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*Living Queer History: Remembrance and Belonging in a Southern City* by Gregory Samantha Rosenthal (review)

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recommended as it provides an important historical perspective to understand the current debates about race and sports in the United States, especially as the significance and relevance of HBCUs and Black colleges sports has garnered new media attention as a result of NFL Hall of Famer Deion Sanders's arrival and departure from Jackson State University football in the last few years.

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*Living Queer History: Remembrance and Belonging in a Southern City.* By Gregory Samantha Rosenthal. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. Pp. 229.)

As G. Samantha Rosenthal notes, "This is not so much a history book as a book *about* history" (10). While the reader can piece together a narrative of the layered queer pasts of Roanoke, Virginia, the book's focus is on the project of collecting and honoring queer pasts, and the significance and meaningfulness of that history in creating space for queer futures. The book examines the work of the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project, an organization Rosenthal helped to lead. The text can be read as a manifesto for the importance of queer public history and public space in a rapidly digitizing world, as a primer for how to do (and not do) queer public history, and as a personal memoir.

The latter is a strength and a potential weakness of the book. The author's rigorous interrogation of their experience as a white trans woman transplanted to Appalachia, viewed through their understanding of intersubjectivity, is strikingly revealing, but the personal narrative can sometimes be distracting. The book is well grounded in LGBTQ+ historiography and in theoretical approaches to space, place and identity, and its archival and oral history research, the heart of the project, is impressive.

The book opens with a history of Roanoke as a "Sin City" (19) that created spaces for queer people, most visibly white gay men, queens, and trans women. The early history especially is more suggestive than evidenced, but the author does an excellent job situating the story within larger historical frames. The second chapter explores the creation and development of the project, focusing on the problems it faced and how it sought to overcome them. This is followed by three thematic chapters, which contain some of the narrative missing from that first historical overview. The first explores the history of lesbianism, and the second transgender history. Both raise a critical question for queer public history: how do public history projects contend with

generational differences in language, experience, and identity? In the first, the author examines the problem of creating a history of an identity that most of the young women who worked with the project did not themselves claim. It raises more questions than it has answers, but the trans chapter is more satisfying. Rosenthal does a fabulously nuanced job of thinking through the many meanings of trans across generations and within communities, showing how sensitivity to those differences can lead to a richer history and more meaningful community connections in the present. The next chapter addresses the ways race and racism have shaped Roanoke's queer history, the (mostly white) project itself, and the possibilities and realities of Black queer history. The lessons here are directed more to white historians and volunteers in how to respect and honor Black people and history, but also contain important stories about the history of Black queerness and its connections, both problematic and joyful, to the city's sexual marketplaces. The voices of Black queens and trans women are showcased here.

The final chapter considers the changes in queer public history in the digital age and reads as an impassioned plea for the importance of materiality and physical space in maintaining and growing vibrant queer communities.

This is a terrific book for anyone interested in public history projects, queer Appalachia, or the importance of space and place in public memory. Its optimistic view, the energized voice of the author, and its blunt honesty make for engaging and inspiring reading.

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