LGBTQ Collection Opens in Michiana Memory

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On October 11th, 2016, coinciding with National Coming Out Day, the St. Joseph County Public Library, the Indiana University South Bend Archives and the IU South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center (CRHC) opened our newest digital collection in Michiana Memory, a digital collection dedicated to local LGBTQ history. Sourced from the CRHC collections, the LGBTQ Collection includes manuscripts, letters, official documents, photographs, and oral histories dating from the early 1970s through the current day. The images are available 24/7 for easy online viewing, downloading or printing.

The initial offerings include newsletters from the Lambda Society (circa 1973-1975), promotional materials from the Sea Horse, a South Bend LGBTQ bar and performance venue, and stickers, letters, and other documents from the campaign by South Bend Equality to include sexual orientation protections in what became the City of South Bend’s Human Rights Ordinance.”. These include materials both for and against such legislation dating from 2003 until 2012.

Civil Rights Heritage Center materials are being scanned and uploaded through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Indiana Memory Digitization Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services of the Indiana State Library. Additional images will be available as they are prepared, with the balance of the collection complete by early 2017.

The LGBTQ Collection helps all people understand and reflect upon the major advancements in LGBTQ acceptance over the last fifty years, and how this one Midwestern city moved from a place where many people felt they needed to hide their identities into a more welcoming and more open community.