



91.7 WVXU
NEWS



Donate

Ohio Lesbian Archives relocates to Over-the-Rhine

91.7 WVXU | By [Nick Swartsell](#)

Published September 25, 2023 at 3:00 AM EDT



Facebook / Ohio Lesbian Archives

Ohio Lesbian Archives showed off some of its new space in a Facebook post on Aug. 27, 2023.

There are only a handful of archives focused on cataloging and preserving publications and other documents related to lesbian history. One is right here in Cincinnati — and it just moved into a bigger, more visible space.

Since 1989, the Ohio Lesbian Archives has been carefully preserving LGBTQ history via newsletters, photos, music, videos, personal papers and more.

The archives recently moved to their new location at 1308 Race Street across from Washington Park.

Board Vice President Nancy Yerian says the collection, which started as an outgrowth of lesbian newsletter *Dinah* in Northside, simply got too big for its former home at Clifton United Methodist Church. The archive had been there since 2006.

"In many ways, it was a fantastic partnership," she says. "However, we just had too much. As we continued collecting materials, as people continued giving us books and archives, we just had way more than we could fit in the space there. So we were looking for a new space for really a pretty long time. We're really excited to have a little bit of breathing room and care for our collections better and make them more accessible and get more of the community into our space."

[LISTEN: New series shows you how to learn more about your LGBTQ ancestors](#)

Two other faith communities helped make the move possible, Yerian and board member Michael Chanak, Jr. say.

All Saints Chapel was a non-denominational LGBTQ church that met in Mount Adams until 1991. When the church dissolved, \$10,000 that had been earmarked for a new building was invested and saved for a future project that supported the LGBTQ community. The trust grew to about \$63,000, which was provided to establish the OLA's new home.

Northside's New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church made a similar contribution. The church ceased operations in 2021 due in part

"I think that's exciting, that the community is investing in itself," Chanak Jr. says.

Yerian stresses that while the archive has been focused on lesbian issues, it collects material from the broader LGBTQ community. It's also more than an archive, she says. There are plans for events and other community-building efforts at the new space. She says in the current political atmosphere, the archives' mission is more vital than ever.

"I think it's important to save these stories at any time, and to have a dedicated space for LGBTQ history," she says. "I would also say that right now, it's especially important as we are seeing an increase in book bans, as we're seeing anti-LGBTQ legislation that targets transgender people, that bans drag performances. Our community has been here in Cincinnati for a very long time and knowing our stories is very important to fight back against silencing."

RELATED: Movies that expand the evolution of LGBTQ+ representation in film

The archives has been welcoming visitors Wednesdays and Sundays on a soft-opening basis, Yerian says. An official grand opening celebration is planned for Sunday, Oct. 22.

Tags

[Local News](#)[Ohio Lesbian Archives](#)[LGBTQ](#)[Daily View](#)

Nick Swartsell

Nick has reported from a nuclear waste facility in the deserts of New Mexico, the White House press pool, a canoe on the Mill Creek, and even his desk one time.