

What Is The Wisconsin First Archive?

The *Wisconsin First* archive preserves the history of America's first law for the protection of same-sex relationships, Assembly Bill 70, passed into Wisconsin state law in 1982 after a fifteen-year civil rights campaign. This bill, preventing discrimination against lesbians and gay men in a variety of public and private matters, was the first of its kind and a major victory for LGBTQ+ rights nationwide.

Wisconsin First aims to preserve this history by providing access to digital copies of documents relating to AB 70 sourced from private and public sectors, currently maintained by a number of partnered institutions.

These pages contain scanned or photographed copies of the contents of their respective collections, available under Creative Commons license, most of which have text transcripts within a drop-down section included lower on the pages. Built-in page search functionality on Google, Firefox, and similar browsers can be used (Ctrl+F is the default shortcut for most desktop browsers) once the drop-down has been opened.

NOTE: Different institutions often maintain different methods of accessioning or arranging documents, there may be variation in how certain documents are handled depending on the institution and collection.

This archive is by no means a complete arrangement of the entire story of AB 70 nor the fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Wisconsin, in part because said story is still being written to this very day. This archive serves as a reference source to better enable learning about this history, and to aid in further research beyond what is already known.

How To Use This Archive

You will find separate pages for many individuals, with links to the items and collections which they are pertinent to, under the People category, indexed and accessible via the Search bar.

In order to find what you are looking for, searching for names of those involved, newspapers and other publications from the time, or particular pieces of legislation can guide you to individual pertinent files. From there, you can easily find new related documents by following the file path at the top of the page, which is detailed in the **Navigating Repositories** section below on this guide.

Search Functionality

The Search feature on this website (<https://wisconsin-first.com/search/>) will search through the available People and Folders, but does *not* include names of collections, the contents of individual file transcriptions, nor the names of repositories.

The Search page does allow for results to be filtered via collection, or by any of the six current repositories included.

NOTE: If you find an instance of an individual with a "People" page not being listed under the respective heading in the "Folder Details" section, or any other feedback to help improve the Archive, please get in touch via contact@ourliveswisconsin.com.

Within the Search page, each Repository, Collection, and the Boxes within are listed within the "COLLECTION" drop-down menu.



This offers an additional way to view and browse the layout of the Archive's collections.

Terminology

The Repositories are the institutions where the physical copies of these documents are maintained, and may be available for further use upon contact. If you would like to get in touch with repositories, please contact us at contact@ourliveswisconsin.com

The Collections are the sets of documents, photographs, and other materials a given institution has assembled and stored in one group, either because they were received in a donation or through acquisitions processes together, because they were stored as such previously by the institution while still in active use, or for a variety of other reasons. Different institutions may follow different sets of best practices for how their collections are arranged, depending on the circumstances and procedures of the institution.

Many notable individuals are listed under the People category, allowing you to search the available collections by those associated with a particular figure. These are the same items accessible throughout the

Archive's collections, the People tags merely make it smoother and quicker to view items pertaining to particular individuals across all six repositories.

What Is An Archive?

The US National Archives (<https://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html>) states that archives:

- save items to serve as proof that an event occurred;
- explain how something happened, whether for personal, financial, or sentimental reasons;
- may be located in more than one place.

Wisconsin First exists to be a digital front for its collections regarding the fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Wisconsin, accessible online to the public to be a testament for the past struggles, to aid in research into it and those involved, and to overall better enable the public to learn about this watershed moment in state and national history.

Navigating Repositories

The documents are available in the order and categorization by which they were organized by their current repository.

When browsing this digital archive, the file path will be displayed at the top of each page, showing where any given document or file is stored, in the following format:

Home » Repositories » [*Name of Institution*] » [*Name of Collection*] » [*Box*] » [*Name of Folder*]

Using this file path, present on any page (even if it was found via built-in search, saved as a bookmark, shared as a link, etc), you are able to see where the same collection, box, or folder is stored, and be able to access it again later. For example, here is "Home » Repositories » University of Wisconsin-Madison. University Archives and Records Management":

[Home » Repositories » University of Wisconsin-Madison. University Archives and Records Management](#)



Items

[Series 5/87_COSCA_Richter 1954 \(Box 1, 8\)](#)

[Series 5/87_COSCA_oct 10 1963 moises \(Box 1, 7\)](#)

[Series 5/87_COSCA_1953 conduct app \(Box 1, 4\)](#)

[Misc \(Box 1 6\)](#)

Under the file path is displayed the collections available from said repository. Below the Collections, the Items section displays all of the Folders held within all of the Collections listed above, in order of attached call number.

Make A Contribution

If you have any information, records, or other items you believe can be of interest for the project, there is a form at the bottom of the "ABOUT WISCONSIN FIRST" page for contributing, either in documents, feedback, or otherwise. <https://wisconsin-first.com/about/>

Thank you for your time and interest, please feel free to contact us, and please enjoy the *Wisconsin First* Digital Archives!