

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

JOHN J. WILCOX, JR. ARCHIVES

WILLIAM WAY LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

This Collection Development Policy provides guidelines for building the collections of the John J. Wilcox, Jr. Archives at the William Way LGBT Community Center.

Mission of the Archives

The John J. Wilcox, Jr. Archives is a program of the William Way LGBT Community Center and is located within the Center at 1315 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA. Our mission states:

The mission of the Archives is to collect, describe, interpret, and provide access to publications, personal papers, organizational and business records, audiovisual materials, and ephemera created by, dealing with, or of special interest to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Our collections include materials from around the world, but preference is given to items that document the lives of sexual minorities in Delaware, New Jersey, and Eastern Pennsylvania.

Clientele Served by the Archives

The Archives serves a broad range of users, including the LGBT community of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley, scholars/researchers from around the world, activists and artists, students from area K-12 schools, undergraduate and graduate students, teachers at area schools, local history researchers, journalists, writers, and documentarians, and WWCC staff.

Scope and Priorities of the Archives

Areas of collecting emphasis are defined by the Archive's mission, historic and existing strengths of the collections, trends in the study of LGBT history, and the current and changing needs of the Center's clientele.

Topics

LGBT history and culture, generally

We collect on the topic of LGBT history broadly and not comprehensively. We do not make a priority of collecting material specific to localities beyond Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley, except to provide context by including representative samples from this category, or when materials are otherwise strongly related to other collecting priorities, such as personal and family collections, organizational collections, and so on.

The homophile and early LGBT rights movements

This includes the pre-Stonewall movement for equality and the early years of gay liberation through the 1970s, both in and out of the Philadelphia region.

LGBT history in the City of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley

This is our key and strongest collecting area. We strive to collect in this area comprehensively.

History and operations of the WWCC and its predecessors

The Archives is the official repository of the business records of the William Way LGBT Community Center and its predecessors, the Gay Community Center of Philadelphia, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Philadelphia, and Penguin Place. This includes records of enduring historical value which document the history and operations of the Center and contain evidence of its organization, function, decisions, procedures, and activities.

Feminism and feminist organizations

Early in the history of the Center the Archives made a point to collect material related to feminism and local feminist organizations. This is no longer a collecting priority.

HIV/AIDS

Original and unique materials which document the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Philadelphia area, with emphasis on its impact on the LGBT community through the 1980s and early 1990s.

Formats

The primary formats collected include manuscripts, printed texts, graphics, artifacts and objects, textiles, audio-visual materials, and born-digital materials.

Personal and family papers

Personal and family papers of individuals or families who are or once were members of the Philadelphia and Delaware Valley LGBT communities, especially those whose work or lives have been devoted to LGBT issues and concerns. We usually do not collect personal or family papers of those from outside the geographic region.

Organizational and business records

Records of area organizations dedicated to LGBT issues, including activism, education, health, and culture.

Periodical publications

Includes newspapers, magazines, journals, and newsletters. Emphasis is on local publications and organizations, those of the homophile and early LGBT rights movements, and representative samples beyond these specific focuses.

Ephemera

Includes paper-based material, both published and unpublished, which serves an immediate informational need and is not necessarily intended by its creators to be maintained past its intended use. Examples include newsletters, catalogs, pamphlets, mailings, programs, invitations, brochures, postcards, calendars, posters, handbills, broadsides, greeting cards, tickets, graphics, etc.

Newspaper clippings

Clippings from local and national publications on LGBT issues, especially articles from the mainstream press which would otherwise not be included within the periodical collection.

Audiovisual materials

Focus is on original content on the subjects of the homophile and early LGBT rights movements, and LGBT history in Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley. Examples include interviews and oral histories, local radio programs, and musical performances that relate strongly to local figures or organizations. Materials beyond this scope which support collections of local figures or organizations may also be included. We do not typically collect home recordings of TV shows or commercial materials such as movies and documentaries, unless they have a local connection and are not readily available elsewhere.

Artwork

The permanent art collection is managed by the WWCC Art Committee. Additionally, the Archives accepts LGBT-related artwork as part of larger archival collections such as personal or organizational records.

Artifacts and objects

These include buttons, matchbooks, membership cards, signs, etc., to the extent that we have the resources to care for these materials.

Textiles

Includes t-shirts, hats, bags, banners, uniforms, costumes, etc., to the extent that we have the resources to care for these materials.

Rare books

Includes rare books and autographed first editions. Not currently collecting in this area unless the material relates directly to another collecting priority such as LGBT material from the Philadelphia area.

Pulp fiction

Inexpensive and popular mostly LGBT paperback fiction books typically printed on woodpulp paper. Often contained lurid or exploitative stories and used sensational cover art. From the 1930s to the 1980s.

Reference collection

Comprised of secondary literature meant to assist staff and researchers in using original sources from the Archives. Topics in the reference collection may include seminal works in LGBT history, studies of local LGBT history, including published research conducted in the Archives, histories of the local geographic area, histories or bibliographies of allied fields (such as HIV/AIDS or women's studies), and resources used in the cataloging, description and management of archival collections. Additions to and deaccessions from the reference collection will be made periodically to keep it current.

Travel guides and business directories

These include the popular Spartacus Gay Guides, Damron Address Books, and Gayellow Pages.

Born-digital material

We do not yet collect born digital material with any regularity. In the future this might include e-mail, webpages, digital images, blogs and other social media sites.

Other parameters of the collection

Strengths of the Collection

Included are materials from the local area, early periodicals from the 1960s and 1970s, travel guides, and the ephemera collection.

Retrospective collecting

Areas of the collection we are particularly eager to enhance include materials pertaining to transgender people, women, and people of color. We also aim to fill in gaps in our periodicals collection as donations or purchases allow.

Primary and secondary literature

Except for the reference collection, most of the materials collected in the Archives are considered to be primary sources. Offers of secondary literature (for instance books on the topic of same sex marriage or LGBT history) will be referred to the WWCC Library.

Language

We collect materials predominantly in the English language. Materials in other languages which support local LGBT communities as well as representative samples of materials in other languages may be collected as well.

Geographic aspects

Our strongest and most important collecting parameter is the location referred to as Philadelphia Metropolitan area, also sometimes referred to as the Delaware Valley or the Tri-State area.

Budget Allocation and Funding

Historically, there has been no dedicated budget for the purchase of collections. A part-time project archivist and a part-time curator are presently supported by grant funding from the William Penn Foundation.

Acquisition Methods

Currently, the Archives acquires materials almost exclusively through donation. As gifts of materials and funds are essential to maintaining and developing the collections, the Archives seeks the support of donors. In rare instances the Archives has accepted materials on long-term or indefinite loan. Materials documenting the history and operations of the Center are acquired through transfer to the Archives. Occasionally, materials from the Center's Library are transferred to the archives. Generally, the Archives prefers not to accept materials that are not intended to become the property of the William Way LGBT Community Center.

Collecting Policies and Procedures

The Archives does not accept materials without legal transfer of title, deed of gift or deposit, or other official acknowledgment. The Archives does not accept materials that are restricted from public access in perpetuity. Some collections or portions of collections may be designated restricted for a reasonable and finite period of time with the advanced agreement between the Archives and the donor. Materials that do not fall within the scope of the Archives collecting areas or that duplicate existing holdings may be deaccessioned in accordance with the Archives policy on deaccessions, subject to the terms of acquisition, William Way LGBT Community Center regulations, and state and federal laws. Duplicate gifts are often made available to similar collecting institutions.

Ongoing Review of Collection Development Policy

This collecting policy is designed to meet the goals of the William Way LGBT Community Center and the John J. Wilcox, Jr. Archives. This policy will be periodically reviewed, evaluated, and changed as necessary to meet these goals. The Archives reserves the right to change the preceding policies without notification to donors, their heirs or assigns.