

# Through the Queer Looking-Glass

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## The Future of LGBTQ Public History

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In the summer of 1994, the gay activist, community historian, and author Alan Bérubé directed a seminar at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. In the course Bérubé spoke of the great need to document, collect, and preserve gay and lesbian history in keeping with his lifelong advocacy for community-based history. In October of that year, four students from the class, Tom Cook, Pat Young, Jeanine Wicks, and Bonnie Tinker, founded the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific—the first archive of its kind in the region.<sup>1</sup> What was noteworthy about this grass-roots initiative was its formation in the midst of one of the most perilous political periods for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Oregonians in the state’s history—one that mirrored larger events in the country as a whole.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a conservative backlash to the social and cultural changes that had taken place in the US since the 1960s—one that consolidated the political gains resulting from the decline of New Deal liberalism and that coalesced into a political alliance between the New Right and the Christian Right. This backlash, which included a Christian-based sexual purity movement, was on full display in the fight against the gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida, led by Anita Bryant in 1977. The conservative political gains first ascended in 1980 with the presidential election of Ronald Reagan and the defeat of several noteworthy liberal Democrats in Congress. The 1990s proved to be another decade of fierce debates

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1 Heather Burmeister, “Gay and Lesbian Archives of LGBTQ Pacific Northwest History,” *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/gay\\_and\\_lesbian\\_archives\\_of\\_the\\_pacific\\_northwest\\_glapn/#.W\\_huUjhKjcs](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/gay_and_lesbian_archives_of_the_pacific_northwest_glapn/#.W_huUjhKjcs); About the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, <http://www.glapn.org/1000about.html>. In 2014, the organization added “LGBTQ” to its name. For an overview of the life and work of Allan Bérubé, see John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, “Introduction: Allan Bérubé and the Power of Community History,” in *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, and Labor History*, ed. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 1–37.

and ongoing clashes between conservatives and liberals over public policy, state funding, and civil rights for gays and lesbians. A second wave of conservative gains crested with Republicans' successful effort to take control of the US House of Representatives in the midterm elections of 1994. The culture wars that ensued featured prominently in the Republicans' Contract with America, battles over sodomy statutes, sex education, and abortion laws, and in the successful adoption of the Defense of Marriage Act (1996), which was intended to prevent the adoption of gay marriage laws in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

In Oregon battles over gay and lesbian civil rights came to the fore in the late 1980s with the formation of the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), a Christian Right organization. In addition to its initial anti-abortion platform, the group also aimed to forestall the advancement of gay rights through local and statewide citizen initiatives. The OCA's most well-known initiative was Ballot Measure 9 (1992), which sought to amend the Oregon constitution to declare "homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism, and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse" and ban any "special rights" for homosexuals and bisexuals. Measure 9 was eventually defeated by 56 percent to 44 percent of the vote; however, the battle over the measure resulted in a significant increase in anti-gay hate crimes in the state that year, including eighty-seven crimes officially reported against lesbians and gay men in the two months leading up to the election. In just one example, in September 1992 Hattie Mae Cohens, an African American lesbian, and Brian H. Mock, a white gay man, were killed in a firebombing of their home by a group of white supremacist skinheads. Although the OCA's follow-up anti-homosexual initiative in 1994, Ballot Measure 13, did not pass statewide (by a very close 51 to 49 percent), it did achieve passage in twenty-five of Oregon's thirty-six counties and coincided with the passage of several anti-gay measures at the city and county levels.<sup>3</sup>

The appeal of the OCA was grounded in deeper social, economic, and cultural stresses within Oregon at the time. Oregonians who supported the organization, worked on its campaigns, and voted for its citizen initiatives from the late 1980s through the early 2000s viewed gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Oregonians as a threat to public safety and social stability at time when the social and economic order seemed to be unraveling before their eyes. Support for the OCA was especially strong in rural areas hard hit by economic recession and job losses,

2 Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974–2008* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 119–26; Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 216–24; John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 345–69. See also George Chauncey, *Why Marriage?: The History Shaping Today's Debate Over Gay Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

3 Randy Blazk, "Oregon Citizens Alliance," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon\\_citizens\\_alliance/#.W\\_m8yzhKjcs](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_citizens_alliance/#.W_m8yzhKjcs); Elizabeth A. Tedesco, "'Humanity on the Ballot': The Citizen Initiative and Oregon's War over Gay Rights," *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 22, no. 1 (2002): 163–70; William M. Lurch, "Oregon: Identity and Politics in the Pacific Northwest," in *God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield), 227–51.

including declining employment of working-class men in resource-based sectors such as logging and the lumber industry. For conservative Christians, the gay community represented urban values—urban disorder—that threatened traditional gender roles, family structures, and child welfare. Other conservative voters saw gays and lesbians as undeserving of claims of minority status, i.e. “special rights.”<sup>4</sup> For those in the gay and lesbian community, such misrepresentations created a hostile political rhetoric that threatened their fundamental rights as citizens and their very safety.

It was in this context that Cook, Young, Wicks, and Tinker established the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest and thereby became part of the much broader movement to document LGBTQ history that was a hallmark of gay liberation and lesbian feminism in the 1970s and the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> At the same time that the United States showed increasing signs of a deep-seated political and social polarization in the late twentieth century, queer activists and community historians put their shoulders to the wheel and created organizations that could provide the intellectual resources, self-knowledge, and community support to push forward for social inclusion, equal rights, and full citizenship despite the divisive political climate. This decades-long endeavor to peer through the queer looking-glass and accurately document and represent the LGBTQ past in public history operates on several levels. First and foremost, it provides self-knowledge to individuals and communities, thereby affirming their identities in the face of active efforts to suppress such historical knowledge by the gatekeepers of official memory in heteronormative societies. In collecting and documenting queer lives, LGBTQ public history also builds community, including renewing bonds that have frayed or memories that have become lost, forgotten, or erased under the weight of larger social, cultural, and economic forces. Equally important are the opportunities for

4 Dale E. Soden, *Outsiders in a Promised Land: Religious Activists in Pacific Northwest History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 186–209; Arlene Stein, *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle Over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

5 Following terminology current in the field “LGBTQ” serves as an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and communities and refers to same-sex love, desire, and experience and to sexual fluidity and gender diversity. The term “queer,” which emerged in the 1990s, also refers to same-sex loving and to nonbinary sexual and gender variance. It can also represent much more complex historical processes (racialization and ethnic formation, modern state formation, settler colonialism, state policy and surveillance, industrialization and deindustrialization, sexualization, gendering, class formation and socioeconomic status, life course and aging, and ability and disability) that more broadly capture the lived experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals and communities. For discussions of terminology in queer history, see Don Romesburg, “Introduction: Having a Moment Four Decades in the Making,” in *The Routledge History of Queer America*, ed. Don Romesburg (New York: Routledge, 2018), 4–5; Susan Ferrentinos, *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 5–7; Lara Kelland, “Public History and Queer Memory,” in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 371–72; and Loraine Hutchins, “Bisexual History: Let’s Not Bижack Another Century,” in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 250–61. For a recent critique of the LGBTQ acronym, see Jonathan Rauch, “Don’t Call Me LGBTQ: Why We Need a Single Overarching Designation for Sexual Minorities,” *The Atlantic*, January/February 2019, 16–18.

creating alliances, partnerships, and collaborations that can mend and strengthen the social fabric in rural and urban areas, and in communities facing the inequities, traumas, and legacies of the past and new challenges on the horizon. And finally, LGBTQ public history can be a means for advancing goals of social and economic justice by revealing the myriad of stories that marked the queer past and continue to enliven the queer present.<sup>6</sup>

I began my own journey to public history in the late 1990s as a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia (UBC). While studying the history of the American West and Native North America, I also came out as bisexual and jumped headlong into queer activism and LGBTQ public history. When not taking classes, overseeing discussion sections as a teaching assistant, or studying for my comprehensive exams, I served as an executive officer in Pride UBC, penned queer history articles and film reviews for the campus newspaper *The UBYSSEY*, and produced displays on LGBTQ history for the group's outreach efforts. I also took on my first paid position as a historical consultant, serving as a researcher and writer for the Vancouver Pride Society, and creating an exhibit on the history of gay and lesbian pride celebrations in Vancouver, which was displayed on a series of large panels at the end of the 1998 Vancouver Pride Parade.

After moving back home to Portland in the early 2000s to complete my doctoral dissertation on French Prairie, Oregon (my ancestral French-Indian community), I also served as the co-chair of the Burnside Triangle Advisory Group (BTAG) for the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement. In this capacity, I contributed to the creation of a community survey, co-wrote a LGBT history tour of the Burnside Triangle, and co-authored BTAG's report to the city (2003) recommending the designation of the area as a LGBT cultural and historic district. This was later followed by a position as a staff researcher and writer for the Oregon Historical Society's online Oregon History Project. Looking back, I now see that I became a public historian because I am bisexual. My own desire for queer history and a need to counter bisexual erasure led me to public history at the same time that a desire for knowledge of my bicultural French Canadian and Native American ancestry had also led me to formal graduate studies in history.<sup>7</sup>

6 D'Emilio and Freeman, "Introduction: Allan Bérubé and the Power of Community History," 1-37; Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 115-26; John D'Emilio, "The Power of Community History," in *In A New Century: Essays on Queer History, Politics, and Community Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 128-36; Gerard Kosovich, "The History of Queer History: One Hundred Years of the Search for Shared Heritage," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, ed. Megan E. Springate (Washington, DC: National Park Foundation and National Park Service, 2016), 04:18-34; Lara Leigh Kelland, *Clio's Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U.S. Social Movements and Collective Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 101-27; Gregory Rosenthal, "Make Roanoke Queer Again: Community History and Urban Change in a Southern City," *The Public Historian* 39, no. 1 (February 2017): 38-43.

7 Some years ago, I published an essay on the history and memory of my French-Indian family in which I recounted the process by which we became "white" by the early decades of the twentieth century. I also explained how I "came to see that I regularly benefit from white privilege because of

When I went out on the job market after finally completing my PhD in 2004, I decided that my curriculum vitae would reflect my public history experience, including my work in the queer community, along with my formal training in American Western history and Native American history. During the job search I made the acquaintance of Gregory Smoak, who also specializes in public history and the American West. Years later in early 2016 Greg, then chair of the Western History Association's (WHA) Public History Committee, contacted me and asked if I would be interested in putting together a panel on LGBTQ public history for the association's annual meeting that would take place in St. Paul, Minnesota, in October of 2016. As I was scheduled to attend the queer history workshop at the 2016 NCPH annual meeting in Baltimore that spring, I jumped at the chance to assist with the WHA programming and was able to organize a session entitled "LGBTQ Public History: The State of the Field."<sup>8</sup> It proved to be a lively panel and at the conclusion of the session, the discussants and the audience members felt that we should take action to advance the conversation on queer public history to the national level, perhaps proposing a special edition of a scholarly journal. I agreed to take on the task and contacted *The Public Historian* in January 2017. Sarah Case, managing editor, and James F. Brooks, editor, warmly embraced the idea and a call for submissions went out in the spring of 2017.

By the 2000s the national context was conducive to expanding the conversation on queer public history as a result of broader changes in North America and beyond. In 2005 the Canadian parliament passed the Civil Marriage Act, legalizing same-sex marriage across the country. The US military ended the policy of Don't Ask Don't Tell in 2011 and in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) the US Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act as unconstitutional, finding that the Fourteenth Amendment required all US state laws to recognize same-sex marriage. In tandem with these historical developments, museums, historical societies, libraries, universities, and other educational institutions across the US and Canada have actively included LGBTQ communities in their collections projects and public history work, thereby incorporating queer history into larger national

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my appearance, which was not the case for my French-Indian ancestors who faced racial, ethnic, and religious intolerance." I noted that "it is ironic and disturbing that the same white supremacy that shaped the historical experience of my distant ancestors paved the way for the white privilege that outwardly benefits me." See Melinda Marie Jetté, "Betwixt and Between: The History and Memory of a Family of French-Indian Ancestry in the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 174. In footnote #83 I wrote that "although I outwardly benefit from white privilege, as a member of the sexual minorities community, I have some understanding of the emotional and psychological toll of belonging to a marginalized group . . . my own experience of being 'betwixt and between' leads me to view my ancestors' lives with a mixture of empathy and scholarly curiosity."

8 The queer history workshop at the 2016 NCPH annual meeting was entitled "Daring to Speak Its Name: Interpreting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Pasts and Historic Sites." The facilitators were Susan Ferentinos, Frank Futral, and Megan Springate. The 2016 WHA conference panel included David Duffield, Gregory Hinton, Christopher Hommerding, Melinda Marie Jetté, Linda Long, and Stewart Van Cleve.

narratives.<sup>9</sup> In 2015 Susan Ferentinos published *LGBT History and Historic Sites and Museums* and in 2016 President Barack Obama approved the Stonewall Inn National Historic Monument. That same year, the National Park Service also released *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer History*, edited by Megan Springate.<sup>10</sup>

This special issue, *Queering Public History: The State of the Field*, follows in the wake of these historic developments and coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising of 1969.<sup>11</sup> As such it provides an opportunity for critical reflection on the spirit and vision of gay liberation, lesbian feminism, and bisexual and trans activism as they relate to queer public history, including the fault lines between these movements. The following twelve essays highlight a range of current questions and considerations while also suggesting future directions for the field, including the importance of transnational and global perspectives.<sup>12</sup> These essays recount illuminating stories of agency, creativity, resistance, and love amidst a tangle of countervailing forces and historical events. They also speak to reexaminations of received notions about identity, gender, and sexuality and the power of dominant narratives to frame queer storytelling. Although the contributions to this special issue range from the intimate and the personal to the social and the political, all of the pieces make a clarion call for greater visibility and representation for the many LGBTQ communities and a renewed commitment to social and economic justice in public history ethics and practice.<sup>13</sup>

In the first essay Susan Ferentinos provides an overview of methods and practices for interpreting queer public history that have emerged in recent years in North America and Europe. She notes that it is important to assess these methods and practices, seeing clearly both their strengths and weaknesses. Given the growth of the field from a grassroots, community-based endeavor to one now more broadly connected to liberal institutions and professional practices, a central concern is the contrast between integrative versus special programming approaches to

9 Kelland, "Public History and Queer Memory," 378–79.

10 Susan Ferentinos, *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites*; Megan E. Springate, "The National Park Service LGBTQ Heritage Initiative: One Year Out," *The George Wright Forum* 34, no. 3 (2017): 391–404; Springate, ed., *LGBTQ America*. The NPS theme study is available online at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>. For a recent review of queer history in US historiography, see Regina Kunzel, "The Power of Queer History," *American Historical Review* 123, no. 5 (December 2018): 1560–82.

11 See also Ken Lustbader, guest editor, *LGBTQ Heritage*, special issue of *Change over Time: An International Journal of Conservation and the Built Environment* 8, no. 2 (2019).

12 For an overview of transnational perspectives in queer history and the history of sexuality, see Emily K. Hobson, "Thinking Transnationally, Thinking Queer," in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 200–9; Margot Canady, "Thinking Sex in the Transnational Turn: An Introduction," in "Transnational Sexualities," *AHR Forum*, *American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (December 2009): 1250–57.

13 In this special issue, authors variously use "LGBTQ," "LGBT," "LGBTQ+," "GLBT," and other terms. Rather than impose consistency, the editors have decided using diverse terms more accurately represents how usage has evolved, and is evolving, over time.

LGBTQ public history for museums and historic sites. Ferentinos concludes that this divide in itself is somewhat problematic and that institutions might consider both approaches, integrating queer history into broader historical narratives while also seeking out more specialized exhibitions that explore the historic inequalities, divisions, and unique stories within the myriad of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. She also describes innovative history projects that address silences and omissions in the archives via arts programming; initiatives that reach out to queer youth to combat social isolation; monuments and memorials that provides places and spaces for remembering and mourning; and experimental projects that harness technology to find new ways to document and communicate queer stories in the digital age.

The next two essays by Hilary Lowe and Christopher Hommerding explore case studies on historic homes and historic sites that reconsider queer lives in the generations prior to gay liberation and the politicized social and cultural identities of the modern era. Both pieces ask public historians to contemplate how historical actors defined their own lives, identity, and sexuality within the historical contexts in which they lived. Until recently historic house museums and historic sites have tended to obscure these stories in part due to silences and omissions in the historical record and a general lack of primary source material. Lowe examines the lives and loves of several generations who lived in the Longfellow House-Washington Headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, beginning with George Washington and ending with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana in the 1950s. In order to counter predominant heteronormative discourses and the common time-freezing approach to interpretation at historic house museums, Lowe suggests several useful practices for queer public history. These include seeking out collaborations with local and regional queer organizations and partners, presenting the extant evidence directly to visitors, and being transparent about the historical methods used for interpretation—especially when the historical record is incomplete and the available terminology is elusive.

Hommerding delves into the story of the Pendarvis Historic Site in Mineral Springs, Wisconsin, and the lives of historic preservationists Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum who were partners in life and work beginning in the 1930s. Hommerding calls for a nuanced approach to LGBTQ public history that can challenge both the predominance of urban history—“metronormativity”—and modern-day interpretations of the past based on a politicized, post-gay liberation framing. The author urges historic site interpreters to tap into the rich resource that is the history of sexuality. By placing LGBTQ stories within the history of sexuality, sites can make these lives much more comprehensible to visitors. Rather than take them out of their context by assigning terms such as “gay” and “lesbian” that the historical actors apparently did not use themselves, historic site interpretation can explore instead how LGBT people queered the world around them. In the case of Neal and Hellum, the very reason the Pendarvis Historic Site exists today is due to their decision to take on the feminine domestic labor of preserving the homes of local Cornish miners, thereby

transgressing the gender norms of the mid-twentieth century. In this respect too, “queer” is a useful category of analysis for public history.<sup>14</sup>

Rebecca Bush also addresses questions of interpretation in her essay on Gertrude “Ma” Rainey (1886–1939) and Carson McCullers (1917–67), two bisexual women from Columbus, Georgia. In developing exhibitions on the two artists for the Columbus Museum, Bush confronted questions of representation that remain at the heart of LGBTQ public history: how can and should museums and historic sites present the lives of queer individuals from times when the documentary record is sparse at best? How might public historians represent the gender, sexuality, identity, and experience of such individuals without falling prey to a reliance on presentism, that is on post-Stonewall discourses and terminology? She proposes an emphasis on the “authenticity of objects” and the “subject’s own words” that can allow audiences to better access “the truth of historical figures’ own making”—how queer individuals understood themselves rather than how their contemporaries might have (mis)represented them. Bush found that the lives of Rainey and McCullers have much to teach us about historical expressions of bisexuality, about “transing history,” and about how they navigated a world bound by the social and cultural structures of institutionalized racism, racial segregation, and heteronormative white sexuality—all of which had previously conspired to marginalize the public memory of the two bisexual women in their own hometown.<sup>15</sup>

The power of larger historical structures and forces to shape and control public memory lies at the heart of Juliana Sandoval Álvarez’s study of the Chilean artistic duo Yeguas del Apocalipsis. Francisco Casas and Pedro Lemebel, who self-identified as *locas* (homosexuals), intruded into the staid public arenas of Santiago from 1988 to 1993 with transgressive performances that challenged the processes by which Chile transitioned from the authoritarian rule of the military junta under Augusto Pinochet to a modern democratic state. Through their theatrical public actions, which often shocked onlookers, the duo presented changing identities that were varied in their expression of both gender and sexuality. These performative self-representations directly and publically challenged the Pinochet regime’s concerted efforts to shape the public memory of Chile since its overthrow of the administration of President Salvador Allende in 1973. The transgressive actions of the Yeguas del Apocalipsis called on Chileans to remember the trauma of the military junta, to mourn its victims, and to reflect on the damage inflicted on the nation by the hypermasculine, patriarchal rhetoric of a regime that sought absolute power. The duo also urged Chileans to question the apparent wholesale acceptance of neoliberalism—as opposed to the socialist vision of the Allende administration—a neoliberalism that continued the socio-economic oppression of the nation’s most

<sup>14</sup> Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053–75.

<sup>15</sup> For “transing history” see Finn Enke, “Transgender History (And Otherwise Approaches to Queer Embodiment),” in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 224–36. See also Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2008).

marginalized populations: gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Chileans, sex workers, the poor, and Indigenous peoples. Sandoval Álvarez urges public historians to support efforts to democratize public memory practices and to expand the sources for public history to include performance art.

The next essay by Rachel Wallace adds a second global perspective to the special issue in her overview of an exhibition held at the Ulster Museum in the spring of 2017. “Gay Life and Liberation: A Photographic Record of 1970s Belfast” presented a new perspective on the period of the Troubles (1968–98), the decades-long ethnosectarian intercine conflict in Northern Ireland between Protestant unionists/loyalists and Catholic nationalist/republicans. Using intimate, personal photographs from the 1970s coupled with recently recorded oral histories, Wallace and Doug Soubey, a gay rights activist, examined a hidden subculture in which Belfast’s gay men and lesbians found belonging, community, and liberation despite police repression, the larger ethnosectarian conflict, and concerted anti-homosexual religious campaigns. The “Gay Life and Liberation” exhibit allowed for an expansion of larger historical narratives and a presentation of stories that affirmed queer lives and loves and offered museum goers a vision of a more inclusive society and culture. This is especially relevant given that Northern Ireland is the only place in the British Isles that today does not allow same-sex marriage. In exhibiting the personal photographs of Soubey, the Ulster Museum presented intimate scenes of community and daily life and the new families that queer folk create when rejected by their families and communities of origin. As Wallace notes, the exhibit also raises questions about the censorship of sexually explicit or sexually suggestive materials in exhibitions by museum professionals who fear a backlash by museum partners, audiences, and financial supporters.

Stephen Vider traces the development and significance of a museum exhibition that focused on the intimate, daily life of queer folk living with HIV/AIDS. Utilizing a “domestic archive” comprised of photographs and artworks, Vider curated “AIDS at Home: Art and Everyday Activism,” held at the Museum of the City of New York in 2017. Like Wallace, Vider challenges us to extend our vision beyond dominant historical narratives, in this case the overriding emphasis in the historiography of HIV/AIDS that focuses on public protest and activism, visibility, and public health. In contrast, the New York exhibit highlighted domestic space, private life, intimacy, and feelings as central to the history of HIV/AIDS. Vider calls for the expansion of domestic archives beyond a focus on material culture to one that gives witness to the ephemeral and the embodied. Vider also underlines the important and useful connection between history and art: where the primary sources are sparse or nonexistent, art can represent the space between the past and the undocumented—especially the history of emotion and the history of the senses. Equally significant is the author’s argument that there is an essential, life-giving connection between hearth and home and LGBTQ identities, relationships, and politics. Following feminists of generations past and feminist scholars of the modern era, Vider argues that domesticity provides belonging and intimacy, it shapes queer lives, and

it contributes to community and to the nation. For this reason, it is imperative to collect and preserve the domestic archives of the many queer communities.

The next essay by Kristyn Scorsone offers a window into the lives of African American queer women in the black-majority city of Newark, New Jersey, through the “invisible pathways” of their contributions as entrepreneurs, activists, public historians, and community leaders. Although largely unknown, unseen, and undocumented by the larger white society, African American women have long maintained roles as business leaders including in Newark itself. With the emergence of the Queer Newark Oral History Project, LGBTQ-welcoming churches, and the Newark LGBTQ Community Center, black lesbian small business owners used their positions to contribute to the intellectual life of the community, including community-based public history projects. Here Scorsone notes the interlocking structures of oppression that have historically suppressed black women’s ideas, notably institutionalized racism, misogyny, and white supremacist ideology.<sup>16</sup> Like her peers in this special issue, the author calls upon public historians to recognize and support the intellectual endeavors of those working within their own communities. Black queer women in Newark have much to say about urban history and racial segregation, the dominant discourses of urban decay and urban renewal, anti-gay hostility, and the structures of modern capitalism that dominate all of our lives. We have but to listen and champion their truth-telling.

Catherine Fosl and Daniel Vivian recount the pathbreaking effort to create the Kentucky LGBTQ Heritage Context Study, the first statewide survey of its kind in the United States. Sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Fairness Council, the context study project received an Underrepresented Communities Grant from the National Park Service in 2014 and the project team, which included Fosl as the principle investigator and Vivian as a research consultant, completed the 126-page study in December 2016. As the authors explain, the Kentucky study breaks new ground by extending and enriching LGBTQ history beyond the bicoastal and metropolitan touchstones that have long framed perspectives on the queer past. Kentucky is a geographically diverse state with southern, midwestern, and Appalachian cultures that transect and connect rural communities and urban areas. It is a red state in the Bible Belt where “purple politics” also flourish in the larger cities. In their assessment of the project Fosl and Vivian underline the importance of reflective practice and ongoing dialogues about historical methods. They advocate for public history project teams that represent the range of LGBT identities, especially given issues of race, gender, class, culture, and geography. The Kentucky LGBTQ Heritage Context Study is a major achievement—serving as a case study for other state and provincial projects and a starting point for new queer endeavors at the crossroads of the South, the Midwest, and Appalachia.

<sup>16</sup> See also Charlene A. Carruthers, *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).

In their article on initiatives to document Kansas City's LGBTQ past, Christopher Cantwell, Stuart Hinds, and Kathryn Carpenter advocate for "allyship" in public history practice and thereby offer a useful reassessment of the concept of "shared authority" for the twenty-first century. The emergence of interpretation of LGBTQ history in Kansas City, Missouri—a "wide open" city with a decidedly queer past—in the 2000s was due to a confluence of fortunate developments. Community members had preserved historical documents and artifacts since the late 1900s and then in 2009 shifts in the larger national culture provided an opening for institutions in the city to collaborate and found the Gay and Lesbian Archive of Mid-America (GLAMA). Over the next several years institutional partners and LGBTQ community leaders worked collaboratively to encourage donations to the archive and these outreach efforts eventually resulted in a robust collection that generated a series of dynamic public outcomes in the 2010s. These included a collaborative oral history initiative with NPR's StoryCorps OutLoud project, a traveling history exhibit supported by a first of its kind grant from the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, and Kansas City's installation of a historical marker commemorating the site of the first National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations in 1966, the first gathering of gay rights organizations in the United States. In reflecting on the Kansas City projects, Cantwell, Hinds, and Carpenter ask public historians to consider "allyship" as advocated by anti-oppression activists. Both a process and a relationship, allyship foregrounds trust and accountability by emphasizing that professional allies act as resources, not as authorities. In this way public historians can support and augment the endeavors of marginalized groups who have documented and continue to document their own quest for justice.

Ethical, methodological, and epistemological concerns about public history practice lie at the heart of Jodie Boyd's critical reflection on a major gay and lesbian oral history project in Australia. Following her interview as a narrator for the project, Boyd felt a lingering sense of disquiet with the process. After later gaining professional status as an oral historian, she sought to comprehend the discomfit she felt as a self-identified lesbian narrator. Boyd's critical reflection presents several valuable perspectives and correctives for queer oral history. First and foremost among these is the power of post-gay liberation narrative structures to frame and mold the life stories of LGBTQ narrators in oral history projects. For narrators and interviewers this often means following a familiar narrative script, one focused primarily if not exclusively on sexuality, coming out, and politicized gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans identities. Boyd also highlights the power imbalance in oral history between the narrator and the interviewer, drawing on research literature that notes how interviews can be potentially disempowering and even harmful for the narrator. Seeing oral history from the perspective of the narrator and later as an interviewer, Boyd calls on public historians to carefully consider the ethical dimensions of their work, the force of dominant LGBTQ narratives to frame and even overpower individual life stories, and the ongoing impact of heteronormative societies and cultures that have historically differentiated and injured queer folk.

A final essay by Donna Graves and Gail Dubrow rounds out the special issue with a thoughtful consideration of new directions for LGBTQ heritage and historic preservation more generally. As Graves and Dubrow emphasize, the acronym LGBTQ is itself a term signifying alliances between various communities that fittingly connects with the concept of intersectionality and the authors utilize the concept to call for a more complex, multi-faceted, and multi-layered approach to historic preservation and heritage studies. An intersectional approach to historic preservation and LGBTQ history transcends the single lens, time-freezing practices of the past and reveals the multiple uses and contested interests of various historic actors and groups over time. By recognizing and remembering the many voices that have stories to tell about historic sites, including sites that lack physical integrity, public historians working in historic preservation can overcome the existing biases in a field that has long favored recognition for places that commemorate the histories of middle-class cis-gender white men. The authors point to examples such as the Pauli Murray Residence in Durham, North Carolina, and the Women's Building, the Japanese YWCA, and the Tenderloin District in San Francisco as multi-use sites which include significant moments in queer history that interconnect with important stories of race, class, gender, and struggles for social and economic justice.

The contributions to this special issue attest to the importance of considering historical context and larger historical forces along with analyses of tensions, power, and privilege within and among queer communities when we engage in LGBTQ public history. A recognition of the historic marginalizations and inequalities present in the moniker LGBTQ calls on public historians to continually examine biases built into the structures, practices, and processes of public history, including biases in archives, collecting, exhibitions, and historical interpretations. The breadth and depth of queer histories still to be fully explored run the gamut from experiences of race, ethnicity, immigration, refugee status, labor, and socio-economic class to histories of lesser-known regions, rural areas, religion, the environment, the arts, ability and disability, elders and aging, imperialism, settler colonialism, and Indigenous peoples.<sup>17</sup> Equally significant is the representation of sexuality and gender in LGBTQ public history: how can community-based historians and professional historians collaborate to challenge the heteronormative structures, sexual and gender binaries, and anti-sex rhetoric that continue to marginalize and differentiate queer folk?

<sup>17</sup> See for example: Anne Balay, *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen, eds., *Queer Indigenous Studies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011); Daniel Heath Justice, Mark Rifkin, and Bethany Schneider, eds., *Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity*, special issue of *GLQ: The Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (2010); Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, eds., *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Kim E. Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013); Nayan Shah, "Queer of Color Estrangement and Belonging," in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 262–75.

As we look ahead to the third decade of the twentieth-first century, we might also cast a glance back over the past fifty years and ruminate on the founders of queer public history and their descendants. Gay liberationists, lesbian feminists, and bisexual and trans activists recognized the “archive power” of the institutions of official memory to “silence the past,” and this is why they sought to generate their own archival collections, historical interpretations, and community memories.<sup>18</sup> Viewed collectively, the larger goal of these movements was liberation and justice for all—not simply justice for the privileged, the white, the well-connected, and the affluent in large cities. Considering this goal, Martin Duberman has asked “Has the Gay Movement Failed?”<sup>19</sup> With the triumph of neoliberalist socio-economic structures and policies that problematize justice, the steady march of climate change, and deeply rooted racial, ethnic, gender, and class inequalities in North America and across the globe, it is a sobering question.<sup>20</sup> For public historians an inspiring answer may lie in a deeper engagement with the past and with the present—with the multitude of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans communities and movements that have sought and continue to seek a more just world. If we peer carefully and thoughtfully through the queer looking-glass, perhaps we can see all the lives and loves of the queer as folk.

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<sup>18</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Martin Duberman, *Has the Gay Movement Failed?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018). See also Stephen M. Engel, *Fragmented Citizens: The Changing Landscape of Gay and Lesbian Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> For the impact on neoliberalism on queer communities and queer politics and its impact more generally, see Duberman, *Has the Gay Movement Failed?*, 163–207; Margot Weiss, “Queer Politics in Neoliberal Times (1970–2010s),” in Romesburg, *Routledge History of Queer America*, 107–119; and Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003). For the history of neoliberalism, see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).