the 1970s, several of these collective households were organized around Toronto’s Cabbagetown, a quaint Victorian working-class neighbourhood that was quickly gentrifying. As Bébout points out, much of the gentrification was accelerated by renovation work done by “well-off gay men,” who had moved to the area to take advantage of the relatively inexpensive real estate prices.

¹⁴ Moldenhauer, 2013.

¹⁵ Ibid.

(Bébout, 1998). Glad Day was asked not to move into the office and with that decision, Moldenhauer withdrew from both the archives and *The Body Politic*. Some of his photographs, however, including several iconic photographs of early gay liberation and gay rights demonstrations, would remain in the archives as part of *The Body Politic* organizational records.

An early history of the Archives by historian Rick Bébout (1979) recounts a slightly different set of events that led to the collections moving into the Carlton Street storefront. Published in the 1979 issue of *The Body Politic*, Bébout's "Stashing the Evidence" affirms Moldenhauer's recollection that it was his sense of history that led to his realization of the importance of the material that the newspaper had been accumulating over its first two years of work. Bébout notes, however, that Moldenhauer withdrew from the Archives earlier, leaving Dayman responsible for the care of the records. Dayman separated out *The Body Politic*'s current working files and then he "packed the rest into...cardboard boxes and carted the lot off to another gay group house a few blocks away at 203 Boulton Avenue. There in the damp basement, he began the job of bringing order to this valuable but confusing mass of paper" (Bébout, 1979, p. 21). Jackson also recalled this chain of events in our 2013 interview.

Dayman's commitment to the Archives was nevertheless short-lived. Bébout (1979) describes how Dayman sent out letters to gay groups across the country, announcing the formation of the CGLMA and inviting donations. Papers, ephemera, and artefacts poured in, including a significant collection of activist records from Ian Young, who had founded the UTHA with Moldenhauer just a few years prior (Bébout, 1979). By the summer of 1974, however, the labour required to properly process incoming collections had outpaced Dayman's capacity to contribute to the task; he was no longer in control of the collections (Bébout, 1979). When Moldenhauer dropped out of *The Body Politic*, and the publishing collective set up new offices at Carlton Street, the archives were "hailed out of Ron Dayman's basement and installed in a filing cabinet in one corner" (p. 21). It was at this time that Ed Jackson, a member of the publishing collective since 1972, took responsibility for the archives because he feared that the collections were constantly in

danger of being mistaken as the “carnage from a *Body Politic* paste-up or a GATE meeting, and consequently of being swept into the garbage can” (Jackson qtd. Bébout, 1979, p. 22).

For the next few months, the collections grew under Jackson’s guidance and this prompted a change in the organization’s name. Bébout (1979) reports that the collective mailed out a second letter to gay groups in early 1975, asking for more donations records and began applying for grants through the Canada Council, though none of these applications were successful.¹⁶ Money to support the Archives came from personal donations from collective members and friends, and *The Body Politic* provided space, filing cabinets, and office supplies. Jackson also made a strategic decision to rename the collection the Canadian Gay Archives (CGA), dropping ‘Liberation Movement’ from its title “in order to attract corporations and donations from those made uneasy by the movement, and perhaps a little opportunistic, in order to appear more innocuous to possible liberal sources of money” (Jackson qtd. Bébout 1979, p. 22). The change of name also reflected a general broadening of the collecting mandate to include any and all evidence of gay (and lesbian) cultures, past, present, and future.

The CGA also revisited its mandate and developed a new statement of purpose that was more political in its tone. Bébout’s (1979) article describes how Jackson travelled to New York to attend the third annual conference of the Gay Academic Union to introduce the archives. For this trip, he had prepared a flyer that, for the first time, clearly articulated the CGA’s first mission statement:

A conspiracy of silence has robbed gay people of their history. A sense of continuity, which derives from the knowledge of a shared heritage, is essential for the building of self-confidence in a community. It is a necessary tool in the struggle for social change (qtd. Bébout 1979, p. 22).¹⁷

¹⁶ Jackson, E. (1975, Mar. 20). [Dear People letter]. Organizational records (100.7.3). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

¹⁷ The original presentation given by Jackson is preserved in the organizational files at the CLGA. Jackson, E. (1975). [The Canadian Gay Archives, a presentation by Ed Jackson at The Gay Academic Union–Third Annual Conference, Columbia University, New York City, November 28-30, 1975]. Organizational records (100.7.3). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

The flyer and Jackson's repeated calls to action encouraged a small group of new volunteers to the archives and they began to meet regularly. Bébout (1979) remembers that this group included a professional archivist and a librarian, two students from the Faculty of Library Science at the University of Toronto (now the Faculty of Information), and people who worked at the University library, as well as several members of the newly formed Canadian chapter of the Gay Academic Union.

Despite renewed interest in archival work, the collections remained an undervalued part of *The Body Politic* community. As Jackson recalled, the Archives rarely received as much attention as the publication, and archival work often took a back seat to more pressing tasks related to *The Body Politic*. Bébout writes that, "The phones kept ringing, people kept coming in the door, jobs pressed. History sat in the corner, silent" (p. 22). When the publishing collective moved to a larger 1,000 square foot office at 24 Duncan Street, on the fifth floor of a brick warehouse, the archives moved with it and "for the next four months it remained almost untouched" (Bébout 1979, p. 22).

Changes within the publishing collective and its governing structure were also causing tensions among those members who remained committed to the newspaper and those who were concerned with the long-term preservation of the archives. In late 1975, the publishing collective decided to formalize as a non-profit corporation under the name Pink Triangle Press (Bébout, 1979). This established the Press as an umbrella organization that was legally and administratively responsible for the publication of the newspaper, as well as a newly founded typesetting service called Pink Type. On paper, the CGA also fell under this umbrella and was ostensibly owned by Pink Triangle Press. According to Jackson, he was among the first to raise concerns about the continued association between the CGA and the controversial gay liberation newsletter, which had come under attack many times for its radical editorials. Jackson's fears would be validated shortly thereafter and will be discussed a bit later in this chapter.

Community archivists were also coming to terms with the incredible amount of labour required to maintain the collections, and neither grant money nor stable funding appeared to be

forthcoming. Yet, as Jackson remembered, the archives had grown in size and to such significance that those invested in its continued development were keen to find ways to sustain this labour at any cost. It was around this time that representatives from the Archives of Ontario contacted Pink Triangle Press to enquire about the possibility of acquiring some of the materials for the Province. Several study participants mentioned this first notice of attention from professional archivists as a pivotal moment in the history of the organization. As Bébout (1979) recalls, the offer from the provincial archives was tempting; the collections would be preserved in a secure government building, professionally organized, and made accessible to researchers and the public. Community archivists initially considered the offer, but remained sceptical that the records would be cared for by a government institution and feared that they could easily be neglected or destroyed if political winds changed direction. Bébout also notes that the knowledge of pre-Nazi Germany and the burning of Magnus Hirschfeld's library had made too much of an impression on gay liberation activists for them to consider risking the safety of the archives should they hand over materials to the province. They declined the offer.

The decision to sustain the CGA as a community project marked a turning point for the organization and rejuvenated interest in keeping the collections as an autonomous gay archives. By early 1976, the Canadian Gay Archives had established its own collective and become an important organization in its own right, distinct from *The Body Politic* and the publishing collective that had initially conceived of the archives. The minutes from a February 12, 1976, meeting show that the archives had also formalized its criteria for membership in its collective: members would contribute no less than twenty hours of service per month and be deemed conversant with the principles and procedures of the archives.¹⁸ The first collective included Rick Bébout, Chris Headon, Ed Jackson, Paul Pearce, Vicki Pullam, and Bob Wallace. Shortly after, James Fraser joined the archives.

James Fraser, the “Guiding Spirit of the Archives”

¹⁸ Jackson, E. (1976, Feb. 12). [Minutes from the meeting of the Archives collective, February 12, 1976]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

James Fraser is commonly referred to as the “guiding spirit of the Archives,” and often credited as an animator in the early development of the organization. Trained in Canadian history, Fraser moved from New Brunswick to Toronto in 1976, to take a position at the City of Toronto Archives (Russell, Teeple & Averill, 1985). While working as a professional archivist, he learned of the Canadian Gay Archives through an advertisement in *The Body Politic*, and arrived at the Duncan Street office in late 1976, to offer his expertise. From 1976 to his departure from the archives in 1984, Fraser would guide the archives from a “one cupboard reference collection” to one of the largest archives on homosexuality in Canada by introducing professional archival standards and contributing hundred of hours, working “lunch hours, evenings, and weekends, and often using his own money” (Russell, Teeple & Averill, 1985, p. 246).

As several of my participants remembered, Fraser was also a particularly charismatic and adept community activist, skilled at attracting volunteers to work in the archives. His perseverance and passion brought a new energy to the archives and this was instrumental in establishing the archives as something more than a small reference collection for Pink Triangle Press. Fraser also had a sense of the importance of the work that gay liberation and lesbian feminist activists were accomplishing, and he wanted to collect and preserve every piece of the movement, including those records that other archives might consider lacking in evidential value. In an interview for this project, former Pink Triangle Press collective member Ken Popert recalled one memorable moment when, at a political rally against then Attorney-General Roy McMurtry for his role in the 1981 Bathhouse Raids, Fraser noticed that demonstrators were burning an effigy of McMurtry and “rushed forward to stand with the flames and demanded that they save the head for the archives!”¹⁹ It was Fraser’s zeal for the archives that attracted several of the long-serving community archivists who have remained committed to the archives to this day.

¹⁹ Ken Popert, Interview. September 13, 2013.

Harold Averill was one of the community archivists recruited by Fraser. (Averill, 2013).²⁰ As Averill explained in an interview for this project, he had taken a job at the University of Toronto Archives in July of 1978, and one of his colleagues invited him to a meeting of the Toronto Area Archivists Group (TAAG), where he met Fraser. Averill knew that Fraser was involved with the Canadian Gay Archives and told him that he was interested in volunteering. Fraser replied, “You’re on! Do you know what you are getting yourself into?” to which Averill replied, “No, but I think I might like to find out.”²¹ A few days later, Fraser took Averill up to the Duncan Street office and showed him the collections. At that time, Averill recalled, they were stored in four filing cabinets and a bookshelf, located behind the receptionist’s desk at *The Body Politic*. The total floor space was about ten feet by eight feet, a small but significant beginning.

Fraser was also responsible for welcoming Alan Miller and Gerald King to the archives. In Miller’s case, he came to the archives first in 1977, as a researcher for the Ontario Ministry of Labour, which was expanding its library collections in response to recommended changes to the Ontario Human Rights Code.²² Miller had met Rick Bébout in the early 1970s while he was undertaking doctoral studies in palaeontology, and was aware that Bébout had done some work with *The Body Politic*. He approached Bébout to ask him for recommendations for materials that could be added to a bibliography on gay rights for the Ministry and it was during this conversation that Miller learned of the archives. After visiting the collection several times and getting to know Fraser, Miller decided to volunteer. He explained, “I realized that I really enjoyed working with James and so I stayed. I’ve been there ever since.”²³ Today, Miller is often referred to by fellow volunteers as Mr. Periodicals; he has helped grow the archives’ periodicals collection from a handful of titles to more than 9,000 volumes.

²⁰ Harold Averill, Interview. September 10, 2013.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Alan V. Miller, Interview. September 11, 2013.

²³ Ibid.

Gerald King was also “hailed in” to the archives by James Fraser, with whom he already shared a casual friendship.²⁴ In an interview for this project, King described his first interactions with the archives:

I came here because it was therapeutic for me. I had had a disastrous relationship and James Fraser, who was one of the founders, was indirectly aware and invited me. And as soon as I told him that I was a librarian, I was doomed. He invited me to get involved, so that was helpful for personal reasons, but it was also a means in the days when people were more closeted, my making professional contributions to my professional community that I was comfortable with and that I felt worth.²⁵

For more than 30 years, King has worked with the library materials and was responsible for developing a classification system, based on the Dewey Decimal system, that takes into account the particular needs of a gay and lesbian collection.²⁶

Even as the archives grew under Fraser’s guidance, other members of the archives collective continued to worry that the workload would outpace the resources available. As Averill recalled, there was a general concern that Fraser would “burn out” like so many before him, but this was not the case.²⁷ Bébout (1979) describes how Fraser’s pace and the scope of his labour was unparalleled and unrelenting. By May 1977, Fraser had logged more than 500 volunteer hours dealing with a backlog of boxes and disorganized files (CGA, 1977). During this time, the profile of the CGA was also raised with the publication of the first issue of *The Gay Archivist*, a newsletter that chronicled the organizing work of the collective. Joan Anderson joined the archives in 1978, as did Frank Coulson and Robert Trow, each bringing their own set of expertise and activist experiences to the work.²⁸ Aided by Pink Triangle Press, the CGA also published two bibliographies, the first of four volumes in Alan Miller’s extensive work to gather homosexual resources, and a collection on

²⁴ Gerald King, Interview. October 8, 2013.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The minutes of the March 6, 1981 meeting of the Archives Collective show that Gerald ‘Jerry’ King had been voted in as a collective member, dating his work at the Archives to at least 33 years. Archives Collective (1981, Mar. 6). [Minutes of the March 6, 1981 meeting of the Archives Collective.] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

²⁷ Averill, 2013.

²⁸ Ibid.

homosexuality in Canada prepared by Alex Spence.²⁹ When Pink Triangle Press decided to expand its offices in 1980, the Archives was allotted a 400 square foot space, nearly the size of the entire office that the organizations once shared at the Carlton Street storefront (Bébout 1979, p. 26).

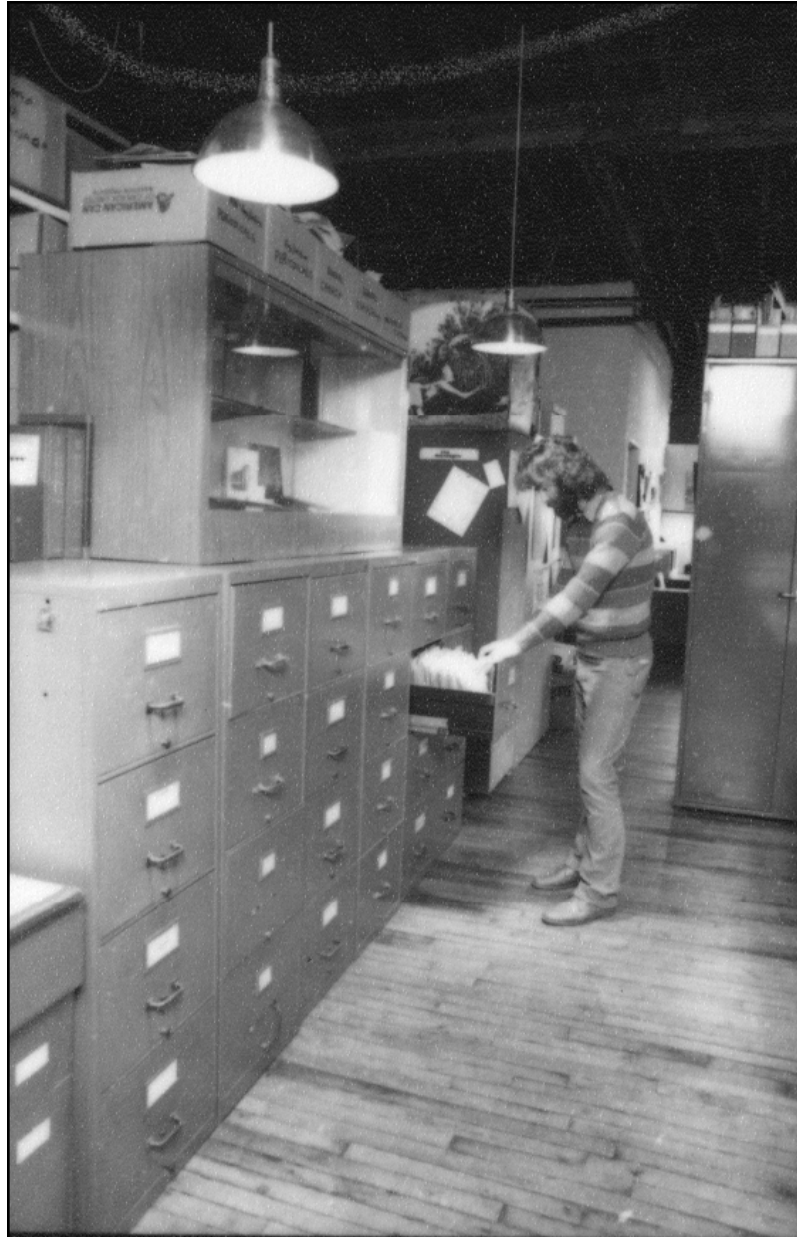


Figure 3.1. James Fraser working in the Archives, 1979³⁰

²⁹ Miller, 2013.

³⁰ Photograph was provided by the CLGA and was taken by Gerald Hannon. Accession number 1989-036-01P. Forms part of the CLGA's photograph collection. Used with permission.

Police Raid the Archives!

As Averill explained, although the CGA remained politically neutral in its mandate to collect broadly and widely the documentary heritage of Canada's lesbian and gay people, the organization itself was not immune to changes in the political opportunity structure. By the end of the 1970s, a series of events that had taken place in the Toronto area renewed public fear of homosexuals and created a politically charged environment. Several study participants remarked that these events were also catalysts for the next major development in the archives' trajectory. In our discussion, Averill described how a resurgence of homophobic actions on the part of police and local politicians validated earlier concerns expressed by Jackson and others about the risks of associating the archives with *The Body Politic*. As a result, the CGA made plans to earn legal independence from the radical publication. It is therefore worth describing these events briefly here to help contextualize the next significant moment in the trajectory of the organization.

The first event that shook the gay and lesbian community was the sexual assault and murder of 12-year-old shoeshine boy Emanuel Jaques by three men.³¹ On July 28, 1977, Jaques was lured up to an apartment above the Charlie's Angels 'body-rub' parlour, one of many 'rub-and-tug' establishments on Toronto seedy Yonge Street strip (MacDonald, 2013). He was then restrained and sexually assaulted over a period of twelve hours before being strangled and drowned in the kitchen sink (MacDonald, 2013). Several days after Jaques' disappearance, a man named Saul David Betesh placed a call to George Hislop of CHAT, and confessed to murdering the missing boy

³¹ Several participants discussed the Jaques murder as a critical juncture in the history of the gay liberation movement; however, it was Jackson who drew the connections between Jaques, the publication of Gerald Hannon's article, "Men Loving Boys Loving Men", in *The Body Politic*, and the 1981 raid on the Archives. Jackson, 2013. There is also some speculation that Jaques and a young friend were, in fact, young sex workers who frequented the Yonge Street strip to look for johns. Unfortunately, I was unable to verify this—limited evidence has been passed orally from person to person over the years.

(Warner, 2002).³² Hislop arranged for Betesh, whom he had not previously met, to hire a lawyer, and then persuaded Betesh to turn himself in to police (Warner, 2002). Based on information provided by Betesh, police arrested three other men as they attempted to flee the city on the Super Continental train to Vancouver as it passed through Sioux Lookout. Three of the men were found guilty for their participation in the murder; the fourth, who had held the door open for the men as they went upstairs to the apartment, was cleared of all charges. Shortly after the arrest of the four men on murder charges, Alderman Ben Nobleman of York sent a telegram to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the very same Liberal politician who had publicly defended the decriminalization of homosexuality, and demanded the return of capital punishment; he made little distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia. As Warner (2002) notes, “The media fulminated about a ‘homosexual murder’ committed during a ‘homosexual orgy,’ creating a guilt by association in which all gays were connected in some sinister way with the boy’s death” (p. 136). By this time, the persistence of gay activists had made it difficult for police to continue systematic surveillance of homosexuals; Jaques’ death nevertheless reignited public scorn for homosexuals and was used to justify increased police interventions.

Around this same time, Toronto gay activists were also following the startling success of the Save Our Children campaigns in the United States (Warner, 2002). Save Our Children was a political coalition formed in 1977 in Miami, Florida, to overturn a county ordinance that had been recently legislated to ban discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodation based on sexual orientation. Warner (2002) explains that the coalition was the first organized opposition to the gay rights movement and was successful in attracting voters to repeal the ordinance at a special election in Dade County that year. Save Our Children then moved across the

³² Hislop is also notable because he was the first openly gay man to run for public office in Toronto. In 1980, he ran for a seat on the Toronto City Council with the support of Mayor John Sewell. Hislop lost the election. In addition, Sewell was not re-elected, a loss that many have attributed to his public support of Hislop. Gay liberation activist Tim McCaskell recalls Hislop’s run for City Council as a pivotal moment in the movement, which brought more public attention to the plight of gay men. McCaskell also notes that Sewell’s loss contributed to the general tension between the gay community and the Toronto Police at that time. See Queerstory. (2014). *52 Division*. Retrieved from: <http://www.queerstory.ca/project/52-division/>

country, sharing campaign strategies to help overturn similar ordinances in other cities. The coalition was publicly headed by former Miss Oklahoma beauty pageant winner and Florida Citrus Commission spokeswoman Anita Bryant, who also planned a Canadian tour, at the invitation of Renaissance International, a Christian organization founded by minister Ken Campbell in Milton, Ontario. The main message Bryant emphasized in her campaign speeches was that homosexuality was a threat to the morality of children and that moral Christians would not tolerate this menace. Toronto activists quickly formed the Coalition to Stop Anita Bryant and in fall 1977, had protested her first appearance in the city with an 800-person march up Yonge Street, the largest demonstration for gay and lesbian rights up until that time (Warner 2002, p. 136). By the end of 1978, the Save Our Children campaign had effectively collapsed after failing to win any further challenges in the United States, including the controversial Briggs Initiative in the State of California.

The conflation of homosexuality and pedophilia nevertheless persisted in public discourse and was made worse by the publication of Gerald Hannon's polarizing article, "Men Loving Boys Loving Men," in the December 1977 issue of *The Body Politic* (Hannon, 1977). As Jackson and Persky explain in their 1982 introduction to the article in their collected volume *Flaunting It!*, the article was the third in a series about the age of consent laws and power relations in adult-child relationships. This is not the place to engage with the full implications of this article on the larger gay and lesbian community—it has been argued by Ross (1995), for example, that the publication caused lesbian women to withdraw *en masse* from gay liberation activism and begin their own, distinct form of political organizing. What is pertinent to the history of the archives is that, with the murder of Emanuel Jaques so recent and the trials of the four men yet to come, and with Anita Bryant's message of family morality fresh in people's minds, Hannon's article managed to spark public outcry at a level not previously experienced and certainly not anticipated by members of *The Body Politic*. The situation came to a head when, on January 5, 1978, police raided the offices of Pink Triangle Press and laid criminal charges against its officers under Section 164 of the Criminal Code

—use of mail to distribute immoral, indecent, and scurrilous materials (Jackson & Persky, 1982, p. 146).

As Averill recalled, the raid was “an eye-opener” for the archives collective and started members onto the “arduous process of identifying [the Canadian Gay Archives] as a separate organization.”³³ In the process of searching the premises, police removed several boxes of material that belonged to the CGA, and the collective had little recourse. Administratively and legally, the archives belonged to Pink Triangle Press, and it was therefore assumed part of the publication process. Thus, even when police were informed that the material behind the reception desk belonged to the archives, police still had the authority to search through the boxes and confiscate what they wanted. Although the political climate would change considerably by the time officers of the publishing collective came to trial in January 1979, the implications for the survival of the archives were apparent and immediate.³⁴ Averill described how Fraser took the initiative to disentangle the archives from Pink Triangle Press to ensure that a subsequent raid would not result in additional materials being lost to police custody. The decision to become an independent organization was a strategic and necessary move.

At the Annual Meeting of Pink Triangle Press on June 24, 1979, the corporation resolved that the Canadian Gay Archives should incorporate as a separate³⁵ entity. A letter dated July 4, from Ed Jackson, instructs the organization’s lawyer, Ross Irwin, to take all legal steps necessary for the incorporation and registration.³⁶ In his response, Irwin outlines the course of action needed to give the CGA legal autonomy from Pink Triangle Press and to allow the archives to become registered as a charitable association for income tax purposes. While the separate incorporation, Irwin notes, is

³³ Averill, 2013.

³⁴ Officers of Pink Triangle Press were acquitted in February 1979, but the Crown appealed the decision. A second trial ended in acquittal in June 1982, and archival materials were returned to the CGA without comment by police, following the end of court proceedings in June 1982. Jackson and Persky, 1982, p. 147.

³⁵ Archives Collective. (1980, May 4). [Minutes of the May 4, 1980 meeting of the Archives Collective]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

³⁶ Jackson, E. (1979, Jul 4). [Letter to Ross Irwin, Symes & Irwin]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.



Figure 3.2. Alan Miller, Joan Anderson & Ed Jackson. Members of the Gay Archives Collective, 1979³⁷

not necessary for the archives to meet the requirements of charitable registration, it would have the advantage of “separating its assets from those of Pink Triangle Press, thereby protecting its assets (chiefly the archival material itself) from seizure under either criminal or civil process instituted against Pink Triangle Press.”³⁸ Irwin also recommends that ex-officio members and directors be appointed as the archives’ first Board of Directors, and that Pink Triangle Press have 50% participation in this board. The minutes from the May 4, 1980, meeting of the archives collective show that members agreed to this shared participation on the board and would appoint three persons from Pink Triangle Press and three persons from the archives collective to form a six-

³⁷ Photograph was provided by the CLGA and was taken by Gerald Hannon. It was originally published in the CLGA’s newsletter, *Gay Archivist*, issue 3, June 1979, p. 1. Accession number 1986-032/11P (25). Forms part of the CLGA’s photograph collection. Used with permission.

³⁸ Irwin, R. (1979, Jun 22). [Letter to the Board of Directors, Pink Triangle Press]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

person board.³⁹ The first set of directors included James Fraser, Alan Miller, Joan Anderson, Gerald Hannon, Ed Jackson, and Chris Bearchell.

The Fight to Be Recognized as an Independent Archives

Gaining independence from Pink Triangle Press proved challenging for the newly formed board. The first hiccup in the incorporation process occurred with the arrival of a letter from the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, indicating that the Ministry would not approve the request to name the organization the ‘Canadian Gay Archives’. In the letter, dated December 7, 1979, Miss G. Goheen of the Corporate Names Section informs the archives that it cannot use the term *archives* in its name because the organization did not meet the definition of an archives.⁴⁰ The letter refers to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, which defines an archives as a “place in which public records are kept....or preserved by the various levels of government or by organizations funded by governments.”⁴¹ Because the term archives has governmental connotations, the Canadian Gay Archives would not be granted its own name. Goheen then suggests that the organization consider the names “Canadian Gay Records Centre” or “Canadian Gay Document Centre.”⁴² As Averill recalled, the letter infuriated the Archives collective. “We were apoplectic,” he explained. “You should have seen James. He was *not* happy.”⁴³ By early 1980, however, the matter had been settled with the help of the Toronto Area Archivists Group, which was able to show the Ministry that archives could not only be extensions of private or service organizations, as was the case with churches and corporations, but they could also exist as stand-alone organizations, such as neighbourhood historical collections. Averill pointed out that the legal recognition of the Canadian Gay Archives as an archival institutions was nevertheless pioneering; from the early 1970s to the

³⁹ Jackson, E. [Minutes from the May 4, 1980 meeting of the Archives Collective]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁰ Goheen, G. (1979, Dec 7). [Letter to Messers. Symes & Irwin, Barrs.]. December 7, 1979. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Averill, 2013.

mid-1990s, Canada would experience a veritable boom in the number of community-led archives established within religious, cultural, ethnic, and neighbourhood communities.

The struggle to obtain charitable status was considerably more fraught. On August 14, 1981, after waiting more than 18 months for a response, the Archives received notice from Revenue Canada Taxation that it had been denied charitable status on the ground that it did not meet the requirements to qualify as a charitable organization.⁴⁴ The letter states:

An organization such as the Canadian Gay Archives, which has been formed by a group of individuals primarily for the promotion, advocacy, or performance of a particular purpose peculiar to them, however beneficial or desirable its nature, does not meet [the requirements for charitable status] and therefore cannot qualify for registration as a charity. In other words, we have not been satisfied that there is sufficient public benefit inherent in the function of your organization for it to qualify as a charity for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act*.⁴⁵

The letter informed the Archives that it could reapply to be considered as a non-profit organization under paragraph 149(1)(L) of the *Act*, which would also have tax benefits; however, this alternative status would not authorize the CGA to issue office donation receipts for income tax purposes as would a registered charity.

As both Miller and Averill recalled, the rejection letter not only infuriated James Fraser, but sent him off to the lawyer's office to find out how the CGA could appeal the decision. In the meantime, a change in the legal team at Symes & Irwin had left the archives' case without supervision and, as a result, Fraser's request for clarification was delayed. When Fraser followed up with the firm, he discovered that the time to appeal had almost expired and the Archives had only two days to deliver its materials to Revenue Canada for consideration. Averill and Fraser immediately contacted all of the prominent researchers who had used the archives in the past and asked that they write letters of support to be sent to the Federal Court of Appeal on behalf of the archives. This list included tenured faculty and librarians from campuses across the country, as well

⁴⁴ Revenue Canada Taxation. (1981, Aug 14). [Letter to Messers. Symes & Irwin, Barrs.]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

as provincial politicians, many of whom agreed to contribute letters of support.⁴⁶ Notably, Michael Ruse wrote from his position at the University of Guelph and described how the archives was instrumental in aiding with his SSHRC-funded research on philosophy and homosexuality.⁴⁷ In his letter, he was quick to point out that he did not identify as a homosexual himself, but used the resources as a way to show that some homosexuals were sick because of their sexual orientation.

Within the space of two days, Fraser and Averill put together a response that refuted the perception that the Archives did not serve “all members of the community.”⁴⁸ Fraser also wrote in the cover letter that the CGA was a member of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA), that it welcomed all members of the public regardless of sexual orientation, and that it had published articles about its service to the research community in at least two professional journals.⁴⁹ As Fraser notes, the Archives had been described as a “public institution” in a recent profile written for the ACA newsletter.⁵⁰ As well, Fraser’s letter makes reference to the CGA’s practice of donating duplicate materials to other libraries and archives across Canada, and notes that the archives was a co-sponsor of the SSHRC-funded Whitman in Ontario Conference that took place at the University of Toronto in October, 1980. The letter and copies of supporting letters were then couriered to the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa to meet the deadline for appeal.

According to Averill, Revenue Canada “backed down and gave us charitable status,” after receiving the appeal; however, this distinction was earned by “the skin of our teeth.”⁵¹ On November 25, 1981, and after a twenty-month battle with Revenue Canada, the lawyers for the Canadian Gay Archives received official notice that the organization had been registered as a

⁴⁶ Copies of all letters of support written to Revenue Canada Taxation on behalf of the Canadian Gay Archives are kept with the Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁷ The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is the federal research-funding agency that promotes and supports post-secondary-based research and training in the humanities and [social sciences](#). Ruse, N. (1981). [Letter of support for Canadian Gay Archives]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁸ Averill, 2013.

⁴⁹ Fraser, J. (1981). [Letter covering application to the Federal Court of Appeal]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Averill, 2013.

charitable organization and could be issuing tax receipts to donors.⁵² For the next few years, the CGA continued to grow and take advantage of its new status as a registered charity. It became easier for the archives to attract investment from community businesses, which could now offer their services and receive a tax receipt for donations-in-kind. As Averill explained, the status also engendered a sense of continuity and stability for the organization; it was not seen as a “fly-by-night” organization, but as an essential part of the gay and lesbian community.⁵³ Several participants noted how significant charitable status has been for the survival of the Archives, which will be explored in Chapter 7.

Fraser’s tenure at the Archives was also ending around this time. In 1983, Fraser enrolled in the Master of Archival Studies program at the University of British Columbia (Russell, Teeple & Averill, 1985). Although he completed his first year of the program and took a summer position at the Vancouver Federal Records Centre, he was unable to return to his studies. Fraser fell ill that fall and, after a lengthy hospitalization, died with complications due to AIDS on March 11, 1985 (Russell, Teeple & Averill, 1985). His obituary describes Fraser as a “tireless and dedicated professional” with the “courage to make, the interest to sustain, [and] the determination to complete” important personal and professional decisions (Russell, Teeple & Averill, 1985, p. 246). Fraser left the bulk of his estate to the archives in his will and the rare book library now bears his name. As Miller discussed in our interview, Fraser’s death would remain a deep wound for the archives that would leave lasting implications. Fraser’s death was also one of many losses due to AIDS that touched the archives. I will discuss the impact of AIDS on lesbian and gay archives in more detail in Chapter 7.

For three years after Fraser’s death, the CGA continued to grow as an independent organization with assistance from Pink Triangle Press, which provided office supplies and space for the collections. Changes in the publisher’s governance structure and resources, however, made it

⁵² Irwin, R. (1981, Nov 25). [Letter to the Canadian Gay Archives]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵³ Averill, 2013.

more difficult for the relationship to continue as it had for more than a decade. In 1987, Pink Triangle Press decided to cease publishing *The Body Politic* and concentrate on its new publication, *Xtra!*.⁵⁴ The Press had also moved away from its early collective governance model and under the leadership of Ken Popert. As Popert recalled in an interview for this project, Pink Triangle Press brought the collections with it when the organization moved from 24 Duncan to 54 Wolseley, but this arrangement was short-lived. There were considerable costs related to the support of the archives, which had now expanded to almost one-third of the office space and three whole rooms. As Popert remembered, after 15 years of supporting this “very expensive hobby,” the for-profit Pink Triangle Press could no longer justify paying for the infrastructure that it provided for the archives.⁵⁵ The Press was also looking to downsize its own offices and would no longer have room for the collections. Popert made the difficult decision to inform the board of the archives that the collections needed to find its own home.

Shaky Independence, 1988-1994

It was not long before other members of the gay community stepped up and took on the archives. By 1988, Jackson had taken a leadership position at the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), which had formed several years earlier.⁵⁶ Together with an organized coalition to support people living with AIDS, Jackson had secured a lease at 464 Yonge Street, and offered to make room for the struggling CGA.⁵⁷ As a long-time supporter of the archives, Jackson agreed to provide the space rent-free until the CGA was able to sustain itself. The arrangement was also mutually beneficial because ACT was in the process of establishing what would become a

⁵⁴ Popert, 2013.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Jackson, 2013.

⁵⁷ In an odd turn of events, Pink Triangle Press also moved to an office in the same building, and the CGA ended up “just down the hall” from its early sponsor. As Averill noted, although the Press no longer provided space for the collections, the supportive relationship continued on. Records show, for example, that the Archives continued to use the post office box once registered to *The Body Politic*, and that Pink Triangle Press paid for this service (CLGA Org records). According to Jackson and Popert, both ACT and Pink Triangle Press also provided office supplies and other administrative supports as needed.

significant AIDS library and resource centre and, as Jackson explained, the archives was a good complement for this work. ACT also supported the work of volunteer Doris Megehan to sort and process its own organizational records to donate to the archives, creating the largest single fonds in the collection, after the records of *The Body Politic* and Pink Triangle Press. The 1992 issue of the CGA's newsletter, *Gay Archivist*, reports that the Canadian Gay Archives had, at the time, the largest collection of AIDS-related material in Canada, including pamphlets, posters, articles, and books on AIDS, as well as personal and organizational records from AIDS activists and AIDS service organizations (CGA, 1992).

During the period between 1988 and 1992, the CGA also undertook a lengthy process to reorganize and formalize its governance structure, as well as impose new technological infrastructure. At the 1992 Annual General Meeting, held at Hart House on the University of Toronto campus, thirty people attended and voted to adopt a new constitution establishing the responsibilities of the board, officers, committees, and members (CGA, 1992). The size of the board was also increased from six members to nine, reflecting the expansion and changing needs of the archives (CGA, 1992). The archives collective, which had been in place for more than 15 years, was dissolved and an operations committee established (known as the OPS Committee). Today, the OPS Committee continues to take responsibility for the acquisition, processing, and preservation of the collections and serves as the core committee of the archives.

The CGA had also earned enough credibility that it was in a position to begin applying for small grants and attracting larger financial donations from community members. In 1992, the archives won a grant for \$10,395 from the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), to hire a project archivist to produce an inventory of photographs received prior to 1988 (CGA, 1992). Funds for this project were matched by the archives, and included an additional grant of \$1,250 from the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal of Toronto (CGA, 1992).⁵⁸ That same year, a donor

⁵⁸ According to Miller, Chris Halonen was hired as a project archivist to create a finding aid for the archives' photograph collection. Halonen compiled more than 600 entries for a total of 4,500 images dated between 1927 and 1987. The original document was created in WordPerfect, indexed by title, subject and accession number, and was later converted into an InMagic database. Miller, personal communication, January 20, 2015.

earmarked a sizeable donation to purchase new computer hardware and cataloguing software (CGA, 1992). Community fundraisers, including boat cruises around Toronto Islands, bar nights in Toronto, Hamilton, and London, and barbecue events, also raised money, in addition to monthly donations from community members (CGA, 1990).

Yet despite growing its service to the public and its collections, the CGA continued to struggle with precarious finances. As both Averill and Miller noted in our discussion, the archives avoided bankruptcy by a series of unexpected bequests from men who had died with AIDS. After his death in 1990, AIDS activist and epidemiologist Bill Lewis left a sum of \$5,300 to the CGA; another \$4,000 was received in 1992 from the estates of men who had died with AIDS.⁵⁹ Miller noted, “At several points, we were really strapped financially and then people died and left us a fair amount of money, and that would sustain us for a year and then someone else would die and we would get some more money.”⁶⁰ Miller estimates that the financial health of the organization was always unstable, but that the death of so many men from AIDS allowed the CGA to stay afloat for several years without undertaking too many fundraising activities. By mid-1993, however, the introduction of anti-retroviral therapies had lengthened the prognosis of most people diagnosed with HIV, and as a result, men began living much longer with the disease. The number of deaths from AIDS dramatically dropped during the mid- to late-1990s, and the estate money “dried up.”⁶¹

Space also remained a persistent concern for the CGA. Community archivists were aware that the space that they had been provided by ACT was temporary, and work had already been undertaken to locate a larger and more stable office to house the collections. As early as fall 1991, the board had begun negotiations with the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) to move into its new building, a former United Church facility in the Riverdale neighbourhood.⁶² After

⁵⁹ CGA (1990, Mar 31). [Financial statement for the year ended March 31, 1990]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁰ Miller, 2013.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² CGA. (1991, Sep 4). [Minutes of the CGA Collective Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

consideration, however, Averill expressed some fears that the archives would not be safe if housed inside the MCC facility; in the minutes from a meeting on the subject, he references the two MCC churches in California destroyed by arson in 1973, and the persistent homophobic attitudes that threatened the security of the church and its predominantly gay and lesbian congregation.⁶³ The archives had moved away from *The Body Politic* to protect itself and Averill did not appear keen to move back in with another controversial organization. Ultimately, the CGA decided not to move into the MCC facility because of concerns over fire risks—originally the Simpson Avenue Methodist Church, the building had been built in 1899 and opened in 1890, and the basement rooms that would be provided for the archives were not suitable for the collections.⁶⁴ A proposal to move with ACT to its new building was also nixed, but no reason is provided in the records.

The CGA was forced to move quickly, however, when the board was informed that ACT had decided to look for new office space to accommodate its growing size.⁶⁵ The archives would not only have to move out of 464 Yonge Street, but the board would also be paying market rent for the first time in its history.⁶⁶ The November 1992 issue of *Gay Archivist* reports that the Canadian Gay Archives was in negotiations to lease new quarters at 56 Temperance Street, near the building that housed the Archives of Ontario (CGA, 1992). The archives had also swelled to the size of its current quarters and would need more space if it should continue collecting materials. The new office was more than twice the space that it shared with ACT, and at 2,000 square feet, the archives would have room to grow (CGA, 1992). The five-year lease would be about \$24,000, and that would necessitate more fundraising to support this increase in expenses (CGA, 1992). As Averill noted, the budget for the archives had ballooned from several hundred dollars in 1978 to about \$14,000 in 1992. With the addition of higher rent, the Archives would indeed be more vulnerable to

⁶³ CGA. (1992, Apr 8). [Minutes from General Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁴ See also the finding aid for the Simpson Avenue United Church Golden Jubilee Anniversary program. Local Church History File provided by the United Church of Canada Archives. Simpson Avenue United Church (Toronto, Ont.) fonds. Retrieved from: <http://www.archeion.ca/simpson-avenue-united-church-toronto-ont-fonds>

⁶⁵ Averill 2013.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

fluctuations in the generosity of donors. The board was willing to take this risk and, on a wintery Friday in February 1993, volunteers stacked the archives to the gunnels of an army surplus truck owned by John Scythes, and in several trips, moved the collections to 56 Temperance. Averill recalled:

There were about six of us hanging off of the sides of the truck holding the boxes on as we roared down Bay Street. And when we moved into Temperance, we filled the lobby and started moving things up the elevator. On the second trip in the elevator, the elevator shut off because it was on the weekend. It returned to the ground floor, the doors opened and that's the way it stayed. We had arranged that the elevator would be turned on for the weekend, but somebody screwed up and we were stuck. So John, one other person, and myself showed up at the door of Temperance Street on Monday morning at 8 o'clock and by noon we had the whole archives moved in. People coming to work in the building had to thread their way through this narrow corridor to the elevator because the stuff was stacked nine feet high! But we had no choice, there was no protection for stuff in the lobby. We had to have somebody there so that's how we handled it. That was probably the most onerous move we've made.⁶⁷

The onerous move would also be a portent for the archives, as it entered the most precarious phase in its history, held together only by the grit and labour of community archivists, and the luck of opportunity.

Even after the move, it took some time for the board and community archivists to realize just how challenging independence would be for the CGA. The first warning sign that the archives would experience an organizational crisis came in 1992, when the board received notice of the closure of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives (CWMA), which had operated with a similar collecting philosophy to that of the Canadian Gay Archives.⁶⁸ Between 1977 and 1992, the CWMA preserved records documenting women's movement activism throughout the country, and operated as a total archives,⁶⁹ collecting organizational records, library material, photographs, and ephemera (Loyer, 2006). In fact, lesbian women often deposited their records with the CWMA either because

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Averill, 2013.

⁶⁹ *Total Archives* is a documentation strategy developed in Canada as an attempt to document the political and social history of the country. Total archives emphasizes the collection of records, both public and private, in a wide range of media, including architectural drawings, cartographic material, audio-visual records, and microfilm. See L. Millar. (1998). Discharging out debt: The evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada. *Archivaria* 46, 103-146.

they aligned more closely with feminism than with the gay liberation movement or because the activism that they participated in fell more broadly under the women's movement rubric (Averill, 2013). As Loyer (2006) explains in her thesis on the CMWA, the archives was founded by a Toronto feminist group and sought to "preserve the historical record of grassroots women's movement activism in Canada," but by the end of 1991, interest in maintaining the organization as an autonomous archives was waning and the group went looking for an institutional home for the collections (p. 2). In 1992, the collections were donated to the Morisset Library at the University of Ottawa, an act that effectively signalled the end of 'second-wave' feminist activism in Canada (Loyer, 2006).

The news of the CWMA's closure hit close to home, as it raised questions about the long-term viability of the Canadian Gay Archives, but it also triggered members to consider how the gay archives could make more space for lesbians both in its governance and in its collections. As Averill explained, members of the Canadian Gay Archives were aware of the work that CWMA was doing and did not want to "step on any toes," and so they often directed lesbian donors to the CWMA, especially if the records they were depositing documented activism that could be described more clearly as second-wave feminism.⁷⁰ At the news of the CWMA's closing, the board began the process of determining if the collections included enough lesbian content to warrant a name change in the organization. After consultation with members of the OPS committee, many of whom also served as directors, the board decided that it would amend the name of the organization to the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA). Approved by members at the September 19th annual meeting, the addition of *lesbian* in the title, as well as its placement before *gay*, was intended to not only recognize the contributions of lesbians to the archives—lesbians, including Catherine Shepard, Chris Bearchell, and Carla Morse, had served as collective members, community archivists, and directors since the archives were first established—but also to initiate engagement with lesbians

⁷⁰ Ibid.

across Canada.⁷¹ Miller and Averill both admitted that this engagement has not always been as successful, nor has the inclusion of lesbians been perceived with the genuine intent the board had hoped to engender.

The second warning sign that the archives was in trouble came out of the financial statement prepared for the 1993 annual meeting.⁷² By February 1993, Averill had called attention to the lack of sustainable fundraising strategies a number of times and had become aware that the fund-matching that the Archives had done to meet the conditions of the Canadian Council of Archives grant had drained much of the organizations general funds, including those that were meant to be earmarked for long-term investments or special projects.⁷³ At a meeting of the board on November 8, 1993, Averill raised the alarm and informed members that a “financial crisis has arisen, where there is sufficient funds in the bank to pay the November rent and the regular small bills such as telephone and office supplies,” but that future sustainability of the Archives is questionable.⁷⁴

The board responded with a number of strategies. First, they sent out a fundraising letter to more than 700 addresses, but decided against hiring a professional fundraiser due to costs.⁷⁵ Directors also approach both Pink Triangle Press and ACT to ask that they establish service agreements with both organizations to retain and care for their records.⁷⁶ During our discussion, Averill reminded me that the Archives had taken in the records of *The Body Politic* and ACT, and were responsible for their long-term preservation, but requested that each organization pay a monthly fee for this service. Popert confirmed that Pink Triangle Press had been paying an annual

⁷¹ CGA. (1992, Sep 9). [Minutes of the CGA Annual Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷² Averill, H. (1993). [Financial statement prepared for the 1993 Annual Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷³ Averill, H. (1993, Feb 10). [Minutes of the Board Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁴ Averill, A. (1993, Nov. 8). [Minutes of the Board/Fundraising Committee Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁵ Averill, A. (1994, Jan 17). [Minutes of the Board/Fundraising Committee Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

fee for service in the form of a donation to the archives since this time.⁷⁷ Board director Sara Stratton also recommended applying to Employment Canada under Section 25 of the *Unemployment Insurance Canada Act*, which would afford the Archives money to hire people for a minimum of 25 weeks to a maximum of nine months, as part of a Jobs Strategy Program to provide employment to those who have lost their jobs.⁷⁸ The Archives agreed to pursue the Section 25 grant, but was turned down by Employment Canada later that year.⁷⁹ At a July 1994 retreat, the board discussed an additional proposal brought forward by Stratton to broaden the scope of the Archives to include more outreach and advocacy in the form of exhibitions, and she recommended an informal name change to include ‘museum’, ‘library’, or ‘art gallery’ in the organization’s title.⁸⁰ This proposal was eventually turned down, but the notion of raising the profile of the Archives through outreach and exhibitions would be discussed many times throughout the next decade.

The financial crisis reached a fever pitch in late 1994. An article written by Eleanor Brown for *Xtra!* on September 21, 1994, outlines the financial crisis and reports that the archives has only enough money in its bank account to pay for one month of expenses (Brown, 1994). She also notes that the CLGA houses important collections from AIDS activist Michael Lynch and novelist Jane Rule, as well as a significant collection of lesbian pulp novels and pornographic materials. The board, Brown writes, is concerned that, if the community does not come forward to support the archives, it could end up forced to donate its collections to a government archives or university library, which will most likely destroy the material that it does not want. The pornographic material, Brown claims, would be placed in jeopardy. She also notes that any donation of materials would render the collections inaccessible to the community. The article reports that three of nine board

⁷⁷ Popert, 2013.

⁷⁸ Averill, A. (1994, Apr 13). [Minutes of the Board/Fundraising Committee Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁹ Averill, A. (1994, Oct. 16). [Minutes of the Board/Fundraising Committee Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁰ Stratton, S. (1994, Jun 7). [Memorandum to CLGA Board Members, re: Board Retreat]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

members have resigned and that an emergency fundraising event is scheduled to take place that evening.

That same day, an ad hoc committee called the Group of Concerned Community Members met to discuss how to deal with the CLGA's revenue shortfall and move forward with fundraising strategies.⁸¹ The committee included Ken Popert, Ed Jackson, Lorna Weir of the Toronto Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies (the community predecessor to the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies), and Elinor Mahoney from the Gay and Lesbian Community Appeal. They proposed three items for the CLGA to consider. First, the archives needed to develop a more robust and sustainable fundraising program; second, the archives should consider establishing an advisory board that would bring to the organization a set of skills that the current board did not possess, including fundraising experience; and third, that the archives needed to adopt new bookkeeping standards and a business plan to avoid overspending or allocating money to projects for which funds were not available. The committee offered the immediate assistance of the Pink Triangle Press bookkeeper and offered to explore the possibility of hiring a fundraising consultant to design a workable strategy for the archives. Popert also offered that Pink Triangle Press would provide six months of financial support to make up the deficit on rent, utilities, and insurance costs as needed.⁸²

The board quickly responded with a counter-proposal that acknowledged the need to reorganize the CLGA to account for the increased expenses, but rejected several items proposed by the committee.⁸³ The board insisted, for example, that it handle the financial crisis internally and had taken steps to avoid future shortfalls, but still required financial support. Popert and Weir acknowledged the receipt of the counter-proposal and informed the archives that the initial

⁸¹ Weir, L. et. al. (1994, Sep 21). [Letter from A Group of Concerned Individuals and Organizations in the Community to The Board of Directors of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Re: A Proposal for Assistance]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ CLGA. (1994, Oct 6). [Letter to Ken Popert]; CLGA. (1994, Oct 11). [Letter to Lorna Weir]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

proposal for support had now been nullified.⁸⁴ The archives was on its own. As Popert (2013) explained in our discussion, the board's refusal to accept the terms of the committee's proposal was frustrating, but also a sign that the archives was coming to terms with some of its financial mishandling.⁸⁵

In the meantime, the board had approached the Gay and Lesbian Community Appeal, a granting foundation that had previously given more than \$20,000 to the CLGA for various purposes over the years (Pegis, 1994). The application to the Appeal, prepared by Averill and board president, Ray Brillinger, outlines the history of the organization and underscores the importance of this resource to both the gay and lesbian communities of Canada, but also to researchers supporting gay and lesbian rights.⁸⁶ In early December, the board received notice that the Appeal had approved the emergency grant application and allocated \$12,000 to the archives, to be dispersed in 12 instalments of \$1,000 per month and earmarked for the payment of rent (Pegis, 1994). An article in *Xtra!* published on December 9, 1994, reports that the archives spent three months reorganizing and building its donor base, and that it intended to focus on long-term planning for fundraising through community appeals and applying for money through granting foundations (Pegis, 1994). With the financial crisis overcome, the archives had finally matured into an emotionally and fiscally independent organization, and shown that it was capable of working through problems on its own and without the intervention of Pink Triangle Press.

⁸⁴ Averill, A. (1994, Oct 16). [Letter to Concerned Citizens and Organizations]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁵ In our interview, Popert emphasized that the CLGA has a long history of poor fundraising and mishandling community donations. He noted, for example, that on one occasion, his own lawyer had asked him about the stability of the Archives; the lawyer had provided several post-dated cheques to the Archives in the form of a donation, but they had not been cashed. He wondered if they had been lost. The records confirm that, on November 14, 1994, treasurer Alan Duddin reported that he had found twelve post-dated cheques misfiled by the previous treasurer. Written in 1991, they were now expired and the Archives was out a significant sum of money. Duddin, A. (1994, Nov 14). [Treasurer's Report to the Board of Directors]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁶ CLGA. (1994, Nov 14). [Application to the Gay and Lesbian Community Appeal]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

Keeping Our Stories Alive, 1995-2013

The period of 1995 to 2013 is marked by professionalization and growth for the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. The period is also marked by a considerable turn in the legal and social climate for gay men and lesbians living in Canada. In 1995, *Egan v. Canada* (2 S.C.R. 513) began the long legal battle to earn marriage rights for same-sex partners. Although the courts decided against the plaintiffs, the ruling included language that supported the belief that freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation should be a protected right. The following year, Bill C-33, which formally added sexual orientation to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, received Royal Assent to become law. The political landscape was also becoming more friendly toward gay and lesbian people. In 1998, seven years after Kyle Rae became the first openly gay city councillor in Toronto, Glen Murray was elected mayor of Winnipeg, becoming the first openly gay mayor of a major city in North America. The next year, George Smitherman was elected to provincial parliament, becoming the first openly gay Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) (Warner, 2002). In 2003, the Court of Appeal for Ontario ruled that the common law definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman violated Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and effectively legalized same-sex marriage in the province (CBC News, 2012). By the time same-sex marriage was legalized in a 2005 amendment to the federal *Civil Marriages Act*, eight provinces and one territory had already recognized marriage equality (CBC News, 2012).

As Jackson noted in our conversation, although same-sex marriage remains a controversial right for gay men and lesbians of a certain age, the rapid legal and social shifts that occurred since 1969's Stonewall Riots have satisfied many of the original movement goals.⁸⁷ In his estimation, the CLGA has served as an essential tool in the activist work that has forced these changes because it has preserved and made available evidence of gay and lesbian lives accessed by scholarly, legal and journalistic researchers. The Krever Commission, for example, established a part-time paid position within the archives to review documents in their efforts to investigate allegations that the

⁸⁷ Jackson, 2013.

organizations responsible for supplying blood and blood products to the Canadian health care system allowed blood contaminated with HIV to be used.⁸⁸ Miller also noted that immigration lawyers have used the international collections at the archives to establish discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the home countries of some refuge seekers. Academic scholars such as Barry Adam (1995), Tom Warner (2002), and Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile (2010), have written historical accounts of gay and lesbian communities using the records preserved by the CLGA.⁸⁹

During this period, the CLGA also took steps to become more formalized and public in its work. In 1995, the organization launched its first website, and revisited many of its policies, including those related to acquisitions and collecting mandates, and its guiding mission, which had not been updated since 1975.⁹⁰ The new mandate, introduced at a September 1997 board meeting reads:

The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives was established to aid in the recovery and preservation of our histories. Its mandate is to acquire, preserve, organize and give public access to information and materials in any medium, by and about lesbians and gays, primarily produced in or concerning Canada. To support this function the Archives also maintains major non-archival collections including a research library, international subject files, and international collection of gay and lesbian periodicals.⁹¹

Around this time, the archives also began preparations to celebrate its 25th anniversary to take place the following year. It was granted status as the honorary patron of the 1998 Pride Parade and would be honoured in a series of events throughout the summer.⁹² For one of these events, the CLGA partnered with the 519 Church Street Community Centre to commission twenty-five portraits of twenty-five individuals who had contributed to the growth of diverse out and proud communities nationwide (Parker, 2013). The inductees were carefully selected with the assistance of curator

⁸⁸ Miller, 2013.

⁸⁹ The CLGA is thanked in the acknowledgement sections in books by each of these authors.

⁹⁰ CLGA. (1997, Sep 10). [Minutes of the Board of Directors] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Bruce Jones, who also arranged for the portraits to be created by gay and lesbian artists. As Jessica Parker (2013) notes in her history of the project, the portraits were unveiled at a ceremony on June 26, 1998, and it was announced that they would form the initial collection of a new Canadian Lesbian and Gay Portrait Collection, which would become part of the archives' holdings. In 1999, with the assistance of a grant from the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal, the CLGA purchased custom built boxes for the portraits and toured them to Saskatoon, Edmonton, and Regina, before they returned to Toronto and were exhibited again at City Hall (CLGA, 1999).⁹³ Averill recognized that the establishment of the Portrait Collection was a public signal to the greater gay and lesbian community the archives had matured and was now an entrenched and vital part of the Canadian cultural landscape. It would also trigger new investment in exhibition programming for the archives.

By the end of the 1990s, the CLGA had also grown more confident in its sustainability and was more willing to engage in political advocacy, although the organization would never align itself with any particular political party or politician. The minutes of the March 15, 1999 meeting of the Board show a motion to take a public stance on things which are directly relevant to the archives' activities, *e.g.* issues of censorship and legislation.⁹⁴ This decision to be more publicly political may have been a response to the decision one month prior to add the organization's name to a court case between Ray Brillinger and Scott Brockie and Imaging Excellence. In 1996, Brillinger, then serving on the CLGA's board, asked Brockie to provide a quotation for printing envelopes, letterhead, and business cards for the archives. According to court documents, Brockie refused to serve the archives, citing his religious beliefs, and denied Brillinger service. In response, Brillinger filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission; the board of the archives agreed in a motion put forward at the February 2, 1999 meeting that the CLGA become a co-complainant in

⁹³ Interestingly, the records from the July 5, 1999 meeting show that the CLGA actually lost money on the 25 Lives exhibition. The wrap-up party at Buddy's was \$300 deficit and they paid \$500 to host a reception at City Hall. CLGA. (1999, Jul 5). [Minutes of the Meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto

⁹⁴ CLGA. (1999, Mar 15). [Minutes of the Board of Directors] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

the human rights case.⁹⁵ Court file no. 179/2000 shows that the Commission heard the case and ruled in favour of the complainants, finding that Brillinger's rights were infringed. Brockie was ordered to provide service to the archives and pay Brillinger \$5,000 in damages (Brillinger v Brockie, 2000). When the details of the case were finalized in 2005, Brillinger donated the total award to the CLGA for its newly launched Capital Campaign, a fund-raising program to raise money for the purchasing a permanent home for the archives.⁹⁶

While the archives continued to build its collection and eke out space for new accessions where it could, it was becoming clear to the members of the OPS Committee that the offices at 54 Temperance were unsatisfactory. In late 2000, materials were damaged by water when a pipe broke in the building, and the archives was forced to sue the landlord's insurance company for damages.⁹⁷ This situation not only convinced the board to revisit its own insurance policies, but also to renew efforts to look for a more suitable home for the archives. Although the board explored several options, the most promising was an offer arranged by David Rayside, a professor at the University of Toronto. According to minutes from board meetings that took place throughout 2001, Rayside had contacted the archives to inform them that the University had agreed to build a new student residence building and that he would like to see the archives move into a space in the basement of the new building. At the time, Rayside was spearheading a proposal to establish a sexual diversity studies program at the University, and he saw a natural relationship growing between the archives and this new program. Negotiations continued between the University and the archives for several years, but ultimately resulted in the archives walking away from the University. A full report of these discussions and the reasons why the archives chose not to partner will be discussed in more depth

⁹⁵ CLGA. (1999, Feb 2). [Minutes of the Board of Directors] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁶ MacDonald, M. (2005, Mar 17). [Letter to Ray Brillinger CLGA]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁷ CLGA. (2001, Feb 5). [Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

in Chapter 8, but it is important to note that the failure to secure a space for the archives at the University of Toronto had immediate and lasting implications for the CLGA.⁹⁸

According to Don McLeod, who was present at some of the discussions between the CLGA and University, the failure to reach an agreement with the University was devastating because it meant that the archives would have to continue its struggle to find suitable space.⁹⁹ At the same time, the fizzled partnership was inspiring to some because it reaffirmed the CLGA's commitment to autonomy and encouraged the Board to refocus its efforts on applying for grants and developing a more robust fundraising strategy. Along with the creation of the National Portrait Collection, interest from the University also raised the profile of the CLGA and showed other organizations and granting foundations that the archives was a valuable part of the country's heritage sector.

The long-earned recognition of the CLGA's role as a vital resource for the community was well understood by local advocates for the organization, including Toronto City Councillor Kyle Rae. As former General Manager Robert Windrum explained in an interview for this project, Rae was aware of the CLGA's' struggle to secure permanent space suitable for the purposes of an archives.¹⁰⁰ In early 2002, the Councillor became aware that the Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Toronto would be consolidating its offices and intended to construct a new, larger building at 26-32 Isabella Street, located in the heart of Toronto's gay village.¹⁰¹ To assist in funding this new building, CAS had offered rights to build a 39-story residential condominium on one of its properties at 33 Charles Street East, and would also be vacating a property at 34 Isabella Street.¹⁰² As Windrum recalled, Rae urged City Council to approve the development plan and proposed that the 34 Isabella property be offered for a nominal fee to the CLGA. Rae and City staff also

⁹⁸ CLGA. (2004, May 30). [Building Development Report for the 2004 Annual General Meeting] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁹ Don McLeod, Interview. October 9, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Windrum, Interview. October 2, 2013.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² CLGA. (2004, May 30). [Building Development Report for the 2004 Annual General Meeting] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

requested that the CAS register a Heritage Easement Agreement for the property, which included the Jared Sessions House, constructed 1859-1860.¹⁰³

Unsurprisingly, the board expressed interest in the proposal to acquire the house at 34 Isabella straightaway, but Directors were also aware that the property was not entirely suitable to be used as an archival repository. The Jared Sessions House is a handsome two-and-a-half story square home, designed in the Italianate style and constructed of brick, stone, wood, and iron. Nevertheless, it required extensive renovations to both the exterior and the interior and would not give the archives enough space to house the existing collections. Once the house was designated a protected property for its heritage value, the CLGA would also have to seek approval from the City's Preservation Services Department for any exterior renovations or alternations.¹⁰⁴ After much discussion at the board level and with community archivists, the CLGA decided to undertake a feasibility study to determine if the move to 34 Isabella was possible.¹⁰⁵ A Building Development Committee was officially struck in late 2004, and an architectural firm offered to support the feasibility study *pro bono*.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime, the board undertook several visioning meetings to brainstorm ways in which the archives could use and take advantage of the space made available by the house.¹⁰⁷ Minutes from board meetings that took place around this time period also indicate that directors discussed the possibility of building a vault behind the house that would take advantage of a service elevator that ran from the ground floor to the second floor and could house the collections in a state-of-the-art facility. This idea was soon abandoned, however, when the board learned that the space behind the archives would not only be limited, but any extension would likely fail to receive approval from the Preservation Services Department.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Windrum, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ CLGA. (2004, Dec 1). [Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

¹⁰⁶ Windrum, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ CLGA. (2004, Dec 1). [Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

As former General Manager Elizabeth Bailey recalled in an interview for this study, the house provided both opportunity and challenges for the archives.¹⁰⁸ It was clear to the board that, no matter how the house was altered, it would not house the entirety of the collections; off-site storage would still be required and this would be an ongoing and increasingly more expensive budgetary item. In addition, the feasibility study suggested that the house required approximately \$250,000 in renovations and an additional sum of money would be required to help move the archives—an estimated at about \$60,000—and the organization would have to purchase additional shelving and office equipment, as well as invest in a different level of insurance.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the acquisition of the house would mean that the CLGA could finally have gallery and exhibition space that would advance the organization's mandate to make materials accessible to the broader public. Although Bailey was not involved with the organization at the time of the earliest discussions about the house, she was aware that the board carefully considered the value of leaving the second and third floors of the house as open exhibition and meeting spaces, and had established a Community Engagement Committee, which would be tasked with finding ways to use this space to attract more investment in the archives and to do outreach to communities that had been previously under documented in the archives' collections.

Minutes from board meetings from 2002 to 2005 also show that the board had established an additional committee to engage with the increasingly ethnically and racially diverse communities in Canada and to attract more young people to the archives (See also Zieman 2009). Around this time, Ken Popert joined the CLGA's board and was keen to see the Archives not only develop the house into a lesbian and gay heritage centre, but also to use the space to exhibit materials that would otherwise be hidden away in Hollinger boxes.¹¹⁰ By the end of 2003, the board had agreed to take over the property and, in April 2004, the arrangement had been approved by all levels of

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Bailey, Interview. September 15, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ CLGA. (2004, Nov 3). [Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

government, including the Ontario Municipal Board.¹¹¹ The archives would have a permanent home at 34 Isabella Street.

While the board prepared to move the archives to 34 Isabella, the organization experienced several unanticipated developments. In mid-2004, the CLGA was contacted by The Gale Group, which offered to digitize some of the collection.¹¹² As the minutes show, Miller and McLeod met with a representative from Gale Publishing in late 2004 to discuss the details of producing as much as 150 reels of microfilm.¹¹³ The project not only validated the work of the archives to preserve material that other archives and libraries had previously ignored, but also raised questions about how the archives would be properly credited and compensated for this work and to what extent the organization was responsible for ensuring that any copyright was respected. As Sheffield and Zieman (2015) note, the question of copyright and intellectual property continues to this day at the archives, and is especially relevant in the era of digitization for online access. The CLGA was nevertheless able to leverage both the agreement with The Gale Group and the acquisition of the house to support an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support the salary of a full-time employee to help manage the day-to-day operations of the organization.

In late-2004, the CLGA learned that it had been successful in securing a \$150,000 grant and hired Len Milley to serve as General Manager.¹¹⁴ Milley had just begun his position when he was asked to assist with renegotiating rent at the 56 Temperance location, but shortly after signing a new five-year lease, the CLGA was informed that the owner intended to sell the building and the archives were being evicted. As Windrum recalled, crisis engulfed much of Milley's energy over the next few months, as the archives were not only forced to look for a temporary space to hold the collections while 34 Isabella was under construction, but also because the organization elected to

¹¹¹ CLGA. (2004, May 30). [Building Development Report for the 2004 Annual General Meeting] Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

¹¹² CLGA. (2004, Nov 3). [Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ CLGA. (2004, Aug 24). [Press Release]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

take the owner of 56 Temperance to court.¹¹⁵ In a settlement, the owners of the Temperance Street building admitted to cancelling the lease agreement prematurely and agreed to pay for the cost to move the archives.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, Milley found suitable space on the second floor of the Churwell Building at 65 Wellesley Street, just a few blocks south of Isabella, and arranged for the move.¹¹⁷ It would end up costing more than \$56,000 to bring the collections from 56 Temperance to 65 Wellesley.¹¹⁸ Milley left the organization soon after and was replaced by Robert Windrum in late 2007.¹¹⁹

Windrum began work in a cramped office space at the Wellesley location and recalled how the CLGA was just recovering from the unanticipated move. The organization barely had time to recover before a series of negotiations were necessary to make the 34 Isabella property suitable for the archives. Both Windrum and McLeod credit Rae for not only considering the needs of the archives in determining which organization would benefit from the Children's Aid Society's development plan, but also in assisting the CLGA with obtaining the funds necessary to complete the renovations and alterations on the house. As Windrum explained, once the board had decided to take the property, the board established a Capital Campaign to fundraise for the purposes of capital upgrades to the house. The initial plan was to undertake renovations and alterations to the house in a staged process, project-by-project, and as funds became available through fundraising activities. The board learned, however, that it could apply for up to \$350,000 in federal grants through the Canadian Cultural Spaces Fund if the organization were able to match this funding.¹²⁰ Just as the members of a fundraising committee were about to fully launch the Capital Campaign, Rae informed the archives that it would receive a one-time donation of \$250,000 from Creswell Development, the firm hired by CAS to complete the construction on its two buildings, as part of a

¹¹⁵ Windrum, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Averill, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Windrum, 2013.

¹²⁰ Bailey, 2013.

'Section 37' agreement.¹²¹ Around this time, the CLGA also received a sizeable bequest from the estate of Roger Spalding, a former member of *The Body Politic* collective and a long-time AIDS activist, who had died in 2006.¹²² Along with \$18,000 raised through the Capital Fund and a grant of \$150,000 already received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation toward renovation costs, the CLGA was able to show Canadian Heritage, which administers the Cultural Spaces Fund, that it was able to match funds (Bailey 2010). In the end, Canadian Heritage agreed to disperse \$175,000, which left the CLGA with a budget of almost \$570,000 for capital repairs and upgrades.¹²³ An additional \$10,000 was received from Toronto Heritage in the fall of 2009.¹²⁴

When the archives moved to 34 Isabella Street in September 2009, the house had been upgraded to provide barrier-free access to the first and second floors, the HVAC system had been upgraded to create a climate-controlled environment for preservation of the collections, and the exterior masonry had been repointed and the foundation repaired.¹²⁵ Findlay remembered that the interior carpets were removed and hardwood floors refinished, and fire-safety upgrades had been made. In addition, the CLGA commissioned Lynette Richards to produce a stained glass memorial window to be installed in the reference room. Signage was purchased for the front of the property and the archives invested in landscaping materials. The rare book library was moved into the main floor, supported by a series of newly installed steel beams in the basement, and the photograph collections and vertical files were moved in behind the books. A reference room and two washrooms were renovated on the main floor, as well as a front office for volunteers, fitted with a

¹²¹ Aaron A. Moore (2013) explains that Section 37 of the *Planning Act* allows “municipalities to secure cash of in-kind contributions from developers in return for allowing them to exceed existing height and density restrictions.” Because the proposed 39-story condominium at 33 Charles Street exceeded both height and density restrictions, Creswell Development were asked to pay a fee of \$250,000 under Section 37. As Moore notes, there were no clear guidelines in the *Planning Act* about what the City should do to manage or disseminate the funds collected under Section 37. Rae somehow convinced council that anything collected from Creswell Development should be handed over to the CLGA to help off-set costs associated with renovations of the heritage property at 34 Isabella. Correspondence between the Archives and City Hall was provided by Elizabeth Bailey.

¹²² Bailey, 2013.

¹²³ Bailey, E.C. (2010, Mar 31). [Interim Report to Canadian Cultural Spaces Fund]. Copy in possession of Elizabeth Bailey.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Findlay, 2013.

series of computer stations. On the second floor, an old washroom had been converted into an office for the General Manager and a large open space toward the front of the house was prepared as a gallery or exhibition hall. A processing room was established next to the updated service elevator and across from an audio-visual room. The third floor, which supported a small kitchen, was left open as meeting space that could be used by the archives or rented out for community events. The interior was painted and styled in a manner suitable for the heritage home and furnished with archival quality shelving and support systems.

The archives celebrated its grand opening on September 26, 2009.¹²⁶ As I recall, the grand opening was also the first time that it dawned on many of the volunteers that the move to the house would have long-lasting implications for the CLGA—not the least of which was that the majority of the collections would have to remain off-site. As one guest said in passing on one of my guided tours, “It’s gorgeous! But, what is the archives without the archives?” It was this comment that spurred my deep thinking about the future of the organization as something more than what it once was.

As both Miller and King explained, the move to the house has raised the profile of the archives in ways unimaginable by many of the long-term volunteers. The CLGA is now supported publicly by corporations such as Telus, who assist with the maintenance of the front garden, and TD Bank, which has underwritten an annual fundraising dinner since 2010.¹²⁷ King described some of the changes this move has produced for the archives, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2013:

This was a huge move because we suddenly had a physical presence on the street. That made a tremendous difference and also because it is a heritage building, it’s attracted more people. We now have two open spaces—we can bring groups in for meetings and the gallery has touched so many other aspects of the community. So people will come in because of an exhibition, not being that aware of all the other aspects of the organization and we use that opportunity for education and for informational purposes. We also started to take part in [architectural tours], so we are

¹²⁶ CLGA. (2009, Sep 26). [Notes from the Grand Opening]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

¹²⁷ Findlay, 2013.

listed in the papers and people come by and we are on the map. This is yet another means of stretching into areas that we might not normally get to.¹²⁸

Both traditional and gay media has also taken note of the archives, and as Bailey noted, the CLGA has become the darling of culture and local interest journalism, especially around Pride Week events. The second-floor gallery and an ambitious exhibition program have also attracted interest from pockets of the Toronto community that would not otherwise have visited the archives—photographers, artists, dancers, and fashion designers, as well as a younger and an increasingly diverse group of people. With the new awareness of the CLGA, however, the archives has also found itself at the centre of more and more public debates about the lack of cultural representation in its collections or among its volunteers and board. As Findlay noted, the more the Archives becomes entrenched in the Toronto cultural landscape, the more it leaves itself vulnerable to criticism, and the CLGA does not always know how to respond. Findlay joked that the archives has grown from a “ragtag group of Lefty activists to media darlings,” and the implications of this transition are still being felt to this day.¹²⁹ I will comment on these implications and offer some insight into the possible future trajectories of the CLGA and the other three archives that inform this study in the final chapter of this dissertation.

¹²⁸ King, 2013.

¹²⁹ Findlay, 2013.

CHAPTER 4

The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives

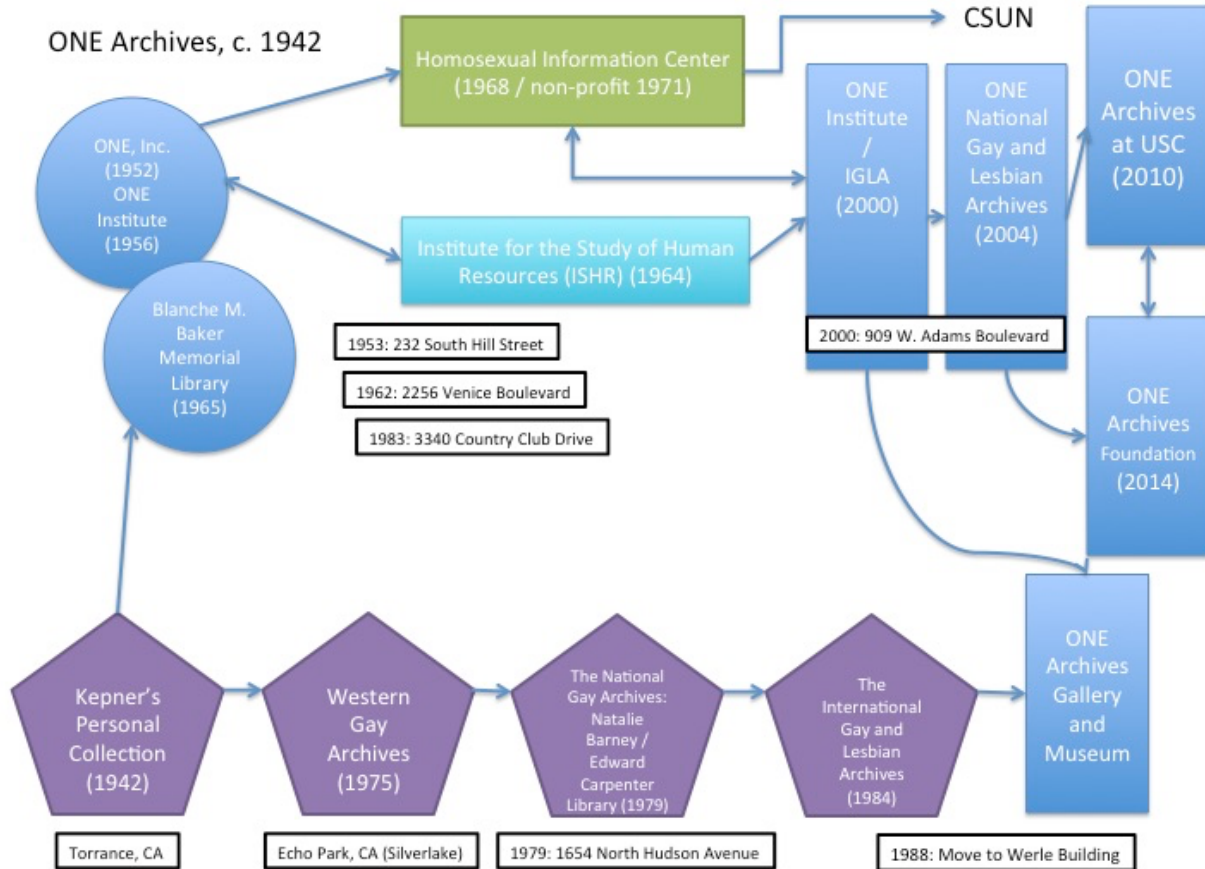


Figure 4.1. Visualization of the formation of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (1942-2013).¹³⁰

In many ways, the development of the Los Angeles-based ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE) is the most complicated of the four archives that inform this study. Much like the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, the ONE Archives grew out of the working files of a publication, *ONE* magazine. Yet, as Wakimoto (2012) explains in her history of the organization, the ONE Archives actually represents an “amalgam” of several community-led collections and

¹³⁰ The ONE Archives is the only institution in this study that is an amalgamation of smaller archives. Although other institutions have changed locations and personnel over time, their collections have, for the most part, remained in custody of the same institution once donated.

personal collections, some of which are related to *ONE* magazine and its parent organization ONE, Inc., and others that are organizationally intertwined but politically distinct (p. 107). One of the most challenging tasks that I faced in learning about the ONE Archives was, in fact, disentangling the history of ONE Archives from the many organizations that have been associated with it over the past seventy-some years. Methodologically, tracing these histories was also a considerably fraught task because none of the original founders or collectors is alive to be interviewed. Hence, the stories of these organizations are told only through secondary sources, third parties, and archival records. My participants at the ONE Archives include Joseph Hawkins, the Director of the ONE Archives at USC; Loni Shibuyama, Archivist; Michael C. Oliveira, Project Archivist; Jeanne Cordova, Carol Grosvenor and Amy Ryan, all former Directors; and three long-time volunteers, David Moore, David Hensley, and Pat Allen, who also serves as the Volunteer Coordinator.

I am grateful for Eric Marcus' 1992 book, *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights*, which collects oral histories from several of the figures that have contributed to the ONE Archives over the years and who are no longer with us. In addition, the histories of ONE, Inc. and *ONE* magazine have been exhaustively documented by C. Todd White in his 2009 book *Pre-Gay L.A.: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights*.¹³¹ Other sources, such as Joseph Hansen's *A Few Doors West of Hope* (1998),¹³² John D'Emilio's (1998) *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States*, and Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons' (2006) *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians*, offer thorough histories of ONE, Inc. and its publications. None of these sources discuss a library or archives with any real significance, but they all point to role of Jim Kepner in the founding and development of an archival collection. Kepner was a member of ONE, Inc. and wrote columns for

¹³¹ C. Todd White was a graduate student at University of Southern California (USC) who became involved with the ONE Archives after Walter Williams, then President of the Board, invited him for a tour. Pre-gay L.A. builds on White's dissertation work on this history.

¹³² There is some controversy over the reliability and accuracy of this book. Both Oliveira and Shibuyama point out that researchers have often pointed out historical inaccuracies in the text. According to Oliveira, the book was written as a tribute to Don Slater upon his death in 1997, and may have been hastily researched and produced.

the magazine under a variety of pseudonyms (White, 2009). He was also the founder and curator of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA), which began as his own private collection before formalizing as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in 1979 (White, 2009). It is Kepner's collection that forms the bulk of the ONE Archives today and it is through him that the complicated story of this organization is best told.

Jim Kepner & ONE, Inc.

Marcus' (1992) descriptions of Kepner and his home corroborate the descriptions of Kepner provided by several study participants. By all account, Kepner was an obsessive collector with great knowledge of Los Angeles and its histories, but he also lacked any formal training in either librarianship or archival methodologies. Marcus writes, "When he recalled the past, Jim pulled details from a mind that seemed to be as fact packed as his house" (p. 43). At the time Marcus met with Kepner, he was living in a "small rundown cottage at the bottom of a steep hill in an outlying Los Angeles neighborhood" (p. 43). Marcus writes, "His front yard is filled with cactus plants, a longtime hobby. Inside, the house overflows with files, books, and personal records, collected during three and a half decades of involvement with the gay rights movement" (p. 43). Kepner's records were organized only to the extent that he could usually find what he needed, and as Pat Allen explained, attending to the materials once they had been acquired was not a priority.¹³³

In a short autobiographical exposition published as part of Marcus' oral history reader, Kepner (1992) describes how he first became aware of the idea of a homosexual organization, after having moved with his sister from Galveston, Texas, to San Francisco in 1942. It was not until 1952, however, that he moved to Los Angeles and attended his first meeting of the Mattachine, an early homophile organization founded two years earlier by Hollywood stage actor Harry Hay and

¹³³ Pat Allen, Interview. October 23, 2013.

several friends (Kepner, 1992).¹³⁴ At the time, the Mattachine operated much like Alcoholics Anonymous; members were considered part of a fraternal order and met in relative secrecy at members' private homes (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). It also took on a cell structure, much like the Masons, and kept no master lists of members' names (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). The name 'Mattachine' referred to a Medieval French secret society of masked men or jesters who used their anonymity to openly criticize the ruling monarchs with impunity (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). Hay believed that this was an appropriate name because it reflected the organization's mission to provide a safe, private space for homosexuals to gather and educate themselves about what he referred to as "Society's Androgynous Minority" (Hay, 1996, p. 5). In Kepner's (1992) view, some members fetishized the fantasy that they were part of an underground society and otherwise conformed to society's heterosexual norms. Kepner describes this time period as particularly repressive and notes that the United States was coming into the McCarthy era. He writes, "This was an enormously conservative, conformist period, probably the most conformist period in our history, or at least in our recent history" (p. 47). Members of the Mattachine "loved nothing better than to say, 'We're just like everybody else except for what we do in bed'" (p. 49).

Kepner's affinity for Marxist theory and speculative fiction nevertheless provided him with a much different outlook on society and social change from many of the other Mattachine members. As he explains in his own words, "I did not believe that society was static...I instinctively took a political approach to social problems" (Kepner, 1992, p. 47). Kepner also describes how he witnessed the 1943 police raid of San Francisco's Black Cat bar, an establishment frequented by drag queens and "butch numbers" (p. 48). As he watched, "butch" men exited the bar with their hands cuffed behind their backs and their heads hung in guilt, while the drag queens were "struggling and sassing the cops" (p. 48). Impressed by the courage and fortitude of the drag

¹³⁴ Faderman and Timmons note that, although the Mattachine Society is the best known of these early homophile organizations, there were certainly others that operated in and around Los Angeles in the 1940s and 50s. The interracial Cloistered Order of Conclaved Knights of Sophisticacy was one such organization. Known more commonly as the Knights of the Clock, members helped interracial homosexual couples secure housing and provided a social space for men to meet. Faderman, L., & Timmons, S. (2006). *Gay LA: A history of sexual outlaws, power politics, and lipstick lesbians*. New York: Basic Books.

queens that night, Kepner maintained a sense of respect for “effeminate queens” (48). He recounts a meeting of the Mattachine at which members were discussing how to distance themselves from drag queens and “stalking butches” in an effort to better integrate into society. Kepner felt the need to defend non-conforming men, but his plea fell on deaf ears. Perhaps for these reasons in addition to his love for writing, Kepner remained associated with the Mattachine, but became increasingly involved with *ONE* magazine, which began publishing in 1953.

The idea of producing a magazine for homosexuals was first discussed at the October 1952 meeting of the Mattachine and in response to the growing publicity surrounding the arrest and trial of member Dale Jennings (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). That spring, Jennings had been arrested for allegedly soliciting a police officer in a toilet in Westlake Park (now MacArthur Park) (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). After the arrest, Jennings contacted Mattachine leader Harry Hay and together they enlisted the support of George Sibley, an attorney and member of the Citizens’ Council to Outlaw Entrapment (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). Most men in similar situations pleaded guilty to solicitation charges so that they might avoid public embarrassment, but Jennings surprised the courts by contesting the charges (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). When the trial began on June 23, 1952, he confessed to being a homosexual but denied that he had solicited the police officer (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). The jury acquitted Jennings on the basis of police intimidation, harassment, and entrapment, and the case was dismissed (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). This was the first time that a homosexual man had successfully fought these kinds of charges and, as Faderman and Timmons (2006) note, the case was a pivotal moment in the homophile movement. It also attracted considerable public scrutiny, leading some Mattachine members to push the organization to step out of the shadows and develop a more public presence (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). At the very least, there was a need to communicate to a broader public and across the country about the Jennings trial and its outcome.

At the October 1952 meeting, the Mattachine leadership resisted the idea of becoming spokespeople for the homosexual community, but a small group of members continued the

discussion the following month at the Studio Bookshop in Hollywood (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). By the end of November, the group had grown to include Mattachine members Jennings, Martin Block, Bill Lambert,¹³⁵ and Don Slater (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). Slater's partner, the celebrated flamenco dancer, Antonio Reyes,¹³⁶ also became involved, as did Merton Bird, an African-American accountant, and John Nojima, a Japanese-American survivor of the Manzanar Relocation Camp. Faderman and Timmons (2006) speculate that several members were likely affiliated with the Knights of the Clock, an interracial homophile organization that emerged around the same time as the Mattachine. White (2009) speculates that Bird, who was a member of the Knights of the Clock, developed the organizing model for the new group based on the governance model established by the Clock. Such close affiliation with an interracial group did not, however, influence much of the direction for the new group, as racialization was not identified as a key issue facing homosexuals at the time (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). Rather, members of this new group were more concerned with distancing themselves from Mattachine founder Harry Hay, who had been recently expunged from his position at Mattachine because of his affiliation with the Communist Party (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). Conscious of encroaching McCarthyism and anti-Communist sentiment in Los Angeles, they decided to incorporate as a capitalist entity (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). As Faderman and Timmons explain, the name 'ONE' was chosen by African-American schoolteacher Bailey Whittaker, based on a line from Thomas Carlyle, "A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one" (p. 116). ONE was incorporated in November 1952, to "aid in the social integration and rehabilitation of the sexual variant."¹³⁷ Its real mission, however, was to

¹³⁵ Bill Lambert is a known pseudonym of W. Dorr Legg. See White, 2002.

¹³⁶ White (2002) refers to Antonio Reyes as Tony Sanchez and notes that this is a pseudonym.

¹³⁷ The ONE, Inc. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, 1953, are included in a syllabus for the course, Homophile 339: Introduction to Homophile Studies in Theory and Practice. The course was introduced in 1956 and taught regularly by Legg at the ONE, Inc. The course syllabus and notes are described in the finding aid for the ONE Incorporated records, (Coll2011.001, Series 5. Education Division records, 1907-1994, bulk 1953-1994). ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, CA.

produce a monthly magazine. The first issue was published in early 1953, and the magazine continued publishing until 1967.¹³⁸

In a 1998 article, Kepner explained that he began writing columns for *ONE* magazine in 1954, but he did so with very little empirical research to support his claims (Kepner, 178). Unsurprisingly, his work came under criticism from readers in the form of letters-to-the-editor and he soon took it upon himself to seek out any newspaper article, correspondence, or monograph that documented gay experiences (Kepner, 1998). Over the next few years, Kepner had amassed a significant reference collection that he often referred to when writing for *ONE* magazine or any other publication on the topic of sexuality (Kepner, 1998). White (2009) explains that, throughout most of this period, Kepner worked full-time at a milk carton factory and spent almost as much time researching and writing for a number of periodicals. He used much of his own money to purchase materials to add to his growing collection. Kepner eventually left his factory job and took a salaried position with the ONE, Inc. as an editor (White, 2009).

In 1955, members of ONE, Inc. made a collective decision to act on their mandate to provide education about and for homosexuals, an effort that would include the acquisition and dissemination of accurate and relevant information about sexuality to counteract the misinformation that was proliferating (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). According to Faderman and Timmons (2006), the organization began offering courses in homophile studies under the umbrella of the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies that fall, with the intention of expanding the program as interest would allow. ONE, Inc. also established a reference library to support its educational programming as well as its publications, including an academic journal, *ONE Institute Quarterly of Homophile Studies*, and gossip rag called *ONE Confidential* (Faderman & Timmons, 2006). By the end of the 1950s, Kepner's collection had outgrown his space—a concern that would repeat itself several times over his lifetime—and he decided to donate 400 books to a new library at ONE, Inc. (Kepner, 1998). Unfortunately, Kepner's donation was not entirely respected. He writes, “The

¹³⁸ Ibid.

librarian sold some of them off as irrelevant. In a ONE schism later in 1965, that librarian took most of those books for what became the Homosexual Information Center (HIC), which still insists that the right of privacy is our only concern (Kepner, 1998). By then, I'd built new shelves, adding more books than ever" (Kepner, 1998, p. 178). By the mid-1960s, Kepner had resolved to continue collecting broadly and aggressively materials related to homosexuality and gay lives, but he would do so on his own (Kepner, 1998).

The schism at ONE, Inc. that Kepner references is discussed at great length by Hansen (1998) and White (2009), and is otherwise known as the "Heist" (White, 2009, p. 146). The division is also referenced in Faderman and Timmons' (2006) book as "a struggle over power and over the very purpose of the organization itself" (p. 122). By 1965, control over ONE, Inc. was held firmly by business manager Bill Lambert, now known as W. Dorr Legg, who was keen to expand the educational side of the business at the risk of neglecting the magazines that had been its primary purpose for more than a decade; in fact, White (2009) estimates that the sales of the magazine were never above a 5,000 run, but this supported both the costly academic journal and costs related to administration. This move upset Don Slater, who had been invested in the publication of *ONE Magazine* since its inception. Early on the morning of April 18, after weeks of vitriolic confrontations with Legg, Slater and several friends pulled a moving van up to the ONE, Inc. offices on Venice Boulevard, and removed office furniture, equipment, the library, and all records related to the publications, and moved them to a rented warehouse space on Cahuenga Boulevard, north of Hollywood (White, 2009). Slater then returned to the ONE, Inc. office and waited for Legg to arrive the next morning. White guesses that when Legg came into the office and discovered it empty, he must have been "flabbergasted" (p. 135). But if Slater expected Legg to back down and agree to give control of the magazine to him, he was sorely mistaken. Legg accused Slater of robbery and called the police (White, 2009). Then, he went one step further and filed a suit against Slater on behalf of ONE, Inc., claiming that the research library and business files were worth well over \$10,000, and that the robbery should be considered grand theft (White, 2009, p. 139). He also



Figure 4.2. Core ONE Incorporated staff (from left to right) Don Slater, W. Dorr Legg, & Jim Kepner. Circa 1957-1958¹³⁹

requested a court order to prevent Slater and his group from publishing under the name *ONE*. Although Slater retaliated with a counter-suit, claiming that his group represented the majority stakeholders in ONE, Inc., a judge found in favour of Legg and ordered Slater to return the stolen property and cease using the name *ONE* (White, 2009). The bitter court cases would continue for two years, during which time Slater published his own magazine called *Tangents*, a name taken from a column once written by Kepner for *ONE* magazine (White, 2009). Meanwhile, Legg continued to produce *ONE* magazine. Sales of both magazines plummeted and both quickly folded in 1967.

Michael Oliveira, a project archivist at ONE Archives, surmises that the public dispute between Slater and Legg was partially at fault for the loss in sales; as well, the emerging gay liberation movement was less interested in the increasingly conformist views promoted by *ONE*

¹³⁹ Photograph provided by the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives. Photographer is unknown. ONE Incorporated records (Coll2011-001).

and its supporters.¹⁴⁰ While Legg continued to redirect his focus on the ONE Institute, Slater set up his own Homosexual Information Center (HIC) using the library and archival materials from the ONE, Inc., which were never returned despite the court order. The ultimate fate of these materials is also part of the more recent history of the ONE Archives, as I will discuss later on in this chapter.

A Difficult Transition: From a Personal Collection to a Not-for-Profit Corporation, 1972-1989

Despite witnessing some of the books that he had donated to ONE, Inc. be removed from the office by Slater and used to establish a new organization, Kepner remained relatively unscathed by the division of the organization. According to White (2009), Kepner had resigned from his position as editorial secretary at the magazine in 1960, and would not return to any official role again until the 1970s.¹⁴¹ As Kepner himself explains in a 1998 article, he had become active in a number of homophile organizations, including the Council on Religion and the Homophile, and the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations. He also became involved with gay liberation activities such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Community Services Center, frequently serving as secretary (Kepner, 1998). As Kepner explains, “All of [this activity] fed my growing collection of meeting notes, newsletters, fliers, posters, photos, correspondence, audio tapes, and buttons” (p. 179). In 1972, he began calling his personal collection the Western Gay Archives and opened up his Torrance, California apartment to students one afternoon a week (Kepner, 1998). There is some evidence to suggest that the collection was well known within the greater Los Angeles area and across the country by this time (Kepner, 1998). In 1974, for example, John D’Emilio, then a graduate student at Columbia University in New York, wrote Kepner to ask him if the Western Gay Archives had materials related to pre-1969 West Coast homophile

¹⁴⁰ Michael Oliveira, Interview. October 17, 2013.

¹⁴¹ According to White (2009), Kepner was never too far removed from ONE, Inc. In 1966, he toured Europe on behalf of the organization and later wrote for the magazine.

groups.¹⁴² The correspondence between Kepner and D’Emilio reflects not only a growing interest in the history of homosexuality, but the significance and importance of the materials that Kepner had collected.¹⁴³

By the mid-1970s, Kepner had rekindled a relationship with ONE, and began serving as the ONE librarian (Kepner 1998, p. 179). It was also around this time that he recognized that his own personal collection had grown too unwieldy for him to handle on his own. In 1977, he offered to donate his collection to the ONE Institute, but would only do so with an agreement from the organization that it would open access to non-credentialed researchers, including those interested in gay liberation history (Kepner, 1998). Legg and ONE Institute declined the offer and Kepner turned his attention to fundraising and attracting volunteers to help him better manage the collection as an independent organization (Kepner, 1998). Kepner admits, however, that he had never intended to turn his private collection into a public institution and that this transition was challenging for him (Kepner, 1998).

Pat Allen remembers first encountering Kepner when Allen contacted the Western Gay Archives to enquire about donating materials he had collected during his work with Dignity, a ministry for gay and lesbian Catholics.¹⁴⁴ Although Allen could not recall the exact year that he became involved as a volunteer, he explained, “I’m the nosy type, so when I decided to get involved with Jim Kepner’s archives, and to help process materials, I recognized the problems that were involved. Jim was not an archivist and more of a pack rat... and thank heavens for that!”¹⁴⁵ As a trained accountant and CFO for at least two corporations, Allen was more accustomed to professional, organized environments and realized that Kepner was “really more obsessed with collecting stuff and hoarding it rather than [organizing it].”¹⁴⁶ Allen also described Kepner’s

¹⁴² D’Emilio, J. (1974-1976). Correspondence. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 2, Folder 2). ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Pat Allen, Interview. October 23, 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

reticence at allowing volunteers to work with his collections; however, in order to sustain the archives, Kepner agreed to let volunteers work with the materials and was soon convinced that he needed to incorporate and apply for not-for-profit status. Both Allen and Oliveira noted that Kepner often accepted monetary donations from community members to support himself and the archives, but obtaining charitable status would allow him to accept money or donations-in-kind and ease his tax burden. It also positioned the archives to apply for a number of public and private grants to support costs associated with running the archives, including a small salary for Kepner to serve as Founder and Curator.

Kepner sets out the details of formalizing the archives in his 1998 article, and the archives' organizational records corroborate this chain of events. Some time before 1977, Kepner moved from Torrance to the cottage described by Marcus (1998)—actually located in Echo Park—and invited a number of interested supporters of the archives for a planning meeting to be held on April 17 of that year. Included in the agenda for this meeting is an introduction to the collections and an assessment of current needs, including the organization's intention to incorporate and pursue funding through government and private employment grants.¹⁴⁷ A letter dated April 18, 1977, from Kepner to Fong Eu, the Secretary of State, indicates that the organization intended to incorporate as a not-for-profit in the State of California under the name Western Gay Archives / Kepner Library.¹⁴⁸ In addition, the Board laid out its concerns in an application to the Gay Community Services Center for financial support:

Functioning as a repository of information, this collection serves not only the Los Angeles Community but also the entire Southern California area. It is one of the most complete collections of its kind in the world. A unique community fulcrum, the

¹⁴⁷ The notes arising from the planning meeting dated April 17, 1977, show that there were two archival collections housed at Jim Kepner's apartment. The first was known as the Western Gay Archives / Kepner Library and the second was a collection of motion pictures and film documentary material referred to as the Rocco Collection. See *The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002* (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1, Folder 4 Minutes 1977-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁴⁸ Kepner, J. (1977, Apr 18). [Letter to Fong Eu, Secretary of State]. *The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002* (Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 1, Folder 1 Articles of incorporation, 1977-1989). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

Archives are presently attempting to serve a rapidly increasing number of users limited by the inadequate facilities of staff and space.¹⁴⁹

Kepner appealed to the Gay Community Services Center, which he had helped found in 1971 along with activist Morris Kight, and proposed that the Center help fund the archives (Wakimoto, 2012, p. 115). The Center approved the plan and agreed to administer the archives under a Title VI Program Operation, which also allowed Kepner to apply for additional Title VI funds to support staffing costs (Wakimoto, 2012). As Kepner (1998) describes this relationship, the Center helped the archives apply to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), but Wakimoto points out that this support was conditional and that the archives, in fact, paid the Center \$100.00 per month for its “supervision” (p. 115). Wakimoto also points out that the expectation was that the archives would become a self-sufficient organization, but this was “overly optimistic” and the Center withdrew its sponsorship after just twelve months (p. 116).

As Kepner (1998) explains, this first board was “played out” by 1979, and a second board had been established; Kepner initially served as Vice President and Secretary (p. 179). Records indicate that the new board made an application to the Secretary of State to amend its name to The Gay Archives: Natalie Barney / Edward Carpenter Library.¹⁵⁰ The board also replied to a request for clarification from the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) about the nature of its business activities.¹⁵¹ The board wrote to the IRS, explaining that the corporation was organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal

¹⁴⁹ IGLA (1977). [Letter to the Gay Community Services Center]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1, Folder 4 Minutes 1977-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁵⁰ Natalie Clifford Barney (October 31, 1876 – February 2, 1972) was an American playwright, poet and novelist who lived as an expatriate in Paris. She was openly lesbian and began publishing love poems to women under her own name as early as 1900. Edward Carpenter (August 29, 1844 – June 28, 1929) was an English socialist poet, philosopher, anthologist, and early LGBT activist. Described in the covering letter for the Application to Incorporate. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 1, Folder 1 Articles of incorporation, 1977-1989). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Revenue Code of 1954.¹⁵² A return letter from the IRS dated November 30, 1979, indicated that the archives had been assessed and it was determined to be exempt from Federal income tax, confirming that Kepner's collection was now a formal not-for-profit corporation operating in the State of California.¹⁵³ With the help of Clark Polak, a journalist and creator of *DRUM* magazine, the archives moved to a 2,150 square-foot storefront office on N. Hudson Avenue.¹⁵⁴

Between 1980 and 1985, The Gay Archives underwent a period of significant growth, expanding its holdings from 7,000 books to 22,000.¹⁵⁵ It had also rented an additional two storage facilities to contain the archival collections.¹⁵⁶ In 1984, the board also voted to amend the name of the organization to The International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA), to reflect the growth in both size and scope of the collections. Nevertheless, fundraising remained a significant concern for the board and the archives continued to struggle each month to pay rent on its three locations.¹⁵⁷ A document dated March 1985, sets out the projected needs and goals of the archives to include sufficient funding to support long-term staffing commitments, larger space to accommodate its materials, and furniture and supplies to support its estimated 15 to 20 daily users and 20 to 30 phone reference inquiries.¹⁵⁸ Although not explicitly stated, this document also suggests that the archives was beginning to incorporate some professional standards, including those endorsed by the American Library Association.¹⁵⁹ University of Southern California professor Walter L. Williams is

¹⁵² IGLA. (1979, Oct 9). [Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 1, Folder 1 Articles of incorporation, 1977-1989). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁵³ Letter from the Internal Revenue Services District Director, dated November 30, 1979. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002, Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 1, Folder 1 Articles of incorporation, 1977-1989.

¹⁵⁴ Allen, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ IGLA (1985, Mar). [Projected Needs and Goals: International Gay and Lesbian Archives]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 2, Folder 6 Steele, Gary, 1981-1989). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

listed as President of the Board, and June Mazer as Vice-President.¹⁶⁰ Kepner is identified as Founder and Curator, a position he held until his death in 1997.¹⁶¹

By 1987, the board had fallen behind in rent and was at a crisis point. As Kepner (1998) explains, “With the collection overflowing our quarters, we got behind in the rent and went into storage until the City of West Hollywood gave us space (smaller than what we’d outgrown)” (p. 180). What Kepner doesn’t mention here is that the board had actually anticipated that the archives would not only outgrow its storefront location on N. Hudson Street, but that it would also fail to fundraise enough money to continue occupying this building. In 1984, a Fundraising Committee managed to secure a grant from Christopher Street West, a non-profit agency that sponsors and produces annual Gay Pride events, but otherwise the archives relied on community fundraisers, such as the 1982 Bessie Smith Depression Rent Party and the 1983 Gene’s TV benefit.¹⁶² In September 1983, the archives also received a donation from Clement Brace, who paid rent money owing and purchased a new videotape player for the organization.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, stable and sufficient funding was not forthcoming.

An ad-hoc Space Committee was also established to investigate possibilities for re-housing the collections and discussions documented in board meeting minutes from 1985 to 1987, indicate

¹⁶⁰ Although I had originally planned to interview Walter Williams for this project, I was unable to make contact with him. On June 18, 2013, Williams was added to the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted List and sought for the sexual exploitation of children, trafficking with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places and criminal forfeiture. He was captured by Mexican authorities later that month and was handed over to the custody of U.S. Marshals. At the time of my visit to the ONE Archives, Williams was being held in prison in Southern California awaiting trial. Several of my study participants made reference to the charges against Williams. One long-time volunteer noted in passing conversation that community archivists were aware that Williams had been using his research travel as opportunity to seek out and have sex with underage boys. In December 2014, Williams was sentenced to five years behind bars for flying to the Philippines to have sex with boys who he had met online. See Brownworth, V. (2013, Jun 21). *The strange case of Walter Lee Williams: Renowned gay writer on FBI’s Ten Most Wanted List*. Lambda Literary. Retrieved from: <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/features/06/21/the-strange-case-of-walter-lee-williams-renowned-gay-writer-on-fbis-ten-most-wanted-list-captured/#sthash.EC4HmLYv.dpuf>, and CBS Local Media. (2014, Dec 15). *Former USC professor gets 5 years in prison for traveling to Philippines for sex with boys*. CBS Local, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/12/15/former-usc-professor-gets-5-years-in-prison-for-traveling-to-philippines-for-sex-with-boys/>

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Clippings from *Data-Boy Magazine*, dated September 18, 1983, September 28, 1983, and September 13, 1984. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Box 8, Folder 31 Press and history 1952-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

that members looked for possible space in San Francisco's old central library and as far away as Minneapolis–St Paul.¹⁶⁴ One proposal to Reverend Kenneth Martin of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in the Valley inquired about the possibility of IGLA relocating to a low-rent church-owned facility in the San Fernando Valley.¹⁶⁵ Another proposal was sent to the City of West Hollywood to become part of a new civic center, then under development.¹⁶⁶ This would ultimately prove successful. The board decided against donating the materials to become a special collection in a public or university library, although there had been some interest from both Sierra University and the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA).¹⁶⁷ Kepner even considered reaching out to ONE Institute, but although Williams did draft a letter to Dorr Legg, proposing that the IGLA collections be merged with the ONE Library, there is no indication that this letter was ever sent.¹⁶⁸ By the middle of 1987, however, it was obvious that IGLA would have to vacate their N. Hudson Street storefront—rent had increased to \$1,200 per month—and they would need to find a new home for the collections.¹⁶⁹

As Allen recalls, Williams was working already at this time to secure a space for IGLA at the University of Southern California (USC).¹⁷⁰ Williams was, as Oliveira explained, a professor of anthropology at USC and had become involved with the archives because of his own interest in

¹⁶⁴ IGLA. (1985-1987). [Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1, Folders 4-23 Minutes, 1977-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁶⁵ IGLA. (1985). [Letter to Reverend Kenneth Martin]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series Box 3, Folder 37 Donated space (Metropolitan Community Church Valley, Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center), 1985-1987). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁶⁶ IGLA. (1985-1987). [Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1, Folders 4-23 Minutes, 1977-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Williams, W. (1986). [Letter to ONE, Inc.]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 3, Folders 40 Possible relocation to ONE, 1986). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁶⁹ IGLA. (1985-1987). [Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors]. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1, Folders 4-23 Minutes, 1977-1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁷⁰ Allen, 2013.

primary sources for research in the history of homosexuality.¹⁷¹ He saw a place for the archives at the university and regularly conferred with the USC Libraries to inquire about the possibility of finding IGLA a donated space. In the meantime, however, the archives had fallen behind in rent and needed to move. In September 1987, Gene La Pietra stepped forward and offered the board a temporary storage space in a warehouse that he owned in the city. According to Allen, La Pietra owned Circus Disco, a well-known dance club in Hollywood, and he was sympathetic to the plight of Kepner and his collections. An October 30, 1988, article published in the *Los Angeles Times* describes the move to a warehouse storage space as a “collective crisis,” and notes that the board was re-considering its previous decision to resist donating the materials to a university (Russell 1988, W1). The article also states that IGLA had been offered free space in a public building owned by the City of West Hollywood for the next two years or until the City destroyed this building to make room for its proposed new civic center. In fact, the collections were moved in late 1988 to the Werle Building, located at 626 S. Robertson in West Hollywood.

According to Kinney (2001), the City of West Hollywood incorporated as a separate and distinct municipality in 1984, after a successful movement by citizens to resist the elimination of rent control, which had been proposed within the County of Los Angeles. As Kinney points out, this movement was led by a tight coalition of seniors, Jews, and gays, many of whom remain in the area today. The social environment of West Hollywood and its municipal politics, leading to the donation of city owned space to gay and lesbian archives, will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Unfortunately, the Werle Building was not only inadequate to house the entirety of the IGLA collections, but it was also believed to be a temporary agreement. Hence, though no longer serving on the IGLA board, Williams continued to push USC to provide a larger and more stable home for the archives.

¹⁷¹ Oliveira, 2013.

The Merger. IGLA and ONE become One.

As Wakimoto (2012) reports, the ONE Library was renamed the Blanche M. Baker Memorial Library in January 1965, and continued to grow in both size and scope throughout the next twenty years, despite losing a considerable amount of material in the “Heist” (p. 111). The Library, which already contained files related to the Mattachine and some audio-visual materials, also expanded to include archival records, including materials from the *Advocate* and unpublished dissertation work by a number of homophile studies scholars (p. 112). ONE supporters sent in newspaper clippings and other materials related to the study of sexuality. Two part-time librarians, Bill Baker and William Sutherland, had been hired in 1966, and began to impose a cataloguing system on the library’s holdings (p. 111). Wakimoto reports that the librarians also offered instructional workshops for researchers interested in using the unique collections (p. 112). In my interview with David Moore, he explained that he was the first full-time paid librarian at the ONE, hired in 1974, and the materials kept pouring in.¹⁷² The ONE received a sizeable grant from the Grazier Fund of the New York Community Trust in 1987, earmarked for the purposes of cataloguing the library materials, however, the space and funds needed to maintain the collections continued to put pressure on the organization (Wakimoto, 2012, p. 113). Allen recalled going to the ONE Institute to meet with Moore at some point in the 1980s, to discuss how the Library was cataloguing its books.¹⁷³ At this point, IGLA had already processed upwards of 90% of its archival material and books, but Allen was surprised to learn that, despite better and more stable funding, the ONE had only managed to organize about half of its materials. Kepner, meanwhile, maintained some skepticism about the ONE’s reticence to acquire and make accessible records related to grassroots organizing and gay liberation activism; he considered the ONE to be quite conservative in focus (Wakimoto, 2012). For this reason, he resisted any pressure from the board of IGLA to consider merging the two collections (Wakimoto, 2012).

¹⁷² David Moore, Interview. October 23, 2013.

¹⁷³ Allen, 2013.

Sentiments about a possible merger of the two collections shifted in 1994, when W. Dorr Legg, long-time business manager and champion of the ONE Institute died from natural causes at the age of 90 (White, 2009). Both Allen and David Hensley described how, at Legg’s memorial service, volunteers and board members from both the ONE Institute and IGLA gathered to discuss the possibility of integrating the collections.¹⁷⁴ Hensley was a teacher in California and active in the teachers’ association union for more than a decade, serving as president at the state level for three years. He was also involved with an organization called GALE (Gay and Lesbian Educators), which was participating in activism in response to the proposed Briggs Initiative, which would prohibit anyone supporting gay rights from working in California public schools.¹⁷⁵ Around this time—in late 1978—Hensley attended a lecture by renowned psychologist Evelyn Hooker at ONE Institute and started attending monthly meetings. In our interview, Hensley described how he eventually “dropped away,” but continued to receive ONE’s newsletter.¹⁷⁶ He recalled reading that philanthropist Reed Erickson had purchased a house on Country Club Drive for ONE Institute, and that the organization was now granting degrees in homophile studies. Hensley returned to ONE Institute in 1990, and began taking courses toward a Master’s Degree, which he earned in 1993.

By 1994, however, ONE Institute was experiencing a crisis of its own. After moving from one location to another in the 1960s, the precariousness of space had become a considerable concern, as was the continued struggle to maintain non-profit status. As Devor and Matte (2004) explain, Legg hoped that the organization might purchase its own building, but an appeal to the community returned few responses, mainly because the organization could not issue tax receipts. In

¹⁷⁴ David Hensley, Interview. October 23, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ California Proposition 6 was an initiative on the California State ballot on November 7, 1978, and more commonly known as The Briggs Initiative. Sponsored by John Briggs, a conservative state legislator from Orange County, the failed initiative would have banned gays and lesbians, and possibly anyone who supported gay rights, from working in California's public schools. The Briggs Initiative was the first failure in a movement that started with the successful campaign headed by Anita Bryant and her organization Save Our Children in Dade County, Florida, to repeal a local gay rights ordinance. See Rimmerman, C. (2001). *From identity to politics: Lesbian & gay movements in the U.S.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

¹⁷⁶ Hensley, 2013.

1963, however, a Louisiana-based philanthropist named Reed Erickson, wrote to Legg to express his interest in supporting the organization (Devor & Matte, 2004). In July 1964, Erickson sent Legg a plane ticket to Baton Rouge, and the two met to discuss an agreement (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 189). Devor and Matte describe how Erickson, a transsexual man and heir to a successful lead smelting business, was interested in supporting initiatives related to educating about homosexuality and transsexualism. Prior to transitioning, Erickson had been the first woman graduate from the Louisiana State University School of Mechanical Engineering, but was likely blacklisted from work in the field because of his involvement in liberal social political campaigns (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 189). After selling his family business, however, Erickson went on to earn a personal fortune of roughly \$40 million, and in 1964, founded a philanthropic organization called the Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF) (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 189). When Legg met Erickson, he described the importance of ONE Institute and its educational mission, as well as the plight of the organization and its precarity (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 189). Erickson agreed to fund ONE, and just six weeks later, founded the Institute for the Study of Human Resources (ISHR), a non-profit corporation to “promote, assist, encourage and foster scientific research, study and investigation of male and female homosexuality and various other types of human behaviour; to advance education” (qtd. Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 190). Charitable donations were accepted and these were, in turn, handed over to ONE, Inc. and ONE Institute. Erickson donated \$12,000 to ISHR before the end of 1964, and continued to donate \$1,000 per month to the corporation until 1976, and again between 1980 and 1983 (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 191). Devor and Matte estimate that Erickson provided more than \$200,000 in direct grants to ISHR in total, and some of this money was used to develop the Blanche M. Baker Memorial Library (p. 190). As Devor (2002) explains, the establishment of ISHR and the continued support of Erickson also shifted the educational and social service work of ONE into the non-profit ISHR, which had lasting effects on the capacity of ONE, Inc. to access funds necessary for its sustainability.

In 1982, Erickson also purchased a large property on Country Club Drive, known as the Milbank Estate, with the intention of giving ONE a permanent home (Devor & Matte, 2004).¹⁷⁷ As Devor and Matte (2004) explain, the ownership of the property was made out to Erickson Educational Foundation for tax purposes, and because Erickson feared that the current owners—the Elizabeth Clare Prophet’s Church Universal and Triumphant—would not sell to him if they knew it that the house would be used by a homosexual organization (p. 195). The sale closed on February 17, 1983, and the ONE moved its offices into the Milbank Mansion over the next few weeks (Devor & Matte, 2004). Shortly thereafter, tensions flared between Erickson and the ONE. According to Devor and Matte, the property was supposed to be turned over to the ONE during a gala event on May 1 of that year, but Erickson had a change of heart (p. 196). Although there is some evidence to suggest that Erickson had become increasingly troubled by lack of support for transsexual issues in gay politics and Legg’s unwavering conservatism, it seems likely that the underlying reason for Erickson’s abandonment of ONE was related to his long-standing personal problems. By the 1980s, his health had taken a turn for the worse and he had formed a serious dependency on illegal narcotics (Devor & Matte, 2004). Erickson had also been arrested several times for drug offences and, as Devor and Matte explain, his refusal to appear in court had resulted in the forfeiture of several properties in addition to large sums of money. In early 1984, Erickson wrote to Legg and stated that he was no longer going to support the organization and that the property would be sold if ONE could not produce the money to support itself (Devor & Matte, 2004). By the end of the year, Erickson was actively trying to evict ONE from the Milbank Estate, which resulted in a difficult situation for the organization (Devor & Matte, 2004). By 1986, ONE had ceased granting degrees and limited its operations to providing lecture series and offering its library and archives for research (Devor & Matte, 2004, p. 197).

¹⁷⁷ According to Matte, Erickson purchased the property using Krugerrand gold coins, which were first minted in South Africa in 1967. During the 1970s and 80s, some Western countries limited import of the Krugerrand because of its association with the apartheid government, but Erickson was known to invest in the currency market. He likely paid for the property in Krugerrand gold coins because they were losing value in the market and he needed to divest in this currency. Matte, personal communication, 2015, March 13.



Figure 4.3. W. Dorr Legg accepts on behalf of ONE Inc. 1 million dollars in gold kruggerands to purchase the Milbank Estate¹⁷⁸

Battle for control of the property, however, raged between ONE and EEF until 1993 (Devor & Matte, 2004). In 1988, Erickson's twenty-year-old daughter Monica was appointed conservator of her father's affairs due to his poor mental and physical health; Erickson had fled to Mexico to avoid further drug charges in the United States (Devor & Matte, 2004). After his death in 1992, Monica was appointed executor and agreed to a settlement with ONE (Devor & Matte, 2004). Ownership of the Milbank Mansion and half of the property was awarded to Monica Erickson and the other half, including a small guesthouse known as Arlington House, was awarded to ISHR (Devor & Matte, 2004). The ONE's offices, library, and archives were moved into Arlington House in August 1993, and Legg faced the financial burden of caring for a property now valued at over \$1 million (Devor & Matte, 2004). ONE, which had left its low-rent location on

¹⁷⁸ Photograph provided by the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives. Photographer is unknown. ONE Incorporated records (Coll2011-001).

Venice Boulevard in 1982, to take up residence in the opulent Milbank Estate, needed to find a new home (Devor & Matte, 2004). Legg died the following summer.

Hensley recalled what happened at Legg's memorial service:

At Dorr's memorial service on the gardens of the Milbank Mansion, at Arlington House, there was a big turn out and they immediately went upstairs to hash out a merger. It was like, now that Dorr is dead we can talk. So there was Kepner's Archive and then Homosexual Information Centre... Walter Williams from USC was cooking up a building... Meanwhile, no one had been paying the taxes [on the Arlington House property] for some time. I don't think we had the money for it.¹⁷⁹

Hensley also explained that the property was eventually sold for about \$1 million, but that the money was never donated back to ONE, as had been promised to Legg. Instead, the money was donated by ISHR to the Williams Institute at UCLA, a think tank situated at UCLA School of Law and dedicated to providing research on sexual orientation, gender identity law, and public policy. Hensley speculates that some members of the ISHR board decided to earmark the money for the Williams Institute rather than ONE because of "old grudges against Dorr," but he did not elaborate on these relationships.¹⁸⁰ One might also speculate that the precarity that had plagued ONE for so many years, declining investment from the larger lesbian and gay community, and the death of its long-time champion was enough to cause ISHR to consider the organization a risky initiative to continue funding. ISHR did, however, contribute \$35,000 to the merger of ONE Institute and IGLA, and according to Devor (2002), provided additional grants to the ONE for a number of projects between 1995 and 2002, including lecture series and educational outreach.

The ONE Archives at USC, 2000-present

In 1994, and as a direct result of Legg's death, members from three organizations came together to discuss the future of their library and archives.¹⁸¹ This included board members from

¹⁷⁹ Hensley, 2013.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Oliveira, 2013.

ONE, ISHR, and IGLA.¹⁸² Board members from the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, also expressed interest in moving their collections into a shared facility. By this time, Walter Williams' persistent work with USC and interest from Lynne Sypes, the USC Dean of Libraries, had resulted in the offer of a university-owned building that could house the now integrated collections of the ONE Institute / International Gay and Lesbian Archives.¹⁸³ By 1995, both Kepner and John O'Brien had moved into the Neutra Building, a USC facility that was once used as a residence for visiting scholars, located off-campus in the residential University Park neighbourhood.¹⁸⁴ The collections were slowly moved out of the Arlington House location and the Werle Building and brought to USC, where they were processed and integrated. As Allen explained, the intention was to leave the unique material in their separate collections and integrate the library material, subject files, and artefacts. Jim Schneider, a long-time volunteer with the Homosexual Information Centre (HIC) also helped bring several filing cabinets of HIC material down to the site.¹⁸⁵ Long-time activists Jeanne Cordova and Yolanda Retter became involved with ONE around this time and began circulating the idea that the archives needed to do more outreach to lesbians.¹⁸⁶ Retter brought in her own personal collection and started soliciting materials from other women that she knew in the Los Angeles area.¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile, volunteers and board members began the process of making the facility suitable for an archives and library, which involved the removal of walls and other structural work.¹⁸⁸

Although plans were thwarted to establish an integrated archives and library at the Neutra Building—USC reneged on the deal and the building eventually became the USC Annenberg House Apartments—the University found alternative space at 909 W. Adams Blvd, just one block west.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Joseph Hawkins, Interview. October 23, 2013.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Allen, 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Jeanne Cordova, Interview. October 29, 2013.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Hawkins, 2013.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

This new facility and the ONE Archives' current home, is not ideal; it was a former fraternity house with a large open area centred by a fireplace; dormitory rooms separated by shared bathrooms circled the second floor, and a service kitchen took up more than a quarter of the main floor. There is no HVAC system, leaving the collections exposed to moisture and heat. The facility also needed major restoration work to ensure that it met codes for earthquake safety, and each organization was asked to contribute funds toward this work. USC would not, however, promise to lease the facility to any of the participating organizations for more than eighteen months at a time.¹⁹⁰ Despite assurances that the University would support fundraising endeavours, the Mazer Archives backed out of the negotiations, a move that will be discussed further in the next section.¹⁹¹ Then, in 1997, Jim Kepner died at the age of 74 (Marcus, 1992).

Joseph Hawkins, now the Director of the ONE Archives at USC, recalled that the university held a memorial for Kepner in one of its large theatres.¹⁹² A letter from HIC member Jim Schneider to the ONE, dated April 10, 1998, also makes mention of a “lavish” memorial service for Kepner, and goes on to note that Kepner and USC had done little to commemorate Don Slater after his death a few months earlier.¹⁹³ The letter, as well as the short biography of Slater written by HIC member Joseph Hansen in 1998, indicate growing tensions between the ONE Institute / IGLA and HIC. As Allen recalled, this tension was also exacerbated by his letter to Schneider informing him that volunteers would be starting the process of integrating the HIC periodicals and books into the larger library.¹⁹⁴ According to Allen, in a move reminiscent of Slater's “heist” of materials from Legg's offices, Schneider and several friends brought a moving van to the 909 W. Adams facility on Christmas Eve, 1999, and withdrew all of the filing cabinets containing HIC

¹⁹⁰ Records documenting the move to USC were unavailable at the time of my visit to the Archives because the organizational records for the organization were being processed. Some records were found, however, in the organizational records of the Mazer Archives. More information about the move to USC is provided in Chapter 8.

¹⁹¹ See Chapter 8 for more details.

¹⁹² Hawkins, 2013.

¹⁹³ Schneider, J. (1998, Apr 10). [Letter from Jim Schneider to fellow Board Members of ONE/IGLA]. I April 10, 1998. The International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll 2012.0021, Series 1 Box 1). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

¹⁹⁴ Allen, 2013.

materials. ONE secretary Jim Morrow caught them in the act and called USC to report the “Christmas Eve Raid.”¹⁹⁵ The ONE had little recourse. When I enquired about the ultimate fate of the HIC materials, both Allen and Hawkins explained that they had eventually been donated to California State University–Northridge (CSUN). White (2009) notes that the materials were donated to the Vern and Bonnie Bullough Collection of Sex and Gender, a special collection within the Oviatt Library (p. 156). Many of the older books still contain nameplates that read, ‘Property of the Blanche M. Baker Library’, indicating that they were part of the original ONE library and removed by Slater in 1965.¹⁹⁶ The material had finally been returned to ONE only to be removed again.

When the USC facility opened in 2000 as the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, it included collections from the ONE, the Institute for the Study of Human Resources (ISHR), and the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA).¹⁹⁷ ONE also accepted a large donation of materials from a Toronto-based activist related to Jewish gay culture, which formed a special collection within the ONE Archives called Twice Blessed.¹⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Retter continued to collect materials related to lesbian experiences under the title Lesbian Legacies Collection.¹⁹⁹ As Hawkins explained, the ONE did not initially transfer its fine art collection or erotica to the USC facility; the Werle Building provided a central location more suitable for a gallery space and some board members feared the USC would not take either the artworks or the erotica because of liability issues.²⁰⁰ Today, the location at the Werle Building is known as the ONE Archives Gallery and Museum, and continues to be used as an exhibition site.

The early 2000s also proved to be a productive period for the ONE Archives in terms of professionalization and financial stability. In 2004, the organization changed its name to the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, 2014). The move to

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Hawkins, 2013.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

USC was concurrent with the addition of two key people to the board of directors, Greg Williams and Carol Grosvenor.²⁰¹ By this time, Hawkins had also taken an official position on the board after several years of affiliation with the collections. Grosvenor explained in an interview for this study that Williams was the first person to impose archival standards on the collections, and he was also successful in obtaining grant money from three different granting agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC), and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).²⁰² Oliveira also noted that Williams was not a trained archivist, but he had worked in archival settings and had some experience writing successful grant applications.²⁰³ Williams helped establish a winning template for the ONE that has earned an estimated \$1 million in grants over the past 10 years.²⁰⁴ Prior to 2006, the ONE Archives was run exclusively by volunteers; that year, Oliveira was hired as a project archivist and Loni Shubiyama was hired the following year.²⁰⁵ The grants also supported a salary for a third project archivist, Michael Palmer, who Oliveira credits with imposing archival standards to the collections and working with Grosvenor to establish a central computer system that brings together several previously distinct InMagic databases. Grosvenor, who worked in information technology prior to her retirement, provided support for the new technological and financial infrastructure at the ONE Archives. Shortly after Retter's death in 2007, the materials that had been physically and administratively separated into the Lesbian Legacies Collection were integrated into the larger ONE Archives, as were the Twice Blessed collections.²⁰⁶ Subiyama estimates that the collections had been more than 90% processed by the end of the decade thanks to paid professional archival staff and dedicated funding for archival materials and technology.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ Hawkins, 2013.

²⁰² Carol Grosvenor, Interview. October 17, 2013.

²⁰³ Oliveira, 2013.

²⁰⁴ Grosvenor, 2013.

²⁰⁵ Oliveira, 2013.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Loni Sibuyama, Interview. October 17, 2013.

In 2010, Hawkins announced that the ONE Archives had donated its collections to the USC Libraries as a special collection and, at the time of our interview, the board was undertaking strategic planning exercises to determine its new mission in light of the fact that it was no longer legally responsible for the management and care of the ONE Archives collection.²⁰⁸ On March 26, 2014, the board announced that it had renamed itself the ONE Archives Foundation, and would serve as an independent, community partner of the ONE Archives at USC (ONE Archives Foundation, 2014a). The board and its three staff members continue to operate the organization as a non-profit 501(c)(3), and “collects, preserves, and protects LGBTQ history, art, and culture in collaboration with ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries, the largest collection of LGBTQ materials in the world” (ONE Archives Foundation, 2014a). The new mission of the board is to “provide access to and greater public awareness of the collections” and to present and support “programs, exhibitions, and educational initiatives to share the LGBTQ experience with diverse communities worldwide” (ONE Archives Foundation, 2014a). The board has also positioned the organization to act as “the country’s leading expert on LGBTQ history” (ONE Archives Foundation, 2014b).

²⁰⁸ Hawkins, 2013.

CHAPTER 5

The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives

“We are, in short, committed to lesbians—past, present, and future. The Collection exists so that every lesbian may realize she is not alone; so that every lesbian knows she can find herself in every generation.”

— Statement of Purpose, March 27, 1989.²⁰⁹

Located in West Hollywood, The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives occupies a cramped office space on the creaky second floor of a City-owned facility known as the Werle Building. Once slated for demolition, the two-story, 7,533-square-foot building has been designated for use by non-profit groups for more than two decades; currently it is home to the West Hollywood Recovery Center, the ONE Gallery, and the Mazer Archives, which use the space rent-free according to lease agreements with the City (Mills, 2013). In early 2013, city council voted against demolition and allocated almost \$400,000 to upgrade the Werle Building to improve electrical wiring, add an elevator and accessible restroom in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and to renovate the second floor to be used as a community meeting space (Mills, 2013). At the time of my site visit in fall 2013, the board of the Mazer Archives was celebrating the City’s decision to invest in the building and, in turn, its renewed commitment to ensuring that lesbians had a space to gather in the otherwise male-dominated city centre. The political process leading to the City’s ultimate decision to invest in the building had nevertheless placed incredible strain on the small group of women who nurture the Mazer Archives and its collections. As board member Jeri Deitric explained in her statement to City Council, “If we didn’t have access to that building the Mazer would not exist” (qtd in Taglieri, 2012). She also expressed a desire to “expand the second floor to make it a lesbian space where different organizations can have their activities” (qtd in Taglieri,

²⁰⁹ Except where noted, archival records were reviewed at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives. The Mazer’s organizational records are not systematically processed and many of the documents reviewed were found in filing cabinets or desk drawers.

2012). The future of the Mazer Archives was and remains precarious. If the City decides to terminate its lease or afford the organization less space in the newly designed second floor, the Mazer Archives could still face extinction.

The fight to keep the Werle Building and encourage the City of West Hollywood to invest in the creation of a lesbian meeting space is but one of the many struggles that the Mazer Archives has contended with in its 30+ years of collecting. In many ways, Deitric's arguments to City Council also reflect a pattern of both passive and active political resistance the organization has instigated over the years. In particular, the organization's commitment to creating a resource expressly for lesbian women has had implications for the archives with regard to its location and space, access to operational funds, and access to expertise. Specific challenges and the strategies by which the Mazer has overcome or coped with these challenges are discussed in greater length in Chapter 6; however, it is important to note that the Mazer Archives appears to struggle more and more often for basic operational needs than the other three archives that inform this case study. In this section, I will trace the emergence and development of this archives, set within the history of socio-political environments that have privileged gay men's voices over those of lesbian women.

There are few secondary sources that document any aspect of the Mazer Archives' history. Faderman and Timmons (2006) discuss Connexus, an early sponsoring organization for the archives, but they do not elaborate on the archives itself.²¹⁰ They do, however, give special thanks to several members of the archives' board in the acknowledgements for *Gay LA*. Wakimoto (2012) noting the Mazer Archives in her dissertation, but this is in reference to its relationship to the ONE Archives, which she profiles in more detail. The Mazer Archives is also mentioned in an article by Williams (1996), describing the proposed Center for Scholars in Residence at the University of Southern California. Perhaps because the Center did not actually come to fruition, the Mazer Archives disappears from the academic literature almost entirely throughout the rest of the decade. Fortunately, the archives has documented much of their own work in a series of newsletters,

²¹⁰ The full name of this organization is Connexus Women's Center/Centro de Mujeres.

published in print from 1982 to 2010, and these have proven to be an invaluable source for information about the trajectory of the organization. The recently published *Making Invisible Histories Visible: Preserving the Legacy of Lesbian Feminist Activism and Writing in Los Angeles* (McHugh, Johnson-Grau & Sher, 2014) contains helpful essays by long-time volunteers and board members. The publication is also a resource guide to the collections that have been donated to the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA) as part of a collaboration agreement between the Mazer Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW), and the UCLA Library. Most of my information about the history of the organization is nevertheless gleaned from encounters with both current and former board members, as well as representatives from UCLA. Narrators include two of the original founders, Lynn Fonfa and Claire Potter,²¹¹ Director of Communications Angela Brinskele, and Ann Giagni, who has served as president of the board for nearly two decades. I also spoke with former board member Lillian Faderman, Kathleen A. McHugh, former CSW director, and Sharon Farb, Associate University Librarian for Collection Management and Scholarly Communication at UCLA. Because of the proximity of the ONE Archives and the relationships that the two archives have currently and in the past, many of my conversations with study participants at the ONE Archives also provided insight into the history of the Mazer Archives, particularly with respect to its decision to withdraw from the partnership with the University of Southern California.

The West Coast Lesbian Collection (WCLC), 1980-1987

Although the Mazer Archives is most commonly associated with the City of West Hollywood and has developed a relationship with Los Angeles-based lesbian communities, founders Lynn Fonfa and Cherrie Cox initially started the collection in the Bay Area. As Fonfa explained in

²¹¹ The third founder, Cherrie Cox, died on January 12, 2002, of breast cancer. At the time that she was establishing the Archives in her Oakland home, Cox worked in the small press and specialty printing business. She was also an accomplished athlete and competed in three Gay Games, in 1982 (San Francisco), 1986 (San Francisco), and 1990 (Vancouver). See her obituary in *The Davis Enterprise*, dated January 18, 2002. Accessed online 20 July 2014 at <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/CAYOLO/2002-09/1032973083>

our interview, hundreds of lesbians had moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco throughout the 1970s, in search of a safer and more accepting community.²¹² By the end of the 1970s, the Bay Area was a vibrant space where lesbian culture was thriving; Olivia Records had moved to Oakland, where the collective was recording and distributing women's music, feminist filmmakers had founded Iris Films to produce and distribute films, and researchers such as Gayle Rubin and Allan Berubé were actively documenting queer history in San Francisco.²¹³ In 1978, Fonfa had joined Amber Hollibaugh, Eric Garber, and Berubé to form the first lesbian and gay history project as a sub-committee of the California Historical Society. They worked closely together and developed several programs over the next few years. One of these programs was a travelling slide show called "Lesbian Masquerade," and was based on Berubé's study of 19th century female cross-dressers. Fonfa recalled that, at one of these shows, an audience member came up to her and introduced herself as Cherrie Cox and explained that she had just moved to the Bay Area from Boston and was interested in establishing a lesbian historical collection. She was familiar with the Lesbian Herstory Archives, then based in the home of founders Joan Nestle and Deb Edel, and wanted to see something similar develop on the West Coast. Fonfa and Cox quickly became friends, then lovers, and during that process began collecting materials to form an archives. Their collection of materials from local organizations, political groups, and cultural activities soon occupied a large space in Cox's small bungalow near Lake Merritt. Fonfa recalled that she and Cox remained part of the lesbian and gay history project for a few months, but eventually withdrew from the group to concentrate on the archives.

Early on, Cox and Fonfa were advised by a lawyer named Donna Hitchens,²¹⁴ who urged them to incorporate so that they could apply for non-profit status and formalize as a charity. Fonfa pointed out that obtaining non-profit status in California as a gay or lesbian organization was a

²¹² Lynn Fonfa, Interview. February 7, 2014.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Donna Hitchens later became the first openly lesbian elected judge in the Superior Court of California in San Francisco. She retired in 2010 after 20 years on the bench. Judge Donna Hitchens. See <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Donna-Hitchens-ready-to-cut-back-on-workload-2478889.php>

challenging prospect in the late 1970s; though ultimately defeated, the 1978 Briggs Initiative had provided a platform for homophobic politics that continued to erupt throughout the state well into the 1980s, as did the assassination of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and openly gay City Supervisor Harvey Milk. Organizations with the word lesbian in their title were encountering difficulty when applying for any form of state recognition. By 1980, however, Hitchens had taken on the archives as a cause and worked pro-bono to help Cox and Fonfa incorporate as the West Coast Lesbian Collection (WCLC). Along with several friends, they formalized as a board and were granted 501(c)3 status by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS). As Fonfa explained, the WCLC's formal status helped them earn a grant from the Chicago Resource Center to acquire, arrange, and describe the papers of long-time lesbian activists Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon.²¹⁵ The archives also received a special grant from the Golden Gate Business Association towards the purchase of a tape recorder to use for a documentation project called Oral Herstories and a project to create a tape library to make materials accessible to visually impaired lesbians (Cox 1982a, p. 7). Funds poured in from individual donations, monthly pledges, and community fundraisers, and the WCLC began accepting significant collections, such as the records of Margaret Cruikshank, the Lesbian Schoolworkers, and the National Lesbian Feminist Organization (Cox 1982b, p. 2). The WCLC officially opened to the public in December 1981, when Cox opened up her home on the weekends and evenings for visitors (Cox 1982c, p. 2).

The WCLC also benefitted greatly when Claire Potter joined the archives in 1981.²¹⁶ A professionally trained librarian, Potter was instrumental in developing a cataloguing system that would adequately and accurately capture the lesbian experiences that were documented in and by the material items that were being collected. Fonfa remembers that Potter and Cox worked with several other women who were archivists to establish intellectual control over the collection.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ The Chicago Resource Centre (CRC) was a private grant foundation that gave funds to lesbian and gay organizations. It is currently defunct, but a 1984 article in the Advocate notes that the CRC had given \$307,340 to lesbian and gay groups that year. See Heim, 1984.

²¹⁶ Claire Potter, Interview. February 8, 2014.

²¹⁷ Fonfa, 2014.

Potter confirmed this in our correspondence and noted that she holds an advanced degree in library and information studies and was familiar with existing bibliographies (e.g., B. Grier's *The Lesbian in Literature* and Jeannette Foster's *Sex Variant Women in Literature*) that she used as guides in acquiring books.²¹⁸ Potter also developed a thesaurus, which was later published as part of *The Lesbian Periodicals Index* with Naiad Press in 1986, and began organizing the manuscripts into categories to highlight their lesbian content or contexts. In addition, Potter aided in acquiring new materials with an intentionally broad collecting mandate. She explained:

The intent behind the WCLC was to be a “community” archives. To collect and preserve manuscripts, books, music (basically any physical artifact) that captured the life and times of the lesbian community, both the contemporary and the historical. The intent was not only to preserve materials of movers and shakers, but also to be a place where “every lesbian woman” could leave a record of her story behind for future generations if she was willing to share her private papers.²¹⁹

As Potter notes, this commitment to collecting broadly and serving as “keepers of the herstorical flame” was a mobilizing force in these early years.²²⁰

The reluctance to appraise materials or make any firm decisions about “whose papers or manuscripts merited preservation” has had both short-term and long-lasting implications for the archives.²²¹ Potter explained, “We were in the midst of a major cultural shift: to think of having a lesbian past, of having our own historical narrative—that was all new, so we were creating the story, while also reaching out to find any record of that past. There was so little to work from that we looked in every direction in search of that story.”²²² This sense of urgency to recover and reclaim any and all evidence of lesbian lives produced an incredibly rich resource that includes materials, such as t-shirts, pin buttons, and matchbooks, which few other archives would have kept in their collections. Indiscriminate collecting also meant that the WCLC was not only running out of space, but that it was also impossible for the small group of volunteers to process the collections at the

²¹⁸ Potter, 2014.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

same pace that they were taking them in. Potter explained that the board was more interested in acquiring material than pursuing intellectual control: “We sacrificed finding aids to the core effort of acquisitions, educational outreach, and keeping hours.”²²³ The WCLC initially kept regular hours on Saturdays and Sundays, and later by appointment only. In the early years, Potter recalled, it was mostly members of the community that came and visits were “museum-like experiences” for most women.²²⁴ She described the space as having “all the power that an ‘all-women’s space’ could have in that period of time.”²²⁵ Visitors were “surrounded with physical artifacts that reflected lesbian life [and this was] just a profound, even spiritual experience—we were the subjects, the central actors in the story.”²²⁶ The haptic experience of being in the archives was privileged over the research potential of the records in the collections.

By the mid-1980s, the WCLC had grown large enough to inhabit two bedrooms of Cox’s small bungalow and she was beginning to feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities that this produced. By 1983, Cox and Fonfa had ended their relationship and, although they continued to work together on the archives, it was becoming increasingly clear that the collections had outgrown the board’s capacity to maintain them. Potter explained, “Having the collections in Cherrie’s house was a definite weighty responsibility for her, which grew heavier over time... She began to resent the sacrifice she was making and began to have concerns about letting strangers into her home.”²²⁷ Cox was experiencing “burnout” and had lost interest in the WCLC.²²⁸ The board began looking for a new home for the archives.

It would take several years before the WCLC found a suitable place to move its collections. As Potter explained, the board did not want to split up the collections, nor did they feel

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

comfortable donating them to an organization that would not respect their lesbian feminist roots.

She stated:

Like the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the WCLC was an outgrowth of lesbian feminism and separatism. We wanted our own space and had a vision of a community supported archives, sustained by the lesbian community. We saw that the larger society had rejected us and had failed to preserve a record of our lives, so we decided to do it ourselves. We wanted to be independent of the heterosexual, patriarchal world in which we were living. We wanted to create lesbian space that was of our own design.²²⁹

The WCLC had never allowed men to access the collection and had only reluctantly opened the doors to women who did not identify as lesbian. When the board decided to move the collection, however, support from the lesbian communities in the Bay Area was not forthcoming. Potter explained that the board assumed that “the support would flow from the lesbian community...,” but she admitted that, in hindsight, this seemed “very naïve at best, utopian and idealistic, borne out of a deep-seated anger, alienation, and youthful optimism and energy.”²³⁰

Fonfa discussed how the socio-political environment in the Bay Area at the time was not conducive to lesbian separatist organizing. She reflected on the culture of San Francisco:

San Francisco has never really been a separatist town, as I can see. I came here in '77. Oakland and Berkeley have always had pockets of separatists, but overall [in] the area this is not a driving force, and then when AIDS happened, everything changed.²³¹

Political and social organizing had been done traditionally in a mixed-gender environment and, when the AIDS epidemic struck in the early 1980s, many lesbian women became caretakers of and advocates for gay men dying with the disease.²³² Fonfa also compared the particular moment for lesbian feminists in the 1980s with the rise of women’s studies in the academy throughout the 1970s. In her experience, she explained, lesbian academics emerging in the 1970s, were faced with a choice of aligning with homophobic and heterosexist feminist scholars or gay male scholars who

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Fonfa, 2014.

²³² Ibid.

brought with them an “abundance of sexism.”²³³ Likewise, the lesbian women involved with the WCLC did not want to see their collections go to a predominantly gay men’s organization and risk neglect due to entrenched misogyny or to a women’s organization where the collections might be discarded or censored because of their lesbian content and contexts.

The desire to pass the collections on to another lesbian feminist and separatist group forced the WCLC to look outside of the Bay Area, even though this would mean moving the archives out of the place where it was relatively well known. Around this time, Fonfa became friends with Bunny MacCulloch and her partner June Mazer, who had been part of a number of lesbian organizations in the Los Angeles area, including the lesbian non-profit educational group Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) and Connexus, a lesbian women’s health organization.²³⁴ Fonfa had visited MacCulloch and Mazer at their home in Altadena, California, and they were forming a lasting friendship around the time that the WCLC was looking for a new home. Fonfa described how she first encountered MacCulloch at a gay pride event in San Francisco and they “liked each other right away.”²³⁵ Although Fonfa could not recall the exact details of their meeting, she remembered that MacCulloch had expressed an interest in the WCLC and wanted to start a similar collection in Los Angeles.²³⁶ When she learned that the founders wanted to move the collection out of Cox’s home and that they were struggling to find a place in the Bay Area, she approached the board of Connexus to enquire about the possibility of taking on the WCLC as a special program.²³⁷

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid. See also Wood, S. (2013). Finding Aid to the Bunny MacCulloch papers, 1929-1988. (Collection LSC 1959). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucla/mss/macc1959.pdf>

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ According to Angela Brinskele, Cox had come down to Los Angeles to be interviewed by MacCulloch and Mazer. It is unclear how the two women became aware of the WCLC, but they wanted to profile the Archives in the SCWU newsletter. Angela Brinskele, Interview. October 21, 2013. A copy of this newsletter is part of the Bunny MacCulloch papers, 1928-1989 (Box 1, Folder 1 SCWU Newsletters and Drafts. 1981-1983). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²³⁷ Fonfa, 2014.

While negotiations between the WCLC and Connexus boards continued, June Mazer was diagnosed with terminal cancer and died January 16, 1987.²³⁸ In a document prepared by MacCulloch for the Connexus, she describes how Fonfa travelled down to Los Angeles for the memorial service:

Lynn Fonfa of the WCLC coordinating committee came to Los Angeles for the memorial service; and it was she who pointed out to Bunny that the house in Altadena was now EMPTY and unused, spiritually as well as spatially. Of course! The solution had been found.

The WCLC materials were trucked to LA in April 1987 and unpacking started apace. Visitors began coming almost at once, long before any real order had existed; materials poured in, requests for research help poured in, ordinary lesbians looking for that connection to their past that only a roomful of lesbians can provide, were aglow, with discovery and self-discovery.²³⁹

Fonfa also recalled the move:

There was a lot of stuff. We put it in the grey boxes, the Hollinger boxes, and we did all kinds of other stuff. There were other people who were involved, so we put everything together and there it went. I visited once, but after Bunny died, I lost touch. It was hard for me because it was very emotionally bound up with who she was for me.²⁴⁰

At the time of our interview, Fonfa had still not visited the archives.

In a letter dated January 22, 1986, Fonfa reaches out to Del Martinez, Chair of Connexus, to urge her to consider taking ownership of the WCLC.²⁴¹ She explains that members of the WCLC board, which she refers to as the “coordinating committee,” have already met with MacCulloch, then serving as a Connexus board member, and Executive Director Lauren Jardine, to outline the importance of the collections and the basic requirements that the archives would need to continue its operations in Los Angeles. Fonfa estimates that the WCLC requires a minimum

²³⁸ Wood, S. (2013). Finding Aid to the June L. Mazer papers, June L. Mazer papers, 1929-1988. (UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucla/mss/maze2136.pdf>)

²³⁹ MacColluch, B. (1989, Mar 3). [Background & History. Mazer Collection Board of Directors & By-Laws Drafts and Minutes]. Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 22: Correspondence (1987-1990)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁴⁰ Fonfa, 2014.

²⁴¹ Fonfa, L. (1986, Jan 22). [Letter to Del Martinez] Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 22: Correspondence (1987-1990)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

of \$12,000 per year to pay for rental space, special insurance, archival supplies, telephone services, a mailbox, and the distribution of its newsletters. She also emphasizes that the collections are currently managed by volunteers and that an additional \$10,000 to \$20,000 would be necessary to hire professional staff. Although records documenting the subsequent negotiations are spotty, a subsequent letter dated January 14, 1987, from Fonfa to Jardine suggests that Connexus had agreed to take over the collections at some point during the previous year.²⁴² In this communication, Fonfa urges Connexus to take physical and legal custody of the WCLC to ensure that its collections

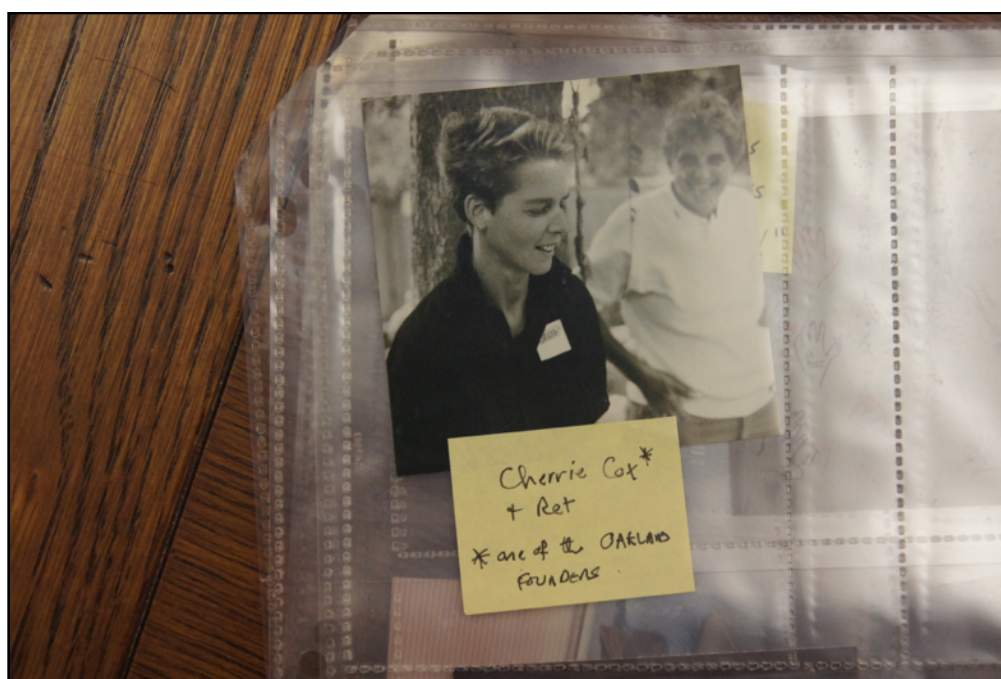


Figure 5.1. Cherrie Cox + Ret²⁴³

²⁴² Fonfa, L. (1987, Jan 14). [Letter to Lauren Jardine] Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 22: Correspondence (1987-1990)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁴³ Photograph of Cherrie Cox and Ret is part of the Bunny MacCulloch papers, 1928-1989 (Box 2, Folder 8 Photos and Slides, No Date). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. I asked Lynn Fonfa if she had any photographs of the WCLC collection or its community archivists and she indicated that she had turned any existing documentation over to June Mazer and Bunny MacCulloch during the transfer of custody of the collection. This photo may have been taken by MacCulloch when she travelled to the Bay Area in 1985 or 1986, to interview the WCLC founders for an article published in the newsletter of the Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU).

remain “secure.” The transfer of title and approximately \$9,500 in funds to Connexus is also discussed. Fonfa also acknowledges the death of June Mazer and notes that the WCLC board supports a proposal to rename the collection in honour of the late June Mazer. In correspondence and documents written after 1987, the archives is referred to as the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collections (JMLC).²⁴⁴

June L. Mazer Lesbian Collections, 1988-1996

The next phase of development for the Mazer Archives is inherently tied to the social and political environment that unfolded in the newly created City of West Hollywood throughout the 1980s and 90s. Kenney (2001) has discussed the history of Connexus in the context of this geography in her book *Mapping Gay LA*, which is helpful for understanding the kinds of obstacles and opportunities the Mazer Archives might also have experienced. As Kenney explains, Connexus was founded in 1985 by Lauren Jardine and Del Martinez after they left their positions at the Gay Services Centre (now the Los Angeles LGBT Center) to establish a health services organization that met the specific needs of lesbian women.²⁴⁵ After much consideration, they decided to locate the organization in West Hollywood because they believed that it was poised to be a welcoming and attractive city for lesbians—they considered Santa Monica to be too expensive and Silverlake to be mostly a gay men’s “enclave” (p. 135). At the time of incorporation in 1984, the City of West Hollywood had three openly gay or lesbian city council members and government was seemingly sensitive to the needs of the larger gay and lesbian population (p. 134). As Jardine and

²⁴⁴ According to MacCulloch’s backgrounder on the Archives, it was Lauren Jardine who suggested that the collection be re-named in honour of June Mazer. This name change would also resonate with the local community, many of whom had known Mazer as an activist and a friend. This same backgrounder notes that the June L. Mazer Collections had its official opening on September 13, 1997, in Altadena, CA. Lynn Fonfa and Cherrie Cox attended the opening program and well known lesbian songwriter Lisa Ben (a.k.a. Edith Eyde) performed. MacColluch, B. (1989, Mar 3). [Background & History. Mazer Collection Board of Directors & By-Laws Drafts and Minutes]. Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 22: Correspondence (1987-1990)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁴⁵ According to Barbara J. Love, Lauren Jardine was the director of Lesbian Central at Los Angeles’ Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center. She left the position to co-found Connexus Women’s Cente, where she served as Executive Director from 1984 to 1988. See Love, B.J. (2006). Jardin, Lauren Lovett (1946-). In B.J. Love (Ed.). *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975*. (p. 234). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Martinez soon discovered, however, West Hollywood was also a predominantly middle-class neighbourhood with white residents; coordinated activism against Proposition 6 (the Briggs initiative) and the AIDS epidemic had also translated into a fairly integrated political environment for gay men and lesbians, with little separatist organizing. Furthermore, the area was rarely visited by lesbians of colour or working-class lesbians, who represented the very cross-section of the broader lesbian community that Connexus hoped to serve. Kenney explains, “West Hollywood lesbians were less likely to need the crisis-oriented social services—including coming-out groups and therapy—that Connexus offered” (p. 138).

Angela Brinskele, a long-time supporter of the Mazer Archives and now its only paid staff member, speculated that Bunny MacCulloch was concerned with the long-term survival of the Mazer Archives and anticipated the ultimate collapse of Connexus.²⁴⁶ In our interview, she explained that MacCulloch was aware that the City of West Hollywood had been working with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to conduct a community needs assessment. Because both McCulloch and Mazer had also served on the board of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA), they knew that the City had purchased the Werle Building at 625 N. Robertson Blvd., and were intending to make this space available to local non-profit community organizations, including IGLA. The ultimate goal, she explained, was to tear down the Werle Building and use this space to build a new Civic Center; IGLA would be moved into this integrated services building, along with a number of additional services, such as a public library and community police. Minutes from the Gay and Lesbian Task Force, dated February 24, 1988, indicate that the City was aware that IGLA needed to move from its Hollywood location and there was some support to bring the archives to West Hollywood.²⁴⁷ At this time, Del Martinez had also been appointed as the Human Services Commission Liaison to the Gay and Lesbian Task Force, suggesting that she was in a position to

²⁴⁶ Brinskele, 2013.

²⁴⁷ This meeting was also attended by Yolanda Retter, who later served as a Mazer board member. Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (1988, Feb 24). [Minutes from the Meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force]. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force records 1980-1989 (Collection 2205, Box 1, Folder 8). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

advocate on behalf of the Mazer Archives to have the invitation to move into the Werle Building extended to the women's collection as well.²⁴⁸ Minutes from the March 25, 1988 meeting indicate that City Council considered a request by Denise Wheeler on behalf of Connexus for City support of the June Mazer Collection.²⁴⁹ Yolanda Retter moved a recommendation that City Council prepare an analysis of the feasibility of funding or providing space for the archives for approval and the motion was approved unanimously by consensus of the Task Force.²⁵⁰ City Council soon thereafter voted in favour of supporting the Mazer Archives and moving it into the proposed future San Vicente Library; in the interim, it would be afforded a space in the Werle Building and provided with access to John Butkis, West Hollywood Librarian, who would work with City staff to ensure that appropriate measures were taken to move the collections into a safe space.²⁵¹ Minutes from a June 1988 meeting of the Task Force also indicate that Council voted to provide \$100,000 per year to fund the "Gay and Lesbian Archives," but it is unclear if this money was earmarked for IGLA or if the Task Force assumed that the two collections would be merged into one larger gay and lesbian archives once they had moved to their permanent home in the Library.²⁵² Retter, who later served as a board member of the Mazer Archives and was a founder of the Lesbian Legacies Collections at the ONE Archives, was appointed to be the Task Force liaison for the archives project.²⁵³

²⁴⁸ Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (1988, Feb 10). [Minutes from the Meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force]. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force records 1980-1989 (Collection 2205, Box 1, Folder 8). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁴⁹ Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (1988, Mar 25). [Minutes from the Meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force]. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force records 1980-1989 (Collection 2205, Box 1, Folder 8). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (1988, Jun 10). [Minutes from the Meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force]. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force records 1980-1989 (Collection 2205, Box 1, Folder 8). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

The collections were moved into the Werle Building on November 28, 1988.²⁵⁴ MacCulloch described the process:

Luckily the importance of the Collection was clearly seen by those most able to help—most notably, Jean Conger, who never failed to move mountains—and men—to suit the Collection. It took about seven weeks to unpack and set up, a feat which could not have been done in twice the time, had it not been for a devoted cadre of first class lesbian elves. Women gave up days off and vacations. A lot of grubby work was involved—cleaning, scrubbing, carpentry, alphabetizing, book-stamping, begging, lugging—they were long hard days, but as JMLC began to shape up, we could see what a wonderful space we were making up there, how peaceful and loving it felt, somehow.²⁵⁵

Brinskele speculated that the decision to support the Mazer Archives was part of an overall concern that the City of West Hollywood was perceived as a gay men's space and that, in an effort to foster more lesbian involvement in the community, the Task Force moved to sponsor as many lesbian organizations as it could.²⁵⁶

MacCulloch and several other women worked with the collections in their new home at the Werle Building until MacCulloch also succumbed to cancer on May 29, 1989 at the age of 60.²⁵⁷ Before her death, MacCulloch established the Bunny MacCulloch 1988 Trust to support the work of the archives. Although the fund included money raised from the sale of the Altadena house (approximately \$30,000), she recognized that the amount was still inadequate to fully support the needs of the archives.²⁵⁸ The establishment of a Trust Fund, however, and the move to the Werle

²⁵⁴ Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (1988, Nov 28). [Minutes from the Meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force]. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force records 1980-1989 (Collection 2205, Box 1, Folder 8). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁵⁵ MacCulloch, B. (1989, Mar 3). [Background & History. Mazer Collection Board of Directors & By-Laws Drafts and Minutes]. Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 22: Correspondence (1987-1990)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁵⁶ Brinskele, 2013.

²⁵⁷ Wood, S. (2013). Finding Aid to the Bunny MacCulloch papers, 1929-1988. (Collection LSC 1959). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucla/mss/macc1959.pdf>

²⁵⁸ Wolt, I. (1989, Mar 2). [Fundraising Letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (bulk 1945-2009, Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007, Mazer Collection Board of Directors (2 of 2)). Irene Wolt collection. UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. A letter dated 08/11/93 from the Bunny MacCulloch Trust confirms that a bequest of \$34,123 was made out to the Mazer Archives. From Bunny's records. The house was located at 1302 Sunny Oaks, Altadena, CA. 91001-1545

Building was enough to give her some confidence that the future of the collections was secure and that the women involved with the archives were competent. She writes:

Let me say that I'm very confident that the best possible women are involved in this task. Each of you has, besides that excellence, a certain heroic and inspiring quality. The Collection is lucky. We're all lucky. Women of the future especially.²⁵⁹

MacCulloch also encourages other women to remember the archives in their estate planning and reminds potential supporters that they could save on taxes by leaving their money to Connexus because it had 501(c)3 status. They could also give directly to the Trust Fund, which was established for the sole purpose of supporting the archives.

By the end of 1989, just as McCulloch had feared, Connexus announced that it was closing its doors and prepared final paperwork to dissolve the organization.²⁶⁰ In an open letter to the community dated January 18, 1990, Connexus informs its supporters that it will be closing its social service center on June 30, but indicates that the Mazer Archives remains a viable service to the community and would continue its operations unhindered at its West Hollywood location. Legal documents filed in January and April 1991, show that the Mazer Archives received all assets of Connexus, including legal ownership of the collections that comprised the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection, a cash balance of approximately \$13,000, any remaining office equipment, and the corporate and financial records of Connexus.²⁶¹ Financial records also shows that Irene Wolt, a former Connexus board member was paid for “data input and organizing the JMLC mailing list,” suggesting a carry through of the commitment to sustaining the Archives that Connexus had promised.²⁶² By the end of 1991, despite the loss of both June Mazer and Bunny MacCulloch and

²⁵⁹ MacCulloch, B. (1989, Jun 9). [Letter to the trustees of the Bunny MacCulloch 1988 Trust]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (bulk 1945-2009), (Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007, Mazer Collection Board of Directors (2 of 2)). Irene Wolt collection. UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁶⁰ Connexus Board of Directors (1990, Jan 18). [Open letter to supporters]. Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 4, Folder 5: Dissolution Documents (1990-1991)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² See Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 12 Financial—Checks (Carbon) Mazer Account (1990-1991), Folder 22: Mazer Account (1990-1991)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

the physical and emotional distance between the collections and its founders, the coordinating committee appeared to have secured a home for the archives. A dedicated group of women, including Irene Wolt, Degania Golove, and Yolanda Retter, had taken on the work of the archives.²⁶³



Figure 5.2. June Mazer & Bunny MacCulloch²⁶⁴

For the next few years, the board concentrated on fundraising and technological infrastructure development at the archives. In 1991, the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection was assessed by the Internal Revenue Service independently of Connexus and granted 501(c)3

²⁶³ See Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 4, Folder 5: Dissolution Documents (1990-1991)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Degania Golove died just as I was finishing this project, on July 17, 2015. She was 86 years old. A notice was sent to subscribers of the Mazer Archives' e-newsletter on July 20, 2015, with information about her long service with the archives.

²⁶⁴ Photograph of June Mazer and Bunny MacCulloch was provided by The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives and is used with permission. (Box 7, Folder 57, No Date). Photographer unknown.

status.²⁶⁵ Tax-exempt status allowed the board to pursue a number of grants to support the purchase of office equipment, such as a laser printer and office supplies, and the processing of newly acquired collections, such as the papers of Naiad Press.²⁶⁶ The board also organized community fundraisers and pledge drives, including a film and lecture series, women's dances, and other community-based events. Perhaps the most significant event to take place during this period was the "5th Anniversary Concert" on October 16, 1994, that was attended by notable women's music performers Alix Dobkin and StrangeFruit, among others.²⁶⁷ Although the concert program notes that the Mazer Collection was founded in Oakland in 1981, none of the original founders are named nor celebrated for their contributions to the work of creating and developing the archives.²⁶⁸ Interestingly, by emphasizing the role of June Mazer as an "invaluable supporter" of the archives and Bunny MacCulloch as the former "Mazer Collection coordinator," the board seems to erase the women who came before—the very act of conscious forgetting that Fonfa, Cox, and Potter attempted to confront and reconcile by establishing a lesbian collection in the first place.²⁶⁹ It is possible that the board chose to celebrate the fifth anniversary of naming the collection after June Mazer as a fundraising strategy—a fifth anniversary reads as an important milestone for an organization—but my encounters with current and past supporters of the archives suggest that this lack of continuity is neither strategic nor uncommon at the archives. Rather, the Mazer Archives appears to know less about itself and its long history than the other three archives that inform this study.

One UCLA archivist, who has worked with the Mazer Archives for several years, explained that the organization underwent a significant crisis in the mid-1990s, which nearly dissolved the

²⁶⁵ Internal Revenue Service (1991, Mar 7). [Letter from Internal Revenue Service regarding charitable status]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

²⁶⁶ Grant applications and supporting materials, both successful and unsuccessful are in possession of the June L. Mazer Archives. I was provided access to these files on-site at the Archives West Hollywood offices at 625 N. Robertson Blvd.

²⁶⁷ June L. Mazer Collection. (1994, Oct 16). ["Let us not be lost to the Future" 5th Anniversary Celebration pamphlet]. Copy in possession of the June L. Lesbian Archives.

²⁶⁸ The history of the collection provided in the concert program is written by then board member Lillian Faderman.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

board of directors. She also speculated that this crisis is at least in part responsible for why the current board has not been able to maintain its connection to the longer history of the archives and why directors are reluctant to discuss openly their experiences nurturing the collections at the Mazer Archives. At some point in 1994, the board learned that the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA) had been working with Walter Williams, a professor of anthropology at the University of Southern California (USC), to acquire a permanent space for its collections. The City Center that was to be built in West Hollywood had failed to move forward and, as noted in the previous chapter, the death of Dorr Legg had resulted in a proposal to merge IGLA and the ONE Library into one large archival repository. These two factors motivated the board of IGLA to look for a larger and more stable space for their collections. Williams, along with IGLA director John O'Brien, negotiated with the USC Libraries to secure a space for the Archives at 746 W. Adams Blvd, in an apartment complex previously used by the Los Angeles Child Guidance Center.²⁷⁰ Although it is not entirely clear how or when the invitation to move into the site was extended to the Mazer Archives, one long-serving board member noted in our discussion that the decision to accept the invitation was fraught and that the board could not agree on the best course of action for the organization. Some directors were more comfortable working in the mixed-gender environment that the shared facility would become; others remained skeptical of the predominantly male environment at USC and the ONE. Ultimately, the Mazer Archives withdrew from this plan, a decision that caused turmoil at the board level and has had a long-lasting impact on the organization as a whole. The multi-organizational discussions resulting in a tentative Mazer-USC agreement, disagreements among members of the board, and the implications of terminating this agreement will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7; however, it is important to understand that the USC offer was a disruptive catalyst for the board. As a direct result of more than two years of negotiations among directors about the USC agreement, women who had invested considerable time and energy into the organization, including former president Kim Kralj, withdrew from the

²⁷⁰ Kralj, K. (1995). [Letter to Lynn Sipe, University Librarian]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

archives almost completely.²⁷¹ By the mid-1990s, lesbian feminist political organizing had also declined and the Mazer Archives found itself operating on behalf of lesbian women in a period of movement abeyance with few women committed to taking responsibility for the collections.²⁷²

Abeyance and Recovery, 1996-2007

In an article published in the Summer 1996 newsletter, Wolt (1996) confirms that the Mazer Archives is not moving to USC and gives several reasons for this decision. The board, she explains, was forced to reconsider the decision because the budget for building renovations had far exceeded the amount that had been reserved for the project. Wolt also notes that the space allocated for the Mazer Archives in the USC facility is not significantly larger than the office space they currently occupy in the Werle Building and that USC could not guarantee them this space for longer than 18 months. The tone of the article suggests that with the move off the table, the Mazer Archives was then able to redirect its resources inward to reinvest in the growth and management of the collections, as well as expand its services to the community. Wolt writes:

We are now reinvesting our energy into the ongoing needs of the Collection, with positive and productive results. We now have more regular hours and more volunteers are committed to staff the Collection at those times. Many new volunteers have joined the Mazer community, two new dedicated board members—Ann Giagni and Sarah Wright—have been added; and the Collection is once again the hub of activity... Our technical support and cataloguing needs have received greater attention as a result of our renewed focus. We have begun an intensive process of upgrading our computer hardware and software as a first step toward increasing access to our materials. We have also inaugurated an Internet Web page, which significantly enlarges our user-base (Wolt 1996, p. 3).

After months of advertising to its supporters the benefits of a relationship with USC and fundraising for the move, the article is buried on page 3 of the newsletter.

²⁷¹ Kralj, K. (1995). [Resignation letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007, Mazer Collection Board of Directors (2 of 2)). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. See also letters and notes written by Irene Wolt regarding the failure of the USC partnership and the conflicts that she experienced with incoming President, Ann Giagni. Wolt indicates in her resignation letter from the Board that it was Giagni who ultimately made the decision to withdraw from the USC partnership after attending only two meetings of the Board of Directors.

²⁷² Brinskele, 2013.

The addition of Ann Giagni to the board is also an important moment in the history of the archives. In a recent interview, Giagni described how she became President of the Board in 1996, and that she has remained in this position ever since (Sher, 2013). It was her experience working at the Los Angeles Public Library for ten years and her work with underprivileged children in the South Central and East Los Angeles neighbourhoods that motivated her to reach out to the Mazer Archives (Sher, 2013). As she explains, she saw the value in archiving as a community project and “disseminating meaningful stories” as a way to redress the invisibility that lesbian women had and continued to experience (Sher, 2013). Giagni was also trying to reclaim her own activist life, which had been interrupted by a lengthy illness. In 1994, when she was re-entering active life, she was surprised to learn that many of the exciting grassroots organizations and women’s services that were established during the height of lesbian feminist activism had simply disappeared (Sher, 2013). The AIDS crisis and waning energies meant that many women had withdrawn from any separatist or lesbian feminist organizing, and Giagni struggled to find a place where she could invest her time. As she recounts to interviewer Ben Sher, a friend introduced her to a board member at the Mazer Archives and she expressed interest in joining the board. At her first meeting in early 1996, she learned that the board was divided about the planned move to USC and that differing opinions about the future direction of the archives had reached a fever pitch. As one long-serving board member explained to me, Giagni reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement that had been signed with USC and the proposed budget for moving to the new space. Giagni expressed concern that the move was risky and recommended that the Mazer Archives reconsider its decision. With board members overwhelmed and exhausted by the failure of the USC partnership to progress, Giagni had joined at a critical moment with the archives needed new leadership and a reasoned voice. Three months later, Giagni became president and the organization entered a period of recovery after such a difficult and political period.

Not everyone was content with the new leadership, however, and the board remained divided on how to proceed with fundraising and collecting goals. Irene Wolt began documenting

her interactions with Giagni in July 1996, and in her personal journal, accuses Giagni of dismissing input from directors with whom she disagrees, taking over or reassigning tasks without discussing this with the board, and delegating too many of her core tasks, including staffing and volunteer coordination.²⁷³ Wolt also notes that other board members had experienced uncomfortable encounters with Giagni during meetings and she felt that Giagni's terse and abrupt behaviour had alienated some of her colleagues. Wolt's papers include several versions of a letter drafted to request a leave from the board of directors. In each subsequent draft, her description of issues related to board politics becomes less angry and more rational; her diplomacy eventually wins over her desire to document her many frustrations. In an early draft, she notes several examples of unresolved conflict with Giagni, but in later drafts, she describes only her concern about overextending the organization's resources for risky fundraising events and the reluctance of some board members to take responsibility for staffing the archives and taking on tasks that a working board should otherwise perform. Wolt resigned from the board in 1998.²⁷⁴

Without further insight into the decisions of the board and, in particular, Giagni's decision-making process, it is unfair to characterize the problems at the Mazer as simply ones of leadership. Brinskele remembered that, when she joined the Mazer Archives in 2007, she was under the impression that the board had remained small and fairly inactive for quite some time.²⁷⁵ The archives had done little volunteer coordination or public outreach, and had really just "[kept] themselves alive."²⁷⁶ The space at the Werle Building was full and additional collections were being stored in private garages all over Los Angeles County. Perhaps a consequence of the Mazer-USC fall-out or continued conflicts among board members, the board also seems to have developed a

²⁷³ See Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (bulk 1945-2009) (Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007). Irene Wolt collection, 1942-2009. UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. In particular, there are drafts of letters to the Board of Directors that outline a series of grievances that Wolt had against Giagni.

²⁷⁴ Wolt, I. (1996). [Resignation letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (bulk 1945-2009) (Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007). Irene Wolt collection, 1942-2009. UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁷⁵ Brinskele, 2013.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

sense of paranoia about how the Mazer Archives was perceived by the greater lesbian community. board meeting minutes from 1998 show that Giagni frequently reported under the agenda item “Rumor Control,” any encounters the board members had with misinformation about or negative stereotyping of the archives.²⁷⁷

Unfortunately, there is little documentation available from the period of 1998 to 2007; the only evidence of work undertaken during this period is recorded in the organization’s newsletters. It is known, for example, that public service hours were limited to the first Sunday of each month and every Tuesday from noon to 3:00 pm, although Lillian Faderman noted in our conversation that the archives was always open by appointment if necessary.²⁷⁸ A flurry of activities is documented in four issues published in the year 2000, coinciding with the celebration of the archives’ tenth anniversary. The March 2000 newsletter reports that the board has voted to change the name to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, but gives no further insight into why the name was changed at that particular moment in time (JMLA, 2000a). A picture of Lynn Fonfa and Cherrie Cox appears on the cover of the June 2000 newsletter as a “Tribute to the women who made it happen” (JMLA, 2000b). Newsletters also report that the archives has received grants to support cataloguing activities, three from the Liberty Foundation and one from the Durfee Foundation, but notes that the competition for grants has become increasingly intense due to an influx of requests for non-profits in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York (Giagni 2002). Yet, the small group of women continued to dedicate themselves to serving the collections as best they could. As Brinskele recalled, the vibrant and youthful entertainment culture and cost of living in West Hollywood had nevertheless driven many middle-aged and working class women out of the city, which mean that most women who served on the Mazer Archives board lived at least an hour away from the Werle Building.²⁷⁹ Community engagement was nevertheless at

²⁷⁷ See minutes from Board Meetings that took place in 1998. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (bulk 1945-2009) (Series 2: Career, 1966-2009, Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives, 1991-2007). Irene Wolt collection, 1942-2009. UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

²⁷⁸ Faderman, 2013.

²⁷⁹ Brinskele, 2013.

an all-time low by 2005, when, as Brinskele reported, the archives could no longer even support a large number of volunteers because supervision was too difficult to manage.²⁸⁰

Brinskele added that, the changing political environment of the local West Hollywood neighbourhood was not an isolated experience, but that the entire country was undergoing a transition in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Women's cultural space and, more specifically, lesbian public spaces, were disappearing.²⁸¹ She explained:

There's no secret that during that time specifically and a little after, bookstores closed everywhere, bars were closing, first slowly and then fast. That's the thing that changed drastically in probably every city, but really in this city it's unbelievable to me, we had bookstores everywhere, we had coffee shops everywhere. You go over to Pasadena, there's Page One, you can go to Westwood and there's Sisterhood.... It was such a wonderful bookstore. It was also like the centre for a lot of lesbians to connect. They had a whole section of Sisterhood that was just an outreach hallway where... you picked up anything you needed to know about the community there. Those all closed during this time. That was devastation to our community and a lot of people started again getting very isolated by going online for everything.²⁸²

Brinskele's comments confirm a sense of shared anxiety about the dramatic changes to the city that resulted in fewer and fewer public spaces for lesbian women to gather. A photographer, Brinskele had documented both the emergence and height of lesbian feminist organizing and women's cultural spaces, and was heartbroken to witness the decline of the movement. By the mid-2000s, the Mazer Archives was one of the only remaining spaces for lesbian women to meet. Brinskele also saw the potential of the archives as a way to preserve the evidence of the bookstores, music, and organizing that had taken place over the past three decades. Not only was she interested in donating her own photographs to the archives, but she was also drawn to the project because she was looking for a way to continue her work in the lesbian community. By the end of 2007, the Mazer Archives was experiencing renewed investment from a community searching for the cultural spaces that they had lost. Brinskele explained:

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

People still come and take a tour of the archive and say, “Okay where’s the gay coffee shop?” then I’m like, “There isn’t one.” “Where’s the gay bookshop in here?” “There aren’t any.” I mean it’s a really big change.²⁸³

The Mazer Archives was not only preserving the material evidence of the lesbian feminist movement by taking in records from organizations and businesses that had folded, but the archives was also poised to become a cultural space where women yearning for this kind of culture could return. The Mazer Archives was also experiencing a growing interest from young scholars, anxious to learn about the important contributions lesbian feminism has made to both lesbian and popular culture.



Figure 5.3. The June L. Mazer Archives at the Werle Building, West Hollywood, 2013²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Photograph of the archives taken by me while visiting the Werle Building in October 2013.

The June L. Mazer Archives, 2007-2014

I first visited the Mazer Archives during the summer of 2011, when the archives hosted an international conference that brought together hundreds of scholars and heritage workers focussed on public, private, academic, and grassroots information centers that collect and preserve materials of all types from LGBT communities. Known as GLBT ALMS (Archives, Libraries, Museums, and Special Collections), the conference was co-sponsored by the City of West Hollywood, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW), and the UCLA Library. I attended the conference as a representative of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, and spoke about this organization's outreach to young people through its Community Engagement Committee. As part of this conference, delegates were invited to attend a reception held at the Charles E. Young Research Library at UCLA, where they were also introduced to a project called Access Mazer: Organizing and Digitizing the Lesbian-Feminist Archive in Los Angeles. This project was the result of a collaboration between the Mazer and UCLA and funded through a two-year UCLA Community Partnership Grant. Historian and former Mazer Archives director Lillian Faderman spoke about the importance of collecting lesbian materials and the challenges that the Mazer Archives has faced in preserving these records and making them accessible to a broader research community. Kathleen McHugh, then Director of CSW, and Sharon Farb, Associate University Librarian, also spoke about the substantial and important relationship that had developed between the archives and the University, resulting in a donation of materials to the UCLA Library. It was, in fact, this presentation and subsequent discussions about the partnership among conference delegates that encouraged me to explore the questions that now form the core of my dissertation research. This was also the first opportunity that I was afforded to meet with Giagni, Brinskele, McHugh, and Farb, all of whom later agreed to be interviewed for this project. In 2014, McHugh spearheaded the production of a resource guide, *Making Invisible Histories Visible*, which has been an invaluable resource for helping me piece together the history of the Mazer-UCLA relationship. This

relationship will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, but it will be briefly discussed here to provide context for the Mazer Archives' current work.

As McHugh (2014) explains in her introductory essay for *Making Invisible Histories Visible*, the relationship between the Mazer Archives and UCLA began in 2006, when Candace Moore, a CSW Graduate Student Researcher (GSR), suggested that the CSW approach the Mazer Archives to become a community partner. Together, they applied for a Community Partnership Grant, part of a now defunct program at UCLA, and secured enough funds to process and digitize five collections. These included the organizational records of Connexus/Centro de Mujeres, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), and the Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), as well as the personal papers of Lillian Faderman and Margaret Cruikshank. As McHugh explains, the Mazer Archives benefitted from this collaboration in having their highly accessed collections professionally processed, and UCLA benefitted by acquiring the digitized material and making these accessible to scholars internationally through the California Digital Library. UCLA also benefitted because the grant covered costs related to the purchase of digitization equipment and the employment of four GSRs to process, create finding aids, and digitize the collections. A subsequent grant through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) brought in another 83 collections to be processed and digitized over a three-year period and also initiated a formal collaboration agreement between the Mazer Archives and UCLA. In 2010, the Mazer Archives agreed to a deed of gift that transferred legal custody of all 88 collections to UCLA with terms that ensure that the records will remain in Los Angeles, be made accessible to a broad public research community, and that failing these obligations the Mazer Archives would retain the legal right to reclaim their material. See Appendix C for a copy of the Collaboration Agreement.

The donation of materials to UCLA and the collaboration agreement between the Mazer Archives and the University have not only raised the profile of the Archives, but the partnership has also produced new opportunities. As Giagni explains in her 2013 interview with Sher, the collaboration has resulted in the transfer of materials to UCLA, which has in turn, opened up new

space at the archives and enables a renewed commitment to collecting records from lesbian women and lesbian organizations. The archives has also received new accessions from prominent lesbian women, including Margarethe Cammermeyer and Beverley Hickok, who might not have considered donating to the Mazer Archives prior to its involvement with UCLA. Because the Mazer Archives remains in its central West Hollywood location, it has also reclaimed its position a community space, where lectures, celebrations, and book readings have taken place. In 2011, the archives also hosted the ALMS conference, as discussed above, which brought international attention to the work of the Mazer Archives and its supporters. Giagni notes that fundraising has also improved over the past year, an “impressive feat for a not-for-profit organization in the current challenging economy” (qtd. in Sher, 2013). She notes, however, that one of the primary goals of the archives remains its own survival, a clear indication that the precarity that has plagued the organization since its beginning continues to be a concern for the women involved. She explains, “Just survival is success” (qtd. in Sher, 2013). Giagni reaffirms the archives’ commitment to grassroots women by saying:

We don’t know elite lesbians. We don’t know stars. We don’t know mega-scientists. We don’t know those folks. We know the teachers, and the nurses, and the electrical workers. That’s who we know as a board. Our responsibility is that if there isn’t somebody out there talking to ordinary, ‘unexciting’ lesbians, telling them that their lives are important, and that the material from their lives, their letters, their photos, their diaries, their personally created memorabilia, are important, if there isn’t somebody out there telling these women, ‘Actually, your life is really important, and someday ten years from now, a researcher is going to be thrilled to look at your photos,’ they’ll throw them away (qtd. in Sher 2013).

Even in 2013, with a sophisticated collaboration agreement in place with UCLA, improved outreach strategies, and interest from “elite lesbians,” the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives remains focussed,

for better or worse, on its role as “rescuer-historian,” collecting the material evidence of lesbian women otherwise lost to the ages (see Eastwood, 1993).²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ The term “elite lesbians” was used frequently during my discussions with community archivists, long-time volunteers, and community partners as a way to distinguish between women who were well known in lesbian activist circles from “every day lesbians”. In my conversation with one long-serving member of the Board, we discussed how the Archives was now receiving queries and donations from more prominent lesbians and their allies, but this was becoming disruptive. The Board has a long-stranding commitment to collect records of “every day lesbians” and did not necessarily want to expend its resources collecting and preserving records that might be better cared for by larger institutions such as UCLA. While I was visiting the Archives in October 2013, the Mazer accepted a sizable donation of records from Betty DeGeneres, mother of well-known lesbian television personality, Ellen DeGeneres. DeGeneres had contacted the Archives after learning of the partnership with UCLA. Community archivists were also working with Hollywood comedienne Lily Tomlin to steward a donation from her estate to UCLA vis-à-vis the Mazer’s partnership agreement. Some community archivists expressed some concern about continuing to collect such significant donations and reiterated the importance of maintaining a balance between collecting evidence of “elite lesbians” and “every day lesbians”. At one point, a member of the Board explained to me that having such valuable collections at the Archives was concerning because they lacked the expertise to care for them. She explained that she had once received records from Margarethe Cammermeyer on behalf of the Archives, including a military uniform. The uniform was kept in a closet for some time before it was handed over to UCLA along with other collections. The board member described how she was relieved that the uniform was no longer at the Archives, where it could be lost or damaged.

CHAPTER 6

The Lesbian Herstory Archives

“We took the variables out of the hands of the authorities that had made an archives necessary in the first place.”

— Joan Nestle²⁸⁶

When I first conceived of this project, I could not imagine undertaking the study without including the Brooklyn-based Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA). Founded in the home of Joan Nestle in 1973, the LHA was one of the first public lesbian organizations in the United States and one of the first lesbian archives in the world; it has been a model for other community-based archival initiatives for more than forty years, including the collections that have now become the June L Mazer Lesbian Archives, which informs this study. Its continued presence as an autonomous lesbian organization in a very different socio-political and economic environment from that in which it emerged is also remarkable. The LHA remains a vibrant community space despite the decline of the lesbian feminist movement and the disappearance of feminist and lesbian cultural spaces, such as women’s bookstores and lesbian newspapers, since the early 1990s. The LHA not only preserves the papers of key lesbian feminist thinkers such as Adrienne Rich and Audre Lorde, but it has also become symbolic of the lesbian feminist yearning to recover and rediscover “those who have come before.”²⁸⁷

I was warned by colleagues and other researchers, however, that the LHA is nurtured by a group of strong-minded women who did not always see the value in academic scholarship; it would be challenging, if not impossible, to conduct my research at the Archives without first earning their trust. Danielle Cooper, whose study of the LHA has been published in the *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* (2013), conducted her ethnographic exploration over several weeks and as

²⁸⁶ Joan Nestle, Interview. February 25, 2014.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

such, she took part in a formal internship program, actively participating in the work of the archives. A long-time colleague, Cooper advised me to spend some time at the archives familiarizing myself with the space and meeting members of the coordinating committee that cares for the archives prior to engaging in my own study of the organization. Likewise, York University-based scholar Cait McKinney suggested that I apply to become an intern and spend a term volunteering at the archives before undertaking my own research about the LHA. At the time of our discussion, McKinney had just returned home after spending several months at the LHA engaged in her own dissertation research. Unfortunately, I was not in a position to take more than a month away from my family, nor could I afford to stay in the New York area for an extended amount of time. It was therefore imperative that I make a connection with the LHA and establish a relationship with the coordinating committee in good time, to ensure that I would have access to the organizational records that I needed and to meet with study participants during a limited site visit.

In early July 2013, I sent an email to the LHA's general inquiries address and within two hours, received a reply from the current caretaker indicating that the organization was not interested in participating. A few days later, I wrote to my colleague, Anthony Cocciolo, Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science, and asked him for help. I knew that Cocciolo taught a course in digital archives and his students had digitized some of the LHA's more highly accessed collections. He kindly sent me a personal email address for Maxine Wolfe, who was not only his contact at the LHA, but also a long-serving member of the LHA's coordinating committee. I wrote to Wolfe that day and she responded with a series of questions about my research. After several emails, she agreed to sponsor the project and brought my proposal to the coordinating committee to review; no one objected to my proposed study and Wolfe invited me to come to Brooklyn. She then put me in touch with founder Deb Edel and from that point on, Edel became my guide to the archives and to the organization. A few days later, a package of clippings and other material about the Lesbian Herstory Archives and its history arrived in my mailbox—

postage paid. When I arrived in Brooklyn in November 2013, Edel met at the archives and gave me a set of keys to the front door.

I felt incredibly supported by Edel and, in fact, all of the women that I encountered at the LHA, a feeling that I know has influenced my understanding of the organization and its importance for the community it serves. Wolfe would later explain in an interview with me for this project that the LHA is not necessarily opposed to academic work, but that the coordinators often feel overwhelmed by the number of people who have contacted them to ask for their participation in research and that, in her opinion, academics are only accountable to other academics, which is a concern for the archives.²⁸⁸ For these reasons, the coordinators are cautious about agreeing to participate in academic studies. It was nevertheless my experience that when they do agree to support a project, they do so with gusto and a level of trust far beyond most researchers' expectations. For my two weeks in Brooklyn, I was made to feel at home in the archives, as I'm sure so many women have felt before me.

My narrators at the LHA include two of the original founders of the archives, Joan Nestle and Deb Edel; three additional members of the coordinating committee, Rachel Corbman, Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, and Maxine Wolfe; and former caretaker of the archives, Polly Thistlethwaite. I was also aided by Joyce Warshaw's 2002 documentary about Joan Nestle and the Lesbian Herstory Archives, *Hand on the Pulse*, as well as a significant body of literature that has been written about the LHA over the years, including several essays written by Nestle herself.

The Archives in Apartment 13A on the Upper West Side, 1973-1985

The Upper West Side lies between Central Park and the Hudson River, between West 59th Street and West 116th Street in the New York City borough of Manhattan. With Columbia University situated at its north end and Lincoln Center to the south, the neighbourhood has a reputation of being home to the city's cultural and intellectual elite; I was informed by my New

²⁸⁸ Maxine Wolfe, Interview. November 12, 2013.

Yorker friends that the Upper West Side is where Woody Allen spends his evenings and tourists make their pilgrimages to the famous Dakota apartment building, where John Lennon took his last steps. Today, the area is prosperous and rents can soar well into the thousands of dollars, pricing out most young and working-class people. As Schulman (2012) recalls in her memoir, the neighbourhood was settled by thousands of poor Hispanic immigrants in the mid-20th century—communities romanticized in the musical *West Side Story*. In the 1960s, the construction of the Lincoln Center started a slow process of redevelopment (Schulman, 2012). Nevertheless, the Upper West Side remained mired in poverty and crime throughout the 1970s and 80s, which continued to keep wealthier professionals out of the neighbourhood (Schulman, 2012). The large apartments and relatively inexpensive rents, however, attracted large numbers of gay men and young professionals just arriving in the city to look for their first white collar jobs. Although the influx of gay men is often credited with spurring gentrification, Schulman notes that it was the arrival of AIDS in the early 1980s that truly accelerated the process. After so many men died from the disease, she explains, the rent-controlled apartments that they had carefully renovated and updated were turned over to new tenants willing to pay increasingly higher rents. The loss of so many gay men during the AIDS epidemic, combined with the already existing trend toward converting rental units to condominiums, successfully transformed the Upper West Side from a rough and tumble, but affordable Manhattan neighbourhood to a middle- to upper-middle class white collar pocket.

It is also important to note that the Upper West Side sits just south of Harlem, although real estate agents now refer to the area immediately north as Morningside Heights (Powell, n.d.). Since the late 1910s, Harlem has been known as major residential, cultural, and economic centre for African-Americans who arrived in large numbers during the Great Migration (Washington, 2002). The district had initially developed in the 19th century as a suburb for the white middle and upper classes, which had led to the development of amenities such as the Polo Ground and the Harlem Opera House, as well as the construction of large homes and grand avenues (Washington, 2002). The arrival of European immigrants in the late 19th century had nevertheless driven out the

wealthier residents, who moved farther north leaving a void of empty homes and businesses (Washington, 2002). In 1910, a large block along 135th Street and Fifth Avenue was bought by a group of African-American realtors and a church group, establishing Harlem as a predominantly African-American district. As Washington (2002) notes in his history of West Harlem, the outbreak of the Great War led to an increased demand for unskilled industrial labour and many African-Americans left the South to find work in urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest United States. African Americans arrived *en masse* to cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and New York; Harlem was the largest of these new communities. At the same time, growing numbers of an educated African-American middle class began investing in new forms of cultural expressions, such as Negro literature and theatre. The explosion of culture in Harlem became part of what Alain Locke referred to as The New Negro Movement in his foundational 1925 anthology. The period between 1918 and 1940 is also commonly known as the Harlem Renaissance. By the end of the 1950s, however, the district had slumped into a cultural nadir. With significant job losses during the Great Depression and the deindustrialization of New York City after World War II, as well as continued and persistent racism, African-American residents in Harlem were left competing for fewer and fewer jobs in a deindustrialized city. By the 1970s, the neighbourhood no longer had a functioning economy and, by some measures, had entered the worst period in its history.

During my interview with Joan Nestle, she emphasized the importance of this urban history on the founding and development of the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Born in 1940, Nestle was raised by her single mother, Regina Nestle, in a Classic Six apartment in the Upper West Side, just a few blocks south of Harlem at 215 West 92nd Street.²⁸⁹ A bookkeeper in New York's garment district, Regina was a working class widow and struggled with poverty, debt, and alcoholism most of her life. As Nestle writes in her 1998 essay, "Run, Regina, Run," the relationship between mother and daughter was strong despite these challenges; Regina is described as witty, sex-positive, and

²⁸⁹ Nestle explained that a 'classic six' is a six-room floor plan common to apartment buildings in New York built prior to 1940. This consists of a dining room, living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a smaller 'maid's room', almost always located off the kitchen.

showing great love and affection for her daughter (Nestle, 1998). As Nestle explained to me, Regina had to work “all the time” and the kind of work she performed often brought her into contact with African-American women, including Mabel Hampton.²⁹⁰ In 1957, when Nestle’s mother discovered that she was frequenting lesbian bars, Regina reached out to Mabel Hampton to seek advice about how to deal with the fact that her only daughter was a lesbian. As Nestle explained, “Miss Hampton just said, ‘Look, get over it, Regina, so am I,’ and that was that.”²⁹¹ And so it was through Hampton and her partner Lillian Foster that Nestle was first introduced to the African-American lesbian community; Nestle described how she would attend African-American balls in Harlem with these two women, and that she was enthralled by their ramshackle apartment in the Bronx, where they kept an archives of black history, a collection of lesbian paperbacks, and materials about the opera. Nestle described Hampton:

She broke all stereotypes. She was supposed to be a domestic worker, you know. And she had been part of the theatre in Harlem, all of that. Ms. Hampton always had a sense of herself as larger than the place that was given to her, but she wouldn’t articulate it that way. She would say, “What do you mean, when did I come out? I was never in.”²⁹²

It was, in part, because of this relationship with Hampton and Foster that Nestle became involved with social justice politics. Nestle has also written that her Jewish heritage contributed to her interest in and desire for social justice for sexual and political minorities (1990, 1998). After she received her undergraduate degree from Queen’s University in 1963, Nestle became involved in the Civil Rights Movement and participated in voter registration drives, including the Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965 (Rapp, 2005). She earned a Master’s degree in English from New York University in 1968, and spent two years pursuing a doctorate before returning to Queen’s

²⁹⁰ Nestle, 2014.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

College to teach as part of the SEEK program,²⁹³ where she worked until cancer forced her to retire in 1995 (Nestle, 2000).

In April 1973, not four years after the Stonewall Riot that many consider the trigger for the modern gay rights movement, Nestle joined Martin Duberman, Barbara Gittings, Andrea Dworkin, John D’Emilio, Jonathan Ned Katz, and others to form the Gay Academic Union (GAU), aimed at making academia more open and responsive to the needs of lesbian and gay people (Duberman, 2002). At GAU’s first conference, held in November of 1973, Nestle met with several women as part of a Women’s Caucus and they began discussing the importance of preserving all of the material that was being produced from their activities and, in fact, the activities of all lesbian women (LHA, 1975). Almost immediately, people started to bring together photographs, journals, books, and ephemera and, by late 1974, an archives had taken up residence in Nestle’s Upper West Side apartment. Nestle describes the birth of the Archives in her 1990 essay, “A Will to Remember:”

[The Archives] grew out of a consciousness-raising group among lesbian members of an organization called the Gay Academic Union. Concerned with the plight of gay students and teachers in high schools and colleges, the GAU was a rallying point for gay scholarship and battles against isolation and homophobia in the city’s schools. Most were part of the city and state university systems, either as teachers, students, or support staff. Within a very short period of time, we split into the usual early seventies factions: sexist gay men, Marxists, and lesbian-separatists... We also knew, in this early day of lesbian publishing, that our presses and publishing were fragile creations, and we were concerned about preserving all their precious productions (p. 227).

In June 1975, a collective of women that included Sahli Cavallaro, Deborah Edel, Joan Nestle, Pamela Oline, and Julia Stanley, announced the formation of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in a

²⁹³ The SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge) program was launched in 1966, by the New York State Legislature. Situated at Queens College, the program is designed to reach qualified high school graduates who might not otherwise attend college. See <http://qcseek.info/about/>

newsletter and began soliciting donations of material from lesbian women across the country (LHA, 1975).²⁹⁴

Deb Edel explained to me how the Archives collective decided to call the collection the Lesbian Herstory Archives:²⁹⁵

I love to tell the story of how we got our name just for the fun of it. We were sitting around having a meeting and Joan wasn't there. She was probably on a trip across country with her then lover. We were trying to come up with a name for this thing that we wanted to do, and we realized we wanted the word 'lesbian' in there, even though everyone around us was using the word 'wemoon' or 'womyn' or 'woman' or all of those spellings, but we wanted 'lesbian' loud and clear. We wanted something that would be formal so that people would take us seriously and, since some of the people were researchers and academicians, we chose the word 'archives' because we also knew that [archiving] was pretty much what we wanted to be doing. And then we wanted a word in the middle that would be playful, so we came up with the word 'herstory'. And, of course, when people heard the term everybody said, well don't you know that 'history' doesn't mean '*his* story'? Really? In terms of word, perhaps, but it sure does in terms of telling the story in reality!²⁹⁶

I asked Edel if she was aware of the term *herstory* prior to the naming of the archives. In a typically humble manner, she said that there *may* have been parallel developments, but that she had not heard the term used before they adopted it. After 1975, the word herstory was being widely used in the lesbian feminist movement, in women's studies courses, and in feminist organizing. Edel did admit that she felt it would be "nice to think that we coined the term."²⁹⁷

Outreach was a key component to the early success of the LHA. As early as May 1975, for example, Pamela Oline had held a workshop on the activities and holdings of the archives, which

²⁹⁴ The formation of the first Lesbian Herstory Archives collective is recounted in Rachel Corbman's history of the LHA's collecting practices. According to Corbman, the five founders all attended the first of four annual meetings held by the GAU. Julia Penelope Stanley had worked in the University of Georgia's English department. Shall Cavallaro was a psychology major who would become romantically involved with Pamela Oline, a feminist psychotherapist. Joan Nestle had left a PhD program at New York University to take up a position in the SEEK program at Queen's College. Deborah Edel was a doctoral student in psychology and worked with children with learning disabilities. Nestle and Edel would also become romantically involved. See A Genealogy of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, 1974-2014. *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, 1(1), 1.

²⁹⁵ Although Edel and Nestle both emphasized in our discussions that the women who nurture the Archives have never called themselves a collective, they refer to themselves as the "archives collective" in the organization's first newsletter, published in June 1975. I have elected to use this term to describe the small group of women who worked with the collections until the point that the Lesbian Herstory Archives made a decision to call this group the coordinating committee.

²⁹⁶ Deb Edel, Interview, November 13, 2013.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

she called the Lesbian Herstory Exploration (LHA, 1975, p. 6). The workshop was offered again in the Los Angeles area in 1976, sponsored by organizers of a lesbian community centre (LHA 1976b, p. 1). Oline had also started an active oral history campaign to record older lesbians' stories and discussions onto cassette or reel, and was willing to travel to women who were interested in participating (LHA 1975, p. 7). As Edel recalled in our discussion, Oline was a significant force in the early years of the archives and, in some ways, representative of the broad political definition of *lesbian* that both lesbian feminists and Lesbian Herstory Archives had adopted. Edel explained that Oline identified as a political lesbian—"a straight woman who identified with lesbian struggles"—and was a valued member of the small community of women who ran the archives.²⁹⁸

Julia Stanley (later known as Julia Penelope) was also an active participant in the early years. As Rachel Corbman recalled in our conversation, Stanley took some of the materials to Tennessee, where she had taken a new job, and planned to process them.²⁹⁹ She had also committed to creating a map of lesbian farms and communes throughout rural United States, which she hoped to make available to the archives (LHA 1975, p. 6). Joan Nestle hosted a wine and cheese party at her apartment in 1976, to encourage more visitors to the Archives and spark interest in contributing to the collection (LHA 1976a, p. 3). She wrote in the March 1976 newsletter, "Since the archives is in the back room of one of our apartments, a visit to it is also a sharing of our lives. Coffee, sometimes bread and cheese, and a jumping dog are part of the welcome" (LHA 1976a, p. 3). Nestle also put together bibliographies of lesbian materials and these were mailed out to women as part of the regular newsletter (LHA 1976a). The February 1978 newsletter, for example, includes an index of the lesbian poetry that had been added to the collection up to January of that year (LHA 1978). Also included is a dedication to Regina Nestle, who had died in December 1977.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Edel, 2013.

²⁹⁹ Rachel Corbman, Interview. November 15, 2013.

³⁰⁰ Notably, this newsletter also contains a news item about the 1977 police raid of the offices of The Body Politic. It is noted that police confiscated records, subscription lists, documents, manuscripts and "much more". The LHA encourages readers to send contributions and letters of support to The Body Politic because "Our words have been silenced for so long; we must not allow it to happen again." See LHA (1978). Lesbian Herstory Archives. Newsletter #4. New York: LHA.

Another important outreach activity for the LHA was a travelling slide show that members of the archives collective toured across the United States, and as far away as Amsterdam.³⁰¹ In the earliest months of developing the collection, Nestle, Edel, and others would bring a selection of archival material to lesbian groups in other cities, in other states, as a way to encourage lesbian women to recognize the value in preserving the material evidence of their lives. Soon, however, they realized that the materials were becoming too fragile and would not survive these outreach trips. As an alternative, the women photographed some of these materials and created a slide show instead. As Edel explained:

In the early days, there were lots of groups around [and] we would get calls ‘come to my group’, ‘can you come to New Jersey?’ ‘Can you come to Westchester?’ And we would take 15 documents, 20 documents, and schlep and schlep and schlep, and we were worried about [the documents] really getting overused and damaged, so we made up this little slide show with two parts. The first part was a number of slides we just talked about. We put on a picture and it would trigger us to talk about things that had come into the Archives. It was never the same. It was a dynamic slide show. And then the second part was slides of faces and activities and things. We took some of the current lesbian songs, maybe 15 minutes of music, and we’d just put on the slides and let the music play. Then we would answer questions. That slide show existed for a very long time.³⁰²

Different people would take different slides out to each group, depending on their own personal interests or the perceived interests of the group who was hosting the show. There might be different slides taken out to meet with a group of physicians, for example, or a group of working class lesbians.

Nestle (1998) considers these slide shows with various community groups to be the most significant outreach work that the archives undertook in the early years, not only because it introduced the Lesbian Herstory Archives to women across the country and beyond, but also because they helped convey to these groups the importance of lesbian organizing and lesbian lives. She writes:

³⁰¹ Nestle, 2014.

³⁰² Edel, 2013.

We created a travelling slide show to bring home the message that all lesbians were worthy of inclusion in herstory, that as we have said a thousand times over, if you have the courage to touch another woman, you are a lesbian... The slide show became our major organizing tool, our most powerful way to work against the feelings of cultural deprivation and personal isolation. It also allowed us to make our vision clear—what was a lesbian archives, how was it different from traditional archives, and how did it fit into the political struggles of our people? (Nestle, 1998, p. 228).

By the end of the 1970s, the LHA had established itself as a vital resource for lesbian women and as a model for how other communities could start their own documentary or archiving initiatives. The goal of the archives, as Nestle described it to me, was not to take in everything and anything that they could find, but to instil in lesbian women a sense that who they were and what they did was important and that the evidence of this work would have a safe place with the archives, if that is where they wished to deposit their records.³⁰³

As early as 1976, Nestle, Edel and Oline realized that the Archives needed to “legalize its existence” and incorporate as a not-for-profit organization to receive tax exemptions status—501(c)3 designation within New York State.³⁰⁴ Initially, the archives started the long process of legalizing by developing a set of by-laws and drafting a Certificate of Incorporation.³⁰⁵ By 1978, however, the archives had decided to allow this Certificate to expire and would reapply to the State as the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation (LHEF).³⁰⁶ As Edel explained, there was a volunteer who was working with the collections around this time and she was a lawyer by

³⁰³ Nestle, 2013.

³⁰⁴ Two letters, dated October 20, 1976, indicated that Joan Nestle had contacted the University of the State of New York, State Education Department and the Charities Department to provide notice that the Archives was intending to incorporate as the Lesbian Herstory Archives, Inc. Copies in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁰⁵ This Certificate of Incorporation for the Lesbian Herstory Archives, Inc. is signed by Joan Nestle, Pamela Oline, and Deborah Edel, dated July 31, 1976, and witnessed by Susan Collins, a Notary Public. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁰⁶ Elkins, M.S. (1978, Dec 1). [Letter to the Division of Corporations and State Records]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Nestle has also state that, “in order to survive in homophobic America as an archives, we have incorporated as a not-for-profit information resource centre because the New York State Board of Regents maintains control over educational institutions and could therefore confiscate the collation for ‘just cause’. In the same year we incorporated (1978), a law was pending in New Jersey decriminalizing homosexuality, and everyone knows criminals have no archives. We take no money from the government, believing that such an action would be an exercise in neocolonialism, believing that the society that rules us out of history should never be relied upon to make it possible for us to exist. All the technology the Archives has—the computer, the xeroxing machine—comes from lesbian, gay, feminist, and radical funding sources” (Nestle, 1990, 232).

training.³⁰⁷ She reviewed the laws pertaining to the treatment of archival repositories by the State and determined that incorporating as an archives would be too risky for the LHA; at the time, archives in New York were considered educational institutions and would be subject to the Regents of the University of New York State, which had the power to confiscate collections and close down archives if they did not meet the expectations of the Regents. If the archives did not have a public toilet, for example, this might violate the rules and regulations for an educational institution. The lawyer advised the women to set up a general foundation—the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation—and the archives would serve as the resource room for this foundation. Nestle, Edel and Oline then applied to the Regents of the University of New York State under the auspices of a general foundation and were “disapproved” as an educational institute, allowing them to pursue non-for-profit status as a charitable foundation. Edel emphasized that this particular legal “route” is what kept the LHA “safe from what was then a very conservative, dangerously conservative state education department.”³⁰⁸ On February 29, 1980, the Internal Revenue Service approved the organization’s status as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit charitable foundation with a tax exemption.³⁰⁹ A statement about the decision to incorporate as a general foundation is also made in the Spring 1979 newsletter:

We have been incorporated under the name of the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc. This broadens our scope to an information service that publishes a newsletter, does public speaking and in as many ways as possible gathers and shares information about the Lesbian Experience. The Archives functions as the “resource room.” For the Lesbian community the two titles will be used interchangeably. For formal business we will be using the new one. It is our hope, however, that the Foundation will become more than just a bureaucratic structure. It is our vision that in the future the Foundation will help develop a Lesbian Cultural Center in the fullest sense of the work, that will be able to facilitate the creation, researching, sharing and preservation of Lesbian culture, and that will be able to provide a support network for Lesbian cultural workers and a place where all Lesbian sisters will feel comfortable (LHA, 1979, p. 6).

³⁰⁷ Edel, 2013.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Letter from the Internal Revenue Status District Director to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc. dated February 29, 1980. LHA Organizational Records provided on-site at the LHA.



Figure 6.1. Valerie Itnyre, Georgia Brooks, Deborah Edel, Judith Schwarz & Joan Nestle at a collection meeting, 1980³¹⁰



Figure 6.2. Gathering at LHA / Joan Nestle's apartment the weekend of the Barnard Conference, 1982³¹¹

³¹⁰ Photograph provided by the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Copyright, Morgan Gwenwald. Used with permission.

³¹¹ Photograph provided by the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Copyright, LHEF, Inc. Used with permission.

It was around this time that Lillian Foster passed away and Mabel Hampton suffered a stroke.³¹² In a gesture that, at the time, was inconceivable in a racialized New York City, white, Jewish Joan Nestle invited the African-American senior citizen to move in with her and take up residence in the Upper West Side apartment. When I asked Nestle to talk about the “impact of Mabel” on the archives, she first corrected herself and me—out of respect, she wanted to refer to Mabel Hampton as Miss Hampton. Nestle then said:

Lillian [Foster] had died and, soon after my mother died, Miss Hampton came to stay with us. She had a stroke, her first stroke, and was in a wheelchair. I was her carer. And we're getting into the elevator and you could just see the looks. And by now the Upper West Side was gentrifying, they'd become apartments you had to buy for a million dollars, we were still renters and the people who were moving or the sons and daughters who had managed somehow to buy their apartments, could not work out what they were seeing, a black woman in a wheelchair and a white woman pushing her. And knowing that we lived together.

...In a really deep way, Miss Hampton is the deepest spirit of the archives. How many generations of lesbian lives she had lived? Born in 1902! So, she meets new lesbians, she had her own life, a rich life in Harlem, in African-American queer society. When she was living at the [apartment] she always had keys, so when she was well enough, she went from her Bronx apartment to Atlantic City, which she loved to do, because she was also a senior citizen and she loved doing the things that senior citizens did. ... She kept enriching her lesbian experience, but she suffered a lot of pressure from older friends [who] were very hesitant to either be out or to be associated with lesbians. Miss Hampton's way of saying it was, “Oh they got religion, they got religion.” But she never took that track. So, we knew by telling her story, and making it part [of the history of the archives]—she was part of the whole collection because she donated her paperback collection, her early paperback collection.³¹³

Nestle's personal relationships with Hampton enriched the early development of the archives by opening up possibilities for collecting materials from African-American lesbian women who might not otherwise interact with an archives. Hampton's presence at the archives also served historians who had begun to access the archives looking for evidence of a queer past. Lillian Faderman, for example, recalled coming to the LHA in 1979, to research for her groundbreaking book, *Surpassing the Love of Men*.³¹⁴ She was pleased to meet Hampton, who greeted her at the archives and spoke

³¹² Nestle, 2014.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Faderman, 2013.

with her about the collection even though Nestle had left the city to attend the March on Washington. Faderman remembered sitting with Hampton and listening to her stories of the Harlem Renaissance and African-American lesbian culture, information that should would not otherwise have encountered as a white scholar.



Figure 6.3. Joan Nestle and Mabel Hampton, dancing, undated³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Photograph provided by the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Copyright, Morgan Gwenwald. Used with permission.

Nestle also explained that it was these kinds of interpersonal relationships, whether platonic or sexual, that brought women and their work to the archives across class and racial divides.³¹⁶ As a teacher with SEEK—a program to help Puerto Rican and black youth access higher education—Nestle was embedded into African-American and Caribbean culture. She tried to make sure that the archives collected French and Spanish-language materials as much as possible. Nestle’s colleagues and professional contacts were also made to feel welcome into the archives and encouraged to use the space for their own organizing and activist work. Georgia Brooks, one of the founders of Salsa Soul, taught the first African-American history workshop at the archives. Nestle’s students would also use the space or volunteer to work with the collections. Becky Sharp, Ann Shockley, and Audre Lorde were all friends with Nestle or other women who were involved with the LHA and so, as Nestle explained, the collections grew in size and scope. The archives, Nestle says, “just grew out of our lives.”³¹⁷ While she acknowledged that the LHA is still “predominantly white faces sitting around the table,” the crucial early years included multiple perspectives from many ethnic, class, and racial backgrounds, which have had a cascading impact on the broad collecting scope of the archives today.³¹⁸ Mabel Hampton’s long-lasting effect on the archives is that African-American women knew about the LHA and were aware that it was a place where black women had associations.

According to Nestle, Hampton also had a sense of history and a “sense of displacement.”³¹⁹ She dreamed of coming home to a place she called “the brownstone,” a safe place for the archives and for the work of future generations of lesbian women to learn from those who had come before.³²⁰ By the mid-1980s, Nestle was also anxious about the growing size of the archives—the collections had consumed almost all of the space in her apartment, from the second bedroom to the living room, to the hallway into the bathroom. She had only her own bedroom as a private

³¹⁶ Nestle, 2014.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

space. She described how her lover would have to step over people reading pulp novels in the hallway to get to the bathroom or eat at the table with strangers poring through old photographs; it was too much. In the beginning, having the collections take up residence in her home was a way to contribute back to and celebrate the community of older lesbian women to which Nestle had come out in the 1950s, but the project had overwhelmed her personal space and “it needed to go.”³²¹ At the same time, she was approaching her 50th birthday and dealing with a chronic illness that had significant implications for her health. She explained:

To do the passion, to enact the passion, to say thank you, to give a home to the women who—when they would come to the archives in the early days—would weep, in the early days from the 50s and 40s, they would weep. I remember [one woman] weeping with her hand against the iron bookshelf that contained the old paperbacks. This sense of deprivation was finally being touched, you know, and there’s nothing like turning deprivation into plentitude to give you sustainability. But then things changed and I was sick... I think it was [when] I turned 50, some major age, and my health had stopped and so we said “ok, it has to leave the apartment.” It had outgrown the apartment so it needed to go.³²²

By the time Mabel Hampton died in 1989, at the age of 86, the coordinators of the LHA had struck a committee to search for a new, permanent “brownstone” for the archives.

Brick by Brick: Finding a Home for the Archives, 1986-1993

“Let us ask the colonized [her]self: who are [her] folk heroes? [Her] great popular leaders? [Her] sages? At most [she] may be able to give us a few names, in complete disorder, and fewer and fewer as one goes down the generations. The colonized seem condemned to lose [her] memory.”

—Albert Memmi³²³

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ This revisiting of Memmi’s quotation was published in both the 1986 issue of the LHA newsletter and in Nestle’s 1996 article, “A Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York.” Nestle flips the gender pronoun from ‘him’ to ‘her’ to re-use the quotation to serve the lesbian feminist imperative to develop a sense of empowerment through historical (or ‘herstorical’) knowledge.

The above quote begins an announcement about the formation of a new Building Fund, published in the September 1986 issue of the Lesbian Herstory Archives newsletter. The archives, the announcement reads, is a “concrete representation of a people’s refusal to lose their memory” (LHA, 1986, p. 2). For more than 13 years, the collections had occupied the Upper West Side apartment and had been visited by thousands of women who had “come to see and touch” (LHA, 1986, p. 2). In 1986, the work of the archives was overseen by Nestle, Edel, and Judith Schwartz, a records manager by trade who had come to live at the apartment, and they had begun referring to themselves as “coordinators” to distinguish themselves from the many volunteers who came and helped process and catalogue the materials. By this time, however, the coordinators recognized that the archives needed to be stored in a space that was secure, climate controlled, and large enough for the collections to grow. They also wanted to have a new gallery and performing space, a common area for meetings, and a residential area that would be home to a live-in caretaker. The coordinators realized the importance of owning a building that is “worthy of the women the archives is dedicated to preserving” (LHA, 1986, p. 2). To this end, they had established a fundraising committee that was dedicated to the purpose of raising enough money to purchase a permanent home for the archives and charged with finding and securing that new space. The first event organized by this committee—a dance called “Buy a Brick” at New York University—had already raised \$6,000 for the special account (LHA, 1986, p. 2). The announcement reached out to women across the country and abroad to help raise additional funds by direct donation, organizing fundraising events in their local communities, or simply “shar[ing] the story of our work” (LHA, 1986, p. 2).

Maxine Wolfe, who joined the archives in 1984 as a volunteer and later became a coordinator, spoke at length about the Building Fund and how the archives came to find its permanent home—a limestone building (not a brownstone) in Park Slope, Brooklyn, far from the gentrification that had made Manhattan untenable for small organizations.³²⁴ As Wolfe recalled, the coordinators began

³²⁴ Wolfe, 2013.

talking about the need for a larger space as early as 1986, but the discussions really moved ahead when Nestle informed the coordinators committee that she wanted the archives out of her apartment before her 50th birthday. The fact that Nestle had set a timeline for the move was a motivating factor, but still, volunteers and co-ordinators were hesitant in the beginning of the search because the archives did not have a stable source of income. Despite their charitable status, operating grants were not forthcoming and the archives refused to apply for government funding as a political stance against what they perceived to be the neo-colonial powers of the United States.³²⁵ Money, Wolfe explained, would come into the archives because visitors would donate a few dollars or “generous friends” would pay the electric bill or phone bill.³²⁶ The LHA had also been priced out of Manhattan, where houses were far too expensive for a small organization to afford. The archives’ ties to the Upper West Side were also disappearing; Nestle was facing possible eviction from her rent-controlled apartment so that it could be transitioned into a condominium and Womanbooks, a feminist bookstore at 201 West 92nd Street that had brought many lesbians to the neighbourhood, was struggling to stay alive under new ownership.³²⁷ The coordinators began looking outside of Manhattan. Just as the rent-controlled apartment in the Upper West Side and the politics of Manhattan had allowed the archives to emerge and develop in the early years, the urban culture of Park Slope would play a significant role in the archives’ move to Brooklyn.

Wolfe and another LHA volunteer, Beth Haskell, had both purchased places in Park Slope, a neighbourhood in Brooklyn that was becoming better known for its lesbian community.³²⁸ Not only were prices more reasonable in Park Slope—around \$500,000 for a sizeable space—, but the coordinators recognized the importance of situating the archives in a neighbourhood where they could draw in volunteers from the local area. As Wolfe recalled, everyone was still incredibly nervous about the prospect of raising half a million dollars from community pockets. Notes from

³²⁵ Nestle, 2014.

³²⁶ Wolfe, 2013.

³²⁷ Nestle, 2014.

³²⁸ Wolfe, 2013.

the coordinating committee meetings in early 1991 indicate that the coordinators worked with a lesbian real estate agent and had looked at several possible buildings, including a 23,000 square-foot commercial building formally used as a bakery.³²⁹ They were also cognizant of the deadline that Nestle had imposed for getting the collections out of her apartment—the end of 1991.³³⁰ They considered renting a space while they continued to look for a suitable building and even discussed the possibility of moving the collections into the Gay and Lesbian Centre.³³¹ None of these options were ideal. Wolfe remembered the meeting at which the coordinating committee finally made the decision to push ahead with a fundraising plan and to pursue a place in Park Slope:

Beth and I had both bought places that were a lot less expensive and we just were two people who had bought places, which if you ever buy a place you have to make a decision to do it then you do it. If you wait to decide until you think you're ready you're never going to do it. So, basically we said that night, I remember it clearly, we said, "Listen folks, it doesn't matter whether the house costs \$500,000 or \$300,000 because you know what, we have zero. Whatever we need we're going to have to raise."³³²

The first step in the fundraising plan was to write a letter to everyone on the LHA's mailing list and ask for money. In a 2004 interview with Sarah Schulman, Wolfe describes her long activist history from her attendance at the 1963 March on Washington, during which Martin Luther King, Jr, delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech calling for the end of racism, to her solidarity work in GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) and ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) (Schulman & Hubbard, 2004). Wolfe had been involved with both direct action vis-à-vis sit-ins and protest, as well as political organizing, through Left groups such as the socialist feminist group CARASA (Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse), the lesbian feminist Lesbian Avengers, and CUNY Lesbian and Gay People, which she founded while teaching at CUNY's City College (Schulman & Hubbard, 2004). When word broke that the LHA

³²⁹ LHA. (1991, Jan 15). [Minutes from the Coordinator's Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³³⁰ LHA. (1991, Feb 6). [Minutes from the Coordinator's Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Wolfe, 2013.

was planning a direct mail campaign, Sean Strub, a member of ACT UP who knew of Wolfe's work with the Archives, offered to organize the mail-out letter.³³³ Although Strub had a reputation for undertaking successful direct mail campaigns for ACT UP, the coordinators turned down his offer. As Wolfe explained to me in our interview, Strub admitted to the coordinators that his mailing list did not include many lesbian women and he was interested in adding the LHA's contacts to his own list of contacts.³³⁴ The LHA had a "hot list," but they also were not in a position to share the names of women with an outside organizer because the coordinators knew that a significant proportion of the women on this list would not feel comfortable receiving direct mail from another queer activist group; open solicitation was also risky because many of these women were not out to their families, their work colleagues, or their landlords.³³⁵ Professional fundraisers also offered to help build fundraising strategies for the LHA, but coordinators balked at the idea that the archives would engage in any form of fundraising that would privilege some women and not others. For example, one fundraising plan recommended that the archives offer wealthy donors the opportunity to name shelves in the library in their honour, or that they establish an advisory board of famous women—e.g., Audre Lorde and Jewelle Gomez—to engender trust in potential donors.³³⁶ As Wolfe explained, the coordinators did not think it was ethical or politically acceptable to acknowledge donors in these special ways just because they had money to give and didn't necessarily put in the work to maintain the collections.³³⁷ In the end, a volunteer who had done some direct mail work for Time Magazine offered to write the fundraising letter and it was signed, Sincerely, *The Women of the Archives*—the names Deborah Edel, Joan Nestle, and Judith Schwartz are listed as coordinators on

³³³ Minutes from the April 9, 1991 meeting of the coordinators indicate that Shawn Strub had met with several of the members to discuss the direct mail campaign. Strub was willing to cover the costs of printing mailing material—about \$20,000—if the Herstory would pay for postage to 50,000 addresses. The minutes show that the coordinators discussed the benefits of this but recognized that they had not ever undertaken such a large campaign and needed to solidify their fundraising strategy before moving forward. LHA. (1991, Apr 9). [Minutes of the Coordinators Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³³⁴ Wolfe, 2013.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ LHA. (n.d. [1989?]). [Fundraising Proposal]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³³⁷ Wolfe, 2013.

the top right-hand corner.³³⁸ It went out in winter 1989 and, as Wolfe recalled, “We got \$60,000 in a minute.”³³⁹

As Wolfe remembered, the LHA continued to send out fundraising letters to their mailing list and every time, the archives would get back “huge amounts of money.”³⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the hunt for a suitable space persisted. Wolfe recalled that one day, she was walking up 14th Street in the South Slope area of Park Slope, and noticed a for sale sign up in the window of a large limestone house just a few doors down from Prospect Park. That same day, LHA volunteer Lucinda Zoe, who also lived in the Park Slope area, walked by the same house and alerted the coordinators. A few of the women came to look at the house and realized that it was large enough for the collection and the third floor could be converted into an apartment where the live-in caretaker would reside. By this time, the LHA had also raised almost \$150,000 for a down payment and were ready to buy. Wolfe explained that the house was vacant at the time; it had been bought by a corporation to house an employee and his family, but that the employee had been relocated only three months after moving into the neighbourhood. The corporation had priced the house at a lower than usual mark to sell it quickly, and the coordinators saw this as an urgent opportunity. Minutes from the August 1, 1991 meeting of the coordinators indicate that the house had been rated at a 7.7 on a scale of 10 by a construction engineer and that it had only minor structural problem.³⁴¹ The decision was made to move ahead with an offer and the realtor gave the LHA until October 10th to secure a mortgage.³⁴² Meanwhile, the coordinators began looking for a bank.

As Wolfe explained, the North Slope area of Park Slope had begun a redevelopment process, spurred in part by the community development activities of Brooklyn Union Gas, the forerunner to the current utilities company, Brooklyn National Grid.³⁴³ Wolfe recalled that, for

³³⁸ LHA. (1989). [Friends of the Archives campaign letter]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³³⁹ Wolfe, 2013.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ LHA. (1991, Aug 1). [Minutes of the Coordinators Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Wolfe, 2013.

many years, the gas company had putting money into upgrading and renovating houses in various Brooklyn neighbourhoods as part of a community development project known as the Cinderella Project. The goal was to encourage New Yorkers to move into the neighbourhoods that they serviced. The first renovated home in Park Slope was a house on Flatbush Avenue that Brooklyn Union Gas had bought, renovated, and then sold to two gay men. As Wolfe remembered, there was a lesbian woman who served as a Vice President at Brooklyn Union Gas and, when she heard that the archives were interested in moving to the Park Slope area, she contacted the Community Capital Bank and encouraged them to arrange a mortgage for the LHA. The bank agreed to support the small not-for-profit archives, despite its unstable funding, and offered to mortgage the remaining cost of the home at a relatively high interest rate. The coordinators agreed to the terms and saved a reserved fund to make any needed preparation or repairs in the house.

In all of my interviews with community archivists involved in buying the house, each was careful to note that the purchase was not a simply legal process. When the offer was made, the LHA's lawyer, Carol L. Buell, arranged for a cheque in the amount of \$33,300 to be mailed to an escrow agent on August 13, 1991.³⁴⁴ On August 29, 1991, the lawyers representing the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc. received a letter from the escrow agent regarding the sale of the property at 484 14th Street.³⁴⁵ The letter stated that the owners of the property, RRI (Cardinal) wanted to withdraw their acceptance of the offer to purchase, as the corporation believed that the LHEF was insolvent and not financially sound—the LHA had not yet secured a mortgage by this date. Wolfe recalled that RRI (Cardinal) had become aware that they were significantly underpricing the building and had already found another buyer, a group home, willing to pay more money for the property.³⁴⁶ Indeed, the minutes of the coordinator's meeting from August 19, 1991, indicate that

³⁴⁴ Buel, C.L. (1991, Aug 13). [Letter to Robert Seward, Esq. from Carol L. Buell]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁴⁵ The original letter is missing from the Lesbian Herstory Archives organizational files; however, a subsequent letter from Carol L. Buel to Robert Seward, Esq. makes reference to this correspondence. Buel, C.L. (1991, Sep 4). [Letter to Roberts Seward, Esq. from Carol L. Buell]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁴⁶ Wolfe, 2013.

the sellers had received an offer from “the state” for \$340,000, significantly more than the offer of \$313,000 that they had accepted from the LHA.³⁴⁷ They refused to sign the contract unless the LHA could provide within one week a letter from a bank guaranteeing a loan, a guarantor, and letters from “board” members stating that they would personally guarantee a loan for the remaining money owed, roughly \$187,000, as stipulated in the contract.³⁴⁸ The coordinators scrambled to gather the necessary paperwork, but all was for naught. As Buell points out in her response, the cheque sent to the escrow agent on August 13th had, in fact, been cashed, binding the purchaser to the terms of the purchase agreement under New York State law.³⁴⁹ RRI (Cardinal) could not back out of the deal without incurring significant penalties and risking a legal case against them. Once the mortgage was secured with Community Capital Bank, the archives became owners of the building. The closing date was listed as December 12, 1991, just in time to meet Nestle’s deadline to have the collection moved out of her apartment.³⁵⁰

As Edel remembered, the news of the house went out to supporters with another fundraising letter, asking that women send in a little more money to help the archives pay off their debts quickly and ensure that the organization would not have to pay all of the interest that would be due on their 30-year-mortgage.³⁵¹ She recalled that there were women in Alaska who held a ping-pong tournament to raise money, a group of women in the Denver area who held a concert to raise funds, and a number of people who organized house parties or showed movies to raise money for the Building Fund. Wolfe explained that most donations that came in were in the amounts of twenty dollars, twenty-five dollars, and even less.³⁵² One of her favourite moments from that

³⁴⁷ LHA. (1991, Aug 19). [Minutes of the Coordinators Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. See also Thistlethwaite, P. (1991, Sep 12). [Minutes of the Coordinators Meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁴⁹ Buel, C.L. (1991, Sep 4). [Letter to Robert Seward, Esq. from Carol L. Buel]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁵⁰ Minutes from a coordinators meeting that took place July 1, 1991, indicate that the move date was set for July 21-23; however, Nestle noted in our interview that repairs and renovations would delay the move until mid-1992. LHA. (1991, Jul 1). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁵¹ Edel, 2013.

³⁵² Wolfe, 2013.

fundraising campaign was when the archives received a letter from a woman who sent in five postage stamps and wrote that she was on welfare and didn't have any money to send, but wanted to help the archives get a home. Nestle recalled that Edel likely contributed the most money of any individual donor, around \$5,000 out of her own pocket.³⁵³

With fundraising ongoing, the archives began preparations for the move to Park Slope. The June 1993 newsletter describes how the first necessary step in the process was to make the first floor of the new building wheelchair accessible and to improve the security of the building overall to host the archival documents (LHA, 1993). The building also had to be repaired and retrofitted to meet building codes for a dwelling occupied by a non-profit educational foundation. Polly Thistlethwaite writes in her building update that architects Joan Byron and Lynn Gernert volunteered to help the archives renovate the building and assist with navigating the “bureaucratic forest—the maze of requirements, inspections, run-arounds, and revisions otherwise known as the New York City Department of Buildings” (LHA, 1993, p. 3). Two women contractors also assisted with renovating the bathroom to meet Byron's original plans. Thistlethwaite also notes that there was considerable controversy over the archives' decision to install a wheelchair lift in front of the building, to make the space accessible. She writes:

At first, our efforts to add a lift to the front of our landmark building were met with some resistance from some of the local community board. At an initial public hearing, objections raised included overblown concerns about the ‘unsightliness’ of any modern equipment as it would perhaps sully the turn-of-the-century appearance of the entire block. Another irrational fear voiced was that neighbourhood children might somehow become impaled on the wheelchair lift. . . . As you can guess, many of the concerns raised revealed thinly veiled homophobia in a neighbourhood that is better known for being lesbian-laden and lesbian-friendly (LHA, 1993, p. 3).

The collections were moved into the Park Slope house in 1992—almost two decades after they were started in the home of Joan Nestle. For the first time in its history, the organization would also publish its telephone number widely—which Thistlethwaite had registered as “499-DYKE”—³⁵⁴ although its exact address would be given out only after potential visitors made their first contact

³⁵³ Nestle, 2014.

³⁵⁴ LHA. (1992, Jan 2). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

with the organization.³⁵⁵ The house would officially open to visitors on Sunday, June 20, 1993, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and a celebration picnic at Prospect Park.³⁵⁶ Nestle recalled that there was a lesbian marching band that played up and down the street during the opening party and that literally hundreds of women came out to tour the house.³⁵⁷

Taking Care of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, 1993-2003

The June 1992 newsletter reports that the LHA purchased the property at 484 14th Street for \$313,000, with a down payment of \$163,000 and \$20,000 in closing costs and fees. The archives owed \$150,000 to Community Capital Bank at business loan rates, to be called in after five years, and an additional \$48,000 in private loans to individuals in the community (LHA 1992, p. 3). As Wolfe explained, Edel was determined to pay off the money owed to the bank before the five-year term expired so that the archives would avoid paying the rather high interest payment that was due.³⁵⁸ After capital expenses were paid out to make the home suitable for the collections and the caretaker apartment was renovated, every penny of money collected went into the mortgage fund. By the end of 1996, the archives had completely paid off their mortgage. Edel explained how this happened:

Within six years, we paid off the mortgage. And this dear sweet little bank couldn't believe it, and probably hates us to this day because interest would have kept them going. And we were finished! That's it! [No more] mortgage—which meant that we didn't have to worry because, as the treasurer, which is what I am, and the person who is always keeping the financial records, I'm always worried about the money. I've been the treasurer since the beginning, and every penny is accounted for. I was worried each month. [Our mortgage payment] was about \$1500 a month, and that was a big chunk to make sure we got in each month. So when we could raise enough money to pay it off that was incredible.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ In a letter to “Coordinating Friends”, Judith Schwartz supports the decision to make the phone number widely available to the public, but expresses some hesitancy about making the address widely known. She suggests that the Archives first spends some time “getting to know our neighbours” before taking any steps to be more public about the purpose and location of the organization. Schwartz, J. (1991, Nov 6). [Letter to coordinating friends]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁵⁶ Promotional material and programs for the official opening are in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁵⁷ Nestle, 2014.

³⁵⁸ Wolfe, 2013.

³⁵⁹ Edel, 2013.

The cover of the December 1996 newsletter shows a photograph of fourteen smiling “archivettes” in front of the door to the archives, taken in honour of paying off the mortgage on the building (LHA 1996, p. 1).

When I asked community archivists to speculate on why they thought the Lesbian Herstory Archives was able to fundraise such an incredible amount of money for the purchase of a house, they each replied with similar answers. Edel believed that the LHA was among the first lesbian organizations to own its own building and, hence it had earned a reputation for being a stable and important part of the community.³⁶⁰ She also noted that there was more money to be spent in the late 1980s and early ‘90s, before the beginning of the economic downturn that has rattled much of North America since that time. Edel also emphasized that the Archives had “touched people’s hearts” in a way that few other organization had for lesbian and feminist women.³⁶¹ Nestle approached this answer by describing how the archives had profoundly impacted women and these people wanted to pay it back.³⁶² She explained:

These grassroots undertakings have an organic life, so for many years [the Archives] stayed in the apartment, it was sheltered by the apartment and the wonderful experience of women coming in would say, “oh, I’m a little uneasy, it’s someone’s private home.” And within an hour they were saying, “where’s the public restroom?” That whole thing touched so many lives. ... The community responded because of the organic time of change. Everyone who had visited, used, spoke to us, knew we were for real. Knew that they had drank a cup of tea or had a piece of watermelon or did something unexpected at an archives. Saw us give a slide show. ... So then the community had developed to the point, and I think there were other archives by that point, so that’s another reason you know by now... It wasn’t a chosen time, but it was a ripe time because people had seen that the apartment was overcrowding, that my bedroom was the audiovisual room. There was no room anymore and people know that I was aging and some people knew that I had been ill, so it was a ripe time. And there was enough growth in consciousness about archiving, about putting ourselves back into history in the ‘90s. Maybe would not have worked in the ‘80s... The most important thing, the most amazing thing, is we didn’t cultivate wealthy contributors. We [just] had a newsletter. So that’s the answer, that we were known for our work and the work represented everyone. Everyone had a longing to be in history.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Nestle, 2014

³⁶³ Ibid.

The fundraising campaign reached donors from all walks of life, from older generations of women who came out into the bar culture of the 1950s and '60s—many of whom are now passed on—and lesbian feminists of the 1970s, to radical lesbians and separatists, to lesbians involved with BDSM and pornography. Straight women and gay men who sympathized with the work of the LHA also gave money. As Nestle emphasized, the openness and willingness of the archives to search out, rescue, and preserve records from an increasingly broad culture of lesbian women afforded them access to a diverse and enriching group of people, willing to give back.

The grassroots structure and history of the archives also played a significant role in its ability to raise funds from a broad community. In the early 1990s, lesbian culture and lesbian feminist culture had reached the peak of its economic influence and women were in positions to give money to initiatives that were not necessarily professionalized. As Wolfe explained, lesbian women, in particular, had been deprived of a sense of their own culture for so long—the academic study of gay and lesbian people was just emerging and no one could take for granted that the lesbian culture that had developed in the wake of feminism and lesbian feminism would survive.³⁶⁴ Bookstores and other women's spaces were starting to shut down, and there were fewer and fewer meeting places for lesbian women outside of academia. The LHA was not a professionalized organization, which made it more welcoming for working class women, and it was a community space. The January 1995 newsletter reports that the archives had started a series of community events under the title "At Home with the Archives," and was developing more community outreach programming (LHA, 1995, p. 3). Wolfe explained that, "Everybody was thrilled that we were actually going to have a place where they could come to, that would keep their papers and their lives."³⁶⁵ When the organization asked for money, it poured in at the rate of about \$2,000 per month, and after the

³⁶⁴ Wolfe, 2013.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

mortgage was paid off, the community could breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the collections would be cared for in perpetuity in a lesbian-owned, lesbian-run building.³⁶⁶

Caring for the archives was both a philosophical and pragmatic concern for the LHA coordinators. After years of working on the collections at Nestle's Upper West Side apartment, coordinators and volunteers recognized the symbolic importance of keeping the archives in a home-like setting where they would be nurtured for by someone who could greet visitors at the door and make them feel at home as they experienced the LHA, offer them a cup of tea or a slice of watermelon. Nestle described in our interview how vital this intimacy and personal interaction was to the continued work of the archives.³⁶⁷ The collections, and now the building that housed them, also needed to be cared for. There needed to be someone on-site to monitor the environmental controls, to watch for pests, pay the phone bill, and to take out the garbage. The LHA had also obtained its first email address upon moving to Brooklyn, and records show that, by the middle of the 1990s, the number of reference requests received by email was a growing concern.³⁶⁸ Someone needed to respond to reference requests, as well as maintain the technology that supported the intellectual control over the collections.

Early on in the discussions about moving the archives out of Nestle's apartment, coordinators had put forth a plan to reserve a space in the archives for a live-in caretaker. While the purpose of the live-in caretaker aligns nicely with the LHA's political and organizational history, it was also a practical solution for how the archives might maintain its collections without having to pay an employee to do so. From its conception, the caretaker's apartment required careful consideration in the planning. The minutes from the October 29th, 1991 meeting of the coordinators, show that architect Joan Byron had recommended that the organization declare the

³⁶⁶ Edel, D. (1993?). *Treasurer's Report*. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁶⁷ Nestle, 2014.

³⁶⁸ The LHA keeps all of its correspondence in filing cabinets in the Periodicals Room on the second floor. These are filed by year received, and by 1995, the number of printouts from the email account begin to swell. By the end of the 2000s, the Archives had received so many requests by email that it no longer printed out each set of correspondence to be filed.

building for use as a two-story non-profit with an apartment, rather than a three-story non-profit with a caretaker space to avoid problems with zoning regulations.³⁶⁹ This would also necessitate the construction of a wall separating the third floor from the archives and additional construction work. The presence of the caretaker's apartment raised concerns again in late 1992, when the Expeditor requested clarification on the relationship between the caretaker and the archives as part of the building inspection process.³⁷⁰ The inspection was necessary to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy required to certify that the building was in compliance with applicable building codes and suitable for occupancy.³⁷¹

When the archives moved to Park Slope in 1992, coordinators Polly Thistlethwaite and Lucinda Zoe, then romantic partners, also moved into the building, occupying the third floor and becoming the first caretakers of the archives.³⁷² As the records show, the caretakers were to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the archives and, in turn, receive a lowered rent for the two-bedroom apartment they lived in.³⁷³ As the archives have developed over time, the presence of a caretaker has been both essential to the survival of the organization and a controversial problem that continues to cause friction among coordinators and between the archives and its users.

The first indication that the caretaker's apartment would become a controversial part of the LHA's governance came in early 1994, when Thistlethwaite and Zoe ended their relationship, and one of the women decided to move out.³⁷⁴ The minutes from the January 5, 1994 coordinators meeting indicate that Thistlethwaite had moved into Edel's co-op and that the c

³⁶⁹ LHA. (1991, Oct 29). [Minutes from the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷⁰ LHA. (1992, Nov 22). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷¹ The Certificate of Occupancy was not actually issued until some time in early 1994, as noted in the minutes of the March 16, 1994 meeting of the coordinators. LHA. (1994, Mar 16). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷² Polly Thistlethwaite, Interview. February 14, 2014.

³⁷³ Buell, C.L. (1992, Dec 11). [Letter to Ms. Deborah Edel re: Caretaker's Apartment Declaration, submitted to Joan Byron's expediter]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷⁴ Thistlethwaite, 2014.

ordinators would have to discuss how to deal with the situation at the next meeting.³⁷⁵ There is no other mention of the caretaker's apartment, however, until August of that year, when minutes show that a researcher named only as "Sally" would be moving into the apartment for six months while she uses the collections to work on a project related to butch/femme culture.³⁷⁶ When I spoke with Polly Thistlethwaite, she clarified that she had initially moved out of the space, but after Zoe also decided to move out, Thistlethwaite returned to serve as the caretaker for several more months.³⁷⁷ In spring 1996, the coordinators held a meeting to discuss the caretaker's apartment and decide if they should continue to have a caretaker-in-residence, given the workload that Thistlethwaite undertook and the risk related to relying on a resident to perform so much of the work at the archives.³⁷⁸ They also needed to determine the details of managing this role and the lease agreement that the archives would have with the occupant of the apartment. The minutes for this meeting show that the discussion took more than three hours and that, by the end, the coordinators had reaffirmed the importance of the caretaker-in-residence and selected a new caretaker, Saskia Scheffer, who would move into the apartment that July.³⁷⁹ The minutes also indicate that the coordinators had some concern over the sustainability of the caretaker role, as it was pioneered by Polly Thistlethwaite. The caretaker had, up to that point, been available to meet and greet visitors, take in deliveries, and generally be available at the house to ensure that the building was safe and secure. This was a significant amount of work and the coordinators understood that a caretaker might ask for assistance from another coordinator or volunteer at any time. The coordinators also rejected the idea of reducing the size of the caretaker's apartment from its current four rooms to three, suggesting that a smaller apartment would not be suitable for two women, if the live-in caretaker lived with a lover, friend, or sub-let. If anyone did share this apartment, however, she would not be considered a co-caretaker and must identify as a lesbian. It is also reported that

³⁷⁵ LHA. (1994, Jan 5). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷⁶ LHA. (1994, Aug 3). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷⁷ Thistlethwaite, 2014.

³⁷⁸ LHA. (1994, May 9). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

Thislethwaite stressed the importance of establishing boundaries between her private and personal life and the work that she did for the LHA, and encouraged the future caretaker to take time away from the collection, if needed. A rental rate of \$600.00 per month was confirmed, which covered basic expenses related to the space, such as electricity and water; rent money collected would be earmarked for these expenses and for other basic expenses related to the operation of the archives. The income from the rental space would help stabilize the LHA's finances and ensure that basic expenses could be paid even if fundraising income fluctuated. Finally, the coordinators decided that the caretaker would be held to a three-year term that could be extended after two years if desirable, and that any future caretakers would be decided upon through a random draw of names submitted by those coordinators interested in taking on this role.

In 2000, the terms of the caretaker-in-residence were revisited after Saskia Scheffer had decided to extend her lease agreement and remain caretaker for another term.³⁸⁰ Coordinators determined it best to establish a guaranteed four-year term for the caretaker, with the possibility of extending her lease for an additional four-year term. In the third year of the first term, "anyone wanting to put their hat in the ring to be caretaker next, including the current caretaker, will do so at that time and discussions will begin on the appointment of the caretaker for the next cycle/increment."³⁸¹ Minutes show that there was no further discussion about the caretaker's duties, who qualifies as a possible caretaker and how the criteria for the role will be determined, or how coordinators would trigger a discussion about the role in the seventh year of a two-term caretaker lease. At a subsequent meeting, it was clarified that the current coordinator might indicate a desire to serve for a third term, if no other person wanted to take on this role.³⁸² There appears to have been some additional discussion about the benefits of keeping the same person in the caretaker role for an extended period of time for organizational continuity, as well as the advantages of having a

³⁸⁰ LHA. (2000, Nov 3). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² LHA. (2000, Nov 29). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

rotating caretaker to sustain the energy and momentum of the person in that role—as Thistlethwaite confirmed in our discussion, the caretaker role was not only a time-consuming position but also an emotional commitment to the archives that could easily overwhelm.³⁸³ The role of the caretaker and the caretaker’s apartment will be revisited in Chapter 7, when I turn my attention to the sustainability of the archives.

The very nature of caring for the Lesbian Herstory Archives also shifted during the 1990s, as the coordinators quickly realized that a significant amount of the work they were contributing was directly related to the maintenance of the house and not to the organization itself. At the same time, the move to Brooklyn, while celebrated by lesbian women from across the country, did have some unanticipated negative consequences for the archives. By the fall of 1994, for example, the number of volunteers had dropped and the kinds of activities that had once worked at the Upper West Side location seemed to not function well in the archives’ new home. The September 21, 1994 minutes document a discussion among coordinators, summarized as a crisis of organizational growth and changes:

In the past, when we met at Joan’s apartment, everyone was together and could see everything that was going on...less feeling of division between ‘experts’ and ‘novices’ or coordinators and volunteers. Anyone could plug in and learn something right away. Now, we are never here collectively outside of meetings, and volunteers work alone. The social aspect has been lost, and labour has become alienated. It’s boring for the volunteers, and they drift away. We need to restore the sense of community. We suggested that this could be done with a commitment from as many coordinators as possible to make it to as many volunteer nights as possible... even if not for the entire time. Drop by, chat with the volunteers, help out.³⁸⁴

Geography also played a part in the drop in volunteer numbers, as coordinators noted that volunteer nights were scheduled to take place on weeknights and this meant that really only Brooklynites would attend—former volunteers from Manhattan would consider this trip too far to make on a weekday. The lack of volunteers meant that the caretaker experienced a greater burden of responsibilities just managing day-to-day tasks such as answering remote reference questions and

³⁸³ Thistlethwaite, 2014.

³⁸⁴ LHA. (1994, Sep 21). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

returning mail. There was also an extended discussion throughout 1994, about the safety of the collection and whether or not visitors should be allowed to be in the archives without another volunteer or coordinator present.³⁸⁵ At the time, Thistlethwaite reported that she believed records to be missing and possibly taken by visitors and there was a need to be more cautious about letting visitors roam unsupervised throughout the house; she even suggested requiring them to place their bags in a locker or behind one of the couches on the main floor before entering.³⁸⁶ The October 24, 1994 minutes note that both of the missing files were found.³⁸⁷ In the interim panic, however, coordinators resisted implementing any additional security measures to avoid regulating visitors in any unnecessary way.

A large number of policies and procedures also developed around this time, which not only helped visitors know what to expect when they came to the house, but also assisted volunteers with the work that they took on.³⁸⁸ Some policies were reaffirmed, such as the agreement that only lesbians could serve as coordinators; and others were revisited and broadened. At the November 17, 1993 meeting, for example, Thistlethwaite urged the coordinators to be more accommodating to male visitors, and the committee agreed to open the house to men on two weeknights and one Sunday each month.³⁸⁹ By the end of the decade, the committee would agree that men could come to the house during any open visiting hours, but they would post a sign for events that were meant to be women-only that would state, “All Women Welcome.”³⁹⁰ By the middle of 1996, coordinators had decided that anyone who self-identified as a woman was welcome during these women-only

³⁸⁵ See minutes of the coordinators meetings for 1994. Copies in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ LHA. (1994, Oct 24). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁸⁸ Minutes from coordinators meetings from this period document both routine maintenance needs, such as leaky skylights and managing the Xerox machine, as well as the development of policies and workflows for how to care for the house. On August 21, 1996, for example, Wolfe submitted a set of guidelines to the coordinators that outlines the ways in which the Archives needed to manage staffing and how to respond to phone messages. The following month, on September 11, coordinators met with architects to inspect the second floor to determine if more support beams were needed to support the weight of archival materials. Copies of these meeting minutes are in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁸⁹ LHA. (1993, Nov 17). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁰ Edel, 2013.

events, including transgender women; the invitation was not, however, extended to transgender men.³⁹¹ An incident in late 1993, involving the unauthorized publication of photographs of archival material in the *Advocate*, triggered discussion about the importance of maintaining the privacy of women who have donated their records to the archives and led to the development of a policy of no photography in the building.³⁹² The ongoing discussions of privacy and intellectual property sparked by the issue with the photographer also led to the development of tighter restrictions on the dissemination of copies made from the archives' collections. The July 26, 1995 minutes make note of the purchase of two stamps, "not for duplication" and "this book is part of the LHA collection," to be stamped on any material leaving the archives as a way to exert intellectual control.³⁹³ Policies regarding the use of interns at the archives were also developed. Although the first intern was invited in 1991, by the end of the decade, the increasing regularity of interns at the archives had spurred a number of discussions about the treatment and supervision of these labourers, the handling of monies received from their host institutions, and whether or not they should be allowed to access confidential information in the archives' databases.³⁹⁴ In one meeting, coordinators discussed whether or not to accept an intern because she was supported by a Fulbright scholarship, and they were unsure if this would make the organization accountable to a state government.³⁹⁵ The archives continued to reject state intervention as a political and philosophical stance, even if this meant losing out on possible interns and grant money. The coordinators also became aware that the Schlesinger Archives [at Radclyffe College] had come into possession of records belonging to Eleanor Coit, an early labour organizer from New York.

³⁹¹ LHA. (1996, Jul 2) 17). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹² In December 1993, Deb Edel sent a letter to Impact Visual, informing the publisher that its photographer, Donna Binder, had violated an agreement that she had with the Archives not to publish any photographs of the Archives without explicit permission. Subsequent discussion appears in the minutes of the coordinators meetings on a number of occasions, from late 1993 to late 1994. Edel, D. (1993, Dec 3). [Letter to Impact Visuals]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹³ LHA. (1995, Jul 26). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁴ LHA. (1999, Jan 15). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁵ LHA. (1994, Jun 8). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

Minutes from November 30, 1994, note that the coordinators were concerned that the Schlesinger, a mainstream archives, was not including any mention in the finding aid that Coit was a lesbian.³⁹⁶ The lack of acknowledgement of her sexuality both reaffirmed the purpose of the LHA and fuelled their distrust of public and mainstream institutions to properly care for lesbian materials.

The formalizing of policies around privacy and intellectual control, the restrictions on men in the archives, and the continued distrust of the mainstream must have led some in the community to perceive the LHA as a separatist organization, and this had a number of ramifications. The year 1994, for example, was the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising and, as early as January 1993, several New York organizations had begun preparations for commemorating and celebrating this historic event.³⁹⁷ The Lesbian Herstory Archives nevertheless perceived that they were excluded from some of the organizing around the anniversary, and in particular, felt slighted by both the Stonewall History Project and the New York Public Library. Both of these organizations wanted to use material from the LHA's collections, but were not forthcoming in welcoming the coordinators from the Archives to the decision-making table. At many points throughout the planning phase, minutes from the coordinators meetings suggest that there was ongoing and increasing tension between coordinators and representatives from more mainstream lesbian and gay organizations.³⁹⁸ In May of 1994, there is also a note that indicated some discussion about whether or not to even participate in the Stonewall 25 pride parade to take place the following month because the organizers had decided to curtail the participation of drag queens and dykes on bikes. In solidarity with drag queens and other groups perceived to be excluded from the Stonewall 25 events, the coordinators agreed to participate only in the dyke march, which would take place the preceding Saturday.³⁹⁹ Some women at the LHA appear to have felt that the exclusion of women and

³⁹⁶ LHA. (1994, Nov 30). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁷ The preparations for commemorating the 25th anniversary of Stonewall are documented throughout the minutes for coordinators meetings, beginning in early 1993 and throughout 1994. Copies in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁸ This tension begins with a note about wanting to withdraw support from the Stonewall History Project in the January 17, 1993 minutes of the coordinators meeting. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

³⁹⁹ Minutes from the coordinators meeting May 25, 1994. LHA Organizational Records provided on-site at the LHA.

marginalized voices was particularly emblematic of the continued sexism and discrimination lesbian women experienced from gay men's and mainstream organizations. It is also likely that the continued separatist stance many perceived the LHA to take would, in turn, alienate some community groups.

Perhaps the most public criticism of the Lesbian Herstory Archives unfolded in Cheryl Dunye's 1996 film *Watermelon Woman*, which depicts a young African-American woman searching for evidence of Black lesbian history at the fictional CLIT (Center for Lesbian Information and Technology) archives, a loosely veiled reference to the LHA. Although the protagonist does find some related records and is assisted by an archivist—all while seated at a kitchen table made to look exactly like the one that once belonged to Joan Nestle and which now resides in the archives' main processing room—the movie is openly critical of the separatist and white focus of the archives and laments the lack of Black lesbian history that has been preserved.⁴⁰⁰

As Thistlethwaite explained in our interview, the film's open criticism of the archives was not only hurtful because it dismissed the legacy of women such as Mabel Hampton, Georgia Brooks, and others in the emergence and development of the LHA, but it also had a particular sting because the filmmaker had initially contacted the archives for research materials and wanted to film part of the movie at the building in Park Slope.⁴⁰¹ Thistlethwaite recalled that it might have even been one of the LHA volunteers that connected Dunye with Ira Jeffries, who portrays the title character in the film. She remembers that Jeffries had been “hanging out” at the archives for some time before Dunye arrived.⁴⁰² As Thistlethwaite explained, the experience of working with Dunye only to be characterized in such a negative light left the archives even more vulnerable and frustrated by the lack of insight into the complicated nature of the LHA's work. She described the experience:

⁴⁰⁰ Dunye's film and its impact on community archives and lesbian organizing have been discussed by a number of scholars, including Foote (1997), Cvetkovich (2002, 2008), Cumber (2009), and Sheffield (2014).

⁴⁰¹ Thistlethwaite, 2014.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

I was working with filmmakers and journalism students and scholars using the Archives for research and the newly interested mainstream media and increasingly expanding varieties of journalism and documentary. The LHA had a lot of material about African-American lesbians, much of it photography, [and] donors did not want to include the legal deeds of gifts that traditional Archives require [because, for example] a widow, a lover, has no legal rights to cede a beloved's collection to an archives without expressed posthumous legal permission. That's how much of the LHA collection was formed and [as a result] most of it couldn't be used for mainstream release. Cheryl couldn't use much of it because of the distribution ambitions she had for the film. There were a lot of clearances that she couldn't get for a mainstream release film.⁴⁰³

Thistlethwaite then described how the coordinators had also decided that they did not want the movie to be shot inside the building. After the unauthorized publication of photographs in the *Advocate* and deciding that there would be a no photography policy in the archives to protect the privacy of those depicted in the records, they did not want to take the risk that Dunye's film would also expose someone, even accidentally. Thistlethwaite managed to find a space at the Hunter College Archives for the film shoot, but by that time, Dunye had partnered with author and filmmaker Sarah Schulman, and moved the film production to Philadelphia.

The narrative of the film also shifted at that time. As Thistlethwaite recalled, the "*Watermelon Woman* story portrays the LHA as a white woman's archives—it's really much more complicated than that".⁴⁰⁴ She went on to explain that, if she were to amend the narrative of the film, it would have included "dumpster diving for lesbian archives outside the New York Public Library" because, at that time, it was common for families to "sanitize" their collections before donating them to a mainstream institution.⁴⁰⁵ The LHA's dumpster rescues actually resulted in some illegally deeded collections finding their way into the archives.⁴⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the LHA's participation in Dunye's film was "particularly encumbered by the legal issues and not wanting to put certain images in a film for mainstream release."⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Shortly after the film was released, Thistethwaite made the difficult decision to step back from her commitment to the archives. The political, social, and cultural impact of the archives also appears to have waned around this time. Minutes from coordinators meetings focus on building maintenance and managing the collections; energies turn inward to sustaining the organization despite the decline in the lesbian feminist movement and the dwindling of excitement about the archives.

The Archives of Feelings, 2003-2014

The Lesbian Herstory Archives is necessitated by many forms of trauma, both insidious and overt, including silences, disrupted communications, lack of history and documentation, and homophobia, all of which have both public and private consequences... It is not a traditional public archive, having struggled for its existence without the institutional sanction or financial support that creates public libraries. The Lesbian Herstory archives [sic], and others like it, has been established from below in an effort to demonstrate that lesbianism has a history and to save materials that might otherwise be destroyed either because of overt hostility or ignorance. And in order to make erotic feelings the subject of archival history, the Lesbian Herstory Archives collects letters, diaries, flyers, and other ephemeral materials that might seem personal or private...the Archives has the potential to become a space for intimate communication.”

— Ann Cvetkovich⁴⁰⁸

Cheryl Dunye’s film continued to influence public impressions of the Lesbian Herstory Archives well into the next decade. *The Watermelon Woman* had also become the darling of an emerging multi- and trans-disciplinary academic literature that was beginning to revisit the purpose and place of archives in the communities they serve. Perhaps the most influential of these new studies is the often-referenced *An Archive of Feeling: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. In the single-authored book, Cvetkovich (2003) develops a queer approach to understanding trauma as an everyday experience for lesbian women and not something experienced only in brief moments of crisis. Lesbian women experience this everyday trauma, in part, because they have been neglected

⁴⁰⁸ Cvetkovich, A. (2003). *An archive of feeling: Trauma, sexuality, and lesbian public cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 78-79.

and rejected by homophobic, heterosexist, and patriarchal institutions. In order to reconcile this trauma, Cvetkovich argues that lesbian women must reclaim and rediscover their collective histories and confront and repair feelings of loss or grievances. She positions the archives as a place to engage in this affective work and, in particular, names the Lesbian Herstory Archives as an essential reparative space. She writes, "...in the absence of institutionalized documentation or in opposition to official histories, memory becomes a valuable historical resource, and ephemeral and personal collections of objects stand alongside the documents of the dominant culture in order to offer alternative modes of knowledge" (p. 8). Imbued with a residue of collective memory, the collections of the LHA offer the material means to memorialize, investigate, and cherish the passing of events beyond the women who directly experienced them. Visitors can touch and feel the pin buttons worn by women in the 1970s, they can read diaries from the 1940s, or look at pictures taken of intimate gatherings or public protests. The letters in the special collections stand in for all of the letters written between lovers, lost to history.

Cvetkovich acknowledges that *The Watermelon Woman* has been instrumental in bringing new attention to the archives. She writes, "Perhaps to the surprise of those who think of both traditional and grassroots archives as an esoteric interest, Cheryl Dunye's 1996 film *The Watermelon Woman* elevates the institution to a new level of popular visibility by making fun of it" (p. 239). She writes, "Those in the know would recognize CLIT as a parody of the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA), and while some might not find the joke funny, its humour can also be considered a form of respect and affection, demonstrating the important place of the archive in the lesbian popular imaginary" (p. 240). Cvetkovich notes, for example, that the archivist in the film, portrayed by Sarah Schulman, tells Dunye's protagonist character that the box of materials that she has ordered has not been processed because CLIT is a "volunteer run" collective, a playful poke at the sometimes misunderstood organizational structure of the Lesbian Herstory Archives (p. 239). Cvetkovich recognizes, however, that the "task of the archivist of emotion is an unusual one" (p. 243). That is, she gives credit to the physical and emotional labour contributed by LHA volunteers and

coordinators over the decades to bring together the material that has created this emotional touchstone for lesbians. She also celebrates the importance of the LHA, a recognition that had been suffering under criticism for almost a decade. Cvetkovich writes:

Both the LHA and its representation in *The Watermelon Woman* points to the vital role of archives within lesbian cultures as well as to their innovative and unusual forms of appearance. They demonstrate the profoundly affective power of a useful archive, especially an archive of sexuality and gay and lesbian life, which must preserve and produce not just knowledge, but feeling. Lesbian and gay history demands a radical archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism—all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive (p. 241).

The attention paid to the LHA by Cvetkovich was not only complimentary, but was also heard by a younger generation of women, as *An Archive of Feelings* was soon adopted as essential reading in Women's Studies, archival studies, cultural theory, sexuality studies, and media studies.

In 2009, when I began my PhD and started to tell people about the research that would eventually inform this study, no less than twenty colleagues asked me, "Have you read Cvetkovich?" Although Cvetkovich's book is certainly not the sole contributor to a cultural return to the LHA, it has played a large role in the renewed interest.

In my conversation with Maxine Wolfe, she speculated that the rise of sexuality studies and queer theory in the academy has contributed to a renewed interest in the archives, bringing in more researchers to access the collections.⁴⁰⁹ She also notes that the number of younger women seeking out the LHA has increased over the last decade, and many of these have come into contact with the archives through their academic coursework or because an instructor has encouraged them to visit. The interaction with so many academic researchers is, however, a significant shift for the archives, which in its early years, was visited mostly by women simply wanting the haptic experience of touching and feeling evidence of the past. Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, a member of the Coordinating Committee, confirmed that her first experience visiting the LHA was because her professor, Flavia

⁴⁰⁹ Wolfe, 2013.

Rando, brought her class to the archives.⁴¹⁰ Smith-Cruz has written about this experience and the impact that it has had on her as a lesbian and woman of colour in her unpublished manuscript, *Soon to be Seasoned: A Transitional Archivists' Account of the Lesbian Herstory Archives*.⁴¹¹ She also makes the distinction between researcher and visitor:

The difference between a researcher and a visitor is based on the motives of the patron. A researcher comes in with wide, wet eyes, from lack of sleep or wanting to be coddled since her dissertation deadlines are hovering over her shoulders, blocking out the sunlight. A visitor comes in excited and nostalgic, right hand gripping a digital camera, and left hand pinching her lover's wrist, ready to dance the "I told you so" since one of them didn't believe in the existence of lesbian herstory. Researchers go home and rethink their entire thesis statement. Visitors go home and make ancestral love.... As a community-built archives, LHA aims to have researchers and visitors be interchangeable; hopefully patrons find multiple reasons to visit the LHA. In other words, we want visitors to come in with new-found inspiration to write their memoirs, or at least donate their herstory to our collection, while researchers can at least masturbate before their rewrite (Smith 2009, p. 5).

While reviewing Smith's manuscript, which was found stuffed in a folder in one of the second-floor cabinets, I was reminded of a note that I had read in the minutes of the May 11, 1994 meeting of the coordinators. The coordinators had been asked by a West Coast researcher if she could take colour slides of images of lesbians back home, presumably to use them for her ongoing study. The coordinators refused the request and the minutes show that Edel emphasized that the coordinators needed to be cognizant that women give their records to the LHA because they want them to be in the archives, not because they want them to be studied or "put out into the world."⁴¹² The emotional value of the collection was often privileged over the research value, even though scholars such as Lillian Faderman have used the archives to produce groundbreaking work on lesbian histories.⁴¹³ The interaction with so many young scholars not only highlights the research value of

⁴¹⁰ Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, Interview. November 15, 2013.

⁴¹¹ Smith, S. (2009). *Soon to be seasoned: A transitional archivists' account of the Lesbian Herstory Archives*. Unpublished manuscript. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴¹² LHA. (1994, May 11). [Minutes of the Coordinators meeting]. Copy in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴¹³ Faderman, 2013.

the collections but also reaffirms the archives as the kind of emotional space Cvetkovich yearns for.⁴¹⁴

The emergence and proliferation of digital forms of documentation and communication have also had implications for the LHA and introduced the archives to a broader and more intergenerational community of women. Throughout the mid-1990s and continuing into the late 2000s, digital content companies such as EBSCO and Thompson Gale negotiated contracts with the LHA to access and digitize periodicals in the collection. The LHA was able to leverage the fact that, in many cases, it held the only known copies of lesbian newspapers and magazines; if digital content companies wanted to expand their holdings of queer material, they had to work with the LHA to access these periodicals. As Wolfe explained, the LHA managed to negotiate favourable contracts that allowed them to dictate the terms of access, arrange to have one of their own volunteers be paid to do the work, and to receive copies of any digitized records returned to the archives without restriction.⁴¹⁵ Although the projects were fraught with challenges, by the end of the 2000s, this work was completed, which brought the collections of the LHA online and a renewed recognition of the importance of the archives. The coordinators, Wolfe explained, are not afraid of the time that it takes to negotiate favourable contracts nor of the work involved with digitization projects, and this has allowed them to jump into digital preservation and online exhibitions without the same kind of inertia that prevents other small organizations from moving forward with digitization.

⁴¹⁴ The women of the Herstory have continued to work through organizational, philosophical and political problems with the same consensus-building governance model that was established in the 1970s, a feat that should not be undervalued. coordinators meet on a regular basis and discuss both pragmatic and intellectual concerns about the collections and the building that houses them. The Coordinating Committee has also survived the loss of Joan Nestle, who moved to Australia in the early 2000s, to be with her partner, Dianne Otto. Nestle remains a coordinator and frequently attends meetings by Skype, but her geographic distance from the Archives has had an impact on the balance of influence within the Committee. As she explained in our interview, her move to Australia has allowed other personalities to become more dominant, even if decisions are still consensus based. The Committee has also welcomed in new coordinators. Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz joined in 2009, Rachel Corbman in 2012, and in 2013, Kayleigh Salstrand joined as the first new coordinator to be invited through a newly implemented and formalized process. As Maxine Wolfe explained in our discussion, there is some understanding that the Herstory may not be as important to the lesbian community as it once was, but the work goes on and women continue to come to the Archives, as volunteers, as interns, as visitors, and as researchers.

⁴¹⁵ Wolfe, 2013.

As of 2009, the LHA has also had an informal relationship with Pratt Institute of Technology's School of Information and Library Science (Cocciolo, 2013). As noted at the beginning of this chapter, I was aware that the LHA had been sending materials to Pratt Institute under the stewardship of associate professor Anthony Cocciolo, who was then working with students in a digital archives course to digitize these materials and make them available online. Wolfe explained that the relationship came about because her daughter had been working at Pratt Institute in the library, and was aware that Cocciolo was looking for community-based archives that would be willing to lend materials to him for the purpose of teaching students how to plan and execute digitization projects. The archives had been keen to digitize their collection of cassette tapes for preservation and access purposes, but had been flabbergasted at the costs of doing this with a professional company. When Wolfe's daughter brought forward the proposal to work with Cocciolo, Wolfe saw this as an opportunity to complete the project for free. Cocciolo assured her that the class would be respectful of the materials and that they were coming from a lesbian organization; he also assured her that Pratt did not want to assume any custody over the materials. Wolfe took the proposal back to the coordinators and everyone agreed that it should move forward. The relationship has not only allowed the LHA to digitize and host a number of its audio recordings, but it has also brought emerging professionals into the archives who might not otherwise encounter the LHA. The current caretaker is a graduate of the Pratt Institute's information studies program; additional volunteers and interns have also come to the archives because of this relationship. As Wolfe emphasized, the LHA especially benefits from volunteers and interns who have archival training because this expertise has helped the archives impose better standards of intellectual control and preservation onto the collections. I will discuss the engagement between Pratt Institute and the LHA in more detail in Chapter 8.

A number of events and conferences hosted at and/or sponsored by the LHA have also brought new attention to the archives. In 2005, Wolfe led a project called Snatches of Lesbian Activism, 1970-2005, which collected and highlighted materials from the LHA to celebrate the

activist work of groups such as the Lavendar Menace, The Committee of Outraged Lesbians (COOL), and Asian Lesbians of the East Coast, among others.⁴¹⁶ The project culminated in the publication of a pamphlet describing the histories of these activist groups and an exhibition of materials drawn from subject files, special collections, and periodicals. In 2008, the LHA hosted the GLBT ALMS (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans Archives, Libraries, Museums & Special Collections), a grassroots conference that brought together more than one hundred professional and community heritage workers involved with queer collections.⁴¹⁷ In 2009, the LHA celebrated its 35th anniversary with a number of related events.⁴¹⁸ That same year, Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz led a project to celebrate the histories and contributions of black lesbians in the '70s, bringing together women who were out and politically active in the 1970s.⁴¹⁹ She also produced a monograph, the Black Lesbians Zine, which has brought a lot of attention to the relevant collections at the LHA.⁴²⁰ Monthly lecture series and tours, as well as “At Home with the Archives” events also continued throughout this period and, as Corbman explained in our interview for this study, these events became increasingly more intergenerational.⁴²¹ The house itself has become an important public space for lesbian gatherings in the absence of women’s bookstores, cafés, and other meeting places. I was fortunate enough to take part in an event while visiting the archives. On November 13, 2013, Kristin Russo and Dannielle Owens-Reid of the online project Everyone is Gay, spoke as part of a panel with Edel and Nestle (via Skype), to discuss the history and future of queer activism and community building. The event drew in a full house of intergenerational women and men. The space was energetic, friendly, lively, and full of life—an unusual energy to experience in an archives.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. See also pamphlets and records related to this project in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴¹⁷ See also promotional material and records related to the NY GLBT ALMS conference in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴¹⁸ See promotional material and records related to the 35th anniversary celebrations in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴¹⁹ Smith, 2013.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Corbman, 2013.

For the most part, however, the Lesbian Herstory Archives has become a place of memory, an artefact itself, a place of reflection in addition to an active collector of material of the moment. On more than one occasion while visiting, I overheard a visitor or research comment that the house was “like a museum.” The home-like quality of the LHA, captured in Cooper’s 2013 ethnography, has an effect of performing the lesbian feminist era that the Archives grew out of—the inviting kitchen table at Nestle’s Upper West Side Apartment, the photocopier next to the kitchen appliances, the rainbow rings and t-shirts hanging up in the shower of the second-floor bathroom, and the framed pictures of lesbians that decorate the mantle, the dressing room, and the bookshelves. The presence of other visitors and the interactions among them also performs the kind of lesbian community building work that the coordinators have aimed to produce by building the archives. The archives is a social space, but one that requires constant care and nurturing. Smith-Cruz worried that the space can “decay” in the absence of care.⁴²² Edel worried that the precariousness of the finances will soon become a greater issue than it ever has, as fewer and fewer women give money to the LHA and more and more younger women seem to take for granted its presence.⁴²³ Wolfe worried that the LHA would have to close the doors to new donations and become an archives of the archives.⁴²⁴ The coordinators are watching carefully what has become of other gay and lesbian archives: some have disappeared, others have donated themselves to public institutions, some have partnered with universities. The key to survival, Edel claimed, is to remain open to new ideas and new ways of thinking, to “modernize.”⁴²⁵ She stated, “The important thing for us, and has always been, to try and stay current and not get stuck in 1970s politics.”⁴²⁶

⁴²² Smith, 2013.

⁴²³ Edel, 2013.

⁴²⁴ Wolfe, 2013.

⁴²⁵ Edel, 2013.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

Luck is Not a Sustainable Strategy

Of great concern to me, really GREAT concern, is the ultimate fate of the collections. I mean after us. What happens when we are all gone? Our community is so short of the time-binding structures that straights take totally for granted. Like schools, colleges, libraries, town halls, political bodies, even a “conscious” press; we must think beyond the immediate future, we must make sure a firebomb can’t wipe out our cultural heritage, even our very vocabulary.

— Bunny MacCulloch to Lynn Fonfa, Cherrie Cox, and Claire Potter, 1985.⁴²⁷

One of my earliest interviews for this project was with Harold Averill, a long-serving volunteer at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.⁴²⁸ Given his lengthy tenure with the CLGA and his career as a professional archivist with the University of Toronto, Averill is uniquely qualified to speak about the history of the organization and provide insight into why it has survived for more than forty years. Averill was part of the organization during its tender beginnings as part of *The Body Politic*, throughout its expansion and growth, and its near bankruptcy in the early 1990s. He helped usher the organization through several moves, including its most recent relocation to the heritage house at 34 Isabella Street. Today, Averill has assumed responsibility for appraising new donations and preparing tax receipts, and mentors a number of younger volunteers who are just beginning to learn the idiosyncrasies of the CLGA’s archival description database. Throughout our discussion, Averill kept saying things like, “Just when we thought it was over, so-and-so gave us some money,” or “we had one month of rent left in the bank and then a cheque came in.”⁴²⁹ I joked with him that I did not think that luck was a good sustainability strategy and he shrugged his shoulders and replied, “It’s worked for us so far....”⁴³⁰ I have to admit, Averill’s assessment is

⁴²⁷ MacColluch, B. (1985, Nov 24). [Letter to Lynn, Claire, and Cherrie]. Bunny MacCulloch papers 1928-1989 (Box 1, Folder 3 June L. Mazer Materials. No Date). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁴²⁸ Averill, 2013.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

incisive; luck would explain why the CLGA survives while so many other lesbian and gay organizations have disappeared over the past four decades.

Averill was also careful to point out that, even though the archives has become the darling cause for corporate and private supporters looking for a safe place to contribute their money, the organization remains precarious. The costs for operating the house are high and the board must now consider salaries and other human resources expenses in its annual budget. Archival supplies also cost money, as does off-site storage for all of the collections that cannot be housed at 34 Isabella. Like any archival institution, the CLGA struggles with common challenges: archives are physical entities that require adequate and increasingly more space; collections need to be processed, catalogued, and managed for long-term preservation, which requires special technology and other costly supplies; and they require expertise to support this archival work. The trifecta of space, money, and expertise would be noted by many community archivists in this study as the three foundational concerns for their respective institutions. As Averill noted in our discussion, the CLGA was lucky that expertise was available, space was free or affordable, and that money seemed to trickle in at just the right moment. Of course, attributing the success of the archives to luck is also part of Averill's humble charm and when we scratched the surface of the organization's history, a much more nuanced and complicated story of survival emerged.

In this chapter, I want to look more closely at some of the factors that have contributed to the survival of the CLGA and the other three case institutions in this study. I will also draw attention to the parallels among these organizations in how they have coped with common challenges of securing adequate space, raising funds to support their work, and attracting and retaining expertise to manage their archival work. There are also notable differences between each organization that I will highlight and discuss in relation to the particular cultures within each archives, as well as local and national political opportunity structures. This chapter is focussed on the strategies that each institution has developed over time to sustain itself and the work that it does to acquire, preserve, and make accessible the materials in its collections.

A Fear of Fascism and a Yearning for Plentitude

Before turning my attention to sustainability strategies, I want to underscore the importance of two strands of history that have not only motivated the four case institutions in this project, but also were instrumental in provoking small collectivities of men and women to begin preserving documented evidence of gay and lesbian lives in the first place. As I noted in Chapter 3, the CLGA was first established as the Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives in 1973, and in direct response to the growing body of material culture that was being produced by the emerging gay liberation movement. The CLGA served as a reference collection for the publication of the magazine until the time that its caretakers made a conscious decision that the archives could and should have a much broader mandate.

Around this time, *The Body Politic* was also working with James Steakley to publish a series of essays about homosexuals and the Third Reich.⁴³¹ Although the impact of this work on broader gay and lesbian movements is not a focus of this project, it is important to understand how these articles affected the development of gay and lesbian archives, in particular. As several of my study participants emphasized in our discussions, Steakley's rediscovery and reclamation of a history of homosexual emancipation in pre-war Germany was profoundly influential for those involved with documentation initiatives.⁴³² One long-time volunteer at the ONE Archives noted that he had once attended a talk at ONE Institute by notable American psychologist Evelyn Hooker, who had lived

⁴³¹ Jackson and Persky (1983) discuss the impact of Steakley's articles in their introduction to the reprint of "Homosexuals and the Third Reich", in their collection of writings from *The Body Politic*. The article was the first English discussion of the gay community that was flourishing in pre-war Germany, until its tragic end. It was also the first discussion of the use of the pink triangle to identify homosexuals imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps. The symbol of the pink triangle was later adopted as a symbol for the gay liberation movement. Jackson, Moldenhauer and Popert discussed this symbol and lasting impact of Steakley's research in our discussions.

⁴³² The impact of Steakley's work is also discussed in B. Mossop. (2014). 1974: The Weimer Republic comes to gay Toronto. In K. Mezei, S. Simon & L. von Flotow (Eds.). *Translation effects: The shaping of modern Canadian culture* (pp. 399-415). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. Mossop notes that Steakley's articles were the first to reveal that "we were living not only through the second wave of the women's movement but also through the second wave of the gay movement, the memory of the first having been all but expunged by the Nazi regime" (p. 411). Mossop goes on to claim, "We were continuing the work of our predecessors, and the past couple perhaps provide guidance about how to proceed, or not proceed, in the present" (p. 411).

with a Jewish family in Germany during the rise of the Third Reich and had witnessed *Kristallnacht* first-hand. Hooker, he recalled, described how members of the Third Reich removed books from the library of famed sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld and the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and threw them into a large bonfire that was widely documented by the German press. That is, these books were not just *a* library, but a library that documented the emergence of a homosexual community from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. During the Weimar Republic, this volunteer explained, Hirschfeld worked to repeal Paragraph 175 of the German penal code that criminalized homosexuality, while lesbian culture, which was not proscribed by law, flourished throughout the country.

The existence and abrupt disappearance of a homosexual culture in Germany was worrisome for activists such as Jim Kepner and Jearld Moldenhauer, who recognized the precariousness of the new gay press and the gay liberation movement, and brought to light the importance of documenting the work the movement had accomplished thus far. There was considerable anxiety that a similar situation that to that which unfolded in Germany could occur in North America. Thus, it seems fair to say that the threat of a return of fascism, which would privilege a ‘moral hygiene’ of youth and condemn homosexuality, was a key motivating factor in the development of an archival project that would preserve what little material evidence did exist at the time. In a 1980 interview, Kepner states:

[There’s] a real danger, because we could be in the situation that Germany was in in 1932, 33. The gay movement in the United States has now reached the degree of acceptance — but not accepted across the board — in society, and the exercise of some degree of political power, and the diversity, that the German gay movement had reached after 35 years of development before Hitler. And it has reached that [point] in conjunction with a number of other progressive or liberationist-type movements. Similar in Germany, a youth movement similar to the recent hippie movement in America, the women’s movement, socialist groups and so on. And all of those were wiped out. If we have one advantage, it is to know that it can happen. The Germans did not know that it was conceivable, in the most educated, most liberal, most highly cultural and industrialized country in Europe. Even though the Nazis were saying quite clearly what they intended to do, it was reasonable for the Germans not to take them seriously. I don’t say it was wise for them. They couldn’t

imagine that that could happen. I think we must know that it can happen, and that may give us one foot over the wall.⁴³³

Even today, long-serving volunteers at the ONE Archives and the CLGA maintain a healthy concern about the possibility of losing the political and social gains that gay men and lesbians have achieved. This persistent fear motivates them, in part, to continue the work that they do to ensure that the records of gays and lesbians are safely preserved.

Fear of a return to fascism must have been on the minds of lesbian women who participated in gay liberation movement activities; however, it does not appear to be the primary motivating factor in establishing either the West Coast Lesbian Collection, which grew into the June Mazer Lesbian Archives, or the Lesbian Herstory Archives. In both cases, early founders began collecting evidence of lesbian lives not only in response to a legacy of neglect and erasure on the part of mainstream archival institutions, but also a perception that gay men's organizations, including the ONE Institute, largely ignored and undervalued lesbian lives as well. Early participants in these archives acknowledged the importance of preserving a record of lesbian lives; they understood the great emotional and psychological impact of building a lesbian collection on the people who came to visit these archives.

During my discussion with Joan Nestle, she spoke about coming home to her apartment and finding butch women weeping as they poured over the pulp novel collection, overwhelmed by the volume of materials by and about lesbians.⁴³⁴ Deb Edel admitted that she is still overwhelmed by the LHA, even forty years later.⁴³⁵ At the West Coast Lesbian Collection, founders Lynne Fonfa and Cherrie Cox believed that the very act of collecting materials created by and about lesbian women would provide a place where lesbians could begin to understand that they were not alone

⁴³³ The interview of Jim Kepner was conducted by David Atkinson in 1980, for the Social Concerns Committee, Unitarian Meetinghouse, Provincetown, MA. It aired on WOMR-FM / Provincetown on December 27, 1991 and January 3 and 10, 1992. Transcripts of this interview and interview notes are preserved in the Jim Kepner papers, Coll2011.002 (Box 1, Folder 4). ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

⁴³⁴ Nestle, 2014.

⁴³⁵ Edel, 2013.

and that their feelings and experiences were reflected in the feelings and experiences of other women. Fonfa explained in our interview that she believed that the archives would be a space where women could build confidence in their own worth because, as she noted, “self-esteem increases as alienation decreases.”⁴³⁶ Perhaps this attention to the affective quality of the archives is why the LHA continues to allow visitors to roam unescorted through the collections and explore records on their own or among friends and lovers. It might also help explain why both the LHA and the Mazer Archives continue to privilege the experience of being in the archives, to touch the records, over the informational or evidential value of their collections. Neither of these archives *feels* institutional, but rather warm, inviting, and nostalgic. I note the importance of this affective quality of lesbian archives because, as Joan Nestle explained, “There’s nothing like turning deprivation into plentitude to give you sustainability.”⁴³⁷

These two strands of history — a fear of erasure and a desire to build a healthy and active community — feature in the mandates or mission statements of the case institutions in this project. Almost a decade after the founding of the CLGA, James Fraser and Harold Averill (1983) restated the mission of the Archives in a monograph published by the organization, *Organizing an Archives: The Canadian Gay Archives Experience*. They write, “A conspiracy of silence has robbed gay men and lesbians of their history” (p. 60). The archives, they explain, “was established to aid in the recovery and preservation of our history” and intended to serve as a “resource library for gay and lesbian groups and individuals across the country” (p. 60). Today, the mandate has been revised, but retains this sense of urgency by positioning the CLGA as a “trusted guardian of LGBTQ+ histories now and for future generations to come” (CLGA, 2014). A recent fundraising strategy even goes so far as to ascribe militaristic ranks to donors who contribute certain pre-determined amounts—Guardians give at least \$1,000 per year, Champions, Defenders, Protectors, and Sentinels slightly more or slightly less—a program that reaffirms the Archives importance as keeper of evidence of

⁴³⁶ Fonfa, 2014.

⁴³⁷ Nestle, 2014.

lesbian and gay lives, past and present.⁴³⁸ The LHA and the Mazer Archives share similar missions; however, the articulation of their mission statements align more closely with the lesbian feminist yearning for safe space. The LHA also makes clear in its guiding principles that the very act of archiving lesbian materials is political and that this has been “denied to us previously by patriarchal historians in the interests of the culture which they serve” (LHA, n.d.). As one community archivist explained, this drive to recover and safeguard records and to make lesbian and gay histories known to a broad public is the “fire that lights the flame — it is the spiritual calling of the archives.”

Formalization, Strategic Neutrality, and Movement Abeyance

The importance of coherent, defensible, and inspiring mission statements cannot be overstated; however, these guiding principles are not enough to explain why or how each archives has sustained itself over time. Both Nestle and Edel spoke about the importance of nurturing the collections of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in their private home, which meant that operating costs were minimal and they could work on cataloguing projects in their spare time, after work or on weekends.⁴³⁹ Fonfa also noted the importance of starting the West Coast Lesbian collection in the home of founder Cherrie Cox.⁴⁴⁰ Jim Kepner’s archives began as a private collection in his own home and the CLGA also kept expenses minimal by sharing office space with its sponsoring body, Pink Triangle Press. Meeting minutes and other records from these four archives show that volunteers often paid for supplies out of their own pockets, or organized just-in-time fundraisers as needed. These included, for example, working with local bars to sell 50-50 tickets and earn profits from special drag shows or other entertainment events, or sending out the occasional letter to community members asking for donations. The four archives also prepared and mailed out

⁴³⁸ The CLGA Guardians Program fundraising promotional and organizational records were provided by Scott Kettles, Executive Director of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. (S. Kettles, personal communication, December 15, 2014).

⁴³⁹ Nestle, 2014; Edel, 2013.

⁴⁴⁰ Fonfa, 2014.

newsletters as a way to share information about the collections, and as a way to maintain a profile in their local communities.

In the case of the LHA, founders organized travelling slide shows and other outreach programming that brought artefacts from the archives out to women's groups across the region. I have discussed the role of these slide shows in Chapter 6, but their importance to the early sustainability of the archives is worth revisiting here. This kind of outreach, Nestle (1998) writes, "helped us make the point that one of our battles was to change secrecy into disclosure, shame into memory" (p. 229). As Nestle explained in our discussion, the LHA did not ask for money for at least two years, as they were processing the first collections, but they continued to send out regular newsletters and make themselves available to communities.⁴⁴¹ When they were ready to ask for money to support the organization, women were already familiar with the archives and had received something free; they were ready to give back in the form of financial support. After each newsletter, the LHA would receive dozens of cheques — five dollars, ten dollars, sometimes more — from women across the country. This money helped buy archival boxes and other supplies, as well as assisted with basic costs related to electricity and rent for the apartment space.

Yet as collections grew, the needs of each archives also expanded and founders began to take necessary steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of their work. As David Moore explained in our discussion, Kepner spent most of the money he earned on buying books and other material for his collection; friends and supporters of the Archives frequently paid his rent or brought him food.⁴⁴² After several years of precarious living, however, volunteers who helped him manage the Archives were finally able to convince him to establish a non-profit organization that would take responsibility for the collections. Cox and Fonfa also recognized that their collections were expanding to fill Cox's small bungalow and they worried about long-term viability of the project.⁴⁴³ Costs for insurance and additional environmental controls were also increasing as the collections

⁴⁴¹ Nestle, 2014.

⁴⁴² David Moore, Interview. October 23, 2013.

⁴⁴³ Fonfa, 2014.

grew. On the advice of a lawyer friend, the women established a non-profit corporation to manage the archives. This was lost after the collection was transferred to Los Angeles, but earned again by the June Mazer Lesbian Archives after it separated from Connexus in 1988.⁴⁴⁴ The police raid of the Pink Triangle Press offices in 1978, which resulted in the removal of materials belonging to the archives, confirmed what many involved with the collections had suspected: the archives needed to formalize as an independent organization for both the safety of the collections and long-term sustainability, and would pursue non-profit status so that they could engage in strategic fundraising to support the organization.⁴⁴⁵ Several coordinators of the LHA registered as a non-profit charitable foundation responsible for, among other tasks, the management of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.⁴⁴⁶

Obtaining charitable status had several beneficial implications for the four archives in this study. The most obvious advantage of becoming a registered non-profit with charitable status is that each of the archives could give tax receipts for financial contributions, which provided additional incentive for donors to give money to the organizations. Averill also pointed out that the non-profit status allowed the CLGA to provide tax receipts for donations-in-kind, which encouraged local businesses and professionals to donate expertise and other kinds of resources to the archives.⁴⁴⁷ In addition, the archives could write tax receipts for the donation of archival materials, a standard practice in mainstream heritage institutions, including museums, galleries, and archives. In the year 1995, the CLGA issued almost \$50,000 in tax receipts to donors who transferred custody of records to the archives (CLGA, 2015).⁴⁴⁸ Obtaining non-profit status or 501(c)3 status also achieved another benefit. By earning recognition through the state for the work

⁴⁴⁴ See also Quinn, M.J. (1989, Mar 7). [Assessment by Internal Revenue Service, 501(c)3]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

⁴⁴⁵ Averill, 2013.

⁴⁴⁶ Records related to the application for charitable 501(c)3 status are part of the LHA organizational records. Copies in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

⁴⁴⁷ Averill, 2013.

⁴⁴⁸ This information has since been removed from the organization's website, but was initially accessed in November, 2014 from: <http://www.clga.ca/donate>

of gathering, preserving, and making accessible records of lesbian and gay experiences, the CLGA, the ONE Archives, The Mazer Archives, and the LHA all gained a certain level of legitimacy within and outside of their local gay and lesbian communities. Averill estimates that the recognition of the CLGA as a non-profit, especially in a period when few other lesbian and gay organizations had secured this status, not only raised the profile of the organization, but also signified a certain level of stability within the organization.⁴⁴⁹ It was not, as Harold explained, a “fly-by-night operation,” but an integral and important part of the emerging gay and lesbian movements.⁴⁵⁰

Charitable status has also had another unintended consequence that I had not previously anticipated. When I designed this project, I set out with the assumption that lesbian and gay archives are social movement organizations. That is, I believed that they contributed an organizational capacity to take in, manage, and distribute resources to support collective actions for social change. Thus, it was rather distressing to hear, on more than one occasion, a community archivist tell me, ‘I’m not really into politics.’ This is not to say that participants did not acknowledge the political potential of archival work, or that the very act of establishing an archives requires political motive and has implications for social movements, but that, in most cases, community archivists did not see themselves as activists based solely on their work with the archives. As one long-time volunteer at the CLGA told me, it would be unwise for the archives to take a political stance because this was not the role of an archives. The Archives, he explained, was responsible for preserving a multiplicity of opinions expressed by and about queer people. A long serving board member of the Mazer Archives put it more simply, “Taking a political stance would be suicide for the archives.” In most cases, when I asked participants to comment on any political activism undertaken by their archives, I was met with a similar response that their organizations did not engage in activism because they did not want to risk losing their charitable status. At first, this concern was a bit confusing for me, as many social services programs and other non-profit

⁴⁴⁹ Averill, 2013.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

organizations such as Egale Canada and PFLAG Canada appear to engage in political advocacy and contribute to collective action for social change.⁴⁵¹ Nevertheless, community archivists recognize the great efforts that were made to obtain non-profit status for their institutions and do not want to participate in any kind of activism that would place this status in jeopardy. The benefits this status provides are too essential to the survival of the organization.

Initially, I wondered if charitable status was used as a justification for the unwillingness of the institutionalized and increasingly more normative archives in my study to take a political stance on controversial issues that could alienate potential donors, both private and corporate. One particular story stuck out in my mind and it raised questions about the CLGA's reticence to engage in broader political action. In May 2010, the archives was approached by a group called Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA), which had been informed by the organizing committee of Toronto's annual Pride Parade that members would be prohibited from using the term "Israeli apartheid" on any of their banners, effectively banning the group from participating in the parade (see Dale, 2010).⁴⁵² The CLGA responded with a rather neutral statement about freedom of speech and offered to provide materials for an exhibition on censorship in Canada, to be displayed at the local 519 Church Street Community Centre during Pride Week celebrations.⁴⁵³ According to former General Manager Elizabeth Bailey, the board initially wanted to respond to QuAIA's request with a more directed statement, which read:

In light of the recent decision by the Board of Pride Toronto to censor the phrase "Israeli Apartheid," we call on Pride Toronto to enter into a respectful dialogue with our queer communities to develop a clear policy of free expression that:

⁴⁵¹ Upon closer examination of these organizations, however, I realized that they do not, in fact, participate in direct or partisanship politics. Notably, Egale Canada is actually represented by two affiliated or partner organizations. Egale Canada Human Rights Trust is a national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) human rights through research, education and community engagement. It is a partner of Egale Canada, a national LGBT human rights organization, which advocates for advancing equality, diversity, education and justice. The charity does not participate in direct or partisanship political action; its partner organization participates in direct actions through human rights campaigns and legal interventions, but does not appear to support partisanship politics. See Egale's website at <http://egale.ca>.

⁴⁵² This engagement was discussed in my interview with former General Manager Elizabeth Bailey, and she subsequently forwarded to me a series of emails about the request from QuAIA that were shared amongst the Board of Directors. Elizabeth Bailey, Interview, September 15, 2013.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

- Recognizes the centrality of free expression to the past and ongoing struggles of our queer communities;
- Recognizes that lawful expression may sometimes “offend,” “feel uncomfortable” or be perceived as “unsafe” to some individuals, but such reactions are never a legitimate basis for censorship;
- Recognizes that *ad hoc* censorship is a poor model for community building and is inconsistent with a true commitment to free expression; and,
- Permits the widest range of voices from our queer communities to be heard.

The CLGA believes that selling out free expression to purchase safety ultimately bankrupts both.⁴⁵⁴

Bailey responded to the board that she did not think that it was responsible for the archives to reference any particular actions on the part of Pride Toronto. She encouraged the board to produce a more neutral statement that would better align with the CLGA’s responsibility to serve as the “trusted and neutral repository of the entire community.”⁴⁵⁵ She states, “I feel it is important not to alienate those members of the community who do support the position that Pride has taken, or those who feel that this is an important shift in the role that Pride Toronto will play in the movement going forward.”⁴⁵⁶ She goes on to acknowledge that there are members of the board that support QuAIA’s position; however, the role of the archives is to collect as broadly as possible to produce a complete historical record, which requires the organization to remain neutral on this

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. Specifically, this email was sent from Martin Lanigan to the CLGA Board of Directors, June 14, 2010. Bailey was copied on this email. Copy in possession of Elizabeth Bailey.

⁴⁵⁵ Bailey, E. (2010, Jun 2). [Email to Board of Directors]. Copy in possession of Elizabeth Bailey.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

subject. She ends the communication by emphasizing that it is not the purpose of the archives to take any particular stance on Israel.⁴⁵⁷

The purported neutrality of the archives is nevertheless more complicated than it would appear. As one community archivist at the CLGA explained, many volunteers are trained as information or heritage workers—archivists, librarians, and curators—and this training instils a sense of professional responsibility to serve as trusted custodians of records. I, too, have undertaken training as an archivist and understand that the duty to care for the records in my charge outweighs any loyalty that I have to records creators or to an ever-shifting political will. Even while postmodern theorists writing in the wake of Derrida's *Mal d'Archives* have effectively challenged the notion that archives are neutral spaces, and archival theorists such as Cook and Harris have called into question the role that archivists play in shaping the historical record, many of the archivists that I spoke with for this project cleave to their identities as trusted guardians; they see it as their responsibility to collect broadly the evidence of lesbian and gay life (see Cook, 1997, 2000, 2001; Harris, 1997, 2002).⁴⁵⁸ Even the coordinators of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, who are more willing to lend their institutional support to political causes than any of the other community

⁴⁵⁷ Canada Revenue Canada can and has revoked charitable status designation from organizations that focus substantially on political activities or appear to support a political purpose. Revenue Canada reviewed charitable organizations' objects and activities on an annual basis. Voices-Voix estimates that Canada Revenue Canada (CRA) began a "blitz" in 2012 to audit charitable organizations that are "critical of the federal government and promote policy ideas that differ from the government's agenda." CRA considers activity political if it explicitly communicates a call to action, such as encouraging the public to contact an elected representative or public official to urge them to retain, oppose, or change the law, policy, or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country, or communicates to the public that any law, policy or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country should be retained, opposed, or changed. CRA may also consider activity political if an organization indicates in any of its materials (internal or external) that the intention of any of its activities is to incite, or organize to put pressure on, an elected representative or public official to retain, oppose or change the law, policy, or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country. As well, charitable organizations may not make a gift to another qualified donee to support the political activities of the recipient. See Voices-Voix (2015, May 1). Canadian Charities and the Canada Revenue Agency. Retrieved from: <http://voices-voix.ca/en/facts/profile/canadian-charities-and-canada-revenue-agency>

⁴⁵⁸ Gilliland (2011) offers an overview of the debates around archival neutrality and professional ethics. As she notes, the archival literature has not only pointed to the traditional notion of archival neutrality as problematic value for acknowledging the bias in our collecting practices, but also any interventions or interpretations that archivists make during appraisal and descriptive tasks. As a result, archival neutrality can obscure the interpretive role of the archivist, who is necessarily part of the organizational and social cultures that contextualize archival work. See A. Gilliland. (2011). Neutrality, social justice and the obligations of archival education and educators in the twenty-first century. *Archival Science*, 11, 193–209

archivists in this study, value the archival ethic to collect broadly, even if this results in the inclusion of hate material or stories that reflect negatively on lesbian communities. No fewer than three community archivists at the LHA pointed out that they have a collection of materials donated by a woman who was responsible for turning in dozens of gay and lesbian civil servants during the McCarthy Era, before she withdrew from her professional life and moved to Florida to establish a gay bed and breakfast. As Edel stressed, the historical records should not be sanitized or skewed by the Archives to create any particular perception of lesbians or lesbianism.⁴⁵⁹ Rather, it should offer as many stories and histories as possible for researchers and visitors to explore.

I note this allegiance to archival ethics because it appears that maintaining a perception of apoliticality or non-partisanship allows these organizations to not only access and retain their charitable designations and position themselves as safe places for corporate and private donors to contribute money, but also serves a greater purpose to support queer social movements long-term, even if the goals of the movements shift or tensions arise within these movements as they develop over time. By doing so, these gay and/or lesbian archives and their archivists practice a form of strategic neutrality. That is, they collect broadly and widely the records of their own communities in an attempt to build a comprehensive and defensible historical record of gay and/or lesbian experiences, even if these experiences are shameful, criminal, or counterintuitive to contemporary expressions of queer social movements. This process of building a collection that does not actively omit any queer voice is what Caswell (2014) has recently referred to as the “fight against symbolic annihilation” (p. 26). This approach not only aligns with the kind of collecting or documentation strategies suggested by archival scholars such as Samuels (1986, 1991) or Hackman and Warnow-Blewett (1987), but it also allows these archives to participate in queer social movements without engaging in direct politics—that work is left to researchers and activists who use the archives and their collections. In the same way that Spivak (1988) has described how diverse ethnic or minority groups can, at times, engage in a practice of strategic essentialism to present themselves with a

⁴⁵⁹ Edel, 2013.

common identity to achieve certain goals, lesbian and gay archives practice strategic neutrality as a way to collect the evidence necessary for building the ideological work needed for social movements to achieve their goals, whatever they may be. This approach is even spelled out explicitly in an early announcement of the formation of the CLGA, which reads, “The Canadian GLM Archives will act as a resource centre to collect, preserve and make accessible all materials relating to the gay community, so that our past and present history and culture, up till now denied to us by straight society, might be maintained in its entirety.”⁴⁶⁰

Strategic neutrality is nevertheless problematic in the very same way that strategic essentialism can obfuscate real or perceived inequalities among or within communities. Strategic neutrality can, for example, render some collecting practices *neutral*, while marginalizing others. I witnessed this at the CLGA and the ONE Archives, both of which purport to collect broadly under the rubric of *LGBT*, yet archivists at both of these institutions estimate that their collections are predominantly related to homonormative, cis-gender men with few collections documenting the lives of queer people of colour (qpoc). The practice of strategic neutrality becomes even more complicated with regard to the two lesbian archives in this study. Each organization collects on a principle of pertinence, broadly anything and everything related to lesbian lives, which renders *lesbian* and *lesbianism* neutral, while marginalizing identities that either overlap or fall slightly outside of this identity category. The LHA reconciles this by maintaining a purposefully vague definition of lesbian to include any woman who has experienced some form of same-sex desire—as Edel pointed out during my tour of the archives, the library includes a biography of Dolly Parton because the American singer-songwriter once commented publicly that she ‘liked the female figure’.⁴⁶¹ As Spivak (1988) suggests, strategic essentialism recognizes the impossibility of essentialism while simultaneously recognizing the advantages of essentialism for political action. Strategic neutrality in the archives works much the same way. The uncritical application of strategic

⁴⁶⁰ Dayman, R. (1974). [Dear friends letter, February 21, 1974]. Organizational records (100.7.3). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁶¹ Edel, 2013.

neutrality is potentially dangerous for the future relevance of an institution that remains tethered to the gay rights or lesbian feminist movements from which it emerged. If used conscientiously as a means to sustain movement continuity, then strategic neutrality has many advantages over active politics because it shields the archives somewhat from shifts in the political opportunity structure or movement ideologies.

Strategic neutrality also affords lesbian and gay archives the capacity to serve as *abeyance* structures to sustain movement continuity from one period to the next. The term *abeyance structure* was first applied to social movement organizations by Taylor in her 1989 article, “Social Movement Continuity: The Women’s Movement in Abeyance.” After examining the histories of the National Woman’s Party (NWP) and the League of Women Voters, Taylor found that these two early feminist organizations attracted both former suffrage activists and younger women interested in particular political causes. As a result, the organizations helped carry on and carry forward the ideology of early feminist activism to a younger generation, further developing a feminist collective identity so integral to the resurgence of the movement, the so-called Second Wave of feminism that emerged in the 1960s. When a new cohort of radicalized young women founded the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966, they built on the collective identity developed by NWP and the League of Women Voters, and used their networks to help organize conferences and collective actions to reignite interest in women’s equality. Feminist activists also drew from the repertoire of collective action established by the early women’s movement to mobilize resources and achieve movement goals.

Although the primary purpose of archives does not necessarily include an imperative to contribute actively to movements for social change, these organizations are instrumental in producing and maintaining the kind of collective identities that Taylor considers so integral to social movement continuity. By collecting broadly and indiscriminately, lesbian and gay archives provide back to queer social movements evidence of their own histories, including records that document the activist and survival strategies that have proven successful in the past. This should not imply

that lesbian and gay archives have been wholly successful at capturing a multiplicity of experiences or that their collections adequately and accurately represent these multiplicities, but only that these organizations are more sustainable because their success is not definitively tied to the trajectory of any particular queer social movement or political stance within these movements. Even if one considers the identity categories of lesbian and gay to be problematic, the records held within the collections may continue to be interpreted and reinterpreted through multiple lenses by multiple people over time, which underpins the value of the work these organizations do to gather, preserve, and make accessible this material.

Understanding these four archives as abeyance structures also helps shed light on why they continue to engage younger generations of activists, who often come to the archives looking for evidence of a queer past and are overwhelmed by the volume of these collections. Nestle referred to this moment when younger people enter the Lesbian Herstory Archives and are immediately moved to engage with archival work, as the “seduction of the archives.”⁴⁶² Once seduced, younger women join work parties or contribute labour to the organization and many take what they have learned beyond the walls of the brownstone to form new political groups and create their own cultural works — zines, films, and photographs — some of which end up back at the LHA as part of the collections. I will pick up on this engagement between the archives and younger generations in subsequent sections, but I want to emphasize at this point that this engagement would not be as easily achieved if the archives had consciously limited its collecting scope to serve the needs of any particular tendrils of queer social movement history.

Seduction Does not Pay the Rent

While attending an evening event organized at the Lesbian Herstory Archives in fall 2013, I was introduced to a number of women who have participated in the work of the archives over the years. One woman asked me how I was enjoying my time in New York and how my work was

⁴⁶² Nestle, 2014.

progressing at the archives. I gave her a brief description of my project and then commented I was impressed that the LHA had managed to attract so many young people; I noted that outreach to young people was somewhat of a challenge at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, where I spent a lot of my time. I remarked that I had spent the past week at the Brooklyn house and it was always buzzing with activity. She leaned close to my ear, as if to whisper a secret, and stated, “Unfortunately, no one around here pays the rent,” and then excused herself from our conversation. I had unwittingly poked a sore spot for some of the long-serving volunteers—financial contributions have steadily decreased since the organization announced that it had paid off its mortgage in the mid-1990s, and the financial safety net built in to the caretaker’s apartment had not been fulfilled. As a result, the archives was struggling to meet basic costs and there seemed to be an understanding that Edel was paying for some expenses out of her own pocket.

When I broached the topic of the rental apartment with Nestle several months later, she explained that there had been some tension among coordinators about how to manage income from the rental apartment.⁴⁶³ Some of the coordinators had expressed interest in converting the caretaker’s suite into a private market-rent apartment, but this was not possible. Nestle emphasized that the caretaker performed an incredible amount of labour at the archives and it was an invaluable and necessary role. The LHA could not sustain the work that it does without having someone live on-site. Nestle also expressed sympathy for the well-being of the caretaker, whose contributions to the LHA were not only time-consuming but also affective labour — the caretaker greets people at the front door, answers email queries, manages the recycling, and hands out tissues to visitors moved by their experiences with the collections. Although she benefits from the reduced rent—

⁴⁶³ Nestle, 2014.

\$600 per month “more if/less if”⁴⁶⁴ the caretaker is also reliant on an ongoing relationship with the archives and its coordinating committee. If the labour required is overwhelming and the caretaker needs to step away from the LHA, it almost always means giving up her home.

The precariousness of the Lesbian Herstory Archives seems astounding, given its apparent status as a cultural landmark; more than one of my study participants at other case institutions pointed to the LHA as an inspiring success story because coordinators were able to pay down the mortgage in just under three years. I asked Nestle to comment on why she believed that financial support has dropped over the years, and she explained that ownership of the house has created an illusion of self-sufficiency for the organization. She speculated that many women now assume that the archives is self-sufficient and those cheques for five dollars, ten dollars, and other amounts, have just dwindled.⁴⁶⁵ Nestle also recognized that the current economic climate in the United States and abroad has translated into fewer dollars to share amongst all service organizations, and she understands the imperative to donate to food banks and crisis shelters that serve the immediate needs of the community. The Lesbian Herstory Archives was also one of the first organizations of its kind; it filled a great void for lesbian women of a certain generation and they gave what they could to ensure that it would survive into the 1980s, the 90s, and beyond. Many of these women are now gone and many others are no longer able to donate as they once could. I would also add that the archives had now moved almost entirely online with communications to its mailing list; without paper newsletters, the LHA competes with a tremendous amount of Internet traffic to reach potential donors. On several occasions since my visit to the LHA, I have met with other researchers working on projects related to the organization and conversations inevitably turn to the question of

⁴⁶⁴ The rental rate is discussed in a series of emails between and among coordinators in 2007. In particular, an email from Paula Grant to coordinators, dated January 22, 2007, and from Maxine Wolfe, dated February 11, 2007, discuss a meeting of the coordinators that was called for January 17, 2007, to manage a situation in which the Caretaker had been unable to pay rent. The emails make reference to the minutes of a coordinators meeting on November 12, 2003, at which coordinators decided to set the rent at \$600 per month “more if/less if.” Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz described to me in our discussion that the “more if/less if” policy is commonly used at LHA to ensure that women who are underemployed are encouraged to participate in events or attend workshops held at the Archives even if they are unable to pay full fees. Email correspondence in possession of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, New York; Smith, 2013.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

how the archives stays afloat. The answer is likely found in something that Edel stressed in our conversation.⁴⁶⁶ Edel does not allow the organization to spend money that it does not have. The building is owned, there are no employees, and there is enough money to cover basic costs. Even though the archives resides in a multi-million dollar home, its overhead costs are minimal.

Financial instability, both historical and current, is nevertheless common to all four archives in this study and yet, without exception, each case institution has struggled to develop strategic fundraising programs. Both the LHA and the Mazer Archives have been moderately successful at earning grants from corporate or private foundations, but the amounts earned have been modest. Several community archivists at the ONE Archives attributed the survival of the ONE Institute to the involvement of Reed Erickson; however, his withdrawal from the organization and the subsequent legal wrangling over the Milbank Mansion property undoubtedly contributed to fall of the organization in the mid-1980s. As Pat Allen explained in our interview, once the ONE Institute had given up its low-rent warehouse for the Country Club Drive estate, it could not sustain itself beyond the investment of Erickson and the Erickson Educational Foundation.⁴⁶⁷ Partnerships with academic institutions, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, have helped the ONE Archives and the Mazer Archives earn grant money through federal granting bodies; however, this is a recent development and monies are often designated for particular projects. That is, money from these grants cannot be used to pay rent or other operating costs, but must be spent on human resources and archival technologies. The CLGA has also been successful in earning grants through provincial and federal granting bodies to support its first paid position and expenses related to renovating its heritage property at 34 Isabella Street. Again, money could not be spent on general operating costs and was earmarked for particular expenditures.⁴⁶⁸ A recent report prepared by the CLGA for its board of directors indicates that 70% of its funding is derived from individual giving, and as Robert Windrum noted in our discussion, the archives anticipates that the amount of money

⁴⁶⁶ Edel, 2013.

⁴⁶⁷ Allen, 2013.

⁴⁶⁸ Bailey, 2013.

raised from individual donations can fluctuate from year to year, which is precarious for the organization (CLGA, 2015).⁴⁶⁹ Other fundraising activities include online auctions for duplicate library material, an annual gala event, and corporate sponsorships from organizations, including major banks and telecommunications companies. Until the launch of its recent Guardians program, however, the CLGA rarely engaged in strategic fundraising.

Death and AIDS in the Archives

Death has always benefitted archives. Whether archives support the power of the state, a religious organization, a business, a class of people, a family, or a particular individual, they are constituted for the purpose of extending our memories beyond the life of any one person. Archival scholars commonly refer to archives as “memory institutions,” intended to gather, preserve, and shape our collective memories in the present and for future generations (Schwartz, 2005). Schwartz and Cook (2002) write, “They are the basis for and validation of the stories we tell ourselves, the story-telling narratives that give cohesion and meaning to individuals, groups, and societies” (p. 13). I will refrain from waxing poetic on the power of archives as memory keepers—others such as Schwartz and Cook (2002), Harris and Hattang (2000), and Jimerson (2009) have already made persuasive arguments about the importance of archives in the cultures that they serve—but I want to emphasize that the primary function of archives is to survive the mortality of founders, to exist beyond lifetimes. That is, archives are not only what Hedstrom (2002) has called the “interface” between the records and the social, cultural, and technological contexts that surround them, but also between the past and the present, two temporal realities inevitably separated by death.

This entanglement of archives and death is not merely a philosophical abstract, but also present in the histories of all four of the case archives in this project and has implications for why these organizations have been able to sustain themselves over the past four decades. In the case of the Mazer Archives, the relationship between one particular death and the archives is critical to the

⁴⁶⁹ Robert Windrom, Interview. October 2, 2013.

sustainability of the organization for more than a decade. As I discussed in Chapter 5, June Mazer was diagnosed with terminal cancer and died January 15, 1987.⁴⁷⁰ At the time, founders Fonfa and Cox were in discussion with Mazer and her partner, Bunny MacCulloch, to move the collections from Oakland to Los Angeles.⁴⁷¹ At Mazer's memorial service, Fonfa and McCulloch realized that the collections could be moved into Mazer's house in Altadena while negotiations with a potential sponsoring organization, Connexus, continued to unfold.⁴⁷² The death of June Mazer not only reignited MacCulloch's interest in the West Coast Lesbian Collections, but also provided the archives with a more stable home in Los Angeles.⁴⁷³ When MacCulloch and others suggested renaming the collections in honour of Mazer, Fonfa and Cox were supportive of the decision.⁴⁷⁴ When MacCulloch was also diagnosed with cancer only a few months later, she made plans to sell the Altadena home at 1302 Sunny Oaks, and use the money earned to establish a foundation that would support the archives.⁴⁷⁵ She also encouraged other women in the community to donate to the Bunny MacCulloch Trust and remember the archives in their estate planning. In total, the Mazer Archives received a bequest of \$34,123 from the Bunny MacCulloch Trust.⁴⁷⁶ Once the Mazer Archives moved into the rent-free offices at the Werle Building, costs were low enough that the money from the Trust was able to support the work of the archives for several years.

⁴⁷⁰ The date of June Mazer's death is unclear. The finding aid for the Bunny MacCulloch papers at UCLA Library Special Collection lists Mazer's death date as January 16, 1987, but a letter in this collection from MacCulloch to Fonfa notes that Mazer died on the evening of January 15. Wood, S. (2013). Finding aid to the Bunny MacCulloch papers 1928-1989 (Collection LSC 1959). UCLA Library Special Collection, Los Angeles. Retrieved from <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucla/mss/macc1959.pdf>

⁴⁷¹ Fonfa, 2014.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Records related to the Bunny MacCulloch Trust document the decision to use the house in Altadena to support the work of the Archives. The first decision was to move the collections to Altadena and store them in the home. Once Connexus agreed to take in the collections, the house was sold. The money earned from the estate sale was donated to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collections. See Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8, Folder 23 Folder 23: Bunny MacCulloch Trust (1988-1990). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. See also Quinn, M.J. (1989, Mar 7). [Assessment by Internal Revenue Service, 501(c)3]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

⁴⁷⁶ JMLC. (1993, Nov 8). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

Planned giving has also supported the work of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives over its history. A recent estimate suggests that roughly 10% of the organization's annual funds are received through bequests. This includes, for example, a sizeable bequest from the estate of Roger Spalding, a member of *The Body Politic* collective and a long-time AIDS activist who died in 2006 (CLGA, 2015).⁴⁷⁷ Money received from Spalding's estate contributed to the renovation of the heritage house at 34 Isabella.⁴⁷⁸ Discussions with long-serving volunteers at the CLGA nevertheless revealed a more complicated relationship between the sustainability of the archives and death, particularly in the years leading up to the organization's near bankruptcy in the early 1990s. As I collected stories from Harold Averill, Alan Miller, Don McLeod, and others, it became clear the extent to which the AIDS crisis had not only affected the work of the archives, but also the financial livelihood of the organization. By the end of 1992, almost 10,000 people had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Canada, and most of the early cases were gay men living in large urban centres (PHAC, 2012). I've discussed this in more detail in Chapter 3; however, I want to consider this history more specifically in relation to both the sustainability and growth of the organization. In a 1993 announcement about the archives' move to its Temperance Street location, Averill writes:

...Recent growth has been explosive, with a 56% increase in holdings in the past three years. The most important contributing factor has been AIDS, both in the number of donations of personal records from estates, and in the administrative records of community organizations that have emerged in response to it.⁴⁷⁹

Beginning with the death of "guiding spirit" James Fraser in 1985, and followed by bequests from Clarence Barnes and Bill Lewis, the CLGA not only benefited from the financial contributions of men dying with AIDS, but also accepted a tremendous number of collections from individuals and organizations documenting the impact of AIDS on Canada's gay communities.

⁴⁷⁷ Copies of the invitation to Roger Spalding's memorial and related notes are in possession of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Spalding's memorial took place February 12, 2006.

⁴⁷⁸ Bailey, 2013.

⁴⁷⁹ This is included with the minutes of the CGA board of directors. Averill, H. (1993, Feb 10). [We've moved again! announcement]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

The CLGA would not be able to rely on estate money for very long. Miller noted that the move to Temperance Street was the moment in the archive's history that marks the true emotional and financial separation from Pink Triangle Press. For years, he admitted, the Archives had never really worried about finances because "something always came through," but the board slowly came to understand that the archives would not survive hand-to-mouth as it had before because Pink Triangle Press was no longer there to provide support if needed in a crisis.⁴⁸⁰ Miller described the first meeting of the board at the new offices as a moment of reckoning, "That's when we realized we had to raise a lot more money."⁴⁸¹ They needed to develop a long-term and sustainable fundraising strategy. At the same time, the introduction of anti-retrovirals to treat HIV was beginning to greatly extend the lives of those who were seropositive. Miller explained:

That was also at the point that the drug cocktail was allowing people with AIDS to live longer. Up to that point we were getting a lot of estates and that's what really saved us.⁴⁸²

With bequests no longer coming to the archives and expenses soaring, the archives reached a point in early 1994, when members of the board finally acknowledged that bankruptcy was a feasible option.

Don McLeod confirmed this history. He explained:

In the past, certainly through the 1990s and into the early century here, it's always been nickel and diming. In fact, it was so bad that, on a couple of occasions, we almost went under; we were absolutely broke. It's sad to say we were actually saved by people who died during the AIDS crisis and if they hadn't given their estates to us or money from the estates, we would have been in very big trouble. We probably couldn't have survived.⁴⁸³

McLeod notes that fundraising remains the most significant challenge for the future sustainability of the archives and its growth, even as the organization has achieved some stability in recent years. I sensed that McLeod is less comfortable with luck as a long-term strategy than some others.

⁴⁸⁰ Miller, 2013.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Don McLeod, Interview. October 9, 2013.

The recognition that the AIDS crisis figures largely in the survival of the CLGA's history must be difficult for long-serving volunteers; at times during my discussions with community archivists, I caught glimpses of this painful realization. A casual encounter with a board member nevertheless provided some perspective on the larger affective impact of the AIDS crisis and the archives. The archives holds special meaning, he explained, for those men and women who survived the AIDS crisis because it houses the evidence of this crisis and ensures that the histories of those lost and knowledge of the activism surrounding the disease will be preserved. I was reminded of this encounter while reviewing old organizational newsletters. An update provided in a 1992 newsletter reads:

AIDS has hit our community hard over the past decade, and its impact is increasingly felt in all areas of the holdings of the CGA. Since June 1991, for example, one-third of the 350 individual donations of archival material received by us (excluding books and periodicals) has dealt directly with AIDS. Some of these records relate to people who have died, others are connected to organizations and individuals who are fighting the disease. Many records concern the impact of AIDS on friends, lovers, and the world at large. Taken together, they provide powerful documentary evidence as to how our world has changed in the age of AIDS (CGA, 1992, p. 4).

Without the CLGA's persistence in gathering this history, researchers would not have access to this rich documentary evidence, and important AIDS history projects, including Ann Silversides' *AIDS Activist: Michael Lynch and the Politics of Community*, would not have been possible. The CLGA is acknowledged by Silversides in her preface and Alan Miller is thanked by name. Since 2013, the CLGA has also been partnered with two professors, Alexis Shotwell and Gary Kinsman, on a five-year project to recover AIDS activist history, funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (See Shotwell & Kinsman, 2014). For Miller, who lost his partner to AIDS, witnessing a renewed interest in these histories across multiple disciplines, and assisting researchers with their work must be both difficult and affirming.

The AIDS crisis has impacted lesbian archives in slightly different ways. One does not have to look far into the history of AIDS activism to discover that Maxine Wolfe was and remains incredibly active in AIDS organizing. Wolfe had founded the CUNY Lesbian and Gay People group in the mid-1980s, and in 1986, attended the first meeting of a group that would become ACT UP

(AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) (Schulman & Hubbard, 2004). She soon formed the Women's Committee of ACT UP and encouraged women to participate in the 1987 March on Washington, which drew an estimated 200,000 people demanding an end to discrimination against people with AIDS (Schulman & Hubbard, 2004). Wolfe's simultaneous investment in the Lesbian Herstory Archives undoubtedly influenced the relationship between the archives and AIDS activism. As Polly Thistlethwaite recalled, the LHA received significant donations from men who died with AIDS, and many of these were anonymous.⁴⁸⁴ She remembered that these donations were significant contributions to the building fund, which was used to purchase, among other things, lateral files for the collections. Men who had come into contact with the LHA through AIDS activism also contributed labour and expertise to the upkeep of the Brooklyn-based house. Thistlethwaite noted several men helped fix up the plaster and prepared the walls for painting, while another man with construction experience enclosed the boiler in the basement. In addition, the LHA benefitted directly from financial contributions from women who had been illegally searched by guards during an ACT UP protest outside City Hall. Thistlethwaite explained that about twenty women were accused of resisting arrest and guards proceeded to strip search them, one after the other, until such time as the searches were found to be in violation of police policies. There was a subsequent lawsuit and each woman was awarded between seven and eight thousand dollars on the condition that they would not speak to the press about the incident. Many of these women, Thistlethwaite explained, made contributions to the LHA Building Fund.

The AIDS crisis also impacted lesbian archives in another, less obvious way. As Budge and Hamer (1994) write, the “unexpected catastrophe of AIDS [had] prised apart the closed doors of mainstream culture to enable the representation of sexual diversity in a way previously unknown” (p. 8). O’Sullivan (1994) connects the increasing prominence of lesbian sexuality and the accompanying fashion trend known as “lesbian chic” to the impact of AIDS. Throughout the 1970s and early 80s, she explains, backlash against feminist movements resulted in a stereotyping of

⁴⁸⁴ Thistlethwaite, 2014.

lesbians as a man-hating “bunch of hairy dykes” (p. 79).⁴⁸⁵ Lesbians were frumpy, ugly, and de-sexualized. By the beginning of the 1990s, however, the caricature of the lesbian had somehow shifted to represent transgressive or outlaw sexuality, the subject of fantasy, and an expression of power in a world that had become fixated on diverse sexualities. O’Sullivan points to the now famous 1993 *Vanity Fair* cover featuring a mannish k.d. lang reclined in a barber’s chair, receiving a ‘shave’ from supermodel Cindy Crawford. The image is titillating and sexy, she claims, and represented the apogee of “lesbianism’s challenge to male-defined heterosexuality” (p. 81). While O’Sullivan is careful to acknowledge the contributions of feminist movements in creating the environment in which this challenge could manifest, she also draws attention to the ways in which the AIDS epidemic rendered lesbian sexuality as safe and aesthetically pleasing, while it simultaneously represented male homosexuality as dangerous and sickly. The underpinnings of lesbian chic, she argues, are inherently tied to the ways in which AIDS created particular identities, some healthy and some unhealthy. For the first time in their existence, lesbian archives were not rescuing materials from dumpsters or scavenging for any evidence of lesbian lives, but were finding representations of lesbianism at the check-out counters in the local supermarket and on television, in music and in popular literature.⁴⁸⁶

The June Mazer Archives has had a more difficult relationship with the AIDS crisis. During the time that Fonfa, Cox, and Potter were preparing to hand over the collections to a community organization, they went looking for a lesbian feminist group in the Bay Area, but none was

⁴⁸⁵ The term “lesbian chic” can be traced to the weekly salons hosted at New York City’s Café Tabac, beginning in 1993. The salon’s creator, Wanda Acosta and filmmaker Karen Song are in the process of producing a documentary feature film that will explore the impact of Café Tabac and, what they call, the “golden era of lesbian culture and history.” See their Webpage: <http://www.cafetabacfilm.com>

⁴⁸⁶ There are many examples of lesbian chic in popular media. Examples include the 1991 episode of American television mainstay, *L.A. Law*, which became the first network television program to depict a kiss between two women; the May 10, 1993 issue of *New York Magazine*, which featured k.d. lang on its cover with the tag line “lesbian chic;” and the prominence of lesbian model Jenny Shimizu, who appeared in both Madonna’s famous *Sex* coffee table book (1992) and opposite lesbian icon Angelina Jolie in *Foxfire* (1996). Also memorable is the April 30, 1997 coming out of Ellen Degeneres’ character on her situational comedy television show, *Ellen*. By the end of the 1990s, the representation of lesbianism had shifted from “hairy dykes” to sexy, sophisticated mainstays of popular media. There is even a book dedicated to the fashion trends of “lesbian hair.” See Dugger (1996).

forthcoming.⁴⁸⁷ As Claire Potter recalled, San Francisco was in the midst of the AIDS crisis and much of the separatist organizing that had flourished in the late-1970s and early 80s, had simply disappeared. This was also true in the Los Angeles area. One long-term volunteer of the Mazer Archives remarked, the AIDS crisis brought the gay male and lesbian communities together into closer ties, but the withdrawal of so many women from lesbian organizing was detrimental to the archives. Nevertheless, women involved with the Mazer Archives were aware that AIDS was not only a concern for gay men, but that it would be an enduring problem for women's organizations as well. In a letter dated November 24, 1985 to Fonfa, Potter, and Cox, Bunny MacCulloch writes:

And we are in for some terrible times, likely. AIDS. We may not always be that crazy about the guys, but it is just going to be fucking tragic and devastating to those institutions we do have to have so many men sicken and die. We are a lot more powerful as a total community with them then without; that's the reality. Also, AIDS is now at the same % among hets as it was among gays in 1981; when THEY all start getting it there will REALLY be hell to pay, and we will be paying it right along with gay men, as the 'cause' of it all.⁴⁸⁸

After the crisis had abated in the mid-1990s, few women returned to separatist causes. As one community archivist at the Mazer Archives explained, the redirection of political and emotional energies from lesbian feminist to AIDS activism had dire consequences for the capacity of the archives and she speculated that California women have never really returned to separatist causes, preferring instead to focus on "mixed-gender activism."

The enduring legacy of HIV/AIDS and the AIDS crisis has additional implications for the future of archives, although benefits are more likely to be bestowed on "mixed gender" organizations. One way in which AIDS continues to feature in the sustainability of lesbian and gay archives is that many men did survive the AIDS epidemic and many of these have been living seropositive for the past two decades or more. Projects such as The Graying of AIDS have pointed out that by 2015, more than half of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States will be

⁴⁸⁷ Claire Potter, Interview. February 8, 2014.

⁴⁸⁸ MacCulloch, B. (1985, Nov 24). [Letter to Lynn, Cherrie and Claire]. Connexus/Centro de Mujeres collection, 1985-1991 (Box 8 June L. Mazer Collection. 1984-1990). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

over the age of 50 (Heinemann & Schegloff, 2013). Research also shows that people who live with HIV are more likely to develop comorbidity diagnoses and die earlier than people who are not seropositive (AVERT, 2014). Thus, in the next two decades, it is likely that a large number of men who have been living with HIV or have contracted the disease since the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, will be dying. As Popert noted in our discussion, the archives is one of the few places where gay men can leave their estates and many will choose to do so.⁴⁸⁹ The archives, Popert underscores, is about the preservation of legacy and older men will be conscious of preserving their legacies with an organization that is specifically designed to do this. The importance of legacy was echoed by several other community archivists at both the CLGA and the ONE Archives in reference to both the importance of the collections and the increasing importance of planned giving as a fundraising strategy. In fact, the term *legacy* was used so frequently by the men who participated in this project and so rarely by women that I began to wonder whether the very notion of legacy has gendered implications, a question that I could not explore further with this project but would encourage others to consider. Without considering the implications that a gendered sense of legacy may create, many community archivists at the CLGA noted that they have put the archives in their wills; Miller has made the archives the beneficiary in his will.⁴⁹⁰ The organization, which emerged out of the gay liberation movement and survived the AIDS crisis and possibly because of it, will benefit greatly from the eventual deaths of those who took part in or were impacted by these histories.

Although I do not have space here to explore a second repercussion of the AIDS crisis, I do want to draw attention to the work of Sturken (1997), Brophy (2004), and Gould (2009), who have explored cultural representations of AIDS in North America. Each examines particular aspect of AIDS — Sturken looks at the memorialization of the AIDS crisis through the creation the AIDS Memorial Quilt, Brophy digs into the work of four artists and authors to discover the impact of the disease on contemporary cultural production, and Gould delves into the history of ACT UP

⁴⁸⁹ Popert, 2013.

⁴⁹⁰ Miller, 2013.

to expose the emotional legacy that the AIDS crisis has created in the United States. The common thread that ties all of these projects together is the acknowledgement that the AIDS crisis emerged at a time when technological advances allowed individuals to more efficiently and effectively document the work that they were doing. This documentation was also visual; the body of evidence involved film, photographs, artwork, posters, t-shirts, and other ephemera. ACT UP, for example, was able to document its activism through handheld cameras and small audio recording devices, while photocopiers and other reprographic technologies allowed activists to more widely distribute and share information about the disease.

The death of so many otherwise healthy young white men with the disease also stimulated an urgent desire to document these short lives and preserve these experiences for posterity (Stuken, 1997; Brophy, 2004; Gould, 2009). The yearning for documentary evidence of life and loss undoubtedly bolsters the determination to create a record of AIDS and AIDS activism vis-à-vis

archives. Investment in the archives therefore serves multiple purposes: It ensures that those lost to AIDS are remembered and that the organizing around AIDS is never forgotten; it also achieves this memory work in an institution that will safeguard these histories against a homophobic and heteronormative culture that had denied the needs of gay men with AIDS for many years and arguably continues to do so. This critical role of the archives as a place where the dead interface with the living is alluring for men—especially those from a generation where few have children—to bestow the fruits of their labours. If, according to Sturken, Brophy, and Gould, the AIDS crisis was the instrument that compelled gay men to come out, it is the archives that will ensure that this expression of gay culture will not be forgotten.

Homophily in the Archives: Founders, Champions, and Volunteers

In the fall 2013, I spoke with notable historian Lillian Faderman about her experiences working with both the LHA and the Mazer Archives over the course of her academic career.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹¹ Faderman, 2013.

Faderman, who is a professor of English at the University of California–Fresno, was among the first historians to produce scholarly works on lesbian history and women’s same-sex desire. Her books, including *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) and *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (1991), draw significantly from the primary sources collected in lesbian archives. We began our discussion with Faderman noting that she first visited the LHA in 1979, when the collections were housed in the apartment of Joan Nestle and Deb Edel. She described the experience as a positive one, and told me how Nestle made her feel “at home” in the archives.⁴⁹² She remembered:

Joan seemed to know where everything was. The first time I was there, she gave me a run of the collection and said that she was going off to the 1979 March on Washington. I said that I could only be there for one week to do research and this was terrible. She said ‘make yourself at home.’ It’s no problem. You can come anytime.⁴⁹³

Faderman also shared her memories of meeting with Mabel Hampton and recalled interviewing her for her book project while sitting at the table in Nestle’s apartment. Today, as Faderman continues to research for a new project on lesbian history, she also draws from the LHA. Sometimes she accesses materials in person, but more often communicates with volunteers over the phone or by email. According to Faderman, the nature of the organization has changed over the years, and particularly in the last few years, but stalwarts such as Edel and Wolfe ensure that the archives remains an important and vibrant part of the New York community.

Faderman compared her experiences interacting with volunteers at the LHA to working with the Mazer Archives throughout the 1980s, as she began research for the project that would become *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*. She explained that the women involved with the Mazer were welcoming, but did not have the same intimate knowledge of the records in their collection. She recalled:

They were wonderful and gracious but just didn’t know the collection. There was a woman there who was in her 80s, and she lived in the Valley. She knew that I didn’t live in LA and was there a limited amount of time and she said, ‘any time you want

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

to use the collection, I will be there.’ I found out that she had to take three buses each way from the Valley to open the doors for me. But she did it. She was just terrific. It was fabulous.... At another point, there was material that I needed [and] it was stored off-site in a garage belonging to one of the volunteers. She said, ‘it’s not catalogued at all but you are welcome to come to our garage and we will put a table and chair out and you can work there.’ And that’s what my partner and I did; we worked in their garage. Nothing was catalogued but they gave us access to many, many boxes. I was truly appreciative.⁴⁹⁴

I brought with me these anecdotes when I visited both of the archives on my own later that season, and I had very similar experiences. Angela Brinskele drove down to West Hollywood to meet me at the Mazer Archives and unlock the door to the Werle Building. She was welcoming and receptive to my project, but it was clear that she was not as familiar with the records in the collections as I had hoped. In fact, it wasn’t until nearing the end of my stay in Los Angeles that I learned that the Mazer continues to store a significant amount of its materials off-site in garages belonging to community archivists and their neighbours. It was made clear that I could access these garages if I wanted to make the trip, but this last-minute offer was also demonstrative of a general sense that the Mazer Archives still struggles to maintain intellectual control over its collections, even after 25 years at the Werle Building. I suspect that this is a residual effect of not only accepting already existing collections from the Oakland founders, but also losing champions June Mazer and Bunny MacCulloch so early on in the project.

Upon arriving at the LHA, I was met by Edel and we had only spoken for a few minutes when she handed me a set of keys to the building and proceeded to show me how the alarm system worked. She then gave me an introduction to the archives and the collections, and appeared to have deep knowledge about what treasures were kept in which boxes. I was then allowed to wander on my own, walking room to room with one hand in my pocket, feeling the weight of the keys I had stashed there.

I want to underscore the importance of people like Nestle, Edel, and the 80-year-old volunteer who travels in from the Valley, to the sustainability of the archives. The trajectories of the

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

archives are undoubtedly shaped by what McAdam (1999) has called, *political opportunity structures*—the openness of institutional political systems, the involvement of allies, and the general easing of restrictions on homosexuality in law have created avenues for queer social movements to form and gain momentum since the mid-1950s (see also Stein, 2012). The formation of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, for example, stimulated collective actions on the part of gay and lesbian activists, but also worked to build more tolerant administrations at multiple levels of government (D’Emilio, 2013). The rise and fall of the Briggs Initiative, the public downfall of Anita Bryant’s campaign to reverse non-discrimination laws, and increasing resistance to police surveillance, have had implications for the four archives that inform this study. As I’ve discussed in the above section, the AIDS crisis has impacted archives and stimulated their development over the last three decades. Nevertheless, without the commitment of founders, champions, and other volunteers, not one of these organizations would have succeeded beyond its first few moments. Without the willingness of Joan Nestle and Cherrie Cox to invite strangers into their homes, the work of June Mazer and Bunny MacCulloch to move the West Coast Lesbian Collections to Los Angeles, or Angela Brinskele’s dedication to work many more hours than the twenty she is paid for each week, or the fervent rescuer-historian personalities of Jim Kepner and James Fraser, the work of the archives would have faltered.

I also want to distinguish between three different kinds of volunteers or actors that I have observed or learned about in the formation, development, and continuing survival of these four archives. The first actors in these organizations were the founders, the individuals or groups of activists who consciously constituted an archives as a political act to gather and preserve material evidence of lesbian and gay lives. These include Jearld Moldenhauer and Ron Dayman, who saw the importance of keeping the detritus of *The Body Politic* beyond a single publication cycle; Jim Kepner, who spent his modest income on rescuing books from remainder bins; Joan Nestle, who understood the importance of building a community resource for lesbian women; and Lynn Fonfa, Cherrie Cox, and Claire Potter, who founded a collection to ensure that evidence of lesbian culture

would be preserved for future generations. In some cases, founders have remained with the archives for many years; however, in most cases, founders moved on quickly to other activist projects as their interests shifted.

A second type of actor then picked up the work of the archives, the champions of the archives. With the exception of Kepner, the champions at each of these four archives have come into the organization after its founding and yet wholly invested in the organization's long-term survival. Champions contribute countless hours of labour to archival projects; they manage the finances, take out the garbage, make sure that the basement doesn't flood, and work diligently to process, describe, and preserve the materials in their care. During my tenure at the CLGA, I've witnessed the work of champions. Since joining the archives in 2008, Dennis Findlay has steadily increased his commitment and now considers his volunteer work as more than a full-time job. Alan Miller takes Wednesdays off for personal responsibilities, but is otherwise available at the archives every other day of the week. Gerald King works a shift every Thursday night, maintaining the library materials, and has done so for more than three decades. Without these champions, the organizations would, at best, have a much more limited capacity to do archival work, but more likely, these archival projects would simply disappear.

I was reminded by several participants in this study that archival work is not very exciting, mundane even, and that community archives need the investment of champions to both sustain this work and to inspire others to contribute their own labour. As one community archivist explained, "Archival description is boring, tedious work, and few want to spend their nights in front of an old computer entering metadata." This might help explain why founders, who see the value in archives for the purpose of community building and political action, do not often stay on to perform day-to-day operations. This might also be why the champions of the archives in my study remain

somewhat undervalued by those outside of the organizations, even though they are the consistently acknowledged internally as the lifeblood of the archives.⁴⁹⁵

This point was also made by Nestle in our continuing correspondence after our formal interview for the project. That is, Nestle recognizes that she is still the person most commonly associated with the Lesbian Herstory Archives, even though she has not lived in North America for more than a decade. Others have taken up roles as coordinators and perform the labour necessary to sustain the archives. In my last email from Nestle, she sent me a note of encouragement and asked that I include the following paragraph in my work:

It is Deborah Edel who is the true cultural wonder of the archives. I have been away from the daily toil and talk about the archival table, but Deb has been at the heart of this project from the beginning. I talk and write and entice, but Deborah held me together in many ways, let me dream my collective dreams and always found room in the apartment for new archival dreams, a metaphor for her whole life—made possible with hard work and little fanfare. So while you read my words, those of you who care how such dreams become real, seek out Deborah Edel and you will find the glow of possibilities.⁴⁹⁶

Although I wish nothing more than that I could end this section with such an eloquent and generous quotation, there is one more point that I must raise. The third and final type of actor that I observed at these four archives is a cadre of volunteers who come to the organizations for a variety of reasons, but do not necessarily become champions. This includes the casual volunteers who work the bar at fundraising events, the people who assist with the occasional archival exhibitions, directors who serve on the board, and the interns who come to the archives for course credit or to gain experience for the benefit of their careers. As these archives become more institutionalized and their collections more palatable to a broader public, this cadre of volunteers has and will continue to grow.

⁴⁹⁵ In Spring 2015, Alan Miller was recognized by the membership-based charity Volunteer Toronto with a Legacy Award for his service to the CLGA. Harold Averill has also been recognized by the Archives Association of Ontario with a J. J. Talman Award for his pioneering work at the CLGA. These forms of recognition are nevertheless rare and it is unusual for community archivists to receive such recognition. See <http://www.volunteertoronto.ca/?page=LegacyAwards15#Alan%20Miller> and <https://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/content/harold-averill-receives-association-ontarios-most-prestigious-award>

⁴⁹⁶ J. Nestle. Personal communication. 2014, June 4.

Social movement theory offers a substantial amount of literature on the role of volunteers in social movement organizations (SMOs); however, the focus has tended to be on the ways in which volunteerism is eroded or enhanced by professionalization (see Zald & Ash, 1966; McCarthy & Zald, 1973; Kleidman, 1994). Some literature on abeyance structures has addressed the ways in which volunteers can help movements carry on or carry over movement ideology from one organization to the next, but this remains limited in scope and not particularly germane to the archives (see Taylor, 1989; Lofland, 1996; Sawyer & Meyer, 1999; and Ferree & Merrill, 2000). To my knowledge, social movement theory has not paid much attention to the roles of interns or practicum students, which constitute a particular type of compensated volunteerism that is quite common in cultural heritage organizations, or to the role of unpaid professionals who perform labour for social movement organizations as a way to learn or maintain valuable skills for their careers. I will discuss internships again in the next two chapters. Early collective behaviour theory looked at the motivations or psychologies of individual participants in collective actions; however, theorists such as Blumer (1979), Smelser (1962), and Lofland (1985) write exclusively about traditional forms of action—protests, rallies, and other forms of civil disobedience. Even recent new social movement theory remains relatively silent on the role of volunteer activists in cultural heritage organizations, despite acknowledging the importance of culture, heritage, and identity formation on social movement success (see Touraine, 1985).

Museum studies and literature on non-profit arts administration provide some insight into the role of volunteers. Holmes (2003, 2006) found that volunteers are an essential resource for museums, although the extent to which museums involve volunteers in their work varies. Chambers (1997) found that volunteers participate in various activities, both front-of-house and behind the scenes, including research, archival work, sales, and fundraising (see also Locke, Ellis & Smith, 2003). Perhaps more relevant to this project is the work of Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) who assessed the motivation of volunteers and found that performance and commitment is enhanced when volunteers are well matched to the tasks that they are given, but that particular motivations

are more difficult to evaluate. Orr (2006) has also described volunteering in the heritage sector as “serious leisure,” suggesting that volunteers can transition from causal to champions if they find reasons to dedicate themselves to the tasks of heritage work.

Clary *et al* (1998) have identified six possible motivations or functions for volunteering, described as: (1) the values function, which indicates the extent to which volunteers act on a social justice imperative to help those less fortunate; (2) the understanding function, which describes the extent to which volunteers can satisfy their own desire to understand their place in the world; (3) the career function, which measures how much volunteers use volunteering to learn new skills or gain experience to leverage in their professional work; (4) the social function, which describes how volunteers use their volunteer positions to socialize, meet new people, and make friends; (5) the esteem function, which indicates the extent to which volunteering improves self-worth and allows them to better understand their value in the world; and (6) the protective function, which measures the ways in which volunteering helps volunteers work through personal problems. Holmes (1999) suggests that volunteers in the heritage sector, in particular, share a love of objects, history, or historical buildings. He also emphasizes the participation of retired people in the heritage sector and suggests that this is, in part, because volunteering allows retired professionals to discover new social spaces and provides a place for them to offer their expertise gained through years of professional work.

Leonard (2012) affirms that retirees and emerging professionals are also likely candidates for volunteer work in archives. He warns, however, that retirees come to archives from a variety of backgrounds, not necessarily related to heritage work. They require training in archival functions, which can place a significant burden on administration to ensure that new volunteers are responsible and accountable for the tasks they are assigned. Relationships among volunteers tend to be personal rather than hierarchical, which also makes it difficult to act critically when problems arise. Leonard also found that archives struggle to recruit volunteers from a relatively “small pool of applicants” and, as a result, address their needs through internships and other student programs

(p. 317). Internships are nevertheless “arrangements of short duration” and do not provide a “long-term dependable source of labour” (317). Leonard suggests that archives seek long-term committed volunteers across a variety of age groups to create a volunteer program that strengthens ties among those with more work experience and emerging professionals with perhaps more technical expertise. Leonard shows that recruiting volunteers both old and young can enhance local outreach opportunities and strengthen the archives’ relationship to its broader community.

All four of the case archives in this study understand the vital role that volunteers play in the sustainability of the organizations. Even though three of these organizations are now supported by paid positions, and the LHA continues to rely on a live-in caretaker, the labour and expertise provided by casual or leisure volunteers is critical to survival. For this reason, volunteer management has also become increasingly important. Pat Allen performs this role at the ONE Archives and, as I write this, the CLGA has just hired its first full-time Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator, a position supported by a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.⁴⁹⁷ This recognition of the importance of volunteers also comes with an awareness of the mortality of champions and the urgent need to grow a new cohort of volunteers, hopefully some of whom will become champions. In many cases, champions are nearing or have reached retirement age, and casual or leisure volunteers have become increasingly more important for succession planning.

The Mazer Archives is the only institution in this study that does not actively seek out interns or student engagement as part of its volunteer program. As one board member explained, the Mazer Archives prefers to solicit support from retired or older lesbians because they have more time to donate and remain more committed to the collections over time. Students are nevertheless engaged with the collections as both researchers and visitors. In addition, graduate students are often hired to work on collections that have been donated by the Mazer Archives to UCLA;

⁴⁹⁷ The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and Canada’s largest granting foundation. According to the agency’s website, OTF awards over \$110 million annually to some 1,300 non-profit and charitable organizations across the province. See <http://www.otf.ca/who-we-are>

however, this engagement is arranged by university administration and not considered part of the Mazer's community-driven program. I will discuss the role of these graduate students assistants (GSAs) at UCLA in the next chapter. A larger discussion about the long-term implications of internships and student engagement in lesbian and gay archives is outside the scope of this project, but remains a critical question worth investigating further.

I want to pick up on one particular strand of the museum studies literature, the social dimension of volunteering, and briefly look at how this has unfolded in the four archives that inform this study. I also want to introduce the concept of homophily to describe the relationships that exist among volunteers in these institutions. McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001) describe homophily as the principle that “contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people” (p. 416). That is, social networks appear to have localized features, such as cultural, behavioural, and genetic expressions, as well as common informational flows. Borrowing this concept from ecological studies, the authors suggest that homophily is an observable pattern of social interaction among small social groups in which “birds of a feather flock together” (p. 417). Groups may form if members sit together at a cafeteria, for example, or among children in a classroom that share similar characteristics and interests. I have casually observed homophily in the archives, at each of the institutions that I visited and among the profession as a whole. As one colleague recently quipped, “Archivists enjoy order and we like to follow rules—that’s what makes us so good at our profession.” The community archivists that I have worked with over the past few years are extraordinarily diligent in their work, but they are also drawn together because of shared political values and experiences, and interested in the lives of their friends and others in their informal social network. The danger of homophily in the archives is that it establishes a social clique or a small association of friends or associates, which can exclude those who do not share the characteristics of its members. Homophily can also produce archival homophily, whereby the collections reflect the shared interests of archivists and the culture of the organization itself. Although it is outside of the scope of this project to investigate the ways in

which the collections themselves are skewed in favour of one culture or interest over others, archival homophily may not necessarily be part of identitarian perniciousness but more a reflection of the lives of those who work in the institutions. Archival homophily and its relationship with strategic neutrality are important considerations for future intellectual work on activist or community archiving practices.

On more than one occasion, community archivists noted that they had initially come to the archives as a way to meet new people, especially when there were few other spaces for gay men and lesbians to socialize. Gerald King recalled that he first came to the CLGA after ending a relationship and sought out a place where he could make new friends and regain some self-confidence; he has remained a volunteer ever since.⁴⁹⁸ Traditionally, women gathered at Joan Nestle's kitchen table to undertake work parties and this kind of group work continues to take place now that the table sits in the centre of the Brooklyn brownstone.⁴⁹⁹ Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz and Polly Thistlethwaite also stressed the importance of interpersonal relationships on the development of collections.⁵⁰⁰ Smith-Cruz surmised, for example, that the Hampton's participation in the archives created a space for elders in the collections and that it continues to honour elders as part of its guiding principles.⁵⁰¹ She also explained that Black women have always been part of the archives and represented to some extent, especially those who maintained friendships and intimate relationships with white women. We even joked that some of the early Black donors were *swirlers*—a term coined in the television program *Orange is the New Black*, to refer to a mixed-race relationship. Nestle later confirmed that significant collections from Black lesbians, including Georgia Brooks and Audre Lorde, came to the LHA, in part, because these women had intimate relationships with white women who were familiar with the archives.⁵⁰² Thistlethwaite also admitted that there was a lot of flirting happening at Nestle's apartment and many visitors came to meet potential romantic

⁴⁹⁸ King, 2013.

⁴⁹⁹ Nestle, 2014.

⁵⁰⁰ Smith, 2013; Thistlethwaite, 2014.

⁵⁰¹ Smith, 2013.

⁵⁰² Nestle, 2014.

or sexual partners. Twice I have asked groups of volunteers working in the CLGA's main office if they thought that their work at the archives was a pleasurable experience. Twice they have denied that there is pleasure in the work that they do, but both times this denial was punctuated by laughter and smirks. They greet each other like old friends and often chide each other like bickering brothers. All of my interactions with volunteers appear to affirm the observations made by Cary *et al* (1998) about volunteers and volunteering in museums.

Cooper's (2013) ethnography of the Lesbian Herstory Archives offers additional insight into the social role that archives can take in their local communities. Drawing from library and information studies literature, especially Buschman and Leckie's framework of 'library as place', Cooper found that the archives' home-like setting and residential neighbourhood creates a casual atmosphere that promotes a level of comfort for visitors that differs significantly from other institutional information centres. She writes, "The LHA not only creates a home-like impression, but also allows patrons to relate to the space, and, by extension, with the information contained therein like they are at home" (p. 531). Cooper adds that the buttons, necklaces, t-shirts, and other ephemera displayed throughout the brownstone give visitors a sense that they can literally touch and feel artefacts of historical and cultural significance, enhancing the experience of being in an important social space. Although Cooper's work is more focussed on the experiences of visitors, her attention to the home-like atmosphere of the LHA unintentionally raises a critical problem for both the sustainability of the archives and its capacity to attract and retain new volunteers. By creating a "homey" place, the archives potentially alienates people who are uncomfortable with this level of intimacy or perceive this intimacy as somehow exclusive.

Cooper's work reminded me of several comments that Smith-Cruz made in our discussion.⁵⁰³ Smith-Cruz explained that the intimacy of the LHA can be overwhelming for visitors and that some interns have not been able to complete their work or have decided not to continue volunteering past their terms because the experience of being in this kinetic or haptic space is just

⁵⁰³ Smith, 2013.

too emotional to bear. Smith-Cruz also explained that trans* identified visitors are welcome at any time, but only trans* women would be able to serve the organization as *archivettes*. She emphasized that there is an implicit assumption that women who want to work with the collections are lesbian identified until they disclose otherwise. The treatment of both trans* identified visitors and volunteers, as well as collections that document trans* experiences is constantly shifting within the organization and, although it appears that coordinators have reached a consensus that is more open than ever to including trans* people and experiences in the archives, the organization's continued alignment with homocentric and cis-gendered identity categories is not only problematic for trans* identified people, but also alienating for a younger generation more comfortable with queerness and queer identities that often transcend binary categories of gender and sexuality. The barrier created by homocentric and cis-gender identity categories will have implications for the organization's capacity to attract and retain investment moving forward into the future. Smith-Cruz worries that the social space provided by the Archives can easily "decay" if it is not tended to and cared for, and the organization is not willing to adapt to changes in the political and affective environment.⁵⁰⁴ This is perhaps why Edel, who has taken on the tending to and caring for the archives is cognizant that the organization needs to better respond to changing expectations and knows that the archives cannot "get stuck in 1970s politics."⁵⁰⁵

Understanding the increasing importance of leisure volunteers and considering the social potential of the archives sheds light on the long-term sustainability of each of the four archives in my study. With the exception of the ONE Archives, which is now wholly owned by the University of Southern California, these archives remain community-based and community led institutions. They need investment from volunteers to keep doing the work that they do. If the organization is perceived by a younger generation as closed or irrelevant, or if the social space is designed in a way that marginalizes entire groups of potential volunteers, this could have serious repercussions on its

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Edel, 2013.

sustainability. The Mazer Archives, for example, is managed by a small group of older women who have not been successful at gauging the interests or capacities of younger women. As one long-serving director explained, the board is comprised entirely of older women because they found that younger women became too busy and could not make time in their lives for the level of commitment that the Mazer Archives requires. It will be difficult for this organization to engage in any form of succession planning if directors continue to devalue or dismiss the contributions of younger volunteers or ignore the potential of developing an internship program that would not only provide much needed labour, but might also introduce new methodologies and creative sustainability models to the management and preservation of the collections under the Mazer Archives' care.

As I have noted before in this study, the environment at the LHA appears to be lively and intergenerational. Experienced coordinators work with newer volunteers and interns to undertake archival work on a project-by-project basis. Younger volunteers gain hands-on experience in exchange for labour, and the LHA also remains relevant to a new cohort of young activists just learning about lesbian history for the first time. The CLGA has also benefitted from the involvement of students, many of whom come to the Archives while pursuing graduate work in archival studies at the nearby University of Toronto. A robust exhibition program has also opened up the CLGA to a broader public who might not otherwise engage with an archives, but who come to see an art show or a performance in the second-floor gallery space. Frequent tours by undergraduate classes and high school groups also ensure that the archives is a welcoming place for younger people, although as Zieman (2009) notes in her update on the CLGA's outreach programming, youth engagement remains challenging for an organization run mostly by older white gay men. Attracting investment from racialized volunteers is an additional challenge. A small body of literature on leisure settings suggests that these spaces can provide opportunities to alleviate racial tension by creating environments where people of different races can interact (see Shinew, Glover & Parry 2004; Glover, Parry & Shinew, 2005). Archives could easily serve as these reparative

leisure settings, but they must first find more ways to allow interracial interactions to occur. This requires much more critical reflection, strategic planning, and open engagement. It might even require a bit of luck.

CHAPTER 8

From Radical Archiving to Special Collections Lesbian and Gay Archives and their Engagements with Academic Institutions

I would like to raise the question and hopefully the consciousness of those Lesbian and Gay activists who lend financial support and material donations to non-gay controlled institutions rather than those of our own community.

It saddens me to see these people, many of them who are sincere and dedicated activists within our community, turn from that community when it comes to placing their papers and collections. Although we receive the papers and works of many activists, artists, writers and others on a regular basis at the archives, I cannot help but wonder how it happens that still others have allowed their materials to be handed over to non-gay institutions that prize their papers little if at all.

Why then do so many activists and other Lesbian and Gay people still entrust their materials to non-gay libraries? Is it because that is where they went to college? Is that a strong enough reason alone? I assume it is not conscious self-hatred which motivates them it must be that they view these libraries as somehow more “respectable institutions” and are better equipped to preserve their items. Could it be that they feel a Gay and/or Lesbian archive won’t have the desired longevity or that they won’t guarantee the protection and preservation of the items they wish to leave behind?

I say to them... don't be surprised at how your cherished alma mater might end up handling those same materials. It is not unheard of that one library board or director is replaced by another and the decisions are made to get rid of those things that are deemed non-suitable for their collection. It has happened before and it can happen again especially to the kinds of materials that document out Gay and Lesbian lifestyles. Virtually every library donation made is accompanied by financial contributions to maintain its preservation and is accepted, naturally, with open arms. What happens to the materials later is another story.

— John O’Brien, IGLA Newsletter #10, Spring 1994, p. 6

In May 2011, I visited Los Angeles for the first of three short visits over the next three years. The reason for my excursion was that the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives was hosting a four-day conference in collaboration with the City of West Hollywood, the ONE Archives, and the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA). Known simply as ALMS 2011, the conference was the third to be organized by an international advisory group under the rubric of the GLBT

Archives, Libraries, Museums, and Special Collections Conference. The first, held in 2006 and hosted jointly by Quatrefoil Library and The Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota, brought together several dozen scholars and practitioners; a second, co-sponsored by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Lesbian Herstory Archives, was held in 2008. When the 2011 conference was announced, I submitted a proposal to present a paper and was thrilled when it was accepted. My colleague, Marcel Barriault, had previously attended the New York conference and assured me that my attendance at future conferences was essential.

Admittedly, I had little interest in travelling to Los Angeles—my perception of the city and its queer communities was based solely on episodes of *The L Word* and a distant childhood memory of visiting Disneyland—and I was unsure exactly how the conference would contribute to my overall research trajectory. After a rather long and uninspiring trip from the airport to my hotel, I took a walk down the Sunset Strip and stumbled upon The Viper Room, a nightclub once partly owned by actor Johnny Depp and where, in the early morning hours of October 31, 1993, River Phoenix collapsed and died. Phoenix was only 23 years old at the time and his death greatly impacted my own coming-of-age. Across the street, in a dilapidated building, a young Jim Morrison once took the stage for the first time at the Whiskey-a-Go-Go, which also served as the launching pad for Mötley Crüe and Guns 'N Roses, two of my favourite bands as a young adult. A few blocks in the other direction, the famous Chateau Marmont stood partially sheltered by the natural Hollywood hills and the engineered landscaping of early 20th century development. It was in this hotel that Hunter S. Thompson, Annie Leibovitz, Dorothy Parker, Tim Burton, and F. Scott Fitzgerald are rumoured to have produced some of their best work. It is also where John Belushi famously died of a drug overdose in Bungalow 3 on March 5, 1982. With several hours before nightfall, I did something that few Angelinos ever do: I walked. I walked from the Strip all the way to Hollywood Boulevard, took in the crowds at Grauman's ("TCL") Chinese Theatre, found Michael Jackson's star on the Walk of Fame, and set off back along Sunset, stopping for a burger at In-N-Out, just steps

away from Hollywood High, where Judy Garland once took her classes. By the time the conference began the next evening at the Plummer Park Community Center, I had taken a shine to my new environment. For a place so often accused of artificiality, I had come to suspect that Los Angeles had the rich character of place that is both inspiring to archivists and animates archival work. Excursions to the Hollywood Forever Cemetery and Griffith Observatory later that week would solidify my new appreciation for the City of Angels.

It was this first visit to Los Angeles that was also the primary catalyst for this research project and, in particular, sparked my interest in learning more about how a particular cohort of lesbian and gay archives established during the gay liberation and lesbian feminist movements balance a desire for political and organizational autonomy with a pragmatic need to manage limited resources. On the second day of the conference and the first full day of presentations, delegates were invited to take a tour of the LGBT collections at UCLA and explore the Charles E. Young Research Library, which houses most of the university's special collections. We were then invited to a presentation called "Access Mazer: Model for University-Community Partnerships."⁵⁰⁶ As a relatively new researcher in this area, I was aware that universities were becoming increasingly interested in LGBT materials, but I was not at all informed about the implications of this trend. The presentation began with an introduction from Julie Childers, Assistant Director, UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW), who outlined the nature of a burgeoning partnership between the CSW and the Mazer Archives, supported by the UCLA Libraries. As she explained, the partnership had started as a small community grant to bring in four collections from the Mazer and have them digitized and made available through the UCLA Libraries digital library service, as part of its Collecting Los Angeles

⁵⁰⁶ Video of this presentation and following panel discussion is unavailable, although I recall that it was recorded at the time. There are, however, two additional videos documenting launch activities for the partnership between UCLA Library and the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives that are worth noting. The first, filmed at an even hosted by UCLA on December 2, 2009, includes remarks from Lillian Faderman and Ann Gigani. Also in attendance, the Mayor of West Hollywood, Abbe Land, and the Honorable Sheila Kuehl, member of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors for District 3. The video is accessible on the UCLA's YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOYdt-IRNvk>. The second is a keynote from the 2011 ALMS conference given by Lillian Faderman, who discusses the importance of preserving historical evidence of lesbian cultures. She speaks specifically about the research that she has done at the Mazer Archives and the significance of the new partnership with UCLA Library. It is accessible on the Mazer Archives YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvnoGdRE4GU>

program. She also discussed how the success of the partnership had led to a second, much larger grant to digitize an additional 80 collections. She then handed the lectern to Ann Giagni, President of the Board for the Mazer Archives, who discussed the board's decision to partner with UCLA, and how they had worked with Sharon Farb, Associate University Librarian, and Kathleen McHugh, Director of the CSW, to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that satisfies many of their concerns. This agreement, Giagni explained, would see the Mazer Archives donate their materials to the UCLA Libraries on the condition that they be kept together in the Los Angeles area and made accessible to the public. The Mazer reserves the right to remove its collections from the UCLA Library if these conditions are not met by the University of California. Giagni also described how this decision was made not only to preserve and make available material previously inaccessible, but also to free up more space for the Mazer Archives to renew its commitment to collecting material evidence of lesbian experiences in the Greater Los Angeles Area.

My own recollection of this presentation is that the audience was seemingly in agreement or at least sympathetic with the Mazer Archives' decision to partner with UCLA, but a disruption occurred during the question period. A man stood up and identified himself as Joseph Hawkins, Director of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives. He asked whether or not the presenters agreed that lesbian and gay archives had reached a particular juncture in their histories that left them vulnerable to waning energies and limited resources. He wondered if all of these archives would eventually seek support from universities or other heritage institutions. My notes from this event show that Hawkins used a particular phrase in his question—"is it an inevitability?"—that produced uproar from several audience members. I recall feeling that the tension in the room was palpable. A woman shouted from the back of the room that she was attending as a representative of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, which remained politically autonomous and that there was nothing "inevitable" about these partnerships. The LHA, she explained, would never donate itself to an institution. Another attendee—possibly Maxine Wolfe of the LHA, although neither of us could recall for certain—also shouted that there was no guarantee that universities would be able to treat

these collections with the same level of care and reverence as community archives. They were, she asserted, collected by and for lesbian and gay people, and that universities were simply “swallowing them up.” I recall this woman saying something to the effect that autonomy was worth fighting for. After a few intense moments, Childers thanked everyone for their comments and the audience was ushered into a new location for a celebratory wine and cheese reception. I returned to Toronto a week later still thinking about this partnership and the exchange of ideas that I had witnessed. When I brought this up with my colleagues at home, I learned that the CLGA had also been asked by the University of Toronto to partner some time in the early 2000s, but had declined the invitation. “Is it an inevitability?” I asked one of the long-serving CLGA volunteers. “No,” he replied, “but, it is certainly an attractive prospect. They have the money and the staff. We have the collections. And there is a lot at stake. Someone should really investigate this further.” Indeed, this is what I endeavour to do here.

Currently in the United States, only 14% of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer (LGBTQ) collections are held in non-profit community archives (Bednarczyk, 2010); more than half of these kinds of collections are now owned by universities. Although data for Canada is not available, it is likely that the situation is similar here. While a welcome sign that universities have become more accepting of non-traditional research and queer and/or trans* scholars, the transfer of collections out of communities and into institutional repositories is nonetheless fraught with tension. As Stevens, Flinn and Shepherd (2010) suggest, there is an increasing appetite on the part of academic institutions to take in collections that document activist activities. While they attribute this phenomenon to a recent turn toward a constructivist approach to heritage and the emergence of more interdisciplinary scholarship and rights-based discourse, there remains a perception that universities are simply “swallowing” community-produced archives to expand their own collections without considering how to appropriately promote the use of this material or the implications that this has on the communities that have produced these collections (p. 64).

Media theorist Kate Eichhorn (2013) has also argued that a shift toward neoliberalism has had a profound impact on the ways in which academic institutions pursue special collections. Neoliberalism, she suggests, has restructured the economy to promote private property rights, individual liberty, and free markets in a way that “places the state itself in a position where its primary function becomes protecting such assumed freedoms and rights” (p. 6). One of the primary ways in which institutions benefit from acquiring and keeping activist records is that these collections might serve as material evidence for the assertion and maintenance of human rights. In this way, universities manifest larger neoliberal goals by serving as the laboratories for the assertion and protection of freedoms and rights demanded by neoliberal economies. She raises several urgent questions. If lesbian and gay archives donate their materials to universities, are they complicit in helping to uphold the very neoliberal ideals that some queer social movements have challenged? Or, is it possible, as Eichhorn suggests, that de-radicalizing this material through institutionalization might actually open up new possibilities for sustaining or re-igniting movement momentum? Another pressing question is what underlies the motivation on the part of universities to collect queer and/or trans* material and what prevents these institutions from destroying this material in the future, either through conscious censorship or censorship through neglect?

In this chapter, I will explore some of the ways in which the four archives that inform this study have responded to the concerns and questions raised above. I will look at how they have resisted or confronted institutionalization and, as a corollary, why some have decided to partner with institutions. Following from my experience at the ALMS 2011 conference, I am conscious that lesbian and gay archives do not share a unifying approach to building relationships with the academy. Both the CLGA and the Lesbian Herstory Archives remain wholly autonomous, although each has pursued partnerships or at least engaged with academic scholars in particular ways. Although the Mazer Archives has donated more than 80 of its collections to the UCLA Libraries, it also remains autonomous and continues to collect as a community-based archives (JMLA, 2015). Its partnership with UCLA, however, positions the Mazer Archives as a conduit through which

potential donors can deposit their material with UCLA under the Access Mazer program (JMLA, 2015). Just as I was preparing to visit the ONE Archives for the first time, the organization announced that it had donated all of its collections to the University of Southern California (USC), effectively ending more than 70 years of independent collecting (Gordon, 2010; Masters, 2010). Although the ONE Archives remains a non-profit organization, its mandate still includes an obligation to collect materials, but its focus has shifted to supporting engagement with existing collections that are now part of USC Libraries. In this chapter, I provide background on each of these cases with regard to their positions on autonomy and partnerships, and explore some of the implications that this has for long-term and short-term sustainability. This background provides context for the discussion on the future of lesbian and gay archives at the end of this chapter and in the following concluding chapter.

The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives and the University of Toronto

By the end of 2000, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) had recovered from its near bankruptcy several years earlier and was reporting a sum of more than \$80,000 in its corporate bank account.⁵⁰⁷ Fundraising activities were consistently improving—the archives took in \$42,000 in 1999 and another \$46,000 in 2000.⁵⁰⁸ Space, however, continued to be a problem and the board had done some preliminary investigation on the possibility of relocating the archives to a new space. The collections had outgrown the CLGA's small office on Temperance Street, forcing the organization to rent a second storage space; the hugely successful launch and tour of the National Portrait Collection was also cause to consider moving into a facility that included a gallery space where the collection could be shown. Nevertheless, an estimated \$60,000 that it would cost to move the archives was prohibitive and the board reluctantly agreed to hold off making any rash decisions.

⁵⁰⁷ CLGA. (1991, Feb 5). [Minutes of the CGA Annual Meeting]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

Even when the archives suffered an incident of water damage and the landlord's insurer denied a claim for \$3,000 in losses, the board remained cautious about making any gestures to relocate.⁵⁰⁹

Minutes from a board meeting held in February of 2001, indicate that Matt Hughes, then President of the Board, was keen to establish an endowment fund for the purpose of purchasing a building for the archives and had already approached Ken Popert and other supporters to discuss the possibility of moving ahead with this plan.⁵¹⁰ Members of the board and volunteers were aware that the Lesbian Herstory Archives had not only managed to purchase a building, but they had also successfully paid off a mortgage through community fundraising.⁵¹¹ Popert also offered to move the archives into a storefront location on Church Street, adjacent to the offices of the Pink Triangle Press. Located in the centre of Toronto's gay village, this would position the archives as a more accessible and visible organization.⁵¹² The offer was nevertheless short-term, two-to-three years only, which meant that the archives would have to move again in the near future. Even though rent would be reduced, the prospect of moving again so soon was enough to discourage the board. Meanwhile, events such as a performance by the Toronto Gay Men's Choir and fundraising nights at local bars, as well as personal donations and bequests, continued to bring in money to support the archives' operating costs as the board continued to search for a feasible solution to its space problem.⁵¹³

Around this time, the Archives had become aware that David Rayside, Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, had been working with an advisory committee to propose the

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ In an email to "Christine", Alan Miller notes that there are three archives in the US, the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the ONE Institute, and the Leather Museum, which were each able to raise enough money to buy their own buildings. Harold Averill (2013) also noted that the board was aware that the Lesbian Herstory Archives had raised enough money to buy their own brownstone. Miller, A. (2003, Oct 29). [Email to Christine]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto. Harold Averill also noted that the board was aware that the Lesbian Herstory Archives had raised enough money to buy their own brownstone. Averill, 2013.

⁵¹² CLGA. (2001, Feb 5). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

establishment of a department of Sexual Diversity Studies (SDS).⁵¹⁴ A long-time gay activist and former member of *The Body Politic* collective, Rayside had previously helped to establish the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Studies Association, and was instrumental in animating a national curriculum for the study of gay and lesbian politics. He was also a friend of the CLGA and, as Miriam Smith recalled in an interview for this project, Rayside was interested in finding a space for the archives on campus as a way to strengthen its association with groundbreaking scholarship in the cross- and trans-disciplinary work of sexual diversity studies.⁵¹⁵ Rayside's SDS proposal was shared with board members at the archives' February 2001 meeting, and discussed at the March meeting a month later. Rayside also wrote to Hughes on March 5, 2001, to formalize an offer to move the archives into University College, a constituent college of the University of Toronto that would become the home institution for the proposed department of SDS.⁵¹⁶ Rayside confirmed that the University had planned a new residence building to be constructed on the "back campus," just behind the University College buildings, and that there had been "motions of support in principle for the location of the archives in the residence complex," approved by both the student council and the University College council.⁵¹⁷ In this email to Hughes, Rayside notes that the archives would be responsible for contributing funds to the capital costs related to the planned building, but that there was a general understanding that the CLGA was not in a position to "raise the kind of money required for this project to succeed, and we do not expect it to."⁵¹⁸ Rayside suggests that there are likely donors who, for personal reasons, would not feel comfortable donating to a gay organization, but would give money to the University if they knew it would assist the archives in finding a more suitable location. If the Archives agreed to long-term commitment to the

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Miriam Smith, Interview. October 8, 2013.

⁵¹⁶ The CLGA's Organizational Records includes a folder of email correspondence between David Rayside and Matt Hughes, dating between February 2001 and early 2003. A key email was sent from Rayside to Hughes on March 5, 2001, outlining the details of the initial proposal to move the Archives onto the University of Toronto campus.

⁵¹⁷ Rayside, D. (2001, Mar 5). [Email to Matt Hughes]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

University, it would be supported in its fundraising activities and given a purpose-built space; the archives would still be required to sign a lease agreement and pay rent for the use of the space, which Rayside estimates would be less than market rent. Rayside concludes the email to Hughes by stating that the University is prepared to hold the space for the archives and begin strategizing for capital fundraising if the proposal to move the archives to campus is “energetically supported” by the CLGA board.⁵¹⁹

Minutes from the March 5, 2001 board meeting suggest that the board was less “energetically supportive” of Rayside’s proposal than the SDS committee had perhaps hoped. Rather, the board was typically cautious about making any decisions about the University College move without considered debate and discussion about the implications of such a partnership. Minutes note that Hughes had spoken with Brian Pronger, also a professor at the University of Toronto and a member of the SDS proposal committee, and that the two had reviewed the details of the offer of space. University College, the minutes read, would “see itself as our landlord and could easily agree to our demands.”⁵²⁰ Pronger also confirmed that the University expected the architect to charge \$700,000 for structural changes to the building that would make the space suitable for the archives.⁵²¹ Hughes indicates that he will contact a lawyer to discuss the legal issues surrounding any agreement between the CLGA and University College, and that he will serve as the spokesperson for the board in any future negotiations. At the same time, the board supported a motion to begin work to set up a Building Endowment Fund and investigate buying its own building, and a subsequent motion to discuss moving in with Pink Triangle Press.⁵²² A month later, when University College reported that there would be a one-year delay in building construction awaiting decisions from the City of Toronto, the CLGA board was prepared to continue looking at all

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ CLGA. (2001, Mar 5). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

options.⁵²³ When Rayside came back to the archives in June that year with a revised estimate of \$1 million to amend the architect's plans, the board decided that this was beyond its means and the proposal to move into University College was put on hold.⁵²⁴

Discussions between the archives and the SDS proposal committee nevertheless continued for at least another two years. In late 2001, Pronger joined the board of the CLGA for a brief period of time, but stepped down in February 2002 to serve as the archives' main contact with the University of Toronto.⁵²⁵ In late 2002, Pronger reported to the CLGA that the University had reviewed the committee's proposal and would consider establishing a Department of Sexual Diversity Studies.⁵²⁶ The board, in turn, recognized that the founding of an SDS department would likely strengthen the relationship between the CLGA and the University, despite the archives' decision not to pursue the offer to move onto campus. This relationship has never truly come to fruition, and even after the University founded the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies in 2005, the CLGA and the Department of Sexual Diversity Studies rarely interact in a formal capacity. Students of the Bonham Centre, including myself, nevertheless engage with the CLGA for research and volunteer experience, but the interactions are almost entirely student-driven.⁵²⁷

Noteworthy, the Bonham Centre established its own archives in 2006, the Sexual Representation Collection (SRC), which is now the largest single University-based research collection of materials relating to sexuality (University College, n.d.). Curated by Nicholas Matte,

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ CLGA. (2001, Jul 9). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto; CLGA. (2002, Jan 7). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵²⁵ CLGA. (2002, Feb 4). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Organizational Records (100.7.1). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵²⁶ CLGA Board Meeting Minutes December 2, 2002.

⁵²⁷ The University College first-year undergraduate seminar course, UC ONE, does include a tour of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives as part of its standard curriculum and has done so since 2011. See <http://www.uc.utoronto.ca/ucone>. The CLGA also supports a number of work study students, which are short-term paid positions subsidized by the University of Toronto. These are, however, usually organized in conjunction with a particular research project and/or grant-funded project and not with the governance or operation of the CLGA, in particular.

the collection contains many of the same kinds of material that the CLGA preserves, but its collecting mandate is focussed on “commercially-produced materials that depict representations of sexuality for pleasure and education, as well as in censorship and the ways in which legal attitudes towards sexuality have impacted sexual representations and those engaged in their production” (University College, n.d.). That is, the SRC collects mostly published materials and does not limit its collection to what would be broadly considered queer and/or trans* materials. Although my dissertation project did not explore the tensions that have been produced by this complementary collection, several of the community archivists at the CLGA noted that they were aware that the SRC was partially created with materials that were originally offered to the CLGA by Brian Pronger, who acquired them through a number of private collectors, including former CBC producer Max Allen. When the CLGA rejected Pronger’s collection because of its broad scope and focus on commercially produced material, Pronger went on to help establish the SRC at University College. It’s unclear if the rejection of this material on the part of the CLGA has had lasting implications for the relationship between the University and the CLGA, or between the CLGA and any of the former SDS proposal committee members.⁵²⁸

The decision to reject the University’s offer to move onto campus did, however, cause friction among some members of the CLGA’s board and several long-serving volunteers. In a series of emails sent between Alan Miller and board member Miriam Smith, Smith notes that she is disappointed that the CLGA and the University of Toronto had not come to an agreement to find space for the archives at University College. More than two years after the offer had been declined, Smith writes in an October 27, 2003 email, that she hopes the archives will re-open the issue and re-consider a move into the residence building, under construction at the time.⁵²⁹ She refers to a previous discussion between them during which Miller explained to Smith that the archives had

⁵²⁸ Pronger continues to be affiliated with both the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies and the Sexual Representation Collection; however, due to illness, he is no longer able to participate in research projects such as this one.

⁵²⁹ Smith, M. (2003, Oct 27). [Email from Alan Miller]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

already spent several years working with the University to come to an agreement, but that the offer was ultimately rejected due to “skyrocketing” costs.⁵³⁰ He had also mentioned that several U.S.-based archives had managed to purchase their own buildings through community fundraising. Smith points out that the American archives operate in very different philanthropic and economic contexts than the Toronto-based CLGA, and that Canadians have less incentive to give to charitable organizations than their American counterparts. She writes:

The proof is in the pudding, Alan. If the CLGA could become ONE Institute, it would have done so by now. It’s not for lack of trying by a long series of people (like you) who have put their time and energy into it. I mean, part of my frustration comes from watching good people spin their wheels and energies in something that I think is doomed to continue more or less in crisis mode, largely due to these larger factors which are beyond our control.⁵³¹

She goes on to explain:

...In my time as a board member, I have seen discussions on strengthening relationships with the business community and with government. Universities are another institution to add into the mix. Politically, I’d prefer a university set up to one in which the CLGA is driven by corporate/business sponsorships.⁵³²

She ends the email with an invitation to share her comments with others and urges the board to reconsider the University of Toronto offer.

Subsequent correspondence shows that Miller did circulate Smith’s email to other board members and researchers to elicit more feedback about the issue of moving and offered some of his own concerns about partnering with a University.⁵³³ He worried, for example, that there are still many individuals who will not donate their papers to government-funded archives, or “ones in which the state can dictate what is preserved.”⁵³⁴ Miller also notes that moving to the University could prevent volunteers from working in the archives due to union regulations. Although this was

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Miller, A. (2003, Oct 29). [Email to Ann Silverside]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

not discussed in the initial negotiations with Rayside or Pronger to have the archives simply become tenants of University College, Miller raises the point that volunteers would not be permitted to work with the collections if they should become part of the University library system. At this point, Miller implies that there is some concern that the University would not be satisfied with simply renting space to the CLGA, but would eventually want to take custody of the collections. In an email to researcher Ann Silversides, he notes that there are few exceptions to the University's labour union regulations—volunteers are not able to work at any of the University's libraries.⁵³⁵ As a result, researchers could potentially lose the expertise of long-serving volunteers, many who were part of the activism documented in the records and often assist with reference queries. Silversides, who went on to publish a biography of AIDS activist Michael Lynch, responds that she sees some value in a partnership with the University, but writes, "I wonder if I had wandered into a gay archives at UofT, if there would have been any Alan Miller to suggest that I concentrate on Michael Lynch?"⁵³⁶ In each response to Miller's circulated email, his concerns are supported and echoed, but it is clear that the decision not to move to the University of Toronto caused great anxiety for many of the CLGAs volunteers and board members.⁵³⁷

When I asked Smith to comment on this exchange in an interview for this project, she could not recall the specific details of the correspondence between Miller and herself, but she did recall the general sense of the situation as it unfolded.⁵³⁸ She explained that, at the time, she was frustrated by the commercialization of Pride and what she would now characterize as the "neoliberal consumerism of the Community."⁵³⁹ Smith was also reluctant to fully embrace corporate sponsorship. She explained, "I don't view [the bank] as a big friend of social justice in

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Silverside, A. (2003, Oct 30). [Email to Alan Miller]. Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵³⁷ There is a folder related to the request to partner with University College that contains correspondence between Alan Miller and several CLGA stakeholders, including Silversides. This is part of the Organizational Records (100.7). Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

⁵³⁸ Smith, 2013.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

Canada.”⁵⁴⁰ Consequently, she placed more trust in universities to ensure the safeguarding of “queer information.”⁵⁴¹ Although she sympathized with the skepticism shared by many among the CLGA board, Smith recognized that there had been a significant shift at the University of Toronto, beginning with the establishment of Sexual Diversity Studies, and that the CLGA would find a safe home at University College. She explained:

[The University of Toronto] is embedded in the city and the city is queer and queer is part of the city, and that wasn't going to be reversed. The gains were obvious and permanent and they weren't going to be rolled back, but I think for an older generation of activists... If you were in your 20s during the [1970s] and you saw the bathhouse raids first-hand and you saw the police pushing people around first-hand, you might say that we could always go back to this or have this sense of vulnerability that I don't have. Younger queer people today don't have that same sense of vulnerability that someone in the older generation has... I think that was the tension. I felt comfortable with the university. In fact, I might have felt more comfortable with it then than I do now.⁵⁴²

Smith did express some discomfort with the current status of the university and suggested that her level of trust in the academy has waned over the past decade. She pointed to the casualization of academic labour as an example of how neoliberalism has crept into the academy. She also noted that a practice of homonationalism in universities has resulted in a kind of “queer branding” of universities as open, diverse, tolerant spaces, which is not always true for queer and/or trans* people who work on campuses and continue to experience marginalization.⁵⁴³ Despite this tarnishing of universities as a whole, Smith nevertheless continues to see great value in partnering with an institution. She understands, however, that the CLGA is a community-led organization and that control over the collections is too important for those who have developed and nurtured the archives over time. She explained:

I knew there were a lot of queer librarians [at the University of Toronto] who would be loving custodians of the archives... I knew that there were those people on side at [the University] and I knew people in the library would be supportive and that [the archives] would be lovingly cherished... and I still believe this. The University of

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

Toronto is such a big, strong, financially powerful institution today that I still think it would be a good home for the archives, even despite my caveats of the corporatization of the university.... I think the people... who worked in the archives, of course they had a proprietary sense—they had built this collection with their bare hands and they didn't want to give it to some institution that at the end of the day they wouldn't be able to control.⁵⁴⁴

During my interview with Smith, we discussed the development of lesbian and gay archives in the United States and I recounted some of my experiences working with the ONE Archives and the Mazer Archives in Los Angeles. I explained that both of these organizations had recently partnered with academic institutions and that part of my interest in this study was to examine some of the impacts of these partnerships. Smith suggested that the development of these partnerships and the institutionalization of queer archives is part of the maturation of lesbian and gay communities more generally. She also underscored the importance of non-queer or *straight* people working with queer materials because this would mark yet another success of the gay and lesbian movement. She commented:

I'm sure it's generational. I think there are differences in generations and in a way it is a mark of the maturity of the queer community in Toronto that it would be institutionalized at [the University of Toronto] and that it would become a professional thing and this is like any other collection... Why shouldn't any straight librarian have to deal with gay stuff? ... One expects that to be part of one's job and isn't it good at the end of the day for members of the community to have the opportunity to work with this material in a professional capacity and use it to build their careers and be properly compensated.⁵⁴⁵

The discussion about partnering with the University of Toronto and the rejected offer to move into the University College residence building was never re-opened by the CLGA board or its long-serving volunteers. Just as Alan Miller and Miriam Smith were ending their correspondence, the Archives learned that Kyle Rae had secured for the organization the heritage home at 34 Isabella Street. Though fairly unsuitable for the needs of an archives, the decision to acquire the

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

house also marked the maturity of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives as an autonomous and community-driven space.

Notably, after more than a decade, the CLGA has recently approached the University of Toronto to help establish the LGBTQ+ Digital Collections repository. The repository grows out of a SSHRC-funded project, “The LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory”, which brings together previously inaccessible collections of oral histories from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and will create a trans* pathfinder to assist researchers interested in studying trans* experiences documented in the collections. Led by University of Toronto associate professor Elspeth Brown, the Collaboratory includes team members from the CLGA, the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria, the Archive of Lesbian Oral History (ALOT) at Simon Fraser University, the Digital Transgender Archives (DTA) at The College of the Holy Cross, and the University of the Arts London’s Photography and the Archive Research Centre. Since fall 2014, the Collaboratory has been embedded at the CLGA, where members and research fellows have laid the groundwork for establishing a formal partnership between the archives and the University of Toronto to host the LGBTQ+ Digital Collections repository.⁵⁴⁶ The repository will house materials created by the Collaboratory, but also become the platform used by the CLGA to preserve the archives’ digital materials, including digitized oral histories and photographs, as well as any born-digital records that it receives in newly accessioned collections.

Considering the history of engagement between the CLGA and the University of Toronto, it is somewhat surprising that the archives is pursuing a formal partnership. Several developments have nevertheless prompted new discussions and created an environment more open to cross-institutional collaborations. First, a generational shift seems to have had significant implications for the way in which volunteers and community archivists think about risk and safety of the collections. The archives was founded by a small group of men who came of age at a time when they were under threat of being harassed or arrested by police simply for expressing their sexuality. In 1976,

⁵⁴⁶ As a Graduate Research Fellow in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto–Mississauga, I have been working as the Collaboratory’s Digital Archivist since Fall 2014.

for example, two men had been found guilty of committing an indecent act for kissing each other on Bloor Street in Toronto. The CLGA preserves photographs taken of a ‘kiss-in’ demonstration that Gay Alliance Towards Equality (GATE) organized in response to this incident (Warner, 2002). These photographs, which feature men kissing on street corners, were so controversial that Warner (2002) considers their publication in *The Body Politic* to be an important mobilizing moment for the gay liberation movement. Today, however, Toronto is a fairly comfortable place for same-sex couples to live and the photographs are little more than a quaint reminder of a previous generation’s struggles. As I discussed in the previous chapter, younger volunteers appear to lack the *rescuer-historian* sentiments that older volunteers still maintain. They also appear less concerned that partnerships with larger institutions could put the collections at risk for police intervention or unwanted surveillance. I discuss some additional implications of a greater interest from universities in these collections in the concluding chapter.

The second development that has led to this new engagement is the impact of digital technologies on the ways that archives both preserve and make accessible their collections, and expectations from their constituent communities. In previous work, I have argued that archives are pressured by a “digitize or disappear” principle that obfuscates the labour and critical thinking that archivists must work through to digitize and make accessible their analog collections (Sheffield & Zieman, 2015). Researchers often ask, “Why don’t you just put it all online?” (p. 113). Not only has the CLGA been inundated by requests for digital copies of materials and greater accessibility through web-based descriptive databases, but it has also been overwhelmed by the prospect of collecting documentation for a whole new generation of activists and community members who communicate and organize using social media and other Web 2.0 affordances. With limited technical expertise and funds to support technological infrastructure, it has been thus far infeasible to establish a digital collections repository in-house. The Collaboratory’s affiliation with the University of Toronto and the needs of its members to develop a preservation platform for the materials that they will create has produced a forward momentum. As I write this dissertation,

community archivists are not only learning how to digitize their audio and video cassettes, but also working on an institutional digitization strategy that will identify and prioritize collections for digitization. Brown's faculty status has helped start a conversation with the University of Toronto Libraries to host the CLGA's digital collections and through a process of careful evaluation of available technologies, the archives has agreed to work with the University to create an Islandora-based multi-site. Although the details are still being worked out, the LGBTQ+ Digital Collections repository has the potential to become the world's largest online repository of LGBTQ+ materials. Older volunteers have been reassured by this approach because the analog originals remain in safe-keeping at the CLGA while the digital surrogates are stewarded through complicated preservation workflows by a team of librarians and technologists employed by the University, which is committed to working with community groups as part of its overall operating mandate and institutional philosophy.

The proposed partnership and digital collections site is also a reflection of the University's increasing openness to embrace post-custodial relationships with its community partners. As early as 1993, Cook (1993, 1994) described the shift from a "custodial" framework in which archivists focus on the physicality of records collections toward a "post-custodial era" with "its conceptual paradigm of logical or virtual realities" (p. 26). That is, in a post-custodial reality, archives will not always be in possession of all records from a single fonds, nor can they necessarily predicate their decisions about arrangement and description of these records on physical groupings in their custody (Ham, 1981; Duranti, 1996). Over the past two decades, the concept of post-custodial relationships has become entrenched in contemporary digital record-keeping practices, whereby records creators maintain custody of their records and the archivist provides ongoing support and guidance about how to care for these records (Tough, 2004). Archivists have also urged large institutions to consider a post-custodial model for working with community groups who want to retain legal and physical custody of their records but lack the resources needed to preserve their collections long-term (Sangwand, 2013). The University of Texas–Austin, for example, has

developed non-custodial agreements to steward the records of the Kigali Genocide Memorial (Rwanda), Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (El Salvador), and other human rights groups (Sangwand, 2010, 2011, 2013). Through a process that Sangwand describes as a “distributed archive” the University has brought together and preserved the records of human rights groups in a digital collections repository hosted by the institution, but does not require these groups to deed over their material.⁵⁴⁷ This model allows the human rights groups to retain ownership of their own cultural heritage while simultaneously affording access to these records to a broader research community vis-à-vis the University archives. The partnership between the CLGA and the University of Toronto also uses a post-custodial model to ensure that the collections remain in the custody of the community who created them, but are both preserved and made available to a broader public through the University of Toronto Libraries.

The Mazer Starts Packing

In 1994, the small group of women that served as the board of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives learned that Walter Williams, a professor of anthropology at the University of Southern California (USC), was working with members of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA) to acquire a permanent space for its collections. For several months, the Mazer and IGLA had been housed in a former city clerk’s office at 626 North Robertson Boulevard in West Hollywood. Known as the Werle Building, the facility was leased to the archives rent-free, but was slated for demolition and, as a result tenancy was uncomfortably precarious. Permanent space promised to both organizations by the City had not materialized after a proposed City Center failed to move forward as planned. As Michael Oliveira explained, the board of IGLA was already motivated to look for a larger and more suitable place for its collections, but became even more keen to expand after Dorr Legg’s death had produced a proposal to merge IGLA with the ONE

⁵⁴⁷ See also Punzalan’s work on virtual reunification of distributed collections using online digital collections platforms. Punzalan, R. L. (2014). Understanding Virtual Reunification. *The Library*, 84(3), 294-323.

Library and Archives.⁵⁴⁸ After several months of negotiations with the USC Libraries, Williams, along with IGLA director John O'Brien, were offered a space at 746 W. Adams Blvd, in an apartment complex previously used by the Los Angeles Child Guidance Center.⁵⁴⁹ Although it is not entirely clear how or when the invitation to move into the site was extended to the Mazer Archives, one long-serving board member noted in an interview for this project that the decision to accept the invitation was fraught and that the board could not agree on the best course of action for the organization. In this section, I will trace the history of negotiations between USC and the Mazer Archives and provide some insight into why the board ultimately decided not to move into the USC-owned facility that now houses the ONE Archives. I will also give some background on the Mazer's decision to partner with the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) almost 15 years later.

In late 1994, the board of the Mazer Archives voted to accept the proposal from USC to move into a building that was owned by the University.⁵⁵⁰ Negotiations with USC and the newly amalgamated ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives were spearheaded by board president Kim Kralj and board members Degania Golove, Irene Wolt, Ivy Bottini, and Marcia Schwemer. When Kralj resigned in mid-1995, Wolt stepped into the roll of president.⁵⁵¹ A life-long activist and writer in the Los Angeles area, Wolt was involved with a number of activist and political activities throughout her life, including the anti-war movement in the 1970s, the redevelopment of Santa Monica, and environmental work.⁵⁵² Jeanne Cordova and long-time activist and lesbian scholar, Yolanda Retter, worked with the Mazer Archives and the ONE Archives to ensure that the Mazer Archives would remain an autonomous and distinct organization, and that it would be allotted a

⁵⁴⁸ Oliviera, 2013.

⁵⁴⁹ LHA. (Letter to Lynn Sipe, University Librarian provided by the Mazer Archives and accessed on-site at 625 N. Robertson Blvd. Mazer organizational files (non-processed). Provided by the Mazer Archives.

⁵⁵⁰ Cordova, 2013.

⁵⁵¹ This transition is documented in the personal papers of Irene Wolt, part of the Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Coll. 1871). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁵² Cheung, A.M. (2012). Finding aid for the Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Coll. 1871). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucla/mss/wolt1871.pdf>

reasonable space in the new facility.⁵⁵³ With the help of USC professor Walter Williams, several key members of the Archives were provided with living space in the newly created Scholars in Residence Building, a small apartment building located within the same complex as the facility that would eventually house the Archives.⁵⁵⁴ By the end of 1994, Retter was living in the residence, along with Jim Kepner and John O'Brien. As a former IGLA president, O'Brien was acting as the liaison between the USC administrators and the ONE Archives.⁵⁵⁵

Although I was not able to locate the original agreement between the Mazer Archives and USC, a letter dated November 19, 1994, from Carolyn L. Frank, a lawyer representing the Archives, to University Librarian Lynn Sipe, outlines the agreement.⁵⁵⁶ The letter indicates that the University has agreed to provide a separate building for the archives, as well as three rooms in the main building.⁵⁵⁷ In addition, there is an agreement that the archives is under no obligation to donate its collections to the USC Libraries, nor provide any staffing to support archival work.⁵⁵⁸ The letter also outlines the ongoing responsibilities of the archives to maintain its own insurance policy.⁵⁵⁹ A copy of the final Memorandum of Agreement, dated only "January 1995," retains all of these terms, but also adds that the collections must be open to the public and that the University Librarian has final jurisdiction in any unresolved dispute between the Mazer Archives and USC.⁵⁶⁰ The term of the Agreement is for five years, and either USC or the Mazer Archives requires an 18-month notice of termination.⁵⁶¹ A brief announcement about the planned move was made on the back cover of the Mazer Archives' Winter 1994-95 newsletter, which read: "Important Update! The

⁵⁵³ Cordova, 2013.

⁵⁵⁴ JMLC. (1995, Mar 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ JMLC. (1994, Nov 19). [Letter to Lynn Sipe, University Librarian]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ [Memorandum of Agreement]. Copy in possession of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

Collection is in the process of negotiating a move to West Adams Boulevard. More information will follow” (*In the Life*, Winter 1994-95, p. 4).⁵⁶²

Behind the scenes, however, the board continued to worry that the decision to move into a shared space with the ONE Archives was a mistake. Board meeting agendas and minutes from this period give some insight into the challenges that the Mazer Archives faced in making their decisions regarding the USC offer. For example, minutes of a board meeting that took place December 12, 1994, indicate that the board had already voted in favour of moving to USC, but that support for the move appeared to be lacking and that the requirement to continue negotiating was “debilitating.”⁵⁶³ There is also a note about the need to undertake repairs at the new site and that the responsibility for these repairs will fall to the board. Subsequent board meeting minutes document the ongoing negotiations with USC and concerns that the board has raised with regard to allocated space, costs related to renovations, and long-term commitment from USC to support the Mazer Archives as an independent and autonomous collection.

In a September 24, 1994, letter to the Mazer Archives, Jeanne Cordova and Ivy Bottini, both community activists and long-time supporter of the archives, expressed interest in helping the board by serving as liaisons between the Mazer Archives and USC.⁵⁶⁴ They offer to sit on the joint building operation committee and note that they have “worked with gay men for two decades and we would be in no mood to allow further sleights of hand such as the attempt to shuffle us into the south rooms, or give Mazer a fiscal bill with no operating budget or prior agreement on such a

⁵⁶² Cordova recalled the terms of the Agreement differently. In our discussion, she recalled that the two archives, as well as the Homosexual Information Centre (HIC), were planning to move together into what was then known as the Neutra Building. They were to form an integrated lesbian and gay archives and library. Each organization would effectively sign a lease agreement with USC and would become tenants of the University to which they would pay a nominal rental fee. As minutes from meeting of the Mazer Archives board show, there was also an understanding that each organization would have its own separate offices and that the materials would not be commingled. See JMLC. (1995, Mar 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives. Bulk, 1991-2001. 1991-2007). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles..

⁵⁶³ JMLC. (1995, Dec 12). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁶⁴ Cordova, J. & Bottini, I. (1994, Sep 24). [Letter to the Mazer Archives] Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives. Bulk, 1991-2001. 1991-2007). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles..

budget.”⁵⁶⁵ They also advocate for keeping the Mazer’s current West Hollywood location in addition to moving to USC. Cordova recalled in our discussion about the move that the two archives, as well as the Homosexual Information Centre (HIC), were planning to move together into what was then known as the Neutra Building, to form an integrated lesbian and gay archives and library.⁵⁶⁶ Each organization would effectively sign a lease agreement with USC and would become tenants of the university to which they would pay a nominal rental fee. As records from Mazer board meetings show, there was also an understanding that each organization would have its own separate offices and that the materials would not be commingled.⁵⁶⁷



Figure 8.1. Jeanne Cordova with her collection of Lesbian Tide newspapers, 2013⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Cordova, 2013.

⁵⁶⁷ JMLC. (1995, Mar 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁶⁸ Photograph of Jeanne Cordova was taken by me during our visit at her home in Los Feliz in October, 2013. She was proud to show me her personal collection of *Lesbian Tide*, the newspaper she edited. *Lesbian Tide* was founded in 1971 by a small group of members of the Daughters of Bilitis, and discontinued publication in 1980. Cordova has a full run of the newspaper that she has collected and preserved in her home office.

At some point in early 1995, however, John O'Brien learned that the entire building complex had been re-allocated by USC to become the Annenberg House Apartments.⁵⁶⁹ The archives had been offered an alternative building at 909 W. Adams Boulevard, several blocks away. The alternate facility was a two-story former fraternity house that would require significant upgrading and alterations to support the needs of a library and archives, and would not be available until the middle of June that year. As Joseph Hawkins remembered, the fraternity had violated university policies and was in the process of being evicted from the university-owned building, but the earliest they would vacate would be after the close of the school year in April. Work that O'Brien and others were undertaking at the Neutra Building, including taking down walls and re-inforcing the floors, ceased immediately. Any collections that had already been moved over were placed into temporary storage. This turn of events gave the Mazer's supporters reason to reconsider their decision to move to USC, and in doing so caused considerable damage to the cohesiveness of the Bboard. Although I spoke with a current board member about the events that transpired after the USC reneged on its promise of the Neutra Building, she declined to speak on the record; even after almost twenty years, she feared that any discussion of the USC partnerships could open up old wounds. Consequently, my understanding of what unfolded is drawn together from the meticulously kept records of Irene Wolt, now held at UCLA as a special collection, and the recollections of Jeanne Cordova. These two accounts do not always align.

Initially, the Mazer Archives agreed to continue preparations to move to USC despite what they perceived to be an unfortunate change in the allotted facility.⁵⁷⁰ By the end of 1995, however, dissenting reservations about the move were becoming more obvious and two distinct factions had developed, illuminating philosophical differences between long-serving board members and those

⁵⁶⁹ Hawkins, 2013.

⁵⁷⁰ Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

who had recently joined the board to help lead the move.⁵⁷¹ Cordova, Bottini, and Karin Quimby had been added to the board only that year and in response to their offer to assist with negotiations.⁵⁷² Lynn Ballen and Yolanda Retter, though not officially board members, had also been working closely with the two archives to develop the USC partnership.⁵⁷³ Lillian Faderman joined the Mazer's board at their request to advise on policies and procedures commonly enacted at academic institutions.⁵⁷⁴ A faculty member at California State University, Fresno, Faderman had also worked extensively with academic repositories for her own scholarship. These six women were quite keen to pursue the partnership with USC; the remaining three board members expressed concern that the move would disadvantage the Mazer Archives and it would be forced to compete with “the boys” for space, resources, and autonomy.⁵⁷⁵ Wolt's records indicate that she was having trouble managing these two different visions for the archives.⁵⁷⁶ There are several discussions among board members documented in Wolt's personal notes that describe ongoing and intense debates about the value of autonomy and how some board members were unwilling to integrate the Mazer's collections into a “boy's organization.”⁵⁷⁷ Long-serving board members were adamant that the Mazer Archives be physically and organizationally distinct from the ONE Archives or any other organization that would be housed in the USC facility.

One of the first signs of “deep philosophical differences” emerged when Faderman resigned from the board in October of that year. In her resignation letter, addressed to Schwemer, Golove,, and Wolt, Faderman writes:

You both know what my feelings have been about the USC move, so I won't discuss them at very great lengths, but enumerate the reasons I support the move in brief. One, we can't be certain how long we will be able to keep our current building. Two,

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Cordova, 2013.

⁵⁷⁴ Faderman, 2013.

⁵⁷⁵ Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives. Bulk, 1991-2001. 1991-2007). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

we have nowhere near sufficient money to buy our own building and the fundraising that would make such self-sufficiently possible would take a major effort on the part of many people, much more major than would be the effort of packing and unpacking books, such as we would have to with the move to USC. Three, the move to USC would mean we could be in immediate vicinity of the younger generation of scholars who would make good use of the collection. Four, it would also mean that we could present credible cases for the the acquisition of papers of major writers. I imagine that we might have gotten the Mary Beeton papers for instance, had we already been at USC. I'm anguished that Barbara Grier gave her tremendous collection to the San Francisco Public Library rather than us or the New York Lesbian Herstory Archives because she thought the library was more stable. Five, major donors would be more likely to support us with large financial contributions if we had an academic affiliation. For all those reasons, I support the move.⁵⁷⁸

The letter ends, however, with a recognition that her support for the move should not overshadow the concerns expressed by long-serving board members and supporters of the Mazer Archives. She admits that she lives out of the Los Angeles area and cannot commit to the daily work of managing the collections and, as a result, feels that it is no longer her place to be in a position to make significant decisions on behalf of those who can and will commit to the labour required.

Faderman's withdrawal from the Mazer Archives is nevertheless amicable and Wolt's records do not show any lasting consequences.⁵⁷⁹

The first real conflict is documented in the minutes of the November 16, 1995 board meeting and describes a difference of opinions between Cordova and several board members.⁵⁸⁰ The minutes report that Cordova had been assigned to write a lead article about the move for the Mazer's newsletter, *In the Life*.⁵⁸¹ According to minutes, some members objected to the "phraseology" of a headline that appeared to announce that the Mazer Archives would become "part of a Gender Studies Archives" and "part of USC".⁵⁸² Wolt emphasized that the Mazer Archives was and had always been a lesbian-only space; since its founding, it had been an

⁵⁷⁸ Faderman, L. (1995, Oct 20). [Resignation letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 3, Correspondence. 1996-1998). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁷⁹ Notably, Faderman was a key personality in attendance at the launch of the Access Mazer launch activities, from 2009 to 2014.

⁵⁸⁰ JMLC. (1995, Nov 16). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

autonomous organization and would never be dependent upon a government, academic, business, or gay male institution. Long-serving members Golove and Schwemer also noted that their vision for the Archives is that the collections would always remain part of a lesbian organization. Minutes show that a debate ensued and a motion was made to have Cordova amend the title to read, “Mazer expands to USC location.”⁵⁸³ Only four of the seven board members voted in favour of this change, but the motion passed. Cordova recalled that she reluctantly changed the title of the article, but that this debate was signal to her that the Mazer’s board was not willing to compromise or work in a “co-gender environment.”⁵⁸⁴ On December 27, 1995, Cordova, Quimby,, and Bottini tendered their resignation from the board and, in a shared statement, Ballen and Retter also ended their relationship to the Mazer Archives.⁵⁸⁵ The statement made clear that the five women were disappointed with the unwillingness of the President to commit to the move and criticized her separatist attitude toward autonomy and gay men’s organizations.

Wolt’s records contain several versions of a letter that she had prepared in response to the statement and it is unclear which, if any, of these was released.⁵⁸⁶ Apparent in all versions is a sense of Wolt’s frustration and anger toward the five signatories. Words have been typed and later crossed out by hand; direct or abrupt language has been replaced by more diplomatic responses. In all versions, Wolt accuses the signatories of making inaccurate claims and misrepresenting decisions made by the board. She also underscores the importance of lesbian-only space, but insists that this is not problematic or contradictory to the decision to move to USC. She notes that the Mazer Archives has a history of working with IGLA and the ONE Archives, as well as other lesbian and gay, and progressive archives. Wolt also implies that the five signatories were attempting to stage a *coup d’etat* of the Mazer Archives’ board and “push others out.”⁵⁸⁷ She goes on to say that the board

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Cordova, 2013.

⁵⁸⁵ JMLC. (1995, Dec 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁸⁶ See letters in the Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 6, Correspondence: USC move. 1994-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

had too easily trusted that Cordova, Quimby, and Bottini were working in the best interest of the Mazer and that this trust had been misplaced. She notes, for example, that the ONE Archives has been allotted ten times more space than the Mazer, suggesting that the negotiating committee led by Cordova had not been appropriately concerned about securing space and resources. Wolt also point out that Retter has been given free accommodations at the Scholars in Residence Building, and therefore has a stake in seeing the Mazer agree to the move. Whether or not this letter was ever sent to Cordova or any of the signatories, its existence suggests incredible tension between Wolt and these women, some who remained in service to the ONE Archives for several more years.

The relationship between John O'Brien and the Mazer Archives also appears to be strained during this period. After the decision to integrate the ONE Library and IGLA, John O'Brien moved from his volunteer role as president of IGLA into a paid position as Executive Director of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.⁵⁸⁸ When Walter Williams moved on to another project, O'Brien also took on a leadership role in the negotiations with USC. As early as March 1995, however, Retter and Wolt began to report that working with O'Brien had become difficult and problematic. At the March 27, 1995 board meeting, Retter reported that their interactions with USC appeared to be led by O'Brien and they feared that he had taken on more authority in the negotiation process than either the ONE Archives or USC had afforded him.⁵⁸⁹ It's noted, for example, that O'Brien had asked for a commitment of \$14,000 to move into the 909 W. Adams Blvd. Building, but it was unclear why this money was being requested and how it would be managed.⁵⁹⁰ Retter cautions the Mazer board to communicate directly with Lynn Sipe, the USC representative, rather than O'Brien, even though she admits that "O'Brien is the only one who knows what's going on."⁵⁹¹ In the same minutes, another board member reports that O'Brien seems

⁵⁸⁸ See International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records, 1958-2002 (Coll2012.002. Incorporation and board of directors Series 1. 1974-1995, Box 2, Folder 5, O'Brien, John 1994). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

⁵⁸⁹ JMLC. (1995, Mar 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

to “want to swallow up the Mazer collection.” She then adopts a defensive tone, claiming, “We shouldn’t back down. We need to find out who we are fighting and what their intentions are. We need to come from a place of strength.”⁵⁹² Wolt encourages everyone to remain calm and not “fight for the sake of fighting.”⁵⁹³

The Mazer’s capacity to negotiate directly with USC appears to be nevertheless thwarted by the intervention of O’Brien at every stage of the process. By the beginning of 1996, it becomes clear to Wolt that O’Brien has been working on a plan with USC to move ahead with an integrated archives and library without including any of the Mazer’s board members in the discussions. An email to Wolt indicates that Schwemer had attended a scheduled negotiation meeting, but no one from either the ONE Archives nor USC showed up.⁵⁹⁴ When Schwemer attempted to reschedule the meeting with USC, she learned that O’Brien had re-scheduled the meeting with administrators for January 24th.⁵⁹⁵ When Schwemer asked O’Brien why the Mazer was not informed about this re-scheduled meeting, he stated that he did not think it was important for the Mazer to be involved anymore since they had not committed to move. O’Brien had also taken it upon himself to contact the City of West Hollywood to ask if IGLA could hand over its space in the Werle Building to the Mazer Archives. This would give the Mazer considerably more space. While a nice gesture, it also implies that O’Brien had moved ahead with decisions on his own. In a letter to Degania Golove dated January 3, 1996, O’Brien notes that he had met with USC Facilities Planning and Management and that USC was planning to build an adjoining building at 909 W. Adams that would contain a theatre, art gallery, and special collections facilities, and could also be built to provide the Mazer Archives with its own separate space.⁵⁹⁶ He writes:

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Schwemer, M. (1996, Jan 16). [Email to Irene Wolt]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 6, Correspondence: USC move. 1994-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ O’Brien, J. (1996, Jan 3). [Letter to Degania Golove]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 6, Correspondence: USC move. 1994-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

Presently, we disagree on space allocation between us at the existing 909 W. Adams building. Our Board has never agreed to only use half of the kitchen. We made this clear in all our discussions with Jeanne/Ivy and Karin representing Mazer and Lynn Sipe and USC Buildings people. This would be another problem not to face should Mazer wish to only stay at Werle until the second building complex can be done. We would greatly enjoy a Community Building Project with Mazer to build this separate building complex in the design that Mazer would want. We hope to get all of these problems worked out with you in the next few weeks.⁵⁹⁷

The mention of Cordova, Bottini,, and Quimby appears to acknowledge the “deep philosophical differences” on the Mazer’s board and pokes at what O’Brien might have perceived as the separatist and risk-averse Mazer Archives. The partnership between USC, the ONE Archives, and the Mazer Archives had clearly fallen apart.

Notably, it was not the philosophical differences or perceived pressure from O’Brien that ultimately moved the Mazer Archives to cancel its agreement to move to USC. Rather, the final decision was made by the board on the advice of Ann Giagni. A former librarian, Giagni had come to a board meeting at the Mazer after deciding to return to volunteering after a lengthy illness. At her first meeting, she became familiar with the agreement to move to USC and the terms of the lease that had been signed for the Neutra Building in 1994. USC had estimated that renovations on the 909 W. Adams building would cost roughly \$470,000, and they had not committed to either contributing money or to assisting with fundraising efforts.⁵⁹⁸ The board had agreed to contribute no more than \$15,000; the ONE Archives had agreed to commit \$25,000, but were being allotted ten times the space as the Mazer Archives. By early 1996, the Mazer Archives had roughly \$70,000 in its account, most of which had come from the estate of Bunny MacCulloch after the sale of her home. Roughly \$16,000 had been raised through community donations and other fundraising events. A \$15,000 commitment was not infeasible if USC would be forthcoming with the remaining costs; however, the board was still unclear about the University’s commitment to renovation costs.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ These figures and the role of Giagni in the decision to withdraw from the USC partnership are documented in correspondence and meeting minutes, part of the Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Subseries 2.1: June L. Mazer Archives. Bulk, 1991-2001. 1991-2007). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles. Cordova and Brinkele also discussed the introduction of Giagni to the Archives in our interviews.

In addition, USC was only offering the Mazer Archives a guaranteed 18-month lease for space in the shared building and would not budge on the length of this agreement.⁵⁹⁹ From Giagni's outsider perspective, it seemed too risky to contribute money toward the renovation of a building that they do not own and not have a long-term lease secured. It was a fiscally irresponsible move on the part of the board, who would be accountable to other volunteers or the public should the partnership sour. She recommended that the Mazer Archives terminate the lease. The board reluctantly agreed and voted to cancel the agreement.⁶⁰⁰ After just one meeting, Giagni was elected to the board and, with Wolt's approval, made incoming President at her next meeting.

Exhausted and feeling defeated by the termination of the lease agreement, Irene Wolt tendered her resignation from the board in late 1996.⁶⁰¹ In her letter to the rest of the board, Wolt notes that she found it difficult to remain in the position of President of a board that was so divided in its mandate and goals, and that she was disappointed that the women who serve the collection could not come to consensus about the future of the archives. She also expresses frustration that the Mazer's supporters did not trust that the administrators of both the ONE Archives and the USC libraries were acting in the best interests of the Mazer Archives. Wolt notes that she has felt ostracized from the archives since the decision was made to elect Ann Giagni as incoming President after having only attended one meeting of the board.

Wolt's resignation came just over a year after Kim Kralj expressed similar concerns over the board's lack of focus and made the decision to step down as president. Kralj writes in her own letter of resignation, "It's been my continual frustration as Board President that progress has not been made in determining the structure and goals of the collection. I feel it is of the utmost

⁵⁹⁹ Community archivists at the Mazer Archives indicated that the board was not only concerned with the financial contributions expected by USC, but also the risky terms of the lease agreement. On several occasions, community archivists noted that the term was for 18 months, but this is not entirely accurate. As noted at the beginning of this section, the Agreement was for five years, but either party may terminate with an 18-month notice.

⁶⁰⁰ JMLC. (1995, Mar 27). [Minutes of the meeting of the Board]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 25, Folder 3, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes (2 of 2). 1993-1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁶⁰¹ Wolt, I. (1996). [Resignation letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 1, Board of Directors: Resignations and responses. 1996). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

importance for the board to start focusing on what these goals will be and move forward with them. The everyday operation of the collection is important, but the Mazer must address many more concerns if it is to grow, survive and thrive.”⁶⁰² By the end of 1996, Giagni had moved into the position of President, where she remains today. It would take another 14 years before the board would consider working with another academic institution.

Before moving ahead, however, it is worthwhile noting that Cordova, Bottini, and Quimby joined the board of the ONE Archives in 1996, around the same time that the collections were moved to the new location at 909 W. Adams.⁶⁰³ Retter also remained actively involved with the ONE Archives after its move, although she was no longer living as a Scholar in Residence. According to Cordova, Retter had been working for many years in Los Angeles to solicit materials to create a lesbian resource centre.⁶⁰⁴ When the relationship between USC and the Mazer dissolved, Cordova proposed that the ONE Archives establish a separate women-only space that would bring together not only materials that Retter had personally collected, but also draw out some of the lesbian materials already at the ONE Archives.⁶⁰⁵ Retter would be the key volunteer who would manage the collections. Cordova recalled that the ONE Archives was quick to agree to such a space and allocated a room on the main floor of the new building for this purpose. Shortly after the ONE Archives moved into its new location, the organization announced that it had established the Lesbian Legacy Collection, which would be a special collection accessible to women only and housed in its own separate room of the archives.

⁶⁰² Kralj, K. (1994). [Resignation letter]. Irene Wolt papers, 1942-2009 (Box 28, Folder 4, Board of Directors: Agendas and minutes. 1995-1998). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁶⁰³ Shibuyama, L. (2009). Finding aid of the Lesbian Legacy Collection Subject Files (Coll2009-004). The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1g503505/>

⁶⁰⁴ Cordova, 2013.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

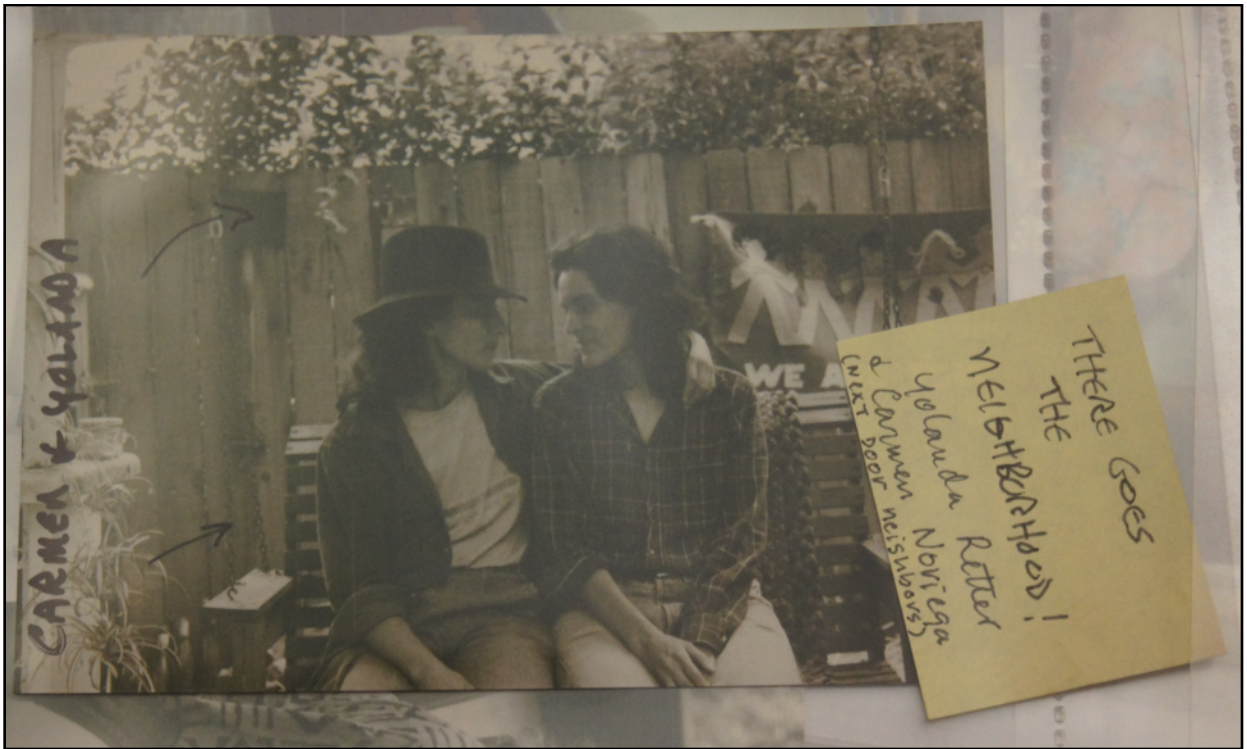


Figure 8.2. Photograph of Carmen Noriega & Yolanda Retter in Bunny MacCulloch's papers⁶⁰⁶

In an interview for this project, former ONE Archives board member Amy Ryan noted that there was some controversy around this collection because it appeared, on the surface, to be a direct competitor of the Mazer Archives.⁶⁰⁷ She speculated that Retter was disappointed with the withdrawal of the Mazer Archives from the USC space, but also understood that her approach to collecting differed considerable from that of the Mazer Archives. Retter was a trained librarian and scholarly researcher who had a more methodologically rigorous approach to collecting and preserving material. The Lesbian Legacy Collection was her opportunity to build a well-managed, accessible, and growing lesbian-only collection that complemented the ONE Archives' mostly gay male collection; its proximity was important. Establishing the Lesbian Legacy Collection was also a way to encourage more women to become involved with the ONE Archives and contribute materials more generally to the larger collection.

⁶⁰⁶ Photograph of Carmen Noriega and Yolanda Retter is part of Bunny MacCulloch papers, 1928-1989 (Box 2, Folder 8 Photos and Slides, No Date). UCLA Library Special Collections, Los Angeles.

⁶⁰⁷ Amy Ryan, Interview. October 23, 2013.

Though initially supported by the ONE Archives, the Lesbian Legacy Collection was nevertheless short-lived. As Cordova recalled, the collection remained physically separate from the larger collection even after Retter took a position as Librarian/Archivist at the Chicano Studies Resource Center at UCLA, which resulted in her withdrawing from the ONE Archives almost completely.⁶⁰⁸ Her decision to leave the Lesbian Legacy Collection, Cordova explained, was also in part because she continued to encounter what she perceived as integrationist politics from the male volunteers at the ONE Archives, who were unhappy with the removal of lesbian materials from the larger collections. Both Hawkins and Allen spoke about this in our interviews and explained that Retter was in the habit of physically removing materials from the larger collection and placing them into the room that housed the Lesbian Legacy Collection, thereby claiming them as her own.⁶⁰⁹ This not only upset the long-time volunteers who had worked tirelessly to collect these records, but also violated any trust that they had placed with Retter to serve the organization as a whole.⁶¹⁰ As Cordova recalled, the Lesbian Legacy Collection was re-integrated into the larger collection shortly after Retter's death in 2007, although she suspects that Retter was able to take back some of the materials that she had initially contributed prior to falling ill.⁶¹¹

When I asked the archivists at the ONE Archives what became of the Lesbian Legacy Collection, both Shibuyama and Oliveira explained that any material that was once part of this special collection is still identified as such in the descriptive database; however, the materials are no longer physically distinct from the larger collection.⁶¹² That is, they remain intellectually organized

⁶⁰⁸ Cordova, 2013.

⁶⁰⁹ Hawkins, 2013; Allen, 2013.

⁶¹⁰ During my interview with Hawkins, he described the early moments of working with collections at the USC location as "archival fiefdoms". Each collection, he explained, came under the stewardship of one or more community archivists who had worked with the materials for some time and, as a result, had particular sensitivities about how the collection should be managed. Hawkins first task was to address these different archival practices and redirect energies toward building one single collection. His goal was to establish a single database, for example, so that researchers could search across collections that were previously separate entities. Hawkins noted that the move to integrate the collections was not well received by Retter, who remained committed to maintaining a separate lesbian collection within the ONE Archives. Hawkins, 2013.

⁶¹¹ Cordova, 2013.

⁶¹² Shibuyama, 2013; Oliviera, 2013.

around a special collection, but are physically commingled with the larger collection of the ONE Archives. Ryan commented that the integration of the materials into the ONE Archives not only ended any active collecting for the collection, but also affirmed any fears that the Mazer Archives had about being subsumed by the much larger ONE Archives.⁶¹³ She stated, “Mazer wanted to keep some kind of integrity of the collection and they thought that wouldn’t happen if they joined with ONE. Honestly, in retrospect, I think they were right.”⁶¹⁴

For over a decade, the supporters of the Mazer Archives retreated and regrouped. Brinskele described this as a period of dormancy with little social interaction between the Mazer’s board, the collections, and the community.⁶¹⁵ The archives was offered the larger space at the Werle Building and moved into the offices vacated by IGLA, but space continued to be a concern and tenancy remained precarious. When Brinskele joined the Mazer in 2007, there was only a small board of three women and they were “really just keeping themselves alive.”⁶¹⁶ Brinskele described how these women continued to apply for grants to process and care for materials, but they rarely organized events or facilitated much public access to the collections. The decision not to move to USC had also disappointed some of the Mazer’s would be financial supporters and, as a result, fundraising became an even bigger challenge. When the archives did decide to launch an annual fundraising event called the Dyke-u-tante Ball, to help raise the profile of the archives in the community, they just barely broke even. The first Dyke-u-tante Ball, held September 20, 1997, raised some money, but the following year the attendance dropped considerably.⁶¹⁷ A current board member explained to me that the organizers of the second annual event soon discovered that the ONE Archives had

⁶¹³ Ryan, 2013.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Brinskele, 2013.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ “Dyke-u-tante Ball” is play on the concept of debutante balls, in which young women would make their social ‘debut’ and ‘come out’ in high society. The Mazer’s event was scheduled in honour of Coming Out Day, 1997. A note about the first “Dyke-u-tante” Ball appears in the Archives’ Winter 1997 newsletter. It was held at the Ivy Substation, “a beautifully refurbished historic rail station in Culver City with a sparkling dance floor” (p. 9). Tickets were \$50-\$35 per person and included a gala dinner. F.T. (1997). Mazer supporters come out at the Dyke-u-tante Ball. In the Life. Newsletter of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection, 14(Winter), p. 9.

planned a similar event on the same night. Whether intentional or not, this set the two organizations competing against one another for the same limited pool of community donors. The Mazer board felt that they could not compete with the ONE Archives and so they did not plan a third event. Until the addition of Brinskele, first as an active volunteer and then as a part-time, paid communications director, the Mazer Archives was surviving only with the continued dedication of a limited number of supporters and remaining funds from the McCulloch bequest. Brinskele also joined just a few months after Giagni had been approached by UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW). For the first time since 1996, the Mazer Archives was willing to consider a partnership with an academic library, although the terms would be much different for the organization.

As McHugh (2014) explains in her introductory essay for *Making Invisible Histories Visible: A Resource Guide to the Collections of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives*, the relationship between the Mazer Archives and UCLA began in 2006, when Candace Moore, a CSW Graduate Student Researcher (GSR), suggested that the CSW approach the Mazer Archives to become a community partner. Together, they applied for a Community Partnership Grant, part of a now defunct program at UCLA, and secured enough funds to process and digitize five collections. These included the organizational records of Connexus/Centro de Mujeres, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), and the Southern California Women for Understanding (SCQU), as well as the personal papers of Lillian Faderman and Margaret Cruikshank. As McHugh explains, the Mazer Archives benefitted from this collaboration in having their highly accessed collections professionally processed, and UCLA benefited by acquiring the digitized material and making these accessible to scholars internationally through the California Digital Library (p. 11). UCLA also benefitted because the grant covered costs related to the purchase of digitization equipment and the employment of four GSRs to process, create finding aids, and digitize the collections (p. 11). McHugh notes, however, that a project of this kind was unusual for the UCLA Libraries and that Stephen Davidson, head of the UCLA Digital Library Program, informed her that it was “a little irregular

for us to digitize collections that the UCLA Library doesn't own" (qtd. in McHugh, p. 11). The UCLA Libraries had concerns about cost and investment, and the Mazer Archives was unwilling to back away from its traditional stewardship role.

In my interview with Kathleen McHugh she explained that the initial project was such a success that the CSW and the Mazer Archives was interested in pursuing a second grant to continue processing more collections.⁶¹⁸ This next phase, however, was done in consultation with UCLA's University Librarian, Gary Strong, and several university administrators. Strong had also raised concerns that the university should not invest resources into processing and digitizing collections that it did not own; in his professional opinion, UCLA Libraries should not risk investing in the collections without an assurance that it would have long-term access to these collections. Strong was nevertheless sympathetic to the needs of the community partner and recognized the importance of their stewardship role. McHugh stressed that the initial meetings between the Mazer Archives and UCLA were unproductive because the archives did not want to relinquish control of their collections to an institution that had traditionally devalued the contributions of lesbian women; the Mazer Archives was built by lesbians women for lesbian women, and this would not change. At the same time, however, the board of the Mazer Archives was coming to terms with the fact that they had run out of space to store materials and did not have intellectual control over the materials that they did have (Sher, 2013). Some materials were stored in garages with poor environmental controls and others were packed into boxes without index lists; Giagni admits that she did not always know what was in the collections (Sher, 2013). They would not agree to transfer custody of the records, however, unless UCLA agreed to several terms: The collections must remain in the Los Angeles area, they must be made accessible to a public research community, and failing these obligations the Mazer Archives would retain the legal right to reclaim their material. After considerable discussion and the addition of Associate University Librarian Sharon Farb to the negotiations, the project truly moved ahead.

⁶¹⁸ Kathleen McHugh, Interview. October 22, 2013.

On May 3, 2009, the Mazer Archives' Board of Directors voted in favour of a motion to enter into a collaboration agreement with the UCLA Library and approve the terms set forth in a Gift Agreement and a Collaboration Agreement.⁶¹⁹ On June 9, 2009, The Regents of the University of California on behalf of its UCLA Campus Library and The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives signed a collaboration agreement, effective May 10 of that year.⁶²⁰ The five collections that had already been identified, processed, and digitized were deeded to the UCLA Libraries shortly thereafter. As McHugh (2014) notes in her essay, the collaboration between the Mazer Archives and UCLA led to an additional three-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which allowed for another 83 collections to be processed and partially digitized (p. 15). The grant ended in May 2014.

The collaboration with UCLA has had an incredible impact on the Mazer Archives, resulting in renewed interest in the work of the archives. The relationship has also helped the Mazer Archives position itself as a conduit for lesbian women interested in donating their materials to UCLA, but concerned about long-term investment of the University. As Sharon Farb explained in our interview, any future donations that are received from the Mazer Archives would be subject to the same terms as the 83 collections initially received.⁶²¹ That is, they would remain in the Los Angeles area and would be made accessible to the public, or the Mazer Archives retain the legal right to withdraw them from the UCLA library system. Such reassurances are attractive to donors who are part of under-documented communities and reluctant to give their materials to an institution they perceive as historically discriminatory. The relationship has also raised the profile of the Mazer Archives within the greater Los Angeles area, which has attracted the interest of potential donors deciding on which institution would best care for their materials. At the time of my site visit in fall 2013, the Mazer Archives had just received a collection from Betty Degeneres,

⁶¹⁹ Copies of the Deed of Gift and Collaboration Agreement were provided by Sharon Farb during our meeting on October 22, 2013. They are also available publicly on the Mazer Archives' website at: http://www.mazerlesbianarchives.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ucla_agreements2.pdf

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Sharon Farb, Interview. October 22, 2013.

mother of television personality Ellen Degeneres and long-time activist with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). There was also some discussion about the possibility of receiving records from Lily Tomlin, a lesbian film actress whose contributions as a Hollywood comedienne are well known and respected. Although it is likely that Tomlin's records will end up with the UCLA Library as part of their extensive Film and Television Archive, if donated through the Mazer Archives, Tomlin and her estate would be shepherded through the donation process by the community archives and the collection would be subject to friendly terms that might not be otherwise forthcoming if donated directly to UCLA.

The renewed interest in the Mazer Archives and its enlarged capacity to take in records of well known or famous lesbian women has implications for the direction of the Archives in the future. In a 2013 short film made for the Mazer Archives, Giagni describes the importance of the Archives as a grassroots community organization for “everyday lesbians;” this sentiment is underscored again in her 2014 essay, “a safe place for everyday, just-trying-to-get-by Lesbians,” published as part of the *Making Invisible Histories Visible* resource guide (JMLA, 2013; Giagni, 2014). It appears as though the Mazer Archives remains committed to collecting, preserving, and making accessible the records of “everyday lesbians” and yet, it seems unlikely that UCLA would be interested in collections that would not be of great value to the broader research community. That is, UCLA has accepted more than 80 collections of relatively important lesbian women and lesbian organizations; however, it does not seem feasible for the university to invest time and resources into processing and preserving materials that have little research value, such as shoeboxes filled with mixed tapes of women's music or a plastic bag containing a pair of worn out Birkenstocks—both of which I found at the Archives' Werle Building office. My experience accessing collections at the rule-oriented and stuffy reading room at the UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library would also suggest that UCLA is less interested in the haptic experience of being in the archives and more focussed on the research potential of the records themselves. Unlike the original founders of the

Mazer Archives, UCLA would not collect on a policy of “anything that has been touched by a lesbian.”⁶²²

The ONE Archives and the University of Southern California

On Thursday, October 7, 2010, the University of Southern California (USC) Libraries announced that it had acquired the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, the largest collection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history and culture in the world (Masters, 2010). The ONE Archives would become a member institution of the USC Libraries’ L.A. as Subject program, complementing the University’s already extensive holdings documenting regional history. In the original press release, Catherine Quinlan, dean of the USC Libraries, is quoted as stating that the donation will make the ONE Archives and its holdings “accessible to future generations of students, scholars and researchers at USC and around the world... [and] support teaching and research in history, gender studies, anthropology, literary studies and so many other disciplines.”⁶²³ The press release also quotes Michael Quick, executive vice dean of the USC College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, who says that the ONE Archives is “one of the most important scholarly collections of materials related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in the country, if not the world. Its acquisition by USC Libraries means that USC faculty and students will have a remarkable resource for the purposes of both cutting-edge research and education.”⁶²⁴ The collections had already informed several USC-sponsored research projects, including Moira Kenney’s *Mapping Gay L.A.: The Intersection of Place and Politics and Spirit*, which aided this study, and the collection is often consulted by film and television researchers, including the producers of the Academy Award-winning film *Milk*; the ONE Archives holds the archives of the Harvey Milk for City Council campaign. Joseph Hawkins, a lecturer in the department of anthropology at USC and

⁶²² Fonfa, 2013.

⁶²³ Quinlan, quoted in USC Libraries. (2010, Oct 8). [Press Release: ONE Archives finds new home as USC Libraries]. Copy in possession of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

⁶²⁴ Quick, quoted in USC Libraries. (2010, Oct 8). [Press Release: ONE Archives finds new home as USC Libraries]. Copy in possession of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

then president of the ONE Archives' board of directors, is also quoted in the press release as acknowledging the donation as "an important step in preserving our community's heritage."⁶²⁵ As noted above, the donation would effectively end more than 70 years of independent collecting at the ONE Archives.

Despite the heated discussion that took place at the ALMS 2011 presentation, which addressed the importance of autonomy for lesbian and gay archives, the donation of the ONE Archives to USC did not come as a surprise to many of the people involved with the collections over the years. In many of my interviews for this project, community archivists noted that the relationship between USC and the ONE Archives was long-standing and that the donation of materials seemed like a natural step in the development of this partnership. Since its early beginnings, the ONE Archives has not only had affiliations with academic institutions, but has also been the information resource centre for the educational programs offered by the ONE Institute. A number of USC faculty and students had taken part in the educational curriculum at the ONE Institute over the years. Like the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, the ONE Archives' collections have been used by a significant number of academic scholars, both in the pursuit of research sanctioned by their home institutions and for personal projects. The ONE Archives has also been helped along by academic researchers, whether students, academic librarians, or faculty, from USC and other institutions in the greater Los Angeles area for most of its development. In many ways, the absorption of the collections into the USC Libraries achieved the "mark of maturation" that Miriam Smith urged the CLGA to make with regard to the University of Toronto's offer almost a decade earlier.⁶²⁶ The details of the relationship between IGLA and USC professor Walter Williams have been described at great length in previous sections, and I have already provided some background on the merger of IGLA with the ONE Library, which created the integrated ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives. Thus, I will not go into these details again

⁶²⁵ Hawkins, quoted in USC Libraries. (2010, Oct 8). [Press Release: ONE Archives finds new home as USC Libraries]. Copy in possession of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

⁶²⁶ Smith, 2013.

here, but rather describe some of the implications of the integration of these two organizations and their affiliation with USC.

I first visited the ONE Archives at its 909 W. Adams Blvd. location in 2011, as part of the ALMS 2011 program, when delegates were offered a guided tour. The site is impressive. The two-story brick building, located several block north of USC campus, is surrounded by an old brick wall and a large gate opens to a small parking lot and entrance. I learned later that the brick wall is designated heritage architecture and is protected by the city. The building, however, was constructed much later.⁶²⁷ Signage exists, but is small and obscured by the wall; passersby would likely assume that the building is just another off-campus residence or a USC administration building. Oliveira commented that the building remains inconspicuous because there is some fear that the building could be targetted by hate groups, although there is no evidence of this. The neighbourhood is a mix of student housing, social housing, and large brick homes, many of which have been converted to apartments or condominiums. The interior of 909 W. Adams has an unusual design. The centre of the building is a large square-shaped area open to the ceiling and holds the extensive library, a reference desk, and several research tables; computer stations along a north wall allow researchers to access the Internet and finding aids. There is also an impressive display of covers from each issue of *ONE Magazine*, as well as framed art and ephemera on the walls, which not only showcases some of the material in the collection but also provides an aesthetic backdrop to the otherwise drab interior. On the outside walls of this large open square are several doors leading to a number of additional rooms that outline the edges of the central area. These rooms include an exhibition space, formerly occupied by the Lesbian Legacy Collection, a processing room, a periodicals room, and a large space housing the majority of the records. These rooms are not publicly accessible to researchers. The library is also closed to researchers by a large metal cage, although visitors can request access with permission. One accessible bookshelf contains duplicate materials that can be purchased by donation. Two staircases in opposing corners lead up to an open hallway outlining the

⁶²⁷ Oliveira, 2013.

edges of the second floor. Doors lead to additional rooms and offices on the outside of the open square. These include a room that contains a sizeable collection related to performing arts and administrative offices. Upon my first visit, I recall Hawkins explaining that the central area was a common room for the fraternity that once occupied the building and the archives had removed a large fireplace and chimney that sat at its core. He had also heard rumours that the fraternity brothers would occasionally fill the floor of the building with water and have canoe races around the fireplace. Fraternity members sometimes returned to the building with their families while on vacation to share memories of their time at university. Some were more comfortable with the current occupants than others. The exhibition space was formerly the communal kitchen. The rooms around the edges of the buildings were all bedrooms, with shared bathrooms in between every second dividing wall. Many of these bathrooms and walls have been removed, but some of the architecture remains. Bud Thomas, the Library Supervisor and Operations Manager, has an office in what would have been the bathroom to a corner bedroom. As Oliveira commented, the building is not ideal for the purposes of an archives. It does not have an HVAC, for example, and is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Nevertheless, it has been retrofit to meet California's earthquake safety codes as part of the renovations process. Despite the rather odd architecture of the ONE Archives building, it is nevertheless an impressive site. Because it is off-campus, the archives retains some of its independence and own identity as a gay and lesbian organization.

As noted earlier, the ONE Archives opened at 909 W. Adams Blvd. in 2000, and soon added several new people to its board of directors, including Joseph Hawkins, Greg Williams, Bill Luckenbill, and Carol Grosvenor.⁶²⁸ Hawkins noted that the ONE Archives had also hired Stuart Timmons into a paid position as Executive Director, but were not able to renew his one-year contract due to lack of funds. With the help of Timmons, however, Hawkins was able to secure two significant grants, one through the *Library Service and Technology Act*, administered by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, and another from the California Community Partnership

⁶²⁸ Hawkins, 2013; Carol Grosvenor, Interview. October 17, 2013.

program. Hawkins soon learned that Luckenbill and Williams, both working in university libraries, were also adept at grant-writing and, together, they began working on a template for future applications, with Grosvenor providing budgetary advice. The template proved successful, and the ONE Archives was soon awarded a California Cultural Historical Endowment Grant (CCHG) for more than \$300,000. The grant was contingent, however, on the support of USC administration, and this was unfortunately not forthcoming. As Hawkins explained, the Dean of Libraries had recently retired and an interim dean had been appointed. This interim dean declined the grant. This surprising decision was Hawkins' first indication that the archives needed to strengthen and formalize its relationship with USC. By the early 2000s, all of the materials from the ONE had been moved out of the house on Country Club Drive. There was certainly no room at the Werle Building to house the entire integrated archives. Hawkins recognized that the ONE Archives were offered the space at USC "by the grace of God," and he knew that University administration could terminate the lease at any point, leaving the ONE Archives without a home.⁶²⁹ The board agreed to move ahead with plans to negotiate a formal agreement with USC and, in the meantime, they placed \$200,000 into a reserve fund to be used only if the Archives needed to search for a new facility.

Luckily, the eviction notice never came. As Hawkins recalled, the early 2000s were a productive period for the development of the organization. Although the CCHG grant was declined, the Archives was successful in obtaining other grant money from three different granting agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC), and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). Hawkins estimates that the ONE Archives has been awarded an estimated \$1 million in grant money over the past 10 years. He admitted that he was initially surprised that the Archives earned such large grants during the Bush Administration, but commented that he perceives the social and

⁶²⁹ Hawkins, 2013.

political climate has recently shifted and that it is becoming increasingly normalized for federal institutions to lend public support for gay and lesbian institutions.⁶³⁰

Hawkins credits Grosvenor and Williams for developing not only a successful grant template, but also for ushering in a level of professionalization that has undoubtedly raised the profile—and therefore potential impact—of the archives. Both Hawkins and former director Carol Grosvenor discussed how Greg Williams, now head archivist at California State University–Dominguez Hills, was the first person to impose archival standards on the collections. As Grosvenor explained in our discussion, she was recruited to the board for her expertise in information technology and financial infrastructure development and, with her guidance, Williams was able to establish a centralized computer system that brought together several previously distinct InMagic databases. Standardizing practices have allowed the ONE Archives to participate in the Online Archive of California (OAC), which provides free public access to detailed descriptions of primary resource collections maintained across the state.⁶³¹ With the grant money, the Archives was also able to hire Michael Oliveira as its first project archivist, followed by Loni Shibuyama, Michael Palmer, and later, Kyle Morgan.⁶³² Shibuyama estimates that, with three paid archivists and money for archival technology and supplies, the ONE Archives was able to process more than 90% of its collections by the end of the decade.⁶³³

With such a productive period, it is not surprising that the board continued to mull over the possibility of maintaining the collection as an autonomous institution. Hawkins described how he and Grosvenor worked through several scenarios about what would happen to the Archives if it were evicted from its USC-donated space or what might happen if the organization decided to

⁶³⁰ Pat Allen also discussed these successful grant applications in our discussion. He seemed equally surprised that the grants were issued during the Bush Administration; however, he emphasized that the Presidency does not reflect the interests of those who work for government agencies. That is, the public face of the government remained conservative, but the overall political environment was increasingly tolerant of lesbian and gay people. Allen, 2013.

⁶³¹ Oliveira, 2013.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Shibuyama, 2013.

move into its own autonomous space.⁶³⁴ Like many other community activists, they were aware that the Lesbian Herstory Archives had been able to raise enough money to purchase a permanent house for its collections and wondered if the ONE Archives could do the same. In the end, however, Hawkins and Grosvenor realized that the collections could not be supported by community donations alone. The costs were too high, and a move would be too risky. In their estimation, the ONE Archives would need to raise at least \$6 million to secure a space that would be the same size as the one it occupied at 909 W. Adams, and it would require an annual operating budget of nearly \$400,000.⁶³⁵ With a ten-member board more comfortable doing outreach and advocacy than fundraising, it was clear that continued autonomy was infeasible. Together, Hawkins and Grosvenor worked with the board for about eighteen months to come to a decision to turn over the collections to USC. With some reservations, the board agreed to pursue a donation to USC. Hawkins commented:

I have to give [the board] credit that they were actually courageous enough to take the chance to turn [the collections] over. Many of them asked, but who are we going to be? What purpose do we have? So it was more about them in the end. And then eventually they let that go and they said, ok. For the greater good, we'll turn it over. And so they did.⁶³⁶

The board's agreement to pursue a formal donation also coincided with the appointment of Catherine Quinlan as USC's new Dean of Libraries.⁶³⁷ Hawkins described how he contacted Quinlan to invite her to come for a tour of the 909 W. Adams facility and she immediately agreed. At this first meeting, Hawkins met with her and described how the organization had functioned for several decades, that it had been successful in earning government grants, and that almost 80% of the collections had already been processed. He reminded her that most archives, whether institutionalized or private, are rarely more than 40% processed. Within a month of her taking on

⁶³⁴ Hawkins, 2013.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

the position, Quinlan had agreed to take the collections to USC. Hawkins noted, “We looked like a tasty morsel of low-hanging fruit to an incoming dean. And I realized this was my time.”⁶³⁸

Initially, Quinlan agreed to take all of the collection, including some of the pornographic materials that the board had previously kept at its West Hollywood location, but she was not interested in the artwork also kept at the Werle Building. Hawkins described how he convinced the USC administrators to re-consider. Since 2002, The J. Paul Getty Trust has supported an initiative to exhibit historical collections that document the history of Southern California (The J. Paul Getty Trust, 2014). Known as Pacific Standard Time, the regional project has grown to include 60 cultural institutions and produced more than 40 publications documenting Los Angeles’ impact on art history during the post-war years (The J. Paul Getty Trust, 2014). Hawkins had become aware of the impact of Pacific Standard Time and wanted the ONE Archives to be part of the initiative. Although he doubted that the Getty would accept his application to exhibit artwork from the ONE’s collections, he submitted a proposal and emphasized the lack of queer content in any of the Getty’s previous exhibits. The Getty accepted the proposal, but did not offer any money in support. Hawkins described how he took the acceptance letter to the board and explained the importance of participating in such an influential art project. Within a short period of time, the board raised \$160,000 for community donations and secured a Warhol Grant to support the exhibition.⁶³⁹ The fundraising success, Hawkins speculated, was evidence of an increased understanding of the value of the artwork in the collections and indicative of how this previously neglected part of the collection had become a critical tool in outreach for the organization. He took this information back to Quinlan and underscored the importance of the art collection to the sustainability of the archives as a whole. As Hawkins explained, Quinlan “resisted me for 6 months, 8 months, but then finally she said ok. Enough. I’ll take it. So we negotiated for another six months to a year and now

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

that's a part of the university."⁶⁴⁰ In the end, the negotiations with Quinlan to take over the ONE Archives' collections took nearly two years to finalize.

Hawkins nevertheless remained cautious about turning over the collections to USC. When I asked him if donating the collections to USC had caused any problems with donor or community relations, he explained that the early supporters of the ONE Archives are now deceased and any remaining supporters of IGLA are now elderly. Most of the organizations and individuals who have contributed materials to the archives are either defunct or deceased. Consequently, few people expressed any reticence about handing over the collections to a larger institution, especially if this resulted in better preservation of and access to those materials. Hawkins explained that he was mostly concerned that by deeding the collections to USC, the ONE Archives would be made ineligible to apply for many of the grants that they had been so successful in receiving as a 501(c)3. What he discovered, however, was that granting agencies were more apt to fund an organization affiliated with a larger institution because this provided even more infrastructural support to ensure that the money would be used responsibly and produce intended results. Hawkins was also aware that universities do not consider libraries to be "fundable entities," and that they could not fundraise for a library in the same way as they do sports teams or curricular programs.⁶⁴¹ The board would have to continue to show the university administration and, in particular, its advancement officers, that the archives could support itself financially through donations and grants. In addition, the decision to donate was met with some resistance from long-serving volunteers who worried that their part in the organization would disappear. Hawkins said this of the volunteers:

These folks were incredibly courageous; they had done everything they could to keep this place open. There had been in-fighting on a level that I just can't even tell you. But still they were coming in every week and scraping together money to buy file folders to do things and then people would volunteer. We have 30 volunteers here, some of whom have been here for 25-30 years and those people are still here. They were concerned that when we became a part of USC, would they still allow them to come here. I said, well yes! Who turns down free labour?"⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

In a wise move, Hawkins, the board, and USC administration not only welcomed long-term volunteers to continue working with the collections after the legal deposit, but they also positioned them as an essential part of the archives' success. As Hawkins explained, the long-term volunteers held much of the institutional memory of the archives and could not be easily replaced by a centralized database. During my visit to the Archives in the fall 2013, it was obvious that this commitment to supporting volunteers has a boon for the continuity of the archival work and service to the collections, even if reference services are now handled primarily by paid staff.

Other changes have occurred since the move to USC and the 2010 donation. Oliveira noted that the success of the grant applications and the professionalization of the archives had other implication as well.⁶⁴³ Not only did this money support the archival work that was desperately needed to bring the collections under intellectual control, it also signalled to the larger community that the ONE Archives was an important institution. He commented, "Those grants that came in really changed how everyone looks at this place."⁶⁴⁴ With an increased profile, the ONE Archives has not only improved access to its collections for researchers, but also stimulated more interest from potential donors. Oliveira noted that Los Angeles attracts creative people and that they often leave behind "stuff."⁶⁴⁵ This "stuff" has increasingly made its way into archival repositories, including the ONE Archives. Once the larger Los Angeles community became more aware of the ONE Archives and trust in the organization's sustainability had grown, more and more donors began contacting the archives to enquire about bringing in records. This added pressure has caused some disruptions at the archives. As Oliveira explained, there is some concern that organizations want to donate their materials to the archives because they either can't or don't want to invest resources in keeping their own records. In some cases, organizations have gone bankrupt and succeeding companies have transferred any older records to the archives. While much of this

⁶⁴³ Oliveira, 2013.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

material is important, the ONE Archives is reluctant to serve as a “storehouse” for orphaned records.⁶⁴⁶ Some individuals have also misunderstood the role of the archives and have enquired about depositing their materials, but will not relinquish custody or control of them. Thus, the archives would be required to actively manage these records, but could not easily provide access to them. Thus, for the first time in its history, the ONE Archives has had decline collections because it could not provide the resources necessary to process, preserve, and make them accessible to researchers.

The move to USC and the professionalization of the archives has also impacted the role of long-term volunteers, some of whom have been involved with the archives for several decades. Oliveira estimates that some of the volunteers who originally worked with Jim Kepner’s IGLA collection at the Werle Building in West Hollywood withdrew from the archives when it moved to USC. The 909 W. Adams Building is about an hour away from West Hollywood by bus or about eight miles south-east. Even with free parking in the ONE Archives’ small lot, some volunteers still find the commute prohibitive. Oliveira pointed out that many of the long-serving volunteers for both the ONE and IGLA are now aging, and are dispersed across Los Angeles County. West Hollywood may have drawn people in because it is also a central meeting place for gay men and offers restaurants, shopping, and other gay-owned or gay-friendly establishments. The USC neighbourhood is not as inviting for older gay men. Some former volunteers might also have dropped away because they held strong opinions about either Dorr Legg or Jim Kepner, which may have influenced their level of support for an integrated ONE/International Gay and Lesbian Archives. The three volunteers that I interviewed for this project were actually recruited back to service at the 909 W. Adams Blvd. after falling away from the organization by board members of the new ONE Archives because they could provide the institutional memory of both ONE and IGLA. As Pat Allen recalled, Kepner had an idiosyncratic approach to organizing collections and

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

Allen could help decipher some of this work for project archivists.⁶⁴⁷ ONE also kept subject files and these would need to be integrated somehow, which required expertise in the history of the organizations, individuals, and events that they documented.

During my research visit to the ONE Archives, some of the more administrative implications of the USC donation were also becoming more evident. As Oliveira pointed out, USC has now provided new bankers boxes and archival materials to house all of the collections, which makes the stacks feel even more professionally managed.⁶⁴⁸ The stacks remain closed to researchers. Other administrative changes were taking place. Older 286 computers were replaced with new machines and are supported by USC's centralized IT department. Oliveira also noted that there are more keys to more locked doors, a change that was implemented to improve building security and meet institutional codes. He joked, "Now that we are an institution much like a mental hospital, we have to comply with everything."⁶⁴⁹ There are health and safety manuals, earthquake preparation instructions, and policy and procedures documents available to staff and volunteers. These changes have had both positive and negative consequences for long-time volunteers. Allen (2013) complained during our interview, for example, that volunteers had been locked out of the computer system because they now require USC identifications and login codes to access; even Oliveira had been locked out from certain levels of access from time to time due to administration's employee access standards. The technology is state-of-the-art. There are five full-time staff members and they are now paid as employees of USC, not through the non-profit organization. Oliveira explained that when transition took place in 2010, Shubiyama, Hawkins, and Thomas were made permanent employees of USC Libraries; Oliveira and Kyle Morgan were both hired as project archivists and remain in their positions supported by grant money. All staff have USC benefits, including health and dental packages. The archives also supports internships and student practicums from both USC and other local colleges. The building appears to visitors, however, as a separate and distinct

⁶⁴⁷ Allen, 2013.

⁶⁴⁸ Oliveira, 2013.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

archives, with its own sense of self. It appears community driven and community supported. And Oliveira noted, the parking remains free. Hawkins and Oliveira emphasized that fundraising is key to the archives maintaining that individuality. Oliveira commented, “If we are just going to be another library that is going to just sit here on the USC campus and not bring in money, then why have us in a separate building and why not just incorporate us into the main library space.”⁶⁵⁰

The donation of materials to USC has yet another set of implications for the ONE Archives. As noted in the organizational history in Chapter 3, USC Libraries is now wholly responsible for the management and care of the ONE Archives. As both Grosvenor and Hawkins explained to me in separate interviews, the donation of materials leaves the non-profit, charitable 501(c)3 organization an archives without archives.⁶⁵¹ The agreement with USC affords the 501(c)3 organization space in the 909 W. Adams facility, but at the time of our interviews, the mandate of this non-profit was unclear. Hawkins and Grosvenor disagreed on what a new vision for this organization should be. Grosvenor commented that she would like to see the 501(C)3 return to its roots as an educational organization and provide the pedagogical support needed to develop curriculum around the existing collections.⁶⁵² That is, she would like to see the non-profit become the access and outreach arm of the archives, providing educational material and teaching tools to both grade schools and colleges that highlight materials in the collections and develop scholarship around the concept of lesbian and gay rights. Grosvenor also explained that some board members were keen to re-position the non-profit as an art history and cultural organization that would have full access to the collections to undertake this work. She commented, “My position and what I am advocating is that ONE Archives, the non-profit, change its mission, change its name, eliminate the word ‘archives’ and basically become an art history and cultural LGBT organization.”⁶⁵³ She also

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Grosvenor, 2013; Hawkins, 2013.

⁶⁵² Grosvenor, 2013.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

underscored the importance of having a non-profit LGBT cultural organization that is not bound by the same administrative rules as USC. Grosvenor noted:

There is a difference between what the non-profit can do and wants to do and what the USC alone can accomplish. USC has a program called “Visions and Voices” which Joseph has used as a vehicle to create on-campus programs. But the difference is, those programs are USC-based and campus-based. The non-profit has no boundaries. There are not a lot of people on the board that understand that difference in terms of campus-based versus no boundaries.⁶⁵⁴

By maintaining its autonomy from USC, the ONE Archives’ non-profit organization could potentially engage in the kinds of activities that an academic institution would not and to a more dispersed public. Grosvenor emphasized the importance of developing a new mission statement that would not limit the non-profit to a ‘friends of the library’-type program that would exist merely to support the ONE Archives. She stated, “We have a much bigger mission.”⁶⁵⁵ Grosvenor also reminded me that Hawkins is now an employee of USC and is no longer working on behalf of the non-profit organization. She also implied that some of his recommendations to the board about their future mandate are also driven by his need to maintain funding to support his own position as Executive Director.

Hawkins agreed with Grosvenor that there is a need to create better outreach programming.⁶⁵⁶ He also explained that the non-profit would continue to take advantage of a small gallery space that was left to the ONE Archives at the Werle Building. Curation and exhibition of materials would likely fall to the non-profit. Hawkins nevertheless underscored the importance of restructuring the 501(c)3 with a focus on fundraising for the continued support of the archival material now in USC’s possession. He worried that some board members continue to see the non-profit as a “social organization” and have attempted to redirect efforts into outreach and advocacy work that is either misplaced or unsuccessful because they have overlapped with other organizations that already provide these services.⁶⁵⁷ A proposed film festival, for example, would compete with

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Hawkins, 2013.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

the highly supported OutFest film festival; the educational curriculum work would be better suited for groups already engaged with Gay-Straight Alliance groups in local high schools. Hawkins has also realized that the board does not need to have employees, which need to be managed or overseen. The non-profit could operate as a volunteer board with little infrastructure. Ultimately, he sees the role of the non-profit as twofold: they should continue to solicit materials from the community because some potential donors will not feel comfortable giving to the “sterile” academic library, and they should engage in fundraising to support the collections.⁶⁵⁸ Hawkins also wants to encourage the board to work in partnership with the University’s advancement officers because they not only have the resources to support fundraising activities, but Hawkins also believes that donors who would not previously give legacy gifts to the 501(c)3, will give money to a larger endowment managed by a reputable institution such as USC. Ideally, Hawkins would like to establish an endowment and raise \$15 million, which would provide the ONE Archives with roughly \$750,000 annually to support staff, supplies, and the facility to care for the collections. Eventually, Hawkins would also like to see a more suitable building for the collection, but he admitted that this is much farther in the future. An endowment would position the ONE Archives in the same field as organizations such as the Shoah Foundation, which is a repository of note that continues to grow because it is assured a minimum level of funding each year.

In my conversation with Hawkins, he acknowledged some concern about the perception that his motivations for handing over the collections to USC were self-serving. After working as a adjunct professor in the department of anthropology for many years, Hawkins now has a permanent job at the ONE Archives. This comes with security and benefits. He did not deny that secure employment was a personal goal, but he assured me that his motivations for pushing the board to establish an endowment and to concentrate on fundraising reflect his careful consideration about safeguarding the future of the collections. The conflict between Grosvenor and Hawkins nevertheless appears to have been settled by having the board of the non-profit take on an

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

educational mandate that includes a fundraising mission. A few months after my conversations with Grosvenor and Hawkins, the board announced that it had renamed the 501(c)3 to be the ONE Archives Foundation, and it would serve as an independent, community partner of the ONE Archives at USC (ONE Archives Foundation, 2014). It continues to have a collecting mandate, done in collaboration with the ONE Archives at USC, but this does not appear to be the primary focus of the organization. The dual purpose is to develop outreach and advocacy programming, including pedagogical support for the collections, and also to fundraise money through community and corporate donations. There is no indication yet that Hawkins has been successful in establishing an endowment for the archives, although such a financial strategy might still be in development.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives and Pratt Institute

I have purposefully left any discussion of the Lesbian Herstory Archives to the end of this chapter because, in many ways, it serves as a counterpoint in this study. The LHA has never accepted any government money for its operations, nor has it ever engaged in any formal partnerships with academic institutions that would result in shared stewardship of its collections.⁶⁵⁹ As a political stance, the archives maintains its autonomy as a community-driven, grassroots lesbian organization. This allegiance to autonomy and steadfast commitment to remaining in the community is what distinguishes this organization from the other three lesbian and gay archives that inform this study, all of which now rely on partnerships and/or government grants to sustain themselves. As I mentioned in the organizational history in the previous chapter, I was unsure if I would be able to include the LHA in this study. I worried that the coordinators would not be receptive to academic research that would not only take place at the archives, but would position the LHA as the *subject* of this inquiry. That is, I knew that I would be welcomed at the Archives as a visitor and be able to use any of the collections, but I was unsure that I would find the support I needed to undertake research about the organization itself, which required access to the LHA's own

⁶⁵⁹ Edel, 2013.

organizational files and the generosity of coordinators to afford me the time to interview them. I should not have been so quick to make assumptions. What I discovered was that the LHA does not resist academic work, but rather this kind of sanctioned research is not privileged over any other reason one might have to visit the brownstone. During my two weeks at the LHA in the fall 2013, I witnessed dozens of women coming into the house just to see what was inside, to attend an event, or to learn more about the organization. I watched Deb Edel give tours to curious visitors with the same level of detail and gusto as she had provided me, as I frantically wrote down notes for future use. As Edel explained in our interview, the coordinators are very cautious when they decide to support an academic project, not necessarily because they devalue scholarly work, but because they are often overwhelmed with requests from academic researchers and not able to invest in all of the projects that they are proposed. Edel commented that resources are limited and the coordinators do not agree to support projects unless they feel they are able to follow through with this commitment.

Certain people involved with the LHA are nevertheless critical of academic scholarship. Maxine Wolfe remains skeptical of the academy and its capacity to connect disciplinary theory with the needs of those it studies. In our discussion, she reminded me that she is an academic herself, as are many of the women who are or who have been involved with the LHA over the years—Joan Nestle, Polly Thistlethwaite, and Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz have all worked in academic institutions.⁶⁶⁰ Wolfe noted that it is her exposure to the academy that has allowed her to witness first-hand the disconnect between what the academy sees as important and defensible ways of studying the world and the impact this kind of work has on its subjects. Academic researchers, she emphasized, are only accountable to other academics. Wolfe pointed to the emergence of queer theory and the post-modern turn in the humanities, which has opened up new opportunities for gay men and lesbians working within the academy, but has achieved this success by neglecting and devaluing women's history. Wolfe noted, for example, that she had once written a paper criticizing Michel Foucault's "total lack of knowledge of the history of women," including any understanding that women's lives

⁶⁶⁰ Wolfe, 2013.

have always been under surveillance, where his theoretical panopticon actually exists.⁶⁶¹ Foucault, she argued, believed that the whole world is about men. Because the modern academic approach to studying lesbian experiences is underpinned by Foucauldian thinking and tenure is achieved by producing work that is acceptable to colleagues, people will not “push the envelope.”⁶⁶² Wolfe commented that academics are likely to “publish what their colleagues find acceptable.”⁶⁶³ She then explained how a knowledge of “the way academia works” has helped the women involved with the LHA better understand the pressures that university archives have to “fit into that mould,” and to anticipate challenges faced by community archives that are not interested in folding to that pressure.⁶⁶⁴

Given Wolfe’s distrust of academic work, I was surprised to learn that she is not only working with the New York-based Pratt Institute on several digitization projects, but that the LHA has also allowed Pratt to host a digital collections website (See <http://herstories.prattsils.org/omeka/>). I was first made aware of Pratt’s engagement with the LHA at a meeting of the Archives Educators & Researchers Institute (AERI), which took place at the University of Texas–Austin in June 2013. I was approached by Anthony Cocciolo, an associate professor at Pratt Institute’s School of Information and Library Science. He wanted to let me know that he had developed a project-based course in digital archives methodology that had resulted in several of his students working with the LHA to digitize and make accessible online a small collection of oral histories. He explained that Maxine Wolfe had responded to an open call he had put out to find community partners for the course who could provide the analogue materials that students would use to create their final digital archives projects. He directed me to a his personal URL, <http://www.thinkingprojects.org>, where he had posted a link to an Omeka-based digital archives hosted by Pratt, but branded with the same web design as the LHA’s own website. Cocciolo then noted that his students regularly uses Pratt

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

Institute's digitization lab to digitize records drawn from the LHA's analogue collections. I admit that, when I first learned of this relationship, I was taken aback by how it seemed to violate the LHA's long-standing practice of institutional autonomy. The fact that the LHA was allowing their records to be removed from the brownstone and placed into Cocciolo's custody, even temporarily, was also unexpected. I nevertheless considered this development to be an interesting association for my own project and hoped that the agreement between Pratt Institute and the LHA was also a sign that the archives would be more receptive to a project on sustainability. As I will discuss in the conclusion, the leap from analogue collecting to digital archiving has been one of the most challenging developments in the histories of the four institutions that inform this study and one of the primary catalysts for working with academic institutions. Cocciolo was also kind enough to provide me with Wolfe's personal email address so that I might contact her directly, rather than risk having my correspondence to the LHA neglected or lost in the organization's central inbox. In my first email to Wolfe, I introduced myself and explained that I had been given her email address by Cocciolo after we had met at a conference. I referred to the "agreement" between the LHA and Pratt Institute. Wolfe responded:

There is an error in your description of LHA's relationship to Pratt. We, as an institution, have no "agreement" with Pratt as an institution. Rather, I—with the agreement of the other coordinators—started a project with Anthony which has mutual benefits: his students get to learn to digitize and to create websites for the products of their work and we get some of our tapes digitized. And, as you say, we keep ownership of the tapes and the digitized versions as well. We are also digitizing many of our other tapes by ourselves. Don't get me wrong—the arrangement has been great—largely because Anthony is easy to work with—but it is not "formal"—nothing written—and he or myself could end it anytime we wanted to—and the only reason it turned out to be Pratt was that my daughter used to work at their Brooklyn campus in the library, was on their listserv and sent me Anthony's request for people who had oral histories they wanted digitized and I contacted him. Anyway, I think this may change the way you describe your thesis.⁶⁶⁵

Obviously, my assumption that the relationship between Cocciolo and Wolfe was more than a "mutually beneficial" arrangement was incorrect.

⁶⁶⁵ M. Wolfe. (personal communication, July 16, 2013).

Wolfe's response did, however, influence my thinking about the relationship between Pratt Institute and the LHA, and it also raised some concerns. One issue is that the statement seemed to dismiss any affiliation between the LHA and Pratt Institute. There is no recognition that Anthony Cociolo is employed by the institution and that he is only able to perform this labour to benefit the LHA because of his faculty status. Unlike Wolfe, this is not a volunteer role for Cociolo, but rather part of his job and its early success likely contributed positively to his tenure package. Students are also supplying labour for this work because it is course work. As Cociolo had explained to me earlier that summer, any materials contributed to course projects are digitized using Pratt's digitization lab and students receive course credit for the work that they do. As a result, students are motivated to produce good work, even if it is unpaid. To suggest that there is no relationship between the LHA and Pratt Institute is not entirely accurate.

In a recent article about the course outcomes for *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture*, Cociolo (2013) has also argued that students learn about LGBT history through their preservation work, thus contributing to the mandate of the Lesbian Herstory Archives to “uncover and collect our herstory denied to us previously by patriarchal historians” through the very process of gathering together and describing this material as an archival collection (LHA, 2013). Archiving-as-process, whether collecting analogue materials or digitizing those materials for the creation of a digital collection, is part of the political purpose of the Lesbian Herstory Archives to be a space where lesbian women can not only come together and learn about themselves, but also find the encouragement they need to document their experiences. Although Cociolo makes clear in his article that the students involved in the digitization course are not required to have an interest in LGBT history nor are they required to identify as lesbian, he found that students reported overwhelmingly that the project helped them to better understand LGBT history. Although the LHA does not operate with an educational mandate, the learning outcomes of the preservation work described by Cociolo would seem to extend the political principles of the LHA by involving a community of people in the work of the archives and, in turn, foster better overall knowledge of

lesbian experiences in history. The focus on learning history would appear to satisfy some of the criticisms Wolfe has with the postmodern approaches of the humanities, which can sometimes neglect women's history. The arrangement with Cocciolo is therefore more than simply a "mutually beneficial" relationship that produces a digital collection, but also about engaging a broader community in the work of the archives, even if the archives continues to uphold its principle to be "housed within the community, not on an academic campus that is by definition closed to many women" (LHA, 2013). Though, it could be argued that the digital records featured on the digital collections website are, in fact, housed at Pratt Institute, only as bits and bytes on a server.

Another concern raised by Wolfe's statement is that the arrangement with Cocciolo is not formalized. While this might be a conscious decision on the part of the coordinators to uphold their commitment to institutional autonomy, it does put the organization at risk. The lack of any formal partnership or a memorandum of understanding between the LHA and Pratt Institute suggests that the digital collections site that has been created by Cocciolo's students and is currently hosted on Pratt Institute's server is supported only as long as Cocciolo remains dedicated to maintaining this site. While Pratt Institute might support the website as part of its commitment to faculty research, long-term support and maintenance of the digital collections site is not guaranteed beyond Cocciolo's service to the institution. That is, if Cocciolo were to leave his position at Pratt or cease teaching the digital archives course that produces this digital collections site, it is unclear what would become of the site and the records that it houses. In Wolfe's response to my email, she confirms that the LHA has not deeded over any of its analogue records and maintains ownership of any digitized copies; however, legal custody of the digital collections remains unclear. Are the digital records stored on Pratt's server originals or copies? Does this matter? The Lesbian Herstory Archives frequently accepts copies of records and does not necessarily privilege the original record or value originality the same way that a traditional archives might. In a digital environment, copies are easy to produce and difficult to manage. Does Pratt Institute own the digital records that it stores on its servers? Does it own any of the descriptive metadata that students have added to the

collection? If so, how can they use this data in the future? Can they be migrated off the digital collections site and into another repository in the future with or without the permission of the LHA? Wolfe notes that the LHA has started its own digitization process, but the management of digital records and the long-term storage and preservation of these records is still in development. Can this digital collections site be deleted if the LHA decides to launch its own digital repository in the future, or will it last only as long as it can operate without intervention or curation? Does the LHA have any investment in stewarding this site or is the organization comfortable with its precarity?

The arrangement with Cociolo also raises an important question about the sustainability of the Lesbian Herstory Archives as an autonomous organization. Here, I would like to return to the question raised in my introduction to this chapter: Is it inevitable that lesbian and gay archives will have to seek out the support of academic institutions to survive into the future? For Joseph Hawkins, the donation of materials from the ONE Archives to USC produced two very important outcomes. First, it ensures the preservation and care of the largest collection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) materials in the world and makes this accessible to future generations of scholars. Second, it provides the infrastructure needed to continue fundraising to support the employment of trained professionals not only to care for these materials, but also to assist researchers to engage with the materials in productive ways. Both the Mazer Archives and the CLGA have histories of deeply problematic engagements with academic institutions, but each has returned to universities in recent years and after considerable reflection about the long-term needs of their collections.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives was not established for the purpose of supporting scholarly work or as a reference collection to support another project. In many ways, the academy is not a logical place for the LHA to end up. The purpose of the archives was to create a space for lesbian women to come face to face with evidence of lesbian history so often neglected or censored by scholarly research. The archives began in the home of Joan Nestle and the presence of a live-in

caretaker is intended to preserve this domestic, non-institutional setting. Visitors can take a book off the shelf and read on a comfy sofa or sit at the same table that once occupied the kitchen in Nestle's Upper West Side apartment. Even while using the bathroom, visitors are confronted with posters, jewellery and iconography triggering memories or post-memories of women's music concerts, lesbian bars, or queer film festivals of years past. Visiting the archives is a haptic experience that cannot be replicated in an institutional reading room. And that is its purpose. Even Edel admitted during one of our conversations that the Lesbian Herstory Archives has become an artefact of lesbian organizing itself.⁶⁶⁶ Artefact or not, the significance of the LHA to the community it serves is not only derived from the evidential value of its collections, but also from the work that the Archives has done as a social movement organization. It is not the end result of archiving that is the organization's goal—the building of a collection—but rather the community building exercise of archiving-as-process.

As I have previously argued, the LHA also serves as an abeyance structure, described by Taylor (1989) as a social movement organization that provides “a measure of continuity for challenging groups” in periods when the movement appears to be in abeyance (p. 762). Donating itself to an institution would put to end the work that the LHA does. As long as the organization can maintain its brownstone, there is no need to look to an academic institution for support. The brownstone is, however, an expensive cost to carry for an organization wholly supported by volunteers, small private grants, and community donations. Edel estimates that the building is worth about \$2 million and could be sold to create an endowment to support the collection if it had to be transferred to another institution.⁶⁶⁷ Edel is now in her early 70s and well aware of declining community donations and the flagging energies of long-time supporters. She does not spend one dime more than the organization can afford, and she thinks about the future of the organization after she is gone. The only inevitability in the future of the LHA is that the original founders and

⁶⁶⁶ Edel, 2013.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

the older coordinators will eventually pass on, leaving the archives in the hands of a younger generation.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives has been more successful than any of the other three archives that I visited at attracting and retaining investment from a younger generation. During my site visit, I was not only introduced to several young women working at the archives, but I also had the opportunity to take part in an evening event that drew in a crowd of thirty or more people, most of them young women. From my own observations, albeit limited, the LHA appears to be a lively and active space where women work together and learn from one another. There was a lot of laughter in the archives, especially from Desiree Yael Vester, the jovial and spirited live-in caretaker who was often present during my visits. I raise the issue of the LHA's capacity to attract younger people because I believe it is bolstered by the archives' proximity to so many academic institutions, including Sarah Lawrence College and Barnard College, as well as the City University of New York (CUNY), home to the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS). Certainly, young people come to the archives because they have an affiliation with one of the coordinators; others come because they are drawn in by the reputation and writings of Joan Nestle—although Nestle has lived in Australia for more than a decade, she remains publicly associated with the archives. Wolfe is a well known and respected activist in New York, was a founder of the Lesbian Avengers and ACT UP, and recently featured in the documentary *United in Anger* (Hubbard & Schulman, 2012). But as Rachel Corbman noted in our interview, many young people find their way to the archives because they are either graduate students looking for materials to support their academic work or because they are seeking out an internship with a feminist organization.⁶⁶⁸ They may also want to visit the archives as a rite of passage, a nostalgic trip to an organization so closely associated with lesbian feminism of the 1970s and 80s. Corbman came to the archives as an intern in April 2012, after completing a graduate degree in gender studies. She started working on a project with Wolfe, which resulted in the creation of a special collections index now available online. By the end of the

⁶⁶⁸ Corbman, 2013.

summer, Corbman had developed such a good working relationship with several of the coordinators that she was asked to become a coordinator herself. The youngest coordinator, Kayleigh Salstrand, also came to the archives as an intern prior to joining the coordinating team. My own colleagues, Danielle Cooper and Cait McKinney, also served as interns at the LHA. There is also a reciprocity in these arrangements. Not only does the LHA benefit from the labour of budding or emerging scholars, but these women often go on to become professional librarians and archivists, inspired in part by their experiences at the LHA. The archives, in turn, benefits from access to this expertise. Edel confirmed that several of the women that she has worked with over the past few years have now become professional librarians and archivists.⁶⁶⁹ Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, for example, first came to the LHA on a class trip as part of a course she was taking at Brooklyn College.⁶⁷⁰ The course was taught by Flavia Rando, a coordinator of the Archives, who also encouraged her to volunteer. Smith's experience working at the LHA was, in part, motivation for her to pursue an advanced degree in library studies, which she finished in 2008. She now works as a librarian at the Graduate Center, CUNY, where former caretaker and coordinator Polly Thistlethwaite serves as the Chief Librarian. As Nestle assured me in our discussion about the sustainability of the organization, as long as young students continue to be "seduced by the archives", it will thrive as an active space.⁶⁷¹ Nestle also emphasizes that it is "the classes that come to the archives that pushes us to learn, too."⁶⁷² She commented, "Of course we have partnerships of the spirit and of work and of students."⁶⁷³ The Lesbian Herstory Archives remains nevertheless "free and independent" as both a guiding philosophy and a way to resist the inevitability of being swallowed up by a larger institution that does not share its political principles.⁶⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Wolfe,

⁶⁶⁹ Edel, 2013.

⁶⁷⁰ Smith, 2013.

⁶⁷¹ Nestle, 2013.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

Nestle, and Edel watch what is happening at other gay and lesbian archives and strategize for the future.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

I began this project with an assertion that lesbian and gay archives, particularly those that were established within the context of the homophile, gay liberation, and lesbian feminist movements, serve as social movement organizations (SMOs). That is, they are organizational and administrative members of the activist community that acquire, manage, and share resources for the purpose of collective action for social change. Unlike traditional SMOs, however, archives do not necessarily participate in active politics, although some do. As I've shown in my case studies, although these organizations have been instrumental in documenting collective actions, for the most part, they do not lobby government, they do not spearhead political campaigns, nor do they provide funds for such activities. Rather, lesbian and gay archives provide the material resources necessary to develop a sense of history and heritage that both contributes to the ideological impulses of queer movements—the 'fire that fuels the movement'— and the affirmation of queer lives that underpins movement success by creating and sustaining ideological coherency even in periods of movement abeyance. As I note in the introduction to this project, archives are absent from the literature on social movements and social movement theory; positioning these organizations as SMOs nevertheless aligns with work by Touraine (1985), Melucci (1980, 1995), and others on the importance of ideology for social movements. By tracing the emergence, development, and resource struggles of four lesbian and gay archives, I intended to show how these organizations have been shaped by broader movement goals, local geographies, socio-political structures, and the particular interests and energies of those who have nurtured their collections over the years. I was curious about how they have leveraged these factors to sustain themselves, in some cases for more than 40 years. Discussions with community archivists, volunteers, and community partners have generally confirmed my assertion that the four archives that inform this study are SMOs, but have also raised important questions about the sustainability of archives

established by and for social movements. In this concluding chapter, I want to outline some of these questions and provide tentative responses. In doing so, I will also summarize the broad findings of my study of these four archives.

Lesbian and Gay Archives in the Age of Respectability

The first question that this study has raised is how lesbian and gay archives have been shaped by the liberalization of gay and lesbian social movements, and how this de-radicalization impacts their capacity to sustain themselves into the future. In *Moving Politics*, Gould (2009) writes that the gay movement turned to “professionalism and routine interest-group politics” in and since the mid-1970s, after moving away from the militaristic sentiments of gay liberation movements (p. 51). Gould surmises that the rejection of radical left politics occurred at the same time that activists began focussing on legislative changes, rather than broader social transformation. This new political agenda oriented toward gay rights requires a rhetoric of inclusivity that deemphasizes sexual expression in favour of a “politics of respectability” (p. 52). Gould goes on to note that the gay rights movement mobilized in the early 1980s by creating a public discussion around the expression of gay pride, which in turn, catalyzed an emotional response to adversity and encouraged gays and lesbians to donate their money and volunteer time to political causes. Activist groups such as Queer Nation offered a sense of “parallel citizenship whose practices explicitly recognized the value of gay lives and countered the sense of lesbians and gay men as irredeemably ‘other’” (p. 70). Although Gould is writing specifically about the response to the AIDS epidemic, her discussion of the ways in which AIDS activism naturalized “gay dignity and self-recognition” is relevant to my own investigation of lesbian and gay archives as social movement organizations (p. 70).

In many ways, the archives that inform this study are emblematic of the various responses to the shift away from radical left politics toward a pedagogy of inclusion. For the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), the discussion of inclusivity initially began internally, as community archivists quickly recognized that they could not limit their work to collecting records

of gay liberation movement activists, but needed to expand their collecting scope to include any and all documentary evidence of gay people. As Ed Jackson recalled, this was an “evolution of consciousness” because it signalled a greater duty to counter the “conspiracy of silence” that prevented gays and lesbians from knowing their shared heritage.⁶⁷⁵ The more inclusive collecting mandate also triggered a lengthy discussion among community archivists about the importance of creating a more welcoming space for lesbians. Jackson noted that women had been involved with the archives since the early years, but the small group of men who managed the day-to-day work of the archives had not always been successful in acknowledging this participation or making any concerted efforts to collect materials that documented lesbian experiences. My conversation with Harold Averill revealed that, from time-to-time, community archivists even encouraged lesbians to donate their materials elsewhere, especially if they documented activism within lesbian feminist organizations.⁶⁷⁶ This active and passive privileging of men’s participation has had lasting implications for the organization, even after the archives added ‘lesbian’ to its formal name. Today, the majority of the CLGA’s lead community archivists are men and most women who do become involved with the organization tend to focus their time on activities related to outreach and interpretive work rather than traditional archival tasks such as accessioning new collections or describing material. Yet, if the inclusion of ‘lesbian’ in the organization’s title and its positioning *before* ‘gay’ was designed to convey a simpatico between gay men and lesbians, one could speculate that this name change was also a politically astute sustainability strategy. Not only was the name change a gesture to women to consider supporting the CLGA—and made only months after the closing of the Canadian Women’s Movement Archives—but it also opened up new possibilities for funding during a particularly precarious period in the organization’s history. Roger Spalding, for example, left a sizeable bequest to the organization in the name of his lesbian sister, Ann Spalding.⁶⁷⁷ The condition of this donation was that the CLGA establish a permanent display of its

⁶⁷⁵ Jackson, 2013.

⁶⁷⁶ Averill, 2013.

⁶⁷⁷ Jackson, 2013.

lesbian materials to counter the persistent privileging of men's experiences. This bequest was later used to support the application for a government grant to renovate the property at 34 Isabella. The condition of the bequest remains unfulfilled at the time of this writing; however, the money has been spent.

Lesbian and gay archives have also expanded their mandates to be more inclusive of bisexual and trans* people as a way to account for the limitations of gay and lesbian as identity categories. Notably, both the CLGA and the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives claim to collect broadly and widely the documentary evidence of *LGBTQ* people.⁶⁷⁸ A statement on the CLGA's website indicates that the organization is "the largest independent LGBTQ+ archives in the world...[and] a trusted guardian of LGBTQ+ histories now and for generations to come" (CLGA, n.d.). The ONE claims to be the "largest repository of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) materials in the world" (The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, n.d.). As I have discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, I have become less convinced that *queer* is an adequate term to properly describe the myriad expressions of sexuality and gender that have existed, that currently exist and that have yet to emerge. At the time of this writing, the term *LGBT* and, to a lesser extent, *LGBTQ*, are commonly used in traditional media, by governments, and corporate cultures to describe a category of people who do not align with heteronormative models of sexuality or gender. I remain even less convinced by the utility of these terms. Not only do they continue to leave out important identity categories, including those that draw attention to racialization and colonialization (e.g., *Two Spirit*), but they also obscure material and representational disparities between and among those who identify in any of the implied categories. It is clear, however, that the two lesbian and gay archives that inform this study invoke LGBTQ in its most inclusive meaning as an umbrella term. The term LGBTQ is also a respectable grammar that is well understood across media, governments, and corporations as a catch-all, and

⁶⁷⁸ Both the CLGA and the ONE use the term *LGBTQ*. See statements on each of the organization's Website. CLGA. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved from: <http://www.clga.ca>; The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (n.d.) About. Retrieved from: <http://www.onearchives.org/about/>

the archives have undoubtedly picked this up as a way to communicate with other liberalized entities. It is nevertheless unclear whether the diversity of volunteers and new collections actually reflects the gender and sexual variances implied in the *B*, *T*, and *Q* of *LGBTQ*. My interactions with community archivists, staff and community partners would suggest that the inclusivity claimed in *LGBTQ* remains aspirational only.

The politics of respectability have also played out in the relationships between lesbian and gay archives and their corporate sponsors. According to Dennis Findlay, the CLGA now receives either donations or donations-in-kind from TD Bank, Bank of Montreal, Telus, and other corporate sponsors.⁶⁷⁹ The archives' most important fundraising event, an annual gala dinner, has been underwritten by TD Bank for the past three years. Findlay reassured me that the Archives carefully considers any sponsorship offers and is cautious not to give up any control it has over its archival work. The archives remains wholly autonomous in making any decisions about what to collect, how it is preserved, and how collections are made accessible to researchers. When I asked Jackson to speculate on why he thought corporations are coming forward with support for the archives, he suggested that donors are now seeing the archives as a safe place to support.⁶⁸⁰ Although the collections are replete with examples of controversial material, including a locked cupboard of intergenerational pornography in the basement, corporate donors assume that history is benign or at the very least, respectable. As Jackson explained, "Well... it's safe. It seems safe. It's history. *History!* It has kind of a squeaky-clean look."⁶⁸¹

That the archives is considered a respectable organization is also remarkable, given that its founders were a "rag-tag group of Lefties" and its collections contain ample evidence of scandalous and 'offensive' material.⁶⁸² Jackson, however, explained how the archives has grown as an organization alongside its founders, many of whom now represent a respectable cadre of gay

⁶⁷⁹ Findlay, 2013.

⁶⁸⁰ Jackson, 2013.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² The term "rag-tag group of Lefties" is commonly used by community archivists at the CLGA to describe the organization's original collective members.

and lesbian professionals.⁶⁸³ Men of his generation, Jackson confided, would have been suspicious of corporate entanglements, but over time, many have grown comfortable with corporatism and capitalism. Considering the social freedoms and legal protections that now exist for gays and lesbians, Jackson jests, “Why be critical at all?”⁶⁸⁴ I did not get the sense that Jackson was being flippant in his response, but rather quite considered. As the gay rights movement matured and many of its political goals were achieved, activists who had participated in rallies, government lobbies, and other collective actions found themselves on the right side of political struggle and, in Jackson’s estimation, “they just want to have fun with their lives.”⁶⁸⁵ While he admits that some activists are inspired by “waving banners,” the majority of his generation are satisfied with the gains that they have made and this has produced a sense of ambivalence about queer activism emerging within younger cohorts of activists, as well as related movements that seek social transformations.⁶⁸⁶ Lesbian and gay archives are the brick-and-mortar validation that they earned the rights and freedoms they now enjoy and justification for disengaging in critical reflection.

The Life Cycle of Lesbian and Gay Archives

The second question raised by this study is whether or not this cohort of lesbian and gay archives, like the social movements that produced them, have a natural life cycle and what might this look like. This question is implied in the statement by Joseph Hawkins that the donation of community collections to universities is an “inevitability,” and more directly articulated in many of the conversations that I had with community archivists grappling with flagging community support and increasing pressure to institutionalize and/or donate their collections to universities. If this cohort of archives has developed along a predictable life course, what are the implications moving

⁶⁸³ Jackson, 2013.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

forward and can the findings from this study be extrapolated to other lesbian and gay archives or other cohorts of community archives with activist roots?

Blumer (1979) was among the first scholars to argue that social movements have life cycles. He identified four stages, which have since been refined and renamed as (1) emergence, (2) coalescence, (3) bureaucratization, and (4) decline (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). In the first stage, social movements are preliminary and have little or no organization. External organizations, however, can provide the structural support for collective action and, if this action inspires subsequent action, the movement can move to the next stage of development (Christiansen, 2009; Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Moyer, 1987). Whether the four archives that inform this study began as personal projects, in the case of Jim Kepner, Joan Nestle, or Cherrie Cox, or they grew out of other forms of cultural production, such as the publication of *ONE* magazine or *The Body Politic*, the early stage of collecting lacked structural support and organization. In the case of the Mazer, external support from Connexus allowed the archives to thrive; administrative and financial support from sponsoring bodies also assisted the growth of both the ONE Archives and the CLGA. The LHA grew first as a personal collection nurtured and cared for in its founder's own apartment. In each case, the archives emerged after founders began to understand the importance of the documentation they had amassed and what a shared documentary heritage could mean for gay and lesbian people.

In the coalescence stage of a social movement, leadership emerges and participants begin to organize around common grievances and causes (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). At this point, participants also develop informal and formal networks, and establish social movement organizations as a way to aggregate resources needed to pursue movement goals (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). It appears that each of the case archives also moved through this stage of development, as leadership took control of the collections and introduced new energy and stability for the organizations. In some cases, this leadership has remained central to the survival of the organization. Joan Nestle and Deb Edel, for example, continue to guide the LHA as they have for

more than forty years. In other cases, leadership has changed throughout the years, but each has added to existing support networks in their own ways. This support structure has also helped the archives move ahead, even when leaders have died or moved away from the archives due to flagging energies. Leadership has also been symbolic in some cases, in the form of a mandate or mission statement, which has provided guidance for community archivists even when archival work has been temporarily suspended.

All of the archives that inform this study also appear to have moved through a bureaucratization stage in their histories. Blumer (1979) initially conceptualized this third stage as the point in which social movement actors have become highly organized and started to build coalitions between and among SMOs and external organizations. Macionis (2001) points out that many social movements lack the capacity to progress to the bureaucratization stage and, as Guigni, McAdam, and Tilly (1999) note, some movements consciously reject bureaucratization for ideological reasons. If achieved, however, formalized organization can provide infrastructural continuity in periods of movement abeyance and support networks of participants even when momentum wanes. Community archivists at three of the archives studied have discussed with me how their organizations underwent a bureaucratization process leading up to their applications to government for non-profit charitable status. It was throughout the process of formalizing mandates and governance structures that the archives became more strategic in their efforts to raise money to support archival work and began approaching this work with more professional proficiency. At the LHA, however, there is a perception that the organization has rejected institutionalization as a political principle. When I asked Edel to comment on this, she agreed that the organization prefers to approach its archival work and decision-making through a process of consensus building, rather than a formal hierarchical structure.⁶⁸⁷ Nevertheless, she agreed that the archives is an institution because it has grown to be “greater than any one voice or any one person.”⁶⁸⁸ It is true that

⁶⁸⁷ Edel, 2013.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

particular members of the coordinating committee and other archivettes take leadership roles in particular areas of the organization, following established guidelines and procedures; however, it would appear that this work is guided by personal interests or the needs of student interns, as much as it is done because of a real or perceived duty to preserve the collections. After reviewing journals where meeting notes have been kept and pouring over the LHA's archives of its own work, I would also estimate that the discussions that inform consensus building are much more important to community archivists than following any bureaucratic imperative.

During the final stage of their life cycle, social movements decline either because they have been successful in achieving their goals and are no longer useful or because they are subject to new forms or intensity of repression from the state or other agents of authority (Miller, 1999). As Miller points out, social movements may also be vulnerable to cooptation if SMOs come to depend on central authority for funding or other resources, or if leaders become integrated into organizations that are the target of the movement and take on different values. Macionis (2001) adds that some movements become established with the mainstream so that the ideology of the movement is adopted by the mainstream and there is no longer a reason to pursue change through collective action. Guigni, McAdam, and Tilly (1999) also note that social movements may fall into periods of abeyance to concentrate on maintaining collective identity and shared values, which leaves open the possibility of a re-emergence of more active politics at a later time and when the political opportunity structures allow participants to more easily organize.

Although it is not my intention to produce a history of queer social movements and their life cycles, it is clear that some manifestations of queer movements have declined and others have emerged with new or reconsidered goals. The homophile movements that coalesced in the 1950s throughout the United States have, for example, all but disappeared (Stein, 2012). As Stein (2014) notes, the decline of the homophile movements made way for the emergence of a gay liberation movement that has since entered a period of abeyance in favour of a human rights oriented agenda. The lesbian feminist movements, which coalesced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, have become

less prominent over the succeeding decades. Although some lesbian feminist scholars, notably Sheila Jeffreys (2003, 2014), have remained fervently separatist in their sensibilities and critical of queer and trans* politics, their key ideas have received sharp criticism from queer theorists such as Butler (1990, 1991), Halberstam (1998, 2011, 2012), and Rubin (1994, 2012), who reject an essentialist understanding of gender. As several of my participants noted, this tension between lesbian separatism and queer theory has been disruptive for lesbian organizing and caused a decline in movement momentum. At the same time, the lesbian and gay rights movement has reached a critical juncture in its trajectory, since gays and lesbians have earned legal protections and more social freedoms across an increasing range of jurisdictions within North America. The movement must also adjust to challenges from burgeoning trans* movements that have expanded the dialogue of queer social movements to account for what Namasté (2000) has referred to as the “erasure of transsexual and transgendered people.” It is unclear how the movement will move forward in light of these challenges and after it has achieved many of its initial goals.

As queer social movements have developed over the past century, so have their allied social movement organizations. In Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, I have described how each archive has developed alongside their respective articulations of queer social movements. The two national organizations, the ONE and the CLGA, have adapted to changes in the movements and, whether because of their broader collecting mandates or their particular organizational cultures, they have aligned well with lesbian and gay rights movement politics. The ONE, for example, was initially affiliated with the homophile movement, but later adjusted to gay liberation politics and gay rights movements as the organization grew. Its move to the University of Southern California (USC) in the 1990s, occurred just as scholarship on gay and lesbian history was becoming more common and, arguably, mainstream. Likewise, the CLGA emerged as part of gay liberation activism, but quickly expanded its mandate to meet the needs of the gay rights movement ideology that emphasized inclusivity and respectability. Interestingly, both archives have been supported by community archivists who understood the cultures and functions of large institutions—Walter

Williams and Joseph Hawkins at the ONE and Harold Averill and Alan Miller at the CLGA—and each responded differently to attention from universities. Whereas Williams saw USC as an ally of the archives and a long-term solution for the survival of the organization, community archivists at the CLGA remained skeptical that the University of Toronto would be able to care for the collections in a manner that they required. Instead, the CLGA appears to understand corporations and how they organize their charitable giving, and has thus positioned itself as a good cause.

On the other hand, the two lesbian archives in this study have either refused to adapt to changes in the social movement zeitgeist as a philosophical stance or have been more politically conscious in their decisions to align with new social movement goals. The Mazer, for example, remains committed to its original mandate to collect materials created by and for women. As one long-serving board member explained in our conversation, the organization is the only lesbian space left in West Hollywood, and community archivists provide precious opportunities for “everyday lesbians” to socialize and learn about their shared heritage as a community building exercise. Events that are sponsored by the archives often feature older lesbians and attract small crowds of lesbian-identified women. Passing conversations with community archivists also made it clear to me that the women associated with the archives cleave to traditional lesbian feminist sensibilities, which has produced tensions for the organization, particularly in its capacity to incorporate trans* identified volunteers or assist researchers who are interested in studying trans* experiences documented in existing collections. This is not to say that the organization is diametrically opposed to trans* movement goals, but that they understand their organization as primarily a lesbian organization. As my study reveals, there are few younger people who are involved with the Mazer outside of the students who have conducted research in the collections or who have been employed by UCLA Libraries to process materials as part of the collaboration agreement. Most members of the board are retirement age and, as one board member noted, this has been the case for some time. In her opinion, women of working age are not able to commit the time needed to support the organization and so the current board does not actively recruit younger

members. If younger women are more likely to align with queer or trans* movement goals, they may not find the Mazer's political stance overly appealing and, it may be difficult for the Mazer to continue once its older supporters are no longer able to work. I sensed in my informal discussions with several community archivists that the donation of materials to UCLA was, in part, a recognition that the organization was in decline and needed to preserve as much of its collections as possible while it could.

The LHA has been more open to changes in queer social movements over the years and, in my estimation, has also been more successful at attracting the interest of younger community archivists less directly influenced by lesbian feminist politics. As Edel explained in our interview, some community archivists arrive at the LHA as student interns; others come because they are curious about the organization and its legacy in the lesbian feminist community.⁶⁸⁹ The coordinators have also been more open to updating the guiding principles of the organization in response to changes in the political opportunity structures and to support new ways of thinking about sexuality, gender, and politics. I spoke at length with Edel about the LHA's stance on taking money from government institutions. She explained that the archives had not pursued government grants because they had placed too many restrictions on the use of the money and often required a system of reporting back that the LHA did not want to participate in. Recently, however, the LHA has considered applying for a grant from Historical Records and Management, which Edel indicated is a quasi-governmental institution. She emphasized that it is important for the LHA to remain current and not "get stuck in 1970s politics."⁶⁹⁰

The LHA has also been more proactive than the Mazer in addressing the concerns of its trans* identified researchers and promoting the use of the collections to research trans* experiences. As several participants noted, there are collections that have come to the LHA from donors who now identify as trans*, and the LHA has taken some steps to acknowledge the

⁶⁸⁹ Edel, 2013.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

importance of these collections to the broader understanding of lesbian histories, experiences, and futures. Trans* identified people are welcomed into the brownstone as both visitors and volunteers; however, some events are publicized as women-only and those who identify as men are discouraged from attending. As both Edel and Nestle explained, the issue of how to embrace trans* movement goals and involve trans* people in the work of the LHA has been intense, but productive, and is ongoing.⁶⁹¹ Edel nevertheless confirmed that all members of the current Coordinating Committee identify as lesbian and there is some resistance to opening up the committee to non-lesbian volunteers. Edel was quick to note, however, that this issue has not yet been discussed at length because the LHA has yet to identify a trans* person who wants to take on a coordinating role.

Despite its continued development and careful consideration of new and emergent social movement energies, the LHA has been greatly impacted by a decline in the broader women's and lesbian feminist movement. I asked Edel if she believed that the lesbian feminist movement had reached its pinnacle of momentum when the LHA began fundraising for the house. I also wondered if the movement has lost momentum over the past decade. Edel agreed that the lesbian feminist movement had a lot of energy throughout the 1970s and into the early 1990s, but that the energies have since moved into other political movements or social causes. She gave the example of marriage equality and admitted that even her energies have been directed to this goal for the past few years. She also speculated that some of the energies have disappeared completely as women have walked away from political activism after achieving some particular goals. Edel explained that this change to the ways in which political energies are expressed has had an impact on the LHA and prompted the archives to reach out to different communities. Edel also noted that these new avenues of outreach are not only for the purposes of attracting and retaining new volunteers, but also to tap into new systems of financial support. She expressed some interest in connecting with more women of wealth and talking to them about supporting the LHA as an important institution in the women's community. Still, Edel is concerned with the future sustainability of the Archives

⁶⁹¹ Edel, 2013; Nestle, 2013.

and noted that the coordinators have had many sustainability discussions over the years. She remains uncomfortable with the idea of turning the collections over to an institution, but does not discount the idea of developing a formal partnership with an academic institution. The property owned by the LHA is valued at roughly US\$2 million, and Edel explained that this amount would be good leverage to negotiate a favourable agreement with a university if necessary. She believes, however, that the preference of the coordinators would be to stop collecting and continue operating as museum or a “20th century archives.”⁶⁹²

Lesbian and Gay Archives in the Age of Representation

The final question that I want to discuss is that of the future of lesbian and gay archives. It is in this response that I also want to grapple with the politics of representation and the ways in which these archives both contribute to and challenge what Ferguson (2012) has called the “adaptive hegemony” of neoliberalism (p. 6). In *The Reorder of Things*, Ferguson argues that state, capital, and the academy have adapted to pressures from the “insurgent articulations of difference begun in the sixties because of and with the US student movements” (p. 5). As Ferguson explains, there is a presumption that universities have been *inflicted* by neoliberalism, producing terms such as the “corporate university,” the “neoliberal university,” or the “knowledge factory” to describe changes in the academy as a response to shifting political economy (pp. 8-9). These expressions are nevertheless inadequate to describe the ways in which the academy has become “the ‘training ground’ for state and capital’s engagement with minority difference as a site of representation and meaning” (p. 11). That is, the direction of influence is not *from* the state and capital *to* the academy, but rather the academy works *with* state and capital to reorganize power through the absorption of minority difference. This is accomplished through “the ‘recognition’ of minority histories, cultures, and experiences” within interdisciplinary pedagogies that simultaneously give meaning to minority experience while securing the status of the academy and its power (p. 13). Ferguson notes, for

⁶⁹² Edel, 2013.

example, that the rise of the interdisciplinaries, including women's studies and ethnic studies, is a direct response to the antiracist and feminist movements of the 60s and 70s, but we have yet to understand what such institutionalization of difference has accomplished. Ferguson calls upon critical theorists to intervene on the management of difference through institutionalization and disrupt the flow of power away from minority groups.

Notably, Ferguson describes the university as an "archival economy," where differences and cultures are processed, arranged, and ordered (p. 12). He writes:

The modern Western academy was created as the repository and guarantor of national culture as well as a cultivator and innovator of political economy. As such, the academy is an archive of sorts, whose technologies—or so the theory goes—are constantly refined to acquire the latest innovation. As an archiving institution, the academy is—to use Derrida's description of the archive—"institutive and conservative. Revolutionary and traditional. An *eco-nomic* archive in this double sense: it keeps, it puts in reserve, it saves, but in an unnatural fashion, that is to say in making the law (*nomie*) or in making people respect the law." The academy has always been an economic domain; that is, it has simultaneously determined who gets admitted while establishing the rules for membership and participation. (p. 12)

I would add to this that, in order to participate in the modern Western academy, members must also be supported and supportable. In other words, if the university supports feminist research, for example, it would likely also create resources needed to support faculty to teach in this area, students to enrol in their courses, and research material to produce feminist scholarship. The Centre for the Study of Women in Education was established at the University of Toronto in 1983, just two years after the University approved a formal degrees in Women's Studies (CWSE, 2014; WGSU, 2015). At UCLA, the Center for the Study of Women was officially authorized by the Board of Regents in 1984; the UCLA Women's Studies Program began offering degrees in 1987 (CSW, 2015; Marchant, 2012). Each program has also established journals—*Signs* at UCLA is only one example of many. In addition, universities have acquired more library and archival materials to support feminist research; the University of Ottawa, for example, acquired the community grown Canadian Women's Movement Archives in 1992 (Loyer, 2006). This collection is now promoted by the

University as one of the unique benefits available to researchers at Ottawa and a reason to become a student in the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies (IFGR, 2015).

Considering the rise of sexual diversity studies in the modern Western academy, it is not surprising that universities have also taken an interest in lesbian and gay archives. As one of my study participants noted in our discussion, the minute his local university began talking about establishing a program in sexuality studies, the community archives received an invitation to take part in the development process. As he went on to explain, the gesture was exciting at first and then it became obvious that there would be pressure to hand over the collection to the university library. For some lesbian and gay archives, the benefits of donating materials to an academic library outweigh any concerns raised by community archivists or their constituent communities. There are also practical concerns that make donation a desirable option; with volunteers aging and collections overwhelming community capacities, universities offer a reasonable solution. According to Joseph Hawkins, situating the ONE Archives within the USC Libraries has provided the organization with infrastructural support, paid staff, and other resources it would not otherwise have access to.⁶⁹³ Corporate and personal supporters have also been more forthcoming about giving money to support the collections because they believe that the relationship with USC provides some assurance that their donation will have a real impact. The Mazer's decision to donate materials to UCLA was also done, in part because the board realized that the University had become more open to partnerships with lesbian and gay groups, namely OutFest, and a more inclusive environment for gay and lesbian students.⁶⁹⁴ When I asked historian Lilian Faderman to comment on why she thought universities were becoming more interested in lesbian and gay archives, she responded, "I think they understand that it's the going thing. We are the Civil Rights Movement now. So of course they are interested in that."⁶⁹⁵ Faderman's comments affirm Ferguson's belief that universities have adapted to challenges by "insurgent articulations of difference" by recognizing this power,

⁶⁹³ Hawkins, 2013.

⁶⁹⁴ Brinskele, 2013.

⁶⁹⁵ Faderman, 2013.

absorbing it, and reflecting it back through special collections that document minority histories, cultures, and experiences.

As I have discussed in Chapter 8, there is some sense among community archivists that the future of lesbian and gay archives is inextricably linked to the modern Western academy. On the surface, the partnerships between the ONE and USC, or between the Mazer and UCLA appear to signal a natural decline in this cohort of archives as social movement organizations. As I discussed in the previous chapter, even the CLGA has approached the University of Toronto again recently, the first time in more than a decade, to partner on a project to preserve digital materials. For Ferguson (2012), interdisciplinarity has been used by the university to reorganize and absorb minority power, and as a corollary, the acquisition of lesbian and gay archives would largely serve the representational needs of the university, used to prove its progressive credentials, but without having to address its own structural power. My study suggests, however, that the relationships between lesbian and gay archives and universities are more complicated than Ferguson's work would imply. As Eichhorn (2012) has shown with her examination of zine libraries and Keenan and Darms (2013) have documented in their work on riot grrrl collections, the institutionalization of minority histories does not necessarily de-radicalize the potential of these materials. Rather, the engagement between young scholars, the collections, and the librarians and archivists who care for these materials has produced new forms of activism that draws from and add to repertoires of collective actions. That is, regardless of location, lesbian and gay documentary heritage preserves knowledge of past actions and supports a network of activists that might otherwise be lost during periods of movement abeyance. They are, as one community archivist declared, the "fuel that lights the fire."

There is, of course, a danger in participating in the academy's representational politics insofar as this strategy is closely linked with identity politics that can obscure material and ideological disparities. Not all queer and trans* experiences are reflected or even recognized in the lesbian and gay materials that have been collected by communities and even within these collections,

there is a risk that only particular narratives of lesbian and gay histories will be accessed. As Stein (2014) has pointed out, one of the first engagements between lesbian and gay archives and the academy were two microfilming projects undertaken in the early 2000s by EBSCO to index LGBT literature. A large content provider for academic libraries, EBSCO signed agreements with the ONE Archives and the LHA to gain access to periodicals collections, such as *The Ladder* and *Mattachine Review*, and in doing so inadvertently created a canon of homophile movement literature. While in some ways these projects were a mark of maturity for the archives and contributed to the rise of sexuality studies, Stein notes that they also neglected more controversial materials, such as *Drum* magazine, which featured more sexual content and liberationist writing. In other words, we cannot ignore the idea that representational politics are problematic, nor fall into a state of ambivalence about the treatment of lesbian and gay materials once in the care of university institutions. We also cannot discount the power of the representational process to make accessible lesbian and gay collections to support new scholarship that excavates our queer past.

Of course, as it has throughout this study, the LHA offers a counterpoint to the presumption that the future of lesbian and gay archives lies with the academy or that the structure of the university's power remains secure. By positioning itself politically as an autonomous lesbian organization, but maintaining a loose relationship to both the academy and the category of lesbianism, the LHA has resisted the kind of absorption that Ferguson describes. The LHA has never positioned itself as representational, but rather symbolic. The motto of the archives, "In memory of the voices we have lost," offers an alternative to the totalizing projects of the ONE Archives or the CLGA, which purports to be the "trusted guardian of LGBTQ+ histories" (LHA, 2013). The success of the four archives also appears to be in the process of archiving as a community building exercise and less of an investment in the production of a final archival collection. As Maxine Wolfe explained in our discussion, archivettes have not been afraid to invest the time it takes to catalogue their large collection or to digitize their audio cassettes—at times this

has meant years of working on the same project, week after week.⁶⁹⁶ I believe that this has less to do with having a better sense of the workload and more to do with how the organization emphasizes the importance of working together and learning from one another. The relationship with Pratt Institute is also a considered engagement that allows the archives to benefit from all that the institution is offering without having to oblige the academy in any way. This approach subverts the institution's structural power by taking from, but not giving in. Watkins Fisher (2012) has described this method of leveraging resources from systems of power without giving in to them as a kind of feminist "parasitism," or a "manic maneuver by which one pretends to take the system at its word and plays so close to it that the system ultimately cannot bear the intensity of one's participation" (p. 225). The use of Pratt's human and technological resources for the benefit of archives to continue operating as an autonomous institution appears to be the LHA's "feminist endgame" (Watkins Fisher 2012, p. 231). In some ways, it is the LHA that has absorbed the power of its local universities, by benefitting from the labour it needs to supply to retain its own credentializing systems. What the LHA loses out is the financial and infrastructural security that a formal engagement might produce, but in turn, the organization gains political integrity.

Lesbian and Gay Archives and Futurity

"The future is only the stuff of some kids."

— José Esteban Muñoz⁶⁹⁷

As I noted in the preface to this dissertation, my engagement with queer theory throughout my doctoral studies has exposed me to conversations about the queer archive, its incompleteness or failure, but also its potential. Read through the lens of queer theory and critical discourse, lesbian and gay archives are failed projects because they will never adequately document the myriad

⁶⁹⁶ Wolfe, 2013.

⁶⁹⁷ J.E. Muñoz. (2012). *Cruising utopia. The then and there of queer futurity*. New York: New York University Press, p. 95.

experiences and lives of those they claim to represent—the same could be argued of any archive of any kind. But to refer to these archives as failures obscures the earnestness of those who have meticulously preserved the records of their own lives and the lives of who they broadly perceive to be homophilous others. This labour has not only been undertaken as a way to participate in the resurrection of queer pasts and the preservation of contemporary political and social communities, but also is done so with a considerable optimism for the future. There is a sense of the importance of their collections for researchers working today and tomorrow, and the importance of leaving a rich historical record for generations to come.

By the same token, there is some apprehension about how collections preserved by lesbian and gay archives will be accessed and interpreted and by whom. Muñoz warns that “the future is only the stuff of some kids” (p. 95). In other words, we assume that the future will be populated by those who look like us and think like us, that they will share our experiences and our desires, that they will want to archive the same kinds of records with the same tools, and interpret existing collections in the same way. What this project has shown is that the four archives that inform this study have survived because they have responded to changes in the political opportunity structure and maintained clear visions about the purpose and power of their archives. At this critical juncture in their histories, however, the path ahead remains unclear. Can lesbian and gay archives sustain themselves in a socio-political environment that challenges the very identity categories on which these organizations are predicated? Strategic neutrality may help them to some extent, perhaps. But, whether the future user accesses these archives within larger institutions or mediated through digital technologies, the coming years will test the resiliency of this cohort of lesbian and gay archives.

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APPENDIX A

List of Participants

Name	Role	Institution	Date of Interview	Location of Interview
Pat Allen	Volunteer Coordinator	ONE	Oct. 23, 2013	ONE
Harold Averill	Volunteer	CLGA	Sept. 10, 2013	CLGA
Elizabeth Bailey	Former General Manager	CLGA	Sept. 15, 2013	My home
Angela Brinskele	Director of Communications	Mazer	Oct. 21, 2013	Mazer
Rachel Corbman	Coordinator	LHA	Nov. 15, 2013	LHA
Jeanne Cordova	Former Director	ONE	Oct. 29, 2013	Her home
Deb Edel	Founder, Coordinator	LHA	Nov. 13, 2013	LHA
Lillian Faderman	Former Director	Mazer	Sept. 19, 2013	By phone
Sharon Farb	Associate University Librarian	UCLA	Oct. 22, 2013	UCLA
Dennis Findlay	Director	CLGA	Oct. 8, 2013	CLGA
Lynn Fonfa	Founder	Mazer	Feb. 7, 2014	Skype
Ann Giagni	President	Mazer	Oct. 25, 2013	Mazer
Carol Grosvenor	Director	ONE	Oct. 17, 2013	ONE
Joseph Hawkins	Director	ONE	Oct. 23, 2013	ONE
David Hensley	Volunteer	ONE	Oct. 23, 2013	ONE
Ed Jackson	Former Director	CLGA	Oct. 2, 2013	His home
Kathleen McHugh	Director, Center for the Study of Women	UCLA	Oct. 22, 2013	UCLA
Don McLeod	Volunteer	CLGA	Oct. 9, 2013	UofT
Alan Miller	Volunteer	CLGA	Sept. 11, 2013	CLGA
Jearld Moldenhauer	Founder	CLGA	Sept. 13, 2013	By email
David Moore	Volunteer	ONE	Oct. 22, 2013	ONE
Joan Nestle	Founder	LHA	Feb. 25, 2013	Skype
Michael C. Oliveira	Project Archivist	ONE	Oct. 17, 2013	ONE
Ken Popert	Former Director	CLGA	Sept. 10, 2013	Pink Triangle Press
Claire Potter	Founder	Mazer	Feb. 8, 2014	By email
Amy Ryan	Former Director	ONE	Oct. 23, 2013	ONE
Loni Shibuyama	Archivist	ONE	Oct. 17, 2013	ONE
Miriam Smith	Former Director	CLGA	Oct. 8, 2013	UofT
Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz	Coordinator	LHA	Nov. 15, 2013	CUNY
Polly Thistlethwaite	Former Caretaker	LHA	Feb. 14, 2014	Skype
Robert Windrum	Former President	CLGA	Oct. 2, 2013	CLGA

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

I. Establishing Context about the Participant and Their Relationship to the Archives

A. Information about the Participant

1. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do here at the archives? What is your affiliation with the archives? How long have you been involved with the archives? Do you have any formal training in archival work or related work (e.g., librarianship, curatorial practice)? [alt. Can you tell me little bit about the work that you do on behalf of the archives?]

B. History of the Archives / The Institution's relationship with the Archives

1. Can you tell me about the history of the archives? [alt. Can you tell me about the relationship between the archives and your institution?].
2. What is the governance structure of the archives? [alt. your institution]. How is the archives managed and who makes decisions about the archives and its activities? How has this changed over time?
3. Could you describe any particularly important milestones in the development of the archives? For example, securing space for archival activities, formalizing the mandate, achieving charitable status?

II. Establishing Context, Determining Instances of Strategy

A. What are the strategic goals of the archives?

1. What is the archives' mandate or mission? What kinds of activities do you do that contribute to the overall mandate of the organization?
2. What are the major concerns for the archives right now? Have these changed over time?
3. How does the archives obtain necessary (financial, HR) support for the work it does? Is it adequate for the work that needs to be done? What additional resources does the archives need to continue its work? What other practical challenges does the archives encounter in its day-to-day work?

B. Identifying strategies

1. Presumably, the archives takes part in the traditional archival work of collecting, preserving, and making accessible records of enduring value. What other kinds of activities does the archives do to achieve its goals? For example, does the archives engage in outreach and advocacy activities, such as public education or exhibition programming? How have these activities changed over time?
2. Does the archives participate in any political actions, such as protests, pride celebrations, sit-ins, etc.? Could you describe any instance in which this has happened? Does the archives work with or interact with organizations that work for social change, e.g., PFLAG, equality organizations, or other political groups? How does the archives contribute research or other resources to support the work of movement actors?
3. Does the archives have any relationships or partnerships with other political or heritage organizations? Could you describe these relationships and tell me a little bit about why the archives decided to pursue these relationships? What kinds of activities do partner organizations do on behalf of or in support of the archives? [For employees of partnering institutions, this question will be highlighted and emphasized].
4. How does the archives describe or communicate the work that it does? How does it persuade individuals or organizations to support the work of the archives? Does this differ depending on the audience? Which issues does the archives chose to highlight? Which issues does it downplay for strategic value?
5. To what extent does the archives plan out its strategic actions? How does the archives decide which issues to highlight or lowlight? Who is responsible for making decisions about particular strategies? How are decisions communicated to other participants in the archives? How does the archives manage input or feedback from its constituents?

C. Factors Affecting the Selection and Change of Strategies

1. Could you talk about a difficult decision that the archives has had to make? *e.g.*, when to expand, when to reduce capacity, how to manage resources, including financial and human resources? What considerations do decision-makers make when weighing costs and benefits?
2. How often does the archives engage in goal-planning or strategic planning activities? Who participates in these activities? How does this planning affect the mission or mandate of the archives? How have the mandate and central goals changed over time?
3. How have particular volunteers or leaders influenced the kinds of strategies or tactics that are preferred? *e.g.*, if the core volunteers were also part of another SMO, did they incorporate their experience into the work of the archives?

4. How and why does the archives engage in particular strategies but not others? Are some programs, *e.g.*, public education or exhibitions, easier to do than others? Why? Why would the archives engage in a challenging or difficult strategy?
5. Does the archives ever walk away from opportunities because of ideological values or commitment to particular movement goals?
6. How are activities facilitated or limited by external factors, *e.g.*, financial support, other organizations' activities, movement successes or failures?
7. How do the internal dynamics of the organization impact the capacity of the archives to engage in particular strategies? For example, how does the archives cope with eager volunteers, lack of expertise, or negative or 'problem' volunteers?

D. Effects of Strategies and Organizational Success.

1. Can you tell me about a project or particular strategy of the archives that was quite successful? Why did it work? What impact did the success have on the archives?
2. What events or actions have unfolded in the gay and lesbian movement, or in politics in general, that have contributed to or hindered the archives' ability to produce a successful strategy?
3. Can you tell me about a particular period in the movement's history that might have caused the archives to retreat in its active work?

E. Effects of Strategies and Organizational Success.

1. How does the organizational structure and capacity affect its ability to achieve either an organizational goal or a movement goal? For example, how does the volunteerism or leadership impact the ability of the archives to implement a particular strategy?
2. In what ways does the archives participate in movement activity that other types of organizations are not able to do?

Transition to end:

Is there anything else about the work of the archives that you would like to share with me? In particular, is there anything about the archives and its relationship to the gay and lesbian movement that you would like to highlight?

APPENDIX C

Mazer - UCLA Collaboration Agreement

Collaboration Agreement

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Library and June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive are linked by common interests and seek to develop collaborations in fields of shared interest and expertise. The activities undertaken pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are based on a spirit of cooperation and reciprocity that is intended to be of mutual benefit to both parties.

This Agreement is entered into on May 10, 2009 between The Regents of the University of California on behalf of its UCLA Campus Library ("UCLA Library"), and The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive (hereinafter referred to as "MAZER") in West Hollywood, California herein referred to as "MAZER".

Recitals

1. Whereas The UCLA Library ("UCLA Library") is one of the leading academic libraries and has an enormous research collection of works in various media that are available for access and use.
2. Whereas The UCLA Library has acquired, cataloged, indexed, curated and preserved its' collections for educational and research purposes for present and future generations.
3. Whereas The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive ("MAZER") is the largest major archive on the West Coast dedicated to preserving and promoting lesbian and feminist history and culture and is a not-for-profit research organization that possesses manuscripts, archives, photographs and other material of historical and cultural heritage related to the struggle for equality of lesbians in Southern California, the State of California and the nation.
4. Whereas The UCLA Library and MAZER share a mutual interest in preserving and providing the broadest possible access to and use of the MAZER collection and materials for the benefit of present and future generations and that this collaboration will contribute to both parties' mutually beneficial knowledge and furtherance and fulfillment of their respective missions.
5. Accordingly, the Parties, desire to enter into an exclusive agreement whereby MAZER will gift and transfer ownership to the UCLA Library of collections and material for the UCLA Library to steward and preserve collections and to make the collections and material as broadly available as possible.

Terms

1. Periodic Meetings

The Parties agree to have periodic meetings to discuss areas of mutual interest and possible collaboration.

2. Exploring Opportunities for Grant Funding to Digitize and Describe Collections

The Parties agree to collaborate to explore opportunities for grant funding to digitize and describe the collections to enhance access and discovery of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive.

3. Governing Law:

This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of California.

4. Use of Names

The Parties agree that THE REGENTS are granted a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty free license to use the name "June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives" to identify the collection of Materials in catalogues, UCLA and University of California websites, exhibitions and promotional materials.

5. Entire Agreement:

This Agreement contains the entire understanding of the parties related to the subject matter herein, and it cannot be changed or terminated orally.

For The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive

By: *Ann Giagnoli* 6-09-09
Ann Giagnoli

Title: *President*

June Mazer Lesbian Archive

For The Regents of the University of California:

By: *Gary E. Strong* 6-9-09
Gary E. Strong

Title: University Librarian

MOTION

Whereas the Board of the June L Mazer Lesbian Archives (The Mazer) is desirous of ensuring that it's current and future holdings are preserved using state of the art methodologies; and

Whereas the Board is also desirous of providing greater public access to the materials, including finding aides and internet access; and

Whereas the Board has determined that these goals can not realistically be fully attained working alone; and


Whereas the Board has explored various possibilities to achieve these goals over the last several years; and

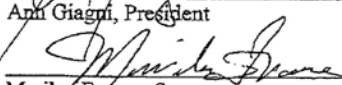
Whereas the Board has conducted a series of meetings with representatives of the UCLA Library system; and

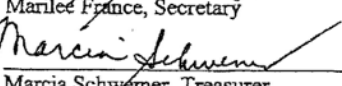
Whereas the Board has reached agreement with UCLA that any donated materials from the June L Mazer Lesbian Archives is guaranteed to remain at the UCLA campus and will always be readily accessible to the public (specifically, the material will not disappear) or failing these requirements The Mazer will have the legal right to reclaim these materials (after giving UCLA the opportunity to remedy the problem);

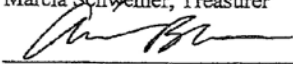
NOW THEREFORE the Board of the June L Mazer Lesbian Archives approves the terms set forth in the Gift Agreement (Exhibit A) and the Collaboration Agreement (Exhibit B) with the Regents of the University of California, on behalf of it's Los Angeles Campus and hereby authorizes Ann Giagni, President of the Board, to execute the documents on behalf of the June L Mazer Lesbian Archives.

ADOPTED May 3rd 2009

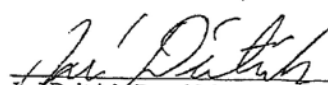


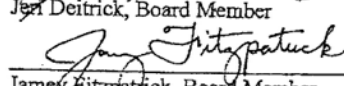
Ann Giagni, President


Marilee France, Secretary


Marcia Schwemer, Treasurer


Angela Brinskele, Board Member



Jeri Deitrick, Board Member


James Fitzpatrick, Board Member

NOT PRESENT
Ann-Marie Williams, Board Member