Introduction

- History Project started in August 2012
  - Story Circle presentation for Aging with Pride
  - Widespread interest led to creation of a history project
  - Has grown to become one of the most successful initiatives of the LGBT Center
Mission

• To discover, document, collect, preserve and present the stories of LGBT history in central PA
• To find LGBT people willing to share their stories and artifacts
• To encourage LGBT people to learn about their history
Discover

Through outreach efforts, we are finding people willing to share their stories and artifacts

- LGBT events
- Publicity
- Word of mouth

You're History
Video oral history interviews
  - Created a questionnaire/prompts
  - Developed a volunteer training program
  - Created a list of interested narrators
  - Conduct video oral history interviews
  - Do transcriptions
Collect

- Started collecting documents and artifacts
  - Photographs
  - Personal papers
  - Archival documents from LGBT Organizations
  - T-shirts, buttons, pins, flags, signs and more
Collect

• Collection has grown rapidly
  – Nearly 100 oral history interviews with transcriptions
  – More than 70 cubic feet of archival documents and artifacts
Preserve

• Developed partnership with Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
  – Provide professional archival care
  – Catalogue, describe and arrange collections
  – Provide storage and access for researchers
  – Opportunities to collaborate on exhibits, original research and publications
Present

- Exhibits of artifacts and historical documents
  - First exhibit October 2013 at Dickinson College
  - Annual collaborative art/history exhibit started 2014
- Future digital exhibits, archives, and tours on the web
- Narrative history putting stories in context and timeline
Present

• Examples of exhibits
Present

• Examples of exhibits
Present

• Examples of exhibits
Present

• Examples of exhibits
Present

- Permanent display case at LGBT Center
  - Rotating exhibits of new artifact and archival donations
  - Thematic exhibits connected to special events or programs
Present

• Quarterly LGBT history programs
Encourage

We encourage LGBT people to learn about their history through:

- Programs - Story Circles
- Exhibits
- Web site
- College course projects and internships
What we are learning

• LGBT people in central PA have lived extraordinary lives and have
  – Experienced all types of discrimination
  – Lived through violence and harassment
  – Persisted and persevered through adversity
  – Formed long term relationships and families
  – Succeeded in careers, community involvement
  – Created places to socialize and find each other
  – Organized for LGBT equality even before Stonewall
  – Developed an entire infrastructure and network of community organizations
Why is this important

• LGBT history has been ignored, destroyed, not valued
  – Mainstream museums and archives have largely ignored or been unaware of this history or avoided it as being too controversial
  – LGBT people have not kept documents and artifacts out of fear of discovery or lack of value of their own history
  – Families finding this material in estates of LGBT people have destroyed or disposed of the material out of shame or disinterest or thinking no one would find it of value
  – Some governments and cultural institutions throughout the world have destroyed evidence of LGBT life

• No one else is telling the stories and history of the LGBT community in central PA

• LGBT people in this region should learn about their history because it is the foundation on which their future is built
What we need

• Narrators
• Volunteers and interns
  – Videographers/interviewers
  – Researchers and writers
  – Web/digital exhibit designers
  – Video documentarians
• Archival documents and artifacts
• Money – donations, grants
• Opportunities for outreach
Thank you!

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