

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project
General Meeting at the Roanoke Public Library
April 11, 2017**

4 People in Attendance

Agenda:

6pm: Check ins
6:05pm:QUICK UPDATES
6:25pm: COMMUNITY CURATION
6:30pm: GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION
6:40pm: DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION
6:45pm: ARTS INITIATIVE
7:10pm: SUMMER/FALL PLANS
7:30pm:Departure

QUICK UPDATES

1) ARCHIVES

- a) Physical Archives: No new donations.
 - i. Discussed possibly giving printed PALS issues to Lynchburg diversity center to help them start archival collection.
- b) Digital Archives
 - i. All five volumes of PALS (50 issues from 1980-1983) now uploaded. All of the *Skip Two Periods* newspapers now uploaded. H.A is still in the process of scanning in *Blue Ridge Lambda Press Newspapers*.

2) WALKING TOURS

- a) Downtown tour
 - i. Next tour is scheduled for April 23rd. C.P will be giving the tour for the first time.
- b) OSW tour
 - i. Test run on the tour was completed on April 9th. Training of tour guides for OSW tour is still scheduled to take place in August. The debut of the public tour is still scheduled for September.
- c) New tour brochure
 - i. E.W is working on updating the tour brochure to reflect new OSW tour. An updated draft version of the tour brochure was passed out at the meeting.
- d) Schedule
 - i. Summer dates for the downtown tour have been added online. The OSW tour will debut in September and will be offered alongside the downtown tour in September

and October. In November, the tours will be scheduled on an alternating monthly basis: OSW will run in November, Downtown will run in December, etc....

3) LGBT LIBRARY

- a) We are now up to 1800 books in the online catalogue. A group of student's from Gregory's INQ 300 class presented on the importance of LGBT libraries at the Diversity Center on April 10th.
- b) Our goal is still to complete the online catalogue by September.
- c) HOMEWORK: Weekly cataloguing sessions continue most every Sunday 1pm-4pm at the Roanoke Diversity Center. Get in touch with GR to get involved. Bring a laptop.

4) ORAL HISTORIES

a) Phase III underway: GR is halfway through editing transcripts—still on schedule to have everything published by May. There will be nine published interviews.

b) Extra Oral Herstories underway: Two oral histories with First Friday members have been conducted by J.G. Eight interviews have been completed by students and volunteers.

c) Phase IV (collectivization): we are interested in conducting community workshops on oral history interview practices in Fall 2017.

- i. We are still wanting to offer these training sessions to folks from the Lynchburg Diversity Center as well.

COMMUNITY CURATION

1) Planning for new digital exhibition. Here's a tentative title! "Finding Each Other: LGBT Community Organizing and Activism in Southwest Virginia, 1980-1989" A draft of this new exhibition that HA and GR put together can be found here:

- a) https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1sQ4w5HXCMIK-R08K87-8bdcZn8Qo98bM9uAxwsBubFg&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650
- b) On March 9th, we had an archives research party so project members could collect notes on local LGBTQ history from the 80s. Our next Archives Research Party is this Thursday, April 13th 5:30pm-Close at the Virginia Room. Bring something to take notes with and something to take pictures with.
- c) HOMEWORK: Project members can use the Oral History Subject Index on our website to comb through interviews for evidence related to the 1980s so we have audio clips for our exhibition. Project Members should also be on the lookout for relevant images we could use.
- d) Once we finish reviewing data/images/audio, we should schedule a community workshop so community members can give us feedback and review the tentative exhibition.
 - i. Probably community workshop date: September 2017.

e) Deadline for exhibit launch: September 2018.

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

1) Lynchburg

- a) Our last project meeting was held at the Lynchburg Diversity Center (March 16th)
 - i. Lynchburg is interested in Oral History workshops in the fall of 2017. They would also like us to help them build up their archives and library.

2) Blacksburg

- a) LGBTQ History Workshop to be held in Blacksburg on Thursday April 20th, JG is leading this.
- b) Our May general meeting will also be held in the Blacksburg Public Library on Thursday, May 18th, 6pm-8pm.

3) Rockbridge/Lexington: OM has a possible contact in Lexington. A possible connection in Lexington was also brought up at the African American LGBTQ Story Circle.

4) Statewide Queer History Mini-Con - June 24: A meeting of LGBTQ History Project members from across the state to discuss common goals, such as creating a common website/clearinghouse for Virginia queer history and discussing possible collaborations. GR will update as more information comes in.

DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

1) African American Story Circle held on April 8th 2pm-4pm at the Gainsboro Library, organized by NM and facilitated by Jenae Thompson.

- a) Turn out for the event was low. Some issues raised: how we, as a majority white project, can improve our outreach efforts and center events like these around the experiences of African American LGBT folks. One attendee brought up how holding an event like this at the Gainsboro library may alienate African-American LGBTQ folks who are not out to their community. He suggested we work on organizing more private events in the future, such as a potluck.
- b) We talked about the further outreach ideas: building these relationships is going to take time and effort. We have to keep working on these undertakings and forming organic relationships with QPOC through inviting them to our events and meetings, conducting oral histories with them, collaborating with black community centers, and so forth.

ARTS INITIATIVE

1) LGBTQ+ History Zine!

- a) The deadline for submission has passed; we have received ten different submissions from seven contributors. Next steps: RB is meeting with Community High School students to put together the zine in the coming weeks. RB wants to have it published and distributed by the end of May.
- 2) “Living Trans History” Interactive Theater workshop.
 - a) Plans for Diversity Camp: Giving a workshop to campers Friday, June 16, 9-10:30am (middle schoolers); 1-2:30pm (high schoolers and young adults). We discussed inviting the trans folks whose stories we used to the Diversity Camp workshop so they can see the campers’ performances.
 - b) Plans for Fall 2017 and onward: We discussed possibly applying for a grant through the Southern Equality Fund that would allow us to work with local LGBT youth on putting together a theater project using our Oral History/Archival records as a source of inspiration—could involve both trans youth and older trans community members. GR’s students could also work on this project during Spring of 2018 in his “Sexual Ethics” Seminar Class.
 - c) HOMEWORK: Reach out to theater professionals who could help us bring this to life. Research grant opportunities through Virginia Foundation of the Humanities, the Victory Fund, and any other organizations that could help fund us.
- 2) Historical Marker Campaign
 - a) Community Forum held on Wednesday, March 22nd. Assistant City Manager of Roanoke and the head of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources were there. The event was covered by local news. The coverage was positive and well-done.
 - b) At this point, the chance of getting a marker on The Trade Winds is about 50/50. One possible issue: what if there is a more significant gay bar elsewhere in Virginia that would be a better candidate for a marker? This is something we could discuss at the upcoming statewide conference.
- 3) Recreative / Performative Events
 - a) Second Annual Queer History Bar Crawl: Friday, April 28

SUMMER / FALL PLANS

- 1) Queer History Dinner Party: scheduled for August, probably a couple weeks before Pride. Still looking for someone to host this!
- 2) Summer Strategy / Exec. Comm.
 - a) RB and OM have stepped up to help with executive duties over the summer while GR is out of town. More project members are welcome to step up—there’s plenty of work to go around!
 - b) GR has typed up instructions for “How to Run the History Project” for exec. Committee. RB currently has these instructions.

c) RB led the April 11th meeting and will lead the May meeting in Blacksburg—she’s hoping to alternate with other project members on running meetings and writing minutes for June and July.

3) Plans for SEPTEMBER 2017:

a) Third Annual History Forum @ The Park: We’ll discuss this more closer to Pride when Roanoke Pride reaches out to us.

b) Pride in the Park booth:

i. Still undecided on one day or two. RB thinks two days would be good.

ii. We need new merch at the booth: we’ll have a new walking tour guide and our classic hats, but we need other ideas. Everyone liked the idea of recreating old gay activist merch and doing “Make Roanoke Queer Again” buttons/bumper sticks.

c) Digital / physical exhibition: our next exhibition won’t be ready in September 2017, so we’re brainstorming other ideas on how to highlight the queer history within Elmwood park: here are suggestions from last month’s meeting that we need more feedback on:

i. Big poster on “Queer History of Elmwood Park?”

ii. Soapbox and speeches?

iii. Human historical markers (this seems to be the most popular idea right now—we would need to begin planning for this soon, maybe do a test run sometime in the spring and try out different historical markers/posing ideas).

iv. Design flyer/pamphlet with map of Elmwood Park queer history?

v. Cover over the existent Elmwood Park signs/maps with our own queer history versions?

d) Launch of OSW Gayborhood Walking Tour – We are still planning on September 17th, 2pm-4pm. Tour guide TBD.

e) Second Anniversary Party / Year-Three Visioning Workshop – Still planned for Wed, Sep. 20 @ CoLab. We’ll have to reserve the colab in advance and make promotional materials to hand out at pride!