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SPEAKERS

Vince Lee, Larry Criscione

V

Vince Lee 00:04

All right. Today is Wednesday, June 9 2021. My name is Vince Lee, and I'm the archivist with the University of Houston libraries Special Collections. curator for the our LGBT history research collections. I'm pleased to be joined by Larry Criscione of the box collection for LGBT history, Inc. And Larry, thanks for joining me today. And you know, being part of our chat and discussion for the collaborative exhibit that were we you myself and other partners of Archer putting together for at the Cushing Library at Texas A&M University. I guess to start with for our audience, I know you, you know me, but they may not know us. Could you tell them what the Botts Collection for LGBT History is for someone who's hearing about it for the first time.

L

Larry Criscione 01:07

Okay, it is a collection. And that's exactly what it is. It is a very miscellaneous collection, I don't exclude anything that's LGBTQ or allies of it. So there are heterosexual items in there too, especially if those people are among, you know, what the community calls allies. So it's got books, magazines, newspapers, clippings, photographs, and a pretty good collection of ephemera. So, and it is just a collection housed in its own location. And it's open for research. And there's been some volunteers along the way that have organized it as best as a non-librarian and non-archivists can do.

V

Vince Lee 02:10

And what's been your role in history with the Botts Collection? Can you talk a little bit about that? Your history?

L

Larry Criscione 02:19

Yeah, I was going to Resurrection Metropolitan Church here in Houston. It's the number one LGBT church in the city. And they have a collection there started by Charles Botts, and he

passed away. And they asked for volunteers, because the man did so much work that they thought it would take five or 10 of us to do it. And I volunteered, and most of the people never showed up other than the first meeting. And so I one by one, I wound up being in charge of it, I got a couple of volunteers to help me and they stayed with me. And then then the church was located decided they no longer wanted to house it. So we created the LGBT collection legal with the state of Texas and the IRS and look for a place we found one. And we immediately began collecting new materials. And it was just coming in by the box load of materials. And like I've previously said, no limit on what the stuff for the stuff covered local, state, national and even international if it was mixed in so that when we formed, due to the IRS rules, you have to have officers. So we added a board. So we did all of that. And so I'm the one that's kind of done the exhibits been the contact to meet people when they bring, you know, give stuff to us either bring it to us, or I go and get it. So that's, that's my role. And then to help researchers when they come in, too.

V

Vince Lee 03:55

Okay, so you're, you're the archivist and curator for the collection is I would imagine, you know, very much a lot of the collections since they came in. Since they were --

L

Larry Criscione 04:07

Yes, that's been one because one of the things that's been been the greatest thing about it is because when you collect the stuff and you meet the people, you know a lot more about the community. I mean, I know things that I never would have dreamed up existed even even even though I'm part of the community, there's so many different segments of it that are under the radar of most people. And then I also learned a lot from the researchers when they come in and you know, looking for stuff that they that they want for their whatever, you know, research they're doing. You have to see the stuff so it just gets absorbed. I try to learn new things. So that and I also do exhibits off site. I've done over 100 of them, and then talking to the people when they ask questions where you have to think of the answer, and so that that helps you learn more and more about it because I didn't experience a lot of this stuff. But I know a lot more, you know, and it's because of working with the archives that I know, some of the stuff that I know, I didn't live it.

V

Vince Lee 05:14

Right. And as an archivist, I learned that's how I learned about collections and materials and donors and the community as well, just through working with the materials. You mentioned researchers that come and use the materials for projects or maybe a story. How do researchers or the media get in touch with you is that you have a contact information? And is that or does that and or word of mouth?

L

Larry Criscione 05:43

Now, what are the things that limits us, I'm not very computer literate. And Leif knows, some knows more than I do. He's our other volunteer Leif Hatlen. But he's still doesn't know enough, we did a website. But we couldn't figure out how to put our material up, bought it, we got one

WE DID A WEBSITE, BUT WE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO PUT OUR MATERIAL UP, SO AGAIN, WE GOT ONE picture on it. And we couldn't figure out how to do anymore. So our website was virtually useless. And we just never really had the money to like, hire somebody to teach us. So the the main way of contact is people, it was listed on the as being there at the church's website, so people can look it up and find out about it that way. Also, as some local people found out about it, through ARCH, mostly they knew how to contact us university professors were sending their students over to do research that knew about us. But of course, none of them knew what was really there. They never really fully understood just the extent of the collection. I mean, you've seen it, it's, it's hundreds upon hundreds and hundreds of boxes -- 1000 to 2000 linear feet of material altogether. And so but now, the more recently, we've been getting most of people that have been coming have been through JD Doyle's websites, he's got our name, and our number listed, the stuff that he has on his site that we loaned him so that he could scan it in to put on his website, our name and our numbers, they're so all over the country, they've been newspaper, writers, reporters, movie makers, and students and professors are contacting us to use the material and through him. Also, we're getting references from the U of H, because the U of H, you know, does not have the complete box collection yet. So sometimes people have been coming over. So those have been our two main sources reference from the U of H and JD Doyle.

V

Vince Lee 08:00

Great, and we're happy to be kind of that conduit and I'm sure JD's website gets a lot of traffic as well, because I know that he, the Library of Congress made him like one of the LGBT portals or sites that they're directing traffic to. So yeah, we definitely get a lot of traffic and --

L

Larry Criscione 08:20

-- It's an excellent sites. And it does get found out about, you know, all over the country, and even people in London have contacted us. So London, England, so you know, it's, it gets -- yeah.

V

Vince Lee 08:41

And you mentioned earlier, you collect all sorts of materials. And you gave a great overview on that. And you said that a lot you in the beginning, and I'm sure continuously you're getting a lot of materials and donations. Were these like drop offs, is this something that they would contact you out or leave at the church or --

L

Larry Criscione 09:03

When it was at the church, they would contact the church, sometimes the communication wasn't good there because they're only there one day a week and you know, I had a box in the office of the church, they put it in, well, if I was only in there one day, a week, you know, their stuff would wait for a week. Every once awhile, somebody would drop it off, and they'd put it at our door I would arrive and the stuff would be at the door, you know, the archive door. But more recently, people will call us and I'll go and pick it up at their home. Because our our location now is locked, so people can't drop it off.

L

Larry Criscione 09:45

And I'm going back a little bit in history. I know that in I think it was 2013, 2014. You and some board members that the Botts Collection reached out to us at UH Libraries and Special Collections about potentially being the home for your archives. And obviously, we're very flattered and happy that you are like one of the first pillars to be part of our LGBT History Collections. But can you share a little bit about that decision and the thinking and why you all chose UH Libraries, out of all the other academic or institutional archives in the area?

L

Larry Criscione 10:28

Yeah, the University of Houston, had added an archivist, his name was Dick Dickerson. And he wanted the collection. At the time, the LGBT material was under the Woman's Collection at the U of H. And he wanted it but we kind of had a disagreement on I misunderstood what his direction was in what he wanted, what he didn't want. So I was reluctant. I went over to Rice University. And as most of the universities and archives know money is limited, work is limited. And Rice University at the Woodson -- the guy in head a head of the what what is it Woodson collection? Or wood something or

V

Vince Lee 11:18

Woodson Research Collection?

L

Larry Criscione 11:20

Yeah, well that the guy there that was head of that told me he would take our collection. Well, let me start start over one part Leif and I are old men. And I've been looking for 20 years to try to find some young person or persons 25 - 30 to 40 - 45 to take over our place to keep the collection going and to keep it intact, have not been able to find anybody. And it has to be somebody willing to commit to a you know, 5, 10, 15 time period, your time, time time period. I mean, come up for a year, two years here, that's just not enough. I couldn't find anybody. Well at the Woodson Collection, the man told me, we would take the whole collection. But if you how much money do you have? And I said, maybe \$300, he laughed, which that's a laughable amount of money. But he said it's gonna sit there until till we get grants. Well, that wasn't that wasn't satisfactory. So he said, We're gonna keep going and struggle as it is to pay the rent and all of that. And then the deal at U of H approach -- approached us actually, y'all came to us and said, We're going to start an independent LGBT collection here. And we want your materials. So we sat down and had a big meeting with the dean and different people there. And then three members of our board, there were about 20 people there, and at a really good session. And after that, we agreed to - that we would turn it over slow gradually, because we wanted it to you know, this, we want it to be well indexed, well separated, and just not a lot. Because a lot of material when it comes in, you get 50 boxes at one time. It's mixed material, and you want to kind of separate it and then indexed so that it can be used by researchers. So I consider us an adjunct of the U of H is how I tell people, you know, it's it's independent, but it's not independent. So we're slowly turning it over you and the U of H has now gotten probably three

quarters of the material. But one of the things that I was not expecting was to get an additional two- three- four- hundred more feet of material in the last four or five years, you know, we thought we thought we would what we had was it but it just suddenly came in in a flood. So that slowed the process down.

V

Vince Lee 13:50

And sometimes that's how the community works. It's like --

L

Larry Criscione 13:53

Yeah--

V

Vince Lee 13:54

Want to slow it down.

L

Larry Criscione 13:55

I mean--

V

Vince Lee 13:56

Coming in, so and we're great.

L

Larry Criscione 13:57

I mean, it's good. I mean, you know, there's lots of material still out there. You know, there's 1000s of feet of material people have in their attics in the garages.

V

Vince Lee 14:07

We feel like an adjunct of you all, as long as you're around, we feel like we're being custodians of the materials. We're processing and organizing it. But things that we don't have. We love to send researchers and media and folks that are looking for certain things that you all still have your way because I know that there's photographs and things that they're still need for documentaries and things like that. So I think it's been a great relationship since I've known you and since you know, we've been aboard together since 2013, 2014.

L

Larry Criscione 14:40

There was also one thing that I was worried about. And I mean, I agonized over it. I was worried

about possible censorship, and get into the political powers that run the state of Texas. Especially you know you get on the sensitive adult material, you just have to recognize the LGBT community. There's a lot of people interested in adult material. You know, and so I was worried about that material being safe in a state of Texas institution, or one that has to obey the laws of the state of Texas, but I've been assured by you and the other people at U of H that that was no problem. And once I settled that issue, and then knowing we could, we would not survive without some younger blood to take it over, it was a done deal. And I've also been telling lots of other people that I know have material that U of H is a safe place to put the stuff. And same way with Texas A&M, who ever would have thought that Texas A&M would become a leading LGBT archive.

V

Vince Lee 15:57

And I think credit goes to our dean, you know, Dean Rooks, Dean German, and then our new dean, they're committed, Dean Jackson, they're all committed to making sure that none of this gets censored. And it's available. Because that's what we are as a research institution, an academic institution, it's the information, whatever the content should be, it should be available to everyone, the community and their students, because that's what they that this is the kind of information that they need to do their projects and their papers. That's what we're there for is to support that research. We're not there to censor or control access of information, even though it may offend some folks, that's what archives is about, as you know, representing all sides of the story. So my other question for you, Larry, is what have you learned from your experiences of being the curator for the Botts Collection? What's been your method of inventory and organizing your materials? I know, you've given me many the tour and shown me kind of your your system and set up. Could you explain to the audience how you and Leif have kind of gone about organizing and kind of processing and inventorying things?

L

Larry Criscione 17:19

Well, one of the things is when I first joined the Bott's archive that was that was at the church, the it was a lending library and had 1000s upon 1000s of books. And they weren't shelved correctly on -- because it was a lending library. And so I was organizing the books, and there was a guy that had donated some stuff. And he wan-- he was leaving the state. And he wanted to see the stuff that he had given, you know, nostalgically. And so I went through some of the archive boxes with him, couldn't find the stuff. We looked for five hours, the next week, we look for another five hours. And of course, he was angry. The next time, another three or four hours, we found the materials. And so I realized that the church was sitting on a treasure of LGBT history. But it needed to be better organized. And conservation work needed to be done and it needed to be stored better. And all that. So then I started working on it, but I didn't know how to do it. But I mean, I knew books, but I didn't know LGBT history. And we had the flood in 2001, a lot of the material was was ruined, did manage to save and dry out some of it. But it's still you know, the newspaper articles are kind of crinkled and things like that. Then, then a friend got talked, told Leif Hatlen about it, Leif Hatlen showed up. He's an oil engineer. And he set to work organizing those clippings in a method I never would have thought of, and he got those clippings organized. And I estimate it was maybe a million magazine and newspaper clippings. I mean, it was boxes and boxes and boxes of 'em. Well, within a year's time he had three quarters of 'em organized and in file folders and indexed into the computer. And they were instantly usable. So they could come in and say do you have a particular thing? And I said,

yeah, let me look it up in the computer and see where it is. And I can have the box or that file folders sitting in front of him within four or five minutes. It would have been it would have taken three months to find that stuff. So that the organization he really helped and stayed - he has been with me for over 20 years. And so we got it really pretty organized and it's in the computer, and it really helped the researchers a lot.

V

Vince Lee 20:01

Was the flood in 2001? Was that from Hurricane Allison? I'm just trying to remember --

L

Larry Criscione 20:05

Yeah, yeah, Tropical Storm Allison, the church had just moved in there and they hadn't figured out where to put us. All the boxes of material were stacked six to seven feet high on the floor, 18 inches of water. So every box on the bottom took a bath. Which ruined the books. But the newspapers, I dried with hairdryers and managed to save them some of the clay paper that has that [? coslin ?] clay in it were too badly stuck together. And I had to discard them. But a lot of the papers could be dried out. I mean, some of them they're, you know, they're wrinkled and all that and, and of course, anything written in fountain pen ink was badly blurred. But I've been told under infrared, it will make them visible again. So I save that I save that stuff. And Leif -- Leif helped.

V

Vince Lee 21:06

They, they put that certain pressure on the paper so they can probably under certain light still make out the letters on it.

L

Larry Criscione 21:13

Yeah, because we have there's a lot of paper there that were where people were taking notes during meetings with pen, either ink pen or ballpoint. And so there's a lot of very personal stuff in the collection that I think is as is important or will be important to somebody in the future. And this stuff grows important in importance on a daily basis. You know, this people are increasingly doing research, the LGBT history has been hidden, and more and more of it is coming out. So there's gonna be more research in the future to come that we can't even imagine now.

V

Vince Lee 21:59

What's your --

L

Larry Criscione 22:00

And of course, the exhibits, I've done over 100 exhibits and we've got one coming up at College

Station, you know, next month. So you know, you need the materials organized so you can find the stuff that you might want to display.

V

Vince Lee 22:16

What other venues have your collection being a part of and exhibited at? You'd mentioned the History Tent.

L

Larry Criscione 22:22

The History Tent that the Pride Parade started in 2006. That's been every year except for last year, of course. I've done exhibits for, um, at churches, at schools. I've done exhibits, let's see. I'm trying to think, to my mind was like the British Petroleum Company, their LGBT group, put a display up on the first floor of their three buildings in their glass cases. It was up for a month. I've done exhibits at the Diana Foundation meetings. Let's see. I'm trying to think about what are some of them?

V

Vince Lee 23:15

I you can correct me if I'm wrong wasn't weren't y'all at the Heritage Society too?

L

Larry Criscione 23:21

Yes, we did. Yes. With that one. They did an exhibit we participated in that. I've done exhibits. My mind went blank, I'm sorry, but but there been some. And of course, much of our material I consider it an exhibit, kind of, JD has borrowed hundreds upon hundreds of our pictures and photographs and our magazines and scanned a lot of that stuff in and credit to him for doing it. It's a lot of work. But it puts a lot of our material out to the world.

V

Vince Lee 23:59

Is there a particular collection or items or group of items within the Bott's Collection that you want folks to know more about, or that's a favorite of yours? That that should be discovered?

L

Larry Criscione 24:12

We do have the Larry Butler collection of photographs. That man was active in the church. He was active in the quilt displays in Washington DC. He has pictures of the March on Washington, and was just a very active photographer. His collection that we inherited goes back to the middle 70s and continue up to -- he died in 2003. And I estimate that there's between 15 and 20,000 of those photographs. And so we have that's an important collection. The newspaper articles are an important collection. And one of the most important parts of that is because they we had the Houston Post, the Houston Post articles until relatively recently, they weren't online, and they disagreed with the Houston Chronicle a lot. And so, you might say, Well, I have

Houston Chronicle articles. But when you have the Houston Post articles, it fills in some gaps of the history. So those clippings are important. We have a lot of the publications and organizational papers of different organizations, many of which are gone now that people don't don't even know the young people do not know about the organizations much less know their history, these organizations were very important because they raised a lot of money. They were social organizations, but a lot of them jumped in quickly when when the AIDS crisis came along. And people needed help. And those people raised a lot of money to help them. And so we have a lot of their publications, they were they were important to the to the life and health of the community. So that's some they were glad to have. There's also Charles Botts was avid in collecting fiction, from as far back as the 1880s. And I personally think people don't think of books as being important today. But I like the idea that those first editions have a lot of important writers that were very popular in the 20s -- 1920s 1930s and 1940s, that they're there in the first edition or second printing of them. I also personally collect autographs. And so there there are maybe 200 to 500 autograph books in the collection. And I'm uh you almost name name them from from Isherwood's or Capote to Maupin to James Baldwin, we have books in the collection that were autographed by those people. And I believe the autographs would be authentic.

V

Vince Lee 27:01

And probably inscribed too -- like "to Charles Botts from"

L

Larry Criscione 27:06

The Capote ones are are definitely inscribed. And so you can tell from the way he wrote him, he didn't just sign his name sitting in a book in a bookstore, that they were inscribed, you can tell he knew the people he was given those books to.

V

Vince Lee 27:23

Excellent. What's been the best experience of your time working at the Botts Collection? And what would you say would be what's one of the most challenging things you've had to work with at the Botts Collection? I know, it's a two part question. But --

L

Larry Criscione 27:39

Yeah, it actually would be both the same thing. So it's easy to answer. And that's doing the History Tent. The first two years of the History Tent, it was 50 feet by 25 feet. And I did it. We were the only only archive that was there. And so 20 tables plus the wall, imagine the walls are 25 by 50 feet. I don't know what square footage that would be. But it's a lot. And so to do that I had a couple of friends helping me move it over there and then separating it because I had different tables on different subjects. And it was an air conditioned tent. But with that door open and closed so often and it just been vinyl anyway, the temperature was still be 80 - 85 degrees and and doing it took several hours to put it up, took an hour to take down and stay there all day long. It was physically challenging, but it was a lot of fun. Because people were coming in and just completely fascinated because -- and like we've talked about him and all of

us in the different archives. No, people don't know about this stuff. People would come in and say, Well, I didn't realize anybody was keeping this stuff. I threw it away. Oh, no, you know why? And, you know, they they didn't know there was a place to take it. They also the young people didn't know about a lot of the history. And I can tell you real quick one story. The first year, a couple came in holding hands, which is kind of rare here in Houston, especially in 2006. And they were looking at the stuff and one of them looked up at me and said, "Tell me, did you do this exhibit?" And I said "Do I look like somebody that did this?" And of course I was like what? 55 nearly 60 years old. He was 21 He said yeah, you kind of do so I look like a you know a computer an archive nerd. Right. And and the reason and then his Who was the guy next to him was a year younger. And they were partners, and he was -- he jabbed him real hard in the ribs and he's and and he said what what and the other guy said what what is it look up, look up look up. And they looked up and right behind me just happened to be a poster of one of those white parties and they had gone to it. So that 21 year old asked me, he says why is that in the exhibit it's not history. And I looked at him and I made getting emotional telling this story. I looked at and said, How old are you? Oh, I'm 20. He's 21. I said, You're lovers, right? And he said, Yeah. Do you really love each other? Well, yes, we do. I said, one of these days. I said, Did you have a nice time at the party? Yes. And I said, well, then it's a beautiful poster. And it was. And I said, said one of these days, 20 years from now, 40 years from now, I hope you're still together, more in love, then than you are now you're gonna come to an exhibit. And you're gonna see that same poster, because some packrat saved it. That's why it's important. It's your history. And that was a thrilling moment for me. And doing the exhibit, because, you know, we've been keeping count of in the last couple of years, and I was telling people, I think 2000, 3000 people been coming through the tent, people laughed at me. And they were saying, 500, 700. No, it's much higher than that. Well since we've been doing the count, it's been running between 3000 and 4000 people, that's a lot of people, and some of them one spent 10 minutes in the tent, but some of them must spend an hour to two hours in the tent, looking through the material. That's been the most exciting part.

L

Larry Criscione 31:24

And talking with you about it, too, and I'm sure some of them became researchers or visitors to the Botts, right, as a result of their visit to the tent.

L

Larry Criscione 31:32

Yeah, it is people after that have called me and have donated stuff, people have also come and done research that didn't, you know, they didn't know there was such a place that they could come and do research. I guess people go on the computer and look up collection or LGBT collection, and then a list pops up. But, you know, 10 - 20 years ago, that wouldn't have -- probably wasn't true.

V

Vince Lee 32:00

Obviously, your time and role at the Botts Collection had it has, it's been a labor of love. And I know you're very invested or vested in the collection in your time there. What advice do you have for young archivists or volunteers that are starting out and that want to work with LGBT history and materials and want to preserve that history for the community?

L

Larry Criscione 32:25

You know, as the current genre said, That's a good question. So give me a few seconds to think about it. For one of them, you got to be able to be willing to spend the time, it is time consuming. I mean, you know, I'm a numbers person, and I've kept track of our hours. And I'm personally, almost to the 25,000 hour mark. So just imagine if you work 2000 hours, a year, 25,000 hours that I've spent. Leif has spent close to 10,000 hours of his time, unpaid, we have never reimbursed ourselves even a single penny of any personal expenses. And so younger people have to be prepared, you know, they're, they're not likely to be paid to do this. So it's gonna take time, but it's worth it. Because it's an important job that needs to be done. And there have to be volunteers to do it. But if it's somebody who is because when I first started working on it, and other reasons, I was really smothered by internal homophobia. And I think working on the archive has helped free me of that, and have more self esteem and seeing the history and been, at least, from looking at the history seeing the brave men and women that have fought the battle out in public and been visible to, you know, make the community more welcome and, you know, out just just being out in public and all that. It's important. So that, so I think it will help young people to do that, too. And knowing that they've, they're doing something that is very needed, and still needed. I mean, the work the work on on all of this is really just begun.

V

Vince Lee 34:32

Yeah. As your fellow colleague and archivist, I know, we're not going to get rich doing what we do. But the work in itself is the reward itself, and kind of making a difference for the community.

L

Larry Criscione 34:47

I mean, you know that you live with it, because you can see you almost every day when you're you're at the library, you see all the boxes that you still have yet to go through.

V

Vince Lee 34:56

Yeah.

L

Larry Criscione 34:57

So you know, I mean, it's even in this computer age, it's still going to be a difficult problem.

V

Vince Lee 35:08

And I know the work means it's, it's personal to you, because you've probably seen a lot of change within the community itself over this past 20 some years. And, you know, I'm sure you've seen friends and loved ones and just folks within the community.

L

Larry Criscione 35:34

Yeah. And I went to the Eagle Bar here in Houston, this last Sunday afternoon. And sitting there by myself, nursing a drink, and seeing the young people in their 20s and early 30s. Coming along and coming into the bar, their heads are up, they're not trying to hide, they've got their hairstyles, and their clothes, and all of that those people are now free. And that wasn't the case 20 and 30. And years ago, and even 40 and 50 years ago, when the police were raiding the bars you could never know, you know what, when the police raided a bar, the people some of the people in that bar would call the next bar, they're on their way to you, your next. And people, you know, would go and change clothes, the women would reverse their blue jeans, and things like that. There's stories behind that. That's why when people don't what I'm talking about, they need to research it. And so, you know, it's different now, I don't think anybody in fact, the young people that I'm just referring to probably don't even know about the police raiding the bars and arresting people, you know, by the dozens and carrying them off to jail. They have no fear. And they're happy, they're smiling. And so it's definitely it is it's changed, and there'll be more change.

V

Vince Lee 37:07

Yeah, they need to know that there's others that paved the way for what they enjoy. For sure.

L

Larry Criscione 37:13

Yeah. And there's no hecklers. I remember I have marched in the parade several times, seeing the hecklers. And I would be willing say, I bet there's not not any anymore. They would literally be run off if they tried to come and heckle. You know, the people in the parade.

V

Vince Lee 37:39

Well Larry, I think we covered everything I was going to ask, is there anything else you want to talk about that we didn't get a chance to cover in any other questions? Before?

L

Larry Criscione 37:48

I think we, we I think we've covered I mean, we are going to continue to shut down as we transfer what remains, there's still a couple hundred feet of material. But it's all going to go over there. Some people are thinking, Well, can you give this up. And I had a pickup truck that I kept for 31 years. And I had and I got rid of it when I got a new vehicle. And a whole year after that I had a friend call wanted to borrow the pickup. And they were saying well, I said I don't have it. "What do you mean, you have I thought you were in love with that pickup." I said I hated the pickup. I'm glad to be rid of it. And, "I thought you would die instead of the pickup." But the same way with this archive. I'm now being asked, Can you put this aside? And I said,

Yeah, I'm 75 years old, I can walk away. Knowing that I've done a pretty good job of collecting the stuff and saving some of Houaron's history -- the LGBT history. So I'm content with not having to drive downtown and work on those papers. So that ends it that sums it up.

V

Vince Lee 38:57

Thanks, Larry, we we appreciate you and everyone at the Botts for letting us kind of run run with the baton. And then I know the work that's there, it's going to be even beyond my generation because we're going to need the next generation of students that are upcoming or working on the collection to kind of carry the baton from us because the work has to continue going forward. But--

L

Larry Criscione 39:21

Yeah, I mean, there's I'm still working when I when I see people. In fact, I run around and give my business cards out. And when I see somebody wearing an LGBT shirt I say, save that shirt. "What do you mean?" I said I keep my shirts, I asked him for it. You know, take it off and give it to me. And if, "oh I want it," I say but please don't throw it away. "Oh no, I don't throw my shirts away". I said people do you say you won't but you do. Save your material, no matter what it is buttons and belts and suspenders and hats. You know all that material. And then if you're a poet or if you're writing a book yourself, save the manuscripts. There's a lot other manuscripts that people can study too because the manuscript isn't always what gets published. And that stuff needs to be saved too and a lot of it's not being saved. So some of the history is lost.

V

Vince Lee 40:15

Artifacts are just as important as the papers.

L

Larry Criscione 40:20

And now, the other thing like I mean, Vance, is that back to the HIV crisis in the 80s, hateful families threw away a lot of the stuff that their sons had accumulated. And it's still being done. I know several instances where where an LGBT person, a gay man has died. And and another gay man burned that man's papers and magazines and personal stuff. I mean, burned. That's something that as archivists we need to get the word out to stop. It should not happen.

V

Vince Lee 41:03

That's like trying to erase someone's life and history on this earth, you know, to keep their materials is to honor their memory and acknowledge their existence as a person.

L

Larry Criscione 41:15

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. All right, Vince. Thanks a lot.

v

Vince Lee 41:20

Thank you, Larry. I appreciate it. I'm going to hit the stop recording button. So