

How Can We Talk About It?:
Disrupting Heteronormativity Through Historic House Museums

Joshua Buckner

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2016

Committee:

Kristine Morrissey

Michael Brown

Tom Diehm

Program authorized to offer degree:

Museology

©Copyright 2016
Joshua Buckner

University of Washington

Abstract

How Can We Talk About It?:
Disrupting Heteronormativity Through Historic House Museums

Joshua Buckner

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Kristine Morrissey
Museology

Increasingly, museums are engaging in conversations around queer topics to make connections with a community that has historically been absent from museums. We, as museum professionals, have the opportunity to continue these conversations. The purpose of this research is to describe ways historic house museums engage in queer dialogue and understand how this role may disrupt heteronormativity within the museum field. This research investigates three historic house museums who engage in queer dialogue and includes staff interviews and a group discussion comprised of museum professionals and members of LGBTQ organizations. Findings suggest that by existing and actively changing the conversations had within their museums, these historic house museums are disrupting heteronormativity. The data also suggests a need and demand to have museological platforms for queer histories. It is hoped that this study will express the importance of museums to engage in conversations around queer voice and to help guide museums wishing to engage in queer dialogue.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: Review of the Literature.....	5
▪ Critique of Historic House Museums	
▪ Queer Representations, Interpretations, and Narratives in Museums	
▪ Museums as Agents of Social Change	
Chapter III: Methods.....	21
▪ Research Goal and Questions	
▪ Sample	
▪ Historic House Museum Descriptions	
○ Jane Addams Hull-House Museum	
○ Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House	
○ The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice	
▪ Methodological Approach and Framing	
▪ Instrument	
▪ Internal Review Board Exemption	
▪ Data Analysis	
▪ Limitations	
Chapter IV: Results & Analysis.....	33
▪ The Original Idea	
▪ Findings	
○ They Exist?	
○ What Does Queer Look Like in Historic House Museums?	
○ How Can We Talk About It?	
○ What Can We Learn?	
Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	59
• There is More Than One Way	
• A Need & Demand	
• Recommendations	
• Conclusion	
Bibliography.....	63
Appendix.....	71

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants in my thesis research that helped me to pursue this topic that I am extremely passionate about in such an authentic and academic way. Thank you to the staff at the Jane Addams Hull-House for allowing me to use their facilities for my research and for being so excited to talk with me about this topic. To the staff at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, thank you for making time for me to discuss all that you do at your institution. Thank you to the staff at the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice for showing me around Durham and teaching me the ways of Pauli Murray. I would also like to thank the amazing museum professionals who took time out of their schedules to speak to me about queer culture within the museum field. Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank the participants of my group discussion in Chicago for offering to set aside time in their busy schedules to sit and chat with me about this topic. Your insights and passions about this topic inspire me as an emerging museum professional.

I owe so much to my wonderful thesis committee who consistently supported me and challenged me to think as critical as possible during my research. So much gratitude goes towards my chair, Kris Morrissey, who always had so much faith and confidence in me and my research. She constantly supported me in everything I did and was always a great sounding board, therapist, and friend. Thank you to Tom Diehm, Director of Field Education at UW Tacoma for signing on to be a part of my committee and being excited to learn the outcomes of my research. Thank you to Michael Brown, Professor of Geography at UW for taking the time to discuss with me different ways to approach my research methods and for wanting to be a part of this journey.

This research would not have been possible without travel funding from the University of Washington Museology Program. Thank you to my amazing, supportive, and colorful cohort, UW Museology 2016. Without your constant support, love, and encouragement over these past two years, I would not have made it this far. Thank you to Joshua R. Helms, for encouraging me to apply to graduate school. To all of my friends back in Alabama, I love you all and you mean the world to me. Finally, to my parents, Tim and Kryston, I am so grateful for your care, love, and support during this journey to pursue my dreams and passions. I love you both with my whole heart and thank you for being there for me, even though I am thousands of miles away.

Chapter I: Introduction

The best museums use their position of trust to encourage people to reflect on society's contemporary challenges. They promote social justice and human rights, challenge prejudice and champion fairness and equality – United Kingdom Museums Association

Historic house museums are seen as markers of the past and represent history on a very personal level. However, many people no longer see historic house museums as relevant places and attendance has gradually decreased over the years. A 2013 Boston Globe article noted that historic house museums across the country have seen a 20 percent decrease in attendance in the past five years (Freedom du Lac, 2013). According to Neil W. Horstman, historic house museums deserve to remain relevant, but in order to do so, they must adapt to the changing world of today (Horstman, 1992). One way of adapting might be engaging in a transparent dialogue about the authentic history of the individual(s) they represent in their institutions.

Very few historic house museums in the United States address the importance of discussions that challenge heteronormativity or emphasize the “diverse and constructed nature” of queer histories (Oram, 2011). Heteronormativity can be explained as

...the view that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and expected social and sexual relations. Heteronormativity insures that the organization of heterosexuality in everything from gender to weddings to marital status is held up as both a model and as a ‘normal’...Heteronormativity works...to naturalize the institution of heterosexuality while rendering real people's relationships and commitments irrelevant and illegitimate (Ingraham, 2002).

In his article *House Museums or Walk-In Closets?: The (Non)Representation of Gay Men in the Museums They Called Home*, Joshua Adair discusses how even in historic house museums where queer men once lived, a disconnect between the actual history of the house and what is discussed in the museum exists (Adair, 2010). This lack of representation has repercussions according to Anna Conlan, who states that “omission from the museum does not simply mean marginalization; it formally classifies certain lives, histories, and practices as insignificant, renders them invisible, marks them as unintelligible, and, thereby, casts them into the realm of the unreal” (Conlan, 2010). Historically, museums have failed to represent the voices of the queer community in their institutions, thus resulting in a lack of inclusion amongst museums. Museums are in a pivotal role to become agents of social change and facilitate conversations to disrupt heteronormativity within the field.

However, Adair suggests that museums can be used as a site for engaging in conversations around deconstructing gender roles and heteronormativity. There is no denying that queer individuals are present in the museums’ community, staff, and in the histories of these institutions (Adair, 2010). There are also a handful of historic house museums across the United States that are embracing queer histories and incorporating this history into the dialogue of the museum: the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago, Illinois, Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice in Durham, North Carolina. All of these institutions are engaging in some form of dialogue around the queer historical connection to the house.

In general, historic house museums are viewed as extremely heteronormative and there is minimal discussion on sexual identity when it comes to the interpretation of many historic sites. The “unspoken assumptions” that every individual leads a heterosexual lifestyle, even in

the past, and the disappearance of sexual identity, gives off a false interpretation of these sites (Biehl, 2012). For example, Adair speaks to the “straightening” of historic house museum practice and that many visitors to historic sites are often unaware to the fact that the subjects of these house museums are “woefully misrepresented by the museums that benefit from [gay men’s] taste, style, and tireless labor (Levin, 2010). Museums must understand the implications they face with the misrepresentation or disregard of the queer community in order to improve the “museums’ credibility and educational impact” (Adair, 2010).

By analyzing how these historic house museums present queer history and conversing both with museum professionals and local LGBTQ organization members, this research provides feedback in which other museums can look to when considering incorporating queer histories into their institution. It would behoove these institutions, like Horstman (1992) states, to “accept the challenge” of promoting their contributions to society. By doing so, visitors may see themselves in the stories and the concepts these museums present to the public. The results of this research add to the continuously evolving literature on queer dialogues in museums and further the ability for museums to become agents of social change through inclusion, transparency, authenticity, and community engagement.

The goal of this qualitative research is to describe ways historic house museums are engaging in queer dialogue in their institutions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field.

(This page intentionally left blank)

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

If you want to make a human being a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves - Junot Diaz

Every house has a closet. The closet “protects its contents from exposure and harm” until the objects are ready to be used (Kushnick, 2010). The closet is also seen as a metaphor for concealing one’s sexuality, a place that, according to Kushnick, is “difficult, unnatural, dark, precarious, isolating, and probably doomed to failure.” According to Steven Seidman, the concept of the closet has unique preconceptions, specifically, the “foregrounding of sexual identity and a systematic mobilization of social agencies (e.g. the state, medical-scientific institutions, the criminal justice system) aimed at enforcing a norm of heterosexuality” (Seidman, 1999). Museums also fall into this category of social agencies enforcing heterosexual normalcy within their institutions. How then do we, as museum professionals, help our museums to “come out of the closet” and engage in conversations when it comes to representing the queer community?

This chapter looks into three areas of research related to answering this question. A broad overview of the literature discussing the role of historic house museums within the museum field speaks to what historic house museums are known for and where many professionals believe these institutions can go in the future. The second section devotes itself to queer representations and dialogues present in museums. Continuing the discussion on queer dialogues, this section also looks into how four larger history and art museums choose to engage in queer dialogues, either through exhibitions, tours, or programming. The final section of literature focuses on how museums, as agents of social change, can be the foundation of having important conversations, challenging prejudices, and preventing omissions. These areas of literature guide the research

investigating the ways historic house museums are engaging in queer dialogue in their institutions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field.

Critique of Historic House Museums

Often seen as the humble, sleepy corner of the museum field, Historic House Museums are rarely looked upon as the most relevant type of cultural institution. However, there are an estimated 15,000 historic house museums in the United States today (Graham, 2014). Most of these houses are classified as “detached, single-family houses; and generally, they have been preserved because of some association with famous personages or historical events” (Fitch, 1990). The National Register for Historic Places takes the definition of the structures they endorse a little further, stating that the structure(s) must fall into one or more of the following criteria:

1. They are associated with an historical event;
2. They have at some time housed a significant historical personality;
3. They represent certain periods or styles of architecture;
4. They provide a view of the past (Chhabra, 2010).

“Velvet ropes that keep rooms pristine and guided tours that describe in agonizing detail residents’ daily routines are, after all, the domiciliary equivalent of sticking a pin through an insect and calling it an exhibition” (Lopez, 2015). This excerpt from Lisa Junkin Lopez’s *Open House: Reimagining the Historic House Museum*, describes how many historic house museums continue to operate under their traditional views on interpreting historic house museums. These former private homes, which are usually run by local historical societies and elderly volunteers, typically partake in a traditional guided tour of the house and showcase their antique furniture

behind said velvet ropes (Graham, 2014). Many of the historic house museums in the United States are “primarily founded, interpreted, and staged to celebrate a romanticized American legacy” and therefore fall into the heteronormative category many other museums find themselves (Ryan & Vagnone, 2016).

According to *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums*, “the process of establishing a house museum brought women out of the private sphere, but it also could be a vehicle for negotiating the changing relationship between women's traditional power base, the home, to the public realm in general and the state in particular” (West, 1999). West describes the history of historic house museums and how the formation of what is considered to be the first historic house museum, Washington's Mount Vernon, was established by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association and led by Ann Pamela Cunningham (West). The evolution of historic house museums, according to West, has allowed us, as museum professional and as “inheritors of the material legacy of the house museum founders, [to] now see the proper function of a museum as the presentation of historically accurate interpretations of the American past.”

Even though this branch of the museum field contains certain “fossilized” characteristics, they also “instill feelings and memories in visitors and offer a special ambience, which take the visitors to the previous era and have them wonder” (Chhabra, 2010). One of the main issues with historic house museums and their future is the challenge of being relevant in the contemporary world. “An emerging approach to history argues that house museums cannot exist in isolation from the present. The past has to be molded in relation with the present and the future. That is, it has to have meaning in the contemporary world. Needs of the society and civic engagement need to be taken into consideration” (Chhabra). The Uncatalogued Museum, a museum blog ran by

Linda Norris, discussed and discovered that people had several reasons for disliking house museums. The main reason: “a lack of connection to the present (irrelevance to the visitor’s life)” (Zupan, 2015). Chhabra’s approach and Norris’ discussion suggest that in order for historic house museums to remain relevant to today’s society, they must find ways to connect to the present and address contemporary topics.

According to a 2013 *Boston Globe* article, historic house museums across the country have seen a 20 percent decrease in attendance in the past five years (Freedom du Lac, 2013). “Their main deficiency, in the light of contemporary knowledge and cultural attitudes, is the elitist, upper-class bias of their interpretation, educational programs, and publications” (Fitch, 1990). Because the traditional audience of historic house museums is aging and attendance is slowly decreasing, bold steps need to be taken.

In their 2016 book, *Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums*, Deborah Ryan and Franklin Vagnone create a “call to action” for the revitalization of historic house museums and their engagement with their local communities. This call for action devotes itself to completely removing the traditional idea of a dusty, old home to one that promotes a more engaging and interesting model. Both authors state that historic house museums “need to take bold steps to expand their overall purpose not only to engage communities surrounding them, but also to become deeply collaborative with the type and quality of experience guests receive” (Ryan & Vagnone, 2016). The book hypothesizes that “HHMs (throughout the book the authors use HHM for historic house museum) fail, at least in part, by their inability to draw connections between the real-life, quirky, and emotional experiences from the House’s past and the same sorts of feelings in the visitors’ own homes.”

According to Donna Harris, author of *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, realizing the challenges facing the future of historic homes and house museums and setting forth several examples of how these institutions can find a use for the house that “fits the house, rather than to fit a use into the house” is a step towards relevancy in today’s society (Harris, 2007). This book gives several examples across the country of what can possibly be done to historic house museums that are looking towards the future during this generational shift of younger audiences and museum workers replacing older ones.

Authenticity is also an important topic within the research of historic house museums. According to Deepak Chhabra’s *Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism*, historic house museums “have social functions to perform and it is their responsibility to portray a holistic and fair account of history” (Chhabra, 2010). In several studies conducted around historic sites, visitors stressed the importance of authenticity and accuracy for a satisfying visit (Cameron & Gatewood, 2000). The study conducted by Cameron and Gatewood also revealed the fact that the “desire for authenticity is almost as often expressed as that for information” when it comes to how the site is presented. This can be seen through those visitors who want an experience with the real thing (period furniture, activities, etc.) and those who desire a “highly personal connection with events or people of the past.”

Queer Representations, Interpretations, and Dialogues in Museums

The relationship between museums and the representation of the LGBTQ community is rooted in the need for a place where the voice of the community can be heard. Having an exhibit, a program, or an entire museum dedicated to the LGBTQ community brings forth a broader

understanding of the community and how the people within the community identify themselves. Fraser and Heimlich summarize it best in their introduction to the “Where is Queer” issue of *Museums & Social Issues*: “Incorporating identity at the most basic level of sexual identity is an important part of realizing that we all see the world through our own lenses and sometimes those lenses provide differing views of how it is to live in the world” (Fraser & Heimlich, 2008).

Jerry Lee Kramer’s *Bachelor Farmers and Spinsters*, discusses how gays and lesbians are not exposed to any accurate information about queer history and are therefore “internalize to a greater degree the stigmatising [*sic*] values of the dominant culture, thereby intensifying the internal dissonance all homosexuals feel during the process of personal identity resynthesis [*sic*]” (Bell et al. 1994; Bell and Valentine 1995). Kramer continues to relay solutions to the issues of nonmetropolitan gays and lesbians, including “providing grants to establish local meeting places or libraries” that could provide “more reliable and accurate information” about being a part of the queer community and how to make connection with people within that community. Though Kramer does not suggest museums specifically as solutions to this problem, the promotion of cultural institutions as information sources, can constitute an outlet like museums.

In order to discuss the presence of queer representations, interpretations, and dialogues in museums, we must first understand what the word “queer” truly means. According to Turner, queer has “the virtue of offering, in the context of academic inquiry into gender identity and sexual identity, a relatively novel term that connotes etymologically a crossing of boundaries but that refers to nothing in particular, thus leaving the question of its denotations open to contest and revision” (Turner, 2000). Queer is also seen as a way to challenge heteronormativity and traditional gender roles, by “way in which this theoretical movement estranges us from common modes of thought” (Levin, 2010). It is also interesting and pertinent to point out the evolution of

the word queer and how it has evolved from a negative term for someone who differs from the norm, to a “word that works to break down strict categories (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) in favor of the common experience of question inherited wisdom with regard to sexual and gender expression” (Ferentinos, 2015).

In 2012, the National Park Foundation stated that out of the 86,000 national designated historic sites on the National Register of Historic Places, only three percent explicitly represent minority populations defined by race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (National Park Foundation, 2015; Ryan & Vagnone, 2016). By not explicitly representing and engaging in interpretations around these minority populations, places like museums are missing out on a vital role that “holds the potential to embody museums’ higher purposes” (Ferentinos, 2015). In her book *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites*, Dr. Susan Ferentinos describes how engaging in historical interpretation can foster a dialogue with the museum’s public, enhance how museums look at inclusion, and “enrich the full telling of US history, expand audiences and collections, and provide a sense of belonging to a group whose contributions to the nation have been largely unrecognized” (Ferentinos, 2015).

The spring 2008 issue of *Museums & Social Issues* addresses the question, “Where is queer?” and the struggle many institutions have with conversations around sexual identity and orientation (Morrissey, et. al, 2008). The journal also discusses why queer matters and why queer is important to museum professionals as an “expansive insight into museum practice as a whole” (Fraser & Heimlich, 2008). This is one of very few examples of museological literature that specifically looks into museums and how they engage in queer dialogues and queer representation. The essays throughout the issue address how museums have served as “an instrument of heteronormativity by erasing or rendering invisible artists’ queer desire and

representations” and how we, as museum professionals, are moving towards the “reinvention of the museum as a publicly responsible and responsive institution” (Sanders, 2008).

Several larger museums are slowly beginning to engage in queer dialogue within their exhibitions and programming. Over the past decade several exhibitions have popped up around the globe defying the traditional view on museums by incorporating queerness into the museum. A short list of notable exhibitions and programs centered around queer culture in the museum, include: *Revealing Queer* at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington, *Out in Chicago* at the Chicago History Museum in Chicago, Illinois, *HIDE/SEEK* at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., and the *Gay and Lesbian Tour* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England.

Revealing Queer, an exhibit created by fellow University of Washington Museology Graduate students Erin Bailey-Sun and Nicole Robert, opened at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington in 2014. This collaboration explored how “the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has grown, changed, become more visible, and worked towards equality.” Bailey-Sun states that this project was started to find ways to engage museums and the LGBTQ communities, to recover “history that would have otherwise been lost” and preserve the area’s current history (MOHAI, 2014).

Bailey-Sun states that the goal of the exhibit was to get “people to be able to understand queer history...even people who identify as LGBTQ don’t know their own history, which is problematic” (Greenslit, 2014). What makes *Revealing Queer* so unique, besides the fact that the exhibit centered on making “Seattle fall back in love with itself because of the LGBTQ community,” is the fact that it also utilized a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The advisory committee was employed to “ensure that an intersectional and holistic method [was]

used to capitalize on the lived experiences of individuals in the Greater Puget Sound area' (Greenslit). By utilizing this model, the committee was able to support the exhibition by "shaping the content, editing text, connecting [MOHAI] with objects and spreading the word" (Queering the Museum Project, 2014).

The year 2016 marks the thirteenth anniversary of the series *Out at CHM*. This popular and provocative series allows visitors to "discover the storied history of Chicago's LGBTQ communities" through exhibitions and programming at the Chicago History Museum. By creating such an in depth exhibit displaying the history of the LGBTQ community within Chicago, the *Out at CHM* series harbors a sense of identity, which draws people into the museum. By addressing a social issue like that of the representation of the LGBTQ community in museums, the Chicago History Museum has been able to develop further educational practices to benefit the community. Jill Austin and Jennifer Brier, curators of *Out at CHM*, wanted to do "more inclusive history about the city of Chicago, to do more history that was risk-taking" (Johnson, 2014).

The programs created for the *Out in Chicago* series predate the exhibition by a decade and their discussions on various aspects of the LGBTQ community and its history within the Chicago community continue (Brier, 2016). A recent panel, titled "Out at CHM: The House that Chicago Built," explores the history of House music and its development within LGBTQ dance clubs in the late 1970s. The event consisted of several Chicago based DJs participating in the transformation of the museum venue into a functioning dance club. There are also discussions on diversity, progression, and impact within the community. Through these panel discussions, the Chicago History Museum has developed newer exhibits focused on more personal and sometimes explicit aspects of the LGBTQ community. For example, the "Dangerously Explicit:

Painting the Gay Male Experience” explores local artists’ paintings depicting various experiences among the gay male community, while “Lesbianography: Lesbians and Sex,” was an event to have provocative conversations about lesbian pornography and how queer women are portrayed in various media (Johnson, 2014). Therefore, by actively encouraging participation from the local community to come to the museum and witness their own history while expressing their views on what they would like to see at the museum, suggests that when a museum involves the public, their voices are heard.

HIDE/SEEK: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture opened at the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian on October 30, 2010. The exhibition was presented as the “first major museum exhibition to focus on sexual difference in the making of modern American portraiture” (HIDE/SEEK Prologue, 2010). Co-curator Jonathan Katz stated that HIDE/SEEK “attempts to cross the gulf between knowledge and acknowledgement” by discussing art that has been seen in other galleries and museums, but changing the way the museum talks about the art (Katz, 2011). Katz also believes that each piece in the exhibition “talks about aspects of sexual difference and that is new and that has not been addressed.” To understand a different world, meaning the queer world of the past, he suggests we must understand the representation of sexuality in the past (Katz).

The exhibition meanders through three centuries of art discussing the various ways sexual difference has been depicted in modern America. The explorations of gender fluidity, sexuality, social marginalization, and how society has evolved and changed towards sexuality, desire, and romantic attachment are seen throughout the exhibition (Steinhauer, 2011). Art work by artists such as Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, Jasper Johns, Georgia O’Keeffe, Andy Warhol, and many others are used to discuss the progressions of sexuality as a topic of conversation and

the “progresses, references to homosexuality and gender bending...” These conversations explore the ways “sexual outsiders, most commonly gay men and lesbians, have, since the late 19th century, made fantastic, eminently discussable, and by turns playful and serious artwork about themselves and their situation” (Steinhauer).

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, has created a tour that “explores gender and sexual identities through a selection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) related objects in the V&A’s rich collections.” This tour is the first time a major museum in London has added a guided lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer history and objects tour to its permanent schedule (Vo, 2015). The tour, based on a booklet co-written by Dawn Hoskin, the Assistant Curator in the Furniture, Textiles, and Fashion Department at the V&A, creates trails through the museum by selecting various objects from the museum’s collection to have conversations about gender and sexuality (Vo). The LGBTQ Working Group, which is comprised of V&A museum staff who have an interest in using the collections to have discussions about sexuality, gender, and identity, “aim to facilitate understanding of LGBTQ identities and histories through research, public programming, discussion and debate” (LGBTQ Working Group, 2016).

The museum is not solely focusing on the fact that next year is a notable year for the LGBTQ community in Britain (2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Britain), but the V&A uses the monthly tours to express that there are LGBTQ experiences to be found within the museum all year around and to remind people that these objects play a pivotal role in everything the museum does. “These tours will first give a greater sense of identity and ownership to LGBTQ visitors, but then slowly create interest amongst others and then be accepted in the mainstream” (Vo, 2015). The attention the V&A has received

from incorporating these tours into their regular programming also suggests that audiences are interested in being a part of LGBTQ programming through a museological perspective (Vo).

These examples suggest that communities desire to see the inclusion and delivery of queer dialogues in museums. Whether these queer dialogues are presented in the form of exhibitions, tours, or programs, it appears that there is a demand to have a conversation around this topic and an ideal place to have these conversations is within a museum setting.

Museums as Agents of Social Change

Throughout the time spent combing through literature devoted to museums and social change, Stephen Weil's essay, *From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum*, constantly popped into mind. Weil states that the museum is an instrument for social change and a place that has the "potency to change what people may know or think or feel to affect what attitudes they may adopt or display, to influence what values they form" (Weil, 1999 & Museum Matters, 2010). This phrase speaks directly to how many museums are shifting their focus from being solely about their collections, to a focus on what museums can do for their communities.

According to Fiona Cameron, museums are embracing this shift of focus Weil mentions and are "fostering an acceptance of cultural diversity" and considering the power museums have to improve society by "producing moral and responsible citizens" (Cameron, 2007). She continues by discussing how a museum director from the United Kingdom discusses the role museums play in having conversations around "edgy topics" and having a "role in defining, creating and promoting the views, values and activities of an open and tolerant society." The following is the quote from the UK museum director:

To institute change on a broad scale we need to work with other organizations, who are working towards a more tolerant, open society that's honest about difficult issues. Museums can provide the backdrop for raising these issues. We have to think about what sort of society a museum aspires to help create.

Professor and museum practice activist Richard Sandell has consistently written about museums as agents of social change and the potential this function has for the future of museums. Sandell proclaims that museums have increasingly become more confident in their “capacity to promote cross-cultural understanding, to tackle prejudice and intolerance and to foster respect for difference” (Sandell, 2007). In turn, Sandell believes that museums must then be required to “develop new goals that respond to local and global social concerns, to articulate and justify their value in social terms, to demonstrate and measure their impact and to develop new working practices to reflect these trends” (Sandell). Sandell's writing is echoed across a number of museum associations, thus suggesting that there is a current demand amongst museum professionals for museums to become agents of social change.

At the 2008 International Museum Day Conference, Alissandra Cummins, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) stated, “While traditionally museums are known for their collections, more and more museums are taking an active key role in exploring social issues with communities to contribute to their development. The educational and ethical function of the museum is to engage culturally diverse contemporary communities through exhibitions and workshops and their design. International Museum Day shows that it is possible to gather together in a new way to interpret the past in light of the present to shape a better future” (ICOM, 2008). ICOM believes in the exploration of the role and function of museums as civil and social spaces, as well as social cohesion among the communities and their environments.

The American Association of Museums (AAM) current strategic plan introduced a guide to transform and ignite change within the museum field. The strategic plan, titled *The Spark*, strives to “champion the value of museums” for the twenty-first century (American Alliance of Museums, 2009). Two major steps that AAM believes will benefit the museum field are transparency and inclusiveness. According to AAM, transparency is defined as “stating clearly what [museums] stand for and presenting it publicly for all to see” and inclusiveness, one of AAM’s values, speaks of seeking out and embracing “diversity of participation, thought, and action” (AAM, 2009).

The Museums Association in the United Kingdom, is the oldest museum association in the world and has consistently advocated and demonstrated that museums can be ambitious about their roles within society. Effective museums, according to the Museums Association, “engage with contemporary issues,” have social justice at the heart of the museum’s impact, foster questioning, debate, and critical thinking (Museums Change Lives, 2013). *Museums Change Lives*, the Museums Association’s vision for impact on museums, demonstrates the ambitious role the Museums Association believes museums across the United Kingdom are capable of reaching. The Museums Association wants museums to improve their social impact so much, that it has generated a ten step action plan that other museums can use to guide their way in making their museums more socially impactful.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is a “global network of historic sites, museums, and memory initiatives connecting past struggles to today’s movements for human rights and social justice.” Though Sites of Conscience is not a museum association, however they do work closely with museums and museum professionals on skills to encourage dialogue within their institutions. In order to encourage social justice, the Sites of Conscience uses “lessons of

history to spark conscience in people all around the world so that they can choose the actions that promote justice and lasting peace today” (Sites of Conscience, 2016). This network of over 200 places of memory from all over the world uses dialogue and group facilitation to get visitors “beyond passive learning” and enable “better access to larger historical and humanities themes within [sites’] exhibits, tours, programs, and social media. Dialogue works because of the learning that occurs when people have discussions with one another. Also through the process of dialogue, social change is created by having people’s own opinions, inputs, or ideas challenged” (Pharaon, 2016).

These examples indicate, as Kate Davison states, “that major institutions are not simply bowing passively to pressure, but are beginning to recognize their powerful social role and their duty to proactively challenge prejudices and omissions” (Davison, 2011). However, it can also be said that these professional museum associations “may be talking about diversity, but have not yet embraced inclusion,” meaning that these associations believe museums should be having these conversations, but little is actually being done to encourage and promote ideas like inclusion and diversity within the museum field (Sorin, 2016). It is important to remember that even though the concept of museums becoming agents of social change is still highly debated amongst museologists, there is still an interest in the ways cultural institutions, like museums, can have discussions based on the interest of social issues (Sandell).

Conclusion

This review centered on literature devoted to historic house museums, representations of queer voice, and how museums can play pivotal roles in society as agents of social change. The literature suggests that the time to address the inclusion and delivery of LGBTQ dialogues in historic house museums and in museums in general, is now. There are countless institutions,

many of which are historic house museums, who have connections to a queer past, but they do not interpret this history in their institutions. According to Ryan and Vagnone, historic house museums “purposely leave out known information because they deem it to be too controversial or potentially offensive to the majority population” (Ryan & Vagnone, 2016). However, there are a handful of historic house museums with connections to queer historical narratives who actively engage in dialogue around this history. The next chapter looks into examples of historic house museums that are actively engaging in queer dialogues. This chapter also attempts to understand how these historic house museums incorporate queer dialogues into their institutions and what can be learned from institutions who authentically interpret their queer past.

Chapter III: Methods

Incorporating LGBT experiences into museum interpretation holds the potential to embody museums' higher purposes - Susan Ferentinos

This chapter describes the methods used in this research study. It begins with restating the original research goal, the questions proposed to guide the research, and the original idea of the study. The remainder of this chapter includes descriptions of each of the three historic house museum sites to provide context for the research results and are then followed by the methodology and framework used to conduct this research.

Research Goal and Questions

The goal of this qualitative research was to describe ways historic house museums are engaging in queer dialogue in their institutions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field. This research sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What does the inclusion and delivery of queer dialogues look like across several types of historic house museums?
- 2) How does the interpretation of queer dialogue in historic house museums attempt to disrupt heteronormativity within the museum field?
- 3) What is the attitude of museum professionals towards museums becoming agents of social change?
- 4) What can other museum professionals learn from museums engaging in queer dialogues?

The Original Idea

The idea for this research study derived from a course in the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington, titled *Advocacy and Social Change* with Dr. Kris Morrissey. I came into this program with the interest of discussing how museums and other cultural institutions lack representation of the queer community and therefore queer voice cannot be found within these museums. During the *Advocacy and Social Change* course, an assignment was to research different types of museums (history museums, science centers, art museums, etc.) and how they engage in “representing and advocating for social change and the varied ways museums are engaging with their local and global communities to solve the most compelling and significant issues of our time” (Morrissey, 2014). During the discussion on historic house museums, the group determined that there were not very many historic house museums that represent and advocate for social change, except for the Jane Addams Hull-House. This discussion brought on a question: what if historic house museums did represent and advocate for social change, more specifically, social change within the queer community and what would that look like? As the Associate Director of the Museology Program, Wilson O’Donnell always says, “Sounds like a potential thesis topic” and my topic was created.

Sample

This research investigated three different historic house museums from different time periods that engage in a dialogue that encompasses queer history. The historic house museums were chosen because they currently engage in a dialogue around the fact that the individual(s) they represent identified as LGBTQ or today are thought to be a part of that community. The

Jane Addams Hull-House in Chicago, Illinois was the first site selected, based on its inclusion in Susan Ferentinos' *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites*, and other literary sources, as well as the emergence of the museum's new *Gender and Sexuality Tour*.

For the remaining two historic house museums, a website search was conducted for historic house museums that have a connection to queer history. This search revealed many historic house museums with a queer past, however, only a select few have actually engaged in a dialogue involving their queer past. The participants were selected based on their active role in telling historically marginalized stories from a queer perspective. The remaining two historic house museums selected were Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House in Gloucester, Massachusetts and the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice in Durham, North Carolina. These three sites represent a diverse group of historic house museums, not only geographically, but also based on the content and history of the inhabitants of each house, and how each house chooses to represent these individuals in their institutions.

Historic House Museum Descriptions

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. Located in Chicago, Illinois on what is now part of the University of Illinois Chicago campus, the museum serves as a memorial to the social reformer Jane Addams, the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Originally, the Hull-House was part of a thirteen building complex, but is now down to two buildings which currently house the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. The original Hull Home, which was built in 1856 and incorporated into the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, is the location of the actual museum portion of the house featuring historical and contemporary exhibitions. The Resident's Dining Hall, which is connected to the original home by a covered walkway and is

used for hosting programs, conversations, and community events to engage in discussions about social justice with the diverse communities of Chicago (Ferentinos, 2015). The Hull-House is described by the former Director Lisa Yun Lee, as a “hybrid house museum – both a museum in a house and a house museum – and we contain exhibits that interpret objects related to both the reformers who worked at Hull House and the predominately immigrant communities that participated in activities that ranged from citizenship classes, labor organizing, theater productions, sex education, painting, music, and literature classes” (Lee, 2011).

Co-founded as a social settlement in 1889, by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, the Hull-House has consistently “played a vital role in redefining American democracy in the modern age” (About the Museum). The Hull-House serves as a memorial to Jane Addams and “her colleagues whose work changed the lives of their immigrant neighbors as well as national and international public policy.” The Museum preserves and develops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continuation of the historic settlement house vision, linking research, education, and social engagement,” (About Hull-House, 2016).

What makes the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum stand out from the two other historic house museums in this study is that this house was once home to hundreds of individuals over a span of nearly a century and it was also a site that provided social and educational opportunities to the working class around Chicago. Unlike most historic house museums who usually dedicate the stories they tell to one individual or family, the stories that are told at the Jane Addams Hull-House are centered around the many people who lived in the settlement house and the impacts they had on their communities, as well as the personal stories of the settlement’s co-founder, Jane Addams. The Hull-House is also used as a site to have conversations around topics that can be considered, by some, to be sensitive. For example, currently the museum is hosting a

travelling exhibit titled *Into Body Into Wall*, which “investigates the wall as a social, political, psychological and physical frame, imagines and reflects on new alternatives, and grapples with personal stories from both sides of the wall” (Into Body Into Wall Pamphlet, 2016). The exhibit stems from the 96 Acres Project, with “is a series of community-engaged, site-responsive art projects that involve community stakeholders’ ideas about social and restorative justice issues, and that examine the impact of incarceration at the Cook County Jail on Chicago’s West Side.”

Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House. This forty-room, 14,200 square foot house built between 1907 and 1934 by Henry Davis Sleeper, is located in Gloucester, Massachusetts in an exclusive area called Eastern Point. The community of Eastern Point has traditionally been used as a summer housing spot. Sleeper is considered to be one of America’s first professional interior designers and he used his house as a place for entertaining, and as a way to showcase his interior design skills to potential clients (Swanton, 2016 & Historic New England, 2016). The house is part of Historic New England’s array of historic properties and the heritage organizations states on their website that at Beauport, visitors “learn about its architectural evolution, the sources of Sleeper’s inspiration, and how he influenced other designers and popular taste” (Historic New England, 2016).

After Sleeper’s death in 1934, the house was purchased by Helena Woolworth McCann, the then heiress to the Woolworth fortune. She and her husband purchased the house and all of its contents in 1935. Woolworth and her husband left most of the house and its contents as it was when Sleeper lived and worked in the house. Therefore, what Sleeper was doing as an emerging interior designer in the early twentieth century still stands today and offers a snapshot of the different colors, decorative arts, wallpaper, and rugs Sleeper valued most. After the deaths of

Woolworth and her husband, the couple's children donated the house to Historic New England to become a historic house museum. In 1942 Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House opened to the public as an historic house museum and has since become one of Historic New England's most popular properties (Ferentinos, 2015).

What makes Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House differ from the two other historic house museums, is that Beauport is the only example of a historic house museum dedicated to a male individual in this research study and it is also the only historic house museum in this research that is owned by a regional heritage organization. Historic New England, the larger entity over Beauport, has over thirty-six historic sites that span five states and four centuries of New England life (Historic New England, 2016).

The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice. Located in Durham, North Carolina, this particular historic house differs from the other historic house museums in two different ways: one, it was the childhood home of Pauli Murray, the other two homes were the adult homes of the individuals and two, the museum has not yet opened its doors to the public. The 1898 house was built by Murray's grandfather Robert Fitzgerald and "to his family, it [the house he built at 906 Carroll Street in the 1890s] was more than a home; it was a monument to Grandfather's courage and tenacity." The house itself is still in the process of renovation and is expected to open to the public in 2020 (Lau, 2016). What will become the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice grew out of the Pauli Murray Project, which is part of the Duke University Human Rights Center at the Franklin Humanities Institute. The concept of creating a small non-profit to take on the leadership role of the property was started in 2009 and then implemented in 2010-2011 (Lau, 2016). "There's technically two entities, the small non-profit

that is actually raising the money to renovate the property and eventually own and operate the property and then there's the Pauli Murray Project and we provide staff support to the non-profit" (Lau, 2016).

Pauli Murray, who the Center is named after, was a local resident and is well known in many Durham circles, but at the same time little is known of her in other circles. She was a champion for both civil and human rights, who's "insights and vision continue to resonate powerfully in our times" (About Pauli Murray). Murray, who was a practicing attorney, historian, poet, author, teacher, activist, and the first African-American female to become an ordained Episcopal priest, "worked throughout her life to address injustice, to give voice to the unheard, to educate, and to promote reconciliation between races and economic classes (About Pauli Murray). "In 1977, Pauli Murray was the first African American woman to be ordained as an Episcopal priest and in 2012 she was elevated to be an Episcopal Saint." Once opened, the house museum will be used as a "community center for dialogue, education, arts and social activism" (Pauli Murray Center, 2013).

What makes the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice stand out from the two other historic house museums in this study, is that it is a member organization of the International Sites of Conscience, which is an organization composed of "sites, individuals, and initiatives activating the power of places of memory to engage the public in connecting past and present in order to envision and shape a more just and humane future" (International Sites of Conscience, 2016).

Methodological Approach and Framing

I approached this study from the perspective of a queer man, academic, historian, and museum professional. Acknowledging the background my, as well as the background of the interviewees, incorporated subjectivity and situated the work within a queer and museological context. Participants include both museum professionals as well as professionals within LGBTQ community organizations. Both groups play pivotal roles in how cultural institutions, like museums, act as agents of social change and therefore are considered to be authentic and inclusive institutions. The data for this research was collected through open-ended interviews of professionals directly involved with the house museums and other museum professionals that have connections with exhibiting queer histories, as well as group conversations consisting of local LGBTQ community organization members and museum professionals. The interviews with the historic house museum staff, the interviews with other museum professionals, and the group discussion used historic house museums as a vehicle to discuss their viewpoints on museums engaging in dialogues centered on queer history and acting as agents of social change.

This research was conducted using two different qualitative methods: *interviews* and *group discussions*. The qualitative approach to research is interested in “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Interviews and group discussions were chosen based on how both techniques lend themselves to collecting data when sensitive topics are being explored. Interviews with participating historic house museum staff allow a more optimal approach for collecting data on the personal histories of the house, as well as the perspectives and experiences had with the staffs who work at these institutions.

While interviews seek out individual experiences, group discussions “seek to illuminate group opinion.” Group discussions have an advantage for “accessing a broad range of views on a specific topic” (Mack, et.al, 2005). Having groups of museum professionals and local LGBTQ organization members participate in a discussion, creates an effective way to collect data on how museums represent the queer community. Also, according to Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, group discussions are also an effective way to elicit “data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented” (Mack, et.al.).

Interviewees were selected based on the following criteria: their position with the institution and/or direct involvement with the dialogue in the museum or on their knowledge and experience of working with museums engaging in queer dialogues. Each participant was recruited through email with a request to schedule face-to-face meetings or a phone interview with the researcher. The participants for the group discussion were selected based on the following criteria: their professional position within the museum field and/or are an active member of a local LGBTQ organization. The choice to have an array of museum professionals representing various branches of the field was to ensure a variety of professional voices from the field were heard in this conversation. The idea of incorporating local members of various LGBTQ organizations was thought to provide an interesting perspective to that of the views of the museum professionals, as the LGBTQ organization members are actively working alongside members of the community that identify as LGBTQ and therefore provide an insight to representation of this culture.

The structure of the group discussion was influenced by the Arc of Dialogue from the International Sites of Conscience. The Arc of Dialogue is a structure that “pairs a common

experience shared by all participants with a sequence of questions designed to build trust and communication, allowing participants to interact in more relevant and personal ways” (Sites of Conscience Toolkit, 2015). Through a set of four phases that builds up a foundation for discussion, allows participants to share their own experiences and knowledge, reaching beyond their own personal experiences, and finally synthesizing what was discussed, lends itself extremely well to group discussions.

All historic house museum staff interviews and the interviews of other museum professionals took place at their participating museum or over the phone and were recorded per the permission of the interviewee. The group discussion took place in the Residents’ Dining Hall at the Jane Addams Hull-House and were also recorded per the permission of the participants. Participants in the historic house museum staff interviews, the interviews with other museum professionals, and the group discussions were given a consent form stating that the researcher has their permission to be recorded and to have the names of their institutions identified in this document. The names of the participants were not recorded in the final research report.

IRB Exemption

The researcher applied for and on February 1, 2016, was granted Institutional Review Board (IRB) exemption to conduct this research.

Limitations

As this study solely looked at only historic house museums, one limitation to this research is the fact there are other types of museums who do engage in queer dialogues within their institutions. A brief overview of four examples of other types of museums engaging in

queer dialogues is discussed within the literature review portion of this study, but this was not the original focus of the research. This was included to express that there is a demand across the entire museum field for open conversations about queer culture.

A second limitation is the number of historic house museums that were used in this study. The amount of historic house museums that have historical connections to a queer individual is already extremely small and by adding the scope of historic house museums that have queer connections and are openly discussing this topic, is even smaller. Therefore, the amount of possible sites to research and understand how they decide to include these dialogues is very limited.

Another limitation to consider would be access to the historic house museums used in this study. The researcher was also only able to visit two of the three historic house museums in person during the data collection process. The remaining site was contacted via phone to discuss this research.

(This page intentionally left blank)

Chapter IV: Results & Analysis

History argues that house museums cannot exist in isolation from the present. The past has to be molded in relation with the present and the future - Deepak Chhabra

Findings

The findings from this research are broken down into four main themes that each contains several sub-themes:

- **They Exist?** Explains that there are in fact historic house museums that are actively engaging in queer dialogues and why this is important;
- **What Does Queer Look Like in Historic House Museums?** Looks into the various ways the sample sites have decided to incorporate their queer history into their institutions;
- **How Can We Talk About It?** Looks into the thought process behind how, as museum professionals, we can display someone's personal lives and how do we go about having these conversations when the individual(s) never told us how they identify, as well as looking into how the three historic house museums define proof;
- **What Can We Learn?** Looks at how these historic house museums are disrupting the heteronormativity found within the museum field, how these conversations are slowly changing how museums interact with society as agents of social change, and what we, as museum professionals, can learn for the future.

Figure I: The following chart visually represents the houses in this study.

Site	Location	How They Approach Queer Dialogue
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum	Chicago, IL	-Gender & Sexuality Tour; museum uses stories of various residents of Hull House to describe gender and sexuality
Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House	Gloucester, MA	-Two programs related to sexuality in the LGBTQ community
The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice	Durham, NC	-Plans to discuss the life of Pauli Murray through an intersectionality lens; museum to open in 2020

They Exist?

The purpose of this research was to understand how historic house museums with queer histories engage in dialogues involving their queer history. Perhaps the most obvious and yet significant finding, is that there are historic house museums that are openly and actively engaging in queer dialogues within their institutions.

Not only are these institutions openly and actively engaging in queer dialogues, they are using this queer historical connection as a conversation starter for various topics beyond the concept of queer. The idea of incorporating queer history into each of these historic house museums is not the main aspect or teaching point of each house, but an important facet of the individual(s) represented in the museum and therefore this facet has a place in the museum. For example, the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice believes that "...this is a story that deserves to be inscribed on the real, physical landscape" but also conjures up the question of

“what does it mean to try and rewrite the story in history and give it physical presence?” With the Jane Addams Hull-House, the conversation around queer, gender, and sexuality expands beyond Addams and there is now a “real initiative to open up that story to the whole community that lived here, and worked here, and came through these doors all the time, and how that really was the force that shaped this place more than any one person.” At Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, the staff believes that having conversations around Sleeper’s sexuality “is something that should be done.”

Each historic house museum incorporates their queer history into the museum and connects these stories to the museum’s mission in various ways. By incorporating this queer history, they are acknowledging and addressing an aspect of the individual(s) each institution represents that was either not known prior to the museum’s engagement with this history or was not yet supported with solid evidence. According to one staff member at the Jane Addams Hull-House, the importance of telling these stories is “one thing that [they] really try to do in all of [their] tours, no matter who the group is, where they’re from, is to include these stories so people can realize that this history is always going to be here, it always was.”

Historic house museums with queer histories that are openly and actively engaging in queer history, is a learning opportunity that emerges from these museums. Aside from Jane Addams, the two other individuals are relatively unknown outside their home cities and small circles of academics. Knowing the more personal stories of these individuals is therefore an aspect that is also not as well known to the general public. The staff at the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice were often approached with “Who’s Pauli Murray, why haven’t I heard of her, who is she?” when beginning their process of telling the life of Pauli Murray through their project. Engaging with the audiences of these historic house museums on the topic

of queer history allows for new conversations around this history, a continuation of conversations that staff may not have been able to continue due to lack of evidence, and it also furthers the field by discussing inclusivity within a museum setting.

What Does Queer Look Like in Historic House Museums?

At all three sites, the interpretation, representation, and terminology used to describe the individual's history, how it connects to the queer community, and how it connects to the museum, were significantly different. However, whether it is through exhibitions, tours, or programs, these historic house museums all openly and actively engage in some form of queer dialogue around the individual(s) they represent within their institution. One educator spoke specifically how historic house museums, through their interpretation, representation, and terminology of queer history, have made a private space into a more public space, and therefore a queer space:

The most important part is figuring out how you get house museums, which by definition, are about these 'private spaces' but are made public...almost by definition they're queer spaces, because of what's happened to them...how they have taken something that's supposed to be private and put it on display...

When former director of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Lisa Yun Lee rediscovered a massive painting hidden amongst the collections at the Hull-House, she knew the person in the portrait was someone of some significance in Addams' life. The painting is of a woman in a full length, light-yellow dress and is painted by Alice Kellogg Taylor, who was once a resident at Hull House. The sheer size, grandeur of the gold plated frame, and the placement of

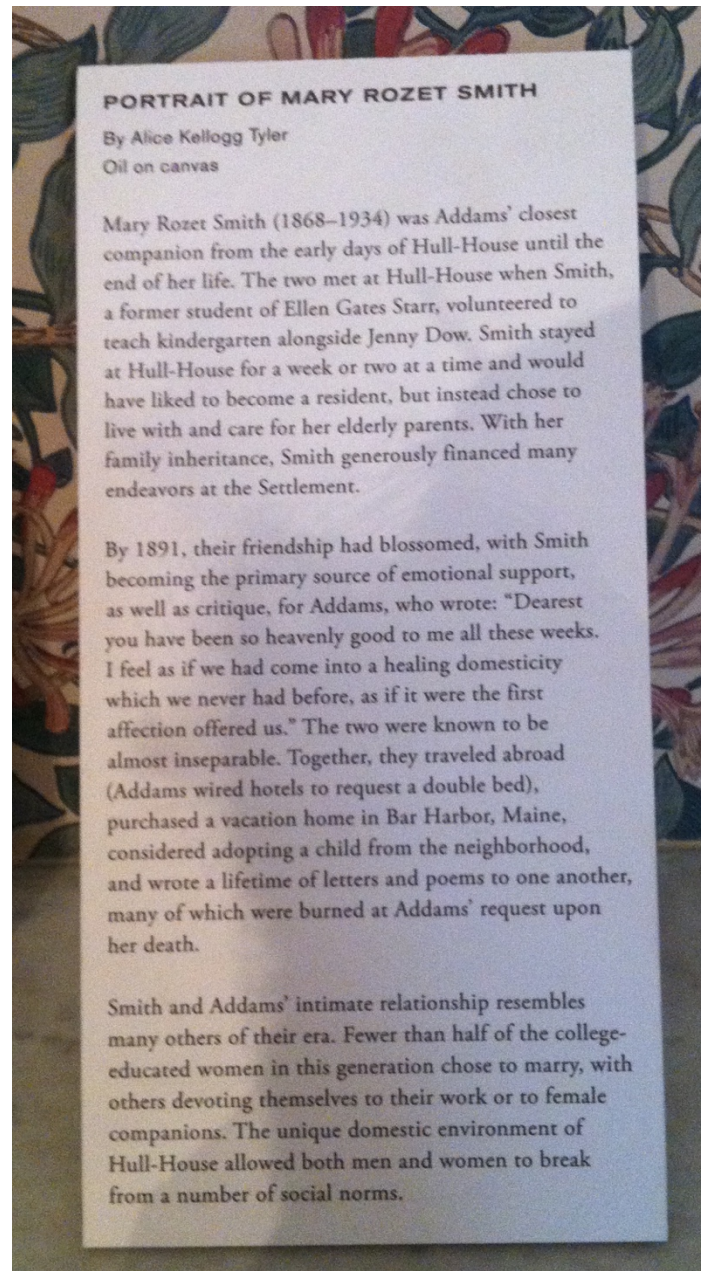
the painting in Addams' bedroom (based on photographs from the time period) signifies that this person was special to Addams. After researching the portrait, it was determined that the painting is of Mary Rozet-Smith, one of the supporters of Hull-House and Addams' companion for decades. The question then was how was the museum going to interpret this piece that held so much significance to Addams? "It was definitely a struggle when including [queer stories] in the Hull-House when our past director found that painting of Addams' life partner...how do we address that?" The museum staff eventually decided to have "visitors vote on which representation they thought was best." The team set up three labels with differing wordings describing Addams' relationship with Rozet-Smith and visitors were encouraged to "put stickies on parts they liked or didn't like...the one that's up there now, is a compilation" of the three labels which is what the audience thought was the best way to talk about it. The three labels presented to visitors were as follows:

- 1) Mary Rozet-Smith was Jane Addams's companion for decades and one of the top financial supporters of Hull House. Alice Kellogg Taylor's relationship with Hull House began in 1890. She taught, lectured and exhibited here until her early death in 1900. A teacher at the Art Institute of Chicago, Kellogg Taylor received many honors for her work.

- 2) Mary Rozet-Smith was Jane Addams's life partner and one of the top financial supporters of Hull House. Given the emotional intimacy that is expressed in their letters to one another, it is hypothesized that they were lesbians. It is, however, difficult to determine this for sure, particularly considering the differences in sexual aptitudes of the Victorian era in which she lived and Jane Addams's own complex reflections on the ideals of platonic love.

3) Mary Rozet-Smith was Jane Addams's partner and one of the top financial supporters of Hull House. They shared a deep emotional attachment and affection for one another. Only about one half of the first generation of college women ever married men. Many formed emotional, romantic and practical attachments to other women. In letters, Addams refers to herself and Rozet-Smith as 'married' to each other. Hull House women redefined domesticity in a variety of ways. Addams writes in another letter to Rozet-Smith, "Dearest you have been so heavenly good to me all these weeks. I feel as if we had come into a healing domesticity which we never had before, as if it were the first affection had offered us." Jane Addams burned many of her letters from Mary Rozet-Smith.

Figure II: Photograph of the final collaborative label explaining the relationship Addams and Rozet-Smith had with one another. The label is placed on top of the mantel underneath Rozet-Smith's painting.



Based on the eagerness of learning about Addams' relationship with Rozet-Smith and the rediscovery of the painting, the education team has recently incorporated a new tour that focuses on the role gender and sexuality has played in the Hull-House since its establishment. The basis of the *Gender & Sexuality Tour* is derived from input from the education team at the Hull-House, as well as the work done with the *Out at Chicago* exhibition at the Chicago History Museum. The tour is broken down into six sections that address various topics and each topic is told in different locations throughout the house. The sections include: *Industrialization*, *Municipal Housekeeping*, *Feminism*, *Identity*, *Gender & Sexuality History of Chicago*, and *Queering Figures at Hull-House*. The 120-minute tour is geared towards "gender [and] women's studies students, queer Chicago, and anyone interested in seeing another side of Hull House history."

The tour begins with explanations of terminology used throughout the tour including: gender, sex, sexuality, lesbian, gay, and queer. The guides highlight these terms, because "words are important" and can be seen as teaching points for people who have never been exposed to these words or it can be a place for clarification to clear up any confusion around the definitions of certain words. Having a space to tell these stories about the various people who frequented Hull House and how they impacted gender and sexuality, explains why "in a way, the exhibit can't stand on its own, [with] something so complex like [queer history], having the room for conversation for people to ask the questions that they may feel uncomfortable by asking because they don't know the words" is extremely important and therefore the Hull-House and the *Gender & Sexuality Tour* are providing a space and opportunity to have these conversations.

Figure II: Gender and Sexuality Tour description from the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum website.

Gender and Sexuality Tour (High school - Adult, 1 hour)

Bring Chicago history out of the closet! Join us for a tour of Hull-House and explore early 20th century stories of gender non-conformity, diverse definitions of family, and fierce self-expression. Hull-House was world-renowned for supporting immigrants and world peace, but did you know it paved the way for LGBT rights? We will address the question, "Was Jane Addams a lesbian?" and consider the historic context that complicates both the answer and the question itself.

One educator spoke to how challenging it was to choose which words to use on the label describing Addams' relationship with Rozet-Smith and how that challenge was part of why they wanted to incorporate language definitions into the tour:

It is a real challenge with the wording that they chose; I think there was a lot of debate that went into the label that's the only reference you have. [The topic] is so big, so I feel like our tour was the intent to right that wrong and weave that story into the whole house, because it isn't just her, it's also the whole community, they were about helping to transform gender and sexuality...

It is important to tell the story of the relationship between Addams and Rozet-Smith, but the tour also brings up the various roles gender and sexuality played with the many people who frequented Hull-House. The original focus of the settlement was to provide a space for the working class people of Chicago and to provide a unique space for social classes to interact with one another. The groups of people living and working within Hull House became one another's family, as many of them did not have blood relatives and therefore that past must be conveyed by telling the entire story:

[There is a] real initiative to open up that story to the whole community that lived here and worked here, and came through these doors all the time, and how that really was the force that shaped this space more than one person.

One of the main questions that visitors at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House ask is “Was Henry Davis Sleeper a gay man?” Visitors sometimes do their own research and uncover some of Sleeper’s history, as in the fact that he was a lifelong bachelor, or he never had children, or was one of the first professional American interior designers, and to some people that screams “GAY!” Therefore, visitors are making their own assumptions, without physical proof, that Sleeper was a gay man. The question gets asked so much the museum posted the question and answer to their Frequently Asked Questions page on the museum’s website.

Figure III: Screen capture of the FAQ page for Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House

Was the first owner of Beauport, Henry Davis Sleeper, married?

Sleeper never married nor had any children. According to tradition, Sleeper was a gay man.

According to one staff member, the fact that Sleeper was a gay man was common knowledge among the community of Eastern Point. “They were very tight knit and within that community and in the broader community too and it was known and acknowledged that Henry was a gay man, but it was never part of the interpretation of the house and its story because we didn’t have the proof that in fact he was gay.” It was not until 2007, when employees conducted an oral history with a relative of Sleeper’s, who finally gave the confirmation that Sleeper was a gay man.

Now that Beauport has confirmation that Sleeper was a gay man, they “have altered the interpretation of the house to reflect that history.” According to one staff member, the house has used this information to establish several public programs in the museum that encourages conversations about Sleeper, the house, and the role of homosexuality over the century:

...a couple of years ago we had a program called *Private Lives, Public Faces*, where a historian gave a short talk / lecture and held a salon style conversation with a group about how [and] what it would have been like to be gay in the early 20th century, during Sleeper’s time. Then this coming Autumn, in September, I have an art history professor coming to give a lecture entitled *Henry Sleeper’s Bachelor House*, looking at other bachelor designers and other bachelor homes in the early 20th century and comparing them to Sleeper and Beauport and talking about the role of homosexuality, collecting, memory, and how Beauport is considered sort of a bachelor house of the period.

In doing additional research on the two programs at Beauport, I found a description of the *Private Lives, Public Places* program was discovered on the Newburyport Guide & Cape Ann Summer Time Special Events and Specials in August page:

“Historian Phillip A. Hayden leads a thought-provoking and sometimes frank informal discussion about public and private attitudes toward human sexuality at the turn of the twentieth century. The program opens with a general overview of the norms and taboos of the day, [and] then looks specifically at how Beauport owner Henry Davis Sleeper and his closest friends navigated the complex and often perilous world of Boston’s gay subculture. This examination of what it meant

to be an outsider in Sleeper's time touches on themes of particular relevance today" (Newburyport Guide & Cape Ann, 2014).

The two examples of public programming at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House demonstrate how museums can openly and actively engage in queer dialogues within their institutions. The concept of authenticity comes to mind when considering Beauport's dilemma on whether or not they are comfortable discussing Sleeper's sexuality to the public. Now that they have a validated answer and have adjusted their programming, newer and broader questions are happening with the museum's visitors: "...instead of previously when that question may have [been asked], the answer was, 'we don't know,' 'we can't say for sure,' then that stopped the conversation. Whereas us confirming, 'yes, he was a gay man,' the next question, 'did he have a relationship with anyone here?'" gets asked. Unfortunately, there is still not any actual proof of a relationship, but "it does open [the conversation] up in general."

The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice, the house museum is in a unique position on deciding how they want to incorporate queer dialogue, as it has not yet opened to the public. Scheduled to open in 2020, the staff are still discussing how they want to approach the topic of Pauli Murray's sexuality, the importance it played in her own life, the importance of having that conversation within the museum, and how other people might interpret it when visiting the museum. Through the Pauli Murray Project and the previous work done by the staff, there is an established voice that is desired for the future museum, but it does not yet have the facilities to engage in conversations around this history.

Figure IV: Screen capture from the Imp, Crusader, Dude, Priest exhibition on Pauli Murray created by the Pauli Murray Project.

between Homosexual & Heterosexual

Why is that my greatest attractions have been toward extremely feminine and heterosexual women?? Why do I desire monogamous married life as a completion?

These 1937 questions to her doctor reveal Murray's struggle with her sexual orientation. Homosexuality was classified a mental illness until 1975. She never publicly identified as a member of the LGBTQ community but her journals and correspondence reveal her struggles and the importance of her 17 year relationship with Irene Barlow who she described as her silent partner, spiritual mate, and the closest person in her life. They are buried under the same headstone in Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY.

The Pauli Murray House is approaching the topic of interpretation and representation from an interesting perspective. Pauli Murray is a person who is not well known in many circles outside of the Durham, North Carolina area and therefore poses an issue on how to interpret someone who might not be as well known. The staff received many questions asking “who’s Pauli Murray, why haven’t I heard of her, who is she?” Therefore, they have to start from the beginning with “general education programs with lots and lots of different people [discussing] who is Pauli Murray and why she is important...her story, what are the gifts her story offers us, the questions it raises.”

When asked ways the staff has considered how they want to approach the interpretation and representation of Murray within the house, the idea of intersectionality came to mind. The concept of intersectionality suggests the overlap of social identities and how these identities interact on several different levels (i.e., I am a queer, white, southern, male). Typically, the term intersectionality is seen within an academic setting and according to one staff member:

...what Pauli Murray's story invites us do most specifically, is to embrace what she called 'integrated, body, mind, and spirit' ...she didn't ask to be a woman one day, a worker one day, a Negro the next. I have to find those unifying principles under which I can operate.

How then, does a museum go about incorporating an intersectional voice and approach it in a way that all people visiting the museum can comprehend? One staff member stated this when the topic of intersectionality was approached:

How do we create an experience, an educational opportunity, a feeling, some way for folks to even ask themselves that question about a concept that only really lives in academia? Yet people know it, people know what intersectionality is because they live it every day. They don't call it that, they don't step outside themselves and say 'Hmm,' but they experience it and we experience the tensions of being pulled to only privilege one identity and in a given situation, we all experience it.

Telling Murray's story in bits and sections is the exact thing she did not want to do with her life; therefore, the museum cannot have one room devoted to Pauli Murray the fighter for women's rights, one room about civil rights, another about her life as an Episcopal priest. Somehow the museum must find a way to incorporate all aspects of Murray's life into every part of the house:

There are [*sic*] a tremendous diversity of kinds of stakeholders in a project like this. Way more than most historic houses, because we have folks in the

neighborhood, we have folks that believe in the political aims, folks who are from the church...who make pilgrimages...There's people who come for different reasons and who will come for different reasons and who already engage with us for different reasons...I see myself in Pauli because we're both female [and] queer. Someone else sees themselves because they're a lawyer or they believe in women's rights or because they present in a masculine way or because they're Episcopalian.

These three historic house museums all have extremely different queer histories and approach the terminology, interpretation, and representation of the individual(s) stories in various ways. However, they all use this queer history as a way to encourage people to learn that queer has always been here and queer plays a part in today's society. Within the group discussion comprised of museum professionals from various branches of the field and local members of LGBTQ organizations, one non-museum individual had this to say about the usage of language within cultural institutions and how important language is to educate people about things they might not know or understand:

If we are not talking about what's happening and using the language to talk about it, we're doing ourselves, our audience a disservice. I think when that happens a lot of the time, with folks who are not a part of the queer community and this extends in the street, in the museum, everywhere, folks don't have the language to talk about it. They feel like they have no agency, they feel like they are not a part of the conversation and they're afraid of making a mistake, they're terrified of misgendering someone or calling someone queer that doesn't identify as queer

and what that does is it separates queer folks and straight folks, or queer folks and allies, so for me, using that language early and often with folks...opens up the line of dialogue a little bit.

This suggests that there is a demand and need to have these stories presented to the public. Museums offer a natural platform to showcase individual's stories and show that there are queer people everywhere and there have always been queer people. There may be various ways people believe that an individual's life should be told and the language to tell that story might vary, but it is clear that these stories need to be told. Having these conversations also provides an opportunity, like the non-museum group participant states above, to teach people about language and "open up the line of dialogue."

How Can We Talk About It?

In all of the interactions with staff at all three historic house museums and the professionals in the group discussion, the following questions consistently reoccurred: *How can museums prove that this individual we are representing was in fact queer when they themselves never said it to us? How can we talk about someone's sexuality when they possibly did not identify one particular way? Who are we to publicly air this individual's personal stories? Is it appropriate? How can we do this authentically, while being respectful to the individual and our museum?* Though this was not part of the original research questions, the consistent mention of how important proof and evidence are for having these kinds of conversations and the questions mentioned above, demands explanation and therefore, need to be addressed as part of the results and analysis of this research.

Every person who participated in the staff interviews and the group discussion voiced their concern about whether or not they have the authority to engage in conversations around someone's sexuality, when the individual never told the museum staff how they identify. One curator summed up all the concerns of the individuals interviewed into one question: Who am I to divulge those kinds of details?

Evidence. The questions *How can museums prove that this individual we are representing was in fact queer when they themselves never said it?* and *How can we talk about someone's sexuality when they possibly did not identify one particular way?* strike up many concerns about how museums discuss people and their stories. These questions also bring up the importance of ensuring that the information we are presenting to the public is not only accurate, but also authentic, and backed up with evidence. Museums are seen as one of the most important resources for education and therefore are seen as one of the most trustworthy sources of information. As museum professionals, we must take all precautions to assure that the stories we are telling are in fact true and we have the evidence to back up the stories. While at the same time we have to assure that we are respecting the individual(s) whose stories we are telling.

The burning of personal documents upon an individual's death, was a common practice during Addams' and Sleeper's time. Jane Addams destroyed many of her personal letters to Mary Rozet-Smith before she died and Henry Davis Sleeper's personal papers, letters, and designs were all destroyed by his family after his death. However, with Pauli Murray's personal documents, quite the opposite occurred. She left behind "thousands of folders" of documents and "put [them] in a large public archive" that has become one of the largest archives representing the history of women in this country.

The concept of evidence comes in many different ways, especially when considering how people may have varying opinions on what is considered evidence and what is not. It is important to note that the aspect of these people identifying as queer, does not define who these people were, but is an important aspect and characteristic of these individuals and therefore having significant proof of this aspect is needed. One professional said:

I don't question for myself about this identity. They had a bank account together, they had a car together, they had a dog, these are things couples do.

Another opinion from a curator brings up the point of exploiting these individuals and questioning whether or not it is important to have these conversations around this topic. If we do not discuss someone's sexuality when they are heterosexual, why then is it important to discuss a person's sexuality when they are homosexual?

I just don't want to exploit that aspect of [their] life with no avail. I feel like it's important if we're going to talk about equality, in the true definition, treat everyone the same way...had he been here and I would have had the opportunity to ask him, maybe it would have been different.

As the curator stated, if we are to treat everyone the same way, why then do we address the sexuality of a gay person and not specifically discuss the sexuality of a straight person? This also brought up another opinion, if a museum was to engage in a discussion whether in an exhibition, tour, or program, that addresses an individual who is thought to be queer and the museum does not acknowledge that fact, would then visitors lash out at the lack of discussion around the topic? This particular conversation was very interesting, in that it began to be almost

a devil's advocate situation around why it is important to address queer within a museum setting. The conversation ended on a question that possibly cannot be answered, but exemplifies this conversation: how do you address the known without it being stated?

Authority. In continuing the concept of what clarifies as proof, notions of authority began to pop up, and therefore resulted in the following questions: *Who are we to publicly air this individual's personal stories? Is it appropriate? What scares you the most about this topic?* With addressing authority, come additional questions about the process of incorporating this queer history into the museum's dialogue, which were geared towards the museum professionals working at the three historic house museum sites: *Can you tell me about the conversation(s) that took place around the decision to share the queer story that is represented here? In your opinion, what was the most difficult decision to make about incorporating the queer story line?*

The conversations around proof of sexuality, how museums can go about addressing this fact, and who technically has the authority to tell these stories, revealed varied answers. One curator had this to say about physical proof, the types of proof needed, and the repercussions of making assumptions:

'He must be gay' doesn't really tell me anything. It tells me that that's your own interpretation and stereotypical vision. If you have letters, pictures, that's a whole other thing. You have to be very careful that you're not making assumptions based on this part of history...taking assumptions made and placing them on someone you don't even know.

One group participant had an interesting opinion that articulate the complexity of telling these stories and the terminology used to interpret the identity of these individuals:

...considering who knows how Jane (Addams) actually identified, like really truly identified, and for us to place the label of lesbian or queer on her doesn't feel good to me, but if I want to see myself represented in the Jane Addams Hull House, I would want to know, I would want to see that language, and the dancing around and the skirting around doesn't feel right either, so it's a fine line. It's interesting.

What Can We Learn?

This section is broken down into four sub-themes: **Social Advocacy & Social Change**, **Community & Collaborations**, and **Disrupting Heteronormativity**.

Social Advocacy & Social Change. I wanted to get a sense of what museum professionals and non-museological professionals felt about museums making a stance on social issues and whether or not that has a place in a museum setting. At the Jane Addams Hull-House, the museum and the Resident's Hall are all used to start conversations around social issues and to provide an opportunity for visitors to ask questions about what they are learning through the exhibitions and tours. One educator said it best when describing the importance of having this space for visitors:

...if it's something so complex like this, having the room for conversation for people to ask questions that they may feel uncomfortable by asking because they don't know the words.

By simply attempting to have conversations seen as non-traditional museological conversations, these museum professionals are pushing the boundaries of what museum work is and attempting to change how people view museums. When discussing how to engage in conversations around social issues, one group discussion participant made a point about the importance of starting from somewhere and starting small:

I think there's a lot of progress that's been made but these issues are not so easily disseminated, that's part of why it's a process. You have to show it here in order for it to be slowly spread more broadly...we have to start. There's a lot of people that still have homophobia or still in the closet.

During the group discussion, one local museum director spoke specifically how the Hull House has created a "fluidity between programming and exhibits" that allows for a broader range of topics concerning social issues and how many of the issues discussed in Addams' time are still relevant to today's society:

[The Hull House] shows the fluidity between programming and exhibits can exist where the biggest exhibit in the museum, the structure itself, and it lends itself to reinterpretation, but also being able to host this (speaking of my group discussion), and talking about the different generations within our community, the different names we would use to call ourselves at different times...you get the generations of the community and become each other, how does a museum become that space to take things to frame it and identify it as exhibits, they're

touch stones or points, conversation starters have to have living performance, conversation, lectures, classes.

When asked to give advice for museums who are considering engaging in conversations addressing social change and advocacy, the answers varied from person to person and they each had different opinions on what can be learned from museums engaging in queer dialogue; however, each had underlying themes that were seen throughout each response: **understanding**, **educating**, and **inclusion**.

The theme of **understanding** came through when participants were talking about how these institutions and the topics they are presenting can help visitors better understand queer history and understand the importance of having these conversations within a museum setting:

I want [visitors] to know how to ask questions that will help them understand the history of anything. What are ways we learn about LGBTQ, we look at organizations, culture, policy, and politics, we look at legal things, what are the strategies we use to understand what happened?

...the more awareness people have about it (referring to the conversation around intersectionality), the more they will understand themselves and think about the way they want to be in the world...think about how the world works and the way we want the world to work. We want the world to be that more integrated body, mind, and spirit.

Educating was also a major theme with many of the participants. Some viewed the opportunities for educating in a point of view from a generational standpoint and how museums

can help older generations, who might not understand where newer generations are coming from when they identify a particular way. Another interviewee focused on educating emerging museum professionals about how museums can and should have conversations about social issues:

It's the older generations who need educating and museums can help with that. At least open the dialogue, [because] some of this is not only having something that the queer people can connect to, but the straight people can see that it's okay that these changes are happening.

Museums can be a place for education...recasting and reshaping museum programs to be more about ideas within a space.

The concept of “recasting and reshaping” museum programs really struck a chord with me as a researcher. Coming into the Museology program at the University of Washington, students are exposed to conversations around social issues and how museums can promote social advocacy. What the researcher learned in that particular class, was that the future of the museum field is beginning to shift its focus to be centered around concepts of inclusion and diversity. With the future of museums focusing on diversity and inclusion, it would behoove museum programs around the world to incorporate these conversations within their program. Having emerging professionals learn, before they even enter the field, that museums can be places of social change, can have tremendously positive effects on how we view the field.

The theme of **inclusion** was mentioned by all of the participants:

It's all about opening up possibilities and seeing what kinds of contribution people have made...where the gaps are, where your new knowledge can be built.

It's all about that.

Think about what are the strategies you're bringing in a more inclusive view of the human being to the work.

I do think the inclusion of [queer media] is important and I'm seeing it more and more and it goes back to the question of how you include these things without being intrusive...how do you consistently include queerness and gender identity?

Like the quotes discussing the education theme, varying opinions on the topic of inclusion were expressed in all of the interviews. To the researcher, all three of these quotes are able to express the importance of inclusion within the museum field, whether that is through various contributions, building on the knowledge of others, or just including the stories of people who have traditionally been left out of the voice of museums. As previously stated, the museum field is shifting to a more focused view on inclusion and diversity and therefore, we as museum professionals, need to shift our own focus to incorporate these ideas.

Community & Collaborations. The importance of community and collaboration constantly weaved in and out of all of the conversations. The types of communities and collaborations differed between each historic house museum, as well as each interviewee. During the group discussion, which as a reminder, consisted of a combination of museum professionals and

professionals representing LGBTQ community organizations, expressed the most passion about collaborations:

...when you engage in partnership, it really allows you to open up a lot of those questions and allows for resource sharing and working in tandem with populations and communities... [it is] a great opportunity to engage with the patrons, but bring in other individuals to access the work and talk about the work and create advocacy. It's finding that intersectionality within the community and continuing to engage with multiple populations and not staying pigeon holed or siloed.

Other interviewees spoke more to how collaborations with community members can help them personally in their professions:

When I plan programs now, I'm definitely aware and always looking for [what] museums might be doing and different ideas.

...it presents lots of challenges, to which mostly I have no answers at this point and... I'm hoping to learn from colleagues that do oppositional history.

...I think part of it is knowing who to collaborate with or engage in a conversation with and I don't think that you just sort of magically say, 'we want to do this,' there has to be some attempt to be in touch with and contact with folks are not part of the museum. I just think of it as an opportunity to bring folks in and make folks see that this is a fight for them, so whether it's talking to the local PFLAG

chapter or talking to an AIDS service organization, or thinking about who to partner with...

One, not to think you have to be all by yourself, two, not to think it has to be permanent and three, it's an opportunity to have a kind of conversation about the process and then see what comes from that...

The importance of community and collaboration make sense as an emerging museum professional. As museum workers, we are a part of our communities and in order to be a part of those communities, we need to collaborate with others. The quotes above stating the various ways the interviewees define how museums can incorporate community and collaboration into their institution, reveals how important it is for museums to reach out to others to help with creating conversations within the museum. Like the first quote suggests, these conversations do not always have to lead to collaborations, but could lead to inspiration or help to understand what the rest of the field is doing. Overall, creating opportunities for furthering conversations around topics like queer, is difficult, but museum professionals need to remember that there are people that are willing to help us have these conversations, many are non-museum people. We just need to reach out to them.

Disrupting Heteronormativity. This section is devoted to the question that was the original driving point for this research: *How does the interpretation of queer dialogue in historic house museums attempt to disrupt heteronormativity within the museum field?*

The answer may seem simple and obvious: these institutions exist and by existing, they are disrupting the heteronormativity found within the museum field. These historic house museums are changing the conversations that are had within a museum setting and are presenting a part of history that has traditionally been hushed and kept from the public eye. The three historic house museums included in this study are taking a chance on being different and providing dialogue that educates people on queer history, while also engaging in other conversations around social issues. They are providing an opportunity for someone to see themselves within the narratives of museums by showing them that there were and are people who fall into the queer identity; one was a famous social worker and the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, another is a man who was one of the first interior designers in America and had a beautiful palatial house, and finally someone who was a writer, a poet, an activist, and the first black, female, Episcopal priest. So when asked how these historic house museums are disrupting the heteronormativity within the museum field, the answer is just that simple, they exist and they are openly and actively trying to change the conversations had in museums.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

Museums are about immersion in exploration of self and spirit, about experiences that lead to fulfillment of human nature, to authenticity, and to being present in the present while being aware of the past and the future - Randy Roberts

The purpose of this study was to describe ways historic house museums are engaging in queer dialogue in their institutions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field. Data were derived from interviews with museum professionals working in three historic house museums that engage in queer dialogues, museum professionals who have worked with institutions that have engaged in queer dialogues, and a group discussion with a mixture of museum professionals and LGBTQ organization members. It is hoped that the results of this study will help to provide feedback in which other museums can look to when considering incorporating queer histories into their institutions and further the literature centered on the museum field and queer history.

There is More Than One Way

This study revealed that there are multiple ways that historic house museums are openly and actively engaging in conversations around queer dialogue. Examining these three historic house museums shows that queer can be interpreted, represented, and engaged in several different capacities. All of which help to continue the conversation around inclusion, diversity, and authenticity within the museum field. At the Jane Addams Hull-House, the museum has decided to not only engage in conversations around Addams' sexuality, but also around how gender and sexuality affected many of the individuals who lived and worked with the house when it was an active settlement home. By creating a tour focused on gender and sexuality, the

Jane Addams Hull-House is able to provide space for visitors to have conversations around queer identity. At Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, programming has been adopted to tell the story of Henry Davis Sleeper and his sexuality. Through the programming, the museum has been able to collaborate with non-museum professionals to help engage in conversations around homosexuality in New England during Sleeper's time. Finally, at the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice, Murray's life motto of an "integrated mind, body, and spirit" has played an important role in the future of interpretation and representation of the house. These historic house museums and the various ways they are engaging in queer dialogue illustrates that historic house museums are still relevant and are valid platforms to engage in conversations around social issues.

A Need & Demand

This study also revealed that there is a need and demand to have a museological platform to engage in queer stories and histories. Throughout all the interviews and the group discussion, there was a constant agreement that now is the time for cultural institutions, like museums, to become agents of social change. All of the interviewees, museum and non-museum, voiced their own views on the future of museums and where they see the field going; however, everyone agreed that the field as a whole must encourage these types of conversations within our institutions. "If the people who make it all happen actually authentically represent the world, then the art that's being created is going to more authentically represent the world, everyone should do that, all the museums should do that." By becoming agents of social change, museums are providing space and opportunities for more conversations to occur in the museum that can help visitors become more connected to the institution. These conversations do not need to be

centered solely on the queer community, but can be about any community that has traditionally been left out of the voice of museums. The important factor about becoming an agent of social change, is that the institution is actively trying to change the conversations had within a museum setting. As West states, “we have not only the right but the responsibility to revise [museums] to accommodate new scholarship, new communities, and new agendas, openly inviting future generations to evaluate our actions in historical perspective.” (West, 1999).

Recommendations

One curator interviewed was working on an exhibit involving an individual who was thought to be queer, but there was no physical evidence to prove it. The curator believed that having a guide would be extremely helpful for museum professionals to have conversations around the topic that are authentic as well as respectful towards the individual’s story. The guide could have possible solutions, recommendations, ideas, concepts, people to reach out to for help, why certain things work and why others do not, when to talk about someone’s sexuality and when to not discuss that aspect of someone’s life. Overall, the guide would stress the importance of having these conversations and be structured to help other museum professionals create various exhibitions, tours, or programs.

Another recommendation would be a more in depth look into how visitors feel about museums engaging in conversations around topics like queer history. The study could first look into the attitude of visitors on the topic of queer, followed by questioning if they were familiar with these individual’s sexualities prior to attending the historic house museum, and finally ask the visitor if their opinion on queer has changed since visiting the museum and learning about these individuals. This study would be a natural continuation of this research, as it would

examine how visitors feel about museums engaging in conversations around topics like queer history. This study could also potentially reveal whether or not being exposed to these topics ignites change within the visitor's perspective on museums as agents of social change.

Conclusion

Queer is everywhere. We are lucky to be living in time when so many people are comfortable enough to be themselves and express themselves the way they truly wish to identify. Recent studies in the U.S. have reported 82% of Generation Z do not care about other people's sexual orientation, 88% believe more people are exploring their sexuality, and 81% believe people are not defined by gender (Laughlin, 2015). Now is the time for museums to join the rest of the 21st century and engage in conversations around topics like gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, and identity. These topics are some of the most discussed topics in today's society. We, as museums professionals, have the opportunity to help continue these conversations within a museum setting and help our visitors connect to our institutions. This study shows that even historic house museums, the branch of the museum field that is seen as sleepy and behind the times, are engaging in these conversations.

As Vagnone and Ryan state, "learning that other people, especially noteworthy and successful people, harbor similar secrets can be empowering" (Vagnone & Ryan, 2015). We need to provide outlets for people who might not see themselves as represented in museums and show them that your story is here and you do belong. It is my hope that this study will help further the conversations around queer identity within the museum field and to help others understand the importance of having these conversations within a museum setting.

Bibliography

- AASLH Historic House Affinity Group Committee. (2008). *How Sustainable is Your Historic House Museum?* History News.
- Adair, Joshua G. (2010). "House Museums or Walk-In Closets? The (Non)representation of Gay Men in the Museums They Called Home." *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*. Ed. Amy K. Levin, New York: Routledge.
- Alleyne, Shirley Brown. (2010). *Making Programs Self-Sustaining at a Small Historic House Museum*. California: Left Coast Press, Inc.
- American Alliance of Museums. (2009). *The Spark: AAM's Strategic Plan*. http://www.aamus.org/docs/about-us/the-spark-strategic-plan_final.pdf?sfvrsn=2.
- Betsky, Aaron. (1997) *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.
- Cameron, Catherine M. & John B. Gatewood. (2000). Excursions into the Un-Remembered Past: What People Want from Visits to Historical Sites. *The Public Historian*, Vol. 22, No. 3 pp.107-127.
- Cameron, Fiona. (2007). "Moral Lessons and Reforming Agendas: History Museums, Science Museums, Contentious Topics and Contemporary Societies." In *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and are Changed*. Editors Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson. New York: Routledge.
- Carson, Cary. (2008). *The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?* California: The University of California Press.
- Chhabra, Deepak. (2010). *Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Coats, Peggy. (1990). Survey of Historic House Museums. *History News*, Vol. 45, No. 1, 26-28.
- Conlan, Anna. (2010). "Representing Possibility: Mourning, Memorial, and Queer Museology." In *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*. Edited by Amy K. Levin. London: Routledge.

- Davison, Kate. (2011). Agents of Social Change? LGBT Voices in Australian Museums. *The LaTrobe Journal*, No 87, May.
- Dubrow, Gail. (2011). Lavender Landmarks Revisited: Advancing an LGBT Preservation Agenda. In Petra L. Doan, Editor, *Queering Planning: Challenging Heteronormative Assumptions and Reframing Planning Practice* (53-70). London: Routledge.
- Ferentinos, Susan. (2014). *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fitch, James Marston. (1990). *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World*. Virginia: The University of Virginia Press.
- Fraser, John and Joe E. Heimlich. (2008). Where Are We? In George Lakoff & Kris Morrissey (Eds.), *Museums & Social Issues*. 3:1, 5-14.
- Freedom du Lac, J. (2013, January 6). Historic house museums struggling to survive: Drop in visitors is traced in part to poor economy. *Boston Globe*.
- Graham, Ruth. (2014). The great historic house museum debate: Do we have too many? The surprising fight over a quirky, dusty, and endangered American institution. *Boston Globe*.
- Greenslit, Jana. (2014). "The Road to Revealing Queer: An Interview with Curator Erin Bailey, Part II," *the Inluseum Blog*. <http://inluseum.com/2014/03/14/the-road-to-revealing-queer-an-interview-with-curator-erin-bailey-part-ii/>.
- Gurian, Elaine Heumann. (2006). "Civilizing the Museum: The collected writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian," New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Donna. (2007). *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*. California: AltaMira Press.
- Hutson, David J. (2010). Standing OUT/Fitting IN: Identity, Appearance, and Authenticity in Gay and Lesbian Communities. *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 33, Issue 2, 213-233.
- Historic New England. (2016). *About Us*. Retrieved from <http://www.historicnewengland.org/about-us/mission-and-vision>.

- Historic New England. (2016). The History Project. Retrieved from <http://www.historicnewengland.org/events-programs/expired-events/100-years-100-communities/the-history-project>.
- International Sites of Conscience. (2016). *About Us*. <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/about-us/>.
- Jane Addams Hull-House – About the Museum. Retrieved from <http://www.hullhousemuseum.org/about-the-museum/>.
- Johnson, Steve. (2014). In ‘Out at CHM,’ gay history is museum-ready. *Chicago Tribune*, January 20.
- Johnston, Lynda & Gill Valentine. (1995). Wherever I Lay My Girlfriend, That’s My Home: The Performance and Surveillance of Lesbian Identities in Domestic Environments. In David Bell & Gill Valentine (Eds.), *In Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (88-103). London: Routledge.
- Kanawati, Dina. (2006). *Founding or Funding: Are Historic House Museums in Trouble?* The University of Pennsylvania.
- Karkruff, Xander. (2014). *Queer Matters: Transforming the Museum Through Ally Practice*, thesis.
- Katz, Jonathan. (2011). *Hide/Seek: Introduction by co-curator Jonathan Katz*. Video, retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4Qn7mrH_qI.
- Kinsley, Rose Paquet & Alethia Wittman. (2016). Bringing Self-Examination to the Center of Social Justice Work in Museums. *Museum Magazine (The Inluseum)*. January/February 2016.
- Krueger, Richard A. (2002). *Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews*. <http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf>
- Krueger, Richard A. & Mary Anne Casey (2014). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, 5th Edition*. SAGE Publications.
- Kushnick, Hannah L. (2010). In the Closet – A Close Read of the Metaphor. *AMA Journal of Ethics (Formerly Virtual Mentor)*, Vol. 12, No. 8, 678-680.

- Laughlin, Shepherd. (2015). *Study: Generation Z and Gender*. The J. Walter Thompson Intelligence.
- Lee, Antoinette J. (1992). *Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments*. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press.
- Lee, Lisa Yun. (2011). *Peering into the Bedroom: Restorative Justice at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum*. The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum, Janet Marstine, ed., Abingdon, Oxon. Routledge.
- Levin, Amy K. (2010). *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums: A Routledge Reader*. London: Routledge.
- LGBTQ Working Group, 2016, Victoria and Albert Museum website, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/l/lgbtq-working-group/>.
- Liddiard, Mark. (2004). *Changing Histories: Museums, Sexuality and the Future of the Past*. University of Kent, Museum and Society, March 2004, 2 (1).
- Lopez, Lisa Junkin. (2015). Introduction, "Open House: Reimagining the Historic House Museum." *The Public Historian*, Vol. 37. No. 2, pp. 10-13.
- Lowe, Hilary Iris. (2015). Dwelling in Possibility: Revisiting Narrative in the Historic House Museum. *The Public Historian*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 42-60.
- Mack, Natasha, Cynthia Woodson, Kathleen M. MacQueen, Greg Guest, & Emily Namey. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*. Family Health International.
- Marech, Rona. (2014). *Untold Stories*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/957-untold-stories>.
- Merriam, Sharan B. & Elizabeth J. Tisdell. (2015). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation, Fourth Edition*. California: Wiley Brand.
- Morrissey, Kris (2014). *Advocacy and Social Change*. A University of Washington Museology Graduate Program course.

- Museum of History and Industry. (2014). *MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer*. Retrieved from <http://www.mohai.org/press-media/press-releases/item/2636-mohai-explores-lgbtq-history-in-locally-developed-exhibit-revealing-queer>.
- Museum Matters, Museum Purpose, Cooperstown Graduate Program Blog, September 14, 2010. <https://cgpmuseummatters.wordpress.com/2010/09/14/museum-purpose/>.
- Newburyport Guide and Cape Ann Guide. (2014). *Summer Time Special and Events in August*. Retrieved from <http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Summer-Specials-and-Events-in-August.html?soid=1104628606995&aid=3Jvsrxidm1Q>.
- Nguyen, Vu Tuan. (2013). *Queer Museology: A Theory and Practice of Collaborating with Queer Communities in Australian Museums*. (Dissertation). University of Sydney.
- Olivo, Sarah. (2015). *Rocking the Boat: Exhibition Methods of Storytelling the Experience of Gender & Sexuality in Museums*, University of Washington, Museology Thesis
- Oram, Alison. (2011). *Going on an outing: the historic house and queer public history*. *Rethinking History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 189-207.
- Orr, Susan R. (2010) *Historic House Museum Sustainability in the 21st Century: Paths to Preservation*. New Jersey: The Graduate College of Seton Hall University.
- Pauli Murray Project. Retrieved from <http://paulimurrayproject.org>.
- Pharaon, Sarah. (2016) *Immersive Dialogue Weekend Training Session*, MUS 588: Let's Talk Dialogue at the University of Washington.
- Pharaon, Sarah, Sally Roesch Wagner, Barbara Lau, & Maria Jose Bolana Caballero. (2015). *Safe Containers for Dangerous Memories*. *The Public Historian*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 61-72.
- Prologue. (2010). Retrieved from <http://npg.si.edu/exhibit/hideseek/>.
- Queering the Museum Project. (2014, January 16). *Revealing Queer opens February 14th*! Retrieved from <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2014/01/>.
- Raker, Andrew. (2013). *Visitors Aren't Allowed Inside Closets: The Mislabeling and Hiding of LGBT People in Museums*.

- Reid, Debra A. (2002). Making Gender Matter: Interpreting Male and Female Roles in Historic House Museums. Jessica Foy Donnelly (ed.), *Interpreting Historic House Museums* (81-110). Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Robert, Nicole. (2009). *Invisible Artifacts: LGBT Inclusion in Seattle History Museums*, University of Washington, Museology Master's Thesis.
- Sandell, Richard. (2007). *Museums, Prejudice, and the Reframing of Difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Sandell, Richard & Eithne Nightingale (Eds.). (2012). *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Seidman, Steven, Chet Meeks, & Francie Traschen. (1999). "Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the United States." *Sexualities, Vol 2(1): 9-34*.
- Sisson, Patrick. (2015). The U.S. LGBTQ History Sites That We Should Preserve. Curbed. <http://curbed.com/archives/2015/06/26/lgbt-preservation-gay-rights-rainbow-heritage-history.php>.
- Sorin, Gretchen. (2016). *Museum Studies Programs & Tools for Creating More Inclusive Curricula*. Center for the Future of Museums.
- Steinhauer, Jillian. (2011). What Has Hide/Seek Lost? A Review. *Hyperallergic*. Retrieved from <http://hyperallergic.com/16351/what-has-hideseek-lost/>.
- Torrenti, Kelsie (2014). *Chasing Authenticity: Re-Examining the Authentic Experience in Historic House Museums* (Thesis). Retrieved from George Washington Columbian College of Arts & Sciences.
- Tseliou, Maria-Anna. (2013). *Museums and Heteronormativity: Exploring the Effects of Inclusive Interpretive Strategies* (Doctoral Thesis). University of Leicester.
- Turner, William B. (2000). *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Vagnone, Franklin D., & Ryan, Deborah E. (2015). *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*. Left Coast Press.

- Vagnone, Franklin, Deborah Ryan, & Olivia Cothre. (2015). The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums: Evaluation Methodology for Historic House Museums. *The Public Historian*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 97-111.
- Vanegas, Angela. (2010). "Representing Lesbians and Gay Men in British Social History Museums." In *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*. Edited by Amy K. Levin. London: Routledge.
- Vo, Dan. (2015). Why the V&A Gay and Lesbian Tour is Essential, Blog post, April 23, 2015. Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/va-faces/why-the-va-gay-and-lesbian-tour-is-essential>.
- Weil, Stephen E. (1999) "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum." *Daedalus*, Vol. 128, No. 3, America's Museums: 229-258.
- West, Patricia. (1999). *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Wood, Elizabeth. (2009). "Rules for the (R)evolution of Museums." In *Inspiring Action: Museums and Social Change*, edited by Carol Brown, Elizabeth Wood, and Gabriela Salgado. London: MuseumsEtc.
- Zupan, Michelle. (2015). "The SCARY Truth Facing Historic Houses," AASLH Blog, <http://blogs.aaslh.org/the-scary-truth-facing-historic-houses/>.

(Page intentionally left blank)

Appendix

Item I: Interview Protocol for Group Discussion

Dismantling the Collective Closet: How Historic House Museums Attempt to Disrupt the Heteronormativity Within the Museum Field

Researcher: Joshua Buckner // Email: [REDACTED]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey, Museology Graduate Program, University of Washington

Phone: [REDACTED] // Email: [REDACTED]

Interview Guide for Group Discussion:

Thank you all for taking the time to speak with me today. You all come from various backgrounds in the museum field and LGBTQ community organizations; therefore, you all bring in specific expertise when it comes to cultural institutions and social advocacy. Because you all come from such diverse backgrounds and have valued opinions to add to our conversation, I want to encourage all opinions even if they are not in agreement with the group. Let's get started.

- 1) Could we go around the group and have each of you share your brief reactions to the house museum?
- 2) What would you say is the focus of this house museum?

Now I would like to talk about the section of the exhibit that discusses queer connections to the institution.

- 3) In your opinion does this connection address social change and advocacy? In what way(s)?
- 4) How do you feel about institutions, like museums, engaging in conversations that address social change and advocacy?
- 5) What would be your advice for museums who are considering engaging in conversations addressing social change and advocacy?

Any final remarks? Great. Thank you all for joining me today and setting aside time to have this conversation with me for my research. If you have any further questions regarding today's discussion or the research, please do not hesitate to contact my thesis chair or me. Our contact information is listed on the consent form that I emailed you all earlier.

Item II: Interview Protocol for Staff Interviews***Dismantling the Collective Closet: How Historic House Museums Attempt to Disrupt the Heteronormativity Within the Museum Field***

Researcher: Joshua Buckner // Email: [REDACTED]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey, Museology Graduate Program, University of Washington

Phone: [REDACTED] // Email: [REDACTED]

Interview Guide for Staff Interviews:

Thank you for taking the time to sit down with me to talk about your institution today. I would just like to start off discussing the background of your institution and your role within this institution. I wanted to speak with your institution because you are one of the few historic house museums who have a queer connection to the house and are engaging in some form of dialogue around this fact.

- 1) Can you tell me a little bit of background on [insert house museum's name] and what the museum is known for in the community?
- 2) Can you tell me about the conversations that took place around the decision to share the queer story that is represented here?
- 3) In your opinion, what was the most difficult decision to make about incorporating the queer story line?
- 4) In your opinion, did incorporating this story cause new conversations to be had in the museum?
- 5) In what way, big or small, is the museum different now that you have incorporated this story?

Do you have any final remarks? Thank you for joining me today and setting aside time to have this conversation with me for my research. If you have any further questions regarding today's discussion or the research, please do not hesitate to contact my thesis chair or me. Our contact information is listed on the consent form that I emailed you earlier.

Item III: Group Discussion Consent Form

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Joshua Buckner // [redacted] // [redacted]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey // [redacted] // [redacted]

I am asking you to participate in a group discussion that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe ways historic house museums are engaging in a queer dialogue in their exhibitions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This focus group will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and the name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this card. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this group discussion?

Printed name of participant

Signature of participant

On card or document left with group discussion participants:

Dismantling the Collective Closet: How Historic House Museums Attempt to Disrupt the Heteronormativity Within the Museum Field

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Joshua Buckner // [redacted] // [redacted]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey // [redacted] // [redacted]

Item IV: Staff Interview Consent Form

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Joshua Buckner // [redacted] // [redacted]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey // [redacted] // [redacted]

I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe ways historic house museums are engaging in a queer dialogue in their exhibitions and how this role may disrupt the heteronormativity found within the museum field. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and the name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this card. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Printed name of participant

Signature of participant

On card or document left with interviewees:

Dismantling the Collective Closet: How Historic House Museums Attempt to Disrupt the Heteronormativity Within the Museum Field

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Joshua Buckner // [redacted] // [redacted]

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kris Morrissey // [redacted] // [redacted]

Item V: Coding Rubric

<i>Context Frames</i>	<i>Definitions / Questions</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p>Social Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social change - Social issues - Inclusion - Authenticity - Transparency 	<p>Why or how museums should or could or have power in changing societal opinions, conversations.</p> <p>The role social issues, advocacy, and change can play in museums.</p> <p>Discussing topics that are not typically traditionally discussed in a museum setting.</p>	<p>“The more awareness people have about [intersectionality], the more they will understand themselves...we want the world to be that more integrated body, mind, and spirit.” (Lau)</p> <hr/> <p>“You activate and get people within the institution who don’t see themselves as necessarily affected by LGBT issues or identity to think of themselves as allies...” (Brier)</p> <hr/> <p>“...conversation with a group about what it would have been like to be gay in the early 20th century...talking about the role of homosexuality and collecting and memory.” (Van Koevering)</p> <hr/> <p>“I feel like it’s important if we’re going to talk about equality, then that’s how in the true definition treat everyone the same way.” (Slinkard)</p>
<p>Terminology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Words - Phrases - Concepts 	<p>Why or how museums should or could use words to describe people in the queer community today versus the words used in the past.</p> <p>Why or how people make assumptions about someone’s sexuality.</p> <p>Finding ways to describe someone’s sexuality, while being authentic, transparent, and respectful.</p>	<p>“...instead of saying we assume, people apply these phrases, ‘he was married to his work,’ ‘he had his ladies,’ ‘lifelong bachelor.’” (Slinkard)</p> <hr/> <p>“It’s interesting, because you’re talking about not only gender identity, but also a cultural difference between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some people look at letters and say ‘he must have been gay’ and others look at letters and say ‘well that’s the way friends talked to each other in letters.’” (Swanton)</p> <hr/> <p>“You don’t want to be saying ‘well because this person was a bachelor and they were very eccentric and they did all these interesting and strange things, he must be gay.” (Swanton)</p>

<p>Evidence / Proof</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation - Verbal - Physical - Process 	<p>Having something that is concrete proof that this individual was queer</p> <p>If we don't have that proof can we still talk about it?</p> <p>Who are we to say this is enough proof?</p>	<p>"You have to be very careful that you're not making assumptions...and placing them on someone you don't even know."</p> <p>"I don't question for myself, about this identity, they had a bank account together, they had a car together, they had a dog. These are things that couples do."</p> <p>"Until we had the oral history, it wasn't something we felt confident enough to include in the interpretation."</p>
<p>Collaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community - Public - Taking chances 	<p>Examples of museums and non-museums working together to support the needs / demands of a community.</p> <p>Brainstorming ideas with various members of the community to create collaborative concepts.</p> <p>What would this look like?</p> <p>Is there a point?</p>	<p>"...at first there were lots of different ways that non-museum and non-historian folks were involved in the process..."</p> <p>"When I plan programs now I'm definitely aware and always looking for what other museums might be doing and different ideas."</p> <p>"...looking towards community members to bring in content to display."</p>
<p>Interpretation / Representation of queer stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exhibitions - Tours - Programming 	<p>What does this look like in these historic house museums?</p> <p>How are they interpreting this history?</p> <p>Reactions?</p>	<p>"I think [identity]'s a really interesting way to think about how we interpret the lives of people both in their public lives or in their private spheres...makes it really interesting."</p> <p>"One area that we have been able to expand a little bit is programming related to sexuality in the LGBTQ community."</p> <p>"The most important part is figuring out how you get house museums, which by definition are about these 'private spaces' but are made public, almost by definition they're queer spaces."</p>

<p>Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the museum field - Of the queer community - The voices of the unrepresented are becoming present 	<p>How can this study help museums when attempting to engage in queer dialogues?</p> <p>What would be the outcomes if we were not to have these conversations?</p>	<p>“Starting and knowing that something small can happen... would still be meaningful... there is a way that this could be about a kind of fusion of something meaningful and useful...”</p> <hr/> <p>“Part of it is again, we don’t know what we don’t know... we don’t see that being lost in the landscape unless we’re looking for it.”</p> <hr/> <p>“What stays with me from places I go, are things that somehow engage with me or touch me in ways that are obviously more personal.”</p>
<p>Disrupting the heteronormativity within the museum field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing the conversation - Broadening the views of others - Connecting the past to the present 	<p>Why or how these historic house museums changing the museum field.</p> <p>What makes them different, stand out, and gravitate towards this change.</p>	<p>“I want them to know how to ask questions that will help them understand the history of anything.”</p> <hr/> <p>“If the people who make it all happen actually authentically represent the world, then the art that’s being created is going to more authentically represent the world, everyone should do that, all the museums should do that.”</p> <hr/> <p>“It’s all about opening up possibilities and seeing what kinds of contribution people have made... [see] where the gaps are, where your new knowledge can be built. It’s all about that.”</p>

Keywords: historic house museums, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, narrative, dialogue, museum, heteronormativity, engagement, community, representation, authenticity, interpretation, social change, exhibition, programming, education, agents of social change, advocacy

Item VI: Photograph of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

Courtesy of Fair Immigration Reform Movement



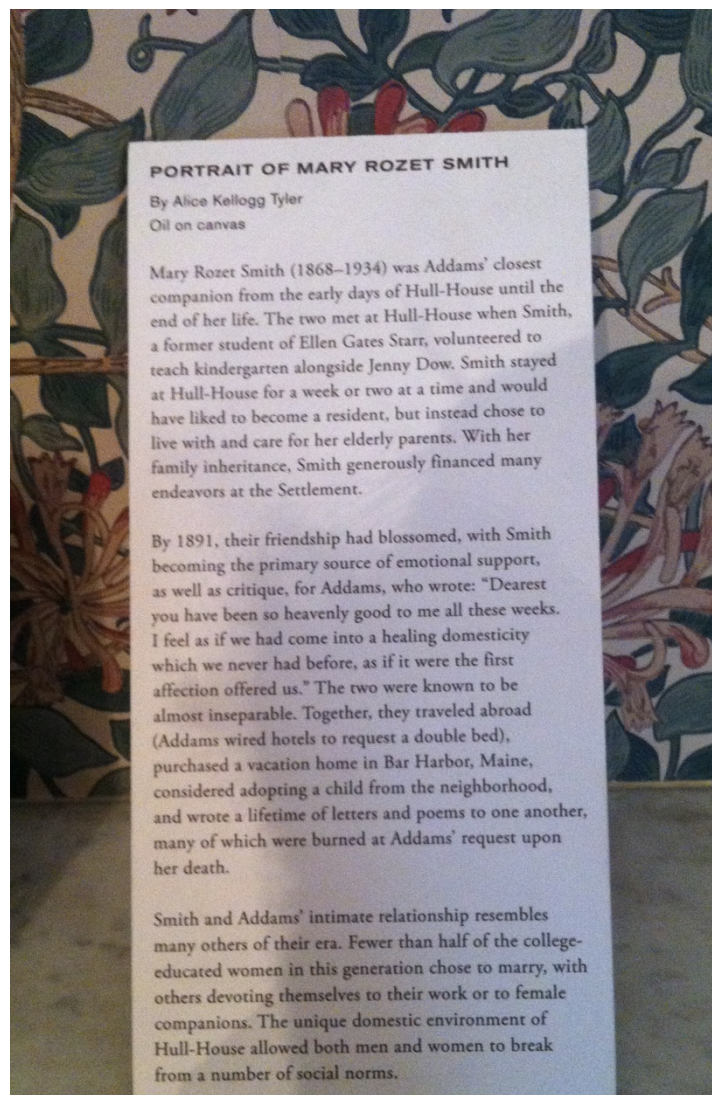


Item VII: Photograph of Jane Addams' bedroom. You can see the large painting of Mary Rozet-Smith and how it demands your attention when you enter the room.

Photo taken by researcher.

Item VIII: Photograph of the final collaborative label explaining the relationship Addams and Rozet-Smith had with one another. The label is placed on top of the mantel underneath Rozet-Smith's painting.

Photo taken by researcher.





Item IX: Photograph of Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House

Courtesy of Historic New England



Item X: Photograph of Henry Davis Sleeper.

Courtesy of Historic New England



Item XI: Photograph of the home childhood home of Pauli Murray

Courtesy of Barbara Lau

Item XII: Photograph of 1 of 5 murals in downtown Durham, NC depicting Pauli Murray.

Photo taken by researcher.

