LGBTQ+ History in Portland, Oregon

A Historic Context Statement

Historic Context Statement Prepared by Cayla McGrail
for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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About the Author

Cayla McGrail (they/she) is a former Associate Planner in the City of Portland's Historic Resources Program and former Associate Project Manager of the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project. They hold a Master of Science in Historic Preservation with a focus on queer preservation and a Bachelor of Arts in History and Anthropology. Cayla's lived, academic, and professional experience related to LGBTQ+ history and historic preservation informed the authorship of this historic context statement.

Contact

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Historic and Cultural Resources Program
historic.resources@portlandoregon.gov

About City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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http://portland.gov/bps
503-823-7700
bps@portlandoregon.gov

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An Overview of Portland LGBTQ+ History, 1905–1994

The area currently known as Portland, Oregon is nestled in the Pacific Northwest at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, the traditional lands of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla and other Indigenous populations. On clear days, the peak of Mount Hood, Oregon's highest point located fifty miles east of Portland, contrasts downtown Portland's concrete mountains. Multiple bridges today construct connective tissues between the Willamette's west and east banks, reflecting Portland's expansion and land annexation following white settlement in the mid-1800s. With continuous alterations and refashioning to the urban landscape, Portland has evolved drastically since its initial platting in 1845 and today boasts a population of over 600,000. Portland's evolution as an urban area was accomplished through removal of Indigenous populations, gentrification of historic African American neighborhoods, clearance of immigrant communities, and displacement of commercial and residential tenants, all of which included LGBTQ+ individuals.

Despite harassment, financial challenges, political targeting, and physical destruction of queer spaces during the 20th century, Portland nonetheless attracted LGBTQ+ people from near and far to plant roots and sow queer life throughout the 1905 – 1994 time period.[33] Many found Portland to be a liberating space where queer culture and life could flourish.

After I got to Oregon it feels like I could have my whole self. I could be Black, I could be lesbian, I could be woman. I could be, you know, whatever.

— Kathleen Saadat, reflecting on the openness she felt in Oregon compared to St. Louis, 2010 [34]

Between 1905, when Doctor Marie Equi resettled in the city, to when Oregonians defeated anti-LGBTQ+ Ballot Measure 13 in 1994, Portland transformed from its conservative Stumptown reputation to a liberal City of Roses identity. Throughout this period, Portland developed its own position within national trends of LGBTQ+ identity, connection, harassment, resilience, care, and self-expression.

[33] Portland today still serves as a prominent place for LGBTQ+ people. In summer 2023, Oregon Public Broadcasting and *Willamette Week* reported that "more LGBTQ+ people are coming to Oregon" to flee anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in other states. See Anthony Effinger, "They Arrived: Portland is Becoming a Haven for Gender Refugees, *Willamette Weekly,* July 5, 2023.; Rolando Hernandez, "More queer people are coming to Oregon to flee restrictive laws. Service providers seeing increased need," September 2023, Oregon Public Broadcast, https://www.opb.org/article/2023/09/04/queer-people-flee-restrictive-laws-for-oregon-service-providers-see-increased-need/.

[34] Oral history interview with Kathleen Saadat, by Cameron Chambers, March 2, 2010, Black United Front Oral History Project, Portland State University, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/blackunited_oralhist/7/.

Oregon and LGBTQ+ History Background, Pre–1905

Oregon's history is rooted in the exclusion and criminalization of diverse bodies and behaviors.[35] For instance, in 1853, Oregon's Territorial legislature adopted new criminal codes outlawing sodomy, launching decades of sexual freedom bans.[36] Broad and vague criminal charges during the late 1800s and early 1900s punished those who were considered non-conforming to heteronormative, cisgender society.[37] These charges included "grossly disturbed the public peace and health," "openly outraged public decency, "injured public morals," "indecent and immoral acts," disorderly conduct, and vagrancy.[38]

LGBTQ+ Historian Marc Stein details in "Historical Landmarks and Landscapes of LGBTQ Law" that various new laws in the late 1800s and early 1900s criminalized queer acts, identities, and communities. First, the 1873 Comstock Act inspired laws over the next century to censor LGBTQ+ "speech and expression in publications, plays, photographs, and films."[39] Restrictive and anti-immigration statutes "targeted (among other groups) individuals convicted of crimes of 'moral turpitude' and those who were 'constitutional psychopathic inferiors.'" In Oregon, Portland was among the first American cities to adopt laws against "lewd solicitation" in 1883.[40]

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[35] Walidah Imarisha, Assistant Professor in the Black Studies Department and Director of the Center for Black Studies at Portland State University, stated to Oregon Public Broadcasting that "Oregon was founded as a racist white utopia." For additional history on Oregon as an exclusionary state, see Tiffany Camhi, "A racist history shows why Oregon is still so White," Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 9, 2020, https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-white-history-racist-foundations-black-exclusion-laws/.; William L. Lang, "Oregon Trail," Oregon Encyclopedia, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_trail/#:~:text=The%20Oregon%20Trail%20has%20attracted,%2C%20Utah%2C%20and%20California%20destinations; C.F. Coan "The First Stage of Federal Indian Policy in the Pacific Northwest, 1849-1852," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 23, no 1. (1921): 46-89.; Darrell Millner, "Black People in Oregon," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated April 2, 2024, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/blacks_in_oregon/.; Douglas Lee, "Chinese Americans in Oregon," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated May 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chinese_americans_in_oregon/#the-exclusion-period-1885-1940.; George Katagiri, "Japanese Americans in Oregon," Last Updated June 30, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/japanese_americans_in_oregon_immigrants_from_the_west/.; Northwest Heritage Property Associates, *Portland New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District National Register of Historic Places Form* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1989).

[36] Previous criminal codes did not include anti-sodomy laws. Sodomy laws expanded through the early and mid-20th century, until Oregon's decriminalization of sodomy in 1971. See George Painter, "Oregon Sodomy Law," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6070sodomylaw.html?query=sodomy%20laws&case=&whole=&phrase=.

[37] For additional pre – 1905 LGBTQ+ history, see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (Longman, 1989).; Thomas A. Foster, *Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same Sex-Sexuality in Early America* (New York University Press, 2007).; William Benemann, *Male-Male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships* (Harrington Park Press, 2006).

[38] Peter Boag's study of same-sex affairs in the Pacific Northwest during the early 20th century cited various cases where these phrases were used. See Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 48, 52, 78, 125 193-194.; Lawrence W. Murphy, "Defining the Crime Against Nature: Sodomy in the United States Appeals courts, 1810-1940," *Journal of Homosexuality* 19, no. 1 (1990): 55-58.; Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth Century San Francisco* (Duke University Press, 2015).

[39] The Comstock Act was named for Anthony Comstock, leader of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. Enacted by Congress, this law prohibited mailing of obscene materials. See Marc Stein, "Historical Landmarks and Landscapes of LGBTQ Law," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History,* ed. Megan E. Springate (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2016),19-05-19-06.

[40] San Jose and Los Angeles California, and Columbia, Missouri were also among the first cities. See Ibid, 19-16.

Simultaneous to policing queer expressions, American vaudeville entertainment popularized professional and amateur cross-gender performances nationwide in the late 19th century.[41] These performances stemmed from exclusions of and prohibitions against diverse people performing in public. For a short period in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the press highlighted such actors' skills in convincingly portraying cross-gender characters and negative stereotypes of people of color rather than commentary on one's personal identity. As these types of performances continued, they provided avenues for some to explore and challenge conceptions of gender.

In late 19th century Europe, academics delving into human sexuality and behavior (sexologists) crafted seminal modern theories on gender identities and expression, sexual fluidity, and sexual orientation.[42] These new theories formed a medical perspective on sexual diversity by delineating newly invented concepts such as *homosexuality, heterosexuality,* and *bisexuality*. Contributions from sexologist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs were particularly noteworthy: the concept of a *third gender* laid foundations for later studies on gender fluidity.[43] This paradigm shift challenged traditional binary notions of gender, added to more nuanced understandings of gender, and further harnessed concepts of sexuality. Perhaps, more profoundly, these sexologists advocated for eliminating centuries-long criminalization and condemnation of homosexuality.[44] Yet, sexologists concurrently crafted "clinical surveillance and diagnosis" models that reinforced Western biomedical concepts of bodies as "objects to be measured, zones to be mapped, and texts to be interpreted."[45] Analyzing and categorizing behaviors and identities within medical frameworks continued to evolve through the 20th century.

Late 19th century Portland was also a place experiencing great change. The Oregon Trail (1840–1860) transported as many as 400,000 white settlers, resulting in violent, coercive displacement and removal of

[41] Cross-gender performances have a much longer history internationally. In the United States, racial minstrel shows featured white actors painting their face black (blackface) to portray racial stereotypes of African Americans as part of the cross-gender entertainment. This practice reinforces systemic racism through offensive, harmful, degrading caricatures. Cross-gender impersonators have historically and contemporarily performed in blackface and other cultural appropriations, though such performances are not condoned. For additional history, see Emily Martin," From Police Raids to Pop Culture: The Early History of Modern Drag," National Geographic, June 2, 2023, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/drag-queen-drag-balls-early-history-pop-culture; "Blackface: the Birth of An American Stereotype," Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom, National museum of African American History and Culture, https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/blackface-birth-american-stereotype.

[42] Influential European sexologists include Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Richard von Kraftt-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, and Magnus Hirschfeld. For more information, see LGBT Issues Committee, "The History of Psychiatry & Homosexuality," LGBT Mental Health Syllabus, Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 2012, https://www.aglp.org/gap/1_history/.; David F. Greenberg, "The Medicalization of Homosexuality," *in The Construction of Modern Homosexuality*, (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 397 – 433.

[43] For additional information on early third-sex concepts, see Hubert Kennedy, *Ulrichs: The Life and Works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement* (Alyson Publications, 1988).; Greenberg, *Construction of Modern Homosexuality*, 408.

[44] For example, Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee, recognized as the first kind of gay civil rights organization in the world, advocated for repealing Germany's anti-LGBTQ+ legal codes. See Patricia A. Cain, "Litigating for Lesbian and Gay Rights: A Legal History," *Virginia Law Review* 79, no. 7, Symposium on Sexual Orientation and the Law (Oct. 1993), 1554.; Liz Tracey, "90 Years On: The Destruction of the Institute of Sexual Science," Politics & History, JSTOR Daily, May 31, 2023, https://daily.jstor.org/90-years-on-the-destruction-of-the-institute-of-sexual-science/.

[45] Jennifer Terry, An *American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1999),41.; "A History of LGBT Criminalization: Over 500 years of outlawing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people," LGBT People & The Law, Human Dignity Trust, https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/a-history-of-criminalisation/.

Indigenous populations supported by colonizing expansionist governments and armies.[46] Like many other emerging West Coast cities, colonial settlers, commerce, agriculture, lumber and railroad construction, and seasonal work resulted in a gender imbalance toward men during the late 1800s.[47] Pacific Northwest historian Peter Boag's research into working-class same-sex sexual activities finds that "homosexual activities were common in and around logging districts on the North Pacific coast" and areas like Portland's inner northwest (also known as North End for its location north of Burnside St.) with transient migrant workers in part because of this imbalance.[48] Historian William Toll summarizes in "Portland's Laboring Class" that the contributions of these transient laborers (whether queer or straight) contributed to the city's regular income by residing in and attending hotels, boarding houses, saloons, and brothels in inner northwest.[49] The socio-economic demographics (working class, transient, and increasingly immigrant labor) and illicit activities (same-sex sexual activity) in the area's hotels, brothels, and saloons influenced early anti-vice campaigns to control inner northwest.

Rising from its raw and "Stumptown" conditions of the late 1850s, Portland quickly emerged as the largest town in the Pacific Northwest and continued to undergo rapid urbanization and industrialization through the 1890s. East Coast merchants arrived in 1850 and dominated Portland's economic, political, and social life within 10 years.[50] From 1870 to 1900, Portland's population greatly grew from 8,293 to 90,426.[51] This growth was a result of immigrant migration and the 1891 annexation of both East Portland and Albina which expanded the city by 18 square miles and incorporated 18,500 residents.[52] By the turn of the 20th century, Portland arose as Oregon's most populous city, a position it has retained ever since.

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[46] For instance, in 1856, United States Army members forcibly relocated most of the Indigenous peoples in the Portland area to the newly established Grand Ronde Reservation in western Oregon, hundreds of miles from their traditional homelands. Many descendants of these peoples are members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon, as well as the Chinook Nation and Cowlitz Nation in Washington state. See Lang, "Oregon Trail," Oregon Encyclopedia, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_trail/#:~:text=The%20Oregon%20Trail%20has%20attracted,%2C%20Utah%2C%20and%20California%20destinations.; William G. Robbins, "Oregon Donation Land Law," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated August 17, 2022, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_donation_land_act/.; David Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated November 13, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/confederated_tribes_of_grand_ronde/; C.F. Coan "The First Stage of Federal Indian Policy in the Pacific Northwest, 1849-1852," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 23, no 1. (1921): 46-89.

[47] William Toll, "Portland's Laboring Class," Commerce, Climate, and Community: A History of Portland and its People, Oregon History Project, https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives/commerce-climate-and-community-a-history-of-portland-and-its-people/the-mature-distribution-center/portlands-laboring-class/.

[48] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 22.

[49] Ibid.; Toll, "Portland's Laboring Class."

[50] Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, *Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context Statement,* 5-6.

[51] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States,* Table 38.

[52] Will Harper et al., "Historic Resources and the Albina Community Plan" (report, Portland State University Department of Urban Studies and Planning, 1990), 5; Charles Henry Carey, *History of Oregon* (The Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1922), 779; Mansel G. Blackford, *The Lost Dream: Businessmen and City Planning on the Pacific Coast, 1890-1920* (Ohio State University Press, 1993), 24.

Early Portland LGBTQ+ Networks, 1905–1930s

In the first decades of the 20th century, Portland experienced a period of sustained growth. Between 1900 and 1930, the city's population exploded from 90,426 to 301,815 residents. The city's economy boomed, fueled by increased lumber manufacturing, shipping, wholesale distribution, construction, and financial activity. Portlanders responded to this growth by undertaking several projects and plans to make the city more livable, physically attractive, and better governed. Major investments in both public and private infrastructure development marked the city's coming of age between 1900 and 1930.[53]

Concurrently, Portland's LGBTQ+ individuals and networks began to come out and gain more visibility. This shift was influenced by a convergence of factors, including the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition, the continued popularity of vaudeville entertainment, advances in medicine, progressive politics, and sensationalized press. These factors together exposed the cultural dynamics of a city where burgeoning LGBTQ+ identities both coalesced and clashed with prevailing societal norms.

The Lewis and Clark Exposition and Sexual Morality

In an effort to position Portland prominently as a Pacific gateway and a significant player in the global market, the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair opened on June 1, 1905. Through meticulously designed landscaping, grand exposition buildings, and captivating exhibits, the fair projected an image of Portland as a fully developed city to the over 1.5 million visitors who attended the exhibition between June and mid-October.[54] Fair organizers hoped the event would retain Portland's place as the Pacific Northwest's most prosperous city, given Portland's accomplishment as the first West Coast city to host such an extravagant exposition.

However, for all its grandeur, the fair perpetuated discriminatory ideologies and negatively impacted Portland's diverse populations. Historian Lisa Blee explains in "Completing Lewis and Clark's Westward March: Exhibiting a History of Empire at the 1905 Portland World's Fair," that "the symbolism of the fair layered representations of imperial might and ingenuity with expressions of American heritage and promised a bright future for the United States, finally realized in the far western town of Portland."[55] Exhibits upheld prevailing societal norms and marginalized people based on race, class, and gender reflective of emerging sexology, psychology, and scientific racism theories which categorized appropriate normalcy, inappropriate deviancy, and civilization. Outside of the fair, urban development disproportionality affected Portland's diverse populations by pushing Portland's Chinese enclave towards

[53] This paragraph is excerpted from Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, *Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context Statement,* 25.

[54] The exposition ended October 15, 1905. For additional information, see Carl Abbott, *The Great Extravaganza: Portland's Lewis and Clark Exposition* (Oregon Historical Society Press, 2004).

[55] Lisa Blee, "Completing Lewis and Clark's Westward March: Exhibiting a History of Empire at the 1905 Portland World's Fair," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 232. Also see Emily Tafford, "Hitting the Trail: Live Displays of Native American, Filipino, and Japanese People at the Portland World's Fair," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 158-195.

inner Northwest and "subsequently crowding the African American community that had centered itself around Union Station in Northwest Portland."[56]

The fair also contributed to the surging expansion of sexualized and gendered street culture. LGBTQ+ historian George Chauncey elaborates in *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* how young people during the early 1900s "tried to construct some measure of privacy for themselves" among public spaces.[57] Portland's dance halls, saloons, theaters, inexpensive lodging houses, brothels, and other supposed illicit venues provided some measure of privacy and were supported by many Portland officials who claimed the city financially benefited from these places in the early 1900s. Historian R.C. Donnelly observes in *Dark Rose: Organized Crime and Corruption in Portland* "it was an open secret that many wealthy Portlanders reaped high rents from buildings housing so-called 'disreputable businesses' and that these same owners influenced selected public officials to minimize prosecutions."[58] By the time of the 1905 fair, these spaces provided environments for a range of attractions and relationships; same-sex sexual activities were documented at the Monte Carlo Pool Hall (formerly W Burnside St. and NW 4th Ave.) and Fairmount Hotel (formerly on NW 6th between Burnside and Couch), while estimates of women involved in public sex work ranged from 500 to 2,500.[59] This established Portland's inner northwest as a "blazing center" of vice.[60]

Portland's "blazing" vice center before, during, and after the 1905 fair heightened public anxieties regarding sexual morality and Portland's social hygiene. Middle-class Portlanders increasingly objected to and conflated inner northwest's accommodations and working-class demographics with suspected vice, immorality, and sexual dangers. Those raising concerns influenced city policy makers to increase control and limitation of suspected sexual dangers and immorality in the once "wide open" town.[61] For instance, starting in 1908, police raided brothels and investigated suspected immoral individuals.[62] City ordinances in 1910 and 1915 restricted behaviors in dance halls, limited women's attendance to such venues, and prohibited women's employment in "any place where coffee, sweet drinks, tobacco, smoking

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[56] Catherine Calbraith and Caitlyn Ewers, Kerrie Franey, Matthew Davis, and Brandon Spencer-Hartle, *African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, from 1851 to 1973,* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2020, E-18.
[57] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 – 1940 (*Basic Books, 1994), 202.
[58] R. C. Donnelly, *Dark Rose: Organized Crime and Corruption in Portland* (University of Washington Press, 2011), 36. Also see G.E. Myers, *A Municipal Mother: Portland's Lola Green Baldwin, America's First Policewoman* (Oregon State University Press, 1995), 18, 93.
[59] There is another Fairmount Hotel on NW 26th Ave., but it does not appear to be the same hotel Boag references. This documentation is sourced from police surveillance of racially and ethnically diverse working class Portlanders who inhabited and frequented this area. See Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 45-46.; Elizabeth Morehead, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970 – 2010" (Thesis, Portland State University, 2012),54.
[60] Chris Sawyer, "From White Chapel to Old Town: The Life and Death of the Skid Row District, Portland, Oregon" (PhD. Diss., Portland State University, 1985, 212.; E. Kimbark MaColl, *Merchants, Money, and Power; The Portland Establishment, 1843 – 1913* (The Georgina Press, 1988), 342.
[61] In 1903, Fred Merrill was elected to Portland City Council on a "keep Portland wide open" platform. Morehead, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970 – 2010," 56.
[62] Ibid. Also see Adam Hodges, "'Enemy Aliens' and 'Silk Stocking Girls: The Class Politics of Internment in the Drive for Urban Order during World War I," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 6 no. 4 (Oct. 2007): 431-458.

materials or apparatuses, or sweet meats or similar articles are sold or served."[63] Coinciding with measures to regulate women's sexual activities, Portland police surveilled and purposefully targeted working class and racially diverse Portlanders' sexual activities in the early 1910s; between November 1912 and April 1913, police apprehended several Greek men for same-sex sexual activities "at rates far above their representation in the overall population."[64]

Portland's Vice Clique and Beyond

In November 1912, the "Vice Clique" scandal further inflamed public anxiety concerning sexuality, particularly the sexuality, private activities, and public lives of middle-class Portlanders.[65] Affluent Portlanders like lawyer Edward McAllister, Doctor Harry Start, and architect Lionel Deane were implicated by police for participation in a network of men engaging in same-sex sexual activities. This network concentrated in Portland's central business district, an urban neighborhood south of Burnside Street, which featured "decent apartment and lodging houses . . . appeal[ing] to young, independent . . . men with same-sex sexual interests" compared to the area of inner northwest which demographically featured more transient, immigrant labor with temporary lodgings.[66] Investigations illuminated various businesses, buildings, and public areas in the central business district that facilitated intimate and sexual relations between men. These included the Belvedere's Louvre Café (274 SW Alder St., demolished), the Imperial Hotel (400 SW Broadway, currently Hotel Lucia), Lownsdale Square (SW 4th Ave. and Main St.), and Dr. Start's office in the Medical Building (729 SW Alder St., currently the Park Building).[67]

The "Vice Clique" was not Portland's lone queer event to spark discourse on public lives and private sexual activities in the early 1900s. Starting in 1905, Doctor Marie Equi's personal life and relationship with Olympia Brewing Company heiress Harriet Speckart gained significant media attention across the Pacific Northwest. Speckart's mother described being "appalled and panicked" over her daughter's budding affection for another woman and their 10-year age gap (Speckart the junior).[68] Mrs. Speckart alleged Equi manipulated her daughter for the family's wealth, leading the press to latch on to claims of a woman

[63] Chris Sawyer, "From Whitechapel to Old Town: The Life and Death of the Skid Row District Portland, Oregon," (PhD diss., Portland State University, 1985), quoted in Moreland, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970 – 2010," 56.
[64] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 50, 52.
[65] The now defunct *Portland News* "sensationalized the story" with inaccuracies and innuendoes to boast its readership. This also led to other newspapers, such as the *Oregon Journal* to begin coverage and coin the term "Vice Clique" for reference to the unfolding events. Additional information on the Vice Clique is in the theme "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing." See George Painter, "The Vice Clique Scandal of 1912-1913," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6040vice.html.; "One Attempts Suicide; Eleven Under Arrest," *Oregon Daily Journal,* November 17, 1912, 1.
[66] Marc Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5, 115-76.
[67] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."; Also see Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 46, for map of associated locations.
[68] Michael Helquist, *Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions* (Oregon State University Press, 2015), 64.

"predator wielding an unhealing psychological influence on the younger woman."[69] The press continued to focus on sensationalizing Equi and Speckart in the early 1900s, leading to their relationship becoming "the second widely published account of a lesbian relation in Oregon and perhaps, in the Pacific Northwest."[70]

Despite public commentary and scrutiny surrounding their relationship, the couple defied 20th century expectations of women. In 1907, the pair appeared in the city's first Rose Carnival and Fiesta where they won second place in the "Carriage and Pair" category. For several years, Speckart filed appeals and grievances against her mother who attempted to limit Ms. Speckart's access to her own inheritance due to her relationship with Equi. Speckart's legal actions "flew in the face of norms for proper womanly behavior at a time when prejudice against women was entrenched in the legal system and law profession."[71] Years later, in 1915, Equi defied legal and social conventions again; her adoption of a baby girl she named Mary is one of the earliest adoption cases of a "legally recognized unmarried mother known to be in a lesbian relationship."[72] The couple's childcare arrangement included Equi assuming legal and financial responsibility with Speckart providing all hands-on care. The family lived in various Portland residences for three years until Speckart and Mary moved to Seaside; following Speckart's death in 1927, Mary returned to Portland and moved in with her mother.[73]

Though American vaudeville entertainment had been popular for decades, the prominence of cross-gender impersonation entertainers during this period intensified concerns regarding alignment between one's public persona and their private identity. Newspaper coverage in the 1910s began to focus "specifically on (homo)sexuality when reviewing, critiquing, and considering the character of men who performed theatrically as women."[74] This shift from commenting on the actor's performance skill to one's identity was partially influenced by emerging scholarship on sexuality and identity and recent arrests of individuals across the West Coast and.[75]

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[69] For example, the *San Francisco Call* featured an article entitled "Heiress Victim of Hypnotist, Rich Oregon Girl Is in Power of Woman Physician." *The Oregon Daily Journal* published an article in 1906 titled "Olympia Girl tells Strange Tale of Intrigue and Conspiracy." See Ibid, 77.

[70] Ibid, 80.

[71] Ibid, 103.

[72] Ibid, 130-131.

[73] Residences associated with the Equi–Speckart family include 841 Lovejoy and 2214 SE 52nd Avenue. Ibid, 163. Equi's last Portland residence from 1923 – 1952 was at 1423 SW Hall Street.

[74] Sharon Ullman, *Sex Seen: The Emergence of Modern Sexuality in Americ*a (University of California Press, 1997), 45-71.

[75] In addition to Portland's 1912 "Vice Clique," California queer networks were investigated and exposed by police around the same time. For example, in 1914, about fifty men were arrested in Long Beach. Scholar Sharon R. Ullman's research into the investigation found that it became "apparent that gender definition was deeply problematic at the turn of the century and that the connection between sexual practice and the nature of male and female occurred on the streets as well as on the stage." See Sharon R. Ullman, "The Twentieth Century Way": Female Impersonation and Sexual Practice in Turn-of-the-Century America," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no 4. (April 1995): 573-600.

Individuals who publicly appeared and lived in gender variant ways often became the focus of similar sensationalized stories that sought to elicit negative reactions to diverse people.[76] Pacific Northwest individual Harry Allen (also known as Harry Livingstone) garnered press attention in the early 1900s, likely contributing to arrests "in every city on the coast and throughout the Northwest" often on charges related to cross-gender attire; Allen was "known to the police of cities throughout the Northwest as the most skillful male impersonator."[77] Portland newspapers particularly "marveled at his masculine characteristics, namely his way of walking, his speech pattern, his ability to swear, and his ease at drinking and smoking" following the publicity of his June 3, 1912 arrest in the city.[78]

Late 19th and early 20th century sexologists shaped these emerging views and discourses on gender and sexuality.[79] In *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States,* historian Joanne Meyerowitz explains that while "most Americans remained oblivious" to the work of European sexologists, dramatized press stories served as an avenue for mainstream society to read about diverse genders and sexualities in ways that often lacked nuanced discussions in favor of sensationalizing elements.[80] Yet, some readers found "new and particular ways to describe who they were" and sought direct support for their diverse identities throughout the early 20th century.[81] Meyerowitz finds that "transsexuality, the quest to transform the bodily characteristics of sex via hormones and surgery, originated" during the early 20th century with European scientists performing experimental "sex transformation" and "transplantation" procedures.[82] During this period, early gender affirming operations focused on removing an individual's anatomy instead of constructing new anatomy which required "advanced medical technology."[83]

In 1917–1918, Portlander Alan Hart was one such individual seeking to transform the body through the removal of anatomy. Hart approached Dr. J. Allen Gilbert in his downtown private practice in the Selling Building (610 SW Alder St.) for "psycho-analytic examination and treatment" related to conditions

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[76] For instance, *The Oregonian* published "End of a Mad Career: The Strange Case of the Famous Countess Sarolta Vay," which chronicled Hungarian Sandor Vay's gender presentation and multiple marriages. "End of a Mad Career: The Strange Case of the Famous Countess Sarolta Vay," *The Oregonian*, September 18, 1890. Additional American press includes "A Woman Marries a Woman," *Harold and News*, December 26, 1889, and "Personated a Man," *Phillipsburg Mail,* February 23, 1900. Also see Anna Borgos, "Sandor / Sarolta Vay, a Gender Bender in Fin-de-Siecle Hungary," in *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies*, ed. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, Louise O. Vasvári (Purdue University Press, 2011): 220-231; Geertje Mak, "Sando / Sarolta Vay: From Passing Woman to Sexual Invert," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 54-77.

[77] "Police Get Woman Posing As Husband," *Morning Oregonian*, June 4, 1912, 12.; "Woman in Man's Clothing," *East Oregon Daily Evening Edition,* March 25, 1907, 6.

[78] This arrest is further discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing." Also see Peter Boag, *Re-dressing America's Frontier Past,* (University of California Press, 2011), 25.

[79] Ullman, "The Twentieth Century Way," 576.

[80] Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States,* (Harvard University Press, 2002), 29.

[81] Ibid, 32-35.

[82] Implanting testicles and ovaries in people were some of the early experimental procedure examples Meyerowitz discusses. Ibid, 15-20. Dr. Susan Stryker's *Transgender History* explains the term transsexual and transsexuality is "a one-way, one-time, medicalized transition across the gender binary…The terminology becomes even more confusing, however, given that many people who don't consider themselves to be transsexual have increasingly started using the same medicalized body modification practices transsexuals have long used…" For further history, see Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*.

[83] Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed,* 17.

troubling Hart since childhood.[84] After months of consulting, the pair concluded that the surgical interventions of an oophorectomy (removal of an ovary or ovaries) and a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) would allow Hart to live his "true nature."[85] While Hart and Gilbert kept information about Hart's surgical and social transformation relatively hidden from widespread public knowledge for Hart's privacy following the operation, the procedure was eventually publicized and is regarded as the first procedure providing gender affirming care for a trans man in the United States.[86]

Scant archival information exists regarding LGBTQ+ life in Portland between the late 1910s and late 1920s. However, in the late 1930s, entertainment halls such as the Variety Hall (331 SW Broadway, basement of the Oregon Hotel, currently connected to 309 SW Broadway) and Music Hall (413 SW 10th Ave., demolished) prominently featured shows with gender impersonator performers.[87] This popular form of entertainment brought together straight and queer audiences, with The Music Hall being "possibly the most notorious establishment in 1940s Portland catering" to LGBTQ+ audiences.[88] Bars often started off as a "nondescript" venue that later acquired reputations particularly during World War II as a place for queer people.[89] The Rathskeller, for example, was "only a block or so from the main bus terminal, which had served as a location for a thriving male sex trade since the 1920s [and] provided the entry point to the city for many servicemen in the 1940s."[90]

Navigating Oppression and Igniting Activism, 1940s–1960s

Starting in the 1940s, Portland experienced profound changes due to altering social, political, economic, gender, sexual, and racial dynamics. World War II shattered the city's insular nature with "thousands of sailors and other service[persons] coming into port and leaving for locations in the Pacific."[91] In 1941, the Portland Army Air Base (7000 NE Airport Way) was built and quickly expanded onsite military facilities while surging wartime production brought up to 72,000 westward migrants who joined Oregon's shipyard

[84] J. Allen Gilbert, Ph.D., M.D., "Homo-Sexuality and Its Treatment," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 52 (July-December 1920): 297. See "LGBTQ+ Health" for additional information.
[85] Ibid, 320.
[86] Gilbert's 1920 article anonymized Hart by using the initial H. Later scholarship by LGBTQ+ historians, particularly Jonathan Katz in 1976, identified Hart and influenced subsequent widespread publicity of Hart's experiences. Meyerowitz found a 1902 New York case as an early example of altering bodies to achieve aligned gender identity, expression, and psychology; this example provided care for a trans woman. See Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed,* 17.
[87] The Music Hall was also known as Paul's Music Hall or Schneiderman's Music Hall. For examples of advertisements for these shows, see Ad, *The Oregon Daily Journal,* November 29, 1937.; "Trio Scores Hit at Variety Hall," *The Oregon Journal,* December 2, 1937.; Ad, *The Oregon Daily Journal,* January 28, 1938.
[88] Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 15.
[89] Beka Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965," (Thesis, Portland State University, 2002), 27.
[90] Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 12.
[91] Ibid,11.; Carl Abbot, "Portland," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated May 18, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland/. For additional information on Portland during World War II, see John Linder, "Liberty Ships and Jim Crow Shipyards: Racial Discrimination in Kaiser's Portland Shipyards, 1940- 1945," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, No. 4 (Winter 2019):518 – 543, and Diane Simmons, "Rejection, Reception, and Rejection Again: Women in Oregon's World War II Shipyards," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 119, No 1 (Spring 2018): 96 – 119.

workforce.[92] As a result, a massive housing project and company town named Vanport (named for the two cites on either side of the Columbia River where it was located) was built in 1942 and immediately became the second largest city in Oregon.[93] That same year, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, authorizing the U.S. Army to establish "military areas" where any and all persons could be excluded in the name of national safety. By May 1942, over 3,800 Pacific Northwest area Japanese and Japanese Americans were evacuated to "hastily constructed temporary living quarters in the Pacific International Livestock Exposition building" (2060 N Marine Dr., renamed Portland Assembly Center) before being sent to War Relocation Centers in Idaho, California, Wyoming, or elsewhere.[94]

Queer cultural development found fertile ground amidst the changing dynamics started in the 1940s. Despite mainstream society's growing conception of vice overtaking major cities nationwide and in Portland, LGBTQ+ networks expanded before, during, and after the war.

Portland's LGBTQ+ Social Worlds

"Fred's" experiences, a Portlander who enlisted in the Marines in 1940 and returned to the city in 1946, shed light on the social landscape during this period.[95] "Fred" frequented spaces that "were not gay bars in the strictest sense . . . [but] men could surreptitiously pick each other up at these places and gays and lesbians could meet with few hassles from proprietors and other patrons, provided they mind themselves."[96] Multnomah Hotel's bar (319 SW Pine St, currently Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Downtown), the Cupboard (1002 SW Broadway, in the Broadway Theatre, demolished), and a "beer parlor on East Broadway near 15th Avenue" (no name provided) were a few of the places where LGBTQ+ individuals like "Fred" could find others.[97]

Patronizing existing spaces such as hotel bars and restaurants allowed LGBTQ+ visitors to blend in, strategically "pass," and deter potential harassment or arrest. Throughout the 20th century, "passing" was an important strategy creating a perception that LGBTQ+ spaces did *not* actually host queer clientele. Historians Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons describe in *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power*

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[92] "Hangar 701 (Building 5715), Historic Sites, Port of Portland, https://portofportland.com/HistoricalSites/Hangar701.; Archaeological Investigations Northwest Inc., *Port of Portland/Hanger 701 Building Ensemble*, Section 106 Documentation Form, Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties, January 2005, https://cdn.portofportland.com/pdfs/Hangar_701_documentation.pdf.; "By 1943, over half of the new hires in Oregon shipyards were women." See Amy E. Platt, "'Go into the yard as a worker, not as a woman': Oregon Women During World War II, a Digital Exhibit on the Oregon History Project," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 235 – 248.; Carl Abbot, "Portland," Oregon Encyclopedia, Oregon Historical Society, Last Updated May 18, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland/.; Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 11.

[93] Tragically, on May 30, 1948, the Columbia River flooded and destroyed the city. See Carl Abbot, "Vanport," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated September 26, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/.; Oregon Historical Society. Digital Collections. Vanport Photographs.; Dale Skovgaard, "Memories of the 1948 Vanport Flood," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 88-106.

[94] Oregon History Project, "Japanese Evacuees, Portland Assembly Center," Oregon Historical Society, https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/japanese-evacuees-portland-assembly-center/.

[95] Fred (pseudonym), interviewed by Peter Boag, June 6, 2002. Quoted in Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 12.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians how "gay men and lesbians who were friends would go together as heterosexual couples and it permitted them to go to places where they couldn't have gone alone, like upscale nightclubs, restaurants."[98] Additionally, gathering at other venues already known for supposed illicit activities permitted queer people to establish other "places for themselves where they would not be the center of attention or scandal . . . they could readily perform queerness under the guise of being in the tavern for other purposes."[99]

"Fred's" experiences and the transition of bars like the Rathskeller into queer venues during World War II reflect national trends accentuated by LGBTQ+ historians. In *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two*, LGBTQ+ historian Allan Bérubé emphasizes "gay male and lesbian GIs were forced to rely on commercial establishments near the heart of the city to find the gay life quickly . . . These establishments often were clustered in the parts of town that were flooded with GIs, introducing the gay life to a wider population of young men and women."[100]

The Harbor Club (former address 736 SW 1st Ave., now 65 SW Yamhill Ave.), opened in 1946 by a discharged serviceman, was one notable establishment which emerged during this period. Due to the bar's reputation among LGBTQ+ Portlanders, the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board (AFDC) listed the club as off-limits to military personnel in 1957.[101] Portland Police surveillance reports from the early 1960s describe that "after all the retail malt beverage outlets have closed, all of both sex converge on The Harbor, packing it, with standing room only" with "all activities, such as males openly kissing each other, fondling each other, with no attempt to cover these activities."[104]

In the mid-1950s, there was a notorious bar, the Harbor Club . . . [it] housed a street-level restaurant and bar which catered to straights and gays, while upstairs was a bar frequented exclusively by gays at nighttime . . . Harbor Club was off-limits to soldiers and sailors.

— Portlander Sister Paula Nielsen, 2012 [102]

It said [H]arbor in neon and it ha[d] a risqué look to it. Like people wouldn't go into it unless you knew what kind of bar it was and that kind of thing.

— Portlander Pat Ware, 1997 [103]

[98] Faderman explains these individuals referred to themselves as the "cufflink crowd." See Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (University of California Press, 2006), 70, 103.
[99] Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 51.
[100] Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (Free Press, 1990), 113.
[101] "Police Say California Sex Deviates Coming to Portland," *Oregon Journal*, December 4, 1964.
[102] Sister Paula Nielsen, *The Trans-Evangelist: The Life and Times of a Transgender Pentecostal Preacher* (One Spirit Press, 2014), 98.
[103] Pat Ware, interview by Ann Sherman, November 19, 1997, December 4, 1997, December 10, 1997, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.
[104] Auditor, Council Documents, Item no. 4739, December 10, 1964; Item no. 4654, December 3, 1964; Item no. 4631, December 3,1964; Item no. 4629, November 27,1964; Item no. 4545, November 27, 1964; Auditor, Council Minutes, Item no. 4545, November 27,1964, Portland City Archives, Portland, Oregon.

. . . I headed south, down to the 'dirty triangle.' That's what it was called then—where all the gay bars were.

— Walter Cole Sr., 2021 [105]

The Harbor Club contributed to downtown's development of distinct queer hubs during the 1940s and 1960s, particularly the area referred to as the "Dirty Triangle." Roughly bounded by the Willamette River, SW 4th Avenue, SW Alder Street, and SW Madison Street, the area's proximity to the waterfront and working-class venues developed its popularity among working-class LGBTQ+ Portlanders with this demographic shifting from its previous nexus located north of Burnside.[106] Longstanding bar Dahl & Penne's (demolished, now 121 SW Morrison St.), which Portlander William Holman remembered was "not far from the Harbor's bolted doors," became a recognized heart of this queer hub starting in the 1960s.[107] Along with the city's first leather bar The Other Inn opening in 1964 (242 SW Alder St., demolished) and the Grand Oasis Tavern (243 SW Alder St.), a concentration of places near the waterfront catered to diverse clientele.

Though the "Dirty Triangle" gained notoriety during the mid-century, a variety of Portland venues and additional queer hubs facilitated LGBTQ+ connections before, during, and after the war. Portland historian Kimbark MacColl finds in *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915 to 1950* that venues associated with vice were largely "unchecked during World War II, aided by city and police corruption" and a non-interventionist administration.[108] Within this atmosphere, places like The Music Hall, the Buick Café (1239 SW Washington St., demolished), and the Tel & Tel Tavern (addressed at 820 SW Oak St., currently New Avenues for Youth) served large LGBTQ+ crowds. The Buick Café specifically gained such widespread popularity for women that individuals who were "recently ousted from San Francisco for their actions and are . . . confirmed Lesbians" knew to go to the Buick to find other women.[109] These venues allowed "queer people [to] openly dance, socialize, and flirt," and contributed to the area south of W Burnside Street and around SW Harvey Milk evolving into a queer hub through the late 20th century.[110] Queer Portlanders also found connections in outdoor areas across Portland, such as Lownsdale Square (SW 4th Ave. and Main Street), Washington Park (4033 SW Canyon Rd.), and a "secluded gay beach developed at the eastern edge of Hayden Island" (no exact address).[111]

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[105] Donnie with Walter W. Cole / Darcelle, Kristen Minor, *From Demas to Darcelles: The History of the Demas Tavern to Darcelle XV Showplace*, 112.

[106] Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 40, 44-42.

[107] William Holman, "A Gay History: Lest We Forget," *Northwest Gay Review,* Special Issue, June 1977,6. See the themes "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" and "Queer Art and Entertainment" for additional information on Dahl & Penne's.

[108] MacColl further elaborated that "mediocrity and indifference at the top produced equally mediocre and indifferent enforcement of the law." E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915 to 1950* (The Georgian Press, 1979), 609.

[109] Police report quoted in Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 13.

[110] Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 34. The "Burnside Triangle" is further discussed below.

[111] "Police Crack Pervert Gang," *The Oregonian,* October 8, 1954.; Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 13.; "Hayden Island 'Bare Ass' Beach," Parks and Cruising Places, Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/hayden-islands-bare-ass-beach.

"Sometime around 1958 (or '59—nobody seems to know for sure)," self-proclaimed Queen Eugenie I, Mother Superior of Transylvania sat on a makeshift throne in the back room of the Half Moon Tavern (formerly 72 SW Morrison St.) as the inaugural queen of the Court of Transylvania, marking the emergence of the West Coast's first drag court.[112] This court was a playful riff on Portland's Rose Festival's traditional annual crowning of a Princess and chosen court.[113] In William Holman's reflective 1977 article "A Gay History lest it be forgotten," he describes the court's development as "haphazard" and comments that memory was lost as to whether titles such as Lord High Sherriff, Crown Princess, and Archbishop were designated or self-appointed.[114] Though the Court of Transylvania dissolved within five years, its legacy endured through the Pruitts of Portland, the Portland Forum, and later the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon, who began hosting themed drag balls to crown a "Queen" (later named Rose Empress) initially "in the mode of a 'Queen for A Day' format."[115] The Portland Forum and Imperial Sovereign Rose Court's pageants and coronation events became increasingly more elaborate in the late 1960s and early 1970s with costumes, performances, and "lavish sets."[116]

Portland's evolving drag scene was not the sole, nor even the most recognized, avenue for cultivating LGBTQ+ connections during the 1940s through the 1960s. Portlander Sally Cohn reflected in 2011 on her experiences during this period that "it was either the bars or softball."[117] Portland bars frequented by lesbians during this time included the Milwaukie Tavern (1535 W Burnside St., currently 16 NW 20th Ave.), The Buick Café, Mama Bernice's (1228 SW 3rd Ave., demolished), and the Harbor Club. The Milwaukie and Mama Bernice's faced scrutiny from City Council during Mayor Schrunk's anti-LGBTQ+ bar campaign, but Portland Police Intelligence Division officers admitted to lesser policing in "alleged 'girl joints'": Police Lt. Jack Crawford stated, "I think it is more common for women to kiss women than for men to kiss men."[118] This opinion permitted early lesbian bars to operate under somewhat less restrictions than other LGBTQ+ venues. At the same time, queer Portlanders discovered camaraderie at Normandale Park (NE 57th Avenue

[112] Drag refers to the performance art and entertainment style that uses makeup, hair, costumes, and other tools to present exaggerated forms of gender expression. A drag court is a one type of organization for drag performers. Drag is further discussed in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment." Also see Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."

[113] This festival's crowing tradition dates to 1908. Erika Weisensee explains "Rose Festival queens were typically selected from among Portland's socially elite, but in 1929 financial woes and lack of enthusiasm plagued the festival…Since 1930, each Portland high school has selected a Rose Festival princess from its senior class." See Erika Weisensee, "Portland Rose Festival," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated February 24, 2023, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland_rose_festival/.

[114] Holman, "A Gay History: Lest We Forget," 4.; Imperial Sovereign Rose Court, "A Brief History of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court," History, https://rosecourt.org/a-brief-history-of-the-imperial-sovereign-rose-court/.

[115] Imperial Sovereign Rose Court, "Monarch's History," History, https://rosecourt.org/monarch-s-history/.; "Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Portland," The Umbrella Project, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/imperial-rose-court-history.; Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," 23-25.

[116] Imperial Sovereign Rose Court, "A Brief History of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court."

[117] Oral history interview with Sally H. Cohn, by Jade Davis and Erin Babcock Musick, SR 11237, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[118] "Police Say California Sex Deviates Coming to Portland," *Oregon Journal,* December 4, 1964.

and Hassalo St, later renamed Erv Lind Field) watching games played by the women's national championship softball team Erv Lind Florists.[119]

> **. . . a lot of lesbians . . . played for that team. And of course they had to be closeted and all that stuff. Oh, I would, I would watch you know I would go and watch the team . . . I'd click [a clicker counter] for everybody who I thought was one of ME. I would click. And then I would figure out the percentage. The lesbian percentage in the softball audience.**
>
> — Sally Cohn reflecting on going to Florists games in the early 1960s, 2011 [120]

Starting in the 1950s, California-based homophile (meaning "loving the same") organizations like the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) provided another avenue for queer individuals to connect locally and nationally.[121] Homophile newsletters *The Mattachine Review* and *The Ladder* became vital connection and affirmation tools by providing a platform for discussing LGBTQ+ people's daily anxieties.[122] Portlanders increasingly established connections with homophile organizations to facilitate local distribution of newsletters, especially as Portland was the last "major city on the West Coast" lacking a homophile society in the 1960s.[123]

> **I have subscribed to *The Ladder* since August and loved every issue; it has been like a lighted candle in the dark forest here in Oregon where no one, nothing, no publication or organization of any kind exists to help the**

[119] Normandale Park continued to be utilized by LGBTQ+ teams through the late 20th century. The Florists and LGBTQ+ sports are further discussed in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment."

[120] Oral history interview with Sally H. Cohn.

[121] Homophile is a collective term to describe the local, national, and international social-political movement for gay and lesbian rights between the 1950s and 1960s. Earlier precursors to the Homophile Movement and Gay Rights organizations include German based Scientific-Humanitarian Committee founded by Magnus Hirschfeld and colleagues in 1897 and the United States-based Society for Human Rights founded by Henry Gerber in 1924, which drew inspiration from Hirschfeld. The Society's *Friendship and Freedom* newsletter is the earliest-documented American homosexual publication, although no copies remain due to police destruction after Gerber and other members' arrests in 1925. In 2015, the Henry Gerber House in Chicago, Illinois became the "nation's second National Historic Landmark designated for its association with LGBTQ+ history." See "LGBTQ Activism," The Henry Gerber House, Chicago, IL," Finding Our Place: LGBTQ Heritage in the United States, National Park Service, Last updated February 20, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/articles/lgbtq-activism-henry-gerber-house-chicago-il.htm. Also see Donna J. Graves and Shayne E. Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* (City and County of San Francisco, October 2015), 134 – 150 for history on the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis.

[122] Elizabeth Coretto, ""The Fountain Pen and the Typewriter": The Rise of the Homophile Press in the 1950s and 1960s," (Honors Paper, Oberlin College, 2017), https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1213&context=honors,10- 13. LGBTQ+ print media is further discussed in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment."

[123] Starting in 1959, Oregonians regularly corresponded with The Mattachine's secretary to obtain materials and illuminated aspects of Oregon queer life. Seattle-based homophile group the Dorian Society hoped to catalyze activity in the rose city and preliminary announced Portland's downtown Park Haviland Hotel (731 SW Salmon Street, currently Park Tower Apartments) as the host location for the February 1968 Northwest Homophile Conference. However, the conference failed to materialize based on the Dorian Society's cancelation of hotel reservations and refund requests. See Letters, Gay Organizations, Daughters of Bilitis, 1958 – 1964, Box 7, Folder 8, Mattachine Society of New York Records, 1951- 1976, New York Public Library.; Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 27.; Western Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations, Seattle, December 1 -3, 1967, Minutes, Box 7, Folder 2; Flyer, Box 12, Folder 10, Tim Mayhew Collection on Gay Rights, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

> **homophile . . . Did you have any idea when you started publishing *The Ladder* how very far its bright messages of hope might reach some day?**
>
> — Margery (last name redacted), letter to *The Ladder,* December 11, 1963 [124]

Distribution required navigating delicate balances of publicly disseminating what most mainstream society deemed "obscene materials" while avoiding unwanted police attention.[125] Rich's Cigar Store (former locations include 539 SW Washington St. and 734 SW Alder St., currently at 820 SW Alder St. and 922 NW Flanders St.) sold One Inc.'s *ONE* magazine, Mattachine Society's *Review,* and DOB's *Ladder* in the 1950s and 1960s, although "sequestered [them] behind the counter rather than displayed [them] in broad view."[126] Portlanders could access these essential materials at this retailer without risking potential mail confiscation and arrest for possessing materials authorities classified as "filthy and obscene."[127]

The Lavender Scare and Anti-LGBTQ+ Campaigns

As overt and covert queer venues proliferated and enhanced queer connections between the 1940s and 1960s, mainstream society aimed to eliminate this nationally growing queer presence. In 1941, for instance, Congress passed the May Act to authorize control of suspected vice and LGBTQ+-associated venues near military bases; by 1944, the newly formed Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board (AFDCB) listed many of these surveilled venues as off-limits for military personnel.[128] The military further evaluated service members' with harmful stereotypes, ultimately barring approximately 4,000 to 5,000 individuals from service on suspicion of homosexuality.[129]

> **There was a great effort to get all gay people out of the military . . . I was called from work one day, and everything in my area where I lived in the barracks had been searched. The evidence that they had against me was a**

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[124] Margery, letter to *The Ladder,* December 11, 1963, J-M, Correspondence - The Ladder Daughters of Bilitis National, Box 12, Folder 3, Phyllis Lyon, Del Matin and the Daughters of Bilitis, GLBT Historical Society.

[125] Other purchasing locations are discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces." Also see Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 22.; Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 126-129.

[126] Founder B.B. Rich opened the first Rich's Cigar Store in Portland in 1894. Publicized arrests and articles on Portland's anti-smut campaign reference additional LGBTQ+ materials purchased at Rich's. See Stan Federman "Indictments Name 5 Shops in City Center," *Oregonian,* January 28, 1965, 1.; Accounts, The Ladder, Daughters of Bilitis National, August 31, 1936 – May 27, 1969 and Undated, Phyllis Lyon, Del Martin and the Daughters of Bilitis Collection, GLBT Historical Society, Box 13, Folder 9.; Oregon folder, Regional Business Correspondence, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries, Los Angeles, California.; Our History," About, Rich's Cigar Store, https://www.richscigarstore.com/our-history.; Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."; Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society," 22.

[127] See the themes "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing" and "Queer Art and Entertainment" for additional information on obscenity laws related to LGBTQ+ content.

[128] "Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board," Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service, Last updated October 30, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/armed-forces-disciplinary-control-board.htm.

[129] The Defense Department formally excluded and expelled individuals from all branches of the Armed Forces in 1949, leading to 2,000 to 5,000 additional discharged personnel. It is currently unknown how many Portlanders were discharged, and/or how many discharged personnel returned to Portland during the military exclusions during the 1940s. Military exclusion continued throughout the 20th century until the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell in 2011. See David Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), 166, quoted in Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 102. "Blue and 'Other Than Honorable' Discharges," Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service, Last updated January 26, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/blue-and-other-than-honorable-discharges.htm.

> **book I had that dealt with male homosexuality and I had the day room copy of *Good Housekeeping* magazine that had an article in it about homosexuality being an illness . . . I was charged with having homosexual material. I was told that due to this reading material I was suspected of having homosexual tendencies; I would be questioned much later . . . I was asked to furnish a list of people that I believed to be homosexual, or anyone I had had relations with . . . When I refused to do this they told me that charges could be brought against me for "homosexual tendencies," whatever that is.**
>
> — Portlander Jackie Wilkinson recalling her experience of being purged from the Women's Army Corps for being gay in 1955 [130]

Starting in the late 1940s, medical professionals and associations attempted to normalize homosexuality and non-conforming gender identities despite mainstream views against diverse sexualities and genders as mental illnesses. American sexologist Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1949) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), known as *The Kinsey Reports*, showcased "homosexual behavior was far more common than had been understood and therefore not psychologically abnormal," these reports expanded professional and public understanding of human sexuality.[131] Nonetheless, in 1952, the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) inaugural Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) reinforced harmful perceptions by establishing "a hierarchy of sexual deviancies, thus centering heterosexuality" as the 'norm.'"[132] Such classification of diverse sexual behaviors had profound implications for medical stigmatization and discrimination by providing a justification for professional attempts to "cure" homosexuality.

Following World War II, until the 1970s, intensified ongoing persecutions of individuals were rooted in paranoia conflating communism, homosexuality, and gender diversity as potential threats to national security and heteronormative society.[133] Starting in 1947, Republican Senator Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska "accused the Truman administration of running a government crawling with subversives and sex perverts," thus influencing President Harry Truman's authorization of 192 investigations into suspected individuals with "sexual perversion."[134] The Hoey Committee (named for committee chair Senator Clyde R. Hoey of North Carolina) expanded investigations and published the report "Employment

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[130] Alan D. Googan, "Community Profiles," *Northwest Gay Review*.

[131] Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 288.

[132] Initially, the DSM categorized homosexuality under "sociopathic personality disturbance." It was reclassified in 1968 under "nonpsychotic mental disorders," alongside classifications such as fetishism, transvestism, sadism, and masochism.

[133] Johnson, *The Lavender Scare,* 4.

[134] Though most individuals resigned or were discharged between January 1947 and April 1950, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy and Senator Kenneth Wherry campaigned against communists and alleged "perverts" remaining in governmental agencies. Senator McCarthy famously declared on February 9, 1950, he possessed a list of 205 individuals "known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department." See Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*, (Viking, 2008), 100.; "McCarthyism and Cold War: Diplomatic Security in the 1950s," in *History of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security of the United States Department of State* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, 2011), 121-160.

of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government" on December 15, 1950.[135] Historian David Johnson describes in *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*, the report's "notion that homosexuals threatened national security received the imprimatur of the U.S. Congress and became accepted as official fact . . . [it] would be quoted for years by the government of the United States and its allies as justification for excluding homosexuals."[136] On April 27, 1953, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 to officially enshrine LGBTQ+ exclusions from federal employment; "Sexual perversion" was included in the federal loyalty-security program leading to the investigation and dismissal of almost 5,000 civil servants.[137] "Moreover, Eisenhower's administration initiated an episodic campaign to disrupt any kind of homosexual politics or press," explains legal scholar William Eskridge in *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*.[138] Nationally, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) infiltrated and harassed burgeoning homophile organizations while the United States Post Office (USPS) confiscated various homophile publications, especially One Inc.'s *ONE* magazine, under laws prohibiting mailing and receiving obscene materials.[139]

Historian Craig M. Loftin contends in *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America* the national persecution of individuals during this period, commonly referred to as the Lavender Scare, caused broad ripple effects beyond the military and federal government.[140] Such invasive investigations into the lives of suspected LGBTQ+ individuals "encouraged state, county, and city governments to follow [the federal government's] lead, thus impacting a broader range of professions" and people.[141] In Portland, Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee, the first woman elected as mayor, prominently linked queerness with suspected vice during her efforts to cleanse the city between 1949 and 1952. Nicknamed "No Sin Lee," she focused law enforcement pressure on burlesque houses, brothels, gay bars, gambling dens, and other so-called "vice" venues which proliferated through the 1940s.[142] Lee centered political and police scrutiny on The Music Hall since it was such a popular LGBTQ+ venue. In 1949, surveillance reports from the Women's Protective Division undercover operations identified lesbian patrons attempting "their pick-up at the Music Hall and in case of failure before the hall closes, they then retire

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[135] Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions,* 102.; Judith Adkins, "These People Are Frightened to Death": Congressional Investigations and the Lavender Scare," *Prologue* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2016), https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2016/summer/lavender.html.

[136] Johnson, *The Lavender Scare,* 114.

[137] Ibid.; "Homosexuals in the Federal Government and Personnel Security," Subject Guides, Research, Eisenhower Library, https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/subject-guides/pdf/homosexuals-in-government-and-security.pdf.

[138] Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions,* 102.

[139] Ibid.; Also see Faderman and Timmons, *Gay LA*,, 116-119.; Vern L. Bullough, PhD., ed. *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context* (The Haworth Press, 2002), 63-64.

[140] The Lavender Scare is a term to describe the mid-century's moral panic regarding sexuality and gender, particularly that of federal employees. For additional history see, David Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[141] Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America,* (State University of New York Press, 2012), 6.

[142] Between 1941 and 1949, Portland Mayor Riley operated a non-interventionist administration which allowed such supposed "vice" activities to increase. See Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965," 25.; Meryl Lipman, "Dorothy McCullough Lee: "Do-Good Dottie" Cleans Up," *Metroscape* (Winter 2008): 26-30.

to the Buick Café . . . and look for other prospects."[143] Subsequent investigation of the venue revealed improper use of its liquor license leading to its closure in 1950.[144] Through Lee's efforts to eliminate suspected vice and "sin," City Council depicted itself as "defending the city's traditional moral decency against . . . immoral groups."[145]

Portland's anti-LGBTQ+ atmosphere continued after Mayor Terry Schrunk's election in 1957.[146] By the early 1960s, Schrunk, City Council, and many Portlanders dreaded the supposed propagation of LGBTQ+ content, individuals, and spaces. Local press circulated popular perceptions held against LGBTQ+ individuals, reinforcing impressions that queer people contributed to crime and urban decline, if not caused it. For instance, *Oregon Journal* articles like "Police Say California Sex Deviates Coming to Portland" and columns authored by Doug Baker provided a platform for residents and Portland city officials to spread homophobic rhetoric and violence directed toward the city's burgeoning LGBTQ+ populations.[147]

> **The Unmentionable People are virtually untouchable people and they are growing stronger each week, both in numbers and in brazenness with which they flaunt their abnormality . . . Today [June 1964], there are eight or 10 taverns and saloons in this city which cater almost exclusively to this crowd.**
> — Doug Baker, *Oregon Journal,* June 29, 1964 [148]

The growth of LGBTQ+ culture and rising numbers of visibly out LGBTQ+ Portlanders prompted enhanced suppression attempts of queer media and queer public visibility.[149] In December 1964, to discourage LGBTQ+ individuals from going out and living in Portland City Council attempted to force the closure of six known LGBTQ+ venues by recommending against these bars' liquor licenses.[150] Notwithstanding these unfavorable recommendations, the Oregon Liquor License Commission (OLCC) continued to license the six taverns.[151]

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[143] Police report quoted in Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 13.
[144] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."
[145] Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland 1948-1965," 13.
[146] Lee failed to win re-election in 1952. Beka Smith's study of Portland's gay bars and vice tolerance argues that Portland Mayor Fred Peterson's administration (1953-1956) was comparatively less focused on anti-LGBTQ+ campaigns. Schrunk's sixteen-year administration focused on supposed links between sexual deviance, public health, economic prosperity, and urban reform. See Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland 1948-1965," 54-56.
[147] "Police Say California Sex Deviates Coming to Portland," *Oregon Journal,* December 4, 1964, 4M.
[148] Doug Baker, "'Bluenoses' Fix Policy in KATU-TV 'Censorship,'" *Oregon Journal,* June 29, 1964, 5M.
[149] In 1963, Portland Police detective Larry Brown "broke the case" of a "statewide homosexual ring" after discovering "hundreds of pornographic pictures," magazines, and films that led to implicating up to 22 persons. The Grand Jury indictments and testimony furthered Mayor Schrunk's attacks on LGBTQ+ materials and heightened public concern against homosexuality. See "Smut Magazine, Sex Ring Tie Brings Warning From Mayor," *Oregon Journal,* Friday October 25, 1963, 1, 4.; "Police Say Arrest of Two Portlanders Exposed Statewide Homosexual Ring Activities," *Oregonian*, October 25, 1963, 1.; "Grand Jury Decries Smut on Newsstands," *Oregon Journal,* February 29, 1964, 1.; "Maury Lauds Smut Mill Crackdown, Raps 'Fuzzy Thinking' on Books," *Oregon Journal,* January 28, 1965, 2.; See Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society," 31-33.
[150] "Council Mulls Treatment of Bars Where Unsavory Characters Gather," *Oregonian,* December 4, 1964, 21.; "License Renewal Refused," *Oregon Journal,* December 11, 1964, 4.
[151] "OLCC Overrides City, Issues Licenses to 6 Portland Taverns," *Oregonian,* December 18, 1964, 30.

Intersecting Social Movements and Liminality, 1960s–1970s

Heightened consciousness and burgeoning political activism across American society and culture facilitated the cross-pollination of BIPOC, women, youth, labor, and LGBTQ+ rights movements through the mid and late 20th century.[152] "Portland reflected the national temper in the 1960s and 1970s . . . [and became a] site of an increasingly vocal, organized resistance to perceived injustices [based on race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class]."[153]

> **To me, anyway, the Gay Liberation Movement in Portland really drew its strength from the Civil Rights Movement, which many people had worked in, and from the anti-war movement . . . The 1970s in particular were a time when feminism began, when Gay Liberation began . . . All of us began coming to Portland. So it was a time when Portland, you know, kind of a small Pacific Northwest city, all of a sudden had an influx of people who were all in their 20s many of who were gay . . . For many people, including me, it was the first time that it was okay to be gay. It was a feeling where it not only was okay it was a good thing . . .**
>
> — Portlander Jean DeMaster reflecting on Portland during the 1970s, 2012 [154]

These socio-political revolutions swirling around economic hardships, military involvement in Vietnam and elsewhere, and identity politics ushered in a new era of collective queer organizing and visibility.[155] Portland's countercultures were vital in supporting emerging queer activities; activist George Nicola recalled in 2013 that most of Portland was a "socially conservative and moralistic environment during the late 1960s and early 1970s."[156]

LGBTQ+ Portlanders Coming Out and Socializing

While earlier LGBTQ+ organizing occurred in Portland, early 1970 found an inflection point. John Wilkinson was a staffer of the underground newspaper *The Willamette Bridge* when the paper rejected an anonymously submitted

Gay, longhair, young,

[152] For instance, "Many of the queer people who [protested at venues like Dewey's, Cooper's Donuts, Compton's Cafeteria, and Stonewall Inn] were themselves people of color, and they were not 'borrowing' a tactic developed by another movement." See Susan Stryker, "Militant Foreshadowings," in *Smash the Church, Smash the State! the Early Years of Gay Liberation*, ed. Tommi Avicolli Mecca (City of Lights Books, 2009).

[153] Calbraith, Ewers, Franey, Davis, and Spencer-Hartle, *African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, from 1851 to 1973,* E-131.

[154] Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "Jean DeMaster speaks at Q Center," YouTube, June 28, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgzb5Oz3p2g&t=331s.

[155] Prominent examples of this new era of include San Francisco's Gene Compton's Cafeteria riots in 1966 and New York City's Stonewall Inn resistance in 1969. These resistance moments were pivotal: Compton's Cafeteria riots marked the "transgender community's debut on the stage of American political history" and Stonewall Inn forged the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) as a new militarized gay organization. For further history, see *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2005).

[156] George T. Nicola, "How the Oregon LGBT Movement was Born," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated July 30, 2013, https://www.glapn.org/6130nicolagaymovement.html?query=george%20nicola&case=&whole=&phrase=.

classified advertisement.[157] Wilkinson viewed the advertisement as a personification of the "sense of separation from the rest of society" that queer people in Portland and nationwide experienced.[158] In response, Wilkinson proposed a Portland-based chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), which had just formed a year earlier in New York.[159] With the support of fellow LGBTQ+ *Bridge* staff writer Holly Hart, forty people attended the inaugural meeting of Portland GLF on March 26, 1970 at Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church (215 SE 9th Avenue).[160]

lonely seeks meaningful relationship with same. Answer with ad in the Bridge.
— Anonymous, 1970

Despite lesbophobia in mainstream feminist circles during the 1960s and 1970s, Portlander Barbara Bernstein summarized in 2013 "a lot of lesbians were involved with women's rights that had nothing to do with lesbian issues."[161] Portland lesbians participated in the formation of Portland Feminist Women's Clinic (6510 SE Foster Rd.), A Woman's Place Bookstore (initially at 706 SE Grand Ave.), women's credit unions, women's construction businesses, auto repair shops, and more.[162] These feminist organizations, spaces, theories, writing, and activism raised awareness of the Gay Liberation Movement's reproduction of "oppressive patterns that privileged men's voices and issues."[163] This awareness influenced Portlander Cindy Cumfer to reignite a Gay Liberation for women group in 1972 (one was started in the summer of 1970 but didn't last) in the basement of Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church. She recalled her

[157] Staff cited sexual advertisements of any kind against their policy when rejecting the ad. John Wilkinson is discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" and in the theme "Queer Arts and Leisure." Matthew Singer, "How a Classified Ad in an Underground Newspaper Ignited Portland's LGBTQ Rights Movement," *Willamette Week* June 12, 2019, https://www.wweek.com/culture/2019/06/12/how-a-classified-ad-in-an-underground-newspaper-ignited-portlands-lgbtq-rights-movement/.

[158] Ibid.

[159] John Wilkinson, "Dear Gay, Young, and Lonely," *Willamette Bridge,* February 6-12, 1970, 23. The Gay Liberation Front was founded in New York in 1969. For additional information, see NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, "Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York," New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, May 2018, 50, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NYC_LGBT_Sites_Context_Statement_102618_web-compressed1.pdf.

[160] This is also discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces." Also see "Interview with David Davenport and John Wilkinson, two founders of the Gay Liberation Front in Portland, Oregon," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6047WilkinsonInterview.html.

[161] Famously, in 1969, National Organization for Women (NOW) president Betty Friedan referred to lesbians in the feminist movement as the "lavender menace," reflecting a viewpoint that "lesbians would tarnish the movement's reputation if NOW members were accused of being 'man-haters' or 'a bunch of dykes." See Oral History Interview with Barbara Bernstein, by Sheana Corbridge and Catherine Meyers, 2013 February 28, SR 11361, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.; Emily Kahn, "Lavender Menace Action at Second Congress to Unite Women," Sites, NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, July 2020, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/lavender-menace-action-at-second-congress-to-unite-women/.; Nina Yankovic, "Lavender Menace and the History of Lesbian Censorship," The Feminist Poetry Movement, Williams College, December 13, 2021, https://sites.williams.edu/engl113-f18/yankovic/lavender-menace-and-the-history-of-lesbian-censorship/.

[162] Jean DeMaster and others have spoken to the importance of Concentrated Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds that allowed people to "get paid for the work that [they] wanted to be doing, that [they] were doing already, particularly [queer people]. See Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "Jean DeMaster speaks at Q Center," YouTube, June 28, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgzb5Oz3p2g&t=331s.

[163] Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 198.

"astonishment" at the 60 women some "who had not been part of Gay Lib" before that showed up to advance women's liberation.[164]

By this time in the 1970s, an area roughly bounded by SE Hawthorne Boulevard, SE Belmont Street, SE 20th Avenue, and SE 39th Avenue (now Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard) was a prominent enclave for lesbian and feminist Portlanders with collective houses and businesses supporting this association. For instance, Ann Mussey recalled her collective house with four other women named Red Emma being "one among many may households of women, many of whom moved to Portland in about that time period . . . [Somebody] said the Southeast is where it's happening. So . . . we thought of our area as between 20th and 39th."[165] On SE 39th Avenue, Mountain Moving Café (demolished) became a prominent venue for lesbian organizing and Portland women's music in the 1970s.[166]

With growing national and local Gay Liberation Movements, various social spaces openly advertised and became known as LGBTQ+ social venues. Roman's Riptide (949 SW Stark St., demolished) was Portland's first gay bar to openly advertise as such in 1970.[167] That same year, San Francisco LGBTQ+ publication *Vector* recognized Walter Cole Sr.'s Demas Tavern (203 NW 3rd Ave., currently Darcelle XV) as a "Portland Greenwich Village."[168] This remark was significant for Portland LGBTQ+ spaces to gain recognition while drawing association to other well-known LGBTQ+ centers.

Roman's advertisement signaled a new era for the area south of W Burnside along SW Harvey Milk Street through the 1970s.[169] Yet, it was the four story, trapezoidal, multiuse building at 303 SW 12th Avenue that "helped to fortify and define a proliferation of LGBTQ+ establishments in this area of downtown."[170] The historical Hotel Alma building hosted various businesses since its original construction in 1911, which largely severed queer Portlanders starting in 1969 with the opening of bar Pied Piper, if not earlier.[171] By 1971, the building opened as Majestic Hotel & Club Baths (303 SW 12th Ave., currently McMenamins Crystal Hotel) where hotel accommodations, saunas, intermittent health services, and more catered

[164] Cindy Cumfer, LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Questionnaire, March 19, 2023.
[165] Oral history interview with Ann Mussey, by Justine Larson and Brooke Welch, SR 4148, Oregon Historical Society Research Library. Mussey's collective house is also discussed in the theme "Queer Intimacies."
[166] Mountain Moving Café is discussed in the themes "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" and "Queer Arts and Entertainment." Also see Pat Young, "Making Music, Making History, *Just Out,* August 20, 1999, 23-25.
[167] Kristen Minor and Don/Donnie Horn, "Darcelle XV," Section 8.
[168] "City of Roses," *Vector*, November 1969, 48. For additional history on Greenwich Village as an "important epicenter of LGBT life" see "Village Pride Tour," Curated Themes, NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/theme/village-pride-tour/.
[169] For previous venues in this area, see the discussion under "Portlander's LGBTQ+ Social Worlds." Also see Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," Section 8.; Minor, "Hotel Alma National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Amendment," (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2020), Section 8.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid. Also see John Tess, "Hotel Alma National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2009), Section 8.

specifically to LGBTQ+ men.[172] Later LGBTQ+ businesses along SW Harvey Milk including Roxy Heart's Memorial Diner and Scandals (initially at 1038 SW Stark [now Harvey Milk] St., currently at 1125 SW Harvey Milk St.) cemented the "Burnside Triangle" area as a center for LGBTQ+ nightlife through the late 20th century, although it was predominantly associated with men.[173]

In addition to downtown and southeast, portions of inner NE Portland developed as LGBTQ+ hubs in the early and mid-1970s. NE Broadway Street, bounding the existing Irvington National Register District, became a queer enclave starting in the late 1970s. The LGBTQ+ affirming church Metropolitan Community Church purchased a building in 1977 (2400 NE Broadway) and various businesses at 1441 NE Broadway (Dugan's, Dugan's Stage Door, Judy's bar, and A Woman's Place Bookstore) contributed to this concentration.[174]

BIPOC LGBTQ+ Portlanders found discrete places to gather within BIPOC neighborhoods in the mid-century, such as Portland's Northeast Albina neighborhoods where many Black Portlanders resided due to historic redlining.[175] LGBTQ+ Portlander and bar owner Ric King, who owned the Jamboree Tavern Jamboree Tavern (2529 NE Union, now 2517 NE MLK Blvd.) between 1956 and 1960, informed scholar Beka Smith that gay bars often accepted few men of color and only did so if their partner was White or if they were drag performers; King's own biracial relationship helped to integrate his bar.[176] Finding affirming spaces to bring cultural traditions together in queer settings was significant, given that many mainstream organizations and spaces were explicitly and implicitly exclusionary whether based on one's race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and/or age.[177]

LGBTQ+ Portlanders Activates Social Rights

With growing courage to live openly in the 1970s, LGBTQ+ Portlanders organized campaigns demanding sexual orientation protection in anti-discrimination legislation. Facing discrimination, job loss, and housing insecurity, many LGBTQ+ Oregonians prioritized obtaining equal rights in employment and housing through non-discrimination legislation; at the same time, many lesbians were "interested in

[172] Minor, "Hotel Alma National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Amendment," Section 8. The Majestic Hotel & Club Baths is also discussed in the themes "Queer Intimacies," "LGBTQ+ Health," and "HIV/AIDS Impacts."
[173] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."; Dave Kohl, "Traipsing the Triangle: Walking into the past, discovering the present," *Just Out,* November 18, 2005, 24. For a discussion on the Burnside Triangle, see Minor, "Hotel Alma National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Amendment," Section 8.
[174] These venues are discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Venues." Metropolitan Community Church is also discussed in the theme "HIV Impacts."
[175] For additional history, see "History of Racist Planning in Portland," Anti-Displacement Plan, Long-Range Planning, Planning and Sustainability (BPS), https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/adap/history-racist-planning-portland.
[176] Oral history interview with Ric King, by Beka Smith, possession of Beka Smith. Quoted in Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965," 81-82, 116.
[177] Exclusion is further discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing."

changing the world . . . in how we live[d] . . . just a legislative agenda . . . [w]as very narrow."[178] Nevertheless, the progressive legal atmosphere of the early 1970s was particularly ripe for Portland's LGBTQ+ political activism to change socio-political realities for Oregonians.

Part of Oregon's progressive legal atmosphere during the 1970s involved comprehensive criminal code revisions. The Oregon Criminal Law Revision Commission supported the decriminalization of sodomy in recognition that "any sexual conduct engaged in between consenting adults whether of a heterosexual or homosexual nature" should not be subject to legal sanction; the Oregon legislature approved the code revision in 1971.[179] Effective in 1972, Oregon became the fourth state to decriminalize sodomy.[180] Unfortunately, the revision included a prohibition on "accosting for deviate purposes" and police entrapment campaigns relied on this misdemeanor charge throughout the 1970s.[181]

Though Portland activist George Nicola reflected in 2015 that "Oregon's fledging gay movement was too young and unorganized to have any influence legally or politically" with the sodomy reforms, various coalitions coalesced around Gay Rights in the early 1970s.[182] In Portland, these included the Second Foundation of Oregon, Portland Town Council, Oregon Gay Political Caucus, and Portland Association for Gay Equality, to name a few. Political figures were also influential allies advocating and advancing LGBTQ+ protections statewide and locally. Gladys McCoy became "the first Oregonian with political power" supporting queer equity when she began working with Nicola "to shape sexual orientation nondiscrimination plank for the national Democratic Party's political platform."[183] McCoy's husband, Bill, who was the first African American elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1972, became a House co-sponsor of Representative Vera Katz's 1973 House Bill 2930, which aimed to add sexual orientation under civil rights protections.[184] Portland City Commissioner Connie McCready was also influential during this time;

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[178] George T. Nicola, "A History of Oregon's Major LGBTQ Equality Organizations," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated May 14, 2015, https://www.glapn.org/6026EqualityOrganizations.html.; Oral history interview with Cindy Cumfer, by Erik Funkhouser and Tim Aguirre, SR 11289, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[179] General Laws of Oregon 1971, page 1873, Ch. 743, enacted July 2, 1971, effective Jan. 1, 1972.; George T. Nicola, "Milestones in Oregon LGBTQ Law," Last Updated June 16, 2015, http://www.glapn.org/6012MilestonesLGBTQLaw.html.

[180] Illinois was the first state to decriminalize sodomy between consenting adults in 1961. For a brief history of how sodomy was decriminalized nationally, see "History of Sodomy Laws and the Strategy that led up to Today's Decision," Documents, ACLU, June 16, 2003, https://www.aclu.org/documents/history-sodomy-laws-and-strategy-led-todays-decision.

[181] Portlanders identified by the aliases of John M. and Rhonda were two of several Portlanders arrested for accosting in the 1970s. This law provision was ruled unconstitutional in 1981. See "Where were they?," *Northwest Gay Review,* April 1974, 4.; "I Didn't Touch You!," *Northwest Gay Review*, 18.; Ibid.

[182] Nicola, "A History of Oregon's Major LGBTQ Equality Organizations."

[183] Hayden Roma, "LGBT Activism in Oregon," Walk of Heroines, Portland State University, Last Updated Winter 2014, https://www.pdx.edu/heroines/lgbt-activism-oregon.

[184] Additional co-sponsored included representatives Stephen Kafoury, Margaret U. Deleri, Ralph Groener, Lloyd C. Kinsey, Mary Wendy Roberts, Keith D. Skelton, Pat Whiting, and Howard Willits and senators Keith Burns, Edward N. Fadeley, Keith A. Burbridge, Ted Hallock, Betty Roberts, and Bill Stevenson. This bill is further discussed in "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing."

she sponsored Resolution 31510, "directing the City to promote a policy of non-discrimination in City employment relative to the personal sexual preference of any individual."[185]

Many of these figures were instrumental in both *A Legislative Guide to Gay Rights* and the Task Force on Sexual Preference. In 1976, LGBTQ+ organization Portland Town Council (PTC) published a comprehensive 80-page guide to educate political officials and the public on LGBTQ+ issues in psychology, religion, education, and lifestyles. PTC advertised and sold copies of the guide through various nationwide LGBTQ+ newsletters. According to PTC member and main author Susie Shepherd, fellow PTC member Larry Copeland "figured if [LGBTQ+ activists] had [a] set of findings [on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation] and the *Legislative Guide,* that we wouldn't have any trouble getting our civil rights bill through. So I remember sitting in his apartment up in Northwest, and we were all trying to decide who would be the best people to get on this task force."[186] At the time, Gladys McCoy served as Oregon Governor Robert Straub's ombudsman and used her position to support Copeland's ideas. As a result, Governor Straub requested the establishment of The Task Force on Sexual Preference "for the purpose of assembling accurate information on homosexual men and women in Oregon and making recommendations on legislation and administrative policies that would ensure the civil rights of all Oregonians, enabling them to be fully contributing members of our society."[187] Metropolitan Community Church Pastor Austin Amerine, American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon attorney Charles F. Hinkle, Portland Parents of Gays co-founder Ann Shepherd, and Portland Gay Liberation Front co-founder Holly Hart were among the twelve members who worked on this task force. Following a two-year study, the 162-page report included 31 recommendations to improve the realities of LGBTQ+ Oregonians in employment, health, education, law, and more.[188]

Activists and politicians were optimistic that the *Legislative Guide* and the complementing study detailing statewide discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations would get statewide legislation protecting LGBTQ+ Oregonians passed. Unfortunately, the 1973, 1975, and 1977 legislative sessions all failed to pass such protections, notwithstanding major political organizing, lobbying, and widespread support from various local and national organizations.[189]

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[185] Up until this point, the City did not have any non-discrimination policy. See Auditor, 31510 – A Resolution directing the City to promote a policy of non-discrimination in City employment relative to the personal sexual preference of any individual, Council Resolution, City of Portland Archives and Records Management.

[186] Oral history interview with Susie Shepherd.

[187] Task Force on Sexual Preference, *Final Report of the Task Force on Sexual Preference,* State of Oregon Department of Human Resources, December 1, 1978, 1.

[188] Ibid.

[189] For instance, listed endorsements in *A Legislative Guide* included Oregon Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, United Church of Christ, and American Civil Liberties Union. Also see "Oregon Gay History Timeline," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://glapn.org/6020timeline.html.

Conservative Criticism of LGBTQ+ Connections, 1980s–1990s

In the last decades of the 20th century, Portland was once again in transition. Its stumptown roots in timber and manufacturing industries evolved as high-tech firms and other businesses established the Pacific Northwest as a "Silicon Forest." A quirky, alternative culture thrived through independent businesses, rock music, social activism, and more. The implementation of the urban growth boundary continued urban renewal in southeast and downtown, and the 1991 annexation of East Portland reshaped the city's fabric. Against this backdrop, LGBTQ+ Portlanders continued to construct social, political, and cultural connections, vital for enduring political headwinds and an epidemic that forever changes society.

HIV/AIDS in Portland

In her retrospective of the 1980s, *Just Out* contributing writer Anndee Hochman poignantly observed, "Whatever else we remember about the 1980s, certainly we will remember AIDS."[190] *Just Out* and other media outlets dedicated extensive coverage to sharing medical knowledge of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), publicizing available support groups, providing safe sex practice guides, commemorating individuals who passed away, and critiquing society's discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ communities, all shedding light on the profound impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals, the healthcare system, and culture in Portland. Such coverage of the developing health crisis exploded as Portland's initial August 21, 1981 case of a HIV/AIDS defining illness signaled the wave of severe immune deficiency to come.[191]

HIV/AIDS hysteria and discrimination permeated Portland throughout the 1980s and 1990s.[192] Early on, medical documentation and public press disproportionately emphasized individuals' sexuality, particularly gay men who were identified as a primary risk group.[193] Headlines such as "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" and "New Homosexual Disorder Worries Health Officials" significantly influenced

[190] Medical and scientific attention toward what would later be labeled as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) began with a pivotal moment— the publication of an article in the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) June 5, 1981 issue of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (*MMWR)*. There were earlier cases and multiple strains of what would later be identified as HIV in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this 1981 CDC article is "often cited as the official beginning of the AIDS crisis." See "Pneumocystis Pneumonia – Los Angeles," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 30, no 21, June 5, 1981.; "A Timeline of HIV and AIDS," Overview, HIV Basics, HIV.gov, https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline/#year-1981.; William H. Schneider, *The Histories of HIVs: The Emergence of the Multiple Viruses That Caused the AIDS Epidemic*, (Ohio University Press: 2021).; Anndee Hochman, "Decade in Review," *Just Out,* December 1, 1989, 20.

[191] Kaposi sarcoma (KS), a rare cancer appearing as lesions or tumors on the skin, has been a defining illness associated with HIV/AIDS since its diagnosis during the early 1980s. See "A Timeline of HIV and AIDS."; "Kaposi Sarcoma," Cancer Types, American Cancer Society, https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/kaposi-sarcoma.html.; "It's Not Over: 40 Years of HIV/AIDS in Oregon," Oregon Historical Society, 2023.

[192] HIV/AIDS stigma continues. For more information, see GLAAD, Gilead Sciences, and Gilead Compass Initiative, *2024 State of HIV Stigma Report,* End HIV Stigma, GLAAD, https://glaad.org/endhivstigma/2024/.

[193] Anthropologists Stephen Murray and Kenneth Payne examined the case studies to showcase how "epidemiological information was rewritten or erased by the risk categories constructed by the Centers for Disease Control" resulting in the patient's sexuality to be the exclusive attribute. See S.O Murray and K.W. Payne, "The Social Classification of AIDS in American Epidemiology," *Medical Anthropology* 10, 1989: 115-128.

societal and medical perceptions, leading to the widespread use of terms like "gay cancer" and "Gay-Related Immune Deficiency" (GRID).[194] Such language perpetuated harmful stereotypes and reinforced the misconception that HIV/AIDS exclusively affected LGBTQ+ populations, a misconception that endured throughout the late 20th century.

> **I never truly grasped that AIDS could directly impact me. I viewed it as a distant issue, something that only affected other communities . . . At 19, I find out that I am HIV-positive, and I know no one who is another young woman, or young person, who I could relate to.**
>
> — Portlander Jennifer Jako, ca. 2011 [195]

Further, Portland health providers, such as Doctor Estill Dietz and Doctor David Rosenstein, recalled individuals withdrawing from their care because they also treated individuals with HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s.[196] Public educational materials were pulled from TriMet buses following an editorial article "AIDS Prevention or Gay Promotion?" published in *The Oregonian.*[197] TriMet was later involved in the "state's first AIDS-discrimination case" that went to trial after terminating employee Joe Griffin in the late 1980s.[198] Griffin was emblematic of numerous people facing harassment and job loss due to their medical status.

The first AIDS-related deaths in March and August 1983 (individuals unknown) marked a turning point in mobilizing grassroots responses.[199] In fall of 1983, Executive Director of Portland's LGBTQ+ counseling center Phoenix Rising Jerry Weller collaborated with Good Samaritan Hospital personnel (1015 NW 22nd Ave.) to lead a seminar on HIV/AIDS.[200]

> **Health professionals from all over the state came to learn about AIDS. And we brought up speakers from San Francisco . . . and all the latest information was given on AIDS — all the technical information for doctors and nurses and V.E. clinic workers and then the afternoon was for gay men, and we had four**

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[194] See Lawrence K. Altman, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," *The New York Times,* July 3, 1981, Section A, 20.; Lawrence K. Altman, "New Homosexual Disorder Worries Health Officials," *The New York Times,* Mayl 11, 1982, Section C, 1.; Joe Wright, "Remembering the Earl Days of 'Gay Cancer,' All Things Considered, NPR, May 8, 2006, https://www.npr.org/2006/05/08/5391495/remembering-the-early-days-of-gay-cancer.

[195] Oral History interview with Jennifer Jako, Oral Histories, Cascade AIDS Project Archives, http://caparchives.org/oralhistory/video-play.php?video_id=66.

[196] Roseanne King, "What do we tell the neighbors?," *Just Out,* May 25, 1984, 7.

[197] David Reinhard, "AIDS Prevention or Gay Promotion?" *Oregonian*, July 3, 1988, D02.; Anndee Hochman, "The Eighties: Decade in Review," *Just Out*, December 1, 1989, 21.; "It's Not Over: Forty Years of HIV/AIDS in Oregon," Oregon Historical Society.

[198] Abby Haight, "Tri-Met hit with AIDS discrimination suit," *Just Out*, March 1, 1989, 9.; Griffin v. Tri-Met, 111 OR. App. 575 (OR. Ct. App. 1992), https://casetext.com/case/griffin-v-tri-met/.; Andee Hochman, "Tri-Met appeals discrimination case," *Just Out*, April 1, 1990, 7.; Fred Leeson, "Plaintiff Claims Tri-met Bias, Lays It to AIDS Virus," *Oregonian*, January 18, 1990, B03. According to Leeson's article, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries had "received 'only a couple' complaints of AIDS-related discrimination, including Griffin's. Griffin "elected to go to court rather than to continue under the agency's procedures." Also see Leeson, "Tri-Met Liable for Firing Worker with AIDS Virus," *Oregonian*, January 25, 1990, A01.

[199] "AIDS death Noted," *Oregonian*, SUNRISE ed, August 12, 1983, 32. Yet, Epidemiologist Dr. Laurence Foster noted a lack of reporting HIV/AIDS cases, the number of cases and deaths is potentially higher.

[200] "Good Sam does AIDS presentation," *Just Out*, November 11, 1983, 5.; Tom Hager, "AIDS: Deadly Enigma," *Oregonian*, October 2, 1983, NW8.

> **hours for gay men, and the auditorium was absolutely packed, with people sitting on the stairs because everyone knew this mysterious disease was around . . .**
>
> — Jerry Weller reflecting on the seminar in 2007 [201]

This seminar proved pivotal. It marked Portland's initial public discussion on HIV/AIDS and influenced the formation of the Oregon AIDS Task Force and Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) within the year to advance understandings of the emerging health crisis's gravity, promote cooperation with health authorities, and obtain resources.[202]

By the end of the 1980s, the number of people with HIV/AIDS in Oregon did not dissipate and Oregon "continue[d] to grapple with the . . . effects and ramifications of the epidemic."[203] Oregon's HIV/AIDS Policy Committee reported a cumulative total of 373 AIDS diagnoses (208 of which had died) and estimated up to 16,000 potentially HIV+ individuals in 1988.[204] The Policy Committee's research also found that by 1988, Multnomah County constituted a cumulative 66.2% (247) AIDS diagnoses and a cumulative 65.7% (137) deaths.[205] These numbers were far beyond other Oregon counties; for instance, neighboring Clackamas County reported a cumulative total of 5.1% (19) diagnoses and 7.2% (15) deaths.[206]

Grassroots endeavors throughout the 1980s and 1990s were "dedicated to teaching prevention measures and caring for" rising numbers of individuals with HIV/AIDS, representing a vibrant response to the medical and social crisis.[207] Such activism marked "the first social movement in the United States to accomplish the large-scale conversion of disease 'victims' into activist-experts . . . [AIDS activists] "taught themselves the details of virology, immunology, and epidemiology," enabling them to advocate for themselves and others effectively.[208] Activist, sociologist, and HIV/AIDS historian Cindy Patton further stresses in "Resistance and the Erotic: Reclaiming History, Setting Strategy as We Face AIDS," "the strategies employed before 1985 or so grew out of gay liberation and feminist theory."[209]

Nationwide, and in Portland, individuals established a variety of avenues to channel their anger, frustration, and sadness about government inaction and sluggish response. For instance, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) was first founded in New York on March 12, 1987 (in Portland by late 1988) as an organization drawing attention and spurring action for AIDS activism. Many of ACT UP's direct actions across the country focused on improving access to the emerging antiretroviral drug zidovudine

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[201] Oral history interview with Jerry Weller, by Libbey Austin, SR 11124, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.
[202] CAP is discussed in the themes "LGBTQ+ Health" and "HIV/AIDS Impacts in Portland."
[203] Numbers from Kristine M. Gebbie and Kathleen Stout, *The HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Oregon Responds*, The HIV/AIDS Policy Committee, July 1, 1988.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Michael MacKillop, "ACT UP sets Portland agenda," *Just Out,* February 1, 1989, 11.
[208] Stephen Epstein*, Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (University of California Press, 1996), 8.
[209] Cindy Patton, "Resistance and the Erotic: Reclaiming History, Setting Strategy as We Face AIDS," *Radical America*, vol. 20, no. 6 (Facing AIDS: A Special Issue), 68.

(AZT).[210] As a result to these actions and hundreds of activists, HIV/AIDS medicine became available quicker and legislation like the Health Omnibus Programs Extension (HOPE) Act in 1988 and the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act in 1990 marked major achievements in federal funding for prevention, education, testing, care, and treatment; The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program established under the CARE Act is the "largest federal program focused on HIV."[211]

Though experimental medicines and broad activism transformed the once fatal diagnosis into a manageable condition by the early 1990s, supporting one's livelihood amidst ongoing health issues, HIV/AIDS discrimination, and anti-LGBTQ+ legislation did not get any easier through the early 1990s.

Oregon's Political Battlegrounds: Ballot Measures 8, 9, and 13

Resurgent political campaigns promoting multiple anti-LGBTQ+ ballot measures surfaced amidst the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Both conservative groups and left-leaning politicians embraced campaigns with the rallying platform of "No Special Rights" and "special privileges for none." [212] This framing alleged LGBTQ+ individuals and other historical excluded groups sought preferential treatment, which gained broad appeal to leverage reversals in civil rights legislation. By 1988, the conservative activist group and political action committee the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) epitomized such platform in Oregon.

The OCA targeted a range of issues but became "best known for sponsoring ballot initiatives that would undo protections" for LGBTQ+ Oregonians.[213] In their first year, the OCA sponsored their first statewide anti-queer rights campaign, Ballot Measure 8. Entitled "Revokes Ban on Sexual Orientation Discrimination in State Executive Branch," this measure sought to overturn then-Governor Neil Goldschmidt's October 1987 Executive Order 8720 that protected sexual orientation from discrimination in Oregon's executive branch; Ballot Measure 8 passed by 52.75%.[215]

I came to Oregon in 1987. [Measure 8] was a shock. Why did we move here? What is wrong with this state?

— Lynn Nakamoto reflecting on the era's anti-LGBTQ+ environment [214]

Passage of Ballot Measure 8 reflected and further enabled a hostile environment across Oregon. Reflecting in 2023, Portland activist and journalist Patrick Mazza informed the editors of *It Did Happen*

[210] "ACT UP Accomplishments- 1987 – 2012," ACTUP, https://actupny.com/actions/.
[211] "Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Legislation," About the Program, Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, Health Resources and Services Administration, https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/about/legislation.
[212] This history is also discussed in theme "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing." Also see William Schultz, "The Rise and Fall of 'No Special Rights,'" *Oregon History Quarterly* 122 no. 1 (Spring 2021): 6-37.
[213] Randy Blazak, "Oregon Citizen Alliance," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated May 25, 2022, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_citizens_alliance/.
[214] "Asian Americans Oppose 9," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/17-asian-americans-oppose-9/.
[215] "Measure 8 (1988)," Regional Politics and Policies in the Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Special Collections and Archives Research Center, LibGuides, Oregon State University, https://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/politicsandpolicies/Measure8.

Here: An Antifascist People's History that "Portland got a reputation around the country as a place where nazi skinheads could come. For a city of our size, we had the most skinheads per capita; it was the skinhead capital . . . They were beating up on Black people, beating up on gays. They hated the gays. This was going on for a number of years."[216] Activist M. Trelor further shared ". . . While the boneheads were there, the Oregon Citizens Alliance were always there as well . . . So while they were saying, 'Let's attack queer people, let's get rid of abortions,' that was the political background in which the neo-Nazis were also organizing."[217]

The OCA continued to propose anti-LGBTQ+ legislation to attack the rights of LGBTQ+ Oregonians through the ballot box. In 1991, the organization attempted to repeal the City of Portland's ordinance to include sexual orientation in civil rights legislation with claims city officials were "controlled by the homosexual community." This repeal language "closely parallel[ed] the . . . proposed, statewide anti-gay initiative," Ballot Measure 9.[218] Sponsored during the 1992 General Election, Ballot Measure 9 posed to voters the option to amend the state constitution "to require that all governments discourage homosexuality, other listed 'behaviors,' and not facilitate or recognize them."[219] OCA member Scott Lively summarized the group was "responding to an aggressive, political agenda being forwarded by the homosexual community."[220] Yet, Portlander Debbie Caselton and several activists explained during this political battle, "we're not trying to get special rights, we're trying to get equal rights."[221]

Though this measure faulted by a 12% margin and Measure 8 was ruled unconstitutional the same year, the OCA was relentless. They passed localized anti-LGBTQ+ measures across the state, leading the Oregon Legislature to quickly invalided these localized measures under the 1993 House Bill 3500 that prohibited measures singling out "citizens or groups of citizens on account of sexual orientation."[222] In 1994, OCA attempted another statewide measure entitled "Amends Constitution: Governments Cannot Approve, Create Classifications Based on, Homosexuality" (Ballot Measure 13).[223] The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) regarded this ballot as a "son of 9" due to copied language and similar intended outcomes to discriminate against LGBTQ+ Oregonians.[224] Measure 13 was defeated by a 3.1% margin, reflecting another battle won in the long war for civil rights protections.

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[216] Patrick Mazza interview, in Moe Bowstern, Mic Crenshaw, Alec Dunn, Celina Flores, Julie Perini, and Erin Yanke, eds., *It Did Happen Here: An Antifascist People's History,* (PM Press, 2023), 22.
[217] M. Trelor was an organizer of the Coalition for Human Dignity, a coalition of community groups and the City of Portland to address hate crimes. Over time, it turned into a committee with Scot Nakagawa as a major leader. See Ibid, 52, 67.
[218] Inga Sorenson, "OCA targets city initiative," *Just Out,* November 1, 1991, 9.
[219] "Ballot Measure 9," The Stores, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/ballot-measure-9/.
[220] Scott Lively, quoted in *Fighting for Our Lives,* directed by Elaine Velazquez and Barbara Bernstein, (1992, Portland: Feather and Fin Productions, 1992), Videotape.; "Fighting for our lives," *Just Out,* October 1, 1992, 7.
[221] Debbie Caselton, quoted in Magnify Media/ BNN/ CameraPlanet, "MTV News: Unfiltered, Episode 108," YouTube, 22:15, January 29, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=UzB26OoVNeE.
[222] George T. Nicola, "Oregon Anti-Gay Ballot Measures Detailed Study," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated February 10, 2013, https://www.glapn.org/6006ballotmeasures.html?query=Measure%2013&case=&whole=&phrase=.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.

Power in Activism and Diversity

LGBTQ+ Portlanders cultivated rich connections through the 1980s and 1990s to challenge the status quo and address issues, ranging from racist perspectives among LGBTQ+ Portlanders to HIV/AIDS discrimination. Organizations such as Black Lesbian and Gays United, Rainbow, and Asian American Pacific Islander Lesbians and Gays (currently Asian Pacific Islander Pride) built homes for BIPOC LGBTQ+ Portlanders excluded from mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations. The Portland Lesbian Form and the Lesbian Community Project formed in the early 1980s to explore identity and promote "the well-being of the lesbian community through a grassroots organization with an evolving multi-issue, multi-cultural perspective."[225] Right to Privacy Political Action Committee (later Right to Pride), the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, and ACT UP/Portland were among several activist organizations working towards legal and social acceptance, particularly stewarding campaigns against Ballot Measure 8, 9, and 13.

Additionally, Portland's queer art scene flourished and were essential avenues for creating joy and laughter during the fraught late 20th century. Groups like The Dyketones and Portland Gay Men's Chorus performed as openly queer musicians across the state and country. The City Nightclub (13 NW 13th Ave.) became central to youth performers in the performing arts, offering space for drag entertainers to entertain on stage and in the club's television show. *Just Out* was one of several queer-led media outlets connecting Portland together. Almost every day, there was some show to attend, be it at Portland Women's Theater Company (1728 NE 40th Ave.) or Washington Park Amphitheatre (4033 SW Canyon Rd).

From 1905 and 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders connected over shared interests and identities, expressed themselves through various mediums, and organized for equality. By the 20th century's close, the rose city was a vibrant hub of queer culture, drawing on decades of LGBTQ+ gathering spaces, activism, and queer visibility.

[225] Mission statement quoted in "Lesbian Community Project records, 1976-2008," Collection Guide, Archives West, https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:80444/xv77362?q=lesbian%20community%20project.