



## Rainbow History Project Annual Report Year Thirteen: 2013

In our bat mitzvah year, Rainbow History Project came of age. Two major developments now allow us to expand both our collection of historical materials and our support for researchers seeking to use those materials. Through our “Archiving 101” activities, we have in place systems and procedures for processing donated materials and constructing finding aids to assist researchers. Archiving 101 has made it much easier for new volunteers to quickly become productive participants. And with our archival partner, the Historical Society of Washington and its Kiplinger Library, again up and running, there is now a place where we can store our growing collection and where researchers can access that physical collection. While we have not yet thrown away the key to our storage locker, Rainbow History Project is no longer constrained by that locker.

With these developments, in December 2013 Rainbow History was able to prepare an informal Work Plan for the next two years. Most notably, in the past we were constrained by our space and processing limitations, and thus our collections focus was on obtaining oral histories. We now can actively pursue physical collections while retaining our commitment to oral histories (we recently taped the oral history of community activist Chris Riddiough) and our other traditional activities.

Here are some highlights of 2013.

### Assisting Researchers

Thanks to indefatigable board member Philip Clark, in 2013 Rainbow History Project provided support to a large number of researchers. Among other things, Philip:

- Provided support to Genny Beemyn, some of whose research is being published by Routledge later in 2014 as *A Queer Capital: A History of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Life in Washington D.C.* (covering the late 19th century through the Eisenhower era).
- Provided Rachel Bryant with background materials for a documentary about gay rights legislation in California.
- Provided Tina Nicole with RHP materials for background research and possible inclusion in a documentary about the DC Eagle.

- Assisted S. Lou Stratton with background research for her work at the University of Birmingham on Lesbian Pulp Fiction and Community Formation: 1950-1969.
- Helped Stephen Vider, a postdoctoral fellow at Yale, with his research on gay and lesbian communes in the early 1970s, on Gay Liberation Front-DC, and on fostering/adoption by gays and lesbians in the 1970s.
- Helped Studio Theatre identify participants for a panel discussion following a performance of *Torch Song Trilogy*.
- Digitized the 133 oral histories and 23 panel discussions in the RHP collection, making these important resources much more accessible to researchers.

### **Presenting Research and Educating the Public**

- Rainbow History Project held a public panel on October 21, 2013, at the Thurgood Marshall Center, entitled “Prejudice and Pride: Racial Discrimination in the LGBT Community, a Historical Perspective.” Colevia Carter, Richard Haight, Dr. Kwame A. Holmes, ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, and Valerie Papaya Mann were the panelists; Chuck Goldfarb the moderator.
- Philip Clark participated in the National Communication Association’s annual conference, along with archivists from the Smithsonian and George Washington University and scholars from the University of Texas-Austin and Drake University, as part of the November 23, 2013 panel “‘The Queen of America Goes to Washington City’: Forging Connections Among Queer Archives, Archivists, and Scholars.”
- Philip updated RHP’s Places & Spaces database, a resource that is becoming ever more important as entire DC neighborhoods are being redeveloped and old buildings and other venues torn down.
- One of our new board members, Bonnie Morris, expanded RHP’s visibility in the academic community and in the women’s community by promoting us on the many panels in which she participated.
- Board member Jeff Donahoe works with the Washington Center, which coordinates Washington, DC internship programs for students from across the U.S. Interns seeking to learn more about the city’s diversity can take a walking tour of Dupont Circle led by Jeff, in which he focuses on LGBT community development and change. In 2013, about 100 students participated in six tours. During June’s Pride celebrations, former board member Brock Thompson gave the Dupont Circle tour.

### **Organizing our Physical Collection**

In 2013, RHP applied our newly developed Archiving 101 systems and procedures to process two large collections—our internal documents and the large collection of documents donated by Black and White Men Together of Washington, DC (BWMT-DC). This activity accomplished three things—it

provided training to both board and non-board volunteers; it provided our volunteers with hands-on experience performing all the steps in archival processing, including the construction of finding aids; and it left us ready to hand off several large document sets to the Historical Society of Washington. Board members Vincent Slatt, Alison Scott, and Richard Haight have led the Archiving 101 efforts. A number of non-board volunteers—Jon Shimabukuro, Tim Meagher, Letitia Gomez, and ABilly S. Jones-Hennin—also have been important members of our Archiving 101 team.

In conjunction with Archiving 101, board members Philip Clark, Jeff Donahoe, Bonnie Morris, Richard Haight, and Vincent Slatt led several forays to our storage locker, where we organized the documents that still await archival processing. With improved inventory management it was possible to start constructing a more specific work plan for the next two years. As part of that process, we organized all post-1970s *Washington Blades* in our possession and passed them on to the Historical Society of Washington in January 2014.

### **Coordinating with our Archival Partner, the Historical Society of Washington**

In 2013, the Kiplinger Library of the Historical Society of Washington was again able to accept physical collections and to serve researchers. RHP has met and coordinated with HSW staff at various levels to renew the flow of documents in the RHP collection to HSW. We worked together to make sure our procedures were compatible, especially with respect to finding aids. HSW staff has attended RHP meetings and RHP has had a representative join HSW's collections committee. Vincent Slatt has taken the RHP lead on coordinating with HSW.

On June 7, as part of the community's Gay Pride festivities, RHP and HSW will co-sponsor a panel on the DC Gay Liberation Front, a seminal gay rights group active in the early 1970s. The event will be held at the Kiplinger Library. In addition to the panel, related documents from the RHP collection will be on display.

### **Updating our Legal Forms**

Rainbow History Project strongly supports intellectual property rights and is vigilant in protecting those rights. As technology has changed and as the range of our collection has expanded, we have continued to review and where necessary update our legal forms. In 2013 we revised our oral history release form and began a review of our deed of gift form as well as the form for releasing materials to researchers. We expect to complete that review in the first half of 2014. Richard Haight and Philip Clark lead this effort.

### **Fundraising and Finance**

Although RHP, as an all-volunteer organization with no physical space requirements other than a storage locker, does not have a large budget, our activities are not without costs. It is essential that we remain visible to our very diverse LGBT community and there also are costs associated with collecting and

preserving the community's documents, presenting workshops, disseminating information and otherwise assisting researchers, and maintaining our website.

Brother Help Thyself continues to be RHP's most loyal and generous financial supporter and we salute their efforts on behalf not only of RHP but of so many small community-based organizations whose history we hope to be able to preserve. With the possible exception of Pride Day, BHT's annual grant reception is the DC event that best shows the diversity of our LGBT community. We have been able to meet our mission thanks to BHT's capital grants to us to obtain digital tape recorders, cameras, and archival materials, and its general grants to us to support our Community Pioneers and panel discussions.

We are fortunate also to have support from individuals in the community. Memberships and individual donations continue to provide the majority of our funding. But our community outreach has been limited and we recognize in our new work plan the need to expand that outreach. New board member Jose Gutierrez is leading that effort and has already suggested a number of new approaches that we expect to introduce in 2014.

Our treasurer, Jim Marks, continues to take the lead on writing grant proposals, and on preparing newsletters and fundraising letters to our supporters. Our secretary, Jeff Donahoe, continues to lead the operational side of all of our public events.

## **Goodbyes and Hellos**

Rainbow History Project is fortunate to have an active board. Each and every member of our board has taken the lead in one or another area of our work. Active volunteers, however, often also have active careers that may take them away from DC. Early in 2013, Steven Mandeville-Gamble, whose hard work on behalf of RHP in 2012 was highlighted in last year's annual report, was offered and accepted the position of University Librarian at the University of California at Riverside, which allowed him to return to his home state. From afar, he has continued to support RHP; he has underwritten the annual hosting fees with Omeka.net for the [rainbowhistory.omeka.net](http://rainbowhistory.omeka.net) site.

Another of Steven's great contributions to RHP in 2012 was bringing Alison Scott into our organization and onto our board. Alison did very important work in 2012 interviewing and preparing bios of a number of our Community Pioneers and in 2013 took the lead on preparing the finding aids for our internal documents and for the BWMT/DC collection. She also was our representative to the Historical Society of Washington's collections committee. Alas, Alison has accepted a position with Steven as deputy librarian at Riverside. She, too, is returning to her West Coast roots.

We thank Steven and Alison for their important contributions to Rainbow History Project and are happy they have agreed to remain part of the RHP family, if primarily through the ether.

We are very fortunate that in 2013 we had three dynamic additions to our board—Jose Gutierrez, Bonnie Morris, and Vincent Slatt. Each has already taken the lead in an important aspect of Rainbow History, as noted earlier in this report.