



Review Article

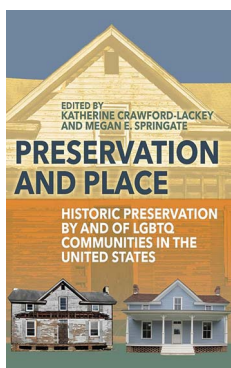
Diversifying the debate: increasing the visibility and accessibility of queer heritage

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KATHERINE CRAWFORD-LACKEY & MEGAN E. SPRINGATE (ed.). 2020. *Identities and place: changing labels and intersectional communities of LGBTQ and two-spirit people in the United States*. New York: Berghahn; 978-1-78920-479-7 hardback £99.

KATHERINE CRAWFORD-LACKEY & MEGAN E. SPRINGATE (ed.). 2019. *Preservation and place: historic preservation by and of LGBTQ communities in the United States*. New York: Berghahn; 978-1-78920-306-6 hardback £100.



While there has long been an archaeological interest in diverse gender identities and sexualities, queer theory was first introduced into archaeological discourse only in 2000 with the publication of ‘Queer Archaeologies’, a special edition of *World Archaeology*. Growing out of the exciting work being done by queer archaeologists and the increasing interest in queer theory and the archaeologies of sexuality, the National Parks Service (United States), led by Megan E. Springate, digitally published *LGBTQ America: a theme study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer history* in 2016 as part of the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative. The goal of the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative and *LGBTQ America* was to explore the nuances of LGBTQ+ heritage and history in the USA. Two recently published volumes, *Identities and place* and *Preservation and place*, edited by Katherine Crawford-Lackey and Megan E. Springate, are collections of a selection of the chapters originally published as part of *LGBTQ America*. *Identities and place* and *Preservation and place* collectively cover many issues affecting LGBTQ+ identity, history and cultural heritage.

The chapters in *Identities and place* predominantly explore the histories and various intersections of the LGBTQ+ community, based on geography, sexual identity, gender identity and race. The volume offers succinct yet detailed introductions to queer theory and the histories of various LGBTQ+ and GSM (Gender and Sexual Minorities) communities, especially for those working in historical archaeology, Cultural Resource Management and historical preservation. In particular, the chapter by Springate is a salient introduction to a ‘broader’ perspective of queer theory and the importance of queer heritage.

Alternatively, the contributors to *Preservation and place* discuss the practicalities of preservation history, laws, methods, education and outreach issues that are probably most pertinent to archaeological and preservationist audiences. In addition to the chapters that are more

conceptual in their scope, there are several contributions that provide practical methodologies and guidelines for cultural preservation, education and outreach. Susan Ferentinos, for example, presents various strategies for discussing LGBTQ+ history with the public. Ferentinos argues for the importance of LGBTQ+ public history, while simultaneously providing concrete steps to capture the nuance and complexities of queer lives in public outreach. Similarly, Leila J. Rupp discusses the importance of incorporating LGBTQ+ history into public education curricula—an especially salient conversation, as the histories of minority groups are quickly being eradicated from US public schools. Rupp defends the importance of teaching LGBTQ+ history, and then provides strategies for using queer historic sites to convey that history in a way that enriches our understanding of gender and sexual diversity in the past. Finally, Gail Dubrow examines the history of the queer preservation movement, and provides concrete, actionable strategies through which archaeologists, public historians, architects and cultural preservationists can create inclusive preservation programmes.

Despite a focus on historical and contemporary examples from the USA, the emphasis by the authors on larger structural issues impacting LGBTQ+ communities also make these volumes useful to archaeologists, public historians and historical preservationists beyond the USA. While some of the contributors address US-specific laws and preservation issues, the analyses and recommendations are broadly applicable to other national and legal contexts. Even the exclusively US-based histories in *Identities and place*, such as Springate's introduction to queer heritage, Loraine Hutchins's chapter concerning bisexuals and Susan Stryker's historiography of the trans community in the US, are applicable to researchers globally. *Identities and place* and *Preservation and place* are fantastic examples of queer historiography that researchers working in other contexts will find enlightening for their own work.

As the analyses contained in the contributions are theory-light, chapters in the two volumes are appropriate for both those who are versed in queer theory and LGBTQ history, and those who are not. At times, however, this was to the detriment of the analyses. In both volumes, but particularly in *Identities and place*, there is a lack of establishment of place and place-making. Many of the case studies in these volumes felt distanced from the people and places under analysis and review. In most cases, the emphasis on historical background and figures, statistics and legislation supplanted an affective sense of place. Readers should expect to encounter the history and practice of queer heritage management, rather than theoretical engagement. These drawbacks, however, are often outweighed by the sheer accessibility of the chapters. While some researchers may be disappointed by the lack of theoretical engagement, the analyses in both volumes remain compelling and informative. More importantly, they are accessible to non-specialist and non-academic readers. More scholarship, particularly public-facing scholarship, should be modelled after these chapters. Students and early career researchers in particular will benefit from combining the depth of analysis with the accessibility of language contained in these volumes.

In addition to the accessibility of language and theory, the contributions are by authors from diverse educational and career backgrounds, and who provide unique insights that are not often presented or engaged with in academic publications. Edited volumes such as these should be commended and celebrated; we need more interdisciplinary, published works that engage with archaeologists, historians and historic preservationists working outside of academia. In *Preservation and place*, for example, Donna J. Graves (a public historian)

and Shayne E. Watson (an architectural historian) provide an in-depth history of the development of a queer community and queer spaces in San Francisco, California. In *Identities and place*, Jeffrey A. Harris, an independent historic preservation consultant, highlights the threat to cultural sites that are significant to African Americans. The chapters in both volumes represent admirably the sheer diversity (gender, sexuality, race, class and professional status) of specialists in queer heritage research and management. The volumes are glowing examples of what archaeology, public history and historic preservation should resemble going forward. The diverse voices presented here address issues and problems that previously have been ignored. These volumes do much to rectify the myopia that has contributed to the destruction and loss of queer heritage.

Each of these volumes contains pedagogical learning activities designed by Katherine Crawford-Lackey. These activities were not included in the *LGBTQ America* theme study, and they are the true highlights of the books. For many educators, these may justify the cost of purchasing these volumes rather than accessing *LGBTQ America* free online. Each activity begins with a brief introduction to the topic, followed by instructions for hands-on, engaged projects. These range from crafting a blog post, to creating a museum guide, to selecting a site and going through the historic preservation process. While these activities are designed for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, their thoughtful presentation makes them easily adaptable for introductory undergraduate courses, high school courses and museum exhibitions. These learning activities are so impressive that I hope the editors and publishers consider publishing a companion workbook at a student-friendly price in the future. Such a workbook would be desirable, as the disappointing aspect of these volumes is that the content of chapters is strikingly similar to versions originally published in the *LGBTQ America* theme study. Outside of the inclusion of the pedagogical activities, the chapters have only been lightly edited to reflect socio-political changes in the three years since publication of the original online theme study. Many readers, including students, independent researchers and underemployed academics, may not therefore find it useful or necessary to purchase these volumes, particularly given the prohibitive cost of the physical versions. Part of my appreciation for the original *LGBTQ America* theme study was its accessibility to low-income researchers and the interested public. While the content of these volumes is a necessary contribution to the field, it is disappointing to see something that was originally free now behind a paywall. Physical copies housed in academic and personal libraries offer legitimacy to queer heritage research, actions and initiatives; but there is an irony in volumes celebrating the heritage and lives of oppressed peoples, that cannot easily be accessed by those communities. Academic legitimacy surely does not justify inaccessibility to so many readers. This point is in no way a criticism of the editors or contributors, and does not detract from the value of the volumes; rather it is a plea for publishers to recognise the contradictory nature of academic publishing.

Overall, *Identities and place* and *Preservation and place* are valuable, interdisciplinary and mixed-method contributions to the queer heritage literature and are worthy additions to any academic or personal library. Making queer history, lives, identities and places more visible in our public education and outreach will have profound impacts on the LGBTQ+/GSM communities in the USA and beyond. It is my hope that these volumes will only help further these initiatives, while inspiring similar efforts globally.