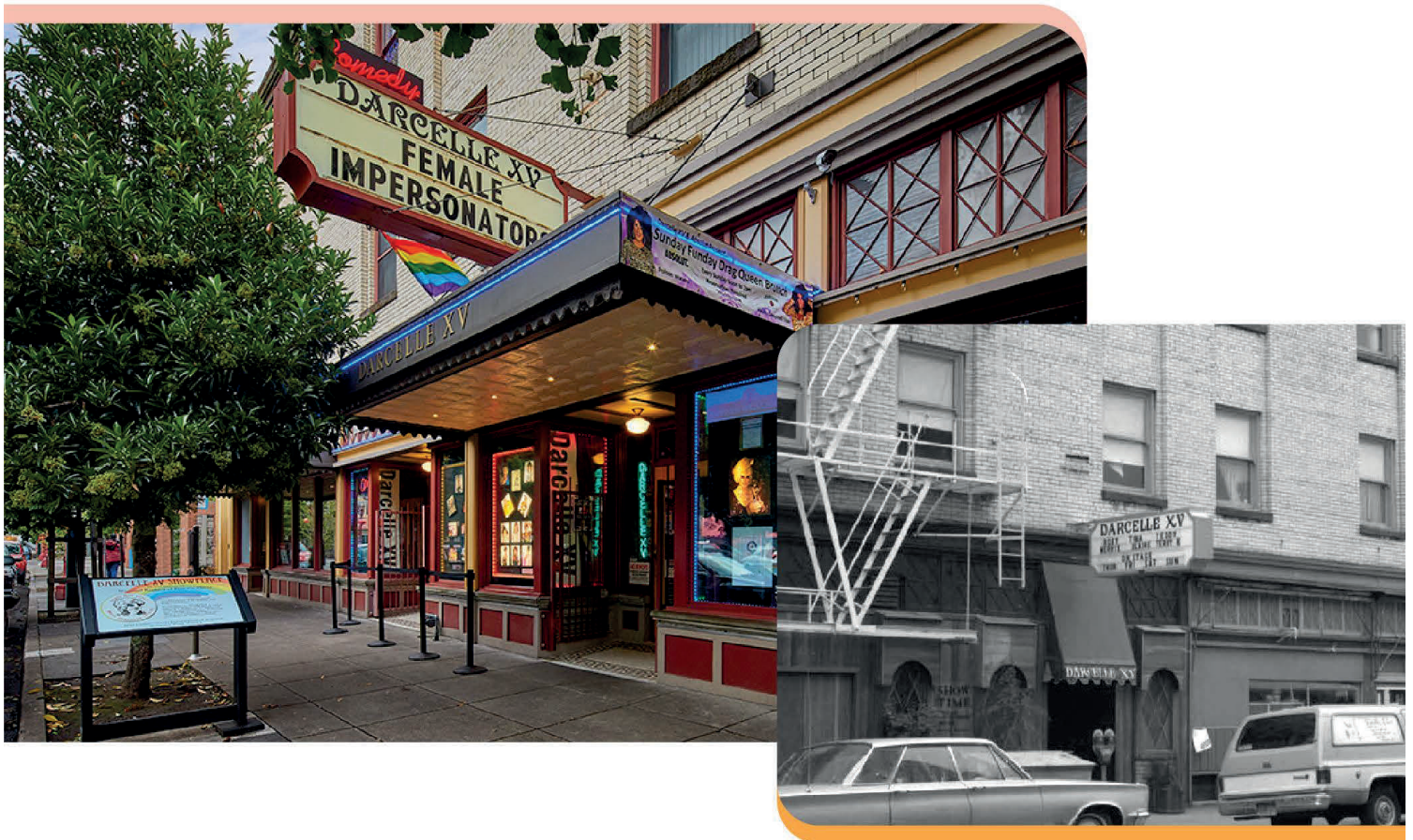


LGBTQ+ History in Portland, Oregon

A Historic Context Statement



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

October 2024

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About City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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Queer Arts and Entertainment

In September 1948, the night sky over Portland's Normandale Field (NE 57th Ave. and Hassalo St, later known as Erv Lind Field) came alive as towering 70-foot-tall light poles illuminated the city's newest sports marvel. Snuggled within a backdrop of trees, the state-of-the-art stadium featured an announcer's booth, a press box, tiered seating, and a meticulously smooth dirt surface infield. Hailed as the "most modern softball field in the country," Normandale Field was designed specifically to host the 1948 world Amateur Softball Association championship games.⁷⁵⁵ Women's teams from across the country, including Portland's own Lind & Pomeroy Florists (renamed Erv Lind Florists in 1948), took to the diamond.⁷⁵⁶ Formed in 1937, The Florists quickly became Portland's premier amateur women's softball team, amassing an astonishing 1,113 wins by 1964. Though neither the team nor fan base were exclusively LGBTQ+, from 1948 to 1964 the Florists and their home base at Normandale Field served as a safe place for LGBTQ+ Portlanders who "found friendship, relationships, and identity within a community of women who enjoyed getting together for a summer of softball socializing."⁷⁵⁷

The Florists offered an important entertainment space for LGBTQ+ Portlanders during the mid-century and were reflective of a long legacy of LGBTQ+ artists and athletes who contributed to arts and entertainment since the early 1900s. Sports, performances, and publications serves as prominent avenues to explore one's gender and sexuality, either explicit or implicit. However, harassment, job loss, arrest, discrimination, dominant social norms, and other repercussions experienced by publicly out LGBTQ+ individuals often compelled artists and entertainers to refrain from public discussion of their diverse identities.⁷⁵⁸ Many artists and entertainers worked under stage/pen names and withheld identifying information. With the rise of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in Oregon and nationwide in the 1970s, many artists and entertainers began to openly identify as LGBTQ+ in their cultural productions. Queer artists and entertainers used various mediums for self-expression, connections, celebration, and advocacy of LGBTQ+ civil rights.

"Queer Arts and Entertainment" explores a selection of LGBTQ+ sports, performances, and print media to illuminate ways Portland's queer expressions enriched the city, though this theme does not encompass the entirety of Portland's queer cultural work. Athletics, performance arts, music, and prose were just a few of many avenues that fostered connections and amplified queer visibility during the 1905 to 1994 period.

⁷⁵⁵ Kristen Minor, "Normandale Field," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2024), Section 8.

⁷⁵⁶ "Florists Draw Opening Spot," *Oregonian*, September 8, 1948.

⁷⁵⁷ "Those Fabulous Florists! Women's Softball and the Flowering of a Lesbian Community in Portland," *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian*, June 1997, 1.

⁷⁵⁸ Tara Burk, "LGBTQ Art and Artists," 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) 23- 3.

On Courts, Fields, and Tracks

Dr. Katherine Schweighofer wrote in “LGBTQ Sport and Leisure” that “mainstream sports history is LGBTQ sports history; people with same-sex sexual partners, those who challenge gender roles, and individuals who understand themselves as somehow different from the heterosexual mainstream have always existed and participated in all forms of American culture, including sports.”⁷⁵⁹

Softball was a pastime and lifeline for many queer individuals nationwide and in Portland. By the late 1930s and 1940s, softball teams “offered a safe, vibrant, and supportive community that provided a counterbalance and even resistance to the homophobic mainstream in which they lived and worked” for many LGBTQ+ people.⁷⁶⁰ Portland’s teams from the 1940s to the 1990s were no exception. Stepping up to the plate in 1937 initially as the Lind and Pomeroy Florists, Portland’s Erv Lind Florists women’s softball team provided comradery and connections for LGBTQ+ Portlanders until the early 1960s. While the team did not self-identify as, or was exclusively, queer across the decades, the Florists nevertheless served as a haven for queer players and audiences. Florists’ games “provided a wholesome ‘cover’ for LGBTQ+ women who were meeting or looking for other queer women.”⁷⁶¹ There was even a known section of the bleachers for close friends and queer people to regularly sit in.⁷⁶² After meeting at the field, players and fans would regularly attend house parties and often go to downtown queer bars, such as The Harbor Club.⁷⁶³

By the mid-1970s, a range of athletic endeavors by and for LGBTQ+ individuals, both organized teams and informal gatherings, contributed to developing LGBTQ+ visibility locally and nationally. For instance, Portland’s Lavender Menace softball team was “one of the first openly gay softball teams in the country” in 1971.⁷⁶⁴ Portlander Rose Bond recalled it as a joyful space where individuals could say “‘here we are, gay and proud and not hiding.’”⁷⁶⁵ Lavender Menace also developed a volleyball team and one of Portland’s “Park Bureau’s first women’s basketball league.”⁷⁶⁶ In 1977, Marilyn Gayle’s “One Eye on the Ball” article in Portland’s *Pearl Diver* identified Lavender Rising, the Amazons, and Sappho’s Sluggers as “fairly out-front dyke identif[ied]” teams.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁵⁹ Katherine Schweighofer, “LGBTQ Sport and Leisure,” *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, ed. Megan Springate (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2016), 24-5.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. For additional history on queer softball history, see Susan K. Cahn, “From the ‘Muscle Moll’ to the ‘Butch’ Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women’s Sport,” *Feminist Studies* 19 no. 2 (1993): 343-364.; Yvonne Zipter, *Diamonds Are a Dyke’s Best Friend*, (Firebrand Books, 1988).

⁷⁶¹ Minor, “Normandale Field,” Section 8.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.; Cook and Painter, “1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour.”

⁷⁶⁴ Celina Patterson, “‘Exuberant joy’: Playing Women’s Softball in the 1970s with Portland’s Openly Gay Team,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 125 no. 1 (Spring 2024).

⁷⁶⁵ Rose Bond, quoted in *ibid.*

⁷⁶⁶ “Gay Women form Basketball Team,” *The Fountain*, February 1973.

⁷⁶⁷ Marilyn Gayle, “One Eye on the Ball,” *Pearl Diver*, July 1977, 10-14.

The growing diversity and openness of queer sports in the late 20th century was largely supported queer businesses and organizations. Specifically, in the 1970s and 1980s, LGBTQ+ bars sponsored teams and sporting events, such as Magic Gardens' (217 NW 4th Ave.) Lavender Menace volleyball team, Rising Moon's (413 W Burnside St.) Lavender Rising softball team, or Ember's Avenue (110 NW Broadway) Fruit Bowl flag football game played in Washington Park (4003 SW Canyon Rd.).⁷⁶⁸ The Lesbian Community Project (LCP) also sponsored sports in the late 1980s and 1990s, with summer softball tournaments and The Amazon Dragons dragon boat team "as a spin-off of LCP's visibility project 'Margins to the Mainstream.'"⁷⁶⁹ The effort to bring lesbian visibility to the annual Rose Festival and dragon boating paid off: in 1994, members were featured on the front page of the *Sunday Oregonian*, and potentially more significant, LCP board member, Amazon Dragon founder, and team captain Chris Mack retold a story of two women near RiverPlace Marina (0315 SW Montgomery Ave.) being excited to hear the word 'lesbian' "proclaimed over a loudspeaker in Waterfront Park" for the boat race.⁷⁷⁰

On Stages, Screens, and Soundtracks

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, LGBTQ+ individuals nationwide and in Portland gravitated toward the world of performance and visual arts for acceptance and self-expression.⁷⁷¹ Theater and stage performances were prominent venues for the eccentric, particularly tracing to vaudeville era entertainment. By the 1970s, openly LGBTQ+ television, radio, and music groups offered additional opportunities for positivity expressing LGBTQ+ identities and empowerment. The mediums of stage, screen, and soundtracks were crucial avenues spotlighting queer life by queer performers across the city, the Pacific Northwest, and the country.

Impersonation and Drag

Impersonation and drag are rooted in performance; Anthropologist Lucas Hasten describes drag in his thesis "Gender Pretenders: A Drag King Ethnography" as gender theatricality, where "gendered signs are consciously hyperbolized and presented expressly as *performance*."⁷⁷² Drag entertainers craft their performances, whether it be lip-synching to a song, standup comedy, theater plays, and/or dance, with

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.; Ad, *The Fountain*, December 1972.; Ad, *Cascade Voice*, October 1982.

⁷⁶⁹ Dragon boat races commemorate the Chinese figure Qu Yuan and have developed into a high performance and competition sport. In Portland, the races have been sponsored by the Portland-Kaohsiung Sister City Association since 1989 to foster cultural exchange. See Jann Gilbert, "Lesbians Lap It Up," *Just Out*, June 17, 1994, 16.; "Amazon Dragons Make Waves," *Just Out*, June 16, 1995, 23.; "History and Culture," About Us, International Dragon Boag Federation, <https://www.dragonboat.sport/about-us/history-culture/>.

⁷⁷⁰ Gilbert, "Lesbian Lap It Up."

⁷⁷¹ GPA Consulting, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Context Statement*, (City of Los Angeles Department of city Planning Office of Historic Resources, September 2014, Revised February 2023), 35.

⁷⁷² Drag encompasses a wide range of performers and performance types. For instance, in the early 2000s, Portland drag performers included drag king troupe DK PDX and self-described "drag monsters" troupe Sissyboy. Portland's diverse drag scene continues today; Portland drag performer Carla Rossi is best known as 'Portland's premier drag clown.'" See Lucas Hasten, "Gender Pretenders: A Drag King Ethnography," (Thesis, Columbia University, 1999), <http://whasten.com/genderpretenders.html#introduction>.

hair, makeup, costumes, and prop design to enhance the show and drag persona. Drag Historian Joe E. Jeffreys contends drag to be a “serious art form . . . It takes many years to practice” and can be very technical.⁷⁷³

This is acting . . . And this is just a costume . . . All you do is put a record on, act like you are singing to the record and you do it all with makeup, dress, wig, and heels.

— Portland drag performer Tina Sandell to Darcelle, 1969⁷⁷⁴

Beginning in the 1900s, traveling impersonation acts in plays and performance troupes graced Portland stages large and small, including the Princess Theatre (13 NW 6th Ave., currently Star Theatre) and the Heilig (827 SW Broadway, demolished).⁷⁷⁵ By the late 1930s and early 1940s, venues like the Variety Hall (331 SW Broadway, formerly in the basement of the Oregon Hotel), the Music Hall (413 SW 10th Ave., demolished), and the Tropics (formerly 935 SW Yamhill St.) regularly featured “America’s foremost impersonators” as part of their nightly entertainment lineup.⁷⁷⁶ Contemporary advertising and police reports indicate these performances captivated audiences with a blend of singing, dancing, and comedic routines which occasionally garnered disapproval from local politicians due to the supposed “lewd” nature of the performances.⁷⁷⁷

Although intensified policing of queer people in the 1940s and 1950s impacted the widespread popularity of drag, Portland’s drag scene achieved a new level in 1958 with the “first established ‘court system.’” On the West Coast.⁷⁷⁸ The dazzling Court of Transylvania led by Queen Eugenie I / Sam formed at the Half Moon Tavern (initially at 72 SW Morrison St.), drawing inspiration from Portland’s Rose Festival tradition in which Portlanders crowned an annual Princess.⁷⁷⁹ Through the late 1960s, the Court blossomed into the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court; in 1971, it joined San Francisco’s emerging court system to create the International Imperial Court System (IICS).⁷⁸⁰ The evolving court system established performance

⁷⁷³ PBSNewsHour, “WATCH: A drag historian on why he documents the art form,” YouTube, July 5, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw8M05i8-48>.

⁷⁷⁴ Donnie with Walter W Cole/Darcelle, Kristen Minor, *From Demas to Darcelles: The History of the Demas Tavern to Darcelle XV Showplace*, (Self-published,) 111.

⁷⁷⁵ The earliest article referencing female impersonation identified by the Umbrella Project of Oregon is from 1895. See Don Horn, “Female Impersonation and Drag- History in Oregon Part 1,” Female Impersonation and Drag, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, <https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/female-impersonation-part-1-1>; Ad, *The Sunday Oregonian*, January 16, 1910, 39; “Eltinge has gowns to make women gasp,” *The Sunday Oregonian*, October 13, 1912, 16.

⁷⁷⁶ Some “foremost impersonators” and performers who entertained in Portland between the 1940s and 1970s include Carroll Wallace, Lee Leonard, Gladys Bentley, and Christine Jorgensen.

⁷⁷⁷ Auditor, Council Documents, Item no. 1117, March 16, 1950, City of Portland Archives and Records Center.

⁷⁷⁸ Randy Shilts, “Fantasy Kingdoms of Rhinestone and Royalty,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, February 9, 1975.; Minor and Horn, “Darcelle XV,” 23.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ In 1964, San Francisco drag performer Jose Julio Sarria laid the foundation for the International Imperial Court System when he self-appointed himself as “Her Royal Majesty, Empress of San Francisco, Jose I, the Widow Norton. As one of the oldest LGBTQ+ organizations in the world, the IICS continues to operate as the second largest LGBTQ+ non-profit organization with chapters in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. For additional information on Sarria, see Graves and Watson *Citywide Historic*

requirements, election rules for drag pageants and coronations, and responsibilities for the crowned queen (later renamed Rose Empress).⁷⁸¹ Initially hosted as beauty pageants, Portland's drag coronations quickly transformed into a "legendary" hallmark of the city's drag scene with lavish sets, "outrageous costumes" and "elaborately staged productions."⁷⁸² The growing extravaganzas in the late 1960s and early 1970s necessitated the use of large venue halls and banquet rooms, such as the Hoyt Hotel's Roaring 20's Room (614 NW 6th Ave., demolished), and the Pythian Building (918 SW Yamhill St.).⁷⁸³

During this time in the late 20th century, Demas Tavern became a prominent hub for Portland's developing drag scene and Imperial Court.⁷⁸⁴ The tavern was listed as the court's contact in 1973 and hosted annual campaign elections for candidates hoping to be crowned Empress.⁷⁸⁵ Owner Darcelle / Walter Cole, who was part of the court since its earlier iterations, was elected Rose Empress XV in 1972 which further established a link between the venue and the court system.⁷⁸⁶ By 1982, Darcelle launched a new annual contest titled "La Femme Magnifique" to crown "the most glamorous female impersonator in the world," with performers competing in talent and showgirl categories.⁷⁸⁷ The various weekly shows, pageants, and association with Portland's drag court system, the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court, solidified Darcelle XV as the "heart of the drag community in Oregon."⁷⁸⁸

Diverse drag courts developed as Portland's drag scene continued to grow. For instance, in 1977, the court Rosebud and Thorn bloomed for Portlanders under 21. The court originated from the all-ages LGBTQ+ club, Mildred's Palace (918 SW Yamhill St.) and provided a creative outlet for youth.⁷⁸⁹ Following Mildred's Palace's closure in 1979, Rosebud and Thorn continued its increasingly elaborate candidate shows, farewell shows, and coronations as it relocated to other all-ages venues throughout the 1990s.⁷⁹⁰ The City Nightclub (initially at 624 SW 13th Ave., demolished; last at 13 NW 13th Ave.) became a popular location for the court and introduced many queer Portlanders to the art form of drag.

Then, one time, they had special guest drag queens from Darcelle's and Embers— places I'd never heard of—and they were four beautiful Black

Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco, 72-74. For additional information on the IICS, see International Court System, <https://internationalcourtsystem.org/>.

⁷⁸¹ Minor and Horn, 23.; Inga Sorenson, "Pumps and Circumstance," *Just Out*, October 20, 1995, 19.; Holman, "A Gay History: Lest We Forget," 7.

⁷⁸² "A Brief History of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court," History, The Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon, <https://rosecourt.org/a-brief-history-of-the-imperial-sovereign-rose-court/>.

⁷⁸³ For additional history and ephemera from the coronations, see Don Horn, "Imperial Sovereign Rose Court," The Umbrella Project of Oregon, <https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/imperial-rose-court-history>.

⁷⁸⁴ Demas Tavern/Darcelle XV is also described under "Drag Bars" in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces."

⁷⁸⁵ Minor and Horn, 24.; "A Brief History of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court."

⁷⁸⁶ Demas Tavern was renamed Darcelle XV as a commemoration to her reign. Minor and Horn, 12.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid, 25.; "About," La Femme CA Pageant, <https://calafemme.wordpress.com/about/>.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Lanny Swerdlow, owner of the club, remarked in 1998 that Rosebud & Thorn was "a real catharsis" for young performers to explore their emotions and create connections. See Patrick Collins, "Prickly Pairs," *Just Out*, March 6, 1998, 7.

⁷⁹⁰ These included The City Nightclub (624 SW Park Ave. and 13 NW 13th Ave.) and Evolution (333 Park Ave., later the Rage). "Rosebud and Thorn," *Just Out*, March 3, 1993, 24.; Ibid.

performers, three drag queens and trans-women [sic] . . . That just blew my mind. That's where Poison Waters was born.

— Poison Waters reflecting on The City Nightclub, 2021 ⁷⁹¹

Despite changes in venue, Rosebud & Thorn maintained its status as the “longest-running teenage female impersonation pageant in the United States, and perhaps the world” through the 1990s, showcasing the enduring impact and popularity of drag culture among Portland’s youth.⁷⁹²

Portland’s BIPOC drag performers and performances have a long history in Portland. For example, famed queer performer Gladys Bentley played at Portland’s Clover Club (formerly at 923 SW Taylor St.) in September 1950.⁷⁹³ For two weeks in 1962, the Jewel Box Revue with BIPOC drag king Stormé DeLarverie performed at Showcase (formerly 949 SW Stark St., demolished).⁷⁹⁴ By the late 1960s through the 1990s, local BIPOC drag performers gained recognition and were regularly performing at venues like Club Northwest, Demas Tavern, and Dahl & Penne.⁷⁹⁵

I was born at Dahl & Penne on Sunday afternoon . . . [An all-Black entrance to a Rose Court Coronation had never been done before.] We had a diverse group of people. It was mainly for those people who wanted to belong to something but didn't want to belong to a clique, and that's how the Ebony Kingdom came about . . . As long as you wanted to be part of the community, but not really belong to a special group, we were there for you.

— Irvina I, Imperial Queen Grand Mama to the Ebony Promise of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon/Irving Lambert, 1998, ⁷⁹⁶

One prominent BIPOC-led drag performance during the 1905–1994 period was Peacock and the Roses (later named Peacock in the Park). In June 1987, Rose Empress XXIX Lady Elaine Peacock launched a family-friendly outdoor drag show “for the kids so that people from the city could be involved in the shows and because they can’t go to the bars . . . they can see the drag shows, see the old queens . . .,” as

⁷⁹¹ Crystal Ligor, Tiffany Camhi, “Poison Waters dives into the history, craft and politics of drag,” Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 23, 2021, <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/06/23/poison-waters-dives-into-history-craft-politics-of-drag/>.

⁷⁹² Ibid. Rosebud & Thorn coronations continue today.

⁷⁹³ Ad, *Oregon Journal*, September 1, 1950.; “Saturday Tip,” *Oregon Journal*, September 1950, 7. For an overview of Bentley, see Haleema Shah, “The Great Blues Singer Gladys Bentley Broke All the Rules,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/great-blues-singer-gladys-bentley-broke-rules-180971708/>.

⁷⁹⁴ The Jewel Box Revue was the first racially diverse touring drag troupe in the country. DeLarverie performed with the troupe from 1955 to 1969. See “Heroes of Stonewall: Stormé DeLarverie,” *World Queerstory*, June 14 2019, <https://worldqueerstory.org/2019/06/14/storme-delarverie/>; Ad, *Oregonian*, August 18, 1962, 6.; Arnold Marks, “After Dark: Restaurateurs Eye Future,” *Oregon Journal*, August 17, 1962, 7.

⁷⁹⁵ For example, drag queen Rochelle was crowned at the Pruitts of Portland’s (a precursor to the Imperial Court) fall ball ca. 1968, becoming the first African American Rose Queen. By 1976, “the court elevated her first African American Monarch by public election. Upon his crowing, Rose Emperor II [Harold] became the first African American Emperor in the International Court System and to do he remains the only Portland Monarch to have reigned as both Rose Emperor and Rose Empress.” For additional history of BIPOC Rose Queens, see “A Brief History of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court.”; “Monarch’s History,” *History, Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon*, <https://rosecourt.org/monarch-s-history/>.

⁷⁹⁶ Pat Young, “Ebony and Ivory,” *Just Out*, November 19, 1999, 16.

Lady Elaine Peacock explained in 1993.⁷⁹⁷ The small event at Washington Park’s amphitheater (404 SW Kingston Ave) transformed over the years, becoming an annual fundraiser for the Audria M. Edwards scholarship (created in 1987 in memory of Peacock’s mother Audria M. Edwards to assist queer students).⁷⁹⁸ Featuring a diverse array of entertainment acts, Peacock in the Park became “one of the highlights of Portland’s queer entertainment calendar” during its 27-year run, with its vibrant performances and electrifying atmosphere.⁷⁹⁹

Theater and Television

In addition to drag performances, theater and television were significant avenues for queer Portlanders to express themselves, tell stories, and find connection during the 20th century. For instance, in 1981, LGBTQ+ Portlander Sandra de Helen founded the Portland Women’s Theatre Company (PWTC). Early auditions, rehearsals, and performances were held in various women-owned businesses across Portland such as the basement of the Community Law Project (formerly on SE Ankeny St.), Tiger’s Heart Dojo (formerly on N. Vancouver), and Echo Theater (1515 SE 37th Ave.) before PWTC found a permanent location at 1728 NE 40th Avenue from 1987 to 1997.⁸⁰⁰ PWTC and its improvisation women’s troupe Acting Out staged plays highlighting women’s and lesbian issues.

Echo Theater also served as the home for Do Jump Movement Theater Troupe, founded in 1977 by Robin Lane, starting in 1984. In her 1988 *Just Out* profile, Lane explained she “started teaching acrobatics for women. At the same time, I was also with an organization called the Portland Dance Collective. So I got connected up with a bunch of women who were doing a women’s show at Storefront Theatre [6 NW 3rd Ave.], and I started working with them.”⁸⁰¹ This ultimately led to the creation of Do Jump. Early on, the aerial artists shared space with Women With Heart Fighting Arts martial arts studio in North Portland before founding Echo Theater. By the early 1990s, Do Jump and Lane were herald in the press for “exploring a distinct form of movement theatre . . . [that was] ‘carefree and high-spirited.’”⁸⁰²

Don Horn’s Triangle Productions! became another prominent Portland theatre company during the late 20th century. Founded in 1989, Triangle Productions! has produced “rich stories told through diverse perspectives, particularly the gay perspective.”⁸⁰³ Horn’s company did not shy away from some of the

⁷⁹⁷ Peacock Productions Inc., “Rosey Waters interviews Lady Elaine Peacock 9/1/1993/,” YouTube, September 2, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_fmNcy-Ghs.

⁷⁹⁸ “History of Peacock Productions Inc.,” About Us, Peacock Productions Inc, <https://peacockinthepark.org/history-of-peacock-productions-inc/>.

⁷⁹⁹ The event discontinued use of Washington Park and Peacock in the Park in 2004. Ibid.; Stephen Blair, “Return of the Peacock,” *Just Out*, June 18, 1999, 43.

⁸⁰⁰ Sandra de Helen, LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project online questionnaire, February 15, 2023.; Out About Town, *Just Out*, November 1, 1987, 14.

⁸⁰¹ Anndee Hochman, “Robin Lane: Daring Young Woman,” *Just Out*, July 1, 1988, 10.

⁸⁰² “Need a cure for winter doldrums,” *Just Out*, February 1, 1992, 29.

⁸⁰³ “Our History,” About Triangle!, Triangle Productions!, <https://www.trianglepro.org/history>.

most provocative productions in the city with plays like *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*.⁸⁰⁴ Triangle Productions! has been housed in a variety of Portland spaces; as of 2024, it operates The Sanctuary at the Sandy Plaza (1785 NE Sandy Blvd.).⁸⁰⁵

Simultaneous to playhouses increasingly providing space for queer art, local television programming significantly contributed to Portland's queer culture and visibility. In 1977, Portland's KATU *Town Hall* special on "gay equality" marked a major turning point: while many LGBTQ+ individuals nationwide and in Oregon remained in the closet during this period considering legal and social consequences for publicly out LGBTQ+ people, LGBTQ+ Portlander and activist Susie Shepherd courageously shared her identity as a gay woman on the broadcast.⁸⁰⁶

. . . If I do this, hopefully fewer people will have to go through [living closeted.] It's really about preventing this kind of grief for so many people . . . It was an unbelievably liberating thing [to go on the show].

— Susie Shepherd on her *Town Hall* appearance ⁸⁰⁷

By the late 1980s, local cable access television programs developed by queer Portlanders were tailored for LGBTQ+ audiences. This further increased queer visibility in an attempt to overcome the absence of LGBTQ+-focused programming on mainstream networks. In 1987, longtime Portland resident and Pentecostal preacher Paula Nielsen debuted *The Sister Paula Show*.⁸⁰⁸ Nielsen and her show gained notoriety for being a public and visible trans person and drag performer preaching gospel.⁸⁰⁹

Another notable Portland broadcast was *Nightscene*, filmed at The City Nightclub (13 NW 13th Avenue). Debuting November 7, 1989, on Portland Cable Access Channel 11, the talk show interviewed a diverse array of local LGBTQ+ personalities, including Stanford Director (known as "Portland's Gay Mayor"), members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), and Lesbian Community Project director Donna RedWing.⁸¹⁰ By its second season in 1990, the program had amassed "one of the largest viewing

⁸⁰⁴ Horn recalled in 2000 that *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* "sparked triangle's first homophobic incident" when Fred Meyer would only sell the tickets under the name V.L.O.S. "I know people would walk into Fred Meyer and ask at the ticket counter, 'Can I have that *Lesbian* show?' just to provoke them." See Andy Mangels, "Out on Stage," *Just Out*, September 1, 2000, 31.

⁸⁰⁵ "Our History," About Triangle!.

⁸⁰⁶ Shepherd was a staff member of LGBTQ+ organization Portland Town Council and was the first Oregon woman paid to work on LGBTQ+ civil rights during this time. Her parents, Ann and Bill Shepherd, who co-founded Portland's Parents of Gays group (later Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, PFLAG), also appeared on the show. Sarah Stroman, "Tales from the Oral History Collection: Susie Shepherd," Blog, Oregon Historical Society, June 14, 2022, <https://www.ohs.org/blog/susie-shepherd.cfm>; Oral history interview with Susie Shepherd, by Erin Sexton and Jamie Walton, SR 4150, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Nielsen also served as a newspaper columnist for local queer press from 1976 through the 1990s. "Thoughts from Paula" appeared in *The Cascade Voice*, *Eagle Newsmagazine*, *City Open Press*, *City Week*, *Oregon Gay News*, and *Alternative Connections*. See Out Loud, "A History of Gay Press in Portland," KBOO, February 11, 2014, <https://kboo.org/media/32634-history-gay-press-portland>; Umbrella Project, "Sister Paula," YouTube, 4:15, October 11, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCXlfg0Bcho>.

⁸⁰⁹ Evening Magazine Remembered, "Sister Paula Nielsen – 1990," YouTube, 4:22, September 4, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1leCEJ1KL4>.

⁸¹⁰ Guests were regularly listed in the Out About Town section of *Just Out*.

audiences for cable access," according to the program coordinator for Portland Cable Access.⁸¹¹ *Nightscene* gained national recognition in 1992 by winning the Publicity and Commercial first place award in the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers' Hometown USA Video Festival.⁸¹² In the last years of the show's run, between 1994 and 1997, the format changed to a "queer *American Bandstand*," yet the show was remembered as a prominent and long-running LGBTQ+-produced cable access program.⁸¹³

Radio and Music

Starting in the early 1970s, Portland's radio and music scenes forged sounds of acceptance and expression. Alternative broadcast radio stations offered a cost-effective and accessible platform for LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations to produce LGBTQ+-centered media.⁸¹⁴ Portland's community-centered KBOO station (formerly 3129 SE Belmont) emerged as one of the nation's earliest radio supporters and broadcasters of queer-focused shows with its 1971 launch of *Homophile Half-Hour*.⁸¹⁵ This radio show originated from an hour-long radio program Second Foundation of Oregon members Neil Hutchins and George Nicola created for Gay Pride Week that year.⁸¹⁶ Airing Thursday nights at 7:45 pm between 1971 and 1973, *Homophile Half-Hour* discussed a range of topics and promoted its speaker schedule in Second Foundation's newspaper, *The Fountain*.⁸¹⁷

In addition to hosting pivotal queer content, KBOO (relocated to 65 SW Yamhill St. in 1973) played a vital role in training Portlanders to work with radio equipment, facilitating broader participation and access to broadcast journalism. LGBTQ+ Portlander Linda Shirley's journey in the 1980s exemplified this: though she started at KBOO as a station volunteer "who could barely plug in a radio," she later hosted the women's music program *Womansoul* and later the talk show *Right Resistance* in 1992.⁸¹⁸

I think it's exciting on radio to have a woman on the air saying 'dyke' behind the mike.' When I was growing up, or even when I was in my 20s, if I had had

⁸¹¹ "Gay television show NighScene Begins second season," *Just Out*, September 1, 1990, 5.; Lanny Swerdlow, "'NightScene' Responds," *Just Out*, April 1, 1991, 4.

⁸¹² "Cable program wins first place in national video competition," *Just Out*, August 1, 1992.

⁸¹³ Inga Sorensen, "Don't adjust your set," *Just Out*, December 16, 1994, 14.; "Former Club Owner Sells Memorabilia," *Just Out*, February 1, 2002, 8.

⁸¹⁴ Tina Gianoulis, "Radio," GLBTQ Archive, http://www.glbqtarchive.com/arts/radio_A.pdf.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid. This is the address associated with the airing of *Homophile Half-Hour*. Since 1986, the station has been at 20 SE 8th Avenue. See Oregon Historical Society, "50 Years of KBOO," 2018, <https://www.worldradiohistory.com/Archive-Station-Albums/KBOO-50-Years-of-KBOO-Portland-2018.pdf>. Episode recordings are available at Oregon Historical Society as part of their LGBTQ Community Collections.

⁸¹⁶ Kohl, *Curious and Peculiar People*, 53.

⁸¹⁷ For instance, the January 1973 program guide in *The Fountain* shared the show's schedule of interviewing "representatives of different gay groups in the Portland area," discussing Oregon legislation, and non-fiction books on LGBTQ+ people. See "Homophile Half Hour," *The Fountain*, January 1973, 8.

⁸¹⁸ Portland musician and KBOO colleague Barbara Bernstein noted women "trained each other instead of going through the regular KBOO process. . . We kind of subverted it and brought women in through *Womansoul*. It was really the only way to get women programmers on the station" during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Anndee Hochman, "Linda Shirley: The Dyke Behind the Mike," *Just Out*, June 1, 1989, 13.; Oriana Green and Katy Davidson, "KBOO, the next generation," *Just Out*, April 21, 2000, 38-39.; Pat Young, "Making Music, Making History," *Just Out*, August 1999, 23.

a radio station with a lesbian saying she was a lesbian and having a good time and playing music, I would have been . . . thrilled. So I try to be out there as much as possible.

— Linda Shirley, known as “dyke behind the mike,” reflecting on the importance of being out on radio, 1989⁸¹⁹

By the mid-1980s, Portland’s radio and queer expression evolved, exemplified by Portlanders Howie Baggadonutz and Michelle Burns launch of *Queersville* in 1986 on KBOO (relocated to 20 SE 8th Ave in 1986).⁸²⁰ The co-hosts aimed to depart from conventional and abundant talk-show format, opting instead for pre-produced comedy skits.⁸²¹ Baggadonutz reflected on the success of the show decades later, stating “the best part of the whole *Queersville* experience was knowing we were reaching closeted homos of all ages who never had the nerve to pick up a *Just Out* or anything remotely gay.”⁸²²

During the late 20th century, LGBTQ+ musicians forged sounds of acceptance and expression. Portland’s women’s music was particularly influential; Pat Young summarized in her *Just Out* article, “Making Music, Making History,” “By 1978, Portland had enough clout to host the second annual Pacific Northwest Women’s Music Festival, and the city’s flourishing lesbian community definitely created an audience for the music to emerge.”⁸²³ Portlander Barbara Bernstein reflected in 2013 the common experience of joining women’s bands, switching bands, and going to “lot and lots of women’s music concerts. . . it was a whole other scene. . . watching the women play all the instruments, watching women write songs about experiences I could relate to.”⁸²⁴ Ursa Minor Choir, Izquierda Ensemble, Musica Femina, Motherlode, the Dyketones, and Portland Lesbian Choir were just a few of Portland’s many musical groups with women openly expressing feminist and lesbian themes in their music; according to founding Dyketone member Char Priolo, they “were the first out lesbian band in the country” when the group formed in 1977.⁸²⁵ For many Portlanders, “getting involved with [music] was an acceptable way for [them] to come out,” as Portland Gay Men’s Chorus co-founder Gary Colman similarly explained in 1995, and continued, “getting involved with the chorus was an acceptable way for men to come out. They could say ‘I’m a member of the Portland Gay Men’s Chorus’ [or another LGBTQ+ musical group], which was less threatening to people. And it was an alternative to the bar scene.”⁸²⁶

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Anndee Hochman, “Howie Baggadonutz: Politically gay,” *Just Out*, August 1, 1988, 10.; “On Air,” *Just Out*, February 1, 1986, 8.

⁸²¹ Ibid.

⁸²² Despite only being on air for a year and a half, it “garnered a lot of notoriety and set a KBOO record for on-air donations for a half-hour show.” Howie Baggadonutz, “20/20 revisionism,” *Just Out*, November 21, 2003, 5.

⁸²³ Pat Young, “Making Music, Making History,” *Just Out*, August 1999, 23.

⁸²⁴ Oral History Interview with Barbara Bernstein, by Sheana Corbridge and Catherine Meyers, 2013 February 28, SR 11361, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

⁸²⁵ Members from Ursa Minor Choir, including Priolo, Naomi Morena, and Kristan Knapp, would form these subsequent music groups, reflecting Bernstein’s commentary that women switched bands or found new bands regularly. Kathy Belge, “Those Fabulous Dyketones,” *Just Out*, March 5, 2004, 35.

⁸²⁶ The chorus drew inspiration from San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus and formed in 1980. Inga Sorensen, “Singing Our Presence,” *Just Out*, September 7, 1995, 19.; “History,” About, Portland Gay Men’s Chorus, <https://www.pdxgmc.org/about/history/>.

Queer performance venues for artists were as diverse as the groups. Mountain Moving Café served as a launching pad for several Portland bands before they embarked on national tours.⁸²⁷ Reed College (3203 SE Woodstock Blvd) and Portland State University (1825 SW Broadway) hosted a myriad of artists aiming to invigorate gay culture and foster LGBTQ+ pride on campuses.⁸²⁸ Despite Portland's limited number of lesbian bars through the 1980s and 1990s, these venues prioritized cultivating audiences and stage space for various lesbian solo musicians and bands. Specifically, Primary Domain (1810 NW Lovejoy St, demolished) was the first home of the groundbreaking women's music initiative First Tuesday Coffeehouse in 1988. Led by Donna Lockett, Cindy Zrinyi, and Sheryl Sackman, First Tuesday Coffeehouse set the stage for women to perform and connect for over 10 years.⁸²⁹ By the fall of 1988, radio host Linda Shirley founded Girlfriend Productions as a women's artists, musicians, and writers' production company with events all over the city.⁸³⁰ LGBTQ+ choirs also found rehearsal and performance spaces in churches such as Metropolitan Community Church (2400 NE Broadway), and Westminster Presbyterian Church (1624 NE Hancock St.).⁸³¹

On Paper and Pages

From the early 1950s through the 1990s, LGBTQ+ print media became increasingly prevalent nationwide. Queer travel guides, alternative newspapers, and comic books illuminated community-based knowledge, personal narratives, advocacy for civil rights, and connections among queer people. Building from the 1950s and 1960s homophile newsletters like *The Ladder* and *Mattachine Review*, queer-crafted print media through the late 20th century disputed prevailing press coverage riddled with negative portrayals of LGBTQ+ individuals.

However, legal repercussions and other negative consequences often influenced authors, contributors, subscribers, and publishers to withhold identifying information. The 1873 passage of the Comstock Act launched decades of legal battles concerning supposed "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, [and] indecent" materials, which these homophile publications became ensnared in.⁸³² Portlander Mary Wings reflected in 2016 the fear of publishing lesbian-centric materials in the 1970s: "I was afraid on some level I was screwing myself eternally. I would not get a job. . . . When I wrote this comic book, I thought I would be arrested or blackballed in some way."⁸³³ Thus, throughout the 20th century, creators deployed first names,

⁸²⁷ Young, "Making Music, Making History."

⁸²⁸ For example, in 1984, local musician Kate Sullivan performed at Reed College Commons and lesbian duo Musica Femina performed at Portland State. See Ad, *Just Out*, February 17, 1984, 13.; "Musica Femina at PSU," March 3, 1984, 10.

⁸²⁹ Will O'Bryan, "Til Last Tuesday," *Just Out*, November 20, 1998, 33.

⁸³⁰ For examples of shows organized by Girlfriend Productions, see Out About Town, *Just Out*, December 1, 1988, 16.; Ad, *Just Out*, June 1, 1991, 5.

⁸³¹ For example, see Marti Staehle, "Solar Invocation," *Just Out*, January 1, 1991, 25.

⁸³² One, Incorporated, a Corporation, Appellant, v. Otto K. Olsen, Individually and As Postmaster of the City of Los Angeles, Appellee, 241 F.2d 772 (9th Cir. 1957), <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/241/772/441041/>; Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 116-119.; Bullough, ed. *Before Stonewall*, 63-64.

⁸³³ Samantha Meier, Trina Robbins, Mary Wings, Roberta Gregory, Lee Marrs, "Queer Comics: Pioneers of Queer Women's Comics" (panel presentation, Queers and Comics Conference, Center for LGBTQ Studies, May 7-8, 2015).

initials, or pennames as anonymizing safety measures. Readers also regularly requested materials be sent to P.O. Boxes or have mail held for them instead of having LGBTQ+ materials delivered to home addresses.

Will you hold all future issues of The Ladder until you hear from me? I expect to be in S.F. [San Francisco] before too long and will drop in to see you. I cannot risk the magazine falling into the wrong hands.

— Bobbie (full name redacted) requesting Del Martin of Daughters of Bilitis to hold subscription, December 8, 1958 ⁸³⁴

Following changes in obscenity laws, especially the United States Supreme Court decision on *One Magazine* in 1958 that concluded homophile publications were “an exercise of American free speech,” Portland’s queer print media bloomed by the late 20th century.⁸³⁵ Many publications overlapped in existence, though on a spectrum of longevity and readership. This section therefore is not an exhaustive recounting of all of Portland’s queer media; instead, this section summarizes the pivotal roles of print media in shaping queer identity, visibility, and activism throughout the 20th century.⁸³⁶

Portland’s LGBTQ+ Newspapers

While Portlanders sent letters and articles to early homophile era newsletters such as The Daughters of Bilitis’ *The Ladder* during the 1950s and 1960s, by the 1970s Portland’s underground press opened the door for future localized LGBTQ+ publications.⁸³⁷ In early 1970, an anonymous personal advertisement reading “Gay, longhair, young, lonely seeks meaningful relationship with same” was submitted to *The Willamette Bridge* (formerly W. Burnside St. and NW 6th Ave.).⁸³⁸ Staffer John Wilkinson saw himself reflected in the ad’s sentiments, seeing it as a plea for connection among Portland’s LGBTQ+ communities. He seized this moment to not only ignite Portland’s Gay Liberation Movement but also usher in a wave of LGBTQ+-centric press by penning an open letter addressing the anonymous author.

⁸³⁴ Bobbie to Del Martin, December 8, 1958, K-L, Correspondence – The Ladder Daughters of Bilitis National, Box 11, Folder 3, Phyllis Lyon, Del Martin and the Daughters of Bilitis Collection, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

⁸³⁵ In the early 1950s, *One Magazine* was regularly confiscated by Los Angeles postmaster Otto Oleson. The homophile organization One Inc. worked with attorney Eric Julber to file “court action against Oleson for preventing the distribution of the magazine, which led to a series of court cases and appeals . . .” The case eventually went to the Supreme Court, who in 1958, marked the important precedent that “homosexual content in a publication could no longer be considered obscene and could be freely mailed.” See Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 116-119; GPA Consulting, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Context Statement*, 77.

⁸³⁶ For additional history, see George T. Nicola, “Periodical Print Mass Media in the Oregon LGBTQ Movement,” Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated December 2, 2014, <http://www.glapn.org/6037CommunityMedia.html>; “Newspapers,” The Umbrella Project, <https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/newspapers-history>.

⁸³⁷ Starting in the 1960s, alternative press mediums linked together various social movements that were ignored by mainstream press. For additional history, see Barry Miles, “The Underground Press,” *Discovering Literature: 20th and 21st century*, British Library, <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/the-underground-press>; Katie Anastas, “Underground Newspapers: The Social Media Networks of the 1960s and 1970s,” Mapping American Social Movements Project, University of Washington Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium, https://depts.washington.edu/moves/altnews_geography.shtml.

⁸³⁸ The paper emphasized “community organizing” over journalism. The first issue envisioned “a platform from which controversial issues and topics can be expressed [which] mainstream press ignores either by accident or by design.” It was located above the People’s Army Jamboree. See Polina Olsen, *Portland in the 1960s: Stores from the Counterculture* (The History Press, 2012), 86, 88.

Published on page 23 of the February 6-12, 1970, issue, Wilkinson empathized with the ad's emotional impact of the words "gay" and "lonely," acknowledging LGBTQ+ Portlanders, including himself, were "doomed" by their overwhelming caution and loneliness.⁸³⁹ To overcome what was felt to be Portland's isolated gay life, he advocated for openness and connection among individuals, believing these first steps led to change.⁸⁴⁰ Wilkinson's openness to publicly identify as LGBTQ+ in a publication contributed to building LGBTQ+ press in the 1970s. Fellow LGBTQ+ *Bridge* staffer Holly Hart supported Wilkinson's efforts and contributed additional LGBTQ+-focused articles to the paper. Articles were often published under pennames to artificially craft a large population of open and publicly identifying queer Portlanders to encourage people to come out and participate.⁸⁴¹ By July 1970, *The Willamette Bridge* included a center pull-out section with LGBTQ+ meeting advertisements.⁸⁴²

Wilkinson's and Hart's openness contributed to gradual shifts in mainstream press discussion of LGBTQ+ identities, and tolerance was even more pronounced starting in the mid-1970s, though often still with notable bias. For instance, in March 1974, Parish (no last name included) published a series of personal narratives about her gender affirming care and experience as a trans woman in *The Oregon Journal* (1320 SW Broadway).⁸⁴³ The *Journal* included an Editor's Note ahead of Parish's writing that simultaneously advanced and stigmatized gender diversity: "*The Journal* hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the human, as well as medical, aspects of a continuing *controversy*" (emphasis added).⁸⁴⁴ On June 25, 1977, Susie Shepherd and her parents appeared boldly on the *Oregon Journal's* front page under the headlined "'I'm homosexual': Portland parents *learn to deal* with gay children" (emphasis added) to share information on Portland's Parents of Gay group as a resource and community.⁸⁴⁵ By 1979, Portlander Fern Gardiner applauded the "excellent presenting for the first time in any major local journal a thorough, positive report on lesbian women" following the *Sunday Oregonian's* "What It's Like to Be a Lesbian" article.⁸⁴⁶

While LGBTQ+ Portlanders gained positive coverage in underground and mainstream press, many LGBTQ+ Portlanders sought to construct and publish their own queer periodicals. Promoted as the "voice for the gay northwest," the newly organized gay organization Second Foundation of Oregon released the

⁸³⁹ John Wilkinson, "Dear Gay, young, and lonely," *The Willamette Bridge*, February 6-12, 1970, 23.

⁸⁴⁰ Also see the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Venues" for additional discussion of Wilkinson's efforts to connect LGBTQ+ Portlanders.

⁸⁴¹ Oral history interview with Holly Hart.; Nicola, "'Periodical Print Mass Media in the Oregon LGBTQ Movement.'"

⁸⁴² Ibid.

⁸⁴³ These articles use the contemporary term transsexual. See Parish, "Hi! I'm Parish," series, *Oregon Journal*, March 18, 1974, 15.; March 19, 1974, 4M.; March 20, 1974, 2M.; March 21, 1974, 2M.

⁸⁴⁴ While Parish chronicled many details of her life across four articles, no additional sources on her have been identified. Scholar Shir Bach also researched Parish but was unable to locate "Parish's full name or anyone else who knew her." Bach concludes this is common in trans history and for those who "transitioned medically in the 1970s, as they were often encouraged to move to a new location and state a new, private life." See Ibid.; Shir Bach, "Tracing Trans Surgery Through the Archives in Portland, Oregon," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last updated 2020, <https://www.glapn.org/6068SurgeryInTransition.html>.

⁸⁴⁵ Jann Mitchell, "'I'm a Homosexual: Portland parents learn to deal with gay children,'" *Oregon Journal*, June 25, 1977, 1, 4.

⁸⁴⁶ Fern Gardiner, *Gay Rights '77*, February 1979.; Jean Henninger, "What It's Like to Be A Lesbian," *The Sunday Oregonian*, March 11, 1979, 109-112.

inaugural gay-identified periodical, *The Fountain* (first published at a founding editor's house, later published at 253 SW Alder St., demolished) in March 1971.⁸⁴⁷ Freely available at local gay bars, as was typical for independent gay presses, the monthly publication covered political and social topics.⁸⁴⁸ LGBTQ+ Portland activist George Nicola contributed many politically-oriented pieces, later reflecting in 2014 how *The Fountain* catalyzed a "huge political awakening among Oregon's gay men and lesbians."⁸⁴⁹

Following the launch of *The Fountain*, a plethora of new LGBTQ+ newspapers were printed across Portland; though they varied in tenure, all strove to connect LGBTQ+ individuals throughout Portland and the Pacific Northwest. The *Northwest Gay Review* (1974 – 1982, published at 118 W Burnside St. and 215 W Burnside St.), *Gay Rights '77 / Oregon Gay Rights Report* (1974 – 1982, 320 SW Stark St.), and *Cascade Voice* (1982-84, 519 SW 3rd Ave.), for instance, delved into a wide array of LGBTQ+ social and political issues.⁸⁵⁰ Short-lived *Pearl Diver* launched in 1977 (no publishing address) and Rag Times started in 1980 by A Woman's Place Bookstore (2349 SE Ankeny St.), elevated lesbian and feminist viewpoints.⁸⁵¹ These newspapers, pamphlets, and other print media combined news articles, advertisements, reviews, political endorsements, and other expressions of LGBTQ+ life to provide local guides for LGBTQ+ Portlanders to find and share with each other.

By 1983, Renée LaChance and Jay Brown ushered in a new era in Portland's queer print media.

Well, Jay and I worked at *The Cascade Voice* together for 18 months, and during – towards the end of that time – we both got involved in producing, um, the 1983, uh Gay Pride Festival . . . we both got educated on feminism and racism and a lot of issues, that, um we didn't have a lot of experience with. And we would bring these issues to our publisher, the publisher of *The Cascade Voice*, and he would say, 'Ah, we're not doing that. Ah, we're not going to write about that. Oh, we're not gonna tell that story. Oh we're gonna do this instead.' And we got so fed up with his inflexibility to allow us to write about how sexist the gay men were . . . and how racist the gay men were, and how unwilling they were to look at those issues. Uh, so then one day, Jay and I got so mad . . . I said to him, 'Jay! We can do this! We can start our own paper!

— Renée LaChance reflecting on *Just Out's* conception, 2013⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁷ *The Fountain*, March 1971.

⁸⁴⁸ Nicola, "Periodical Print Mass Media in the Oregon LGBTQ Movement."

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.; Umbrella Project, "Newspapers.;" Gay and Lesbian periodicals collection, Mss 2988-7, Oregon Historical Society.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.; Feminist and Lesbian Periodical Collection, Coll 257, University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Eugene, Oregon.

⁸⁵² Oral history interview with Renée LaChance, by Brontë Olson and Nicole Estey, 2013 February 26, SR 11364, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Just Out (first at 923 SW 17th Ave.) sought to cover Portland's full diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences by confronting racism, spotlighting individuals with disabilities, individuals in prison, queer youth, and catering to organizations that offer alternatives activities.⁸⁵³ For example, "The Black Lesbian and Gays United Report" illuminated BIPOC LGBTQ+ Portlanders' experiences, "The Roseburg Report" by Billy Russo shared LGBTQ+ rural experience, and the "Just Youth" column spotlighted youth realities.⁸⁵⁴

In addition to articles and columns, *Just Out* staff played pivotal roles in setting *Just Out* apart from other papers. For instance, Roger Hall, the paper's early advertising director, persuaded LGBTQ+ professionals and non-LGBTQ+ businesses to advertise in the paper.⁸⁵⁵ Hall's direction and *Just Out's* practice contrasted typical reliance on LGBTQ+ bars for support; this garnered much attention at national LGBTQ+ press conventions.⁸⁵⁶ Additionally, Rupert Kinnard's graphic directing at *Just Out* received much acclaim; in 1984 and 1987, the paper won Outstanding Overall Design at the Gay Press Association Press Awards.⁸⁵⁷ Among the paper's many accomplishments, its longevity into the 2010s is a testament to its enduring impact as a vital resource for queer Portlanders and Oregonians.⁸⁵⁸

Additional Print Media

Newsletters/papers were not the sole medium circulating information and queer experiences: starting in the mid-1960s, *Bob Damron's Address Book* and other crowd-sourced location reference books assisted individuals searching for LGBTQ+ venues across the country.⁸⁵⁹ These guides became influential wayfinding tools leading "readers to expect (or not) a particular urban form of LGBTQ+ life at a listed venue, regardless of where it was actually located" with the inclusion of hotels, bars, stores, outdoor spaces, and "any other special features in each city listed."⁸⁶⁰ A system of abbreviations and notations emerged to denote amenities and other information about locations. For example, those looking to dance in the early 1970s could search the *Guild Guide* for "d" and be directed to Portland's Club Northwest (217

⁸⁵³ In the premier issue of the paper, their office is listed at 923 SW 17th. It is unclear how long the paper stayed at this location as other issues list a P.O. Box. See Brown, *Just Out*, October 28, 1983, 3.; LaChance, *Just Out*, October 28, 1983, 3.

⁸⁵⁴ For examples of these columns, see Richard Pastega, "For the Good Guys," *Just Out*, January 1, 1988, 28.; Rupert Kinnard, "The Black Lesbians and Gays United Report," *Just Out*, December 9, 1983, 7.; Windfire, "Windfire responds to questions of campfire Teens," *Just Out*, June 1, 1990, 16.

⁸⁵⁵ "Inside Out," *Just Out*, November 7, 2003, 22.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; Oral history interview with Rupert Kinnard, by Marissa Gunning and Ellen Tobias, 2013 February 14, SR 11362, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

⁸⁵⁷ LaChance and Brown approached Kinnard from the start, as all three contributed to the *Cascade Voice*. Kinnard also worked at *Willamette Week*, then after moving to San Francisco he worked in creative and art director positions for papers *Coming Up*, *San Francisco Sentinel*, *SF Weekly*, *Out/Look*, and the *Oakland Tribune*. See Oral history interview with Rupert Kinnard, by Marissa Gunning and Ellen Tobias, 2013 February 14, SR 11362, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.; Oral history interview with Rupert Kinnard, by Betsy Kalin, December 28, 2012, Interviews, OutArchive, <https://theoutwordsarchive.org/interview/rupert-kinnard/>; "Just Out honored by peers," *Just Out*, May 11, 1984, 4.; "W.C. McRae, "For Your Information," *Just Out*, August 1, 1987, 6.

⁸⁵⁸ In 1998, LaChance sold *Just Out* to staff member Marty Davis. Davis continued until December 2011. Jonathan Kipp of Glenn-Kipp Publishing, Inc. attempted to continue the paper, but it ultimately ceased publication in 2013.

⁸⁵⁹ Larry Knopp and Michael Brown, "Travel Guides, Urban Spatial Imaginaries and LGBTQ+ Activism: The Case of Damron Guides," *Urban Studies* 58, no 7 (2021): 1380-1396.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

NW 4th Ave.), The Bohemian (910 SW Washington St., demolished), or Pied Piper (1217 SW Harvey Milk St., currently McMenamins Hal's Cafe).⁸⁶¹

In the 1960s, underground comics emerged simultaneous to other alternative press providing avenues for social movements and queer content. Scholar Sam Meier summarized at the 2015 Queers and Comics Conference that "Unlike their overground counterparts, underground cartoonists [were] free to deal explicitly with matters of sex and sexuality, and many [did]."⁸⁶² Yet, these early issues were "not all concerned with queer women or queer women's sexuality at all," as reflected by Portlander Mary Wings' experience during the 1970s.⁸⁶³ At a Portland bookstore (presumably A Woman's Place), Wings encountered the *Wimmen's Comix* book and was "at first delighted" to find the first lesbian comic, *Sandy Comes Out*, designed by Trina Robbins. Quickly, disappointment set in for Wings: "It looked very superficial to me. It's sort of as if one day she wakes up, she takes a karate class, she sleeps with a woman . . . she's going to wear overalls forever . . . And I thought, well, this has nothing to do with what it really feels like."⁸⁶⁴ In response, Wings created *Come Out Comix* to reflect the complex realities of queer people coming out. With the help of friends who owned a printing press, Wings published the country's first lesbian comic book created by an out lesbian by 1973.⁸⁶⁵

Through the 1970s, queer people continued to critique mainstream and underground comics, influencing the medium to further diversify. In 1977, for instance, Rupert Kinnard's Brown Bomber character revolutionized superhero comics as "the first serialized queer Black character in comics," drawing on Kinnard's personal experiences.⁸⁶⁶ The character quickly "melded with . . . editorial content" as Kinnard illustrated his campus newspaper and spoke out on various social issues.⁸⁶⁷ By the 1980s, Kinnard brought the Brown Bomber to *Just Out* and introduced Diva Touché Flambee in 1984 as a new character. Kinnard utilized a running comics strip in *Just Out* to highlight the irony and hypocrisy of societal norms and contemporary events in a humorous and thought-provoking manner.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶¹ Ronnie Anderson, ed. *Guild Guide 1973 USA & International* (Guild Press Ltd., 1972), 103-104.

⁸⁶² Samantha Meier, Trina Robbins, Mary Wings, Roberta Gregory, Lee Marrs, "Queer Comics: Pioneers of Queer Women's Comics" (panel presentation, Queers and Comics Conference, Center for LGBTQ Studies, May 7-8, 2015.)

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁴ Quoted in *No Straight Lines: The Rise of Queer Comics*, directed by Vivian Kleiman (2021, Compadre Media Group, 2021).

⁸⁶⁵ Wing reflected in 2016 ". . . I just wanted to put a lot of real romance into it and that it, uh, and there was theory behind it and there was feminism behind it and I wanted all those elements to be in there . . . It was a big deal coming out." See "Queer Comics: Pioneers of Queer Women's Comics"; *No Straight Lines*.

⁸⁶⁶ *No Straight Lines*. Also see Albert Cunningham, "Cathartic chums," *Just Out*, February 1, 1992, 19.; "Definition of An Icon: One on One with Rupert Kinnard," PridelIndex, August 16, 2024, <https://www.prideindex.com/definition-of-an-icon-one-on-one-with-rupert-kinnard/>.

⁸⁶⁷ Quoted in *No Straight Lines*.

⁸⁶⁸ Kanani Cortez, "Rebroadcast: Portland comic book artist Rupert Kinnard featured in new documentary," Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 16, 2021, <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/06/16/portland-cartoonist-rupert-kinnard-featured-in-new-documentary/>.

Queer Arts and Entertainment Summary

From 1905 to 1994, queer Portlanders played a transformative role in the city's cultural landscape. They contributed significantly to artistic mediums ranging from theater productions to print media, and athletics to drag. A spectrum of Portland places, from academic institutions to bars, and playhouses to parks, offered environments for Portland's diverse queer cultural scene to challenge norms, reflect on the city's history, and advocate for social change. Their collective efforts enriched Portland's arts and entertainment, leaving a legacy of queer visibility and creative that continues to evolve to this day.