always very vocal about acknowledging the lesbians in the room, which I always thought was really dear and brave. He liked me, I think, and I remember once we were at an ACT UP meeting. It was either before the meeting or after the meeting, and he was in the back of the room, and he goes, "Come here, come here," and he took me out into the garden at the Center [New York's Gay and Lesbian Community Center], and he sat with me, and he was telling me, "You've got to keep doing what you're doing." He was dying. I actually don't remember what he said, but it was encouraging, basically, and he held my hand. And I was so afraid. I was afraid because I was in awe of him. I was afraid because I knew I was touching death. And I didn't have the skills—all this was too much for me. I didn't know how to deal with it. I just thought, "Don't say anything stupid," because I felt like a kid. I mean, I wasn't a kid, but I felt like a kid. And I wasn't a very sophisticated person. I'm not now, anyway, but I really wasn't then, and I just didn't know what to do. It's only later that I really appreciate that moment. I didn't appreciate it then. I was just afraid. But I'm really lucky that happened to me. He was a great guy. He was an amazing man. And kind. Kind, kind, kind. I have a million stories like that. (Heidi Dorow)

These stories vividly reveal oral history's power to turn affective memory into public history. Gathering oral history is itself a form of mourning, a practice of revivifying the dead by talking about them and revivifying moments of intimacy that are gone. The loss of a movement and the loss of people are entwined now, even as new forms of activism continue. Moreover, because mourning is not punctual and need not come to an end in order to avoid pathology or overcome trauma, and because the dead stay with us, it is important to keep the historical record open.

Every lesbian is worthy of inclusion in history. If you have the courage to touch another woman, then you are a very famous person. — Joan Nestle, Not Just Passing Through

Perhaps to the surprise of those who think of both traditional and grassroots archives as an esoteric interest, Cheryl Dunye's 1996 film The Watermelon Woman elevates the institution to a new level of popular visibility by making fun of it. The archives are also a source of narrative drama in The Watermelon Woman, in which Cheryl (played by Dunye herself) becomes obsessed with uncovering the life of the mysterious Watermelon Woman, an African American actress who plays the stereotypical maid roles in old Hollywood films such as Plantation Memories. Through interviews as well as trips to libraries and obscure archives, Cheryl slowly pieces together the story of Fae Richards, whose offscreen life includes a romance with her white director, Martha Page (styled after Dorothy Arzner), a career as a singer in black clubs, and in her later years, a long-term lesbian relationship. Combining documentary with fiction, The Watermelon Woman weaves a visual archive of old photographs, film clips, and newscasts into its drama, simulating the look of these genres so well that it is hard to believe that Richards is Dunye's creation and not an actual historical figure. The most accessible parts of the Richards archive are the materials that connect her to mainstream popular culture—Hollywood films, a relationship with a prominent white woman—and Cheryl at once cherishes these artifacts and searches for other evidence that would bring Richards to life as something more than a stereotype or marginal figure. As part of her quest, Cheryl makes the trip from Philadelphia to New York to visit the Center for Lesbian Information and Technology (CLIT). Novelist Sarah Schulman makes a memorable cameo appearance as the
documents in every nook and cranny, are legendary in accounts of LHA’s origins, especially now that the archives have relocated to a more public space. Conceived of more as a community center than a research institution, one of LHA’s original missions was to provide safe space for lesbian-owned documents that might otherwise be left to neglect or destroyed by indifferent or homophobic families. Since 1993, LHA has been housed in a Brooklyn brownstone purchased not through large grants or public funding but through many small donations from lesbians around the country. As a longtime LHA volunteer Desiree Yael Vester notes, LHA functions as a ritual space within which cultural memory and history are preserved.

The new site continues to combine private, domestic spaces with public, institutional ones, particularly because it occupies a building that was once a home: the downstairs living room serves as a comfortable reading room, the copier sits alongside other appliances in the kitchen, the entryway is an exhibit space, and the top floor houses a collective member who lives there on a permanent basis. Visitors can browse through the filing cabinets and shelves at their leisure rather than having to negotiate closed stacks. Organized as a domestic space in which all lesbians will feel welcome to see and touch a lesbian legacy, LHA aims to provide an emotional rather than a narrowly intellectual experience.

Both LHA and its representation in The Watermelon Woman point to the vital role of archives within lesbian cultures as well as to their innovative and unusual forms of appearance. They demonstrate the profoundly affective power of a useful archive, especially an archive of sexuality and gay and lesbian life, which must preserve and produce not just knowledge but feeling. Lesbian and gay history demands a radical archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism—all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive.

Furthermore, gay and lesbian archives address the traumatic loss of history that has accompanied sexual life and the formation of sexual publics, and they assert the role of memory and affect in compensating for institutional neglect. Like other archives of trauma, such as those that commemorate the Holocaust, slavery, or war, they must enable the acknowledgment of a past that can be painful to remember, impossible to forget, and resistant to consciousness. The history of trauma often depends on the evidence of memory, not just because of the absence of other forms of evidence but because of the need to
address traumatic experience through witnessing and retelling. Central to traumatic memory is what Toni Morrison, in the context of remembering slavery, has called emotional memory, those details of experience that are affective, sensory, often highly specific, and personal. Subject to the idiosyncrasies of the psyche and the logic of the unconscious, emotional experience and the memory of it demand and produce an unusual archive, one that frequently resists the coherence of narrative or that is fragmented and ostensibly arbitrary. Memories can cohere around objects in unpredictable ways, and the task of the archivist of emotion is thus an unusual one.

Understanding gay and lesbian archives as archives of emotion and trauma helps to explain some of their idiosyncrasies or, one might say, their “queerness.” They address particular versions of the determination to “never forget” that gives archives of traumatic history their urgency. That gay and lesbian history even exists has been a contested fact, and the struggle to record and preserve it is exacerbated by the invisibility that often surrounds intimate life, especially sexuality. Even the relatively short history (roughly “one hundred years”) of homophobia as an identity category has created the historiographical challenge of not only documenting the wide varieties of homosexual experience but examining documents of homophobia along with earlier histories of homophobia and same-sex relations. As another legacy of Stonewall itself an important and elusive subject for the archive, gay and lesbian archives have sought to preserve not only the record of successful efforts to combat homophobia and create a public gay and lesbian culture, but also the evidence from periods “before Stonewall” of many different forms of sexual public cultures. In the last decade in particular, there has been a marked historical turn as historians, documentary makers, and average citizens have been drawn to historicizing not just the politics of a gay movement but earlier generations of struggle that threaten to become lost history; they are affectively motivated by the passionate desire to claim the fact of history and acknowledge those who provided the foundations for the 1970s’ gay rights movement. Contemporary queer culture has shown a particular fascination with the generations of the 1950s and early 1960s that immediately preceded gay and lesbian movement activism. This trend is especially evident in the popularity of the documentary genre; the groundbreaking film Before Stonewall (1985) has been followed by an explosion of documentary film and video that has a ready audience at gay and lesbian film festivals.

The stock-in-trade of the gay and lesbian archive is ephemera, the term used by archivists and librarians to describe occasional publications and paper documents, material objects, and items that fall into the miscellaneous category when being cataloged. Gay and lesbian archives are often built on the donations of private collectors who have saved the ephemeral evidence of gay and lesbian life—both personal and public—because it might otherwise disappear. Publicly available materials that might not be found in libraries or other public institutions, such as pornographic books, short-run journals, and forms of mass culture that are objects of camp reception, are preserved in these archives. Also collected there are personal materials, such as diaries, letters, and photographs, which assume additional archival importance when public cultures have failed to chronicle gay and lesbian lives. In addition to accumulating these textual materials, gay and lesbian archives are likely to have disproportionately large collections of ephemera because of their concern with sexuality and leisure culture as well as with the legacies of grassroots political activism. Thus San Francisco’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society of Northern California (GLBTHS) has items such as matchbook covers, the notepads available for exchanging phone numbers in gay bars, flyers for club events, personal photo albums, condoms packaged for special events, and vibrators. LHA has a collection of T-shirts with political slogans, the hard hat with a “lambda” sign on it worn by a lesbian construction worker, and posters from political and cultural events. Both archives also house the files of activist groups such as ACT UP and the Lesbian Avengers that include ephemera such as meeting minutes, publicity flyers for demonstrations, buttons, stickers, and financial records. Their principles of selection and inclusion are not the same as those of a public research archive that defines value according to historical or research interests. It is LHA’s policy, for example, not to refuse any donation of materials that a lesbian considers critical in her life and actively to encourage ordinary lesbians to collect and donate the archival evidence of their everyday lives.

In insisting on the value of apparently marginal or ephemeral materials, the collectors of gay and lesbian archives propose that affects—associated with nostalgia, personal memory, fantasy, and trauma—make a
document significant. The archive of feelings is both material and immaterial, at once incorporating objects that might not ordinarily be considered archival, and at the same time, resisting documentation because sex and feelings are too personal or ephemeral to leave records. For this reason and others, the archive of feelings lives not just in museums, libraries, and other institutions but in more personal and intimate spaces, and significantly, also within cultural genres. In addition to considering gay and lesbian archives as repositories of feelings, I explore here how documentary film and video extend the material and conceptual reach of the traditional archive, collating and making accessible documents that might otherwise remain obscure except to those doing specialized research. My examples are Not Just Passing Through — directed by Jean Carlamusto, Dolores Perez, Catherine Saalfeld, and Polly Thistlethwaite, (1994) — which is about archives, including LHA, and Carlamusto’s To Catch a Glimpse (1997) and Shatzi Is Dying (2000), which are about the loss of her grandmother and the loss of her dog, respectively. These documentaries use the power of visual media to put the archive on display, incorporating a wide range of traditional and unorthodox materials, including personal photographs, videotapes from oral history archives, innovative forms of autodocumentary film, and “archival” footage — including clips from popular film. Especially striking is their use of an archive of popular culture, one that is strongly visual in form, to create an archive of feelings. As a popular practice of archiving, documentary produces the unusual emotional archive necessary to record the often traumatic history of gay and lesbian culture.

Actually Existing Archives

The creators of grassroots gay and lesbian archives have frequently turned their houses into safe havens for history. Like LHA, San Francisco’s Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California (now the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society of Northern California, abbreviated here as GLBT/HS) started out at home. Founded in 1985, GLBT/HS’s collection was initially housed in a spare room in Bill Walker’s apartment until it moved to a public location in the Mission District and then to its current, larger Market Street location. Even the extremely public James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Pub-
to be found in each location; the GLBTHS continues to house sexually explicit materials, including many significant gay male pornography collections that would be controversial for the SFPL. And while the SFPL's efforts to fund-raise are dependent on acquiring the collections of celebrities, politicians, and other exceptional individuals, the GLBTHS remains committed to creating a populist archive that includes the possessions of ordinary people. This mission is especially crucial in order to avoid a disproportionate emphasis on middle-class, white gay men.

Will the two kinds of archives end up competing with one another? This question is especially relevant to funding. An archive's budget must pay not only for its collection but for space and access, including staff to receive visitors and, even more importantly, to catalogue the collection. Many grassroots archives operate through volunteer labor, which limits the amount of time that they are open to the public and the amount of time devoted to organizing them. In the mid-1990s, the GLBTHS received a large bequest that made it possible to hire a full-time paid archivist for the first time. The SFPL also has a large endowment ($2.5 million) for special collections, but these funds are earmarked for acquisitions and cannot be used for staff. (Thus, although the inauguration of the Gay and Lesbian Collection was celebrated along with the opening of the new SFPL building in April 1996, most of the special collections—such as the papers of Randy Schilts, Barbara Grier, and Harvey Milk—were not available because they had not been cataloged.)

Another telling case is the recent history of the gay and lesbian special collections at the NYPL. Under the auspices of Mimi Bowling, curator of manuscripts, who has been sympathetic to building the collection, the NYPL has acquired a number of important archives. A major catalyst for the current visibility of its holdings was the 1988 acquisition of the International Gay Information Center (IGIC) archives, a community-based archive that was started as part of the Gay Activists Alliance in the 1970s. Lacking both the space and labor to stay independent, IGIC offered its collection to the NYPL; the timing was good, coinciding with a period of strong gay and lesbian activism as well as a developing sense within the NYPL that building a gay and lesbian collection was a priority. Since then, the library has focused on the AIDS crisis in particular and has acquired the records of ACT UP/NT, GMHC, the People with AIDS Coalition (PWAC), the art collectives Gran Fury and Fierce Pussy, and the video collectives DIVA-TV and Testing the Limits.

The significant differences between the NYPL and SFPL are immediately evident from the architecture of their buildings. Whereas the SFPL is housed in a new building whose contemporary design, open atrium, and intimate reading rooms convey spatially a democratic vision that the library is open to all, the NYPL is much more forbidding. Its four research collections are largely funded by private donations, a legacy of the founding of the library in 1895 by New York's rising aristocracy. The Astors, Carnegies, Rockefellers, and other families raised funds for a "public" library system, but also for a monument to New York City as a world-class cultural and economic capital. Opened in 1911, after twelve years of construction, the main building at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street is in the grand style of nineteenth-century public architecture. The classical architecture and huge reading room are imposing, displaying on a massive scale the idea of tradition, which is being invented as well as preserved by the archive. Entry to the manuscript collection is available by special application only to those who have specific research projects; the research room, which is located off the main reading room, feels like a sequestered space for devoted, and slightly antiquated, scholars, in sharp contrast to the open airy feel of the San Francisco library.

Because the NYPL is such an important institution of power both within the city of New York and nationally, the NYPL's gay and lesbian archives can't help but be a crucial sign of success and visibility. The 1994 Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall exhibition, mounted in conjunction with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall riots, was a high-profile event that showcased the NYPL's growing collections. The huge title banner with a pink triangle incorporated into its design was displayed over the Fifth Avenue entrance, transforming the concept of "becoming visible" into a performative act. A popular success, the exhibition displayed photographs, posters, buttons, and other ephemera that surveyed gay and lesbian culture and activism. Drawing on the considerable financial and spatial resources of the NYPL, the exhibit served as a way to make the archive visible and accessible, sending a message that gay and lesbian history is worthy of inclusion in the halls of power. The exhibit's impact for spectators derived in part from the unusual juxtapo-
sition of gay and lesbian content with the traditional exhibition space. A book based on the exhibit has further extended its reach to wider audiences and made the materials more permanently accessible. Mimi Bowling suggests that these methods of making the library's gay and lesbian collection public are a way of guaranteeing ongoing funding for its preservation and maintenance.

There were some critics of the Becoming Visible exhibit, though—most notably those with ties to LHA, which donated materials to the exhibition but had a tense relationship with it. Among the points of contention were the lack of sufficient acknowledgment of materials from sources other than the NYPL, including LHA, and a warning sign about sexually explicit materials placed at the entrance to the exhibit. Polly Thistlethwaite suggests that the NYPL's self-congratulatory relation to the exhibit masked its dependence on community-based archives such as the IGIC, without which it would not have had the materials for the exhibit: "The Becoming Visible exhibit was willfully framed to appear as though it had been birthed [sic] from the stacks, archives, native savvy, and magnificent goodwill of NYPL, doing a magnificent honor for gays and lesbians, deprived yet deserving of mainstream recognition." She sees the NYPL as falsely representing itself as having an extensive history of collecting gay and lesbian materials, when in fact its holdings were not until recently cataloged or publicized as such.

Maxine Wolfe, one of the ACT UP members I spoke with, talked at some length in her interview with me about her involvement with the LHA, where she has been a longtime volunteer. In addition to corroborating Thistlethwaite's account of LHA's relation to the NYPL exhibit, Wolfe discussed her objections to the donation of ACT UP/NY's files to the NYPL—an argument that she made publicly at ACT UP meetings when the decision was deliberated. She claims that there is no safety for gay and lesbian materials in a publicly funded institution, in contrast to the dedicated mission of LHA, where no one will suddenly decide to defund or de-accession lesbian and gay materials. Scoffing at the notion that the NYPL is a more secure location, Wolfe explained to me in her interview, "Let me tell you about security—it means that when there is a fire, someone wants to save your papers. At LHA, there are twenty-five women who would put lives on the line to save that stuff." She is a strong advocate of the independent and separatist stance of LHA, and her convictions serve as a reminder that recognition and inclusion by traditional institutions should not be the only model of success for gay and lesbian archives.

Yet despite the reservations expressed by those at LHA, other queer activists have been able to find a home for their materials at the NYPL. Another valuable case of collaboration between traditional public institutions and grassroots archives is the example of the library's Royal S. Marks Collection of AIDS Activist Videotapes. The collection was assembled with support from the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, whose mission is to preserve the grassroots response of artists and activists to the AIDS crisis, and which provided funding for the duplication of one thousand hours of videotape in order to make it accessible to the general public. Central to this project has been the curatorial vision and labor of Jim Hubbard—a founding member of the MIX Festival of experimental lesbian and gay film and video—who had a long-standing interest in making sure that AIDS activist video materials were preserved. In his view, the choice of the NYPL as a repository for the collection was an obvious one; only the NYPL had the storage space and conditions to be able to house such a large collection as well as the resources to make it accessible. The Royal S. Marks Collection was also made public through an exhibition in collaboration with the Guggenheim Museum in December 2000. In a series titled "Fever in the Archive," the Guggenheim screened eight video programs on a range of topics, including collective action, safe sex, drug use, women and AIDS, and organizing in communities of color. Watching AIDS activist videos at the Guggenheim Museum (with the exhibition of designer Georgio Armani's fashions upstairs in the main gallery space) was sometimes an odd experience, the product of yet another strange juxtaposition of traditional institutions and grassroots activism. At a related panel discussion where activists and academics talked about the legacy of AIDS activist video, panelists Douglas Crimp and Alex Juhasz also expressed ambivalence about the experience of watching and revisiting the videos because they continue to be a site of loss and mourning. Indeed, while any archive is haunted by the specter of death, its literal and traumatic presence in any AIDS collection serves as a vivid reminder that archives can be motivated by emotional rather than intellectual needs. For example, Hubbard describes the difficulty of getting some donors to contribute materials because of their sentimental value. Ray Navarro's mother continues to keep his videos in her home be-
cause they are like an extension of or proxy for his body and thus difficult to part with. 21

One of the persistent values of grassroots and community-based archives is their capacity to keep the emotional need for archives at the forefront of their mission. LHA, for instance, remains a benchmark for the steadfastly independent archive, one that differs dramatically in its goals and practices from a research institution. Some of the principles that Joan Nestle articulates in "Notes on Radical Archiving from a Lesbian Feminist Standpoint" include: "The archives will collect the prints of all of our lives, not just preserve the records of the famous or the published, [and] the archives should be housed within the community, not an academic campus that is by definition closed to many women. The archives should share the political and cultural world of its people and not be located in an isolated building that continues to exist while the community dies. If necessary, the archives will go underground with its people to be cherished in hidden places until the community is safe." 22 Rather than taking for granted the principles of legal entitlement and viability for research and the need for funding that govern the acquisition process of many traditional archives, it is important to keep the model of LHA in mind as a challenge to these accepted notions.

Especially influential in the planning and maintenance of LHA is the notion of safe space that has been so central to lesbian feminist communities. A mistrust of public institutions runs deep in the mission of LHA. LHA is more interested in fostering a lesbian public sphere than in appealing to a general public sphere, and thus the model of success represented by the NYPL's collection has no meaning in this context. Instead, there is an interest in making archival skills more accessible to all: "The archives should be staffed by Lesbians so the collection will always have a living cultural context. Archival skills shall be taught, one generation of Lesbians to another, breaking elitism of traditional archives." Indeed, information about the archives is passed on orally by the volunteers who staff the open houses and guide its visitors. "Its atmosphere must be nourishing, entry into our archives should be entry into a caring home." Rather than being a specialized domain for experts, LHA is a welcoming sanctuary. Yet the involvement of professional librarians such as Thistlethwaite, Lucinda Zoe, and Desiree Yael Vester in the running of LHA has also sparked debates among those on the archives board about whether it should adopt a more formal cataloging system or develop ways of acquiring permissions from contributors so that the collections can be used more easily by researchers. LHA continues to evolve, creating new forms of archive that combine traditional practices with a lesbian feminist vision, but it will always be a distinctive space because of its commitment to challenging the conventions of the traditional archive.

NYPL curator Mimi Bowling herself insists that there will always be room for both the grassroots and traditional archive, that they each have roles to play, and that they can work in tandem with one another. 23 As the number of archives of all kinds increases, it will be interesting to watch how the collaborations and tensions are played out. 24 For example, fundraising has begun for a National Museum of Gay and Lesbian History, which if it is ever built, would certainly signify the visibility of gay and lesbian history within the national public sphere of archives. But there will always be a special place for the community archive, in part because it appeals to the emotional need for history. Moreover, it will continue to be important to challenge what counts as national history and how that history is told. In order to pursue further the significance of an archive of feelings, I turn now to another important genre of experimental and emotional archive — documentary film and video, which, in its ability to make vivid the centrality of feelings to the archive, has much to offer to museums and libraries.
Trauma’s Archives

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida presses psychoanalytic approaches to memory to the conclusion that an archive is fundamentally impossible.\(^9\) The absence of memory that marks traumatic experience is ultimately for him the logic of all memory, which fails to be archived even in the unconscious. Using examples ranging from Freud’s mystic writing pad to e-mail, Derrida explores the mechanisms by which memory leaves its material traces or “impressions,” and the arbitrary relation between the material object and the psychic life it marks. *Archive Fever* is interesting to read in the context of trauma studies because Derrida also considers, following Yosef Yerushalmi, the question of psychoanalysis as a Jewish science through a story about a Bible passed on from Freud’s grandfather to his father.\(^9\) The dependence of Derrida’s argument on a father-son story suggests that the general theory of the archive is in fact situated within a culturally specific context.

The attempt to root psychoanalysis within a specific history gives way, however, to the force of Derrida’s argument about the nature of inscription and memory. He is less interested in actually existing archives than in the general logic of the archive, although he does mention in passing that the archive is the site of contests over knowledge and power, and he pauses to consider the transformation of Freud’s last house into an archive of psychoanalysis. Implicit in these references, though, are relatively traditional institutions, and it is thus worth speculating about the implications of an encounter between *Archive Fever*’s theory and the material specificities of more experimental grassroots gay and lesbian archives. Ephemeral evidence, spaces that are maintained by volunteer labors of love rather than state funding, challenges to cataloging, archives that represent lost histories—gay and lesbian archives are often “magical” collections of documents that represent far more than the literal value of the objects themselves. And Carlonmusto’s documentaries, which collate history out of personal collections, old movies, and sentimental objects, also confirm the status of the archive as a practice of fantasy made material. Queer archives can be viewed as the material instantiation of Derrida’s deconstructed archive; they are composed of material practices that challenge traditional conceptions of history and understand the quest for history as a psychic need rather than a science.

The passion for the preservation of history that sustains the LHA and GLBTHS, even with slender material resources, can be compared with the archives and institutions that have been developed to remember traumatic histories. Holocaust testimonials at the Yale Fortunoff Archive and the Shoah History Foundation, as well as Holocaust memorials and museums around the world; the documentation of immigration at Ellis Island; an increasing number of memorials to the civil rights movement in the South, such as Maya Lin’s memorial in Birmingham, Alabama; the Vietnam War memorials in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere—all of these sites preserve traumatic histories in ways that challenge the meaning of archive and memorial.\(^1\) Trauma puts pressure on the institutionalizing force of museums and monuments as well as on the notion of an archive, demanding collections and installations that can do emotional justice to the experiences they remember. The results are frequently unconventional and innovative.

In the context of the challenges posed by trauma archives, it is worth considering the idiosyncratic and queer nature of gay and lesbian archives, so often collected according to sentiment and emotion. In contrast to institutionalized forms of cultural memory, the grassroots lesbian archive seems intimate and personal. It takes the documents of everyday life—oral history, personal photographs and letters, and ephemera—in order to insist that every life is worthy of preservation. Documentary film and video (as well as experiments in other cultural genres) push that enterprise still further, finding an unexpected range of materials that archive emotion and feeling.

One of the reasons I chose to place this chapter at the end of the book rather than at the beginning, where it might have served as a methodological guide to all of the chapters, is because it is so directly inspired by the AIDS crisis, which has had an indelible impact on the urgency and passion with which gay and lesbian publics have raced against death to preserve a record of lives and publics. Carlonmusto’s *Shatzi Is Dying* stands alongside Tom Joslin’s *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*, Marlon Riggs’s *Black Is, Black Ain’t*, and Gregg Bordowitz’s *Fast Trip, Long Drop* as well as many other videos that transform the documentary form through their encounters with mortality. This encounter produces the archiving impulse, the desire to collect objects not just to protect against death but in order to create practices of mourning. A significant num-

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ber of the activists I interviewed either have direct ties to LHA or cite it as a strong influence. The specter of literal death serves as a pointed reminder of the social death of losing one's history. Thus, for example, Leonard's simulated photographs of Richards that provide the visual archive for The Watermelon Woman can be linked to her installations of fruit peels painstakingly sewn back together, which served as a memorial to friends, including Wojnarowicz, who died of AIDS.

In addition, Carломusto's mourning of both her grandmother and her dog is significantly influenced by her experience with AIDS. Her newest work, "The Portrait Gallery," created in collaboration with Rosett as part of their ongoing interactive multimedia project AIDS: A LIVING ARCHIVE™, incorporates their vast AIDS activist archive (including the clip of Jacobs that is included in Shatzi) into an altar installation. The viewer stands in front of an altar of electronically lit votive candles, each one displaying the image of an AIDS activist; projected on the wall behind the altar is an image of a flickering candle accompanied by the sound of "Let There Be Light" being sung a cappella. (Rosett notes that "when an Italian and a Jew create an AIDS memorial, it's inevitable that they're going to burn a few candles." The viewer presses a button in front of one of the candles and activates a brief video portrait (a clip) featuring the person whose image is on the candle; while the portrait is showing, all of the candles except for the one selected go dim. By incorporating the video archive into an installation that is charged with spiritual meaning, Carломusto and Rosett acknowledge that the reception of the video is an emotional process, and they give viewers an opportunity to acknowledge those feelings within the context of the museum. Hence, they address the challenge of many trauma archives: how to present archival material in a way that doesn't simply overwhelm or numb the observer. Their work indicates that it is not enough simply to accumulate archival materials; great care must be taken with how they are exhibited and displayed. The cultural knowledges embedded in forms such as documentary video and photography, performance, and installation art have much to offer as a resource for archives. Not only is "The Portrait Gallery" exhibited in a context that acknowledges its emotional power but the insistence on the archive as living reconstitutes the work of mourning and memorial. At the heart of the archive are practices of mourning, and the successful archive enables the work of mourning.

Thinking of the archive as a memorial to the dead, one that must perform the work of mourning at a personal level, is yet another reminder of why, however respectable certain kinds of gay and lesbian archives become, there will remain a need for grassroots and community-based archives. The importance of fantasy as a way of creating history from absences, so evident in queer documentary and other cultural genres, demands creative and alternative archives. In the case of both traumatic and gay and lesbian histories, grassroots archives and the archives preserved by cultural forms move past the impossibility of the archive articulated by Derrida toward collections of texts and objects that embody the sentiments and obsessions of archive fever.
Martin quotes the following passage: "Let’s suppose that lesbians and gay men in the academies and institutions of the contemporary United States have a particularly potent relation to grief. Exiled from the Law of the Social, many gay men and lesbians may have introjected the passionate hatred of mainstream homophobia and taken up an embattled, aggressive, and complex relation to the death drive" (Peggy Phelan, "Dying Man with a Movie Camera: Silverlake Life: The View from Here," GLQ 2, no. 5 [1995]: 390).

7. In the Archive of Lesbian Feelings

1. Along with pseudofilms such as Plantation Memories, Watermelon Woman includes a fake archive of photographs of Richards, which Dunye produced in collaboration with photographer Zoe Leonard. The photographs have been exhibited independently (including at a 1997 Whitney Museum biennial installation) and have been published as a book: Zoe Leonard and Cheryl Dunye, The Fae Richards Photo Archive (San Francisco: Artspace Books, 1996).

2. My information about LHA comes from discussions with volunteers during visits there, and I offer thanks to Polly Thistledthwaite, Lucinda Zoe, and Paula Grant for their generous assistance, and especially to Maxine Wolfe and Desiree Yael Vester for giving me time in which to interview them about the archives. Other sources of information include LHA newsletters and Nestle, A Restricted Country, esp. 110–119, 178–88.


4. According to Vester (ibid.), there are sometimes proposals that the top floor should be used for the collection, but others think the live-in resident gives the archives its identity as a "home."

5. For her thinking about archives and intimacy as well as for conversations about the ideas in this chapter, I am indebted to Lauren Berlant. For discussions of the archive, see Berlant, "68 or Something," and The Queen of America Goes to Washington City, 10–15. For discussions of intimacy, see Lauren Berlant, ed., "Intimacy," Critical Inquiry 24, no. 2 (special issue) (winter 1998). For their connections, see Lauren Berlant, "Intimacy's Ephemerata" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, Toronto, December 1997).

6. See Morrison, "The Site of Memory."

7. On the paradigm of "one hundred years of homosexuality," see Halperin, One Hundred Years of Homosexuality, which is influenced by Foucauldian models of sexuality as a category with a history. Adopting a different historical model is historian John Boswell, who argues both polemically and with considerable archival evidence for a continuous tradition of homosexuality in his books: Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), and Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe (New York: Villard, 1994). It can be useful to understand Boswell's scholarship as driven by the affective need for history. For an interesting discussion of Boswell along these lines, informed by Halperin, Foucault, and others, see Dinshaw's introduction to her book about the intersections of medieval studies and queer studies, Getting Medieval. Dinshaw argues for the affective power of different historical periods to "touch" one another through the queer juxtaposition of past and present.

8. In lesbian culture, the resurgence of interest in butch-femme cultures has been part of this phenomenon. The popular interest in gay and lesbian history has been facilitated by the recent publication of many important scholarly books, including George Chauncey, Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940 (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Davis and Kennedy, Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold; Newton, Cherry Grove, Fire Island; and Martin Duberman, Stonewall (New York: Dutton, 1993).

9. See my "In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture," Camera Obscura 49 (2002): 107–46. Overlapping with this chapter, the article explores documentaries that use a popular culture archive and focuses in particular on Forbidden Love, dir. Lynne Fernie and Aerialn Weissman (Women Make Movies, 1992); Greetings from out Here, dir. Ellen Spiro, about lesbian and gay life in the South; and Girlpower, dir. Sadie Benning (Women Make Movies, 1992). I am particularly interested in documentaries that use experimental strategies to exhibit a visual archive. For more on the gay and lesbian documentary scene, see Chris Holmlund and Cynthia Fuchs, eds., Between the Sheets, in the Streets: Queer, Lesbian, Gay Documentary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

10. Muñoz discusses the status of ephemera in the production of queer history in "Ephemera as Evidence."

11. Not Just Passing Through is distributed by Women Make Movies.


Notes to Chapter Seven
In addition to drawing on time spent at the LHA, my insights are based primarily on research in and about the GLBTH as well as the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library, and the New York Public Library. My thanks to Jim Van Buskirk of the San Francisco Public Library, Bill Walker and Susan Stryker of the GLBTH, and Mimi Bowling of the New York Public Library for sharing information about the history of these archives and institutions.

Another example is the negotiations between the Mazer Collection and One Collection, both grassroots archives based in Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California (USC) about moving the collections to the campus. The Mazer (a lesbian archive) ultimately decided not to move its collection to USC because the university was only providing space and not staff.

See Mimi Bowling, preface to Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America, Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman (New York: New York Public Library, 1998), ix-x. Bowling notes as significant the acquisition of two special collections in the 1980s prior to the 1991 acquisition: the papers of Howard Brown, a former New York City health commissioner and founder of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the records of the lesbian/feminist poetry journal Thirteenth Moon. She observes that “more important than these two acquisitions per se was the fact that a fundamental shift in policy was under way, and was openly articulated” (ix).

Polly Thistlethwaite quotes Mimi Bowling as saying that the exhibit was the most successful in the NYP’s history. See Polly Thistlethwaite, “Building A Home of Our Own: The Construction of the Lesbian Herstory Archives,” in Dating to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian Library History, ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 169.


Douglas Crimp and Alex Juhasz, Fever in the Archive panel discussion, Center for Gender and Sexuality, New York University, 6 December 2000. Other panelists were Jean Carlomusto, Gerard Ferguson, and me.

Jim Hubbard, conversation with author, New York City, 9 June 2000.

Joan Nestle, "Notes on Radical Archiving from a Lesbian Feminist Standpoint," Gay Insurgent 4-5 (spring 1979): 11; cited in Thistlethwaite, “Building A Home of Our Own,” 154. Thistlethwaite’s article is a vital source of information about the history of the LHA and I thank her for drawing it and the excellent collection of which it is a part to my attention.

in the connections between memory, history, and archival objects (see Illuminat
tions, 59–67). Benjamin’s interest in the photograph can be linked to his interest
in modes of historicization that include memory and affect, such as the trauma
of shock. For more on this issue, see Cadava, Words of Light.
31 See Testing the Limits: NYC (Part One). DIVA-TV’s work includes Target City Hall
(1989) and Like a Prayer (1991); some of the Living with AIDS episodes are avail-
able on the compilation Video against AIDS distributed by Video Data Bank. All
of these videos are also included in the Royal S. Marks Collection of AIDS Activist
Videotapes at the NYPL.
33 Carluomusto’s video thus offers a corroboration and extension of Roland Barthes’s
argument about the “punctum” in Camera Lucida, trans. Richard Howard (New
York: Hill and Wang, 1981), an investigation of the affective power of photography
that leads him finally to a photograph of himself as a boy with his mother.
34 See Patricia White’s discussion of L Is for the Way You Look in Uninvited: Classi-
cal Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability (Bloomington: University of
Indiana Press, 1999), 35–36.
35 See Mietch, Family Frames.
36 On this issue, see Eric Clarke, Virtuous Vice: Homonormativity and the Public Sphere
37 See Watney, Policing Desire; Crimp, “Mourning and Militancy”; Wojnarowicz,
Close to the Knives; and on Silverlake Life, Phelan, Mourning Sex, 153–73.
38 Jean Carluomusto, phone conversation with the author, 8 July 2002.
40 See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991).
41 On Holocaust memorials and museums, see J. Young, The Texture of Memory. On
the Vietnam War memorial in Washington, see Sturken, Tangled Memories.
42 Maxine Wolfe is a member of the collective; Polly Stithelwaite worked with LHA
for many years and also lived there; Alexis Danzig was a member and also went
on a cross-country tour with the slide show; and Jean Carluomusto and Catherine
(Saaliied) Gund made Not Just Passing Through about LHA.
43 The profound influence of the archive on Leonard’s photography is visible throughout
her work, including her photographs of the bearded lady preserved at a museum in France, her photos of little girls in New York’s Museum of Natural
History, and her recent pictures of a disappearing culture on New York’s Lower East Side. For catalogs of her work, see Zoe Leonard, Strange Fruit (New York:
Paula Cooper Gallery, 1995), and Secessio.
44 AIDS: A LIVING ARCHIVE™ was also the title of the 2001 exhibit Carluomusto and
Rosset curated for the Museum of the City of New York to mark the twen-
tieth anniversary of GMHC; the exhibit included the first public installation of
“The Portrait Gallery.” In addition to footage Carluomusto and Rosset shot for the
installation, “The Portrait Gallery” uses clips from Carluomusto and Rosset’s ar-
chives, including tapes Carluomusto made with GMHC (including the Living with
AIDS cable access series, the Safer Sex Shorts, and the Oral History Project), ACT-
UP’s DIVA-TV, and the Testing the Limits Collective; footage Rosset shot and
produced for the Sixth International Conference on HIV/AIDS and STDS in San
Francisco in June 1990; interviews Rosset shot and produced with South African
AIDS activists; and material shot by Gregg Bordowitz, some of which now
appears in his video Habit (2001).
45 Jane Rosset, e-mail to author, 17 January 2002.

Epilogue

1 For more on the Shepard case, see Beth Loffreda, Losing Matt Shepard: Life and
Politics in the Aftermath of Anti-Gay Murder (New York: Columbia University
Press, 2000).
3 The Brandon Teena Story, dir. Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir (1998); and Boys
6 Judith Halberstam has taken up the case of Teena in “Male Fraud: Counterfeit
Masculinities and the Brandon Teena Archive” (paper presented at the Future
of the Queer Past conference, University of Chicago, September 2000), as well as
as “Telling Tales: Brandon Teena, Billy Tipton, and Transgender Biography,” in
Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion, ed. María C.
37. It is significant that Halberstam uses the concept of the “archive” to describe
the range of documents that represent the Teena case. Halberstam has also con-
ducted to a dossier of short articles about Boys Don’t Cry that have appeared
in Screen: Aaron, “Pass/fail”; Julianne Pidduck, “Risk and Queer Spectatorship,”
Screen 42, no. 1 (spring 2001): 97–102; Patricia White, “Girls Still Cry,” Screen
42, no. 1 (summer 2001): 217–21; Judith Halberstam, “The Transgender Gaze in
Boys Don’t Cry,” Screen 42, no. 3 (autumn 2001): 294–98; and Lisa Henderson,
7 See Morrison, “The Site of Memory.”
9 Halberstam discusses this issue in “The Transgender Gaze” and “Telling Tales.”
10 For more on the question of class, see Henderson, “The Class Character of Boys
Don’t Cry.”
11 I’m borrowing here the distinction between universalizing and minoritizing con-

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