

David Flaherty Scholarship

The McPherson Library is one of the most important places at UVic. This academic year I have discovered that the library has so much more than just comfy seats to study but is a resource of rich, unique information to sink your teeth in to. For me, the Transgender Archives is a resource that opened my eyes to how essential libraries are. I was first introduced to the Transgender Archives, in a class I took called GNDR 219: “Intro to Trans Histories”, taught by Jamey Jespersen. In this class, we took a ‘field trip’ to the Transgender Archives and were taught that this is the largest collection in the world. Being able to hold these amazing pieces in my hands, like issues of *Transvestia*, a magazine ranging from the 1960s-1980s about cross dressing, was seriously life changing. To feel the pages of pieces like *Transvestia* was like holding pages of proof of queer existence, especially because we are currently living through attacks on trans existence. After my visit to the Transgender Archives, I could not stop talking about how transformative this experience was because my perception of archives totally shifted. I used to think of archives as a way of maintaining a cisgender, white supremacist, heteronormative narrative, but I now understand that archives are ways to show diverse histories and complex, nuanced stories of people's lives.

Exploring the Transgender Archives inspired a lot of my work this year. In multiple classes I chose to explore the existence of trans lives. For example, in HSTR 350: “Weimar and Nazi Germany”, I researched Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Research, where some of the first gender affirming surgeries took place. I used the Transgender archives as well as the UVic library’s online database of articles to complete this research. In GNDR 219, our final assignment was to imagine and create something that could have been in the Transgender

Archives. I created a transvestite pass for Dora Richter, a transgender woman who worked at Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Research. My visits to the Transgender Archives inspired this project because I relied on the lens that archives present someone's life as multidimensional and fully human. The Transgender Archives are essential and demonstrate how people cannot simply be erased.

I also used the Digital Commons in the library this year for my GNDR 300 class. We were required to build a website and were given tutorials through the Digital Commons. As someone who is not very tech-savvy, the assistance provided by the Digital Commons was essential. I was able to create a website that I am proud of because of the one on one help I received. To me, the Digital Commons represents that libraries are fluid and can adapt to provide services that respond to the current needs of its community. The library is a place of learning, community, remembering, and growth.