

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project
General Meeting at the Patrick Henry Hotel
October 14, 2016**

8 people in attendance.

AGENDA

6pm: Check-ins
6:05pm: ARCHIVES
6:10pm: ORAL HISTORIES
6:15pm: DIGITAL EXHIBITION
6:20pm: WALKING TOUR
6:25pm: LGBT LIBRARY
6:30pm: YEAR TWO GOALS
7:30pm: Other Ideas / Concerns
7:50pm: Departure

ARCHIVES

- 1) Donors are now approaching the Virginia Room directly to give materials to the LGBTQ History Collection. We now have thirteen distinct donors, and the collection has grown to over four boxes of materials.
- 2) HOMEWORK: We need help scanning and digitizing archival materials. We are going to prioritize scanning in the PALS newsletters (1980-1983) that tell a story of LGBT organizing in Lynchburg.
 - a. Anyone who wants to help with scanning, please be in touch with GR about scheduling a time to come in and do a brief training. After that, you can come in on your own and scan materials whenever the Virginia Room staff allow you to do so.

ORAL HISTORIES

- 1) Roanoke College students, as well as GR and JG, have now completed five new recorded interviews—all with women—for the LGBTQ Oral History Initiative, bringing the total number of oral history narrators so far to nineteen. Next up, students and JG will be completing written transcripts of the interviews; then, GR will audit-edit all the transcripts. The goal for deposition of recording and transcripts at the Virginia Room is January 1, 2017.
- 2) HOMEWORK: We agreed that Phase III of the Oral History Initiative should focus on queer people of color (QPOC), particularly LGBTQ African Americans. So far we have one confirmed narrator for this phase of the project. Everyone can help over the next two months by reaching out to and

recruiting LGBTQ African Americans to participate in our project. Our target goal is to recruit 8-10 narrators.

DIGITAL EXHIBITION

- 1) The exhibition has launched at www.gayliberationroanoke.org and so far is the most liked and shared thing ever posted on our Facebook page.
 - a. There is a larger question, though, of whether we can track statistics of visits to the exhibition page itself. GR will check with Roanoke College IT to see what we can find out about site visitation.
- 2) HOMEWORK: We never completed reaching out to all the community contacts on our “Promotions” spreadsheet, to announce the launch of the exhibition. GR will send out the “Promotional Contacts” spreadsheet again so that anyone who wants to help can send out some promotional emails to our contacts.

WALKING TOURS

- 1) The tour has launched to the public. GR and RB (our two tour guides) have each led one public tour so far. We had 14 people on the first tour, and 12 on the second tour. GR has also led a private tour for Community High School students.
 - a. GR would like to add a few new things to the tour script, but forgot to bring this up at the meeting! So it will just have to wait until next meeting.
- 2) HOMEWORK: There are still community contacts on our “Promotional Contacts” spreadsheet who have not heard from us about the launch of the walking tour. Please feel free to reach out to those who have not been contacted so far.
- 3) HOMEWORK: We are still looking for more tour guides. GR will train you. The workload is probably giving one tour every other month, or something like that.
- 4) OSW GAYBORHOOD HISTORY WALKING TOUR: HA and GR are working on developing a second walking tour, focused on Old Southwest’s history as Roanoke’s gayborhood. We plan to schedule a private test-run of the tour for Saturday, December 10, 2pm-4pm. The goal for launching the tour to the public is September 2017.

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. Over three

volunteer sessions so far, involving about one dozen unique volunteers, we have thus far catalogued about 500 books (out of an estimated 3,000).

- a. The library catalog is “live” at:
<https://roanokelgbtlibrary.librarika.com>
- 2) HOMEWORK: Library work sessions are every Sunday, 2pm-5pm, at MCC church. Bring a laptop.

YEAR TWO GOALS

1) GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

- a. We came up with the following process / work flow for beginning a geographic expansion initiative:
 - i. First, make a list of people and institutions we already know across Southwest Virginia that would be open to partnering with the LGBTQ History Project
 1. Some ideas that came out of the meeting:
 - a. Dutch Inn, Martinsville --- hosts drag shows? (RW)
 - b. Floyd PFLAG (JB)
 - c. Christiansburg contact? (OM)
 - d. Lynchburg Diversity Center
 - e. Blacksburg UU Church (JG)
 - f. The Glade Church, Blacksburg (RW)
 - g. Lesbian group in Blacksburg (JG)
 - ii. Second, build a relationship with that local host, and ask them if we can schedule an LGBT History Workshop at their institution, or at another location (like a local library) with them being the host of the event
 - iii. Third, once a workshop is scheduled, then we schedule the next month’s History Project meeting to also take place in that location---as a way to follow-up and try and recruit ongoing interest and involvement by local community members
 - iv. So, a calendar of how this would all work might look something like this:
 1. January 2017: workshop in Lynchburg
 2. February 2017: History Project meeting in Lynchburg
 3. March 2017: workshop in Blacksburg
 4. April 2017: History Project meeting in Blacksburg
 5. Et cetera
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 4. April 2017: History Project meeting in Blacksburg
 5. Et cetera
- b. We also talked about how there is rich archival material at the Virginia Room now about gay history in Lynchburg. So we might have something extra special to offer to the Lynchburg community, once we’ve gone through and made sense of the archival material in our hands.

2) DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

- a. We agreed upon a somewhat similar process / work flow for demographic expansion as we did, above, for geographic expansion:
 - i. Develop a list of community contacts in the African American community for outreach:
 - 1. Some ideas that came out of the meeting:
 - a. NAACP
 - b. Harrison Museum
 - c. Black churches
 - d. The Park
 - e. GSAs at local high school
 - ii. Second, build a relationship with a local host, and ask them if we can schedule an LGBT History Workshop at their institution, or at another location (like a local library) with them being the host of the event
 - iii. Such a workshop would involve the storycircle technique we have previously discussed, in which people are invited to tell and share their own personal stories in a safe and welcoming environment
 - b. Meanwhile, we are also recruiting narrators for our QPOC Oral History Initiative. Target goal is 8-10 narrators confirmed by January 2017.

3) ARTS INITIATIVE

- a. We are still interested in producing a zine! RB will connect with the Community High School Zine Club.
- b. Site-specific ideas: There seems to be consensus to start a campaign to erect a DHR (Virginia Department of Historic Resources) historical marker somewhere in Roanoke. If successful, this will be the first explicitly LGBTQ historical marker erected anywhere in the Commonwealth!
 - i. We came up with the following process / work flow to launch the historical marker campaign:
 - 1. First, History Project members develop a short list of no more than five potential historical sites
 - 2. Second, we then make a webpage that describes each of these sites and shows them on a map, as well as what they look like today
 - 3. Third, we make a Kickstarter page (or use similar crowd-funding program) to raise money for the historical marker. We need to raise \$1,500! This page will also feature a poll (one person, one vote) where people can vote on which site they would like to win.
 - a. The amount of money one gives will not influence the election. One person, one vote.
 - b. Whichever site from the short list wins the poll will receive the entire \$1,500 for production of a historical marker on that site

- c. The election/poll closes once \$1,500 is reached.
 - c. Performative ideas:
 - i. We decided to begin planning one recreative/performative event per month. Next month's event will be:
 - 1. Lesbian Frisbee, at Highland Park. This is a recreation of a lesbian Frisbee event organized by First Friday (Roanoke's first major lesbian organization) back in the 1980s.
 - a. This event will be Sunday, November 13, 2pm, Highland Park? (unfortunately all Saturdays in November are already booked with other LGBTQ events in the community...)
 - b. We will produce reproduction *Skip Two Periods* t-shirts for sale / raffle at the Lesbian Frisbee event.
 - c. We will have a little picnic, too...? Hot mulled apple cider?
 - d. We will have reproductions of *STP* for distribution to participants.
 - 2. Future recreative/performative event ideas:
 - a. Rollerskating ala FAIR from 1978?
 - b. We need to look in the archives and find more cool ideas!
 - ii. Hold a Women's Retreat Reunion?
 - 1. We think we are not ready to plan something this big. Hopefully a series of lesbian herstory-themed events will build a cohort of younger queer women who can then help plan such a Women's Retreat Reunion, so that some point in the future---maybe summer 2017 or summer 2018?---we can invite back First Friday women to engage in cross-generational dialogue with a generation of younger queer women.
 - d. We did not discuss the participatory/interactive theater idea...
- 4) STORYCIRCLES
 - a. We did not really discuss this technique any further, although we plan to use it in both our geographical and demographic expansion initiatives
- 5) EXHIBITS
 - a. We decided that our next online exhibition will be similar to the one we produced about gay liberation:
 - i. It will be a strict chronological timeline, focused on the LGBTQ history in Southwest Virginia from 1980-1989.
 - ii. The goal is to launch the exhibit to the public at Pride in the Park in September 2017

- iii. The exhibit will include content related to many of our ongoing themes / initiatives: Lynchburg's gay history; lesbian herstory; the history of the AIDS crisis; et cetera
- b. We did not discuss the traveling / pop-up exhibit idea...

OTHER IDEAS / CONCERNS

- 1) Do we need to develop a Mission Statement for our organization?
 - a. After some discussion, we decided: no. Our website and all published materials says this: "we are a community-based history initiative committed to researching and telling the stories of LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations in our region."
 - b. We like the idea of the project's mission as organic and fluid. It will change over time as the project grows and new members come and go.
- 2) What are we planning for Valentine's Day?
 - a. RB proposed the idea of having a Valentine's Day card-making party. We'd make LGBT-history themed Valentine's Day cards to send to all the people who have contributed to the project so far.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Our next meeting will be Thursday, November 10, 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Parrott Room, Roanoke Public Library
- 2) Update the project website! (It's falling way behind.)
- 3) Help scan in materials at the Virginia Room--- Wednesdays 4pm-6pm, or by appointment
- 4) 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
- 5) Use the "Promotional Contacts" spreadsheet to spread the word about our exhibition and walking tour
- 6) Volunteer to be a walking tour guide
- 7) Help digitize the LGBT Library catalog --- Sundays 2pm-5pm @ MCC church. Bring a laptop.
- 8) Contribute to the list of geographic expansion contacts. Contribute to the list of contacts in the African American community.
- 9) Develop a short list of historical sites and a webpage for the Historical Marker Campaign
- 10) Begin developing the 1980s exhibition timeline

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 23, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke LGBTQ History Walking Tour
<https://www.facebook.com/events/578210832363425/>

Thursday, November 10, 5:30pm-7:30pm: Next General Meeting @ Parrott Room,
Roanoke Public Library

Sunday, November 13, 2pm[?]: Lesbian Frisbee @ Highland Park

Sunday, November 20, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Walking Tour

Saturday, December 10, 2pm-4pm: Private Test-Run of the OSW Gayborhood
History Walking Tour

Thursday, December 15, 5:30-7:30pm[?]: General Meeting?