Going against the archival grain: case studies of pop culture archives of a music scene, regional zines, and local beer

Rutgers University has made this article freely available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters. [https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/64965/story/]

This work is an ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT (AM)
This is the author's manuscript for a work that has been accepted for publication. Changes resulting from the publishing process, such as copyediting, final layout, and pagination, may not be reflected in this document. The publisher takes permanent responsibility for the work. Content and layout follow publisher's submission requirements.

Citation for this version and the definitive version are shown below.

Citation to Publisher Version: Lutz, Christine A., Maharjan, Tara & Crawford, Stephanie. Going against the archival grain: case studies of pop culture archives of a music scene, regional zines, and local beer. Archives and Records 41(3).


Terms of Use: Copyright for scholarly resources published in RUcore is retained by the copyright holder. By virtue of its appearance in this open access medium, you are free to use this resource, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings. Other uses, such as reproduction or republication, may require the permission of the copyright holder.

Article begins on next page
**Going Against the Archival Grain: Case studies of pop culture archives of a music scene, regional zines, and local beer**

Popular culture collecting in academic special collections and archives is sometimes still viewed within the institution as a challenge to traditional collection development, which has tended to emphasize the mainstream and enshrine privilege and hegemonic structures. This is especially the case when the cultures and media emphasized in such collecting might be categorized as being counter-cultural, DIY, or somehow ‘other.’ This article consists of three case studies that emphasize recently developed popular culture-based collections at Rutgers University’s Special Collections and University Archives that focus on voices and communities outside archival norms of collecting: the New Brunswick Music Scene Archive, the New Jersey Regional Zine Collection, and the New Jersey Beer Collection. An emphasis on how faculty and staff have developed these collections by working with participants and creators outside mainstream popular culture leads to examples of how faculty and staff have engaged in critical pedagogy and outreach, particularly among students. Woven throughout are examples of challenges faculty and staff have faced around institutional acceptance, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivities along with work to overcome the challenges. The article concludes by considering future popular culture collection-building endeavors and engagement among students and community members.

**Keywords:** alternative mass media; beer; music scenes; New Jersey; popular culture; zines

**Introduction**

Popular culture collections in academic libraries have grown increasingly commonplace and accepted since the 1970s when Jack A. Clarke argued for the importance of such collections in a seminal piece in College and Research Libraries. At a time when popular culture studies was still a nascent field, Clarke encouraged librarians to consider the ‘literature, music and art produced for mass consumption’ by the ‘mass media,’ but also work produced by the ‘poorer and working classes’ and other non-elites, as well as by the ‘contemporary counterculture.’ Clarke encouraged librarians to think of popular culture material that could help give voice and representation to otherwise underrepresented communities as worth preserving and cataloguing for use by faculty and students working in the burgeoning field.
Taking a cue from Clarke, librarians, curators, and archivists can look to media studies and other humanities-driven fields to support the development and acquisition of pop culture or alternative communities collections. In *Why Study Media?* Roger Silverstone affirms that alternative media ‘have created new spaces for alternative voices that provide the focus for both specific community interests as well as for the contrary and the subversive.’ Silverstone writes of the employment of mass media techniques by alternative media ‘to pursue a critical or alternative agenda, from the margins, as it were, or from the underbelly of social life.’

Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives (SC/UA) is interested in documenting notes from the margins. The three case studies of Rutgers collections presented here aim to demonstrate that the non-traditional voices typically found in pop culture collections help the archive to more holistically document the New Jersey community and have fostered a new audience of users. We present context and background for each collection, its development, and modes of outreach and engagement. We also discuss both the common and unique challenges we have faced. In concluding, we explore goals and concerns for the critical pedagogical use of pop culture collections at Rutgers.

**Popular Culture Collecting and Rutgers SC/UA**

Rutgers University’s Special Collections and University Archives’ (SC/UA) stated mission is to collect, preserve, and make available ‘rare, unique, and specialized sources to support study and research on New Jersey, the history of Rutgers University, and other select subjects that support the mission and curriculum of the university and the needs of the people of New Jersey.’ Within SC/UA, the Sinclair New Jersey Collection is the largest, most comprehensive collection of New Jersey materials in the state. The approximately 70,000 monographs, pamphlets, periodicals and serials in the collection cover broad subject areas including state, county, and municipal history, genealogy, literature, science and technology, political science, and bibliographies. Therefore,
Rutgers SC/UA serves and documents its local community. As of the 2010 census of New Brunswick, New Jersey, where SC/UA is located, the population of 55,181 people was 66.2 percent white, 53 percent Hispanic or Latino, 14 percent Black or African American, and 9.7 percent Asian. Within the Rutgers community, as of 2017, of the 50,254 undergraduate and graduate students, 37.6 percent are white, 12.2 percent Hispanic or Latino, 7.1 percent Black or African American, and 26.2 percent Asian.

Archivists at SC/UA are aware and critical of the dominant, or traditional, collecting areas outlined in the mission statement that results in supporting the collecting of ‘important’ events, people, and publications. These important or historically significant events, people, and publications are often depictions of or produced by heteronormative, socio-economically advantaged white men. Traditional collections are often seen as utilized for ‘serious’ research, are easily accessioned into existing archives, and are representative of a small demographic’s lived/professional experience. In order to diversify the collections (gender, race, socio-economic, and high vs. low culture), starting in 2015, SC/UA began actively collecting popular culture materials, which are housed within the Sinclair New Jersey Collection. The New Brunswick Music Scene Archive, which documents the history of the local music scene; the New Jersey Regional Zine Collection, which focuses on marginalized voices in the zine community; and the New Jersey Beer Collection, which documents the immense growth of craft brewing in New Jersey, reflect DIY ethics and have attracted research interest from faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students at Rutgers and among a wider community.

Pop culture collections challenge institutional mission statements and collecting strategies; what is considered ‘important’ or historically significant; and who gets to take up space/who gets to speak. The New Brunswick Music Scene Archive documents what has been a primarily white male community, but has sought out women and minorities within that scene. In
the New Jersey craft brewing industry, documenting the relatively small number of women and minorities who are working in a white, male-dominated industry has also been a priority. Zines, on the other hand, are often a voice for the minority community, and have served as an almost organic vehicle for collecting these minority voices throughout the New Jersey region.

Developing popular culture collections has created both practical and ideological challenges. SC/UA faculty and staff have encountered difficulties in establishing and developing these collections and in finding storage and preservation solutions for ephemeral pop culture materials. Despite challenges, SC/UA faculty and staff have worked closely with producers and consumers of these materials, and their respective roles in these communities have helped them build collections and community trust and participation.

With ever-shrinking budgets, academic libraries and archives commonly look to faculty for curriculum-driven collecting. Student-driven collecting, however, especially in popular culture areas, can speak to the media with which young people engage. Such connection can go a long way towards fulfilling Rutgers’ and SC/UA’s missions around instruction and student support. At a state university with a large and highly diverse student body, SC/UA values the opportunity to work with students who might feel underrepresented or overlooked. In SC/UA popular culture collections are viewed as social, cultural and political tools and resources for the ever-diversifying student body. SC/UA’s engagement with students allows faculty and staff to be attuned to the materials that hold meaning for students. Perhaps students can then see themselves and the pop cultural artifacts that are meaningful to them in the space of an archive.

New Brunswick Music Scene Archive

*The New Brunswick music scene*
New Brunswick, New Jersey, the site of Rutgers University, has a long musical history. Throughout the nineteenth century, the city was home to theaters, opera houses, and musical associations. Paul Robeson, Rutgers Class of 1919, sang in local cafes for spending money. The National Musical String Company, at one time the world’s largest producer of steel musical instrument strings and the first producer of harmonicas in the United States, sat on the edge of the city from 1897 until the 1970s. In the decades leading up to the 1980s, New Brunswick became home to several live music venues as well as a number of spaces around Rutgers that regularly hosted local and national acts. Rutgers alumnus Lenny Kaye of the Patti Smith Group played with his band The Vandals at a Rutgers fraternity in 1964, and perhaps more famously, Bruce Springsteen played early gigs at The Ledge, now the Student Activities Center. As the sounds of ‘college rock’ began to grow in popularity in the 1980s with the help of college stations such as Rutgers’ WRSU, bands such as The Smithereens, The Blasés, and Spiral Jetty helped put New Brunswick on the musical map. Additionally, the New Jersey hardcore scene emerged in this decade, and bands such as Pleased Youth, The Bouncing Souls, and Headstrong, began to call New Brunswick home. Amid this scene, ‘house party’ shows for all ages began to develop. But even in the mid-1980s, a music reporter for the Central New Jersey Home News observed a ‘recent dearth’ in live music venues in the city, noting that show organizers were booking shows at a local restaurant not known for having musical offerings.

By the 1990s, as the price of replicating CDs, cassettes, and vinyl records became more affordable, many labels established themselves in New Brunswick. Well-known bands of this time included Lifetime, Deadguy, Buzzkill, and Bionic Rhoda. As the decade went on, most remaining New Brunswick venues started to close as the city’s landscape began to change with downtown redevelopment and the growth and expansion of healthcare and corporate entities. By the end of the 1990s, the New Brunswick basement shows, held in off-campus student rentals,
began to take off, and the 2000s ushered in the ‘New Brunswick basement scene,’ bringing national attention to The Hub City thanks to bands like Thursday, Screaming Females, and The Gaslight Anthem. The nationally-recognized Don Giovanni Records, founded in 2003 in New Brunswick, became the label of choice for many New Brunswick bands. Today, bands like The Front Bottoms and The Dead Flowers continue to emerge from the city and garner fans beyond New Brunswick, with the support of two campus radio stations and the basement scene. Several recording studios and one independent record shop maintain a steady business. Yet one of the most-lamented problems for the New Brunswick music scene remains a lack of accessible spaces for live music in the city and on the Rutgers campus. This point was driven home when the most influential and renowned live music venue in the city, The Court Tavern, recently closed for a re-imagining by its owners that would shut out local musicians and touring bands.

Archiving the scene

While nineteenth and early twentieth-century musical activities and spaces are documented in Rutgers’ Special Collections and University Archives, there was scant documentation of the thriving, often underground, music scene that grew throughout the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The city now focuses on cementing its reputation as ‘The Healthcare City,’ anchored by the world headquarters of Johnson and Johnson, which itself played a major role in redevelopment in the city beginning in the 1960s. Restaurants and theaters aimed at middle- and upper-class consumers operate almost in opposition to a youth-oriented, university-based local music scene, one that continually reinvents itself and is forced to ebb and flow according to the vicissitudes of developers and financial investors.

At Rutgers, the New Brunswick Music Scene Archive (NBMSA) was founded to demonstrate the value and reach of independent, local music and to document and attest to the importance of and meanings around a local music scene. Inspired by the work of the DC Punk
Archive and the Louisville Underground Music Archive to document their respective cities’ out-of-the-mainstream scenes, the NBMSA co-founders set out to document and keep alive the do-it-yourself ethos underpinning the local music scene, and tell a story of dissent from mainstream culture. The collection is comprised of flyers, set lists, publications, zines, press clippings, photographs, various forms of ephemera, sound recordings, and clothing relating to shows and bands who were based in New Brunswick. The collection is developed primarily through donations and maintaining a robust Facebook presence has helped spread the word about the archive, what is collected, and to make donor connections. The NBMSA has taken an ethnographic approach in collecting. When materials are accessioned it is important to speak to the donor to ascertain contextual information about the material and the donor’s connection to the scene. If donors are local, meeting with them and collect this information in person can lead to other donors or new stories about the music scene. This effort is a key part of the work of connecting with donors, building trust and respect, and making donors feel a sense of ownership in the archive, despite the fact it is housed at an institution.

**Combating institutional challenges**

Institutional challenges around funding, staffing, and technology are not new for special collections and archives. They can be particularly problematic for popular culture collections which are often faced with additional, unique challenges. The twentieth and twenty-first century materials in the NBMSA and other pop culture collections may take a back seat to the more pressing preservation concerns of, say, rare books or newspapers. For example, the NBMSA includes plastic bags from record stores that present problems around off-gassing. For the time being, the unit’s conservator recommended encapsulating the bags so they remain self-contained. The collection boasts 1980s acetate discs that only have so many plays in them before they are rendered merely artifacts. Currently, these discs can only be used for exhibition and in the
classroom to demonstrate evolving technologies. The intent is to apply for grants in order to have these discs cleaned and digitized, but, again, deficits in staffing and time have put this on the back burner. Ironically, while local music is more available than ever before via platforms like YouTube and Bandcamp, many libraries face a tremendous challenge in collecting digital music. Music librarian Sean Luyk has wisely noted that in local music collecting, ‘technologies of distribution’ can be ‘a barrier to collecting.’ For many institutions, including SC/UA, being able to capture and preserve digital output and media with copyright concerns remains a work in progress.

The founding of the NBMSA introduced a new collecting area to SC/UA. Music had not been a strong area of collection development for previous curators, despite a mandate to collect comprehensively on all aspects of New Jersey history and culture. As mandated by the university, University Archives regularly acquires records of student life like yearbooks, programs, and photographs, as well as records of the campus radio stations and concert committees that document Rutgers’ musical happenings to some extent. But outside of the University Archvies music-related collecting focused on more traditional areas, such as nineteenth century sheet music and concert programs, as well as records of defunct music-related businesses and organizations. Among SC/UA’s monograph holdings, well-known New Jersey artists like Bruce Springsteen, Frank Sinatra, and Count Basie are among the best-represented. So it was against this collecting history that the concept of the NBMSA received strong support in some areas, but doubts about its importance, viability, and potential for scholarly use in others.

**Outreach, instruction, and community engagement**

Katherine Reagan at Cornell University has called their Hip-Hop Collection a ‘living archive’ that aims to connect the voice of people in hip-hop to the university’s curriculum.’ Similarly, the NBMSA is a popular culture collection that brings underrepresented, often counter-cultural,
voices into academic discourse (but only if those voices wish to be represented, as will be discussed). Among their work with students, the co-founders have consulted one-on-one with a graduate student in California completing a thesis on the tension between underground music and academia, and a Rutgers graduate student in music theory examining the material culture of punk music in New Jersey. They have brought items from the archive to undergraduate and graduate classes at Rutgers whose professors want their students to learn about archives and special collections and potential avenues of research. These courses include the history department’s course on New Jersey history, the Communication course ‘Musical Cultures and Industries,’ and the American Studies graduate course ‘The Musical Matrix.’ Much like the founders of the UCLA Punk Archive (and certainly other similar archives), those who work with archive believe that the NBMSA and other counter-cultural pop culture collections can ‘be used as an appealing introduction to archives for the uninitiated.’

Through both one-on-one consultations and classroom instruction, SC/UA faculty and staff regularly bring new audiences into the archive. They use popular culture materials with undergraduate and graduate students not only to engage them with materials that may resonate with them but also to demonstrate the potential and viability of these materials for research. Additionally, faculty, staff and their collaborators who have their own close associations with these materials are available to meet and work with students and other researchers not only as subject experts but as participants in the scene.

When SC/UA faculty and staff speak with students and teaching faculty about the NBMSA, they are open about who they have been able to document so far, as well as the gaps in collecting, and how they make efforts to respect those who do not want to be documented. Consistent with SC/UA’s commitment to outreach, instruction and community engagement, SC/UA faculty will be teaching a Rutgers first-year seminar on exploring archives through the
lens of popular culture. Students will use the NBMSA and other collections to explore and
demonstrate how critical factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, class, and age are documented
and perpetuated in popular culture materials. They will have the opportunity to think more
deeply about what is included and excluded in archives and special collections and why. As a
final project students will create their own popular culture archives, acting as agents in what
Linda Hooper has described as the “participatory nature of critical pedagogy,” and provide an
opportunity for the students to discuss, demonstrate and explore their own objects of meaning.
Students and instructors together can consider what makes an archive, and how what “might be
organized and accessed fits into the goal of critical awareness through the discursive self-
awareness paradigm of critical pedagogy.”

Challenges of inclusivity

Taking an embedded archivist approach to how SC/UA faculty conduct instruction, outreach,
and collection development encourages a sense of trust, connection, understanding, and also
appreciation. They are able to delve into their own networks to build and promote the archive.
Yet they also realize that relying on their own networks can be limiting. To this end, SC/UA has
organized several programs at the Library with speakers who have been involved in the scene,
trying to bring in a diverse mix of musicians, owners of record labels and recording studios,
music journalists, and documentarians of the scene, being as cognizant as possible of often
diverse perspectives-genders, races, ages. In the first and second panels, speakers emphasized the
strong associations they have with items of pop culture. Each donor/participant was asked to
bring along an item of significance that served as a jumping-off point for discussion. These
ranged from jacket patches with band names that one participant (an author of an autobiography
of his time in the scene) wore in the 2000s, to drawings that singer/guitarist Marisa Paternoster
of Screaming Females made for flyers while sa student at Rutgers.
Within the framework of SC/UA’s mission, faculty and staff continue to work to meet challenges around inclusivity, around whose stories are told, and who is permitted to tell those stories. They continue to probe ways to document scene participants of color, women, LGBTQ individuals and their intersections in a preponderantly white, male scene that people outside of that demographic have found unwelcoming or inhospitable. For example, a woman who has been part of the scene contacted the archive anonymously to say that there were problems within the scene that have made women feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Indeed, flyers posted around New Brunswick offer assistance to women who have felt uncomfortable or threatened at male-dominated basement shows.

Although SC/UA is intent on documenting the underground and DIY, not everyone in those populations wants to be part of what can be seen as an elite institution, or, increasingly, a university that has become steadily more corporate. The New Brunswick basement scene is an example of an important scene NBMSA founders want to document, but in the pursuit of a scene that has literally gone underground to protect itself from police, adopting secret names for basement venues that require one to ‘Ask a Punk’ to find out show locations, they realize they may be doing a disservice. For the time being, they have settled on documenting the scene in relatively broad strokes, accepting flyers for past shows, and documenting bands that have grown out of the basement scene or are generally known to play basement shows.

Drawing on Will Straw’s concept of a music scene, SC/UA faculty and staff recognize that an archive can reinforce the ‘stabilization of local historical continuities,’ and it can ‘disrupt such continuities.’ They consider how they can disrupt problematic continuities in the archive and address the challenges inherent in attempting to create a local music archive that can serve as an inclusive cultural space. They are very cognizant that they have focused on the rock, hardcore, and punk scene that New Brunswick is best known for, but this focus excludes other scenes that
are less well known. These include robust and long-standing scenes around jazz, R&B, and Mexican music, not to mention the Hungarian, German, and Polish communities that once called New Brunswick home in large numbers. The NBMSA founders have begun laying the groundwork for future documentation in these areas. For example, they attended programming at the New Brunswick Public Library where we were able to start making connections with R&B musicians who have played for generations in New Brunswick. While the public library is building a database of musicians, producers, and labels, they cannot accommodate records of these creators, so the NBMSA can step in and work with members of this musical community to make their collections part of, or a sister collection to, the NBMSA. The NBMSA has the potential to participate in work with ethnic communities and their artistic output.

New Jersey Regional Zine Collection

Why collect zines

Between 2015 and 2016 a project archivist conducted a casual survey of the women artist collections in the Miriam Schapiro Archives on Women Artists at Rutgers. The findings were hardly surprising. There are a total of thirty-six women artist collections: twelve women’s art organizations records, two collections that are essentially vertical files, and twenty-two individual women artist papers. Of these twenty-two individual artists, one is a woman of color and one is openly gay. While queer women and women of color can be found in the twelve women’s art organizations records and in the vertical files, they are often hidden or unattributed and therefore not accessible to most users.

The lack of women of color and queer women in the Schapiro Archives highlights the fact that there are weaknesses that should be addressed and corrected. By not collecting diverse points of view, we run the risk that a viewer or researcher could surmise that women of color and
queer artists had nothing of worth to contribute to the women’s art movement. A plan to collect more queer and women of color artists was developed, but the acquisition and processing of new collections can take years to complete. In an effort to incorporate more diverse voices faster than traditional collections can, Rutgers SC/UA began to collect zines.

Zines were an obvious choice to collect for several reasons. First, the project archivist who conducted the women artist survey was familiar with zines. Starting in 2013, the project archivist attended the New York Feminist Zine Fest at Barnard Library and knew and met artists who made zines. Second, zines are almost exclusively made by women, queer individuals, people of color, and other marginalized groups. Zines are relatively cheap, often ranging from one dollar to fifteen dollars. Lastly, there is a zine librarian community that influenced the development of this collection.

**Definition and history**

Zines are small do-it-yourself publications that are often ephemeral in nature. Usually produced in small batches, zines can be photocopied, stapled, glued, taped, Sharpied, and/or handmade. Their subject matter varies, but all provide space as an alternative means of self-expression. Often, they are anti-corporate, anti-capitalist, and anti-system. The Barnard Zine Library defines zines as a DIY subculture self-publication. Zine makers often wish to share knowledge or experience with their own community and others. Zines are inherently about representation: who gets to be published, what kinds of stories are published, and whether those people and stories are reflective of lived existence. Tobi Vail expresses the need for representation in the Riot Grrrl zine *Jigsaw*:

> please listen to me you motherfuckers, i, unlike hundreds of boy fanzine writers all across america, have a legitimate need and desperate desire to be heard. i am making a fanzine not to entertain or distract or exclude or because i don’t have anything better to do but because if i didn’t write these things no one else would either.
Historically, zines can be traced to alternative media: self-published suffrage pamphlets in the nineteenth century, scrapbooks created by women’s clubs, or mimeographed political pamphlets, all of which offered alternative views and histories. Contemporary zines cover a wide range of subject matter including but not limited to: feminism, anarchy, comics, racism, abuse, and storytelling.

Literature around zines has generally focused on the practicalities of pitching zine collecting to your library, outreach with zines, and a humanities centric analysis of collecting ephemeral material, memory, and otherness in the archive. In 2003 Jenna Freedman proposed collecting zines to the Barnard Library. In that year there were only a handful of zines in libraries, and most were not accessible via library catalogues. Barnard College has a well-developed research focus on women, and Freedman proposed a complementary collection strategy in collecting zines written by women, that would begin by documenting third-wave feminism. Additionally, Freedman saw collecting zines as a strategy to challenge the lack of non-traditional publishers and authors in an academic library setting. This sentiment is echoed by other zine librarians and expanded upon in “Each According to Their Ability: Zine Librarians Talking about Their Community,” in which Violet Fox adds that the zine librarian community was founded with an impulse towards social justice and inclusivity.

Humanities scholars have approached the archive as a site for the analysis of collecting the ‘other’ and the ethical implications of collecting ephemeral material like zines. In The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order, Kate Eichhorn examines issues and questions regarding the archiving of feminist materials that document social change. For Eichhorn, the feminist archive is a site of interaction between the legacies, systems of thought, cultural production, and traumas of the past which she views through various collections of zines.

Collecting New Jersey Regional Zines
According to Diana Panuncial in her article “By the Numbers: International Zine Month Stats on DIY Zine Culture,” there are 138 libraries in the United States that house zine collections. In 2016 Rutgers SC/UA started collecting New Jersey regional zines. They collect in three ways: by purchasing directly from zinesters online via Etsy, Big Cartel, or their own website; by purchasing from zine distribution centers or distros online; and purchasing in person at local zine fests. Currently, there are roughly four zine distribution centers (distros) in New Jersey: Things You Say Distro, The Word Distro, No Shame Distro, and The Bettys. Being located between New York City and Philadelphia, New Jersey is a base for zinesters who travel between cities to sell their work at zine fests or underground bookstores. The exact number of current zine-makers in New Jersey is uncertain, but New Jersey zinesters are featured in larger zine collections like the zine Girl Wonder, made in New Brunswick in the 1990s and featured in the Sarah Wood Zine Collection at Duke University.

The New Jersey Regional Zine Collection contains zines about feminism, zines that are diary-like in their confessionals, zines about women’s issues, zine comics, zines that are lists, fan zines, political zines, zines about racism, artistic zines, and zines about various forms of abuse. All collecting areas emphasize the voices of queer women and/or women of color. As of June 2019, there are eighty-nine zines in SC/UA’s collection and a small amount of ephemeral material including zinesters’ business cards, pins, bookmarks, and stickers.

The zines SC/UA collects are somewhat limited in order to support research on New Jersey, the history of Rutgers University, and other select subjects that support the mission and curriculum of the university, SC/UA, and the needs of the people of New Jersey. We have chosen to interpret the geographic necessity loosely, to encompass those in New York and Pennsylvania. In addition to SC/UA’s mission statement, the development of the New Jersey Regional Zine Collection was also influenced by the zine librarians' online community and
through the zine librarians listserv.\textsuperscript{27} While SC/UA has been a longtime lurker on the listserv, they have utilized the group’s code of ethics and cataloguing guidelines to develop and inform their own descriptive practices.

In order to describe the zine collection, faculty and staff have utilized a finding aid structure, and a subject tagging system. Because zines are so ephemeral, they have found that finding aids that list only the author and title, then require the user to have specific knowledge of what they are hoping to see. In order to make the zines more accessible to new users, each zine is described with two to three subject taggings in addition to as complete a citation as possible.\textsuperscript{28} If a user is looking for zines about abuse, then they can search the finding aid for the subject term ‘abuse.’ In addition to Library of Congress subject headings, SC/UA occasionally adopts colloquial terms like ‘fandom.’ Currently the collection is housed in manuscript boxes and one oversized flat box and is arranged alphabetically in order to accommodate the haphazard accruals.

**Outreach as a challenge**

Kate Eichhorn writes in her conclusion to *The Archival Turn in Feminism*, that the archive needs to be activated in order to be truly radical:

What makes the archive a potential site of resistance is arguably not simply its mandate or its location but how it is deployed in the present. While archivists and special collections librarians play critical roles in fostering such possibilities, the onus is also on researchers working both inside and outside of the academy to ensure that activist collections of all kinds continue to be activated in the present and for the future.\textsuperscript{29}

In the spirit of activating collections, SC/UA creates and participates in outreach activities involving zines. In the summer of 2018, faculty and staff curated a pop up exhibition in which each case was dedicated to SC/UA’s specific collecting areas. The inclusion of zines resulted in
Rutgers School of Communication and Information faculty member Marija Dalbello’s History of the Book class came to view the collection and participated in making a simple one-page folded zine.

In 2018 Rutgers Art Librarian Megan Lotts’ Byrne First Year Seminar course on ‘play’ visited SC/UA. In addition to books on gaming rules, toys from a New Jersey utopian community, and feminist board games, staff pulled SC/UA’s untitled cootie catcher zine. The end of the class was spent with students creating their own cootie catchers and sharing their twists on the rules or results of playing the game.

While SC/UA has had success in sharing the zine collection with students and faculty, outreach is often in addition to archivists’ other duties of processing, description, digitization, and reference. This creates tension between the need to activate buried or inaccessible collections, and the mental health of the archivist who tries to juggle too many tasks.

New Jersey Beer Collection

The history of beer and New Jersey

The first commercial brewery in the state of New Jersey began in 1641. Few records exist to show the exact number of breweries operating in the state throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The best way to track where breweries operated is through newspaper advertisements about land and buildings for sale that included a brewhouse or malthouse. By the mid-1800s, better records were being kept on breweries, and these indicate that there were fifty-eight breweries in New Jersey as of 1879. By 1910, New Jersey had the seventh-largest beer industry in the United States, generating about $20 million a year. The thirteen years of Prohibition (1920-1933) saw twenty-five of the fifty-one pre-Prohibition breweries surviving. Post-World War II, larger breweries outside New Jersey began to acquire
New Jersey breweries, and each state was left to create their own laws regarding breweries. New Jersey did not create laws that were conducive to allowing breweries, leaving an Anheuser-Busch operation as the only beer producer in the state. In 1994, New Jersey’s previously stringent laws regarding brewing were amended to allow craft breweries and brewpubs. Another change to the laws in 2012 kicked off the current craft beer boom that New Jersey is still experiencing. In 2018, New Jersey ranked forty-fifth in breweries per capita but ranks sixteenth in economic impact making over $1.6 million.

The post-World War II trend of acquisition of smaller New Jersey breweries by larger out-of-state breweries meant that business records were also caught up in the acquisitions, leaving few records of these smaller breweries in archives today. With this lesson learned, it is important that in a time of a craft beer boom that we, as archivists, work to document these over 100 breweries in the state of New Jersey. The current New Jersey beer scene still operates in a very localized market with the distribution of a brewery’s beer generally confined to a limited radius of the brewery. This means that breweries are competing to have a tap handle at local restaurants, shelf space at liquor stores, and for visitors amongst other breweries. In the first half of 2019, New Jersey saw two popular breweries suddenly close. Rutgers SC/UA is working to document the beer scene by reaching out to breweries regularly, both electronically and in person, to see if they have materials such as beer lists, stickers, coasters, tap handles, diagrams of the brewing process, and other promotional materials.

**Who, why and how to document craft beer**

In 2018, while the overall sales of beer per volume in the United States were down one percent, the craft beer industry grew four percent by volume. The craft beer industry made up more than twenty-four percent of the $114.2 billion beer industry in the United States. As the craft beer movement continues to develop throughout the United States, the need to document local beer
scenes also grows. The literature around the archiving of the beer community has not been extensive but instead is only touched upon in beer industry literature or mentioned in small features in library publications. However, the effort to document the craft movement is one that is happening at a number of universities through strong relationships with their local beer scenes. As Tiah Edmunson-Morton of the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives notes in Heather Vandenengel’s article “Universities Archiving Beer’s Past and Present,” ‘The key to the archival efforts is to get beer drinkers and brewers interested in documenting their past and present, so future beer lovers can learn about the evolution of the brewing and hops industry.’ Universities such as California State University San Marcos Library (CSUSM), which holds the Brewchive, and Oregon State University, which maintains the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives, are working to archive their local beer culture. Repositories across the country have been working with beer communities to archive beer since as early as 2014. On a much larger scale, the National Museum of American History has created the American Brewing History Initiative to document the history of American beer. SC/UA began the New Jersey Beer Collection in the summer of 2016 to document the state’s growing craft beer industry through an active focus on reaching out to the New Jersey beer community.

As Judith A. Downie of CSUSM notes, ‘Much time is spent building personal connections with local brewers to prove that we are serious about this project.’ As we see with the experiences of the New Brunswick Music Scene Archive and the New Jersey Regional Zine Collection, community participation is paramount. Likewise, it isn’t enough to merely reach out to breweries; being a part of the brewing community is also important. Moreover, the personal connections that Downie references go beyond just the connections to local breweries in that they touch upon the efforts to document other popular culture collections. The community focus and institutional connections that drive the creation and growth of these collections are critical. A
key part of the work of archivists, curators, and librarians documenting popular culture collections is to continually interact with the culture that is being documented. The repositories that hold these collections also need to show the community that they are serious about documenting their history. In spring 2019, a faculty member took part in the International Women's Collaboration Brew Day at a local brewery. This annual event is held on March 8, International Women’s Day, to help raise awareness of women in the brewing profession. This brew day was a way for both the faculty member to learn more about how a local brewery operates, but also for the brewers and and other staff to learn that the local university is working to document the local beer scene.

While the New Jersey Beer Collection has little research value to modern-day scholars, this collection is an attempt by SC/UA to anticipate future research potential. While the collection is not one that is being used in the reading room by scholars, mainly because people can still go to these breweries in person and see the things that are being collected, this collection is one that is widely used for outreach, class instruction, and exhibits. The collected materials in the beer collection often fit into traditional manuscript boxes, however, the collection is also growing to include more cans, bottles, growlers, and tap handles. This presents a challenge in the storage of the collection, which needs specialized housings to accommodate the size and sometimes odd shapes of these items, such as a tap handle shaped like the state of New Jersey. In its own way then, the beer collection also lets us educate both faculty and students about the creative thinking and physical labor that go into housing and preserving non-traditional materials. The beer collection was highlighted when an American Studies faculty member brought her undergraduate class entitled ‘American Folklife: Foodways in Global Context’ to SC/UA. The collection inspired students to consider today’s craft brewing movement as part of a continuum from brewing in Colonial North America. Perhaps not surprisingly, the beer
collection is of great interest to students. The fact that their university finds beer culture important enough to document in the archive creates a newfound excitement in archiving. This excitement is why the New Jersey Beer Collection was prominently displayed in the center case of the pop-up exhibition noted previously. Intrigued, those walking by to see craft beer bottles in a display case, then wander into the gallery to learn more. The beer collection, like the zine and New Brunswick music collections, is also often featured on SC/UA social media feeds. The social media presence has been a key way to connect with members of various communities, including the library and archival communities, and people who are unaware of SC/UA’s collecting efforts.

With the uncertain viability of breweries in a continually growing craft beer market in New Jersey, the need to document these breweries while they still exist is a much easier feat than trying to track down materials after breweries close. The goal is to document as many of these breweries as possible and work to create a relationship with the breweries so that the collection can continue to grow to one day obtain oral histories, business records, and recipes.

**Conclusion**

The development of popular culture collections around the New Brunswick music scene, New Jersey-based zines, and the state’s craft beer movement at Rutgers University Special Collections and University Archives is a change to SC/UA’s long-established collecting strategies. In the curators’ practices around developing popular culture collections, they work to be sensitive to the fact that archival collections often reflect privileged perspectives. Yet faculty and staff in SC/UA want to pay particular attention to marginalized, DIY, and underground parts of popular cultures while they are still ‘of the people,’ and not co-opted or commodified by more mainstream popular culture. Curators are challenged and inspired to thoughtfully develop collections and modes of outreach and engagement as they continue to face mutual challenges around funding,
time, and lags in institutional abilities to adapt to rapidly changing technologies of creation and distribution. Further development of popular culture-oriented collections will require the curators to find ways to balance these challenges.

SC/UA faculty and staff see ongoing community engagement and outreach as crucial for continuing to develop and make meaning through popular culture collections. In the broader New Brunswick community, they have started on this course by taking successful classroom-based activities centered on SC/UA’s popular culture collections ‘on the road,’ and have collaborated with several New Brunswick community non-profits. In considering the future development of popular culture collections, faculty and staff must remain cognizant of the fact that New Brunswick is very diverse. As noted, in order to more inclusively document the city’s music scene, curators will need to pursue other musical genres and engage with students to learn more about what they listen to, or even what music they themselves might perform, and how faculty and staff can work with them to build collections that can resonate with them.

Development in the zine collection will hopefully look like more community-driven zine-making events, more hands-on zine projects throughout the Rutgers library system, and more rigorous collecting of zines, through connections with the Rutgers art community and increasing individual contacts with zinesters. For the beer collection, the need to continue to expand collecting is a priority, but also to conduct oral histories with the women and minorities who have emerged in the craft beer scene.

In SC/UA we can use the music, zine and beer collections to connect with young people who crave exposure to tangible media. The recent rise in vinyl record sales and continual output of music on vinyl, especially by independent bands, demonstrates a desire for connection with the material in an age of digital streaming media. A resurgent interest in zines, including the DIY cut-and-paste methods of the nineteen eighties and nineties reflects their power as a form of
media and self-expression. While many college students are no doubt interested in beer, perhaps a craft beer collection is a way for those of drinking age but also not yet at that point to gain an appreciation of the history and craft behind something dominated by a corporate, profit-driven industry. Parlaying curatorial expertise into helping students think about their own collections and interests in a new way, as things worthy of study, reflection, documentation, and preservation, will also help to grow all of these collections and further allow us to engage in the participatory aspects that are central to employing critical pedagogy in archival work. Engaging students around their own unique popular culture interests can educate archivists, curators, and librarians and then expand beyond their own biased conceptions of what can and should be archived.

Bibliography


Eichhorn, Kate. The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.


3. Ibid.
5. “Sinclair New Jersey Collection.”
8. The authors would like to clarify that these statements do not imply that we would like SC/UA to stop collecting the papers of white men.
11. Citation temporarily removed.
12. Fraser and Haley, “Building Punk Rock Collections at UCLA Library Special Collections,” 56.
15. A list of the collections can be found here: https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/scua/women-artists
21. Additional literature on the gap between humanities scholarship on the archive and archival theory can be found in: Caswell, “‘The Archive’ is Not an Archives,” http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/7bn4v1fk.
23. Fox et al., “Each According to their Ability,” 211.
24. Panuncial, “By the Numbers.”
25. Things You Say is currently on a break and The Bettys may be more NYC based currently.
28. This subject tagging structure is directly influenced by cataloging techniques listed on zinelibraries.info, and the Queer Zine Archive Project’s (QZAP) policy of tagging subjects that include specific queer or LGBTQ terms that are not and probably never will be included in the Library of Congress. See Kumbier, “Ephemeral Material,” 227-229 and Rachmattson, “Seven Questions for: Milo Miller.” Craft Beer Sales by State.
30. Perhaps a way to decrease the tension is to participate in more collaborations, so that in the theory the work will be spread out more.
32. Pellegrino, *Jersey Brew*.
33. “Craft Beer Sales by State.”
34. “National Beer Sales & Production Data.”
35. “Universities Archiving Beer’s Past and Present.”