

A Selected Timeline of LGBTQ+ History

Adapted from the Following Sources

- [LGBTQ-History-Cards.pdf \(glsen.org\)](#)
- Resources for history and timelines: [LGBTQ Rights Timeline in American History » Teaching LGBTQ History](#)

c. 111 – c. 130

Antinous, a 19-year-old man who was the Roman Emperor Hadrian's favorite lover, mysteriously dies in the Roman province of Egypt. After finding out about Antinous's death, Hadrian creates a cult that gave Antinous the status of a god and built several sculptures of him throughout the Roman Empire.

1620

Colonial Plymouth established with **Puritan norms**. Mayflower contract signed by the men in the group “...for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith...” Established **gender norms** that determined the nuclear family unit was the basis for all other institutions such as government or church. Men held leadership positions, while women’s purpose was submissive and to “please your husband and make him happy.”

1624

Richard Cornish of the Virginia Colony is tried and hanged for sodomy.

1631

Massachusetts Bay General Court, in accordance with Puritan religious and moral beliefs, declared that the following were considered sex crimes and were punishable by whipping, banishment or execution: fornication, adultery, rape, and sodomy.

1649

The first known conviction for lesbian activity in North America occurs in March when Sarah White Norman is charged with “lewd behavior” with Mary Vincent Hammon in Plymouth, Massachusetts.



1714

Sodomy laws in place in the early colonies and in the colonial militia. These laws remained in place until challenged in 1925.



1732

Lesbian – the term lesbian first used by William King in his book, *The Toast*, published in England which meant women who loved women.

1749

Thomas Cannon wrote what may be the earliest published defense of homosexuality in English, “Ancient and Modern Pederasty Investigated and Exemplify’d.”



1778

Lieutenant Gotthold Frederick Enslin of the Continental Army becomes the first documented service member to be dismissed from the U.S. military for homosexuality.

1779

Thomas Jefferson revises Virginia law to make sodomy (committed by men or women) punishable by mutilation rather than death

1849

Lifelong partners **Jason Chamberlain** and **John Chaffee** sail from Boston to California to seek their fortunes in the **California gold rush**. They lived together in Groveland, Ca until Chamberlain died in 1903.

1857-1861

1857-1861 James Buchanan elected president. A lifelong bachelor, Buchanan had a long-term relationship with **William Rufus King**, who served as vice president under Franklin Pierce. The two men lived together from 1840-1853 until King's death. Some historians suggest Buchanan, by today's terms, was gay.

1862

Jennie Hodgers, disguised as a man named **Albert Cashier**, enlisted in the Union army in Illinois and fought for three years until the end of the war. She continued living as a man after the war.

1868

We'wha, a Zuni Native American from New Mexico, is received by

U.S. President Grover Cleveland as a "Zuni Princess." They are an accomplished weaver, potter, and the most famous Ihamana, a traditional Zuni gender role, now described as mixed-gender or Two-Spirit.

1868

Louisa May Alcott published Little Women. Alcott, who used the name Lou in private life, later said, “I am more than half-persuaded that I am, by some freak of nature, a man’s soul put into a woman’s body.”

The Louisa May Alcott Society frames Alcott’s life with the following statement: “[It’s] so important to acknowledge that [Alcott] never fit a binary sex/gender/sexuality system.”



1869

Homosexual – Hungarian journalist Karl-Maria Kertheny first used the term homosexual.

1879

Death of **Charley Parkhurst**, well-known stagecoach driver in Central California who was born a woman, but lived as a man. Buried in Watsonville, Ca.

1890

Birth of **Alan Hart** who pioneered the use of the X-Ray for tuberculosis diagnosis and one of the first transgender men in history

1894 and 1967

Bisexual – the pamphlet, “Psychopathia Sexualis” was translated from German and one of the first times the term bisexual is used. 1967: Sexual Freedom League formed in San Francisco in support of bisexual people.

1907

Gertrude Stein meets **Alice B. Toklas**, sparking a legendary romance. In Paris, the two women set up a salon that connects many great writers and artists, including gays. Stein publicly declares her love for Toklas in print in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, published in 1933.

1917-1935

The **Harlem Renaissance**. Historians have stated that the renaissance was “as gay as it was black.” Some of the lesbian, gay or bisexual people of this movement included writers and poets such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Zora Neale Hurston; Professor Alain Locke; music critic and photographer Carl Van Vechten, and entertainers Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters and Gladys Bentley.



1924

Henry Gerber forms the Society for Human Rights, the first gay group in the United States, but the group is quickly shut down.

1926

Rose Schneiderman is elected the president of the Women's Trade Union League. Schneiderman is remembered for saying, "What the woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist — the right to life as the rich woman has the right to life, and the sun and music and art. You have nothing that the humblest worker has not a right to have also. The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too."

Schneiderman had a long-term relationship with Maud O'Farrell Swartz, another woman union organizer.

1928

The Well of Loneliness, by Radclyffe Hall, is published in the US. This sparks great legal controversy and brings the topic of homosexuality to public conversation.

1944

Pauli Murray, a law student at Howard University, proposed challenging the “separate” part of the Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) Supreme Court decision as a violation of the 13th and 14th Amendments; this argument eventually formed the basis for the Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) case.

Murray, a black, genderqueer person perceived as a woman, also coined the term “Jane Crow” to describe the intersectionality of discrimination experienced by black women. While at Howard, Murray also organized sit-ins in Washington D.C. to desegregate restaurants and urged classmates to go south to fight for civil rights.

In 1971, Ruth Bader Ginsburg credited Murray for inspiring the amicus brief she wrote for the Supreme Court case *Reed v. Reed*, which was the first time the nation’s highest court recognized women as victims of sex discrimination.

1948

Alfred Kinsey, an American biologist and sexologist at Indiana University issues the first report, Sexual Behavior of the Human Male, was published and discussed male homosexuality (Also known as the Kinsey report).

1950

The first lasting gay organization, the Mattachine Society, is formed in Los Angeles. They refer to themselves as a “homophile” group. The group exists for about a decade before splitting into smaller entities.

1952

Christine Jorgensen is the first American who comes forward publicly about being transgender and speaks openly about her experiences with gender confirmation surgery and hormone replacement therapy. Her transition causes an international sensation, and for many, she is the first visible transgender person in the media.

1952

The **American Psychiatric Association's** diagnostic manual lists homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance that could be treated

1953

Executive Order 10450 issued by President Dwight D. Eisenhower banning homosexuals from working for the federal government stating they are a security risk. This order stays in place until 1993 when President Bill Clinton and the U.S. Congress enact the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law.

1955

The Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), considered to be the first lesbian rights organization, is formed by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon in San Francisco, California. The group is conceived as a social alternative to lesbian bars, which were considered illegal and thus subject to raids and police harassment.

1955

Gay – the term gay was used throughout Europe earlier, but this is the year most agree that gay came to mean same-sex relationships between men.

1956

James Baldwin, African-American novelist and intellectual, publishes his first novel, *Giovanni's Room*, a critically acclaimed work that explores bisexuality, as well as intimate relationships between men.

1958

One v. Olesen (Supreme Court Decision)

Without oral arguments, the Supreme Court issued a decision stating that first amendment free speech rights protected the publishing of “One Magazine”. Up to this point in time the U.S. Postal Service had the power to open any magazine or mail they determined to be “obscene, lewd, and/or lascivious.” They also had the power to keep lists of people who received such publications; and had lists of homosexual men who received the publication, “One Magazine.” The publication was a gay man’s publication associated with the Mattachine Society.



1962

Illinois becomes the first U.S. state to remove sodomy law from its criminal code.

1963

Bayard Rustin, noted civil rights activist and gay man, is the chief organizer behind the historic March on Washington, which culminates with Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech.



1964

The first gay rights demonstration in the USA takes place on September 19th at the Whitehall Induction Center in New York City, protesting against discrimination in the military.

1965

Transgender – John Oliven, in his book, *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology*, used the term transgender to mean a person who identifies with a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth.

1966

Compton's Cafeteria Riot, San Francisco. Transgender and drag queens in San Francisco reacted to ongoing harassment by the police force. After several days, the protests stopped. One of the outgrowths was the establishment of the **National Transsexual Counseling Unit (NTCU)** in support of transgender people.

1969

Police raid the Stonewall Inn in New York City in the early hours of June 28. This leads to four days of struggle between police and LGBTQ people. Transgender people, LGBTQ people of color and youth are a major part of these “riots” that mark the birth of the modern LGBTQ movement.

1969 or 1970

Black Panther activist and leader Afeni Shakur meets Carol Crooks while both are imprisoned. After getting released from prison, they worked together to bring gay liberation into the ideology and work of the Black Panthers. When Shakur gave birth to her son, Lesane Parish Crooks, she gave him Carol's last as an acknowledgement of the “father” role Carol filled during their romantic relationship. Lesane grew up to become musician Tupac Shakur.

1970's

Teresa Rankin kept her sexual orientation private while organizing textile workers at J.P. Stevens in North Carolina, relying on the lesbian social scene in nearby Washington, D.C. for community. When the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) offered her an organizing position in a small town in Virginia, Rankin, turned down the opportunity fearing isolation due to her sexual orientation.



1970

The first “Gay Liberation Day March” is held in New York City.

1973

The **American Psychiatric Association**, after considerable advocacy by Frank Kameny and members of the Mattachine Society, changed the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. It was not until 1987 that homosexuality was completely removed from the APA list of mental disorders. The APA found that “the latest and best scientific evidence shows that sexual orientation and expressions of gender identity occur naturally...and that in short, there is no scientific evidence that sexual orientation, be it heterosexual, homosexual or otherwise, is a freewill choice.”

1974

Elaine Noble becomes the first openly gay person to be elected as a state legislator; she served in the Massachusetts State House of Representatives for two terms.

1977

In San Francisco Howard Wallace campaigned for the boycott of Coors beer because of its anti-union and anti-gay policies. In 1983, Wallace and other activists formed the Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance of San Francisco.

1977

Anita Bryant, former American singer and Miss America Pageant winner formed a group called “Save Our Children” to protest against a Dade County, Florida ordinance preventing discrimination against homosexuals. Her campaign was successful and the law was repealed. Gay and lesbian activists and organizations, including Harvey Milk, condemned the action and in response, boycotted Florida Citrus Commission products, for which Bryant was a spokesperson. In 1980, Bryant was fired as the spokesperson for the Florida Citrus Commission and in 1998, a new gay and lesbian rights ordinance was passed. This was one of the first times the LGBT community realized the political power they possessed.

1977

Harvey Milk becomes the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California when he wins a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

1978

The Briggs Initiative, a statewide proposition in California, was defeated by 58% of the voters. The initiative would have banned gays and lesbians from working in California's public schools.

1978

San Francisco Supervisor **Harvey Milk** is assassinated along with Mayor George Moscone. Supervisor Dan White is convicted of voluntary manslaughter and is sentenced to seven years in prison

1979

National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Over 100,000 people gathered in support of gay and lesbian rights.

1980

The Democratic National Convention was the first American political party to officially incorporate a plank preventing discrimination by sexual orientation into their platform. Though the language employed was very general, it was a significant advancement in the gay liberation movement, called “a clear victory” by gay rights activists (“TheWorld”). Both Ted Kennedy and Jimmy Carter, the Democratic Party’s 1980 candidates for President, supported the addition of gay rights to the platform.

1981

Nearly 800 people are infected with GRID (Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder). The name is changed to AIDS by the year's end.



1984

Virginia Uribe begins Project 10, a program to support LGBTQ students in a Los Angeles high school. The project is eventually adopted by the entire Los Angeles School District.

1985

The first memorial to the Nazi's gay victims is unveiled at the Neuengamme concentration camp, a pink granite stone monument inscribed, "Dedicated to the Homosexual victims of National Socialism."

1986

Bowers v. Hardwick (Supreme Court Decision)

By a vote of 5-4 that a Georgia sodomy law criminalizing oral and anal sex in private between consenting adults was legal and that there were no constitutional protections for acts of sodomy. (Was overruled in 2003: See Lawrence v. Texas).

1987

ACT UP, a direct-action activist group, is founded in the LGBT Community Center in New York City to bring attention to AIDS-related issues using civil disobedience.

1989

Billy Tipton, a famous male jazz musician, dies. As a result, it becomes publicly known that Tipton was assigned female at birth but lived and identified as male for most of his adult life.

1990

The documentary Paris is Burning is released.

Where does voguing come from, and what, exactly, is throwing shade? This landmark documentary provides a vibrant snapshot of the 1980s through the eyes of New York City's African American and Latinx Harlem drag-ball scene. Made over seven years, *Paris Is Burning* offers an intimate portrait of rival fashion “houses,” from fierce contests for trophies to house mothers offering sustenance in a world rampant with homophobia, transphobia, racism, AIDS, and poverty. Featuring legendary voguers, drag queens, and trans women—including Willi Ninja, Pepper LaBeija, Dorian Corey, and Venus Xtravaganza—*Paris Is Burning* brings it, celebrating the joy of movement, the force of eloquence, and the draw of community.

1991

Audre Lorde is named State Poet of New York. She is a critically acclaimed novelist, poet, and essayist who was also politically active in the civil rights movements, a cofounder of The Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, and an editor of the lesbian journal “Chrysalis.”

1993

The U.S. Congress passed and President Bill Clinton signed “**Don’t Ask Don’t Tell**” that allowed gay and lesbian people to serve in the military. They would not be asked their sexual orientation during enlistment screening.

1993

One thousand members of the Service Employees International Union met at Local 250's union hall in Oakland and founded SEIU's Western Conference Lavender Caucus. (98) A few years later in 1997, Pride at Work, an organization dedicated to defending and promoting the rights of queer workers, formally affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

1994

Pedro Pablo Zamora (born Pedro Pablo Zamora y Díaz) was a Cuban- American AIDS educator and television personality. As one of the first openly gay men with AIDS to be portrayed in popular media, Zamora brought international attention to HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ issues and prejudices through his appearance on MTV's reality television series, *The Real World: San Francisco*.

1996

Kelli Peterson founds the Gay/ Straight Alliance at East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. The city school board bans all “non- curricular” student clubs in order to keep the group from meeting.

1997

Ellen DeGeneres, a comedian, TV actor and television host was one of the first popular entertainers who publicly came out as a lesbian during an interview on the Oprah Winfrey show and then became the first openly gay character on the TV show, “Ellen.” She was then highlighted on the cover of Time Magazine and other news organizations. Her show was canceled the following year.

1998

Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, was brutally attacked and tied to a fence in a field outside of Laramie, Wyo. and left to die because he was gay. He died from his wounds several days later. This was one of the most notorious anti-gay hate crimes in America and resulted in a federal law passed 10 years later in 2009 called the “Hate Crimes Prevention Act”, a federal law against bias crimes directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people.

1998

Tammy Baldwin became the first openly lesbian candidate ever elected to Congress, winning Wisconsin's second congressional district seat over Josephine Musser.

2000

GLSEN conducts its first National School Climate Survey to assess the experiences of LGBTQ youth with regards to their experiences of school-based harassment and victimization, the frequency with which they heard homophobic language in their schools, and their overall comfort in school. The survey is the first of its kind to examine the specific experiences of LGBTQ-identified youth in schools nationally.

2002

NYC expands the definition of “gender” to include protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people in employment, housing, and public accommodations in the NYC Human Rights Law.

2003

Horizon Foundation creates the Gwen Arujo Memorial Fund for Transgender Education in honor of Gwen Amber Arujo, a slain trans teenager. The fund's purpose is to support school-based programs in the nine-county Bay Area that promotes understanding of transgender people and issues annual grants.

2003

Lawrence v. Texas (Supreme Court Decision)

Ruled by a vote of 6-3 that a Kansas law criminalizing gay or lesbian sex was unconstitutional declaring the importance of constitutional liberty and privacy consistent with the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Also overturned the court decision in Bowers v. Hardwick (1986) stating that the court had made the wrong decision.



2004

Massachusetts becomes the first U.S. state to legally recognize same-sex marriage.



2006

Attorney and transgender activist Kim Coco Iwamoto is elected to the state-level Board of Education in Hawaii. She is the first openly transgender person to be elected to a state level office in the US.

2006

Soulforce, an organization committed to confronting religious-based hate, launches its first Equality Ride bus tour, visiting 33 colleges and universities that ban enrollment of openly LGBTQ students.

2009

President Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes and Prevention Act, also known as the Matthew Shepard Act, into law. The law expands the 1969 US federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, and becomes the first federal law to include legal protections for transgender people.

2009

The David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act or David's Law, was a bill first introduced in the US House of Representatives by Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee of Texas. It was designed to enhance federal enforcement of laws regarding hate crimes, and to specifically make sexual orientation, like race and gender, a protected class.

2010

The U.S. military policy “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” officially ends. This allows lesbian, gay, and bisexual people to serve openly in the military. The repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” does not lift regulations barring many transgender people from serving. The U.S. Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed the **repeal of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”** so that gay and lesbian people could serve openly in the military. One person present at the signing ceremony in the White House was Frank Kameny who had been released from military service in 1958 because of discriminatory policies against gay and lesbian people.

2013

In the wake of the killing of Trayvon Martin, black queer activist Alicia Garza writes a series of posts on Facebook titled ‘A Love Letter to Black People,’ which she concluded affirming, “Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.”

Her friend and co-conspirator, Patrice Cullors later modifies the post to share on Twitter and creates the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter

2013

U.S. v. Windsor / Repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act – DOMA (Supreme Court Decision)

By a vote of 5-4 ruled that defining marriage as just between a man and a woman is unconstitutional under the Fifth Amendment guarantee of equal protection. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1996 and stated that marriage or legal unions are between one man and one woman. This decision ruled the congressional law as unconstitutional and that states have the authority to define marital relationships. This decision was rendered the same day as the decision in Hollingsworth v. Perry.

2011

US Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan issues a statement clarifying that students have the right to form gay-straight alliances (GSAs) under the Equal Access Act of 1984 in any public school that allows noncurricular student groups to form. Schools must also provide GSAs with the same opportunities as other groups to convene and access resources.

2012

The Food and Drug Administration approves Truvada to be taken as a daily preventative for those at risk of acquiring HIV as PrEP (Pre- Exposure Prophylaxis). The Center for Disease Control notes that this is the first time a drug has been approved to prevent acquisition of sexually and intravenous transmission of HIV.

2013

.S. v. Windsor / Repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act – DOMA (Supreme Court Decision) The US federally recognizes same- sex marriages, extending federal benefits to couples in states that allow same-sex marriage. The Supreme Court strikes down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a law signed by President Bill Clinton in 1996 that prohibited same-sex couples from receiving federal marriage benefits.



2014

Laverne Cox is the first transgender woman to win an Emmy as an Executive Producer for Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word, a documentary. It aired on MTV.

2015

Obergefell v. Hodges (Supreme Court Decision)

The Court voted 5-4 that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This decision mandated that states must allow same-sex couples to legally marry.

2016

The Department of Education issues official guidance to clarify that transgender students are protected from discrimination under Title IX, a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against students on the bases of sex/gender in federally funded education programs and activities.

2017

Austin City Council approves the first ordinance for single-stall bathrooms to be recognized as gender-neutral. The ordinance does not address multiple stall bathrooms.



2015

Cincinnati votes to ban reparative/ conversion therapy of LGBTQ youth.

2015

MTV's critically acclaimed series True Life airs an episode covering the topic of living and being genderqueer, bringing to light for many viewers at home (beyond the introduction to the world outside of the gender binary) how to properly use the singular "they" and other neopronouns.

2016

Inspired by Black Lives Matter, students at the University of Missouri began the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement in response to racism, sexism, and other issues in the administration. The movement was led by queer-identified black students, such as student body president Payton Head.

2016

President Obama dedicated the new Stonewall National Monument in Greenwich Village, Lower Manhattan, as the first US National Monument to honor the LGBTQ rights movement.

2020

The US Department of Health and Human Services issues an official revision that shortens the deferral period for blood donation from men who have sex with men. In addition to shortening the deferral period from a life ban to 12 months, the new revision includes the statement that for the purposes of questioning, gender should be considered on a “self-identified and self-reported” basis.

2020

Geo Soctomah Neptune (they/them) became the first openly two-spirit, transgender, and non-binary person to be elected to office in Maine. They are a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe from Indian Township, Maine, and is a Master Basketmaker, a Drag Queen, an Activist and an Educator. As a person who identifies as a two-spirit, an indigenous cultural gender role that is a sacred blend of both male and female, Geo uses they/them gender-neutral pronouns.



2021

CDC Releases Report Confirming Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People at Greater Risk of COVID-19 Illness

2021

The administration of US President Donald Trump finalized yet another rule rolling back nondiscrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people seeking the services of health and welfare programs funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

2022

The World Health Organization declared monkeypox a public health emergency and it also warned of another threat to society:

"Stigma and discrimination can be as dangerous as any virus," WHO Director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The global monkeypox outbreak appears to mostly affect men who have sex with other men. "While we may be seeing clusters primarily in certain groups of people, viruses do not discriminate by race, by religion, or by sexual orientation."

2022

President Biden's Proclamation:

During Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Pride Month, we reflect on the progress we have made as a Nation in the fight for justice, inclusion, and equality while reaffirming our commitment to do more to support LGBTQI+ rights at home and abroad. I often say that America can be defined by one word: possibilities. This month, we celebrate generations of LGBTQI+ people who have fought to make the possibilities of our Nation real for every American.