

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project  
General Meeting at the Roanoke Public Library  
December 15, 2016**

5 people in attendance

**AGENDA**

6pm: Check-ins  
6:05pm: ARCHIVES  
6:10pm: ORAL HISTORIES  
6:20pm: EXHIBITIONS  
6:25pm: WALKING TOURS  
6:35pm: LGBT LIBRARY  
6:40pm: GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION  
6:45pm: DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION  
6:50pm: ARTS INITIATIVE  
7:15pm: OTHER IDEAS  
7:30pm: Departure

**ARCHIVES**

- 1) The physical archives continues to grow with new donations every month. The latest donation is from Dan Jones: over a dozen folders of material related to the founding and development of the Ricketson Memorial GLBT Library in the early 2000s.
- 2) Since last meeting, GR and HA have received training from Fintel Library on how to manually upload materials to the digital archive. We have successfully uploaded all of PALS (Positive Alternative Lifestyles), Volume 1. Meanwhile, RB and HA have scanned in all the PALS newsletters (1980-1983). Next semester we'll work on uploading them to the archive.
- 3) HOMEWORK: Weekly scanning/research sessions in the Virginia Room will resume on Friday, January 20, 2:30pm-close (5pm). They will be most Friday afternoons through the end of April. All are welcome to attend. (If that date/time doesn't work for you, we can figure out other times, too. The Virginia Room is open Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 8pm, if that helps.)
  - a. Also, if anyone has a portable scanner they would like to bring to the scanning sessions, that will help us double our scanning capabilities.  
Thank you!

**ORAL HISTORIES**

- 1) Phase II (Oral Herstories): The latest five interviews are now published and all available online! This includes full audio, written transcripts, plus our 17-page subject index.
  - a. <http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/oral-histories/>
- 2) Phase III (QPOC Histories): Same as last meeting. We have confirmed four narrators—two black gay men, one black trans woman, and one black former sex worker—to participate in Phase III of the Oral History Initiative. GG is working on recruiting a few others, including queer black women. Our target is to confirm eight oral history narrators by mid-January.
- 3) More Oral Herstories: JG has signed onto our IRB application (we are awaiting approval) and plans to conduct more oral herstory interviews with women involved in First Friday. Not clear how many interviews she will complete, or who will be responsible for the transcripts.
- 4) HOMEWORK: If you know of African American LGBTQ folks who might be interested in doing an oral history interview for our project, please ask them about it and report back to the History Project. Thank you!
  - a. See more thoughts on this below under “Demographic Expansion” ...

## **EXHIBITIONS**

- 1) We have not made any progress on our second online exhibition, Title TBD, 1980-1989. But we did discuss a game plan for moving forward on the project: we’d like to explore “community curation.” History Project members will be encouraged to attend weekly research sessions, or go on their own, to look through our archives and take note of key events from the 1980s. At every History Project meeting we will dedicate 10-15 minutes to plotting out our points on a collective timeline, so that by May 2017 we hopefully have some consensus on the general narrative arc of the planned exhibition.
- 2) HOMEWORK: Go down to the Virginia Room to look through our archives and take notes on 1980s-era materials. Suggest key events/places/people/etc. for the 1980s exhibit.
  - a. Weekly scanning/research sessions resume on Friday afternoons beginning on Friday, January 20, 2:30 – close (5pm). Feel free to go to the Virginia Room at other hours, too, to look for material for our exhibition!

## **WALKING TOURS**

- 1) Downtown Tour: No one attended RB’s downtown tour in November. The tour schedule is up on our website and on Eventbrite now through April 2017.
  - a. We agreed to add the story of Paul Holt, a former transvestite sex worker who fought back against police harassment of prostitutes and was able to overturn the city’s anti-solicitation ordinance in a court

case in 1993, to the walking tour. We will add this material to the first stop on Salem Avenue which tells the history of trans sex workers on Salem Avenue in the 1970s.

- 2) Old Southwest Gayborhood History Tour: We did a test-run of the tour on Saturday, December 10. Due to the cold temperature, only four people attended. Feedback included:
  - a. Too much information, especially at the first stop. Needs to be edited down / streamlined.
  - b. Other feedback?
- 3) HOMEWORK: GR will edit the tour script again, and then send out for everyone's review and feedback once again in early 2017. We will schedule our next test-run of the tour for Saturday, April 8, 2pm-4pm. HA will plan to have laminated images ready for the tour.
- 4) HOMEWORK: We are looking for tour guides! GR will train you. The workload is probably giving one tour every other month, or something like that... It is very fun and rewarding, and anyone can do it!

### **LGBT LIBRARY**

- 1) The History Project is helping the Roanoke Diversity Center (RDC) to create an online, digitized catalog of the LGBT Library at MCC Church. An incredible team of volunteers has thus far catalogued over 1,000 books (out of an estimated 3,000).
  - a. The library catalog is "live" at:  
<https://roanokelgbtlibrary.librarika.com>
- 2) We have also added a "Library" page to our project website that describes, briefly, the history of the LGBT Library.
  - a. <http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/library/>
- 3) HOMEWORK: Library work sessions are every Sunday, 2pm-5pm, at MCC church. Bring a laptop.
  - a. The last work session of 2016 is this Sunday, December 18, 1pm-4pm (note the time change). The first work session of 2017 will be Sunday, January 15, 2pm-5pm.

### **GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION**

- 1) No updates. No success with this initiative so far.
  - a. Lynchburg = GR reached out to the Lynchburg Diversity Center but the conversation stalled. OM and HO have volunteered to be liaisons between the History Project and the Lynchburg Diversity Center. We decided that this will probably be our first partnership beyond Roanoke.
  - b. Blacksburg: JG is in contact with a lesbian organization in Blacksburg. LC offered to help with that, as well.

- 2) The following amended calendar of events is suggested:
  - a. February 2017: workshop in Lynchburg
  - b. March 2017: History Project meeting in Lynchburg
  - c. April 2017: workshop in Blacksburg
  - d. May 2017: History Project meeting in Blacksburg

### **DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION**

- 1) No updates. No success with this initiative so far.
- 2) Black community outreach. Liaisons:
  - a. NAACP (Brenda) = GG
  - b. Harrison Museum (Charles) = GG
  - c. Gainsboro Library = NM
- 3) Latinx community outreach: Liaisons:
  - a. Yolanda = GG
  - b. Vivian = EW
  - c. Mauricio = LC; GR
  - d. Local Colors = EW?
- 4) The next steps remain:
  - a. Schedule a workshop in early 2017 with local African American host organization?
  - b. Schedule a workshop in early 2017 with local Latinx host organization?
- 5) HOMEWORK: NM suggested that History Project members should individually each make an effort to attend more POC-organized events around town, to get to know people, and to fight against segregation. We all agreed that folks should post relevant announcements to the History Project listserv so that members can be aware of and attend these events if they so choose.

### **ARTS INITIATIVE**

- 1) LGBTQ+ History Zine!
  - a. RB met with the Community High School Zine Club to begin a partnership focused on producing an LGBTQ+ history-related zine. The next meeting will be in late Jan / early Feb. Contact RB to get involved!
- 2) Historical Marker Campaign
  - a. No progress has been made on the campaign.
  - b. Here is a revised timeline for launching the campaign:
    - i. GR reaches out to folks who used to attend The Trade Winds and solicit their views on the Historical Marker Campaign

- ii. Community Forum: GR will reach out to the UU church to see if we can hold a forum in their space sometime in February. The plan for the forum is outlined in last month's meeting minutes.
  - iii. Campaign Launch Party: if we leave the forum with consensus about how to move forward, then we will schedule a campaign launch party at The Park for sometime in the spring (March?).
  - iv. We will commence the official marker application process following a successful Community Forum. We will commence raising money at the launch party at The Park.
- 3) Recreative / Performative Events
  - a. Lesbian Frisbee: success!
  - b. Gay Rollerskating: success!
  - c. Everyone thinks these events went well and brought in new people and drummed up interest in the History Project. Good job, all!
  - d. There is no event planned for January.
  - e. We discussed holding a performative event in April based around the history of cruising and public sex in Highland Park near where the dog park is today. This would include bringing mattresses to that spot to commemorate the public sex mattresses that the police cleared out of that area in 2002! Shall we call it a...
    - i. #MakeHighlandQueerAgain Mattress Party? Tentative date: Sunday, April 9, 2pm?
  - f. Shall we hold our Queer History Bar Crawl again in late April. Say... Friday, April 28, 7pm - onward?
  - g. HOMEWORK: Everyone should examine the materials in our digital archive and look for other recreative/performative ideas, and bring them to our next meeting.
- 4) Elmwood Art Walk proposal
  - a. GR met with Michael Borowski, assistant professor of art at Virginia Tech, about putting in a proposal for the city's public art competition. We are moving forward with this. The proposal is due February 6, 2017. If accepted, the sculpture/installation will go up in May 2017. We are thinking about ways to get History Project members involved in the process, possibly brainstorming ways to interact and engage with the sculpture/installation after it is installed?
- 5) Participatory / Interactive Theater idea = did not discuss. Punted to the next meeting.

### **OTHER IDEAS / CONCERNS**

- 1) Make Anti-Heteronormative Valentine's Day Cards!
  - a. We have tentatively scheduled this for Monday, February 6, 6pm @ RDC. (Waiting on space approval). RB is in charge of procuring arts & craft supplies.

- b. We will make this a public event and invite teens and other young people to come along, too. Of course we are also making V-Day cards for all the people who have contributed to the project since its founding. GR will produce a list of names and addresses for everyone we want to send a card to.
- 2) March in the CARE MLK Parade in Lexington, Saturday, January 14, 10am-12pm
  - a. We will hold a sign-making / banner-making party tentatively on Tuesday, January 10, 6pm @ RDC. (Waiting on space approval). We will need supplies and some consensus around anti-racist messaging. GR will announce the sign-making / banner-making party within the march's FB event page.
- 3) Queer History Dinner Party
  - a. RB proposed the idea of a queer history dinner party. Perhaps we would dress up in costume and take on the character of an important LGBTQ historical figure?
  - b. Schedule for sometime in the spring. Someone needs to volunteer to host the party! (It would be private, by invite only. Not a public event.)
- 4) Social Media / Web Committee?
  - a. GR is adding RB to the project's facebook page as an administrator to help us with social media outreach and advertising.
- 5) We are running low on MRQA hats (about 5 left) and STP shirts (3 left). Shall we replenish these? At what numbers?

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1) Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 12, 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Parrott Room, Roanoke Public Library
- 2) Help with scanning/research at the Virginia Room--- Fridays 2:30pm-5pm (starting Jan. 20), or by appointment
- 3) Reach out to LGBTQ African Americans in your circles. Tell them about our QPOC Oral History Initiative. Interviews to take place in February-March 2017. We would like a final list of 8 confirmed narrators by mid-January.
- 4) Help with community curation of our 1980s exhibition timeline. Suggest key events/people/places for the 1980s exhibition. Scanning/research sessions on Friday afternoons, starting Jan. 20.
- 5) Suggest edits to the OSW walking tour script. Volunteer to be a walking tour guide!
- 6) Help digitize the LGBT Library catalog --- Sundays 2pm-5pm @ MCC church. Bring a laptop. Sessions will resume Jan. 15.
- 7) Contribute to our list of geographic expansion contacts. Contribute to the list of contacts in the African American and Latinx communities. Attend POC-organized events around town and introduce yourself to folks. Fight against segregation.
- 8) Help make our first zine!

- 9) Comb through the archive and brainstorm new recreative/performative events.
- 10) Come to one of our zillion of events planned for January-April 2017. Ahhh!

### **UPCOMING EVENTS (Jan-April 2017)**

Tuesday, January 10, 6pm: Sign-making / banner-making party in preparation for MLK March @ RDC???

Thursday, January 12, 5:30pm-7:30pm: General Meeting @ Roanoke Public Library  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/343661832669015/>

Saturday, January 14, 10am-12pm: March with us in the CARE MLK Parade in Lexington  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/340596596297968/>

Sunday, January 22, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/218611745260612/>

Monday, February 6, 6pm: Make Anti-Heteronormative Valentine's Day Cards! @ RDC???

Thursday, February 9, 5:30pm-7:30pm: General Meeting @ Roanoke Public Library?

February, date TBD: Community Forum (Historical Marker Campaign) @ UU Church in Roanoke?

February, date TBD: History Project workshop @ Lynchburg Diversity Center?

Sunday, February 19, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour

March, date TBD: Launch Party / Fundraiser (Historical Marker Campaign) @ The Park?

Sunday, March 26, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour

Saturday, April 8, 2pm-4pm: Second Test-Run of OSW Gayborhood Walking Tour

Sunday, April 9, 2pm-4pm: #MakeHighlandQueerAgain Mattress Party?

Sunday, April 23, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour

Friday, April 28, 7pm – onward: Second Annual Queer History Bar Crawl?