



RAINBOW HISTORY PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT Year Fourteen: 2014

2014 has been the Year of the Volunteer for the Rainbow History Project and, as a result, we accomplished a lot and are poised for an even more active year in 2015. While always an all-volunteer organization, we have sometimes been too busy with day-to-day tasks to focus on attracting and training new volunteers. In 2014, led by board members Jeff Donahoe and Vincent Slatt, we recruited and trained more than 10 new oral history interviewers and expanded our base of archiving volunteers. In addition, our treasurer, Jim Marks, created and successfully recruited experienced volunteers to a new development committee, culminating in a successful end-of-year donor campaign. And we did all of this while significantly expanding our oral history and physical document collections (we now have more than 150 oral histories!), assisting a wide spectrum of researchers, and educating the public through public panel discussions and more than half a dozen walking tours. We also strengthened our working relationship with our archival partner, the Historical Society of Washington, DC. And, as has been the case from our inception, Brother Help Thyself again provided essential funding support.

Here are some highlights of 2014.

Oral Histories: We significantly expanded our oral histories collection.

- In 2014 we progressed from collecting the occasional oral history to performing a few interviews each month and as 2015 begins our growing cadre of volunteers will be able to increase that number. In December we collected our 150th oral history and already we are close to 160.
- We held several oral history research and interview training sessions at the Gay Community Center and now have more than 10 trained volunteers. Most of our new volunteers are in their 20s and 30s and are enthusiastically seeking out community members to interview.
- All of the various volunteer and narrator permissions and release forms were revisited and compiled into a single master training packet. This packet is now available on our website and provided to all volunteers.

- Legacy data for our oral history collection had been stored in disparate spreadsheets and paper files, resulting in some confusion and difficulty in access for users. In 2014, all of the information was collected and imported into our online catalog (“Omeka”) and now all interviews in our collection are described online in our catalog. This will facilitate discovery by researchers and also help track our use of these in creating transcripts and other produces.
- In 2014, Routledge, a global publisher of academic books, released Dr. Genny Beemyn’s *A Queer Capital*, which chronicles twentieth century LGBT history in DC. Dr. Beemyn used Rainbow History Project oral histories and our walking tours and Places & Spaces database as source materials, as well as conducting extensive original research and interviews. Dr. Beemyn has donated all of these extensive oral history materials to RHP, which will become the Genny Beemyn/*A Queer Capital* collection at RHP. These materials significantly supplement our oral history collection.

Physical Collection: We received, processed, and constructed finding aids for a number of historically significant collections that are now available to researchers.

- Robert Coggin was a founder of the first gay and lesbian student group at the University of Virginia and an early LGBT leader in Montgomery County, MD. His collection, which was donated by his estate, provides strong documentation of the early work on gay rights legislation in Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. These materials have been fully processed and are now available at the Historical Society of Washington, DC.
- In the 1980s, a small group of volunteers at DC’s second Gay Community Center attempted to construct an archive of the DC LGBT community, collecting materials from LGBT organizations and clippings from LGBT and non-LGBT periodicals. Although that iteration of the Center closed its doors in 1990, seven large boxes of the collected materials have survived and have been donated to RHP. This Eaton-Kesinger collection includes extensive internal documents from the Gay Community Center itself, as well as newsletters and pamphlets from a large number of LGBT organizations in DC, Virginia, and Maryland, and newspaper coverage of the community and its organizations. These materials have been fully processed and are now available at the Historical Society of Washington, DC.
- Additional materials on the second Gay Community Center, focusing on the period 1988-1990, were donated by the estate of Jim Lemly, who was treasurer of the Center.
- Catherine Tuerk has donated her collection of materials on the two areas in which she has contributed so much to the community – PFLAG and information on gender non-conforming youth.
- Our archiving volunteers meet monthly to process newly donated materials. Since many of these sessions are held at the Historical Society of Washington, DC, where our physical collection is housed, we have developed a close working relationship with the Society’s staff and volunteers. During the year, we also reviewed and/or processed collections acquired prior to 2014, including:

- the Black and White Men Together of Washington, DC papers covering the 1980s and 1990s (which are now fully processed and available).
- the unprocessed Bruce Pennington papers that had been transferred to HSW years ago but needed review.
- the records of the U.S. Department of Commerce's GLOBE employee group, for the period 1992-2004, including materials about an EEO complaint.
- the transfer of copies of *The Washington Blade*, *Michael's Entertainment Weekly*, and *Metro Weekly* to HSW and the transfer of duplicate copies of the *Blade* to the Latino/a LGBT History Project in Washington, DC.
- Nancy Tucker, who participated in our panel Gay Liberation Front panel discussion, also donated a box of materials for our collection, including rare issues of *The Ladder* lesbian magazine from the 1960s as well as issues of the newsletter *O.W.L.S.* (Older Wiser Lesbians) from her time as editor in the 1980s.

Public Education Events: Panel discussions, exhibits, walking tours, presentations, and readings.

- RHP held the public panel discussion "Gay Power to Gay People: Gay Liberation Front DC" during Pride Weekend, bringing together members of this foundational group for a discussion about their work to gain LGBT visibility and rights in DC. More than 90 people attended and an associated exhibit curated by RHP ran for more than a month at the Historical Society of Washington, DC's Kiplinger Library.
- We led more than half a dozen Walking Tours of LGBT Capitol Hill and Dupont Circle, both for the general public (as part of Pride and WalkingTown DC) and for special groups (Washington Center interns, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum employees, University of Maryland students, University of Rochester alumni).
- Board member Philip Clark participated in *Our Time in History*, a Black History Month event that RHP co-sponsored with Mary's House for Older Adults; Metropolitan Community Church; the DC Center; the DC Coalition of Black Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Men and Women; and the DC Mayor's Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Affairs. Philip spoke about Black LGBT history and about RHP's African-American materials and collections.
- Philip Clark participated in tribute readings to Essex Hemphill at the Mount Pleasant Public Library during National Poetry Month and at the OutWrite LGBT literary festival at the DC Center on August 1, 2014.
- Philip Clark read work by former DC poet Donald Britton as part of WordsOut, an inaugural LGBT literary festival sponsored by the DC Public Library.
- Rainbow History Project recorded the panel discussion "Stepping Out: A Celebration of the Interfaith History of LGBT Welcoming and Affirming in Metropolitan DC, MD, and VA," which was coordinated by the DC Center's "Center Faith" program and held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Many of the faith-based leaders were recruited for RHP oral history interviews. RHP was represented by board members Jeff Donahoe, Richard Haight, and Vincent Slatt.

Supporting Researchers, Journalists, and Film Makers: helping requesters access information from our collection and putting them in touch with historically knowledgeable individuals in our community.

- Philip Clark continues to be a unique resource for a wide range of academic, free-lance, and community researchers as well as producers and journalists from organizations such as Al-Jazeera America and WETA.
- Philip helped requesters research a wide range of topics in 2014, including:
 - the Mattachine Society of Washington;
 - the Gay Liberation Front of Washington, DC;
 - gay communes in DC;
 - gay adoption;
 - Dr. John McCalla;
 - the Stonewall Rebellion;
 - the DC Gay Switchboard;
 - the history of the *Washington Blade*;
 - the Furies;
 - Frank Kameny;
 - J.J. Proferes;
 - LGBT civil rights;
 - the 1979 Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference;
 - community archiving;
 - Washington, DC in the 1980s;
 - help with photo permissions for a documentary film;
 - the 1979 March on Washington;
 - *Friends* radio program.

Community Outreach and Development: Our newly formed development committee has expanded our community outreach and fundraising efforts.

- The development committee has helped us incorporate outreach and fundraising into our traditional activities as well as make efforts to be visible in new places.
- Our Capital Pride Weekend outreach – at the Gay Liberation Front panel discussion and at the Pride Festival booth that we shared with the Historical Society of Washington, DC – generated several hundred new names for our mailing list. From these sign-ups, new volunteers, donors, and oral history interview subjects have already contributed to RHP.
- Board member Vincent Slatt and Anne McDonough of the Historical Society of Washington co-authored for the *2014 Pride Guide* an article about RHP's history and its relationship with HSW. 75,000 copies of the printed *Guide* were distributed.
- We implemented a recommendation from the development committee to do more outreach to the DC suburbs by making a presentation at the annual Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association pool party and having a table at NOVA Pride.
- A newly created festival, Northern Virginia Pride, was held on October 5, 2014 in Centreville, VA. Board members Jim Marks, Jose Gutierrez, Richard Haight, and

Vincent Slatt staffed an RHP booth at the event, providing festival goers with information on LGBT history in Northern Virginia. United States Senator Mark Warner appeared at the event and was photographed with the RHP contingent at our booth.

- Our end-of-year donor campaign had both online and postal mail components and generated more than \$2300 in contributions.
- We also did outreach to the research community. Philip Clark wrote “The DIY Archive,” about the Rainbow History Project and LGBT archiving, for the Summer 2014 (Vol. 1, No. 2) volume of the academic journal *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*.

Website and Online Presence: We performed important upgrades that provide critical tools for our education and outreach initiatives.

- After an initial assessment and planning period in 2013, in 2014 Vincent Slatt assumed the role of webmaster for the group and led a number of projects. These included:
 - Converting our html web platform into a Wordpress blogging site to allow for easy and rapid updates concerning RHP programming and events.
 - Migrating all historical materials into our online catalog, run through Omeka.
 - Creating catalog records for five different collections.
 - Scanning, cataloguing, and publishing in the catalog 400 new items, including newsletters, images, press releases, and other documents from public newsletters and other collections.
 - Extensive data clean-up.
 - Updating the Places and Spaces database, using fusion tables to present the historic information in a map rather than simply a chart. As one of our most frequently used assets – researchers both rely on it and also provide us with updated and expanded data to incorporate into it – this implementation of mapping technology improves the usefulness of the database and provides greater flexibility in updating the map.
 - Converting our historic timelines into a new format and making them available on the website under a new heading for timelines, starting with the Bi History Timeline.
 - Creating an RHP photo journal on Flickr to share large groups of photos created at events or through digitization of historic materials. Board member Richard Haight led this project.

LOOKING FORWARD:

Our 2014 accomplishments—an expanded volunteer corps, more efficient and effective website, growing oral history and physical document collections—leave us well positioned to provide even greater service in 2015 and beyond. As our collections gain recognition, more community leaders have approached us about donating their papers. (Expect future announcements.) We are employing our expanded oral history capability as we prepare for a

Community Pioneers celebration in May. Our collaborative efforts are growing; board member Bonnie Morris is coordinating with Erin Hawkins and Denise Bump to present a panel on “Lost Lesbian Spaces in DC,” which will be take place at the Library of Congress and be co-sponsored by the Library of Congress GLOBE. Our development committee is expanding our outreach activities. And more and more researchers are turning to us as a source for historical DC LGBT documents.

I invite everyone in DC’s LGBT community to join us in this exciting endeavor.

Chuck Goldfarb
Chairman, Board of Directors