

History Happens

News from the



GLBT
Historical
Society
archives & museum



March 2017

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Oral histories from
the Dragon Fruit
Project



Dion Wong



Gisele Pohan



Benji Aquino



Crystal Jang

Voices From the Past: Relaunching the Historical Society's Oral History Program

by Gerard Koskovich

The GLBT Historical Society's oral history recordings are a repository of LGBTQ voices recalling memories going back to the early years of the 20th century. The more than 600 interviews -- including some conducted before the society was founded in 1985 -- feature not only well-known members of the community, but also individuals who lived far from the

headlines. The collection provides a unique window into the lives of queer people in the past who would otherwise remain invisible.

"Oral histories are crucial to uncovering stories that are difficult to find," notes Amy Sueyoshi, associate dean of the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State. "If you think about queer sexualities as taboo, you can imagine that people across decades would more actively try to destroy rather than save evidence of queer things in their lives. When historians are faced with this problem of seemingly little to no record of queer sexuality, we turn to oral histories to discover those secrets that likely comprised the most important parts of our lives."

A former board chair and occasional exhibition curator for the Historical Society, Sueyoshi was one of the leads on the [Dragon Fruit Project](#), an initiative to collect oral histories from LGBTQ elders in Asian Pacific Islander communities of the Bay Area. Video oral histories from the project currently form part of the Main Gallery exhibition at the GLBT History Museum.

Histories Worth Saving

"Often, only those of us who have the most resources think that our histories are worth saving," Sueyoshi says. "Due to the racialized nature of how resources are unevenly distributed in America, communities of color often do not have the bandwidth to think of their lives as historically significant. They are simply doing work that needs to be done without saving any record of the work. Oral histories then become an excellent way of uncovering pasts that might otherwise be deemed insignificant."

The GLBT Historical Society recently relaunched its own effort to actively gather oral histories. Documenting underrepresented voices and experiences of intersectionality will be at the heart of the initiative. The effort kicked off at the beginning of February when some 30 women and men ranging from their teens to their 70s attended a volunteer orientation. According to managing archivist Joanna Black, who coordinated the gathering, "The atmosphere was friendly and curious. The feedback I got from people was that they felt really motivated to participate after attending the meeting."

The next step will be a free volunteer training on March 9, including information on doing background research, developing questions and recording interviews. A major goal is to broaden the diversity of the Historical Society's existing holdings and more fully record the richness and heterogeneity of queer experience, with a particular focus on reaching out to women. Individuals interested in taking part may contact Joanna Black for more details at joanna@glbthistory.org. To search the society's current oral history holdings -- about half of them transcribed and available online as PDFs -- visit the [archives home page](#).

From the Development Manager

Vision 2020: Working to Create a New Museum



by Juanita Carroll Young

Last month I started work as the GLBT Historical Society's new development manager. My professional background made me leap at the chance to get involved. A graduate of Mills College, I have more than 14 years of experience with nonprofit fundraising, grants and institutional giving. I love working with board, staff, volunteers and members to

ensure funding for cultural and social justice nonprofits.

But I'm also thrilled to have joined the team at this vital organization for another reason. As a bisexual community member, I'll never forget the opening of the GLBT History Museum's "Biconic Flashpoints" exhibition in 2014. Being in the presence of the coeditor of *Bi Any Other Name*, the president of BiNet USA, the leader of the Bay Area Bi Network and so many other bi activists touched me deeply. And the archival materials blew me away.

Knowing personally just how much it means to see our history preserved and displayed, I'm excited about connecting with the GLBT Historical Society's supporters, a group of people who share our understanding of this important work. And I'm already busy helping build capacity for [Vision 2020](#), our initiative to create a New Museum of LGBTQ History and Culture.

Our Incredible Supporters

We're well on our way thanks to the response to our year-end fundraising campaign. We needed to receive up to \$30,000 in donations by Dec. 31, 2016, to qualify for a dollar-for-dollar match from four generous donors: Al Baum and Robert Holgate, Elisabeth Cornu and the Excelerate Foundation. A pledge from Emily Rosenberg and Darlene DeManincor increased the amount to \$50,000. Thanks to our incredible supporters, we not only qualified for the matches, we ultimately raised a total of \$110,000.

The Vision 2020 campaign also has received an exceptional boost from another quarter: At the end of January, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution calling on the City, philanthropists, business leaders and residents to support our efforts to create a world-class LGBTQ public history center with galleries, archives, public program spaces, and facilities for researchers and staff. For full details, see the [story on our website](#).

Of course, I'd be really happy to hear from you about why you connect with the GLBT Historical Society's mission to tell the stories of our queer ancestors. Contact me at (415) 777-5455, ext. 2, or via [e-mail](#). And if you're in town, let's meet at the society's [anniversary party](#) on Friday, March 17, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at [the GLBT History Museum](#). Looking forward to personally thanking many of you for your part in sustaining the strength and inspiration that come from knowing our history.

Juanita Carroll Young is the development manager for the [GLBT Historical Society](#).

In the Archives

An African American Lesbian Curator



by Mark Sawchuk

Consisting of seven cartons, the papers of Adrienne Fuzee (1950-2003) document the life of a visionary artist and writer who was one of the few openly lesbian African American arts curators working in the Bay Area at the end of the 20th century.

Originally from Los Angeles, Fuzee helped develop and promote the work of artists at Watts Towers, the Los Angeles Woman's Building, New Langton Arts, Spectrum Gallery, the GLBT Historical Society, the San Francisco LGBT Community Center and her own Galerie Fuzee.

In addition, Fuzee coedited *Unsolicited Commentary*, a journal of cultural criticism; taught at the San Francisco Art Institute; cochaired Lesbians in the Visual Arts; was a founding member of the Queer Cultural Center; and served as president of the Advisory Board for the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery.

The GLBT Historical Society's archives preserve Fuzee's literary and critical manuscripts, as well as her correspondence with numerous fledgling Bay Area artists she mentored over the course of her career. To learn more about the Adrienne Fuzee Papers, see the [online finding aid](#).

Upcoming Events

[Staged Reading](#)

[Rhino in the Castro: "Blithe Spirit" by Noël Coward](#)



Monday, March 6
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco
Free | \$5.00 donation welcome

[Theatre Rhinoceros](#), San Francisco's groundbreaking queer stage company, has teamed up with the GLBT History Museum to

present "Rhino in the Castro," a series of readings of plays reflecting the LGBTQ community and our allies.

This month's offering is *Blithe Spirit*, a classic 1941 comedy by celebrated gay wit Sir Noël Coward. The play centers on a fussy novelist, remarried but haunted by the ghost of his late first wife whose spirit is conjured up by a visiting "happy medium." The Rhino's reading discovers the queer connotations between the lines. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Fundraiser

Out of Hibernation: Beer Bust at the Lone Star



Sunday, March 12
4:00-8:00 PM
The Lone Star Saloon
1354 Harrison St., San Francisco

[The Lone Star Saloon](#) invites gay bears and their friends to a special beer bust to support the GLBT Historical Society and our current exhibition, "[Beartoonist of San Francisco: Sketching an Emerging Subculture](#)." Curator

Jeremy Prince will be on hand to make informal comments about the history of the bear subculture, and artwork and t-shirts by bear cartoonist Fran Frisch will be available for purchase. With spring on the way, the beer bust will be a great opportunity to come out of hibernation for a visit to the Lone Star, recently honored by the City of San Francisco as an officially recognized [LGBTQ legacy business](#). Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Anniversary Party

Turning 32, Turning Six, Turning Up the Music

Friday, March 17
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco



\$15 advance; \$20 at the door

Thirty-two years ago, a band of queer history enthusiasts created the GLBT Historical Society to uncover, preserve and share stories of the LGBTQ past. Six years ago, we opened the doors of the GLBT History Museum in the Castro. Join us at a double anniversary party to celebrate these milestones -- and to raise funds for our spring makeover. The museum is

showing her age and needs a fresh face so she can better welcome visitors for the next four years. VivvyAnne ForeverMore, Marga Gomez and Alex U. Inn will serve as hosts and entertainers, and DJ Marke B will provide the sounds. Drinks and light refreshments will be provided. Proceeds of the party will help us redo the museum entry, reception desk and shop. To purchase advance tickets, [click here](#).

[Open House](#)

[Behind the Scenes in the Historical Society Archives](#)



Saturday, March 18

11:00 AM -1:00 PM

The GLBT Historical Society

989 Market St., Lower Level, San Francisco

Free admission

The GLBT Historical Society preserves one of the world's [largest collections of LGBTQ historical materials](#). Our archives are used by

historians, writers, filmmakers and others researchers, yet they remain little known to the wider community. This special open house will offer members of the public a behind-the-scenes tour, including a rare opportunity to visit the archival reserve normally accessible only to Historical Society staff.

Managing archivist Joanna Black will provide an introduction to the collections, the activities and the uses of the archives. Visitors also will have a chance to see highlights from the holdings that have never before been displayed publicly. Guided tours will take place at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. To reserve a free ticket, RSVP no later than 3:00 p.m. on March 17: [click here](#).

[Living History](#)

[ACT\(ing\) UP: 30 Years of Nonviolent Direct Action](#)

Tuesday, March 28

7:00-9:00 PM



The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco
\$5.00; free for members

Thirty years ago this month, the first chapter of the militant AIDS activist organization ACT UP was founded in New York City. At the same time, the AIDS Action Pledge was forming in San Francisco, emerging from earlier AIDS protest groups in the city, including Citizens for

Medical Justice, Mobilization Against AIDS and the ARC/AIDS Vigil. The first in our new monthly series called "Fighting Back," this intergenerational discussion will feature veterans of those early groups as well as contemporary organizers of LGBTQ nonviolent direct action who will lead a public forum exploring the effectiveness of such efforts in creating change. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

HELP PRESERVE OVER 150 YEARS
OF TRANSGENDER HISTORY

DONATE TODAY

The Louise Lawrence Transgender Archive will increase understanding of transgender people by making historical materials available to researchers and the public. The history of marginalized communities is elusive, imperiled and best preserved by the community itself. You can help by donating* to our Indiegogo campaign.

**Our fiscal sponsor, the GLBT Historical Society, will receive 10% of the donations.*

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a person with short hair, wearing a dark suit jacket and a white shirt with a dark bow tie. They have their hands raised near their face, with fingers slightly spread. Overlaid on the center of the image is a circular logo for the Louise Lawrence Transgender Archive. The logo has a white border and contains a portrait of a woman with dark, curly hair. The text "LOUISE LAWRENCE" is written in a purple font along the top inner edge of the circle, and "TRANSGENDER ARCHIVE" is written in a blue font along the bottom inner edge. Below the photograph, the text "HELP PRESERVE OVER 150 YEARS OF TRANSGENDER HISTORY" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath this text is a dark blue rectangular button with the words "DONATE TODAY" in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a paragraph of white text explaining the purpose of the archive and a note about the fiscal sponsor.

Visit Us

EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St.

San Francisco, CA 94114

(415) 621-1107

www.glbthistory.org/museum

Monday & Wednesday - Saturday: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Tuesday: Closed

Sunday: Noon - 5:00 PM

ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER

The GLBT Historical Society

989 Market St., Lower Level

San Francisco, CA 94103-1708

(415) 777-5455

www.glbthistory.org/archives

Call to schedule a research appointment.

CREDITS: Oral history screen captures courtesy of the Dragon Fruit Project
Photo of Noël Coward by Allan Warren

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