

“I WANTED TO BE JUST WHAT I WAS:”  
DOCUMENTING QUEER VOICES IN THE SOUTH

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores themes in queer history and the concept of archival activism to argue for development of LGBT archival collections in the South that adequately reflect the region. Chapter One discusses trends in queer history with an emphasis on regional variations in the South, as well as the obstacles historians have faced in gaining access to queer archival material. Chapter Two engages archival theory to build a framework for supporting queer archives. Chapter Three examines current collections of LGBT archival material at universities and public institutions in the South, to show how oral history projects developed in cooperation with queer community organizations have the ability to capture the experiences of queer people who would otherwise be unrepresented in the historical record. The inclusion of participants who lived in the South before the rise of gay rights activism broadens the scope to reflect unique aspects of the region: experiences with religious institutions, rural life outside of urban queer communities, and the roles of race and class in shaping sexual identities.

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## INTRODUCTION

“I’ve been an actor most of my life.”<sup>1</sup> This statement, made by a Southern gay man as part of an oral history project, exemplifies the challenge faced by archivists who attempt to document lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lives in the South. When the historical subject has lived a hidden life, intervention by the archivist is required to facilitate the inclusion of queer lives in the documentary record. For many queer Southerners, threats to family and community relationships, employment opportunities, and physical safety have prevented them from living openly and authentically. Another oral history participant, who did not live as an openly gay man until age 65, discussed “coming out”<sup>2</sup> to a close friend from school: “I told her that there was a secret that I had that only God knew, only God and I knew. And during that weekend while we were together ... I told her that I was homosexual, that I had kept this from her, that I had kept it from my family. I tried to keep it from other people as much as I could.”<sup>3</sup> Southern voices like these create a narrative that is different from those of the struggle for equality in New York or San Francisco, therefore the preservation of the Southern record requires a unique approach.

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1. K.C. Potter, “A Secret Only God Knows,” The Brooks Fund History Project, <http://www.cfmt.org/thebrooksfundhistoryproject/> (accessed Jan. 30, 2016).

2. “Coming out” is a colloquial term for self-disclosure of one’s queer sexuality or gender identity, and “coming out of the closet” is a colloquial term for living as an openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer person.

3. Jere Mitchum, The Brooks Fund History Project, <http://www.cfmt.org/thebrooksfundhistoryproject/> (accessed Jan. 30, 2016).

With the mission of collecting, preserving, and providing access to the documentation of the past, the archivist is charged with the responsibility of maintaining evidence of our cultural heritage. According to The Society of American Archivists Core Values Statement, “Archivists embrace the importance of identifying, preserving, and working with communities to actively document those whose voices have been overlooked or marginalized.”<sup>4</sup> While several American cities in other parts of the country have archival collections that are dedicated to queer life, those living in the South often do not have a similar framework of political activism and community organizing upon which to build collections. However, the stories of individuals who managed to survive in an environment that is often hostile to queer people provide important insight into the daily struggle that goes beyond the successes of the modern-day movement for equal rights. The first-person accounts of the ways in which queer people lived in Southern communities yield invaluable resources for examining methods of resistance outside of the political arena and revealing basic means of survival. While historians are able to read between the lines of news stories, court cases, and census records, personal accounts in the form of oral histories and personal papers are a researcher’s gold mine for stories of both struggle and acceptance, as well as the agency of everyday people.

This thesis examines the following concepts to make the case for developing queer archival collections in the Southern region of the United States: themes in queer history including factors that make Southern queer history unique; the development of archival activism and issues related to development of queer collections; an examination

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4. Society of American Archivists, “SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics” (May 2011), <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics> (accessed Feb. 8, 2015).

of collections that exist in the region with particular focus on reflecting the regional characteristics of the South; and the ways in which archival tools for documenting queer history can be used to document hidden lives. The experience of being queer in the South has a narrative that is distinct from the general trends in queer history, therefore the tools for collection and preservation of this history should also be defined by the region's needs.

### Literature Review

Queer history emerged from the social history movement in the 1960's and 1970's as an expansion of women's and gender history. A key theoretical argument in this literature is the concept of "social constructionism," where gender and sexuality change across time and place.<sup>5</sup> Rather than changing terminologies and labels, sexual and gender identities are not historically or geographically stagnant, and therefore must be understood in context. According to Leila Rupp, "although there have always been people who express desire for sexual contact with others of the same sex, there has not always been a meaning or an identity attached to such desires."<sup>6</sup>

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5. John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity" in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review, 1983); Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., "Introduction" in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (London: Penguin, 1990): 1-13; Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1992); Estelle Freedman, "'The Burning of Letters Continues': Elusive Identities and the Historical Construction of Sexuality," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 4 (1998): 181-200; Leila J. Rupp, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

6. Leila J. Rupp, *A Desired Past*, 197.

The development of a queer identity is a major theme in this literature. Self-identification as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, or queer person marks a significant shift from engaging in acts or behaviors that were outside of traditional notions of gender and sexuality.<sup>7</sup> John D’Emilio argues that a gay identity did not exist before the mid-nineteenth century, and that the surfacing of this identity coincided with increased autonomy in America’s growing capitalist economy.<sup>8</sup> Changing social conditions, such as opportunities for financial independence apart from the family unit and the distinction between sexuality and reproduction, created the environment for queer sexual identities to emerge. In conjunction with the concept of a gay identity, communities in major cities began to grow. In his discussion of homosexuality in the military during World War II, Allan Bérubé suggests that urban gay communities developed in the post-war era in part because soldiers who had claimed their gay identities during wartime did not want to return to the hostility of their rural hometowns.<sup>9</sup> Michael Bronski’s overview of American queer history echoes Bérubé’s wartime coming out experience theory, and the resulting growth of gay populations in American cities. The new “political identity, formed within a potentially vibrant, self-supporting social structure, took root in major American cities after the war and grew into the LGBT movement that we know today.”<sup>10</sup>

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7. Margot Canaday, “LGBT History,” *Frontiers* 35, no. 1 (2014); Freedman, “‘The Burning of Letters Continues’”; Leila J. Rupp, “‘Imagine my Surprise’: Women’s Relationships in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1997).

8. D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity.”

9. Allan Bérubé, “Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II” in *Hidden from History*.

10. Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States (ReVisioning American History)* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 175.

Much of queer historical scholarship centers around activism and community in urban bi-coastal areas with little emphasis on rural America.

The focus on urban activism has resulted in the general exclusion of the South from the historiography. While the sources for southern queer history are limited, John Howard's *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* and *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, a collection of essays, lend insight on the particularly southern aspects of queer history.<sup>11</sup> Most significantly, Howard argues that the Southern experience does not fit in the master narrative of queer history and should therefore be considered on its own terms. Howard points to "race, religion, rurality, and resilience" as the defining themes of Southern queer history.<sup>12</sup> Historian Donna Jo Smith adds to Howard's argument that region should be used as an analytical tool in her assertion that the "coming out" narrative is not always applicable to the Southern experience, and that distinctive Southern mythology, specifically in terms of race relations, should be taken into account in analysis.<sup>13</sup> Other authors in Howard's collection provide insight into the activism that took place in the South, outside of the typical narratives of organizations in bi-coastal cities.<sup>14</sup> These studies illuminate the ways in which the Southern region impacted activist

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11. John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Howard, ed., *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South* (New York: NYU Press, 1997).

12. *Ibid*, 5, 9.

13. Donna Jo. Smith, "Queering the South: Constructions of Southern/Queer Identity" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

14. Saralyn Chestnut and Amanda C. Gable, "'Women Ran It': Charis Books and More in Atlanta's Lesbian-Feminist Community, 1971-1981", Katy Coyle and Nadiene Van Dyke, "Sex, Smashing, and Storyville in Turn-of-the-Century New Orleans: Reexamining the Continuum of Lesbian Sexuality," Meredith Raimondo, "Dateline Atlanta: Place and the Social Construction of AIDS," and Kathie D. Williams,

efforts, such as an emphasis on rural communal living, religious organizing efforts, and racial segregation. Building on John Howard's arguments, this thesis makes the case, not just for a particularly Southern historical narrative, but also for archival collections that reflect these regional variations. In order to improve the Southern representation in the broader queer historiography, one must turn to the sources—the archives.

Archivists were once—and still are in some institutional settings—passive recipients of records of organizational function and personal manuscript collections. The archival profession has been grounded in *respect des fonds*, the Principle of Provenance, and original order, which were established preserve context and create trust in the records.<sup>15</sup> These traditional archival concepts privilege the reproduction of power, which is established in the creation of the records and remains throughout the archival process—from collecting to arrangement of records to accessibility. Collections of activist records, even when the activists' goal was to dismantle systems of power and oppression, also reflect these systems of power in the creation of their records. Archival collecting privileges those in positions of power within communities, and the urban activist narrative continues to dominate. Moreover, these traditional archival guidelines discourage an active role in the creation of a thematic and intentional collection, thereby

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“Louisville’s Lesbian Feminist Union: A Study in Community Building” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

15. Respect des fonds, the Principle of Provenance, and the Sanctity of Original Order dictate that collections should maintain the same arrangement that the creator intended, and that records from different creators should be kept separate from each other. These archival foundations were codified by in these foundational works by traditional archival theorists: Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (London: Clarendon Press, 1922) and Theodore Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

privileging the dominant culture while excluding marginalized groups. Since the mid-twentieth century, the role of archivist has broadened, mostly in response to the social history movement, which also inspired the analysis of queer history. Howard Zinn's 1970 address to the Society of American Archivists sharply criticized the archival profession for abusing their power as keepers of the historical record under the guise of neutrality and objectivity, and thus allowing the exclusion of dissenting or marginalized voices.<sup>16</sup>

A major archival debate in the twentieth century is whether objectivity and neutrality should be privileged over archival interference to reflect a diverse society. In order to adequately collect the records of previously excluded groups, Helen Samuels proposed the concept of "documentation strategy" to streamline the process of "documentation of an ongoing issue, activity, or geographic area."<sup>17</sup> Rather than being concerned with the material that is available for collection, Samuels encouraged archivists to be actively engaged in the creation of records to adequately and equitably document society. The implementation of a documentation strategy greatly expanded the role of the archivist, as well as the function of the archives.<sup>18</sup> Archivist Randall Jimerson, also a proponent of archival activism as a social responsibility, argues that it is possible to "maintain professional standards even while advocating a cause or defending a moral or

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16. Howard Zinn, "Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977).

17. Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past?" *American Archivist* 49 no. 2 (Spring 1986): 115.

18. Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992); Elizabeth Snowden Johnson, "Our Archives, Our Selves: Documentation Strategy and Re-Appraisal of Professional Identity," *American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2008).

ideological perspective.”<sup>19</sup> One must first recognize that archivists do not exist in a vacuum; they are influenced not only by their own personal experiences, prejudices, and beliefs, but also by the era and culture in which they live.<sup>20</sup> To expect that an archivist could accomplish complete objectivity is to say that the archivist would have the ability to fully disengage with their morals and values – a behavior which in itself would be professionally unethical.

Archivists of queer material have adapted their methodology to account for the lack of queer voices in the historical record. Rodney Carter discusses the silences in the archives in regards to marginalized communities, and how the absence of those voices in itself has meaning to the historical record in the form of documentation of intentional exclusion.<sup>21</sup> Other theorists have expanded the notion of “archive” far beyond the traditional scope of the institutional setting to include documentary filmmaking, collections of ephemera, photography exhibits in their efforts to document the history of trauma and emotion.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Mathias Danbolt stresses the importance of an

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19. Randall Jimerson, “Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice,” *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2007): 77.

20. Hans Booms, “Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992): 28.

21. Rodney G. S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid”; See also: Daniel Marshall, Kevin P. Murphy, and Zeb Tortorici, “Editors’ Introduction: Queering Archives: Historical Unravelings,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014); John D. Wrathall, “Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections,” *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (1992).

22. Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture,” *Camera Obscura* 17, no. 1 (2002); Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Alex Juhasz, “Video Remains: Nostalgia, Technology, and Queer Archive Activism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 2 (2006);

emotional archive in his argument that queer political activism is a “living archive,” much like an oral tradition of storytelling.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Lewis Abrams argues against queer archival projects because the concept does not fit into historical categories, and therefore cannot be catalogued.<sup>24</sup> Despite some contestations against archival activism and social justice as an impetus for collecting, grassroots and community history projects, many of which utilize oral histories as a method of documentation, have worked to fill the archival void where marginalized groups have been excluded.<sup>25</sup> Grassroots collecting and community-based projects provide vehicles that remain outside of the mainstream<sup>26</sup> institutional setting, yet serve as a source of empowerment for previously marginalized groups. Additionally, archivists can work in cooperation with grassroots archives, allowing the archivist the opportunity to participate in the creation of the record,

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Rebecka Taves Sheffield, “The Bedside Table Archives: Archive Intervention and Lesbian Intimate Domestic Culture,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014).

23. Mathias Danbolt, “We’re Here! We’re Queer?: Activist Archives and Archival Activism,” *Lambda Nordica* 3-4 (2010): 104.

24. Abram J. Lewis, “‘I Am 64 and Paul McCartney Doesn’t Care’: The Haunting of the Transgender Archive and the Challenges of Queer History,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014).

25. Rodney G. S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid”; Elise Chenier, “Hidden from Historians: Preserving Lesbian Oral History in Canada,” *Archivaria* 68 (2009); Richard J. Cox, “The Archivist and Community” in *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander (London: Facet Publishing, 2009); Andrew Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History, and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011); Steven Maynard, “‘The Burning, Wilful Evidence’: Lesbian/Gay History and Archival Research,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1992).

26. “Mainstream archives” are archives that are not queer institutions. Examples of mainstream archives include university special collections, a public library, or a city archive.

and perhaps to facilitate transitioning the collection to a mainstream institution in the future.<sup>27</sup>

This thesis surveys the previous works on queer history and queer archives to determine how the Southern experience breaks the mold of these narratives. Despite archival interventions to facilitate documentation of the queer community, large swaths of the South are missing from both the historiography and the historical record. Historians of queer history and archivists of queer collections are often working in isolation of one another, and a lack of cohesion of these two fields of study negatively impacts the quality of both collections and historical research. Because traditional archival methods exclude other possible sources, historians focus on the dominant urban activist narrative. Archivists who are concerned with documenting this marginalized community are informed by archival theory and a desire to create an inclusive record. However, an understanding of the queer community, the current state of the queer

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27. Flinn, "Archival Activism"; Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing Over to Handing On," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, nos. 1-2 (2010); Steven G. Fullwood, "Always Queer, Always Here: Creating the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture" in *Community Archives*; Elisabeth Kaplan, "We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity," *American Archivist* 63 (Spring—Summer 2000); Jennifer King, "Trust and the Activist Archivist," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1, no. 2 (2014); Lynn Kirste, "Collective Effort: Archiving LGBT Moving Images," *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 3 (Spring, 2007); Elizabeth Knowlton, "Documenting the Gay Rights Movement," *Provenance* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1987); Brenda J. Marston, "Archivists, Activists, and Scholars: Creating a Queer History" in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, edited by James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); Joan Nestle, "The Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York," *Journal of Homosexuality* 34 (1998); Will Roscoe, "History's Future: Reflections on Lesbian and Gay History in the Community" in *Gay and Lesbian Studies*, ed. Henry L. Minton (New York: Haworth, 1991); Polly J. Thistlewaite, "The Gay and Lesbian Past: An Interpretive Battleground," *Gay Community News* (Boston) 4 (Winter 1995).

archival record, and a plan for filling in the gaps in the record are necessary components to successful development of queer collections. The analysis and research in this thesis provides a framework and recommended methodology for adequately representing Southern queer voices.

### **Scope and Approach**

For the purpose of this investigation, the geographical definition of the American South includes the states that seceded to form the Confederacy during the Civil War, with two exceptions. These states include South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Despite a shared Confederate history, each of the eight states included vary in terms of climate, landscape, and culture, and overgeneralization of the region should be avoided. For this study, Texas and Florida have been excluded in order to focus on the Southeast as a region of identity. Texas and Florida both have a cultural heritage and identity that is markedly different from that of the other states listed. As John Howard states, these Southern states also share themes of “race, religion, and rurality.”<sup>28</sup> As part of the argument of this thesis, these themes tie region together just as much as the geography. Because many of the collections examined in this thesis have been recently created or are in the process of development, the content of the collections generally falls into the temporal scope of post-1930’s.

The language used in this thesis is a reflection of contemporary means of self-identification. While the word “queer” has not always been a positive descriptor, it has

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28. John Howard, “Introduction” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 5.

been reclaimed from derogatory connotations, and many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people prefer to self-identify as queer. At this juncture, “queer” is an umbrella term to encompass the variety of expressions of gender (beyond the male/female binary) and sexuality. This includes, but is not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. “Queer” does not necessarily mean a sexual orientation, as it also encompasses behaviors, actions, and desires. Additionally, “trans\*” is used to describe variations on gender identity, including those whose biological sex differs from their gender identity, those who do not ascribe to the male/female binary, transvestites (cross-dressers), and transsexuals. Where an individual has self-identified as gay or lesbian, those terms are used instead of “queer.” Where it is appropriate, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) will be used instead. Although “queer” is used in this thesis, one must use caution when using this terminology, specifically when working with potential archival donors of an older generation or those who are not familiar with the contemporary definition of this word. While “queer” has been reclaimed as a more inclusive and fluid identification, some continue to consider the word offensive. The changing meaning of the word “queer” points to a central component of queer theory: sexuality is socially constructed and is not constant across time and place, therefore the terminology to describe sexuality is also in flux. The evolution for language of self-identification in a historical context will be further discussed in Chapter One.

The primary sources for this thesis are the Southern archival collections under examination. Queer collections, or groupings of archival records that have been specifically selected for their contributions to understanding queer culture in the historical context, were examined in Georgia, North Carolina, New Orleans, Virginia,

South Carolina, and Tennessee. Other states in the Southern region—Mississippi, Arkansas, and Alabama—did not have queer collections at the time of this research. The Brooks Fund History Project, a very recent acquisition of the Nashville Public Library, is a collection of the oral histories of individuals who lived in Nashville and the surrounding area before 1970. The History Project serves as an example of community cooperation with a mainstream archival repository, as well as a model for documenting Southern queer life during the period before the modern gay rights movement. The Brooks Fund formed out of a private community interest to document regional community history, whereas the majority of other queer collections in the region grew out of special projects within academic institutions. These collections were not created through traditional archival methods, and they all formed from the activist desire to document a hidden history where traditional documentation was limited.

The methodology for this research is two-fold: first, an analysis of the formation of a queer identity, with specific attention to the impact of region, combined with a theoretical examination of queer archival documentation offers a framework for developing queer archives; second, existing queer collections in the South are placed in this historiographical and theoretical framework to determine methods for improving representation. Each of the collections is discussed in terms of how the content reflects regional variations, how the community was involved in self-documentation, and what gaps in the historical record remain. This research reveals the ways in which archival methods should be adapted to meet the unique needs of communities who would otherwise be absent from the historical record, and therefore the historical narrative.

## Structure

Chapter One: Documenting Queer History is an exploration of the trends in the history of sexuality and gender in the United States, which contributes to the understanding of the forces at play in the archive. These themes include: sexuality and gender as social constructs that change over time and place; the development of a queer identity and labeling oneself as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, or queer; and attributing contemporary terminology and concepts of sexuality and gender to subjects from the past. In order to accurately and responsibly preserve documentary evidence, the archivist must have a working knowledge of the historical context to appropriately collect and catalogue the material. The archivist must also be aware of discriminatory behavior in the archives—in both intentional and unintentional ways—that has impacted accessibility for researchers. Despite a general absence of southern voices from the queer historical narrative, this chapter discusses the ways in which historians have identified key ways to differentiate the southern queer experience.

In Chapter Two: Queer Voices in the Archives, archival theory provides a framework for understanding queer archives, particularly in terms of the changing role of archivist from passive guardian of documents to active mediator of the historical record. While this shift remains controversial and continues to be debated, archivists have been developing strategies since the 1980's to increase documentation of marginalized people and communities. The discussions in the archival community about activism in the archives, archival silences, grassroots contributions, and alternative sources for documentation contribute to a better understanding of the obstacles facing Southern queer archives. Trends in the establishment of queer archives apply to the South in many ways,

and fledgling Southern queer collections can learn from the experiences of archives in other areas to better adapt repositories' regional needs. Because many queer archives grew out of political and social activism in urban areas, Southern queer archives are at a disadvantage due to limited community organizing in rural areas. While these collections are smaller with fewer resources, they show that queer Southern history does exist, and efforts are being made to make it more accessible. Alternative sources for queer history are examined as more representative of queer culture than traditional archival material. Finally, oral history is presented as a methodology for documenting queer people, specifically in the South where other archival resources may not be available. Queer oral history collections provide an opportunity for individual voices to be heard rather than narratives of urban activism.

Chapter Three: Queer Collections with a Southern Accent examines existing collections in the South to determine the gaps in the record when institutions depend on the records of activist leaders and community organizations. In addition to identifying places where rural and non-activist voices are excluded, this analysis also discusses racial, economic, and gender representation. The Brooks Fund History Project in Nashville is an example of developing southern queer archival collections that adequately reflect the region through its use of oral history as a methodology, as well as community collaboration to create the collection. Web-based initiatives reveal other avenues for collecting oral histories that allow for greater community participation and accessibility. The conclusion of this chapter offers recommendations and goals for developing Southern queer oral history collections.

The conclusion returns to the theory that the Southern region yields a specific narrative to queer historical identity—one that centers around Christianity, racial division, and rural life, rather than social activism and living in urban queer communities. Whereas many Northern queer archival collections are focused on activist organizations and gay neighborhoods, southern collections must adapt to these regional variations to find alternative sources for documentation. In each of the archival collections discussed in Chapter Three, the oral histories created by these communities provide an opportunity to explore the historical narrative of a community that would remain undocumented without the interference of archivists and activists. The documentation of Southern queer lives can also be applied to other people who live “hidden lives” and have previously been excluded from being heard in the archives. The conclusion explores the ways in which this methodology can be used to record the history of other marginalized communities.

## CHAPTER ONE: DOCUMENTING QUEER HISTORY

As academic studies of gay and lesbian life proliferated in the 1990s, archivist Steven Maynard urged fellow archivists to prepare themselves for increased requests for access to pertinent material.<sup>1</sup> In 1992, Maynard stressed that in order to understand the kinds of material researchers of the history of sexuality are looking for, archivists must first understand the central arguments about the history of sexuality as a social construction that changes across time and place. The social constructionism argument is of particular significance to this study in terms of the archival dilemma of describing subjects as gay or lesbian when the subjects did not necessarily adhere to those definitions in their lifetimes. In order to read between the lines of the historical record to find hidden references to sexuality, archivists must acknowledge the context within which the historical subject understood his or her actions. A working knowledge of the historical context is necessary to appropriately process, describe, and collect relevant material. Yet, locating this historical perspective for the Southern queer past is further complicated by limited scholarly publications on the region. Much of the historiography of queer life in the United States focuses on the epicenters of political movements, mainly New York City and San Francisco. This bi-coastal bias excludes the experiences of queer people who live in Southern states, as well as many other parts of rural America. When attempting to write the history of Southern queer life, historians are faced with a lack of archival resources on the subject. An overview of the trends in the history of

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1. Steven Maynard, “‘The Burning, Wilful Evidence’: Lesbian/Gay History and Archival Research,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1992): 195-201.

sexuality and gender in the United States, with special consideration to the limited historical investigations of the specifically Southern narrative, contributes to the understanding of the forces at play in the archive.

### **Development of a Queer Identity**

While investigating the letters of Alice Baldy, a nineteenth-century woman in Georgia, at the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Elizabeth Knowlton discovered evidence of a same-sex relationship through Baldy's use of romantic language and her expression of a desire to build a nurturing, independent life with a same-sex partner.<sup>2</sup> Archivists did not mention the homosexual content of the letters in the finding aid, either intentionally or unknowingly. Knowlton suggests that collections across the country contain evidence of gay life that remains unidentified for researchers. While Knowlton does not recommend labeling a person as gay who would not have given themselves that label, she encourages accurate descriptions of the content of records. Rather than using the word "lesbian" to label Baldy, a description of the relationship as defined in the letters would provide researchers with the necessary information to formulate their own arguments about Baldy's same-sex desire. Sexuality is not stagnant across time and place; therefore, a person in Alice Baldy's time would not have had contemporary language to describe her sexuality, nor would she have had the contemporary cultural understanding of same-sex attraction. The development of a queer

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2. Elizabeth W. Knowlton, "'Only a Woman Like Yourself'--Rebecca Alice Baldy: Dutiful Daughter, Stalwart Sister, and Lesbian Lover of Nineteenth-Century Georgia" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, edited by John Howard (New York: NYU Press, 1997).

identity is a key theme in queer historiography, and understanding this concept provides context for archival description. The archivist's understanding of sexuality in a historical context contributes to identifying same-sex desire in a way that is both respectful to the historical subject, and also informative to the researcher.

As Leila Rupp has shown in *A Desired Past*, contemporary labels and conceptualizations of sexuality and gender are not always applicable to those from the past.<sup>3</sup> Men engaging in sex acts with other men in early twentieth-century New York City often did not consider themselves to be gay, as George Chauncey has shown in *Gay New York*.<sup>4</sup> Margot Canaday describes the shift from “acts to identities” as the “overriding narrative” of twentieth century LGBT history.<sup>5</sup> In recognition of the significance of this shift, various historians have sought to identify catalysts for the development of sexual identities across the timeline of the twentieth century. The growth of capitalism, industrialization, and urban migration are popular explanations. In the early twentieth century, the transition from the rural agricultural family farm to the industrial city resulted in single men and women moving to American cities for employment.<sup>6</sup> Estelle Freedman and John D’Emilio credit the development of homosexual identity to “the separation of reproduction and heterosexuality” in a capitalist society. The personal autonomy that grew out of the capitalist wage labor system allowed for women and men

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3. Leila J. Rupp, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

4. George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

5. Margot Canaday, “LGBT History,” *Frontiers* 35, no. 1 (2014): 11.

6. John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity” in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review, 1983).

to have sexual lives outside of the traditional family unit. D'Emilio and Freedman's argument is that the development of homosexuality is part of broader social trends as Western society moved from an agrarian culture to industrialized capitalism. The late nineteenth century social purity movement, which promoted Christian ideals of sexuality and the family in an effort to end prostitution, encouraged gender-segregated housing, workplaces, and schools. An unintended consequence is that gender segregated spaces fostered same-sex community.<sup>7</sup> These private spaces provided an opportunity for expression of same-sex attraction, which ultimately expanded into the public sphere as queer communities and neighborhoods developed in urban areas. Yet Freedman offers a caveat to this theory: "identity formation is in fact as much an individual as social phenomenon."<sup>8</sup> Notions of individual identity development is applicable to rural areas of the South in the first half of the twentieth century where there was less exposure to the medical, political, and social discourse surrounding the homosexual identity than in urban areas.

Urban gay and lesbian communities experienced another boom during and after World War II. Allan Bérubé continues the popular urban migration narrative in his discussion of World War II's impact on gay and lesbian soldiers.<sup>9</sup> The military was not a

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7. Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012).

8. Estelle Freedman, "'The Burning of Letters Continues': Elusive Identities and the Historical Construction of Sexuality," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 4 (1998): 184-185.

9. Allan Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II" in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. George Chauncey, Jr. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus (New York: Penguin, 1990), 383-95.

safe place for public expression of sexuality by any means, yet the single-sex atmosphere combined with the opportunity to explore gay nightlife while being stationed in larger cities, exposed gay and lesbian servicemen and women to queer community and sexual opportunities. For both gay men and lesbian women who served during World War II, Bérubé posits that the war brought them out of rural, small-town life, resulting in a “coming out” experience. With these newly discovered identities, building lives in big cities was more appealing than going back into hiding at home, especially during a time of strong anti-gay public sentiment and increased legal and political oppression. Bérubé suggests that the development of these post-war gay communities in cities was the impetus for initial organizing in the gay rights movement of subsequent generations.

Race, class, and gender influence the social conditions that allowed for the formation of queer identities. The development of lesbian identity for women was on a different trajectory than a gay male identity because of women’s traditional economic dependence on men. Lillian Faderman examines the shift from “romantic friendships” between women at the turn of the century, through the mid-twentieth century development of the lesbian identity as a medical abnormality, and ends with the late-twentieth century adaptations of the lesbian identity to include “lifestyle, ideology, the establishment of subcultures and institutions.”<sup>10</sup> Each of these stages is connected to growth spurts of economic independence for women. Before the twentieth century, education, race, and class privileges allowed upper-class women to develop same-sex relationships with other women, as they were capable of living more independently from

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10. Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 4.

men and enjoyed more social privacy than working-class women. While working-class women were claiming a lesbian identity in the postwar years, upper- and upper-middle-class women rejected the term, as well as the developing lesbian culture, in favor of continuing the socially accepted romantic friendship cohabitation.<sup>11</sup> However, they continued to act in ways that would suggest the label: “rejecting the label did not mean rejecting the practice.”<sup>12</sup> Rejecting lesbianism was a privilege of class and served to distance these women from “working-class and African-American women who were forging an explicitly erotic lesbian community in the postwar era.”<sup>13</sup> At a time when medical literature pathologized both sexual and gender deviance, a rejection of labels was required, at least publicly, for self-preservation. Susan Stryker discusses how class and race privilege “encouraged white people with transgender feelings, especially if they enjoyed a measure of social respectability or financial security, to construct their identities in isolation, to engage in cross-dressing only furtively, and to form networks with others like themselves only at a great risk, unless they were willing to present themselves as people in need of medical or psychiatric help.”<sup>14</sup> While many white upper and middle class trans\* people explored their gender identities privately, working class people of color were often more public about their gender and sexuality. Stryker describes protests and riots, such as Cooper’s Donuts in Los Angeles in 1959, Dewey’s

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11. Rupp, *A Desired Past*.

12. Freedman, ““The Burning of Letters Continues,”” 194.

13. Ibid.

14. Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008), 59.

lunch counter in Philadelphia in 1965, and Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966, where transgender people of color militantly demanded social change.

Throughout the course of the twentieth century, gender and sexuality have undergone a process of conceptual unraveling. The forces of capitalism and industrialization played an important role in the development of the current construction of gender, as did the medical community and popular culture. For early sexologists, women who defied gender roles in terms of appearance and employment were of more social concern than women who maintained loving relationships with other women.<sup>15</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz posits that trans\* history adheres to key themes in twentieth century American history, such as “the growing authority of science and medicine,” and “the rise of a new concept of the modern self that placed a heightened value on self-expression, self-improvement, and self-transformation.”<sup>16</sup> Meyerowitz describes the role of popular culture through magazines and newspapers, rather than the medical community, in providing the general public with stories about sex change beginning in the 1930s. These publications would have been available across the country, including the rural South. Some readers who were dealing with what were considered to be abnormal desires or abnormal bodies engaged with these sensationalized media stories by actively writing letters to the editor, pursuing assistance with their needs, and developing a vocabulary with which to frame their situations. Unfortunately, doctors had little recourse for helping

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15. Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*.

16. Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 9.

these patients in the United States at the time, and often confused the desire to change genders with homosexual tendencies.

Following Christine Jorgensen's widely publicized sex change operation in 1950, both the medical community grappled with "the taxonomic process of sorting out a tangled thicket of varied conditions of sex, gender, and sexuality."<sup>17</sup> Those who lived outside the boundaries of standard sexuality and gender began engaging in a similar self-identification process. Many of those who sought sex change operations attempted to distance themselves from homosexuality and deviance, and encouraged attention to their appropriate gender roles once the operation was complete. Society in general, including the medical profession, continued to associate the desire to change sex with homosexuality and mental illness. Rupp points to the 1950s as the shift when "same-sex attraction, rather than gender presentation, increasingly became the salient marker of who was 'gay.'"<sup>18</sup> In the 1960s and 70s, transsexuals began to see themselves as distinct from gay and lesbian identifications. Both gay-identified and transsexual-identified people "adopted strategies that might make them appear 'normal,' strategies that sometimes involved rejecting 'abnormal' others," therefore causing animosity between the groups.<sup>19</sup> Awareness of the historical connections between sexuality and gender opens the dialogue for more accurate archival description.

Social constructionism, a key theme in the historiography of queer life in the United States, suggests that concepts of gender and sexuality change across time and

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17. Ibid, 7.

18. Rupp, *A Desired Past*, 153.

19. Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 185.

space, and therefore identity must be examined in context. The editors of *Hidden from History* state the importance of gay history as it has contributed to gay theory by “demonstrat[ing] that personal sexual behavior is never simply a private matter, but is always shaped by *and* shapes the wide social and political milieu.”<sup>20</sup> Faderman also sides with the social constructionist theory in her argument that appropriate social conditions allowed lesbianism to emerge in society.<sup>21</sup> This is in contrast to the essentialist theory that homosexuality is biological, and has and always will exist in any society. Throughout Faderman’s study, the development of a lesbian identity and sexual self-awareness is characterized as a consequence of particular historical opportunities. Not just homosexuality, but sexuality in general is “a social construct—a product of the times and of other factors that are entirely external to the ‘sexual drive.’”<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Rupp states, “sexuality is not a fixed essence, understood and practiced the same way across history.”<sup>23</sup> Just as concepts of sexuality and gender are not stagnant, social perceptions of queer identities have been in flux between tolerance and abhorrence of throughout the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> Romantic friendships between women were accepted at the turn of the century, and then challenged by sexologists as a mental deficiency in the following decade. The 1920s brought sexual experimentation, which allowed queer subcultures to develop in major cities, yet the depression in the 1930s encouraged the traditional family

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20. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., “Introduction” in *Hidden from History*, 13.

21. Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*.

22. *Ibid*, 308.

23. Rupp, *A Desired Past*, 10.

24. Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*.

structure for financial security.<sup>25</sup> World War II allowed lesbians and gay men to find their identities and establish communities in a way that was not previously possible, yet persecution and fear of homosexuality as an illness or defect abounded in the postwar era. The sexual liberation of the 1960s and 70s was followed by a religious conservative backlash in the 1980s. Although this is a very simplified version of trends, overall, the twentieth century was much like a ping-pong match between relative acceptance and oppressive disapproval of same-sex desire. However, these generalized notions of patterns in queer identity development and social response are not entirely accurate when translated to the South. Race, class, religion, and geography define Southern concepts of sexuality and gender in a way that prevents the South from being lumped into the sweeping queer American narrative.

### **A Specifically Southern Narrative**

John Howard's work began to fill the void of southern queer history with his 1999 book, *Men Like That*, and his 1997 collection of essays, *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*. Region as a category of analysis is imperative, as Howard posits, "queer Southerners don't fit neatly into the master (or meta-) narrative of American lesbian and gay history," which privileges "identity, community, and politics."<sup>26</sup> Rather, Howard emphasizes the four elements that continuously appear in Southern gay history: race, religion, rurality, and resilience.<sup>27</sup> These themes run throughout both his work and the

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25. Chauncey, *Gay New York*.

26. Howard, "Introduction" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 5.

27. *Ibid*, 5, 9.

work of those included in the collection to create a new narrative of specifically Southern queer history. However, Howard acknowledges the potential pitfalls of over-generalizing the queer experience in the South, especially in the beginning phases of Southern queer history. The history of the South shows a variety of cultural and social differences depending on race, class, and region; therefore, Howard champions the regional methodology and community studies.

Donna Jo Smith echoes Howard's trepidation about over-generalization. Smith notes that this publication corrects the bi-coastal urban bias of queer history by including region as an analytical tool. Yet, in adding this category of region, Smith argues that historians must acknowledge certain issues with both queer identity and southern identity. First, the model of the "coming out" narrative is not always applicable in historical situations, and the lesbian/gay identity is historically unstable. Second, the South is ripe with mythology that serves to make it distinctive as a region. Instead of devaluing these myths, historians must consider their role in creating identity, specifically as they relate to race relations. The experience of race is a key part of distinguishing the North from the South. Smith warns that Southern queer history projects can "privilege an oversimplified visibility and stability in both queer and southern identity—that we will find what we go looking for and ignore those experiences that don't fit our preconceived notions of the southern queer."<sup>28</sup> In order to avoid this situation, Smith suggests that rather than assuming subjects have a connection to either a queer identity or a southern identity, the historian must look for the subject's definitions of identity. Additionally, the historian

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28. Donna Jo Smith, "Queering the South: Constructions of Southern/Queer Identity" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 380.

must not anticipate either the communities of support or the oppressive struggle faced by the subject, as both circumstances are possible. The historian should not limit the story within the confines of queer southern mythological expectations. *Men Like That*, as well as many of the essays in *Carryin' On*, tell stories that often move beyond conventional assumptions of Southern queer history, and require a more astute level of analysis.

Howard's key contribution to queer historiography is the notion that same-sex relationships existed, and were even tolerated, outside of the urban gay destinations and hubs of political activism that are so frequently the subject of community histories.

The unexpected landscape of rural Mississippi offers a portrait of thriving queer activity prior to the Civil Rights Movement. In contrast to popular notions of Southern queer experiences, Howard opens by stating, "male-male desire in Mississippi was well enmeshed in the patterns of everyday life."<sup>29</sup> Language and context are crucial to Howard's argument. Rather than defaulting to contemporary definitions of gender and sexuality, Howard shows the ways in which these concepts are fluid temporally and geographically. Despite the fact that they frequently engaged in homosexual behaviors, many of Howard's historical actors did not self-identify as gay, resulting in Howard's conclusion that "the truth of sexuality is often elusive and mutable."<sup>30</sup> While particular sex acts in Mississippi were not considered to be immoral before the sixties, especially in youth, claiming a gay male identity would have been socially problematic. Similar to previous arguments about self-identification by Cook, Rupp, and Faderman, separating

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29. John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xi.

30. *Ibid*, 306.

identity politics from gender and sexuality is essential for understanding Howard's argument. Without labels for sexual identity, Howard presents an alternative portrait of Mississippi that includes an abundance of socially tolerated same-sex behaviors.

While the Southern story borrows aspects of the general American queer narrative, the specific social context of the South in terms of religion, race, and rurality<sup>31</sup> present opportunities for better understanding the particular ambiguities of sexuality historically. The religiosity of the South has shaped public perceptions and responses to homosexuality, yet not always in the popular association of oppression. In her account of Alice Baldy, Elizabeth Knowlton shows that Southerners in the Victorian era emphasized sex outside of marriage as a sin, which would include homosexual acts, but that same-sex desire was not particularly sinful on its own accord. Knowlton states, "Historians stress the negative effects of religion on gay people, yet many nineteenth-century American women gained support from religion" in both emotional and social ways.<sup>32</sup> Without churches directly speaking against homosexuality, women like Alice Baldy were able to form their own interpretations about religious justification for their relationships. Particularly when women were inundated with religious messages about the sinful nature of sex with men outside of marriage, same-sex relationships fell outside of the bounds of impure sexual relations with men.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Howard notes that churches did not actively speak out against homosexuality until the 1960s, as it was "forbidden as part of

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31. These four "R" words come from John Howard, "Introduction" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 5, 9.

32. Knowlton, "'Only a Woman Like Yourself'", 46.

33. *Ibid.*

the wider ban on premarital and extramarital intercourse.”<sup>34</sup> Howard discusses the gay rights activism that took place in Mississippi, and the role of religion in crafting the arguments on both sides of the political spectrum. The establishment of the Metropolitan Community Church, an international LGBT Christian denomination with many congregations in the South, incited a backlash from mainline churches. This backlash took the form not only of vocal condemnation from the pulpit, but also arson attacks on MCC churches in Nashville and New Orleans in 1973. Yet this backlash created improved community organizing networks and visibility for the gay rights movement. Howard focuses on religion in his essay about the moral policing of public spaces in postwar Atlanta, as the evangelical tradition was of importance to both those doing the policing and those being policed. Howard suggests that the relationship between religion and policing is “a cultural configuration unique to the Bible Belt South.”<sup>35</sup> In regards to the impact of the AIDS crisis on Atlanta, Meredith Raimondo argues, “The prominent role that Christianity plays in cultural life in the South may have helped focus discussions of AIDS on sexual identity.”<sup>36</sup> Yet, similar to Howard’s assessment of policing of public spaces, Raimondo shows the role of religion increasing the homophobic response to AIDS, as well as the support network for those who were affected by the crisis.

In addition to religion, race has been a crucial part of the Southern narrative; therefore, the history of queer sexuality in the South has not been immune to racial

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34. Howard, *Men Like That*, 56.

35. John Howard, “The Library, the Park, and the Pervert: Public Space and Homosexual Encounter in Post-World War II Atlanta” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 108.

36. Meredith Raimondo, “Dateline Atlanta: Place and the Social Construction of AIDS” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 355.

implications. Race and class privilege were evident in other parts of the country, yet the oppressive racial climate of the South encouraged strict boundaries that permeated every aspect of daily life. Any level of tolerance of same-sex desire required that the acts were within the confines of these racial boundaries. Whereas the emphasis on class was significant to protecting potential same-sex desire in other parts of the country, being white in the South offered similar security. James Sears describes Gordon Langley Hall, a white elite person who transitioned to female and changed her name to Dawn in Charleston, South Carolina in the 1960s. This account demonstrates the ways in which race and class served as protections from intolerance of deviant sexualities—so long as boundaries of racial and social class were not transgressed.<sup>37</sup> Dawn was accepted among Charleston’s white social elite until she announced her engagement to her African-American chauffeur. Similarly, Katy Coyle and Nadiene Van Dyke stress the significance of race and class for turn-of-the-century lesbians in New Orleans through a comparison of prostitutes and college women. Lesbians who attended same-sex schools were immune from much of the castigation faced by prostitutes because their class and race privileges allowed them to be perceived as asexual.<sup>38</sup>

Racial tensions in the 1960s also played an important role in the shift in attitudes from relative tolerance to a repressive policing of sexuality that expanded in the subsequent decades. Howard argues that the state decisively shifted after 1965 toward

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37. James T. Sears, “Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in Pre-Stonewall Charleston: Perspectives on the Gordon Langley Hall Affair” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

38. Katy Coyle and Nadiene Van Dyke, “Sex, Smashing, and Storyville in Turn-of-the-Century New Orleans: Reexamining the Continuum of Lesbian Sexuality” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

hostility regarding queer Mississippians, which was in large part a result of white supremacists' "link[ing] civil rights activism and communism to male homosexuality."<sup>39</sup> Although there were queer civil rights activist outsiders who came to Mississippi, false accusations of sexual deviance worked to discredit the movement. Law enforcement took up the cause of punishing sexuality and gender nonconformity. The emergence of identity politics "clashed with local sensibilities"—discrete queer engagements had been tolerated, but public presentations of sexual deviance were abhorrent.<sup>40</sup> Mississippians were willing to forgive politicians caught in the act of gay sex, so long as the politician conformed to proscribed gender roles and "portray[ed] it as an act, not an identity."<sup>41</sup> Engaging in homosexual acts that defied racial boundaries or appeared gender non-conforming, on the other hand, was intolerable. Gender non-conformity, race, and class complicated attitudes toward queerness.

*Men Like That* illustrates the ways in which same-sex sexual activity thrived in rural areas, which is in opposition to the theory that queer people had to move to the North to find partners. Howard heavily emphasizes the importance of location, as "Queer lives were constructed by place, as they likewise constructed place."<sup>42</sup> Howard locates "sites" of gay sexuality in the home, church, and school. In the home, cross-dressing and sexual experimentation with other boys of the same race were accepted activities during childhood and youth that boys were expected to outgrow. Church was a significant site

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39. Howard, *Men Like That*, 149.

40. *Ibid*, 239.

41. *Ibid*, 271.

42. *Ibid*, 35.

for finding sexual partners through networks across the region, and the physical space often functioned as an available location for sexual activity. School reinforced gender roles, especially in same-sex dormitories at racially segregated schools, which contributed to notions of acceptable sexual behavior. While boys who engaged in male-male sexual activity as the penetrator were conforming to gender roles, boys who were too often the receiver or acted too feminine would be chastised. In colleges and universities, students created queer spaces by rooming with other queer students.

Howard also discusses transportation and movement throughout the region as imperative to establishing networks and locating community. Cars offered the opportunity to fulfill queer desires, either through traveling long distances across rural terrain to visit gay bars, clandestine roadside stops like public restrooms, or using the car itself as a queer space. Howard states, “Queer boys were not driving for solitude but communion.”<sup>43</sup> Movement to and from urban enclaves contributed to network building, as well as the formulation of identities. Popular culture representations of queerness shaped the perceptions of the general public, but more importantly, they provided queer Mississippians with models for identity to which they could relate. Songs, film, theater, and literature both infiltrated and emanated from Mississippi, keeping those in rural areas connected with the growing gay culture. The migration from rural areas to the increasingly urban center of Atlanta falls in line with other national postwar trends for the development of gay communities. Moving into the public sphere was integral for the establishment of an identity-based community, yet this heightened visibility in the move toward public spaces for expression of same-sex desire also resulted in the policing of

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43. Ibid, 115.

sexuality. As sexuality moved from the private to the public sphere, the agents responsible for policing sexuality moved from the family unit to law enforcement, religious leaders, and politicians. Howard shows how in contrast to the popular theme of urban migration, Southern queers found safe spaces for sexual expression outside of the cities.<sup>44</sup>

Howard's fourth element of the Southern narrative is resilience. In the face of post-1965 hostility, communities developed, and Southerners continued to find ways to express their same-sex desire. In her discussion of lesbian softball teams in Memphis in the 1940s-60s, Daneel Buring reiterates the theme of urban migration as integral to the formation of "individual consciousness" and "communal identity."<sup>45</sup> While drawing connections to national demographic, political, and social trends, Buring uses oral history to illustrate how Memphis fits into the general narrative of lesbian history. Yet Buring also tells a story that is characteristic of the South: "too much openness would bring socially conservative or religiously fundamentalist responses" that could "threaten social connections, jobs, and even physical safety."<sup>46</sup> Softball served as safe environment and meeting place for lesbians, as well as an alternative to the bar scene. Kathie Williams portrays the establishment of the Lesbian Feminist Union, a lesbian separatist community, in the unlikely location of Louisville, Kentucky in 1974. Although the community was short-lived, Williams demonstrates the long-lasting impact on the area

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44. John Howard, "The Library, the Park, and the Pervert" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

45. Daneel Buring, "Softball and Alcohol: The Limits of Lesbian Community in Memphis from the 1940s through the 1960s" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 203.

46. *Ibid*, 205.

through “culture building” and the development of subsequent queer political organizations. The Lesbian Feminist Union grew out of the civil rights movement and a rejection of patriarchal, male-dominated gay community organizing. The group organized a land collective for meeting spaces, a library, rental rooms, a resource center, and a women’s bar, and created culturally defined literature and music. Many of the lesbians involved in the development of this community later worked across gender boundaries within a unified gay rights movement in Louisville. Williams’s examination is an example of a community study on the edge of the Southern region that broadens the scope of political organization from a bi-coastal bias to include an unlikely hub of activism.<sup>47</sup> Like Williams, Saralyn Chestnut and Amanda Gable provide a community study that adds a Southern voice to the historical narrative of the gay rights movement. Another example of urban migration to urban centers, the authors use Charis Bookstore as a focal point for their discussion of a lesbian community in Atlanta. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance and the bookstore played an important role in connecting the South to regional and national activism, and also illustrate the importance of written word in disseminating political and social concepts. Throughout the South, in both rural areas and growing cities, stories of Southern queer life contribute to the narrative of Southern history. Moreover, region provides an alternate lens through which to view the history of sexuality.

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47. Kathie D. Williams, “Louisville’s Lesbian Feminist Union: A Study in Community Building” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

### The Legacy of Homophobia in the Archives

Historical studies pertaining to queer sexuality in the South have been limited, and a lack of archival evidence is one deterrent. Many historians, particularly those working in the South, have encountered instances of archival misconduct in past efforts to hide evidence of queer sexuality. As keepers of the historical record, archivists have the power to shape evidence, but at times, that power has been abused. In archival institutions, seemingly neutral actions are not always neutral. The ways in which archivists can withhold information range from blatant misuse of power to an accidental or misguided interpretation of the archivist's role as keeper of the record. In an effort to keep family secrets hidden, archivists have denied access to records that reveal a historical subject's sexuality. In a more institutionalized way, archival power can be abused by failing to process queer collections or not making their accessibility a priority. The most blatant misuse of an archivist's power has been destruction of records due to their queer content. Librarian James V. Carmichael Jr. notes that previous generations of librarians and archivists were products of their times, and thus "reflected the social mores of the years in which they lived."<sup>48</sup> For example, the Library of Congress did not sanction the subject heading "gay" until 1987, and prior to 1987, "Sexual perversion" was typically used in cataloging.<sup>49</sup> Archivists of a previous generation have held negative perceptions about homosexuality, which resulted in inaccurate or incomplete descriptions

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48. James V. Carmichael Jr., "'They Sure Got to Prove It by Me': Millennial Thoughts on Gay Archives, Gay Biography, and Gay Library History," *Libraries and Culture* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 91.

49. Polly Thistlewaite, "The Lesbian and Gay Past: An Interpretive Battleground," *Faculty Works* (Winter 1995): 3.

of records containing evidence of same-sex desire to avoid revealing a subject's queer sexuality. Carmichael states that archivists of this generation went a step further and destroyed many records due to institutionalized views on homosexuality and the desire to "protect" the reputations of subjects and their family members: "That any account of lesbigay experience from the earlier part of the century survives at all is miraculous, considering the pressures that have been exerted to destroy the papers of self-documenting lesbigays."<sup>50</sup> This assertion of archival power has resulted in a loss of documentation of queer history. According to archivist Elizabeth Knowlton, ways in which archivists assert their power without explicitly destroying evidence include "return[ing] papers to the family, never get[ting] around to processing them, catalog[ing] them vaguely and incompletely—archival ingenuity is endless."<sup>51</sup> In both deliberate and unintentional ways, archivists have used their authority to shape the content of the historical record.

Historian John Howard echoes Carmichael and Knowlton's concerns in his argument that queer history has been intentionally excluded from the Southern narrative. Howard states, "the keepers of Southern history, the archivists, have sometimes actively worked to thwart us, to exclude us from the fold."<sup>52</sup> Howard takes his seemingly anti-archivist stance a step further in claiming that Southern archivists have been intentionally

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50. James V. Carmichael, Jr., "Introduction: Makeover Without a Mirror--A Face for Lesbigan Library History" in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbigan Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 15.

51. Elizabeth Knowlton, "Documenting the Gay Rights Movement," *Provenance* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 25.

52. John Howard, "Introduction" in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

exclusionary of evidence of homosexuality by “do[ing] their best to see that those papers remain fodder for rodents.”<sup>53</sup> Martin Duberman’s 1980 essay is a “cautionary tale” of the challenges faced by the historian in dealing with previously concealed documents in a heated political climate of anti-gay sentiment.<sup>54</sup> While attempting to publish the correspondence between Thomas Withers and James Hammond, two prominent men in South Carolina in early nineteenth century, Duberman discovered that archival barriers are not limited to simply discovering the uncataloged evidence of same-sex attraction.<sup>55</sup> The letters, which are part of the South Carolina Library’s collection, “reveal an antic, wanton—and homoerotic—side that stands in sharp contrast to their later reputations.”<sup>56</sup> Not only were the ancestors of these men outraged by potential publication of their family secrets, but the archivists also denied Duberman’s request to publish the letters, as they saw “their function as protective and preservative—of traditional moral values in general and of the family’s ‘good name’ in particular.”<sup>57</sup> He ultimately chose to publish the letters without permission as an act of civil disobedience. In his discussion of Duberman’s experience with the archives, Marvin Taylor states, “the archivist went

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53. Ibid, 6.

54. Ibid, 162.

55. Martin Bauml Duberman, “‘Writhing Bedfellows’ in Antebellum South Carolina: Historical Interpretation and the Politics of Evidence” in *Hidden from History*, 153-168.

56. Ibid, 153.

57. Ibid.

beyond preserving the physical object for the use of scholars and began to preserve his own vision of society, in which knowledge about homosexuality must be suppressed.”<sup>58</sup>

In light of the continued struggle for queer equality in the United States, segments of academia and the archival profession have begun to shift their attitudes in support of research in queer history.<sup>59</sup> However, as homophobia continues to thrive in many areas of the South, it is possible that Duberman would have encountered similar roadblocks if he had uncovered these documents today, thirty-five years later. In that respect, Duberman’s essay serves not only as secondary analysis of the historical evidence, but also as a primary account of homophobia in the archival and historical professions. Documentary evidence is even further complicated by archivists’ biases of class, race, and gender in the collection and description processes. The historical record often reflects those in power, which leaves significantly less material for analysis from the point of view of women, African Americans, and those who were illiterate. Foundational archival principles like the principle of provenance and original order result in records that reflect the dominant culture and those with political agency. Therefore, even when evidence of same-sex

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58. Marvin J. Taylor, “Queer Things from Old Closets,” *Rare Books and Librarianship* 8, no. 1 (1993): 26.

59. The American Historical Association’s Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History “promotes the study of homosexuality in the past and present by facilitating communication among scholars in a variety of disciplines working in a variety of cultures” (<http://clgbthistory.org/>). The Annual Meetings of the AHA offer a variety of panels and discussions related to LGBTQ history. The Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists “promotes the preservation and research use of records documenting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history and serves as the liaison between lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual archives and the Society of American Archivists” (<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/lesbian-and-gay-archives-roundtable-lagar>). LAGAR also publishes the Lavender Legacies Guide, which lists primary source material in North America by state.

attraction exists in the historical record, the voices that survive are generally those of white men and occasionally elite women. In both explicit and accidental ways, biases against queer people have led to the exclusion of their records in archival collections.

### **“Outing” Those from the Past**

Even if blatant homophobia is no longer an issue in many archives, locating evidence of queer sexuality is further complicated by the fact that language for self-identification has changed over time. James V. Carmichael Jr. suggests that the central challenge for archivists and historical researchers is outing those from the past who may never have considered themselves to be homosexual. Carmichael claims, “outing anyone against their will is a perpetuation of the kind of emotional violence to which people of earlier generations were routinely subjected.”<sup>60</sup> According to Carmichael’s standards, the evidence must be clearly defined for items to be cataloged as items of gay history, yet this is particularly challenging when the evidence is intentionally vague or ambiguous. In the post-Stonewall era, the formation of gay identity has resulted in more clearly defined labels of sexuality, thus negating the variety of expressions of same-sex desire from those who would not have identified themselves as homosexual.<sup>61</sup> While the field of queer history often requires that the investigator disregard labels and abandon contemporary terminology, archivists are rarely afforded that opportunity. As the editors of the *Radical History Review* “Queering Archives” issue suggest, the archive is a place of “cataloging, listing, indexing, describing, narrating provenance, determining acquisition criteria, and

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60. Carmichael, ““They Sure Got to Prove It by Me,”” 94.

61. Ibid.

administering access to materials,” therefore “ in the archive, it is always ‘a naming time.’”<sup>62</sup>

While archivists have faced complex issues in describing documents with homosexual material, historians have also been troubled by forcing those from the past to disclose their same-sex relationships against their will. In 1979 and 1980 Blanche Weisen Cook and Leila Rupp both encouraged the acknowledgement and analysis of women’s relationships in response to the apparent homophobia in posthumous biographical accounts of women who shared their lives with other women.<sup>63</sup> Historians were hesitant to reveal the sexuality of their subjects who did not explicitly state their sexual identity for fear of inaccurately portraying their subjects. Margaret Rose Gladney discusses the predicament of “outing” historical actors that she encountered while editing the papers of lesbian Lillian Smith.<sup>64</sup> Her essay was originally part of a talk on “The Importance of Gay and Lesbian Library History” sponsored by the American Library Association’s Library History Roundtable. Despite her initial concerns about violating Smith’s carefully-guarded privacy, Gladney ultimately came to the conclusion that the life Smith lived with her partner was an integral part to her story: “Our expressions of sexuality, like our expressions of gender, race, and class, do not exist in isolation but emerge in

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62. Daniel Marshall, Kevin P. Murphy, and Zeb Tortorici, “Editors’ Introduction: Queering Archives: Historical Unravelings,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 4.

63. Leila J. Rupp, “‘Imagine my Surprise’: Women’s Relationships in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1997): 155-176.

64. Margaret Rose Gladney, “Personalizing the Political, Politicizing the Personal: Reflections on Editing the Letters of Lillian Smith” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*.

relationship with one another. All are necessary in any effort to create a full portrait, whether of an individual or of a people, in any time or place.”<sup>65</sup>

Despite the pitfalls of failing to acknowledge lesbian relationships in the past, over-labeling historical actors as lesbians is also problematic. Rupp provides a framework for addressing and preventing the production of history that denies or ignores the full capacity of same-sex relationships. Rupp points to the choice historians must make between “labeling women lesbians who might have violently rejected the notion or glossing over the significance of women’s relationships by considering them asexual and Victorian.”<sup>66</sup> In her discussion of the relationships between women’s rights activists in the 1940s and 1950s, Rupp argues that the historian should carefully present the facts as they are known, without attempting to categorize women using contemporary labels. In *A Desired Past*, Rupp decisively does not use contemporary terminology to describe sexuality unless the person “lived in a time when those categories had been named and claimed.”<sup>67</sup> Throughout her analysis, Rupp discusses the terminology as found in the original text to explain the ways in which vocabulary and ideology have changed across time and place. Rupp also stipulates that historians must take into account the subject’s access to knowledge of lesbian identity and lesbian culture. Some women who shared homes and built their lives with other women vocally rejected the notion of a lesbian identity, and the historian must respect those boundaries, despite the possible influence of

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65. Ibid, 103.

66. Rupp, “Imagine my Surprise,” 398.

67. Rupp, *A Desired Past*, 8.

fear and shame on the historical subject's choice to not openly identify with homosexuality.

Estelle Freedman draws on Blanche Weisen Cook and Leila Rupp when she argues that without “direct evidence,” historians “need to be historically specific about the meaning of identity.”<sup>68</sup> Freedman recommends that rather than “impos[ing] upon the past identities constructed in our own times,” historians should “read for past constructions, and consider where they originated, how they changed, and how multiple layers of meaning—intellectual, emotional, and political—could influence individual identity.”<sup>69</sup> Like Rupp, Freedman calls for further analysis and reading between the lines, not to more accurately label those from the past, but rather to create a more truthful portrait that takes into account time and place. Archivists can benefit from this type of analysis as well. When indecisive, vague, or coded material presents itself in the repository, the archivist armed with knowledge of sexual identities should be able to describe material in a way that is both true to the subject's wishes and easily accessible for researchers. In addition to identity variations in different time periods, geography also dictates proper description. Experiences in Northern cities are not always congruent with Southern stories, for example. Archivists and historians both have an obligation to accurately describe those from the past, which can be more successfully implemented with cooperation and collaboration. Archivist John D. Wrathal implies that the work of historical analysis is not solely for the historian, as the archivist must first make such evidence accessible and available to the historian for synthesis. In order to do so

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68. Freedman, “The Burning of Letters Continues,” 193-194.

69. *Ibid.*, 195.

accurately, the archivist must have a working knowledge of the history of sexuality, as well as the language to adequately describe the documents.<sup>70</sup> However, this task is further complicated when many sources for Southern queer history are hidden, and the scholarly historical work to guide their cataloging and description is limited.

### **Conclusion**

Richard J. Cox posits that archivists must be prepared for “different kinds of questions, comments and discussions” when attempting to document those who have traditionally been excluded from archival practice.<sup>71</sup> Armed with an awareness of the concept of sexual identity, as well as an understanding of the general and regional queer historiography, archivists will be much more prepared for the questions that arise. Additionally, archivists will be more knowledgeable in regards to collections and acquisition issues with queer collections. Having the appropriate historiographical framework is also imperative for understanding the need for archival activism to correct previous cataloging mistakes, collect relevant material to be preserved for future researchers, and to accurately address sensitive issues for the community. The key components that define Southern queer history—according to Howard, religion, race, rurality, and resilience—should also define the archival collections of the region. Cooperation between historians, archivists, and community activists will facilitate the

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70. John D. Wrathall, “Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections,” *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (1992): 165-78.

71. Richard J. Cox, “The Archivist and Community” in *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, ed. Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander (London: Facet Publishing, 2009), 257.

further development of the Southern queer narrative. According to Brenda J. Marston, activists, archivists, and historians “contribute to creating historical records, to finding materials that should be preserved, to placing them in an archival home, and to interpreting and telling the stories of our lives.”<sup>72</sup> Interactions between activists, archivists, and scholars can improve the quality of grassroots archives and mainstream archival institutions, in addition to the scholarly works that emerge from these collections.

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72. Brenda J. Marston, “Archivists, Activists, and Scholars: Creating a Queer History,” in *Daring to Find Our Names*, 139.

## CHAPTER TWO: QUEER VOICES IN THE ARCHIVES

Developing archival collections can be a radical act of defiance. Determining which items deserve preservation due to their enduring historical value can be an affirming act that defines a community's shared heritage. The Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn was founded in 1975 based on the notions of the convergence of self-determination and self-documentation:

The Lesbian Herstory Archives exists to gather and preserve records of lesbian lives and activities so that future generations will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives. The process of gathering this material will also serve to uncover and collect our herstory denied to us previously by patriarchal historians in the interests of the culture which they serve. The existence of these archives will enable us to analyze and reevaluate the lesbian experience; we also anticipate that the existence of these archives will encourage lesbians to record their experiences in order to formulate our living herstory.<sup>1</sup>

The activists who spearheaded this project did so with a community-building motive in an effort to define the lesbian experience on their own terms, rather than being forced into the dominant culture's record of their existence that is based on perceived medical abnormalities, refusal of religious standards, or other negative representations. For an oppressed community, having a voice and recording one's own history is not only empowering, but can also be healing. Narratives of strength, resiliency, and agency shine through when a community has the opportunity to write their own history. As archivist

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1. Joan Nestle, "The Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York," *Journal of Homosexuality* 34 (1998).

Randall Jimerson states, archives can “provide resources for people to examine the past, to comprehend the present, and to prepare for a better future.”<sup>2</sup>

While this study focuses on the specific nature of Southern queer archives, the theoretical framework applied to this investigation draws on previous investigations of queer archives across regional boundaries. As will be discussed in this chapter, queer archives require a different approach due to unique concerns about privacy and intentionally hidden lives. Trends in the establishment of queer archives apply to the South in many ways and fledgling Southern queer collections can learn from the experiences of archives in other areas to better adapt repositories’ regional needs. Because many queer archives grew out of political and social activism in urban areas, Southern queer archives have been at a disadvantage due to limited community organizing in Southern rural areas. As explored in the previous chapter, the historiography of gender and sexuality in America has largely focused on urban America. In comparison to the urban LGBT archives like the Lesbian Herstory Archives, ONE in Los Angeles, and the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, the South has fewer resources for the investigation of queer history. There has been relatively less discussion about the South in the historiography of queer America. Yet, as John Howard’s work has shown, there is a specifically Southern queer narrative that contributes to the historiography of gender and sexuality as further evidence that gender and sexuality are socially constructed. Moreover, Southern queer history shows that social trends of tolerance and hostility are constantly in flux, and religion, race, class, and geography play

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2. Randall Jimerson, “Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice,” *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2007): 253.

a role in the development of social perceptions. LGBT narratives also fit into the larger framework of social justice and Civil Rights in America, and the power dynamics that exist within our popular culture, churches, and government. Because of its value as historical evidence, archivists should actively pursue the documentation of Southern queer history. In some southern cities, activists and archivists have started the process of collecting this history. While this thesis argues that the documentation of queer history should be modified to meet Southern needs, emerging Southern queer archival collections are part of a broader theoretical framework of archival activism. The discussions in the archival community about activism in the archives, archival silences, grassroots contributions, and alternative sources for documentation contribute to a better understanding of the obstacles facing Southern queer archives.

### **Activist Archivists**

Archival activism is a transparent intervention in the archival process in order to adequately and accurately document a community or identified group. Rather than passively waiting for documents to arrive at the archivist's threshold as a cohesive, organic collection, archival activism involves the archivist and the community in the collection process with a specific documentation goal in mind. This practice is not universally accepted in the archival community and continues to be debated. Actively engaging in the recordkeeping process undermines the foundational principles of archives. *Respect des fonds*, the Principle of Provenance, and the Sanctity of Original Order are tenets of the archives that discourage any interference with the records in order to maintain trust in the records and preserve their context. In this traditional model,

records are created by a person, institution, or organization, and then passed on to a repository for safekeeping. Collections created by different sources should not be combined so as to preserve the provenance, and collections should not be reorganized so as to preserve the original order. Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration* from 1922, a foundational archival text, illustrates these tenets, as well as the concept of objectivity to preserve the Truth in the archives. In the traditional sense, archives are considered neutral, objective, and passive keepers of the past. In many modern institutions, archivists are more actively engaged with their collections by determining what materials should be collected, as well as participating in the process of records creation to determine which voices will be heard. This necessitates a delicate balancing act for the archivist between honoring the foundations of archival theory and also honoring the communities that have consistently been absent in the archival record.

If the archives contain only the organically created records of institutions and organizations, the historical narrative privileges those in power, while denying the perspectives of those outside of the system. Additionally, privileging the written record prevents those who are illiterate from first-hand participating in the documentary record. For example, researching the history of American slavery relies on the available written records left by those in power: the slaveholders. Enslaved people were rarely referred to by name in the records, but rather as property. The humanity denied to enslaved people prevented their voices from being documented in the ways that white men's experiences have been recorded. It also makes research challenging, and sometimes impossible, for historians and genealogists of African American history. During the late 1930s, the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration collected oral histories of

formerly enslaved people, which are now part of the Library of Congress's collection. This archival intervention preserved the narratives of formerly enslaved people that the traditional documentary record has excluded.

In addition to people of color, both enslaved and free, the traditional archival bias toward those with political and economic power has often resulted in the exclusion of women, non-Christians, the poor, Native Americans, those who are illiterate, and other groups. The social history movement that started in the 1960s encouraged the exploration of previously excluded histories of ordinary people, rather than the power-biased, usually white elite version of history that had been privileged in the archives. Instead of focusing on the narrative of the powerful, historians sought—and continue to seek—a more inclusive representation of the past in terms of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Because documentation of the powerless is limited under the traditional notion of Jenkinsonian recordkeeping, historians have shifted to other sources, including “broader constructs of pasts based on ideas about social memory.”<sup>3</sup> Francis X. Blouin, Jr. states, “Instead of directing the process of uncovering the past through available fragments, the archive is subordinated as one contested element in a variety of tangible and intangible elements that help construct a sense, an image, a theory, or a representation of a particular past.”<sup>4</sup> Historians began searching for records in the archives that were not described by traditional archival cataloging processes, or did not exist, which pushed archivists to change the ways in which they collected and described evidence of the past. Rather than

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3. Francis X. Blouin, Jr., “Archivists, Mediation, and the Constructs of Social Memory,” *Archival Issues* 24 (1999): 105.

4. *Ibid.*, 109.

solely providing access to government documents and manuscript collections of the prominent figures in society, archivists recognized the need to pursue other resources.<sup>5</sup>

Spurred by historian Howard Zinn's 1970 address to the Society of American Archivists, the following decades saw a wave of "activist archivists" who hoped to encourage more democratic collecting practices.<sup>6</sup> Faced with the overwhelming task of actively pursuing comprehensive archival records, Helen Samuels proposed the idea of "documentation strategy," which is "a plan formulated to assure the documentation of an ongoing issue, activity, or geographic area."<sup>7</sup> Her 1986 article, "Who Controls the Past," marks a point of transition, as archivists were encouraged to implement cohesive collecting plans based on a specific topic. The role of archivist shifted from "keeper" of the past to "selector" of the past, as T. R. Schellenberg promoted appraisal as a necessary component of the profession in the mid-century. Samuels takes the active role a step further, as archivists not only select material that they receive, but also seek out material based on a specific subject that has been neglected. Documentation strategy offered a solution for streamlining the process by increasing communication between archivists, records creators, and users. In creating a documentation strategy, Samuels emphasizes

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5. Andrew Flinn, "Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History, and the Heritage Professions," *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011): 1-20.

6. Howard Zinn, "Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977).

7. Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 115.

that institutions should not be concerned with the material that is available: “The concern is less what does exist than what should exist.”<sup>8</sup>

Elizabeth Snowden Johnson discusses the ways in which archivists have shifted from “keepers of the past” to “shapers of the past” as archivists are increasingly responsible for appraising items to determine what should be collected and what should not.<sup>9</sup> Through the process of archival appraisal, archivists must determine which records are worth accessioning, which records should be retained permanently, and which records should be destroyed. According to Luciana Duranti, who adheres to more traditional notions of the profession, archives should be “impartial,” “authentic,” “natural,” “interrelated,” and “unique.”<sup>10</sup> These defining characteristics create a contradiction with the idea of assigning value to an archival document. If each document is as just as important as the next, there is no way to eliminate one while keeping the other. However, not every document can be adequately stored, preserved, and accessed. When the usefulness of a document is taken into account, appraisal can be considered, yet the completeness of the collection and the impartiality of eliminating documents for posterity are still problematic. Duranti posits that this selection of items for keeping is the archivist’s duty as guardian of public memory, and collection and deaccessioning keep the repository alive. Traditionally, historians have been charged with imposing their will on the sources through narrative and discourse. Yet, before historians even have access to

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8. Ibid, 120.

9. Elizabeth Snowden Johnson, “Our Archives, Our Selves: Documentation Strategy and Re-Appraisal of Professional Identity,” *American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2008): 191.

10. Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” *American Archivist* 57, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 334-335.

these sources, archivists have already undertaken archival appraisal to determine which records would be saved and which would be destroyed. As Mark Greene states, “Both the creation and the selection of archival materials are tainted, if you will, by the values, missions, and even resources of the creators and the archivists.”<sup>11</sup> Power is central to the formulation of archives, as obviously not every item can be saved, and the archivist has the power to determine what is kept for public memory. As the role of archivist has shifted from custodian of records to “active mediator,” Terry Cook notes “archivists inevitably will inject their personal values into all such activities.”<sup>12</sup>

Richard J. Cox states, “Archives, used for social justice, can seem to politicize the archival function, muddling the old objective of archivists functioning as neutral observers and participants.”<sup>13</sup> Greene discusses the effects of postmodernism on the archival profession, leading archivists like Duranti and Cox to favor a recordskeeping paradigm. The recordskeeping paradigm privileges transactional records that support an institution’s function and serve the creators of the records. In contrast, the archival paradigm is concerned with preserving evidence for social memory, with more emphasis on the “meaning” of the records. Recordskeeping is an administrative function, where the value of the record is based on its functionality; in the archival paradigm, the value of a

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11. Mark Greene, “The Messy Business of Remembering: History, Memory, and Archives,” *Archival Issues* 28, no. 2 (2003-2004): 101.

12. Terry Cook, “Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archives in Constructing Social Memory,” in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, edited by Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 173.

13. Richard J. Cox, “The Archivist and Community” in *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, ed. Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander (London: Facet Publishing, 2009), 256.

record is based on its meaning to social memory. The reason for the existence of archives has shifted from “judicial-administrative” to “socio-cultural.”<sup>14</sup> The recordskeeping paradigm of custodianship is well-suited for the judicial-administrative function of archives, but falls short when the meaning of archives is expanded to include the full documentation of society. Yet, Elisabeth Kaplan argues that attempts to diversify collections require archivists to identify a group that is “other,” defined by differences rather than similarities, thus potentially further marginalizing a group based on a social construction of identity. Kaplan states, “Attempts to balance the record are simply applications of new biases.”<sup>15</sup>

Is it possible for an archivist to be objective and neutral, as traditional archival principles mandate, while also encouraging a variety of perspectives in collections? Furthermore, should the goal of accurately reflecting our diverse society be privileged over neutrality? Archival activism advocate Randall Jimerson argues that it is possible to “maintain professional standards even while advocating a cause or defending a moral or ideological perspective.”<sup>16</sup> One must first recognize that archivists do not exist in a vacuum; they are influenced not only by their own personal experiences, prejudices, and beliefs, but also by the era and culture in which they live. To expect that an archivist could accomplish complete objectivity is to say that the archivist would have the ability to fully disengage with their morals and values—a behavior which in itself would be

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14. Terry Cook, “What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 43.

15 Elisabeth Kaplan, “We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity,” *American Archivist* 63, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2000): 147.

16. Jimerson, “Archives for All,” 272.

professionally unethical. Hans Booms states, “Archivists are human beings: as an animal social, the archivist will unavoidably appraise records according to those subjective opinions and ideas which have been acquired as part of the mindset of one’s own time.”<sup>17</sup> Rather than attempting neutrality, archivists should embrace their calling to democratically select records for preservation.

Randall Jimerson and Mark Greene have debated the merits of social justice activism in the archives. Greene, a critic of social justice in the archives, identifies himself as an activist archivist. Greene acknowledges the power in the archives and the need for representation in collections. However, he sees the call for diversity to be outdated, as “both individual practitioners and the profession as a whole have widely accepted it for so long.”<sup>18</sup> He believes social justice archives “over-politicize” the profession, and that mandatory social responsibility for justice in the archives is professionally unethical.<sup>19</sup> Jimerson argues that a responsibility for social justice in the archives does not equate to engagement in partisan politics, but rather “it does require them to acknowledge that their profession is inherently and unavoidably engaged in political power struggles to define the nature of our societies.”<sup>20</sup> Elisabeth Kaplan also identifies these intrinsic qualities of both the archivist and the archival institution: “The archival record doesn't just happen; it is created by individuals and organizations, and

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17. Hans Booms, “Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992): 28.

18. Mark Greene, “A Critique of Social Justice as an Archival Imperative: What Is It We’re Doing That’s All That Important?” *American Archivist* 76, no. 2 (Fall—Winter 2013): 303.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Randall Jimerson, “Archives for All,” 262.

used, in turn, to support their values and missions, all of which comprises a process that is certainly not politically and culturally neutral.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Jimerson corrects Greene’s assertion that the social justice mission is a mandatory archival practice. In his rebuttal, Jimerson contests that “the call of justice” is a matter of “conscience” that cannot be forced upon anyone.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Greene misrepresents Jimerson’s encouragement of social justice within the profession to be a moral requirement for institutions. Jimerson states, “Although many collecting repository archives will seek to document all sides of a controversial issue, it is not necessary for all to do so.”<sup>23</sup> Instead of a mandate for individuals and institutions, as Greene perceives, Jimerson is encouraging an ideological shift in the profession to view pursuits of social justice as an acceptable practice. Jimerson’s push for social justice archives comes from the desire to give the archival profession purpose and relevance in the modern era. For Jimerson, archival activism is a natural extension of the profession’s social responsibility.

Another point of contention between Greene and Jimerson is the definitions and value of “objectivity” and “neutrality” in the archives. Jimerson favors objectivity, whereas Greene favors neutrality. According to Jimerson, an archivist can be an objective advocate for a cause or issue. Objectivity is a professional standard that Jimerson believes in upholding, yet neutrality serves to maintain the status quo. Jimerson states, “Remaining neutral or invisible is impossible for archivists engaged in selection,

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21. Kaplan, “We Are What We Collect,” 147.

22. Randall Jimerson, “Archivists and Social Responsibility: A Response to Mark Greene,” *American Archivist* 76, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2013): 336-337.

23. *Ibid*, 340.

appraisal, arrangement, description, and reference services.”<sup>24</sup> Instead of denying this injection of the archivist’s “concepts of history and society into the archival record,” Jimerson recommends recognition and transparency through documentation of choices.<sup>25</sup> Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz echo Jimerson’s position: “The performance of archivists, the power of archives, should no longer remain naturalized, interiorized, ‘obvious,’ or denied, but opened up to vital debate and transparent accountability.”<sup>26</sup> Greene argues that Jimerson’s favoring objectivity over neutrality creates a highly politicized environment, thus injecting more of a power dynamic and potential for corruption. Yet Jimerson counters, “Objectivity in methodology and professional standards should be employed, but self-documentation and even partisanship may be necessary to ensure preservation of culturally sensitive or confidential information.”<sup>27</sup> For example, community archives for underdocumented groups can maintain objective professional standards, yet not be politically neutral in their endeavors. While Jimerson believes corruption is a result of passivity, Greene argues that corruption comes from “becoming enmeshed in the very corrupt systems and (arguably) corrupt values often reflected on both sides of the social justice divide in the heat of passion.”<sup>28</sup> Greene is concerned with the archival goal of “preserv[ing] memory and meaning for all facets of society.”<sup>29</sup> He believes the goal of social justice archives is to privilege one version of history over

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24. Jimerson, “Archives for All,” 277.

25. Ibid.

26. Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 181.

27. Jimerson, “Archivists and Social Responsibility,” 339.

28. Greene, “A Critique of Social Justice as an Archival Imperative,” 309.

29. Ibid, 328.

another, and argues that neutrality is a more ethical professional pursuit. Both authors are attempting to reconcile the foundations of archival theory with the contemporary agenda to document a plural society.

Academic historians similarly face the dilemma of historical truth, with debates focused on the concepts of objectivity and neutrality.<sup>30</sup> However, a key difference in their discipline is the public discourse within their academic community that fuels professional accountability. Historians interpret history, and their interpretations are examined, countered, discussed, and revised. The community of archivists obviously debates and discusses the merits of professional practice, but unlike historians, the daily individual decisions of archivists are typically not peer-edited. The process may be part of an ongoing community discourse, but the product is not. This puts extra pressure on the profession to get it right. When historians engage in subjective inquiries or political advocacy, they have the net of the academic community to keep them accountable. Archivists, on the other hand, are held accountable by the public that uses their resources, and eventually by the virtue of collective social memory.

While few archivists still strictly adhere to Jenkinson's recommendation for passivity in collecting in order to protect the historical truth of the archives, Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz argue that these behaviors continue to be ingrained in archival thought. Yet, hiding under the cloak of objectivity is in itself a use of authority and power over the records. The experiences of historians such as Martin Duberman in attempting to uncover the queer past showcase the intentional and unintentional influence of archivists'

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30. Thomas L. Haskell, "Objectivity: Perspective as Problem and Solution," *History and Theory* 43, no. 3 (October 2004).

biases on records.<sup>31</sup> An acknowledgement of these currents of archival power is necessary to understand how to use this power ethically. Cook and Schwartz state, “Power recognized becomes power that can be questioned, made accountable, and opened to transparent dialogue and enriched understanding.”<sup>32</sup> While scholars like Jenkinson argue that the archivist must passively manage collections, passivity in itself is an act of agency by denying his or her power to engage with the records to create a more equitable historical record. The archivist can either use their agency to give privilege and authority to those in power, or use their agency to actively intervene in the creation and collection of records. Cook expresses the inherent responsibility of archival appraisal: “We are deciding what is remembered and what is forgotten, who in society is visible and who remains invisible, who has a voice and who does not.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Archival Silence**

While the archivist has the power to determine “who has a voice and who does not,” some members of society have made the choice to remain silent. Many queer people have intentionally hidden evidence of queer life, often for reasons of survival. The invisibility of queer subject matter in the archives is perhaps a reflection of a history of secrecy and shame. When engaging archival activism to document groups who have

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31. Martin Bauml Duberman, “‘Writhing Bedfellows’ in Antebellum South Carolina: Historical Interpretation and the Politics of Evidence” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, edited by George Chauncey, Jr. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus (New York: Penguin, 1990).

32. Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 181.

33. Cook, “Remembering the Future,” 169.

traditionally been marginalized from both society and the historical record, archivists must be aware of the power silence holds in the archives. The work of queer archives is “an appraisal of presences and absences,” where the absence of documentation is often just as significant as its inclusion.<sup>34</sup> The silences in archives, or the absence of documentation of a group of people, can be read as more than an intentional destruction or casual omission by archivists. Rather, these groups, such as the queer community, may be rejecting inclusion in mainstream institutions as a form of resistance. Archivist Rodney G. S. Carter argues, “Only those voices that conform to the ideals of those in power are allowed into the archive; those that do not conform are silenced.”<sup>35</sup> If archives aim to be a reflection of society, those in a “peripheral position in society” will also be marginalized in the archive.<sup>36</sup> Francis X Blouin, Jr. similarly acknowledges how “Gaps in the archives...affirm certain historical realities.”<sup>37</sup> Such historical silences are not limited to the archival record. In his discussion of social memory and landscape, Kenneth Foote describes remembrances (or lack thereof) at locations where non-accidental tragedy has occurred. Foote says, “Perhaps the ‘silence’ of these sites actually does ‘speak’ to the senselessness of the violence as eloquently as any monument would.”<sup>38</sup>

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34. Daniel Marshall, Kevin P. Murphy, and Zeb Tortorici, “Editors’ Introduction: Queering Archives: Historical Unravelings,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 1.

35. Rodney G. S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence,” *Archivaria* 61 (2006): 219.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Francis X. Blouin, Jr., “Archivists, Mediation, and the Constructs of Social Memory,” *Archival Issues* 24 (1999): 110.

38. Kenneth E. Foote, “To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture,” in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, edited by Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 391.

Carter discusses the importance of collective identity for marginalized groups, and how archival silences hinder the development of a shared history that contributes to collective identity.<sup>39</sup> Carter states, “we must recognize that not everyone wishes to be heard and that the assumption that marginal groups would desire to be included in state archives can be construed as arrogance on the part of the archivist.”<sup>40</sup> Participation in the archives of a state that actively oppressed certain groups in the past (and perhaps the present as well) may not be an attractive option for some groups of people. Maintaining archival silence within this context is a reflection of the forced silence and hiding experienced by these groups. Additionally, Carter states that “silence must not be equated with absence: it is a forceful strategy of resistance.”<sup>41</sup> The archivist must recognize the difference between natural silences, which are “entered into by choice,” and unnatural silences, which is a result of “the use of power, both overt and covert.”<sup>42</sup> While unnatural silences should be corrected and amended, the archivist should respect natural silences. Marginalized groups may exercise “the right to remain silent” as an expression of power in an archival setting. The silence in itself tells an important story that should be recognized.

John Wrathall notes that because sexuality is not constant across time and place, historians must be careful to distinguish between actual archival silences and the historian’s search for language and concepts of sexuality that might not have existed at

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39. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid,” 222.

40. Ibid, 226-227.

41. Ibid, 227.

42. Ibid, 228.

the time of the document's creation.<sup>43</sup> However, Wrathall discusses the ways in which provenance, or the context of the document's original creation, can be used to "illuminate the meaning of silences."<sup>44</sup> Wrathall states that archival silences "are not the same, that they hid different meanings, and that something of what they hid can be deduced from the context in which they exist and the purpose for which they were produced."<sup>45</sup> Yet other scholars have argued against reading between the lines of queer history, not only to respect the silence, but also as a rejection of historicizing sexuality. According to Abram Lewis, the transgender archives' "contents arguably exceed historical explanation."<sup>46</sup> Rather than focusing on the exclusion of queer evidence from the archive, Lewis suggests that the concept of queer does not fit into historical categories, nor can it be historically analyzed. Therefore, there is no evidence of queer history because queer history does not exist in a way that can be cataloged.

Privacy is an essential element of the archival silence discussion, as not all material that is discovered was meant to be made public by the creator. Archivist Judith Schwarz discusses three archival activities that involve privacy decisions: donations, use by researchers, and collection of records related to a specific group. In these circumstances, the interests donors, researchers, and collectors sometimes may conflict

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43. John D. Wrathall, "Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (1992).

44. *Ibid.*, 166.

45. *Ibid.*, 178.

46. Abram J. Lewis, "'I Am 64 and Paul McCartney Doesn't Care': The Haunting of the Transgender Archive and the Challenges of Queer History," *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 15.

with each other.<sup>47</sup> Schwarz provides several examples of families exerting control over the legacies of their deceased loved ones, as well as institutions attempting to protect the private papers in regards to possible same-sex relationships. While Schwarz notes that archivists have hidden sensitive materials in order to encourage future donations from those who are hesitant about privacy issues, archivists often attempt to balance these privacy needs with the researchers' needs for access. Issues of privacy are not limited to untold stories of queer experiences in manuscript collections and family papers.

According to Schwarz, gay and lesbian collections also face conflicting interests of researchers and donors "when people's lives may depend upon the security of their deepest held secrets."<sup>48</sup> Schwarz uses the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn as an example of addressing privacy concerns during acquisition. The Lesbian Herstory Archives protects the privacy of donors from the "noncommunity public," especially when exposure involves "the mainstream media or press."<sup>49</sup> The archive engages the donor in a discussion of usage for the materials, including a variety of circumstances that may arise in the future and protections that might be required for the sake of not only the donor, but also their loved ones. While privacy concerns for living individuals are

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47. Judith Schwarz, "The Archivist's Balancing Act: Helping Researchers While Protecting Individual Privacy," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992): 179-189.

48. *Ibid*, 186.

49. Polly J. Thistlewaite, "Building 'A Home of Our Own': The Construction of the Lesbian Herstory Archives," in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian Gay Library History*, edited by James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 158.

integral to ethical standards, Schwarz notes, “a full disclosure of deceased individuals’ history can do little harm and yet add much to the lives of others.”<sup>50</sup>

Although privacy concerns for the person who created the collection may be eliminated upon that person’s death, a collection often holds correspondence or other material with information about people who are still living. The non-donor individuals whose records are included in a collection usually did not consent to having their personal information shared, and that information could be embarrassing or inflammatory. According to the Society of American Archivists *Code of Ethics*, it is the responsibility of the archivist to protect the privacy of the creator of records, as well as the privacy of these third-party individuals. However, the manner in which to undertake this task is left to the discretion of the archivist. In an archive of LGBT oral histories, third-party privacy issues are a significant concern. Sara E. Hodson provides the example of the Isherwood manuscript collection at the Huntington Library. Christopher Isherwood kept diaries throughout his life, which were donated to the Huntington Library and were to be published after his death. Even after close scrutiny from an editor and attorneys, a family member of someone mentioned in the footnotes of a manuscript of the diary threatened legal action over the inclusion of personal information about the relative. As a result, collection access was restricted for thirty years.<sup>51</sup> In areas hostile to queer people, like many southern locales, “outing” someone in the archives could be not only embarrassing to the person being outed, but could also threaten their personal safety,

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50. Schwarz, “The Archivist’s Balancing Act,” 189.

51. Sara S. Hodson, “In Secret Kept, In Silence Sealed: Privacy in the Papers of Authors and Celebrities,” *American Archivist* 67, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2004): 198-199.

personal relationships, or job security. Because Southern states lack non-discrimination protections for LGBT populations, employers can legally fire an employee if they are “outed.”<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, if information that identifies someone’s sexuality is excluded entirely from the record evidence of queer history is being hidden. Family members donating the manuscript collection of a deceased individual might attempt to hide information about the individual’s sexuality for fear of embarrassment to the family, or an archivist might omit the revealing information, either motivated by concerns over privacy or homophobia. The archivist must be careful to respect the privacy concerns of those included in collections—not only for ethical reasons, but also for legal reasons—while also not erasing evidence of same-sex desire from the records. Steven Maynard notes that the development of a formal professional code of ethics regarding access to material would be helpful for both protecting the confidentiality of sources and preventing obstructions to research, and that researchers of gay and lesbian history should be included in the code’s creation.<sup>53</sup>

### **Grassroots Archives and Mainstream Institutions**

Queer community organizations have approached privacy concerns and previously being omitted from the historical record by creating their own grassroots archives. The queer community’s current archival impulse is a reflection of coming out,

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52. State employees are protected from sexual orientation and gender discrimination in North Carolina, Louisiana, and Virginia. The states of Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina do not have laws to protect LGBT employees from discrimination.

53. Steven Maynard, “‘The Burning, Wilful Evidence’: Lesbian/Gay History and Archival Research,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1992).

both in society and in the archives. Will Roscoe describes queer archives as “the earliest and most frequent manifestation of the lesbian and gay history movement.”<sup>54</sup> Collecting the records of a shared heritage is in itself a form of activism through reclaiming a place in history. According to Schwartz and Cook, “Power relations in the archives are implicated in the obsessive focus on identity, which has characterized intellectual endeavors across disciplines since the 1980s.”<sup>55</sup> Because the development of a queer identity is central to queer historiography, Schwartz and Cook’s discussion of the archives as key players in identity politics has particular meaning to queer archival collections. Schwartz and Cook state, “notions of identity are confirmed and justified as historical documents validate with their authority as ‘evidence’ the identity stories so built.”<sup>56</sup> Queer archival collections serve this validating purpose for the queer community by providing “evidence” of a queer identity in the historical record.

Mark Greene argues that history is owned, and for community-based archives, ownership of their history is paramount. In the case of groups who have been excluded from the archives, they continue to own their history, rather than a mainstream institution.<sup>57</sup> Those marginalized groups therefore have the agency to interpret their own history, rather than having its interpretation be determined by those outside of their

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54. Will Roscoe, “History’s Future: Reflections on Lesbian and Gay History in the Community,” in *Gay and Lesbian Studies*, ed. Henry L. Minton (New York: Haworth, 1991), 166.

55. Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory.” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (March 2002): 15.

56. *Ibid.*, 16.

57. Mark Greene, “The Messy Business of Remembering: History, Memory, and Archives,” *Archival Issues* 28, no. 2 (2003-2004).

group. When actively choosing silence in mainstream archives, community-based, grassroots archives serve as an alternative for creating collective historical identity for marginalized groups. Carter states, “it is only through continual transmission within the group that their stories, and hence their identity, will remain vital.”<sup>58</sup> Grassroots archives are key to recording queer history, not only when denied participation in state archives, but also after the invitation for institutional inclusion has been extended. Community archives maintain control over the narrative of a shared history. Richard J. Cox echoes Carter’s sentiment: “The fact that a group may resist placing documentary materials into established archival repositories, opting to create their own, enhances our understanding of the role of power and authority emanating from the acts of creating and preserving documents.”<sup>59</sup> Grassroots archives not only allow queer community groups to maintain power over their history, but also allow these groups to have control over privacy issues and descriptive language. Alycia Sellie et al define activist archives as community-based archives “conducted by and for activists themselves.”<sup>60</sup> According to the authors, “activist archives not only honor specific communities but also forge new relationships between parallel histories, reshape and reinterpret dominant narratives, and challenge conceptions of the archive itself.”<sup>61</sup> In these settings, the archivist can engage in activism as Jimerson encourages, yet avoid opposition from fellow archivists like Greene, who discourage politicization of the documentary record. Many community-based collections

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58. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid,” 230.

59. Cox, “The Archivist and Community,” 254.

60. Alycia Sellie, Jesse Goldstein, Molly Fair, and Jennifer Hoyer, “Interference Archive: a free space for social movement culture,” *Archival Science* 4 (2015): 454.

61. *Ibid.*

are eventually absorbed within archival institutions, yet the authenticity of the marginalized voice is intact in the original creation of the records. Carter encourages archivists to actively include community members in the process of correcting previous exertions of archival power on marginalized groups through oral history projects, participation in project planning, and assistance in establishing their own archive.

Grassroots, community-based queer archives have been integral to the improved documentation of queer history. Steven Maynard notes, “Given the exclusion of lesbian and gay history from universities and academic journals, and the conscious and unconscious suppression of lesbian/gay materials in mainstream archives, the sources and locations of gay history have, by necessity, emerged outside of these institutions.”<sup>62</sup> Andrew Flinn discusses the significance of community-based archives that collect histories of people who have been excluded from the mainstream narrative as sites of “discovery, education, and empowerment.”<sup>63</sup> These archives often have a defined political agenda, which is to restore the history of the community, and to reclaim the frameworks within which their stories are told. Flinn argues that the purpose of these collections are “informed by a political understanding of how this material and doing this type of activity might help people and communities in their contemporary lives and struggles.”<sup>64</sup> Queer archives not only seek to reclaim the interpretation of the queer past, but also to portray the devastation of lives due to homophobia in an attempt to prevent the continuance of such acts. Either overtly or covertly, queer archives maintain a political

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62. Maynard, “The Burning, Wilful Evidence,” 196.

63. Flinn, “Archival Activism,” 9.

64. *Ibid*, 11.

agenda that extends into present interpretations of queer identities to both thwart discrimination and inspire the community through shared heritage. Because of this agenda, Flinn warns that it “is important not to dismiss the significance of rigorous, critical historical methods and to be wary of the celebratory and romantic nature of some recovery or oppositional histories.”<sup>65</sup> Rather, without discrediting their academic potential, these archives should be considered “heritage activism” in the context of broader activist movements.<sup>66</sup>

The emotional attachment to the contents of the collections can be both a benefit and a disadvantage to the academic potential of grassroots collections. Elizabeth Knowlton, then curator at the Georgia Department of Archives and History and archivist at the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, argued in 1987 that archives should actively collect material relating to the gay rights movement. She conducted a survey of archives across the country to determine which collections contained documentation of the movement, and found that the majority of collections at the time with evidence of gay life were private gay archives. Like Flinn, Knowlton acknowledged the advantages of private gay archives, namely the ability to create their own story; however, she also notes the disadvantage of archives created by activists rather than academics or archival professionals, such as non-adherence to professional standards and emotional attachment to the material.<sup>67</sup> Ann Cvetkovich points to intimacy of the beginnings of grassroots queer archives, as most began and were housed in private homes and spaces. These

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65. Ibid, 11-12.

66. Ibid, 12.

67. Knowlton, “Documenting the Gay Rights Movement.”

intimate spaces, in contrast to mainstream archival institutions, made it possible to collect personal and emotional history. Will Roscoe notes, “Several of these lesbian and gay archives began as labors of love on the part of one or two collectors and have remained closely identified with them (which accounts for both their organizational stability and their occasional idiosyncrasies).”<sup>68</sup>

Archival theorists have engaged in a debate over the past thirty years about the popular trend to consolidate and merge grassroots collections with mainstream archives. The benefits of non-queer archives holding queer collections include increased visibility and funds for preservation. However, many activists have found that the benefits are outweighed by potential problems, such as archivists processing collections without adequate knowledge of the community, collections not being given priority for preservation, and a lack of community control.<sup>69</sup> Polly Thistlewaite of Hunter College and the Lesbian Herstory Archives provides the New York Public Library’s “Becoming Visible” exhibit as an example of a mainstream institution’s inaccurate representation of queer history. The library failed to acknowledge “its own role in secreting lesbian and gay history and diminished the contributions of self-documenting people.”<sup>70</sup> The Lesbian Herstory Archives supplied much of the exhibit’s content, yet the library did not adequately credit the grassroots archive or provide information about the archive in the exhibit. Thistlewaite states, “Our historical survival is due to self-documenting efforts and

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68. Roscoe, “History’s Future,” 164.

69. Lynn Kirste, “Collective Effort: Archiving LGBT Moving Images,” *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 3 (Spring 2007).

70. Polly Thistlewaite, “The Lesbian and Gay Past: An Interpretive Battleground,” *Faculty Works* (Winter 1995): 5.

to the work of radical historians who have uncloaked our pasts. Had it not been for these, there would have been no material for the New York Public Library to display upon this occasion of the first ‘major’ exhibit of lesbian and gay history.”<sup>71</sup> Brenda J. Marston, archivist at Cornell’s Human Sexuality Collection, emphasizes the importance of community-based archives because “they can be more successful than institutional archives in involving all segments of the queer community and in sharing the excitement of knowing our past.”<sup>72</sup> Much of the argument against consolidation stems from a deep-seated distrust of mainstream institutions due to the legacy of homophobia in the archives. James V. Carmichael Jr. describes how keeping grassroots archives self-contained “preserves integrity, ensures safety, and exercises the collective will.”<sup>73</sup> In hostile environments, maintaining community control over the historical record is a priority so that mistakes made by archival institutions in the past will not be repeated.

In 1995, Thistlewaite discussed the trend of merging many grassroots gay and lesbian archives with mainstream institutions.<sup>74</sup> While the consolidations are a nod to the work of grassroots archives in stressing the importance of cataloging queer history, folding community collections into mainstream institutions also signals a loss of community control. Many universities and public institutions seek to acquire pre-existing

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71. Ibid, 6.

72. Brenda J. Marston, “Archivists, Activists, and Scholars: Creating a Queer History,” in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, edited by James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 141.

73. James V. Carmichael Jr., “Introduction: Makeover Without a Mirror—A Face for Lesbian and Gay Library History” in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 15.

74. Thistlewaite, “The Gay and Lesbian Past.”

gay and lesbian collections to serve as the foundation for developing their own collections. Thistlewaite expresses community concern for the integrity and accessibility of collections considering the legacy of archival mistreatment of queer material. Key problems with mainstream collections include accurate descriptions of queer subject matter and the fear that outing people in the historical record will discourage donors and funding. Thistlewaite states that queer material in mainstream institutions has been “disguised from or denied to researchers, removed from collections, or destroyed by biological family or family executors entitled by law to do just that.”<sup>75</sup> Many archival acquisitions happen when the donor passes away, which leads to legal issues surrounding legitimate heirs of archival material when a non-biological family member is in custody of the items unless the donor made previous arrangements.<sup>76</sup> Thistlewaite urges community-based collections to move forward with trepidation, and to not hastily commend public institutions for accepting these collections when the previous actions of the institutions are in fact the reason for the original formation of grassroots initiatives. Thistlewaite argues, “It is essential that in our enthusiasm to achieve mainstream recognition that we not neglect or impoverish community-controlled history projects because this would be a bargain struck with the sacrifice of self-definition.”<sup>77</sup>

In her work with George Washington University’s collection in Washington, DC, Jennifer King encountered similar challenges acquisitioning material from grassroots collections. Because grassroots activists or organizations perceive the institution as “the

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75. Thistlewaite, “Building ‘A Home of Our Own,’” 165.

76. *Ibid*, 166.

77. Thistlewaite, “The Gay and Lesbian Past,” 7.

Establishment”, they are reluctant to trust the institution with their materials. One way archivists have attempted to change this perception and gain trust is through volunteering with the Rainbow History Project, “a DC-community-owned and -operated queer archive.”<sup>78</sup> Community engagement and support of grassroots archival projects can be helpful to build trust. Flinn suggests that community-based archives should pursue partnerships with mainstream archives as a means of stability and sustainability. However, in forging these partnerships, communities should retain authority over their narratives as much as possible, and partnerships should be participatory rather than mandatory. Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd discuss the ways in which community archives and mainstream institutions can mutually benefit from partnership: “Mainstream archivists can use engagement to enhance their profile with under-represented user groups and potentially increase the scope of their collections; community archivists can meet strategic objectives (around the visibility of their histories) whilst gaining useful skills.”<sup>79</sup> In order for these partnerships to be successful, mutual respect is imperative. This includes the responsibility of the traditional archive to acknowledge and ease concerns about a legacy of exclusion on the part of the community. Both sides must also be able to appreciate the strengths and expertise each side brings to the table. However, the authors put the burden on the traditional institutions to facilitate a successful relationship. While Flinn’s advocacy for the future of grassroots collections is well

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78. Jennifer King, “Trust and the Activist Archivist,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1, no. 2 (2014): 191.

79. Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, “New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing Over to Handing On,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, nos. 1-2 (2010): 61.

intentioned and realistic, his arguments could also be considered paternalistic and patronizing – mainstream institutions have the resources and special knowledge to provide protection and authority over community assets.

The debate about grassroots archives merging with mainstream institutions is a reflection of the gay rights movement’s dialogue about assimilation into a heteronormative culture.<sup>80</sup> While various goals of the contemporary movement, such as marriage equality, demand admission into established institutions, many queer activists reject the idea of conforming to dominant systems in society. The potential benefits of assimilation include equality under the law, inclusion in many religious denominations, and society’s acceptance. Yet with assimilation, the queer community risks the loss of a defined culture, which includes a shared heritage and public memory. Grassroots institutions face a similar dilemma in that merging presents more opportunities for access, preservation, and funding, but perhaps a loss of community control. As queer collections move out of grassroots locations and into institutional settings, Cvetkovich stresses that “it will prove increasingly important not to forget the more queer collections and strategies of grassroots archives.”<sup>81</sup>

### **Queer Sources for Queer Archives**

When traditional archival sources are either nonexistent or hidden, historians and archivists must look to alternative historical material for documentation of queer life.

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80. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

81. Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture,” *Camera Obscura* 17, no. 1 (2002): 137.

Court records regarding violations of anti-gay legislation offer another invaluable resource for queer historians. Newspapers also provide access to queer history through stories of same-sex scandals, as well as access to popular ideas regarding gender and sexuality at the time.<sup>82</sup> Searching for queer sources requires a re-examination of evidence from unexpected places, as well as a reconsideration of material that holds meaning to the queer community. According to Ann Cvetkovich, “Lesbian and gay history demands a radical archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism—all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, archivists should be cognizant of the community’s wishes in terms of what should be collected, preserved, and made accessible. Many queer collections are focused on the records of gay, lesbian, and trans\* activist organizations and the community leaders who fought for equality. While this is an important part of the queer narrative, the voices of people who did not or could not engage in activism are not represented. Still, it should be acknowledged that the inclusion of these activist records is an improvement in the adequate documentation of the queer community. Yet the formation of these collections revolves around those in power within the community, which is a replication on a smaller scale of the archival traditions that privilege those in positions of power in the documentary record. Randall Jimerson encourages archival repositories “to turn their attention to collecting and preserving the records of ordinary people” because “these forgotten voices continue to represent an underdocumented

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82. Maynard, “The Burning, Willful Evidence.”

83. Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 241.

texture in our social fabric.”<sup>84</sup> This requires the archivist to look outside the realm of traditional evidence to sources such as oral history accounts, ephemera, popular culture items, the visual arts, documentary, and erotica.

Queer repositories typically house items that other kinds of archives would reject, either because they are too difficult to store and preserve, or because the archivists simply find no meaning in the objects. This kind of ephemera, such as clothing, political buttons, protest signs, holds meaning to the community’s shared heritage. Cvetkovich encourages the archivist to “proceed like the fan or collector whose attachment to objects is often fetishitic, idiosyncratic, or obsessional” because “objects that are not inherently meaningful...are made so through their significance to an audience.”<sup>85</sup> Central to Cvetkovich’s argument is that gay and lesbian archives are repositories of trauma.<sup>86</sup> Cvetkovich suggests that the ephemera which typically characterizes the queer archive—objects and personal items rather than cohesive paper records—is a reflection of traumatic events. Collecting these items stems from a desire to remember emotional events, and that “affects—associated with nostalgia, personal memory, fantasy, and trauma—make a document significant.”<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, Franklin A. Robinson, an archives specialist with the Archives Center at the National Museum of American History, has encountered the opposite challenge. Rather than the archivist not understanding the meaning behind potential archival material, donors are often unaware

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84. Jimerson, “Archives for All,” 269.

85. Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 253-254.

86. Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings,” 110.

87. Ibid, 112.

of the significance of the material they have, or are reluctant to share their personal items or stories with the general public in an open collection.

In an argument similar to that of Cvetkovich, Mathias Danbolt also views the queer archive as a site of emotional trauma. According to Danbolt's postmodern assessment, queer rights activism, with the legacies of repurposed slogans and phrases, is an archive in itself. Danbolt provides a definition of archival activism that focuses on the performative aspect of social movements. Danbolt considers activism itself to be an "archive of prior actions" in that it "function[s] as an embodied and living archive that makes activist history present."<sup>88</sup> By moving beyond the confines of the brick-and-mortar institution, Danbolt discusses an emotional, ephemeral version of the archive that gives preference to oral tradition over the documentary evidence. Because activists are often focused on the here and now, and are acting in immediate reactionary and often covert ways, maintaining an adequate documentary record for progeny is rarely a concern. With a lack of archival evidence, "the experiences and knowledges from the queer activist archive can reanimate the past and reinvigorate the present."<sup>89</sup> Like Danbolt, Alicia Sellie et al argue for a reconsideration of the function and goals of a collection to meet the needs of an activist movement. The authors posit, "the nature of the activist archive might reflect the temporality of social movements themselves."<sup>90</sup> Rather than the traditional notion of an archive as permanent collection of records, the authors suggest that the value

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88. Mathias Danbolt, "We're Here! We're Queer?: Activist Archives and Archival Activism," *Lambda Nordica*, nos. 3-4 (2010): 104.

89. Ibid, 109.

90. Sellie, "Interference Archive," 454.

of an activist archive should also be measured by the “free space” it provides to “form community identity” that encourages “networks and skills for action.”<sup>91</sup>

Because the aspect of queer collections that separates them from their mainstream counterpart is sexuality, documentation of sexual expression will be a part of any queer archive, and should not be avoided or removed. As Polly Thistlewaite states, “The language archivists use to talk about the trouble with queer material is the language the heterosexual world uses to talk about the trouble with queers.”<sup>92</sup> In capturing queer life, material of a sexual nature is a part of the archive that cannot, and should not, be disregarded. Will Roscoe discusses the ways in which items collected in gay archives, specifically those of an erotic nature, make more of a contribution to understanding identity than social constructionism’s labeling theories. He states, “It is the objects that desire invests, as much as the labels that society applies, which serve to unleash the flows of signs and meanings, the discursive play, that constitutes and inscribes our subjectivity... The collection offsets social construction with self-construction.”<sup>93</sup> Marc Stein examines “the roles that archival projects have played in the canonization of homophile sexual respectability” to create a gay history that is white, upper middle class, and critical of sexual deviance or expression.<sup>94</sup> Stein describes a different kind of contemporary archival erasure—rather than eliminating evidence of gay life, archivists and historians have essentially cleaned up radical elements of queer history. Sexual

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91. Ibid, 464.

92. Thistlewaite, “Building ‘A Home of Our Own,’” 164.

93. Roscoe, “History’s Future,” 168.

94. Marc Stein, “Canonizing Homophile Sexual Respectability: Archives, History, and Memory,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 53.

expression is an integral component of what distinguishes queer history different from straight history. While the importance of affection and partnership should not be diminished, sexual attraction and expression should not be excluded from the historical record for the political purpose of portraying heteronormative “respectability.” There can be an appropriate space for sexually explicit or pornographic material in the queer archive.

The strong visual arts tradition of the queer community offers significant contributions to archival collecting. Rebecka Taves Sheffield details the Bedside Table Archives project at the University of Ontario, which combines oral history with an arts approach to documenting the everyday aspects of lesbian lives.<sup>95</sup> The project contains photographs of objects on bedside tables and brief interviews about the objects and their meanings, and will be a part of the digital collection of Canada’s Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony. This unique project documents aspects of domesticity and personal life, in contrast to bar culture, political activism, and community-based archival projects. Additionally, this project extends beyond the urban scene to include suburban, domestic life. Sheffield uses the term “archive intervention,” which is credited to artist Lubaina Himid. The term is defined as “a research-based art practice that seeks to enliven and engage relations between archives or research collections and the communities they serve.”<sup>96</sup> This project is in response to the postmodern acknowledgement of the

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95. Rebecka Taves Sheffield, “The Bedside Table Archives: Archive Intervention and Lesbian Intimate Domestic Culture,” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014).

96. *Ibid*, 110.

archivists' role in "participating in the work of records creation as a way to better represent those who remain undocumented."<sup>97</sup>

Cvetkovich extends the definition of "archive" beyond the traditional notion of collections of documents and items to include documentary films as archives and filmmakers as archivists. According to Cvetkovich, documentaries capture the emotional trauma in an intimate way that archival records cannot. Like oral histories, documentaries capture the "cultural memory" of the queer community because "gay and lesbian history in particular is produced through memory as much as through documents."<sup>98</sup> In her discussion of videos of those lost from AIDS, Alex Juhasz shows how the personal record can be used to facilitate collective memory. Juhasz suggests this is a form of "queer archive activism," which she defines as "a practice that adds love and hope to time and technology."<sup>99</sup> Many forms of media, from documentary film and motion pictures to photography and installation pieces, suggest the multi-faceted potential for queer archives. Juhasz states, "We can use archival media to remember, feel anew, analyze, and educate, ungluing the past from its melancholic grip, and instead living it as a gift with others in the here and now."<sup>100</sup> Mixed media presentations allow archives to move beyond the traditional documentary record to include a variety of visual representations of the past.

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97. Ibid, 116.

98. Cvetkovich, "In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings," 137.

99. Alex Juhasz, "Video Remains: Nostalgia, Technology, and Queer Archive Activism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 2 (2006): 326.

100. Ibid.

### Oral History as Evidence

Recordings of oral history, either conducted by researchers or through archival outreach projects, are increasingly used as research resources for historians. The use of oral histories creates a more inclusive historical record by incorporating those who have been marginalized and removing the barrier of literacy. Steven Maynard notes that oral history projects are a key component of telling queer history because of the lack of documentary evidence. Queer people who kept their identities hidden in their youth or young adulthood are more likely to recount their experiences now that society has generally become more tolerant of their sexualities. According to Elise Chenier, “In the postwar period most lesbians and gay men worked hard to hide, not preserve, their private lives.”<sup>101</sup> Beginning in the 1970s, archival outreach to obtain oral histories was necessary to uncover these stories. As the social history movement encouraged historians and researchers shifted their focus to less-frequently documented groups, like women and minorities, their methods also required a transition from traditional document-based research.<sup>102</sup> For these early practitioners, oral history “was a way to write gay and lesbian experience into existence, to challenge heterosexism and traditional history, and to engender pride within a community long forced to live on the social, economic, and political margins of society.”<sup>103</sup> Chenier suggests that the current problem of preserving these oral histories is not based in homophobia, but rather the “lack of training in oral

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101. Elise Chenier, “Hidden from Historians: Preserving Lesbian Oral History in Canada,” *Archivaria* 68 (2009): 248.

102. Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “Introduction” in *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-5.

103. *Ibid*, 252.

history methodology and the absence of a dedicated grassroots movement to collect and preserve.”<sup>104</sup> Another barrier to preservation is the fear of legal ramifications due to inadequate or nonexistent usage agreements and consent forms. Oral history projects are often more democratic in their scope, and thus provide access to the stories of ordinary people. Archivists or researchers create these collections inorganically; therefore, these projects have the ability to reflect more diverse voices.

Because many gay and lesbian people lived hidden lives, “historians have relied heavily on oral history to supplement the relatively sparse material record of gay and lesbian lives, particularly in the pre-Stonewall era.”<sup>105</sup> Daniel Rivers describes two key challenges in writing queer history: “the changing definitions of sexual identity” and “the obscuring effect of homophobic repression.” Oral histories, as Rivers posits, have alleviated some of these complex challenges.<sup>106</sup> Rivers also notes that oral histories have been a part of gay and lesbian liberation and culture through “coming out” stories with a political goal of “visibility.” Many of the early scholars of gay history, such as Allan Bérubé, John D’Emilio, and Lillian Faderman, relied on oral histories, which also encouraged the development of LGBT collections as historians donated their oral history research to archival repositories.<sup>107</sup> Their research and methodology also inspired early grassroots archives, such as the Lesbian Herstory Archives, to collect oral histories. In the 1970s, the gay liberation and feminist lesbian movements were focused on “coming out”

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104. Ibid, 249.

105. Daniel Rivers, “Lesbian Mothers and Gay Fathers from the Pre-Stonewall Era” in *Bodies of Evidence*: 65.

106. Rivers, 64.

107. Rivers, 65.

and defining one's sexual identity as a political action. In the previous era, however, River states, "the lives of same-sex oriented men and women were often much more complex than this politics of the closet might assume," and oral histories have played a key role in deciphering these complicated narratives.<sup>108</sup> In order to understand pre-Stonewall LGBT history, the researcher must put aside the definitions of "gay" and "lesbian" that came from the 1970's because many of the narratives of queer lives from this earlier era defy strict categorization. As stated by the editors of *Bodies of Evidence*, "Closely mined and diligently listened to, oral histories—including their many silences—can bring personal affect, individual significance, and personal memory to bear especially on sensitive themes and experiences such as sexual consciousness, gender identity, and sex acts."<sup>109</sup>

Martin Meeker points out that queer oral history has "enabled historians to uncover long-forgotten forms of resistance among a group of people who appear in the historical record—to the extent that they appear at all—primarily as victims: victims of police raids on bars, purges in the military, and defamation in the newsstand."<sup>110</sup> Yet Meeker also suggests that oral history has the capability of moving past the "discrimination-resistance paradigm" to create a more dynamic historical narrative.<sup>111</sup> For example, Meeker's interviews with straight political leaders of the 1960's in San Francisco developed his interpretation of queer history based on the connections and

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108. Rivers, 70.

109. Boyd, 17.

110. Martin Meeker, "You Could Argue that They Control Power: Politics and Interviewing across Sexualities" in *Bodies of Evidence*: 227.

111. Meeker, 227.

correlations with other activist social movements, and also offered a different perspective of a straight person's interactions with the gay community. Queer historiography shows that levels of tolerance and acceptance have not been stagnant across time and place, nor are they consistent among race, class, religion, or region. Because these varied levels of rejection and inequality for queer people persist along these categories in the present, the ability to collect oral histories that reflect our plural society is limited to the willing pool of participants. The editors of *Bodies of Evidence* describe how this challenge has led to “comparatively little oral history research on U.S. queer communities of color.”<sup>112</sup> This theory should also be correlated to the proportional lack of Southern queer oral histories. Just as the written record of queer history tends to reflect those who were engaged in political activism and community organizing because of their willingness to expose their identities, those who are politically active and “out” are more willing to participate in oral history projects.<sup>113</sup> This points to a central strategic challenge—especially for those in the South—of collecting the testimonies of hidden lives. Some queer people have refrained from revealing their sexuality (and perhaps continue to do so) for reasons of social ostracism, personal safety, the forfeiture of one's career or military position, or the loss of custody of children. It takes courage to share one's story after a lifetime of suppression. While queer oral history has been a crucial part of developing the queer historiography, the methodology is paramount to including the specifically Southern elements of the broader American queer historical narrative. As exemplified through the genres of bluegrass and country music, which are deeply rooted in the Southern region, storytelling

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112. Boyd and Ramirez, “Introduction” in *Bodies of Evidence*: 13.

113. *Ibid*, 12.

is a crucial part of Southern culture. Oral tradition has also a more inclusive way to pass down historical information within the Southern culture because literacy is not a prerequisite. Because oral history is imperative for the complex examination of queer history, and the South is rooted in oral tradition, oral history is a key component for the documentation of southern queer life.

### **Conclusion**

The traditional model of archivists as keepers of history and historians as interpreters of history can no longer be so clearly defined, given the complexity of expectations set for both professions. Archivists must assume the role of activists in order to salvage the historical material necessary to inclusively write history. Archivists must also be aware of the challenges of archival silences, and understand the political implications of both inclusion and exclusion in the historical record. Additionally, archivists must understand the potential for a multi-faceted archive, using a variety of sources to document those who have been hidden from the record. With each of these tasks at hand, an alliance with both historians and the community being served is crucial to successfully manage queer collections. Both historians and activists have the power to greatly improve the task of documenting queer life in the South, not only by guiding the archivist through the process of accurate cataloging and description, but also by facilitating conversations about the specific implications of the Southern region to queer historical endeavors.

### CHAPTER THREE: QUEER COLLECTIONS WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT

“The biggest revelation was how much courage it took for most of our interviewees to talk to us,” said Iris Buhl, chair of the Brooks Fund History Project, a queer oral history project in Nashville, TN. “The old fears are still very deeply engrained in so many of them, even if they are leading relatively open lives now.”<sup>1</sup> Documenting the voices of those who have led hidden lives is crucial not only to understanding the cultural power dynamics of the past, but also to gain perspective on the present. Queer archives provide a space for a shared heritage, a collective identity, and a community-defined historical narrative. For queer people who have lived in silence and have had the phrase “don’t ask, don’t tell”<sup>2</sup> entrenched in their consciousness, oral history offers an opportunity to reclaim their voices. In addition to making a contribution to the historical record, queer oral history is also an end to the archival silence. As discussed in Chapter Two, oral history as a methodology is vital to queer Southern scholarship because of its unique ability to capture individual lives, sensitive and personal information, and to provide a voice to the previously voiceless. Moreover, this methodology speaks to the legacy of an oral tradition in the South.

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1. “History Project,” The H. Franklin Brooks Philanthropic Fund, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, <http://www.cfmt.org/explore/initiatives/h-franklin-brooks-philanthropic-fund/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

2. “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was a Clinton Administration policy for gays and lesbians in the military that began in 1993 and ended in 2011. Under this order, queer people in the military could not disclose their sexuality. It was also viewed as a protective measure because supervisors could no longer investigate servicemen or women for perceived homosexual acts.

Many Southern archives often do not have frameworks of activist organizations from the pre-Stonewall homophile era or the post-Stonewall gay and lesbian social movements upon which to build queer archival collections. This lack of a documentary record—specifically a record that was created by queer people, rather than medical or legal records that document the discrimination and policing of queer people—creates an opportunity for oral histories to fill this archival void. In Southern cities like Atlanta and Durham where activist organizations have been working for decades, archival representation mirrors that of New York and San Francisco with a focus on activism and community leaders, rather than collections that reflect the plurality of Southern regional experiences. That is not to say that contemporary activist and community organizations that exist in many Southern areas do not play an essential role in developing queer collections. As these queer community organizations emerge in the South, they contribute to the process of archival development by creating their own oral history projects, or by establishing a relationship with publicly-funded institutions or university archives to insure their community's documentation.

Chapters One and Two established a theoretical framework for queer archives in the South, and this chapter places existing queer collections in this context and offers recommendations for improvement. The bias toward urban, activist-oriented queer history is a thread that runs through queer historiography and archival representation. Archives in the South are not immune to this bias, as many of the queer collections that exist in the region were developed as extensions of Civil Rights collections, and therefore focus on activist leaders and organizations. While Civil Rights activism took place across the South, in both rural and metropolitan areas, much of the documented queer activist

organizing in the South occurred in urban areas. Therefore, placing queer collections in the context of Civil Rights collections results in less representation from both rural and non-activist queer voices. Although documenting gay liberation activism in the South is necessary, those who have not participated in community or political organizing, or who live in rural areas of the region, continue to be marginalized in the historical record. Additionally, when power structures in society are replicated within queer activist organizations, like limited African-American or trans\* leadership, those power dynamics translate to limited African-American or trans\* inclusion in the archival record. For the purpose of this examination, queer collections are defined as an intentionally curated grouping of records that has been selected to fill in the gaps of the archival record. Many archival institutions house evidence of queer life that is scattered throughout various collections because, of course, sexuality and gender are not the only means of self-identification. However, deliberately developing collections around the central topic of gender and sexuality facilitates a re-examination of the ways in which marginalized people have been excluded from the record.

Locating queer collections in the South is currently a challenging task, despite efforts from the archival community. Web-based efforts to provide lists of queer collections improve accessibility, but are also difficult to maintain and can quickly become outdated without constant attention. The Society of American Archivists' Lavender Legacies Guide, a guide to queer collections in the United States, is a project of the Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable.<sup>3</sup> The project describes itself as “the first

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3. “Lavender Legacies Guide: Introduction,” Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable, The Society of American Archivists, <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/>

formal and comprehensive guide to primary source material relating to the history and culture of lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgendered (LBGT) people held by repositories in North America,” and has been created to “facilitate the continued study of the history and culture of a marginalized people traditionally ignored and sometimes deliberately hidden from researchers by mainstream institutions.”

Starting in 1996, members of the LAGAR Directory Committee contacted repositories to create a list of collections with queer content, which have been arranged geographically in the guide. An updated committee was appointed in 2011. Listings for Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina are included, but due to a lack of updates, the information about the collections is not accurate. For example, the section on Georgia only lists the Atlanta History Center, leaving out Emory and Georgia State’s collections, and Louisiana’s section only lists Tulane. The guide has a comments feature, where comments have been posted asking how to update information on the website.<sup>4</sup>

Specifically for oral histories, the LGBTQ History Digital Collaboratory was established in 2014 through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.<sup>5</sup> The project’s mission is to connect the queer oral history collections in North America, and to provide assistance with digitizing material for online accessibility. The project’s “Oral History Hub” is a list of collections in North America, however many of

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lesbian-and-gay-archives-roundtable-lagar/lavender-legacies-guide-introduction#.V1GUIJMrLOE (accessed May 26, 2016).

4. Comment by Leon Miller of Tulane University in regards to Tulane’s listing, <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/lesbian-and-gay-archives-roundtable-lagar/lavender-legacies-guide-united-states-louisiana#.V1GWoJMrLOE> (accessed May 26, 2016).

5. “About,” LGBTQ History Digital Collaboratory, <http://lgbtqdigitalcollaboratory.org/about-us/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

the collections in the South are not included. While these guides can be helpful resources, the inaccurate listing information is a misrepresentation of the archival material that is available in the South.

To ascertain the current state of southern queer archives, this chapter examines LGBT collections in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana in terms of the following characteristics: the utilization of oral history to fill in the gaps of the historical record, the inclusion of rural and non-activist voices, and the archive's engagement with the queer community. A discussion of web-based initiatives highlights the potential for improved accessibility and increased community involvement. Research for this chapter also included repositories in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama; however, no queer collections could be found in those states. The Brooks Fund History Project in Tennessee is presented as an example of these queer collection characteristics in action in a state that previously did not have any queer collections. This chapter concludes with recommendations for improving Southern queer collections.

### **Building on Activist Foundations**

In the South, social justice movements of the 1970s like gay liberation and the feminist and environmental movements have roots in the Civil Rights Movement of the previous decades. Many of the queer collections in the South have developed queer collections in the context of the Long Civil Rights Movement, which acknowledges the intersectionality of discrimination.<sup>6</sup> The Triangle Research Libraries Network, a

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6. Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005).

consortium of university libraries in North Carolina, describes their Long Civil Rights Movement digitization project's mission to "broaden and deepen the traditional understanding of the civil rights movement as a 1960s-era American phenomenon; it stretches the movement's timeline to include its origins and its aftermath (1930-1980s), and connects it with contemporary controversies such as school resegregation, environmental and economic justice, with related efforts for social justice such as the women's and gay rights movements."<sup>7</sup> Whereas major American cities like New York and Los Angeles have a history of early concerted gay activist efforts in the 1950s through the 1970s, cities in the South experienced the emergence of queer activism later, with some early organizing efforts in the 1970s, and a growing movement with the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. This organized activist history in the South is documented through more traditional archival materials like manuscript collections of personal papers and organizational records in Southern cities, especially in archives that already have established Civil Rights collections.

Educational institutions across North Carolina in Boone, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Asheville, and Durham provide the backbone for North Carolina's queer collections, which generally fit into established Civil Rights collecting efforts. Because of the connections to Civil Rights collections, activists and community leaders in North Carolina's cities are represented in manuscript collections more so than those who were

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7. "Content, Context, and Capacity: A Collaborative Large-Scale Digitization Project on the Long Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina," Triangle Research Libraries Network, <http://www2.trln.org/ccf/content.php> (accessed July 2, 2016).

not engaged in queer activism.<sup>8</sup> For example, in Charlotte, the Sue Henry Papers document her mayoral candidacy and political activism, as well as her bookstore, Rising Moon Books & Beyond, a lesbian bookstore and queer community gathering place that closed in 1998.<sup>9</sup> In addition to bookstores, churches in the South have been important sites for LGBT community building. The Belk Library Special Collections at Appalachian State University holds the records of Boone's Christ's Church United, a church that was originally founded in 1992 as part of the Metropolitan Community Church denomination. The finding aid notes that at the time, "it was the only church in the area to accept and advocate for members of the LGBT community," and that "pastor Cindy Long (1960-) was at the time the only openly lesbian minister of a Christian church in Watauga County."<sup>10</sup> The Metropolitan Community Church was an important means of community support and acceptance in the South. It served as a familiar venue for engagement and social activity, and also validated members of the queer community

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8. Joseph A. Herzenberg Papers finding aid, Southern Historical Collection, [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Herzenberg,Joseph\\_A.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Herzenberg,Joseph_A.html) (accessed May 26, 2016); Carol Duin Collection of LGBTQ Materials finding aid, Ramsey Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Asheville, NC, [http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/duin\\_carol\\_LGBTQ/default\\_duin\\_carol.html](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/duin_carol_LGBTQ/default_duin_carol.html) (accessed May 26, 2016); Linda Lawyer writings and memorabilia finding aid, Murrey Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, [https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/linda-lawyer-writings-and-memorabilia-1988-1992/oclc/937714706&referer=brief\\_results](https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/linda-lawyer-writings-and-memorabilia-1988-1992/oclc/937714706&referer=brief_results) (accessed May 26, 2016).

9. Sue Henry Papers finding aid, Murrey Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, [https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/sue-henry-papers-1992-2002/oclc/937704084&referer=brief\\_results](https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/sue-henry-papers-1992-2002/oclc/937704084&referer=brief_results) (accessed May 26, 2016).

10. Boone Christ's Church United records finding aid, Special Collections at Belk Library, <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/findingaids/ac880> (accessed May 26, 2016).

who had been ostracized from their churches of origin due to their sexuality.<sup>11</sup> This collection is also notable because Boone is a small town in the mountains, not a major urban city, and therefore provides an example of community-building and queer life outside of metropolitan areas.

The Rubenstein Library Special Collections at Duke University in Durham has extensive queer collections that document the city of Durham and extend to other parts of the Southeastern region, particularly in regards to women's sexuality and gender expression. Collections with queer content became part of the collecting mission in 1988, when author and feminist activist Sallie Bingham endowed a women's studies archivist position in the Special Collections library. Records that relate to activism and community organizing in the Durham area include: the records of the Lesbian Health Resource Center, which was a community-based organization that provided health advice and workshops for lesbians; the Triangle Business and Professional Guild records document the professional association's goal of providing positive role models for the gay and lesbian community in business and charitable pursuits from 1970 until 2006; the records of Triangle Community Works! document groups within the coalition starting in the 1970s, such as ASPYN (A Safer Place Youth Network), The Gay and Lesbian Helpline, P-FLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and RRNGLE (Raleigh Religious Network for Gay and Lesbian Equality); the records of OutRight, an organization that worked in the Triangle area in the 1990s to support LGBT youth and young people; and the personal papers of Mandy Carter, a Durham-based black lesbian

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11. John Howard, *Men Like That*, 231.

activist.<sup>12</sup> Collections related to statewide queer issues in North Carolina include the North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project records, the records of Front Page newspaper for LGBT North and South Carolinians, and the Tarheel Leather Club Newsletters.<sup>13</sup> As part of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture's collecting mission, Duke's library has the LGBT History Collection, the Lesbian and Gay Pulp Fiction Collection, and the Zines Collection. Duke also has collections that relate to other states in the region and the South in general. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Archives document lesbian activism and communities in the Southeast beginning in 1973.<sup>14</sup> When the Alliance disbanded in 1994, the book collection was kept in Atlanta at Emory University and a community library, and the remaining materials, such as organizational records and periodicals were purchased by Duke. The Women's and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Movements Periodicals Collection contains

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12. Guide to the Lesbian Health Resource Center records, Rubenstein Library, Duke University, Durham, NC, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/lhrc/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Alliance of Queer Undergraduates at Duke records, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uaaquaduke/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Preliminary Guide to the Triangle Business and Professional Guild Records, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/tbpg/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Triangle Community Works records, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/trianglecommunityworks/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Preliminary Guide to the OutRight Records, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/outright/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Mandy Carter Papers, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/cartermandy/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

13. Guide to the North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project Records, Rubenstein Library, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/nclghp/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Preliminary Guide to the Front Page Records, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/front/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Tarheel Leather Club Newsletters, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/tarheelleather/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

14. Guide to the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Archives, Rubenstein Library, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/alfa/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

material produced by and for the women's rights and gay rights activist communities across the country.<sup>15</sup> The records of the Southerners on New Ground (SONG) organization document efforts beginning in 1993 to connect LGBT people in the Southern region "who believe in liberation across all lines of race, class, culture, gender and sexuality."<sup>16</sup> The personal papers of Dan Kirsch, Dorothy Allison, and Minnie Bruce Pratt document Southern gay activists in the arts, as Kirsch was a theater director, Allison was an author, and Pratt is a poet and essayist.<sup>17</sup> In addition to Duke's collections, Durham's queer activism is evident at the Durham County Public Library's LGBTQ Collection, which documents significant events for the queer community in the city of Durham, mainly between 1981 and 2015, through material from various donors.<sup>18</sup> Through Duke's extensive collections and the public library, both manuscript collections and oral histories are used as to document the queer community across lines of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Like North Carolina, Virginia's universities also offer collections related to gay activism and community organizing. Collections at the James Branch Cabell Library at

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15. Guide to the Women's and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Movements (LGBT) Periodicals Collection, Rubenstein Library, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/wlgbtpc/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

16. Preliminary Guide to Southerners on New Ground records, Rubenstein Library at Duke University, Durham, NC, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/song/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

17. Guide to the Dan Kirsch papers, Rubenstein Library, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/kirschd/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Dorothy Allison Papers, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/allisondorothy/> (accessed May 26, 2016); Guide to the Minnie Bruce Pratt Papers, <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/prattminniebruce/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

18. LGBTQ Collection finding aid, Durham County Public Library, <https://durhamcountylibrary.org/ncc/archives/lgbtq-collection/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia document Richmond's early LGBT community organizing efforts between 1974 and 1988. Other collections that document later activism in the area include the Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (1990-2005), the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network Richmond Chapter (2000-2005), the Richmond Lesbian and Gay Pride Coalition Records (1988-1993), and the Central Virginia Gay and Lesbian Publications Collection (1990-2005). The university also houses records of the Richmond Triangle Players, a theater group that put on productions with gay content from 1992 until 2007. The University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia houses the Rita Mae Brown Papers. Brown is a writer, known for her 1973 novel with a lesbian character, *Rubyfruit Jungle*. Brown is also an activist who was a founder of the Redstockings Radical Feminist Group and a co-founder of the Radical Lesbians, Lavender Menace, and a communal living project called the Furies Collective. The Mark A. Weber Collection on Lambda Horizon at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia documents student campus activism from 1971 until 1991, particularly focusing on the AIDS education committee materials.<sup>19</sup>

New Orleans, Louisiana also has a documented activist and community-organizing legacy. The manuscript collections at Tulane University, including the library's special collections, the Newcomb College Institute, and the Amistad Research Center, contain evidence of queer culture in New Orleans. The Amistad Research Center houses the *Impact* Collection, records from a New Orleans gay and lesbian community newspaper, and the "Just for the Record" Collection, records from a gay and lesbian

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19. Mark A. Weber Collection on Lambda Horizon finding aid, Virginia Tech Special Collections, <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/viblbv00016.xml> (accessed May 26, 2016).

weekly cable access television show that aired from 1987 until 1993.<sup>20</sup> Newcomb College's particularly unique collection is the Drag King Collection, which "covers drag king culture in New Orleans, in the United States, at Tulane and Newcomb, includes photos of drag shows, event posters, zines, magazines, etc. relating to queer life" from 1914 to 2007.<sup>21</sup> Tulane houses the records of the LGBT Community Center of New Orleans, which has served as "a social, political, and support center for New Orleans' queer population" since 1992.<sup>22</sup> Also at Tulane, the records of the Louisiana Lesbian and Gay Political Action Caucus, which worked for equality in the state constitution starting in 1980, extend beyond the urban center of New Orleans. The group was centered in Alexandria, Louisiana, and also had branches in Acadiana, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans. Activists for gay rights in New Orleans are documented in personal papers at the Amistad Research Center and Newcomb College.<sup>23</sup> The finding aid of for the Phyllis

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20. *Impact* Collection finding aid, Amistad Research Center, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=932&q=impact> (accessed May 26, 2016); Just for the Record collection finding aid, Amistad Research Center, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=924&q=just+for+the+record> (accessed May 26, 2016).

21. Drag King Collection finding aid, Newcomb Archives, [http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Drag\\_King\\_Collection](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Drag_King_Collection) (accessed May 27, 2016).

22. LGBT Community Center of New Orleans records finding aid, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University Special Collections, <http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=813> (accessed May 26, 2016).

23. Larry Bagneris Papers finding aid, Amistad Research Center, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=297&q=larry+bagneris> (accessed May 26, 2016); John D. Rawls Papers finding aid, Amistad Research Center, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=1426&q=john+d+rawls> (accessed May 26, 2016); Tee A. Corinne Collection finding aid, Newcomb Archives, [http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Corinne\\_Tee\\_A](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Corinne_Tee_A) (accessed May 26, 2016); Phyllis Parun Papers

Parun Papers at Newcomb College notes that this collection is notable because gay and lesbian community papers are particularly difficult to locate in other archives in New Orleans. While records of queer people who were not actively involved in political and social organizing are minimal in New Orleans, the records of queer people who lived outside of the city are even more difficult to locate. One exception to this statement is the Skip Ward Papers at Tulane, which bridges the gap between urban activism and rural areas by providing documentation of queer activism outside of the urban core. Ward lived in Alexandria, Louisiana, and was “one of the pioneering members of LGBTQ activism in Louisiana” in the 1970s. His work focused mainly on queer people who lived in rural areas and religious groups, which harkens back to two of John Howard’s defining characteristics of the neighboring state of Mississippi: rural and religious.<sup>24</sup> The finding aid notes that Ward’s efforts “efforts are linked to nearly every queer activist group in Louisiana and many others nationwide.”<sup>25</sup>

The collections in New Orleans fail to represent the city’s diverse queer community with limited documentation of trans\* people and people of color. Additionally, the collections in New Orleans have thus far omitted a critical event in American LGBT history: the UpStairs Lounge attack. In 1973, thirty-two people were killed in an act of arson at a French Quarter bar. The attack occurred while members of the Metropolitan Community Church denomination were gathering for services at the

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finding aid, Newcomb Archives, [http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Parun\\_Phyllis3](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Parun_Phyllis3) (accessed May 27, 2016).

24. John Howard, “Introduction” in *Carryin’ On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, 5.

25. Skip Ward papers finding aid, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University Special Collections, <http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=815> (May 26, 2016).

club. Until the Pulse nightclub attack in Orlando on June 12, 2016, the UpStairs Lounge attack was the deadliest attack on a gay establishment.<sup>26</sup> Archival materials documenting the attack would place the event in context and contribute to historical understanding of this challenging part of New Orleans's history. Typically the response to tragic events like this is a galvanization of the community, such as the mobilization of the LGBT community in Atlanta during the AIDS crisis, and the response of the New Orleans LGBT community could possibly be an important marker of the development of queer organizing in the area.

Atlanta, Georgia is another important site of queer activism in the South. Wesley Chenault, who was previously an archivist at the Kenan Research Center, defines Atlanta, Georgia as “the southern regional center for LGBT culture” since the 1960's.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the headquarters of the Centers for Disease Control is in Atlanta, which made Atlanta a pivotal city during the AIDS crisis, and increased activist engagement and visibility in the area.<sup>28</sup> Two defining characteristics of Atlanta's queer history are the racially diverse population with a large African-American community, and the lesbian-feminist movement that started in the 1970s. Organizational records at the Kenan

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26. Diane Anderson-Minshall, “Remembering the Worst Mass Killing of LGBT People in U.S. History,” *The Advocate*, June 24, 2013, <http://www.advocate.com/crime/2013/11/15/remembering-worst-mass-killing-lgbt-people-us-history?page=0,4> (accessed June 29, 2016).

27. Wesley Chenault, “The Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History,” *Perspectives on History* from the 2007 supplement to the 121st Annual Meeting, Dec. 2006, <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2006/0612/07AMSupplement/07AMSup19.cfm> (accessed May 2016).

28. Maureen McGavin, “Emory University's MARBL Expands LGBT Collections,” Emory News Center, June 10, 2013, [http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress\\_lgbt\\_marbl\\_exhibit/campus.html](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress_lgbt_marbl_exhibit/campus.html) (accessed May 26, 2016).

Research Center, part of the Atlanta Historical Society's non-profit Atlanta History Center, include the Atlanta chapter of Black and White Men Together, a national association of gay men that sought to end racial and cultural discrimination. The Kenan Research Center's collections on social clubs, discotheques, church records, and queer publications document the development of Atlanta's gay culture in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>29</sup> Also at the Kenan Research Center, the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Serial Collection contains local and regional LGBT publications produced by the community from the 1970 through 2004, and the *Southern Voice* records preserves issues of the weekly independent publication for Atlanta's LGBT community.

Like the manuscript collections at the Kenan Research Center, the special collections at the libraries of Emory University and Georgia State University also showcase Atlanta's status as the hub of gay culture and activism in the South. Georgia State University's holdings include numerous collections of personal papers from Atlanta-based activists, some highlights of which are: Frank Abbott, who is an original member of the Radical Faeries, a group that promotes sexuality, radical spirituality, and community; Lorraine Fontana, who was a member of the Atlanta Lesbian-Feminist Alliance; Richard Rhodes, who was the first openly gay delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1988; and Terri Wilder, who was involved in AIDS activism with ACT-UP and the Hope Clinic for AIDS research at Emory.<sup>30</sup> Organizational records in the collection include: an all-male gay clogging group, Jim Blythe Buffalo Chips;

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29. See Appendix B.

30. "Manuscript Collections at GSU," LGBTQIQA Studies: Primary Sources, <http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611> (accessed May 23, 2016).

EstroFest Productions, which produced arts programming that celebrated women; Gay Spirit Visions, a spiritual group that held conferences and retreats; the Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia, Inc., which is an association of legal professionals who oppose discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; and the Atlanta Gay Center records, which began serving the Atlanta area in 1976.<sup>31</sup>

The Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library at Emory University in Atlanta has made a concerted effort to build their queer material into a consolidated collection, and to acquire more queer collections. The LGBT Collection accompanies their existing collection strengths: social justice movements and civil rights in the Atlanta area.<sup>32</sup> Through donations to fund their LGBT Collection, the Library's goals are to "fund a permanent LGBT archivist position, purchase unique materials for the collection, build an LGBT oral history program, create digital access to the collection, present community exhibitions, provide grants for visiting scholars and graduate students to use the collection, and host lectures, readings, and performances."<sup>33</sup> The current collection is divided into three categories: Politics and Activism, LGBT Culture, and HIV/AIDS Crisis and Community Public Health. Additionally, the collection contains 924 titles of

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31. "Manuscript Collections at GSU," LGBTQIQA Studies: Primary Sources, <http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611> (accessed May 23, 2016).

32. Maureen McGavin, "Emory University's MARBL Expands LGBT Collections," Emory News Center, June 10, 2013, [http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress\\_lgbt\\_marbl\\_exhibit/campus.html](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress_lgbt_marbl_exhibit/campus.html) (accessed May 26, 2016).

33. "LGBT Collections," Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University, <http://rose.library.emory.edu/collections/modern-politics/lgbt.html> (accessed May 26, 2016).

gay erotica in paperback from the 1960s and 1970s, many of which are very rare.<sup>34</sup>

Within these three categories, the goal of the LGBT Collection is “document the work of activists, organizations, and trailblazing political figures to achieve equality” through documentary material produced by the community.<sup>35</sup>

Cities like Durham, Chapel Hill, New Orleans, Atlanta, Richmond, and Nashville each have a legacy of Civil Rights activism, and they also have collections of LGBT activism that fall within the expanded notion of the modern Civil Rights Movement. In Birmingham, Alabama, another pivotal location for Civil Rights activism, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute featured a photography exhibit in 2012 titled “Living In Limbo” that documented lesbian families living in the deep South.<sup>36</sup> However, Civil Rights activism in a given Southern area does not necessarily create a natural space for queer collections. Jackson, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee, for example, were both hubs of Civil Rights action. Both cities have historical institutions and university collections dedicated to the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Yet, the archives in these cities have not expanded their collections like Duke University or Emory University. This is not an argument that queer collections should be incorporated into Civil Rights collections, but rather an observation that existing Civil Rights collections do not necessarily equate to opportunities for queer collecting. An engaged and

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34. Maureen McGavin, “Emory University’s MARBL Expands LGBT Collections,” Emory News Center, June 10, 2013, [http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress\\_lgbt\\_marbl\\_exhibit/campus.html](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress_lgbt_marbl_exhibit/campus.html) (accessed May 26, 2016).

35. “LGBT Collections,” Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University, <http://rose.library.emory.edu/collections/modern-politics/lgbt.html> (accessed May 26, 2016).

36. “Living in Limbo, Inc.,” <http://livinginlimbo.org/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

supportive queer community, on the other hand, is necessary for successful collection development. The Southern cities with queer collections also have established local queer organizations, statewide activist networks, and university curricula that support oral history projects.<sup>37</sup> Like collections in New York and San Francisco, most current Southern collections also rely on the social activism and organizational framework to build collections. Following this pattern from larger cities fails to recognize the contributions and testimonies of rural and non-activist Southerners, and also fails to capture the aspects of the South that differentiate the region from other regions of the country: John Howard's concepts of race, rurality, and religion.

### **Using Oral History to Fill in the Gaps**

Oral history projects have been utilized to reflect the plural queer communities, and to fill in the gaps in the historical record where only activism is documented. Creating oral history collections involves a level of archival activism to supplement traditional archival material like manuscript collections, or to create archival material where none currently exists. Oral history projects allow for the inclusion of non-activist, non-leadership, non-urban voices that are generally missing from the traditional manuscript collections at educational institutions and libraries in the South. They also create an opportunity to collect the histories of people who have been left out of the historical record across boundaries of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Many of the manuscript collections mentioned in the previous section have limited

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37. State-wide organizations: Equality North Carolina, Forum for Equality Louisiana, Equality Virginia, Georgia Equality, and Tennessee Equality Project.

material related to transgender and bisexual people, and despite connections to Civil Rights, many of the collections do not equitably consider the African-American experience of being queer in the South. Existing oral history projects, such as the Southern Oral History Project at Chapel Hill, the Gender and Sexuality Oral History Project at Georgia State University, campus community projects, and the Brooks Fund History Project in Nashville, demonstrate the potential for projects in other Southern cities.

The Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill started in 1973 with the goal of preserving the Southern past through “learning the South’s history from the people who have lived it, who have staked their lives and values in it, and who are eager to supplement the historical record with the vitality of their own accounts.”<sup>38</sup> This program presents an important opportunity to document people who would otherwise not be a part of the historical record, not only in North Carolina, but across the Southern region. The interviews are available through the University of North Carolina’s Southern Historical Collection. Series within the program’s collection that contain evidence of Southern queer life include The Long Civil Rights Movement, Southern Communities: Listening for a Change, Southern Women: Women’s Leadership and Grassroots Activism, and LGBTQ Life in the South. The interviews in these series were collected between 1993 and 2011. The Long Civil Rights Movement’s Gender and Sexuality series “explores how the South played a critical yet contradictory role in shaping both the women’s movement and the gay liberation movement,” and how

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38. “About,” Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, <http://sohp.org/about-sohp/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

women's rights and gay rights activists participated in the African American civil rights movement in the South during the 1960s before championing issues of sexuality and gender equality.<sup>39</sup> Some of the interviews in the Long Civil Rights Movement's Oral History and the Modern South series also pertain to the gay, lesbian, and transgender community in North Carolina.<sup>40</sup> The History of Gay Men and Transgender People in the South series in Southern Communities: Listening for a Change collection were part of an undergraduate student project from 2000 through 2002 that focused on gay life in the South, particularly in North Carolina in the 1960s-1980s.<sup>41</sup> The Southern Women: Women's Leadership in Grassroots Activism project includes five interviews by Holloway Sparks from the 1990s with three lesbian activists living and working in North Carolina.<sup>42</sup> The collection LGBTQ Life in the South includes two series: the interviews

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39. U.11. Long Civil Rights Movement: Gender and Sexuality, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/U.11.%20Long%20Civil%20Rights%20Movement:%20Gender%20and%20Sexuality/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1> (accessed May 16, 2016).

40. U.13. Long Civil Rights Movement: Oral History and the Study of the Modern South, Southern Oral History Program, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/U.13.%20Long%20Civil%20Rights%20Movement:%20Oral%20History%20and%20the%20Study%20of%20the%20Modern%20South/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1> (accessed May 16, 2016).

41. K.2.7. Southern Communities: Listening for a Change: History of Gay Men and Transgender People in the South, Southern Oral History Program, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/K.2.7.%20Southern%20Communities:%20Listening%20for%20a%20Change:%20History%20of%20Gay%20Men%20and%20Transgender%20People%20in%20the%20South/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1> (accessed May 16, 2016).

42. G.2.3. Southern Women: Special Focus: Women's Leadership and Grassroots Activism, Southern Oral History Program, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/G.2.3.%20Southern%20Women:%20Special%20Focus:%20>

of E. Patrick Johnson for his book *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South*, and LGBTQ Activism in the North Carolina Triangle Area. Johnson's interviews discuss "when interviewees realized they were gay or not like other boys, the role of the church in their upbringing, geographic segregation in their town, gender roles at home, gay slang, coming out, college years, the impact of HIV/AIDS on their lives, and their decisions to continue to live in the South or to emigrate upon reaching adulthood," and the content "challenge[s] traditional stereotypes of black gay men as closeted or repressed and reveal how black gay men carve out a place for themselves within their communities in the South."<sup>43</sup> Similarly, at Duke University, the personal papers of authors John Howard and James T. Sears include oral histories collected by the authors as part of their historical research. The interviews in the LGBTQ Activism in the North Carolina Triangle Area series cover "the development of queer activism from social organizing in the early 1970s, to the beginning of statewide lobbying and political activism in the early 1990s, and to recent developments in North Carolina regarding pro-LGBTQ laws such as the North Carolina School Violence Prevention Act and anti-LGBTQ legislation such as Amendment One."<sup>44</sup>

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Women's%20Leadership%20and%20Grassroots%20Activism/field/projec/mode/exact/co  
nn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1 (accessed May 26, 2016).

43. W.2. LGBTQ Life in the South: Sweet Tea Interviews by E. Patrick Johnson, Southern Oral History Program, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/W.2.%20LGBTQ%20Life%20in%20the%20South:%20Sweet%20Tea%20IntervIEWS%20by%20E.%20Patrick%20Johnson/mode/exact/order/title> (accessed May 26, 2016).

44. W.1. LGBTQ Life in the South: LGBTQ Activism in the North Carolina Triangle Area, Southern Oral History Program, <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/W.1.%20LGBTQ%20Life%20in%20the%20South:%20LGB>

It is important to note that the Southern Oral History Program has incorporated queer oral histories into their larger goal of documenting Southern history and has recognized queer history as an important part of the Southern narrative. Documentation of the visible and vibrant southern queer communities is crucial to understanding the queer experience in the region, and North Carolina's legacy of queer activism is reflected in the collections of the state's universities. While activism is the central focus of many of these oral history collections, the Southern Oral History Project's collections cover a diverse population, including African-American participants and representation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. The collections could benefit from the inclusion of more rural and non-activist voices so that oral history can fill in the gaps of already well-documented activism in the state, and expanding the collection in this way is well within the scope of the project.

The Gender and Sexuality Oral History Project, which is affiliated with the Archives for Research on Women and Gender at Georgia State University, was established in 2011 to “document LGBTQ history in Atlanta, Georgia and the South through interviews with activists and leaders in grassroots movements as well as established organizations and public offices.”<sup>45</sup> While some of the interviews were specifically collected for the purpose of the Gender and Sexuality Oral History Project, others were part of other projects, but met the criteria for inclusion in the collection. An

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TQ%20Activism%20in%20the%20North%20Carolina%20Triangle%20Area/mode/exact/order/title (accessed May 26, 2016).

45. “About the Gender and Sexuality Oral History Project,” Georgia State University Special Collections and Archives, [http://research.library.gsu.edu/gender\\_sexuality](http://research.library.gsu.edu/gender_sexuality) (accessed May 2016).

example is The Touching Up Our Roots oral history project, where each of the participants were involved in gay rights activism in the Atlanta area and nationally. Another collection is from Gay Spirit Vision, which contains the oral histories of men who were part of the gay men's spiritual group. Many of the oral histories in the Gender and Sexuality Oral History Project focus on HIV/AIDS activism in Atlanta: Sarah Lopez is a bilingual psychologist in Atlanta who was an early responder to the needs of AIDS patients; Jennifer Carroll is an HIV-positive AIDS activist in Troup and Rockdale counties; and Andrew Wood is a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a charitable gay activist group, and has been involved in ACT-UP.<sup>46</sup> Atlanta's legacy of lesbian-feminist activism is also documented in the oral histories: Linda Bryant opened Charis Books, a feminist bookstore, in 1974 and established the community organization, Charis Circle, in the 1990s; Lorraine Fontana was one of the founders of the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance and DARI (Dykes for the Second American Revolution); and Sonia Johnson was a radical feminist writer and speaker who was raised Mormon and was excommunicated from the church.<sup>47</sup> The Gender and Sexuality Oral History project complements Georgia State's manuscript collections in terms of the scope and content, and similarly, is focused on activism and community organizing efforts in the urban area. While this collection's focus on activism and grassroots efforts does not allow for the voices of rural and non-activists in Atlanta, future developments in this collection should

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46. "Manuscript Collections at GSU," LGBTQIA Studies: Primary Sources, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta, GA, <http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611> (accessed May 23, 2016).

47. Ibid.

include less documented groups like queer African-American activists and leaders in the transgender rights movement.

Although evidence of the queer communities and institutions in Atlanta is available at the Kenan Research Center, Emory University, and Georgia State University, Wesley Chenault acknowledges the lack of documentation of individual queer voices beyond the spectrum of activism, both in Atlanta and the South in general. An oral history project at the Kenan Research Center and the Atlanta Historical Society sought to correct this deficit. Curated by Chenault in 2004 with partial funding from the Georgia Humanities Council, “Atlanta’s Unspoken Past” is a collection that “focused on lesbian and gay history and culture in Atlanta prior to the explosion of gay rights movements that occurred in cities across the United States in the early 1970s, and provided the framework and foundation for a public exhibition in 2005, *The Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940-1970*.”<sup>48</sup> Topics covered in the interviews include: “backgrounds; coming out experiences; reasons for staying in, moving to, or away from Atlanta; recollections of same-sex relationships and local gay life; and ideas about community, race, gender, and religion, region, and sexuality.”<sup>49</sup> Participants in the project were mostly white, middle-class, Christian men who were born before World War II, and lived in Atlanta or the region for their adulthood or prior to the 1960s. This collection lacks female representation, as well as people of color. Chenault also worked with the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History to increase visibility

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48. Finding aid for Atlanta's Unspoken Past oral history recordings, VIS 178, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center.

49. Ibid

of Atlanta's African American LGBT community.<sup>50</sup> Atlanta has been the South's hub of queer activism since the 1970s, and documentation of the city's contributions to the gay liberation movement has been an archival priority. Queer life in the rest of the state of Georgia, particularly in rural areas, has not been adequately documented. The "Unspoken Past" collection marks a pivot toward collecting histories from before Atlanta was the hub of Southern gay culture, and provides an example of non-activist narratives that can be replicated for other parts of the state.

Just as oral histories complement traditional manuscript collections to document cities and regions, oral history projects on college campuses improve documentation of queer life in the microcosm of educational institutions. Campus oral history projects at Virginia Tech and Duke University have been used to supplement the organizational records of queer activism at college campuses. At Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, the LGBTQ Oral History Collection contains interviews with "influential members" of the Virginia Tech community.<sup>51</sup> The university archivist, a public history professor, and students of an oral history class conducted the interviews. Duke has a similar oral history collection, the Queering Duke History Project, which contains interviews collected from Duke alumni in 2014 as part of a larger exhibit on the queer history of the university.<sup>52</sup> The curator, Denzell Faison, notes that the impetus for the project was "to refute the

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50. Chenault, "The Unspoken Past."

51. Virginia Tech LGBTQ Oral History Collection finding aid, Virginia Tech Special Collections, <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/viblbv01834.xml> (accessed May 26, 2016).

52. "Oral Histories," Queering Duke History, Rubenstein Library at Duke University, Durham, NC, <http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/queer/intro/oralhistories> (accessed May 26, 2016).

prevailing theory that Duke University never actively discriminated against LGBTQ individuals.”<sup>53</sup> This collection is an example of archival activism in action: the project sought to correct an inaccurate representation in the University’s historical narrative. In addition to being an example of community engagement within a university community, this project is significant because of the concerted effort to reclaim the narrative by creating a collection that more accurately reflects the experiences of LGBT alumni. Oral history projects provide a unique opportunity to work with communities to reclaim their history.

### **Community Engagement**

In 2012, New Orleans community members Stewart Butler, Otis Fennell, and Mark Gonzales founded the Legacy Project to collect oral histories of queer people in the area. Although the project was short-lived due to a lack of resources, it morphed into the LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana, which promotes and encourages the preservation of LGBT material within existing collections in New Orleans. The LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana is an example of a community effort to increase accessibility in the state, with a listing of archives, libraries, and repositories with LGBT+ holdings.<sup>54</sup> Following the Society of American Archivists national conference in New Orleans in 2013, the LGBT+ Archives Project adopted this mission statement: “The mission of the

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53. “From the Curator,” *Queering the Duke History*, Duke University Libraries, <http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/queer/intro/curator> (accessed May 26, 2016).

54. “Current Archives, Libraries, & Repositories with LGBT+ Holdings,” *LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana*, <http://www.lgbtarchivesla.org/current-archives/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana is to promote and encourage the protection and preservation of materials that chronicle the culture and history of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community in Louisiana.”<sup>55</sup> The independent organization’s website serves as a portal to New Orleans institutions with queer archival holdings, and members of the group conduct site-visits and correspond with institutions to fulfill their mission. The project notes that they have no intention of establishing their own queer archive in Louisiana, but rather wish to work within the existing institutions to achieve their documentation goals. In this way, the LGBT+ Archives Project serves as a community liaison with institutions.

Rather than creating their own independent archives and libraries like New York City’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center or Baltimore’s William Way Community Center, many Southern community groups have chosen to incorporate their archival material into collections at mainstream institutions, or to work with mainstream institutions to create archival collections where they do not currently exist. Two examples of this trend are the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing and the Harriet Hancock LGBT Center in Columbia, South Carolina. The Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing was a community organization that worked with the Atlanta History Center in the 1990s to preserve Atlanta’s LGBT history.<sup>56</sup> This relationship provides an example of community engagement with a historical institution to document the history of the queer community, as discussed in Chapter Two. Now defunct, the Atlanta Lesbian

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55. “Mission, Purpose & History,” LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana, <http://www.lgbtarchivesla.org/mission-purpose/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

56. Tina Gianoulis, “Atlanta,” *gltq* (2006), [http://www.gltqarchive.com/ssh/atlanta\\_S.pdf](http://www.gltqarchive.com/ssh/atlanta_S.pdf) (accessed May 26, 2016).

and Gay History Thing's records are part of the Atlanta History Center, and include personal papers of gay and lesbian activists in the area. The South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina contains records of the Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement in Columbia, South Carolina, including publications and other materials donated by the Harriet Hancock LGBT Center and other donors.<sup>57</sup> The collection contains oral histories from community leaders and organizational records from a variety of groups across the state, including both the South Carolina Pride Movement and the South Carolina Black Pride Movement. Literature and non-fiction, periodicals, and publications that were formerly a part of the Sam Nichols Memorial Library at the Harriet Hancock Center are now a part of the University of South Carolina's collection.

Possibly due to lack of resources on the part of Southern community centers and organizations, independent, grassroots archival projects have not developed in the South like they have in bi-coastal urban cities. Unlike their bi-coastal counterparts, queer communities in the South seemingly are more likely to trust mainstream institutions with the preservation of their history. Another possible explanation for this trend is related to the increased hostility toward LGBT people in the South: social acceptance and assimilation into the broader narrative is valued as a marker of success in the Southern queer leadership more so than in bi-coastal cities with a longer history of developing an independent queer culture. Although these theories are conjectures, the trend remains true—Southern queer communities have shown a willingness to work with archival institutions. In order to facilitate accurate and respectful documentation of the Southern

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57. South Carolina Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Collection finding aid, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, <https://library.sc.edu/socar/mnscripts/GLBTQlist.pdf> (accessed May 26, 2016).

queer experience, mainstream institutions should work in partnership with community groups to improve the quality of the historical record.

### **The Brooks Fund History Project**

In contrast to many of the collections in other Southern cities, Nashville's Brooks Fund History Project is an example of a grassroots activist effort to fill in the gaps of Nashville's historical record to include queer voices. The H. Franklin Brooks Philanthropic Fund was established in 1995 with the mission to "encourage the inclusion, acceptance and recognition of Middle Tennessee's lesbian and gay citizens by supporting a variety of nonprofit programs in Middle Tennessee enhancing the quality of life for the LGBT community and building bridges between all segments of the community."<sup>58</sup> The fund was created in honor of H. Franklin Brooks, an educator at Vanderbilt University who promoted a more tolerant campus environment through the inclusion of gays and lesbians in the school's anti-harassment policy, as well as the sponsorship of the campus's first lesbian and gay student organization.<sup>59</sup> The Brooks Fund states, "We were founded for the purpose of building bridges between the LGBT community and the community-at-large, and between local nonprofits and donors committed to issues of tolerance and education."<sup>60</sup> The fund provides grants to organizations that support the queer community in the area. Past recipients of Brooks Fund grants include MT

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58. "About," The H. Franklin Brooks Philanthropic Fund, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, <http://www.cfmt.org/explore/initiatives/h-franklin-brooks-philanthropic-fund/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

Lambda's LGBT+ College Conference at Middle Tennessee State University, The Oasis Center's Just Us queer youth program, and Jewish Family Service's same-sex parent adoption services. A key component of the History Project's success is the philanthropic nature of the Brooks Fund. Where other similar projects, like Louisiana's Legacy Project for example, were not seen to fruition due to a lack of resources, the History Project benefits from the financial and community support of the Brooks Fund.

The Brooks Fund History Project is a collection of oral histories of self-identified gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Middle Tennesseans. This collection provides an example of a community archive that allows queer people to reclaim their history in a way that allows individual voices to be heard. Moreover, the Brooks Fund does not privilege community leaders and social activists, but rather encourages the stories of ordinary people who might otherwise not be a part of the documentary record. According to the authors of "Interference Archive," community archives allow the creators to "create a space to represent and redefine their own lived history."<sup>61</sup> Rather than being defined by the records of community activism in the post-Stonewall era, the Brooks Fund seeks to document the lives of people living in the area in a way that moves beyond politics to capture the lives of everyday people. The Brooks Fund History Project shows how this kind of community-based endeavor can be successfully accomplished to achieve this goal. The Fund's 2014 Annual Report describes the importance of this project for the community, both past and present: "These stories would provide perspective to the community; a community that has changed for the better in many ways and yet still has a

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61. Alycia Sellie, Jesse Goldstein, Molly Fair, and Jennifer Hoyer, "Interference Archive: a free space for social movement culture," *Archival Science* 4 (2015): 455.

great distance to go to achieve equality for the GLBT community.”<sup>62</sup> The collection was created with the financial backing of the Brooks Fund, support from members of the Vanderbilt University community in honor of H. Franklin Brooks, and a relationship with the Metropolitan Nashville Public Library.

The History Project was spearheaded by Iris Buhl, a volunteer who was involved in every step of the process, from raising money to writing the interview questions.<sup>63</sup> She was inspired to start the project after the death of her friend Herbert Fox, a Nashvillian who started Nashville’s society magazine, *nFocus*, and a writer for the television show *Hee Haw*.<sup>64</sup> Buhl recognized that a generation of gay Nashvillians was passing without their stories being documented, and she sought to correct this problem. Buhl has lived in Nashville for seventy-three years, where she attended George Peabody College, and has spent her career advocating for underprivileged children and volunteering for a variety of community service organizations. For 18 years, Buhl worked for Nashville CARES, Nashville’s HIV/AIDS non-profit support organization that started in 1985.<sup>65</sup> She has served on the Advisory Board for the Brooks Fund since it was founded, and was

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62. The Brooks Fund, *2014 Annual Report* (Nashville, TN: The Community Foundation of Middle TN, 2014), 6.

63. *Ibid.*

64. Jim Ridley, “A remarkable new oral-history project documents LGBT life before Stonewall in Middle Tennessee,” *The Nashville Scene*, June 13, 2013, <http://www.nashvillescene.com/nashville/a-remarkable-new-oral-history-project-documents-lgbt-life-before-stonewall-in-middle-tennessee/Content?oid=3429916> (accessed May 26, 2016).

65. Bennett Robbins, “Metro Human Relations Commission garners new members,” *Out & About Nashville* (August 1, 2007), <http://www.outandabouthnashville.com/story/metro-human-relations-commission-garners-new#.V04gd5MrIZw> (accessed May 26, 2016); “About,” Nashville CARES, <http://www.nashvillecares.org/about/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

appointed to the Metro Nashville Human Relations Commission in 2007 to “provide community-wide education to lessen discrimination in public accommodations, employment, financial services and housing as well as to promote respect for diversity.”<sup>66</sup> Roger Moore, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt, was also involved in the project from the beginning. Robyn Smith was the project’s attorney, who wrote the legal releases and contracts, and led a team of pro bono attorneys to take care of copyright and privacy concerns after the interviews had been completed. Phil Bell, a producer, kept the focus on history rather than politics, and Dan Cornfield, a Vanderbilt sociologist served as a consultant.<sup>67</sup> Deidre Duker, also a producer, worked closely with the project to create a documentary with the oral history material.<sup>68</sup> The documentary is called *A Secret Only God Knows*, and it aired on Nashville Public Television in June 2015 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Brooks Fund.<sup>69</sup>

Members of the Brooks Fund History Project steering committee conducted the interviews between 2009 and 2014.<sup>70</sup> Eleven of the interviews are with gay men, five are with lesbians, two are with transgender women, three are with same-sex couples, and four

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66. Robbins, “Metro Human Relations Commission garners new members.”

67. The Brooks Fund, *2014 Annual Report*, 6; Ridley, “A remarkable new oral history project.”

68. The Brooks Fund, *2014 Annual Report*, 6.

69. “‘A Secret Only God Knows’ Documentary Premiere,” Upcoming Events, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, <http://www.cfmt.org/attend/event/185/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

70. “History Project,” The H. Franklin Brooks Philanthropic Fund, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, <http://www.cfmt.org/explore/initiatives/h-franklin-brooks-philanthropic-fund/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

are with straight observers.<sup>71</sup> The project required that interviewees be “30 years or older before 1969” and that they “had lived in Middle Tennessee for at least ten years prior to that.”<sup>72</sup> The year 1969 was chosen as the cut-off year because of the Stonewall events in New York City, which are often cited as the beginning of national attention to the gay liberation movement. The Brooks Fund’s focus on the pre-Stonewall era provides an opportunity to engage the histories of previously hidden voices—those who lived in the region prior to the social activism and community development that is more frequently documented in queer archival collections. The participation of older members of the community, most of whom were in their early seventies when they participated in the project, present an opportunity to understand the experiences of living both with and without community, and offer an important perspective that should be recorded while the generation is still able to do so. According to Buhl, “Gay and lesbian citizens of Middle Tennessee have a lot to tell us about what life was like for them fifty or sixty years ago. They were—and are—an integral part of the fabric of this community. Our knowledge of the history of Middle Tennessee is incomplete without their stories.”<sup>73</sup>

In the oral histories, participants discuss their relationships with their families, their experiences as young people learning about their sexuality, feelings of ostracism, and the ways in which they built their own communities, friends, and families. Self-realization and self-identification, including confusion and feeling alone, are part of many of the interviews. Participant Gail DuBois, who later owned a gay bookstore and a bar in

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71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

Nashville, described how she did not have the language to describe herself and her desires in her youth.<sup>74</sup> Through bars, the workplace, house parties, and churches, the interviewees found people like themselves in the city of Nashville. Many of the participants discuss Nashville's gay bars, as well as secret locations that were known only to the gay community. While the oral histories often discuss challenged familial relationships and painful experiences of intolerance and violence, the interviews generally contain more evidence of agency and creating one's own life—they are stories of survival and building community, rather than focusing on the difficulties they faced.<sup>75</sup> Phil Bell remarked, "More than one person I talked with told me they were accepted for who they were by friends and family, even back during the '40s and '50s, which surprised me."<sup>76</sup> Interviewees were selected through members of the Advisory Board "networking" in the community, and reflected a range of class, race, and education level.<sup>77</sup> Although the same number of potential interviewees declined as agreed to participate, only two interviewees eventually decided to not be included in the project, and some passed away before the project was completed.<sup>78</sup>

In 2015, the collection was donated to Special Collections at the Nashville Public Library, which already maintained a Civil Rights collection and reading room, so that Brooks Fund History Project could be accessible to the general public and used for

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74. As described by Gail DuBois during the panel discussion at the Nashville Public Library on Jan. 21, 2015.

75. Ridley, "A remarkable new oral history project."

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid; Panel discussion at the Nashville Public Library on Jan. 21, 2015.

research purposes. In addition to the videotaped oral histories, the collection also contains donations of ephemera that relates to the content of the videotaped interviews.<sup>79</sup> Because there were many legal aspects to the donation and public accessibility of the collection in regards to privacy concerns, the legal documents signed by participants were also donated as part of the collection. When the History Project was formally donated to the library on January 21, 2015, a well-publicized panel discussion of six people who were involved in the creation of the Brooks Fund History Project was held in a packed room at the Nashville Public Library. During the panel discussion, issues of the interviewees' desire for secrecy and privacy were addressed. The Advisory Board was cognizant of the importance of respecting the wishes of the participants in disseminating their life stories. The panel also discussed the process of finding participants. The Advisory Board found it challenging to find willing participants in the African American and Jewish communities, and more men agreed to talk than women. The Board also sought people who lived in rural areas outside of Nashville, rather than including only urban (or suburban) Nashville participants. The library expects to further develop the collection with additional materials.<sup>80</sup> This donation is referred to as "Phase I" with interviewees who were adults before Stonewall, and the next phase will include post-Stonewall histories of LGBT community development and activism in Nashville. As of June 2016, the Brooks Fund

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79. "History Project."

80. Brooks Fund History Project finding aid, H. Franklin Brooks Philanthropic Fund, Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Nashville Public Library Special Collections, <https://catalog.library.nashville.org/Record/.b22969263?searchId=9250566&recordIndex=1&page=1&searchSource=local> (accessed May 26, 2016).

History Project collection has yet to be opened to the public and is temporarily closed to researchers.

The History Project's donation to the Nashville Public Library raises questions about the relationship between community collections and mainstream archival institutions. Prior to the collection's donation, the oral histories were available to reporters and community members, and were used to create a documentary. Now that the collection is in the hands of the library, it is inaccessible to both the community and researchers. Despite promises made at the time of the collection's donation, the Nashville Public Library has not made the History Project a processing priority. While the closure is temporary, it represents the library's symbolic control over the community's history, which has returned to state of silence. Donating the collection to the library is a transfer of power, and requires faith on the part of the community organization that the mainstream institution will care for the material as promised. In "New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing Over to Handing On," the authors caution that, "In developing new custodial arrangements it is important for archives to consider the concerns of community archivists, who may have fears both about the implications of relinquishing control of their records and about the ongoing accessibility of material to community members."<sup>81</sup> Maintaining community archives without the assistance of mainstream institutions allows the community to maintain control over their history. From this perspective, community archivists joining forces with traditional archival repositories can be viewed as a means of assimilation. Joan

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81. Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing Over to Handing On," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, nos. 1-2 (2010): 64.

Nestle of the Lesbian Herstory Archives's statement exemplifies this position: "We take no money from the government, believing that such an action would be an exercise in neocolonialism, believing that the society that ruled us out of history should never be relied upon to make it possible for us to exist."<sup>82</sup> However, collaboration with mainstream institutions while still maintaining the community's historical integrity is possible—and arguably *imperative*. Queer history is a part of the Southern narrative, and should thus be contextualized in the broader historical narrative of mainstream institutional holdings.

Other oral history projects have documented Atlanta in a way that is somewhat similar to the Brooks Fund's documentation of Nashville's queer history. The Touching Up Our Roots collection at Georgia State provides a comparison to the History Project, as this collection also involved a community group outside of the archive that created the records independently, and then donated them to a mainstream archival institution. Where these collections diverge in their missions is that Touching Up Our Roots intentionally sought participants who were involved in gay rights activism, as opposed to the Brooks Fund's mission of interviewing people who lived in the area before the rise of activist groups. The "Atlanta's Unspoken Past" collection at the Atlanta History Center had a mission similar to that of the Brooks Fund, although the group of selected participants was smaller and less diverse than the Brooks Fund. The "Atlanta's Unspoken Past" collection was a project of the institution, rather than a donation from a community organization. The Brooks Fund History Project—regional oral histories created by the

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82. Joan Nestle, "The Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York," *Journal of Homosexuality* 34 (1998): 232.

community to document the pre-Stonewall era for institutional donation—is the only collection of its kind in the Southern region to date.

### **Web-Based Initiatives**

At The Brooks Fund History Project donation event, a representative of the library announced that a corresponding website would be released later in the year to facilitate use of the collection, and that it would be publicly available. An additional component of the website would be the ability for users to submit their own stories to be cataloged in the collection, which would increase community engagement and improve access and participation for rural LGBT people. Web-access to these oral histories outside of the South also improves the potential for the Southern voices to be included in the general American queer historical narrative. Although the History Project website has yet to be developed, a website as described would not only be beneficial to the Brooks Fund, but could also serve as model for encouraging community engagement for other similar collections in the region. Elizabeth Yakel and Ghetu Magia Krause have written about their experience using a web interface to crowd-source information for a “next generation finding aid” using Web 2.0 technologies for the Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections.<sup>83</sup> Benefits from this kind of web engagement include improved accessibility, collaboration between archivists and the community, and increased opportunity for the community to contribute to the writing of their history. Creating finding aids and archival descriptions evokes the archivist’s cultural bias through the application of “value laden

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83. Magia, Ghetu Krause and Elizabeth Yakel, “Interaction in Virtual Archives: The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections Next Generation Finding Aid,” *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2007): 282-314.

terms,” specifically in relation to outdated or insensitive sexuality-related terminology, which would be improved by the crowd-sourcing process.<sup>84</sup> Wendy Duff and Verne Harris also encourage engagement of the community in the description process in order to prevent the archivist’s bias or lack of cultural understanding from interfering with the record.<sup>85</sup> While community participation like that of Krause and Yakel’s project would improve accuracy and engagement for LGBT collections, the archivist would be faced with the additional task of removing hate speech or other negatively motivated interaction on the web-based interface. Often anonymity allows users to feel more inclined to use homophobic rhetoric. However, the ability to anonymously participate in an LGBT archival project via the internet might be a motivating factor for those who would otherwise not want their experiences to be public record, such as queer people living in small rural towns. Based on the mostly positive and affirming user comments on the websites for both the *Tennessean* and *Nashville Scene* articles on the Brooks Fund History Project, it is plausible that an interactive feature would encourage community building and a shared heritage, rather than providing a platform for derogatory comments or hate speech against the queer community. Monitoring the website would also alleviate these potential problems, and resources should be allocated to prioritize this project.

Another model for web-based archival projects is the *Kids in Birmingham 1963* collection, which focuses on the experience of the Civil Rights Movement from the perspective of bystanders rather than the activists. With a mission similar to that of the

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84. Randall Jimerson, “Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice,” *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2007): 279.

85. Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002).

Brooks Fund History Project, *Kids* explores an alternative narrative from the activist-oriented documentary record. In doing so, the collection “provides a broader understanding of great change in society and helps people place their own experiences in historical context.”<sup>86</sup> The authors describe the children in Birmingham during the Civil Rights Movement as “passive participants.”<sup>87</sup> Although they were not directly involved, they were greatly impacted by the events happening around them. The project is a “web-based hybrid heritage project” that “contains curated first-person accounts and educational tools.”<sup>88</sup> The website has a *Share Your Story* page for passive participants with possible starting phrases to help orient users to the process. The form also asks for demographic information (excluding race) and publication permission. With this methodology and the use of social media, news reports, and high school reunion lists for promotion, participant selection happens somewhat organically. Rather than the archivist identifying participants who qualify for inclusion in the collection, users find and participate in the project on their own. Because the project was not connected to an institution and participation was voluntary, participants felt comfortable contributing their stories. *Kids* is “neither a traditional community or a traditional archive,” which challenges the definitions and limitations of community archives.<sup>89</sup> Rather than using community resources to build archival collections, the Kids project is an example of how

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86. Sonia, Yaco, Ann Jimerson, Laura Caldwell Anderson, and Chanda Temple, “A web-based community-building archives project: a case study of *Kids in Birmingham 1963*,” *Archival Science* 4 (2015): 400.

87. *Ibid*, 401.

88. *Ibid*, 400.

89. *Ibid*, 416.

archival resources can be used to build community. “The initial goal was to offer storytellers a catharsis as they claimed their places in the history or sorted through their feelings about the roles they played.”<sup>90</sup> The authors point out the need for a way to contribute to projects like Kids anonymously, while still maintaining the truthfulness and accountability of their stories.<sup>91</sup> This concept and methodology could also be applied to Southern queer archives to document the experiences of those outside the activist arena in the queer community.

Entirely web-based archival collections offer another opportunity for community collections where collaboration with mainstream archival institutions is not feasible—or not desired. Online repositories like StoryCorps and Country Queers provide access to oral histories, as well as opportunities to contribute to their collection by recording oral histories at their StoryBooth locations. The StoryCorps website has a collection of LGBTQ stories, including oral histories from queer people in the South, which can be sorted by state. One example of the oral histories available from StoryCorps is Dick Titus and Zeek Taylor, who met in Memphis, TN in 1971 and live in Arkansas.<sup>92</sup> Titus and Taylor discuss keeping their relationship a secret in order to protect his family and his career. Because there are currently no queer collections in Arkansas, StoryCorps is an opportunity to collect these histories. Country Queers is a smaller oral history project that seeks to document “the diverse experiences of rural and small-town LGBTQI folks in the

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90. Ibid, 413.

91. Ibid, 420.

92. “Zeek Taylor and Dick Titus,” StoryCorps, <https://storycorps.org/listen/dick-titus-and-zeek-taylor-160306/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

U.S.A.”<sup>93</sup> Although the collection is not limited to the South, the southern states of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia are represented. The project is funded by donations and a Kickstarter campaign. On the website’s “About” section, Rachel Garringer describes how queer people living in rural areas are expected to travel to cities in order to find acceptance and community, but that many “country queers” want to remain in their rural homes. The mission of this project is to build an online presence to “document how experiences of country queerness are similar, and how they differ based on race, class, age, ability, gender identity, immigration status and other parts of our identities.”<sup>94</sup> The project has worked with organizations like Southerners On New Ground, the STAY Project of Appalachian Youth, and the USDA’s Rural Pride Campaign. While projects like StoryCorps and Country Queers are collecting individual oral histories that reflect the Southern queer experience, collections like the Brooks Fund document the narrative of a specific region, and provide opportunities not only for regional comparison, but also for acknowledgement of a shared regional heritage.

### **Recommendations for the Development of Southern Queer Archives**

The current archival collections the South record a legacy of queer activism in urban areas that is similar, yet perhaps a few decades later, to San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and other major cities in the United States. While a significant contribution to the Southern historical narrative, the South’s urban activism cannot be conflated as the norm across the region. Just because people in Atlanta were actively engaged in the

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93. “About,” Country Queers, <https://countryqueers.com/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

94. Ibid.

lesbian-feminist movement and the AIDS crisis does not mean that queer people living in rural Georgia could be vocal about their sexuality or gender identity. Urban cities in the South provide a significant foundation upon which to build Southern queer collections, yet Southern archives have a responsibility to include rural and non-activist testimonies that reflect the plural culture. Rather than looking to activist groups for documentation through their organization records or publications, archival repositories in the South can engage activist groups as community partners to develop collections that reflect a broader characterization of being queer in the South. In order to fulfill this mission, archivists must be aware of the strengths and limitations of both activist-oriented collecting missions and oral history as a methodology, and should create a regionally specific documentation strategy.

While activism-oriented collecting missions aid in the development of queer collections, the general focus on activist organizations and community leaders limits content of the collections. The focus on activism within the queer community, while a vital component of the queer historical narrative, excludes the voices of those who were not—for a variety of reasons—part of political or community organizing efforts. This privileges those who lived visibly and openly, and encourages a power dynamic within the queer community's documentary record. Those who engaged in activism and organizing seemingly deserved to be documented, or could be documented more easily, whereas those who did not remained in the evidentiary shadows. In writing about Jewish archives, Elisabeth Kaplan states, "Archivists seeking to balance the record, to incorporate authentic voices, to resolve the problem of the underdocumented, or even, sometimes, to celebrate diversity must reify identity, thereby making cultural differences

immutable and eliminating individuality, personality, and choice within the group in question.”<sup>95</sup> Similarly, queer archival collections tend to boil down the queer community to only activists, organizers, and entertainers, thereby painting a portrait of queer life that excludes people who did not have access to visible urban communities. Activism-focused collections also reflect more urban and suburban dwellers, rather than rural or small-town queer people, not to mention rural intentional queer communities like Short Mountain and Ida in Tennessee. In an effort to fill the void of queer historical documentation, many archival collections fail to document the complexity of the Southern queer experience.

However, the importance of documenting and recognizing these Southern queer organizing efforts should not be dismissed or overlooked. Those who have built and led queer communities, fostered supportive and inclusive environments, and worked for equality on local, regional, and national levels are crucial to the queer Southern narrative, and their voices deserve to be preserved as part of the Southern historical record. Additionally, living activists and community leaders can be critical resources in expanding the content of queer collections to capture a wider pool of participants. In states like Alabama and Mississippi where queer collecting efforts currently do not exist, community organizations serve as key allies to archival repositories for developing oral history collections that reflect the community. Public libraries and special collections in these areas should encourage state activist organizations, like Equality Mississippi, or local community groups, like the Magic City Acceptance Center in Birmingham, to facilitate oral history projects. The relationship between archival institutions and queer

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95. Elisabeth Kaplan, “We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity,” *American Archivist* 63, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2000): 148.

community organizations allows an opportunity for conversation about increasing collecting efforts beyond the urban core. Similarly, community organizations can encourage the repositories that currently house their history to create oral history projects that reflect the entire South, not just the leaders in major cities.

The cooperation and collaboration between repositories and the queer community is central to the process of correcting archival silences in the historical record. As stated by the authors of “New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector,” consultancy is a two-way street: “just as community archives may seek professional advice from their mainstream counterparts, so the latter may also look to community archivists as sources of specialist knowledge.”<sup>96</sup> Community representatives can and should be recruited to assist in forming and describing collections, just as archivists can use their resources to assist community groups. Where grassroots efforts lack the motivation or funding to undertake an oral history project on their own, state, city, or university archives should encourage community groups to document their history, and should offer guidance and assistance where resources fall short. Time is of the essence: it is crucial collect the oral histories of those who have lived through--and not just participated in--social the social movements of the second half of the twentieth century while members of that generation are still living. Just as representation in our historical record should not be limited to those who held social, political, and economic power, our archival collections should not only contain evidence of those who held power within social movements. Participation in social activism is often a privilege that coincides with

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96. Flinn et al, “New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector,” 69.

educational and financial opportunity, as well as access to a like-minded community of support. Focusing solely on the leaders of social movements in archival collections prevents documentation of people who, for a variety of reasons, could not speak up. Perhaps, for these people, social activism was less public protest, and more acts of personal agency in everyday life to maneuver the oppressive forces at work against them. Without oral history projects that capture these voices, such important facets of the social history narrative will go undocumented. Oral histories present an opportunity to heed Howard Zinn's 1977 archival challenge to document "the lives, desires, and needs of ordinary people."<sup>97</sup>

With the specific nature of Southern history in mind, the following guidelines should be considered in developing Southern queer oral history collections. Archivists should look beyond activism to document the pre-Stonewall era in the South while the opportunity is still available, but should also make long-term plans to document the development of communities and grassroots activism in the area. When selecting participants, race, class, and religion should be considered in order to gain a better understanding of how these categories impact self-identification, social and familial relationships, and concepts of gender. Geography is also an important factor, and although oral history projects will likely be based out of more urban areas, organizers and archivists should attempt to find participants from nearby rural areas as well. Statewide queer organizations are an important resource for locating potential rural participants, as these groups have supporters in rural areas, and often have satellite teams in smaller

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97. Howard Zinn, "Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977): 25.

towns.<sup>98</sup> Colleges and universities in more rural areas can also facilitate oral history participation. Oral history projects that are connected to universities have the potential to privilege college-educated participants, therefore such projects should also strive to include participants from varying education levels. In order to ensure the privacy of participants in regards to sensitive material, interviewees should have the right to be anonymous, and precautions should be taken to protect the identities of third parties who are named by participants. Additionally, participants should be made aware that the information they are providing about their lives will be made publicly available, and oral history and archival ethical guidelines should be strictly followed.

Oral histories about same-sex attraction in the South have limitations, and researchers and archivists should be aware of these issues. Nan Alamilla Boyd states, “the history of same-sex sexuality is limited by articulations of gay and lesbian identity, both through the imperative coming-out story, which suggests a self-consciousness about gay or lesbian political agency, and through a caution about illicit or tawdry sex.”<sup>99</sup> Southern oral histories are particularly impacted by these limitations. As John Howard’s oral history research elucidates in *Men Like That*, queer sexuality in the South has historically avoided political, social, and verbal definitions, and often does not adhere to notions of self-identification, specifically in terms of contemporary identity labels of gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Additionally, notions of Southern propriety and religiosity create

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98. For example, the Tennessee Equality Project has teams in counties across the state, including towns like Rogersville and Morristown, as well as the Upper Cumberland area.

99. Nan Alamilla Boyd, “Who is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 2 (2008): 189.

challenges for explicitly discussing sexual topics. Even if a participant is willing to discuss their sexual past, they may remain private about such topics for fear of the public record reaching family members. Publicly identifying as gay or lesbian may be risky enough for a participant, let alone describing sexual experiences during an oral history interview. Organizers of oral history projects should be cautious and respectful of a participant's boundaries and should avoid labeling or identifying participants in a way that they would not self-identify. One must also understand that the interviewee will likely couch their queer experience in terms that they perceive the interviewer is anticipating. For example, if the goal of the project is to tell the history of gay or lesbian sexuality, the participant will likely frame their experience as a steady trajectory from oppression to marriage equality, rather than exploring the nuances of gender and sexual identity development. As Boyd states, "Not that political visibility is a bad thing, it's just something to observe as we continue our quest for 'greater reality' in the narratives we construct for the historical record."<sup>100</sup>

Despite the limitations of oral history collections, this methodology is the best way to achieve the goal of recording the history of queer Southerners because it allows a shared authority. The archivist's power is shared with the participant, providing a voice to those who have been silenced. Power is a central theme in the process of archival activism. Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook describe the power dynamics at play in archives: "Archives—as records—wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity, over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies. And ultimately, in the pursuit of their professional

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100. Ibid, 189.

responsibilities, archivists—as keepers of archives—wield power over those very records central to memory and identity formation through active management of records before they come to archives, their appraisal and selection as archives, and afterwards their constantly evolving description, preservation, and use.”<sup>101</sup> Through thoughtfully developed oral history projects and ongoing relationships with the community, archivists can be partners in developing collections that reflect and respect a plural society. It must be noted that within this partnership, the responsibility of collecting and the promotion of oral history projects in the South should not be solely left to LGBT activists and community organizations. Compared to other parts of the country, the resources—in terms of both time and finances—of queer organizations and activists are necessary to combat hostile legislation in the region, which places historical projects at a lower position on the priority list.<sup>102</sup> Archival institutions should be sensitive to the demands placed on queer community groups, and whenever possible, bear the burden of collection development with community liaisons serving as consultants.

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101. Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (March 2002): 2.

102. Prior to the 2015 Supreme Court decision, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide, every state in the South (as well as many states across the country) had passed state constitutional amendments to ban same-sex marriage. In 2016, many Southern states attempted (many successfully) to pass anti-LGBT legislation that: prevents transgender people from using the restroom of their gender identity; allows businesses to refuse service to LGBT people; allows civil servants to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples; and allows mental health professionals to refuse service to LGBT patients.

## Conclusion

In his discussion of social memory, Kenneth Foote suggests, “many individuals and organizations act collectively to maintain records of the past, even if these records are shaped by the demands of contemporary life.”<sup>103</sup> While archivists attempt to collect based on conceptions of the past, collections are often just as much a reflection of the goals and motivations of the present. For marginalized communities, history and its documentary record have a greater value than the search for historical truth, or the quest for academic knowledge. The editors of *Bodies of Evidence* state, “While the self-understood and often unspoken validation of narrators’ subjective perspectives does not entail taking every recorded declaration as a factual truth, it does require that researchers commit to listening carefully for what narrators’ recollections reveal about their time and place in history.”<sup>104</sup> Collecting queer oral histories is a political act. Daniel Marshall presents a “key political motivation for queer oral history work” as “its desire to challenge universalizing narratives of homosexuality...and its methodological accommodation of multiple narratives is surely as much a part of this intervention as the content of the histories themselves.”<sup>105</sup> Reclaiming the historical narrative is an act of liberation—a radical act that shifts the balance of power and reframes individual agency amidst intolerance. Although professional and academic standards are essential in these

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103. Kenneth E. Foote, “To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture,” in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, edited by Randall C. Jimerson, 29-46 (Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 380.

104. Boyd, 5.

105. Daniel Marshall, “Gay Teachers and Students, Oral History, and Queer Kinship” in *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 180.

historical endeavors, this kind of scholarly work involves trauma, emotion, self-expression, and is deeply personal for those involved. It is a kind of restorative community service that yields a voice to the voiceless. Through regional oral history projects, the redefined narrative is a step toward healing the wounds of oppression.

## CONCLUSION

Historians of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans\* individuals and communities have shown how queer history has impacted the broader cultural narrative, through shifting concepts of gender and sexuality across time and place, as well as the development of sexual and gender self-identification. The study of sexuality and gender is important to fully understanding the common narrative of United States history. Just as the lenses of race, class, and gender have been used to more fully understand the forces at play in American history, queer history provides insight into the ways in which our culture's perceptions of gender and sexuality have changed. In the early days of gay history, as the editors of *Hidden from History* explain, historians sought gay heroes from the past with which to identify in order to create a collective history and shared identity for the gay community. Since then, the field of queer history has proved its value to the historical community through providing further analysis of the complexities of American culture, events in American history, and changing concepts of gender and sexuality.

Historians have presented gender and sexuality as social constructions, a concept which was particularly relevant in the historians' amicus brief in the *Lawrence v. Texas* Supreme Court case to overturn Texas's sodomy law. Many justices cited the work of historians to show that not only has sexuality changed over time, but that repression and criminalization of homosexuality via legislation like anti-sodomy laws is a post-World War II phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Scholars of LGBT history have shown that contrary to popularly

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1. George Chauncey, "What Gay Studies Taught the Court': The Historians' Amicus Brief in *Lawrence v. Texas*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10, no. 4 (2004): 509-538.

held conceptions, there have been times in American history where queer life was in some measure accepted. One might be surprised to learn from John Howard's *Men Like That* that gay sex acts between men were relatively tolerated in Mississippi before the 1960's, and that a network of gay men actually thrived in Mississippi—a state that is politically hostile to same-sex relationships today. Authors included in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South* similarly describe situations where gay life thrived in unexpected places. For example, Kathie D. Williams discusses Louisville's Lesbian Feminist Union, a lesbian separatist community in Kentucky that eventually led to Louisville's gay activist network. These stories offer a contrast to the narrative that gay life only flourished in urban bi-coastal American cities undermine the idea that the only way to express a gay sexuality was to migrate to those cities. Depicting thriving gay communities in unlikely times and places serves to encourage a re-evaluation of the dominant narrative of constant homophobia in American history. These contributions to the history of American sexuality show the ways in which southern queer history is a part of the broader southern historical narrative, and much of this research is informed by oral history. For historians and researchers, queer oral history collections offer insight into the nuances of Southern culture and the social construction of gender and sexuality. For members of the queer community, on the other hand, these collections offer a shared heritage built on struggle, resistance, survival, and unanticipated acceptance.

The benefits of adequate archival documentation are not unique to the queer community, and the strategies established in Chapter Three for documenting queer people in the South translate to other oral history projects seeking to fill in gaps in the archival record. Although activists in any social movement are more likely to share their stories,

the voices of those who are living through social change are equally valuable. Everyday acts of survival and resistance enhance the historical narrative of social change. For example, documentation of the environmental movement should not only feature environmental activists, but also the farmers whose livelihood is being impacted by the effects of global warming. The inclusion of non-activist and rural narratives should be an archival imperative, regardless of the particular group that is being documented. Archival collections often privilege urban populations, and the inclusion of people living in rural areas should be a priority for archival institutions in order to more adequately reflect the plural American culture. Grassroots organizations can be crucial allies for archival institutions who are attempting to document social movements or marginalized groups. Mainstream institutions working in partnership with grassroots organizations facilitates documentation of populations that would otherwise be inaccessible. For example, partnerships with trusted community organizations may help allay the fear of deportation that often prevents undocumented immigrants from sharing their personal histories with archives. Additionally, oral histories are also an important component of documenting immigrant communities due to language and potential literacy obstacles, as well as the personal aspect of sharing one's story.

Using oral history as a vehicle, mainstream archival institutions should work in tandem with community organizations to document not only the history of grassroots activism in the Southern region, but also the lives of queer Southerners when vocal activism was not a viable option for many in the region. Through community-engaged oral history projects, archivists have the opportunity, and the obligation, to improve the quality of the documentary record by including voices that have previously been omitted.

Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz identify “the central role of the archivist as mediator and interpreter, as an important shaper of the documentary record of the past that will be passed on to the future.”<sup>2</sup> Although archives strive for neutrality in maintaining public memory, archives have the power to determine which voices will be heard, as well as which voices will be excluded.<sup>3</sup> According to Rodney Carter, collecting decisions, “combined with the active exclusion of certain dissenting voices and non-conforming records, have a drastic impact on the form of the archives and have great implications for the state of societal memory.”<sup>4</sup> Archival interference and community engagement is necessary to ensure that collections reflect our plural society, including marginalized and excluded populations. Randall Jimerson stresses that “archivists should seek opportunities to preserve records of those often overlooked by their collecting strategies and recognize the broader concept of provenance for an entire community including those groups marginalized or silenced by archival collecting policies and appraisal guidelines.”<sup>5</sup> In documenting marginalized populations, archivists should utilize methodologies and strategies for inclusion that accommodate the community’s specific nature. In the case of Southern queer communities, deliberate and inclusive oral history projects offer a solution for documenting not only those who lived openly, but also those who hid their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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2. Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 183.

3. Rodney G. S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence,” *Archivaria*, no. 61 (2006): 216.

4. *Ibid*, 219.

5. Jimerson, “Archives for All,” 277.

“You lied about it, is what you did.”<sup>6</sup> This is a statement from Gail DuBois, participant of the Brooks Fund History Project, about living a double life as a Metro Nashville public school teacher and a lesbian bartender in the 1960s. Many of the participants of the project discuss the ways in which they hid their sexuality in order to protect themselves. Oral history is the key to moving past the “lies” and the silences in the archives to deepen the historical understanding of being a queer Southerner. Other communities who have been silenced by oppressive forces have also found oral history to be a powerful method of reclaiming their voices. Oral histories have been used in communities of undocumented immigrants who have been unable to tell their stories for fear of deportation. In her examination of documenting unauthorized immigrants in America, Marta Caminero-Santangelo states, “personal stories—oral history, life writing, ‘witness’ testimony—play an important, perhaps even vital role in advocacy and human rights struggles.”<sup>7</sup> Tywana Whorley’s investigation of memory surrounding the Tuskegee Syphilis Study—where participants of the study were unknowingly infected with syphilis and were denied appropriate treatment—provides an example: collecting oral histories from participants of the study “broke the silence that had surrounded the participants and their families” because of victimization and shame.<sup>8</sup> An early example of using oral history as an instrument of social change is the previously mentioned Federal

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6. Jessica Bliss, “Victimized and feared: Gay in Nashville before 1970,” *The Tennessean*, Jan. 21, 2015, <http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2015/01/20/gay-nashville-past/22075071/> (accessed May 26, 2016).

7. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, “Documenting the Undocumented: Life Narratives of Unauthorized Immigrants,” *Biography* 35, no. 3 (2012): 449.

8. Tywana Whorley, “The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the Politics of Memory” in *Archives and Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, edited by R. J. Cox and D. Wallace, 165-175 (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 171.

Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, which collected oral testimonies of formerly enslaved people in the 1930s as Jim Crow legislation and racial oppression abounded in the South. For the African American community, “an archival presence represents both an assertion of racial pride and an effort to secure the power that comes from being able to tell the group’s collective story of tragedy, suffering, achievement, and success.”<sup>9</sup>

Archival collections that currently document queer lives in the South offer plenty of room for growth. While invaluable to the Southern historical narrative, activism and gay culture in Atlanta, as well as community organizing in North Carolina’s university cities, represent the bulk of the evidence of queer life in the South currently. These records are crucial to understanding Southern grassroots activism, and to contradict the notion that queer activism is limited to bi-coastal urban areas. However, only documenting those who were politically and socially active in the region excludes queer people who lived in rural areas and were less engaged in the vocal struggle for equality. Collections like the Brooks Fund History Project showcase opportunities to use oral history as a vehicle to document the lives of queer people who lived in the South before activism existed in their neighborhoods, towns, and rural communities. For many queer Southerners, the experiences described by participants of the History Project continue to ring true, as many queer people live in rural areas without the community networks often offered in larger cities. Oral history collections are a necessity in the region, due to limited manuscript collections of activists or grassroots organizations in many parts of the South in comparison to bi-coastal urban areas; however, they should not be viewed as a

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9. Randall Jimerson, “Archives For All,” 268.

last resort. Rather, Southern queer oral history collections are an opportunity to gain access to the lives of people who would otherwise remain hidden from the historical record. The words of Brooks Fund History Project participant Gail DuBois show the value of queer oral history collections, as well as the urgency with which archivists should heed the call: “I never thought we’d live to see it...I thought we’d always be hiding.”<sup>10</sup>

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10. Bliss, “Victimized and feared.”

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: COLLECTIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA

### **Belk Library Special Collections** Appalachian State University (Boone, NC)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Boone Christ's Church United Records (1992-2005):** "This is a collection of records from the Boone Christ's Church United. When it was founded in 1992 as the Metropolitan Community Church of the High Country it was the only church in the area to accept and advocate for members of the LGBT community. Its pastor Cindy Long (1960-) was at the time the only openly lesbian minister of a Christian church in Watauga County." <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/findingaids/ac880>

### **Wilson Library Special Collections** University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Jeffrey Beam Papers (1968-2007):** This collection relates to Beam's involvement in the literary and gay communities. <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Beam,Jeffery.html>

**War Resisters League, Southeast Regional Office Records (1966-1995):** This collection contains relevant information to the study of gay and lesbian rights in the Southeast, as the WRL was involved in gay and lesbian demonstrations and protests. [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/War\\_Resisters\\_League.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/War_Resisters_League.html)

**Joseph A. Herzenberg Papers (1883-2006):** Joe Herzenberg was "a politician; historian; advocate for social, environmental, and economic justice; and the first openly gay elected official in North Carolina." [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Herzenberg,Joseph\\_A.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Herzenberg,Joseph_A.html)

### **J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections** University of North Carolina (Charlotte, NC)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Charlotte Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Collection (1990-2000):** These materials are duplicates of items related to Charlotte from the collection at Duke University. [https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/charlotte-gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-transgender-collection-1990-2000/oclc/841574637&referer=brief\\_results](https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/charlotte-gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-transgender-collection-1990-2000/oclc/841574637&referer=brief_results)

**Linda Lawyer writings and memorabilia (1988-1992):** "Collection consists primarily of printed copies of "The soft spot," Linda Lawyer's monthly column in the newspaper Q Notes between 1988 and 1992. The column was written under the pseudonym Ann Michele. Also included are coasters and tee shirts for One Voice Charlotte, an LGBT

chorus based in Charlotte, North Carolina.” [https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/linda-lawyer-writings-and-memorabilia-1988-1992/oclc/937714706&referer=brief\\_results](https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/linda-lawyer-writings-and-memorabilia-1988-1992/oclc/937714706&referer=brief_results)

**Sue Henry Papers (1992-2002):** “The papers consist of materials created and collected by Sue Henry as proprietor of the Rising Moon Books & Beyond bookstore, Charlotte mayoral candidate, and member of a range of social and political organizations. Though particularly focused on gay and lesbian issues, the collection documents Henry's broad-based activism throughout the 1990s and includes numerous newsletters produced by Charlotte-area activist organizations.” [https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/sue-henry-papers-1992-2002/oclc/937704084&referer=brief\\_results](https://uncc.worldcat.org/title/sue-henry-papers-1992-2002/oclc/937704084&referer=brief_results)

### **Ramsey Library Special Collections** University of North Carolina (Asheville, NC)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Carol Duin Collection of LGBTQ Materials:** “This collection, created by local gay rights advocate Carol Duin, contains personal papers, speeches, presentations, correspondence, educational materials, articles, publications, and discussion materials related to advocacy and education about lesbian, gay, bi, trans-gendered, and queer lives.”

[http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/duin\\_carol\\_LGBTQ/default\\_duin\\_carol.html](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/duin_carol_LGBTQ/default_duin_carol.html)

### **Rubenstein Library Special Collections** Duke University (Durham, NC)

#### Manuscript Collections

**North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project Records (1983-1996):** The LGHP was a non-profit that provided support and services for people with AIDS.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/nclghp/>

**Women’s and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Movements Periodicals Collection (1968-2005):** This collection contains newspapers, newsletters, magazines, and journals that were created by the women’s rights and gay rights activist groups.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/wlgbtpc/>

**Harris Interactive press releases and media alerts on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues (2005-2008):** Harris Interactive is a global marketing research firm that was involved in research for marketing to gay and lesbian consumers.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/harrisinteractive/>

**Dan Kirsch papers (1975-2004):** Dan Kirsch was an activist, community organizer, and theater director in Charlotte, NC. <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/kirschd/>

**Alliance of Queer Undergraduates at Duke (AQUADuke) records (1973-1995):** This collection covers AQUADuke activist organizing on the Duke campus.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uaaquaduke/>

**John Howard Papers (1950-2013):** This collection is John Howard's personal papers, as well as the oral histories and research for his book *Men Like That*.  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/howardjohn/>

**Lesbian Health Resource Center Records (1987-2005):** This collection contains the papers from the Durham-based community organization that provided health advice and workshops for lesbians. <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/lhrc/>

**Triangle Business and Professional Guild Records (1970-2006):** "According to the Triangle Business and Professional Guild bylaws, the TBPG aims to establish a network of business and professional resources, to encourage fellowship and support among businesses, professionals, and charitable pursuits, and to provide and promote positive role models in the gay and lesbian community, particularly in the Triangle (Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham) area of North Carolina."  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/tbpg/>

**Mandy Carter Papers (1970-2013):** "Mandy Carter is a self-described "southern out black lesbian social justice activist." Since 1968 she has been involved in peace, social, racial and LGBT organizing at the local, state, regional, and national levels. She has been based in Durham, N.C., since 1982."  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/cartermandy/>

**Front Page Records (1975-2004):** "Collection consists of materials used in production of the newspaper, specifically a large clippings file, flyers, newsletters, press releases, book PR, incoming correspondence, a "Kill" box file, some clippings organized by subject, papers centered on Lee Mullis and Jim Duley, a reader survey, faxes, some submissions, and a large number of other gay and lesbian publications."  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/front/>

**Triangle Community Works Records (1974-2008):** "Triangle Community Works! was formed in 1994 and consists of a coalition of groups, including ASPYN (A Safer Place Youth Network), The Gay and Lesbian Helpline, P-FLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and RRNGLE (Raleigh Religious Network for Gay and Lesbian Equality). Collection includes historical documents from several groups in Triangle Community Works!, including ASPYN, RRNGLE, and the Gay and Lesbian Helpline. Materials date from the 1970s to 2008."  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/trianglecommunityworks/>

**Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Archives (1972-1994):** "The ALFA Archives and Periodicals Collections that have been transferred to Duke are an incredibly rich source of information about feminist and lesbian activism and communities, especially in the Southeast, from the early 1970s to the present."  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/alfa/>

**James T. Sears Papers (1918-2008):** James T. Sears papers include his personal papers and research on gender and sexuality, especially in the South.  
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/searsjames/>

**OutRight Records (1990-1998):** “Triangle-area organization founded in 1990, now disbanded; provided support for gay youth and other young people with questions about their sexual orientation.” <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/outright/>

**Southerners on New Ground Records (1993-2003):** “Southerners on New Ground (SONG) currently works to build, connect, and sustain those in the South who believe in liberation across all lines of race, class, culture, gender and sexuality, through a membership of 600 primarily LGBT people.”

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/song/>

**Tarheel Leather Club Newsletters (1990-1992):** This collection contains newsletters about the Tarheel Leather Club.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/tarheelleather/>

**Dorothy Allison Papers (1965-2010):** Dorothy Allison was an author and feminist.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/allisondorothy/>

**Minnie Bruce Pratt Papers (1870s-2005):** Pratt is an educator, poet, and activist who is from Alabama and has lived in the South.

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/prattminniebruce/>

### Oral History

**Queering Duke History Project:** Oral histories were collected from Duke alumni in 2014 as part of a larger exhibit project on Duke’s queer history.

<http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/queer/intro/oralhistories>

## **Durham County Library** (Durham, NC)

### Manuscript Collections

**LGBTQ Collection (1972, 1976, 1981-2015):** This artificial collection from a variety of individual donors reflects the activism of the LGBTQ community of Durham. The primary concern of the collection is significant events in the community: “the April 12, 1981, Little River beatings and aftermath; the 1986-1988 Gay Pride marches, the 1986 push to recall Mayor Wilbur ‘Wib’ Gulley for proclaiming a week dedicated to anti-discrimination and the LGBTQ community’s campaign against the recall, the 1993 March on Washington, and the 2012 protests against Amendment One, which proposed to make same-sex marriage unconstitutional in North Carolina.”

<https://durhamcountylibrary.org/ncc/archives/lgbtq-collection/>

**Southern Oral History Program**  
University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC)

Oral History

**The Long Civil Rights Movement: Gender and Sexuality:** “This series explores how the South played a critical yet contradictory role in shaping both the women's movement and the gay liberation movement. Many second-wave feminists and gay rights activists first gained experience as grassroots organizers in the South's African American freedom movement of the 1960s. The South earned a reputation for its adherence to traditional notions of womanhood and masculinity and for its organized resistance to the Equal Rights Amendment and gay rights initiatives. It was in that southern context that many activists began to extend the goals of freedom and equality to questions of gender and sexuality. This series contains 25 interviews conducted by students and interns under the direction of Dr. Sarah Thuesen during the Summer 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The students chose a broad range of feminists and gay rights activists as interviewees.”

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/U.11.%20Long%20Civil%20Rights%20Movement:%20Gender%20and%20Sexuality/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1>*

**The Long Civil Rights Movement: Oral History and the Modern South:** Some of the interviews in this collection pertain to the gay, lesbian, and transgender community in North Carolina.

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/U.13.%20Long%20Civil%20Rights%20Movement:%20Oral%20History%20and%20the%20Study%20of%20the%20Modern%20South/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1>*

**LGBTQ Life in the South: Sweet Tea Interviews by E. Patrick Johnson:** “These interviews comprise a portion of the set done by E. Patrick Johnson between 2003 and 2006 as research for his book (and performances of) *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South* (2008). Major topics include when interviewees realized they were gay or not like other boys, the role of the church in their upbringing, geographic segregation in their town, gender roles at home, gay slang, coming out, college years, the impact of HIV/AIDs on their lives, and their decisions to continue to live in the South or to emigrate upon reaching adulthood. These interviews challenge traditional stereotypes of black gay men as closeted or repressed and reveal how black gay men carve out a place for themselves within their communities in the South.”

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/W.2.%20LGBTQ%20Life%20in%20the%20South:%20Sweet%20Tea%20Interviews%20by%20E.%20Patrick%20Johnson/mode/exact/order/title>*

**Southern Communities: Listening for a Change: History of Gay Men and Transgender People in the South:** These interviews were part of an undergraduate student project that focuses on gay life in the South, particularly in North Carolina in the 1960s-1980s.

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/K.2.7.%20Southern%20Communities:%20Listening%20for%20a%20Change:%20History%20of%20Gay%20Men%20and%20Transgender%20People%20in%20the%20South/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1>*

**LGBTQ Life in the South: LGBTQ Activism in the North Carolina Triangle Area:**

These interviews cover “the development of queer activism from social organizing in the early 1970s, to the beginning of statewide lobbying and political activism in the early 1990s, and to recent developments in North Carolina regarding pro-LGBTQ laws such as the North Carolina School Violence Prevention Act and anti-LGBTQ legislation such as Amendment One.”

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/W.1.%20LGBTQ%20Life%20in%20the%20South:%20LGBTQ%20Activism%20in%20the%20North%20Carolina%20Triangle%20Area/mode/exact/order/title>*

**Southern Women: Special Focus: Women’s Leadership and Grassroots Activism:**

This project includes five interviews by Holloway Sparks from the 1990s with three lesbian activists living and working in North Carolina.

*<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/sohp/searchterm/G.2.3.%20Southern%20Women:%20Special%20Focus:%20Women's%20Leadership%20and%20Grassroots%20Activism/field/projec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/creato!date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/1>*

## APPENDIX B: COLLECTIONS IN GEORGIA

### Kenan Research Center Atlanta History Center (Atlanta, GA)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing Papers and Publications (1957-1994):** This collection contains publications from the LGBT community, business and organization papers, and personal papers of gay and lesbian activists in Atlanta and Georgia.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS773-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

**Black and White Men Together Records (1982-1996):** Black and White Men Together of Atlanta was part of a national association that sought to end racial and cultural discrimination, and also engaged in AIDS activism.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS903-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

**Unitarian Universalist Lesbian and Gay Community Newsletters (1982-1987):** The UULGC was established in 1979 as an activist social group of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta. The collection contains newsletters from the group.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS726f-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

**Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender Serial Collection (1970-2004):** This collection contains local and regional LGBT publications from Atlanta and the Southeast.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS991-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

***Southern Voice* Records (1982-2007):** *Southern Voice* was a weekly independent publication about Atlanta's LGBT community. The collection includes both issues of the periodical and editorial notes from planning meetings. Subjects include national and regional crime, health, lifestyle, and politics for the LGBT community.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS1016-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

**Apollo Social Club, Inc. Records (1972-1978):** The Apollo Social Club was a non-profit organization that provided social functions for gay men. This collection contains business documents, newsletters, correspondence, travel itineraries, invitations, financial information, and membership lists.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.MSS713f-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

**Backstreet Atlanta Discotheque Visual Arts Collection (1982-2002):** This collection documents Atlanta's first gay bar through photographs and advertisements.

<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.VIS225-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>

### Oral History

**Atlanta's Unspoken Past (2004-2005):** This collection consists of 10 interviews of lesbian and gay people who were brown before or during World War II and lived in Atlanta or the region before the 1960s.

*<http://ahc.galileo.usg.edu/ahc/view?docId=ead/ahc.VIS178-ead.xml&chunk.id=&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default>*

## **Special Collections and Archives Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA)**

### Manuscript Collections

**Franklin Abbott Papers:** Franklin Abbott is a psychotherapist, writer, poet, artist, and gay activist from Birmingham, AL. He was also an original member of the Radical Faeries. *<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/2436>*

**Ken Anderson Papers, Hugo Berston Papers, Marla Helena Dolan Papers, Jimmy Gray Papers, Steve Warren Papers, Gayle Austin Papers, Terry Bird Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing Records:** Georgia State University's Special Collections cites these collections as containing LGBT information.

*<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**Atlanta Gay Center Records:** This collection contains the records of the Atlanta Gay Center, a community center founded in 1976. The Center was a meeting place, operated a helpline, and offered free HIV testing and support groups.

*<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Records (1981-2009):** The AFWC performed both regionally and nationally, and the collection contains business papers, audio and visual recordings, and ephemera. *<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**M. Charlene Ball Papers:** M. Charlene Ball worked in the Women's Studies Institute at Georgia State University, participated in the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, and the Atlanta lesbian music scene.

*<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/2247>*

**Carol Brown Papers:** This collection contains documentation of anti-gay organizing in Cobb County in the 1990's, as well as the response.

*<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**Jim Blythe Buffalo Chips Records:** These are the records of an all-male gay clogging group. *<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**Candy Carson Artifact Collection:** This collection is ephemera from the LGBT community and materials from Atlanta's gay bars.

*<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>*

**Thomas H. Crim, Jr. Papers:** Thomas H. Crim, Jr. was from Evans, Georgia, and wrote letters to the editor of the Augusta Chronical defending gay rights. The collection was assembled as a scrapbook by Crim.

<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/2166>

**EstroFest Production Records (1999-2003):** EstroFest produced visual, performing, and fine arts programs that celebrated women.

<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/1877>

**Lorraine Fontana Papers:** This collection documents lesbian and civil rights activist Lorraine Fontana and her participation in the Atlanta Lesbian-Feminist Alliance.

<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Gay Spirit Visions Records:** This collection documents the volunteer-run GSV spiritual group, which started in 1989 and held conferences and retreats.

<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Dave Hayward Papers:** The personal papers of Dave Hayward document his membership in Atlanta's 1972 Gay Pride committee, his experience as one of the first openly gay journalists in Atlanta, and his involvement in Touching Up Our Roots, Inc., Georgia's LGBT History Project.

<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Carl Owens Papers:** Carl Owens's personal papers document his activism against Cracker Barrel in the 1990s and involvement in Queer Nation.

<http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Richard Rhodes Papers:** Richard Rhodes was the first openly gay delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1988 and was involved in the Democratic party. He also founded SAGE and was active in the Atlanta Prime Timers, both organizations for older gay men. <http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Ed Scruggs Papers:** This collection is papers related to Ed Scruggs's gay and civil rights activism in Atlanta.

<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/2136>

**Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia, Inc. Records (1994-2012):** This collection of correspondence, meeting minutes, and reports documents the Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia, an association of legal professionals who oppose discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/2250>

**Terri Wilder Papers (1996-2007):** Terri Wilder's papers include information about her AIDS activism with ACT-UP, the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and the Hope Clinic at Emory University.

<http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/findingaids/id/1487>

Oral History <http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115731&p=752611>

**Touching Up Our Roots, Inc.:** The oral histories of Willis Bivens, Goldy Criscuolo, Diamond Lil, Dave Hayward, Winston Johnson, Allen Jones, Jesse Peel, Richard Rhodes,

and Erin Swenson are part of the Touching Up Our Roots oral history project. Each of the participants were involved in gay rights activism in the Atlanta area and nationally.

**Gay Spirit Vision:** The oral histories of Michael Goatee, Craig Iverson-Cook and Bruce Tidwell are part of the Gay Spirit Vision collection about a gay men's spiritual group.

**Franklin Abbott:** Franklin Abbott's oral history is a part of his collection about his activism and involvement in the Radical Faeries.

**Charles Anderson, Ken Anderson, Charles Ballance, Hugo Berston, John Carson, Alejandro Martinez, Frances Pici, Don Young:** These oral histories have been identified by Georgia State University Library as containing documentation of LGBT life.

**Linda Bryant:** Bryant opened Charis Books, a feminist bookstore, in 1974 and established the community organization in the 1990s.

**Jennifer Carroll:** Carroll is an HIV-positive AIDS activist in Troup and Rockdale counties.

**Lorraine Fontana:** Fontana was one of the founders of the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance and DARII (Dykes for the Second American Revolution). Her oral history focuses on her queer activism both locally and nationally.

**Sonia Johnson:** Johnson was a radical feminist writer and speaker who was raised Mormon and was excommunicated from the church.

**Gus Kaufman:** Kaufman is a clinical psychologist who has been active in non-profit organizations.

**Elizabeth Knowlton:** Knowlton was a member of the Atlanta Feminist-Lesbian Alliance, and has been engaged in social activism.

**Sarah Lopez:** Lopez is a bilingual psychologist in Atlanta who was an early responder to the needs of AIDS patients.

**Tonia Poteat:** Poteat is a global AIDS activist.

**Amy Ray:** Ray is a member of the Indigo Girls and a solo artist, and she is an activist for grassroots causes.

**Emily Saliers:** Saliers is a member of the Indigo Girls and a writer, and she is an activist for grassroots causes.

**Margo Smith:** Smith is a feminist activist who has worked on issues of domestic violence.

**Charles Stephens:** Stephens is an AIDS activist and advocate of gay men's health and social justice.

**Jeff Willard:** Willard is a social activist for gay rights in the Jewish faith.

**Andrew Wood:** Wood is a graphic designer and gay activist from Atlanta. Wood is a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a charitable gay activist group, and has been involved in ACT-UP.

**Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library  
Emory University (Atlanta, GA)**

Manuscript Collections

**National Association of Black and White Men Together (1980-1999):** This collection is the organizational records from NABWMT, “a gay multiracial, multicultural, political and social organization.” The Library also has the scrapbook of Willis Blivins, founder of the Atlanta chapter.

*[https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/nabwmt1071/#collection\\_description](https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/nabwmt1071/#collection_description)*

**David A. Lowe Papers:** Lowe is a lawyer, gay rights activist, and Emory alumni.

*[https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/lowe1072/#collection\\_description](https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/lowe1072/#collection_description)*

**Atlanta Gay Men’s Chorus (1981-2012):** This collection contains “administrative records, performance and event files, printed material, photographs, audiovisual material, and born digital material” related to the chorus.

*[https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/AtlantaGayMensChorus1251/#collection\\_description](https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/AtlantaGayMensChorus1251/#collection_description)*

**Rebecca Ranson Papers (1906-2013):** Ranson is a Southern lesbian playwright and activist. This collection contains “subject files, writings, journals, audiovisual material, born digital material, correspondence, printed material, and photographs that document her career as a playwright, author, and activist.”

*<https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/ranson1253/>*

**Network Q (1992-1996):** This collection is the records of the first weekly gay and lesbian public television program.

*<https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/networkq1010/>*

**Gay erotic paperback collection:** This collection consists of 924 titles, many of which are rare, from the 1960s and 1970s.

*[http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress\\_lgbt\\_marbl\\_exhibit/campus.html](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress_lgbt_marbl_exhibit/campus.html)*

**Jesse R. Peel Papers (1956-2005):** Peel was a physician in Atlanta and an AIDS activist.

*<https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/peel1231/>*

**Southeastern Arts, Media, & Education Project (SAME) (1984-1996):** SAME was an LGBT arts organization, and the collection includes organizational records, as well as audiovisual material. *<https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/same1015/>*

**American Music Show (1982-2005):** American Music Show was a public access television show in Atlanta, where RuPaul made his television debut. The collection is over 700 videotapes, artwork, and newspaper clippings.

*[http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress\\_lgbt\\_marbl\\_exhibit/campus.html](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2013/06/upress_lgbt_marbl_exhibit/campus.html)*

## APPENDIX C: COLLECTIONS IN LOUISIANA

### Howard-Tilton Memorial Library Special Collections Tulane University (New Orleans, LA)

#### Manuscript Collections

**LGBT Community Center of New Orleans Records (1992-2011):** “This collection contains the correspondence, executive board material, financial records, activity logs, and membership lists of the LGBT Community Center of New Orleans (formerly known as the Lesbian and Gay Community Center of New Orleans). The LGBT community center is a social, political, and support center for New Orleans' queer population which also has extended support to New Orleans' other minority populations.”

<http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/findingaid&id=813&q=>

**Louisiana Lesbian and Gay Political Action Caucus records (1980-2002):** “This collection contains the correspondence, research, endorsements, financial records, executive material, bylaws, membership lists, and meeting minutes of the Louisiana Lesbian and Gay Political Action Caucus (LAGPAC), a group that focused on political activism for equal constitutional rights for Louisiana's queer population. The Lesbian and Gay Political Action Caucus was centered in Alexandria, Louisiana, but also had locations in Acadiana, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans at one point.”

<http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=814&q=>

**Skip Ward papers (1971-2006):** “The papers of Blanchard ‘Skip’ Ward, a resident of Alexandria, Louisiana who was one of the pioneering members of LGBTQ activism in Louisiana. He focused the majority of his efforts on the rural and religious members of the queer community. His efforts are linked to nearly every queer activist group in Louisiana and many others nationwide.”

<http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=815&q=>

### Amistad Research Center (New Orleans, LA)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Larry Bagneris Papers (1968-2008):** This collection is the papers of civil rights and gay rights activist Larry Bagneris, who was active in Houston, TX and New Orleans, LA.

<http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=297&q=larry+bagneris>

**Impact Collection (1992-1996), unprocessed:** Impact was a New Orleans newspaper for the gay and lesbian community.

<http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=932&q=impact>

**Just for the Record Collection (1987-1993), unprocessed:** Just for the Record was a weekly cable access television show. The collection has tapes of the show, as well as corresponding documents.

<http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=924&q=just+for+the+record>

**John D. Rawls Papers:** This collection contains materials of Rawls's work for a lesbian client who was discharged from the United States Navy because of her sexual orientation.

<http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/index.php?p=accessions/accession&id=1426&q=john+d+rawls>

### **Newcomb College Institute Special Collections Tulane University (New Orleans, LA)**

#### Manuscript Collections

**Phyllis Parun Papers:** Phyllis Parun is a writer, artist, and activist from New Orleans, and this collection covers her activism for women's rights, gay and lesbian rights, and macrobiotic food beginning in the 1970s. The finding aid notes that the gay and lesbian community papers are particularly difficult to locate in other archives in New Orleans.

[http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Parun\\_Phyllis3](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Parun_Phyllis3)

**Drag King Collection (1914-2007):** This collection "covers drag king culture in New Orleans, in the United States, at Tulane and Newcomb, includes photos of drag shows, event posters, zines, magazines, etc. relating to queer life. In addition, the collection includes select chapters from a book on drag culture, information from a presentation on drag culture, and documents relating to the research protocol for the book on drag culture." [http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Drag\\_King\\_Collection](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Drag_King_Collection)

**Tee A. Corinne Papers:** Tee Corinne studied at Newcomb College, and is an artist and writer who has written about lesbianism, erotic stories, and poetry.

[http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Corinne\\_Tee\\_A.](http://www.tulane.edu/~newcomb/archives/findingaids/Corinne_Tee_A.)

### **New Orleans Public Library Special Collections (New Orleans, LA)**

#### Manuscript Collections

**Materials relating to the gay/lesbian history of New Orleans:** "Material collected by John Gutierrez, a student at the University of California, Berkeley (and later a librarian with the New Orleans Public Library), for a paper on the history of gays/lesbians in New Orleans. Typewritten and printed material dealing with the gay/lesbian community of New Orleans. Included is correspondence with various archival repositories regarding relevant holdings; photocopies from various books, periodicals, and travel guides held at the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society in San Francisco; materials produced and

distributed by the New Orleans chapter of Queer Nation; copies of various pamphlets, periodicals, and other research material.”

*<http://www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org/~nopl/mss/mssrecs3.htm>*

**APPENDIX D: COLLECTIONS IN TENNESSEE****Nashville Public Library Special Collections  
(Nashville, TN)**Oral History

**Brooks Fund History Project:** This collection contains “oral history interviews with approximately 25 individuals from Middle Tennessee who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, conducted between 2009 and 2014 by members of the Brooks Fund History Project steering committee. Specifically concentrating on older members of the LGBT community, whose average age was in their early 70s, the project focuses on life in Middle Tennessee prior to the nationally-significant events of Stonewall in New York City in 1969.”

*<https://catalog.library.nashville.org/Record/.b22969263?searchId=9144242&recordIndex=1&page=1&searchSource=local>*

**Jean and Alexander Heard Library Special Collections  
Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN)**Manuscript Collections

**James R. Hawks and Robert Anthony Teal Collection**

**Leslie Everett Long Papers**

**Rainbow Community Center Collection**

**APPENDIX E: COLLECTIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA****South Caroliniana Library  
University of South Carolina (Columbia, SC)**Manuscript Collection

**South Carolina Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Collection (1975-2012):** Records of the S.C. Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement in Columbia and elsewhere; papers of individuals and various organizations concerned with matters of interest to the GLBTQ community; newsletters, national and local publications, and other materials re GLBTQ life in S.C. and elsewhere, donated by the Harriet Hancock Center (Columbia, SC), and various other donors.

*<https://library.sc.edu/socar/mnsrpts/GLBTQlist.pdf>*

## APPENDIX F: COLLECTIONS IN VIRGINIA

### Swem Library College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA)

#### Manuscript Collection

**Gay and Lesbian Archives (1984-2006):** “Gay and Lesbian Archives of Falls Church, Virginia may be affiliated or also called the Washington, D.C. Gay and Lesbian Archives. The collection consists mostly of advertisements, fliers, form letters, and other printed material about events or information of interest to the LGBT community, mostly in the United States.” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=wm/viw00309.xml>

### James Branch Cabell Library Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA)

#### Manuscript Collections

**Richmond Gay Documents Collection (1974-1988):** “The collection, 1974-1988, consists of documents concerning the gay and lesbian community in Richmond, Virginia. Principally contains clippings, correspondence, legal files, minutes, newsletters, and publications, concerning local gay organizations. Organizations represented include Gay Awareness in Perspective (GAP), the Gay Rights Association (GRA), the Virginia Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the Richmond Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the Gay Alliance of Students (VCU), and the Richmond chapter of Dignity-Integrity. At the end of the reel, there is a copy of Sodomy in Virginia: Comments on the Statute and the Cases, 1 April 1975.”

<http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00115.xml>

**Central Virginia Gay and Lesbian Publications Collection (1990-2005):** “This collection principally contains publications related to and concerning the gay and lesbian community in Central Virginia. Consists of organization newsletters, advertisement broadsides and flyers, newspapers, and magazines. Principally contains publications produced by specific organizations (i.e. newsletters and advertisements) and nationally and locally published magazines and newspapers that concern gay and lesbian issues but that are not associated with any one organization (i.e. The Advocate and the Virginia GayZette).” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00105.xml>

**Richmond Triangle Players Archives (1992-2007):** “This collection is mostly composed of photographic and ephemeral material relating to the various productions that RTP has undertaken in the past 13 years. This includes advertisements, programs, and photos, and reviews. Most of the reviews were done by representatives from either the Richmond Times Dispatch or Style Weekly Magazine. Despite the lack of administrative records, the collection is rich in other ways. There is material related to a broad range of topics, from AIDS and gay/lesbian related issues to local (Richmond) personalities. Some of the first productions staged by RTP dealt with the AIDS crisis;

shows like Ten Percent Revue and Lisbon Traviata attempted to shed light on this important aspect of gay experience. Other shows with a focus on AIDS include Elegies for Angels, Punks, and Raging Queens and Steve Moore's I Never Knew Oz Was in Color.” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00137.xml>

**Richmond Lesbian and Gay Pride Coalition Records (1988-1993):** “Records, 1988-1993, of the Richmond Lesbian and Gay Pride Coalition, principally consisting of clippings, correspondence, flyers, meeting minutes, and treasurer's files pertaining to the organization and its main annual event the Richmond Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival. There are also biographical sketches for board of directors nominees. Correspondence is exchanged between the board of directors and other committees with local vendors, RLGPC members, and local government officials concerning the Pride Festival.” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00117.xml>

**Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Richmond Chapter Records (2000-2005):** “GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) is a national organization fighting to end anti-gay bias in primary and secondary schools. The Richmond, Virginia chapter first met in January 2000 and received official chapter accreditation in July 2001. The chapter's long-term goal is to ‘end sexual orientation and gender identity bias in Richmond City, Henrico County, Chesterfield County, and Hanover County schools.’” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00109.xml>

**Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (1990-2005):** “The Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY) was founded in 1991 by local educators, mental health practitioners, and members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community concerned about the welfare of young people struggling with identity issues. Their mission is to enhance the general well-being of sexual minority youth through support, education, advocacy and opportunities. ROSMY has grown to serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth ages 14-21 through a variety of services and programs in the Metro Richmond area. ROSMY provides services such as counseling, and opportunity for discussion in a safe and supportive environment.” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vcu-cab/vircu00139.xml>

### **Virginia Tech Special Collections (Blacksburg, VA)**

#### Manuscript Collections

**Virginia Tech LGBTQ Oral History Collection:** “This collection consists of oral history interviews with influential members of the LGBTQ community at Virginia Tech, both past and present. Interviews were conducted by Tamara Kennelly, University Archivist, David Cline, Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Graduate Certificate in Public History, and students of Professor David Cline's Oral History class.” <http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/vibl/v01834.xml>

**Mark A. Weber Collection on Lambda Horizon (1971-1991):** “The Mark A. Weber Collection on Lambda Horizon includes minutes, correspondence, constitution, handouts,

notes, and newspaper and magazine articles concerning the Virginia Tech gay and lesbian student organization, Lambda Horizon, from 1971-1991. The collection includes materials regarding the AIDS education committee, which was a primary focus of Lambda Horizon. In addition, the constitution of the Gay Alliance, a previous student organization, is included.”

*<http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/viblbv00016.xml>*

**Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library  
University of Virginia (Charlottesville, VA)**

Manuscript Collection

**Rita Mae Brown Papers (1929-2001):** “While chiefly identified as a writer, especially as the author of the groundbreaking and successful novel *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973), featuring the lesbian character, Molly Bolt, Rita Mae Brown is also known as a political activist, feminist, speaker, and founder of such groups as the Redstockings Radical Feminist Group, National Gay Task Force, the National Women's Political Caucus, and co-founder of Radical Lesbians and Lavender Menace. She is also a co-founder with Charlotte Bunch of an experiment in communal living in Washington, D. C. called the Furies Collective, and an early member of NOW.”

*<http://search.vaheritage.org/vivaxtf/view?docId=uva-sc/viu03270.xml>*