



John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology: Megan E. Springate

Paul A. Shackel

Accepted: 6 November 2020 / Published online: 22 March 2021
© Society for Historical Archaeology 2021

Dr. Megan E. Springate (Fig. 1) is making a significant contribution to historical archaeology and is truly a worthy recipient of the John L. Cotter Award. This award was established in 1998 in honor of John Lambert Cotter (1911–1999), a pioneer educator and advocate for the discipline. The award recognizes outstanding achievement by an individual at the start of a career in historical archaeology. Dr. Springate has published many excellent articles in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in books (Springate 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2000; Giesecking et al. 2019). Her book, *Coffin Hardware in Nineteenth-Century America* (Springate 2015), is an important contribution to the field. She is extremely active in promoting her landmark edited volume for the National Park Foundation/National Park Service that brings lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) heritage to the forefront of the discipline. This work has now been published in three volumes by Berghahn Books (Crawford-Lackey and Springate 2019a, 2019b, 2020).

Dr. Springate's (2017a, 2017b, 2017c) dissertation research focuses on the ways race, gender, and class are co-created, shaping how people are perceived and how their life experiences are framed. She performed her archaeological research at the Wiawaka Center for Women on Lake George, New York, the longest continuously operating women's retreat in the United States. Wiawaka



Fig. 1 Meagan E. Springate. (Photo by K. Gordon, 2021.)

was founded in 1903 on the grounds of the defunct Crosbyside Hotel, a middle-class resort that was opened in the mid-19th century. It was developed by middle-class women as a place where working women could have an affordable vacation from the ills of factory work and urban life. Wiawaka remains open, with a continuing

P. A. Shackel (✉)
Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, College
Park, MD 20742, U.S.A.
e-mail: pshackel@umd.edu

mission to better the lives of women. Dr. Springate worked closely with Wiawaka's board of directors, staff, visitors, and a broad community of over 70 volunteers during her research, sharing the history of Wiawaka and the workings of race, class, and gender, allowing participants to make connections between the past and present.

The community engagement and intersectional work Dr. Springate began at Wiawaka also informed and shaped the deeply engaged work she did with the National Park Service as coordinator of the LGBTQ heritage initiative, working to ensure that all of America's stories are told. Beginning by reaching out to LGBTQ communities across the United States, Dr. Springate compiled a database of over 750 places with LGBTQ history, making the information public by mapping the locations in Google Maps. Since 2014, this map has had over 25,000 views; it makes clear that LGBTQ history is not confined to large metropolitan areas like New York City and San Francisco, but is found in communities—rural and urban—everywhere across the country. Even more places are represented in LGBTQ America, a crowd-sourced project on History Pin done in conjunction with Quist, Rainbow Heritage Network, and the National Park Service (<<https://www.historypin.org/en/lgbtq-america/>>). Currently, over 1,100 places across the U. S are represented.

This concept of LGBTQ history as American history served as a key organizing principle for the report, edited by Dr. Springate and published by the National Park Service and National Park Foundation, entitled *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Springate 2016). This study by a federal agency is groundbreaking: the first of its kind worldwide to take a broad, intersectional look at American LGBTQ history and connect it to the specific places where it happened. The study is extensive, with 32 chapters and over 1,200 pages spanning the contact period through today and is available free to the public on the National Park Service Website, <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>>. Over 1,300 places across the U.S. with LGBTQ history are mentioned in the text. This work has been edited by Dr. Springate, and she is the coeditor of a three-volume set published by Berghahn Books (Crawford-Lackey and Springate 2019a, 2019b, 2020). As part of the theme study, she also wrote an archaeological context for LGBTQ sites, <<https://nps>

[.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-archeology.htm](https://nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-archeology.htm)>, looking at how studying queer people and places archaeologically can also address some of the larger questions asked in historical archaeology (Springate 2016).

Throughout the preparation of the study, Dr. Springate's consultation with subject-matter specialists and community members across the country was integral to shaping these volumes. She attended community meetings, including those held at the U.S. Department of the Interior; the GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco; an LGBTQ retreat in Aptos, California; the Leather Museum and Archives, Chicago, Illinois; the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies, CUNY; the Women's Rights National Historical Park, Seneca Falls, New York; the Victory Institute, Washington, D.C.; and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.; as well as countless one-on-one conversations and email exchanges. Intentionally intersectional in organization, subject matter, and in the identities and expertise of the authors and peer reviewers, the volume strives to tell a complete LGBTQ history, including groups and places often omitted from other histories. She strove to have diversity in the authors and peer reviewers of the study, as well as in the chapter content; identifying as white, black, Asian American, Latino/a, Hawaiian, gay, lesbian, queer, transgender, bisexual, heterosexual, male, female, and genderqueer—authors and peer reviewers represented several disciplines, including historic preservation, history, archaeology, geography, gender studies, and religious studies, as well as community activism, education, archival work, and journalism. This multiplicity of narrative voices and a commitment to accessible writing helps to ensure that the study is of use to a broad public, ranging from those interested in LGBTQ history to educators and activists, to state and federal bureaucrats assessing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Park Service document, *LGBTQ America*, and the three edited volumes from Berghahn Books provide a baseline for people to identify, connect with, record, and preserve LGBTQ history in communities across the nation. Dr. Springate continues to work with LGBTQ communities, parks, heritage professionals, and educators on ways to use this scholarship as a springboard to bring communities together and document and preserve LGBTQ history. Dr. Springate's work in an extraordinary accomplishment helping to tell all America's story. Her work is groundbreaking, important, and worthy of the John L. Cotter Award.

References

- Crawford-Lackey, Katherine, and Megan E. Springate (editors)
2019a *Identities and Place: Changing Labels and Intersectional Communities of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit People in the United States*. Berghahn, New York, NY.
- Crawford-Lackey, Katherine, and Megan E. Springate (editors)
2019b *LGBTQ Preservation and Place: Historic Preservation by and of LGBTQ Communities in the United States*. Berghahn, New York, NY.
- Crawford-Lackey, Katherine, and Megan E. Springate (editors)
2020 *Communities and Place: A Thematic Approach to the Histories of LGBTQ Communities in the United States*. Berghahn, New York, NY.
- Giesecking, Jen Jack, Katie Batza, J. Jeffery Auer IV, Julio Capó, Jr., Megan E. Springate, and Shayne Watson
2019 “Start Here. We Exist.”: A Roundtable Discussion of the US LGBTQ Heritage Theme Study. *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 25(3):379–401.
- Springate, Megan E.
2000 Intersectionality, Queer Archaeology, and Sexual Effects: Recent Advances in the Archaeology of Sexualities. In *The Routledge Handbook of Global Historical Archaeology*, Charles E. Orser, Jr., Andrés Zarankin, Pedro P. A. Funari, Susan Lawrence, and James Symonds, editors, pp. 95–116. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Springate, Megan E.
2015 *Coffin Hardware in Nineteenth-Century America*. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA.
- Springate, Megan E.
2017a ‘Archaeology? How Does That Work?’ Incorporating Archaeology into the National Park Service LGBTQ Heritage Initiative as Community Engagement. *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage* 4(3):173–185.
- Springate, Megan E.
2017b Connecting the Threads: Archaeology of Reform/ Archaeology as Reform. In *Archaeology of Reform/ Archaeology as Reform*. Thematic issue, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 21(4):773–784.
- Springate, Megan E.
2017c *Respectable Holidays: The Archaeology of Capitalism and Identities at the Crosbyside Hotel (c. 1870–1902) and Wiawaka Holiday House (mid-1910s–1929), Lake George, New York*. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, College Park. University Microfilms International. Ann Arbor, MI.
- Springate, Megan E.
2017d The National Park Service LGBTQ Heritage Initiative: One Year Out. *George Wright Forum* 34(3):394–404.
- Springate, Megan E. (editor)
2016 *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. National Park Foundation and National Park Service, Washington, DC. National Park Service <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>>. 11 February 2021.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.