

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project
General Meeting at the Roanoke Public Library
November 10, 2016**

17 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
7:20pm: Other Ideas / Concerns
7:30pm: Departure

ARCHIVES

- 1) The physical archives continues to grow with new donations every month. Donors are now going directly to the Virginia Room to make donations to the LGBTQ History Collection, which is awesome.
- 2) The digital archives is stagnant, with a backlog of nearly fifty scanned historic newspaper issues that need to be uploaded to the website. GR and HA have a meeting on November 11 with Roanoke College librarians to see about getting access to the digital archives website ourselves so that we can manually upload the material.
- 3) HOMEWORK: We continue to have weekly scanning/research sessions in the Virginia Room on most Wednesdays, 4pm-6pm. All are welcome to attend.

ORAL HISTORIES

- 1) Phase II (Oral Herstories): Five interviews are complete, and four of the transcripts have been submitted for review. GR is now audit-editing the transcripts and adding to the comprehensive subject index. We hope that these five new interviews and transcripts will be uploaded online to the Virginia Room's digital archives by sometime in December.
- 2) Phase III (QPOC Histories): GR and GG reported on recruitment updates for our QPOC oral history initiative, to begin in January 2017. As of now, we have two black gay men, one black trans woman, and one black former sex worker confirmed for the project. GG is working on recruiting a few others, including

queer black women. Our target is to confirm 8-10 oral history narrators by January.

- 3) HOMEWORK: If you know of queer or trans people of color who might be interested in recording an oral history for our project, please ask them about it and report back to the History Project. Thank you!

EXHIBITIONS

- 1) GR reported that, as of last month's meeting, we have decided to do our next digital exhibition on the topic of the 1980s. There are no further updates (as we are busy researching in our archives to see what 1980s-era materials we have!)
- 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.

WALKING TOURS

- 1) The Downtown tour is off to a great start. October's tour was not as well attended as September's tours, with only five people attending. Our next tour is Sunday, November 20. The tour schedule is up on our website and on Eventbrite now through April 2017.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Old Southwest Gayborhood History Tour: We have a draft script, which GR will send out again for comments and critiques. We'll be doing a private test-run of the tour material on Saturday, December 10, 2pm-4pm. Look for the facebook event invite!
- 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 800 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.

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

- 1) GR, RW, OM, JG, and others all reported back on our collective efforts to make contacts with local hosts in Southwest Virginia regions outside of Roanoke.
 - a. Martinsville = RW is working on it, but it does not look immediately promising
 - b. Lynchburg = GR reached out to the Lynchburg Diversity Center and has just heard back. OM and HO also 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.
 - c. Blacksburg: GR reached out to Glade Church; hasn't heard back. JG is reaching out to a lesbian organization in Blacksburg. LC offered to help with that, as well.
- 2) The following calendar of events is suggested:
 - a. January 2017: workshop in Lynchburg
 - b. February 2017: History Project meeting in Lynchburg
 - c. March 2017: workshop in Blacksburg
 - d. April 2017: History Project meeting in Blacksburg
 - e. Et cetera

DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

- 1) GR reported back on efforts to make contacts with local African American organizations in the Roanoke Valley as potential hosts for a partnership with the History Project.
 - a. NAACP (Brenda) = GR sent a facebook message; no response. GG will personally reach out to them on behalf of the History Project
 - b. Harrison Museum (Charles) = GR sent an email; no response. GG will reach out on behalf of the History Project
- 2) Several people brought up the importance of reaching out to the Latinx (Latina/o) community, as well. The following contacts were suggested:
 - a. Yolanda = GG has a connection
 - b. Vivian = EW has a connection
 - c. Mauricio = LC has a connection
- 3) The next steps, perhaps, are to:
 - 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

ARTS INITIATIVE

- 1) LGBTQ+ History Zine!
 - a. RB is meeting with the Community High School Zine Club next week to begin a partnership focused on producing an LGBTQ+ history-related zine!
- 2) Historical Marker Campaign
 - a. GR distributed copies of the "LGBTQ Historical Marker Campaign --- SHORT LIST" and then proceeded to explain that we would have to scrap most of the shortlist. GR also distributed the Commonwealth of Virginia's "Application to Propose Placement of a New Virginia Historical Highway Marker" document.
 - i. The short of it is: 3 of 5 sites on our short list do not qualify for a historical marker because their period of greatest historical significance post-dates 1966 (and the state's rules are that the period of historical significance must be at least fifty years ago). That leaves The Trade Winds (opened in 1951) and The Block (active in the 1960s) as the only viable sites.
 - b. After much discussion, we agreed to move forward with a campaign that would ask the regional LGBTQ+ community (paraphrasing here)... "Should we put a historical marker at the site of The Trade Winds, Southwest Virginia's first gay bar?"
 - c. We decided that the way to move forward with the campaign would be:
 - i. First, hold a community forum at the UU Church on Grandin Road, inviting members of the LGBTQ+ community to come and consider the question "Should we put a historical marker at the site of The Trade Winds?" This event should include a presentation by the History Project on the history of The Trade Winds and why a historical marker is needed there; oral testimony from folks who used to go to The Trade Winds and can speak to its significance to statewide and/or national LGBTQ history; plus, significant time for discussion and workshopping / brainstorming the right language for the marker, and how to proceed with the campaign.
 - ii. Second, launch the campaign at a later date with a fundraiser / party at The Park.
 - iii. The timeline for all this might be January 2017 = community forum at the UU Church? February 2017 = fundraiser at The Park?
- 3) Recreative / Performative Events
 - a. Lesbian Frisbee, Sunday, November 13, 2pm-4pm @ Highland Park
 - i. We discussed updates / needs, which will be summarized in an email to be sent out over the listserv prior to Sunday's event
 - b. December event: Gay Rollerskating!

- i. On March 13, 1978, the Free Alliance for Individual Rights (FAIR), a gay activist group in Roanoke, held a “Skating Party” at the Roanoke Valley Skate Center (on Brandon Avenue). The skating party was from 7:30 – 10pm on a Monday evening, followed by drinks at Nite & Day (which is now Lucky!) on Kirk Avenue.
 - ii. We will hold our “Gay Rollerskating” recreative event on Saturday, December 10, 7:30 – 10pm @ the Skate Center, followed by drinks at Lucky.
 - 1. We need to make reservation at Lucky for our party, as it will likely be packed there at 10pm on a Saturday night
- 4) Participatory / Interactive Theater idea = did not discuss. Punted to the next meeting.
- 5) Other Arts Initiative proposals
 - a. The City of Roanoke’s Arts Commission is looking for new sculptures / installations for the Elmwood Art Walk, a pedestrian plaza that sits squarely on top of The Block, Roanoke’s historic gay cruising area in the 1960s and 1970s. GR is in touch with Michael Borowski, an assistant professor of art at Virginia Tech and History Project supporter, about possibly working together to apply for a space on the Art Walk for an LGBTQ+ history-themed sculpture or installation.
 - b. The deadline for applications is February 6, 2017.

OTHER IDEAS / CONCERNS

- 1) Valentine’s Day card-making party
 - a. We’d like to make LGBT-history themed Valentine’s Day cards to send out to all the people who have contributed to the project so far.
 - b. Shall we schedule such a party for late January or early February so that we can get these in the mail to folks by Valentine’s Day?
- 2) 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. Would anyone like to host such a party? And when should we schedule it for?

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Our next meeting will be Thursday, December 15, 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Parrott Room, Roanoke Public Library
- 2) Help with scanning/research at the Virginia Room--- Wednesdays 4pm-6pm, 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 8-10 confirmed narrators by January 1.
- 4) Begin developing the 1980s exhibition timeline. Suggest key events/people/places for the 1980s exhibition.
- 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.
- 7) Contribute to our list of geographic expansion contacts. Contribute to the list of contacts in the African American and Latinx communities.
- 8) Help make our first zine!
- 9) Plan next steps for launching the Historical Marker Campaign
- 10) Promote our Gay Rollerskating event!
- 11) Prepare application for the Elmwood Art Walk sculpture / installation
- 12) Have fun. ☺

UPCOMING EVENTS (through February 2017...)

Sunday, November 13, 2pm-4pm: Lesbian Frisbee @ Highland Park
[\[https://www.facebook.com/events/652331018262002/\]](https://www.facebook.com/events/652331018262002/)

Sunday, November 20, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour
[\[https://www.facebook.com/events/1849118248654274/\]](https://www.facebook.com/events/1849118248654274/)

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

Saturday, December 10, 7:30-onward: Gay Rollerskating @ Skate Center

Thursday, December 15, 5:30-7:30pm: General Meeting @ Roanoke Public Library

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

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

January, date TBD: General Meeting @ Roanoke Public Library

Sunday, January 22, 2pm-4pm: Downtown Roanoke Walking Tour

Late January / early February, date TBD: Valentine's Day card-making party @ place, TBD

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

February, date TBD: General Meeting @ Lynchburg, place TBD?

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