Getting the collection back on the streets;

A walking tour of digital content

Megan MacGregor, Instruction and Outreach Librarian, University of Southern Maine
megan.mac@maine.edu
USM’s Special Collections
The Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine’s LGBTQ+ Collection

Covers late 1960s - current

Digitized:
15 collections
- Photographs
- TShirts
- Newspapers & Newsletters
- Oral Histories
- Videos
- Podcast

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- Guides:
  - Interviews & Transcripts
  - Brochures & Pamphlets
  - Posters
  - Concert Programs
  - Exhibition Materials

- Exhibitions:
  - Current Exhibitions
  - Past Exhibitions

- Events:
  - Upcoming Events
  - Past Events

- Digital Resources:
  - Database Search
  - Image Viewer
  - Video Player

- Contact:
  - Library Contact Information
  - Center for Diversity Support
Connect with the community.

Define their roles in the project.

Listen to them.
Tell a story

Rise and fall of queer bars in Portland, ME.
Flask
(Spring Street)
(Somewhere Else)
(Somewhere Over the Rainbow)
The Chart Room
(Entre Nous)
(Spring Street Gym)

Blackstones
30 years
1968-1980
Twilight World
Stonewall
Early movement

1982-1991
HIV/AIDS & Hate Crimes
Increased visibility
Equality Acts

1994-2005
Bars in Queer Culture
Transgender Rights Movement

1987-present
Where we are now
“So you’d walk in and there’d be a long bar, with many people drinking and partying and smoking, there was a big haze of smoke. Then you’d turn to the right and there’d be a big huge room...for dancing. And there’d be tables. ...uh...I believe that it was because when the lights came on in the back room, you had to stop dancing immediately, and you had to put the tables together immediately, and sit down. Because that meant the police were coming in.”

Penny Rich, Querying the Past: LGBTQ Maine Oral History Project Collection, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ Collection, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.
Risen from the Ashes: The Phoenix Opens in Portland

There was a time when the bars were important to me, when the whimsical attention of the bar crowd seemed to me to constitute an important recognition of my own existence, and I took comfort in the dinginess and friendliness of Roland's Tavern. I am sure that my face is a familiar one in Portland bars even though I don't go to bars in Portland very frequently any more. But recently a few good friends persuaded me that it was about time to check out the Phoenix--Roland's new bar, risen from the ashes of fire and and old church, on Oak Street, just off Congress.

The Phoenix is a most pleasant surprise. This is not your sleazy clandestine Gay bar tucked away among the warehouses and the docks. Remember those? Some of you? This is not your sleazy defensive bar, either--announcing with a chip-on-the-Gay-shoulder, "Look we exist, too." Times have changed. Gay is good. Gay is upfront. Gay women and men want a place to go that doesn't offend the aesthetic sense at every jog in the walls. With the coming of the Phoenix, Portland's Gay people have a classy, tastefully decorated place to meet and party in. There's a restaurant downstairs. Then it's a disco for dancing. There's a room with a real bar separated by a real wall from the room where the music blasts, a room where conversation at a few decibels below a bellow can take place. There's an upstairs room with pinball machines and pool tables overlooking the dance floors. And it's all carpeted except for the dancing area--red carpet that squishes under your sneakers or hip boots. Big staircases. Nice plants. Coat check room. Cover charge on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Even urinals in the men's room.
Thanks for coming on the Big Queer Historical Bar Tour! This tour would not have been possible without Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine’s LGBTQ+ Collection at USM. The collection is housed at our Portland Campus in Glickman Library. You can explore the collection yourself at: https://usm.maine.edu/library/specialcollections/lgbt-collection

Some of the collections in the LGBTQ+ Collection were born digital (Querying the Past) or have been digitized (LGBTQ+ newspapers). They can be found at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/lgbt/

Please let us know what you thought (good or bad) about the tour so we can improve it! https://forms.gle/KkFKZPp4DMhywa5g6

If you have any materials (photos, shirts, letters, etc) please consider donating them to the LGBTQ+ Collection by contacting:

Susie Bock
(she/hers)
susie.bock@maine.edu
207-780-4269

If you would like to share your memories, consider being interviewed for the Querying the Past: LGBTQ Maine Oral History Project by contacting:

Dr. Wendy Chapkis
(she/hers)
chapkis@maine.edu
USM’s LGBTQ+ Collection presents...

Big Queer Historical Bar Tour on ZOOM

A Zoom tour of Portland’s LGBTQ+ bars past and present.

Wed. June 22
5:30-7:00pm

$10 per person
Advanced Registration Required at:
https://tinyurl.com/48zrpheb
LGBTQ+ Collection on Digital Commons, https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/lgbt/


Blackstones ad, n/a, n/a, "The Pride Reporter, Special Issue (July 2000)" (2000). Pride Reporter. 2. https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/pride_reporter/2

Picture of exterior of Roland’s Tavern, Our paper Dec 1983 Page 9 Remembering Roland’s https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=our_paper_sac
Questions