
New Online LGBTQ+ Collection at the IU East Campus Archives

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The IU East Campus Archives has a new, online LGBTQ+ archival collection created this Spring 2019 semester by IU East students from Dr. Travis Rountree's Eng-W270 Argumentative Writing Class. The class focused on finding an artifact or interviewing someone from the local LGBTQ community which would then be placed in the IU East Archives. Students wrote and recorded their own reflections on the historical, cultural, or social importance of their artifacts or interviews and pulled themes that they uncovered and wanted to further explore into a rhetorical analysis paper. The collection includes local news articles, photographs, event fliers, interviews, and students' analysis of their research and contribution to the collection.



IU East LGBTQ+ Archive

Beth South, Eng-W270 Spring 2019, and Travis Rountree



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Throughout the semester, Archivist Beth South visited the class to discuss various topics, including best practices in conducting interview and oral histories, the importance of documenting and preserving materials from underrepresented groups, the need for Deeds of Gifts and Copyright Releases, and some of the moral and ethical questions that archivists come across when dealing with controversial or sensitive material. While the students collected the items for the LGBTQ+ collection and wrote about them, Beth pulled the materials together and organized it all into IU Pressbooks and created an online exhibit book.

The idea for this collaborative project, featuring a mix of student research and primary source gathering, grew from the Indiana University Libraries Primary Source Immersion Program that Beth South and Dr. Rountree attended last summer. Beth was interested in adding more student research and diverse collections to the IU East Archives and Dr. Rountree wanted his W270 course to address rhetorical constructions of LGBTQ identities in the Richmond, IN area and to have his students work with LGBTQ archive collections. As Richmond or Wayne County didn't have any type of LGBTQ collections available anywhere, and the LGBTQ community has been mostly underground, the course was adapted to have the students build and contribute to the first LGBTQ archive collection for Richmond and the surrounding areas.



The poster features the IU East logo at the top, followed by the text 'LGBTQ SPRING EVENTS'. Below this, it states 'RICHMOND AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!'. The events are listed as follows: FEB. 21, Film Series - Southern Comfort, TR 124, 5:30-7 PM, Free Pizza; MAR. 6, Poetry Reading - Stephen Mills, First Bank Richmond Community Room, 5:30-7 PM, Reception Following; MAR. 20, Film Series - Love, Simon, TR 124, 5:30-7 PM, Free Pizza; APR. 11, Local LGBTQ Community Members Panel, TR 124, 5:30-7 PM, Reception Following. Contact information for Travis A. Rountree is provided at the bottom. The poster is decorated with vertical rainbow-colored brushstrokes on the left and right sides.

In addition to the archive, there were several LGBTQ focused events that accompanied the class: a film series, featuring *Southern Comfort* and *Love, Simon*; a poetry reading and classroom talk by Stephen S. Mills, a Richmond native and queer poet who now lives in New York; and a LGBTQ Community Panel that featured participants that either grew up in Richmond or currently live and work in Richmond and identify as LGBTQ+. The talk given by Stephen S. Mills, including some of his poetry reading, and the community panel are also included in the collection. The collection was unveiled at the LGBTQ Community Panel, with some students presenting on what they contributed and what they learned.



Figure 1
Students Ethan Scott, Samantha Shockley, & Dr. Travis Rountree at the LGBTQ Community Panel

While there have been various attempts to establish an LGBTQ community in Richmond, IN, including pride marches, LGBTQ organizations, and Facebook groups, there has never been a sustainable, visible presence of queer life in Richmond. This archive collection makes an effort to have this community more visible on and off campus. Dr. Rountree and Beth hope that this collection will grow organically to include more voices, perspectives, and experiences of members of the LGBTQ community here in Richmond, IN and the surrounding areas. You can view the IU East LGBTQ+ Archive Collection at <https://iu.pressbooks.pub/eastlgbtqarchive/>. For additional questions, you can reach out to Beth South at eabrockm@iue.edu.