The Campaign for Atlanta: An Act of Research

John Q (Wesley Chenault, Andy Ditzler, and Joey Orr)

Abstract

The Campaign for Atlanta: an essay on queer migration was a public event presented by the John Q collective (Wesley Chenault, Andy Ditzler, and Joey Orr) on May 17 and 18, 2013 at the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum. It was a performatively essay form that investigated a palimpsest of civil war histories and fragments of regional and national queer migrations. This article begins to make explicit the issues explored in the performance: namely, the divergent ways in which the past is linked to place by various technologies of sight and their very different historical worldviews. Written for a special issue on activism, the article makes the case that activating archives in public situations allows scholarship to expand its purview, to include nontraditional configurations and interdisciplinary methods as a way of linking scholarly content to artistic form.

Introduction

John Q is an idea collective of artists, archivists, and curators, consisting of Wesley Chenault, Andy Ditzler, and Joey Orr. The phrase idea collective attempts to avoid being strictly received as either an artist or academic collective because we are particularly invested in working along these unsettled borders. Before formalizing our connection to one another, Wesley was archivist at the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center from 2004 through 2008, where he bolstered the lesbian and gay collections, including an oral history project focused on 1940–70. Joey is a curator of public space, and while at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia in 2004, he worked with Wesley on the oral history project conducting interviews. Andy, who has curated the Film Love
series since 2003, worked with Wesley in 2006 on a series of public screenings of home movies from the Research Center’s permanent holdings. Three years later, Andy began working on plans for a site-specific screening that responded to a particular event in Atlanta’s queer history. Joey knew about this, as well as the fact that, perhaps serendipitously, we were all working around issues of queer history or public space in Atlanta. He coordinated a series of meetings in the fall of 2009. John Q’s first temporary public art project was presented on Saturday, April 3, 2010.

This first project, Memory Flash, aimed at activating memories mined from LGBT collections at the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center and from news reports. In particular, the project represented little known memories of queer life in Atlanta from the 1960s, prior to the gay rights movement, in the geographic locations where they originally occurred. These included an African American male social club, a drag cabaret, a women’s softball league, and a screening of Andy Warhol’s film, Lonesome Cowboys. The four respective movements in the work were considered “discursive memorials,” rather than permanently situated historical markers or sculptural forms. The series moved across the city over the course of one late afternoon to early evening, and then was gone. The ephemeral nature of these memorials was meant to formally underscore that the historical subjects of the research did not generally have permanent access to public space, but rather constantly negotiated their gathering spots among a series of opening and closing clubs, sports leagues, private gatherings, and domestic spaces. Being visible in public spaces was a complicated affair at the time. In fact, Atlanta’s underground newspaper, Great Speckled Bird, described the removal of homosexuals from Piedmont Park in the late sixties “by, among other expedients, the use of photography.”

In consideration of a methodological approach suited to the field of memory studies, we referred to historian Frances Yates’s landmark work, The Art of Memory. In it, she examines classical texts that take up memory as part of the art of rhetoric. We were specifically interested in her description of the memory palace. This is a mnemonic device in which the rhetorician would visualize embedding information in specific spaces to ensure its ability to be recalled in the order of a given narrative, dictated by its progressive placement within the memory palace. In her description, she states that memories are more likely to persist when fused with visual and affective triggers, or as she describes it: “. . . the idea of helping memory by arousing emotional affects through . . . striking and unusual images, beautiful or hideous, comic or obscene.” Or, as Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian Ott succinctly state about collective memory in their introduction to Places of Public Memory: “. . . public memory is typically understood as animated by affect.”
The second movement of *Memory Flash*, for example, took an oral history about the Joy Lounge, a short-lived drag club in Atlanta in the late 1960s, and attempted to create public memory with some of these tactics. At the time, cross-dressing was illegal by way of a city ordinance, so when police came through the club, word was sent back to the performers who would huddle up in a walk-in beer cooler and await word that the coast was clear. Participants in the 2010 series of interventions were invited into a cold, dark walk-in mobile refrigeration unit packed with beer boxes on the site of the old club’s vacant, empty lot. Back projected in one of the boxes was a digital video transfer of original footage of the Joy Lounge performers. The darkness and coldness of the space was intended to work with the equally comic and tragic memory to ensure that it persisted. We appropriated methods used in the ancient art of rhetoric, therefore, to use the city itself as a mnemonic device organized around queer memories, so that when those in attendance revisit the sites of *Memory Flash*, personal memories of the event might endure now as a kind of shared or collective memory. This gives some initial insight into our relationship to activism, or more specifically, a commitment to *activating* information from archival collections in public spaces as a way to traffic memory with others.
In fact, one of our research interests is invested in the notion that publics can produce knowledges together. In the context of John Q’s work, this implies that the research questions and findings are not only ours, but can also be generated by those who participate in the public phases of our work. This should be qualified by saying that our publicly engaged works are very specifically choreographed and based on many hours of discussion and collective workshopping. In any social practice, there is a range of possibilities for engagement, from being a more or less traditionally defined audience offering attention on the one hand to being a real collaborator in the unfolding of the work on the other. John Q’s endeavors have occupied most positions on that spectrum. Public projects, however, are generally taken up with a thoughtful plan about the relationship we are constructing between our research questions and how others experience them. So although the work is open to the public in various ways, it is not offered without consideration or intention.

The possibilities for publicly constructed knowledges as “live” intellectual pursuits and the fact that these events are intentionally planned seems contradictory. This contradiction is actually productive in thinking about the performative in the service of research. In a performance art context, the work is both something that is happening in life and a representation. In a critical definition of performance, art historian and curator Kristine Stiles eloquently describes that the performance artist is considered by viewers as: “both the subject and the object of the work of art.” She continues: “In performance, artists present and represent themselves. . . .” Likewise, our public work acts as both the representation of our research (that is, performing our research questions, methods, and possible outcomes) and the research itself (carrying out one of our research questions, which is trying to decipher what happens to our research in public situations and in the experience of others). If performance art tends to trouble the notion of representation in visual art, it does the same in research, thus producing an examination of scholarly form, its problems, and even its politics. Things like peer-reviewed articles and monographs, for instance, are not necessarily final research products, but rather an index of research—something that cannot exist without the presence of research—and not the research itself, which is a process of inquiry. And this embodied process is precisely what gives performance its social and political valence. Stiles concludes: “It [performance] alters the use of objects through acts and serves as an object lesson in how meaning is created by such actions.” In other words, John Q’s public acts of research may offer innovative uses for archival memories and even suggest new models for how meaning can be created in expanded contexts. The tension between archival evidence that is fixed for preservation, research, and citation and the state of flux intro-
duced by way of its social or performative contexts is always at issue in our work. In fact, this essay was generated by cycling through phases of documentation and public negotiation.

During the processes of research and performance, we began to notice the constantly resurfacing issue of queer diaspora—the idea that Atlanta became a migratory destination for LGBT populations in the Southeast, in the same way San Francisco and New York serve a national queer vocabulary of urban geographies. Freed from familial and other restraints in an environment where community was possible and financial survival was sustainable, one individual with whom we spoke described his own move to Atlanta thus: “the brochure [about Atlanta] is out... They don’t know your mama’s people.” And although the fact of this rural-to-urban queer migration is by now well documented, many scholars have also noted the erasures this grand narrative creates. So, we became interested in the idea of queer migration, but also in finding ways to trouble it.

In the summer of 2012, John Q presented a performative panel with some occasional collaborators at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History Museum as part of the National Queer Arts Festival in San Francisco. While there, much of our time was dedicated to research in the GLBT Historical Society. We had been looking at the late Crawford Barton, an artist who photo-documented San Francisco’s Castro district through periods of immense...
political and social change. On our first visit to his collection, we pored over his photographs, among other materials, a seemingly endless repository of portraits, friends, street scenes, and early Pride parades. On this particular research trip, we learned that Barton was born and raised in the small rural town of Resaca, Georgia, a fortuitous discovery in light of our interest in queer migration. We also found two boxes of mostly super-8 films, along with some 16mm, that had never been transferred and possibly not viewed since Barton’s death in 1993. Some of these titles suggested the films might be documents of Barton’s own migration and thus instilled in us an intense feeling of anticipation. Among the titles were *Me and Mark on the Way Out*, *On the Road*, and *Resaca*. The town of Resaca is also the site of one of the earliest battles in the military campaign for Atlanta, which concluded with the decisive Battle of Atlanta, a historical event that is documented and interpreted in the iconic tourist destination, the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum.

This essay necessarily casts a broad interdisciplinary net. We are interested in exploring some of the histories of how the past and place are visualized. We begin by taking advantage of the unique repetition of Resaca in histories about the movement of military, then queer, bodies into Atlanta’s urban center. We use the Atlanta Cyclorama as representative of a particular apparatus that depends on a historically embedded observer as a generative point of comparison and contrast. We are also interested in how Crawford Barton captures the past and place in the context of his own migration and what relationships his films might have to earlier forms of the moving image, and even to such earlier forms of visualization as cycloramas. Finally, we are interested in following our archival research through to consider what part this all can play in how we come to understand notions of past queer migrations and how they might be activated for our collective and public inquiry.

**Visualizing the Past**

The Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum is home to a 42’ x 358’ painting of the Battle of Atlanta. It depicts different theaters of this battle and illustrates the movement of Union soldiers into the city’s center. The overlapping movements of queer bodies and soldiers into Atlanta created a dizzying mix of times and places that was enticing. We therefore began to explore Barton’s newly rediscovered films of his own migration alongside the Cyclorama painting. We were specifically interested in how the past becomes fixed to place in different historical moments through their attendant technologies of sight. This became the crux of our
new intervention. This time, however, it was not geared toward the vernacular and
quotidian space of the street, but instead an institutional space—a history museum
whose primary task is to preserve a visual apparatus from the late nineteenth century
that depicts bodies moving into the city of Atlanta.

Twenty years before the Civil War, William T. Sherman visited Indian
mounds on the Etowah River in north Georgia and noticed that the Allatoona
Pass was very difficult. Nearly two decades later on the Atlanta Campaign, he
resolved “not even to attempt it, but to turn the position, by moving from
Kingston to Marietta via Dallas. . . .”13 His memory of the place informed his
tactical maneuvers. Because the many theaters of battle cannot be seen from any
one vantage point, the modern military general must be a genius in visualizing
the space of war.14 Not only does this mean the general must possess a powerful
geographic imagination, it also underscores an imperative to remember and
represent place. Napoléon was said to have had the largest map collection in the
world at one time, estimated at over 70,000 sheets, a task for which he employed
geographic and artist engineers.15 While military mapping proliferated in the
nineteenth century, large-scale military painting was being revived in the salons
in the early part of that century, as well.16

In 1840, historian Thomas Carlyle coined the words “visualize” and
“visuality” to reference this ability to maintain a dominant view.17 This not
only referenced visual dominance over geography, however, but also over History
itself—the ability to read the trajectory of History.18 Visualizing landscape
and visualizing the past are intimately connected. If some early geographers
meant to represent regions and landscapes as naturalized and seamless, others were
invested in human struggle. If early nation-states defined their borders by military
defense, excluding those who fell into the no-man’s land beyond, other kinds of
thinkers constructed entire geographies of emotion that mapped the histories of love
affairs. In one of Jorge Luis Borges’s parables, cartographers become so obsessed with
the map’s point-for-point reference that they make one the exact size of the empire.
It was so unwieldy, however, that future generations abandoned the thing, and its
tattered remains became shelter for animals and beggars.19

If the Cyclorama is illustrative of the military genius’s panoramic view of the
landscape, how might we visualize the landscapes and histories of queer migrations?
Further, how might we navigate such spaces as the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War
Museum in a way that opens up spaces for us to rethink our relation to the past? Can
queer histories and historical institutions offer creative possibilities for activation?
These are some of the research questions provoked by our distinctly queer investiga-
tion of Crawford Barton’s migration in the context of the Atlanta Cyclorama and
Civil War Museum, an act of research we called a performative essay.
On the Way Out: Cinema, Mobility, and Embodied Vision

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, battle panoramas such as the Atlanta Cyclorama provided memorials for places of historical significance. They were also one of the cultural phenomena that prepared audiences for cinema. Early cinema combined motion and projection with the immersive experience of panoramic landscapes and was part of a spectrum of new experiences of space and motion. One of the first films shown by the Lumière brothers, two of cinema’s earliest filmmakers, was the famous film of a train arriving at La Ciotat rail station in southern France. The track is pictured at a diagonal to the camera, so that as the train arrived, it approached the camera and sped seemingly beyond the picture frame and by implication toward the viewer. Stories of viewers’ terror at the approaching train are apocryphal, but to judge from written reactions quoted by film historian Tom Gunning, it is clear that viewers understood that something new was visible—a permeability of the frame, one that “[collapsed] the contemplative distance in the anticipation of collision.”

Within a few years, as Gunning notes, the mobility of the camera itself precipitated further change in the experience of motion through space. In films that placed the camera at the front of a moving train, the standard experience of perspective is reversed. The horizon becomes the source of a continuously emerging landscape instead of a disappearing point. Rather than being in a position of visual dominance, the camera becomes the point at which everything irretrievably disappears. Thus cinema demonstrates the process of the arrival of new information and its passage into memory, and perspective changes from a type of visual mastery to an experience of what Gunning describes as “abject subjection to the course of movement and the logic of the track.” If train passengers’ lateral, sideways gaze at the passing scenery was akin to the visual mastery of landscape painting and military mapping, the cinematic view from the front of the hurtling train provokes “not only a crisis within the spectator’s relation to space and landscape, but a heightened awareness of perception and consciousness itself.” The loss of visual dominance was accompanied by a “heightened awareness” and a new visibility.

From the beginning, cinema was clearly predicated on a complex interplay between knowledge and what Gunning calls “astonishment.” Contrary to legends of naïve, unprepared viewers cowering from the oncoming train, early cinema spectators were “sophisticated urban pleasure seekers,” incorporating the moving image into a panoply of cultural novelties and attractions. Part of the evidence for this includes eyewitness accounts of early motion picture projections: They began with a single frame from the film projected as a still onscreen,
and as the projector cranked into motion, the picture began to move in full view of the audience. Early cinema spectators were thus aware of the mechanism by which they saw movement.\textsuperscript{26}

The move to cinema from earlier forms of visualization is not a matter of progression, but of rupture. In his book, \textit{Techniques of the Observer}, Jonathan Crary explains that historically located technologies of sight emerge from a constellation of discourses and power apparatuses that produce something called “the phenomenon of the observer.”\textsuperscript{27} In particular, the visual production of the cyclorama is tied to a “geometric optics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” that represents a disembodied knowledge of the world.\textsuperscript{28} Instead of progressively developing from mechanisms like the camera lucida to eventual cinema, Crary suggests there is a rupture and transformation in the observer. Photography and film, therefore, emerge from the different worldviews and “physiological optics” of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{29}

Moving from a dominant, reflective view of the landscape to being down in it anticipates the mobility through landscapes via the automobile that characterized the second half of the twentieth century in the United States. This process is evidenced in central motifs of the counterculture, from Jack Kerouac’s novel, \textit{On the Road}, to the Hollywood “road movie,” such as \textit{Easy Rider}. At the same time, the proliferation of small gauge 8mm and super-8 filmmaking brought the production of moving imagery to its most intimate and quotidian level in the “home movie.” The handheld nature of the filming process also put the camera “on the road” and documented new types of cinematic motion that reflected the rhythms of individual bodies. If in the nineteenth century new kinds of vision were embodied, they were also separated from the other senses, disentangling sight from touch and other corporeally based perceptions.\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps capturing geographies of longing and desire activate the handheld, spatially embodied apparatus of the super-8 camera in ways that would have been foreign to earlier cinematic mechanisms and forms. In Crawford Barton’s archival documents, we discovered the road movie and home movie reanimated together by gay liberation.\textsuperscript{31} The senses of vision and desire comingle here.

Among Crawford Barton’s papers in the GLBT Historical Society are Kodak boxes holding super-8mm film reels marked with handwritten titles that reference Resaca, Atlanta, and a road trip. Archival films are tantalizing. Unlike letters, newspapers, or videos, you cannot view them on the spot. For the researcher, therefore, they emerge in a state of anticipation and desire. Seeing the particular title, \textit{Me and Mark on the Way Out}, in the context of our research on queer migration, we felt it necessary to view the film inside the box.\textsuperscript{32} With the
help of the Historical Society, a digital copy was made of the original. We found no evidence that Crawford Barton thought of his super-8 films as anything other than home movies, or of when and how he showed them during his lifetime. But as a record of a queer migration, *Me and Mark on the Way Out* is a complete work. A roughly three-minute reel, seemingly edited in camera, it documents a trip to a destination so apparent to Barton that he felt no need to identify it in his title. And so for us it becomes an allegory, in a sense: the way out. The way out west seems possible, for the landscape visibly flattens through the course of the film. The film is not dated, but for the two men’s clothing and hairstyles: circa 1970, then, around the time that Barton relocated from Georgia to San Francisco for good. Whether his premiere voyage or a trip back home, we cannot know. But we do know that Barton saw the migration of gay men to San Francisco as socially significant and pregnant with historical possibility.

In the first shots of the film, we see our protagonists: driver and passenger, Barton at the wheel—a classic road trip in progress. Then a shot of forward motion through the windshield, the freeway covered in smoke. Unlike the train films drawing the spectator ever forward, here the smoke provides a mysterious curtain through which we seem to be passing into another world. That world, in this queer historical moment, includes the hunky filling station attendant in the next shot. Specifically, his torso and crotch are seen dynamically here through Barton’s side view mirror, itself framed by the forward view out the side window. He pumps the gas, the nozzle prominent at crotch level. For a moment he turns, and we see in the mirror an RV traveling the distant highway, a reminder of mobility and the mechanism by which we got here. An intrepid queer camera-man, Barton holds the shot for the maximum length, right up to the attendant’s approach to the car window.

Though the car is still, we are clearly cruising, and here we shall halt the cinematic motion to a single image in order to consider a moment of queer migration. Crawford and Mark are on the way out to another place, moving through landscapes and visibilities, but reverse images and motions beckon. If in the early train films the possibility for contemplation was obliterated by the continuous unfolding of the landscape and its passing into irretrievable memory, Barton takes a moment to restore cinematic contemplation through the mirror of an unmoving car. Both brazen and secretive, both home movie and road movie, this shot at once addresses the past (the rear view, rural Georgia) and an imminent future (San Francisco, gay liberation), from the window and mirror of a momentary pause in the immersion of the onrushing landscape. Fusing a particular investment in physical desire with an ambiguous relation between stillness and motion, this image seems deeply inflected with queer embodiment.
Films are only visible when reflected off a screen, so we can only view Barton’s daring cruise of the filling station attendant in the side view mirror as a double reflection. Here we may find our own “heightened perception” of the mechanism of queer visibility. The home movie’s record of private domestic space (or in the case of Barton’s road movie, his car) becomes something different when projected as cinema in public space. When we project queer home movies as cinema, we see a double reflection. Throughout queer history, visibility has been precisely the troubled metaphor and lens through which queer liberation has been apprehended, most notably in the personally and culturally inexhaustible repetition of acts of “coming out” into public view. Or as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick eloquently described it in *Epistemology of the Closet*: “So resilient and productive a structure of narrative will not surrender its hold on important forms of social meaning.”

To *project* queer home movies—to throw forth, to cast, to come out—is not only to enlarge and show the queer and the quotidian onscreen, but also to examine queer modes of visualization and the uneasy intersections of liberation and bio-power. Like the early cinema audiences who watched the still image crank into motion, the contemporary audience of Barton’s super-8 films is made aware of the mechanisms by which queer communities were beginning to articulate their experiences in a specific, historically located moment.
The home/road movie as it relates to queer migration in Barton’s collection, therefore, derives some of its queer status from the fact of its handheld embodiment. In the visual capture of the move to San Francisco from rural Georgia, there are sensual and affective registers activated—the enlistment of desire in objectifying the gas attendant and Barton’s fearless filming until the moment of possible discovery. If early cinema offered new perspectives on space and motion inflected by the embodiment of vision Crary describes, in the second half of the twentieth century, vision becomes more directly connected to other senses, opening up the possibilities for it to become entwined not only with space and motion, but desire and affect, as well.

### John Q and Crawford Barton on the Way Back

*The Campaign for Atlanta* was subtitled “an essay on queer migration” and performed in two parts that took place in different spaces in the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum. During a regular visit to the Atlanta Cyclorama, the presentation would begin with an interpretive film about the Atlanta Campaign in the auditorium, followed by a move to a space where viewers’ static seating rests on a mechanism that rotates, slowly turning the audience 360 degrees, the full expanse of the painting, while a recorded narrative dramatized by music and sound effects describes what is depicted. John Q’s performance, however, made for an intentionally irregular visit. Participants were directed to navigate the space of the Cyclorama backwards, rerouting the actual institutional design and moving metaphorically against the grains of history and archives, and exploring, perhaps for the first time in public, a sampling of the film work of Crawford Barton and the story of his migration from Georgia to California.

Researchers, filmmakers, and artists have used Barton’s photographs to reference the importance of the Castro terrain to queer populations all over the United States. Barton himself created a photo-essay, a novel manuscript of over 1,700 pages, and a screenplay—all titled *Castro Street*. Castro Street, therefore, is a place, but also a geographic imaginary, the way many sites of real struggle begin to operate as representation, even allegory. The way the Battle of Atlanta becomes the Cyclorama. The way a neighborhood becomes *Castro Street*—a site of struggle but also a photo-essay, a novel manuscript, and a screenplay. Sites of struggle, whether an urban enclave in California or a small town in Georgia, have many potential afterlives. They can become rigidly fixed narratives that foreclose other possibilities, but they can also be spaces for conceiving new types of relations. The same is true of archives, and Crawford Barton’s collection allowed

John Q to explore a different geographic imaginary, one that placed in relief Barton’s connections to people and places in rural Georgia and Atlanta, and, his migratory path to California.

Crawford Barton was born and raised in the small north Georgia town of Resaca, site of one of the first battles in the Atlanta campaign eighty years earlier. Through all of his migrations and until his death, Crawford kept letters, photographs, and films that documented his early life in Georgia—a corpus of memory and relations, fading migratory traces. Before his move to San Francisco, sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s, Crawford exchanged letters with men living in small towns in Georgia, among them Calhoun, Dalton, Thunderbolt, and Valdosta; stationed in military bases in Mississippi, Texas, and South Carolina; and working or attending college in California, Illinois, and Tennessee. Through these social networks, Crawford and friends discussed educational aspirations and setbacks, career hopes and disappointments, relationship topics from cruising and dating to navigation tips on secrecy and disclosure around sexual identity with family and friends, and military experiences and concerns with the draft and anti-homosexual regulations. These private communication networks—letters, cards, phone calls, face-to-face conversations—were effective
everyday strategies to transmit thoughts and feelings about intimate and sexual matters. Along with films and photographs, Barton’s correspondence not only complicates notions of rural/urban queer lives, but also serves to illustrate how these lived experiences and the stories that are later told are often recursive and interlaced.

During the first part of the performative essay, the narrative of troop movements was juxtaposed with another notion, that there have been other campaigns since Sherman’s Battle of Atlanta, other movements—motilities of people, desires, memories, archives, and art. As in other cities, queer diaspora moved into Atlanta from all over the state and region, as Barton’s personal collection documents. Although the reasons vary as to why some gay women and men chose to leave their hometowns, the risk of erased or forgotten rural connections remains. There is an impulse in queer history that annexes bodies, memories, and archives in urban centers—large places whose significance sometimes overshadows existing rural relations and roots. These narratives can be cycloramic in scope, visualizing the places occupied in ways that truncate personal stories and fix them to larger histories. When those who move to urban environments die, what they leave behind sometimes gets deposited in collecting repositories in adopted cities, leaving the impression that queer lives are about the metropoles. Regardless of how it came to be, Crawford Barton’s personal papers reside in San Francisco, California, not his hometown of Resaca or any of the places he lived in Georgia. John Q had to visit a West Coast urban enclave to explore Barton’s connections to people and places in the South.

Since the late 1990s, scholars have questioned assumptions about shared queer experiences, arguing for the importance of place and the role of specificity in shaping the lives of lesbians and gay men in nonurban areas. By focusing on the distinctions between the experiences of women and men in different regions, cities, towns, and neighborhoods, these studies highlight the particularity and complexity of queer identity and community formation as well as their relationship to rural places and urban centers. John Howard, for example, emphasizes issues of race, mobility, and movement in the experiences of gay men in the rural South during the mid- and late twentieth century, the period during which Barton left home, attended college for a short time, worked, and, eventually, planned to move to California. Scott Herring deploys Jack (formerly Judith) Halberstam’s formulation of metronormativity in his work on queer anti-urbanism. Before relocating, Barton’s social networks in Georgia necessarily crossed geographic expanses—spaces marked by race, gender, and class. His knowledge of queer cruising grounds and gathering places, whether in Atlanta or Valdosta, was enabled by communication technologies of the day, namely letters,
cards, and telephone, in addition to face-to-face interactions. Automobiles expedited his access to private homes and apartments, as well as popular hangouts, gay or otherwise, and reflected privileges assumed by white people during rapidly changing, but deeply engrained, social patterns in a predominately biracial environment. Barton, remembered by many as a photographer and denizen of an iconic and quintessential queer haven of the late twentieth century, also, perhaps unintentionally, was a documentarian of a lesser-known movement of gay male lives in small Southern places and a dynamic that results in the sometimes forgotten connections to them both.

Conclusion

In expanding our focus on queer migration beyond final urban destinations, John Q sought to introduce Crawford Barton back to Atlanta and to those who, for two evenings, occupied one site on his migratory path. As a performative act of research, The Campaign for Atlanta intended to activate the Atlanta Cyclorama—an otherwise overdetermined historical artifact and its institution of
preservation—as a way of rejuvenating our thinking about how to visualize the geographies of moving bodies. Situating this performance in public space formally underscores the relational manner in which our historical subjects negotiated their social and political realities. At the same time, we have tried to free the notion of social engagement from a strictly aesthetic discourse so that, for instance, practice-led research might leverage public gatherings in the service of archival investigations. In other words, activisms have achieved hybrid forms far beyond such traditional examples as riots and picket lines. As methods of resistance shatter into ever more dispersed forms, looking back at historical documentation through acts of research can at times provide the very seeds needed to explode untapped past potentials with contemporary exigency.

NOTES

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7. The degree to which an artist or collective surrenders her intention has been a matter of some critical and curatorial debate. For an example of how this discourse has been taken up, see Claire Bishop, “The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents” in *Artforum* (February 2006), 179–85.


9. Ibid., 95.

10. John Q’s interview with Duncan Teague, December 27, 2012. Although in our interview Teague was speaking specifically about the economic and employment opportunities for African-American gay people migrating to Atlanta, we found his evocative metaphor of the “brochure” resonant with our own migratory experiences, and those of others with whom we spoke.

11. The panel, “Collaboration and the Future of Memory,” was presented by E. G. Crichton, Rudy Lemcke, and John Q at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History Museum as part of the National Queer Arts Festival, Sunday, June 10, 2012.

12. A productive meditation for the implications of tourism, military campaigns, and queer diaspora can be found in Dan Brouwer’s section on “Ideologies of Mobility” in his essay “From San Francisco to Atlanta and Back Again: Ideologies of Mobility in the AIDS Quilt’s Search for a Homeland,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 703–4.


15. Ibid., 126.

16. Ibid., 127.

17. Ibid., 125.

18. Ibid., 125–7. We have capitalized the “H” in history here to maintain stylistic consistency with the broadsheet produced in conjunction with the performative instance of this essay. Not only does this mean to set history apart from more fragmented notions of memory, but it appears in the material as a sentence within a sentence: You are a witness to History.


21. Ibid., 171-172.

22. Ibid., 172.
23. Ibid., 168–72. Thomas Edison’s 1899 train film, *New Brooklyn to New York via Brooklyn Bridge, no. 2*, with its two parallel tracks moving into the center of the frame, the horizon constantly emerging from the distance and disappearing behind the camera, and the spectator seemingly drawn down the track, is a perfect illustration of Gunning’s idea. The film may be viewed at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/edmp.1734.


25. Ibid., 117.

26. Ibid., 118–19.


28. Ibid., 16.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 19.

31. In our suggestion about the conflation of the home movie and the road movie in some of Crawford Barton’s films, we are reminded that John Howard’s emphasis on the space of the automobile in *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Wesley Chenault’s emphasis on domestic space in “An Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940–1970” (Ph.D diss, University of New Mexico, 2008) make similar claims about the importance of these spaces (the car and the home) for queer relation and circulation.

32. In addition to *Me and Mark on the Way Out*, the box containing this reel shows a number of handwritten titles that correspond to the other scenes in the film and their order on the reel: “Shot of Freeway through Smoke,” “Filling Station Attendant,” “Whirlwind,” “Merce and Mark in Field.” We will refer to the entire film as *Me and Mark on the Way Out*.

33. Several of Crawford Barton’s handwritten notes about his photo-essay and scripts, *The Castro*, describe his feelings about the historical importance of his time in that neighborhood.

34. We thank our editors for bringing to our attention George Platt Lynes’s photographs of Jacques D’Amboise from choreographer Lew Christiansen’s ballet, *Filling Station*.


37. This is a play on Barton’s film titled, *Me and Mark on the Way Out*.

38. The phrasing here resonates with Ann Laura Stoler’s work related to affective resonances and archives and the idea of “archives-as-process” in *Along the Archival*


John Q is an idea collective whose name references “John Q. Public.” The “public” is left understood, though the work is considered a kind of public scholarship, and the “Q” is left hanging to reference the group’s interest in queer history and politics. Past projects have included Memory Flash (Flux Projects, 2010), Discursive Documents: Performing the Catalogue (Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, 2010–11), MondoPotato (MondoHomo, Eyedrum,
2010), *Policing Ourselves* (*The Journal of Sexual Homos* Atlanta zine launch, Outwrite, 2011), and *The Campaign for Atlanta: an essay on queer migration* (*The Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum, City of Atlanta, 2013*). As a collective, John Q has presented panels, discussion, lectures, and performances at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, the GLBT History Museum (as part of the National Queer Arts Festival), the Institute of Liberal Arts Colloquium at Emory University, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, and the Southern American Studies Association conference. Publications include “Discursive Memorials: Queer Histories in Atlanta’s Public Spaces” in *Southern Spaces* and a guest edited issue of *The Journal of Sexual Homos* (*The JOSH, Arts & Sciences Projects, New York*). The collective’s work was also covered in *Noplaceness: Art in a Post-Urban Landscape* (Possible Futures, 2011). Work has been included in the Joan Flasch Artists’ Book Collection at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Elsewhere Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina. Awards include a National Endowment for the Arts supported residency and fellowship (2013), an Allan Bérubé Prize from the American Historical Association’s Committee on LGBT History (Honorable Mention, 2012), and an Artadia: Fund for Art and Dialogue Award (New York, 2011). Press coverage includes *Bad at Sports*, *Huffington Post*, and *Public Art Review*, among others. John Q will also be exhibiting in the upcoming exhibit, *Hearsay*, at the Zuckerman Museum of Art (2014). This exhibit will be accompanied by a catalogue of John Q’s work with essays by Jonathan David Katz and Shawn Michelle Smith. www.johnq.org.

**Wesley Chenault**, a certified archivist, is head of Special Collections and Archives in James Branch Cabell Library, part of VCU Libraries, at Virginia Commonwealth University. A member of the Academy of Certified Archivists, Society of American Archivists, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, Chenault was selected to attend the Archives Leadership Institute in 2011; taught courses on archival theory and practice for the Department of History at the University of West Georgia; was a member of the curriculum development team for the Master of Archival Studies program at Clayton State University; and, currently, serves on the editorial board of *Provenance*. With broad interests in archives, identity, place, and memory, Chenault’s writings appear in the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, *Public, Southern Spaces*, and, more recently, the edited volume *Queer South Rising: Voices of a Contested Place*. Currently he is revising his dissertation, “An Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940–1970,” for publication. Chenault has a PhD in
American studies from the University of New Mexico and an MA in women’s studies from Georgia State University.

**Andy Ditzler** was trained as a percussionist at Indiana University and is a curator, performer, and composer living in Atlanta. He has curated over one hundred twenty programs in the ongoing series Film Love, which presents rare, historical, and experimental cinema to general audiences. As a musician, Ditzler has performed in contexts ranging from classical and jazz to free improvisation and rock. His 2008 song “Solstice” is featured in a music video directed by underground film legend George Kuchar. Ditzler released *Closet Studies*, his latest collection of songs, in 2011. In 2012 he revived the 1977 performance art work *Desirium Probe* by the New York artist James Nares. His work has been reviewed in publications and journals from *The Huffington Post* and *Pitchfork* to *Art Papers* and *Public Art Review*. He is currently a doctoral student in Interdisciplinary Studies and a George W. Woodruff Fellow in the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University, where he studies the curation and exhibition of experimental film, ephemeral cinema, and other marginalized forms. His writings on film may be found at the Film Love website, www.filmlove.org.

**Joey Orr** holds an MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is currently finishing his dissertation, *Practicing the Past: Socially Engaged Remembering in Contemporary Art*, at Emory University’s Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts. His curatorial work has focused almost exclusively on installation and public intervention, from alternative, grassroots venues to museum, commercial, and municipal exhibition spaces. He was founder and curator of the five year community-based installation project ShedSpace, has worked for the Atlanta-based Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCA GA), and served on the Editorial Advisory Board for *Art Papers* magazine for five years. He currently serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal for Artistic Research* (Bern, Switzerland) and is an instructor at Georgia State University and an artist-teacher for the Vermont College of Fine Arts. His writing has appeared in *Art Papers, Emotion, Space, and Society, The Journal of Sexual Homos,* and *Southern Spaces*. Past projects have been reviewed by *Art in America, ARTnews, Art Papers, Contemporary (UK), Public Art Review* and *Sculpture* magazine, among others. www.joeyorr.com.
the Campaign for Atlanta

by John Q

Friday, May 17, 2013 & Saturday, May 18, 2013
at seven o’clock in the evening

at the ATLANTA CYCLORAMA, a 42 x 358 foot panoramic painting of the Civil War’s Battle of Atlanta, located at 800 CHEROKEE AVENUE in GRANT PARK

essay noun
1. a short literary composition on a particular theme or subject, usually in prose and generally analytic, speculative, or interpretive.
2. anything resembling such a composition: a picture essay.
3. an effort to perform or accomplish something, attempt.

In the Atlanta Cyclorama, the seating apparatus revolves, providing an immersive experience of the painting that surrounds you. Controlled light directs your attention to the scenes under discussion. The apparatus itself takes you on a turn that controls what spaces draw your attention and when. The narrative is set. Your gaze over this space has been determined in advance. It is a visual, pre-cinematic form, which presents the unfolding of geography and history as seemingly inevitable. You are a witness to History.

The painting’s history is a migration story of its own movement from place to place, and its ultimate landing in Atlanta. It was originally commissioned by an Illinois politician to commemorate his military service in the Atlanta Campaign. The painting traveled the country in the service of popular entertainment. Its arrival in Atlanta was never planned as its final installation. It was never intended to inhabit the geography it depicted. The structures of this building and the Atlanta Campaign narrative now belie the artwork’s kinetic past, but it moved across a divided country and not on a direct path. There are other movements to note. In addition to the travels of a panoramic painting across the country, there is the movement of bodies taking in the view of a 360-degree work of art. The Atlanta Campaign was itself a military Civil War operation designed to move Union troops through the state into the city.

But there have been many other campaigns since, many other movements—motilities of people, desires, memories, archives, and art. Queer diaspora moved into the city from all over the state and region. These migrations have often meant that queers of every stripe have moved to cities: Atlanta, San Francisco, New York. When these people die, what they leave behind sometimes gets archived in these places, leaving the impression that queer lives are about the metropoles—large places whose significance overshadows existing rural relations and roots. These narratives can be cycloramic in scope, visualizing the places occupied in ways that fix personal stories to larger histories. But we will not be telling any grand narratives of queer migration here. Instead we invite you to explore with us one person’s migration.


jolanaq.org

Broadsheet for The Campaign for Atlanta: an essay on queer migration.
Crawford Barton came to San Francisco from Atlanta some time in the early 1970s. He was born and raised in the small north Georgia town of Resaca, site of one of the first battles in the Atlanta Campaign eighty years earlier. Through all of his migrations, he kept until his death letters, photographs, and films that documented his early life in Georgia—a corpus of memory and relations, fading migratory traces.

Barton photo-documented the Castro district over decades of immense political and social change. Researchers, filmmakers, and artists have used his photo-archive to reference the importance of this terrain to queer populations all over the United States. Barton created a photo-essay, a novel manuscript of over 1700 pages, and a screenplay—all titled Castro Street. Castro Street, then, is a place, but also a geographic imaginary, the way many sites of real struggle begin to operate as representation, even allegory. The way the Battle of Atlanta becomes the Cyclorama. The way a neighborhood becomes Castro Street. Sites of struggle have many potential afterlives. They can become rigidly fixed narratives that foreclose other possibilities, but they can also be spaces for conceiving new types of relations. In expanding our focus on queer migration beyond final urban destinations, therefore, we have sought to introduce Crawford Barton back to those of us who occupy one site on his migratory path.

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www.JohnQ.org

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All images from the Crawford Wayne Barton Collection appear courtesy of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

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On Friday, May 17 and Saturday, May 18, 2013 at 7 pm, at the Atlanta Cyclorama, John Q performed the essay The Campaign for Atlanta as a way to discuss queer migration and to screen a sampling of Crawford Barton’s early Super-8 films, introducing him back to Georgia.

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