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The History Project receives \$350,000 grant from Mellon Foundation  
*Sustainability initiative will support capacity building for a vital LGBTQ+ community organization*

BOSTON, MA (September 21, 2022) The History Project (THP) is thrilled to announce that The Mellon Foundation has awarded a grant of \$350,000 to support capacity building and sustainability planning for Boston's LGBTQ community archives.

**This generous support is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of THP.** THP was founded in 1980, a time when most mainstream archives either minimized or actively suppressed queerness in collections. 42 years later, THP has one of the largest independent LGBTQ+ archival collections in America. Unfortunately, progress is not a straight line: In 2022 we're witnessing targeted and increasing attacks to silence queer people and hide LGBTQ+ history. Books by queer authors are challenged and banned from schools, and [ten states have prohibited public schools from discussing gender identity or sexual orientation or require parental notification of LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula](#).

Since hiring our inaugural Executive Director Joan Ilacqua in January 2020 ([which was made possible in large part by a generous grant from The Mellon Foundation's Community-Based Archives program](#)), The History Project has expanded its programming and collecting. To meet the increasing needs of the LGBTQ+ community during this pivotal moment, THP's staff and Board of Directors will build capacity through increased staffing and the development of a sustainability plan. **We are thrilled to announce that beginning in September 2022, longtime volunteer Samantha Valentine will join The History Project as the Director of Archives and Outreach.**

"This vital support from the Mellon Foundation provides an incredible opportunity to preserve and share LGBTQ+ stories and history in New England. I'm so excited to bring on Sam Valentine, an archivist and librarian who is deeply familiar with and passionate about The History Project's mission to document, preserve, and share LGBTQ+ history. I am also so grateful to the Mellon Foundation for understanding, valuing, and supporting our mission," said Executive Director Joan Ilacqua.

As Director of Archives and Outreach, Ms. Valentine will lead acquisition, processing, reference, outreach, and education efforts. Her work will ensure that our archival and volunteer policies and procedures are up to date, that THP is prepared to create deeper collaborations with other queer organizations, and that THP can provide access to LGBTQ+ history during this moment when the visibility and rights of queer people are in the jeopardy across the country.



“I’m proud and honored to continue supporting the work of the History Project in this new role,” said Valentine. “Collecting, preserving, and sharing LGBTQIA+ stories is vital to building on the work of those who have come before us, and to honoring the life, joy, and vitality of our communities. I look forward to developing partnerships, creating opportunities for engagement, and continuing to document the living LGBTQIA+ history of Boston and New England.”

Valentine, who uses both she and they pronouns, earned an MLIS with a concentration in Cultural Heritage from Simmons University's Master of Library and Information Science program in 2018. While at Simmons, she also served as Dean's Fellow for Digital Media Outreach. They formerly served as a Federal Librarian, as a project archivist for GLAD - GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, and as a member of New England Archivists' Inclusion and Diversity Committee. She has been a volunteer processing and outreach archivist for The History Project since 2016. Valentine will begin their new position in September 2022.

### **About The History Project**

The History Project is Boston’s LGBTQ+ community archives. A volunteer-driven organization founded in 1980, The History Project documents, preserves, and shares the history of New England’s LGBTQ communities and with LGBTQ+ individuals, organizations, allies, and the public. Learn more about our work at [www.historyproject.org](http://www.historyproject.org).

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