

LGBT History

Just like any other marginalized group that has had to fight for acceptance and equal rights, the LGBT community has a history of events that have impacted the community. This is a collection of some of the major happenings in the LGBT community during the 20th century through today. It is broken up into three sections: Pre-Stonewall, Stonewall, and Post-Stonewall. This is because the move toward equality shifted dramatically after the Stonewall Riots. Please note this is not a comprehensive list.

Pre-Stonewall

- 1913** Alfred Redl, head of Austrian Intelligence, committed suicide after being identified as a Russian double agent and a homosexual. His widely-published arrest gave birth to the notion that homosexuals are security risks.
- 1919** Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Institute for Sexology in Berlin. One of the primary focuses of this institute was civil rights for women and gay people.
- 1933** On January 30, Adolf Hitler banned the gay press in Germany. In that same year, Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexology was raided and over 12,000 books, periodicals, works of art and other materials were burned. Many of these items were completely irreplaceable.
- 1934** Gay people were beginning to be rounded up from German-occupied countries and sent to concentration camps. Just as Jews were made to wear the Star of David on the prison uniforms, gay people were required to wear a pink triangle.
- WWII** Becomes a time of "great awakening" for queer people in the United States. The homosocial environments created by the military and number of women working outside the home provide greater opportunity for people to explore their sexuality. (People relocate to large coastal cities. Rise of gay bars, clubs, and community groups.)
- 1947** The first U.S. lesbian magazine, *Vice-Versa*, was published.
- 1948** Alfred Kinsey publishes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* revealing that queer people number far more than was commonly believed. Many bisexual.
- 1951** The Mattachine Society was founded to help homosexuals realize their collective histories and experiences. The Mattachine Society is often considered the beginning of the contemporary organized gay rights movement in the U.S. The name Mattachine was derived from medieval French history and referred to jesters who always wore masks in public.
- 1955** The Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian organization, was founded to promote a sense of community, belonging, and political unity for women. The name Daughters of Bilitis was taken from the poem, "Songs of Bilitis," by Pierre Louys.
- 1957** The Kinsey Report revealed that 10% of the male population is predominantly homosexual.
- 1961** Illinois became the first state to decriminalize homosexual acts.

LGBT History

Stonewall

1969 On June 27, the Stonewall Riots in New York City's Greenwich Village marked the beginning of major resistance by gay men and lesbians to discrimination. The police, following orders, raided the Stonewall Inn, a popular bar in New York's Greenwich Village for queer people, sparking three days of riots. Police harassment was common for patrons of queer bars and individuals **could be arrested for not wearing three clothing items of their assigned sex.** The patrons of the Stonewall Inn fought back forcing the police to barricade themselves inside the bar for protection. (*Note the atmosphere of harassment toward queer people in broader society and in the bars. Also, the Stonewall Riots were led mostly by gender-non-conformists and people of color like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson.)

Post-Stonewall

- 1970** In the summer about 200 Chicagoans took to the streets of their city with signs carrying simple messages such as "I am Gay," "Gay is as Good as Straight," and "I Exist!"
- 1973** The American Psychiatric Association removes "homosexuality" from its official list of mental disorders. It then adds "gender identity disorder/gender dysphoria" in its place. This in turn targets transgender and gender-non-conforming people as mentally ill. "Gender Identity Disorder" is still in the DSM as a diagnosis, and is required for gender non-conforming people to have access to health/medical care.
- 1978** On November 27, Harvey Milk, an openly gay city council member and San Francisco's Mayor George Moscone were murdered. In 1979, the convicted murderer Dan White received a verdict of voluntary manslaughter and a sentence of 7-8 years. This caused massive protests throughout the country as gay men and lesbians saw this as yet another blatant example of discrimination.
- 1979** On May 31, the California Supreme Court made a landmark decision that public utility companies could neither arbitrarily refuse to hire homosexuals, nor could they interfere with employee involvement in gay organizations.
- 1980's** Originally called "GRID" (Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disease); AIDS/HIV goes from isolated incidents to full-blown epidemic. The rise of the AIDS epidemic takes queer activism in new directions. Queer Nation and the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) are formed to take direct action activism to the fight against AIDS. (ACT UP- lasted 2 years. Queer Nation—"We're here. We're queer. Get used to it." No formal structure. They would hold large community meetings, kiss ins, etc. Staged events to garner press and political attention to issues of gay community and AIDS that was being ignored in society.
- 1981** Wisconsin became the first state to pass state-wide gay rights legislation.
- 1987** On October 11, the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights drew over 500,000 people making it the largest civil rights demonstration in U.S. history. This date became National Coming Out Day.
- 1987** The NAMES Project unveiled the AIDS Memorial Quilt on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C. At

LGBT History

- that time, the Quilt covered the area of two football fields.
- 1988** The Episcopal Diocese of Newark, New Jersey became the first church in the country to support ministers and congregations who condoned and blessed relationships between gay and lesbian couples.
- 1990** The Hate Crime Statistics Bill passed through Congress in February. Previous legislation required the collection of data on crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice. This new law also required that data be collected on crimes motivated by prejudice against people of differing sexual orientations.
- 1990** At the 101st Annual Conference of American Rabbis, it was decided that gay men and lesbians would be accepted as rabbis. The resolution states that “...All Rabbis, regardless of their sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation which they have chosen.”
- 1992** On October 11, the AIDS Memorial Quilt was unfolded in its entirety, representing 22,000 people, on the Capitol Mall. Today, it's too large to be displayed in its entirety in any one place.
- 1992** Canada joined the vast majority of other NATO countries permitting military service by lesbians and gay men.
- 1992** Bill Clinton, the 41st President of the United States, was the first President to recognize gay and lesbian civil rights as a serious and important national issue. He also appointed open gays and lesbians to government positions.
- 1993** The first large study of female sexual orientation found that there was a strong genetic component to homosexuality and heterosexuality, as reported by researchers at Boston University and Northwestern University.
- 1993** “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is signed into law, banning gays and lesbians from openly serving in the military
- 1994** The first-ever school district-sanctioned gay youth prom is held in Los Angeles.
- 1996** The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would have prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace, narrowly fails in the U.S. Senate in a vote of 50-49. It is the first time a vote on lesbian and gay civil rights has ever been before the full Senate.
- 1996** President Bill Clinton signs the Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), denying same-sex couples to the right to have their unions/partnerships recognized by the federal government.
- 1997** Ellen DeGeneres comes out in her U.S. television comedy show.
- 1998** Mathew Shepard brings hate crimes against gays to the forefront of news. The 21-year-old gay college student in Wyoming was beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die.
- 2000** Vermont is the 1st state to legalize civil unions.
- 2000** For the first time, the U.S. census attempts to estimate the number of same- sex (“unmarried partners”) households.

LGBT History

- 2001** A federal judge upholds Florida's ban on adoptions by gays and lesbians.
- 2001** Rev. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson blame gays and lesbians among other groups for contributing to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.
- 2002** Comedian and actress Rosie O'Donnell publicly comes out in a television interview.
- 2003** Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn) compares homosexuality to polygamy, incest and adultery when commenting on the sodomy case being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 2003** The U.S. Supreme Court overturns the Texas sodomy law in a highly publicized case (*Lawrence, et al vs. Texas*). The Court determined the law was unconstitutional based on infringement of citizens' privacy in their home.
- 2003** Canada allows same-sex couples the right to marry.
- 2003** Rev. Gene Robinson becomes the first openly gay man to be confirmed a bishop in the Episcopal Church USA.
- 2004** Utahans pass Amendment 3, making it the 3rd law on Utah books that defines marriage as between a man and a woman.
- 2004** Massachusetts legalizes same sex marriage
- 2005** The United Church of Christ becomes the first mainstream Christian church to support gay marriage
- 2008** Utah Legislation passes the Mutual Commitment Registry requiring all domestic partners to register, allowing businesses, should they choose, to use the registry to determine eligibility for benefits.
- 2008** Proposition 8, banning gay marriage, passes in California
- 2008** Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire legalize same-sex marriage bringing the country's total to six. Maine's law was later overturned bringing the number back down to five.
- 2010** US District judge rules California's Prop 8 ban on gay marriage unconstitutional
- 2011** President Obama declares the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional and directs the Department of Justice to stop defending the law
- 2011** "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is repealed allowing LGBT men and women to openly serve in the U.S. Armed Services.
- 2011** New York legalizes gay marriage
- 2012** U.S. 9th District Court of Appeals rules California Prop. 8 unconstitutional
- 2012** Maine, Maryland, and Washington become the first states to legalize gay marriage by popular vote