LGBTQ PUBLIC HISTORY: REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

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Nicole Belolan, ed., with Sarah Case, October 2019

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A digital publication of the Public History Commons
as part of "Queering Public History: The State of the Field" in collaboration with *The Public Historian*.

Cover photograph from Emilie S. Arnold's essay: On June 12, 2017, visitors inspect a section of the *One Year Later* exhibition devoted to solidarity and outreach from around the country and the world following Orlando's Pulse Nightclub massacre. (Photograph by Frank Weber, courtesy of the One Orlando Collection).

"Did you Know" sidebars by Nicky Rehnberg and Sarah Dunne, University of California, Santa Barbara. Technical assistance by Meghan Smeznik, NCPH Digital Media Group.

INTRODUCTION

// NICOLE BELOLAN

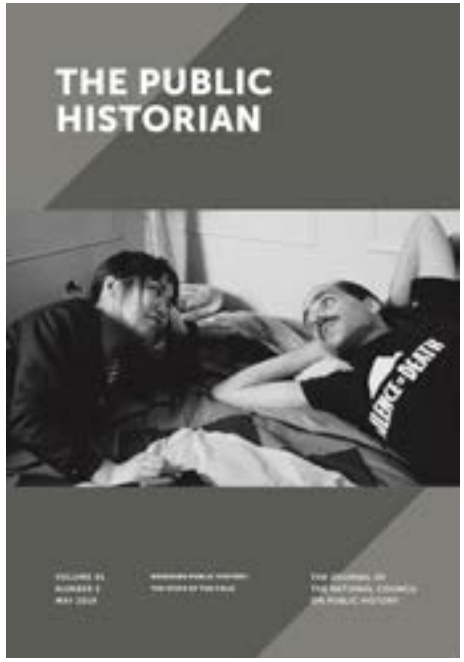
These reports from the field complement the special May 2019 issue of *The Public Historian*, guest edited by historian Melinda Marie Jetté and published in part to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of what is commonly referred to simply as "Stonewall." This single word refers to the uprising that took place "one steamy summer night in 1969," to quote the Stonewall Inn's web site, and catapulted the gay rights movement to the national stage. Yet as the essays in this electronic collection suggest, historians are collecting, preserving, and interpreting LGBTQ history not only at the best-known LGBTQ sites but also in communities across the country. These public history workers come from diverse backgrounds, and each approaches this history in different and exciting ways. LGBTQ history, readers will learn, goes by many names and is not monolithic. In fact, that diversity is what makes it so interesting and impactful. What can we all learn from these efforts, regardless of the type of history we do and the place where we do it?

From Colorado to Texas to South Carolina, historians, activists, and community members are collaborating on LGBTQ history initiatives ranging from oral history projects to exhibitions. These projects are not fleeting; instead they aim for long-term access and preservation of the histories with which they are working. You will read, for example, about how Beth Shalom Hessel and Nancy J. Taylor at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, acquired collections and initiated oral histories documenting the range of stances in the Presbyterian community on LGBTQ inclusion over the past forty years. Historical Society staff worked with broad constituencies to raise enough money to process the archives and get them ready for researchers. Expanding access to these collections will help the Historical Society reach new audiences, including community group collaborators, despite a limited budget. Are there untapped constituencies involved with your organization with whom you could share a coffee to talk about your hopes and dreams for your collecting future?

Further, these histories do not simply capture Stonewall and the following decades. They also reach more deeply into the past than we might imagine they could. Annie Anderson, for example, mined institutional records at Eastern State Penitentiary but also criminal court and police records to shape a new stop on the site's audio tour dedicated to LGBTQ history at the penitentiary, going back to the 1880s. LGBTQ history is a long one that can be incorporated into many historic sites throughout the country if we think creatively about where to find sources. Have you made time recently to explore that lead in a nearby archive you had always wanted to follow so you could add new perspectives to your existing interpretive materials?

All of these essays highlight the triumphs of doing LGBTQ history; they also emphasize the challenges. As Carrie Giauque asks in her essay about doing LGBTQ history in Columbia, South Carolina: how do you find someone to interview for an oral history if you want to talk to them about something they kept secret for a long time? And as Rebecca Hankins and Miguel Juárez suggested in their essay about collecting LGBTQ history at Texas A&M: how can you get people to care about LGBTQ history when the place where you work has a history of excluding LGBTQ individuals and groups from its walls?

Confronting challenges in doing public history that come with cultures of secrecy and exclusion is not unique to LGBTQ public history. Neither is celebrating successful collaborations. We hope these essays provide practitioners of public history with some new inspiration to tackle their goals but also to show their communities the importance of capturing and talking about LGBTQ history whether they find it in an oral history, an archive, or an artifact.



Special issue of The Public Historian, *Queering Public History: The State of the Field, May 2019. Cover image by Susan Kuklin.*

OUT OF THE LGBTIQ COLLECTING CLOSET: THE DON KELLY RESEARCH COLLECTION OF GAY LITERATURE AND CULTURE AT TEXAS A&M

// REBECCA HANKINS AND MIGUEL JUÁREZ

INTRODUCTION

At the opening of the *Lives. Liberation. Love.* exhibition of Don Kelly's collection at Texas A&M University, Kelly started his presentation by noting "I am not a scholar, librarian, or book dealer, I am a 74-year-old gay man who has had a life-long love and passion for books."[1] Kelly's vast collection consists of over 24,000 materials ranging from books, serials, newspapers, and flyers related to the LGBTIQ movement covering culture, activism, and lifestyle. This essay argues that Kelly and many others who have built significant and discreet collections are archiving their lives "in the closet," to reference the popular phrase referring to LGBTIQ individuals who have not made their gender identity or sexual orientation widely known. Like other underrepresented voices, the collections made by and about gay men and lesbians are essential to gaining a fuller understanding of the past. Adding them to publicly available archival repositories will guarantee inclusion of diverse lives in the archival and historical fields, ensuring that scholars don't ignore or exclude undocumented, underexplored, and underserved lives and communities. These dedicated and passionate collectors are, for us in the archival profession, amateur archivists who have the same skill sets and expertise, and, in most cases, a deeper knowledge of their subject matter than the archivists who accession their collections. We seek to honor the passion of these individuals, with a focus on the life's work and collecting of Don Kelly, who in spite of his modest statement, pushed Texas A&M University (TAMU) out of the collecting closet to ensure the University's archives live up to its rhetoric on diversity and inclusion.

Archival LGBTIQ materials help us look at topics using critical lenses which interrogate and subvert. Researchers' assumptions are typically changed and challenged by studying primary materials to arrive at wider notions of sexuality, homosexuality, and same-sex desire. These materials also help researchers explore how marginalized sexualities have largely remained buried in historical records.

This essay will discuss the strategies, collaborations, individuals, and groups that led to acquisition of the Don Kelly Research Collection on Gay History and Culture. This collection is now one of several other large LGBTIQ collections in North America, such as: the ONE Archives at USC, which is the largest LGBT repository in the world; the Gay and Lesbian Collections & AIDS/HIV Collections at The New York Public Library; and The James Hormel Collection at the San Francisco Public Library. All are among the top collections in terms of the depth of their holdings. In addition, there are diverse university holdings around the country that include the University of Michigan's Joseph A. Labadie Collection, the Gerber/Hart Library at the University of Chicago, and the LGBT Archive at the University of North Texas, which documents the history and culture of communities in the South and Southwest, and an emerging LGBT collection at the Chicano Studies Research Library and Archive, including "Collections Created by Women," at UCLA. Another significant collection is the Alicia Gaspar de Alba Papers at the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin. The Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota has as its expressed goal to become the largest LGBTIQ collection in the world! Many more institutions are engaged in building their LGBTIQ collections, so much that there is now a Wikipedia project to document these holdings all over the US.

1 Lauren Schiller, et al., *Lives. Liberation. Love.: The Don Kelly Research Collection of Gay Literature and Culture* (College Station: Cushing Memorial Library & Archives, Texas A&M University Libraries, 2015), viii.

The Don Kelly Research Collection in Gay History and Culture housed at TAMU has a breadth of holdings that is unparalleled and adds to the rich LGBTIQ collections around the country. The Kelly collection, combined with the Arden Eversmeyer lesbian literary and media collection, the Mark Sieling/John Algor rare transgender and gay materials, the papers of Judge Phyllis Frye (the first elected transgender judge in Houston), TAMU Professors Antonio La Pastina/Dale Rice's international LGBTQ materials, and the papers of Harriette Andreadis (founder of A&M's Women's & Gender Studies Program), plus many other smaller LGBTIQ archival collections, represents a strategic push for TAMU to become a space to preserve and make accessible these important resources. These significant holdings, along with the University's GLBT archive which chronicles the groundbreaking Supreme Court decision detailed below, position our holdings as an important contribution to other North American LGBTIQ collections noted above. Collecting these materials has made it possible for A&M to become one of the premiere research destinations for scholarship on LGBTIQ communities.

There is still significant work to be done in terms of collecting materials of underrepresented communities, including LGBTIQ communities throughout the country. The 2016 Princeton Review of Colleges list of unfriendly LGBTQ campuses placed Texas A&M University at number 13. With the acquisition of the Don Kelly Collection, we have now left that list and this progress is intertwined with the history of LGBTIQ collecting at the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives (CMLA). These collections demonstrate how the campus has pushed to become a more equitable and representative space for all.

HISTORY OF TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY AND LGBTQ ACTIVISM

TAMU has struggled with the representation of diversity as a central component of its founding mission of "intended for all." Founded in 1866 as a land-grant institution, it therefore had an obligation to educate all Texas citizens, including African Americans, women, Latinos, and indigenous individuals. However, that mandate did not prevent the Texas legislature in 1876 from declaring that African Americans and women would not have this opportunity. These two were the only groups not permitted to fully enter the school as students until 1963; restrictions on full enrollment for women as undergraduates continued until 1970. Scholar Sarah Schulman, in her book *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*, noted that, "No one with power in America 'comes around.' They always have to be forced into positive change."[2] These words are truly relevant to the history of LGBTQ activism on the campus of TAMU.

A turning point in this history occurred on April 4, 1976, when Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. John Koldus, denied an application from the Gay Student Services (GSS) to be a recognized student organization on the grounds that GSS would not "be consistent with the philosophy and goals . . . of Texas A&M University." GSS filed a lawsuit against TAMU in February 1977 with the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court ruled on behalf of GSS, but this ruling was appealed by TAMU to the US Supreme Court as *Gay Student Services v. Texas A&M University*. The Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal, leaving intact the lower court decision of 1985 that required universities nationwide to recognize and provide financial support to gay student groups under the First Amendment. The ruling had an expansive and far-reaching impact on public universities throughout the United States. Not only did it allow all gay student groups to receive recognition and support, but also it opened the way for Greek organizations and other student groups to request similar benefits. Cushing has maintained and preserved the records of the legal challenge including documents, flyers, papers, and writings of what is now the GLBT Resource Center.

2 Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 15.

In an effort for the university to become more inclusive, a series of exhibits were initiated in the spring of 2001, beginning with an exhibit on African American Aggies (the nickname for students who attend TAMU) titled *In Fulfillment of a Dream: African Americans at Texas A&M University*, followed by an exhibit on Aggie women titled *Intended for All: 125 Years of Women at Texas A&M* (Spring 2003), and culminating in the exhibit titled *¡Siempre! Hispanics at Texas A&M, Celebrating 130 Years* (2006-2007). These exhibits helped to highlight the diversity at Texas A&M and they also helped to identify possible directions for collecting and inclusion. In 2003, Hankins was hired at Texas A&M to work in TAMU's Cushing Memorial Library & Archives and Juarez was hired in 2005. Together, we used these prior inclusion efforts as a foundation of our work as archivists. We embarked on a program of outreach and collecting LGBTIQ materials that would compel us to confront that past, be a force for positive change, and put our commitment towards an inclusive future forward.

LGBTIQ GOALS/OUTCOMES

The LGBTIQ collections at Cushing have been built with the strategic goals and outcomes in mind listed below:

- To inform and educate students, staff, faculty, and the surrounding community of the history that will acknowledge the importance of LGBTIQ history in TAMU's history.
- To connect the university's LGBTIQ history to the wider impact on student groups throughout the nation.
- To provide steps for accessing this history.
- To showcase some of the projects, papers, and writings which are products from that history.
- To provide information on the research possibilities these collections offer for students, staff, faculty, and researchers.

Adding the Don Kelly Research Collection on Gay History and Culture contributed to fulfilling Cushing's LGBTIQ collection goals.

ACQUIRING THE DON KELLY RESEARCH COLLECTION ON GAY HISTORY AND CULTURE

Don Kelly, born in 1940, a Chicago native, moved to Texas and retired there after a thirty-five-year-career as a civil servant in East Texas. He began building his collection after moving to Houston. He stated at an April 2015 exhibit opening, "I thought I might make a contribution by collecting the sometimes reviled and much undervalued books and publications that have been the only source of reassurance and identity for many gay people over the years."

As a social activist much of his life, Kelly says that he has always had an interest in the advancement of gay rights and the desire to understand the history of gay people, which sparked his interest in collecting gay literature and publications. From the publications of the Victorian era through the "lost gay novels" of the early twentieth century and campy gay pulps from the 1950s and 1960s, the collection contained an array of rare and unique materials. Fittingly, Kelly describes the collection as "broad, but in-depth."[3]

3 Schiller, et al., *Lives. Liberation. Love*, viii.

What sets the Kelly collection apart from others is the singular and intentional nature of the collection that represents the vision of one dedicated individual. Some exceptional features of these holdings include international and national titles that reflect the gay rights movement across the world, including the rare gay magazine, *Estrapost der Eigene*, first published in Germany. The Kelly collection includes an enormous cache of gay pulp fiction stories with colorful titles and covers, a rich assortment of artists' books, numerous inscribed titles by authors both famous and infamous, and arguably, the best coverage of full runs of periodicals from all over the country including wonderful covers that feature works of renown photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

We first became aware of the Don Kelly Collection on the Archives and Archivists (A&A) listserv in September 2012. Our first thought when reading his message was: here is a Texas-related collection that would give Cushing and Texas A&M some legitimacy in its rhetoric regarding the value of inclusiveness and diversity. With this in mind, we proceeded to make contact with Don Kelly after viewing the extensive listing on LibraryThing.com, an open source website that allows individuals to chronicle and catalog their literary collections and connect the reader with others with similar interests. We shared the link with our then-director, Dr. Larry Mitchell, and we discussed Kelly's resources and the need to get further information. Due to a number of circumstances including the fact that the university was going through a budget crisis, we had to pass on the collection. But in 2013, Mr. Kelly contacted us again to see if the university continued to have an interest in the collection. It was then that we decided it was time to move on trying to acquire it. With the help of our colleagues, Michael Jackson and Lauren Schiller, we embarked on a strategic effort to demonstrate the significance, importance, and usefulness of having a collection of such diverse resources in Cushing. We contacted faculty across campus about the research, teaching, and engagement value of the collection and they were eager to assist. We set up a meeting between Mr. Kelly and a group of interested faculty, all from the College of Liberal Arts, to strategize on how best to gain the funding and support. It took almost a year and a half, but we were successful in demonstrating the need and acquiring the funding for this important collection that we saw as a unique collaboration that included members of the library, archive, administration, faculty, staff, and community.

As long-time archivists, we have consistently pondered the question that has been repeatedly discussed in the archival field: whether amateur archivists, or collectors with no professional archival training, who have a particular interest and passion for a subject matter and, in this case, who have created archives in their closets, should deposit their collections in professionally run archives. A&M's conservative reputation and history of fighting against the GSS, noted above, was a concern that we felt was important to inform Don Kelly about; honesty and trust are important qualities that donors and archivists must exhibit at all times. There are always concerns that the receiving institutions won't provide the attention, sensitivity, and resources to ensure access, publicity, and care for the holdings that these community archivists often times have spent, as in Don's case, considerable time, effort, money, and commitment to developing the collection. Don, strategically, saw that having the papers here would provide a means to challenge and facilitate a change in the conversation on LGBTIQ issues. His desire to work with us through this long, slow, but ultimately successful process is testament to his optimism and thoughtfulness. Our concerns were legitimate but unfounded and the Kelly collection has led us to other donors and collections.

Two words sum up Don Kelly and his wonderful collection: patience and passion. This collection, finally here at Cushing and at Texas A&M University represents a good start on changing the narrative, moving forward on the thirtieth anniversary of the stated ideal of an inclusive environment, and, more importantly, providing a voice to those who have contributed so much to its excellent academic reputation. Don continues to add to the collection, spending his time and wealth to build the collection from an initial donation of 8,000 materials to over 24,000!

A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

The acquisition of the Kelly Collection has been a bonus for Texas A&M University in a variety of ways. Historical exhibits have traditionally been used in archival repositories as a means of providing access to rare or fragile holdings, highlighting new art work or important collections, and also showcasing the institution itself. There has been a shift in the archival world that seeks to use exhibitions as a means to promote further scholarly inquiry, to exploit the resources in ways that encourage the public good. We heard over and over from faculty and scholars about the importance of the research value of the Kelly resources.

With this ideal as the backdrop and after picking up the initial 8,000+ collection in August 2014, we embarked on an intense process to inventory and develop an exhibition to publicize, promote, and showcase the collection. We chose the April 1, 2015, opening date that fortuitously was also the thirtieth anniversary of the US Supreme Court's decision in 1985. We felt it was the perfect time to celebrate another big step for diversity by Texas A&M in acquiring the Kelly Collection and putting on the first exhibit to showcase the history of the LGBTIQ campus and local community.

The exhibition titled, *Lives.Liberation.Love: The Don Kelly Research Collection of Gay Literature and Culture*, was led by Lauren Schiller and Michael Jackson with input from all of Cushing's staff and faculty. The exhibition was a huge success with speeches by A&M's Provost and out-lesbian Dr. Karan Watson; the Vice Provost for Diversity, Dr. Christine Stanley; the Dean of Libraries David Carlson (all of who were instrumental in acquiring the collection); and a wonderful breakdown of the significant holdings in the collection by Don Kelly.

During the viewing of the exhibit we were approached by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Dr. Pamela Matthews about the possibility of establishing a research fellowship for the collection. After meeting and agreeing to collaborate on the $6,000 funding in 2016, we established the Don Kelly Research Collection Fellowship, now in its third year. Our first fellowship recipient, University of Tennessee graduate student Nikita Shepard, used the collection to write on the experiences and history of LGBTIQ youth, establishing a reputation for writing and speaking on this underexplored topic. We were able to award three 2018 and 2019 Fellowship recipients and look forward to others examining the rich resources of the Don Kelly Collection.

Acquiring the Kelly collection has benefitted the library and A&M in numerous ways that continue to bring us positive press, attention, and acknowledgement. Some activities besides the collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts include the following:

- partnering with Film Studies Prof. Dan Humphrey on a visit and lecture by *Milk* writer and Oscar winner Dustin Lance Black.
- co-hosting with the English Department a luncheon for scholar Dr. Henry Abelove.
- 2016 hosting the reception and lecture by former Houston Mayor Annise Parker, an out-lesbian, elected twice as mayor of a major city.
- 2017 hosting the visit and lecture by the founders of the Old Lesbians Oral History Project, Arden Eversmeyer and Dr. Kathy Prezbindowski, for "Coming Out Week."
- acquiring donations of over 300 duplicate serials received from the *One Archives*.
- receiving a run of all the 254 back issues of leading Texas LGBTIQ periodical OutSmart Magazine, printed from February 1994-December 2015.
- increasing exhibit visitors during the 14-month exhibition (2765+) over previous exhibit (2100+) and also during that time a substantial increase in researchers using all of our LGBTIQ/Women's & Gender Studies collections.

CONCLUSION

Drexel University Information Science Assistant Professor Alex H. Poole's recent article in the *American Archivist* titled "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-Twentieth-Century American South," noted that "the archive is never a neutral space" and that its biases, preferences, and conceptions of what is important has long-term consequences for what we deem historical or whose history we value.[4] This is a challenge to us all, i.e. archivists, librarians, and historians, to make our repositories more diverse and inclusive in our collections, personnel leadership opportunities, and collecting policies. We can all do our part to collect out of the LGBTIQ closet.

4 Alex H. Poole, "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-Twentieth-Century American South," *American Archivist*, 77 no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014), 23.

VOICES FROM THE PULPIT AND PEW: DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE, INTENTIONAL LGBTQ RECORDS COLLECTING INITIATIVE AT THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

// BETH SHALOM HESSEL AND NANCY J. TAYLOR

As we broke bread across a hotel breakfast table during a conference in late 2015, the field organizer for Covenant Network of Presbyterians, a group within our denomination long committed to equal recognition of the life, leadership, and vocational calling of LGBTQ Presbyterians, asked for advice. Several of the leaders of the organization wanted a way to memorialize their founding executive director, Pam McLucas Byers, who had recently died. "We are thinking about an edited collection of essays, perhaps," she ventured. "What do you think?"

Our minds instantly clicked into action. As the executive director and lead archivist of a national denominational archive, the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), we work in a reality of declining financial resources. As mandated by the Presbyterian Church (USA) constitution, we continue to bring in over five hundred cubic feet of records a year from congregations, denominational agencies, and individuals. These augment our current 36,000 cubic feet of records dating back to the earliest Presbyterian entities in the American colonies in the eighteenth century. We support the research and work of PC(USA) agencies, synods, presbyteries, and congregations, as well as academics and members of the general public, while we serve thousands of in-house and online patrons annually. During the past decade, a generous grant enabled us to launch a digitization program at PHS through which we digitize records for congregations and for our website. Digitization capabilities enable us to reach new audiences but also increase our fundraising burden. Although we have had limited ability to address them, we have had our list of collecting priorities, too. What are those topics or issues that twenty or forty years from now researchers will be asking to see in our collections? How might we address these identified gaps in our collections?

The need for the Presbyterian Historical Society to collect LGBTQ archival materials is clear. The struggle for ordination rights and marriage equality for LGBTQ faithful has been one of the animating and dominating movements in the past forty years in all major Protestant denominations in the United States and certainly in our own. Future researchers will study the religious component of the LGBTQ equality efforts. Recent work has begun to recognize the centrality of church-wide conversations about sexuality in shaping public perceptions of LGBTQ civil rights.[1] Yet we had become aware that several leaders of the decades-long struggle for full inclusion of LGBTQ Presbyterians in the life and ministry of the church had donated their papers to their alma maters rather than to the denominational archives. With limited staff and financial resources, we risked the bulk of individual and organizational papers related to this movement being dispersed geographically, making future research difficult, or disappearing entirely, moldering in garages or basements or being thrown away.

We needed impetus and resources to identify and court the individuals holding records we wanted in our archives; to help defray the cost of shipping materials; to process records and digitize key items; and to undertake an oral history project to collect the stories of people who might not have papers to donate but have important information to

1 Among recent works are: Heather R. White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); R. W. Holmen, *Queer Clergy: A History of Gay and Lesbian Ministry in American Protestantism* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2013); and Timothy Samuel Shah, Thomas F. Farr, and Jack Friedman, eds., *Religious Freedom and Gay Rights: Emerging Conflicts in the United States and Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Did you know?

The Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, PA, established in 1852, is the oldest denominational archival repository in the US. The Society preserves and provides access to over 30,000 cubic feet of official records and personal papers.

add to the larger history. Our own holdings related to Presbyterian LGBTQ history or other theological conversations around sexuality were limited to the work of official task forces and agencies at the national level. We lacked the fierce witness of individual activists and organizations on the theological left and right. The conversation with the Covenant Network field organizer seemed like one that called for careful listening and potential cultivation for partnership.

The field organizer quickly warmed to the idea of creating a memorial fund in Byers's name that would enable PHS to collect, preserve, and make available digitally and in the archives the records and oral histories of individuals and organizations across the theological spectrum. Such an initiative would align the goals that motivated Byers's work with the mission of the Presbyterian Historical Society in a way that strengthened our collection and provided a lasting and dynamic legacy. Byers, who led the Covenant Network from 1997 to 2011, was a vivacious, tenacious woman who worked hard for unity and diversity in a theologically torn church, seeking to bring people from across the theological spectrum to the table to talk, worship, and learn together.

Over the course of several months of conversations, we developed a roadmap and a call for support for our plan. The organizer brought several other individuals to the table to help us strategize. Although some initially thought we might raise funds and collect papers only from progressive Presbyterians, they understood our position that the denominational archives serves all Presbyterians (and other researchers). In order to tell the full story, we needed to collect the papers and oral histories from those who worked for the full inclusion of LGBTQ Presbyterians as well as from those who opposed ordination or marriage equality for LGBTQ individuals. The fights over full inclusion—for that is what they often devolved into—tore the denomination apart. The PC(USA) has witnessed an exodus of congregations even as people who once felt shunned by Christianity have joined and many theologically conservative congregations and individuals have decided to remain in the family. Our archives must faithfully serve them all.

In late 2016, we embarked on the quiet phase of fundraising and records collecting for the Pam Byers Memorial Fund (PBMF). With a generous $15,000 matching grant from one individual, our small group of volunteers assisted in raising funds and asking individuals for their personal papers or for the records they held of the numerous conservative and progressive organizations dedicated to this issue that sprang up in the PC(USA) starting in the early 1970s until the denomination approved ordination in 2011 and marriage equality in 2015. The network of relationships our collaborators had developed over years of activism provided us access to many individuals we might not otherwise have been able to reach—including leaders of the conservative wing of the church who respected Pam and supported our collecting initiative despite their opposition to LGBTQ ordination.

We had several goals to meet before we could officially move from the private to the public phase of the initiative. We wanted to meet our original quiet phase goal of $30,000. We wanted to collect papers and items from individuals and organizations on both sides of the conversation to showcase the breadth and diversity of the history and to demonstrate our commitment to preserving the records from across the theological spectrum. Finally, we needed some compelling content for the dedicated webpage that would launch in conjunction with the public campaign. We needed material that told stories that would interest our audience and deepen knowledge of the history of the movement.

Thanks in large part to our initial group of community volunteers, we surpassed our private fundraising goal by 37 percent, enabling us to look beyond support money to the funding of a dedicated staff position to process materials, conduct oral histories, and coordinate the digital presence of the Pam Byers Memorial Fund collecting initiative. In 2018, we conducted a national search for a Pam Byers Memorial Fund Project Archivist, and Elizabeth Wittrig, who had experience working with the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network, started at PHS in September. We officially launched the public phase of the Pam Byers Memorial Collecting Initiative in October 2018.

Hiring Wittrig has had a significant impact on the overall project. She has processed the papers of Patricia Dykers Koenig, who served as the national organizer of the Covenant Network from 2000 to 2017—the pivotal decades during which the PC(USA) changed positions on gay ordination and marriage—as well as two leading Presbyterian pastors who advocated for LGBTQ rights within the denomination: Laird Stuart and Eugene Bay. True to our commitment to document diverse positions on LGBTQ inclusion, Wittrig has also processed the papers of Jerry Andrews, one of the leaders of the conservative wing of the church, and Jack Haberer, another conservative pastor and editor who later supported gay ordination. Wittrig's work has also made more accessible two groups of records that had been in our collection for years but had not been fully described and processed: the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Task Force to Study Homosexuality Records, 1976-1978; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Special Committee to Study Human Sexuality records, 1974-1991. In conjunction with other PHS staff, Wittrig has increased our ability to collect oral histories, conducting interviews with Covenant Network leaders like John Buchanan and Barbara Wheeler and with LGBTQ pastors such as Daniel Vigilante, Lisa Larges, and Bertram Johnson. Wittrig has sought to expand the breadth of our collecting by reaching out to LGBTQ pastors and leaders of color. Her recent acquisition of *Out of Order*, a documentary chronicling the challenges faced by Presbyterian LGBTQ faith leaders, enables us to screen it at events that bring congregations and organizations into conversation with each other.

With this foundation of newly acquired and/or processed archival collections, we purposefully created a number of opportunities for people to interact with the PBMF collecting initiative. Wittrig created a dedicated page on the PHS website that includes links to finding aids; a timeline of the movement for an inclusive church, 1970-2018; blog posts about the initiative; and a link to digitized materials in Pearl, our online digital archives. The LGBTQIA+ History collection in Pearl is particularly significant because it gathers in one place digital material in all formats and easily expands as we add more still images, newsletters, correspondence and reports, oral histories, videos, and websites.

All of this activity has generated more leads on materials, more financial support, and a sustained level of excitement that is flourishing in the public phase of the collecting initiative. People are now coming to us with materials and with ideas for future avenues to pursue, and we are engaging with community groups and individuals in ways that were not possible before we launched the initiative and hired a dedicated project archivist.

In a process that has been collaborative and community-based from its inception, PHS's LGBTQ collecting initiative has helped us build a strong collection around one of the defining movements of the past forty years. The initiative has also strengthened our ties to the broader Presbyterian community, provided new content for digitization, and jump-started our neglected oral history program. A collaborative and innovative program emerged from a fortuitous conversation. Careful listening, visioning, and strategic planning by archival staff and community partners enabled us to undertake new initiatives and programming that previously appeared moribund and undoable because of limited resources. Ultimately, at a time when most archives struggle to claim relevance and resources among a general public that considers them esoteric and unimportant to contemporary life, this project has helped to propel our denominational archives into current conversation and broader awareness. We are committed to growing our LGBTQ collections and ways of sharing them. Our experience with the Pam Byers Memorial Fund Project provides us with a partnership model to address other collecting priorities in order to maintain an innovative, inclusive, and accessible twenty-first-century archives.

UNCOVERING THE LAVENDAR SCARE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

// JUDITH ADKINS

In 2016, Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland asked then Secretary of State John Kerry to apologize for the State Department's purge and exclusion of LGBTQ employees during the Cold War. Secretary Kerry responded with an apology that implicitly critiqued the singling out of one agency. "The Department of State," he said, "was among many public and private employers that discriminated" during that era.[1]

While Kerry's remark downplayed State's prominent role in the early years of the purge, its assertion of broad culpability was on the mark. Most federal agencies played a part in what historians now call the Lavender Scare: the removal and banning of LGBTQ employees as "security risks" during a period of national concern about communism. Suspected homosexuals in the State Department were referred to in the press and elsewhere as "lavender lads." Historian David K. Johnson, author of the definitive monograph on the purge, popularized the term Lavender Scare, which makes explicit the link between this particular form of LGBTQ persecution and the post-World War II Red Scare.[2] Because other employers followed the federal government's lead and adopted similar discriminatory policies, the Lavender Scare rippled across state and local governments and the private sector as well.

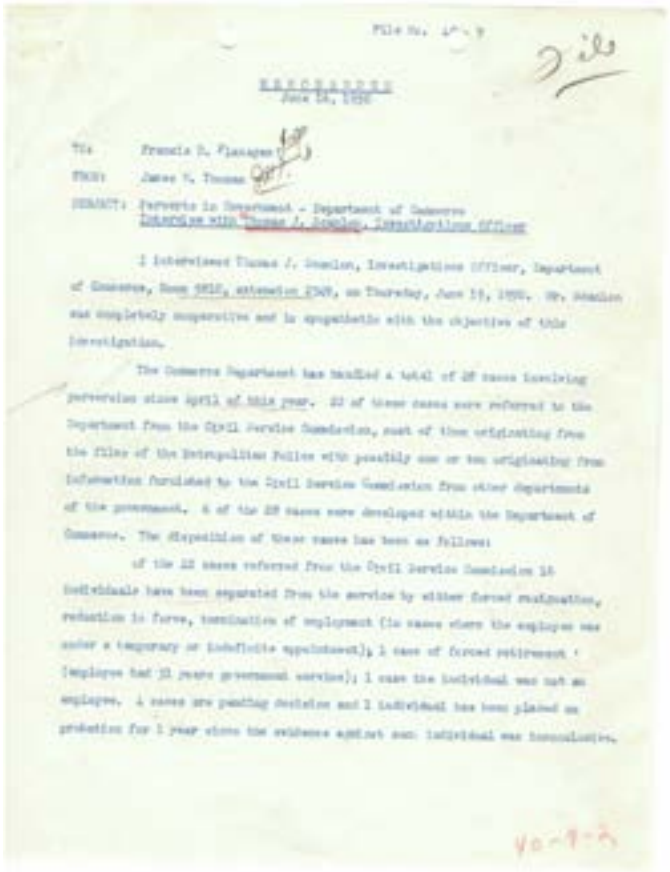
However, few government agencies, let alone corporations and other private employers, have acknowledged, explored, or shared this history. As a result, the American public is largely in the dark about this systemic discrimination carried out under the rationale of national security from the late 1940s to the early 1970s.

Although federal agency historians have the advantage of a formal network, the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG); geographical concentration in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area; and familiarity with their own agency's records, real obstacles stand in the way of those who wish to investigate LGBTQ subject matter. Other historical projects typically have higher priority, relevant primary sources tend to be elusive and dispersed, and many LGBTQ topics touch on current political flashpoints. In a time of political polarization and uncertain budgets, agency professionals can be wary of subject matter that might edge up to ongoing controversies. In the case of LGBTQ history focused specifically on employment discrimination, the protection of personal privacy is also a concern.

Bearing these complexities in mind, the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives has identified a small, discrete set of records from the early years of the Lavender Scare that, used creatively, make it possible for federal historians and other public history professionals to explore and tell particular chapters of this story efficiently. The investment of time and effort can be contained because the materials are relatively limited. In addition, privacy concerns and political sensitivities are minimal because the records directly concern only the period from 1947 to 1950, even though they are emblematic of a much longer story.

1 Anne Gearan, "From State, an Apology for Past Anti-Gay Actions," *Washington Post*, January 10, 2017.

2 See David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).



An interview summary written by a Senate committee staff member. Records of the US Senate, National Archives and Records Administration.

The Center for Legislative Archives has custodial responsibility for the records of the US House and US Senate. Among these vast holdings are a cache of files from the Senate's 1950 investigation into homosexuality in the federal workforce. This congressional inquiry, known as the Hoey committee investigation, intensified and legitimized the purge of gay workers just as it was beginning.[3]

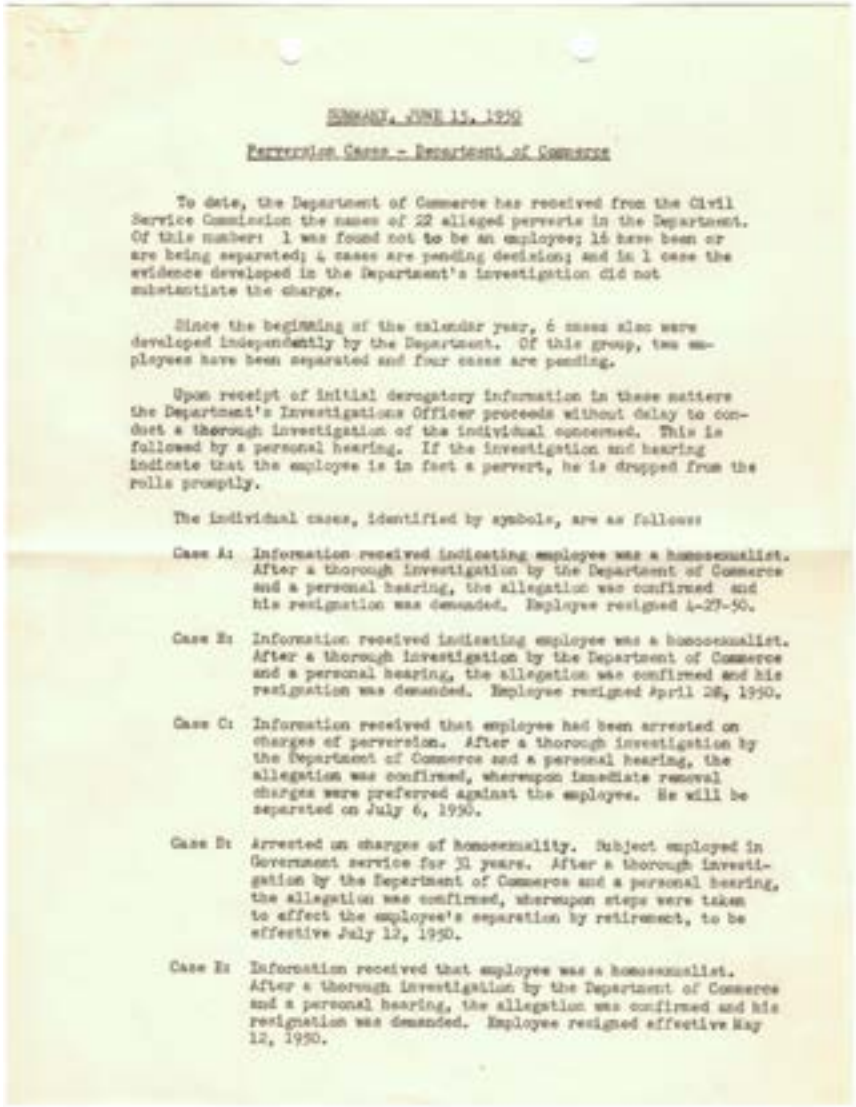
The Senate's investigating committee wrote to and interviewed officials at fifty-three government agencies. The resulting files contain correspondence, memoranda, interview summaries, and other documents describing each agency's stance on the desirability of LGBTQ workers and each agency's policies and procedures for removal and screening.[4] Pictured at left, for example, is a 1950 memorandum, "Subject: Perverts in Government – Department of Commerce," in which Senate committee staff member James H. Thomas recounts his conversation with the Commerce Department's Investigations Officer, Thomas J. Scanlon.

Some documents, such as the one pictured on the following page, describe the removal of individual employees, without naming names, as in this 1950 summary entitled "Perversion Cases – Department of Commerce," also submitted to the Senate committee by Commerce's Investigations Officer, Thomas J. Scanlon.

Many researchers have consulted the Senate committee's published final report and the transcripts of its hearings, but the potential of these agency-specific investigative files remains largely untapped. In part this is because these archival materials are obscured by their origin in a congressional committee system that is always morphing. Over time, committees are eliminated or renamed, and new ones are created. The 1950 Senate investigation was conducted by a subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments; today, that committee's files are part of the records of a successor committee, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. To counter this unintentional but real bureaucratic obfuscation, archivists need to find creative ways to bring evidence and stakeholder together.

3 For more about the investigation, see Judith Adkins's "'These People Are Frightened to Death': Congressional Investigations and the Lavender Scare," *Prologue Magazine*, 48, no. 2 (Summer 2016).

4 The Senate records discussed throughout this essay are the Case 40 Files of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Record Group 46, Records of the US Senate, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. The Commerce Department documents included here as illustrations are all from the Commerce Department file, Case 40-9. To contact the Center for Legislative Archives, email legislative.archives@nara.gov.



SUMMARY, JUNE 15, 1950

Perversion Cases - Department of Commerce

To date, the Department of Commerce has received from the Civil Service Commission the names of 22 alleged perverts in the Department. Of this number: 1 was found not to be an employee; 16 have been or are being separated; 4 cases are pending decision; and in 1 case the evidence developed in the Department's investigation did not substantiate the charge.

Since the beginning of the calendar year, 6 cases also were developed independently by the Department. Of this group, two employees have been separated and four cases are pending.

Upon receipt of initial derogatory information in these matters the Department's Investigations Officer proceeds without delay to conduct a thorough investigation of the individual concerned. This is followed by a personal hearing. If the investigation and hearing indicate that the employee is in fact a pervert, he is dropped from the rolls promptly.

The individual cases, identified by symbols, are as follows:

Case A: Information received indicating employee was a homosexualist. After a thorough investigation by the Department of Commerce and a personal hearing, the allegation was confirmed and his resignation was demanded. Employee resigned 4-27-50.

Case B: Information received indicating employee was a homosexualist. After a thorough investigation by the Department of Commerce and a personal hearing, the allegation was confirmed and his resignation was demanded. Employee resigned April 28, 1950.

Case C: Information received that employee had been arrested on charges of perversion. After a thorough investigation by the Department of Commerce and a personal hearing, the allegation was confirmed, whereupon immediate removal charges were preferred against the employee. He will be separated on July 6, 1950.

Case D: Arrested on charges of homosexuality. Subject employed in Government service for 31 years. After a thorough investigation by the Department of Commerce and a personal hearing, the allegation was confirmed, whereupon steps were taken to effect the employee's separation by retirement, to be effective July 12, 1950.

Case E: Information received that employee was a homosexualist. After a thorough investigation by the Department of Commerce and a personal hearing, the allegation was confirmed and his resignation was demanded. Employee resigned effective May 12, 1950.

The first page of a Department of Commerce document laying out the numbers of "alleged" homosexuals in the Department and summarizing actions taken. Records of the US Senate, National Archives and Records Administration.

One approach is direct outreach to historians at government departments. This is more challenging than it might seem. Some of the federal agencies of 1950 no longer exist; others have different names or have been reorganized into other entities. Moreover, not all federal agencies have an official historian. Consequently, it is necessary to identify and contact additional agency and departmental professionals (curators, librarians, and others) with a stake in these materials. Future plans include possible formation of an LGBTQ working group within the SHFG and a presentation at the SHFG's annual meeting that would showcase the potential of these records.

One goal is to demonstrate how these Senate investigative files can be cross-referenced productively and how they can serve as a portal to other records relevant to the scare. For example, in addition to the agency-specific files, which typically do not name employees, the Senate committee's records include arrest reports submitted by the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC. The government employees named in these reports were arrested for consensual same-sex contact or for activity that today might be characterized as "cruising." The reports include the arrested person's name, place of employment, "hangouts," and more. It is possible to cross-reference the agency-specific documents in the Senate committee's investigative files with these police arrest reports and determine the names of some of the people fired from a given agency.

With names in hand, one can request the relevant personnel files from the National Personnel Records Center at the National Archives. Files can be requested for any federal worker whose employment ended before 1952. An individual personnel file can be slim and unenlightening, or it can run for hundreds of pages and include job applications, performance reviews, security investigation summaries, letters, photographs, and more. Relatively few government employees named in the 1950 police arrest records would still be alive today (an eighteen-year-old employee in 1950 would now be in his late 80s), so the personal privacy concerns here are manageable. Privacy rights expire at death, and it is easy enough to avoid divulging details about any person likely to still be alive.

Without too much effort, then, a diligent historian can connect a general agency document (like that Commerce Department summary above) to an arrest record for someone working in that agency and then to that individual's personnel file. The information in the personnel file can then be used to personalize the scare: to tell a particular man's story with enough autobiographical detail (education, job history, sometimes even a photo) to convey the impact of the Lavender Scare on actual lives.

Did you know?

The term "Lavender Scare" comes from historian David K. Johnson's 2004 book of the same name. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450 in 1953, individuals who might identify as LGBTQIA today were barred from federal employment because they were seen as a security risk. This led to the firing of 5,000 LGBTQIA workers, many of whom were thrown out of the closet.

Note that most of those arrested for same-sex activity were men; lesbians were far less likely to seek partners in public places and so had less contact with law enforcement.

The other way in which the Senate committee's records can serve as a portal into additional relevant primary source material is that agency memoranda and correspondence often reveal which organizational units undertook investigation of LGBTQ individuals. Was there a division devoted to investigations? Did the agency's personnel department handle these issues? Or did the personnel unit have a separate security division within it? Or were such investigations spearheaded by some other unit within the agency's organizational structure? Even federal historians with generally good knowledge of their agency's official record group of materials in the National Archives don't necessarily know where to search for LGBTQ material; the Senate investigative files can help these historians pinpoint where, organizationally, they might want to start. Public historians researching LGBTQ history at state or local archives, or in corporate archives, might also find suggestive information here about the variety of organizational units likely to be implicated in the purge of LGBTQ employees.

In addition, the federal narrative offers definite clues about the most promising historical junctures for focused research into the Lavender Scare ripple effect—that is, the spread of employment discrimination beyond the federal level. In 1950, for example, the outcry about infiltration by "Communists and queers" grew so loud that politicians, the press, and the public demanded congressional investigation. Another potentially promising year to zero in on would be 1953, the year President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed Executive Order #10450, "Security Requirements for Government Employees." Relying on the "security risk" rationale affirmed by the Senate committee, this EO officially designated sexual orientation as a relevant factor for government employment. It also required companies working for the government to follow the same standards. An uptick in the investigation or scrutiny of LGBTQ employees in the private sector at these two historical moments, especially among businesses or industries that relied heavily on government contracts, seems likely.

When the subject under consideration is the LGBTQ experience, public historians might reasonably conclude that recent decades are much easier to explore than the immediate post-World War II era. There is far more evidence documenting the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, or the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, or the recent struggle for marriage equality, than there are extant records about LGBTQ life before the 1969 Stonewall uprising. Sometimes, however, as these Senate committee records suggest, there are clear advantages to mining a finite but rich vein of archival material about that earlier period. The project can be kept manageable, the passage of time has eliminated or muted certain privacy and political concerns, and the history discovered is more likely to be new to a general audience. These Senate records also suggest the importance of targeted records promotion by the archival community when it comes to isolated caches of LGBTQ material about the 1940s and 1950s.

In our present era, when national security concerns are again at the forefront of various policy discussions and public debates, the lessons of the Lavender Scare seem particularly relevant. The public history community is invited to use this discrete set of congressional records to unearth more Lavender Scare stories and share them with the American people.

"UNLAWFULLY AND WICKEDLY": TRACING QUEER PRESENCE THROUGH PRISON AND COURT RECORDS

// ANNIE ANDERSON

Queer people were rarely documented in American history well into the twentieth century, and yet their presence can be traced through the records of penal institutions—places that separated them from their communities, labeling them as threats to the heteronormative status quo. Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site is one such institution with a diverse set of warden's journals, intake registers, and cellblock logs. Navigating euphemistic labels and derogatory language, we have located and documented hundreds of individual prisoners who, if alive today, may have identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), and added discussion of them to the site's interpretation.

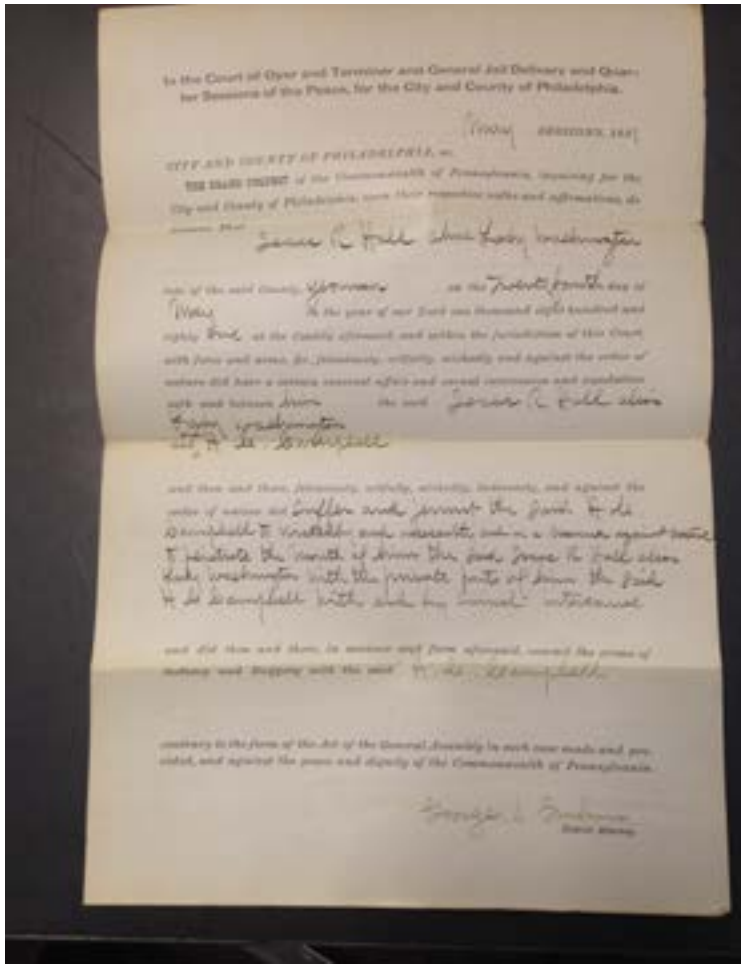
Until recently, there was no targeted effort to collect or document the histories of LGBTQ people who lived and worked at Eastern State—an active prison from 1829-1971. The site's sole interpretation of queer history lived within an audio stop about twentieth-century sexuality, mostly contextualizing same-sex contact within the limiting, oppressive confines of a correctional institution. In the audio stop, a prisoner who lived at Eastern State in the 1950s and 1960s recalls hearing about "homosexual affairs" among the incarcerated population, and about prisoners "quote 'falling in love' unquote."[1] The tone of his comment betrays an apprehension to believe that this could have been a genuine experience. The audio stop, which visitors can still access, lasts about a minute and a half, and no other interpretive content exploring the prison's queer past was offered. I set out to trouble the notion that Eastern State was only a site of sexual assault, coercion, and desperation. Could some people have experienced real intimacy and affection in this walled town? And what about those whose queer identities had been the very cause of their incarceration?

The historic site has increasingly interpreted contemporary issues, particularly mass incarceration, for its 275,000 annual visitors, but the interpretation of queer life in the past and in prisons today remains underexplored. In 2016, I wrote and narrated an audio stop about queer life at the prison—an attempt to interpret affection and love within a space of assumed sexual predation. Because of historic erasures and the persistence of homophobia, revealing the queer corners of the prison's history is a methodologically, interpretively, and emotionally difficult undertaking.

The records I work with on a daily basis as a researcher at Eastern State were produced, almost entirely, by prison officials. Layers of power, control, and care are packed into the journals, parole books, and reception registers created by individuals in state-sanctioned positions of authority, tasked with keeping prisoners safe, peaceful, and healthy. In recent years, I've begun organizing and filing any reference in these records to affection, sex, intimacy, and sodomy—an ambiguous term, used throughout the prison's history, criminalizing certain sex acts, often between members of the same sex. I filed away every warden's journal I could locate about queerness—including one describing two prisoners given a citation for kissing each other, another documenting two men punished for being in bed together, and a number of entries describing fights over solicitation and sexual advances.

Our research team has digitized, cataloged, and scanned tens of thousands of prison records from the Pennsylvania State Archives and other repositories in recent years, but many more records live in other archives that we have yet to visit. In order to supplement the records that prison officials created that are preserved at Eastern State

1 Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site audio tour, Stop C: "Sexuality (20th Century Issues)," featuring an oral history excerpt from an anonymous prisoner incarcerated at Eastern State Penitentiary from 1957 to 1970.



Isaac Hall's (alias Lady Washington) 1881 indictment bill, photographed at the Philadelphia City Archives. Photo courtesy of the author.

Penitentiary, I've cast a wider net to include criminal court records held elsewhere. I have made several research trips to the Philadelphia City Archives in recent years to better understand the legal proceedings that individuals were subject to by the Philadelphia court system. I have looked at criminal court dockets, notes of testimony, and bills of indictment—which detail witnesses, fines, and geographical locations of criminal activity.

Even though I aimed to catalog the prison's queer history, one of my key finds was purely accidental. While working on another research project, I stumbled upon records for an individual who—if alive today—may have identified as transgender. Isaac Hall (alias Lady Washington) served a six-and-a-half-year sentence at Eastern State in the 1880s for sodomy.[2] Hall appeared in several Philadelphia newspapers as someone who affected feminine attire and mannerisms, "personating lady characters … among others the character of Lady Washington."[3] When Hall left Eastern State in 1887, Warden Michael Cassidy (c. 1829-1900) wrote in his journal that Hall "was known in his locality as Lady Washington and is no doubt addicted to the crime for which he was committed."[4] I wondered: what could Cassidy's language of "addiction" reveal about how prison officials and law enforcement agents viewed same-sex activity? Perhaps Hall was unapologetically "out," in whatever way that might have manifested in the 1880s. What kind of legacy had Hall left behind in their neighborhood, and how did the word of their alias spread to Cassidy? In every court docket, bill of indictment (at left and next page), and prison record related to Hall, an official also jotted down Hall's alias: Lady Washington. In so naming Hall, I couldn't help but think that they were affirming Hall's gender while also marking it as abnormal, something officials believed should be committed to paper and noted.

2 Michael Cassidy, Warden's Daily Journals (series #15.50), Volume 5 (1886-1888), November 25, 1887, Records of the Department of Justice, Eastern State Penitentiary, Prison Administration Records, Pennsylvania State Archives; Docket and Bill of Indictment for Isaac Hall, May 1881, Clerk of Quarter Sessions (Record Group 21), Philadelphia City Archives.

3 "Seeking Pardons," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 18, 1882; "Serious Charges," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 1, 1882; "Board of Pardons," *Patriot*, December 17, 1884. It is unclear from these historic accounts who the "character of Lady Washington" was, whether a real person or a fictional persona.

4 Michael Cassidy, Warden's Daily Journals (series #15.50), Volume 5 (1886-1888), November 25, 1887, Records of the Department of Justice, Eastern State Penitentiary, Prison Administration Records, Pennsylvania State Archives.

In a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article from 1882 detailing Hall's request for a pardon, the newspaper noted that Hall's alias "had much to do with the heavy sentence."[5] How common was it for people to transgress gender boundaries in 1880s Philadelphia, and were they more severely punished than other queer people if caught? According to court records, Hall's sexual partner, H. C. Campbell, received nothing more than the inconvenience of being summoned to court. After pleading guilty to a sodomy charge of receiving oral sex from Hall, Campbell was discharged by the court.[6]

Isaac Hall (alias Lady Washington) and H. C. Campbell's 1881 indictment bills, photographed at the Philadelphia City Archives. Photo courtesy of the author.

5 "Seeking Pardons," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 18, 1882.

6 Docket and Bill of Indictment for H. C. Campbell, May 1881, Clerk of Quarter Sessions (Record Group 21), Philadelphia City Archives.

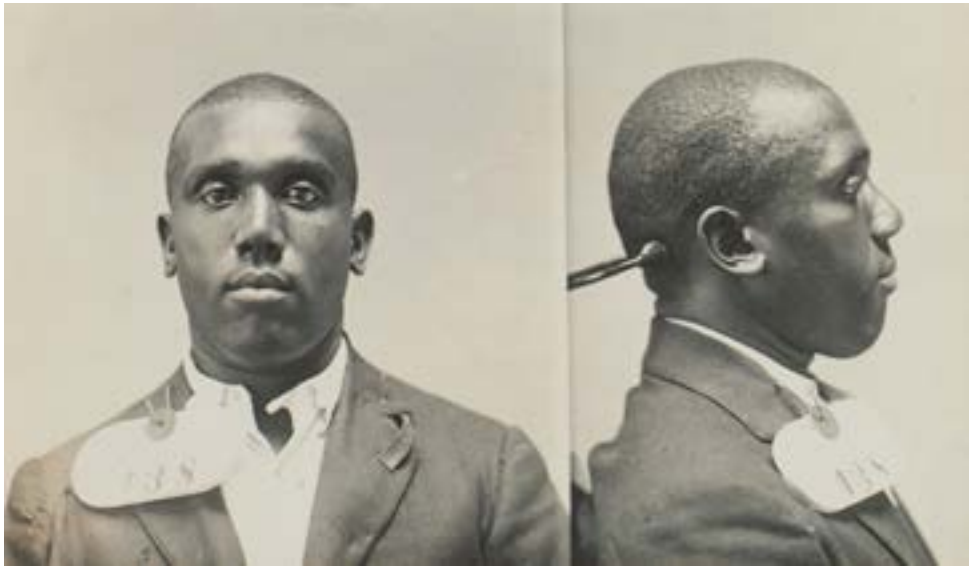
In addition to Hall's story outlined above, I also learned from court and prison records about individuals such as Ross C. C. Adams (pictured below) and how representatives of the law repeatedly reached into the lives of LGBTQ people. Adams was incarcerated twice at Eastern State for sodomy. In 1904, Adams was charged with having sex with Matthew Pivorotto on July 5, and with soliciting sex from Edward Verrall on July 6. The indictments for both charges included witnesses from Wanamaker's, a large department store in downtown Philadelphia, indicating that Adams may have frequented the store (a restroom or other private space, perhaps) to cruise for sex.[7] The twenty-year-old Adams seems to have found consensual sex with Pivorotto, but the second indictment indicates he was rebuffed by Verrall and turned into the authorities. In just one moralizing sentence, the Philadelphia legal apparatus indicted more than just Adams's crime but also his character and identity, alleging he "unlawfully and wickedly did then and there solicit, incite and endeavor to persuade one Edward Verrall, against the order of nature, to have a certain venereal affair and carnal intercourse and copulation with and between him the said Ross C. C. Adams and the said Edward Verrall."[8]

While Adams's indictments do not list any law enforcement agents as witnesses, sodomy solicitation indictments from this era often note that the person being solicited was a police officer, indicating that Philadelphia officers may have engaged in entrapment and sting operations to disrupt and encroach upon queer spaces.

Ross C. C. Adams (inmate B-2424), photographed in 1904 as a 19-year-old upon his entrance to Eastern State Penitentiary for a sodomy charge. Photo: collection of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, gift of the Scheerer Family.

7 Bills of Indictment for Ross C. C. Adams, July 1904, Clerk of Quarter Sessions Record Group 21), Philadelphia City Archives.
8 Ibid.

In 1920, Ross Adams, pictured again below, again turned up in Philadelphia court records and Eastern State's prison roster. Adams, then thirty-five years old, was charged with sodomy for having sex with Erskine Glenn. The court filed six separate bills of indictment against Ross, one for each day it alleged Adams had intercourse with Glenn.[9]



Ross C. C. Adams (inmate C-438), photographed in 1920 as a 36-year-old upon his entrance to Eastern State Penitentiary for a second term for sodomy. Photo: collection of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, gift of an anonymous donor.

Did Washington Glenn, Erskine's father, listed on each bill of indictment as a witness, alert the authorities to the relationship? Was the penalty so severe because Erskine Glenn was only fourteen years old?[10] The problem for researchers with blanket terms like "sodomy" or "sodomy and buggery" is that a host of criminalized sex acts get caught up in one net—from consensual acts among and across genders, to sexual assault and exploitation.

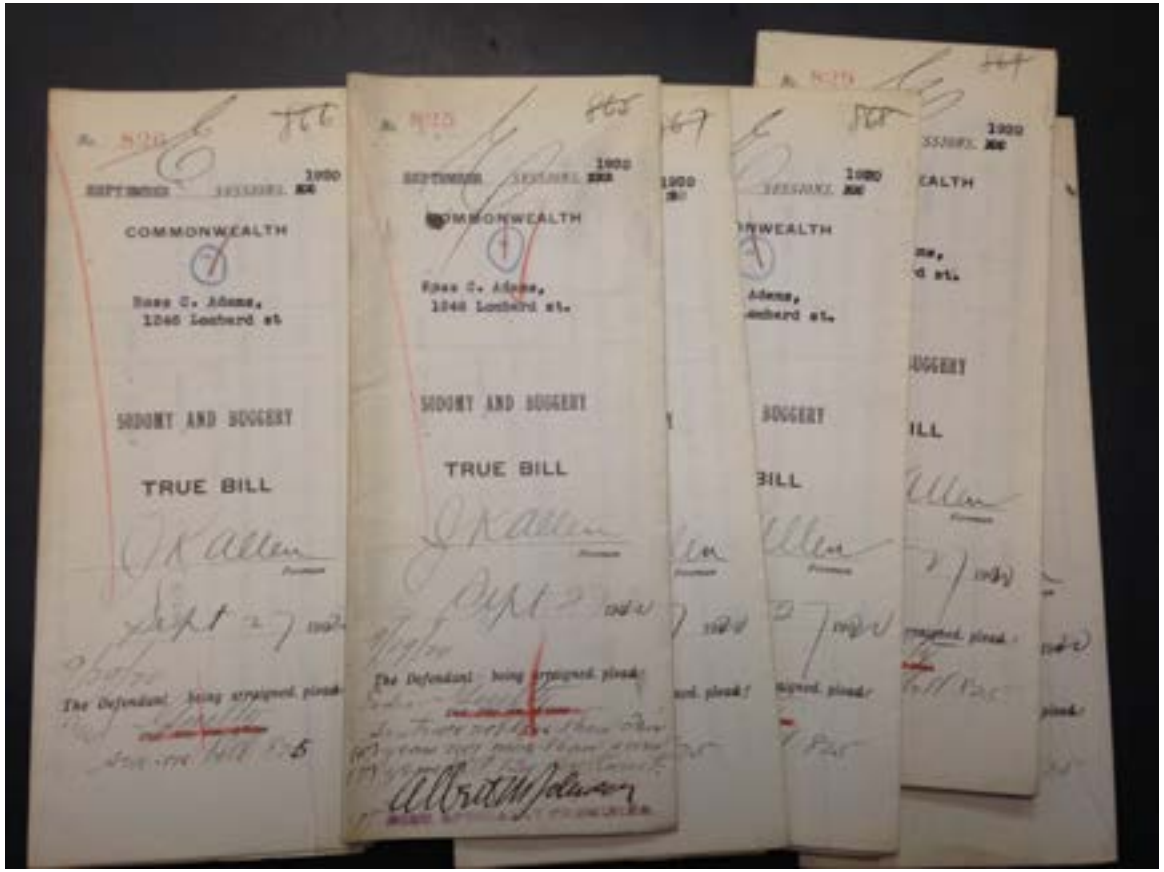
A handful of individuals served time at Eastern State for heterosexual acts that the courts labelled sodomy. Mary Bailey, one of only a few women sentenced to Eastern State for sodomy and buggery, arrived at the penitentiary in 1891 for performing oral sex on a man named Charles France. Perhaps it was the out-of-wedlock nature of the sex—or the non-reproductive nature of it—that qualified it as sodomy and buggery. France was charged with keeping a disorderly house (a common charge brought against individuals who owned establishments that traded in gambling and sex), sodomy and buggery, and assault and battery on Bailey. The court gave Bailey an eighteen-month sentence and France a one-to-three-year sentence.[11] Did France assault Bailey? If so, why would she be charged with a crime? Was money exchanged? Was Bailey a sex worker? Another set of records from 1938 detail a four-to-eight-year sentence for a man named Wallace Ross for performing oral sex on a woman named Dorothy Jordan. Did these people get caught in the act? How and by whom?

Even knowing how dramatically sexual mores have shifted since the 1930s, I'm surprised that heterosexual sex between consenting partners might garner a multi-year prison sentence. These unexpected turns and unanswered questions reveal the difficulties of working with records related to sex crimes. Euphemisms abound, and predators collect the same charges and punishments as willing participants. Still unknown is how a defendant's race and class background—or how well they "passed" in straight society or their willingness to perform their gender assigned at birth—impacted the severity of their sentence.

9 Bills of Indictment for Ross C. C. Adams, September 1920, Clerk of Quarter Sessions (Record Group 21), Philadelphia City Archives.
10 Ibid. and United States Census, 1920, accessed on FamilySearch.org.
11 Bills of Indictment for Mary Bailey and Charles France, January 1891, Clerk of Quarter Sessions (Record Group 21), Philadelphia City Archives.

Eastern State's LGBTQ audio stop, made possible by the research described above, has been added as an addendum to the twentieth-century sexuality stop. This stop is neither as popular as the historic site's audio narratives of escapes and famous prisoners such as organized crime leader Al Capone, nor is it among the least listened to. Every year, thousands of visitors access the LGBTQ audio track at the end of Cellblock 8—far off the main tour route. It's possible some visitors trek out to the twentieth-century sexuality stop just to hear content about sex, and they discover the LGBTQ stop as a bonus (the LGBTQ stop is not included on the site map that visitors use to navigate the prison, because of limited map space and the adult nature of the stop's content).

But it's also possible that visitors are genuinely curious about the prison's queer histories—and what they might reveal about sexual morality in our own era. I'm optimistic that we'll continue to locate and narrate the stories of those criminalized, convicted, and imprisoned for acts that many of us today do not consider criminal. In 2018, Eastern State's interpretation team developed new site signage that explores crimes—abortion, sodomy, drug and alcohol offenses—that are no longer criminalized in many places. We hope these changes will compel visitors to consider what is illegal now that someday may not just be legal but loosened from the grip of morality altogether.



Ross C. C. Adams' 1920 indictment bills, photographed at the Philadelphia City Archives. Photo courtesy of the author.

THE WILLIAM AND MARY LGBTIQ REASEARCH PROJECT: DOCUMENTING THE LGBTIQ PAST IN VIRGINIA

//JERRY WATKINS

For most of the twenty-first century it was hard to miss the converted warehouse with the rainbow painted on the entirety of the interstate-facing wall as one drove through Richmond, Virginia, on Interstates 64 and 95. The wall now features a black background with colorful murals, and nearby, an electronic billboard flashes advertisements for the VA Lottery interspersed with Diversity Richmond's rainbow. In many ways, these shifting representations—from the traditional rainbow of the "Gay Community Center of Richmond" to the mural of the more inclusive Diversity Richmond—track the changing face of Richmond's (and indeed the nation's) LGBTIQ+ community. Diversity Richmond, which houses a thrift store, art gallery, and community event spaces, bills itself as a community center where, as their vision statement proclaims, "LGBTQ+ citizens are treated with respect and dignity, and their unique gifts are championed and celebrated, thereby strengthening our community."[1] Part of that mission is to preserve the history of Diversity Richmond and the larger Richmond community. Richmond is often more famous and oft remembered for the denial of justice as the former capital of the Confederacy and then seat of massive resistance to integration. The William & Mary LGBTIQ Research Project is working with Diversity Richmond to document and make available LGBTIQ histories in Virginia, which despite Richmond's past has a long history of activists working for justice across various communities. This essay provides a brief report from the field for this project that charts the evolution from a campus project to one that involved the broader community.

In fall 2015, Leisa Meyer, Community Studies Professor of History, American Studies, and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at the College of William & Mary, received a small amount of funding from the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC. The Mattachine Society's goal was to provide seed money to a variety of research projects across the country.[2] These initial funds were immediately joined by monetary and in-kind support from a variety of individuals and units at the college to support the project including the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the then Roy R. Charles Center for Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies, the American Studies Program, the Lyon G. Tyler Department of History, the National Institutes for American History and Democracy, the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, and the law school. The project launched in the spring semester of 2016. The student researchers came from both undergrad and graduate levels in majors as diverse as gender, sexuality, and women's studies; history; sociology; anthropology; English; law; education; and American studies. The project's graduate research fellow, Jan Hübenthal (American studies), established and ran the social media presence. Leisa Meyer, in collaboration with the staff of the Swem Library Special Collections, provided the initial training for the student researchers in archival and digital records research. They then spent many Saturdays in special collections at William & Mary, Virginia Commonwealth University, the Library of Virginia, and the Virginia Historical Society. The research

1 Diversity Richmond, "Vision," 2019, http://diversityrichmond.org/who-we-are/vision.html.

2 Cortney Langley, "Mattachine Project Unearths W&M's Lost LGBTIQ History," April 1, 2016, https://www.wm.edu/news/stories/2016/lgbtiq-research-project-helps-unearth-lost-history-of-william--mary123.php.

Did you know?

Established in 1950, the Mattachine Society is one of the oldest LGBT organizations in the United States. Communist and Labor Activist Harry Hay established the Society to protect the rights of gay men in Los Angeles.

from that first semester culminated in an exhibit at William & Mary's Swem Library. According to those who attended the opening reception and roundtable discussion, the event was well attended and provoked thoughtful discussion.[3]

One of the primary critiques come from the research and exhibition was to point out the representative dominance of white gay men. Much of that was a function of the available source material in the archives, a more extensive problem of which projects such as this should always be cognizant. A number of queer scholars have noted that oral history helps to remedy the silences present in traditional archives.[4] That summer Dan Delmonaco, one of the student researchers for both the Stephens Project and the LGBTIQ Research Project, conducted oral histories with LGBTQ alumni of color to begin to offset some of these absences.[5] Expanding to a space such as Diversity Richmond has allowed us to connect with and document the life stories of people of color as well as trans individuals in the greater Richmond Area.

The start of fall semester 2016 brought a new group of students and increased faculty involvement. Jerry Watkins was hired as a visiting assistant professor in the Department of History. When he arrived on campus, he was especially looking forward to working on the research project because of his work with Southern queer history.[6] In addition to engaging in traditional archival research, student researchers and fellows assisted with digitizing the pictures and other ephemera donated or loaned to the project by community members. Oral history necessitated a different kind of approach to research than many students had encountered before. The faculty advisors conducted a series of training sessions to prepare the students for the particularities of conducting interviews with older LGBTIQ+ individuals; these intergenerational exchanges have been one of the highlights of the project. We found it helpful to develop core areas of inquiry to facilitate continuity across the years of the project. "Biography" and "Identity" give space for narrators to define themselves in and across their life stories and give researchers a window into diverse identities and the ways people grapple with self-understanding. "Community" and "Activism" concentrate on the built environment and lived experience of Richmonders. This data is providing insight to neighborhood composition and the ever-changing queer uses of space. The information from four areas both complemented the findings from extant archives and began to engage the multiple absences in these documents.

In the 2018-19 academic year, we continued to work with Diversity Richmond and have expanded our interviews to include members of the greater Richmond area and communities for whom interviewing at Diversity Richmond is not feasible. In the last two years, we have conducted over sixty interviews and are working our way through the transcribing and approval process. So many people are excited to share their stories and many bring in personal items to supplement their interviews. Others have reached into their attics and divested themselves of LGBTQ ephemera. Some of the items have been donated to William & Mary, but most have been returned after being digitized, tagged, and loaded onto our Omeka platform. Soon, the digital component of our planned exhibition will be ready to launch. This will ultimately include both a physical exhibition at Diversity Richmond as well as the digital exhibition and online archive.

3 Langley, "Mattachine Project Unearths W&M's Lost LGBTIQ History."

4 Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, eds., *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

5 The Stephens Project is an ongoing oral history project housed in Swem Library and focused on William and Mary LGBTQ alumni and current and past LGBTQ faculty and staff.

6 Jerry T. Watkins III, *Queering the Redneck Riviera: Sexuality and the Rise of Florida Tourism* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018).

Beyond the relationship with Diversity Richmond, our William & Mary LGBTIQ Research project is joining in coalition with other Virginia-based projects. The recently created Virginia Coalition on LGBTQ History is working to link university and community projects with other state agencies such as the Department of Historic Resources. A common language allows shared and searchable data and exhibitions across our various platforms, meaning broader availability to interested publics. Also, pooling our talent and sharing resources will hopefully facilitate more grant funding from a wider variety of community partners.

In many ways, William & Mary was well placed to begin this work in the region. The university has long emphasized substantive research opportunities for undergraduate students. Part of the new college curriculum (a revamped and re-imagined approach to general education courses) encourages, teaches, and assists students to think differently about their places in the world. This culture has come with financial support for community-engaged research. The Sharpe Community Scholars Program, the Provost's Office, and the Dean of Arts and Sciences all provided funding for the project. The Roy R. Charles Center for Academic Excellence, the National Institute for American History and Democracy, as well as the Lyon G. Tyler Department of History and the American Studies Program have provided space, materials, and support for the students engaged in this work. In fact the American Studies Program has a dedicated graduate fellowship linked to the project and the Charles Center provides a summer fellowship for students to continue the work when the academic year ends. Students are passionate about the project, but the reality of their academic lives means that this support from the university is essential in allowing work on the project to fulfill some student requirements. The project also benefits from two already-established LGBTQ initiatives on campus. William & Mary GALA, the LGBTQ alumni association, was instrumental in starting the Stephens Project in memory of Stephen H. Snell and Stephen E. Patrick. It is a multi-year long-range initiative to record oral histories with alumni, faculty, staff, and students. William & Mary GALA also established the Boswell Initiative in memory of John Boswell. The Boswell Lecture and the Boswell Initiative include funding for an autumn memorial lecture delivered by scholars working in LGBTQ studies and a spring series of events, such as 2017's weekend of queer oral history workshops with noted LGBTQ oral historian Marcia Gallo. This initiative allows students to engage a variety of scholars and helps to bring the world to William & Mary.

This work has not been without problems. The larger LGBTIQ+ movement(s) is currently grappling with issues such as inclusion/exclusion and respectability/identity politics. These play out on the ground in sometimes surprising ways. For example, when the Gay Community Center of Richmond became Diversity Richmond, some did not welcome the change and have resisted involvement with the center's new mission, necessitating contacts beyond the center. Some narrators have questioned why certain letters (TIQ+) appear in the title of the research project. The word "queer" continues to be troubling for some. Others have questioned student involvement in the research process. For instance, at least one interviewee has expressed the feeling that undergraduate students could not possibly conduct sufficiently rigorous interviews or relate to their subjects, while others have been overjoyed at being interviewed by students who represent future generations. This necessitates flexibility with students and community members.

The students have been the backbone of this project. Without students who are dedicated to this work, we could not succeed in documenting the variety of histories under the larger LGBTIQ+ umbrella. They give up several of their Saturdays and countless other hours working on transcripts, digitizing, and even running the social media presence. This diversity of skills means that we can accomplish so much more than a purely faculty-led or individual project. The students who come to this project are passionate about the goal and mission, but they must also balance their other classes. Sometimes things like the transcription of oral histories get backlogged or only a few students show up for research trips. Course credit for work on the project helps students do both, but one must always be prepared and remain flexible.

Richmond's past is a rich tapestry of activism, resistance, and justice work across communities. The William & Mary LGBTIQ Research Project: Documenting the LGBTIQ Past in Virginia is bringing together students, faculty, staff, and a variety of community partners to recover and make the queer part of that history available and accessible. At a time when our politicians peddle in "fake news" and increasingly pervert history for their own purposes while erasing "inconvenient" narratives and people, it is ever more critical to stake our claim in the historical record. Drawing inspiration from Queer Nation and ACT UP: we were here, we are here, and we will help people speak our history because silence equals death.

THE JEWEL IN THE BUCKLE: A CASE STUDY OF LGBTQ HISTORY IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

// CARRIE GIAUQUE

Nestled among the grounds of the South Carolina State House are over a dozen historical markers and monuments. The most notable of the monuments is the one honoring the Confederacy, which drew national attention twice, in 2000 and 2015, over debates about the Confederate flag being flown on the state house and on the grounds. Its existence and placement continue to be part of a larger national debate about the prevalence of monuments of the post–Civil War period and their role in racial politics. These monuments, like all others, have served an important role in the education of the public, as they commemorate events or people considered noteworthy by those who created the structures. However, monuments often present a history dominated by cis-gender white male figures. In 2001, the African-American History Monument was unveiled on the state house grounds after citizens protested the number of monuments to white historical figures, many of whom represent the Confederate Lost Cause. To date, there are no memorials to any LGBTQ community member or activist on the state house grounds. Despite this lack of representation, the LGBTQ community has been thriving in South Carolina and the rest of the South.

Beginning in 2007, I endeavored to research the history of the LGBTQ community in Columbia, South Carolina, to show that even in the Bible Belt the LGBTQ community between the years 1950 and 1987, although perhaps guarded and cautious, was visible and cohesive.[1] I focused my research on LGBTQ individuals' use of privately owned businesses as community gathering spaces. Bars, movie theaters, and stage theaters became preferred spaces for LGBTQ community members to gather due to their social nature. In 2007, LGBTQ historical collections and archives were few and far between in the South. Those that existed were often a small collection in a handful of university and local libraries, as was the case at the University of South Carolina.

Due to the lack of primary sources, the best available option to collect the historical account was to conduct oral history interviews with members of the LGBTQ community. Even if an archive collection had existed, oral histories provide an asset not acquirable in a print archive collection. Oral histories provide a direct account of a person's life and events. The audible cues such as tone, cadence, and pitch all give you a sense of the emotions related to the recollection they are giving, something that is rarely given in a written account.

These direct accounts are invaluable as a resource, but that does not mean they are not without their own issues. First, finding and connecting with interviewees is a difficult task. Asking people to divulge a part of their past they have kept secret at some point is uncomfortable, even when they no longer keep their sexual orientation private. One way to alleviate this situation is to become involved in the community under investigation. For me, participating in local LGBTQ events and volunteering at the local LGBTQ community center gave interviewees time to get to know me in a casual setting, and I was fully open and upfront about the topic I was researching. Many community members would then agree to be interviewed and would also suggest and introduce me to others they felt would be useful interview subjects.

The second difficulty in collecting oral histories is that the personal account of an individual's recollection of the past is sometimes inconsistent due to their own personal perceptions and life experience.

1 The work began as research for my MA thesis: Carrie Anne Giauque, "The Jewel In The Buckle: The Social And Political Role Of Commercial Space For The GLBTQ Community In Columbia, South Carolina" (MA thesis, University of South Carolina, 2009).

Did you know?

Professor of African American Studies and Performance Studies E. Patrick Johnson's book Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South*, is one of many oral history projects that has expanded our historical understanding of the gay experience in the US South. Johnson documented how rural upbringings allowed his narrators to experiment sexually due to a lack of parental supervision and the abundance of open spaces Despite the homophobia present in segments of Southern society, many of Johnson's narrators stayed for economic reasons and due to familial loyalty.*

For example, one interviewee gave two different accounts of a personal life event. When asked about the two accounts, it became clear that one was the account they had told others while they kept their sexual orientation private.[2] By conducting more than one interview with the same interviewee and revisiting certain questions or subjects, it is possible to get correlation or correction.

In addition to volunteering and becoming involved in the community, I found a few other helpful sources for finding interviewees. In 2005, a local radio program named Rainbow Radio began broadcasting interviews with members of the LGBTQ community in South Carolina.[3] The interviews gave accounts of what it was like to grow up gay in the South, coming out stories, and opinion pieces on politics. I also used monographs about southern LGBTQ history. James Sears, a former history professor at the University of South Carolina, interviewed several members of the LGBTQ community, most of whom lived in Columbia, for his books, published between 1991 and 2001.[4] A few of those interviewed in Sears's books agreed talk with me about the use of movie and stage theaters and bars. It should be noted that the political climate toward the LGBTQ community had favorably changed enough by that time I spoke with them that those who had used false names in the books were willing to use their legal names in my research.

In the course of my research, I became curious as to how bars that accepted members of the LGBTQ community continued to operate without continued harassment from the police and others. One answer came from my assessment of the buildings they previously occupied. Affairs, a downtown Columbia bar located at 712 Huger Street, was housed in a two-story building. The downstairs bar remained closed, acting as a sort of decoy for the bar operating on the second floor. Others operated incognito in nondescript buildings that were not recognizable as a bar, much less a gay bar. McBee's, which was located at 925 Huger Street, and a few others, were located in old warehouses where there were no windows to alert passersby to what was occurring inside. The interior of these bars that were not exclusively gay bars but were tolerant of gay clientele, often had a seating section of booths in the back area. One interviewee, Michael VanDiver stated, "When the soldiers would be coming in on the weekend, the gay people would have to stay up in the seating area. We weren't allowed to come down to mix with the soldiers so to speak, but we would always flirt with the soldiers and all."[5] Others mentioned having to sit in the back, and they were prohibited from dancing unless it was after hours and the bar locked the front door.[6] The Capital Club, which was established in 1980 within a block of the South Carolina State House, was and remains a members-only gay bar. Only recently did Google define it as a gay club, as before it had remained a secret of the LGBTQ community for decades. On its façade, the building has two windows with a reflective surface and a solid door. A bouncer sits in an entryway that blocks all

2 Jerry Kelly and Robert Barnes, interview with author, Columbia, SC, March 17, 2009.

3 Rainbow Radio began airing on WOIC 1230 AM in Columbia, South Carolina. It can now be found on WXRY 99.3FM. A collection of interviews can be found in Ed Madden and Candace Chellew-Hodge, *Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio* (Spartanburg, SC: Hub City Press, 2010).

4 James Sears has written several works which document gay life in the South, such as James Sears, *Growing Up Gay in the South: Race, Gender and Journeys of the Spirit* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1991) and *Rebels, Rubyfruit and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

5 Michael VanDiver, personal interview with the author, Columbia, SC, December 2, 2008.

6 Will Sligh, interview with the author, Columbia, SC, March 17, 2009, and Tony Price, interview with the author, Columbia, SC, March 23, 2009.

Did you know?

Police raids of gay bars were common across the United States in the mid-century. In New York, the New York State Liquor Authority revoked the license of any bar that served gay people, or suspected gay people, on the grounds that an assembly of queer persons was "disorderly" conduct. When this statute was overturned in 1966, police in New York relied on the "three garment rule," a state gender-appropriate clothing statute, to arrest the queer patrons of bars, including at the now-famous Stonewall Inn. Under the "three garment rule," all patrons had to be wearing three articles of clothing that matched their biological sex, which was determined by escorting patrons to the restrooms for a strip search once raids had begun. This practice particularly targeted transgender people and butch lesbians.

view of the interior even when the door is open. By keeping the clientele invisible from passersby, the bar could ensure that from the sidewalk, no one would see anything that would raise suspicion and alert the authorities.

Another way to prevent a bar from being a target of police raids was to be careful of where it was advertised. City directories can be great resources for uncovering the addresses of individuals and businesses.[7] However, the various bars and dance clubs the LGBTQ members mentioned were often not listed in the directories. Whether this was an attempt to remain hidden from the public or it was because the bar did not remain in business long enough to be included in the directory is unclear.

Instead, bars welcoming to LGBTQ were often advertised in gay travel guides such as Damron's and in adult bookstores.[8] However, many locals not part of the LGBTQ community were aware of these places. Kim Harne, a native of Columbia, remembers her parents remarking that Our Place was a "gay bar" in the 1980s.[9] As careful as they were with advertising, word of mouth always works best but often leaks out.[10]

Given that the bars could not always remain hidden, I sought to answer how frequently arrests or raids occurred, which proved problematic. South Carolina's Attorney General Annual Report stated how many times buggery or sodomy was reported, however, it did not detail if the person accused was prosecuted for homosexual activity or the location of the arrest.[11] Newspaper arrest records rarely used identifying words such as sodomy, buggery, or homosexual activity. Interviewees gave a little more context, indicating that raids only occurred during summer breaks and election years.

Lack of information on arrest records are not the only obstacle in reconstructing a history of a group that had to remain hidden and is only now getting the recognition it deserves. One obstacle is negotiating the changed perception of the group. Members of the LGBTQ community have often lived decades telling a version of their story that served as a heterosexual façade in order to protect themselves and others. To complicate matters, many of the older members of the community are suffering from the effects of aging, and many passed away before their history could be collected. Many interviewees mentioned having had journals that documented their accounts, only to have destroyed them later.

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7 Hill's Columbia Richland Co, *SC City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1950-1973); Columbia Richland Co, SC (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1974-1984); Columbia, South Carolina, *City Directory* (Richmond, VA: R.L. Polk & Co., c.1985-1987).

8 Damron's Travel Guides were introduced in 1964 and served as travel and business guides for gay men and women. While Damron's has long served the LGBTQ community with information, finding archived copies requires extensive travel to several archives and many collections are incomplete as the guides were often disposed of after the new edition was published.

9 Kim Harne, interview with the author, Columbia, SC, March 4, 2009.

10 Analysis of gender and identity of the bar owners in Columbia, South Carolina, is a subject for future research. Nationally, many women and black community members were restricted on their abilities to own property due to the limitations in gaining the capital necessary to purchase and maintain a business, and instead gathered at private house parties. This issue is addressed in George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 1-32.

11 South Carolina Attorney Generals Office, *Annual Report, 1951-1976* (Columbia, SC: Attorney Generals Office, 1976).

Map of known and operating bars, movie theaters, stage theaters and hook up spots in Columbia, South Carolina between 1950-1987.

Historical memory is not the only thing subject to the ravages of time. Buildings are also subject to destruction before they can be documented or honored for their importance in LGBTQ history. Had it not been for the public outcry over potential destruction of the Stonewall Inn in New York City, the site of a 1969 uprising that helped bring gay rights issues to the fore, it might have seen the wrecking ball before it was honored with the National Register of Historic Places nomination in 1999, well before the required fifty years of historical significance. State Historic Preservation Office members have an improbable task of approving a nomination of sites that fall below the fifty-year rule. Local designations in Certified Local Governments may consider a building if it serves as a pivotal moment in local LGBTQ history, but few towns can claim a building of such significance. Historical markers are the next best options to designate important sites and broaden the visibility of LGBTQ history as they have a twenty-five year of historical significance rule and can be placed regardless of an extant building or business. However, to date, Columbia and the entire state of South Carolina have no local landmarks or historical markers that designate or recognize the LGBTQ community and its history.

In the end, the research showed that Columbia had several bars and dance clubs that accepted LBGTQ patrons or even had an exclusively gay clientele by at least the late 1950s. The bars often had short life spans, but most bars in downtown areas—whether they cater to gay clientele or not—tend to have short lifecycles. The difference with gay bars was that police raids could spell the end to their business.

Movie theaters, especially B-reel film houses or grindhouses, were common hookup spots where the cover of darkness allowed LGBTQ members to meet with less threat of discovery. Stage theaters, especially in the 1980s, often became the center of political movements by using the space to gather as an organization and to present plays oriented to issues related to the LGBTQ community such as productions of the AIDS-themed play *Angels in America*.

Another way to achieve recognition for a historical moment or group is through educating the public. Mapping technology such as ArcMap or Google Earth can be utilized to create a visual representation of buildings and sites to help the public understand LGBTQ history. I created a Google Map (screetshot at left) with several layers pertaining to the research: LGBTQ friendly and exclusive bars, movie and stage theaters known to be frequented by LGBTQ members, known hook-up sites, and local landmarks of importance. Each dot on the map, as seen in the image at left, shows a location and gives a brief historical account.

Past attempts to get community interest in designating a historic marker of LGBTQ history were turned down by their State Historic Preservation offices or local businesses due to worries about safety. Given the recent strides the LGBTQ community has received in terms of public acceptance and equality, the time is now right to recognize the history in Columbia, South Carolina. A historic marker in front of the Capital Club, the now longest operating gay bar in Columbia, would be the best location. Or one of the many Confederate statues on the State House could be substituted with a monument to Harriett Hancock, the mother of the Pride movement in Columbia, South Carolina, and recipient of the Equality Award by President Barack Obama. Or perhaps the University of South Carolina campus can erect an educational plaque recognizing the students who in 1998 orchestrated the first drag show on campus, the Birdcage, which is still performed annually and has been recognized for its role in creating acceptance among the student body. Those "rhinestone drag queens" at the Birdcage were the inspiration for the title of the article, as they put a jewel into the buckle of the Bible belt.

QUEER COLA ORAL HISTORY AND DIGITAL ARCHIVES

// TRAVIS WAGNER AND JOSHUA WHITFIELD

The Queer COLA Oral History and Digital Archive Project is an LGBTQ+/Queer digital history project designed to create a public, community-curated archive for queer persons in Columbia, South Carolina. Up until 2018, it had been managed by graduate students Travis Wagner (pursuing a PhD in Information and Library Science) and Joshua Whitfield (pursuing an MA in Public History). To aid in this process, we each received $500 from the University of South Carolina's Graduate Civic Scholars Program to purchase equipment, web domains, and other services for the project. Currently the project is ongoing and seeking new team members, community advisors and participants, and sustainable sources of funding. In this field report, we will discuss the collection contents to date, the challenges of engaging in queer historiography with a specific emphasis on doing so in the American South, and, finally, highlight significant content within the collection.

Affectionately nicknamed "COLA" and "Soda City," the city of Columbia has served as a hub of queer life and culture in a primarily rural state. The Queer COLA project fills a void in efforts to preserve queer public memory by seeking not only to provide a digital community platform to preserve local queer history, but also to make that history readily accessible to the community outside traditional institutional spaces. So far, we have collected eight oral histories and digitized multiple documents, photographs, and objects related to queer local history and culture in Columbia. Notable oral history recordings include discussions with Columbia-based drag queen Ebony Wood and South Carolina trans activist Danya Smith. The digitized items include multiple protest posters from events such as the "Justice for Orlando" memorial led by trans youth of color to honor the victims of the PULSE Night Club shooting in the summer of 2016. The items also include pins and fliers for queer advocacy events and celebrations such as South Carolina Pride. We have also begun training volunteers to help with future oral history collection and community outreach.

Columbia represents a curious and somewhat unusual space for LGBTQ+ history in the American South. Both complicit in and compromised by a racialized history of exploitation, the space is one that is simultaneously progressive and regressive. Columbia represents an undeniable beacon for queer inclusion. Columbia is the home of SC Equality, The Harriet Hancock Center, and the relatively inclusive space that is the University of South Carolina (USC). Despite the presence of these inclusive organizations, Columbia remains a site that has not overcome the normalization and institutionalization of systemic racism. To talk about the queer narratives of the state (and its capital city) is to be deeply cognizant of how incredibly narrow such a historical lens remains. Much like queer historiography as a whole, understanding of the queer past in South Carolina grapples with the constant evolutions of LGBTQ+ history. The scope of queer inclusion is expanding, but it only affords the potential for historical remembrance to gay, white, cisgender men.

Again, not dissimilarly to other LGBTQ+ historic endeavors, previous attempts to make available the experiences of queer history in Columbia have given privilege to those narratives that have become "acceptable" within the normative framework of neoliberalism. In doing so, Columbia embraced a version of queer identity that remains complicit with and beholden to heteronormative ideologies.[1] These narratives are undeniably crucial to LGBTQ history, but we wanted our project to reflect the rich complexities of a larger queer narrative. What happens to the experiences of trans youth in such a structure? What about queer people of color? Moreover, how does one account for queer identities such as those of two-spirit communities whose gendered and sexed identities becomes excluded within postcolonial rhetorics? From acknowledging these failures and complexities came the emergence of the Queer Cola Oral History and Digital Archive Project (hereafter QCOHDAP).

As discussed, this project operates within an understanding of the importance of a community driven approach to archiving, one that facilitates the desires of those represented, as opposed to institutional definitions of what warrants inclusion within any archival collection.

1 Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Beacon Press, 2012).

However, the need for certain guidelines and practices is unavoidable. These practices, primarily, focus on assuring the safety and confidentiality of individuals who donate materials to the digital repository. Moreover, because it is a community archive, the definition of what constitutes inclusion, will, when possible, not include materials already collected elsewhere. To borrow from Joanna Newman, we understand documents in this context to be "records that originate in a community" as opposed to being seen as reflective of a community, as this helps to assure that the "collection, maintenance and use involves active participation of that community." Although our proposed project includes acquisition forms and management policies, what makes it into the collection is contingent on what is brought forth by those within the community.[2]

At the outset, we realized there were a number of obstacles for two graduate students attempting to reach out to queer communities in Columbia. For example, identifying and defining our target community for this study is complicated by the sheer diversity of queer communities under the umbrella of "LGBTQ+." Each smaller community possesses its own unique sets of sexual and gender identities, political objectives, and internal hierarchies. Given the ephemeral nature of queer identity, it is often difficult to delimit clear boundaries for choosing who belongs in Columbia's "queer community" and who does not. There is also an element of power in this discussion, since we risk perpetuating these hierarchies when we seek participants for the community advisory board, for the oral history interviews, and to provide donations for the digital archive.

The same risks applied to the content that community members wanted to have preserved through this digital history project. We structured our expectations and methodological approaches to be flexible enough to meet the specific expectations of individual participants while striving to serve Columbia's queer communities in general. This required us to push our own boundaries of what qualifies as "significant" in LGBTQ+ local history work. Of specific note were flyers for student-led events at USC such as the popular Birdcage drag show which is put on annually by the efforts of queer student groups on USC's campus. The flyers, small and seemingly arbitrary, are now one of the collection's most popular items, as evidenced by their number of views on Archive.org where QCOHDAP houses its digital content. In turn, we tried to preserve more ephemeral materials such as posters and picket signs from demonstrations, as they are often not preserved in institutional archives and seemed to be a common item offered by participants. Most recently, we reached out to activists who participated in the 2016 protests against S.1203, an anti-transgender bathroom bill proposed by then South Carolina Senator Lee Bright, which attempted to mirror the controversial "bathroom bill" of North Carolina.[3] Through these contacts we were able to digitize some of their posters and other materials, once again proving to be some of the most popular content within the digital repository. We have also begun documenting the methods of digitizing and uploading content so future individuals working with or interested in contributing to QCOHDAP can do so seamlessly with minimal need for oversight by project managers.

In our oral history work, QCOHDAP has sought to follow most of the standards established by the "Principles and Best Practices for Oral History," adopted by the Oral History Association in October, 2009.[4] Most of these provisions were useful for guiding our methodology for conducting oral history interviews, although we have striven to give as much control as possible over the interviews to our interviewees. For recording our interviews, we used a ZOOM H4nPro Handy Recorder with dual microphones that could record in WAV and MP3 files.

The pre-interview sessions with participants were vital in establishing trust and credibility between researcher and participant. At this time, we provided a document of informed consent listing the interviewee's rights and privileges. By emphasizing the consensual nature of the oral history interview we were able to foster a communicative relationship before, during, and after the collection of the interview.

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2 Joanna Newman, "Sustaining Community Archives," *Comma* 1 (2011): 90.

3 South Carolina State Senate, General Bill, S. 1203, 121st Session, introduced in the Senate on April 6, 2016, https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess121_2015-2016/bills/1203.htm.

4 Oral History Association, "Principles and best practices for oral history," 2009, https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/.

We prepared a series of questions before each interview, but we encouraged participants to choose which topics they wished to discuss and which they wanted to avoid. This flexibility empowered our participants to explore more difficult topics related to mental health, pornography, recreational drug use, sexual violence, racism, sexism, and transphobia.

In promoting community buy-in for oral history interviews, much of our early feedback came from older white gay men with an established presence in the community, followed by significant interest from white and Latinx queer women. Although at this point we have been able to procure ample material from queer women and trans people, unfortunately, we feel that we have largely failed in our mission to establish community buy-in from black queer people. Since Columbia's residents are about 40 percent black, the dearth of black queer voices in this project is a failure of the project managers. We can only report two instances in which we were able to schedule oral history interviews from community members who identified as black gay cisgender men, but both interviews fell through due to changes in interviewee availability and growing lack of interest or distrust of the project.

It is possible that our choices for social media outreach inadvertently influenced the lack of responses we received: much of QCOHDAP's marketing funding (deployed from the aforementioned stipends project managers received as part of their fellowship with USC's Graduate Civic Scholars Program) were allocated to Facebook's marketing algorithms, which superficially provided good geographically focused exposure to the project. Prioritizing outreach using Facebook, however, was a misstep. The work of Pew Research Center's demonstrated that social media preference sometimes varies along racial lines. Black Americans, for example, often use platforms such as Twitter and Instagram more than whites, a fact that scholars such as Porchia Moore have attempted to remind those of us in the public history profession.[5]

One early success of the project was the collection of 2.5 hours of interviews and several documents and items from Dr. Will Moreau Goins, the former executive director of the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois & United Tribes of South Carolina (ECSIUT). Goins identified as two-spirit (a pan-Indian gender and sexual identity that today has ties with LGBTQ+ communities) and was heavily involved in social justice campaigns throughout South Carolina. The collection and interview include the work Goins did as an advocate for indigenous persons including items from his many information sessions on two-spirit identities as well as documentation of the creation and advertising for an activist-led documentary eponymously titled *Two-Spirit*. Those looking to research either Goins or learn more about two-spirit identities will find evocative and hard to come by content chronicling the dual work Goins and others like him faced in having to advocate both as indigenous persons and as a part of the "plus" often overlooked in the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Tragically, Goins passed away in November of 2017, but we were able to digitize many of Goins's donations to the archive.

QCOHDAP is a relatively small project with a small project team that has attempted to fill a need in the community. To that end, we have garnered positive feedback and community buy-in from queer people in Columbia. The project has a good foundation to build upon this community support and expand its base of community stakeholders. More important, the team needs to grow and change to fulfill mission objectives. Although QCOHDAP's original project team brought a diverse interdisciplinary skillset to the project, both team members are white (one masculine/one masculine presenting) with a graduate education.

Our more pressing challenges moving forward with the project will be bringing queer POC community members into the project team, as well as establishing an inclusive community advisory committee that can meet regularly to develop long-term goals.

5 Porchia Moore, "An Exploration of Race, Social Media, and Museums," *Exhibition* (American Alliance of Museums, 2013): 50-52; Pew Research Center, "Pew Internet and American Life Project," 2013, http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Social-media-users.aspx.

Diversifying QCOHDAP's social media outreach will also be essential to establishing new ties to queer communities in Columbia. As it stands, QCOHDAP has a promising future and continues to receive new interest and suggestions for donations and interview participants on a regular basis. We recently spoke about QCOHDAP at USC Upstate's annual Bodies of Knowledge conference in the spring of 2018 and have recently given an invited lecture at the Palmetto Archives, Libraries and Museums Council on Preservation's (PALMCOP) symposium on the theme of "Preserving Bits and Bytes." The project continues to evolve, and we hope to expand the participation to include queer communities in South Carolina's Upstate. Updates and future evolutions of QCOHDAP can be found via the project's website: www.qcohdap.com.

STONEWALL: RIOT, REBELLION, ACTIVISM, AND IDENTITY

// CHRISTOPHER GIOIA

The stonewallhistory.us website has been designed to collect a range of documents, images, texts, and testimony about perhaps the most controversial and crucial moment in LGBTQ history, the Stonewall rebellion of 1969. Digital archiving can be said to present some challenges as well as advantages. An online digital database provides an immediate entry point into the complex, tangled web of stories and memories that construct the Stonewall narrative. Through this engagement with the past, viewers can determine for themselves if answers to the many questions that remain are possible, or even desirable. One drawbacks of a digital archive is that although the potential for inclusiveness exists, the content may also be seen as reinforcing a subjective perspective due to the records and testimony that exist and that are forthcoming.

The popular Stonewall narrative is that the riots were the spark that ignited the LGBTQ rights movement. For the most part the American public has acknowledged, if not embraced this view. The collective understanding that Stonewall is significant is not debated. Yet, there is less clarity about more specific aspects of the uprising: Which segment of the community led the way organizing protest? Did gay male social networks have a monopolizing effect on gay rights organizing? Was the early homophile movement influential in the post-Stonewall era, or even considered by the more radical group that emerged then? Were trans individuals influential in gay liberation? Were people of color invited to participate in activism? Who was really there in Greenwich Village, New York, that night in June of 1969? Who started the rebellion?[1]

The memories and details of the rebellion tend to vary according to the source consulted. The collection of documents and testimony on stonewallhistory.us aims to keep the event open to interpretation by providing users with primary sources from a variety of perspectives. In this way it can be demonstrated that Stonewall and the resulting birth of the gay liberation "revolution" were very much spontaneous and creative. As professor of communications Barbie Zelizer wrote, "we allow collective memories to fabricate, rearrange, elaborate and omit details about the past, pushing aside accuracy and authenticity so as to accommodate broader issues of identity formation, power and authority, and political affiliation."[2] Zelizer points out that even the stories that emanate from those who exist on the margins of society and have the least power are impacted by political and social influences. In the case of the Stonewall narrative, the broader social movements of the time, such as the militant protest culture and the youth-oriented counterculture and consciousness, converged to help leaders of the nascent gay rights movement form a concept of identity, affiliation, and authority for the community. In this case, the authority that was exerted through the liberation movement was the concept of oppression.[3]

Prior to Stonewall, some lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals existed quietly in the closet and enjoyed measured stability within their social lives and to a degree in society at large as long as they were reserved and respectable. For the gender nonconforming, this often meant living dual lives. For those who did not conform or remain in the closet, alienation from society, friends, and even family was typical. The new authority, exercised by the liberation movement, was one that asked for more than tolerance and required acceptance. Based on the oral histories I conducted, it can be said that collective memory of the liberation movement by participants recognizes and supports this understanding.

I decided early on that recording oral histories would be a crucial part of this public history project. Alessandro Portelli's examination of the history of the labor movement in Italy through oral histories was an inspiration for this decision. I found some similarities in the blurring of facts and chronology between the story of Stonewall and the narrative he chronicles in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Nan Alamilla Boyd noted that when writing *Gay New York*, George Chauncey observed: "early in my research it became

1 Christopher Gioia, *Stonewall: Riot, Rebellion Activism and Identity*, 2017, https://stonewallhistory.omeka.net/discussion.

2 Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1998.

3 Gioia, *Stonewall*, https://stonewallhistory.omeka.net/discussion.

Did you know?

Many museums and libraries have mounted exhibitions that coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. For example, The New York Public Library created an exhibition of photographs by photojournalists Diana Davies and Kay Tobin Lahusen and other artifacts from the library's holdings. Curator Jason Baumann organized the exhibition into four sections to discuss this landmark event: queer protest, queer newsprint, love, and queer bars.

clear that oral histories would be the single most important source of evidence concerning the internal workings of the gay world."[4] In my interviews, I also became aware of hierarchies within the inner workings of gay social circles and how they impacted collective memory of events. The power of listening to the recorded voices of my informants, elder members of the community, provided a uniquely accessible point of entry for myself as well as those who may not be familiar with the events described. Nan Alamilla Boyd wrote about the voices heard in oral histories as texts "open to interpretation and their disclosures should be understood as part of a larger process of reiteration." She questions how much factual details matter or whether an equally valuable, more romantic story is told through oral history.[5]

Certainly the Stonewall story is romanticized as any other battle or revolution has been throughout history. But for some, it was perceived as a tool in a broader series of actions and reactions. The activist community in New York City was clearly media savvy and therefore capitalized on the attention the unrest attracted, including the most disparaging accounts. If it were not for the media coverage and the ensuing controversies, especially concerning *Village Voice* articles on the riots that led to protests, the commemorative potential of Stonewall may not have been realized.

The individual interpretations of participants, witnesses, activists, and authors also provide the means to shape the factors that contributed to Stonewall's success as a catalyst and help create a narrative that resonates beyond simple facts and a linear sequence of events. This is echoed in the testimony of those I interviewed and also in the earliest written accounts such as the *Rat Subterranean News* coverage of the incident. The *Rat* reporter, known only as "Tom" wrote, "Soon pandemonium broke loose. Cans, bottles, rocks, trash cans, finally a parking meter crashed the windows and door." He concluded, "What was and should have always been theirs, what should have been the free control of the people was dramatized, shown up for what it really was: an instrument of power and exploitation. It was theater, totally spontaneous. There was no bullshit."[6]

The progression of this story into the narrative of Stonewall is set in motion by the grassroots organizing that began almost immediately after the first night of the rebellion. This narrative represents elements that are derived from the protest movement culture of the late sixties and was tied to notions of identity that envelop the specific narrative.[7] Craig Rodwell, Jim Fouratt, Martha Shelley as well as Sylvia Rivera, who came together in the days and weeks after the incident to organize the earliest liberation organization, can be seen as shaping this narrative of the Stonewall rebellion. Members of the homophile movement such as Dick Leitsch of the Mattachine Society, and Rudy Grillo, Morty Manford, and others who participated in Gay Activists Alliance, authorize its re-telling. Despite the fact that this was by no means the first violent protest against police harassment, the event is instilled with the significance of the activists' interpretation within the context of broader social movements of the time.[8]

4 Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Who is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 2 (May 2008): 177.
5 Ibid.
6 "*The Rat*, July 9-23, 1969, pg 6.," Stonewall: Riot, Rebellion, Activism and Identity, https://stonewallhistory.omeka.net/items/show/56.
7 Knut Lundby, Digital Storytelling, *Mediatized Stories: Self-Representations in New Media* (New York: Peter Lang), 2008.
8 Christopher Gioia, *Stonewall*, 2017, https://stonewallhistory.omeka.net/discussion.

I hope to continue building the collection of stories, images, and documents contained on stonewallhistory.us with the goal of bringing in as many voices and perspectives regarding the past as possible. Contributions of digitized archival material or written testimony and comments are welcome and can be submitted through the "contribute an item" tab on the home page. I will be utilizing the website for a continuing education course and have booked presentations with community groups in the New York metro region in 2019. As I take the time to promote the project, I hope to engage with participants and include their commentary and thoughts. In my first presentation late in 2018, several men who had been Stonewall regulars or present that weekend in 1969 were in attendance. Although I offered to record their testimony there was some reluctance on their part. Although they seemed grateful for the opportunity, perhaps they just weren't sure they wanted to go on the record. I reached out to this group again during WorldPride this spring.

Much of the comments on the site so far have been supportive and express thanks for gathering the material. The site has been utilized by teachers, documentary film makers, and journalists to name a few. Ideally, a digital archival collection will grow organically through contributions, but as with other records, there is a better result when a program for identification and retention are in place. Soliciting participation still seems to be the best avenue to secure testimony and that is certainly my objective and goal during the fiftieth anniversary of Stonewall.

Note from author: Commentary and analysis above previously published on stonewallhistory.us and various blog posts.

INTERPRETING PULSE: ENGAGING COMMUNITY INTERPRETATIONS OF TRAGEDY

// CONNIE L. LESTER, PATRICIA CARLTON, AND SARA RAFFEL

In the early morning hours of June 12, 2016, Omar Mateen, a twenty-six-year-old security guard, opened fire inside Pulse, an Orlando gay nightclub, killing forty-nine people and wounding another sixty-eight club patrons who had been enjoying the venue's "Latin Night." After a three-hour standoff, Mateen, an American citizen, was also killed by Orlando police who stormed the building. As Orlandoans awoke to the news of the event, they quickly moved to rally around the victims and offer an interpretation of the horror the community had experienced. City and county government tasked the Orange County Regional History Center with the collection and curation of the thousands of items left at the spontaneous memorials that quickly appeared around Orlando.[1] Other institutions also quickly shifted resources to document and interpret the Pulse shooting. This study examines three projects. One is the Regional Initiative to Collect History, Experiences, and Stories (RICHES), which adapted an existing project to collect oral histories and digital artifacts related to the shooting. It also includes two RICHES partners: the LGBTQ History Museum of Central Florida, Inc., which revised an in-progress plan to acknowledge the Pulse tragedy in an physical exhibit that opened in November 2016, and the Citizen Curator project, which organized an exhibit of remembrance on the first anniversary of the shooting.[2]

Each of the partners emphasized the importance of a democratic approach to the collection and interpretation of the Pulse tragedy.[3]

Now, almost three years after the event, an evolutionary understanding of the meaning of Pulse is more apparent. Initial interpretations emphasized the need to comfort and encourage unity and characterized Pulse as an aberration.

By the first anniversary, public analysis of the Pulse tragedy was evident as debates over LGBTQ+ rights, gun control, and terrorism gained political traction and exposed underlying tensions, and both historians and the public struggled to document and interpret difficult history close to home. The exhibits they created questioned the state of social justice in Orlando and nationally and sought to illuminate myriad forms of discrimination and suggest solutions. As we approached the third anniversary, efforts to construct a permanent physical memorial of commemoration and as well as one promoting social activism promise ongoing reinterpretations of the meaning of Pulse.

1 As James B. Gardner noted, the creation of "vernacular, sidewalk memorials reveal the struggle to find meaning . . . [as] temporary shrines [that] facilitate public mourning through eclectic yet choreographed displays." James B. Gardner, "September 11: Museums, Spontaneous Memorials, and History," iin Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Christin Sanchez-Carretero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 96.

2 During this article's publication process, the museum officially changed its name from the GLBT History Museum of Central Florida, Inc., to the LGBTQ History Museum of Central Florida, Inc. The museum's current name is used throughout.

3 William G. Thomas, Patrick D. Jones, and Andrew Witmer, "History Harvests: What Happens When Students Collect and Digitize the People's History?," *Perspectives on History: The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association* (January 2013), https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2013/history-harvests.

The immediate response to the shooting was a community-wide effort to offer comfort and protection. Citizens of Orlando and people across the globe used social media to check on Orlandoans gathered at the Pulse site and at the hospitals where victims received medical care. Others brought coolers of water to share with the strangers waiting in the hot sun for news of the victims or standing in long lines to donate blood. Indeed, so many turned up that blood banks were overwhelmed. Churches opened their doors to mourners and offered funeral services. Airlines flew family members and coffins at no cost. And thousands across the globe contributed millions of dollars to defray immediate and long-term medical costs and to assist the families of the dead. Fifty people dressed in angel costumes spread their wings to create a physical barrier and protect grieving families and friends at their loved ones' funerals, shielding them from members of hate groups who mocked and celebrated their loss. A local quilt guild received individual squares and fully completed quilts from quilters around the world; more than 1800 quilts comforted those in need.[4] The Orlando Gay Chorus provided singers for every vigil in the days and weeks that followed.[5]

In the outpouring of work, the first interpretation of the event emerged: it was an aberration, the work of a lone gunman who, despite being an American citizen, may or may not have been motivated by ties to global terrorism. The interpretation met two different needs of the community. For most Orlandoans, seeing the shooting as the result of a lone gunman who had no connection to the community reassured them that this remained a safe place to live and affirmed their belief in the "goodness" of themselves and their neighbors. For the city, the interpretation was essential to Orlando's economic strength—tourism. As a site of world tourism that projected itself as home to Walt Disney World, the "happiest place on earth," Orlando needed to be able to say, "this is not us."[6]

The initial interpretation rested on a long history of the city as a gay vacation destination. Parliament House, an LGBTQ resort, had just celebrated its fortieth anniversary.[7] In 1991, an estimated three to four thousand LGBTQ attendees at Walt Disney World theme park inaugurated the first Gay Day, an event that expanded into a week-long international celebration. The city's Pride Parade annually attracted enthusiastic audiences. In 2002, the Orlando City Council enacted "Chapter 57," a gay rights measure, that added "sexual orientation" as a protected category in Orlando's anti-discrimination laws. In an effort to be more inclusive of the transgender community, "gender identity" was also added as a protected category in 2014. Despite the positivity these milestones represent, the LGBTQ History Museum documented a more complex history, one that projected exclusion as well as acceptance and pride.

In June 2016, the LGBTQ Museum was engaged in the final planning for an exhibit on gay history in Orlando that was scheduled to open during Pride Week in October at the Orange County Regional History Center. As the museum's board labored over the organization of the exhibit they titled *Pride, Prejudice, and Protest*, they decided to organize the story in a way that interpreted in the history of exclusion, the horror of the AIDS crisis, as well as the emergence of gay pride. The exhibit was designed to end on a high note—to demonstrate the progress that had been made. The violence at Pulse and the simultaneous chaotic national political climate forced revisions. In the final version of the exhibit, the years that

4 Paul Gorgio, "'#Quilts for Pulse Project' comforts victims," ClickOrlando.com, June 6, 2017, https://www.clickorlando.com/news/pulse-orlando-shooting/quilters-offer-comfort-to-pulse-families-first-responders. Participants in the project came from all fifty states and twenty-four countries.

5 "Past Events," Orlando Gay Chorus, June 2016, June 2017, June 2018, https://www.orlandogaychorus.org/shows/list/?tribe_paged=1&tribe_event_display=past&tribe-bar-search=Pulse+.

6 LGBTQ magazine *The Advocate*, for example, called Orlando "A haven for LGBT folks of all ages in the Sunshine State," and wrote, "As it's home to the one and only Walt Disney World, it's easy to believe that Orlando is the Happiest Place on Earth." Sunnavie Brydum, "Orlando, Fla," *The Advocate*, June/July 2013, Issue 1067, 42-43.

7 Erin Montgomery, "A Place in the Sunshine State: Community, Preservation, and the Parliament House" (MA Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2017).

witnessed the emergence of pride were bookended by the AIDS crisis and the Pulse shooting—a juxtaposition of events that invited contemplation on the meaning of progress. One of the more startling features of the exhibit was a free-standing wooden structure with doors on two sides: one door was an open closet door and the second door was a closed bathroom door. Hurricane Matthew delayed the Pride Parade and the opening of the exhibit until November, but visitors packed the exhibit, where they lingered and quietly moved through the panels and artifacts. The *Pride, Prejudice, and Protest* exhibit did not directly confront the accepted public interpretation of Pulse. Yet, as the first public presentation to place Pulse in a larger historic timeline, the museum and its exhibit suggested that the story was more complex than initially presented.[8]

The occurrence of tragic events in the modernist world of grand narratives has given way to "postmodern ideals of distributed authority and competing narratives" that are best realized in digital archives and memorials. As Patricia Carlton observed in her work on the memorialization of traumatic events: "Rather than represent the collective memory of a particular group or provide a singular narrative of the event, the [digital] disaster archive's multiple 'texts of mourning' place site visitors, contributors, and curators at various stages of recovery" together where a social network of the bereaved can "generate civic identity and solidarity, and prepare for future catastrophic events."[9] The responses to the Pulse shooting discussed here show the beginnings of those various stages of recovery, from the grief witnessed in oral histories only a few months after the event to the continuing activism of the affected community three years later. Though Pulse is still recent history, the creation of diverse narratives showcases the many perspectives surrounding the event, and the remembering and sharing of those perspectives—as we discuss in the additional examples below—galvanizes the affected communities and their support systems.

In 2015, the second project, RICHES, received a National Endowment for the Humanities Common Good grant to work with the LGBTQ History Museum to conduct History Harvests in the gay community. History Harvests events are designed to connect academic historians and communities to facilitate a more inclusive and democratic history. Participants bring images, objects, and documents from family collections to be digitized/photographed and made available through a dedicated, open-source website. Oral history collection is also a feature of most History Harvests. The Pulse tragedy expanded the scope of the work. Rather than the originally planned single community collection event, RICHES students and staff conducted oral histories with members of the Gay Chorus over several months and organized three History Harvests at the LGBT+ Center Orlando (The Center).[10] In the days after the Pulse shooting, The Center had fulfilled its mission as a sanctuary and safe space for all people reeling from the tragedy. The decision to conduct the History Harvests at The Center tied the collections of artifacts and memories to Pulse. Like the exhibit, these collections revealed a complex history that was not always visible to the straight community. The individual oral histories revealed that an event like Pulse is not experienced or interpreted in a singular manner. The digital presentation of the images and oral histories, unfiltered by exhibit curation, offered a public opportunity for individuals to assess multiple views and arrive at multiple interpretations of the event. For example, Joel Strack, a founding member of the Orlando Gay Chorus, described singing with the chorus at an Orlando City soccer game following the tragedy. Ticketholders had been instructed to wear specific colors based on their seat location; the result was a rainbow of color around the stadium. Strack believed that "There are people who . . . probably never even knew the Orlando Gay Chorus existed . . . and yet,

8 "Pride, Prejudice, and Protest – Orange County History Center" planning document, LGBTQ Board Minutes, May, 16, 2016, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/items/show/10555; Emlie S. Arnold, "The Wound Is Fresh: Exhibiting Orlando's LGBTQ History in the Shadow of the Pulse Nightclub Massacre," *Exhibition* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 27-35; Patricia Carlton, "From Ashes to Ashé: Memorializing Traumatic Events Through Participatory Digital Archives" (PhD diss., University of Central Florida, 2016), 63, 16, and 151.

9 Carlton, "From Ashes to Ashé," 63, 16, and 151.

10 In operation since 1978, The Center's mission includes serving as a sanctuary for LGBTQ people; providing programming to educate, empower and entertain; build strategic alliances; and fighting discrimination, inequality, oppression and injustice. Promotional material for the History Harvests conducted at The Center is also available: "Pride. Prejudice. Protest.–History Harvest Flyer," January 2017, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/items/show/10554.

because of the tragedy, they stepped up as members of Orlando's community, supporting the gay community as well.[11] The narrative of unity so evident in Strack's oral history appears in a number of the other oral histories. However, participants also clearly related the events at Pulse to their personal histories as men and women separated from the larger community. Many expressed a sense of guilt for "surviving" an act of violence directed against their peers.

Richard Lamberty, another member of the chorus, provided another perspective. Lamberty celebrated his birthday on the weekend of the Pulse shooting. He recalled that he went to a reception and dinner and when it ended, "nobody wanted to really go out." Any other year "we would have been going to Pulse and arriving about 12:30 and staying until they closed or later—make them stay open and play music. So I would have had, you know, 25-30 people from out of town, who just love to dance, be there with me, and I just, you know—when—I'm tired. I think I'll go home. That was the decision." On the evening of the June 12 Lamberty joined fellow chorus members at the Joy Metropolitan Community Church to sing for the first of twenty vigils held over a two-week period. Lamberty ended his oral history with a reflection on the meaning of Pulse: "I don't look forward to my birthday next year . . . the weekend of the one-year anniversary. I don't want there to be a one-year anniversary . . . It's so preventable. We have to be responsible for what happens next. I have to be responsible for what happens next."[12] The narrative provided by Strack countered the mega-narrative of acceptance and support by suggesting that Orlando was not aware of the contributions of gays to the artistic life of the community. Lamberty's oral history also pointed toward a "memorial" that was embraced by a number of Orlandoans, a call to social activism.

The calls for activism often had deep roots in past experiences of social and political exclusion. In one oral history, Debbie Simmons, a founding member of the Metropolitan Business Association (MBA)—an organization supporting LGBTQ businesses in Orlando—remembered the difficulty in garnering support from local officials for the city's gay community. Simmons recalled encouraging Glenda Hood, Orlando's mayor from 1993-2003, to attend a MBA meeting. When Hood finally attended a meeting, Simmons said, "[Hood] was asked some very direct questions about supporting the gay community and non-discrimination and she stood right at the podium and said, 'I will not be a champion for your cause.'" Hood went on to encourage the MBA participants to get involved in local government and advocate for themselves, but according to Simmons, Hood's statement "was explosive, because it made a lot of people really energized, that OK, well now we're going to be on the steps of City Hall asking, 'Why not?'" For Simmons, these memories of the LGBTQ community's struggle for equal rights—and she's adamant that that struggle is not yet over—underline her feelings about the Pulse shooting. She believes in the progress made, citing the city flying rainbow flags in 1998, the annual Come Out With Pride parade, and the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling on gay marriage, but is wary of the community "letting its guard down" in light of events like the Pulse massacre.[13]

The third of the digital archiving projects facilitating community-based interpretations of Pulse was funded by an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant. The project invited the public and University of Central Florida students to curate digital and physical exhibits that addressed two aspects of the Pulse tragedy: eliminationism, or what journalist David Neiwert defined as "a politics and culture that shuns dialogue and the democratic exchange of ideas in pursuit the outright elimination of the opposing side through suppression, exile and ejection, or extermination;"

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11 For full oral history, see Joel Strack, interviewed by Tyler Campbell, September 26, 2016, Audio record and transcript available, RICHES, Orlando, Florida, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/items/show/7987.

12 For full oral history, see Richard Lamberty, interviewed by Geoffrey Cravero, October 11, 2016, Audio record and transcript available, RICHES, Orlando, Florida, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/files/original/fce724952773f51471717fce7ed72c54.pdf.

13 For full oral history, see Debbie Simmons, interviewed by Sara Raffel, June 16, 2018 Audio record and transcript available, RICHES, Orlando, Florida, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/files/original/a6bcd1754d4f695e222e5ef92110abb1.pdf.

and resilience.[14] Undergraduate and graduate students developed digital exhibits that explored the ways in which a history of "othering" and violence established the context for the shooting. Housed in the RICHES Mosaic Interface database, the eliminationism exhibits covered a range of related topics—"the permeation of violence in daily life," shared responsibility through social policy and culture, exploration of a white family's past that included life at Rosewood (site known for a week of racial violence in 1923), and questions about the experience of black students on white campuses.[15] In these exhibits, the interpretation proclaims that Pulse did not happen without context, that Orlando, Florida, and the nation harbored a history of violence that began with the dismissal of others.

The Citizen Curator project also invited public submission of exhibit proposals for a presentation at the UCF Art Gallery for the month of June 2017, in honor of the first anniversary of Pulse. In the words of the project organizers, in order to facilitate "contemporary civic discourse and engagement, we encouraged projects that explored strategies for combating racism, discrimination, eliminationism, and other social practices that seek to marginalize others." The Citizen Curator Project facilitated creative engagement with local museum, library, and archival collections. It invited participants to respond to the theme "Eliminationism and Resilience," and University of Central Florida user engagement librarian Carrie Moran's storytelling and photographic exhibit, *The Lines That Join Us*. Moran's exhibit presented images and stories of people who got the iconic zigzag line of a heartbeat tattoo in honor of the forty-nine victims.[16] In a moving poem titled "Mornings After," professor and Director of Graduate Programs for the University of Central Florida's Department of Writing and Rhetoric Martha Brenckle explored her own feelings of despair that isolated her from social interaction, lamenting, "everyone but you is strong." In the concluding lines she promised to face each day and "remember the living and not cry." In a similar juxtaposition of fear and hope, images of the colorful quilts that represented the warm embrace of the world surrounded a mobile exhibit of text messages typical of those sent and received by friends and family in the hours after the tragedy. For participants in the Citizen Curator project, interpreting Pulse meant recognition of the context of violence and eliminationism that characterized American life as well as the resilience that enabled the community to find meaning in the loss and move forward with purpose.[17]

More than two years following the event, it is impossible to identify the long-term narrative that will emerge as the dominant interpretation, especially as the community continues to work through its own emotions, but some aspects have become evident. The dichotomy between official interpretations and individual/community understanding of the event remains. Plans for memorializing the event include questions about the building, which is owned by the onePULSE Foundation. The foundation, headed by Pulse owner Barbara Poma, includes the political and economic leaders of the city on its board of trustees and "Chairman's Ambassadors Council." As support grew to create a physical memorial on the site of the tragedy, Orlandoans were invited to participate in decisions about the Pulse memorial through an online survey that contained, according to the foundation's website, "carefully selected and thoughtful questions."[18] In October 2017, the OnePulse Foundation held a community forum presenting a panel of experts on tragic memorials such as the Holocaust Museum and the 9/11 Memorial.

Although many in the audience expected an interactive event, the forum was tightly regulated with a panel presentation and a curated question and answer session.

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14 David Neiwert, *The Eliminationists: How Hate Talk Radicalized the American Right* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009), 11.

15 "Citizen Curator Project," RICHES Mosaic Interface, June 2017, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/citizen-curator-project.

16 For some examples of how Pulse was incorporated into tattoos, see the exhibit catalog: Carrie Moran, "Showing Our Pulse," *Resilience*, 47, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/files/original/1f47643a9d838d26e9b6c80d15b46c2d.pdf.

17 The catalog for the Resilience exhibit can be viewed at https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/files/original/1f47643a9d838d26e9b6c80d15b46c2d.pdf.

18 The OnePulse Foundation website can be found here in both English and Spanish: https://onepulsefoundation.org.

As plans for the memorial moved forward, the OnePulse Foundation collected information from survivors and families in order to create "a sanctuary of hope . . . . to honor the 49 lives that were taken, their families, the 68 injured victims, the affected survivors and the first responders and the healthcare professionals who cared for the victims."[19]

What is often subsumed in the narrative of the Pulse is acknowledgment that the shooting took place on the club's Latin Night. Nearly half of the forty-nine who died that night were of Puerto Rican descent. Overwhelmingly the people in the club self-identified as living at the margins of the queer and Latin communities. As the leaders of QLatinx noted, they were young Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Salvadoran, Venezuelan, and Afro-Latins who did not always live comfortably with either the largely white queer community or the straight Latin community. Aside from the creation of spontaneous memorials of flowers, stuffed animals, heartfelt wishes, and photographs in Orlando, the first memorial appeared in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in July 2016, less than a month after the shooting.[20]

A second memorial in the form of a community organization emerged from the Latinx community. Founded in the immediate aftermath of the Pulse tragedy, the organization QLatinx "brought together members of the community directly impacted by this tragedy to build a supportive infrastructure, address inequality, and promote inclusionary practices for local leadership and partnering agencies."[21] Though QLatinx is not a memorial in the traditional brick-and-mortar sense, its continuous and evolving presence in the community makes it a sort of "living memorial," honoring the memories of those killed by supporting the wider community. In the months since its founding and under the leadership of its director and co-founder, Christopher Cuevas, QLatinx has become a formidable center for Latinx queer-trans support and social activism. Monthly newsletters report an array of events, workshops, and life support activities that range from financial planning to cooking classes, health care information, immigration workshops, social action marches, political action information, and grassroots organizing. QLatinx memorialized the Pulse tragedy by taking action.[22]

Three years after Pulse, Orlando remains conflicted in its interpretation of the events at the Pulse nightclub on June 12, 2016. Thrust into an unwelcome international spotlight, the first reactions denied the reality of an unprecedented violent event with claims that it represented an aberration perpetrated by on outsider. Upon reflection, academics and some members of the public recognized that othering and violence permeated the city's and region's histories, as it did elsewhere. This narrative focused on the interpretative frameworks of eliminationism and resilience. As Pulse retreated from everyday newscasts and conversation, efforts to memorialize the place and those who lost their lives moved to the forefront. Two related, but very different, memorials emerged. The first focused on place and offered the possibility of transforming the site of the tragedy from a location of horror to one of contemplation. The second, founded by the Latinx community, focused on social and political grassroots activism to address the needs of those who live at the margins of the queer-trans and Latinx communities. The foregoing assessment of Orlando's response to Pulse recognizes that reckoning with tragedy can unite a community to comfort and heal those most closely affected by the event. It also suggests that under the banner of unity, competing interpretations of the event(s) vie with one another in the struggle to move forward and provide the living with meaning for the unthinkable. How Pulse will be remembered remains an evolving conversation influenced by memory of the event, the push and pull of history, and the pressure of the social and political present.

19 "About OnePulse Foundation," https://onepulsefoundation.org/onepulse-foundation/#about.
20 Jennifer A. Marcial Ocasio, "Pulse Victims' Families in Puerto Rico: 'We Have to Cry Alone,'" *Orlando Sentinel*, June 8, 2017.
21 "About Us," QLatinx, https://www.qlatinx.org/who-we-are.
22 Ibid.

"LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE": COLLECTING AND EXHIBITING ORLANDO'S LGBTQ HISTORY AFTER THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB MASSACRE

// EMILIE S. ARNOLD

During the early morning hours of Sunday, June 12, 2016, a homegrown terrorist carried out a protracted shooting on the "last call" crowd at Pulse, a popular gay nightclub just south of downtown Orlando. It was Latin Night. The majority of those killed and injured came from Orlando's queer Latinx community, but some victims were straight, others were multiracial, and an overwhelming number were young. Excluding the shooter, the massacre resulted in forty-nine dead and sixty-eight injured, and for the sixteen months prior to the Las Vegas shooting on October 1, 2017, it held the distinction of being the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. As of this writing, it remains the worst episode of mass violence against the LGBTQ community in US history.[1]

This painful course of history compelled the staff of the Orange County Regional History Center in Orlando, Florida, to establish the institution's most important public history project. The One Orlando Collection Initiative, begun within days of the Pulse Nightclub massacre, brought thousands of documentary and related memorial objects under the care of its historical society collection. It also saw the recording of dozens of oral histories, the creation of an online digital memorial, and development of three exhibitions, with more planned in the years to come. As agents of a responsive museum, our collections work in the community set the stage for us to create meaningful exhibitions strongly focused on welcoming a public not typically catered to by our institution while serving as a healing tool for the entire affected community.

For the staff of the Orange County Regional History Center, this was—and continues to be—both a professional project of paramount importance and a deeply personal labor of love. As we began to build the One Orlando Collection from thousands of items associated with immediate and palpable grief, we recognized their power to serve as incredibly multifaceted testimony to a watershed moment in national, Orlando, LGBTQ, and Latinx history. Exhibiting hundreds of these objects in our county government museum during the one- and two-year commemorations of the attack, we knew that no other local agency possessed the capacity to assure the public of the historical importance of what had happened. When visitors attended the History Center's *One Year Later* (2017) and *Another Year Passes* (2018) exhibitions to reflect, grieve, heal, and seek evidence of change, they saw that the massacre mattered to history, that these people killed and those forever changed matter too, and that preserving the tangible relics of what happened will matter for generations to come.

ORLANDO'S QUEER HISTORY: A NEGLECTED NARRATIVE

The Orange County Regional History Center is a medium-sized history museum in downtown Orlando operating as a public/private nonprofit partnership. It was established in the 1940s, when amateur historians began collecting and displaying curiosities in a room in the county courthouse. The holdings of the Historical Society of Central Florida largely represent archives and material culture donated by wealthy,

1 The title quotation references Lin-Manuel Miranda's 2016 Tony speech, which you can read about here: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/13/theater/lin-manuel-mirandas-sonnet-from-the-tony-awards.html.

cisgendered, and successful white people, a reality not uncommon to US history museums. Aware of this disparity, those developing History Center exhibitions within the last decade have worked to seek and represent other perspectives and voices (like those of poor citrus laborers or residents remembering segregated Orlando), sometimes succeeding in bringing new items to tell these stories into the collection.

Until the 2016 inception of the One Orlando Collection, Central Florida's queer historical record had largely been left out of the History Center's physical collection. Late in 2015, the museum agreed to partner with the GLBT History Museum of Central Florida, a virtual museum, to collaborate on a joint exhibition opening in October 2016, a project well underway when the massacre took place. Because of a fundamental lack of materials in our collection to interpret this history, we relied completely on the curators of the GLBT History Museum to guide us as we narrated more than fifty years of successes, setbacks, anti-gay violence, protests, the AIDS epidemic, gay businesses, and the struggle for civil rights. Because we decolonized this history at our museum by collaborating with and listening to the GLBT History Museum, our curatorial partners allowed us to exhibit extraordinary photographs and artifacts to tell this story in *Pride, Prejudice & Protest: GLBT History of Greater Orlando*.

And yet, in the months before the exhibition was to open, the History Center administration declined to advertise it. It seemed as though they felt that hosting it in our gallery was enough, and that they preferred keeping awareness minimal and visitorship small; as curators, we intuited that actually issuing a press release or holding a media day might invite scrutiny that made the administration queasy. The History Center obtains most of its funding from county government, after all, and even the remotest possibility of political interference made an exhibition wholly centered on LGBTQ history potentially controversial. This was our professional reality as curators and collections managers the day hundreds of bullets pierced Pulse Nightclub and changed Orlando forever.

June 13, 2016, the evening after the shooting, over tenthousand mourners gathered for a candlelit vigil at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. There, they left a collection of signs and mementos that grew into one of Orlando's first Pulse Nightclub memorials. (Photograph by JD Casto, courtesy of the One Orlando Collection)

ORLANDO RESPONDS TO HATE

Within hours of the massacre, Orlando reacted to show love in the face of violence. Citizens overwhelmed blood donation centers by the thousands, organized vigils that drew tens of thousands more, raised millions of dollars to benefit survivors and families of the murdered, and recognized the first responders who had faced the horror of the scene and raced to save to the wounded. Within weeks, rainbow flags and murals filled the city. Orlando's sports teams pledged games and dedications to remembering the victims and raising funds. New organizations formed to support those affected and particularly the LGBTQ Latinx community, including the Orlando United Assistance Center, Proyecto Somos Orlando, and QLatinx. Existing groups, like The GLBT Center, Orlando's oldest queer support organization, became rocks for their community like never before. Over the next month, massive public memorials formed at four locations in downtown Orlando, drawing individual heartfelt tributes in all shapes, sizes, and colors of the rainbow by the thousands.

At the time of the shooting and for the two years that followed, I served as the assistant curator of exhibitions for the Orange County Regional History Center. I later met people who had been inside the club that night, but I didn't know any of them at the time of the shooting. Still, from the morning of the attack, I struggled as an Orlandoan to come to grips with the devastation and senseless inhumanity that took place so close to my home and under the gaze of the world. Dozens of helicopters circling my neighborhood beamed aerial video to news stations around the country, but when I turned off the television, I could still hear them drone. At the Tony Awards the night of June 12, Lin-Manuel Miranda stood on a national stage during the 2016 Tony Awards and spoke to Orlando when he told the world that "love is love is love is love is love is love is love is love," condemning the attack on the LGBTQ community with a new rallying cry that the Orlando community also embraced.

I lived around the corner from Orlando's historic Greenwood Cemetery where our mayor pledged plots to the families of the murdered. Within days, I watched cars back up in the street in front of my duplex during funeral processions. I walked near the entrance to the cemetery, holding the hand of my future husband, Adam Ware, himself the History Center's research librarian and historian as well as a bisexual man struggling to reconcile his own experiences with the violence. We felt as though the Spanish and English signs we saw told our own broken hearts: "*Amamos juntos. Lloramos juntos*" ("We love together. We cry together") and "Our hearts are with you."

In these moments, I am in grief, and among my Orlandoan colleagues, I am not alone. At first, beyond waiting with the masses attempting to give blood at Orlando's overwhelmed facilities, attending vigils, and donating money to the One Orlando Fund, most of us had no idea that we'd play any part in helping Orlando cope with the savagery inflicted on our community. Like most of our city's grieving population, we wanted to do something to right this terrible wrong, to give and show love and kindness and respect. And Pam Schwartz, our chief curator of collections and exhibitions, had a plan in the works that very day to help the way only a museum can.

Here, a close-up shows the state of the memorial at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts on June 25, 2016, the first day History Center staff had permission to collect. As we collected, we also cleaned up, discarding spent candles and rotten flowers. (Photographs courtesy of the One Orlando Collection)

A COLLECTION IS BORN

In the days and weeks following the shooting, at four locations—Lake Eola (a public park iconic to downtown Orlando), Seneff Arts Plaza at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts (pictured at left), Lake Beauty on the Orlando Regional Medical Center campus (the primary hospital where shooting victims recovered—pictured below), and Pulse Nightclub itself—mourners laid huge quantities of handwritten notes, signs, paintings and artistic tributes, photographs, bouquets of flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, flags, pinwheels, religious objects, banners, candles, clothing, and more. These objects were as diverse as the people who left them, but they were often rainbow-colored and unique to Central Florida; several were tied to the Walt Disney or Universal Orlando theme parks where the murdered had worked. All were exposed to the elements of a particularly brutal Central Florida summer, which included heavy rain, wind, intense sunlight, and mold and insect damage. Proximity to burning candles often saturated objects with wax, even burning them. As keepers and interpreters of our city's diverse history, we wondered what might happen to these artifacts if we didn't try to preserve some of them.

While representatives from other museums across the country visited Orlando, surveying these spaces for good artifacts to pilfer for their own collections, our chief curator drafted the Orange County Regional History Center's One Orlando Collection Initiative. This was a strategy for obtaining permissions to serve as the repository of record for these Pulse-related items, then assessing and collecting these objects on the basis of their individuality, physical condition, and the power of their messages. Most importantly, her proposal insisted on three things. First: immediate action, before the objects disappeared or disintegrated. Second: creating three new staff positions to provide the work hours necessary to triage, accession, and conserve these objects as we almost doubled the volume of our museum collection. Third, and most importantly: retaining this powerful collection at home in Orlando, allowing the History Center to fulfill its mission to preserve and interpret Central Florida history. This effort was ambitious in its immediacy; similar work took many years at sites like the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, the Oklahoma City National Museum & Memorial, and at Virginia Tech.

Given the high emotion in Central Florida at the time, achieving permission to move forward was politically challenging. Nevertheless, by June 24, a small History Center team composed of just four collections and exhibitions staff (including myself and Adam) began work in the field. It was sweaty, emotional labor that required an extremely sensitive level of professionalism to show our community the reverence we held for this duty.

Across thirty-one days, we became experts at running our mobile conservation station, releasing saturated papers from plastic wrapping and pressing water from innumerable notes and signs on site. As professionals, we identified objects contaminated by mold and quarantined them; as curators and mourners, we read each and every message, a difficult and heartbreaking task. We ultimately transported all of these objects to our off-site collections facility, where the full-time One Orlando registrar accessions, conserves, and catalogues them.

As we worked, we frequently asked ourselves: Does this item need immediate conservation? Can it survive at the memorial for a few days to fulfill its intended purpose as an object of mourning? We also communicated with curious visitors, which became an act of outreach and advocacy; although these mourners could be critical of local politicians and their handling of the crisis, they largely reacted with gratitude once we explained our work and why these objects are important to Orlando history.

The collection also contains not just memorial objects but also paper and digital media, including photographs and print publications. All of these artifacts serve as primary sources recording Orlando's experience following the shooting. Certain documentary objects, especially ones collected by our team from within Pulse Nightclub itself, are the core of a powerful "dark collection" of testimonial artifacts. We had no intention of displaying them while the risk of retraumatizing survivors and family members was so acute, and they will likely remain in the dark for many years. These objects include blood-stained clothing, a section of bullet-pierced tile wall and companion bathroom door, a sink that provided the leverage to climb to safety through a hole near the ceiling, and a cabinet in which survivors hid.

The collection also includes dozens of oral histories conducted by the chief curator and the dedicated One Orlando oral historian with survivors, family members, first responders, and members of Orlando's LGBTQ, Latinx, and religious communities. These form the basis of a body of knowledge of decades of Central Florida history that will continue to inform research in coming years. History Center staff will carry on the recording of these oral histories because the Pulse experience is not fixed in time; it will continue to change and evolve across the rest of the lives of every person the massacre touched, and we intend to document that.

Finally, with assistance from our One Orlando digital archivist, we've created an online memorial, allowing us to share images and stories of thousands of collections objects internationally. This provides access to the collection to those unable to travel to Orlando, particularly since so many victims' families are not local to Orlando and some even live in other countries, as well as an additional means of allowing individuals to feel

connected to and ownership of Orlando's history. Through this site, we continue to solicit stories from the public to help us understand the items in our collection.

EXHIBITING THE LEGACY OF PULSE

After the massacre, internal resistance to publicizing our October 2016 Pride, Prejudice & Protest: GLBT History of Greater Orlando exhibition dissolved. This was emblematic of a greater sea change in Orlando, where more than fifty-thousand people had rallied a week after the shooting in support of the LGBTQ and Latinx communities. With the GLBT History Museum of Greater Orlando, we immediately worked together to find a way to honor and reflect on the impact on LGBTQ Orlando.

For me, this resulted in many hours of overtime rewriting part of the exhibition, creating a new section for the display of a few dozen artifacts from the One Orlando Collection that also included a tribute to the murdered. Our museum was part of the 2016 "Come Out With Pride" proceedings—Orlando's annual LGBTQ pride festival and parade—and we widely advertised our special free day, expansive history exhibition, and special display of forty-nine memorial crosses in an unprecedented collaboration with Orlando's annual Pride festival. Interviewed by the Orlando Sentinel, our collaborator Joel Strack, a longtime Orlando gay activist, said, "The pride in having it here on display at one of our public buildings—it's huge! It says that the gay community is part of the Central Florida community, and we haven't always felt that way."[2]

On June 12, 2017, visitors inspect a section of the One Year Later *exhibition devoted to solidarity and outreach from around the country and the world. (Photograph by Frank Weber, courtesy of the One Orlando Collection)*

But this was just the beginning. A concerted presentation of the massacre's memorial legacy took place in June 2017. We named the weeklong exhibition One Year Later: Reflecting on Orlando's Pulse Nightclub Massacre (Spanish title: *Un año después: Reflexiones sobre la masacre en la discoteca Pulse de Orlando*), and it was one of a series of commemorative events planned by Orange County and Orlando governments. It was also the first completely bilingual (English-Spanish) exhibition our museum ever produced in-house. This was especially important in that we invited approximately six hundred family members, survivors, and Pulse Nightclub staff members to two private previews, and addressing their emotional and language needs to make them feel welcome was of paramount importance.

From a narrative standpoint, these needs and the very recent nature of the shooting guided the choices Pam and I made as curators of *One Year Later*. As an active member of the onePULSE Foundation task force advisory council charged with the creation of a permanent Pulse Nightclub memorial, frequently meeting with the groups most deeply affected by the massacre, and as an oral historian who

2 Jason Ruiter, "GLBT Central Florida History Exhibit Chronicles Victories and Losses," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 9, 2016, http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/pulse-orlando-nightclubshooting/os-pulse-gay-history-20161009-story.html.

recorded dozens of interviews with them for our One Orlando Collection, Pam had special insight. The investigation into the events of June 12, 2016, continues even as of this writing, and we chose not to interpret the violence of the night itself. Instead, *One Year Later* focused on the people affected by the massacre and on Orlando's community response with careful attention paid to community healing and, again, special care to engage the audience without retraumatizing them. By and large, the artifacts and their messages spoke for themselves, and we knew how important it was to let visitors engage with them. As I wrote label copy, I worked to allow visitors to feel their own feelings and make their own connections borne from their individual Pulse experiences without instructive interference from a commanding museum narrative voice, and interpretation was spare (about one word per square foot).

Mourners visit brightly decorated wooden crosses stationed at Lake Beauty next to the Orlando Regional Medical Center, where survivors recovered, on June 25, 2016. Photograph by Phelan M. Ebenhack and Frank Weber, courtesy of the One Orlando Collection)

June 2018's four-month exhibition, *Another Year Passes: Orlando after the Pulse Nightclub Massacre (Transcurre otro año: Orlando después de la masacre del Club Nocturno Pulse*) used successful aspects of One Year Later but was different in two significant ways. First, with two years' perspective, the exhibition provided a great deal of additional interpretation, delving into oral histories and the stories we'd learned about many objects in the time since they joined our collection. Key to this was the inclusion of Spanish translations of many messages from objects recovered at the memorials, which time constraints had prevented the year before. As a result, the label copy word count more than doubled.

Second, *Another Year Passes* tapped into a vein of anger coursing through Orlando. By June 2018, the horrific shootings in Las Vegas (October 2017) and relatively nearby Parkland, Florida (February 2018) had each charged the community's frayed nerves. This exhibition showcased continued Orlando activism against hate and gun violence, including in demonstrations at the March for Our Lives. It also highlighted Orlando's place as a sober "Site of Solidarity," showing how other sites interpreting mass violence (such as the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum and the 9/11 Memorial and Museum) reached out to us—and, after ensuing events of national and international mass violence, how Orlandoans offer sympathy, understanding, and love to other people experiencing their own darkest days.

Guided by oral histories and continued community dialogue, these exhibitions showcased our documentary images by professional and amateur photographers, hundreds of memorial objects rescued from the elements at memorial sites, and quotations from witnesses to history. These artifacts, each unique, typically spoke for themselves: many were rainbow-colored or filled with personal messages (often heart-rending) or featured the drawings of children. They bore English and Spanish words and the hashtags created and adopted by our community to express solidarity: #OneOrlando, #OnePulse, #OrlandoUnited, #LoveIsLove. They were big and small, paper and object, local and international. Together, they spoke to the incredible impact this awful event created across age, culture, and region, and to the ongoing nature of Orlando's Pulse Nightclub experience. By 2018, given the overall sense of frustration in our community as mass shootings continue to take place, objects that had seemed a bit too raw to present the year before went on display. One of these was a small American flag recovered at the shore from downtown

Orlando's Lake Eola Park memorial on June 24, 2016. Someone had written on every white stripe: "I'm sorry that we continually vote for people who won't protect you. I'm sorry that we only pay lip service to your struggle. I'm sorry that it took your life to convince me to fix it." In 2016 and 2017, these words had the effect of deepening our grief and anger; in 2018, this message was galvanizing.

Review of social media, interactions with our guests, conversations with donors and informants to the One Orlando Collection, and press coverage proved incredibly useful to understanding the impact the exhibition had on our audience. Although we avoided traumatic descriptions of violence in contextualizing these objects, we still took special pains to use vocabulary that honestly represented Orlando's Pulse experience. A public Facebook comment by visitor Ron Jaffe clearly explained how this affected him. The afternoon of June 12, 2017, he wrote:

The Collection staff insisted on using a harsh vernacular a few times, referring to the event as a massacre and using the terms "kill" and "murder" on a few of the signs. This was a careful choice and certainly not done gratuitously. I think anything less would have taken away from the poignancy of the exhibit. I believe it's the job of museums to present history without trying to sugar-coat it, particularly for events like these.

We also took care to acknowledge the public's relationship with and sense of ownership over the memorial objects. At Pulse Nightclub, for example, at the time of this writing, visitors continue to engage directly with memorial items, examining them, picking them up, touching them, even signing them with messages of their own. As One Orlando Collection objects accessioned by the Historical Society, however, these items became frozen in time, and it was necessary to explain that while visitors may no longer write on them, we had provided a special memorial space at the end of both exhibitions where they could still write messages—and these messages also became part of the One Orlando Collection.

In 2017, Instagram user "grossfacekilla," who shared several photographs taken in the gallery, showed the emotional rawness shared by many of our guests, writing, "today, standing next to our brothers and sisters, it was Sunday Morning all over again and it's still sinking in. How can you remember something you can't forget?" Another Instagram user, "solidshepard," also posted photos of artifacts and a similar sentiment, writing, "It was a tearful and maddening and healing display," while user "kateeov" was briefer still: "Amazing. Devastating. Inspiring."

After recording a One Orlando Collection oral history about her work organizing the largest public mural commemorating Pulse, Chimene Pinder Hurst toured *One Year Later* and, stunned, quickly identified herself in a photo of hundreds of volunteers lined up to give blood after the shooting. Orlando Gay Chorus member and photographer JD Casto, who had donated his extraordinary photographs, saw several of his images on display and felt so overwhelmed by the presence of his own work that he excused himself to cry. Interviewed by *Orlando Sentinel* reporter Stephen Hudak, Brian Alvear, brother of Amanda Alvear who died at Pulse, said, "I think it's beautiful, I think it's amazing . . . I wish it was permanent. It's sad we're not going to be able to see it year-round or go whenever we want." Hudak also quoted local LGBTQ activist Nancy Rosado: "Oh my God, seeing our community openly embracing us . . . rings all the bells."[3] Each of these messages assured us that we were on the right track.

REFLECTING ON SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

My colleagues and I embraced our challenging work on the One Orlando Collection project and the exhibitions that highlight it without hesitation. Serving our community this way, professionally and personally, required the most difficult, important, and devastating work of our careers. It has changed the way we think and operate, driving us to approach new community history projects—such as bilingually exhibiting the history

3 Stephen Hudak, "Pulse History Exhibit Makes Some Weep, Others Smile," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 16, 2017, http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/pulse-orlando-nightclub-shooting/os-history-center-pulse-collection-20170614-story.html.

of Orlando's Vietnamese community in the summer of 2017—with a similar mind to adding underrepresented voices to our collections and decolonizing Orlando's history. This work with Pulse continues to permeate day-to-day schedules at the History Center, and as other episodes of mass violence occur around the country, staff reach out to provide guidance to other museum professionals who find themselves in similar positions. We are members of, and derive strength from, an unusual club of public historians none of us ever expected to join.

When Jan Ramirez and Anthony Gardner of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York visited *One Year Later*, they provided feedback both to Orange County government and to Pam. Anthony, himself a family member of a 9/11 victim, told County Mayor Teresa Jacobs:

Jan and I were so deeply moved and impressed by the Pulse exhibition. The installation was so beautifully curated, accessible and thoughtfully designed. The bilingual labels was [sic] also such a sensitive and smart approach. Mayor Jacobs, Pam and her team are to be commended for this inspiring and powerful contribution to the documentation and commemoration of the June 12 attack.

Pulse lives inside this community now. It lives inside the History Center, too, and the hearts of each and every one of us honored to record its impact. The One Orlando Collection project carries multiple aims into the coming years, as the community continues to adapt to life after the massacre. It affirms that what happened at Pulse Nightclub is important to Orlando right now and will continue to be important for generations. It demonstrates that queer and Latinx narratives are integral to Orlando's history and are worthy of preservation and remembrance within a county government museum. Our collection also stands as a record of local, national, and global reproach against sickening violence, showing manifest agreement that "love is love is love is love."

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Judith Adkins, an archivist at the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives from 2005 to 2019, is now a program officer in the Division of Research Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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// EMILIE ARNOLD

Emilie S. Arnold is an exhibition developer who served as assistant curator of exhibitions at Orlando's Orange County Regional History Center from 2011-2018. Her work collecting, curating, exhibiting, and memorializing the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre has been recognized and awarded by the American Association for State and Local History, the American Alliance of Museums, and the Southeastern Museums Conference.

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Beth Shalom Hessel is the executive director of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia and previously the executive director of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, the national archives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and all predecessor denominations. She holds a Ph.D. in History from Texas Christian University and has done work in oral history.

//MIGUEL JUÁREZ

Miguel Juárez received a Master of Arts degree in Library Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1998, a Master of Arts degree in Border History in 2012 and a PhD in Borderlands History in May 2018 from the University of Texas at El Paso. He works as an adjunct professor in the History Department at the University of Texas at El Paso and in the Department of ESL, Reading and Social Sciences at the Valle Verde campus of El Paso Community College.

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Connie L. Lester is an Associate Professor in History at the University of Central Florida where she is also Editor of the Florida Historical Quarterly and the Director of the Regional Initiative for Collecting History, Experiences, and Stories (RICHES) Digital Project.

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// TRAVIS WAGNER

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// JERRY WATKINS

Jerry Watkins is currently a visiting Assistant Professor at the College of William & Mary who teaches across the Modern US curriculum and whose research focuses on the queer South and LGBTQ theatre. His book *Queering the Redneck Riviera: Sexuality and the Rise of Florida Tourism* is available from the University Press of Florida.

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