KEEPING LOS ANGELES’ LGBTQ+ HISTORY VISIBLE

Pride Month 2023 | ONE Archives Foundation x LACHS
About ONE Archives Foundation

Founded in 1952 as ONE Inc., the publisher of *ONE Magazine*, ONE Archives Foundation is the oldest active LGBTQ organization in the United States. In 2010, ONE Archives Foundation deposited its vast collection of LGBTQ historical materials with the USC Libraries. Today, the organization is dedicated to promoting this important resource through diverse activities including educational initiatives, fundraising, and range of public programs.
Notes on Language

- Hetero/Homo/Bisexual (c. 1860s)
- Lesbian (c. 1890s)
- Queer (c. 1890s)
- Asexual (c. 1890s)
- Gay (c. 1920s)
- Transsexual & Transvestite (c. 1920s)
- Intersex (c. 1940s)
- Transgender (c. 1960s)
- Pansexual (c. 1970s)
- Two-Spirit (c. 1990s)
- Nonbinary (c. 2000s)
Honoring Tongva Land & Two-Spirit Natives
WW2 & Growth of Queer Communities in Los Angeles

1940s - 1950s
GINGER ROGERS BEACH

This section of Will Rogers State Beach has been a notable site of LGBTQ+ expression and organizing as early as the 1940s. During and after World War II, LGBTQ+ people migrated to Los Angeles to take advantage of a new sense of community in Santa Monica Canyon. As the LGBTQ+ community became more politically conscious in the later twentieth century, Ginger Rogers Beach became an important site for organizing around social issues, such as youth support, police discrimination, racism, and AIDS. In recent years, this area has been demarcated by lifeguard towers 17 and 18 and has been known as “Ginger Rogers Beach,” a campy reference to the glamorous gay icon of Hollywood’s Golden Age.

Safe Space for LGBTQ+ Expression

During World War II, widespread social changes gave way to a rise of LGBTQ+ communities in urban centers, especially in port cities like Los Angeles. Young people embraced newfound economic opportunity and personal freedoms away from their traditional lives back home, even as medical institutions and government policies targeted homosexuals as psychological and moral deviants.

More military personnel moved to Los Angeles than to any other U.S. city throughout the 1940s, and beaches served as a critical safe space for LGBTQ+ people. In Gay L.A. – a seminal text on Los Angeles’ LGBTQ+ history – historians Lilian Faderman and Stuart Timmons write:

The beach was especially attractive to gay people. It represented the very edge of the continent, far away from ‘back home’. During and after the war, writable cases of gay life could be found in the open at many Los Angeles beaches, where the atmosphere was celebratory, convivial-like, even lawless.

As a teen in the 1950s, Faderman—the “mother of lesbian history”—observed gay people at the beach freely express their flamboyance and explore romance. In 1957, she watched San Francisco drag queen Josie Serra give an impromptu performance to a queer crowd on the sands. Serra enlisted in the U.S. Army following the attack on Pearl Harbor, becoming infatuated with queer nightlife while stationed in Berlin, and returned to San Francisco in 1947. In 1960, Serra would become the first openly gay person to run for political office in the United States.

In 1956, Harry Hay and Rod Geinrich—co-founders of the Mattachine Society, one of the nation’s first gay rights organizations—gathered 500 signatures at an anti-war petition. At this time, gay beachgoers were not yet willing to join an organization to discuss homosexual rights. The community became more politically unified through the next few decades as gay publications—such as ONE Magazine—and acts of civil disobedience—such as the Stonewall Uprising—strengthened the case for a common identity and a civil rights movement (see sign #2).

Writer Christopher Isherwood and painter Don Becherer met on the beach in 1952, launching a life-long partnership. Isherwood’s 1964 novel A Single Man memorialized the beach and Santa Monica Canyon’s gay culture in modern literature.

For Pride Month 2023, LA County Supervisor Lindsay P. Horvath and the ONE Archives Foundation formally commemorated the vibrant LGBTQ+ history of this beach.
Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, & ONE Inc.
ONE Inc. v. Olesen (1958)
ONE Institute for Homophile Studies

Dr. Evelyn Hooker
Bayard Rustin

1950s - 1960s
Queer Uprisings in the 1950s & 1960s
Personal Rights in Defense & Education

PRIDE

Vol. 1, No. 1
P.O. Box 46422
Los Angeles, California 90046
May 1966

The Purposes of PRIDE are:
LEGAL: to distribute information regarding legal rights,
to recommend lawyers and bailbondsmen,
to provide financial assistance in selected cases;

POLITICAL: to register voters,
to inform the group of the attitudes of candidates,
to make recommendations for voting purposes;

EDUCATIONAL: to educate the community;
COMMUNITY SERVICE: to give referrals for apartments, employment;
to promote a V.D. campaign;
SOCIAL: to arrange parties, bowling and other events.
Municipal codes around cross-dressing in the 1800s United States

Although gender conventions have been challenged for many centuries, it wasn’t until the middle of the nineteenth century when gender expression was scrutinized through legislation. Municipal laws against cross-dressing and presenting as the opposite sex started to emerge across many U.S. cities: Columbus Ohio (1848), Chicago, Illinois (1851), Wilmington, Delaware (1856) Charleston, South Carolina (1858), and San Francisco, California (1863).
Biltmore Invasion
The Community Acts Up

1980s - 1990s
The Freedom to Marry

Edie Windsor
Pride Today
The Road to Equality

The ACLU is tracking 491 anti-LGBTQ bills in the U.S.

Florida students say they’re walking out and teaching themselves banned history lessons to protest censorship and anti-LGBTQ laws in education.

1175 Total number of LGBTQ elected officials nationwide
History Has Work to Do

You don’t have to be gay to be fired!

You just have to:
- Express an unpopular opinion
- Wear the wrong clothes
- Have a student angry at you
- Hug a fellow teacher
- Defend a gay friend
- Hug a student
- Speak out on human rights

The list is endless.

Vote NO ON 6

“Protect our children”

Preserve parents’ rights to protect their children from teachers who are immoral and who promote a perverted life style

Vote “YES” ON 6

Former Police Chief, Ed Davis: “There is no question that homosexuals pose a threat to children”

Ad paid for by “Citizens for Decency and Morality”, Dr. Ray Betema, Co-Chairman

one
ARCHIVES FOUNDATION
Time for Questions!

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