

invisible Histories Project

Mission Statement

The Invisible Histories Project locates, preserves, researches, and makes community accessible the rich and diverse history of LGBTQ life in the US South. Currently, IHP collects in Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. IHP acts as an intermediary between the Queer community and various institutions like universities, museums, archives, and libraries in order to save Southern LGBTQ histories.

Who We Are

The Invisible Histories Project is 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Co-founders, Joshua Burford (Director of Outreach & Lead Archivist) and Maigen Sullivan (Director of Research & Development), began working on the concept in late 2015. 501(c)3 status was obtained in October 2016 and the project officially launched and began collecting in February 2018. Both Burford and Sullivan were working on the project full time by September 2018.

In the first year of operations, IHP located 18 new LGBTQ collections in Alabama; identified 3 repository archive partners; helped develop 3 undergraduate courses at 2 state universities; organized and held the inaugural Queer History South Conference of 115 archivists, historians, students, faculty & staff; mentored 4 undergraduate and graduate interns/scholars; and received an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to expand their work into Mississippi and Georgia.

In addition to preserving the rich history of LGBTQ Southerners, the project's goals are to:

1. Create opportunities for intergenerational connection with Queer & Trans people in the South,
2. Create research opportunities for students, faculty, and community members in archives, research and preservation,
3. Provide a network for LGBTQ historians and archivists through the South through the Queer History South network and conference,
4. Work with universities, libraries, museums, and archives to create collection and preservation partnerships throughout the South, and
5. Establish a community based, centrally located space to display these histories and act as a space for community dialogue around Queer history.

What We Do

IHP focuses on four key elements related to advancing LGBTQ Southern History:

- Community Engagement
- Archiving, Preservation, Research & Scholarship
- Education
- Professional Development & Best Practices

IHP acts as an intermediary between institutions and organizations and everyday folks. We strive to break barriers between organizations and their local communities to ensure that preservation and research exist in a co-productive and relationship centered way. In addition to direct collection and preservation, IHP is invested in providing scholars with direct access to materials as well as creating a network of people conducting LGBTQ Southern archiving, preservation, education and research to make scholarship more accessible. We focus on providing education around the Queer South to those within and outside the region through speaking, exhibiting, online materials, and publications. Finally, IHP seeks to help develop a new generation of scholars working in the Queer South as well as work alongside other professionals in the field to develop best practices for this work.

Contact Us

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