

LGBTQ Round-up at Manuscripts and Archives



One of Manuscripts and Archives major collecting areas is material from the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community. I was very much reminded of this in early September when we received several new collections or additions to existing collections, which explored many different aspects of these communities. Gwyneth Crowley, the Librarian for LGBT Studies, made all of these additions possible by purchasing them from Queer Antiquarian Books.

Highlights include:

- The Good Vibrations Collection ([MS 2025](#) [1]), which covers the feminist, sex-positive sex toy shop based in San Francisco, California. Founded in 1977 by sex educator Joani Blank, it was opened as a response to requests for a “clean, well-lit place” to shop for sex toys and books. They also have a mail order catalog, a production company for making erotic videos, and educational workshops on all sorts of sexual activities. While men are welcome in their shops, it developed its marketing and products to primarily appeal to women. They are also extremely LGBTQ friendly, with workshops and products aimed at people regardless of their gender or their partner’s gender. While I may disappoint you by reporting that this collection does not include any products sold in the shops, it does contain printed ephemera from it, including fliers that advertise their workshops, a catalog from the 1980s (with hand-drawn pictures of their products), and a booklet with stories of people’s first time using toys purchased from Good Vibrations.

[2]

An early Good Vibrations mail order catalog

- An addition to the Transgender Collection ([MS 1848](#) [3]). While generally made up of printed ephemera from Northern California events and services, approximately half of the fliers are from drag queen events and the other half are from events and services for transgender and [non-binary](#) [4] people. Represented in the drag queen events ephemera are theatrical parodies (personal favorite: one involving a parody of the film *The Silence of the Lambs* renamed *The Silence of the Trans* and starring drag queens Peaches Christ and Sharon Needles as Trannibal Lecter and Buffalo Jill) and charity events led by drag groups such as the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Represented in the transgender and non-binary ephemera are fliers for health services (including transitioning care and mental health care), marches and protests, and artistic events such as film screenings and gallery showings. It's interesting to see the difference in tone.
- An addition to the Physique Collection ([MS 1850](#) [5]). Champion Studios operated in the 1950s and 1960s, creating artwork of athletic, nearly nude men and selling them to the interested—in many cases the interested were men sexually attracted to men. Since gay pornography was illegal and therefore straightforward, commercially produced work was unavailable, magazines and artwork were developed around “fitness” and “physique” themes with the models in minimal clothing as they could not pose nude. Manuscripts and Archives received order forms with sample images for prospective customers. The artwork is definitely eye-catching, but also of interest is how they worked to keep the theme going as almost every photo set includes the “story” of how the subjects came to be photographed, or drawn, or sculpted.
- The Gaylesta Brochures Collection ([MS 2024](#) [6]), which takes us back to San Francisco, California's LGBTQ communities. Gaylesta is an organization that refers LGBTQ identified people to mental health professionals that give culturally competent care. The brochures included in this new collection cover issues and experiences that can impact mental health such as HIV/AIDS, gender identity, biphobia and bisexual erasure, body image and eating disorders, coming out, queer parenting, domestic violence, stress and anxiety, and trauma. There are also brochures covering kink-aware therapy for those who are interested in BDSM (bondage, discipline, sadism, masochism) and/or fetish practices, and polyamory-aware therapy for

those interested in or involved in ethical non-monogamous relationship structures.

[7]

A sampling of Gaylesta brochures

- An addition of ephemera and newsletters to the AIDS Collection ([MS 1834](#) [8]) from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation's California branch. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation is based in Los Angeles, California and works in 36 countries, providing healthcare to those sick with HIV and AIDS, advocacy for the sick, and research studies and clinical trials. Much of the ephemera is made up of educational brochures on different aspects of HIV/AIDS care. There are also fliers for their medical centers, their pharmacies and their California thrift store, Out of the Closet, that uses its proceeds to fund the foundation. Among other preservation challenges with this collection: finding a box that could house its safer sex kits with condoms.

For those interested in working with these collections, you can find links to their finding aids in the descriptions above.

For information on using our collections, visit our website [here](#) [9].

External link: <http://campuspress.yale.edu/mssa/lgbtq-round-up-at-manuscripts-and-archives/> [10]

Source URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/news/2015/12/lgbtq-round-manuscripts-and-archives?page=7>

Links

[1] <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.2025>

[2] <https://campuspress.yale.edu/mssa/files/2015/12/DSCN0622-1lty95y.jpg>

[3] <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1848>

[4] http://transmediawatch.org/Documents/non_binary.pdf

[5] <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1850>

[6] <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.2024>

[7] <https://campuspress.yale.edu/mssa/files/2015/12/DSCN0621-15adenq.jpg>

[8] <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1834>

[9] <http://web.library.yale.edu/mssa>

[10] <http://campuspress.yale.edu/mssa/lgbtq-round-up-at-manuscripts-and-archives/>