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# Transgender Culture and Resources

## Jeannie Bail and Ailsa Craig

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In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of transgender culture, issues, and experiences. In popular culture, trans celebrities such as Laverne Cox, Chaz Bono, and Janet Mock have been a part of this shift, often acting as celebrity spokespeople to increase understanding of trans issues. Even with the greater visibility of trans lives in popular culture, ongoing court battles like *G.G. v. Gloucester County School Board* (a US case centered on trans students' rights to use communal bathrooms congruent with their gender) demonstrate the need for greater understanding and acceptance.

As co-authors, we have had the privilege of working with materials on loan from the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria (Canada), the largest transgender archive in the world. This experience, which included collecting comments from library patrons who viewed the collection materials, highlighted for us the role that libraries and archives play in laying the groundwork for increased diversity, awareness, and inclusion related to trans lives, culture, and community. It is not only a matter of meeting the information needs of those who are coming out as transgender, but the wider community of family (spouses, children, parents, etc.), friends, and allies. And, alongside the value of providing information with direct practical application, patrons' comments underscored how the inclusion of trans resources at the library enriches our cultural imaginary, and creates the space for imagining and living what they have sometimes felt to be "impossible lives."

As discovered through our work on this column, there are some excellent resources to recommend to collection development librarians. Two that particularly guided our work are *TRANScending Identities: A Bibliography of Resources on Transgender and Intersex Topics*, which was compiled for the American Library Association's (ALA) Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Round Table by Nancy Silverrod of the San Francisco Public Library (last updated 2008),<sup>1</sup> and *Beyond Caitlyn Jenner* by K. R. Roberto.<sup>2</sup> This column hopes to add to, and build upon, the work already done by Silverrod and Roberto, and is careful not to duplicate titles (although a few snuck in there).

In addition to the titles listed below, there are several prominent authors for whom it is challenging to single out individual titles. The body of their work is important as a whole, and many of them have received awards and appeared in Gender Studies and Sociology reading lists at universities across North America and beyond. These authors include **Kate Bornstein** (*My New Gender Workbook*; *A Queer and Pleasant Danger*; *Hello, Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Suicide*

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for *Teens, Freaks, and Other Outlaws; Gender Outlaw*), **Ivan Coyote** (*Tomboy Survival Guide; Gender Failure* (with Rae Spoon); *Missed Her; One in Every Crowd; The Slow Fix*), **Leslie Feinberg** (*Stone Butch Blues; Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman; Drag King Dreams*), and **Julia Serano** (*Whipping Girl; Excluded: Making Feminist and Queer Movements More Inclusive; Outspoken: A Decade of Transgender Activism and Trans Feminism*).

Presses that specialize in LGBTQ literature also make excellent places to find new work in this quickly growing area of cultural production. A few publishers to note are **Arsenal Pulp Press**, **Flamingo Rampant** (children's books), **Seal Press**, **Topside Press**, and **Transgress Press**. The website Lambda Literary is another excellent resource for features, reviews, and interviews. Lambda Literary also sponsors an award program known as The Lammys, which identifies and celebrates the best writing in LGBTQ publishing. There is also the invaluable work of ALA's GLBT Round Table, which administers the Stonewall Book Awards.

If we have inadvertently left out any important resources (no doubt we have), please feel free to contact us—we would love to continue building upon the collective efforts of librarians identifying and promoting material that represents and contributes to greater gender diversity in the stacks.

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## REFERENCE SOURCES

Erickson-Schroth, Laura, ed. *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014 (ISBN: 978-019-932535-1).

This 672-page guide is an essential resource about anything having to do with trans life, written by and for the transgender community (family and friends will find it invaluable, too). Its many contributors write on topics such as "Relationships and Families to Life Stages." The inclusiveness of the book is noted, with an emphasis on the diversity of the transgender community in the chapter "Who We Are." The editor holds an MD, so health, both physical and mental, is covered candidly and authoritatively.

Howell, Ally Windsor. *Transgender Persons and the Law*, 2nd ed. Chicago: American Bar Association Book Publishing, 2015 (ISBN: 978-163-425036-8).

According to a study on the information needs of transgender communities in Portland, Oregon, legal information is the top-ranked material sought.<sup>3</sup> This guide covers many areas of law, such as identification changes, family law, and health care, using case law and federal law and regulations. This invaluable source also contains a glossary of terms and an appendix that breaks out, state-by-state, laws relating to changing one's birth certificate. The book also intersects with health care issues by providing a list of US companies that provide health insurance coverage for gender confirmation surgery.

Meyerowitz, Joanne. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004 (ISBN 978-067-401379-7).

A cultural history that relies heavily on archival material to construct what has taken place since the mid-twentieth century in medical and scientific treatment of gender and sex, starting with the "sex change" surgery of Christine Jorgensen. The role of the media, particularly its treatment of transsexuality in popular culture, is also explored.

Stein, Marc, ed. *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*. New York: Scribner's, 2004 (ISBN: 978-068-431261-3).

First published in print in 2004, and due for a revision, this work is available online through the Gale Virtual Reference Library. It is a general reference on wide-ranging LGBT historical developments, and contains a variety of transgender topics such as the Erickson Educational Foundation and Transgender Organizations and Periodicals. Coverage includes over five hundred entries, and its chronology spans four hundred years of history.

Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History*. Berkeley, CA: Seal, 2008 (ISBN: 978-158-005224-5).

Written by a trans woman and historian, this is a well-received survey text of transgender history covering the past hundred years. In addition to historical information, the author opens the book with a detailed chapter on key terms and concepts, and provides an addendum on further reading and resources.

## Books

Beemyn, Genny and Susan Rankin. *The Lives of Transgender People*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011 (ISBN: 978-023-114306-6).

A groundbreaking research project of 3,474 diverse transgender participants, this data-rich study shares its findings, broken down into five sections: Demographics, Experiences, The Climate, Developmental Milestones, and, of particular interest for those who work with transgender youth, Implications for Higher Education.

Boylan, Jennifer Finney. *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*, 10th anniversary ed. New York: Broadway, 2013 (ISBN: 978-038-534697-9).

Boylan has the distinction of being an academic, a soap opera guest, and a best-selling author. This is her honest, and often humorous, story of transitioning from James to Jennifer, and the repercussions of her gender shift on her wife, two sons, friends, and colleagues. She admits that the change was easier for her than for those around her.

Califia, Patrick. *Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Cleis, 2003 (ISBN: 978-157-344180-3).

Known for his provocative and radical writings on

sexuality, Califia, who is a trans man, explores the history of “gender transgressors” and gives attention to a group that is often overlooked: partners of transgendered people. A sweeping overview and critique of the literature published on trans people—from autobiographies to academic writings.

Currah, Paisley, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Price Minter, eds. *Transgender Rights*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006 (ISBN 978-081-664312-7).

Divided into three sections—Law, History, and Politics—this collection of essays, written by a wide range of leaders in the transgender rights movement, focuses on social justice and the advancement of transgender rights and equality. It also serves as a resource for those interested in an overview of trans issues in the United States from an activist perspective.

Faludi, Susan. *In the Darkroom*. New York: Metropolitan, 2016 (ISBN: 978-080-508908-0).

A memoir from the perspective of an adult daughter by famed feminist author Faludi, whose estranged father, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, transitions from Steven to Stefánie at age seventy-six. Not only is this a personal journey to uncover more about her father’s motivations for undertaking gender confirmation surgery, but it is also an examination of what gender is and how it both shapes and traps us.

Greatheart, Marcus. *Transforming Practice: Life Stories of Transgender Men That Change How Health Providers Work*. Toronto: Ethica, 2013 (ISBN: 978-099-179890-2).

Greatheart’s training as a social worker shapes this book, and emphasizes the support systems and resources available to trans men. Many stories of those who have transitioned are included as well. One of the author’s goals is to encourage “trans competent” practices and environments among those who provide medical care to the transgender community.

Irving, Dan and Rupert Raj, eds. *Trans Activism in Canada: A Reader*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2014 (ISBN: 978-155-130537-0).

This critical anthology brings together work from trans activist scholars and community members. The editors focus on the process of transformation, from opportunities for social change to changes in institutions and health care. The collection features leading Canadian scholars such as Dr. Aaron Devor and Viviane Namaste.

Jacques, Juliet. *Trans: A Memoir*. New York: Verso, 2015, (ISBN: 978-178-478164-4).

At the age of thirty, UK-based journalist Jacques, after struggling with gender identity for many years, made the decision to pursue gender confirmation surgery. She chronicles her journey through an online column in the *Guardian*, and shares her story publicly with readers all over the world. Many cultural references to her favorite films, books, sports

teams, and music are provided, allowing the reader to “get to know” the author.

Jennings, Jazz. *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen*. New York: Crown Books for Young Readers, 2016, (ISBN 978-039-955465-0).

Called one of “The 25 Most Influential Teens” of 2014 by *Time* magazine, this YouTube star and trans activist has written a memoir that chronicles her journey, coming out at as a transgender girl at an early age with much love and support from her large Jewish family. A New York Public Library Best Book for Teens, 2016.

Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2014, (ISBN 978-076-365611-9).

An intimate look at the lives of six mostly urban transgender or gender-neutral young adults, with accompanying photographs by the author. The book offers a window into their teenage lives, and serves as a photojournalistic account of their stories through the author’s interviews and images. Many of the subjects speak frankly about some of the challenges faced such as bullying and grappling with gender identity.

Mock, Janet and Mark Seliger. *On Christopher Street: Transgender Stories*. New York: Rizzoli, 2016, (ISBN: 978-084-785831-6).

Known for his photographs of celebrities, Seliger set out to capture the spirit of the old West Village, especially its various subcultures, which are rapidly disappearing in the face of an uber-gentrified New York City. He was drawn to the transgender community, and his intimate portraits are accompanied by the subjects’ own stories of transitioning and the impact it had on their lives.

Nutt, Amy Ellis. *Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family*. New York: Random House, 2015, (ISBN: 978-081-299543-5).

A *New York Times* Notable Book, this is the true story of Wayne and Kelly Maines, who adopted who they thought to be identical twin brothers. It turns out, however, that the twins identified as different genders. The book chronicles the emotions of the family as it comes to terms with the transformation of a son to a daughter.

Shultz, Jackson Wright. *Trans/Portraits: Voices from Transgender Communities*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2015 (ISBN: 978-161-168807-8).

Part of a “fourth wave” of trans literature, the book is filled with useful information such as a timeline of transgender history, a glossary of medical terms, and resources for medical and mental health care providers. In addition to the stories of over thirty trans individuals, this broad and inclusive book was created to produce a “comprehensive, collective and lay memory of transgender experiences” through oral history.

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Valentine, David. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007 (ISBN: 978-082-233869-7).

An interdisciplinary ethnography by an anthropologist who worked as a safe-sex activist in New York City during the early 1990s. The author, now an assistant professor in anthropology at the University of Minnesota, discovered that, in his research with primarily trans women, there were language politics at play and resistance to being labeled transgender.

Zabus, Chantal and David Coad, eds. *Transgender Experience: Place, Ethnicity, and Visibility*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2014 (ISBN: 978-041-565616-0).

A comparative, global reader of trans topics from around the world including Australia, South Africa, and France. As the editors point out, the need to increase the visibility of the transgender experience is one that is a “common goal globally.”

### Periodicals and Serials

*International Journal of Transgenderism*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005, quarterly (ISSN: 1553-2739).

Published in association with its partner organization, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), this journal features international and multidisciplinary articles on transgender health care topics from academics and practitioners in the field. Indexed in many sources, including: *CINAHL*, *CSA Social Services Abstracts*, *SocINDEX*, *EBSCOhost*, *Scopus*, *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)*, *LGBT Life*, *PsycINFO*, and more. Volumes 1 through 6 are with German publisher Symposion.

*Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014, quarterly (ISSN: 2328-9252).

Edited by Paisley Currah and Susan Stryker, this journal publishes innovative interdisciplinary research exploring gender and identity, with issue topics ranging from Decolonizing the Transgender Imaginary to Archives and Archiving. Indexed in *EBSCOhost*, HighWire Press, and Scholars Portal.

### Databases

*Archives of Human Sexuality and Identity: LGBTQ History and Culture Since 1940*. Gale.

Launched in 2016, this vast new digital offering brings together thousands of rare and unique primary sources, many out of print, from organizations such as the New York Public Library, the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society. This searchable collection includes LGBTQ materials from around the world, including newspapers/newsletters, organizational records, reports, pamphlets, manuscripts, and more.

*LGBT Life*. EBSCOhost.

Known as the definitive index to LGBTQ literature, it was created in partnership with ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives and the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation. Source types include 350+ abstracted and indexed books and reference works, 260+ abstracted and indexed journals, magazines, and newspapers (many regional). Includes a fair number of transgender sources, including a short run of the pioneering magazine *Transgender Tapestry*.

*LGBT Thought and Culture*. Alexander Street.

A database of significant archival materials, relating to LGBT political and social activism from the twentieth century to the present. The database contains case files relating to a number of obscenity cases (including Radclyffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness*) and a run from 1965–80 of the Damron Guides, a directory of LGBT-friendly establishments in the United States and Canada. Exclusive content includes the Pat Rocco Collection, the papers of Jeanne Cordova, and the Magnus Hirschfeld Collection. Partnerships made with various institutions, including ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, The Kinsey Institute Archive and Library, and Cleis Press, ensure broad, multidisciplinary coverage. Cross-searchable with *LGBT Studies in Video*. (see below).

### Web Resources

National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) (<http://www.transequality.org/>)

Founded in 2003, the Washington, DC-based NCTE is a national social justice organization for transgender people. Its advocacy efforts focus on two projects: the Racial and Economic Justice Initiative, which aims to include perspectives of trans people of color and those who are affected by poverty, and to improve conditions for transgender people who are incarcerated or detained, and the Trans Legal Services Network, which helps transgender persons navigate any legal-related issues, such as formally changing one's name or gender on identity documents.

Transgender Law Center (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org>) and Transgender Law and Policy Institute (<http://www.transgenderlaw.org>)

Sister organizations, they work together to combat discrimination, and to provide legal information and resources to the transgender community. In addition, they advocate for the advancement of trans rights and equality in law and policy, and monitor and track current legal developments happening around the world. The Transgender Law Center operates a helpline for legal information requests.

Trans Student Educational Resources (<http://www.transstudent.org/>)

A youth-led organization that promotes a trans-friendly educational system through advocacy work and trans activism. It has several upcoming publications to note, including

Title IX: *The Rights of Transgender Students* (to be released in 2017). It also maintains the biggest online list of LGBTQ+ camps.

## Archival Collections

Digital Transgender Archive (College of the Holy Cross) (<http://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net>)

Based at the College of the Holy Cross, where its founder and project director K. J. Rawson is an assistant professor in the English department, this is the world's largest online hub of digitized transgender materials. A collaboration of over twenty institutions and private collectors, it contains materials from around the world. Its goal is to make trans history easily accessible to researchers globally. The archive is searchable, and merges all its various collections into a single search engine. Users can also browse the materials by geographic location, topic, or collection.

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (University of Southern California Libraries) (<http://one.usc.edu>)

Founded in 1952, ONE is the largest repository of LGBTQ materials in the world, housing over two million archival items. A small portion of the collection has been digitized and is available online via the USC Digital Library. Among the types of materials represented are periodicals, books, film, sound recordings, photographs, pieces of art, organizational records, and personal papers. A majority of the collection is searchable via online catalogs, including its subject files, and finding aids are available for its archival collections via the Online Archive of California.

Transgender Archives (TGA) (University of Victoria, BC, Canada) (<http://www.uvic.ca/transgenderarchives/>)

Launched in 2011 and dedicated to the preservation and promotion of trans history, the TGA is the largest trans archive in the world. Its materials, which come from all over the world, range from books and newsletters to photos and personal correspondence. Its collections include many pioneers in trans activism, including Reed Erickson, Ariadne Kane, Virginia Prince, Rikki Swin, and the organizational records of Fantasia Fair, one of the longest-running annual celebrations of gender diversity. TGA's founder and academic director, Dr. Aaron Devor, holds the Chair in Transgender Studies at the University of Victoria, and is a widely acclaimed scholar and teacher. His book, *FTM: Female to Male, Transsexuals in Society*, was recently reissued in 2016 by Indiana University Press (ISBN: 978-025-302286-8). The TGA also sponsors a conference, Moving Trans History Forward, which is open to everyone interested in the preservation and sharing of trans and gender-nonconforming history.

## Media Collections

*LGBT Studies in Video*. Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street (ISSN: 2325-2715).

This survey collection of over three hundred videos is a partnership primarily with Frameline, the media organization behind the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival. Many award-winning videos that chronicle LGBT history are included, in addition to rare works by pioneering filmmakers such as Carl Theodor Dreyer and Pat Rocco. Users can search by keyword or browse its offerings by theme or topic. Transcripts are provided, and are fully searchable.

## Film

By no means a comprehensive list, these films are worth highlighting for their numerous awards and international recognition: *Beautiful Boxer* (Thailand, 2003), *Boys Don't Cry* (USA, 1999), *The Danish Girl* (UK, USA, 2015), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (USA, 2001), *Laurence Anyways* (Canada, France, 2012), *Ma Vie en Rose* (Belgium, 1997), *Tomboy* (France, 2011), *Trans* (USA, 2012), and *Transamerica* (USA, 2005).

## Podcasts

TransWaves (<http://www.transyouthequality.org>)

Produced by the Trans Youth Equality Foundation, this show features interviews with a wide spectrum of guests, from trans youth and their families to health providers and activists. Past episodes have featured the TransKids Purple Rainbow Foundation and Harvard University poet, literary critic, and professor, Stephen Burt.

One from the Vaults (OFTV) (<https://soundcloud.com/onefromthevaultspodcast>)

Monthly episodes on trans history, produced and hosted by Morgan M. Page, a Montreal-based video artist, writer, and activist. In addition to being a Lambda Literary Fellow, Page has written *BRAZEN: Trans Women's Safer Sex Guide*.<sup>4</sup>

Transgeneral (<http://www.transgeneral.supplies/blog/>)

Billed as a "comedy infotainment podcast," this podcast is hosted by two Australian trans women, Chelsey and Charlotte. It was created as an outlet to connect with the trans community and to educate people on trans issues and concepts in a conversational, and often humorous, way.

Transition Transmission (<http://transitiontransmission.libsyn.com>)

Started in 2012 by the "Transgender Trio" (Amber Neko, Alexandria Tibby and Ramona Knotts), this is a "by and for transgender podcast." Current trans and LGBTQIA+ news and culture are discussed.

## References

1. Nancy Silverrod for the American Library Association Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table, "TRANScending Identities: A Bibliography of Resources on Transgender and Intersex Topics," 2008, [http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/sites/ala.org/glbtrt/files/content/professionaltools/glbtrt\\_trans\\_08.pdf](http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/sites/ala.org/glbtrt/files/content/professionaltools/glbtrt_trans_08.pdf).

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2. K. R. Roberto, "Beyond Caitlyn Jenner," *Library Journal* 141, no. 10 (2016): 52.
3. Angie Beiriger and Rose M. Jackson, "An Assessment of the Information Needs of Transgender Communities in Portland, Oregon," *Public Library Quarterly* 26, no. 1-2 (2007): 45-60.
4. Morgan M. Page, *BRAZEN: Trans Women's Safer Sex Guide* (Toronto: The 519 Church Street Community Center, 2013), <http://www.catie.ca/en/resources/brazen-trans-womens-safer-sex-guide>.