Living Queer History: Remembrance and Belonging in a Southern City. By Gregory Samantha Rosenthal. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. Pp. i, 278. $29.95)

More queer people live in the U.S. South than any other region of the country, according to a recent UCLA study. As such, writing histories of queer and trans southerners is the radical work of both recovering the past and claiming space. Gregory Samantha Rosenthal's *Living Queer History* traces the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project's "queer public history activism" since its founding in 2015 (p. 10). In many ways a memoir, the book also tells the story of the author's gender transition during her "pilgrimage" to a surprising "queer and trans Mecca" of at least fifty years—Roanoke, Virginia (p. 3).

Recent historiography, such as Stephen Vider's *The Queerness of Home* (2021), has shown how most previous histories of gay rights movements emphasized political activism, claiming public space, and marriage equality. This obscured histories of domestic life, sex work, and marginalized queer and trans people. Similarly, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, Madeline Davis, Lillian Faderman, and Margot Canaday have discussed the source difficulties of lesbian history—gatherings often happened in private households and sources used pseudonyms for safety. *Living Queer History* covers important ground by tracing neighborhood spaces used by sex workers and uncovering stories about trans lesbians. Roanoke is an ideal site to discuss historical preservation and urban renewal, blind spots of white male activists who shaped local priorities, and consequences for those who now lack access to stories of their queer and trans ancestors (and current spaces for queer belonging, which a historical plaque does not secure).

Rosenthal also makes important contributions to our understanding of oral history theory. Building on what others have argued about intersubjectivity, she writes candidly about her own subject position (as a white transfeminine nonbinary person), body, and relationships and how these impact her activism and scholarship. Oral historians in this small southern city had some "awful experiences" (p. 149) that raised methodological questions—what should they do when a narrator threatened them? Or when a narrator exposed local political leaders' involvement with sex work? The first chapter gives an overview of Roanoke's queer history, highlighting divisions between lesbians and gay men in neighborhoods and activism, the street as a trans space more enduring than queer bar scenes, waves of urban reform that targeted queer and trans Virginians, and how race, gender, and sexuality interacted. Chapter two traces the practical and theoretical tasks of the queer history project: building an archive of forgotten materials, oral histories, and story circles; facing ethical dilemmas of romance between organizers; and planning historical reenactments (bar crawls following a 1978 map of queer-friendly establishments, a 1983 lesbian frisbee event, and a roller-skating event in the same rink as a 1978 party thrown by a gay activist group).

Lesbian history remains the central focus of the third chapter. Early leaders in the public history project were white gay men, and so their initial events focused solely on white males in the past. While trying to instead recover "herstory" or women-led storytelling as done by activists in the 1970s and 80s, issues arose about who should be allowed at events (Are they open to all genders? Should everyone feel welcome or should the most marginalized people be the focus?). This chapter is haunted by Rosenthal's own sense of uncertainty about her belonging in lesbian spaces as a transfeminine nonbinary

person, the few self-identified lesbians doing the work of the public history project, and the specter of Black queer women with no explicit space in past or present Roanoke. Rosenthal argues the solution was to preserve lesbian herstories written to celebrate women of color, trans women, and bisexual and pansexual women.

The fourth chapter emphasizes trans history, and the History Project's joint goals of recording stories of local trans elders through oral history, anti-cross-dressing laws, and arrest records plus reenacting these stories thoughtfully for queer and trans youth camps. Rosenthal details the outsized impact of trans sex workers on local memory: descriptions of Roanoke as a corrupt city "counterintuitively memorialized trans sex work as a key moment in Roanoke's history" (p. 145). The fifth chapter explores the project's emphasis on remembering Black queer Roanoke. It discusses spaces that white narrators did not remember, like adult bookstores and Black-owned restaurants. It builds on E. Patrick Johnson's oral histories about spaces that excluded Black queer southern men and ask where Black queer men were in Roanoke. The sixth chapter questions how to use digital history to preserve material from past queer communities in Roanoke, including the materials of the Ricketson LGBT Memorial Library and art proposals for the city that display the queer past.

For Rosenthal, the personal is political—the book's two parallel narratives are about coming out as trans during the Trump campaign and how the public history project-maintained safety, funding, and publicity during those years. The book's strength is in creating an intimate local study of Roanoke, but more discussion of implications for similar southern cities outside Virginia (or in more rural spaces) could have staked a stronger claim in the southern historiography. I also wondered about Christianity in queer Roanoke. Rosenthal briefly mentions a queer friendly MCC church and the impact of the Black church, but it would have been interesting to hear more about the role of Christian education in the community. Overall, *Living Queer History* is a moving, deeply personal story about queer southern belonging with wisdom relevant to other public historians. In 2023, as many southern legislatures attempt to restrict drag shows and criminalize queer youth, queer public history bolsters our fight for our rights as southern queers to "remembrance and belonging."

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Every Nation Has Its Dish: Black Bodies & Black Food in Twentieth-Century America. By Jennifer J. Wallach. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. 1 – 241. $27.95)

In *Every Nation Has Its Dish: Black Bodies & Black Food in Twentieth-Century America*, Jennifer Jensen Wallach uses ideas of embodied Black food consumption in the twentieth-century as a means of activism, distancing, and inclusion. Wallach uses manuscript collections, popular literature, and media from the Progressive Era through the Civil Rights Movement to argue for ingestion as the embodiment of a Black national identity. She arcs the reader from the writings of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois to Black nationalists and Civil Rights leaders midcentury, illustrating how discussions on food consumption within Black activist communities revealed class fissures