

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project
General Meeting at the Roanoke Public Library
December 17, 2015**

7 people in attendance.

AGENDA

(5:30-6pm): gathering, food & drink, set-up
(6-6:05pm): Check-ins
(6:05-6:15pm): WORK STUDY RESEARCH ASSISTANT
(6:15-6:55pm): ARCHIVES
(6:55-7:10pm): ORAL HISTORIES
(7:10-7:30pm): OTHER PROJECTS
(7:30-7:45pm): departure

WORK STUDY RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The LGBTQ+ History Project has hired SM, a senior History major at Roanoke College, as our first part-time Research Assistant! They will work 8 hrs./week starting mid-January 2016 and ending in late April 2016. The funds come from Federal Work Study money.

- 1) TASKS LIST: GR distributed a “Spring 2016 WSRA Tasks List” that both he and SM have agreed to. History Project members made the following comments/suggestions to the task list which are reflected below:
 - a. At least 2 hrs./week archival and bibliographic research at the Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, or within other repositories, as needed
 - b. Help process donations for the LGBTQ History Collection at the Roanoke Public Library, including photographing and scanning items for inclusion in our digital archive; also, maintaining a database of all donations that we can keep updated on the project website
 - i. COMMENT: we should make sure to cross-reference the data from the digital collection with the physical collection, and vice versa
 - c. Work on development of the “Queer Roanoke” Timeline:JS digital history website... with the goal of unveiling a basic narrative by April?
 - d. Help locate and laminate a series of images / quotations for use on a downtown LGBTQ+ history walking tour
 - i. COMMENT: these first four tasks should be the WSRA’s main priorities, rather than the following items...
 - e. Develop, or find someone to develop, a logo for the History Project?

- f. Work on developing a Kick-Off Event at the Virginia Room in April? (or later?) Ideally will incorporate a small exhibition of items that have been donated so far to the physical archives
- g. Help plan rural outreach to LGBTQ+ communities in Southwest Virginia. A series of “Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project Workshop & Archives Collection Events”?
- h. ADDED at the meeting: Conduct donor follow-up: the WSRA will be in touch with donors as materials come in, and work with those donors regarding content moderation
- i. ADDED at the meeting: the WSRA will recruit and train volunteers for archives collection events, and other events, as needed

GR will follow up with SM on these revisions. As we all agreed to at the meeting, this list is highly aspirational! We are setting an ambitious bar to push this project forward, and it will be okay if we do not accomplish all these things by the end of April 2016. ☺

ARCHIVES

We continued with a discussion of the DIGITAL ARCHIVES initiative.

- 1) GR demonstrated that the UPLOAD FORM (https://forms.roanoke.edu/digital_archive_project) and SHARED SHELF COMMONS site (<http://www.sscommons.org/openlibrary/welcome.html#3|collections|7730775||Southwest20Virginia20LGBTQ2B20History20Project|||>) are both “live” and open to the public! Unfortunately, no one has yet used the form or uploaded material to the digital archives, except for the original three test images.
 - a. BATCH REVIEW: “Batch review of uploaded content,” as set on the agenda, was not necessary because nothing new has been added to the archive.
 - b. POLICY FOR DEALING WITH IMAGE PERMISSION REQUESTS: We discussed very briefly, and agreed that History Project staff will reach out to donors in the event of an image permission request, and put the donor directly in touch with the entity requesting to reproduce the image.
 - c. OTHER COPYRIGHT HOLDERS: We briefly discussed that other copyright holders (such as the Roanoke Times or the Roanoke Public Library) need to agree to publish an item via our Creative Commons license in order for us to publish that content in our digital archive. In other words, when we scan in material from the LGBTQ History Collection at the Virginia Room, the Virginia Room must agree to us publishing those items on the digital archive via the Creative Commons license.

- d. GENERAL QUESTIONS / CONCERNS:
 - i. STORING 'QUARANTINED' IMAGES: Question for DW at Roanoke College: can we store 'quarantined' images/items on the Shared Shelf server for preservation's sake, even if we are not able to show them publicly on the site because of third party confidentiality issues? In other words, the question is: if we reject an image/item because it violates our Policy on Protecting the Privacy of Third Parties (<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/policy-on-protecting-the-privacy-of-third-parties/>), can we still store it 'hidden' in our archive, in the event that we may get consent to publish the item at a later date?
 - ii. PROJECT PROMOTION: The issue of whether or how to promote the digital archive project was discussed, and there was general consensus that we should continue to prioritize building the Physical Archives, and not push the Digital Archives so hard at this time. We will continue to scan in materials from the Physical Archives, but not directly ask community members to contribute to the digital-only site. That said, of course we will keep the upload form "live" and accessible to the public, should community members choose to use it. It is easily accessible from our website: <http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/archives/>

We continued with a discussion of the PHYSICAL ARCHIVES initiative.

- 1) GR showed the new "Archives" pages on the History Project website (<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/archives/>), which includes a subpage featuring "Highlights of the Collection," (<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/physical-archives/>) which itself features a link to the official Finding Aid to the LGBTQ History Collection (<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2015/12/LGBTQ-History-Collection-Finding-Aid.pdf>), as prepared by the staff at the Virginia Room.
 - a. REVIEW OF PROGRESS: We all feel like the first Archives Collection Event was a great success! The material that has come in so far is superb, but also "just the tip of the iceberg."
 - b. PLAN TO SCAN/DIGITIZE ITEMS: GR has already begun scanning items for inclusion in our Digital Archives collection. The WSRA will carry on this project into spring 2016.
 - c. PLANNED OPEN HOUSE EVENT AT VIRGINIA ROOM: We did not discuss when the planned Open House event for the LGBTQ History Collection should take place at the Virginia Room. This is one of the WSRA Spring 2016 tasks, so this discussion will continue into 2016.
 - d. GENERAL QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:

- i. SERIALIZING WITHIN FOLDERS: There is some concern about the Virginia Room’s policies on labeling items only down to the folder level, and not serializing each item within each folder. The concern is that we might lose track of what is within each folder; that items may be misplaced or stolen; that items might be placed out of order within folders; etc.
- ii. ROANOKE PFLAG COLLECTION (1990s): There are some questions raised about the fact that the Roanoke Diversity Center donated such voluminous collections from Roanoke PFLAG from the 1990s, and that neither current nor former members of Roanoke PFLAG have been consulted. We all agreed it is important to reach out to these parties as soon as possible to tie them into the project, as well as encourage them to contribute more to help round out the Roanoke PFLAG collection.
 - 1. If Roanoke PFLAG members (current or former) want to contribute more items to this collection, we agreed to petition the Virginia Room to, in that event, separate the Roanoke PFLAG materials from the RDC Series, and make a dedicated series just for Roanoke PFLAG. This will only happen, though, if Roanoke PFLAG becomes an official donor to the LGBTQ History Collection and gets its own series.
- e. FUTURE ARCHIVES COLLECTION EVENTS: After some discussion, we decided that we should reach out to The Park to see if we can hold our next Archives Collection Event at The Park in February 2016.
 - i. WEEKNIGHT, DEDICATED EVENT at THE PARK: We decided that a weeknight event, dedicated to the History Project—rather than competing for attention on a popular Friday or Saturday night—would be best.
 - ii. A PARK “REUNION”: There was the idea of billing it as a Park “Reunion” for people who remember going to The Park in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and asking them to bring their photographs and mementos for donation to the collection?
 - iii. TIE-IN WITH HISTORY PROJECT TALK: There was the idea that we might attract more people to come to this event if there is a scheduled talk/presentation about the History Project—our accomplishments so far, and goals for the future—rather than just asking people to bring their items in for the collection.
 - iv. TARGETING AUDIENCE: There was discussion of partnering with prominent groups with extensive email listservs of older LGBTQ folks—RDC listserv; IP listserv—to

target specific audiences to come to this Archives Collection Event.

- v. OTHER IDEAS: The “Reunion” idea sparked other ideas, such as holding a “Last Straw Reunion” at the former site of The Last Straw; or holding a picnic in the grassy lot where The Tradewinds used to be. We decided that these are cool ideas, but they await further community outreach, education, and growth of the project.
- f. RURAL OUTREACH: We had meant to discuss the Rural Outreach initiative, but did not have time. It was suggested that IP members might be good contacts for connecting with rural LGBTQ communities across Southwest Virginia. We will continue this discussion over email.
- g. MUSEUM-SIZE OBJECTS: We decided to put on the agenda for January’s meeting to discuss drafting a policy for dealing with museum-size (non-archival) historical materials. At the moment if a donor wants to work with the History Project to find a permanent home for such materials, we have no policy for such materials.

ORAL HISTORIES

Update on the ORAL HISTORIES initiative (to launch in February 2016)

- 1) The forms are finalized!
- 2) Equipment is purchased!
- 3) IRB forms will be submitted in January once we’ve got all the students’ signatures
- 4) RECRUITMENT OF INTERVIEW SUBJECTS: Our goal was to recruit 8-16 interview subjects. We currently have eleven soft confirmations! We will continue to recruit, while also letting folks know that we may or may not get to interview everyone who is interested in Spring 2016 based on numbers and based on the students’ capabilities to carry out these interviews. But let them know that we will do another round of interviews in Spring 2017, and every spring onward!
 - a. DIVERSITY: We were concerned about our ability to recruit cisgender lesbian and bisexual women and also transgender subjects, and not just white gay men. So far, of our eleven confirmations, we have at least one transgender participant, and at least three cisgender women. We will continue these efforts to diversify the interviewee pool.
- 5) DIGITAL REPRODUCTION: GR showed the Virginia Room’s digital history website (<http://libraryjunction.com/virginiaroom/>), which will host the finished audio recordings and transcripts from the Oral Histories initiative. We can also post audio recordings and transcripts to our

Shared Shelf Digital Archives, with the Virginia Room's permission. We need to check-in about getting that permission.

6) GENERAL QUESTIONS / CONCERNS:

- a. BROADENING THE POOL OF TRAINED INTERVIEWERS: GR brought up that there are some interviews that, because of their sensitivity and/or significance, he may want to conduct himself rather than give to the college students to conduct as their assignment. Other History Project members have expressed interest in conducting interviews, as well. GR will propose a training schedule for anyone who wants to learn how to conduct oral histories, and send a proposal out to History Project team members via email.

OTHER PROJECTS

GR discussed a few new initiatives in the works for 2016.

- 1) WALKING TOUR: GR gave a test walking tour to Roanoke College students in October 2015. Their feedback included that the tour needed more visuals---laminated photographs and other images---to help bring the history to life.

- a. NEXT TRIAL RUN: GR will be leading a second test-run of the walking tour on January 24, 2016 for friends and History Project members. This new tour starts and ends at Elmwood Park, is about two miles long, and takes approximately two hours. It is designed as a potential project for Pride in the Park weekend at Elmwood Park.

- b. QUESTIONS / CONCERNS:

- i. LENGTH: Two hours may be too long. Could be shortened to 90 minutes?
- ii. LUNCH: alternatively, if the tour takes two hours, it could be scheduled with one hour of walking, then lunch, then the second hour of walking. Make a day out of it, and provide lunch as a social opportunity for guests.
 1. If we do lunch, we would have to book the lunch in advance, and take RSVPs for the tour in advance, so that we can give the lunch location our final numbers.
- iii. WALKING TOUR or BUS TOUR: Some think it may work better as a bus or trolley tour, rather than walking.
- iv. SCHEDULING: If we did it Pride Week, would it work better during the week rather than on the weekend, since the weekend is already full of other activities? But then again, a weekday will not connect with a working-class audience, and most LGBTQ folks come to town for the weekend, not

the week. If we wanted to do the tour on Pride Weekend, we would need to schedule this in consultation with Roanoke Pride.

- 2) "TIMELINE:JS" DIGITAL HISTORY PROJECT: GR showed off the Timeline:JS open-source digital history software (<https://timeline.knightlab.com>), and the "Queer Roanoke: A History" timeline that he and SM have started and will continue to develop in Spring 2016. Everyone seems to think this is a great initiative, although it is clear that much more research is necessary before the site will be ready to go public.
- 3) OTHER IDEAS:
 - a. PRIDE WEEK, SEPTEMBER 2016: We began to discuss what the History Project might plan for Pride Week in September 2016. Potential initiatives include:
 - i. Reserving a BOOTH at Elmwood Park for the History Project. We will need volunteers to work at the booth, as well as a banner (with our new, as yet undesigned, logo) to let people know that we are the "Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project."
 - ii. Launching the WALKING TOUR with one (or many) tours offered either on Pride weekend, during Pride week, or in the weeks before or after Pride Week.
 - iii. Launching the TIMELINE:JS digital history site. We can potentially have iPads (or tablet devices) at the History Project booth, so that passerby can scroll through the timeline and/or also browse our Digital Archives site. Think of the booth as a digital exhibition space!
 - iv. Have a big EVENT / PARTY to celebrate the launch of these new initiatives and also, of course, to celebrate the one-year Anniversary of the History Project!

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Our next meeting will be in late January. Because of GR and SM's course schedules in Spring 2016, Thursday evenings are the most workable option for monthly meetings. The Roanoke Public Library seemed to work great as a meeting location. We'll determine the exact date of January's meeting via email.
- 2) Get answers to Digital Archives questions.
- 3) Get answers to Physical Archives questions.
- 4) Reach out to Roanoke PFLAG to invite them into the History Project, especially starting communication about the Physical Archives collection.
- 5) Reach out to The Park to plan a proposed February 2016 Archives Collection Event at The Park.

- 6) Do some networking and outreach to help draft a proposed Rural Outreach tour for sometime in February – April 2016. The goal is to visit 3-4 rural Southwest Virginia communities on 3-4 consecutive weekends.
- 7) Continue to recruit oral history subjects. Get hard confirmations (and phone numbers!) for each participant by late January.
- 8) Develop an Oral History training program that will launch in late January for History Project members interested in conducting interviews.
- 9) Develop the Walking Tour for the next test-run on January 24.
- 10) Begin communications with Roanoke Pride regarding History Project plans for Pride Week, September 2016.
- 11) Reach out to community members and students to see if anyone is interested in developing a logo for the History Project!

UPCOMING DATES

Late January: - next Monthly History Project meeting
- Oral History training program begins

January 24: test-run of Downtown Roanoke LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour

February: - Oral History project begins
- Proposed Archives Collection Event at The Park

February - April: Rural Outreach

TBD: planned Kick-Off Event @ Virginia Room

September: - Pride Week events (TBD)
- History Project One-year Anniversary!