



In Plain Sight – Where History Comes Out LGBTQ Historical Timelines Docent/Classroom Guide

Introduction

In late 2020, the SNMA produced a series of digital timelines related to LGBTQ history in the United States. Thanks to a grant from the Florida Humanities Council, these timelines will also be exhibited on touchscreens in the museum. Florida Humanities has furthermore enabled the SNMA to help make these timelines more accessible to various audiences through public engagement and curriculum development.

This guide provides staff, volunteers, docents and classroom teachers and leaders with a toolbox of instructions, tips, and methods for facilitating discussions with different types of groups. The conversations and approaches will naturally vary depending on the makeup and size of the group—as well as the expertise and interests of the facilitator. Rather than comprehensive, this guide aims to give docents new techniques and pathways of facilitation, anticipating questions and dialogues that might arise. Of course, docents should also feel free to draw on their own knowledge of LGBTQ history and experience in group facilitation.

The point of this guide is *not* to survey LGBTQ history or to educate docents on the contents of the timelines. Instead, this guide will help facilitators engage audiences by grounding the timelines in a humanities perspective. Beyond communicating important information, good facilitation promotes critical, constructive, and creative thinking. Queer history is a rich and sometimes overwhelming field—one clearly quite difficult to cover in a five or sixty-minute discussion. Ultimately, the discussion should whet the group’s interest in LGBTQ history through critical engagement exercises.

More specifically, this open-ended guide will help you:

- Engage visitors in dialogue through pointed questions, generative discussions, and fun group activities.

- Spark discussions by using unique materials at the SNMA, including books, art, objects, and archival material.
- Emphasize that the consideration of history requires critical thinking, analysis, and interpretation.
- Accentuate local LGBTQ history in Fort Lauderdale and South Florida.
- Embrace queer historical narratives to start constructive conversations about broader topics such as history, identity, difference, community, politics, and democracy.
- Encourage audiences to make personal connections with the historical record.
- Make LGBTQ history more accessible, interesting, and meaningful to diverse audiences.

Engaging Different Audiences for Different Lengths of Time

Because museum visitors and groups widely vary, this guide will prepare you to engage different kinds of audiences in discussion.

In particular, it will offer adaptable facilitation frameworks for the following groups:

- Junior high school group
- High school group
- Adult group
- LGBTQ junior high or high school group
- LGBTQ adult group
- Online audience

You will be prepared to facilitate for varying lengths of time, from 5 minutes to 1.5 hours.

Preparing for the Visit

In advance of facilitating a discussion, you should try to gain as much information as possible about the visiting group or individuals. Having a sense of the audience will help you structure and tailor the discussion.

Questions to consider include:

- Who are the visitors?
- How big is the group?
- Do the visitors already know each other?
- Do you already know the visitors?
- What are their ages, identities, and backgrounds?
- Do they have any special accessibility needs?
- Do they identify as LGBTQ?
- Are they familiar with LGBTQ history?
- Are they potentially resistant to or uncomfortable with talking about LGBTQ history?

- Are they being supervised by a teacher or authority figure who is accompanying the group?
- Are they more talkative or on the quieter side?
- Have they visited the museum before?
- Have they previously engaged with the timelines at the museum or online?
- How long is the visit?
- Are there specific themes or topics that should be emphasized or addressed?

Structuring the Discussion

Because the group makeup as well as the discussion length will be different, this guide introduces different modules that can be adapted and elaborated on as you see fit. Of course, there is no simple formula for leading a rich discussion.

The core elements of the discussion include:

- A. Introduction (Module 1)
- B. Body (Modules 2 to 7)
- C. Conclusion (Module 8)

The topics of the modules themselves are:

1. Introduction
2. Icebreaker and Ground Rules
3. Learning about History and LGBTQ History
4. Defining LGBTQ History
5. The Timeline as a Historical Tool
6. The Archive
7. Intersectionality
8. Conclusion

Closely attuned to the development of the discussion, you will use your own judgment in mixing and incorporating parts of Modules 2 to 7.

Each module is built around an objective, containing a cursory description, the intended audience type, discussion questions, possible responses, and wrap-ups. In this guide, suggested questions and other suggested scripted texts are in bold type.

Facilitating larger groups, you might choose to use a whiteboard or easel pad to organize the conversation as participants brainstorm responses to your questions. If you utilize such tools, make sure to include all of the participants' responses in one way or another—possibly rewriting or adapting responses that are not perfectly aligned with the question. Incorporating all of the participants' responses is essential to establishing an inclusive atmosphere. A whiteboard

or easel pad can be a terrific tool for mapping out disparate thoughts, but it can also create a more formal feel to the discussion, which might not be desired.

Module 1: Introduction

Whether you anticipate the discussion to be short or long, an introduction will set the stage for your time together, helping participants more fully engage with the timelines. At the very least, you should:

1. Welcome the group.
2. Attempt to create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.
3. Communicate what the timelines are and how they relate to the SNMA.
4. Get a sense of whether or not the participants might wish to stay for a discussion (if you haven't already).

The timelines...

- Are an ongoing curriculum project at the SNMA.
- Are an attempt to spotlight various historical events of note related to LGBTQ history in the U.S.
- Are, in their current form, divided into the following topics: general timeline (with a focus on politics), business, memorials and historic places, sports, AIDS, theater and dance, film and television, visual art, literature, and music.
- Are just one entry point to the richly diverse field of queer history.
- Are available on these touchscreens as well as online.
- At the SNMA, we are committed to making LGBTQ history public and accessible, so we encourage educators and students to draw on and share our timelines.
- If there are certain timeline events you would like to add, correct, or clarify, please contact Stonewall directly.

Clarify your role as a facilitator:

- Your role is to engage the individual or group in a discussion and other activities that build on the timelines.
- While you might not necessarily be an expert on LGBTQ history, you will do your best to respond to any questions, and can share resources at the SNMA and beyond.

Module 2: Icebreaker and Ground Rules

Building on the introduction, this module makes possible a meaningful and engaging group discussion. Its goals are to establish:

- Increased curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Greater comfort talking and critically engaging.
- A stronger sense of familiarity with one another.

There are three main purpose of the icebreaker: to introduce yourself, to learn more about the visitors, and to make them feel more comfortable engaging in conversation.

For the icebreaker, you should ask group members to provide their:

1. Name
2. Pronoun (she/he/they, etc.—if they feel comfortable) *
3. Anything else they wish to share

* You should be familiar with contemporary pronoun usage. For a helpful guide produced by the LGBT Life Center, see [this link](#). It is also possible that you will receive questions on what transgender is. [This resource](#) from the Human Rights Campaign can help you field such questions.

You should commence by sharing your own name and pronouns to set an example. It might be nice to share how you got involved in the SNMA or why you are passionate about queer history. Depending on the group, you might need to review why we state pronouns in the first place. Explain that our pronouns signal our gender identities, and knowing each other's pronouns can help establish a more respectful and inclusive atmosphere for discussion and exploration. Offering nametags with names and pronouns is also a good idea.

Along with names and pronouns, it might be useful to ask a low-key fun question as an icebreaker. Light questions can open up the conversation and get the ball rolling.

Here are a couple of ideas:

- What is your favorite LGBTQ-themed movie, TV show, or book?
- Have you ever been to the SNMA?
- What brought you to the museum today?
- How did you get interested in LGBTQ history?

If you're engaging with a group of school children, particularly those who might not have experience talking about LGBTQ issues, it might be helpful to lay out some ground rules for discussion. The point of these guidelines is to attempt to create a safe space.

Recommended ground rules:

1. Listen respectfully and actively.
2. Criticize ideas rather than individuals.
3. Allow everyone the chance to speak.
4. Commit to learning instead of debating.
5. Don't make assumptions about other participants.

You might also wish to ask:

- Are there any other guidelines you'd like to add to this list?
- Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

It's possible that there will be unwelcoming or inappropriate behavior from time to time. You will need to use your best judgment on how to respond so as to create an inclusive and affirming environment for everyone.

- Ask "How do you know that?" or "What do you mean by that?" to respectfully begin to confront the conflict.
- Try to clarify the assumption behind what the person is saying, reframing it in a productive way.
- Defer to others (such as a teacher) who might be better able to respond.
- Above all, do your best to make sure that the rest of the group feels supported.

Module 3: Learning about History and LGBTQ History

This module is about how we access, comprehend, and make sense of history—and LGBTQ history in particular. It is suitable for junior high school, high school, and some college and adult audiences.

Where and how do we learn about history?

- School
- Movies, television, books
- Museums and memorials
- Media and social media: Instagram, Twitter, etc.
- Family, friends, communities

We learn about history through *representations*. What is a representation?

- A portrayal or account of something: a person, a place, a thing, a phenomenon, an experience....
- Representations are not the same as the thing itself: they only are one portrayal or account of it.
- For instance, if I told you each to paint a portrait of me, each painting would look very different. You would bring your own individual perspectives, beliefs, skillsets to this task. And regardless of how good or true-to-life your portraits are, they will never be me.
- The same is true for history. Representations help us learn about history, but they are not history itself.
- Representations can be textual, visual, sonic.
- They can occur on film, television, radio, literature; in textbooks; in the media.

Representations are neither neutral nor objective. What do I mean by this?

- Representations do not occur in a vacuum. They reflect the times and places from which they emerge.

- They are always colored by—and in dialogue with—the enveloping social, political, and cultural beliefs.
- On top of this, as viewers and students, we bring our own attitudes and biases to our own encounters with representations of history.

What are some examples of a representation of history?

- Some examples: the book/musical *Les Misérables* is a portrayal of the French Revolution; *42* is a film about the life of baseball player Jackie Robinson; the TV series *Mrs. America* is about the movement to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment; the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck is a fictional account of the Great Depression.
- However, representations of history also occur in textbooks, the media, social media, by word of mouth, and so forth.

Now that we've discussed our encounters with history, let's focus on LGBTQ history. Where do you generally learn about queer history?

- *Answers will vary depending on the group.*

Do you (or did you) learn about LGBTQ history at school or at college?

- *Answers will vary depending on the group.*

From what I'm hearing, we often encounter and learn about history and queer history in different places and in varying amounts. Why do you think this is?

- *Answers will vary depending on the group.*
- Homophobia and transphobia pervade American culture. Like other fields and subjects, history is, unfortunately, shaped by transphobia and homophobia.*
- Narratives of LGBTQ life are regularly overlooked, neglected, and erased in historical curricula at schools and other sites of learning and teaching.
- History tends to be written from the perspective of those in power: in other words, from the perspective of white heterosexual cisgender men.
- LGBTQ people have had to write their own histories to preserve their valuable contributions to the world and to make them accessible to future generations.
- Generally speaking, the past two decades have witnessed an increase in queer visibility in the mainstream media and popular culture. Parallel to this—and possibly on account of this—certain accounts of LGBTQ history have become more widely taught, appreciated, and debated.

* Depending on the group, it might be wise to define homophobia and transphobia. Ask: What are homophobia and transphobia?

- Broadly, the dislike of or prejudice against queer/trans people.

Wrapping up:

- We access history through representations, and representations always reflect particular conditions and belief systems.

- The scarcity of visible LGBTQ history in our culture can often be traced to systemic transphobia and homophobia.

Module 4: Defining LGBTQ History

This module explores the field of LGBTQ history in the U.S., drawing attention to well known and less familiar historical narratives. It is appropriate for all types of groups.

Today we will be discussing LGBTQ history—a large field of study that can be interpreted in a number of ways. How would you define LGBTQ history?

- *Answers will vary depending on the group.*
- The history of LGBTQ people in their full diversity.
- The history of the struggle for LGBTQ rights.
- LGBTQ history also takes in histories of same-sex romantic and sexual practices, gender variance, and gender nonconformity.
- Labels for identity categories (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, etc.) are always changing and evolving. The field of LGBTQ history recognizes that frequently people who lived in earlier historical periods might not have embraced the specific identities contained in our present-day LGBTQ acronym.
- For example, the term “queer” was often considered a negative designation in previous decades, but now many individuals embrace the term in a positive way.
- For the purpose of this guide, “LGBTQ” and “queer” are used interchangeably. Younger generations tend to prefer “queer” and sometimes find identities such as “lesbian” and “gay” to be limiting, monochromatic, outdated, and not fluid enough to encapsulate their sexual and gender identities.

All in all, there is no singular way to define LGBTQ history, just as there is no singular way to define queer people.

For the next group activity, divide the participants into clusters of three or four. Give each group five or more notecards or sticky notes. Alternatively, this activity can be conducted as a series of questions, without sticky notes and discussion in groups.

Now we will do a brainstorming activity that is designed to help us collectively reflect on what we already know about LGBTQ history.

What are some images, narratives, events, and historical figures that immediately come to mind?

Take a few minutes to discuss ideas with your group, then write down five or more timeline events on the notecard or sticky note. Then we will come back together, and each group will share their responses.

- *Answers will vary.*

- Almost certainly someone will mention the Stonewall Riots.
- Other common responses might be Harvey Milk, Anita Bryant’s anti-gay organizing, Martha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Audre Lorde, Larry Kramer, marriage equality battles, Caitlyn Jenner, and Pete Buttigieg.

Of course, this institution has “Stonewall” in its name. Why do you think this is?

- The Stonewall Riots, which took place in New York City in 1969, marked a crucial moment in the history of LGBTQ liberation in the U.S. and worldwide.
- As such, the founder of the SNMA, Mark Silber, chose the name “Stonewall” to recognize the broader fight for queer liberation.
- Though the SNMA houses a great deal of archival material and publications related to this event, we don’t have all the stuff from the Stonewall Riots, and we certainly aren’t limited to this milestone.

Taking into account all of your responses, what are some trends in popular perceptions of LGBTQ history?

- *Answers will vary.*
- Possible trends include lots of white, gay cisgender men; lots of cultural figures; historical events that involve famous people; a stronger emphasis on the last twenty years.

Who is missing from these popular narratives? What tends to be overlooked?

- *Answers will vary.*
- Possible answers include women, people of color, and trans people; the dynamism of mass social movements (which involve more than just famous people); histories of LGBTQ life beyond major cities such as New York and San Francisco.

Why are certain LGBTQ historical narratives more visible than others?

- We tend to make heroes of individuals who “make history”—and, in so doing, mythologize them. For instance, Harvey Milk becomes the figurehead of gay liberation, or Audre Lorde becomes the token Black lesbian writer.
- In school curricula, there is often not enough time or resources to delve into histories of queer people in great depth. Like other branches of history, LGBTQ history tends to be reduced to the accomplishments of a small cast of people. In reality, of course, history is much more complex.
- White gay cis men tend to have more power in institutions that produce knowledge (the media, academia, etc.) than other segments of the LGBTQ community. For this reason, sometimes their historical narratives receive greater attention.

Wrapping up

- Rather than a footnote, queer history is a vital part of the American story.
- LGBTQ history is incredibly diverse and ripe for exploration and critique.

- The SNMA’s timelines mark many, if not all, of the people and events you’ve shared. The timelines also intend to fill in less familiar narratives, events, people, and contributions.
- History is always being made and is never static.

Module 5: The Timeline as a Historical Tool

This module considers the timeline as a vehicle for learning about and contemplating history, particularly through drawing on personal experience. It is suitable for junior high school, high school, and possibly some college and adult audiences.

What is a timeline?

- On a very basic level, a timeline represents the passage of time as a line, listing events in chronological order.
- Timelines can be textual and/or visual.

What are some strengths of a timeline?

- They tend to be organized and clear.
- They help us understand various historical events and other phenomena in relation to one another.
- They function well in a museum or gallery.

What are some weaknesses of a timeline?

- They sometimes need to pinpoint one moment of time—yet historical events are often hard to pinpoint in a straightforward way.
- They can be reductive and flatten out history.
- They fail to provide an in-depth historical contextualization.
- They generally do not touch on people’s ordinary experiences.

For the next group activity, divide the participants into clusters of two or three. Give each person a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. This activity is geared toward junior high and high school audiences.

The next activity examines the timeline as a historical tool through a more personal lens. Your task is to create a timeline of your family or community history. Interpret this however you’d like—as focused on broad as you wish.

What are some types of events that could go on your timeline?

- *Answers will vary.*
- Histories of immigration and relocation
- Cultural, religious, or political events

- Births, deaths, marriages, celebrations

Put at least five events on it. After a few minutes, share your timelines with your partner(s).

As the group comes back together, ask:

What was it like to create a timeline of your family or community? Was this assignment easy or hard for you?

- *Answers will vary.*

This activity shows that we are all products of history. What does this mean to you?

- *Answers will vary.*
- History spills into the present. Our lives are structured by what has happened before us; these include histories of power, disparity, and difference.
- Studying history helps us learn about ourselves: our identities, our communities, our neighborhoods, and so forth.

Wrapping up

- History is endlessly complex and central to our lives.
- It is a challenge to represent history on, or as, a timeline.
- Timelines are just one technique of representing the past.

Module 6: The Archive

This module introduces participants to the concept of an archive, connecting some of the SNMA's special collections to the timelines. It is mainly (yet not solely) geared toward junior high and high school groups.

Founded in 1972, the SNMA is one of the oldest and largest queer archives and libraries in the U.S. and internationally. What is the purpose of an archive—and a queer archive in particular?

- An archive is a place (physical or virtual) where historical documents, objects, records, and ephemera are kept.
- A queer archive collects and houses material related to LGBTQ life.

Why do we need queer archives?

- Generally speaking, queer archival material has not been a collecting focus of other archives, many of which are attached to universities and public institutions.
- Queer communities have historically needed to develop their own archives to keep their histories alive.
- For this reason, archives such as the SNMA tend to be called “community archives.”
- Most of the materials at the SNMA have been donated by community members.

The next activity involves various objects from the SNMA collections. It is possible to anchor the discussion to either one or multiple types of object, which should be chosen in advance and kept in a convenient place. Below is a sampling of different objects that can be put in dialogue with specific timelines.

There are three ways to structure this activity.

1. To choose one of the following prompts (A to G).
2. To choose multiple prompts.
3. To use a variety of objects at once (H).

Now let's engage with some of our collections. And, by the way, these objects are not for you to keep! I'll need them back at the end of this activity.

A. Political buttons (and other graphic material) *

The buttons largely relate to gay liberation and AIDS activism. Try to incorporate a good variety of identities and causes, including those local to South Florida. Pass the buttons out to participants without yet explaining what they are.

* Similar materials that could be substituted or utilized in conjunction with the buttons include t-shirts, posters, and placards.

What are they? What is their purpose?

- They are buttons for political campaigns, causes, and the building of community.
- They combine visual and textual material.
- They are generally attached to clothes or accessory garments.
- Usually they are designed to capture people's attention, to make a bold statement.
- Before the age of Instagram and Twitter, buttons such as these were even more pervasive in social movements such as feminism, gay liberation, and AIDS activism.

Why are these buttons in our collections?

- They are part of queer history.
- They illuminate our understanding of the experience of earlier generations of LGBTQ people.

If you were going to place them on a timeline, where do you think they would go?

- They relate to the history of political organizing and social movements. For example, the fight against Anita Bryant's Save Our Children campaign or transgender activism.
- Frequently objects have multiple lives. Though a button might be produced in a particular year, and for a particular reason, it can be worn through the ages, gathering new meanings.

- For this reason, it might be hard to link the button to a single historical moment on a timeline.
- Buttons are agents of political activism, often worn by masses of people as they fight for social change. The lives and stories of masses of people are often left out of the history books.
- That is, we might be very familiar with the story of Harvey Milk or RuPaul or Alice Walker or Sylvia Rivera or Cherríe Moraga. Yet millions of people who have participated in the larger LGBTQ movement are not. These buttons can be a reminder of that.

B. Periodicals

The periodicals relate to the LGBTQ movement. Try to incorporate a good variety of identities and causes for which there are extra copies. Some examples might include *ONE* and publications from the Daughters of Bilitis.

Take a few minutes to study your periodical. Consider its purpose, author, date, and intended audience.

What are we looking at?

- *Participants should describe the publication, its purpose, author, date, and intended audience.*

What types of articles and materials are inside?

- The publication might have articles, illustrations, advertisements, and personal advertisements.

How would people have accessed this publication back in the day?

- It would be sent in the mail—this was long before the time of email and digital publications!
- Some publications would have been shipped in a non-descript envelope so that its contents—some of which might have been incriminating in the day—could be hidden from public view.
- Some publications had large circulation, others did not.
- Some publications were regional, whereas others had a national focus.
- Certain publications were sold at specialized bookshops or available at community archives and libraries such as the SNMA.

How do you think a queer or trans person felt upon receiving this publication in the mail?

- *Responses will vary.*
- Some ideas: excitement to be connected to the community; anxious that other people might find the publication; empowered to know that other LGBTQ people were involved in activist projects; and eager to meet community members in person.

C. Programs for theatre, drag, and dance productions

These materials should represent a diversity of LGBTQ and LGBTQ-themed entertainment events. Some ideas include playbills for Broadway shows and programs for drag and dance performances.

Take a few minutes to examine these materials. Consider the purpose, date, and intended audience.

What are we looking at?

- *Participants should describe the program, its purpose, date, and intended audience.*

Why do you think this material ended up in our archive?

- This performance/play/musical/dance production had special meaning for members of the queer community.
- When uplifting LGBTQ stories were difficult to find in popular culture, theater, dance, and drag were essential art forms that sometimes helped people feel more recognized.

Many people enjoy collecting playbills and other memorabilia. Do you have any special collections of your own?

- *Answers will vary.*

D. Sports paraphernalia

The SNMA has a great deal of material from the Gay Games, including programs, medals, and costumes.

Take a few minutes to examine these materials.

The objects might require a little bit of historical contextualization on your part. The Gay Games are an international sport event for LGBTQ athletes. The first edition was held in San Francisco in 1982. They are essentially the gay version of the Olympics.

Why were the Gay Games so important for LGBTQ people?

- The world of sports was—and remains—deeply homophobic and transphobic.
- LGBTQ people were often fired from professional sports teams or were unable to come out publicly in order to have the same opportunities as their straight peers.
- The Gay Games and other similar events helped create a community of queer athletes and their supporters.

E. Business directories and travel guides

Pass out the business directories and travel guides.

Take a few minutes to examine these materials. Consider the purpose, date, and intended audience.

What are we looking at?

- *Participants should describe the publication, its purpose, date, and intended audience.*

Why did queer people need to create their own business directories and travel guides?

- Businesses were often hostile to LGBTQ people.
- Guides attempted to make their consumer and tourist experiences safer and more informed.
- Guides also highlighted places where queer people could connect with one another: bars, clubs, bookstores, etc.
- Queer people like to support each others' businesses!

Which timeline is relevant to these directories and guides?

- The business one—though it mostly addresses corporate leaders who happen to be LGBTQ.

F. Works of LGBTQ literature

Pass out works of queer literature. These can be books of historical significance as well as pulps.

Take a few minutes to examine the book. Consider its genre, subject matter, date, and intended audience.

What are we looking at?

- *Participants should describe the book, its genre, subject matter, author, date, and intended audience.*

Is it obvious that the book touches on queer themes or that the author identified as part of the LGBTQ community?

- *Responses will vary.*
- Depends on the book in question.

If it's a LGBTQ group, you can ask:

When and where did you first read an LGBTQ-themed book?

If you're discussing pulps, you might wish to explain:

Gay and lesbian pulp fiction is a genre of novels with a great deal of gay and lesbian erotica. They were especially popular and pervasive during the 1960s and 1970s. Lesbian pulps were also widely consumed by heterosexual men.

What strikes you about these “pulp”?

- They are paperback—that is, cheaply and copiously produced, made of wood “pulp” paper.
- They have visually captivating and suggestive covers.
- Pulps are sometimes regarded as having little literary merit. Nevertheless, they were highly influential in both LGBTQ and mainstream American culture.

G. Music

Pass out the music-related materials. These might be programs for musical events or records in their original jackets. It also might be fun to play a song or two of deep significance to LGBTQ history—perhaps something on the records in question.

Take a few minutes to examine this material. Consider its genre, date, medium, and intended audience.

What are we looking at?

- *Participants should describe the object, its genre, musical artist, date, and intended audience.*

Why has music been so important for the LGBTQ community?

- Music makes us feel affirmed and less lonely.
- Every major social movement has had its own soundtrack. Music is a vehicle for activism and mobilization.
- LGBTQ people have developed communities around music—for instance, Gay Men’s Chorus.
- Historically many mainstream musical artists have had to stay in the closet to have successful careers.
- When musicians started to come out and more publicly address their sexualities and gender identities starting in the 1970s, members of the queer were especially moved and inspired.

For a queer audience, you can ask:

Is there a queer anthem of your generation? What makes it a queer anthem?

In discussing a record, you might add:

In an age before Spotify, how did people encounter music generally?

- On the radio.

- Records, tape cassettes, etc. These records were once part of someone's personal collection.
- In person.

H. Variety of materials

To present a spectrum of different materials across the timelines and all at once, you should pass around a carefully curated box and have each participant choose an object. Then divide the participants into groups of two or three.

With your partner(s), take a few minutes to examine this material. Consider its genre, date, medium, and intended audience.

Bring the group back together and ask:

Please share your object with the rest of us, describing it to the best of your abilities. Though you might have little historical context, you probably know more than you think you do!

As facilitator, you must use your judgment in terms of jumping in and helping out participants who might be struggling to historically position their objects. The point is not to give an elaborate history lesson but rather to help participants occupy the role of historian or archivist.

Always feel free to follow up with questions.

Why do you say that? What make you think that? How so? Can you elaborate on that?

Why did this object capture your attention?

Why do you think this object found its way to the SNMA?

What timeline(s) might be relevant to your object? Why?

Wrapping up

- Community archives are repositories for historically marginalized communities.
- Archival objects shed light on historical experience, helping us engage thoughtfully and thoroughly with the past.
- One day your own collections will be archives, too!

Module 7: Intersectionality

This module is about the notion of intersectionality—a key framework for thinking about identity and lived experience. It is suitable for all audiences.

Now we will be discussing the concept of intersectionality—an influential term in the media, popular culture, and academia. Intersectionality not only helps us grapple with our own identities, but also nuances our understandings of history—and especially LGBTQ history.

Intersectionality offers a framework for thinking about the complexity of identity and lived experience. Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw is responsible for coining the concept in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Intersectionality suggests that our identities are shaped by overlapping factors and social categories in a world of inequalities, including racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc.

What are some of these?

- Race
- Gender
- Sexuality
- (Dis)ability
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Class
- Age
- And so on.

Pass out pen and paper.

In the next activity, your assignment is to list out eight to ten of your identities.

After a couple of minutes, ask:

What was this exercise like? Did it strike or surprise you in any way?

- *Responses will vary.*

The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate that each one of us is a unique person who has a number of different identities. Instead of competing, these identities are intertwined. Some of these identities and subject positions contribute to our lived experience of power and/or powerlessness.

Some examples to illustrate the concept of intersectionality in the world:

- Women of color regularly experience not only racism, but also sexism in a number of realms, from healthcare to the legal system to the workplace.
- Transgender people often have trouble getting sustainable employment due to their gender identities and live in poverty.

- Kamala Harris, as a Black woman and woman of South Asian descent, is the first woman and person of color to occupy the role of Vice President. Every other politician in this office has been a white man.

You can also discuss your own identity position if it seems useful and appropriate.

For example, in my case, I am a white person. But I am also a Jewish-American gay cisgender man. These identities collectively make me who I am.

Even though I consider my queer identity to be central to my life, for other queer people, queer identity might be less significant to how they define themselves. Yet it is still, of course, there.

Some identities we choose, and some identities are thrust upon us. Though we live in the present, many of our identities extend from much longer histories.

Why is the concept of intersectionality useful to the study of LGBTQ history?

- It reveals that queer people have diverse experiences and subject positions; each person belongs to a number of social groups and wears many hats.
- Intersectionality teaches us that racism, homophobia, sexism, and so on are interconnected, and they collectively affect our lived experience and sense of self.
- LGBTQ history is not a singular narrative but a multitude of stories and interpretations.
- Queer history is inseparable from histories of race, colonialism, gender, disability, immigration, and so on.

Wrapping up:

- Our identities are complex, layered, and rooted in larger histories.
- The study of LGBTQ history requires an intersectional approach.

Module 8: Conclusion

This module offers an ending to the discussion. It is necessary for all groups.

Because we're approaching the end of this discussion, I want to thank you for your participation and engagement. It was a pleasure to facilitate this conversation.

Let's conclude with a group check-in. Feel free to share:

- A takeaway—something new you've learned
- A question
- Anything else you'd like to bring up

What are some ways you can bring today's conversations out into the world?

- *Responses will vary.*
- Recommend the institution to a friend, family member, or colleague.
- Counter homophobia, transphobia, and other types of discrimination you encounter in your life.
- Get involved in political initiatives and campaigns that are meaningful to you.
- Create your own collections: they will be important archives in years to come!
- Seek out diverse cultural narratives as you consume media and learn about history.
- Stay in touch by following us on social media, and sign up for our email newsletter.

Thank you! Please continue to explore the timelines as well as the rest of the museum and library.

(September 2021)