Final Seminar Panel Presentation (40 minutes)

Remember to Breathe and Talk Conversationally ☺

Part 1: Introduction

Title Slide: Title and Name

Hello and thank you for coming to my final seminar. My name is Diana Kiyo Wakimoto and today I'll be discussing my thesis research on queer community archives in California since 1950.

Why do we keep old photographs, letters from family and friends, and the various knick knacks that accumulate throughout our lives? We keep them because they hold memories and tell the story of our place in our families, our communities, and in our world. Archives are places that house these records of our past for future access and use. However, archives are not just storehouses of records, they are active sites of power and the archivists who manage them exercise great control over what is remembered and forgotten through what is collected and how these collections are described.

Slide: Burned letters

For many decades, the records that have been forgotten are those of the queer communities, which were not collected by institutional archives. In response to this neglect, community groups created their own archives to collect and preserve their records (Barriault, 2009a; Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Fullwood, 2009). Without the activism shown by the pioneers who created these personal collections and community archives, much of the record of the queer community organizations, movements, and individuals would have been lost. Multiple queer

community archives have been created in California to combat the historical neglect and silencing of queer voices in institutional archives. My thesis focuses on the little studied area of the histories of these queer community archives in California and their relationships to institutional archives.

Slide: Importance

As Schwartz (2006) noted, "Archivists—who surely know 'archives' best—continue to toil largely behind a professional veil of presumed neutrality; their practices and concerns are invisible to most users; and their literature does not even register on the radar screen of academic disciplines" (p. 25). This study will hopefully serve to "register on the radar screen" the importance of studying queer community archives and the value of activism in the archives for preserving community history.

Slide: Overview of talk

Let's turn to an overview of this seminar before continuing. I'll cover the research questions and terminology, before turning to a brief overview of the relevant history and literature that contextualize this study. Next, we'll move into the research design before spending the bulk of our time discussing the most important findings, contributions, and implications of this study. I'll conclude with future research directions and final thoughts before opening the floor for questions and comments.

Slide : Research Questions

My research revolves around the primary research question of:

How have queer community archives evolved since 1950 in California?

Within this primary question are the subquestions of:

Why were these community archives created?

What are the similarities and differences seen among the community archives?

Slide : Sub-Questions 2

What challenges do the community archives currently face?

What is the relationship between community archives and institutional archives as both now collect records about the communities?

Slide: Sub-questions 3

How do community and institutional archives compare in their treatment of the historical record of the communities under investigation? And

What are the possible implications for archival practice and research?

Slide 3: Terminology

Next, let's turn to defining a few key terms that are used extensive in my work.

Queer

I will be using the term "queer" as the most general, overarching term to describe the communities discussed in this thesis. I will be using queer for the same reason Barriault and Sheffield (2009) used it when they were guest editors of *Archivaria*'s special section on Queer Archives: "Using the word 'queer' as an umbrella word to designate all

people whose sexuality is generally considered non-heteronormative is both a more inclusive and a more practical choice" (p. 120). While I use the term "queer" in order to be as inclusive and respectful to every person's self-identification as possible, I understand that for some "queer" is still seen as derogatory or not their preferred choice. Because of this, when I quote from interviews and other sources, I use whatever term is used by the narrator or author.

Archivist

An archivist can be broadly defined as "an individual with responsibility for management and oversight of an archival repository or records of enduring value" as by Pearce-Moses (2005) for the Society of American Archivists.

Archives

As noted previously, this thesis is focused on archives and archives are places were records of individuals and organizations are preserved, processed, and described so that they can be accessed and used.

Community

This study uses the term "community" in the manner in which Jim Kepner, founder of the International Gay and Lesbian Archive, defined it: as a way "to describe the condition of any group of people partly joined to each other and distinguished from others by characteristics which shape special attitudes, behavior and interrelationships, which may of course vary within the group" (Kepner, n.d., p. 2). This is not to imply that communities are homogeneous entities. They are not. The plural "communities" is used to re-emphasize the diversity among the many queer communities.

Part 2: History and Literature Review (Time check 5:05)

Slide 4: History

This study is concerned with the queer community archives in California from the 1950s to the present day (Lukenbill, 2002). The civil rights movements greatly inspired members of the queer communities to become more visible and to mobilize to systematically fight discrimination (D'Emilio, 1998). The movements were not homogenous nor were they unchanging as shown by the changing name of the movements which was first known as the homophile movement in the 1950s before finally being known as the queer rights movement in the 1990s. Like the civil rights movements to end segregation, the movements within the queer communities overall evolved from a more assimilationist approach to one that was more militant and radical (Stryker & Van Buskirk, 1996).

While New York is well-known as one of the major epicenters of the queer civil rights movements, California has and continues to play an important role. The most important cities in California's queer history are Los Angeles in the south and San Francisco in the north. It was in these locations that influential and pioneering organizations were established, such as the Mattachine Society and the ONE Institute in Los Angeles, and the Daughters of Bilitis and the Council on Religion and the Homosexual in San Francisco (D'Emilio, 1998; Marcus, 2002). With large queer communities whose members were willing to be publicly recognized, Los Angeles and San Francisco became major political forces and sources of inspiration for queer rights organizations throughout the United States.

Slide 5: Historiography

In the beginning, the people who wrote queer histories were part of the queer communities and not university faculty (Kennedy & Davis, 1993; Roscoe, 1992). Decades before it became fashionable to study queer history and create departments dedicated to the study of sex, gender, and culture, community scholars and activist pioneers such as Jonathan Katz (1976) and Joan Nestle (1990) were conducting oral histories, collecting documentation, and writing histories for the communities (Katz, 1976).

As a result of institutional archives' neglect, and in some case suppression, of queer historical records, researchers, historians, and anyone interested in queer history had to be creative in finding and using sources. As Gilfoyle (1994) has noted, these historians engaged "in some of the most detailed and rigorous detective work, searching for new archival sources, and finding previously ignored materials" (p. 518). Furthermore, Historian Lyle Dick (2009) lamented in his study of the 1942 same-sex trials in Edmonton, Canada, that "the only 'indexes' consist of unusable numbered file lists. Researchers and archivists alike are thereby poorly positioned to identify the records that might be accessed for research on sexual minority history" (p. 214).

Queer communities created archives from private collections as people came together to make their collections publically available in centralized locations (Nestle, 1990; Walker, 1985). As noted by Brown (2011), multiple queer community archives came into existence during and after the 1960s gay rights movements. Historians now often use

collections from community archives in addition to, or in place of, privately-held collections when writing queer histories.

Slide 6: Literature Review Overview (Time check 8:15)

This diagram shows an overview of the literature that contextualizes this study and we'll discuss the literature before turning to the gap which the study partially fills.

Slide: Archivist Role Debate

Since the founding of the Society of American Archivists in 1936, the identity of the archivist has been vigorously debated within the archival profession in the United States as it has been worldwide. As former president of the Society of Archivists, Victor Gray (2008) noted, "When it comes to the possibility of anyone encroaching on territory labeled 'archive', we can, as a profession, be peculiarly sensitive, not to say defensive" (p. 4). This has translated into debates of the role of the archivist. There are two main views of the archivist: that as keeper of institutional records and that of the archivist as activist.

Slide: Keeper of Institutional Records

The archivist as keeper of institutional records is the ideal of the archivist as an objective, neutral guardian of records created by institutions. In this conception of the archivist and the archives, historical or cultural aspects of the archives, if considered, are secondary to their institutional uses. Richard Cox and Luciana Duranti are two contemporary advocates of Margaret Cross Norton's archival/records management thinking. Cox wrote in 1998a, "The role

of the archivist is not to reform society but to identify and preserve the evidence created by its institutions and inhabitants" (p. 58).

Slide: Archivist as Activist

In contrast to this idea of the archivist as gatekeeper and protector of their institutions' records is the conception of the archivist as activist who should actively build archival collections to promote social change. South African archivist, Verne Harris (2011), noted, "I have never considered the possibility that an archivist can be, or should aspire to be, an impartial custodian (or passive assembler, or mere keeper)" (p. 348). American historian and former archivist Randall C. Jimerson (2009), like Harris, advocated for social justice through archival professional work; in his words, "archivists can use the power of archives to promote accountability, open government, diversity, and social justice" (p. 237).

Slide: Description, Power, and Identity

No matter with which ideal of the archivist's role one sides, the archivist exercises great control and power over the archives and the collections held within it. The control over language is power, and in archives this power resides in archivists' determination of what language will be used to describe and represent people, groups, events, and ideas present in the records.

Descriptive standards used and policies of mentioning sexuality or not in finding aids contribute to the access or silencing of voices in the archives. For example, Ellen Greenblatt (1990) has written about the historical bias in the Library of Congress Subject Headings, noting that historically the Library of Congress was "slow to implement changes in

language…to reflect common usage and current terminology" (p. 76). For example, "lesbianism" did not become an authorized subject heading until 1954. However, activism has forced the Library of Congress Subject Headings to better reflect preferred terms in more recent years.

Slide: Community Memory and Identity

Another important area of scholarship providing context for this current study deals with collective memory and community identity. Collective memory is the concept that shared memories and understandings are the basis of culture and social groups as noted by Maurice Halbwachs in his canonical 1925 work which delineated the field. This is directly related to community identity which gives individuals a framework through which they can understand their world. As Canadian archivist Terry Cook (2001) noted, the archivist is "an active mediator in shaping collective memory through archives" (p. 24). Even outside of family groups, the archives provides a way of forming and promoting collective memory and identity through the preservation and access of records of a community's past.

Slide: Community archives

While community archives are not a new phenomenon, the study of community archives by archivists and historians is a fairly recent development. It is unsurprising, given the continued debates and territoriality over the archivist's domain that some archivists feel that "grassroots groups are challenging their professional authority" (Stevens, Flinn, & Shepherd, 2010, p. 61).

The majority of studies on community archives and the few studies on community archives' histories are by archivists (Bundsgaard & Gelting, 1992; Flinn, 2007; Flinn & Stevens, 2009) outside the United States. The major works have been written by archivists in the United Kingdom, no doubt in part because the government has funded multiple studies and programs aimed at understanding and assisting community archives such as the Community Access to Archives Project.

Studies of community archives have supported allied research in community memory and the importance of archives to group memory and identity. X, Campbell and Stevens' (2009) dialogue about the rukus! Archive in the United Kingdom is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for community members caring passionately about the preservation of their records. This ethnographic study found, as Campbell said, "Archiving is a way of achieving some sort of visibility" (X, Campbell, & Stevens, 2009, p. 280).

Brown (2011) has discussed a similar situation in the United States where queer community archives have been the only remedy to the lack of queer voices in the institutional archives for many years. Again, this demonstrates the importance of community activists and archivists in preserving records.

Slide: Gaps in literature

The recognition of the importance of community archives in recent years has yet to translate into a sustained research on their histories and current statuses. This study responds to this gap by analyzing community archives' histories and representation in multiple archives. It continues the discussion of the evolving purpose and identity of archivists to see if they do "play a crucial role in society's institutional

systems and cultural representations" as posited by Jimerson (2009, p. 263).

Part III: Research Design (Time check 14:00)

Slide: Research Design Overview

This next section of the talk gives an overview of the research design of this study and how the various pieces fit together.

Slide : Epistemology

Social constructionism frames this study and posits that we only make sense of our world, and create knowledge and understanding, through our identification and belonging to social groups. Although societies and communities are of course made of individuals, social constructionism holds the social group as more important to the formation of meaning and identity. Social constructionism provided the underlying support structure for this thesis, from which the theories, methods, and final analyses could come together to construct the findings.

Slide: Theory (Social History)

New social history, which emerged as a product of the civil rights movements, challenged the established narratives of history that focused mainly on the rich and powerful elite (Bennett, 2000). It refocused the lens through which historians studied and validated the study of women, minorities and other marginalized groups (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Howell & Prevenier, 2001). It is a bottom-up construction of history, much like the community archives are grassroot, independent, community-created spaces.

This study used new social history for its theoretical framework, which in turn is influenced by two other theories, postmodernism and poststructuralism

Slide: Postmodernism & Poststructuralism

Postmodernism can be said to be derived from “a highly critical epistemology, hostile to any overarching philosophical or political doctrine, and strongly opposed to those ‘dominant ideologies’ that help to maintain the status quo” (Butler, 2002, p. 29). Postmodern historical studies acknowledge that there is not one narrative, but many narratives for any event, time period or topic studied in history (Cook, 2000; Deodato, 2006; Jimerson, 2009; Lubar, 1999; H. White, 1978).

Poststructuralism concerns language and how meanings of words are never stable, but are constantly in flux (Belsey, 2002). For this study, poststructuralist concerns have bearing on the analysis of changes and differences in the language used to describe and represent the queer communities. This links it back to postmodernism which is also concerned with multiple points of view and changes that occur such as when previously marginalized groups take control over their own representations and narratives.

Slide: Methodologies (Archival research)

Archival research is the primary methodology used in historical studies to gather information (Howell & Prevenier, 2001). For this study, archival research was conducted to gather primary sources relating to the history and development of queer archives in California. Three main types of archival records were consulted: collection policies, finding aids, and collections.

Slide: Collection policies

Collection policies usually state the scope of the physical type of materials and the subjects, time periods and/or events that are collected by a given archives (Boles, 1987). These policies provided one way to determine what was deemed important for archives to collect.

Slide: Finding Aids

Archival finding aids are often very detailed and rich records that describe not only subject headings or main themes of a collection, but also the collection's provenance, scope and content, when the collection was received and processed, and who processed the collection. They are "the most important tools for archival description" (Jimerson, 2009, p. 15).

Slide: Collections

While the finding aids show how the archivists described queer communities, the materiality of the collections show what documents archivists thought were important and worthy of archiving (Flinn & Stevens, 2009). Differences in types of materials collected in the community and institutional archives (Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Hamilton, Harris, & Reid, 2002) show differences in how the histories of the communities are preserved and represented. The collections also provided information used to create the histories of the archives.

Slide: Methodologies (Oral history)

Oral history interviewing was completed in conjunction with the archival research as it is one of the primary means to collect histories of

California's queer community archives. Interviews were solicited with those individuals who are involved with the three community archives.

The oral history interviewing in this study followed the professional, best practice guidelines of both the Oral History Association in the United States and the Oral History Association of Australia. The oral history interview guide and archival research methods for data collection were determined to be successful after the completion of the pilot study in 2010 and used for the subsequent data collection for the rest of the thesis.

Slide : Institutions Used

Three community archives and three institutional archives were used in this study, as you can see from this slide. All archives are located in California and collect records of the queer communities.

Slide: Interviewees and Institutions

The list on the screen now shows the names and affiliations of the community archivists and volunteers who were interviewed for this study.

Slide: Analysis

Textual analysis was used to analyze the collected information from the archives and the oral history interviews (Yow, 2005). Source criticism enabled me to corroborate information given in the oral history narratives with information found in the archives. The contextualization of the sources was also a very important part of the analysis in order to embed them within the wider cultural, social, and historical frameworks (Berkhofer, 1995; Lubar, 1999).

Slide: Ethics and Limitations

Queensland University of Technology granted ethical clearance for this research project on April 12, 2010. The major ethical issues that drove the study were how to respectfully conduct the interviews and use these narratives in the construction of the queer community histories. Unlike most forms of social science interviewing, oral historians name their narrators due to the need to verify information in order to validate the research. Because narrators are not anonymous they are given power over their words via editing the transcripts before they are used in the research and deposited in an archives. In this particular study, extra care was taken to not reinforce power hierarchies. This was accomplished by not having the narrators sign over copyright as is standard practice, but instead sign a Creative Commons Attribution License.

Limitations of this study included that it focused on one of the many diverse communities that have created community archives. Archives that solely exist in a digital space with no physical component were out of scope of this project. While this study examined queer community archives in California, the development patterns of community archives formed by other groups and in other locations may follow very different trajectories. This study therefore seeks to construct histories and suggest implications that may be useful to individuals in other situations, but does not claim to create a theory that is “applicable to all instances…in every possible setting” (Stevens, Flinn, & Shepherd, 2010).

Part III: Findings (Time check 20:06)

Slide: Findings

Now that we've discussed the context and design of the study, let's move into the findings starting with the comparison of the queer community archives' histories.

Slide: Comparisons of Community Archives Histories

While the archives were founded at different times, they were all founded to combat the silences in the institutional archives and lack of access to materials about queer histories. These archives only grew due to the dedication of many volunteers. Without whom, the community archives would not have grown beyond privately held collections.

Slide: GLBT Historical Society

The GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco was founded in 1985 through the tireless efforts of members of the Lesbian and Gay History Project, led by Willie Walker. He was inspired to create this archives because, in his words (2003c), "…there just was nothing, nothing was really being collected" (p. 50). The Historical Society has always functioned as more than a traditional archives, serving also as a meeting space and a museum. From its beginnings as a periodical archives, it has grown into one of the largest queer community archives in California and now includes the GLBT History Museum in the Castro.

Slide: ONE Archives

The ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives is the oldest of the three community archives in this study. Its larger parent organization, ONE, Incorporated, which published *ONE Magazine* and also was one of the

first educational institutes to award degrees in homophile studies, was founded in 1952. ONE Inc.'s office complete with a library (Shibuyama, 2011b) was opened in 1953. Located in Los Angeles, it is one of the largest queer community archives in the United States, if not the world. Also created due to the lack of queer materials held in public libraries and institutional archives, it has grown through donations and through mergers with other community archives such as the International Gay and Lesbian Archives in 1995. In October 2010, it became part of the University of Southern California Libraries system when it essentially donated itself to the university.

Slide: Lavender Library

The Lavender Library, Archives, and Cultural Exchange of Sacramento, Incorporated is the youngest of the three community archives in this study and was founded in 1998. Completely run by volunteers, including professionally trained librarians and archivists, it was the brainchild of Gail Lang and as the lead cataloger, Buzz Haughton (2011) explained, "I think a lot of people who became active in the Lavender Library did it out of a sense of loyalty to Gail because we loved her so much" (p. 10). It's the smallest of the three archives and is located in the capital of California. Also created by activists in response to not having dedicated space for a queer archives and library, its archival program is a quite recent development. It was begun in 2005 when Ron Grantz began volunteering his archival expertise to the Lavender Library (Grantz, 2011).

Slide: Similarities

Now that we have an overview of the history of the community archives, we turn to the contemporary statuses of the archives.

Slide: Professional Archivists

Each archives, regardless of being volunteer-run or having paid positions, is managed by one or more professional archivists. The GLBT Historical Society has always had professional archivists (Kim, 2010), while the Lavender Library's first professional archivist came in 2005, seven years after its founding (Grantz, 2011), and the ONE Archives had its first professional archivist in 2006 (Shibuyama, 2010). This is not only a commonality among the archives, but links them to the larger professional archival community in the United States.

Slide: Public programming

One of the major characteristics of queer community archives that links them together and differentiates them from institutional archives is their focus on public programming. Public programming, such as lecture series, support groups, exhibits, and fundraising events such as galas, also helps integrate the archives within the local queer communities and increases their relevance for community members who may not be interested in archives, but are interested in the various other activities such as lectures and film series or book clubs.

Slide: Differences among Community Archives

While there are many similarities among the queer community archives, they are unique spaces which reflect the diversity of their communities. One of the differences reflected in the community

archives is the differences in their staffing models. From the entirely volunteer-run Lavender Library to the highly structured ONE Archives with separate Board of Directors and USC oversight, the queer community archives differ greatly in their staffing.

Following different staffing models, the archives also differ in circulation policies. While archives are traditionally defined as non-circulating collections of materials, and none of the community archives in this study circulate their archival collections, they differ in their lending of non-archival materials. The Lavender Library's circulation policy is the most divergent of the three, as it is the only one that circulates its book and DVD collections.

While all three of the community archives have their finding aids available online, the ONE Archives and the GLBT Historical Society are part of the Online Archive of California or OAC, while the Lavender Library is not. The OAC constrains the structure of the finding aids and strongly recommends descriptive standards. However, while most newly created finding aids follow LCSH as the descriptive standard, many older finding aids reflect local standards. The Lavender Library uses alternative standards, in their case a locally adapted version of the thesaurus created by Dee Michel.

Slide: Challenges Facing Community Archives

The queer community archives all face similar challenges, to which we now turn our attention.

Slide: Mission

It may seem like the mission of the community archives should be a fairly straightforward, non-contentious issue: the mission of an archives

is to preserve and make accessible records of the community. However, community archives function as more than archival repositories, which complicate their core mission. For example, as Bryer (2010) explained, "…I may be wrong, but I think some people would prefer that we become a museum….archives don't make money and the museum idea is sexier" (p. 8). But the archives piece of the Historical Society is likely to continue because of "broad swath of people who come in" (Kim, 2010, p. 7) to use the collections.

Slide: Money

In addition to mission, one of the key challenges facing queer community archives is their ongoing sustainability. While the ONE Archives has seemingly met this challenge by becoming part of the USC Libraries in October 2010 thereby deriving institutional support from the university, the Lavender Library and the GLBT Historical Society remain fully independent, community-based organizations which need to raise all their funds. As Buzz Haughton (2011) of the Lavender Library noted, "We started off on a shoestring and we're still on a shoestring." The GLBT Historical Society has been successful in securing corporate sponsors and large grants for processing its collections. Through strategic planning and marketing campaigns, the Historical Society and Lavender Library are working to become and remain sustainable community-based organizations.

By connecting the importance of understanding one's own history and community's history with the ability to affect change in society for a better life, the community archivists and volunteers hope to ensure the sustainability of the archives through time and money donations. As Bryer (2010) concluded, "It's just an essential part as, passing a gay

marriage law. You're not going to pass a gay marriage law unless you have a history that shows you that marriage has not always been one thing all the time" (p. 11-12) and the queer community archives provide the evidence that supports these challenges to the political status quo.

Slide: Institutional Archives

Now we move into a discussion of the queer community archives relative to the institutional archives and the comparisons of their collection policies, finding aids, and collections.

Slide: Collection Policies

The collection policies of the queer community archives and the institutional archives show interesting similarities and differences. The GLBT Historical Society's, Lavender Library's, and the Hormel Center's policies are more inviting to donors than those of the ONE Archives or University of California, Santa Cruz, particularly from non-elites within the queer communities. While the Bancroft's policy does not specifically mention the queer communities as a focus, it has a similarly inviting policy for donations by "ordinary" people. The ONE Archives and the University of California, Santa Cruz have the policies that are most geared towards the "exceptional" and would be most likely to discourage donations from individuals and organizations that are not as well known as the Daughters of Bilitis, Queer Nation, or Harvey Milk.

Slide: Finding Aids

To a greater extent that the collection policies, the archives' finding aids vary greatly in terms of length, scope, and format. As this thesis

research revealed, despite the professions' recent attempts to standardize their structure and content, finding aids are still very idiosyncratic descriptive tools. Finding aids are also influenced by an archives' participation in union catalogs, such as the Online Archive of California.

Because the majority of the finding aids have been created since the later 1990s, with the bulk created after 2007, a longitudinal analysis of changes in language representation was not possible. This harkens back to institutional archives not collecting materials from the queer communities in earnest until fairly recently and through either lack of staffing, funding, or priority, access to these collections through the finding aids is a relatively recent phenomenon.

However, while an historical analysis of the archives' finding aids was not possible, the comparisons of contemporary documents reveal some interesting trends. First, and most importantly, all of the finding aids from both the queer community archives and the institutional archives are sensitive in their use of language to describe the queer communities. Even though all the archives except the Lavender Library are part of the Online Archive of California (OAC) and therefore bound to its standards, the majority of the finding aids employ a mixture of LCSH and local cataloging subject headings when they list indexing terms.

Slide: Collections

In terms of the archival collections themselves, there is overlap between materials collected by the institutional archives and those collected by the community archives. The community archives, which

often put on exhibits, collect many objects more often associated with museums than archives. For example the GLBT Historical Society has murals from the closed bathhouses in San Francisco, a table and chair from Harvey Milk's photography studio, and memorabilia from various Pride Events and Pride Parades. As the Hormel Center is the only queer-specific institutional archives examined in this study, it is not surprising that its collections are also more diverse than the other institutional archives. In addition to the usual paper and photographic collections, the Hormel Center also has a collection made entirely of T-shirts.

Slide: Partnerships among archives

The relationships among queer community archives and institutional archives run the gamut from almost no interaction to full integration with an institutional partner. In between the Lavender Library's lack of relationships with institutional archives and the ONE Archives complete assimilation with the USC Libraries is the GLBT Historical Society. The Historical Society has engaged in many collaborations and grant-funded projects with other local organizations including the California Historical Society and the Society of California Pioneers.

Furthermore the GLBT Historical Society deposited some of its most highly used collections with the Hormel Center shortly after it opened in 1996, but it has no plans of future deposits and is in the process of determining its level of partnership with the center (Bryer). Even as the institutional archives are now collecting materials and are in some way in competition with the community archives for materials, there has not been a dearth in donations at the community archives, if anything

they are up. As Rebekah Kim (2010) of the Historical Society noted, “We do get a lot of requests from the community to take their stuff” (p. 4).

Part IV: Contributions and Implications (Time check 32:00)

Slide: Contributions/Implications Overview

We now turn to the contributions and implications of this study’s findings to both the literature and the archives profession.

Slide: Contributions to Literature

This study has contributed to filling in the gap in the literature base that surrounds the queer community archives through the successful answering of the research questions as we have just discussed. This study has also added to our understanding of the current statuses of the queer community archives shown through their remarkable similarities and differences, as well as the challenges they face. Furthermore, this study provides support for the conception of archivist as activist as many of the records of individuals and organizations in the queer communities would have been lost without the active collecting by the archives’ founders and donors.

Slide: Implications for Archivists

As archivists continue to debate the role of the archivist as a professional, this study lends support to the scholars and practitioners who see the archivist as an activist and a non-neutral player in the construction of history and community identities. It bears repeating that without the activists and archivists within the queer communities who saved records and completed oral history projects, much of the record of the communities’ histories would have been lost. Therefore

activism is important to saving records of the past and the archives profession must act to ensure a diversity of voices are found in the archives. We could learn much from the community archivists and volunteers about connecting with community members and creating archives and spaces that reflect community needs and interests.

This entire research project, from conception through to the findings, supports the idea that the archives profession should be engaged with communities and be a part of the discussions outside the archives profession on the role and purpose of the archives. As a profession, we cannot afford to be insular either with our conceptions of the archives or with the distribution of our research and theories. The findings also suggest that archivists should be more reflective in their practice, especially in the description of historically marginalized communities whose collections reside in the archives.

In order to promote these changes to practice, archives graduate education must also shift focus to include a greater emphasis on effective outreach and collaboration with communities and a greater emphasis on connections with the international community of archivists and other scholars working with community archivists and volunteers.

Slide: Implications for Community Archivists

Communities are, quite obviously, the most important part of the community archives. This project has shown that the queer communities archoves are vibrant, diverse, active amalgams of

individuals and their collections. Creating archives brought community members together in the effort of collecting, processing, preserving, and providing access to their own historical record. The most important result of this project for community archives is that it is another piece of academic evidence validating the study of the queer communities and validating the importance of the queer community archives for scholarship. But more importantly for the community members the archives provide documentation of the past that can be used to foster community identity, create awareness of the community through exhibits, and assist in making a case against the discrimination still faced by the community members.

Through new partnerships and bringing in new people through public programming and exhibitions, the community archives will be able to remain self-sustaining as the first and second generations of archivists and volunteers retire from the archives. Through increased visibility and bringing in younger community members and educating archivists about the community archives, these archives should continue to grow and allow more generations of community members and scholars to reap the benefits of learning from these unique collections, spaces, and people.

Part V: Future Research and Conclusion

Slide: Future Research Directions

There are many avenues of future research. Research extending this study's research design to other geographical locations and to other communities that have created archives would increase the

generalizability of the findings. Research in this area would also allow for the comparisons to community archives in other countries contributing to a broadening of our understanding of archives history and practice outside the United States.

Slide: Final Conclusions

It is through embracing of community that the archives profession will find its place in this information age. In so doing, the archives will become everyone's space to remember the past and to learn from the many stories found in the stacks. Archives should not be relegated—either in reality or in people's minds—to being dusty storehouses of old documents. They should be places to learn about history in order to challenge the status quo.

Slide: Acknowledgements

I'd like to acknowledge my supervisory team for all their guidance and support:

Dr. Debra L. Hansen (SJSU)

Dr. Christine Bruce and Dr. Helen Partridge (QUT)

As well as thank the community archivists and volunteers who took the time to talk with me and without whom this project would have never been completed.

Slides: Image Credits

Here are the credits for the images that I used under Creative Commons Attribution Licenses

Slide: Questions/Comments

The QR Code and link take you to a list of the sources used in this talk. I'll now open up the floor for questions and comments, thank you very much for listening.