

Review by Brian Dempsey of Aaron Devor's *The Transgender Archives: Foundations for the Future* (2nd ed)

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The Transgender Archives: Foundations for the Future (2nd ed)
by Aaron Devor
University of Victoria Libraries
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For the past decade the University of Victoria, Canada, has taken a leadership role in investing in trans studies. It has done this through building its unparalleled Transgender Archive which “is committed to the preservation of the history of pioneering activists, community leaders, and researchers who have contributed to the betterment of transgender and gender nonconforming people”, by establishing the first ever Chair in Transgender Studies and most recently by announcing an ambitious scholarship and fellowship scheme for students and academics. As a long-serving academic in the sociology department at the university, Aaron Devor founded the archives in 2007 and subsequently became the first person appointed to the Chair (professorship) in Transgender Studies in 2016.

In this delightfully illustrated book, which is available as print-on-demand hard copy or an online pdf (both via <http://www.uvic.ca/transgenderarchives/>), Devor relates the inspiring history of the founding of the archive and introduces us to some of the items that are available in what is the largest such archive in the world. I say “are available in” rather than “are preserved in” because the university’s philosophy in relation to the more than 320 linear feet of archival materials, books, and periodicals from eighteen countries and spanning over a century of activism and research is that “[a]rchives, and the rare publication collections that are often associated with them, would be nothing without people to use them. The Transgender Archives ... moves beyond delimiting notions of rare collections as solely serving the research interests of the academy, or consisting only of materials created in privileged socio-economic contexts.”

Professor Devor’s work, generously supported by his librarian colleagues and the many others who have donated material or otherwise supported the archive, is exemplary and shows how valuable archives can be if based on inclusive and progressive principles. Oh, and a little institutional support also goes a long way!