

## Up-and-Comers: News for Student and New Archivists

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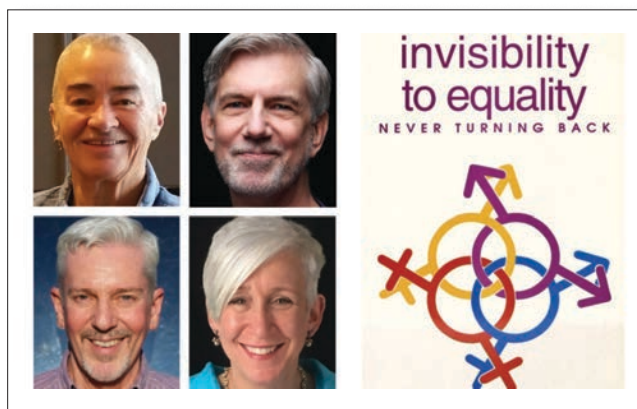
### Meet Xena Becker LGBTQ+ Digital Humanities Fellow, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, MLIS Student, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This summer, I worked in the Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Charlotte as the LGBTQ+ Digital Humanities Fellow. My assignment was to perform preliminary research for and create a prototype of a digital timeline about the history of the LGBTQ community in Charlotte. This timeline, when it has reached its final stage, will be used on the SCUA website to showcase the materials in the King-Henry-Brockington archive of records of LGBTQ individuals and organizations in Charlotte since the 1960s. Beyond building a creative and accurate timeline, my goal for this project was to gain an understanding of Charlotte's queer history through the material artifacts that have passed through that community. Additionally, I was encouraged to seek out gaps in the collections and to consider which areas of the Charlotte community are not fully represented in the materials that are currently housed at UNC Charlotte.

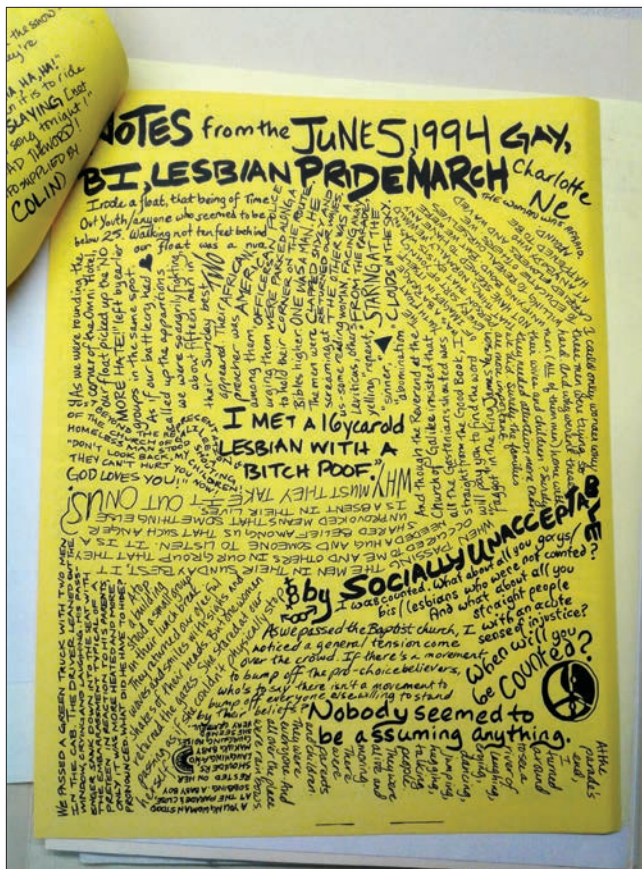
When I first began working at UNC Charlotte, my concerns for the project fell into three main areas: history, technology, and narrative. I came to Charlotte knowing very little about the history of the city, let alone the history of the LGBTQ community there, so I spent the first few weeks of my fellowship learning that history and the role of the LGBTQ community in Charlotte. I visited museums, went on walking tours, and spoke with my supervisors and coworkers about their impressions of Charlotte's history and character. Once I had a better sense of the city overall, I dove deeper into a variety of materials, such as articles in *Q-Notes*, a long-running LGBTQ newspaper, and my supervisor Tina Wright's thesis on the AIDS crisis in Charlotte, to learn about the city's queer community. As I learned more, I was cautious about inserting too much of my own judgment into my impressions of Charlotte's queer community. I have a different cultural understanding of my identity and my community as a midwesterner, and I tried to remain conscious of this bias as I began to historicize queer life in Charlotte.

One way I attempted to temper my bias was by finding opportunities to speak to people who have been members of the Charlotte LGBTQ community for a long time, which was possible thanks to the impressive relationships that already exist between SCUA and many local

communities. Some of my favorite moments this summer happened when materials in the archives connected to meeting community members in person. For example, I attended a panel with four organizers of the 1994 NC Pride Celebration (which took place in Charlotte) to learn about the planning process and the event's impact on the community. The four panelists—Sue Henry, Dan Kirsch, Darryl Lodgson, and Kimberly Melton—all have materials in the King-Henry-Brockington archive (Sue is the “Henry” in the collection's title), and earlier that day, I was looking through Henry's papers related to her bookstore, Rising Moon Books and Beyond. A fascinating element of her papers is the 11 folders dedicated to materials she saved from the bulletin board in the store. These fliers, newsletters, cartoons, want ads, and other materials show which communities were gathering and meeting in that space. In another delightful twist, the materials all still smell like the incense she burned in the store. In the folder from 1995 is an issue of a 'zine called *Concordance*, which has a page titled “Notes from the June 5, 1994 Gay, Bi, Lesbian Pride March, Charlotte NC.” The page describes the attitude of the marchers in the parade and the response from onlookers, both positive and negative. Juxtaposing this 'zine with the panel gave me a full sense of how my work fits into the community, as the timeline will become a way for people to understand the connection between those two moments in time.



After I gained a better understanding of Charlotte's history, I began to research the technology currently available to create digital timelines to decide which would be a good fit for this project. I followed a procedure from a class I



took as an undergraduate called Queering the Web. In that class, we also had to construct timelines of queer history, and part of our project was to figure out how common web tools used for developing timelines can be limiting when you are telling the stories of the LGBTQ community. For example, many digital timelines focus on creating single points at specific dates, which limits their ability to show historical cycles or how an event may extend over time. For LGBTQ history, these limitations can be especially fraught when you consider how to represent changing or hidden identities over time, or when parts of history must be inferred rather than being explicitly proven.

In Queering the Web, we began by creating timelines using common online tools. Then, after we had discussed the limitations and issues present in those tools, we proceeded to create prototypes of what an ideal timeline for a historical narrative would look like. We were encouraged to think outside of any limitations that currently exist in web design or our own programming capabilities and instead to focus on being as creative and truthful as possible in our representations. I brought this same approach to UNC Charlotte this summer. I wanted to begin by finding a

suitable existing software for representing the history of the queer community and then, once I had found its limitations, develop a prototype of a more expansive and creative timeline.

As I read Wright's thesis on the AIDS crisis and flipped through letters and newspapers in the collections, I noticed repeatedly that most organizations and gathering places in Charlotte can still be linked to their street addresses. I learned in my preliminary research on Charlotte that much of the city has been rebuilt or further developed since the 1970s, so I found the specificity of these addresses really interesting to the community's history. I wondered which of those spaces remained, if any, and how those spaces related to one another through time and space. Therefore, I began to look at mapping programs to see if any would be effective for this timeline. I decided to work with StoryMaps, as I had a little experience with it, and it was the only one I looked at that offers accessibility features like alt text for images.

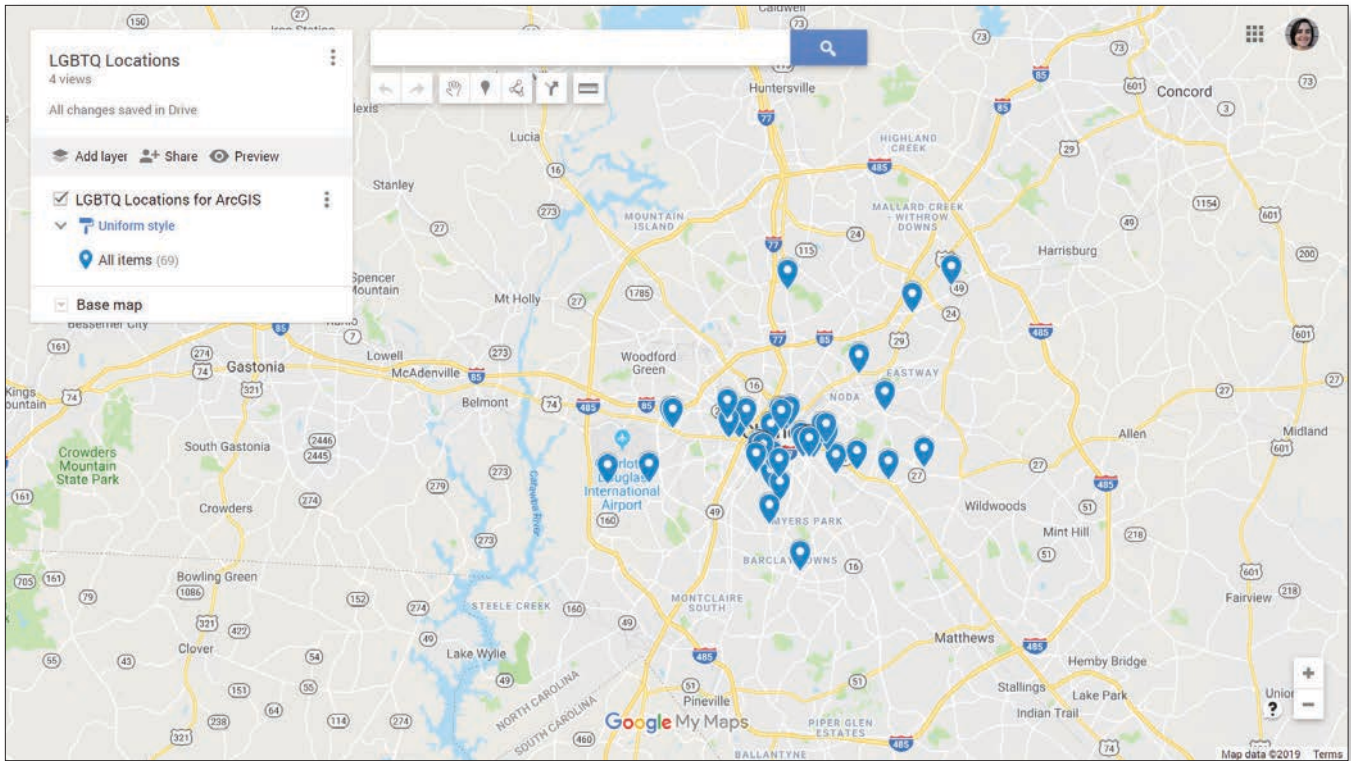
I spent some time compiling lists of addresses for community organizations and businesses, which I then put into Google Maps and ArcGIS Online to see if any interesting patterns emerged. Once I had these maps, I began to experiment with the various storytelling templates available through StoryMaps. I made some progress trying out different templates, but none seemed quite right as I was still formulating a sense of what the history of the Charlotte LGBTQ community felt like to those involved in it.

This illuminated my final phase of the project: narrative. Once I had a sense of what the history of the queer community in Charlotte is like and what technology could be used to convey that history, I began to imagine how I could combine those two elements to create a story about queer life in Charlotte. I understood my role in creating a timeline as something more creative than simply placing dates into a chronological list. I wanted to see what stories were present in the materials in the King-Henry-Brockington archive and to create a digital piece that tells those stories well. This may seem like a strange way to approach something that is ostensibly "historical," but I knew that what I was seeing could never be the full picture. My own bias and the limited materials in the archives will always be impediments to creating a "full" history, but the gaps are part of the story too.

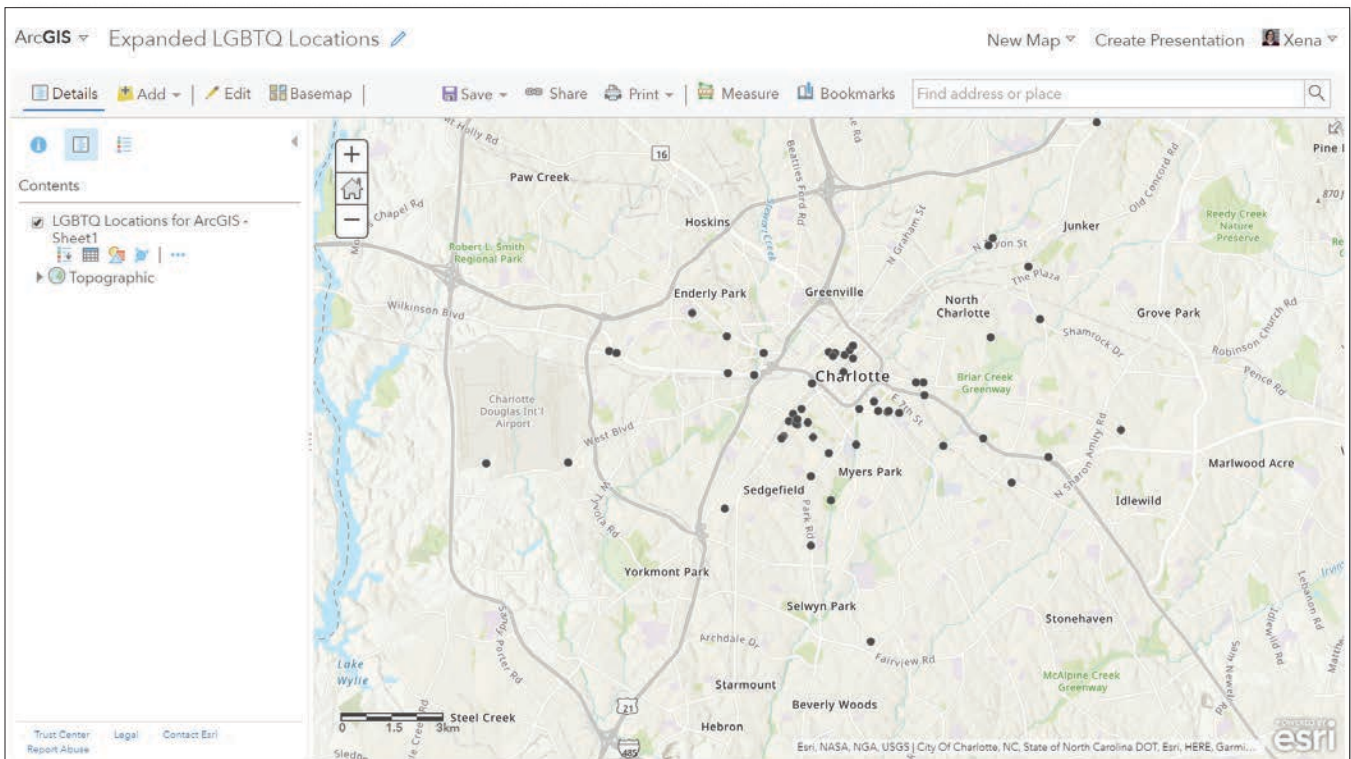
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**UP-AND-COMERS**—Continued  
**Meredith Lowe, Assistant Editor**



*Charlotte LGBTQ community organizations and businesses on Google Maps*



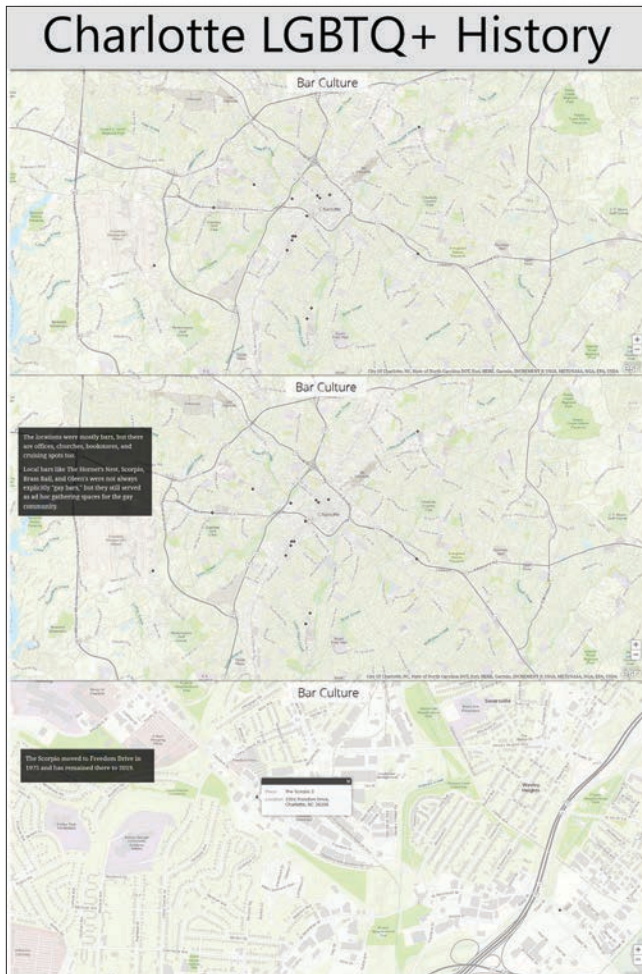
*Charlotte LGBTQ community organizations and businesses on ArcGIS Online*



**UP-AND-COMERS—Continued**  
**Meredith Lowe, Assistant Editor**

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Looking ahead, my prototype will serve as a template or inspiration for a fully realized timeline. I have also kept track of specific areas in Charlotte's queer history that are currently underrepresented, which hopefully will be used to create collecting policies or spur research that will bring more of those stories to light. Working on a project that may never actually be created as I envision it is strange, but I am satisfied with the work I did this summer and look forward to seeing what comes next for the timeline. I will take away skills in new areas like mapping and digitization, as well as knowledge about a community that is very similar and very different from my own. I hope to use these skills and knowledge in future projects during my final year of graduate school and beyond that in my career.



*Prototype pages from the Charlotte LGBTQ+ timeline project appear here and on the following page.*

### News & Maxine Doyle Perkins

**'Maxine' Will Get New Trial Here In Vice Case**

By HARRISON WALLS  
 The Mayor of Charlotte will be asked to grant a 1961 conviction with a 1961 conviction.

Charlotte, N.C. (AP) — A woman who was convicted in 1961 for a crime against nature will get a new trial here in a case that has become a landmark in the fight for gay rights.

The woman, Maxine Doyle Perkins, was convicted in 1961 for a crime against nature, a violation of a 400-year-old sodomy law that originated during the colonial era in North Carolina. Perkins' arrest and trial were covered extensively in the Charlotte Observer, making the case an early example of queer life entering the public gaze.

Perkins will be tried again in the case, which was first tried in 1961. She was convicted in 1961 for a crime against nature, a violation of a 400-year-old sodomy law that originated during the colonial era in North Carolina. Perkins' arrest and trial were covered extensively in the Charlotte Observer, making the case an early example of queer life entering the public gaze.

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Charlotte Free Press

WHATEVER

Q-Notes

### Religion

**Don King**  
 Founder of Q-Notes  
 Leader of Dignity/Acceptance  
 Journalist at the Charlotte Observer

Listen to LGBTQ community members describe their experiences with religion in Charlotte.

**Churches and Bookstores**

Starting with the 1970s, neighborhood efforts resulted in the creation of the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard.

To keep track of all the new gathering places and events, Queen City Coordinators worked together to create the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard.

## THE GAY & LESBIAN SWITCHBOARD OF CHARLOTTE

Organizations founded after the 1980s usually fell into a few distinct categories.

1980s				
POLITICS		AIDS		COMMUNITY PRIDE
Lambda Political Caucus forms (1983)		Charlotte Observer releases report on AIDS (1983)		Charlotte's first Gay Pride Day (1981)
		Metrolina AIDS Project is founded (1985)		First issue of Q-Notes (1983)
				Charlotte's second First Gay Pride day (1984)
	YOUTH PFLAG founded (1986)			
Robert Sheets runs for city council (1987)				Carolina Transgender Society founded (1987)
First Tuesday (1988)				
		Charlotte NAMES Project (1989)		
1990s				
POLITICS	YOUTH	AIDS	ARTS	COMMUNITY PRIDE
	Time Out Youth founded (1991)		One Voice Chorus (1990)	
Citizens for Human Rights (1992)		RAIN founded (1992)	Rising Moon Books & Beyond (1991)	All the Beautiful People! (1992)
				Charlotte Business Guild (1992)
				NC Pride Fest (1994)
Sue Henry Mayoral campaign (1995)				
MAJIC (1996)			Angels in America (1996)	OutCharlotte festival (1996)
		First AIDS Walk (1997)		Carolina Lesbian News (1997)
MeckPAC founded (1998)	Samantha Gellar and "Life vs the Paperback Romance" (1998)			

## 2000s

Community pride continues to grow in the new millennium. Projects continue and achieve new successes. Organizations lose funding and momentum. The world and the city changes again.

Click on an organization to learn more about it.



MeckPAC



Time Out Youth



One Voice Chorus



Charlotte Pride Committee



LGBT Community Center



RAIN



Black Gay Pride



Charlotte Business Guild



There's a BIGOT in my Biscuit!  
First Tuesday