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

Civil Rights and Meaningful Access Statement

The City of Portland is committed to equity, nondiscrimination, and meaningful access. It is the policy of the City that no person, on the basis of race, color, national origin, Limited English Proficiency, disability, age, sex, religion, income level, sexual orientation, gender identity, familial status, or other protected class be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of the policies, programs, services, or activities it administers, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title II of the American with Disabilities Act, and related authorities and regulations.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services, contact 311, Relay: 711.

Traducción e Interpretación | Biên Dịch và Thông Dịch | अनुवादन तथा व्याख्या | 口笔译服务 | Устный и письменный перевод | Turjumaad iyo Fasiraad | Письмовий і усний переклад | Traducere și interpretariat | Chiaku me Awewen Kapas | 翻訳または通訳 | ภาษาและล่าม หรือ ภาษอะหีบาย | الترجمة التحريرية أو الشفهية

www.portland.gov/bps/accommodation

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

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) develops creative and practical solutions to enhance Portland's livability, preserve distinctive places, and plan for a resilient future.

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

THE BUREAU OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgments

The following colleagues and collaborators provided ongoing guidance and support throughout the development of the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project and the authorship of this historic context statement. Consultants led by Salazar Architect Inc. authored three related National Register of Historic Places nominations and provided guidance to the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project, which informed the development of this document.

BPS Project Team

Cayla McGrail, Associate City Project Manager
Brandon Spencer-Hartle, City Project Manager
Sandra Wood, Principal Planner

Project Consultants

Ernestina Fuenmayor, Salazar Architect Inc.
Dorian McCall, Salazar Architect Inc.
Kristen Minor, Minor Planning and Design
Shayne Watson, Watson Heritage Consulting

Project Advisors and Collaborators

Anthony Hudson
Ariel Kane
Caity Abhrams
City of Portland Office of Equity LGBTQIA2S+ Program
Cindy Cumfer
David Martinez
Debra Porta, Pride Northwest
Don/Donnie Horn, Umbrella Project of Oregon
Fern Wilgus
Friendly House Elder Pride Services
Hannah Mellor
Jason Brown
Jason G. Damron
Katherine English
Marti Clemmons
Marty Davis
Matthew Davis
Megan Walker
Melinda Marie Jette
Melissa Lang
Oregon Queer History Collective
Office of Equity LGBTQIA2S+ Program
Reid Vanderburgh
Valerie Whittlesey
City of Portland Queer Alliance

BPS Technical Support

Anamaria Perez, Data Analyst
Eden Dabbs, former Communications Liaison
Hillary Adam, Senior Planner
JoEllen Skonberg, Web Content Manager
Jordan Jordan, City Planner II
Julie Ocken, Strategic Projects
Krista Gust, Graphic Design
Lauren McKinney-Wise, GIS Technician II
Wing Grabowski, Equity and Engagement

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the fall of 1969, drag queen Darcelle/Walter Cole jumped up on the makeshift stage in Demas Tavern (208 NW 3rd Ave., currently Darcelle XV) and performed under the glow of a projector's spotlight. At this time, drag performance was new entertainment at Cole's Demas Tavern, which he had purchased two years prior. What began as a typical Old Town neighborhood bar soon transformed into a celebrated drag cabaret with weekly shows featuring Darcelle and her drag troupe. The bar "was one of the early drag clubs to participate in, sponsor, and initiate drag competitions and performances, especially those related to the now-international Imperial Court System."[1] By 1974, Demas Tavern was renamed Darcelle XV, honoring Darcelle's own reign in the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court. Over the following decades, Darcelle XV evolved into a prominent and beloved center of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer+ (LGBTQ+) joy, comradery, authenticity, and resilience, offering a safe space for Portlanders to gather and celebrate.[2]

In 2020, Darcelle XV was designated as a historic landmark on the National Register of Historic Places for its specific association with LGBTQ+ historic— the first of its kind in Portland, Oregon.[3]

LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project Overview

Launched in 2022, the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project developed as a multi-year initiative to advance surveying, contextualizing, and designating Portland LGBTQ+ historic resources. Darcelle XV's designation inspired the opportunity and illuminated the need for a more profound investigation of the city's LGBTQ+ historic resources in light of their exclusion from past historic preservation initiatives.[4] This exclusion— despite the presence of prominent LGBTQ+ historic preservationists throughout the field's contemporary development— has led to both intentional and unintentional underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ histories in local, state, and federal registries.[5] The lack of LGBTQ+ historic resources listed on

[1] Kristen Minor and Don / Donnie Horn, "Darcelle XV," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2020), Section 8. Terminology is further discussed below.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Lizzy Acker, "Darcelle XV becomes first Oregon business designated a national historic site for its place in LGBTQ history," Life & Culture, Oregon Live, Last updated December 1, 2020, https://www.oregonlive.com/entertainment/2020/12/darcelle-xv-becomes-first-oregon-business-designated-a-national-historic-site-for-its-place-in-lgbtq-history.html.
[4] Historic resource is a catchall phrase for buildings, portions of buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, trees, sites, places, and districts. It is used in this document interchangeably with historic sites. "Despite Portland's long legacy of LGBTQ+ leaders, events, and businesses, there is only one historic resource designated for its association with LGBTQ+ history." See Historic Resource Code Project – Recommended Draft- As Amended Volume 1: Staff Report, Historic resources Program, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, January 2022, 10.
[5] Megan Springate, editor of LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History emphasized the "lack of representation (and the fact that the NPS is now working to address it) is a result of historical and structural forces in American history and historiography that have foregrounded the elite and powerful in celebrations of the predominantly white men who are popularly perceived as the driving forces behind the exploration, settlement, expansion, and military and political success of the United States." See Springate, "Introduction to the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative Theme Study," in *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), 02-3.

local, state, and federal historic registries have limited access to financial incentives that could support their maintenance.[6] Worse, exclusion from historic preservation recognition and protection programs has enabled continued erasure and destruction of past and contemporary LGBTQ+ history.

. . . the traditional preservation framework [of] this system does not always fit the history of people who were marginalized or who sought to hide from view due to social disapproval, discrimination, and threats to their safety.

— Donna Graves, James Michael Buckley, Gail Dubrow [7]

The City of Portland's Historic Resources Program, housed in the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), led the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project in effort to correct past harms with funding provided by the National Park Service's (NPS) Underrepresented Communities Grant, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) Heritage Grant, and general fund dollars allocated by the Portland City Council. Three distinct yet related project deliverables were developed between 2022 and 2024:

1) A historic context statement (this document).
2) A historic resource survey of 90 selected resources.
3) National Register of Historic Places nominations for Normandale Field / Erv Lind Field (NE 57th Ave. & Hassalo St.), McMenamin's Crystal Hotel (303 SW 12th Ave.), and Juniper House (2006 SE Ankeny St.) developed by Salazar Architect Inc., Minor Planning and Design, and Watson Heritage Consulting [8]

Historic Context Statement Overview

Historic context statements are preservation planning tools used to identify, document, and evaluate historic resources associated within a defined theme; they are not intended to be comprehensive documents but present an overview of patterns, people, and places connecting historical periods to the physical environment. Theme topics range from a city's history to an architectural style and to a cultural group. Historic context statements are vital in assisting historical research and designation by organizing information about related properties that develops understandings of them and their significance within a specific theme.[9]

---

[6] A federal tax credit is available for National Register listed properties. For additional information, see National Park Service, "About the Incentives," Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, Last Updated August 30, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/about.htm.

[7] Donna Graves, James Michael Buckley, Gail Dubrow, "Emerging Strategies for Sustaining San Francisco's Diverse Heritage," *Change Over Time* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 167.

[8] The Historic Resources Program and consultants agreed on three selected historic resources for National Register of Historic Places nomination after consideration of over 400 properties. Volunteer members of the Project's Community Advisory Group reviewed nomination drafts. A deeper understanding of these resources informed the development of this document.

[9] For example, the thematic chapter on HIV/AIDS provides information supporting the contextualization of the National Register of Historic Places nominated resource Juniper House, an HIV/AIDS end-of-life care facility.

LGBTQ+ History in Portland, Oregon: A Historic Context Statement is a core deliverable of the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project: it places historic resources and the built environment within the context of Portland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer+ histories. Development of this document relied upon understandings of broad patterns in LGBTQ+ and Portland history, a review of other cities' and states' existing and emerging LGBTQ+ historic contexts, and historic preservation best practices. Further, lived experiences and professional expertise of project team members and collaborators were incorporated throughout the document to authentically reflect Portland's LGBTQ+ historic context. This document identifies a wide range of historical patterns, events, cultural influences, individuals, groups, and spaces that broadly reflect Portland's LGBTQ+ populations' presence during the 1905–1994 time period. In doing so, this historic context statement facilitates future identification, documentation, designation, and preservation of LGBTQ+-associated historic resources.

Many sites related to LGBTQ+ history remain unknown; addresses have changed, were not always publicized, and sites have been demolished prior to this project. Future research and documentation may illuminate areas of Portland's LGBTQ+ history that were not identified during this project as new historical information becomes available. Therefore, this document is not an exhaustive accounting of every significant resource, individual, event, or thematic category associated with LGBTQ+ history. Instead, this work was informed by the 400 currently identified LGBTQ+-associated historic resources (90 of which were surveyed as a companion to this document) to provide a foundation for future efforts.

This document's narrative is limited to the geographic area that now comprises the city of Portland, Oregon.[10] The temporal focus begins in 1905 when lesbian doctor Marie Equi (1872–1952), a prominent Portland activist and doctor who had several public same-sex relationships in the early 20th century, relocated to Portland from Pendleton, Oregon and established her first Portland practice. Her Portland residency over the next several decades helped shaped the city's LGBTQ+, political, and medical histories. Beginning this document with the year of her relocation to Portland intends to bring to the foreground lesbian history which is too-often overlooked in dominant historic preservation practices and LGBTQ+ historical narratives.[11] The period concludes in 1994 to include historic resources associated with several late 20th century events: the HIV/AIDS epidemic; pivotal moments in LGBTQ+ civil rights including the defeats of anti-LGBTQ+ Ballot Measures 9 and 13; and establishment of diverse LGBTQ+ organizations. At the time of this writing in 2024, 1994 does not meet the generally accepted 50-year timeframe

[10] While focused within the city boundaries of Portland, Oregon, many places in Portland's immediate vicinity and beyond the metropolitan area are significant to Portland's LGBTQ+ history. This includes areas such as Sauvie Island, Rooster Rock State Park, Salem, Oregon, and Eugene, Oregon.

[11] The LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project recognizes that Indigenous peoples inhabited the area currently known as Portland, Oregon long before the arrival of the first publicly known lesbian Marie Equi. The Project also recognizes that Indigenous histories and experiences may only be known among Tribal members. Further research into Indigenous history in the area currently known as Portland, Oregon may modify the temporal and geographic understandings of Portland's LGBTQ+ history. For an introduction to diversity in gender roles, sexualities, and identities among Indigenous people of the United States, see Will Rosco, "Sexual and Gender Diversity in Native America and the Pacific Islands," 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) 09-01- 09-29.

necessary for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; however, some of Portland's LGBTQ+ historic resources from the recent past may be exceptionally significant and thus eligible for designation.[12]

This document explores Portland's LGBTQ+ built environment through themes related to identity, connection, harassment, resilience, care, and self-expression. The first chapter, "An Overview of Portland's LGBTQ+ History, 1905–1994," provides a chronological foundation for six thematic chapters of LGBTQ+ history. National and state context provided in the first chapter ground readers in significant external events, patterns, people, and places that informed and influenced Portland's LGBTQ+ experiences. The six thematic chapters are not organized chronologically but follow the development of LGBTQ+ identities and communities.[13] Viewing these chapters together facilities better understanding of a historic resource during its associated time period (historical overview) and in comparison to other resources within similar areas of significance (theme).[14]

Methodology and Approaches

Engagement

The project team actively pursued redressing historical exclusions and injustices by nurturing connections and collaboration with Portland's LGBTQ+ population.[15] The Umbrella Project of Oregon, an initiative led by Don / Donnie Horn, and Oregon Queer History Collective (formerly Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest) were influential in identifying and connecting to local LGBTQ+ historians, leaders, and individuals. Starting in the fall of 2022, the project team engaged with Portlanders in frequent one-on-one and group meetings to build relationships while gathering informal insights that deepened understandings of the city's LGBTQ+ history. This facilitated filling in research and knowledge gaps that are unfortunate realities of many underrepresented populations having historically lacked dedicated archiving, documentation, protection, and preservation access. Moreover, the project team partnered

[12] The National Park Service provides additional criteria for properties that for various reasons would not ordinarily qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (e.g., cemeteries, birthplaces, and structures that have been reconstructed or moved, and places associated with the recent past). Known as "criteria considerations," these additional criteria allow properties to qualify for designation if they meet certain additional qualifications for listing. Criteria Consideration G, Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Last Fifty Years, is especially relevant for this document and properties associated with LGBTQ+ history. For guidance, see Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Revised 1998), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB22-Complete.pdf.

[13] Though LGBTQ+ history, and all historical subject areas, have generally accepted temporal boundaries (such as Pre- and Post-Stonewall or Pre- and Post-World War II), the arrangement of this document does not conform to such strict periodization of history outside the overview chapter. The temporal focus of 1905 to 1994 throughout the document and specifically within the theme chapters allows a longer trajectory of LGBTQ+ history to be understood, such as the context of political and police harassment spanning the 20th century.

[14] Susan Ferentinos, PhD, with Benjamin Egerman, *Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study,* (Preservation Maryland, September 30, 2020,) 117.

[15] A list of those most involved is included in the Acknowledgements section.

with local organizations to ensure a presence at significant events like Portland Pride 2023 and organize inclusive gatherings with Friendly House Elder Pride Services.

These nurtured relationships paved the way for establishing an ad-hoc volunteer community advisory group to participate in and support the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project's development, including preparation of this context statement. This group was comprised of individuals from diverse lived and professional backgrounds, such as academics, activists, artists, cultural resource managers, community organizers, public historians, and longtime LGBTQ+ Portlanders. Commencing in 2023, the Historic Resources Program regularly convened these individuals for in-person and virtual meetings to provide valuable input to the project team on methodologies, engagement strategies, nomination drafts, and guidance for this document. Their contributions extended to fostering stronger ties among LGBTQ+ Portlanders, ensuring the project authentically reflected multifaceted narratives of Portland's queer histories.

Desiring broader participation, the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project hosted an online questionnaire between February and December 2023. This questionnaire, with an option for respondents to share information anonymously, played a pivotal role in soliciting personal recollections from the public about LGBTQ+ histories and significant places, expanding staff knowledge beyond existing archival information. Aiming to reach diverse audiences, staff promoted the questionnaire on social media platforms, at in-person events, and through blog posts.[16]

The overall engagement methodology relied heavily on building existing and new relationships, partly supported by the author's own lived experiences, interests, and participation within Portland's LGBTQ+ communities. This robust engagement enriched the project and facilitated a more nuanced interpretation of LGBTQ+ Portlanders' lived experiences.

The Historic Resources Program also engaged subject matter experts, historians, property owners, and other public members with lived experiences related to Portland history to promote extensive collaboration in this project's development.

Sources, Research, and Data Collection

The LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project was informed by several decades of community-centered documentation, archiving, and cultural heritage projects. Oregon Queer History Collective and the Umbrella Project of Oregon were especially foundational as both organizations have compiled robust

[16] "Community Participation sought for LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project," LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project, Historic and Cultural Resources Program, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Portland.gov, Last updated March 22, 2023, https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/historic-resources/lgbtq-historic-sites/news/2023/3/22/community-participation-sought.

collections of LGBTQ+ ephemera, oral histories, articles, and more.[17] The Collective's "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour", updated in 2011, was a key resource: this foundational list of community-identified LGBTQ+ sites served as a starting point in developing a preliminary inventory of LGBTQ+ historic resources in Portland.[18] While tour sites were primarily concentrated in downtown Portland, research and sources provided by the Umbrella Project further developed the project's preliminary inventory and research.

Commencing in summer 2022, the project team reviewed existing research and source materials compiled by Oregon Queer History Collective and the Umbrella Project to identify historical subjects requiring expanded research. Most existing materials primarily identified white gay and lesbian cisgender experiences in Portland's downtown core during the latter half of the 20th century.[19] Thus, additional archival repositories and connections with diverse living LGBTQ+ Portlanders unearthed new information, property addresses, and insights not previously compiled by these local LGBTQ+ historical organizations. This expanded research helped to place Portland's LGBTQ+ history within national and regional LGBTQ+ contexts. Furthermore, significant project effort concentrated on identifying sites outside of downtown Portland, non-building resources (parks and public rights-of-way), and spaces associated with intersectional histories.

The most frequently consulted sources utilized to develop this document are provided below:

Archives

- City of Portland Archives and Records Center
- Oregon Historical Society and Oregon Encyclopedia
- Portland State University Special Collections
- Reed College Special Collections
- University of Oregon Special Collections
- Oregon Health and Sciences University Historical Collections and Archives
- Digital Transgender Archive
- Gale Archives of Sexuality and Gender

Publications and Theses

- Peter Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?' Gay Culture and Activism in the Rose City Between World War II and Stonewall," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 105, no. 1 (Spring 2004).
- Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest* (University of California Press, 2003).

---

[17] For an overview of Oregon Queer History Collective's collections, see "LGBTQ Community Collections," Research Guides, Research and Library, Oregon Historical Society, https://www.ohs.org/research-and-library/research-guides/lgbtq-community-collections.cfm.

[18] Tom Cook, revised by George Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last updated 2011, https://www.glapn.org/6045walkingtour.html.

[19] There are a few exceptions: for instance, historians have documented gender nonconformist Harry Allen and trans man Alan Hart during the early 20th century.

- Jayden Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses: Encountering Queer History in Portland, Oregon, 1941–1974" (Thesis, Whitman College, 2020).
- David Grant Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People: A History of Metropolitan Community Church in Portland, and the Sexual Minority Communities of Northwest Oregon* (Spirit Press, 2006).
- Elizabeth Morehead, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970–2010" (Thesis, Portland State University, 2012).
- Beka Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948–1965" (Thesis, Portland State University, 2002).
- Patricia Jean Young, "Measure 9: Oregon's 1992 Anti-Gay Initiative" (Thesis, Portland State University, 1997).

Multimedia

- Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest oral histories [20]
- No on 9 Remembered [21]
- *It's Not Over: 40 Years of HIV in Oregon* [22]

This historic context statement principally draws on primary and secondary sources created within Portland's LGBTQ+ populations. Additional sources created outside LGBTQ+ populations about LGBTQ+ Portlanders— such as newspapers, police reports, arrest records, and City Council minutes— provide insights into queer lives and were consulted by the project team. These sources were beneficial for piecing together absent information due to the relative scarcity of surviving LGBTQ+-created historical documents. However, sources are often "problematic in that they make public the very acts that people usually have good reason to conduct in private."[23] Further, the prevalence of explicit and implicit homophobic, transphobic, sexist, classist, ableist, and racist perspectives and language across all source materials complicate the objectivity of these materials.

Demeaning and discriminatory perspectives and language against queer and other marginalized Portlanders is included in this document. Some prejudice views and words have not been altered from the original record to provide evidence of attitudes, stigmas, and inequalities endured by historically excluded people in Portland and nationally, before, during, and after the 1905–1994 time period covered

[20] Students in Portland State University LGBTQ+ capstone course interviewed several prominent LGBTQ+ Portlanders starting in the late 1990s through 2013. See "Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Oral Histories," Digital Collections, Oregon Historical Society, https://digitalcollections.ohs.org/gay-and-lesbian-archives-of-the-pacific-northwest-oral-histories.

[21] An online exhibit of 30 stories related to Ballot Measure 9 and the No on 9 campaigns. See Noon9Remember, Western States Center, https://noon9remembered.org.

[22] Oregon Historical Society displayed this exhibit from June 10 – August 14, 2022. The exhibition documented the work of local HIV/AIDS resources such as Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) and highlighted HIV/AIDS impacts on Oregonians. See Kayla Blackman, "It's Not Over": Developing an OHS Exhibition Documenting Forty Years of HIV/AIDS in Oregon," Blog, Oregon Historical Society, June 28, 2022, https://www.ohs.org/blog/its-not-over-40-years-of-hiv-aids-in-oregon.cfm#:~:text="It's%20Not%20Over%3A%20Forty%20Years,by%20HIV%2FAIDS%20in%20Oregon.

[23] Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest* (University of California Press, 2003), 10.

by this historic context statement. While utilized as evidence of inequity, discrimination is not condoned by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, the Historic Resources Program, nor the LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project.[24]

Historic Resource Survey and Documentation

Collecting and recording information through historic resource surveys is often the first steps in preserving historic resources. Surveyors evaluate resources against one another and identify those that may be historically significant locally, statewide, or nationally. In Oregon, historic resource surveys can be conducted as a reconnaissance level survey (RLS) or an intensive level survey (ILS), depending on the depth of information collected and evaluated.[25]

Throughout 2022–2024, LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project staff and consultants at Salazar Architect Inc. created an evolving master list to track extant and demolished resources associated with LGBTQ+ history dating from the early 1900s through the 2000s. This database functioned similarly to the statewide historic database by including fields for the resources' historic and current names; address; designation status; construction date; primary and secondary functions; siding materials; architectural descriptions; and notes. Preliminary architectural descriptions were gathered from historical photographs, articles, personal memories, and oral histories. These architecture descriptions were crucial for understanding demolished and/or extensively altered resources and allowed the project team to compare physical changes of surveyed resources.[26] This database expanded beyond standard RLS documentation fields to include LGBTQ+ periods of association and associated audiences. Documenting the date of LGBTQ+ connections illuminated that many resources became associated with queer history long after the resource's original construction (a mean of 61.5 years). Additionally, the project team could preliminarily determine period(s) of significance in the area of LGBTQ+ history. Understanding audiences at resources was also valuable to identify intersections, such as associated queer youth resources.

In early 2023, the project team selected 90 resources for documentation through a selective reconnaissance level historic resource survey. This survey established baseline documentation of a diverse sampling of sites with connections to Portland's LGBTQ+ history. The project team included resources with Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) LGBTQ+ associations, diverse geographic

[24] For additional information about harmful and biased language in archives and use, see Archives and Records Management, "Statement on Harmful and Biased Language in Archival Description," City of Portland, https://www.portland.gov/archives/harmful-and-bias-language-statement#:~:text=If%20you%20would%20like%20to,remove%20terms%20from%20archival%20descriptions.

[25] For additional information and guidance on historic resource surveys in Oregon, see "Survey Historic Places," Oregon Heritage State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon.gov, https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/pages/survey.aspx.

[26] The National Park Service — who administers the National Register of Historic Places — defines integrity as "the ability of a property to convey its significance." Historic resources must have integrity and be shown to be significant under National Register of Historic Places criteria for National Register listing. The National Register considers integrity to be a combination of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For additional information on integrity and evaluation, see *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Revised 1997), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

locations, varied periods of significance, and different resource types with the intention of reflecting Portland's spectrum of LGBTQ+ places and experiences. This survey produced baseline architectural and historical documentation following RLS survey guidelines while also expanding on required fields to include historical narratives of each resource. Incorporating this additional survey field allowed the project team to record relevant information that was not apparent from a resource's physical characteristics, which is critical given many LGBTQ+ resources are significant for social histories instead of architecture. Survey records are available as an appendix to this historic context statement.

Notes on Terminology

Terminology related to gender and sexuality has and continues to evolve as the "concept of identity itself is historically situated" and terms generally reflect the period in which they are coined or popularized.[27] Scholar and editor of the National Park Service's *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History,* Megan E. Springate further elucidates that "our modern ideas of identity have their roots in specific historical processes including state formation, colonialism, capitalism, and individualism."[28] Therefore, some terms previously standard in the past are no longer in widespread use or favorable due to their derogatory and/or medical association. Some terms intended to capture greater nuance and/or reclaim ownership by community groups were not used, known, or popular in the past.

> **_Transsexual_ is now sometimes considered an old-fashioned word, whereas the word _transgender_—which ironically was coined by people who wanted to distinguish themselves from transsexuals—has become more or less synonymous with what transsexuality used to mean: that is, a one-way, one-time, medicalized transition across the gender binary. Some people nevertheless prefer to still use _transsexual_ to refer to those trans identities, practices, and desires that require interacting with medical institutions or with legal bureaucracies, in contrast to those trans practices that don't.**
>
> — Dr. Susan Stryker describing distinctions between former and recent terminology, 2017 [29]

Both in the past and today, no one word, acronym, or definition is universally accepted, and people may or may not accept/identify with any certain term(s).[30] Over the 20th century, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s, "homophile" and "gay" were popular umbrella terms to describe the full range of diverse

[27] Megan E. Springate, "Introduction to the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative Theme Study," in *LGBTQ America*, 02-25.
[28] Ibid. Also see Susan Ferentions, "Interpreting LGBTQ Historic Sites" 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), 31-7-31-8.
[29] Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution,* 2nd Edition (Seal Press, 2017).
[30] For example, see Alexander Cheves, "9 LGBTQ+ People Explain How They Love, Hate, and Understand the Word 'Queer,'" Culture, Them, June 14, 2023, https://www.them.us/story/what-does-queer-mean.

LGBTQ+ identities. Some people still utilize these terms this way; others may opt for words and acronyms that gained popularity in the latter half of the 20th century.[31]

> **I use gay—when I talk about myself as being gay it's like, I don't even use the word lesbian very much, because when I started doing this, all we were, were gay. It was the early and mid 1970s and if you were gay, it meant you were homosexually oriented and cool with who you were, and that was it! There were gay men and there were gay women.**
>
> — LGBTQ+ Portland activist Susie Shepherd reflecting on her personal terminology [32]

This document employs various contemporary strategies for naming LGBTQ+ history and historical figures practiced by other preservationists and public historians with an intent to be inclusive of historic figures and recognize evolving expansion of terminology and identity. For instance, "LGBTQ+" and "queer" are used interchangeably as umbrella terms throughout this document to include those who did not, might not, and/or could not fit dominant societal gender and sexual binaries in the past and to this day. These umbrella terms are used when more specific identifying terms are not available.

Springate described in *LGBTQ America* "it is inappropriate to foist an identity on those who did not or could not identify themselves" publicly. Thus, this document follows the practice of *LGBTQ America* to discuss relationships in historical figures' lives, freeing this document from attempting to claim past Portlanders as LGBTQ+ and/or confine individuals who did not or could not publicly express their queer identities. Other times, primary source materials influence the use of specific terms. For example, Portland LGBTQ+ activist Susie Shepherd will be referred to as "gay" because she publicly discussed her identity using that term.

[31] For instance, the term "queer" has a long use history inside and outside of LGBTQ+ populations. Through the 20th century, many employed it as derogatory slander, influencing many LGBTQ+ individuals to reject the term for its traumatic and harmful history. In the 1980s and 1990s, activists and organizations like Queer Nation reclaimed the word as a political stance. It is used in this document in the spirit of inclusivity and reclamation. For additional history, see Che Gossett, Reina Gossett, and AJ Lewis, "Reclaiming Our Lineage: Organized Queer, Gender-Nonconforming, and Transgender Resistance to Police Violence," *The Scholar and Feminist Online* 10.1-10.2 (Fall 2011/Spring 2012). Accessed https://sfonline.barnard.edu/reclaiming-our-lineage-organized-queer-gender-nonconforming-and-transgender-resistance-to-police-violence/.

[32] Oral history interview with Susie Shepherd, by Erin Sexton and Jamie Walton, SR 4150, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

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]

---

[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.

---

[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

---

[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]

---

[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

---

[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*

---

[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]

---

[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**

---

[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

---

[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

---

[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]

---

[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;

---

[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]

---

[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**

---

[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

---

[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.

---

[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.

Queer Intimacies

"Mother McAlllister" sauntered down the sidewalks of SW 4th Avenue in early 1912, the expanses of Portland's downtown Plaza Blocks (adjacent to SW 4th Ave. and SW Main St.) stretching before him. Composed of Lownsdale and Chapman Squares, these two public open spaces were popular outdoor plazas in the early 1900s.[226] Around 1904, the squares were informally segregated by assumed gender and age (Chapman for women and children, Lownsdale for men) as Lownsdale Square became associated with frequent "immoral behaviors."[227] Lownsdale's exclusivity as a "gentlemen's gathering place" fostered its reputation as a space for men to meet and solicit other men for intimate activity all the while blending seamlessly into the downtown crowds.[228] Portlanders ebbed and flowed through the park with the hustle and bustle of the day, some catching sight of "Mother" as a familiar presence among park-goers. Should he desire more privacy for intimacy, "Mother" had options at his disposal, whether it was the nearby park bathrooms referred to as "T rooms" or a retreat to his law office a few blocks away.

Throughout the 20th century, Portlanders like "Mother McAllister" (legally known as Portland lawyer Edward S. McAllister) explored understandings of their diverse identities.[229] The criminalization of diverse sexual acts starting in the late 1800s meant that intimate instances during the 1800s and early 1900s often unfolded in discreet Portland settings where such encounters could occur away from prying eyes. For some, these sexual activities were purely physical; for others, they were broader expressions of the individual's identity.[230] Over the course of the 20th century, diverse sex acts and materials were legalized, and some individuals became more open about their unique identities. Historian Josh Sides emphasizes in *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* that by the 1960s, "sex radical—those individuals who willfully violated the sexual taboos of their era— asserted both their real and perceived rights to express their sexuality as fully as they desired at any given moment and in any particular place."[231] Gay bathhouses, leather bars, and pornography theaters, to name a few, emerged in the mid-century as particular places to express sexuality while still providing moments of intimacy.

---

[226] The City of Portland acquired Lownsdale and Chapman Squares in 1869. For more information on the squares, see "Lownsdale Square," Find a Park, Portland Parks and Recreation, Portland.gov, https://www.portland.gov/parks/lownsdale-square.

[227] This segregation was formalized by a Portland City Council ordinance passed in 1924.

[228] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 114.

[229] During testimony in McAllister's trial, Portlander Harry Allen Work mentioned queer people receive "some nickname some woman's name," often according to the role they performed. "Mother" was a nickname given to older men who performed oral sex with other men. See McAllister Transcript, 7, 17, 20,21,40, 61. For additional history on terms used by men engaged in same-sex sexual activities, see George Chauncey Jr., "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past,* ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: Meridian, 1989), 294-317.

[230] David Halprin is one of several scholars who discusses modern social and cultural constructions of sexual identity. See David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 10, 106.; John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[231] Josh Sides, *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 7.

"Queer Intimacies" explores a spectrum of queer intimate experiences in Portland's private and public spaces during the 1905 to 1994 period. Though public expressions of gender and sexuality are not exclusive to LGBTQ+ people nationwide or in Portland, sexual rendezvous sites were important to those who sought "collective support for their rejection of the sexual and gender roles prescribed to them."[232] Due to the often private nature of intimate relationships, along with potentials for harm and consequences from public knowledge in a hostile society, the full extent of queer intimate experiences in 20th century Portland is largely speculative from few remaining sources.

Intimacy in Private

Moments in private spaces offered opportunities to create personal sanctuaries away from public scrutiny and potential police harassment. With the popularity of communal living in the late 1960s and early 1970s, large private residences offered opportunities to intentionally live with other LGBTQ+ people.

The unveiling of Portland's homosexual network by the press and police in 1912 and 1913 illuminated "apartment houses, hotels, rooming houses," and other private places' role in fostering queer sexual and romantic connections in early 20th century Portland.[233] In the city's central business district, several individuals arrested for their connection to a network of individuals engaging in same-sex sexual activities referred to as the "Vice Clique" scandal lived together or near each other in the 1910s. For instance, Earl Van Hulen and Harry Wight lived in an apartment together on SW 11th Avenue and Columbia Street from 1910 to 1911 while Claude Bronner and Nathan Healy resided together on Morrison Street from 1909 to 1911.[234] Van Hulen, Bronner, and Healy all moved to SW Washington Street in 1911.[235] At some point between 1911 and 1912, Bronner shared a residence with Burt Thornton on SW 17th Avenue and SW Taylor Street; this apartment drew particular focus among Portland press in 1912 for the couple's presumed sex parties and parties where individuals dressed in gender-variant clothing.[236]

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and various hotel rooms served as queer residential and sexual spaces throughout the early to mid-1900s.[237] YMCA buildings nationwide and in Portland were prominent and became closely associated with LGBTQ+ life because they were primarily "physically

[232] Chauncey, *Gay New York,* 204.
[233] "One Attempts Suicide; Eleven Under Arrest," *The Oregon Daily Journal,* November 17, 1912, 6.
[234] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs*, 97, 100.
[235] Ibid, 101.
[236] Thornton and Bronner owned the A.B.C. Restaurant together, first opened in 1906 at 567 SW Washington St (now 1703-1917 W Burnside St.) The restaurant's final location was 442 SW Washington St. (now 1218 SW Washington St.), which opened as the Palace Hotel in December 1912. The press referred to Bronner's apartment as a "den of corruption so vile as to keep I from being event faintly described." Bronner pled guilty and was sentenced to a year in Oregon State Penitentiary. See Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 101.; "Indictments Are Found," *The Sunday Oregonian,* December 29, 1912, 7.; "Bronner Pleads Guilty," *Morning Oregonian,* March 12, 1913, 9.; "Prosecution to Cease," *Morning Oregonian,* June 20, 1913, 13.
[237] For additional history and intersections of the YMCA and YWCA see Nina Mjagkij, and Margaret Spratt, *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York University Press, 1997).

oriented, male-only spaces, largely free of supervision."[238] At least six men involved in the Vice Clique roomed at Portland's downtown YMCA (SW 6th Ave. and Taylor St.) between 1911 and 1912.[239] Moreso, single resident occupant (SRO) rooms in residential hotels provided short-term housing and often developed associations with vice and other illicit activities; for example, Old Town Portland's Norton House on NW First and Couch Streets was reported by *West Shore magazine* in 1877 as being " . . . surrounded . . . by sailors' saloons, laundries, heavy industry, and houses of ribald reputation."[240]

Concurrently in the early 1900s, Portland's lesbian culture developed in private residences. During the late 19th century and early 20th century, historian Micheal Helquist summarizes in *Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions* that it was "not unheard of among the hundreds of young single women who settled in the West" to reside together.[241] Economic realities for young women in large cities and women's contemporary social and sexual standards provided both a cover and a means for many to live together in companionship with little comment. LGBTQ+ historian Lillian Faderman states in *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth Century America,* "Whether or not those relationships were usually sexual cannot be definitively known."[242] Within this context, Doctor Marie Equi (1872–1952) built residential refuge with her companions in various Oregon places.[243] Though she lived with various partners throughout her life, Harriet Speckart was Equi's longest and most public relationship during the early 20th century. After meeting in 1905, the couple lived together in various Portland residences between 1906 and 1918.[244] Helquist speculates that their residences held prominence among other lesbians and served as a "precursor of the larger, self-identified lesbian subcultures that flourished in American cities several years later."[245]

> **She lives in a sphere which I approve, all gifted women, who made something of themselves, can do something, and are somebody. No small talk and social nothingness, everything is discussed and with the whole soul, it makes life spicy.**
>
> — Harriet Speckart writing to her aunt, 1906 [246]

By the mid-20th century, Portland's known LGBTQ+ residences extended beyond downtown's core. Development and urban renewal forced many to affordable areas east of the Willamette River. For

---

[238] Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 142, 146.
[239] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 112.
[240] Quoted in Liza Mickle, Nicholas Starin, and Jeffry Uecker, "Skidmore/Old Town Historic District," National Historic Landmark Nomination (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2008), 66.
[241] Helquist, *Marie Equi,* 29.
[242] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers,* 15.
[243] Equi first lived in The Dalles, Oregon, with her companion Blessie Holcomb. See Helquist, *Marie Equi,* 28-23.
[244] Their residences included the Elton Court (formerly 415 SW Yamhill St.) between 1906 and 1909; The Nortonia Hotel (409 SW 11th Ave., now the Mark Spencer Hotel) from 1909 to 1911; South Parkhurst Apartments (current address 1204 NW 20th Ave.) between 1912 and 1914; and a Craftsman in Portland's Mt. Tabor neighborhood (current address 2214 SE 52nd Ave.).
[245] Helquist, *Marie Equi,* 100.
[246] Ibid, 100.

instance, an area of inner southeast Portland roughly bounded by SE Hawthorne Street, SE Belmont Street, SE 20th Avenue, and SE Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard surfaced as a lesbian residential enclave by the 1970s. Collective living in this area became increasingly popular, reflected by the Red Emma Collective house started by Ann Mussey and four other women in 1971 who all moved to Portland together. Mussey reflected in 2000 on how the group "rented a [pink] house on Southeast 35th Avenue, a block and a half south of Hawthorne . . . Our household was one among many households of women, many of whom moved to Portland about the time period, a time span of a couple of years [during the early 1970s].[247]

Cruising Public Spaces

During the 20th century, individuals nationwide and in Portland found various public spaces available to meet each other and engage in intimate activities. Alex Espinoza explains in *Cruising: An Intimate History of a Radical Pastime,* people "(both closeted and otherwise) had to learn to negotiate the surreptitious world of hookups and sexual gratification with tact and dexterity given the rise in anti-gay sentiments."[248]

Public parks proliferated as popular recreational areas at the turn of the 20th century and concurrently became a prominent venue for those seeking intimate connections.[249] Park amenities such as public bathrooms offered semi-private spaces for sexual encounters, like the men's restroom at Lownsdale Square.[250] The square's proximity to SW 3rd Avenue fostered a cluster of LGBTQ+-associated businesses in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Aero Bathhouse (1237 SW 3rd Ave., demolished) and Dinty Moore's (924 SW 3rd Ave.).

Lownsdale Square was not the sole site in Portland's network of outdoor spaces catering to sexual encounters in the early and mid-1900s. The rise of amusement parks like Council Crest Amusement Park (SW Council Crest Dr., demolished) and Oaks Amusement Park (7805 SE Oaks Park Way), introduced a fresh dimension to outdoor leisure and entertainment. These parks quickly became associated with sexual deviance and garnered reputations for being hubs of "immorality" and disorder.[251] Testimony in 1912 and 1913 during trials of Portlanders arrested as part of the "Vice Clique" scandal intensified this association;

---

[247] Oral history interview with Ann Mussey, by Justine Larson and Brooke Welch, SR 4148, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[248] Alex Espinoza, *Cruising: An Intimate History of a Radical Pastime* (Unnamed Press, 2019), 8. One example is the handkerchief code (aka hanky code or flagging) which developed throughout the 20th century as a system of color-coded handkerchiefs denoting various sexual activities. See J. Raul Cornier, "Hanky Panky: An Abridged History of the Hanky Code," The History Project, April 23, 2019, https://historyproject.org/news/2019-04/hanky-panky-abridged-history-hanky-code-0.

[249] While generally cost-free access to greenery in increasingly urbanizing cityscapes, outdoor spaces were not always accessible to all equally. As with all public spaces, outdoor spaces reflect power dynamics, and societal norms as they have long been a tool of "social control." See Doreceta E Taylor, "Central Park as a Model for Social Control: Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of Leisure Research* 31, No 4 (1999): 420-477.

[250] The restroom was a popular location for sexual encounters through the mid-century based on arrest records and newspaper reports. For example, see "Morals Count Faced," *Oregonian,* April 26, 1953.; "Two Sentenced to Long Terms," *Oregonian,* September 23, 1955.

[251] "In 1905 a city council member described the Oaks as 'an immoral place and that he had seen more drunkenness there than he had ever seen at any place in the City.'" Quoted in Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 71.

individuals exposed Council Crest's slopes as a hotspot for queer sexual activities.[252] Although Council Crest Amusement Park closed in 1929, Oaks Amusement Park and other outdoor spaces remained popular among Portlanders through the end of the century. By the mid-20th century, Portlanders in the know were aware of additional outdoor cruising spots; gay travel guides crowdsourced from locals and developed notations such as "cruisy areas" to inform readers about different spaces.[253] Portland parks featured under this notation between the early 1970s and late 1980s included Lewis and Clark Monument in Washington Park (4033 SW Canyon Road); Delta Park (N Denver Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard); Laurelhurst Park (SE Cesar E. Chavez and Stark Street); and Columbia Park (4503 N Lombard St.).[254]

Like parks, streetscapes were readily available spaces for individuals to find each other and engage in intimate activities during the 20th century. By the 1960s, the street and sidewalks around SW Yamhill Street and SW 5th Avenue gained notoriety as a popular gathering space for queer youth, especially those between 14 and 21 years old. Colloquially known as "The Camp," this area offered a space without age restrictions, identification requirements, and its proximity to queer bars like Dahl & Penne's (604 SW 2nd Ave., demolished) and the Other Inn (242 SW Alder St., demolished) fostered a vibrant streetscape where diverse individuals could forge connections.[255] One Portlander recalled "The Camp" as "very gay and very well attended," with scores of people regularly hanging out.[256]

> **It was like where a lot of gay men met just by walking on the street. And the cars would circle and they would look and make eye contact and all that. So that's my first sexual experience, was that way because that's the only way I knew how to do it. I had no frame of reference whatsoever for this, this activity. I just started walking and sort of figured it out.**
> — Portlander Larry Copeland reflecting on "The Camp," 2011 [257]

[252] Earl Taylor and W.T. Hume testimony, *State of Oregon v. Harry Start,* Transcript, 26- 27, 308-309.

[253] *Bob Damron's Address Books, The Guild Guide,* and *The International Guild Guide* were prominent gay travel guides which included Portland addresses. Gay travel guides are also mentioned in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment." For additional history, see 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.; "About Us," Damron, https://damron.com/about-us.; Payton Seda, "A Brief History of Gay Travel Guides—And What They Say About Life in Southern California," Arts and Entertainment, LAist, https://laist.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/more-than-just-gay-bars-a-new-exhibit-in-anaheim-explores-the-history-of-gay-travel-guides.

[254] Parks are also discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Venues," and "Queer Arts and Entertainment."

[255] Portland Larry Copeland notes it was SW Yamhill and SW Morrison and Walter Cole Sr. notes it was a "wall on the northwest corner of SW 3rd and Yamhill between 2nd and 3rd Avenues." The area appeared in gay travel guide *Damron's* Address *Book* under "Yamhill (Camp Street)" between 1972 and 1980. The published address shifted slightly from "Yamhill St. between 4th & 6th" from 1972 to 1976, then to "between 3rd & 4th." See Oral history interview with Larry S. Copeland, by Emily Bowen and Kenty Truong, SR 11233, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.; Don Horn (Donnie) with Walter Cole/Darcelle, *Looking from My Mirror,* (Self-published, November 2019), 162.; Don Horn, "Camp," Youth, Umbrella Project, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/camp.

[256] Anonymous, interviewed by Cayla McGrail, November 27, 2023, not recorded.

[257] Oral history interview with Larry S. Copeland.

The street and sidewalks gained such a widespread reputation that people from "other parts of Oregon and even Idaho were frequently competing" with Portlanders who utilized this area for sexual connections and money.[258] Many, but not all, who gathered at "The Camp" were housing insecure and/or runaway youths involved in paid sex work to financially support themselves.[259] Despite objections by political figures and the public, "sex workers have always been part of queer history," proclaims UC Berkely Professor Juana Maria Rodríguez.[260] Paid sexual interactions provided crucial financial support for those grappling with unemployment or low wages.

Indoor public spaces, such as cafes, department stores, bus stations, hotels, bathrooms, and theaters, also emerged as havens for intimate queer connections. These various types of places made cruising available in the midst of everyday urban live. For instance, the former Orpheum Theater (formerly 759 SW Broadway, demolished), the Circle Theater (516 SW 4th Ave., demolished), and the Capital Theater (626 SW 4th Ave., demolished) facilitated "at least three long-term gay couples who met in the balcony . . . in the 1950s and [these] relationships lasted over thirty years."[261] The Circle Theater was especially known for its "two separate balconies, one to the left and one to the right. The balcony to the left was for men and women . . . and the one to the right was limited to men only." [262] In the 1960s and 1970s, several older Portland theaters transformed into pornography venues. For instance, Oregon Theater (3530 SE Division St.) initially opened in 1925 and began showing pornography in 1967 while Star Theater (6 NW 6th Ave.) featured erotic films and dancers and nude dance reviews by the 1970s. [263] While these venues potentially featured queer content, two theaters were noted in queer press as LGBTQ+ pornography venues: Tom Kat Theater (425 NW Gilsan St.) and Eros Adult Theater (314 SW Taylor St.).[264] Managed by Portland drag queen Nickie/Nikkie, Tom Kat Theater opened in 1973 and advertisements declared it Portland's "only lavender cinema," with lineups featuring "hardcore gay action films," "male erotic art films," and live

[258] Dave Kohl, "Hiking 'The Camp': An Annotated Walk Through Time," *Just Out,* August 19, 2005, 25.

[259] The full extent of sexual abuse associated with "The Camp" is unknown. See "Camping Out," *Northwest Gay Review,* October 1976, 7, and Rod Patterson, "Sex for Sale: Teen-age Boys 'husting' on Portland Streets," *Oregonian,* September 11, 1977, for discussions on paid sex work in the area.

[260] Ivan Natividad, "Juana Maria Rodríguez: Sex work is a queer issue," UC Berkeley News, June 27, 2023, https://news.berkeley.edu/2023/06/27/juana-maria-rodriguez-sex-work-is-a-queer-issue/.

[261] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."

[262] Ibid.

[263] "New Life Envisioned for Old Portland Landmark." *DJC,* April 30, 2020. https://djcoregon.com/news/2020/04/30/new-life-envisioned-old-portland-landmark/.; Kristi. Turnquist, "Former Portland Porn Cinema Reborn as Portland Art Museum's Tomorrow Theater," *Oregonian*, October 5, 2023.; "Business District on Division Street." *Oregon Journal,* December 21, 1924, 30.; Ad, *Oregon Journal*, September 6, 1925, 45.; Ad, *Oregon Journal*, December 21, 1924.; Jay Horton, "The Oregon Theater, the City's Last Operating Porn Palace Before Closing This Year, Plans for a Second Coming." *Willamette Week*, August 11, 2020. https://www.wweek.com/arts/2020/08/11/the-oregon-theater-the-citys-last-operating-porn-palace-before-closing-this-year-plans-for-a-second-coming/.; Marlena Williams, "Star Theater," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated August 8, 2024, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/star-theater/.
Ad. Oregon Journal, September 6, 1954.

[264] Don Horn, "Eros Theatre," Theaters, The Umbrella Project of Oregon,. https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/erosadult-theatres.

performances by "nude male go-go dancers."[265] Similarly, Eros Adult Theater prominently showed hardcore gay films between 1970 and 1975.[266]

Erotic Enterprises: Baths, Bars, Bookstores, and Beyond

Erotic enterprises— businesses offering sexual content such as brothels, bars, theaters, and stores— shaped Portland's economic landscape from the early 1900s throughout the latter 20th century. While many of these businesses provided covert space for LGBTQ+ individuals from the early decades of Portland, specialized sexual venues specifically for queer clientele emerged as early as the 1950s and expanded options for finding queer intimacies.

Bathhouses

Bathhouses initially emerged as public service facilities to address the hygiene needs of rapidly growing urban populations, especially in cities where personal showers and baths were scarce in residential spaces.[267] In addition to their primary hygiene function, historical accounts dating back to the late 1800s show evidence that bathhouses often also served as spaces for sexual connection.[268]

Starting in the 1950s, bathhouse culture evolved within the developing sexual landscape to become distinctly characterized by its exclusive catering to "the sexual and social needs of gay men" nationwide and in Portland, marking a new era for bathhouses.[269] Gay historian Allan Bérubé contends in his article "The History of Gay Bathhouses" that baths provided crucial space where individuals could "overcome isolation and develop a sense of community and pride in their sexuality . . . gay men could be sexual and affectionate with each other."[270] Among Portland's bathhouses, Aero Vapors (1237 SW 3rd Ave., demolished) emerged as a prominent location in the 1950s, reinforced by its location near other associated LGBTQ+ spaces including Lownsdale Square, adult bookstores on SW 3rd Avenue, and Dinty Moore's bar (924 SW 3rd Ave.).[271]

Downtown Portland's vibrant bathhouse culture gained steam in the 1970s, distinguished by several bathhouses opening and rebranding. Workout Baths (531 SW 12th Ave.) first opened in 1969 and later became Olympic Baths Uptown. This opening was especially significant as "the first gay-owned and

[265] Don Horn, "The 'Tom Kat' Theatre," Theaters, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/theater-history.
[266] Ad, *The Fountain,* April 1971, 5.
[267] Allan Bérubé, "The History of Gay Bathhouses," *Journal of Homosexuality* 44 no. 3 (2003): 33-53.
[268] Ibid, 37.
[269] Bérubé's study provides "4 major stages in which bathhouses evolved into homosexual institutions." These include ordinary bathhouses, favorite spots, early gay bathhouses, and the modern gay bathhouse. Ibid, 36.
[270] Ibid, 34, 36.
[271] Aero Vapors closed in 1972 and was subsequently demolished by the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project. It is currently Terry Schrunk Plaza. For multiple references to the bath's popularity, see Don Horn, "Aero Vapors," Bathhouses, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/aerovapors.

operated bath in Portland."[272] Owner Rick Dijon (Richard Lawson) explained to the *Northwest Gay Review* that "every bath in the city was a straight [-owned] establishment getting rich off the gay community" before his venture.[273] Other baths that opened during this period included the Majestic Hotel and Club Baths (303 SW 12th Ave.), Olympic Baths (509 SW 4th Ave., formerly Mahon's Steam Bath), and Club Continental (531 SW Park Ave.).

When Portland's Majestic Hotel and Club Baths opened in 1971, it boasted a plethora of amenities that epitomized the modern gay bathhouse experience. Advertisements in Portland's *Northwest Gay Review* promoted the club's themed rooms, sun deck, pool tables, TV and theatre lounges, spa rooms, and hotel accommodations in the multi-story building.[274] The regular and deluxe hotel rooms permitted LGBTQ+ couples to openly travel and sleep overnight together; Portlander Norm Costa recalled in 2000 an instance when he and his partner "went to Club Portland and rented a room and just slept in it."[275] Beyond its interior accommodations, the Majestic Hotel and Club Baths' launch on SW Harvey Milk Street contributed to the surrounding area with "a lot of late-night activity between the bars and the baths."[276] As a result, SW Harvey Milk became "the most visible area of the city to be identified with LGBTQ+ culture."[277]

Other Portland bathhouses advertised similar building amenities, underscoring their transformation from public facilities to multifaceted centers for entertainment and intimacies. When Club Continental Baths opened in 1977, Dijon/Lawson emphasized the importance of this evolution:

> **We designed and built this bath with changes that have taken place in the gay community in mind. Gays aren't going to go just anywhere now. They want a place with some class and respectability about it.**
> — Rick Dijon/Lawson [278]

Although bathhouses proliferated in the 1970s, by the late 1980s attendance declined and spas shuttered nationwide and in Portland due to a range of challenges. Many viewed this decline as "a direct result of the ignorance and fear that accompanied the AIDS epidemic [since] the federal government placed pressure on certain local governments to close the existing bathhouses."[279] Nonetheless, bathhouses like

[272] "New Bath in Portland," *Northwest Gay Review,* undated, clipping in Don Horn, "Club Continental Baths," Bathhouses, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/club-continental-baths.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ad, *Northwest Gay Review,* June 1977, clipping in Don Horn, "Club Baths & The Majestic Hotel," Bathhouses, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/club-baths-majestic-hotel.
[275] Costa's recollection did not include a specific date. See Oral history interview with Norm Costa, by Stephanie Munly and Ruben Reynaga, SR 4143, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.
[276] Dave Kohl, "Traipsing the Triangle: Walking into the Past, Discovering the Present," *Just Out,* November 18, 2005, 24.
[277] Minor, "Hotel Alma National Register of Historic Places Amendment," May 2024, 10. This Portland area is also discussed in "Overview of Portland LGBTQ+ History, 1905 - 1994."
[278] "New Bath in Portland."
[279] "Continental Club in Portland Acquires Nation's Largest Gay Health Club," *City Open Press,* October – November 1986, 11.

Club Baths, which operated into the early 2000s, fostered a sense of "homosexual camaraderie" through friendships, recreational activities, sexual connections, and potential romantic relationships.

Bars and Clubs

Intimate and sexual connections flourished within the vibrant atmosphere of Portland's bars and clubs during much of the second half of the 20th century.[280] These venues offered a "main point of contact with others of the gay community—and one of the few places where you can 'be yourself' without fear . . . IN THE DIM of the cocktail lounge, romances . . . blossom."[281] Bars and clubs served as crucibles for countless romantic encounters; many Portlanders found various relationships within these social settings.

Through the 1900s, erotic dance venues were significant places in Portland's economic and cultural landscape. In "Myths and Measures: The Cultural Performance of Portland's Strip Club Identity," scholar Wayne Coffey traces pieces of exotic dance and striptease to the late 1800s; by the 1950s, boundaries between dance clubs featuring go-go dancers and striptease theaters blurred, accompanied by the unclear "legal boundary between 'topless,' 'partial exposure,' and 'nude.'"[282] Within this context, Portland's Mary's Club and Broadway Theater introduced topless dancers.[283] Mary's (formerly 129 SW Broadway, currently 5 NW 5th Ave.) included a range of performers and emcees in the 1960s including local drag performer Scarlet O'Hara/Gary L. Alexander.[284] Men go-go dancers and strippers became part of Portland's LGBTQ+ bar entertainment in the 1960s and 1970s with Demas Tavern and the Pied Piper regularly advertising go-go dancers.[285] By 1981, Don Sexton and Tom Breazeale's Silverado (initially at 1217 SW Harvey Milk St.) opened as Portland's all-nude men strip club.[286]

In the mid-1960s, leather bars emerged as specialized venues for the sexual subculture which was establishing alternative spaces.[287] Portland's Other Inn (242 SW Alder St., demolished) was the inaugural leather bar opening in 1964.[288] As described by Portlander Rose (no last name given) in a 1996 profile on

---

[280] Additional bars are discussed in the themes "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" and "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing."
[281] Dean Smith, "Portland After Dark: Gay Bars Hold Key for Homosexuals," *Oregon Journal,* August 31, 1972, 4M.
[282] Wayne Coffey, "Myths and Measures: The Cultural Performance of Portland's Strip Club Identity," (Thesis, Portland State University, 2012), 21.
[283] Broadway Theater hosted the first topless show in the city in 1966, with Mary's following soon after. See Phil Stanford, *Rose City Vice: Portland in the '70s – Dirty Cops and Dirty Robbers* (Feral House, 2017), 30.; "Go-Go Clubs Organize to Regulate Conduct," *Oregon Journal,* December 22, 1964, 10.
[284] Gary L. Alexander, *Life's Not Just a Drag* (AuthorHouse, 2013), 97-101.; Julie Gallaher, "Mary's Club," *Exotic Magazine,* July 2004, 26-27.
[285] See Don Horn, "Male Strippers," The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/male-strippers.
[286] Aaron Spencer, "A Different Kind of Silver anniversary," *Just Out*, February 4, 2011, 20.
[287] "Leather" is an umbrella term for a variety of sexual practices including sadomasochism (S/M), bondage, and fetishism. Portlanders involved in the leather community expressed in 1996 that it's "more of a personality or attitude." For additional information on leather, see "History," Resources, Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District, sfleatherdisctrict.org/history/.; Matthew D. Johnson, "Leather Culture," GLBTQ Archive, http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/leather_culture_S.pdf.; Inga Sorensen, "Radical Sensualists," *Just Out*, February 16, 1996, 17.
[288] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."

leather published by Portland's LGBTQ+ newspaper *Just Out,* the Other Inn introduced many individuals to the intricacies of leather culture.[289]

After the Other Inn closed in 1982, Portlanders John Phillips and Ray Southwick launched a new leather space with their bar, JR's.[290] Operating two locations, JR's West (300 NW 10th Ave.) and JR's East (4036 SE Hawthorne Blvd.), JR's boasted a welcoming neighborhood bar ambiance that appealed to a broad audience.[291] With its basement nightclub JR's Cell/The Cell managed by "Portland's leather master" Robert Dunn, JR's West garnered notoriety among Portland's leather scene. Activities at the Cell "equaled or exceed that of any bathhouse in Portland, and even, some said, San Francisco," according to some accounts.[292] While predominantly associated with gay men, leather became more inclusive throughout the 20th century. JR's West included a women's only night on the occasional Tuesday and, as Renée LaChance recalled in 1998, "women did play."[293]

A few blocks from JR's West, the Dirty Duck/Gayle's Dirty Duck (439 NW 3rd Ave., demolished) debuted as a new gay bar in January 1984, and swiftly became a focal point for the leather community as JR's closed by the end of the year.[294] Numerous leather organizations, including the Portland chapter of the Knights of Malta, Portland leather-levi women's group Defenders of Mithra, the Portland chapter of the National Leather Association, Oregon Guild Activists of SM, Oregon Bears, and others found a new home at the Dirty Duck.[295] Events like the Oregon Leatherman competitions further underscored the bar as Portland's prominent leather bar until its closure in 2010.[296]

Retail

Retail stores played a significant role for queer customers nationwide and in Portland by offering welcoming shopping environments and specialized products starting in the 1900s.[297] By the 1970s, adult bookstores and sex shops emerged as venues for specialized materials, products, and intimate connections. Scholar Elizabeth Morehead explains in her thesis, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970-2010," that "many of the products sold in these stores were not new, as some were previously available in pharmacies or by mail. What was new was that the objects and media designed to sexually arouse were available openly and in one location . . ."[298] Between the 1970s and early 1980s, downtown Portland, specifically SW 3rd Avenue, had a high concentration of adult-oriented retail

[289] Sorensen, "Radical Sensualists," *Just Out*, February 16, 1996, 17.
[290] "Ray Southwick, 1946 – 2005," Transitions, *Just Out*, January 6, 2006, 4.
[291] Renée LaChance, "Cheers for Queers," *Just Out,* April 3, 1998, 3.
[292] "Ray Southwick, 1946 – 2005."
[293] LaChance, "Cheers for Queers."
[294] Andy Mangels, "Just Ducky," *Just Out,* April 17, 2009, 28.
[295] Mangels, "Just Ducky."; "Defenders of Mithra Celebrate Anniversary," *City Week,* November 21, 1986, 3.
[296] "Last Call: Two LGBTQ landmarks shut down, tear down," *Just Out,* August 5, 2011, 10.
[297] Also see the theme "LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" for additional information on LGBTQ+ retail.
[298] Morehead, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970-2010," 83.

establishments with stores like Eros Bookstore (837 SW 3rd Ave.), Hard Times Bookstore (926 SW 3rd Ave.), Pink Cat Bookstore (523 SW 3rd Ave.), and Peek-A-Rama Book Store (834 SW 3rd Ave.).[299]

"Ten years ago, dildos and vibrators were more 'in the closet.' I've done a lot about getting them out of the closet," Portlander Holly Mulcahey reflected in a 2001 *Just Out* interview.[300] In 1991, Mulcahey opened It's My Pleasure (first at 4526 SE Hawthorne Blvd.), aiming to provide a welcoming "tasteful adult bookstore— tasteful erotic videos and books from a feminist perspective," feeling that "some of the men's X-rated bookstores . . . were so intimidating and awful."[301] With cards, jewelry, "candles shaped like labia," sex toys, reading materials, workshops, and more, It's My Pleasure worked to normalize sexual self-empowerment.[302] The store also worked to foster and support queer Portlanders by hosting potlucks for new lesbians in town, showing LGBTQ+ plays, and selling tickets for other Portland LGBTQ+ events.[303] Around 1994, Mulcahey relocated the store to (4258 SE Hawthorne Blvd.) to double its size to 3,000 square feet, which allowed Mulcahey to provide space to other women-owned businesses. It's My Pleasure continued to contrast other sex stores: it was a "high-ceilinged, colorful corner shop" with two resident cats instead of the typical "darkened windows" that often personify sex stores.[304] It's My Pleasure modified to keep relevant in the evolving social, political, and economic realities of LGBTQ+ Portlanders.[305]

> **It's My Pleasure opened up on Hawthorne Street in a very small location. It was 15 feet wide and about 80 feet deep . . . We had a few sex toys. We had a few books—a little bit of this, a little bit of that. A part of the store was set aside for evening meetings. We had a little couch and some comfy chairs and bulletin boards. I started a lending library there with books of my own collection and customers kept donating to it, and it kept building. We had classes in the evenings about protecting yourself and relationships and good health and dating and safer sex. And at that time, back in 1991, there wasn't much outreach towards women or towards lesbians about safer sex. So we did some groundbreaking work back then. In the early 1990s, the bi community was hardly even a community at the time . . . So we were among**

[299] "Guide to Portland Area Gay Scene," *The Fountain,* September 1972, 17.
[300] Natalie Shapiro, "Good Vibrations: It's My Pleasure celebrates 10th anniversary," *Just Out,* April 12, 2001, 12.
[301] Ibid.; Anndee Hochman, "Pleasure-trove: Holly Mulcahey spreads the gospel of sexual self-empowerment and entices converts with a panoply of women-oriented wares," *Just Out,* March 7, 1997, 32.
[302] It's My Pleasure's first advertisement emphasized empowering women. See Announcements, *Just Out,* July 1991, 21. For an example of workshops hosted at It's My Pleasure, see Announcements, *Just Out,* December 3, 1993, 20.; Ibid.
[303] Shapiro, "Good Vibrations."; Out About Town, *Just Out,* August 19, 1994, 19.
[304] Upstairs were two massage therapists and a Reiki practice. See Shapiro, "Good Vibrations."; Anndee Hochman, "Pleasure-trove: Holly Mulcahey spreads the gospel of sexual self-empowerment and entices converts with a panoply of women-oriented wares," *Just Out,* March 7, 1997, 32.
[305] The location of It's My Pleasure was 3106 NE 64th Ave. By the mid-2000s, Mulcahey sought a new owner. See "It's My Pleasure Seeks New Owner," *Just Out,* March 7, 2008, 9.

> **the first places in Portland to be open and welcoming to bi women, as well as lesbians.**
>
> — Holly Mulcahey describes her store as a haven for affirmation, knowledge, and belonging [306]

Queer Intimacies Summary

From 1905 to 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders found and crafted various spaces to explore their identities and engage in queer intimacies. A spectrum of Portland places, from apartments to bathhouses and bars to parks, offered private and semi-private environments where Portlanders could cultivate queer relationships for a few hours, a few days, or an entire lifetime. Queer intimacies played a crucial role in establishing and building connections, relationships, and a sense of community, all of which increasingly became more out and public.

[306] Oral history interview with Holly Mulcahey, by Erin Sexton, SR 4147, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces

On March 24, 1970, John Wilkinson and Holly Hart led a meeting of forty Portlanders in Centenary-Wilbur United Methodist Church's basement coffeehouse, Ninth Street Exit (215 SE 9th Ave.). During the late 1960s and early 1970s Centenary-Wilbur became a center of counterculture, with its social activist environment and multi-purpose space proving conducive to Wilkinson and Hart's efforts to form a gay consciousness-raising group.[307] Advertisements in alternative newspaper *The Willamette Bridge* noted the assembling of LGBTQ+ individuals at the coffeehouse to create a Portland-based "coalition of radical and revolutionary homosexual men and women committed to fight the oppression of the homosexual" named Gay Liberation Front (GLF).[308] GLF meetings continued through the summer of 1970 and the group saw their attendance grow over time, sparking new energy and effort for gay liberation and activism in Portland.

Portland Gay Liberation Front's formation at Centenary-Wilbur United Methodist Church "open[ed] the closet door" for individuals to gather and live "without fear, but with openness and excitement" at dances, drag balls, music nights, group meetings, political campaigns, and other public spaces.[309] While queer organizing efforts occurred in the city before and after Portland GLF, the group's formation reflected "the rapid proliferation of a vast diversity of new gay organizations" beaming with gay pride.[310] Portland GLF, subsequent LGBTQ+ organizations, and various social spaces were crucial avenues for queer Portlanders to discover self-expression and acceptance, create solidarity, and grow grassroots activism during the 20th century's intense national, regional, and local hostilities.

"LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces" explores a spectrum of venues and organizations cocreated by and for LGBTQ+ Portlanders during the 1905 to 1994 period. Publicly identifying as LGBTQ+ throughout the 1900s could lead to harassment, arrest, incarceration, job loss, and other negative consequences, inspiring some to withhold details from public record as safety measures.[311] While coming out publicly as

---

[307] David Grant Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People* 41, 43.; Valerie Brown, "Music on the Cusp: From Folk to Acid Rock in Portland Coffeehouses, 1967-1970," History Cooperative, https://historycooperative.org/journal/music-on-the-cusp-from-folk-to-acid-rock-in-portland-coffeehouses-1967-1970/.; Oral history interview with Holly Hart, by Winter Drews and James Loos, SR 4145, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[308] George Nicola, "How the Oregon LGBT Movement Was Born," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated July 30, 2013, https://www.glapn.org/6130nicolagaymovement.html; Matthew Cowan, "OregonScape: Fall 202 Issue 121:3," OregonScape, Oregon Historical Quarterly, Oregon Historical Society, https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/oregonscape/Copy-of-oregonscape-fall-2020.cfm; Don Horn, "Centenary Wilber Methodist Church," Venues, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/centenary-wilbur-methodist-church.; Jay Shockley, Amanda Davis, Ken Lustbader, and Andrew Dolkart, *Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City,* (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, May 2018), 50.

[309] John Wilkinson, "Dear Gay, young, and lonely," *Willamette Bridge,* February 6, 23.; Nicola, "How the Oregon LGBT Movement was Born."

[310] Precursors to Gay Liberation Front include the 1924 Society for Human Rights and the 1950s Homophile Movement characterized by organizations like the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis. See Elizabeth Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994,* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2- 3.

[311] Classified sections in queer newspapers, advertisements, and articles promoting Portland LGBTQ+ organizations often provided first names, phone numbers, and/or P.O. Boxes.

LGBTQ+ became increasingly more common starting in the 1970s, many social organizations and spaces did not sustain for extended periods. This lack of stable physical space necessitated resilience and ingenuity to forge connections across shared interests, values, and identities. Diverse organizations and places offered spaces where Portlanders could come out, whoever they were, in search of establishing LGBTQ+ connections.

Finding Space for Queer Connections

Throughout the 20th century, queer Portlanders crafted new and alternative worlds in music halls, parks, bars, restaurants, stores, coffee shops, community centers, residences, and other "third space[s] . . . at the margins of society . . . where new identities, actions, and opportunities [could] be constructed."[312] The variety of third spaces provide a broad view into LGBTQ+-connected places and underscores that queer Portlanders lived, worked, and socialized all over the city during the 1905 to 1994 period. Utilizing existing spaces reflected the ingenuity of making and maintaining spaces as financial hardships impacted Portlanders' abilities to host openly LGBTQ+ social venues for extended periods "due to their lesser political and economic power."[313] Rent increases often forced venues to relocate in search of cheaper spaces. Yet, this change of space offered chances to expand, as evidenced by A Woman's Place Bookstore relocating four times between 1973 and 1990.[314]

The nomadic nature of queer venues and organizations brought opportunities to engage with other LGBTQ+ demographics. For example, the youth-oriented queer peer group Windfire rotated meetings between the lesbian-owned restaurant Old Wives Tale (1300 E Burnside St., demolished) and the all-ages gay club The City Nightclub (first at 624 SW 13th Ave.) "in response to a concern that they 'hadn't been reaching the kids who go to the City.'"[315]

Though commercial venues such as bars, restaurants, and stores, were prominent spaces to find other LGBTQ+ Portlanders, schools, places of worship, community centers, parks, and private residents also became important socializing spaces. Throughout the 20th century, these places served as alternatives for young people, people with limited financial resources, people of color, and other LGBTQ+ Portlanders who were ostracized from mainstream places.

---

[312] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (University of California Press, 2007), 12-13.

[313] Several scholars have pointed to the historical and contemporary realities of LGBTQ+ people, and those most historically excluded within LGBTQ+ populations, to retain physical spaces. See Gwen Shockey and Karen Loew, "Photo-documenting the Lost Landscape of Lesbian Nightclubs in New York City," *Change Over Time* 8, no 2 (2018): 186 – 205; Jen Jack Gieseking, "Mapping Lesbian and Queer Lines of Desire: Constellations of Queer Urban Space," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38, no. 5 (2020).

[314] The bookstore was first located at 706 SE Grand Avenue and relocated several times during its operating history (1973-1990) due to loss of lease and growth of inventory. Associated properties include 1300 SW Washington (1975-1980), 2349 SE Ankeny Street (1980-1985), and 1441 NE Broadway (1985-1990).

[315] W.C. McCrea, "Where are we to go?," *Just Out,* October 1, 1985, 8. Additional youth spaces are discussed throughout this theme and "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing."

Drinking and Dining

Drinking and dining establishments served as some of the earliest gathering spaces for LGBTQ+ Portlanders, especially following the 1933 repeal of national anti-liquor laws.[316] Gay bars functioned as a "public closet: a place to hide, to create worlds . . . in a secure environment" surrounded by individuals authentically expressing themselves outside the confines of hetero-and cisnormativity.[317] These venues served as a cornerstone of Portland's queer social life by offering a level of safety, opportunities for entertainment, and social connection.

> **It was the summer of 1949 that I went to my first gay bar. It was an exciting experience as I was not quite 21 and gay bars were secret places in those days. Bars were where most gays went to meet people . . .**
>
> — Portlander Duane Frye reflecting on Portland's 1950s' gay bars, 1998 [318]

> **. . . If you wanted to go to meet people . . . you went to the bar or the underage club.**
>
> — Portlander Kimberlee Van Patten reflecting on gay bars, 2009 [319]

Coffeehouses, Cafés, and Restaurants

Coffeehouses, cafés, and restaurants for LGBTQ+ Portlanders date back at least to the first decade of the 20th century, exemplified by venues like the Hotel Belvedere's Louvre Café (formerly SW 4th Ave and SW Alder St., demolished) and the Rainbow Grill (720 SW Washington St., Morgan Building), owned by Theodore Kruse. Community historian George Painter described the Louvre as an elegant, "gay owned and heavily gay patronized" venue.[320] LGBTQ+ Portlanders may have found connections in the café's "Gent's Dining Room," an exclusive men's space reflecting contemporary societal constructions of gender segregated spaces that fostered homosocial and homosexual interactions.[321] Despite its popularity, the Louvre closed shortly after "Vice Clique" trials in 1912 and 1913 illuminated its homosexual associations.[322]

---

316 John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (University of Chicago Press, 1983), 33. For additional information on Prohibition repeal, see NCC Staff, "Five Interesting facts about Prohibition's end in 1933," Blog, National Constitution Center, December 5, 2022, https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/five-interesting-facts-about-prohibitions-end-in-1933.

317 Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (William Morrow & Co., 1997), 17.

318 Duane Frye, "Portland Gay Bars in the '50s and '60s," *Just Out,* June 19, 1998, 66.

319 Oral history interview with Kimberlee Van Patten, by Katie Horton and Amy Sherwood, SR 11291, Oregon Historical Society Research Library. To see one comment discussing alternatives to bars, see McGee, "Community doesn't need bars," Just Out, February 1, 1985, 3.

320 George Painter, "The Louvre Restaurant," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6080louvre.html?query=rainbow%20grill&case=&whole=&phrase=.

321 Individuals connected to the "Vice Clique" mentioned it as a regular spot for gay men during the 1912-1913 trials. Violinist Janci Rigo, also arrested in 1912, regularly played at the venue. Ibid.

322 For additional information on the "Vice Clique," see "Early Portland LGBTQ+ Networks, 1905-1930s," and the theme "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing" and "LGBTQ+ Health."

In its wake, Kruse opened the Rainbow Grill on October 2, 1913.[323] It garnered quick acclaim as "the most unique grill 'on the Pacific coast'" for its atmosphere, dining, and latest kitchen equipment. Days after its opening, *The Oregonian* lauded the "dozen or more ornamental pillars [covered by] panels of ornamental glass perfectly tinted with the seven delicate colors of the rainbow . . . a reflection of these rainbow lights in every direction."[324] It also featured a gentlemen-only dining room, but never reached sufficient patronage to sustain it; by June 15, 1915, Kruse "turned off the brilliant lights that gave the Rainbow its name and announced it would not reopen" due to its financial difficulties.[325]

By the mid-20th century, new coffeehouses, cafés, and restaurants served as vital alternative third spaces for individuals uninterested in or unable to participate in the bar and club scenes, such as sober LGBTQ+ Portlanders and LGBTQ+ youth who were barred from alcohol-serving establishments. In 1970, Wilkinson promoted Centenary-Wilbur's Ninth Street Exit Coffeehouse as an LGBTQ+-friendly establishment where "no drugs go inside and no liquor goes inside."[326] Despite this rule, Portlander Rose Bond recalled GLF's meetings in the early 1970s as "party night at the coffeehouse."[327] Along with GLF's 1970 summer meetings, a Gay Liberation for Women group utilized the space on Tuesday nights; Holly Hart remembered herself and "other people that were . . . running up and down the stairs, being at the [National Organization for Women, NOW] meeting and then running down the stairs and seeing how the coffeehouse [with Gay Liberation for women] was going."[328]

Several other LGBTQ+-friendly and owned coffeehouses emerged before or around the same time as Ninth Street Exit. One notable example was Walter Cole Sr.'s Caffe Espresso (formerly located on SW 6th Ave. and SW Harrison St., demolished), which he acquired in 1957.[329] Initially characterized as a "mundane little coffeehouse catering to the college crowd," Cole Sr. revolutionized Caffe Espresso's ambiance, ultimately shaping it into what could be considered "the longest-standing and most influential" privately owned coffeehouse in Portland during the transition from the beatnik to the hippie eras.[330] By 1967, coffeehouses proliferated; most were hosted by churches and college ministries who attempted to provide spaces for musicians, students, youth, and more.[331] The Agora Coffeehouse in the basement of the Koinonia House on the Portland State University campus (633 SW Montgomery St., currently Campus Public Safety) and First Unitarian Church's (1011 SW 12th Ave.) basement Charix Coffee House (entrance at 1216 SW Salmon St.) swiftly grew in popularity among hippies and "alienated" youth, many of whom

[323] "Rainbow Grill is Open," *The Morning Oregonian*, October 3, 1913, 2.; "Rainbow Grill Outdoes Nature in its Decorative Beauties," *The Morning Oregonian,* October 5, 1913, 74.; Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."
[324] Ibid.
[325] "Rainbow Grill Closes," *Oregonian,* June 15, 1915,11.
[326] Cowan, "OregonScape: Fall 202 Issue 121:3."
[327] Rose Bond, quoted in 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): 34-57.
[328] Oral history interview with Holly Hart.
[329] Brown, "Music on the Cusp."
[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.

probably "did not fit into mainstream society's expectations in one way or another."[332] Both Agora and Charix, however, closed their doors in 1970.[333]

A new wave of LGBTQ+ coffeehouses and cafes emerged on the heels of Agora, and Charix in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Many emerged during the 1970s feminist movement; McGill University professor Alex Ketchum illuminates in *Ingredients for Revolution: A History of American Feminist Restaurants, Cafés, and Coffeehouses* how feminist dining establishments nationwide "challenged the status quo around cooking and consumption through the creation of feminist food . . . [which] revolved around vegetarian ethics, labor issues, cost, and the sourcing of products."[334] Writer Leo Kirts summarizes further that places did not "assimilate into mainstream society, [instead] they insulated hyper-local economies by hiring from within their communities when possible, looking for ways to employ tradeswomen and support artists work."[335] Portland's Mountain Moving Café (SE Caesar Chavez Blvd. and SE Stark St., demolished), was one such feminist dining place debuting in 1974 with a clear "political vision to make a center for all of the different groups, movement groups, and alternative groups."[336] The café was in an "old, big paint store" renovated "all from scratch."[337]

> **It was a big place. We had a stage, cause it was really centered around performance, though it's hard to even put in words cause there just aren't places like this. Every night of the week we would have a different event. So, we had a calendar with thirty events in a month . . . Every Wednesday night we'd have women's night, so we had a women's only night which was quite radical . . . And people met each other there . . . some of the collective members were lesbians, some gay men, and some straight men . . . we had all kinds of people . . . it was more, I would say, a radical coffeehouse than a gay coffeehouse.**
>
> — Ellen Goldberg, co-founder of Mountain Moving Cafe, describing the café [338]

Influenced by Mountain Moving Café's ethos, Old Wives Tale (1300 E Burnside St., demolished) set out to accommodate diverse Portlanders by offering "different things to different people."[339] This inclusive vision

---

[332] Ellen Brooks, "They Go to Charix," *The Oregonian,* February 25, 1968,131.; Molly Grothaus, "Koinonia Offers Friendship and Community," *Oregon Journal,* May 1, 1970, 17.; Dirk, "There is No Place in the City."

[333] Police targeted theses coffeehouse for supposed drug distribution and other criminal activity. See "Charix Quits, Hits Police," *Oregon Journal*, March 11, 1970, 4M.; William Sanderson, "Church Closes Charix, Teenage Coffee House, For Fear Of 'Imminent' Police Raid," *Oregonian,* March 13, 1970, 18.

[334] Alex Ketchum, *Ingredients for Revolution: A History of American Feminist Restaurants, Cafes, and Coffeehouses,* quoted in Leo Kirts, "Inside the Historic Lesbian Cafes That Fed the Feminist Movement," Tender, Them, November 22, 2023, https://www.them.us/story/historic-lesbian-cafes-ingredients-for-revolution-tender.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Oral history interview with Ellen Goldberg, by Annica Eagle and Spencer Trueax, SR 11235, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid.

[339] Oral history interview with Holly Hart.

encompassed amenities such as a playroom for children, a nutritious menu, and a meeting room. Founder and owner Holly Hart strongly emphasized fostering community, evident in features like a community bulletin board at the entrance and local publications free of charge.[340] The restaurant quickly evolved into a central hub for various groups, especially LGBTQ+ groups. Lesbian organizations like the Lesbian Caucus, the Lesbian Forum, the Friends of Gertrude and Alice, and Women with Women and Children were prominent clientele as the restaurant and these social groups provided a "place for lesbians" to become politically active, share information, and connect.[341] Additionally, queer youth group Windfire and the Bisexual Exploration Group regularly met at Old Wives Tale.[342]

Opened initially in 1977, Roxy Heart's (1121 SW Harvey Milk St, also Roxy Heart's Memorial Diner and later The Roxy) was a 24-hour restaurant deeply intertwined with LGBTQ+ Portlanders. Many considered Roxy Heart's to be "the" restaurant in the LGBTQ+ district south of W Burnside Street along SW Harvey Milk Street. Though it closed for a period between 1988 and 1993 (and was resurrected as The Roxy between 1994 and 2022), the restaurant was as a cherished institution known for its warm atmosphere and comforting food.[343]

In the late 1980s, Portland witnessed the emergence of new lesbian-owned cafés, which quickly became cherished additions to the city's lesbian venues and vibrant dining scene. Notable among these establishments were Olivia's (1033 NW 16th Ave., also known as the Olivia Café), Café Mocha (4108 NE Sandy Blvd.), and Cup and Saucer (3566 SE Hawthorne Blvd., later 1001 SW 10th Ave.). Olivia's, named initially Rubyshoes Café, operated within the premises of the lesbian bar, the Primary Domain, from 1986 to 1989.[344] Café Mocha, founded by Renée LaChance and La Verne Lewis in 1988, aimed to be a space where LGBTQ+ Portlanders could "dance and have all of the elements except the alcohol."[345] That same year, longtime Oregonian Karen Harding, who had previously owned an expresso cart around Portland State University, purchased Cup and Saucer and created "a neighborhood oasis."[346]

Lesbian Bars

Reflecting on Portland's bars in 1998, Renée LaChance poignantly stated "lesbian bars were the only places I knew of where I could find others like me."[347] Many bars were "considered lesbian because they

[340] Ibid.
[341] Friends of Gertrude and Alice, from Gay and Lesbian periodicals Collection, 1970 – 2008, Oregon Historical Society, Mss 2988-7.
[342] For examples, see Out About Town, *Just Out*, September 14, 1984, 8.; Out About Town, *Just Out*, December 1, 1988, 17.
[343] Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People*, 214.; Tom Stevenson, "She's De-Lovely," *Just Out,* October 5, 2001, 15.; John Notarianni, "Remembering The Roxy, Portland's 24-Hour, LGBTQ-friendly diner," Oregon Public Broadcasting, March 26, 2022, https://www.opb.org/article/2022/03/26/remembering-the-roxy-portlands-24-hour-lgbtq-friendly-diner/.
[344] Ad, *Just Out,* July 1,1988,16.
[345] Renée LaChance, "Access no longer denied," *Just Out,* April 17, 1998, 3.; Anndee Hochman, "La Verne Lewis: Business Woman Escaping the Rules," *Just Out,* April 1, 1990, 13.;
[346] Anndee Hochman, "Karen Harding: Learning on the Job," *Just Out,* December 1, 1989, 19.; Anndee Hochman, "Snap Shots of Diversity: The Years in Profiles," *Just Out,* June 1, 1990, 19.; Ad, *Just Out,* May 1, 1991, 18.
[347] LaChance, "Cheers for Queers."

were willing to serve gay women, not necessarily because everyone who drank there" identified as a lesbian.[348] Thus, throughout the 20th century, particularly between the 1940s and 1960s, a range of bars catered to Portland's diverse lesbian population. For example, in 1949, undercover police officers from the Women's Protection Division surveilled the popular Music Hall (413 SW 10th Ave., demolished) and mentioned in their report that they "observed several women, who were, apparently, what we were looking for."[349] Other undercover operation reports also mentioned that three blocks away, the Buick Café (1239 SW Washington St., demolished) served as a popular afterhours space for women to "pick up [other women] and make lovers of them."[350] Nearby, Edna Jordal's Milwaukie Tavern (1535 W Burnside St., now 20 NW 16th Ave.), operated between 1963 and 1964 and was entirely staffed by women. While these venues became principally popular among middle-class lesbians, several working-class lesbian bars also operated. "From its opening [in 1959], The Transfusion Inn (1139 SW 1st Ave., demolished) was a working-class lesbian bar" and The Harbor Club, already a notorious LGBTQ+ bar and working-class venue, "attracted a significant lesbian crowd . . . [Portlander] Pat Ware remember[ed] hanging out [there] in the early 1960s" with lesbians.[351]

Bartenders, such as Portland's "notorious and charismatic" Jay "Papa" Scott, played important roles in building these lesbian bars. Scott, who was described as "an old school dyke . . . always in a suit and tie," worked in several downtown Portland bars, including the Transfusion Inn, the Cartwheel Tavern (1223 SW 5th Ave.), the Old Glory Tavern, Model Inn, and Demas Tavern.[352] Scott developed a "fanbase" among many Portland lesbians, who followed her around as she changed jobs among these bars, subsequently transforming them into lesbian bars. Reportedly, the "Model Inn became colloquially known as 'Scotties' among" these women.[353]

By the 1970s, the women's movement and gay liberation movement advanced lesbian cultural and spatial production.[354] Lesbian bars including Other Side of Midnight (426 SE Hawthorne), Rising Moon (413 W Burnside), Club Northwest (217 NW 4th Ave.), Primary Domain (1033 NW 16th Ave.), Judy's (1441 NE

[348] Socio-economic statuses of and expectations for most women contributed to the lack of single-demographic venues throughout the 20th century; specifically, "queer women have lacked the institutional resources and financial capital" to open and operate venues. See Nicole Pasulka, "The History of Lesbian Bars," Identity, Vice, August 17, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-history-of-lesbian-bars/#:~:text=In%20smaller%20cities%2C%20bars%20were,Johns%20and%20other%20butch%20dykes.; Shockey and Loew, "Photo-Documenting the Lost Landscape of Lesbian Nightclubs in New York City."

[349] Council Documents, Item no. 1117, March 16, 1950, City of Portland Archives and Records Center.

[350] Elizabeth Moorad to Chief Pray, City Council Minutes Attachments, February 14, 1950, City of Portland Archives and Records Center. Scholar Jayden Dirk's "In a Garden of Deviant Roses: Encountering Queer History in Portland, Oregon, 1941-1974" finds that beyond these brief mentions and a job advertisement, "the historical record is particularly silent regarding the Buick Café." Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 57.

[351] Dirk, "In a Garden of Deviant Roses," 52.; Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."

[352] Ibid, 53.; Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," 27.

[353] Ibid.; Letter from Barbara to the Daughters of Bilitis, October 18, 1963, MS Phyllis Lyon, Del Martin and the Daughters of Bilitis Collection, "H, Correspondence - The Ladder Daughters of Bilitis National," GASG, http://tinyurl.gale.com/tinyurl/CGBLz2, 2

[354] Heather Murray, "Free for All Lesbians: Lesbian Cultural Production and Consumption in the United States during the 1970s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 16, no. 2 (May 2007): 251 – 275.

Broadway), Club 927 (927 SE Morrison), and the Egyptian Club (3701 SE Division St.) operated for various lengths and catered to diverse lesbian demographics.[355] Nonetheless, these bars furnished important socializing functions for Portland women: in the 1970s, Club Northwest and Rising Moon sponsored softball and volleyball teams; Portland's women's band The Dyketones were among the many bands, "musicians, and actors in the community [who found] a forum for their talents" at Judy's bar between 1983 and 1985; Primary Domain's opening in 1985 was an exciting new "haven" in the city with a dining room area that quickly became a networking center, hosting the 2nd annual Portland Leather women's contest, and much more in the late 1980s.[356]

Despite the popularity of Portland's lesbian bars in the late 20th century, LaChance somberly summarized that "women's bar community is ever changing . . . [with bars] unable to support [themselves]."[357] By 1994, there were approximately 4 specifically lesbian bars compared to the previous decade's.

Dance Clubs

Dance clubs' dance floor with high-tech sound systems distinguish them from mere bar venues. A prime example was Steve Suss' establishment the Rafters (737 SW Park Ave.), which debuted on November 8, 1975 and was located above Suss' existing bar, Embers Lounge (739 SW Park Ave.).[358] Rafters was touted in local gay newspaper *Northwest Gay Review* as "Portland's largest discotheque bar" with "three dance floors on three levels."[359] "Another unique feature of the Rafters [were] the large picture windows overlooking the street and adjoining businesses below. It [gave] an open feeling."[360] Suss' ownership and operation of these two spaces gave LGBTQ+ Portlanders multiple environments tailored with "gay people in mind, by gay people, constructed by gay people, and enjoyed by gay people."[361]

The Rafters reflected growing national popularity in disco and the discotheque as a venue form. Educator Destiny Clarke summarizes in "The History of Disco" that disco "arose from the underground dance clubs of New York. It was a creation of the Black, Latine [sic], and LGBTQ+ communities who found solace in the music and dancing that took place in these clubs."[362] Disco dance clubs provided space for queer people to openly express themselves, dance, and connect with each other.

---

[355] For instance, the Rising Moon catered to a "motorcycle dyke" crowd while Primary Domain was described as breaking the "tradition [of bars being dark and dingy] with lighting that is bright and flattering." LaChance, "Cheers for Queers."; Renée LaChance, "Editorial," *Just Out,* January 1, 1985, 3.

[356] "Out of the Closets and Into the Gym," *The Fountain,* December 1972. Sports are further discussed under "Queer Arts and Entertainment." Also see Ibid.; Out About Town, *Just Out,* January 1, 1987,15, and various dates.

[357] LaChance, "Cheers for Queers."

[358] "The Rafters- Once Upon a Bar," *Northwest Gay Review*, December 1975, 14-15.

[359] Rafters featured such a large dance due to its former use as a billiards hall. Ibid.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Destine Clarke, "The History of Disco: How Music Fueled a Cultural Revolution," Closeted History, https://www.closetedhistory.com/episodes/08-the-history-of-disco-how-music-fueled-a-cultural-revolution.

Many Portland dance clubs provided crucial safe spaces for queer youth and several all-ages clubs operated between the 1970s and 1990s as the lack of "a place to 'do their own thing'" in the early 1970s inspired LGBTQ+ youth to organize themselves and their own social spaces.[363] A youth branch of LGBTQ+ organization Second Foundation of Oregon hosted a 1973 Halloween Ball in the Pythian Building (918 SW Yamhill Street) as the "first youth-exclusive space for queer teenagers in Portland."[364] The event influenced Portland Youth Alliance (PYA) to develop in 1974 as a separate organization from the Second Foundation. PYA opened their club, Stairs Down, in the basement of the East Side Commercial Building (615 SE Alder St.); the "spacious" teen club provided music, dancing, and refreshments for youth.[365] By May 1974, amenities expanded to include a "drop-in center, counseling center, social services, [and] rental space" and signaled the growth of the city's "Only Youth Nite Club" to a well-rounded youth center.[366] It was for a time the "only gathering place open to gay people under the age of 21" where "queer youth could be themselves with other queer youth."[367] Despite its large membership in early 1974, PYA struggled with finances, resulting in the group's dissolution and the Stairs Down's closure after just eight months.[368]

New youth groups and venues surfaced to fill PYA's void. On June 25 and 26, 1976, the Eastwood Community Church Cooperative Center (4620 SE 67th Ave.) celebrated its grand opening of an all-ages "facility for gay people in Portland," Epicenter.[369] A year later, Portland activist Lanny Swerdlow launched his decades long endeavor of owning and operating several youth clubs starting with Mildred's Palace on the second floor of the Pythian Building. Between June 24, 1977, and 1979, "queer young people attended in droves."[370] However, Mildred's suffered from lease negotiations that forced the club to relocate to 316 W Burnside Street (currently Dante's) and later rename to Metropolis (also known as the Met).[371]

Swerdlow's The City Nightclub (first at 624 SW Park Ave., last at 13 NW 13th Ave.) gained acclaim as the "longest-lived and most notorious" Portland youth venue between 1983 and 1997.[372] Dancing, stage shows featuring drag performances and musicians, and live filming of a cable-access television show called *NightScene* enabled Portland's queer youth to express themselves creatively and forge connections.[373] Various queer youth emphasized The City's significance in a 1996 MTV Documentary,

[363] "Under 21," *The Fountain,* May 1971, 10.; Ron, letter, *The Fountain,* July 1971.
[364] Dirk, "There is No Place in the City."
[365] "The Stairs Down," *Northwest Gay Review,* February 1974, 8.
[366] Ad, *Northwest Gay Review,* May 1974, 14.
[367] "The Stairs Down."; Dirk, "There's No Place in the City."
[368] "Youth Center Closes," *Northwest Gay Review,* October 1974, 13.
[369] "New Youth Center Opens," *Northwest Gay Review*, May-June 1976.
[370] Robin Will, "Portland's Legendary Youth Clubs, 1977-1998: Mildred's Palace, Metropolis, The City, Rage," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated August 19, 2018, https://www.glapn.org/6058CityNightclub.html.
[371] Don Horn, "Metropolis/ Mildred's Palace/ Metro-Metropolis," Youth, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/metropolis/mildreds-palace/metro-metropolis.
[372] Will, "Portland's Legendary Youth Clubs."
[373] *NightScene* is further discussed in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment."

including Portlander Lady O who shared "it's a place that I can let go, where I can express myself."[374] Recognizing this venue's popularity with diverse LGBTQ+ Portlanders, the youth group Windfire met at the club to expand its outreach and membership.[375] Unfortunately, The City Nightclub closed in 1997 as a result of law enforcement and political scrutiny.[376]

By the late 20th century, some LGBTQ+ dance clubs adapted to the ever-shifting night life. Code Blue epitomized the trend of mobility; it offered "Portland's only moveable dance bar" exclusively on Friday and Saturday nights following its debut on October 4, 1991 at Pine Street Theatre (221 SE 9th Ave.).[377] Code Blue promised a lively party atmosphere every weekend while marketing a "safer and more discreet" environment.[378] Queer Night, a Monday night all-ages extravaganza at La Luna within the former Centenary-Wilbur space, also embodied Portland's ephemeral club and dance scene with once a week dance nights. Founded in 1993, Queer Night was "an invigorating alternative to Portland's typical top 40 club fare" with a wide diversity of Portlanders inhabiting the building's second floor.[379] With a sliding scale and benefit drag parties, La Luna's queer nights raised "money for the community and create[d] an alternative space" important to all.[380]

Drag Bars

Gender impersonators and drag entertainers performed across theater stages and in venue halls in the early decades of the 20th century; by the 1960s, drag bars materialized in response to increasing needs for socializing venues during heightened scrutiny and contempt for queer individuals. Indigenous drag performer Tina Sandell/Jerry Farris regularly performed at Club Northwest (217 NW 4th Ave.) while lip-synch performers were weekly features of Dahl & Penne's "Sunday Mass" held in the backroom dubbed the Royal Flush Room.[381] Drag performer Irvina I/Irving Lambert reflected after the bar's 1983 demolition it was a "place . . . never [to] forget. . ."[382]

> **. . . [It] was [a] home away from home . . . It was Portland's first gay living room . . . D & P's back room run by the one and only Vanessa. It was the stage**

[374] Cleopatraproductions1, "The City Nightclub Documentary 1996 from MTV," YouTube, 4:21, October 1, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-y0dErbJHPg.
[375] W.C. McCrae, "Where Are We to Go?: The Dilemma of Being Young in Portland," *Just Out,* October 1, 1985, 8.
[376] Swerdlow's clubs had a history of being raided and clientele arrested and is discussed in the theme, "LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing." Also see Inga Sorensen, "A Tale of Two 'Citys,'" *Just Out*, June 7, 1996, 21.; Marjorie Skinner, "Last Night in the City: A Reunion for Portland's Legendary Nightclub," Portland Mercury, August 27, 2014, https://www.portlandmercury.com/music/2014/08/27/13398621/last-night-in-the-city.; Matthew Singer, "In the City: The Story of Portland's original all-ages gay nightclub," Willamette Week August 26, 2014, https://www.wweek.com/portland/article-22975-in-the-city.html.
[377] Ad, *Alternative Connection,* October 1992.
[378] Ibid.; "New Women's Bar to Open in Portland," *Alternative Connection,* October 1991.
[379] Grace Pastine, "Putting the Lights Out on Queer Night," *Just Out,* June 19, 1998, 9.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Donnie with Walter W Cole / Darcelle, Kristen Minor, *From Demas to Darcelles: The History of the Demas Tavern to Darcelle XV Showplace,* 110-111.; Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," 37.
[382] Irving Lambert, "Memories of Dahl and Penne," *Just Out*, June 19, 1998, 20.

> **that made some great stars . . . Sunday brunch at D & P's was the place to be. . . On many of those Sunday afternoons Emperors and Empresses were made or talked about as well as Kings and Queens . . .**
>
> — Irvina I, Imperial Queen Grand Mama to the Ebony Promise of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon/Irving Lambert, reflecting on Dahl and Penne, 1998 [383]

Demas Tavern distinguished itself from these other venues as drag performances took center stage and became the bar's focus beginning in 1969.[384] Walter Cole Sr. had purchased the tavern two years prior and his journey into impersonation performances in 1968 alongside Tina Sandel eventually evolved into the iconic drag persona, Darcelle.[385] Cole Sr.'s significant other, Roxy/Roc Neuhardt, encouraged the tavern to transform to have something similar to Portland's Hoyt Hotel (formerly at NW 11th Ave. and Hoyt, demolished) or San Francisco's LGBTQ+ bar Finocchio with Vegas-style floor shows.[386] As a result, tables were rearranged to create an impromptu stage, a slide projector served as a make-shift spotlight, and a "changing room was rigged up behind a curtain hung on a wire."[387] By 1970, San Francisco LGBTQ+ publication *Vector* recognized Demas Tavern as a "Portland Greenwich Village," which marked a significant milestone in Portland's LGBTQ+ spaces gaining visibility among other prominent LGBTQ+ cities.[388] With Roxy choreographing performances, by 1972 the budding ensemble transformed Demas Tavern into the "only drag venue in Oregon to offer a professionally produced weekly show."[389]

While Darcelle transformed Demas Tavern/Darclle XV into one of the most prolific spaces for Portland drag, additional Portland venues flourished. Significantly, all ages youth venues like Mildred's Palace and The City Nightclub diversified the drag scene beyond bars by hosting events of the youth drag court Rosebud & Thorn throughout the late 20th century.[390] By the late 1980s and early 1990s, bars like JR's West and Embers Avenue regularly hosted drag benefit shows and events, reflecting drag performances becoming widespread entertainment in LGBTQ+ bars.

Retail

Retail establishments associated with LGBTQ+ Portlanders, whether LGBTQ+-owned or LGBTQ+-friendly, have played a significant role as third spaces offering welcoming shopping environments and diverse

---

[383] Ibid.; Donnie, et al., *From Demas to Darcelles,* 114.

[384] Demas Tavern is further discussed in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment."

[385] Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," 34- 35. Also see Donnie, et. al, *From Demas to Darcelles*, starting at page 117 for Cole's description on how Darcelle as a drag persona developed.

[386] Roxy worked at the Hoyt, and Darcelle and Roxy became friends with Hoyt Hotel entertainer Gracie Hansen. Donnie, et. al, *From Demas to Darcelles*. For additional history on the Hoyt Hotel, see Dan Haneckow, "Hoyt Hotel," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last updated August 19, 2022, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hoyt_hotel/#:~:text=Opened%20in%20May%201912%20to%20serve%20the,the%20Oregon%20Journal%20reported%2C%20%E2%80%9Cwith%20modest%20prices.

[387] The evolution of Demas Tavern/Darcelle XV Showplace's interior is further discussed in Minor and Horn, "Darcelle XV," starting on page 6.

[388] "City of Roses," *Vector*, November 1969, 48. Ibid, 28.

[389] Ibid, 29.

[390] Patrick Collins, "Prickly Pairs," *Just Out,* March 6, 1998, 7.; "Rosebud and Thorn," *Just Out,* March 3, 1993, 24.

products since the early 1900s.[391] For example, community historians suggest a cigar store (formerly 295 SW Morrison Street, demolished before the parcel was readdressed in 1931) operated by Portlanders Alonzo E. Ream and Hilton R. Macbeth between 1898 and 1900 potentially served as a meeting place for gay men, given the contemporary social norms surrounding cigars as predominantly masculine products and Ream's later connection to the "Vice Clique."[392] David Del Meagher, another individual implicated in the "Vice Clique," worked at downtown store (exact address unknown) and provided clothing to be used in local drag parties.[393] As decades passed, LGBTQ+ Portlanders increasingly managed, founded, and assumed ownership of various retail establishments, cementing their presence and influence within the city's commercial landscape.

During the 1970s, bookstores emerged as a prominent retail option catering to and often operated by LGBTQ+ Portlanders. They offered invaluable resources on LGBTQ+ life, sold unique and specialized products, and served as community hubs. A pivotal moment came in 1972 with the opening of Random Strands (933 SW Stark St.): it proudly positioned itself as the "all gay . . . bookstore" in local press and boasted a diverse array of books, films, novelties, and an arcade located next door LGBTQ+ bar Riptide Lounge (949 SW Stark St., demolished).[394]

In 1973, A Woman's Place Bookstore (first at 706 SE Grand Ave.) debuted, founded on providing "a space that is defined as a woman's place."[395] The bookstore stocked literature, albums, tapes, and cards by and about women. By 1988, the bookstore advertised its evolution into "much more than a bookstore," now offering a multifaceted community center featuring a "lending library . . . community resource area, a children's space, a space to meet friends old and new, and a place to network."[396] Furthermore, its bulletin board, referral files, phone hotline, and store newsletter, *Rag Times* (previously *A Woman's Place Newsletter* and *A Woman's Place Newspaper*), provided a wealth of resources, including the largest selection of lesbian literature, and invaluable access to information on Portland's feminist and lesbian cultures. Despite the store's position as a prominent lesbian feminist bookstore in the city, A Woman's Place Bookstore closed in 1990, citing various challenges such as escalating rent, inventory shortages, declining sales, and waning engagement.[397]

---

[391] Additional stores are discussed in the theme "Queer Intimacies."
[392] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."
[393] Ibid.
[394] Other Portland adult bookstores like Scorpio's Adult Bookstore (209 SW Taylor St.), for instance, advertised the "largest gay assortment in the Gay N.W," though it was not "all gay" as Random Strands promoted. See Ad, *The Fountain*, December 1972.; Ad for Random Strands, *The Fountain*, April 1972.; Smith, "Portland After Dark: Gay Bars Hold Key for Homosexuals" 4M.
[395] "A Woman's Place," *The Fountain,* May 1973, 9.
[396] Jay Brown, "Bookstore in a crunch," *Just Out,* June 1, 1988, 5.
[397] The bookstore relocated several times, including to 1533 E Burnside St., 2349 SE Ankeny St., and 1441 NE Broadway, in pursuit of larger spaces to accommodate its expanding inventory and better serve Portlanders. See Sarah Koehl, "Woman's Place just that," *Just Out*, March 2, 1984, 2. P.M. Scott, "A New Look and a New Life for A Woman's Place Bookstore," *Just Out*, July 1, 1986, 9.; Anndee Hochman, "A Woman's Place plans to close doors," *Just Out,* June 1, 1990, 12.

Clothing and thrift stores were also popular destinations created by and catering to LGBTQ+ shoppers in the 1960s and 1970s. Helen's Pacific Costumers (1036 W Burnside St., currently Buffalo Exchange) was a popular store for "nearly everyone needing outfits for drag" according to community historian David Grant Kohl.[398] In 1968, Portlander Jeanie Breal opened Jelly Bean Clothing Store (initially at 802 SW 10th Ave., also known as Jelly Bean and later the Store) and featured Rose Empress Scarlet O'Hara in its advertisements.[399] LGBTQ+ political organization Portland Town Council (PTC) launched the Portland Thrift Center (at 4611 SE Hawthorne Blvd. and SE 26th Ave. and SE Clinton St.) in April 1977 "for the benefits of the gay community."[400] PTC would later evolve into Portland's LGBTQ+ counseling center Phoenix Rising, which opened and managed the thrift store Out of the Closet (2875 SE Stark St.) starting in 1986.[401] Drawing inspiration from the Portland Thrift Center and a San Francisco thrift store, Out of the Closet aimed to benefit LGBTQ+ Portlanders by allocating proceeds to local LGBTQ+ non-profits.[402] Between 1982 and 1986, Breal co-owned the clothing store Forward Gear (1023 SW Yamhill St.) with Peter Rinearson and Sanford Director to offer new, fashionable clothing options.[403]

LGBTQ+-owned businesses growing in Portland and nationwide influenced the formation of LGBTQ+ business associations, the earliest in San Francisco.[404] In 1992, Portlanders Fred R. Elledge, Deborah Betron, and Rick Schmidt co-founded the Portland Area Business Association (PABA) to "increase visibility and business opportunities" for LGBTQ+ Portlanders.[405] LGBTQ+ "businesspeople in Oregon have largely gone unrecognized by both our own community and the community at large. We're now finding our place in the sun thanks to PABA," Schmidt stressed three years after its founding.[406] Monthly luncheons with guest speakers were held at downtown's Marriott Hotel (1401 SW Naito Pkwy), with additional meetings at PABA members' workplaces.[407]

By the 1980s and 1990s, various advertisements across Portland's LGBTQ+ newspapers from non-LGBTQ+ owned businesses reflected upward numbers of Portland businesses promoting themselves as LGBTQ+-friendly. This practice was important for companies not yet strongly associated with queer clients as they increasingly recognized queer consumer power and attempted to market specifically to queer

[398] Kohl, "Hiking 'The Camp': An Annotated Walk Through Time."
[399] Ad, *The Fountain,* February 1972.; Don Horn, "Jelly Bean Clothing Store," Retail, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/jelly-bean-clothing-store.
[400] The thrift center relocated by December 1977 to 4611 SE Hawthorne Boulevard. See *Gay Rights '77*, March 1976, April 1977.
[401] "Out of the Closet Opens," *Just Out,* May 1, 1986, 7.; "Resources: A Random Sample," *Just Out,* June 1, 1987, 36.
[402] Ibid.; "'Out of the Closet' pays off," *Just Out,* August 1, 1986, 7.
[403] Don Horn, "Forward Gear," Retail, The Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/forward-gear-1.
[404] Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,*132.
[405] Out on Broadway was another LGBTQ+ business organization, though formed outside of this document's study period. Out on Broadway founder Brian Marki explained that the high numbers of LGBTQ+-owned businesses specifically on NE Broadway encouraged him to organize to "network and work collectively to promote their goods and services." See "New Business Association," *Just Out,* October 1, 1992, 19.; Inga Sorensen, "Out for Business," *Just Out,* August 18, 1995, 17, 19.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Guest speakers included Col. Greta Cammermeyer, Portland mayor Vera Katz, former Police Chief Tom Potter, Gov. Barbara Roberts, and Bill Naito, to name a few.

customers.[408] Portland LGBTQ+ newspaper *Just Out* specifically sought out advertisements from queer and non-queer owned companies when it first launched in 1983 and further prompted businesses to advertise with them to ensure those "who want[ed] to make gays and lesbians welcome . . . [were] at the fingertips of 15,000 lesbian and gay consumers" who read *Just Out*.[409]

Mainstream stores and corporations using targeted marketing to LGBTQ+ customers reflected important shifts in the social and economic power and acceptance of LGBTQ+ Portlanders, particularly amidst challenges such as escalating rents that shuttered specific queer stores and evolving consumer preferences. Yet, the enduring legacy of LGBTQ+-owned and serving retail — from the early days of bookstores and thrift shops to the establishment of niche spaces like lesbian feminist bookstores — extends far beyond mere economic transactions. These establishments served as economic engines within the community while fostering cultural exchange, activism, and social connection.

Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces served as some of the first public venues for queer socializing in Portland and nationwide.[410] These spaces were especially valuable for their general open access with no financial or age barriers, thus allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to schedule events and hold informal gatherings to connect and celebrate queer life across a range of parks, streets, and sidewalks with generally few issues.[411]

Two prominent parks for LGBTQ+ connections during the 1905–1994 period were downtown's South Park Blocks (SW Park Ave. from Salmon St. to Jackson St.) and Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park (bounded by Naito Pkwy, S Harrison St, NW Gilsan St., and the Willamette River). Since the early 1970s, these parks and surrounding streets played important roles as locations for Portland's Pride rally/march/festival locations.[412] For instance, in 1975, the South Park Blocks held Portland's "first public"

---

[408] For additional analysis on LGBTQ+ marketing and economic buying power, see Katherine Sender, *Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market* (Columbia University Press, 2005).

[409] Ad, *Just Out,* April 1, 1987, 5. This practice of promoting non-LGBTQ+ businesses did not always translate to a business valuing LGBTQ+ customers. For instance, Renée LaChance recalled in 2013 that local company Alpenrose Dairy did not want their logo as part of local store Food Front advertisements published in *Just Out*, resulting in a large boycott against Alepnrose Dairy products. See Oral history interview with Renée LaChance, by Brontë Olson and Nicole Estey, 2013 February 26, SR 11364, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.; Ann Marcottee Shepherd, "Alpenrose loses another customer," *Just Out,* July 1, 1986, 4.; Marvin Moore, "Boytcott Continues," *Just Out,* August 1, 1986, 4.

[410] See the theme "Queer Intimacies" for discussion on sexual activities in outdoor spaces. See the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment" for discussion on sports in outdoor spaces.

[411] However, some parks including Portland's Lownsdale and Chapman Squares have been segregated based on gender and age. Also see Taylor, "Central Park as a Model for Social Control: Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth Century America."

[412] Pride events started in 1970 originally as Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day as a commemoration to New York City's June 1969 Stonewall Inn resistance. Quickly, the day turned into a weeklong celebration under Gay Pride Week with various events. For example, Portland's 1977 Gay Pride Week included a picnic in Laurelhurst Park on June 21st, a spaghetti feed at Zorba the Greeks (626 SW Park) on June 22nd, a disco dance at Woodcraft Hall (1410 SW Morrison) on June 24th, and the Gay Pride Fair

Pride fair with approximately 200 people in attendance.[413] LGBTQ+ activist George Nicola reflected in 2019 the significance of this event, summarizing "it was kind of amazing seeing all these people outside, because typically we're indoors."[414] By the next year, activist Kathleen Saadat was among the few Portlanders who organized the city's "first gay civil rights march" from the park blocks to Waterfront Park.[415]

> **It was just so reminiscent of the anti-war [marches] then, because there were chants: 'Two, four, six, eight. Gay is just as good as straight! Three, five, seven, nine. Lesbian is might fine!' Very, very in your face . . . it was definitely a protest in that sense. And all the speeches were kind of shouted.**
>
> — Portlander Steve Fulmer describing the first gay civil rights march, 2019 [416]

The South Park Blocks was also the location of Portland's March for Lesbian/Gay Rights on October 13, 1979, aligning with the first national March on Washington for Lesbian/Gay Rights occurring on October 14, 1979.[417] According to event organizer Portland Town Council, the Portland and Washington marchers "have been organized to strength the movement for lesbian/gay equality and to 'end all social, economic, judicial, and legal oppression of lesbian and gay people.'"[418]

By the 1980s and 1990s, Portland's Pride continued to expand and utilized Waterfront Park as the main event location. In 1984, 3,000 people attended, which was the "largest gay pride rally in Portland history," until 1988 when approximately 5,000 people attended the event as part of Lesbian/Gay Pride Month. By 1992, amidst the political battles of Ballot Measure 9, Portland Pride garnered the most media attention compared to previous years and was upgraded to parade status by the city with the longest parade route. As of 2024, Portland Pride continues at Waterfront Park as "one of the largest donation-based Pride Festivals in the United States" organized by non-profit Pride Northwest.[419]

(Waterfront Park) and march to City Hall (1221 SW 4th Ave) on June 25th. See Calendar posted by Don Horn, "Golden Awards," Awards, Umbrella Project of Oregon, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/golden-awards.

[413] Tom Cook, "Portland Lesbian/Gay Pride: Looking Back through years of Liberation Celebration," Lesbian and Gay Pride 1993 Souvenir Guide, in Gay and Lesbian History, Series B: Gay and Lesbian Community Organizations and Resources, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society.

[414] Quoted in Singer, "How a Classified Ad in an Underground Newspaper Ignited Portland's LGBTQ Rights Movement."

[415] Ibid.; "Kathleen Saadat," Queer Heroes Northwest 2012, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6327KathleenSaadat.html.

[416] Ibid.

[417] "In Support of National March, Portland candlelight March for Lesbian/gay Rights Readied," *Oregon Gay Rights Report* 5, no. 10, October 1979, 1.; "National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights," in Intelligence: Portland Town Council, Police – Historical/Archival- Historical/Archival Investigative Files, City of Portland Archives.

[418] Ibid.

[419] Pride Northwest was founded in 1994 and has organized Pride ever since. According to Pride Northwest, previous organizers urged for a "long term stable steward for Portland Pride." For an overview of various Pride organizers, and the struggles in organizing pride, see various authors, *Just Out,* June 1, 1986, 8-9.

Academic Institutions

Portland schools and universities were crucial for activists and LGBTQ+ organizations starting in the 1970s, echoing nationwide social and political organizing among students.[420] Queer students such as Portland Benson High Schooler Tim Sullivan advocated for organizations specifically designed for LGBTQ+ students considering many queer students and teachers lacked administrative support, experienced homophobia, and faced potential expulsion.[421] On Portland campuses, Gay Student Unions and similarly named organizations became increasingly common to support students, advocate for change, and organize LGBTQ+-centered events.

Despite queer student groups fracturing into multiple groups throughout the late 20th century, confronting homophobia on campus was a primary goal. At Portland State University (PSU), students sought to address entrenched homophobia and insensitivity occurring within the campus counseling center while other students protested campus plays and human sexuality courses for their negative and stereotyped portrayals of queer people in the early 1970s.[422] At Lewis and Clark College (615 S Palatine Hill Rd.), Cindy Cumfer recalled the unfriendly campus environment for queer students during her studies in the late 1970s, influencing her to co-found the Gay and Lesbian Caucus in 1975 as the first openly gay group at Lewis and Clark.[423]

An additional goal for student activists was elevating LGBTQ+ visibility as an integral part of campus identity. In 1972, the temporarily named Portland State Gay Liberation Front secured an office space in the Smith Center (1825 SW Broadway, currently Smith Memorial Student Union) and financial support from the school's Speaker Committee and Educational Activities committee to host speakers, purchase LGBTQ+ books, and organize displays.[424] PSU's spring 1973 psychology seminar taught jointly by faculty

[420] For an overview of student activism in the 1960s and 1970s, see Alaa Elassar, Nicquel Terry Ellis and Ashley R. Williams, "In Pictures: A lookback at student protest movements in the US, CNN, April 30, 2024, https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/30/us/photos-student-protest-movements-reaj/index.html. For an example of Portland student activism during the 1970s, see "Remembering May 11, 1970 and Moving Forward," History, Portland State University, https://www.pdx.edu/history/remembering-may-11-1970-and-moving-forward.

[421] After Sullivan came out and urged for a school-based organization for queer students, school officials explained they would not be able to guarantee his safety and insisted Sullivan's mother to pull him out of Benson High School in 1971. That same year, biology teacher Peggy Burton was expelled from Salem, Oregon's Cascade High School for her identity. Burton recalled "one day out of thin air with no warning I was called into the principal's office, and he said he had heard a rumor that I was a homosexual. [I replied] 'so what? What does that have to do with teaching?' . . .He fired me on the spot." Burton filed a federal civil rights suit, becoming the first queer public school teacher to do so. See Tim Sullivan, "Aftermath of High School Discharge," *The Fountain,* July 1972, 24.; Tim Sullivan, "A High School Discharge: One Year Later," *The Fountain,* June 1973, A9.; Charles Hinkle and George T. Nicola, "Peggy Burton," Queer Heroes Northwest 2012, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6316PeggyBurton.html.

[422] "PSU Gays Seek School Response," *The Fountain,* December 1972, 6.; "Gays Picket Staircase," *The Fountain,* February 1973, 3.; "PSU Gay People Confront Sexuality Class," *The Fountain,* March 1973, 11.

[423] George T. Nicola, "Cindy Cumfer: Community activism and LGBT family law," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated March 29, 2014, https://glapn.org/6025CindyCumfer.html.

[424] "PSU Gays Develop Program," *The Fountain,* January 5, 1973.

and local activists marked "the first gay studies course in the Portland area."[425] At the same time, sixteen gay Reed College students organized a branch of the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), which was renamed and reorganized as several other iterations in the years following.[426] By 1974, Reed's renamed Gay Student Union held meetings in the campus building Anna Mann as a "regular part of the Reed Community and [was] funded by the Student Activities Board," according to Reed alumni and group leader Martin Land.[427] Land recalled "The Gay Student Union held an annual party (quaintly known as a 'social,' in a learned borrowing from the upper-class preppy culture that was widely represented . . .). The Gay Social was the pinnacle of the social calendar on campus . . ." during the 1970s.[428]

College departments and local organizations sought to enliven gay culture across campuses by hosting and/or co-sponsoring events to build connections among queer students and Portlanders at large. For instance, Lewis and Clark began a Gender Symposium in 1982, with a range of national and local presenters attending; for instance, in 1993, famed LGBTQ+ historian Allan Bérubé was among the workshop leaders with "Doing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual History."[429] By the next year, PSU's School of Extended Studies sponsored Bérubé for a summer session course entitled "Queer Life and Social Change, 1900-Stonewall."[430] Bérubé's Portland courses inspired Tom Cook, Pat Young, Jeanine Wicks, and Bonnie Tinker to form an organization focused specifically on the area's LGBTQ+ history. As a result, the Oregon Queer History Collective was founded in October 1994.[431] PSU's Women's Studies program was also influential during this period; in 1986, the program and PSU's Women's Union collaborated with Portland nonprofit Lesbian Community Project to host the city's first lesbian conference entitled *Building Community: Common Ground for the Future,* at PSU's Smith Center on November 8 and 9, 1986.[432] The conference kicked off with readings from Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, a former PSU humanities and Women's studies teacher and editor of lesbian/feminist publication *Sinister Wisdom.*[433] Workshops

[425] "PSU Offers Gay Course," *The Fountain,* March 1973, 2.; "First PSU Gay Class Popular," *The Fountain,* May 1973, 2.
[426] "Reed College Gays Organize," *The Fountain,* March 1972, 2.; "Reed Gay Union Founded," *The Fountain,* November 1972, 8.
[427] Matin Land, LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Questionnaire.; See Also "Reed Gay Union Funded," *The Fountain,* November 1972, 8.
[428] Land, with Cayla McGrail, April 14, 2023, not recorded.
[429] Series II.A Professional Papers: Writings, Talks and Slide Shows, 1968-2006, undated: 'Doing Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual History,' Gender Studies Conference Talk, Portland, OR, April 1993, 1991-1993. MS Box 16, Folder 13, The Allan Berube Papers: Series II: Professional Papers. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society, San Francisco, California.; "Symposium Archive," Gender Studies Symposium, Academics, Lewis and Clark, https://college.lclark.edu/departments/gender_studies/symposium/archive/.
[430] Series II.B Professional Papers: Teaching, 1978, 1990-1999: Portland State University 'Queer Life and Socials Change' Course, Administrative Materials, Course Materials, 1994: Portland State University Course, Administrative Materials, Summer 1994. 1990-1994. MS Box 21, Folder 1, The Allan Berube Papers: Series II: Professional Papers. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society, San Francisco, California.
[431] Melinda Marie Jetté, "Through the Queer Looking-Glass: The Future of LGBTQ Public History," *The Public Historian* 41, no. 2 (2019): 6.; "A History of GLAPN," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/1007glapnhistory.html.
[432] "Lesbian Community Project Update," *Just Out,* November 1, 1986.
[433] For additional information on Kaye/Kantrowitz, see Julie R. Enszer, "Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz," The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women, The Jewish Women's Archive, Last updated June 23, 2021, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kaye-kantrowitz-melanie.

included a diversity of topics, from "Music and Lesbian Culture" to "Lesbian Moms and Co-Parenting" to "S/M- Our Fears and Fantasies."[434]

Community and Service Centers

In addition to commercial venues and campuses, community and service centers played important roles as spaces for LGBTQ+ Portlanders to connect, socialize, and get support during and after the 1970s. By the 1980s and 1980s, community centers reflected increased inclusivity, visibility, acceptance, and intersectionality in programs and services.

In 1972, the inaugural Gay Community Center (first at 258 SW Alder St., demolished) debuted under the auspices of the Second Foundation of Oregon. Transforming a former restaurant and office space above Portland's leather bar, the Other Inn (242 SW Alder St., demolished), Second Foundation boldly repurposed the space into a welcoming and inclusive hub with several amenities specifically for LGBTQ+ Portlanders.

> **. . . Main hall—used for general meetings, pool table, bar, and just sitting around. A ballroom with stage for the Friday and Saturday night dances as well as rehearsals for miscellaneous performances and the performances themselves. Just off the ballroom [was] the library which house[d] an exceedingly wide variety of books which can either be read there or taken out. Next to this [were] the Second Foundation office and counseling rooms . . . Just off here [was] the Fountain office, where all the but the printing is done for the Fountain.**
>
> — Jae, "A Look at Portland's Gay Community Center," [435]

In the Second Foundation's newspaper *The Fountain*, then-president Roy Bouse promoted the Center's ethos of "fun and games . . . for friendship and for love . . . for the Gay community."[436] The Center hosted various activities and gatherings to cultivate connections, like dances and coffeehouse hours every Friday and Saturday.[437] However, its tenure above the Other Inn was short-lived, and its relocation to the Pythian Building (918 SW Yamhill St.) in 1973 also proved temporary, evidenced by the Center's closing in 1974.[438] Consequently, Portland was without a dedicated LGBTQ+ community center for several years.[439]

---

[434] Conference Program, Special Collections and University Archives, Portland State University Library, Portland, Oregon.
[435] "A Look at Portland's Gay Community Center," quoted in Don Horn, "Portland's Gay Community Center First Location," Community Centers, The Umbrella Project, https://www.umbrellaprojectoregon.com/portlands-gay-community-center-1st-location.
[436] Roy Bouse, "Beware of Rumors," *The Fountain*, January 1973, 23.
[437] Ad, *The Fountain,* July 1972.
[438] The Second Foundation planned to "form a citywide corporation involving all of Portland's gay organizations who could financially support and make use of the buildings facilities," resulting in the Six Under Inc. Unfortunately, this failed.
[439] The Q Center (4115 N Mississippi Ave Suite D), Portland's current LGBTQ+ community center, opened in 2009.

Some community centers not initially established for LGBTQ+ Portlanders began to support LGBTQ+ programming by the late 1970s and through the 1990s. For instance, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA, 1111 SW 10th Ave.) sponsored a Women's Resource Center between 1968 and 1977 with programs, events, classes, and a job bank that were LGBTQ+-friendly.[440] In the 1980s, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center (6651 SW Capital Highway) hosted Jewish lesbian brunches, film screenings, and other lesbian events.[441]

In response to the lack of queer youth of color programming in other spaces, the Urban League of Portland (10 N Russell St.) developed Rainbow in 1994, providing a platform for queer youth of color to forge connections.[442] Urban League program specialist Dionne Fox believed Portland was the only Urban League chapter in the country to sponsor such group.[443]

I always thought of the Urban League as a place that assisted minorities and low-income people, great work like that. I never viewed it as a place that addressed issues like homosexuality.

— Dionne Fox, Urban League program specialist expressing her initial perspective of the organization, 1998 [444]

In addition to community center programs, a range of service centers provided shelter, social service support, and connections to diverse Portlanders, particularly among queer youth. Outside In, founded in 1968 by Doctor Charles Spray, Arnold Goldberg, and Mary Lu Zurcher, was one emergent youth space that "offered a variety of different resources to queer youth that were not found elsewhere in the city" such as counseling and discussion groups.[445] By the 1980s, the LGBTQ+ counseling service Phoenix Rising embodied LGBTQ+ community center (locations included 408 SW 2nd Ave., 333 SW 5th Ave., and 620 SW 5th Ave.) with social programs and retreats, setting a standard for similar services across the country.[446]

These spaces were crucial for youth, considering that throughout the 20th century "teenage homelessness was considered a crisis in Portland . . . [and] of these homeless youth, a disproportionate number of them

[440] "Diverse Resources Welcome Women," *Oregonian,* December 5, 1975, 29.; Michael Rollins, "YWCA wants people to see its 'W' right side up," *Oregonian*, January 28, 1987, 18.
[441] For example, see Out About Town, *Just Out*, November 1, 1990, 22.
[442] "Urban League begins group for sexual minority youth," *Just Out,* April 1, 1994, 13.
[443] Inga Sorensen, "Local Color," *Just Out,* February 6, 1998, 17.
[444] Ibid.
[445] Outside In was "one of the first free community health clinics in the U.S. and one of the earliest on the West Coast." It initially operated in a house on SW 13th Ave. and Salmon St., then in the basement of First Unitarian Church. Its current operations have various locations around Portland. See Outside In, "History," About Us, https://outsidein.org/about-us/history/.; Outside In, "Contact Us," About Us, https://outsidein.org/about-us/contact-us/.; Dirk, "There is No Place in the City."; "Outside In Newsletter," June 1971, Mss 1516, Box 2, Church and Social Problems Collection, Oregon Historical Society.
[446] "Phoenix Rising's on the move," *Just Out,* May 1, 1987, 5.; Ad, *Just Out,* January 1, 1988, 31.; Ad, *Just Out,* August 1, 1991, 24. Phoenix Rising is also discussed in the theme "LGBTQ+ Health."

were queer."[447] By 1992, Outside In and Phoenix Rising sponsored Voices of Individual and Community Empowerment from the Street (VOICES), the only group specific for housing insecure youth.[448]

Places of Worship

LGBTQ+ individuals participated in various religious and spiritual groups, whether while hiding their queer identities, directly confronting congregations, and/or forging connections to build affirming religious and spiritual spaces.[449] By the 1960s and 1970s, some religious and spiritual circles reflected the larger societal turn towards inclusion and increasingly affirmed diverse identities.[450] At the same time, LGBTQ+ people forged their own religious and spiritual paths by creating local and national affirming organizations, such as Rev. Troy Perry establishing the Metropolitan Community Church in 1968 as "the world's first church group with a primary, positive ministry" to LGBTQ+ individuals.[451] In Portland that year, a group of LGBTQ+ individuals met at YMCA's Parker Chapel (831 SW 6th Ave., demolished), marking one of the earliest LGBTQ+ religious gatherings in the city.[452] Despite not much else being known about this gathering, this first meeting influenced later efforts among LGBTQ+ Portlanders to organize around spiritual connections.[453]

On October 24, 1971, Portlanders gathered at Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church for the "first official meeting of the Portland Metropolitan Community Church."[454] Citing the desire "to be in the downtown area because that is where the homophile community is located," later church services were also held at Parker Chapel and Second Foundation's Gay Community Center.[455] Unfortunately, these early iterations "failed due to a variety of reasons and was replayed by Portland Community Church . . . [which] held [services] in the parlor of the Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church."[456]

---

[447] Dirk, "There is No Place in the City."; Shae Silver, "Once in a while, there's help: Problems are major for gay street youth," *Just Out,* August 1, 1990, 10. For recent statistics on LGBTQ+ housing insecurity in Portland, see LGBTQAI2s+ Housing Collaborative, Policy Paper: LGBTQAI2S+ Houselessness in the Portland Region, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b99853a365f02c7e5f464fd/t/65b7ea5eb88c5621385a77c5/1706551905917/housing3.pdf.

[448] Pamela Lyons, "Street Out Reach: VOICES honors the survival stories of queer youth who have found a home on the streets," *Just Out,* February 4, 1994, 15.

[449] Drew Bourn, ed. Megan Springate, "Struggles in Body and Spirit: Religion and LGBTQ People in US History," in *LGBTQ: America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, 21-1 – 21-51.

[450] Ibid.

[451] Rev. Troy Perry, "MCC History," About, Metropolitan Community Church, https://insidemcc.org/about-mcc/mcc-history/.

[452] Dave Kohl, "A Curious and Peculiar People: Metropolitan Community Church of Portland celebrates 30 years," *Just Out,* January 20, 2006, 20.

[453] Ibid.

[454] Dave Kohl, "A Curious and Peculiar People: Metropolitan Community Church of Portland Celebrates 30 years."; (Possibly Kohl), "Early MCC Activity," https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6324fa1d5d2c5f1d7acfce0f/t/66d0891e0c4e4c1d34cc73c5/1724942655905/Early+MCC+Activity+paper+possibly+by+David+Grant+Kohl.pdf.

[455] Ad, *Oregonian,* April 15, 1972,30.; "Church Set for City's Gay People," *Oregon Journal,* April 16, 1973, 5.

[456] Lanny Swerdlow, "A Gay Community Catalog," *Northwest Magazine,* part of *The Oregonian,* April 6, 1975, 11.

1976 marked the beginning of major transitions for Portland's MCC branch. San Franciscan Rev. Austin Amerine accepted the minister position for Portland MCC and started work on January 6, 1976; "MCC Portland now uses [this] as its founding date."[457] Under Amerine, attendance rose significantly, especially as he emphasized the importance of a social "ministry as well as a religious one . . . members who are just 'stepping out of the closet [have] a chance to meet people."[458] The growth of attendance and engagement qualified the church to be charted by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and on January 9, 1977, a charter ceremony was held at the Old Church with Perry, Darcelle, and many others in attendance.[459] Amerine also steered the purchase of a permanent location (2400 NE Broadway) in 1977. According to David Grant Kohl's *A Curious and Peculiar People: A History of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, and the Sexual Minority Communities of Northwest Oregon,* MCC Portland "became the fifth MCC congregation to purchase its own property."[460] This not only meant a stable home for the church, but also permanence and visibility; it became widely known as the "Gay Church." A permanent location also allowed MCC to host various organizations and meetings, including LGBTQ+ sobriety meetings, queer artists events like a slide show by Oregon photographer Tee Corrine and rehearsals of Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Lesbian and Gay Pride steering committee meetings in the early 1980s, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) meetings in the late 1980s, and more. During the church's 45th anniversary, Portlander Susie Shepherd concluded "that corner of NE 24th & Broadway is truly hallowed ground."[461]

From its early sessions in the 1970s, diverse Portlanders participated in MCC. Portlander Frodo Okulam explained MCC "accepts diversity in who God is . . . they will never use gender terms . . . or if they do they use both genders."[462] Within this environment, Okulam initiated the formation of a women's spirituality group, SisterSpirit, in 1985. "It's mostly Pagan; it's always been mostly Pagan," while combining diverse celebrations and traditions worshipping "the divine feminine."[463] That year, the group advertised a study group at 2804 NE 42nd Avenue and the first "meditative celebration gathering" at Echo Theater (1515 SE 37th Ave.).[464] Over the years, various meetings, potlucks, and celebrations were held across Portland, ranging from the Governor Building (408 SW 2nd Ave), Old Wives' Tale, and Forest Park (4099 NW Thurman St.).[465]

During this period of the late 20th century, additional LGBTQ+ religious organizations formed. Dignity, for instance, was a Catholic LGBTQ+ organization that met at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church (SE 12th

[457] Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People,* 87. For Amerine's background, see Kohl, 89-91.
[458] Sandra McDonough, "Church ministers to gay community," *Oregonian*, January 19, 1978, 31.
[459] Kohl explained MCC churches start as "study groups" then become "missions" before "full-fledged churches with a charter from MCC headquarters." Kohl, 89, 97. For additional information on MCC churches, see "Emerging Churches," Churches and Laity, Metropolitan Community Church, https://insidemcc.org/emerging-churches/.
[460] Kohl, 103. For a discussion on the process, see Kohl, 101.
[461] https://www.mccportland.com/anniversary-memories-and-blessings/.
[462] Oral history interview with Frodo Okulam, by Brisa Peters, SR 4149, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.
[463] Ibid.; "About Us," About, Sisterspirit, http://www.sisterspiritwomensharingspirituality.org/about.html.
[464] *Rag Times,* various ads.
[465] Various ads, *Just Out,* 1988-1994.

And Pine St.), St. Philip Neri Catholic Church (2408 SE 16th Ave.), and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (1432 SW 13th Ave.) during the 1980s and early 1990s.[466] Portlander Jerry Deas, who served as the national secretary of Dignity USA in the 1990s, explained "Dignity hasn't been welcome in church circles . . . But it does provide a bridge for individuals . . . We become the bridge between the church and the hurting Catholic."[467]

Various Portland religious spaces also served as hubs for non-spiritual groups. Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church and its basement coffeehouse was a prominent space for organizing during the 20th century; in the late 1960s Centenary-Wilbur Pastor Harper Richardson drew inspiration for progressive programming, events, and advocacy from San Francisco's Glide Memorial Methodist Church.[468] As a result, anti-war groups, Portland's National Organization for Women (NOW), a food collective, folk musicians, youth organizing, and LGBTQ+ groups heavily utilized the church building for social organizing.[469] The Second Foundation of Oregon was founded at Koinonia House (633 SW Montgomery St., currently Portland State University Campus Public Safety) before meeting at the Old Church (1422 SW 11th Ave). Westminster Presbyterian Church's Great Hall (1624 NE Hancock St.) hosted events of the Lesbian Forum, encompassing musical performances, talent shows, and panel conversations in the early 1980s.[470] In the mid-1980s, the Gay Bridge Club, a "rap and social group for young adults 18 and up" formed out of Windfire, frequently met at the First Congregational Church (1126 SW Park Ave.).[471]

Private Residences

Private residences fostered crucial, nascent LGBTQ+ connections throughout the 20th century. Residences offered a level of protection and connection for LGBTQ+ Portlanders that was generally unavailable in public venues, even in an ever more tolerant Portland. As a result, private residences served multi-use purposes, ranging from de facto community centers to political organizing hubs and family sanctuaries. Potlucks, parties, and other gatherings developed unique spaces for conversations and connections among Portlanders. Cliff Jones, a co-founder of Portland's Black Lesbians and Gays United (BLGU), recalled the group's 1980s genesis and continuation for that exact purpose:

> **A friend and I decided to have a potluck of Black gay men. We got about seven or eight men at my house and had a great time and so we decided to do it on a regular basis. And then, I thought, 'Well I want to meet some black lesbians too,' because I hadn't met any black lesbians in Portland at that**

[466] Ad, *Just Out,* June 1, 1988, 30.; "Dignity/Portland forced out," *Just Out,* March 1, 1992, 9.; "Dignity moves again," *Just Out,* December 3, 1993, 8.
[467] Will O'Bryan and Patrick Collins, "Keeping the Faith," *Just Out,* December 18, 1998, 17.
[468] For additional information on Glide Memorial Methodist Church see Graves, and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 154- 155, 161, 174, 181.
[469] Brown, "Music on the Cusp."
[470] Willow Pond, "A Room full of Lesbians," *Just Out,* November 25, 1983, 5.; Out About Town, *Just Out,* various dates.; Community Events, *Rag Times,* various dates.
[471] Out About Town, *Just Out,* September 1, 1987, 18, and various dates.

> **point. Someone introduced me to a black lesbian, and she knew a lot of people, so she said, 'You bring your men and I'll bring my women, and we'll have a potluck together.'. . . For me, Black Lesbians and Gays organizing and considering how to develop social and political power and looking at the intersections of being black and lesbian and gay, looking at racism within the gay community, homophobia with the black community. Just having a space. . . To have our African American cultural traditions present in a gay/lesbian setting was unique. . . It was incredibly powerful.**
>
> — Portlander Cliff Jones recalling the formation of Black Lesbians and Gays United, 1999 [472]

Starting in the late 1970s, Portlanders Ann and Bill Shepherd were also among the many Portlanders who opened their home up to LGBTQ+ organizing. In 1977, the Shepherds with Rita and Charles Knapp co-founded Parents of Gays (POG) as a way for both families to support their own LGBTQ+ children and other Portland families.[473] The Shepherds posted their home address (2538 SW Hamilton St.) and phone number in LGBTQ+ newspapers while mainstream papers initially resisted publishing information on the emerging support organization.[474] By the summer of 1977, the Shepherds' appearance on a local television program and in *The Oregon Journal* "opened a title wave of interest . . . [The Shepherd's] phone was ringing off the hook— never to stop. . . "[475] The Shepherd house regularly hosted holiday dinners, extending their open home beyond POG meetings.[476]

Over the next two decades, Parents of Gays and other family organizations greatly expanded. Such expansion was valuable for LGBTQ+ youth, LGBTQ+ parents, and other family members to have support groups, especially as child custody and other family law matters became "one of the most important arenas for" LGBTQ+ politics during the mid and late 20th century.[477] In 1982, POG elected to join the national organization of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (initially Parents FLAG) as PFLAG Portland.[478] Around this time, Portlander Audria Mae Edwards, who had four LGBTQ+ children, became the second president of the organization and "the first African American in the country to head a PFLAG chapter."[479] By 1986, PFLAG Portland hosted the fifth annual internation convention at the Westin

---

[472] Oral history interview with Cliff Jones, by Richard Lidzbarski and Rebecca Fessenden, 2012 May 14, SR 11478, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[473] The Shepherds and the Knapps attended the same church and their daughters, Susie Shepherd and Kristan Knapp, were friends.

[474] Susie Shepherd recalled that Ann's employer, *The Oregon Journal,* refused to publish advertisements. They were later in a front-page feature. This is discussed further in the theme "Queer Arts and Entertainment." Also see "PFLAG," Queer Heroes Northwest 2012, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6308PFLAG.html.

[475] Ibid.

[476] Oral history interview with Jerry Weller, by Libbey Austin, SR 11124, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[477] Geoffrey Wren, "Our Children, our lives, and the court," *Just Out,* October 15, 1993.

[478] Parents of Gays, Parents FLAG, and later PFLAG originated in New York by Jeanne (1920-2013) and Jules (1919-1982) Manford in 1973. For additional history, see "Our Story," About Us, PFLAG PDX, https://pflagpdx.org/about-pflag-pdx/our-story/.; "Our Story," PFLAG, https://pflag.org/our-story/.

[479] George Nicola, "More about Audria M. Edwards and the scholarship fund that bears her name," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/posters/images/32%20Misty%20Audria%20Pea%238199A7D.jpg.

Benson Hotel (309 SW Broadway, currently The Benson Portland) with attendance by prominent Portlanders including then-Mayor Bud Clark, then-Oregon Secretary of State Barbara Roberts, and local activist Keeston Lowery.[480] In addition to PFLAG, groups like Women with Women with Children provided "social networking groups for lesbians who have or want to have children in their lives, whether as mothers, mothers' partners, "Big Sisters," or adoptive mothers" and often utilized members' homes for potlucks and meetings.[481]

LGBTQ+ Connections in Social Spaces Summary

From 1905 to 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders established various lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer+ organizations to connect with others, increase public visibility, and cultivate queer culture. A spectrum of Portland places from private residences to academic institutions, bars to places of worship, offered environments where LGBTQ+ Portlanders could come out and publicly claim physical space. LGBTQ+ connections in social spaces played a crucial role in fostering solidarity necessary for larger civil rights efforts, grassroots care during health crises, and queer entertainment.

[480] "Parents Flag plans Portland parley in '86," *Just Out,* November 1, 1985, 7.; Schedule of Events, *Just Out,* September 1, 1986, 9.; Jay Brown, "Rap on homophobia," *Just Out,* October 1, 1986, 5.

[481] Ad, *Just Out,* December 1, 1988. Women with Women with Children was founded by Portlander Holly Hart, and the address often published (2717 NE Hancock St.) in early ads is presumed to be Hart's residence.

LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing

On June 20, 1992, rainbow flags fluttered and banners reading "For Love and Justice: A Walk Against Hate" and "From Eugene to Portland in Support of Lesbian and Gay Rights" filled the air with vibrancy and a spirit of political defiance. Marchers crossed Portland's Burnside Bridge, converging with the Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade and Rally along Portland's Waterfront Park, amplifying the city's LGBTQ+ presence.[482] Activist Anne Galisky proposed a walk through the Willamette Valley as a powerful act of resistance against Ballot Measure 9 ("Amends Constitution: Government Cannot Facilitate, Must Discourage Homosexuality, Other 'Behaviors'").[483] Named the Walk for Love and Justice, Galisky, activists, and other supporters embarked on foot from Eugene, Oregon on June 7, 1992 "to build bridges and to promote an end to oppression and hatred in all its forms."[484] Months later, on November 3, 1992, Oregon voters defeated the ballot measure by a 12% margin, marking a significant victory in the ongoing battle for LGBTQ+ civil rights.[485]

Opposition to 1992's Ballot Measure 9 spurred multifaceted and diverse responses, including the Walk for Love and Justice; door to door campaigning; a Nirvana benefit concert at the Portland Meadows (1001 N Schmeer Rd., since demolished); satirical artwork; and coalition building.[486] The various anti-Ballot Measure 9 campaigns from LGBTQ+, BIPOC, labor, political, artistic, rural, and religious organizations reflected the crystallization of political and legal power by and for LGBTQ+ Oregonians, which gained strong momentum in the 1970s. With many LGBTQ+ Portlanders at the forefront, Oregonians united throughout the 20th century to fight for LGBTQ+ lives.

"LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing" explores various anti-LGBTQ+ political movements and efforts for LGBTQ+ civil rights during the 1905–1994 period.[487] Oregon's state-sanctioned oppression of diverse peoples provided a foundation for legal and social discrimination towards LGBTQ+ Portlanders

---

[482] The 1992 Portland Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade and Rally theme of "A Simple Matter of Justice" drew inspiration from a Harvey Milk speech to "optimize the fight [Oregonians] face with the Oregon Citizens Alliance." 1992's Pride counted 9,000 marching and 15,000 attending the rally, marking the largest turnout to date. See Renée LaChance, "Back on the Waterfront," *Just Out,* June 1, 1992, 13.; "The early years of Lesbian and Gay Pride in Portland," *Just Out,* July 1, 1992, 2.

[483] Oral history interview with Anne, Galisky, by Dave Anderson and Emily Craft, 2013 February 27, SR 11369, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.; "Ballot Measure 9," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/ballot-measure-9/.

[484] Supporters included The Lesbian Community Project, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroesta (PCUN), and up to 70 religious organizations. See "Walk for Love and Justice," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/24-walk-for-love-justice/.; Barbara Bernstein, "Forging bonds," *Just Out,* July 1, 1992, 26.

[485] William Schultz, "The Rise and Fall of 'No Special Rights,'" 24.

[486] Renée LaChance, "Bop til you drop," *Just Out,* October 1, 1992, 31.; See various examples of opposition strategies on The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/.

[487] While various anti-discrimination legislation based on sexuality and gender were introduced throughout the 20th century, it would not be until 2007 that a state-wide anti-discrimination bill would be passed as the Oregon Equality Act. In 2014, Oregon achieved marriage equality with the overturning of 2004's Measure 36 which had banned LGBTQ+ marriage with an amendment of the Oregon constitution. In 2017, Oregon passed the first "standalone statewide transgender justice bill." These examples showcase that political and legal advocacy and activism is still needed for LGBTQ+ Oregonians in the 21st century. For additional history, see "Our History," About Us, Basic Rights Oregon, https://www.basicrights.org/history.

throughout the 1900s. Anti-vice campaigns in the early decades of the 20th century and "no special rights" campaigns in the latter half of the century sought to marginalize and criminalize queer identities, spaces, and livelihoods. Even among LGBTQ+ Portlanders, divisions and exclusions arose based on race, gender, sexuality, age, and ability. These frictions placed on and within Portland's queer communities prompted coalition building and legal strategizing to end forms of oppression in Portland and across Oregon.

Everyday Life as Political Battlegrounds

The struggle for one to freely express themselves, have relationships, and make a living resonates with the feminist mantra "the personal is political" and has significance in Portland's political ethos. Portlanders' everyday lives were shaped by concurrent civil rights movements, civil rights "denied, fought for, fought against, won, lost, won again, and threatened."[488]

Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Oregon was no exception to phrases such as "crime against nature" and "the crime which could not be named" and commonly used these in criminal charges to reinforce negative views towards nonnormative sexual activities.[489] "For several centuries, official disapproval of homosexual acts stemmed primarily from Judeo-Christian religious doctrine upon which secular laws proscribing 'offenses against nature' were based," scholar Jennifer Terry explains in *American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society,* and continues that "religion and law constituted the principal authoritative discourses through which homosexuality was understood."[490] Other charges, such as "immoral acts," disorderly conduct, and vagrancy were broad and vague enough to apply to a range of supposed criminal activity. For instance, in April 1913, laborer Grover King was arrested in the Fairmount Hotel (formerly W. Burnside St. and 4th Ave.) and charged with vagrancy, though police caught him engaging in sodomy.[491] Portland police also charged Pacific Northwest gender non-conforming individual Harry Allen (also known as Harry Livingston) with vagrancy due to Oregon state's lack of laws that specifically criminalized the act of wearing attire deemed inappropriate for an individual.[492]

---

[488] Megan E. Springate, "LGBTQ Civil Rights in America," in *LGBTQ+ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History,* edited by Megan E. Springate (National Park Foundation, 2016), 18-2.

[489] Peter Boag's study of same-sex affairs in the Pacific Northwest during the early 20th century cites various cases where these phrases were used. See Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 52, 78, 125 193.; 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.

[490] Jennifer Terry, *American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), 40.

[491] Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 45, 48.

[492] Other cities, including San Francisco and New York, passed anti-Masquerade / anti-cross-dressing ordinances to "regulate multiple gender offenses, including those of feminist dress reformers, 'fast young women' who dressed as men for a night on the town, female impersonators, and people whose gender identification did not match their anatomy in legally acceptable ways." For additional history, see Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Duke University Press, 2015), 62.; William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet,* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

Allen's arrest in early 20th century Portland reveals the complex dynamics between how queer individuals understood their own lives versus how authorities and society perceived them. Allen was born in 1882 and moved with his family to Washington in the 1890s. According to historian Peter Boag's research, Allen "traveled constantly around Washington and Oregon in search of employment," taking on bartending, longshoring, and other physical work.[493] At some point in the early 1900s, Allen met, courted, and eloped with Seattleite Isabell Maxwell.[494] By 1912, Allen settled in Portland and sent a telegram requesting his wife to join him. Police, who reportedly had been surveilling the couple for some time, raided the lower eastside house (no address) where the two were staying and arrested them. Authorities viewed the telegram as evidence of illegal activity, suspecting that Maxwell *posed* as Allen's wife and was "transported . . . across state lines for immoral purposes" such as paid sex work, ultimately leading to Allen's arrest for violating the Mann Act (also known as the White-Slave Traffic Act of 1910).[495]

However, after interrogations, Allen supposedly broke down and shared information about his identity, resulting in local charges and sentencing for vagrancy to punish his gender expression. According to Boag, "the shocking revelation [of Allen's identity] dumbfounded the local arresting authorities . . . [and] Portland newspapers had a field day."[496] The *Morning Oregonian's* June 4, 1912 headline read "woman posing as husband" and dismissed the married couple's relationship.[497] The article, as well as others from across the nation that publicized information on Allen, used stigmatizing language such "masquerading" and "impersonation"; such terms suggested that Allen was merely pretending. Worse, terms like "man-woman" further marginalized Allen's identity.[498] Despite local and national portrayals reflecting confusion regarding Allen's identity, Allen countered the narratives and spoke of his "change of sex"— a declaration that can be understand as an expression of a trans identity.[499]

While Allen and Maxwell garnered attention for their relationship, authorities heavily policed other diverse relationships throughout the early 1900s. Peter Boag's *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest* examines intersections of race, ethnicity, and class. He finds that "urban police forces in [Portland's] Northwest purposely concentrated their surveillance of male-male sexual activities in the transient working-class neighborhoods. In doing so, the local authorities clearly utilized laws against same-sex sexual activities as only one part of a larger middle-class campaign to

---

493 Peter Boag, "Past as Prologue: Harry Allen in the Northwest And The Slow History of Trans Acceptance," Northwest Public Broadcasting News, February 5, 2021, https://www.nwpb.org/2021/02/05/past-as-prologue-harry-allen-in-the-northwest-and-the-slow-history-of-trans-acceptance/. Also see "Stealing Horses & Hearts: Trans Vagabonds of the Wild West," History is Gay, September 16, 2020, https://www.historyisgaypodcast.com/notes/2020/09/15/episode-32-stealing-horses-and-hearts.

494 "Police Get Woman Posing As Husband," *Morning Oregonian*, June 4, 1912, 12.

495 Ibid; Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past,* 23.; White slavery was a contemporary term for sex trafficking and forced prostitution. For additional information, see Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Harvard University Press, 2014).; Eric Weiner, "The Long, Colorful History of the Mann Act," All Things Considered, NPR, March 11, 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/03/11/88104308/the-long-colorful-history-of-the-mann-act.

496 Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past,* 25.

497 "Police Get Woman Posing As Husband."

498 Ibid.

499 Ibid.; Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*, 29.

persecute working-class men of racial and ethnic minority backgrounds."[500] Police surveilled area venues like the Monte Carlo Pool Hall and Paris House (formerly on NW Davis St. and NW 4th Ave., closed in 1907) and arrested many on vagrancy, disorderly conduct, "immoral acts," or other broad charges.[501]

In November 1912, Portland police arrested up to 68 individuals, several of them affluent white men, for their connection to same-sex sexual activities. Boag's *Same-Sex Affairs* contended these arrests, referred to as the "Vice Clique" arrest, would shape the Pacific Northwest's responses to LGBTQ+ life "for at least the next half century."[502] For instance, this scandal significantly influenced Oregon's laws related to sexuality. Prior to the 1910s, individuals across the country charged with sodomy argued existing criminal definitions of sodomy did not apply to certain sexual acts and thus were not indictable under sodomy statues; Portlander Harry A. Start supposedly viewed Oregon's sodomy law the same way, as one informant during his 1912 trial testified Start was not concerned about charges because "'there isn't anything covering [oral sex] and they can't do anything with me or you or any of the rest of them.'"[503] Within months of the "Vice Clique" trials, on January 31, 1913, Oregon Legislature enacted Oregon House Bill 145, expanding the 1853 criminal definition of sodomy to encompass any form or practice of "sexual perversity" and tripled the maximum prison sentence to 15 years.[504]

The "Vice Clique" revealed and publicized the various places where intimacies occurred, and arrests campaigns throughout the 20th century targeted these known spaces. Downtown streets and parks were notoriously risky spaces for citation and arrest, whether for jaywalking or the charge of "disorderly conduct involving morals."[505] Portland officials undertook a more extreme measure to control activities in the 1920s when they formally segregated the Plaza blocks of Lownsdale and Chapman Squares (adjacent to SW 4th Ave. and Main St) based on assumed gender and age (Lownsdale exclusively for men, Chapman

[500] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 46-47.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Ibid, 2.
[503] Cases in Texas (1873), Montana (1915), and Idaho (1916) also used the same defense argument. Ibid, 202.; *Oregon State v. Harry A. Start*, Trial Transcripts, 262, 296, 319.
[504] The 1853 sodomy code was defined as: "Every person who shall commit sodomy, or the crime against nature, either with mankind or any beast, shall, on conviction, be punished[.]" The 1913 sodomy prohibition greatly expanded: "If any person shall commit sodomy or the crime against nature, or any act or practice of sexual perversity, either with mankind or beast, or sustain osculatory relations with the private parts of any man, woman or child, or permit such relations to be sustained with his or her private parts, such person shall upon conviction thereof, be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than one year nor more than fifteen years." Boag found that the broad definition of "sexual perversity" was used to prosecute later cases, like a 1928 case of an individual who manually masturbated a teenage boy. See General Laws of Oregon 1913, page 56, enacted Jan. 31, 1913, quoted in George Painter, "Oregon Sodomy Law," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6070sodomylaw.html?query=sodomy%20laws&case=&whole=&phrase=.; Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 203-205.
[505] For examples, see "Morals Count Faced," *The Oregonian*, April 26, 1953.; "Men Arrested," *The Oregonian*, September 6, 1955, 23.

exclusively for women and children) until the 1990s.[506] In 1953, 1956, and the 1970s, Portland police performed weekly patrols and entrapped several gay men in Lownsdale Square.[507]

Between the 1940s and 1960s, mainstream society conflated diverse queer identities as deviant threats to national security and challenges to hetero- and cisnormativity. As a result, many exerted a hypervigilant effort at policing suspected queer individuals and shielding children from queerness in the name of a national project of security, patriotism, and hetero- and cisnormativity. For instance, in 1950, Portland Police Sergeant Earl Bigg released a pamphlet titled "How to Protect Your Child From the Sexual Criminal," which drew on Bigg's professional experience and recently published sexuality studies.[508] *The Oregonian* and *Oregon Journal* also headlined articles in 1956 like "Homosexual Ring Nipped" and "Deviate Ring Broken" among its coverage of sex crimes.[509] Following other states, Oregon prohibited those convicted of sodomy from being a public school teacher in 1957 as another effort many believed would protect children.[510]

During this mid-century period, some LGBTQ+ organizations adopted and promoted a conformist stance in appearance, dress, and behavior not only to gain acceptance but also deter further harassment.[511] These organizations presented representations that the homophile (or variant, as preferred by Daughters of Bilitis) were like everyone else who conformed to traditional ideals. Historian Elizabeth Armstrong illuminates in *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950–1994,* how the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis "were particularly interested in the education of elite heterosexual groups . . . The names and goals of these organizations suggest that homophile organizations were not centrally concerned with building a public identity, but instead with seeking rights

---

[506] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."; "Lownsdale Square," Find a Park, Parks and Recreation, Portland.gov, https://www.portland.gov/parks/lownsdale-square.; Devon Haskins, "In the early 1900s, Lownsdale Square was for men and Chapman Square was only for women and children. Here's why," KGW 8, May 9, 2024, https://www.kgw.com/article/travel/whats-in-a-name/portland-lownsdale-chapman-squares-segregated-gender/283-5955e4de-756e-44ff-8bff-cc408df115b4.

[507] "Could be Muggers," *Northwest Gay Review,* September 1974, 15.; Jann Mitchell, "Gays Claim Harassment; Police Deny 'Crusade,'" *Oregon Journal,* June 22, 1976.; "The System: Vice Square on New Ramage," *Northwest Gay Review,* March 1976, 4.

[508] Though Biggs' discussion of "abnormality" included LGBTQ+ identities, he opposed the broad application of sodomy laws that implicated consenting adults. Bigg's became instrumental in reforming Oregon sex crime laws. After his publications, Biggs spoke at the Kinsey Institute and collaborated with famed sexologist Alfred Kinsey. Earl R. Biggs Papers, Library, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, https://scua.uoregon.edu/repositories/2/resources/747.

[509] "Homosexual Ring Nipped," *Oregon Journal,* January 1, 1956.; "Deviate Ring Broken," *Oregonian,* January 20, 1956.

[510] California was the first state to enact the public teacher probation. "Oregon Gay History Timeline," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6020timeline.html.

[511] The belief and practice of marginalized individuals adopting and conforming that what is deemed respectable or appropriate by mainstream society is respectability politics. Respectability politics have varied in LGBTQ+ history. In addition to the 1950s homophile era, the late 20th century push for marriage equality adopted similar strategies: both periods had some activists emphasizing LGBTQ+ people where just like everyone else who conformed to traditional ideals of monogamy, family life, and middle-class respectability. For additional history, see Emily Skidmore, "Constructing the 'Good Transsexual': Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press," *Feminist Studies,* 37 no. 2 Race and Transgender Studies (Summer 2011):270-300.; Colin P. Ashley, "Gay Liberation: How a Once Radical Movement Got Married and Settled Down," *New Labor Forum* 24 no. 3 (Fall 2015):28-32.

and improving public opinion . . . Homophile organizations rarely included sexual identity terminology in their names."[512]

Yet, harmful perception against LGBTQ+ individuals, especially as supposed dangers to children, continued through the late 20th century. For instance, in 1992, political organization Oregon Christian Alliance (OCA) published a flyer titled "Homosexuality, the Classroom and Your Children: Why every Oregon Parent and Grandparent should Vote 'Yes' on Measure 9," the OCA-sponsored ballot measure to amend the constitution to outlaw homosexuality. According to local historian Pat Young, over 700,000 flyers were printed and distributed across two Oregon counties.[513] One OCA supporter expressed their view that Oregonians "need to vote 'yes' on 9 to help stop unwholesome, unhealthy, bad habits being taught through the school system."[514]

This discriminatory perspective of LGBTQ+ people shaped how some LGBTQ+ organizations interacted with youth. For instance, in "'There is No Place in the City:' Queer Youth, the Counterculture, and Portland's Early Gay Rights Movement, 1968 – 1974," scholar Jayden Dirk explains in the early 1970s, LGBTQ+ organization Second Foundation of Oregon "maintained a degree of reluctance and distance when it came to queer youth under eighteen, fearing accusations of predatory behavior."[515] The group withheld membership from youths due to the "nature of our organization . . . [a] veiled reference . . . to the fact that it was an openly gay organization" which could be labeled as predatory.[516] As a result, underage queer Portlanders in the late 20th century often felt stuck in the closet with no support from queer and non-queer society, until they made their own organizations such as Windfire and Bridge Group.[517]

Despite harmful perceptions of and discrimination towards LGBTQ+ individuals in employment, housing, the press, and society at large during the mid and late 20th century, civil rights activism across the country began achieving legislative wins that would advance queer equity. For instance, in 1971, the American Civil Liberties Union advocated for the Oregon Criminal Law Revision Commission to decriminalize

---

[512] Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*, 19.

[513] Patricia Jean Young, "Measure 9: Oregon's 1992 Anti-Gay Initiative," (M.A. thesis, Portland State University, 1997), 45.; Brian T. Meehan and Bill Graves, "OCA stirs emotions with its 2nd flier," *Oregonian,* September 25, 1992, D1.

[514] Marilyn Matheny, letter, *Medford Mail Tribune,* October 30, 1992, 14A.

[515] Dirk, "'There is No Place in the City."

[516] Ibid.

[517] Windfire was formed in 1982 as a "peer support and social group for gay and bisexual adolescents. . . giv[ing] gay youth — from 14 to 19 — the same opportunities for an association of peers as heterosexual kids have. Windfire provides a forum where gay and bisexual youths can meet, listen to scheduled speakers, get information or advice, and discuss whatever is on their mind." Bridge Group "spawned" from Windfire to continue supporting LGBTQ+ Portlanders age 18 to 29. Though these groups existed, an 18-month study in the early 1990s and subsequent 1991 report entitled *Oregon's Sexual Minority Youth: An At-Risk Population* illuminated that many young LGBTQ+ Oregonians' "feel confused or ashamed when they begin to discover their sexual identities. When they seek support, or unbiased information, its usually not there." For perspectives from Portland's youth and discussion on these issues, see W.C. McCrae, "Where are we to go? The Dilemma of being young in Portland," *Just Out*, October 1, 1985, 9.; Celia Floren, "Gay youth: a forgotten minority?," *Just Out*, March 1, 1988, 8.; Wendy L. Wernsing, "The Problem with youth programs," *Just Out,* August 1, 1989, 14.; Inga Sorensen, "Sexual Minority youth task force completes report," *Just Out,* September 1, 1991, 19.; Dandi Baunach, Melissa Kilby, and Pamela Mullins, "Windfire: One of the few places where queer youth can go to be themselves and have fun," *Just Out*, September 1, 1991, 15.; Resources, *Just Out*, May 15, 1998, 29.

sodomy, among its various code revision changes. The commission recognized that "any sexual conduct engaged in between consenting adults whether of a heterosexual or homosexual nature" should not be subject to legal sanction.[518] Taking effect in 1972, Oregon became the fourth state to decriminalize sodomy.[519]

Starting in the early 1970s, several LGBTQ+ Portlanders also initiated political organizations, committees, and alliances to advance and obtain the legal protections long since denied to them. This new era of LGBTQ+ activism rooted in Gay Liberation took shape across the nation as groups like Gay Liberation Front, Gay Activist Alliance, and Gay People's Alliance publicly declared their diverse sexuality and demanded "complete sexual liberation for all people . . . reject[ing] society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature."[520] Nationwide and in Portland, "zapping" or direct public confrontation of anti-LGBTQ+ events and individuals, became a popular strategy for this new era of LGBTQ+ activism. For instance, in 1973, Gay People's Alliance at Portland State University zapped a PSU Human Sexuality course that presented anti-gay rhetoric. Demonstrators held signs reading "Gay Pride," "Gay Liberation Now," and "Support Gay Rights."[521]

In addition to these activist groups, LGBTQ+ organization Second Foundation of Oregon immersed itself in politics, ranging from drafting legislation to fundraising, testifying, lobbying, and more. For instance, in 1972, members surveyed Oregon Primary candidates on their support for sexual orientation protection in anti-discrimination legislation; this survey was the first of its kind to question candidates on LGBTQ+ topics.[522] Further, this survey identified potential allies who could support and advance local and statewide policies through the next decades. By the next year, Second Foundation, other activists, and identified allies collaborated to introduce Oregon House Bill 2930 during the 1973 legislative session. HB 2930 marked a watershed moment: the first Oregon bill aimed at prohibiting "discrimination in employment and certain real property transactions" based on sexual orientation.[523] Though it garnered significant support from numerous state Representatives, Senators, and organizations, HB 2930 and subsequent statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights bills failed to pass through Oregon Legislature until 2007.[524]

---

[518] George Painter, "Oregon Sodomy Law," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6070sodomylaw.html.
[519] Randy Shilts, "Candy Jar Politics- the Oregon Gay Rights Story," *The Advocate,* August 13, 1975, 11, 14.
[520] Gay Liberation Front's statement of purpose, quoted in Geoffrey W. Batmen, "Gay Liberation Front," GLBTQ Archive, http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/gay_liberation_front_S.pdf.
[521] "PSU Gay People Confront Sexuality Class," *The Fountain,* March 1973, 11.
[522] "George Oberg," Queer Heroes Northwest 2015, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6526GeorgeObert.html.
[523] Eliza Canty-Jones, "HB 2930, Anti-Discrimination Bill," Oregon History Project, Oregon Historical Society, https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/hb-2930-anti-discrimination-bill/.
[524] The bill was co-sponsored by representatives Vera Katz, Stephen Kafoury, Margaret U. Deleri, Ralph Groener, Lloyd C. Kinsey, William McCoy, 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. Additional supporters included the Portland chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Portland Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC), the Oregon Federation of Teachers, The Oregon Women's Political Caucus (OWPC), the Oregon American Psychiatric Association (APA), and many individuals. Additional LGBTQ+ civil rights bills included House Bill 2637 (1975), House Bill 2288 (1975), House Bill 2704

Locally, Portland City Council struggled to unanimously recognize and support LGBTQ+ Portlanders during the 1970s. At this time, "the city of Portland [had] neither a civil rights ordinance nor a contract compliance clause."[525] Through "systemic effort on the part of City Commissioner[s Mildred Schwab and Francis Ivancie] to prevent gay people from ever achieving equal rights status," language on sexual orientation was removed from a developing 1974 resolution protecting municipal employees from discrimination, and these commissioners pushed for perpetual tabling of the resolution.[526] Over the next two years, these commissioners heavily criticized the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities' (CCSM) funding requests to support LGBTQ+ Portlanders; Ivancie even publicized his opposition in *The Oregon Journal* under the title "No Dating Center."[527] On the other side, City Commissioners Connie McCready, Charles Jordan, and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt supported queer political and social initiatives, as evidenced by Commissioner McCready sponsoring Resolution 31510, Portland's first sexual orientation resolution protecting city employees, and Mayor Goldschmidt's later declaration of June 25, 1977 as "Gay Pride Day."[528]

Reportedly, Portland City Council's 1974 debates over sexual orientation anti-discrimination protection inspired Portlander Larry Copeland to steer the "loosely knit network of gay businesses" and individuals of Portland Town Council (PTC) to become politically active.[529] Quickly, the organization organized lobbying efforts for state bills, established an office (initially at 320 SW Stark St., room 303, later room 506), hired Jerry Weller as the first Executive Director (1976 – 1983), added Susie Shepherd as paid staff, published the newsletter *Gay Rights '77 / Oregon Gay Rights Report*, and much more. As a result of all

(1981), Senate Bill 319 (1983). See George T. Nicola, "Early Attempts at Oregon Gay Civil Rights," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated October 22, 2010, https://www.glapn.org/6110earlyattempts.html.; Greg Wasson, "Gay Rights Bill sparks legislative discussion," *Oregon Daily Emerald,* March 16, 1981, 3.; "Senate defeats gay rights bill," *Oregon Daily Emerald,* April 12, 1983, 4.; George T. Nicola, "Milestones in Oregon LGBTQ Law," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last Updated June 16, 2015, https://glapn.org/6012MilestonesLGBTQLaw.html.

[525] "The Buck Stops Nowhere," *Northwest Gay Review,* February 1973, 6.

[526] "Back In," *Northwest Gay Review,* September 1974, 6.; "Tabling for infinity," *Northwest Gay Review,* November 1974, no page number.

[527] In the 1970s, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds were influential in supporting various social organizations largely created by feminist and LGBTQ+ activists. Starting in May 1975, the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities (CCSM) sought CETA Funds from Portland City Council to hire staff and expand their work supporting LGBTQ+ Portlanders. Commissioner Schwab particularly "object to CETA funds being used for fundraising and for legislative lobbying [that would] perpetuate the agency" (read as homosexuality). Such objection was based on misperceptions of the center; Secretary Charles Fantz explained the center was not involved in any fundraising or lobbying. See BJ Noles, "City Council Balks over Job Funds," Oregonian, August 7, 1975, 12. See also Huntly Collins, "Job funds 'given to lobby groups,'" Oregonian, August 13, 1975, 33; Charles Fantz, "Sexual Minorities," Oregonian, August 25, 1975, 20.; Francis J Ivancie, "No Dating Center," Oregon Journal, August 30, 1975, 4. The Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities is discussed further in the theme "LGBTQ+ Health."

[528] LGBTQ+ activists and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission urged Mayor Goldschmidt to issue such declaration starting in 1974. When the mayor finally made the declaration, there was intense backlash. That weekend, 200 people joined a protest at Laurelhurst Park (SE Cesar E Chavez Blvd and Stark St.), opposition letters were published in local press, and phone calls threatened murder. See Nelson Pickett, "Goldschmidt Urged to Recognize 'Gay Rights' In Portland," *Oregon Journal,* June 20, 1974, 2M.; "'Gay Pride Week' Mayor Ignores," *Oregon Journal,* June 24, 1974, 4M.; "Gays join ranks in support of rights," *Oregonian,* June 26, 1977, 1.; "An Open letter to Mayor Neil Goldschmidt," *Oregon Journal,* June 30, 1977, 18.; Steve Jenning, "Goldschmidt Threatened in Phone Call," *Oregonian,* November 28, 1978, 4M.

[529] George Nicola, "Larry Copeland," Queer Heroes Northwest 2012, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://glapn.org/6326PortlandTownCouncil.html.

PTC's organizing, PTC and its members became influential pillars of Oregon's LGBTQ+ political organizing.[530] For instance, in 1977, Weller organized PTC-Political Action Committee (PAC) as the second gay political action committee in the nation at this time, paving the way for Weller and other PTC members— John Baker, Terry Bean, Keeston Lowery, and Dana Weinstien— to co-found the Right to Privacy (RTP) political action committee in 1982. RTP quickly became "one of Oregon's largest group of politically active" LGBTQ+ Oregonians "dedicated to harnessing the financial clout of the gay and lesbian community to support our friends and defeat our enemies in elective office in Oregon."[531] Among Right to Privacy PAC's various organizing activities was the annual Hart Dinner fundraising dinner first held on October 9, 1982; later dinners were held at Portland Hilton (921 SW 6th Ave.), Benson Hotel (309 SW Broadway), Oregon Convention Center (777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd), and other large-scale venues to hold the growing attendance.[532] These dinners were important not just for the massive funding amounts (more than $50,000 raised in 1988 for instance), but "also for its program" of acknowledging local activists through honoree awards and attendance of Oregon politicians, including Neil Goldschmidt, Vera Katz, and Barbara Roberts. The increasing numbers of attending politicians was "a testament to the growing support for gay rights."[533] With PTC focusing on other activities (it became LGBTQ+ counseling center Phoenix Rising in 1983), Right to Privacy PAC and its later Right to Privacy Inc. became Oregon's leading political LGBTQ+ hub.

While some queer activists were proudly claiming their LGBTQ+ identities and coming out of the closet, Portland's queer community reflected a microcosm of Oregon's exclusionary environment and thus was not immune from prejudice and discriminatory views towards others; LGBTQ+ organizations and spaces often marginalized and excluded LGBTQ+ Portlanders with intersectional identities. Portlander Rupert Kinnard reflected in 1986 that he didn't think the "the gay community [was] any different in its racism from the community at large."[534] Primary sources from BIPOC LGBTQ+ overwhelmingly speak to experiences of marginalization, discrimination, and threats of intimidating violence.

> **I tried to get involved with the community, joined the board of LCP [the Lesbian Community Project]. With the lesbian and gay community in general, there was some marginalization of Asian Pacific Islander (API) folks back then. There wasn't always the welcome mat. A group of us started Asian**

[530] According to Susie Shepherd, Jerry Weller served as "a co-chair of the finance committee for Eugene's No on 51 campaign with Terry Bean. Jerry coordinated Portland's fundraising effort, raising over $60,000— an unheard of among for a ballot measure in those days." Susie Shepherd, "Jerry Weller," Queer Heroes Northwest 2012, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://glapn.org/6326PortlandTownCouncil.html.

[531] "Right to Privacy, PAC earns Community Service Award," *Just Out,* January 20, 1984, 3.; Right to Privacy Political Action Committee Political Endorsement ad, *Just Out,* May 1, 1988, 36.

[532] This dinner was named for Alan Hart and became the focus of local activists, including Candice Hellen Brown, who opposed the use of Alan's birth name in the name. She summarized in 1995 that the dinner should remove Alan's birth name because she and others felt that "part of our transsexual history…has been stolen from us" by not recognizing Hart as trans. For further discussion of the Hart dinner, see Inga Sorensen, "Fringe no more: The Transsexual community takes RTP to task for perceived exclusionism," *Just Out,* December 1, 1995, 14.

[533] Pat Young, "A Past to Be Proud of, *Just Out,* June 4, 1999, 4.

[534] Dennis Peterson, "Unlearning Racism: New Attempts to Understand Old Attitudes," *Just Out,* January 6, 1986, 7.

> **Pacific Islander Lesbian & Gays (APLG) so we could have buddies, a sense of community. Part of my being involved came from that experience with the larger community— I felt a little left out. We are constantly overlooked. None of our issues ever gets addressed.**
>
> — Lynn Nakamoto reflecting on the 1990s formation of Asian Pacific Islander Lesbian & Gays (APLG) [535]

> **I've noticed this group of racists that frequent the bars. Sometimes they will surround me or come up to the person I'm dancing with. A couple of them at the Cell were making a noose out of their leather straps. One night I was at the baths and this guy said to me as I was walking into my room, 'KKK.' Later he took an aerosol can and sprayed it in his room as if to rid the room of my odor.**
>
> — M. speaking to *Just Out* writer Dennis Peterson, 1986 [536]

One instance that profoundly shaped LGBTQ+ Portlanders reckoning with racism was the 1983 "Aunt Jemima" incident at Waterfront Park (98 NW Naito Pwky), occurring during that year's Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. Portlander Cliff Jones recalled the incident in 2012: "a white man came to our Lesbian and Gay Pride dressed in black face as Aunt Jemima. Some people approached him and asked him to leave — and he wouldn't leave — so confrontation erupted and a number of us surrounded him."[537] Eventually, BIPOC LGBTQ+ Portlanders were able to get the man to leave, though Jones noted "many people were upset that we had done that. They felt like we were excluding him."[538] The incident continued to play out in the local gay press and a group of men "threatened to come en masse in blackface" to the next Pride.[539] Rupert Kinnard summarized the racist letters as "prime examples of unenlightened attitudes . . . [and] the need for education and awareness in this community."[540] Heinously, "the Black lesbian who had originally . . . confronted this man started getting death threats . . . [and] the FBI got involved."[541] This incident spurred other responses for Portlanders: in October 1983, the Lesbian and Gay Pride (L/GP) Steering Committee's meeting at Dahl and Penne's back room (121 SW Morrison St., demolished) was devoted to addressing the incident and by April 1984, L/GP Steering Committee adopted guidelines to deter similar activity from occurring with an Anti-Racist Brigade marching in the 1984 parade to further "stop our oppression of each other."[542]

---

[535] "Asian Americans Oppose 9," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, Western States Center, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/17-asian-americans-oppose-9/.
[536] Peterson, "Unlearning Racism: New Attempts to Understand Old Attitudes," 7.
[537] Oral history interview with Cliff Jones, by Richard Lidzbarski and Rebecca Fessenden, 2012 May 14, SR 11478, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Rupert Kinnard, Black Lesbians and Gays United Report column, *Just Out,* December 9, 1983, 7.
[541] Oral history interview with Cliff Jones.
[542] Marcia Cutler, Catherine Smith, Steve Fredrick, Maureen Carrsyn, "Anti-Aunt Jemima," *Just Out,* May 11, 1984, 3.; "An open letter," *Just Out,* June 8, 1984, 5.

Despite LGBTQ+ political efforts to critique society and internal structures, LGBTQ+ oppression did not cease into the late 20th century. Oregon's contentious political and social battlegrounds primarily centered around Oregon Citizens Alliance's unrelenting sponsorship of various anti-LGBTQ+ bills under Ballot Measure 8 (1988), Ballot Measure 9 (1992), and Ballot Measure 13 (1994). During this period, "many people believe[d] that homosexuals [were] protected by the United States constitution. And that [was] not the case. . . A person [could] be fired from their job for being gay, [could] be refused service in a restaurant simply for being gay."[543] This fostered an environment where many Oregonians believed LGBTQ+ Oregonians sought *special rights* instead of *equal rights.*[544] Activist Kathleen Saadat stressed in 1992 that OCA's actions were "worse than the McCarthy-era in some ways, because they're taking not just peoples' jobs but they're encouraging the violent element in our society to physically attack people."[545] The offices of the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon (1847 E Burnside St.), The HIV Day Center (2941 NE Ainsworth St.) *Just Out* (address not published) and Metropolitan Community Church (2400 NE Broadway) were just a few of the locations burglarized and vandalized, and the Portland Police Department Bias Crimes Division documented a 22% increase in hate crimes following petition signatures for Ballot Measure 9.[546] Even within queer organizing against these measures, Saadat also noted "The problems of racism within the campaign were the same as outside the campaign."[547]

There is no denying the painful experiences of Oregonians facing everyday political battles between 1905 and 1994. Nonetheless, these political efforts, especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s, provided a foundation for contemporary LGBTQ+ political activism in the region. LGBTQ+ Portlanders like Saadat and Lowery were among the many activist - government employees working to pass important LGBTQ+ civil rights protections, such as Portland Resolution No. 34945 in 1991, which expanded Portland's early civil rights resolution to protect all Portlanders.[548] Oregon's late 20th century activism was also "strengthened by people and organizations all over the state who were not directly affiliated. . . but were determined to do the difficult and loving work of trying to educate ordinary people about a group of ordinary citizens within their midst, those who call themselves lesbian and gay," as No on 9 press officer Suzanne Pharr outlined in 1993 and which was reflected by groups such as Bigot Busters, People of Faith Against Bigotry, and Republicans Against Prejudice.[549] From the seedbeds of the 1994 No on 13 Committee and Support Our Communities Political Action Committee sprouted Basic Rights Oregon,

[543] Quoted in *Fighting for Our Lives,* directed by Elaine Velazquez and Barbara Bernstein, (1992, Portland: Feather and Fin Productions, 1992), Videotape.
[544] Schultz, "The Rise and Fall of 'No Special Rights,'" *Oregon History Quarterly* 122 no. 1 (Spring 2021): 6-37.
[545] Kathleen Saadat, Quoted in *Fighting for Our Lives,* directed by Elaine Velazquez and Barbara Bernstein, (1992, Portland: Feather and Fin Productions, 1992), Videotape.
[546] Ibid.; Ellen Hansen, "Hate Strikes," *Just Out,* July 1, 1992, 15.; "Hate Crimes Surge," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/7-hate-crimes-surge/.
[547] "African Americans Voting No on 9," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/6-african-americans-voting-no-on-9/.
[548] Cathy Kiyomura, "Gay Rights Law Enacted," *Oregonian,* October 4, 1991, A1.
[549] Pharr quoted in "Straight by Not Narrow," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/25-straight-but-not-narrow/. Additional groups included the Rural Organizing Project, The Lesbian Community Project, various unions, business allies, and more. See The Stories, No on 9 Remembered for more.

specifically formed as a "long-term, year-round operation whose mission is to 'build a movement to advance and protect democratic freedoms, and civil and human rights; build the broadest possible coalition to counter activities of groups such as the Oregon Citizens Alliance; [and] defeat attempts to deny basic rights through the electoral process."[550] By 1994, Oregon shifted from its "hotbed of homophobia" reputation to a leader in queer politics "with at least eight openly gay, lesbian or bisexual candidates up for election— a national record" at that point.[551]

Social Venues as Political Battlegrounds

In *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970,* LGBTQ+ historian John D'Emilio detailed early gay bars' pivotal role as "seedbeds for a collective consciousness that might one day flower politically."[552] As burgeoning visibility of queerness met harassment nationwide during the early and mid-20th century, it facilitated bar-based organizing leading to the Homophile Movement in the 1950s and 1960s and the Gay Liberation Movement in the 1970s.[553] Importantly, bars and other queer social venues emerged not just as social hubs but also as political venues where activism and advocacy came together. This enduring tradition of activism in queer social spaces persisted through the late 20th century, underscoring the significance of venues as both targets of oppression and centers of empowerment.

Targets of Oppression

By the late 1940s, in response to increasing visibility of queer individuals and networks, "American political leaders engaged in an ambitious campaign of demonizing and purging homosexuals from public life."[554] In Portland, Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee 1949 to 1952 campaign aimed make the "city as wholesome as possible" which ensnared LGBTQ+ venues under criminal establishments and included LGBTQ+ individuals in efforts to combat supposed 'sex deviates'.[555] Beginning on February 9, 1949, two Women's Protective Division undercover officers frequented The Music Hall (413 SW Stark St, demolished) hoping to make arrests of queer patrons following an earlier report that "women attempt their pick up at the Music Hall."[556] While officers Sybil Plumlee and Edna Trout failed to make any contacts, they filed reports on "lewd jokes and behavior" during impersonators' "suggestive and disgusting performances."[557] This

[550] Inga Sorensen, "Time not Right," *Just Out,* August 18, 1995, 14.
[551] Pamela Lyons, "Oregon's Political Coming Out," *Just Out,* May 6, 1994, 13.
[552] John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (University of Chicago Press, 1983), 33.
[553] Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (University of California Press, 2003), 147.
[554] Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 88-91.
[555] "City Studies Act to Curb Sex Crimes," *Oregonian,* February 25, 1952, 1.; "City Committee Named to Recommend Action to Curb Sex Offenders," *Oregonian,* February 26, 1, 13; "Group Forms in Sex Cases," *Oregonian,* February 27, 1952, 13.; "Pervert Curb on Plan List," *Oregonian,* February 29, 1952, 1, 12.
[556] Police report quoted in Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 13.
[557]Council Documents, Item no. 1117, March 16, 1950, City of Portland Archives and Records Center.

report influenced Lee and the Portland City Council to further investigate the venue, force the impersonation acts to cease, and ultimately shut down the Music Hall altogether by 1950.[558]

Following the end of Lee's administration in 1952, the Portland Police Department varied its approach to policing and controlling LGBTQ+ venues and individuals. An informal hands-off strategy during the mid-1950s allowed a few queer venues to operate in a concentrated area downtown. Officers viewed this strategy as an easy way to manage queer people instead of closing bars that would have individuals "scatter to various places, which would compound the problem" of control.[559] Despite its status as Portland's only restricted venue for service people for its supposed vice connections, officers permitted the Harbor Club (736 SW 1st Ave., currently 65 SW Yamhill) under this policy and resisted City Commissioner Stanley Earl's attempts to shut the venue down.[560] Though a few places were purposely left open, LGBTQ+ individuals nevertheless endured harassment, entrapment, and arrests throughout the mid- and late 20th century. Reflecting in 2000 on Portland during the mid-century, Norm Costa recalled example incidents at the Half Moon Tavern (first at 72 SW Morrison Street) where police would "roust [individuals] once in a while [and would forcibly remove patrons from barstools]. They weren't friendly."[561]

Terry Schrunk, Portland mayor from 1957 to 1972, initiated a new era of political targeting against queer venues and life starting in the early 1960s.[562] Within two years of his election, Schrunk reestablished Portland's Committee for Decent Literature and Films with goals to eliminate publicly available indecent materials supposedly flooding Portland and physical locations where such materials could be obtained.[563] Though not initially focused on queer content, the fallout from a sensational 1963 *Oregonian* exposé on a purported "statewide homosexual ring" which utilized "hundreds of magazines of the homosexual type

---

[558] The *Oregon Journal's* March 17, 1950, front page cover included a photograph of an impersonation troupe with the caption: "NOT IN PORTLAND, BOYS—Never more, Mayor Dorthy McCullough Lee said Thursday, many these female impersonators impersonate in Portland if night club owner wants council recommendation for liquor license renewal. Act, which played many months at Music Hall, no longer is featured there, proprietor says. Swishy stuff shan't sully city, says mayor." "Council Takes Rap at Impersonators," *Oregon Journal,* March 17, 1950, 1.

[559] Council Item 4629, December 3, 1964.; *Oregon Journal*, June 29, 1964.; "Hangouts for Homosexuals," December 22, 1964.; "OLCC Overrides Ban On 6 Taverns," December 18, 1964.; "Homosexuals" newspaper clipping file, OHS Research Library; Oregonian, December 4, 1964, 21. Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 30.

[560] Ibid.

[561] Oral history interview with Norm Costa, by Stephanie Munly and Ruben Reynaga, SR 4143, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

[562] See Smith, "Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965," 84-129, for further discussion on Terry Schrunk's reform efforts.

[563] In the 1910s, Portland City Council proposed, created, and passed several boards, committees, and ordinances related to content review. Although these earlier instances did not specify any review of LGBTQ+ content, these earlier censorship controls established precents of limiting materials based on "the interest of moral life" and social hygiene that would later be used in anti-LGBTQ+ campaigns. See Mary P. Erickson, ""In the Interest of the Moral Life of Our City:" The Beginning of Motion Picture Censorship in Portland, Oregon," *Film History 22,* no. 2 (2010): 148-169.; "Sound Approach on Obscenity Fight," *Oregon Journal,* November 12, 1959, 27.; "Community Action Against Obscenity," *Oregon Journal,* December 10, 1959, 53.; "Obscenity Ban Voted," *Oregon Journal,* March 11, 1960, 23.; Rolla J. Crick, "Smut Books Flood City," *Oregon Journal,* March 18, 1963, 1, 9.; "'Anti-Smut' Drive Asked," *Oregonian,* November 7, 1963.

. . . to encourage homosexual acts" fueled efforts to attack queer publications in the following years.[564] The committee and law enforcement encouraged bookstores, newspaper stands, and Portlanders to participate in the campaign by eliminating materials available for purchase and reporting any obscene content.[565]

. . . Decent Literature Committee work . . . has been stepped up during the past months, due partly to the distribution of magazines and books which cater to the pervert. We have been aware . . . that there is a definite correlation between the availability of this printed poison and the percentage of increase in homo-sexual activity.

— Mayor Schrunk to Mr. Virgil L Shipley, December 10, 1964 [566]

Isn't there something that Portland can do to stop this infiltration of filth before it penetrates this city deeper than it already has?

— Portlander Joanne Lilleoren to Mayor Schrunk, August 12, 1965 [567]

In 1964, Portland City Council attempted to solve "the perplexing social problem of what to do about taverns and bars where homosexuals and other 'undesirable characters' allegedly" gathered.[568] Mayor Schrunk determined that Portland was "attracting people of the so-called gay crowd who [were] being run out of San Francisco and Los Angeles" due to intensified policing in those cities.[569] In an "abrupt change in the city's own policy" which previously allowed many LGBTQ+ venues to operate unimpeded, in the winter of 1964 Portland Council denied liquor license renewals for various reportedly queer venues in attempts to stifle Portland's increasing LGBTQ+ population.[570] This included the Half Moon Tavern (122 SW Yamhill St.), Mama Bernice's (1228 SW 3rd Ave.), the Harbor Club (736 SW 1st Ave., also known as Harbor Inn), Derek's Tavern (820 SW Oak St.), Milwaukie Tavern (1535 W Burnside St.) and the Model Inn (1536 SW 1st Ave.).[571] The Harbor Club ultimately closed in early 1965 due to Portland Council refusing to issue it a food license, therefore making it "impossible for that bar to serve the food necessary to fulfill the requirements" of its liquor license.[572]

---

[564] "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.; "Jury Links Sex Crimes with Lewd Magazines," *Oregonian,* March 1, 1964.

[565] Cook and Painter, "1999 Portland Gay History Walking Tour."; "'Anti-Smut' Drive Asked."; Four Men Charged in Obscene Book Sales: Indictments Name 5 Shops in City Center," *Oregon Journal,* January 28, 1965, 1.

[566] Letter from Mayor Terry Schrunk, December 10, 1964, Mss 1497, Box 1, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.

[567] Joanne Lilleoren to Terry Schrunk, August 12, 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society.

[568] "Council Mulls Treatment of Bars Where Unsavory Characters Gather," *Oregonian*, December 4, 1964, 21.

[569] "Police Say California Sex Deviates Coming to Portland," *Oregon Journal*, December 4, 1964, 3.

[570] "Hangouts for Homosexuals," *Oregon Journal,* December 22, 1964, 10J.

[571] "Council Mulls Treatment of Bars Where Unsavory Characters Gather."

[572] Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?," 34.

Concurrently to Council addressing bars, Portland Police carried on campaigns against queer literature. In 1965, Third Avenue Smoke Shop (830 SW 3rd Ave.), Rich's Cigar Store (734 SW Alder St.), 300 Smoke Shop (300 SW Washington St.), and Tony's Smoke Shop (614 SW 2nd Ave.) "were targeted explicitly because they sold magazines and novels that dealt with 'lesbianism'"; employees were arrested on charges of "disseminating obscene paperback books in which the central characters are homosexuals or lesbians."[573] This misdemeanor charge carried a six month jail sentence, a $1,000 fine, or both. The perception against obscene materials across the state influenced local and statewide effort to introduce new legislation that would make the charge "a felony misdemeanor . . . with the penalty to be determined by the sentencing judge upon conviction."[574] Of the individuals arrested, one was charged a $500 fine, and another was convicted for 90 days in jail.[575]

Discourse over obscene materials continued through the late 20th century with heteronormative and homophobic ideologies guiding what activities, venues, and individuals were considered deviant. Scholar Elizabeth Morehead found in "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970-2010" that Portland Police, the City Attorney, City Council, and the Portland Planning Bureau (currently Bureau of Planning and Sustainability" "attempted numerous times to use public policies and land decisions" to shape this discourse and related sexual geography of where venues could be located.[576] For instance, in 1981, the Planning Commission proposed Ordinance No. 153062 to prohibit adult theaters and bookstores from operating in residentially zoned areas or within 500 feet of a residential zone or any school.[577] With this ordinance, venues such as the Oregon Theater (3530 SE Division St., currently Tomorrow Theater) were required to close or relocate within 12 months to comply.[578]

The longstanding concern and homophobic attitudes among elected officials and mainstream society against LGBTQ+ individuals being around and interacting with children influenced policing of all-ages LGBTQ+ spaces like the Stairs Down (615 SE Alder St.), Mildred's Palace (918 SW Yamhill St.), and The City Nightclub (13 NW 13th Ave.). On March 17, 1974, the Portland Police Bureau's Women's Protective Division and other uniformed police officers removed 23 people from Stairs Down on curfew violations (a measure to specifically punish youth) and incarcerated nine in juvenile hall; these individuals were later released.[579]

---

[573] Over 400 books were confiscated by police. The specific titles used to charge the employees included *Dance-Hall Dyke, Her Raging Needs, The Pleasures We Know, A Kind of Marriage,* and *Lesbian Roommates.* See "5 Arrested Here in Crackdown on 'Downtown Smut Mills'," *The Oregon Journal,* Thursday, January 28, 1965, 2.; "Four Men Charged in Obscene Book Sales."; Dirk, "In a garden of deviant roses," 152-155.

[574] Ibid.

[575] Ibid.

[576] Elizabeth Morehead, "Public Policy and Sexual Geography in Portland, Oregon, 1970-2010," 13.

[577] Ibid, 108.; Portland City Council, Ordinance No. 153062, City of Portland Archives, Portland, Oregon.

[578] Laurel Slater, "Adult Theatres may be forced to move under new ordinance," *Vanguard,* February 5, 1982; Spencer Heinz, "City Hall draws bead on 'juice bar' nudity," *Oregonian,* December 6, 1983.

[579] "Better Here," *Northwest Gay Review,* May 1974, 14.

Mildred's Palace owner Lanny Swerdlow also recalled police waiting outside the venue to arrest LGBTQ+ youth on the same charge.[580]

The City Nightclub, an all-ages venture Swerdlow opened in 1983, faced increasingly severe treatment from City authorities over several years. Swerdlow recounted an incident in 1989 where the club was subjected to what he described as an "illegal raid" by Portland Police, Fire Marshals, the Bureau of Buildings, and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.[581] In 1992, Swerdlow and then-Police Chief Tom Potter reached a "precedent setting" agreement to address the various issues plaguing the club, including alleged drug use, sexual activities, and violence.[582] However, following Potter's resignation from the bureau in 1993, Swerdlow understood that the police failed to uphold their agreement to partner in addressing criminal activity thereby enabling the police to cite the Specified Crime Property Ordinance (also known as the "drug house" ordinance) in efforts to close the club in the mid-1990s.[583] In December 1995, Senior Deputy City Attorney Nancy E. Ayres filed a civil suit against the building owner to force The City Nightclub to permanently close. Struggling to resolve these challenges, the long-time youth venue ultimately closed two years later.[584]

Many LGBTQ+ Portlanders endured discrimination and physical violence in addition to City-sanctioned closures when going out. For instance, in 1984, fundamentalist picketers brandished intense hate signs and confronted attendees of a Portland Gay Men's Chorus (PGMC) concert at Benson High School (546 NE 12th Ave.), which was the first time in the history of the PGMC that such an incidence had occurred."[585] In 1991, Portland photographer and activist Catherine Stauffer attended an Oregon Citizen Alliance meeting at Foursquare Church (1303 SE Ankeny St.), where she suffered an assault by OCA Communications Director Scott Lively.[586]

---

[580] George T. Nicola, "A History of Oregon's Major LGBTQ Equality Organizations, excerpt in Robin Will, "Portland's Legendary Youth Clubs, 1977-1998."

[581] Inga Sorensen, "The Short Goodbye," *Just Out,* November 15, 1996, 14.

[582] Tom Potter, a strong advocate and ally for LGBTQ+ equity, was appointed Police Chief in 1990. In 1991, he became the first Chief of Police to march in Portland's Gay Pride parade. The Potter family gained national attention following their 'coming out' articles in *Just Out* and the *Oregonian.* In 2004, he was elected Portland Mayor and continued his advocacy of LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion. See Anndee Hochman, "Potter stresses equality," *Just Out,* volume 8, number 7, May 1991.; "Tom and Katie Potter," Queer Heroes Northwest 2017, Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6571Tom%20&%20Katie%20Potter.html.; "Tom and Katie Potter," The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/16-tom-katie-potter/.

[583] Ariel Waterwoman, "Portland to lose visionary leader," *Just Out,* April 1, 1993, 8.

[584] Sorensen, "The Short Goodbye."; Sorensen, "Lanny Revisited," *Just Out,* January 7, 2000, 1, 8, 9.

[585] Fortunately, Steve Fulmer said the picket galvanized even more people to purchase tickets. "Fundamentalist pickets confront concertgoers," *Just Out,* March 30, 1984, 4.

[586] Stauffer "maintained friendly contact with OCA" starting in the early 1990s. She received an invitation to this event. Stauffer sued the OCA, ultimately shutting down the OCA by the early 2000s. Catherine Stauffer, "Knock down, drag out with the OCA," *Just Out,* November 1, 1991, 8.; Inga Sorensen, "OCA Watch," *Just Out,* December 1, 1991, 10.; David Batterson, "She Won!," *Just Out,* November 1, 1992, 14.;"The Lawsuit that Shuts down the OCA,"; The Stories, No on 9 Remembered, https://noon9remembered.org/stories/29-the-lawsuit-that-shut-down-the-oca/.

Centers of Empowerment

Despite concerted efforts during the 20th century to eradicate LGBTQ+ visibility from cities like Portland using various legal and political tactics, numerous LGBTQ+ individuals and allies united to resist oppressive measures aimed at curtailing LGBTQ+ civil rights and spaces.

During Mayor Schrunk's 1964 political campaign attempting to close six bars associated with LGBTQ+ clientele, bar owners resisted with newfound support. The owners retained local attorneys James Damis and W.F. Whitely to defend the bars under the recently enacted Civil Rights Act which prohibited discrimination in public places.

It [was] clear that this recommendation from the city [was] not because of any activity that was going on at the bar . . . It [was] simply because gay people congregate[d] there. And that's not constitutionally permissible.

— Attorney James Damis, 2018 [587]

Despite Council's persistent refusal to approve these bars' liquor renewals, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) opted to renew all the bars' licenses, agreeing that the bars had not committed any legal violations and thus finding no valid justification for denying their renewals. This OLCC decision marked their first divergence from City Council recommendations and a significant triumph for LGBTQ+ Portlanders to gather freely in downtown queer venues.

In the years following, political activism shifted towards advocating for and supporting statewide legislation to protect LGBTQ+ individuals in addition to access to bars. There was a feeling among some Portlanders in the 1970s that "things were great because unlike other places, the City of Portland didn't hassle" LGBTQ+ for some time.[588] In 1971, Portland activist George Nicola noted in a *Fountain* article how "for a long time Portland gays have sat back, securely and comfortably, bragging about what they thought was an ideal situation in this city— no police harassment and lots of fun nightlife."[589] Second Foundation of Oregon secretary Carol Brefford compared her experiences in Portland to California in a 1973 KBOO radio interview with Lanny Swerdlow, feeling that queer people "weren't harassed up here . . . we're kind of pushed aside and not so much acknowledged." [590] This feeling among some Portlanders made getting support for bar-based political organizing challenging compared to other cities. Nicola questioned if Portlanders were "sitting on a powder keg" with this environment.[591]

---

[587] Zach Dundas, "In 1964, Portland Tried to Crack Down on the City's Gay Scene. Here's What Happened.," Features, News & City Life, Portland Monthly, May 22 2018, https://www.pdxmonthly.com/news-and-city-life/2018/05/in-1964-portland-tried-to-crack-down-on-the-city-s-gay-scene-here-s-what-happened.

[588] George Nicola, "Viewpoint," *The Fountain*, September 1971, 18.

[589] Ibid.

[590] It is important to note that Nicola's and Brefford's experiences are not representative of al Portlanders during this period. Intersections of class, race, age, and ability could impact how policed or "hassled" one was.

[591] "Viewpoint," *The Fountain*, September 1971, 18.

The fact is that as long as homosexuals are proscribed in any manner by the law, as long as they have to live in a society where discrimination and prejudice run rampant and are even justified by professionals who call us "sick." Then we will never really be free from the whims of self-seeking politicians out to win the next election by stirring up the groundless fears of the voting public. But those changes can only come about from a mass-based gay rights movement. And such movements do not come from behind oak panelled closet doors. Wake up Portlanders before it is too late!

— George Nicola "Viewpoint," 1971 [592]

Nonetheless, members of emerging LGBTQ+ political organizations significantly recognized queer social venues as prominent recruiting and fundraising spaces for legislative measures from the mid-1970s through the late 1990s. For instance, in 1973, Nicola convened the first Oregon Gay Political Caucus at the newly opened Gay Community Center (258 SW Alder St., demolished). The Caucus aimed to coordinate activities of Oregon's flourishing gay rights groups who could mobilize statewide resources and political power toward effecting legal reforms.[593] Other political benefits and events were hosted at a variety of spaces, including Zorba The Greek (626 SW Park Ave.), Koinoina House (633 SW Morrison St.), and Montgomery Park (2701 NW Vaughn St).[594]

There were people who went out to the bars, sold buttons, talked, asked for donations, invite[d] people to meetings and all of that. We had a series of something called courtyard follies, which was out behind a bar . . . we'd bring in bales of hay and things . . . it's like let's have a show, [we] did [a] talent show and people would sing and dance, or whatever they were doing . . . And those things would raise $100 or $200 at a time.

— Portland LGBTQ+ activist Larry Copeland [595]

While bars secured their safety, local LGBTQ+ youth and activists sought out political support to protect queer youth and venues from policing. In the 1970s, Mildred's Palace owner Lanny Swerdlow attempted numerous times to ensure there was a safe space for queer youth. First, Swerdlow approached LGBTQ+ organization Portland Town Council (PTC) for support against police entering the club and arresting queer youth. PTC provided a recommendation for local attorney Craig Colby who argued with the City Attorney against illegal police entry of a private establishment and curfew violation.[596] The police began to wait for

[592] Ibid.

[593] "Gay Political Caucus to Meet," *The Fountain*, January 1973, 3.; "Oregon Gay Political Caucus Holds Meeting," *The Fountain*, March 1973.

[594] "Courtyard Follies to Open," *Oregonian,* June 22, 1979, E12.; Oral history interview with Susie Shepherd.; Oral history interview with Larry S. Copeland, by Emily Bowen and Kenty Truong, SR 11233, Oregon Historical Society Research Library. "No on 9 Thanks and acknowledgements," *Just Out,* November 15, 1992, 24.

595Oral history interview with Larry S. Copeland.

[596] Nicola, excerpt in Will, "Portland's Legendary Youth Clubs, 1977-1998."

queer youth to exit before making arrests which only influenced individuals to stay at the club all night.[597] Swerdlow then approached Portland City Commissioner Charles Jordan for assistance; under Jordan's leadership, Portland Police left Mildred's alone. By the 1990s, the scrutiny of Swerdlow's all-ages club The City Nightclub energized activism to protect the venue, though it would close by 1997.[598]

LGBTQ+ Politics and Policing Summary

From 1905 to 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders and allies advocated for transformative changes in queer visibility, rights, and social acceptance. Criminalization, policing, and stigmatization gradually shifted to recognition and greater legal protections. A spectrum of Portland places from bars to City Hall, apartments to streets, offered environments where LGBTQ+ Portlanders could strategize actions to disrupt oppressive structures. Starting in the 1970s and onward, LGBTQ+ Portlanders actively championed protections from discrimination in employment, housing, family law, and public accommodations. LGBTQ+ politics and civil rights played a crucial role in achieving greater legal and social acceptance for all Portlanders.

[597] Ibid.

[598] On March 18, 1996, over 400 individuals marched from The City Nightclub to City Hall changing "Save the City!" with various signs. The battle over the club even drew attention from MTV news. See Cleopatraproductions1, "The City Nightclub Documentary 1996 from MTV," YouTube, 4:21, October 1, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-y0dErbJHPg.

LGBTQ+ Health

In early 1972, LGBTQ+ Oregonians started to call LGBTQ+ organization Second Foundation of Oregon's newly established Gay Hotline. Callers hoped to receive information on where find LGBTQ+ bars, how to support their LGBTQ+ children, and other related needs.[599] Calls increasingly revolved around access to supportive health services; individuals feared resources would focus exclusively on one's sexuality to the determent of other health concerns.[600] Portlanders Tom Cherry, Dave Van Wagner, Libby Durban, and many others recognized and responded to the escalating need for inclusive queer healthcare by organizing the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities (CCSM) in May 1973.[601] First located at 1007 NW 23rd Avenue, the building had just enough room for phone services. Nonetheless, CCSM staffed a psychiatrist, a psychologist, alcoholic recovery specialists, an attorney, mental health paraprofessionals, and psychology students. With this staff on weekend phone shifts Friday through Sunday, they were "set up . . . to aid persons to discover the most satisfying means of expressing their own sexuality" and help callers with "family, friends, employers, and landlords, and the kind of response they get from the general population."[602] CCSM profoundly altered the landscape of Portland's LGBTQ+ healthcare as Portland's first community-based counseling service explicitly tailored for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Over the 20th century, medical providers like those at the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities, scholars, and advocates challenged entrenched, problematic medical paradigms that marginalized LGBTQ+ people. LGBTQ+ individuals at the forefront of social and medical transformations facilitated the gradual but progressive shift toward redefining and destigmatizing queer identities in society and healthcare. Queer Portlanders created accessible and inclusive care spaces for other queer Portlanders. Queer medical providers and allies integrated these grassroots efforts into the city's predominant healthcare institutions to offer care tailored to the needs of LGBTQ+ Portlanders. LGBTQ+ Portlanders and allies together played crucial roles in supporting, advocating for, and advancing care for LGBTQ+ Portlanders.

---

[599] A Gay Community Catalog," Oregonian, April 6, 1975; Nestor Perala, "Gay Hotline begins 16th year," Just Out, August 1, 1987, 30.

[600] "Counseling for a valid relationship," Northwest Gay Review, 8.; Tom Cherry," Queer Heroes Northwest 2017, Oregon Queer History Collective, June 2017, http://glapn.org/6563TomCherry.html.

[601] This center drew inspiration from similar work in Seattle. See George Nicola, "A History of LGBTQ Oregonians and Mental Health 1970 – 2017," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last updated January 15, 2018, https://www.glapn.org/6054OregonLGBTQMentalHealth.html?query=health&case=&whole=&phrase=. Oregon Historical Society holds Libby Durbin's papers, including materials related to the counseling center. See Libby Durbin papers, circa 1975-2012, Mss 2988-21, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.

[602] Charles Fantz, "Helpful Series," *Oregon Journal*, April 11, 1974, 18.; "Sex minorities center seeks funds," *Oregonian,* August 7, 1975. The center's focus drew homophobic political criticism from Portland City Commissioners, impacting the center's finances and ability to operate. See BJ Noles, "City Council Balks over Job Funds," *Oregonian,* August 7, 1975; Huntly Collins, "Job funds 'given to lobby groups'," *Oregonian*, August 13, 1975, 33; Francis J. Ivancie, "No Dating Center," *Oregon Journa*l, August 30, 1975, 4.

"LGBTQ+ Health" explores a range of healthcare initiatives that substantially contributed to the city's comprehension of and care for diverse genders and sexualities during the 1905 to 1994 period. To safeguard patient-provider privacy, exact locations and information associated with many healthcare efforts were intentionally obscured and withheld from historical and contemporary public record. The criminalization of certain healthcare procedures throughout much of the 20th century further contributes to a lack of records.[603] Nonetheless, various Portland locations are known to have hosted clinics, workshops, meetings, and other health-associated services that contributed to Portland's diverse healthcare landscape.

Anti-LGBTQ+ Healthcare Background

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, medical fields including the study of human sexuality (sexology) and the study of the human mind (psychology) influenced social perceptions and understandings of diverse sexualities and genders. Most medical providers and mainstream society viewed LGBTQ+ individuals through a lens of pathology and attributed an LGBTQ+ individual's medical concerns solely to their diverse gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexuality.[604] Many health care professionals justified harmful medical and legal interventions in misguided efforts to align an individual with perceived pathological, "abnormal" and "deviant" behaviors and identities into acceptable heteronormativity and cisnormativity.[605] Bethania Owens-Adair, one of the Pacific Northwest's earliest physicians, strongly advocated in her 1910 publication *Human Sterilization* to "relieve loathsome victims from an unnamable vice . . . their curse and destruction by a simple surgical method that might give them a chance to recover their reason."[606] Owens-Adair significantly tied together sexuality and mental health by connecting vice (coded language that included diverse sexual activities) to a loss of mental capacities. This detrimental medical perspective coupled with invasive and harmful procedures impacted the livelihood of individuals across the Pacific Northwest through the remainder of the 20th century.

Peter Boag's *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest* finds that Portland's 1912 exposé of men engaging in same-sex activities referred to as the "Vice Clique"

---

[603] For example, abortion services have been criminalized for much of the 20th century. For further Portland history on abortion, see Michael Helquist, "'Criminal Operations': The First Fifty Years of Abortion Trials in Portland, Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116 no. 1 (Spring 2015): 6-39.; Michael Helquist, "'Lewd, Obscene and Indecent': The 1916 Portland Edition of *Family Limitation,*" *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117 no. 2 (Summer 2016): 274-287.

[604] See "Oregon and LGBTQ+ History Background, Pre- 1905" in "An Overview of Portland LGBTQ+ History, 1905-1994" for additional discussion on early medical theories and perspectives.

[605] LGBTQ+ people nationwide endured confinement in healthcare facilities and suffered from invasive medical procedures such as forced sterilization, forced castration, and/or electroshock therapy. For additional information on electroshock therapy, see Ren L[i]u, "Shock the Gay Away: Unpacking the Farrall Instruments Electro-Shock Machine," News, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Sothern California, https://one.usc.edu/news/shock-gay-away-unpacking-farrall-instruments-electro-shock-machine-0.; Sarah Baughey-Gill, "When Gay was Not Okay with The APA: A Historical Overview of Homosexuality and its Status as a Mental Disorder," Occam's Razor 1 (2011): 6 – 16, https://cedar.wwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=orwwu.

[606] Dr. B Owens Adair, *Human Sterilization*, 55. https://digital.osl.state.or.us/islandora/object/osl%3A33385. For additional information on Owens-Adar, see "Suffrage and Sterilization: Dr. Owens-Adair," Oregon State Hospital Museum of Mental Health, https://oshmuseum.org/suffrage-and-sterilization-dr-owens-adair/.

scandal significantly influenced anti-LGBTQ+ healthcare through the subsequent decades. First, the scandal presented "a new reason for state mandated sterilization" with local press, lawmakers, and mainstream society increasingly connecting same-sex sexual activities to ideas of infection, disease, and degradation, and thus supporting such extreme measures in response.[607] For instance, a November 1912 *Oregonian* article entitled "The Misconception of Eugenics" postulated that Portland would benefit from forcibly sterilizing those in the "Vice Clique" "than to shut them up in prison, where they will merely infect all around them with the venom of their disease."[608] Then-Oregon Governor Oswald West also supported forced sterilization against "degenerates who slink, in all their infamy, through every city, contaminating the young, debauching the innocent, cursing the State."[609] By February 1913, Oregon lawmakers enacted House Bill 69, which classified LGBTQ+ Oregonians as "menaces to the public peace, health, and safety" and authorized involuntary sterilization for those deemed such "menaces."[610] Oregon's state-sponsored eugenics-based policy remained in practice for decades; in 1983 the Oregon State Senate repeal the last law, officially abolishing the Board of Eugenics and marking the end to this heinous procedure.[611]

Secondly, the "Vice Clique" influenced the local Social Hygiene Society of Portland (renamed the Oregon Social Hygiene Society in 1913) to disseminate sexual health information to combat "social vices" and reinforced heterosexual sexuality.[612] The Society viewed the "Vice Clique" as a reflection of increasing moral degeneracy and unacceptable sexual activities in Oregon.[613] Thus, the Society's materials predominantly emphasized eliminating "the spread of 'vile' practices by implanting 'wholesome sex' ideas into the minds of the ignorant youth."[614] Heteronormative perspectives remained prominent in sexual

[607] Baog, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 208.
[608] "Misconception of Eugenics, *Oregonian,* November 24, 1912, 6, quoted in Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs,* 209.
[609]Ibid.
[610] Boag stresses the significance of this bills as the "first time in the history of eugenics bills in Oregon, the very people whom society increasingly conceptualized as 'homosexuals' and who had come to attention in the recent Portland scandal were no singled out and specifically targeted for sterilization." Ibid, 210.
[611] Eugenics is a set of beliefs and practices aimed at improving the genetic quality of a population. Eugenicists view certain characteristics, qualities, traits, and whole demographic groups as either inferior and "unfit" or superior. LGBTQ+ individuals are not the exclusive focus of eugenicists; diverse racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities and/or little to no income have also suffered from eugenics as the movement has been rooted in racist, ableist, and classist ideologies. Various control efforts are utilized to enhance or eliminate what is deemed inferior or superior, including forcible sterilization and marriage laws. Between 1923 and 1983, Oregon forcibly sterilized over 2,600 individuals. For additional Oregon eugenics history, see Oregon Public Broadcasting, "Eugenics: In the Shadow of Fairview, Oregon Experience," YouTube, July 18, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NYB_C6tVnA.; Mark Largent, "'The Greatest Curse of the Race': Eugenic Sterilization in Oregon, 1909-1983," Oregon Historical Quarterly 103 no. 2, (2002): 188–209. For broader history, see Mark Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (Rutgers University Press, 2007).
[612] Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs*, 189-197.
[613] Ibid, 198.
[614] Boag, Same-Sex Affairs, 189-190. Also see Jodi Hammond, "Hitting the Line Hard: The Height of the Social Hygiene Movement in Oregon, 1911- 1918" (2001) Dissertations and Theses. Paper 6081. https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.7951.; Dimitra Fellman, "The Nuclear Family and Gender Roles in Oregon's Venereal Disease Campaign: 1911- 1918," Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal 18, vol. 1 (2021): 13 -25.

health information through the mid-century to reinforce traditional gender roles, acknowledge only heterosexual relationships, and marginalize diverse sexual activities and identities.[615]

Through the mid-20th century, medical professionals continued to pathologize and marginalize LGBTQ+ identities. In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) classified homosexuality under "sociopathic personality disturbance" in their inaugural edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), cementing harmful perspectives against diverse sexuality.[616] This classification "established a hierarchy of sexual deviances" with heterosexuality centered as the 'norm'," and justified continued professional attempts at supposed cures for homosexuality.[617] In 1970, for instance, Portland State University students seeking campus counseling were purportedly advised to "go straight" to resolve concerns regarding their sexuality.[618]

> **. . . Visits often led to misdiagnosis, judgment, ostracism, and treatment for their sexuality rather than their medical ailments. In addition, medical care was often expensive and held the possibility of extortion, since [LGBTQ+ people] typically paid for their health care out of pokey and avoided using insurance for feat that employers would learn of their sexuality and then harass or fire them . . . Many dreaded that disclosure of their sexual activities would not remain confidential with their doctor, leading to ridicule from their families, termination from their jobs, or both, and these concerns had merit . . . Venereal disease testing at Department of Health clinics in many cities commonly required disclosure of the patient's name and of all previous sexual partners before treatment was given.**
>
> — Historian Katie Batza summarizing LGBTQ+ healthcare in *Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s* [619]

For Community, By Community

Homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, and classism permeated healthcare services both nationally and in Portland throughout the 20th century, prompting many who experienced discrimination to establish their own practices to better serve diverse patients.[620] Historian Dr. Susan Ferentinos emphasized

---

[615] Examples include government propaganda warning men against potential sexually transmitted diseases from women, sex hygiene classes that reflected the eras' moral agendas, and military venereal infection contact reports that assumed a serviceperson's sexuality. See "(H)our History Lesson: Women's Sexual Health & Safety on the World War II Home Front," Articles, National Park Service, Last updated August 28, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/-h-our-history-lesson-women-s-sexual-health-safety-on-the-world-war-ii-home-front.htm.

[616] Rebecca Graham, Kisa Hooks, and Louis Berger, *Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources,* (District of Columbia Office of Planning Historic Preservation Office, September 2019), 2-16.

[617] Ray Levy Uyeda, "How LGBTQ+ Activists Got "Homosexual" out of the DSM," Politics & History, Jstor Daily, May 26, 2021, https://daily.jstor.org/how-lgbtq-activists-got-homosexuality-out-of-the-dsm/.

[618] PSU Gays Seek School Response," *The Fountain*, December 1972, 16.; David Grant Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People*, 51.

[619] Katie Batza, *Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 1.

[620] For an overview of U.S. LGBTQ+ Health history, see Katie Batza, "LGBTQ and Health," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History,* ed. Megan E. Springate (National Park Foundation, 2016), 22-1 – 22-26.

in "Beyond the Bar: Types of Properties Related to LGBTQ History" that "the boundaries between politics and health . . . are not impermeable," as healthcare initiatives took shape in various settings: bars, bathhouses, stores, private residences, churches, office buildings, dental clinics, and hospitals.[621] These community hubs offered temporary and ongoing services tailored to a wide range of healthcare services and specific needs, including sexual healthcare, mental healthcare, and lesbian-centric healthcare. However, while some of these initiatives have been documented, there remains a significant opportunity for future research to comprehensively explore the full breadth and depth of community-led healthcare efforts in Portland during the 1905–1994 period and beyond.[622] Such research could shed light on the invaluable contributions of grassroots initiatives and their enduring impact on healthcare in the city.

Sexual Healthcare

The practice of Doctor Marie Equi, the city's first openly queer physician from 1905 until her retirement in 1931, stands out as a nonconforming figure in Portland's early 20th century medical history and offers insight into potential queer-competent sexual health services.[623] Equi was one of the first sixty women to graduate from a state school with a degree in medicine.[624] Holistic health and advocacy for historically marginalized communities characterized her medical practice. For example, in the mid-1910s, she partnered with birth control advocate Margaret Sanger to revise editions of Sanger's pamphlet, *Family Limitation;* these revisions provided additional medical information and increased appeal to working class and union members, a demographic to which Equi dedicated her services.[625] While the exact number of queer patients Equi treated is unknown, her status as an openly queer figure in Portland likely influenced LGBTQ+ Portlanders to seek out her medical care.[626] Her legacy is a testament to the vital role of LGBTQ+ healthcare leaders in challenging societal norms and advocating for accessible healthcare services.

Over the next forty years, "nearly all medical literature and education on homosexuals focused on homosexuality itself as an illness."[627] Yet, between the 1920s and the 1970s, American social attitudes,

---

[621] Susan Ferentinos, "Beyond the Bar: Types of Properties Related to LGBTQ History," *Change Over Time* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2018) 144 – 163.

[622] For instance, the Marie Equi Center, formerly the Equi Institute, was founded in 2014 to "empower and improve the health of LGBTQIA2S+ folks in the Pacific Northwest."

[623] Equi initially practiced in the fifth-floor office in the Oregonian Building (formerly SW 6th and Alder St., demolished), before relocating to other offices in the Medical Building (523 SW Alder St., currently the Park Building), Central Building (403 Central Building), and LaFayette Building (34-35 Lafayette Building).

[624] Michael Helquist, "Marie Equi (1872-1952)," Oregon Encyclopedia, Last Updated September 9, 2024, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/equi_marie_1872_1952_/.

[625] Michael Helquist notes Equi "toned down the text on sexual pleasure and dropped specific mention of abortion…Equi also reminded women of their responsibility to limit the 'human material for exploiters and militarists.'" Additionally, Equi was one of Portland's few physicians openly offering and performing abortions in the early 1910s. See Helquist, *Marie Equi,* 149.; Helquist, "'Criminal Operations': The First Fifty Years of Abortion Trials in Portland, Oregon."

[626] One queer individual Equi is known to have examined was Harry Allen. See Michael Helquist, "Transgender Appearance in 1912 Portland, Oregon," Change Your Day, Michaelhelquist, Last Updated April 15, 2016, https://www.michaelhelquist.com/change-your-day/transgender-appearance-in-1912-portland-oregon.

[627] Batza, *Before AIDS,* 4.

sexual ethics, intimate behavior, and sexology research underwent radical revolutions.[628] Known as the sexual liberation movement, changes in medicine and society shaped the departure of previous sexual expression and diversity norms. For instance, the marketing and availability of different birth control methods (namely the birth control pill in 1960) throughout the late 20th century gave many more freedom in their sexual lives. Sexologists including Alfred Kinsey, William H. Masters, and Virginia E. Johnson advanced nuanced understandings in same-sex sexual activities, pleasure, and sexual dysfunction through their respective publications *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953, and *Human Sexual Response* in 1966.[629]

With the "challenges to medical authority, the lingering radicalism of the 1960s, and government policies . . . [and] the incident of venereal disease among the adult population in the United States . . . the atmosphere in which gay health activism could thrive" did, Batza finds in their research.[630] Through the 1970s, LGBTQ+-focused and competent sexual health initiatives gained momentum and challenged prevailing heteronormative approaches. Nationwide and in Portland partnerships between LGBTQ+ organizations and free clinics emerged in the mid-1970s, marking a significant shift in sexual health advocacy. "Free and confidential venereal disease checks" were hosted at Portland's Workout Baths (531 SW 12th Ave.), Olympic Baths (first at 359 SW Morrison St.), and the Majestic Hotel & Baths (303 SW 12th Ave.) on March 23, 1974, reflecting collaboration between the LGBTQ+ organization Second Foundation of Oregon, bath owners and managers, Multnomah County Health Department, and the Governor's Task Force on Venereal Disease.[631] Emerging partnerships such as these departed from previous norms by specifically catering to LGBTQ+ Portlanders' sexual health at locations they frequented, which would continue through the late 20th century.

Mental Health Resources

For much of the 20th century, LGBTQ+ Portlanders were reluctant to seek support in potentially homophobic medical spaces due to dominant medical and social discrimination against LGBTQ+ identities. Portland activist Lanny Swerdlow explained in 1975 that "the degree of self-hate instilled by an

---

[628] Scholars note the 1920s as among the "first" sexual revolutions in America. See John Levi Martin, "Structuring the Sexual Revolution," *Theory and Society* 25 no. 1 (1996):105-151. Andrea Tone, "Contraceptive consumers: Gender and the Political Economy of Birth Control in the 1930s," *Journal of Social History,* 29, no. 3 (Spring 1996):485-506.; Beth Baily, "Prescribing the Pill: Politics, Culture, and the Sexual Revolution in America's Heartland," *Journal of Social History* 30 no. 4 (Summer 1997): 837-856.; Kevin F. White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (NYU Press, 1992).

[629] Alfred Kinsey, W. Pomeroy, and C. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (W.B. Saunders, 1949).; Alfred Kinsey, W. Pomeroy, C. Martin, and Paul Gebhard, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (W.B. Saunders, 1953).; Williams H. Masters, Virginia E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (Bantam Books, 1966).; "Diversity of sexual orientation," Research, Kinsey Institute, https://kinseyinstitute.org/research/publications/historical-report-diversity-of-sexual-orientation.php#Kinsey1948.; "Masters & Johnson Collection," Archival Scholarly Works, Collections, Kinsey Institute, https://kinseyinstitute.org/collections/archival/masters-and-johnson.php.

[630] Catherine Batza, "Before AIDS: Gay and Lesbian Community Health Activism in the 1970s," (Thesis, University of Illinois Chicago, 2012), https://indigo.uic.edu/articles/thesis/Before_AIDS_Gay_and_Lesbian_Community_Health_Activism_in_the_1970s/10910060?file=19408433.

[631] "Operation Steam Clean," *Northwest Gay Review,* May 1974.

oppressive society and the agonizing difficulty encountered in 'coming out' . . . has generally never been dealt with effectively by 'straight' mental health agencies."[632]

By the late 1970s, additional organizations to the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities provided queer-focused mental health services. The gay political organization Portland Town Council (PTC) began to orient its educational branch Portland Town Council Foundation towards counseling in 1979.[633] PTC Foundation was renamed to Phoenix Rising by 1983 and emphasized mental health, education, referrals, and friendship in a "place to grow, learn, play, and form new friendships."[634] Phoenix Rising became the "nation's first gay/lesbian tax-exempt foundation" and set a standard for similar services across the country through its various support groups, panels, workshops and retreats that offered LGBTQ+ Portlanders opportunities to "submerge . . . into a totally [LGBTQ+] environment . . . to relate on a level not possible within heterosexual society."[635] Phoenix Rising relocated several times to larger office spaces at 408 SW 2nd Avenue and 620 SW 5th Avenue to accommodate additional programming.[636]

These queer-led, informed, and affirming centers influenced mainstream care systems to increasingly focus on assisting LGBTQ+ Oregonians in areas like stress, anxiety, substance abuse, and major life changes instead of looking to cure their diverse sexuality and gender.[637] Other organizations and health departments increasingly sought LGBTQ+-led counseling services in the late 1980s and early 1990s, particularly as mainstream services attempted to develop their own LGBTQ+-affirming care programs. Several individual LGBTQ+-led or supportive mental health providers emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s to provide services outside of large organizations, advertising across Portland's queer media.[638] In total, the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities operated for 16 years and Phoenix Rising for 21 years; together, they were the first, the largest, and the longest operating LGBTQ+-led mental health service centers in Portland during the 1905–1994 period.

---

[632] Lanny Swerdlow, "A Gay Community Catalog," *Oregonian*, April 6, 1975, 122.

[633] Portland Town Council developed three arms of LGBTQ+ organizing: lobbying through Portland Town Council, PTC Political Action Committee to get candidates elected and funded, and Town Council Foundation for education. Eventually, all of Portland Town Council became Phoenix Rising. See Oral history interview with Larry S. Copeland, by Emily Bowen and Kenty Truong, SR 11233, Oregon Historical Society Research Library; Nicola, "A History of LGBTQ Oregonians in Mental Health 1970-2017,"; Nicola, "A History of Oregon's Major LGBTQ Equality Organizations," Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, Last Updated May, 14, 2015, http://glapn.org/6026EqualityOrganizations.html; Pat Young, "How It All Began," Just Out, October 6, 2000, 25, 27,

[634] Ibid.; Ad, *Just Out,* November 1, 1985, 15.; Jonathan Kipp, "Phoenix Falling," *Just Out,* October 6, 2000, 24.

[635] "Phoenix Rising broadens service base," *Just Out,* October 1, 1985, 7.

[636] Phoenix Rising's on the move," *Just Out,* May 1, 1987, 5.; Ad, *Just Out,* January 1, 1988, 31.; Ad, *Just Out,* August 1, 1991, 24.

[637] Swerdlow, "A Gay Community Catalog."

[638] Private practices withheld their addresses for safety. See Professional Services, *Just Out,* various dates.

Lesbian Healthcare

Women's health initiatives starting in the 1970s aimed to improve "health care for all women and end sexism in the health system."[639] However, lesbians in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1900s continued to experience significant barriers in accessing medical care due to various factors such as sexist and homophobic attitudes within medical settings creating unwelcoming environments for lesbian patients, the absence of targeted healthcare services tailored to the needs of lesbians, financial constraints, and limited education about health issues.[640]

> **[This doctor at Oregon Health Sciences University (3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road)]. . . all he wanted to talk about [was] me being a lesbian . . . I said 'Listen, I'm not here because I'm a lesbian, I'm here because I have breast cancer.'**
>
> — April Lewis sheds light on the struggles faced by lesbians navigating the healthcare system after her breast cancer diagnosis, 1997 [641]

In the 1980s and 1990s, a notable rise in dedicated lesbian healthcare providers, organizations, and conferences marked improvements for competent care. The Portland Feminist Women's Health Center (6510 SE Foster Road) introduced lesbian health self-help groups starting in the 1980s, which served as platforms for sharing vital information, creating support groups for health-related challenges, and empowering lesbians to "actively participate in their healthcare."[642] Moreover, lesbian naturopathic physicians (for example, Suzanna A. Scopes, no address provided) and chiropractors (for example, Circle Chiropractic, 423 S.E. 15th Ave.) played significant roles in addressing the dearth of lesbian-led care within mainstream medical institutions.[643] In October 1994, local nonprofit Lesbian Community Project sponsored the Lesbian Health Conference at Good Samaritan Hospital (1015 NW 22nd Ave.), a groundbreaking conference featuring discussions on "living with chronic illness, alternative health care, and building a healthy lesbian community."[644]

Allied Institutions

Despite mainstream medicine harboring animosities towards LGBTQ+ individuals and perpetuating discriminatory practices throughout the 20th century, the late 1960s marked a turning point with institutions increasingly recognizing the importance of providing inclusive care and services. During the latter half of the 20th century, institutions such as the University of Oregon Medical School (3181 SW Sam

---

[639] H, Mariekind, "The Women's Health Movement," *International Journal of Health Services* 5, no 2, (1975): 219 quoted in Francine H Nicols, "History of the Women's Health Movement in the 20th Century," *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing* 29, no. 1 (Jan./Feb 2000): 56.

[640] Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 191.; Inga Sorensen, "Health matters," *Just Out,* January 17, 1997, 13.; Barrett White, "Invisible Women: A Legacy of Lesbian Health," Legacy Community Health, https://www.legacycommunityhealth.org/newsblog-invisible-women-a-legacy-of-lesbian-health/.

[641] Sorensen, "Health matters."

[642] Ad, *Just Out,* December 23, 1983, 4.

[643] Ads in Professional services, *Just Out,* various dates.

[644] Inga Sorensen, "Lesbian health issues to be explored at conference," *Just Out,* October 7, 1994, 13.

Jackson Park Road, renamed Oregon Health Sciences University in 1981), Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital (1015 NW 23rd Ave.) and various private practices played crucial roles in complementing grassroots efforts to extend care to LGBTQ+ individuals and families. Among their many health programs, these institutions made significant strides in transgender health.

Transgender Healthcare

Transgender healthcare, and the right to access this care, greatly progressed in the 20th century. Portlander Alan Hart was the first to receive gender-affirming healthcare specifically for a trans man in the United States.[645] While attending college, Hart "found out through perusal of various professional books [his] true condition" and found ways to start expressing this 'condition'.[646] Following graduation in early 1917, Hart consulted with Dr. J. Allen Gilbert's private practice in the Selling Building (610 SW Alder St.) for "psycho-analytic examination and treatment" with the use of "suggestive therapeutics in the hypnoid state" other methods in attempts to have Hart conform to societal expectations of people presumed to be women.[647]

> **Shortly before my graduation [from the University of Oregon Medical School] I consulted a psychiatrist in Portland, Dr. Gilbert, a physician of established reputation; and with him made a complete study of my case, my individual history and that of my family. This was followed by a complete, careful physical examination. The diagnosis arrived at may be summarized as follows: Complete, congenital, and incurable Homosexuality together with a marked modification of the physical organization from the feminine type.**
>
> — Alan Hart, personal letter, 1921 [648]

With Dr. Gilbert, Hart "realized and urged the advisability of sterilization" after accepting his "condition as one of abnormal inversion."[649] At some point between late 1917 and early 1918, Hart received an oophorectomy and a hysterectomy to "face life under conditions that might make life bearable."[650] The removal of Hart's anatomy and resulting sterilization showcase how individuals utilized often harmful medical perspectives of LGBTQ+ individuals and related medical interventions for their own benefit. "I

---

[645] "Expressions as Diverse as the Landscape: The Selling Building, Portland, Oregon," Articles, Find Our Place: LGBTQ+ Heritage in the United States, National Park Service, Last Updated February 20, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/articles/expressions-as-diverse-as-the-landscape-selling-building.htm.; Batza, "LGBTQ and Health."

[646] It is not explained what books, or 'true condition' Hart examined, but it is possible Hart read early sexology works where he learned about diverse gender and sexual identities. Gilbert, "Homo-sexuality and its Treatment," 317.

[647] Ibid, 319.

[648] Alan Hart, "Letter from Alan Hart to Mary Roberts Rinehart, August 3, 1921," Digital Transgender Archive, https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/files/vt150j54x.; Hart, "Letter from Alan Hart to Mary Roberts Rinehart, August 12, 1921," Digital Transgender Archive, https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/files/kd17ct13d.

[649] The term "inversion" and language regarding Hart's sexuality reflected contemporary understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality that often lumped these together under umbrella terms like "invert" or "homosexual.

[650] Gilbert, 320.

have been happier since I made this change than I ever have in my life," Hart expressed in a 1918 interview.[651] Gilbert ultimately supported Hart during a period when most of society discriminated against LGBTQ individuals, concluding in his 1920 *Journal of Mental Disorders* article, "Homosexuality and Its Treatment," that instead of criticism and hounding, [Hart] needs and deserves the respect and sympathy of society."[652]

Little archival materials exist that describe trans Portlanders' lives and healthcare between the 1920s and the late 1950s. However, this does not exclude the possibility of a trans population in Portland during this period. Some might have transitioned and lived their lives without publicly sharing their identity. When their identity did become public knowledge, they might have relocated and rebuilt their life in places where their identities were unknown. Alan Hart experienced this several times through the early 1920s; in a personal letter from 1921 Hart detailed that a former schoolmate informed Hart's employers and local newspapers of his identity, leading him to flee Oregon.[653]

Despite reported ban on surgical transition operations, Portland's University of Oregon Medical School emerged as a major leader in trans healthcare in the mid-20th century.[654] Following recruitment of Dr. Ira Pauly as a practicing psychiatrist and faculty member in 1962, Pauly published the 1965 article "Male Psychosexual Inversion: Transsexualism: A Review of 100 Cases" as the "first global review of the published data on transgender patient outcomes."[655] Pauly recounted in a 2015 interview how he faced challenges in getting the article published "as some folks just [didn't] see this as anything but bizarre . . . immoral, or unethical . . . Anyone who presumed to treat them was equally crazy."[656] Yet, the published article established him as a specialist on the topic and Pauly continued to push forward understandings of gender identities, collaboratively developing a scale for assessing psychological distress related to the incongruence between bodies, assumed genders, and identities.[657]

By the early 1970s, a gender identity and sexuality specialist team with a "half-dozen specialists" including Dr. Pauly and gynecologist Dr. Raphael B. Durfee developed at the University of Oregon Medical School. Though surgical operations occurred "at hospitals away from the medical school," the team assisted

---

[651] Alan Hart, quoted from *Albany Daily Democrat,* in Kami Horton, "Meet Oregonian Dr. Alan Hart, who underwent the first documented gender-confirming surgery in the US," Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 30, 2022, https://www.opb.org/article/2022/06/30/oregon-us-gender-affirming-surgery-history-dr-alan-hart-lgbtqia-history/.
[652] Gilbert, 322.
[653] Hart, "Letter from Alan Hart to Mary Roberts Rinehart, August 3, 1921," and "Letter from Alan Hart to Mary Roberts Rinehart, August 12, 1921."
[654] "Portlander Asks Sex Change Surgery," *Oregon Journal,* September 25, 1972, 4M.
[655] Steve Duckworth, "Queering OHSU: Honoring Our LGBTQ+ History," OHSU Historical Collections and Archives, June 2021, https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/queering-ohsu-honoring-our-lgbtq-history.
[656] Ira B. Pauly and Maija Anderson, OHSU Oral History Program, Historical Collections and Archives, February 18, 2015, https://digitalcollections.ohsu.edu/record/3213.
[657] This psychological distress is gender dysphoria. For more information see "What is Gender Dysphoria," Gender Dysphoria, Patients and Families, American Psychiatric Association, https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria.; Duckworth, "Queering OHSU."

medical transitions through evaluation, hormone therapy, and follow up studies.[658] In 1972, the team estimated they cared for 12 to 15 individuals who had received "gender identity operations" and at least three gender-affirming operations occurred each year in Portland.[659] Scholar Shir Bach speculated in "Tracing Trans Surgery Through the Archives in Portland, Oregon," that the "team evaluated far more people . . . as the gatekeeping model of the time treated surgery as a last resort."[660] Further, Bach drew attention to a lack of centralization information sharing which led specials to see Portlanders individually with no coordination between consulted providers. This resulted in varying numbers of how many individuals were consulted in Portland during the late 20th century.[661]

Parish (last name unknown) and Lois (pseudonym) illuminate experiences of obtaining trans healthcare from this team. In 1972, 26-year-old Portlander Stephani (last name unknown) petitioned Oregon State Welfare Department for coverage of her gender affirming care.[662] Shortly after, she "disappear[ed] from the historical record. In her place, however, came Parish" whose personal background and photos published in a 1974 *Oregon Journal* series remained consistent with Stephani.[663] Parish's *Oregon Journal* series provided insight into "an operation . . . to bring [the] body into harmony with . . . lifelong feelings of gender," though identifying information about "Portland's newly established Sex Identification Team" was withheld for privacy.[664]

> **At the hospital I was surprised that no one in the lobby gave us [Parish and her boyfriend John] a second glance. If they had only known! . . . Someone took me up to my room— and it was evident immediately that the staff had been well-briefed. Everyone treated me as a woman. Nobody said 'him' or stared, or anything like that . . . The second stage of the operation was completed a couple of weeks later . . .**
>
> — Parish describes her experience of gender-affirming care at an unnamed Portland hospital, 1974 [665]

Lois's experiences with this specialized team and Dr. Pauly during the late 1960s and 1970s "serves in stark contract to Parish's," and highlights nuances related to trans identities and affirming care.[666] Pauly

---

[658] "Portlander Asks Sex Change Surgery."
[659] Shir Bach, "Tracing Trans Surgery Through the Archives in Portland, Oregon," Oregon Queer History Collective, Last updated 2020, https://www.glapn.org/6068SurgeryInTransition.html.
[660] Ibid.
[661] Ibid.
[662] "Portlander Asks Sex Change Surgery."; "Welfare Unit Mulls Sex Case," *Oregon Journal,* October 3, 1972, 4M.; "Welfare Rules Out Funds for Sex Change Surgery," *Oregon Journal,* October 30, 1972, 2M.
[663] Shir Bach's research of Parish was unable to locate "Parish's full name or anyone else who knew her." 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." Bach, "Tracing Trans Surgery Through the Archives in Portland, Oregon." This article series is further discussed in "Queer Arts and Entertainment."
[664] Staff of this team "pleased for anonymity." See "Parish, "A Boy Made of 'Sugar and Spice…'," *Oregon Journal,* March 18, 1974, 4M.; "Portland Girl's Story Points Up Sex Identity Problem," *Oregon Journal,* March 18, 1974, 4M.
[665] Parish, "Surgery is 'Rebirth' For Parish, Starts Her New Life," *Oregon Journal,* March 21, 1974, 2M.
[666] Lois was included in Ira Pauly's "Adult Manifestations of Female Transsexualism" under the pseudonym "E.R." Bach, "Tracing Trans Surgery Through the Archives in Portland, Oregon."

evaluated Lois "as an ideal candidate" for gender affirming care based on several contemporary guiding principles: Lois "presented no psychosis and placed in the 95th percentile on an IQ test . . . was able to pass as a man even before hormone therapy . . . and . . . planned on marrying and starting a family in Lake Oswego."[667] Dr. Durfee advised Lois to undergo major surgical operations at Good Samaritan Hospital to relieve developing issues related to hormone therapy and to align Lois's expression and identity. However, this surgical intervention traumatized Lois.

> **So I went to Good Samaritan Hospital and had the original surgery. On my own, with nobody at my side . . . And I had both breasts removed and my ovaries and my uterus in one surgery. And when, when I woke up, I thought, 'Is there anything of me left?' I mean, I just felt like I'd been carved up, which was pretty apt way of thinking about it.**
>
> — Lois describing experiences related to surgical interventions in the 1970s, 2020 [668]

Bach's study of Parish and Lois concluded that the spectrum of trans Portlanders' experiences "underscores the uncomfortable truth that the gate-keeping model of medical transitions didn't lead to ideal outcomes, even by their own standards."[669]

By the late 20th century, specialized trans care shifted from research institutions like University of Oregon Medical School into primarily private practice.[670] Dr. Pauly's departure from Portland in 1978 potentially impacted Portlanders seeking support within institutional settings. Word-of-mouth and information-sharing, therefore, became even more crucial for Portlanders navigating shifting landscapes of transgender care. One Portlander recalled in 2023 that they learned about a southeast Portland practice near Reed College (3203 SE Woodstock Blvd.) "through community" in the 1990s.[671]

Nonetheless, research institutions continued to influence and contribute to trans healthcare in the mid- and late 20th century. During this period, surgical techniques related to gender affirming care greatly improved; in the 1970s for example, San Francisco-based plastic surgeons revolutionized facial feminization and masculinization surgeries.[672] In Portland during the early 1990s, Dr. Toby Meltzer revolutionized techniques for individuals to retain more sensation post-gender affirming surgery at the University of Oregon Medical School (now Oregon Health Science University).[673] Between Pauly's tenure in the 1970s and approximately the late 1980s, a shift in policy related to surgical transitions had occurred.

---

[667] Ibid.
[668] Quoted in Ibid.
[669] Ibid.
[670] Ibid.; Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*.
[671] Anonymous submission, LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project online questionnaire, 2023. This anonymous submission did not provide further details on the private practice.
[672] Facial Feminization and Masculinization are plastic surgery procedures shaping the face to look more feminine or masculine. These surgeries can include procedures to reshape areas of the skull, hair transplants, face-lifts, and/or reshaping the cartilage of the earlobes. For additional information see, Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 291.
[673] Duckworth, "Queering OHSU."

According to Dr. Meltzer, who had joined the school's Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Unit in 1990, Doctors Ed Tank and Robert Demuth had been practicing affirming care "for years."[674] With training, mentorship, and research, Dr. Meltzer had few complications and mastered surgical techniques to become the first surgeon in the country to create a clitoris with sensation for individuals to have full sexual function.[675] Online chatrooms and trans networks spread knowledge of Portland's medical success in the late 1990s. "And all of a sudden, I started seeing people from not just Oregon, but I started seeing people from northern California and Washington state . . . literally overnight this became half my practice," remembered Dr. Meltzer in 2019.[676]

LGBTQ+ Health Summary

From 1905 to 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders and allies advanced the acceptance of diverse genders and sexualities in medical and healthcare settings. Grassroots and individual medical providers established practices in clinics, storefronts, bars, and private homes to provide compassionate LGBTQ+ informed care to challenge discrimination and hostility perpetuated in mainstream healthcare environments. LGBTQ+ healthcare initiates broke significant barriers and were crucial to shifting mainstream medical institutions' understanding, inclusivity, and standards of care.

[674] Toby Meltzer and Morgen Young, May 3, 2019, OHSU Oral History Program, Historical Collections and Archives, Oregon Health Science University, https://digitalcollections.ohsu.edu/record/8756?v=pdf%2Cvid.
[675] Amy Saunders, "Change/MD," Phoenix Mag, April 1, 2016, https://www.phoenixmag.com/2016/04/01/change-md/.; Duckworth, "Queering OHSU."
[676] Toby Meltzer and Morgen Young.

HIV/AIDS Impacts in Portland

On the morning of February 27, 1989, activists convened outside Portland's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) offices (511 NW Broadway), marking a significant moment in the ongoing struggle against human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Individuals hailing from Seattle, San Francisco, and Portland converged to lend their voices to a nonviolent civil disobedience event organized by Portland's chapter of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).[677] Their collective aim was to spotlight the FDA's role in perpetuating a "murderous AIDS policy," a reference to the agency's refusal to release vital treatments. Amidst chants of "ACT UP! Fight Back! Fight AIDS!" echoing through the streets, one activist handcuffed himself to the doorknob of the FDA office, symbolizing ACT UP's determination to confront the government's ineffectiveness in tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This demonstration not only drew attention to pressing HIV/AIDS treatment issues but also underscored burgeoning nationwide solidarity within HIV/AIDS activist movements. It signaled expansion of AIDS activism into regions beyond established epicenters of San Francisco and New York with the Pacific Northwest firmly joining the ranks of those demanding urgent national action to address the epidemic. By day's end, the impassioned protest resulted in the arrest of approximately twelve individuals, further highlighting the unwavering commitment of AIDS activists.[678]

Action by ACT UP/Portland, other chapters, and additional activists through the late 1980s and 1990s led to substantial changes. For instance, the FDA accelerated its approval process for HIV/AIDS drug treatments, and Portlander Joe Doherty remembered individuals being able to walk out of care facilities like Portland-based HIV/AIDS hospice Our House due to the changes in medication.[679] Further, legislative and funding increased services and support, as government action finally addressed the medical and social crisis.

"HIV/AIDS Impacts Portland" explores a range of initiatives and grassroots efforts that emerged during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s. Widespread stigma, lack of institutional support, and increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS diagnoses in Portland challenged and influenced medical institutions and society to respond. Organizations like Cascade AIDS Project, Oregon Minority AIDS Coalition and service providers like Juniper House and HIV Day Center filled the gap of mainstream health services. Local activism during the late 1980s and 1990s raised awareness, disputed stereotypes, and generated

[677] AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power formed in New York City in 1987 as a "grassroots political action group" seeking to "bring widespread attention to the AIDS crisis." For additional history on ACT UP, see NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, May 2018, 66, 68- 71.; Sarah Schulman, Let the Record Show: A Political History of ACT UP NEW York, 1987 – 1993, ; Sam Sanders, Jinae West, Andrea Gutierrez, Sylvie Douglis, Liam McBain, Manuela Lopex Restrepo, Jordana Hochman, "ACT UP: A History of AIDS/ HIV Activism," NPR, June 18, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/06/16/1007361916/act-up-a-history-of-aids-hiv-activism.

[678] Michael Ambrosino, "ACT UP zaps FDA in Portland," *Just Out,* April 1, 1989, 23. Ambrosino was among the individuals arrested, detained at the federal courthouse, and strip-searched by U.S. Marshals. For more information, see "ACT UP Strip search produces federal suit," *Just Out,* October 1, 1989, 12.; Inga Sorensen, "Justice Served," *Just Out,* July 21, 1995, 15.

[679] "ACT UP Accomplishments – 1987 – 2012, ACTUP, https://actupny.com/actions/.; Oral interview with Joe Doherty and Kay Gage, by Ernestina Fuenmayor and Cayla McGrail, June 15, 2023, unrecorded.

funds to support people with HIV/AIDS. Portland's response to HIV/AIDS stemmed from the city's resilience, network of community care, and collaboration of diverse demographics developed before, during, and after the late 20th century.

Portland's HIV/AIDS Healthcare Systems

Medical and Scientific Research

Oregonians' attention and involvement in HIV/AIDS medical and scientific research surged following the state's first case of Kaposi sarcoma (KS) reported in August 1981, notwithstanding the relatively fewer reported case numbers compared to other states containing the most significantly impacted cities.[680] In 1982, Dr. David Regan, a blood disease and cancer specialist affiliated with the Northwest Cancer Research Center at Providence Medical Center (4805 NE Glisan St.), utilized the center's blood testing machines to detect blood abnormalities, including those abnormalities related to the developing health crisis.[681] Providence's 1982 testing was ahead of commercial blood tests, available starting in 1985, and elevated the Research Center to become Oregon's "No. 1 AIDS tracker" by analyzing blood samples.[682] By 1983, Regan and the center's team tracked 40 cases of blood abnormalities related to HIV/AIDS.[683]

Through the early and mid-1980s, medical researchers worked to better define the disease. To recognize broader demographics impacted by the quickening mortality rate, such as children, women, non-LGBTQ+ people, and hemophiliacs, in 1982 the CDC introduced the term Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and a case definition of AIDS.[684] By 1984, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the identification of retrovirus HTLV-III (named HIV in 1986) as the cause of AIDS and the development of a blood test.[685] Blood testing development was imperative, as additional research and reports suggested blood exposure and transfusions were responsible for transmitting AIDS.[686] The initial

---

[680] Alan K Ota, "Immune disease research priority for health agency," *Oregonian*, February 27, 1983, D8, 3M; "Oregon considered low-risk area for AIDS," *Oregonian*, August 17, 1983, B2, 3M; Tom Hager, "AIDS: Deadly Enigma," *Oregonian*, October 2, 1983, NW8.

[681] Portland Providence Medical Center acquired one of three Cytofluorograph machines in the nation to test blood cells. Detecting levels of "helper" T-cells, which help the immune system, determine HIV/AIDS diagnosis. See Ann Sullivan, "Human blood cell 'sorter' captures medical attention," *Oregonian*, Tuesday, September 23, 1980; Hager, "AIDS: Deadly Enigma," *Oregonian*.; "A Timeline of HIV and AIDS,"

[682] The Food and Drug Administration released the Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA), the "first commercial blood test…to detect HIV" on March 2, 1985. It was designed to screen blood banks, not to diagnose patients. For more information, see, Abbott, "How One Test Changed HIV," Products and Innovation, Newsroom, Abbott, November 27, 2019, https://www.abbott.com/corpnewsroom/products-and-innovation/how-one-test-changed-HIV.html.; Merrill Fabry, "This is How the HIV Test was Invented."; Oz Hopkins, "Additional test reduces doubt in AIDS," *Oregonian*, April 25, 1985, D1-D2.

[683] Hager, "AIDS: Deadly Enigma."

[684] On September 24, 1982, the CDC's *MMWR* used AIDS for the first time and defined it as "a disease at least moderately predictive of a defect in cell-mediated immunity, occurring in a person with no known cause for diminished resistance to that disease." See "Current Trends Update on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)—United States," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 31, no. 37 (September 24, 1982): 507-508. 513-514.

[685] Lawrence K. Altman, "New U.S. Report Names Virus That May Cause AIDS," *New York Times,* April 24, 1984, Section C, Page 1.

[686] On December 10, 1982, *MMWR* reported a "suspected case of transfusion-associated AIDS in a 20-month-old San Francisco infant who had none of the known risk factors for AIDS." The March 4, 1983, *MMWR* article, "Current Trends Prevention of

blood tests introduced in 1985 detected the "presence of antibodies to the virus"; these tests were not intended for diagnosing HIV/AIDS itself as the virus could be present without corresponding antibodies.[687] Reportedly, 20% of 1,400 Oregonians who tested in 1985 received positive results, a relatively low number compared to cities like San Francisco, but nonetheless a concern.[688] Considering potential reliability issues, and the urgent need for tests to be accurate and accessible, Portland-based biotech firm Epitope Inc. (formerly at 1920 NW Johnson St., Suite 110) spearheaded national HIV/AIDS testing through the late 1980s with a commercially viable diagnostic test.[689] By October 1987, Epitope's test was extensively utilized in the U.S. and Western Europe to confirm positive HIV results.[690]

While blood testing refined through the late 1980s and early 1990s, experimental treatments of limited drugs attempted to respond to the evolving medical crisis.[691] Often, treatment options largely focused on managing opportunistic infections and symptoms rather than directly targeting the virus. The FDA approved azidothymidine (AZT) in 1987 as the first antiretroviral drug shown to slow the progression of HIV. Yet, AZT caused much concern due to its "unprecedented" approval process, potential side effects, high cost, and access. In 1988, Portlander Dr. Mark Loveless explained that "third-party providers such as insurance companies and welfare agencies are paying for the drug, often only when the criteria on the product insert are met. [Many individuals] do not meet the arbitrary criteria," leading to individuals splitting dosages with others and finding AZT without prescription.[692] "There are desperate things being done by people feeling desperate about their [HIV/AIDS status]," Loveless summarized.[693] Within a few years, the FDA approved additional potential drugs like didanosine (DDI), which was cheaper than AZT.[694]

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): Report of Inter-Agency Recommendations" noted the "possibility of acquiring AIDS through blood components or blood" based on "several cases in persons with no known risk factors who have received blood products or blood within 3 years of AIDS diagnosis." See Institute of Medicine (US) Committee to Study HIV Transmission Through Blood and Blood Products, "History of the Controversy- HIV and the Blood Supply," in *HIV and the Blood Supply: An Analysis of Crisis Decision making* (National Academies Press, 1995), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK232419/.

[687] Since the release of antibody testing in 1985, several concerns arose surrounding its reliability, including "time needed to develop a positive antibody," that would show up in testing. Further, the release of this 1985 test focused on protecting the national blood supply. See Hopkins, "Additional test reduces doubt in AIDS," D2.; Hopkins, "Portland company works on test to diagnose AIDS infection," B1.; Jay Brown, "HTLV III antibody test—don't take it," Just Out, May 1, 1985, 6.; Thomas S. Alexander, "Human Immunodeficiency Virus Diagnostic Testing: 30 Years of Evolution," *Clin Vaccine Immunol* 23 no. 4 (April 4, 2016): 249-253.; Merrill Fabry, "This is How the HIV Test was Invented," *TIME*, June 27, 2016, https://time.com/4377408/history-hiv-testing/.

[688] "20% positive rate at state alternative sites," *Just Out,* April 1, 1986, 8.

[689] Epitope Inc., originally named Immunologic Associates, Inc. when formed in 1979, relocated to Beaverton by 1987. See Oz Hopkins, "Portland business arms biomedical arsenal," *Oregonian*, December 29, 1983, B6, 3M; Michael C. Hubbard, "Sees no Connection," Letter to the Editor, *Oregonian*, April 6, 1985; Donald J. Sorensen, "Epitope leader of NW Stocks," *Oregonian*, March 3, 1987, D8, 3M.; Oz Hopkins, "Portland company works on test to diagnose AIDS infection," *Oregonian*, October 5, 1986, B1.; Jack Riley, "Oregon firms make medical news," *Just Out*, May 1, 1989, 5.

[690] "Epitope to Buy Back Some of Its Stock," *Oregonian,* October 28, 1987, Sec. C7.

[691] Jeffrey Zurlinden, "AIDS 101," *Just Out,* October 1, 1989, 6.

[692] Doris Wisher, "AZT: Genie or viral treachery?," *Just Out,* February 1, 1988, 14.; Alice Park, "The Story Behind the First AIDS Drug," *TIME,* March 19, 2017, https://time.com/4705809/first-aids-drug-azt/.

[693] Ibid.

[694] Katrin Snow, "DDI in Portland," *Just Out,* November 1, 1991, 12.

Drug combinations, referred to as drug "cocktails," became increasingly common though no cure for HIV/AIDS was discovered by the mid-1990s.

Health Services and Care

During the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, national and local networks of institutions and grassroots initiatives increasingly collaborated to address the multifaceted needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS. Hospitals, hospices, clinics, and community-based care programs played vital and complementary roles in providing medical treatment, care, psychosocial support, medical research, and advocacy. Grassroots care programs filled gaps in mainstream healthcare systems, offering much more personalized support, assistance with daily living activities, and community support. Together, these diverse institutions formed a comprehensive network, striving to alleviate suffering, promote dignity, and combat stigmas.

By the early 1980s, Oregon Health and Science University's Russell Street Dental Clinic (214 N. Russell St.) provided pivotal care persons with HIV/AIDS who had dental needs yet could not receive care at other dentist offices.[695] Significantly, Russell Street started "writing the manuals on how to treat AIDS patients because [they] had the experience."[696]

With rising numbers of people with AIDS (PWAs) across the nation and Oregon (an estimated 13,000 to 18,000 Oregonians in 1988), hospitals experienced being "stuck with having very little resources available" for HIV/AIDS care.[697] Dr. Robert Lawrence, Chief of Allergy and Immunology at Kaiser Permanente's Immune Deficiency Clinic, stressed that increasing numbers of Oregonians with HIV/AIDS would "need help along the line" and hoped that "more cost-effective" avenues could provide comprehensive and compassionate care.[698] Additionally, misinformation and stigmatization influenced many hospitals, nursing homes, and healthcare staff to refuse care of people with AIDS.[699]

Alternative grassroots care quickly emerged nationwide and in Portland in response to the lack of support and pervasive discrimination experienced by individuals with HIV/AIDS in most medical institutions. Driven by individuals and organizations, these often LGBTQ+-led initiatives reflected the phenomenon of "every gay community across the nation [having] organized some sort of support group and/or fundraising activity" starting in 1981.[700] Physicians, people with AIDS, and other committed activists played central roles in delivering medical care during the 1980s. Notable initiatives include the Cascade AIDS Project (CAP), end-of-life care initiated by Juniper House (2006 SE Ankeny St.), and HIV day centers.

---

[695] Russell Street Dental Clinic was established in 1975 and assisted Portlanders with low to no income.
[696] David Rosenstein Oral History, interviewed by Gary T. Chiado, August 17, 2014, OHSU Oral History Program, Oregon Health and Science University, https://digitalcollections.ohsu.edu/record/3271?ln=en&v=pdf.
[697] Patrick O'Neil, "Programs to Help Families, Friends of AIDS Patients," *Oregonian,* August 15, 1988, C1.
[698] Ibid.
[699] Patrick O'Neill, "A Place to Call Home," *The Sunday Oregonian,* November 15, 1987, Sec. 3M-B.
[700] "Topic AIDS," *Just Out,* January 6, 1984, 4.

Cascade AIDS Project (CAP)

In 1983, Phoenix Rising (408 SW 2nd Ave., Suite 420) established Cascade AIDS Project (CAP), a reflection of LGBTQ+ Portlanders' commitment to combating AIDS. Comprising physicians, Portlanders with AIDS, and other dedicated activists, this branch of Phoenix Rising swiftly developed educational materials and programs to aid Portlanders affected by the epidemic.[701] Within two years, CAP became an independent entity, consolidating various burgeoning initiatives into its portfolio, including a fundraising committee (Cascade AIDS Network), an education and risk reduction committee (CAP Committee), a direct services program (Community Health Support Services/ Personal Active Listener Board), and a financial assistance program (Brinker Fund Board).

As CAP transitioned into an independent organization, it continued the information sessions initiated by Phoenix Rising. Sexual health information sessions occurred at various locations across Portland, including CAP's office, (408 SW 2nd Ave., Room 427), the Portland Building (1120 SW 5th Ave., 2nd floor, Room B), and Overlook House (3839 N. Melrose Dr.)[702] CAP initiatives also had a dedicated space within the Majestic Hotel & Club Baths (303 SW 12th Ave., later Club Baths) for awareness, testing, and counseling related to HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted infections.[703]

Through these efforts, CAP and other healthcare providers made LGBTQ+-focused sexual health resources available to Portlanders through the latter decades of the 20th century. As of 2024, Cascade AIDS Project (520 NW Davis St., #215) is the "oldest and largest community-based provider of HIV services, housing, education, and advocacy" in the Pacific Northwest.[704]

Juniper House

As the HIV/AIDS epidemic became entrenched in Portland, the need for end-of-life care facilities became evident.[705] Initially, end-of-life care often came from partners and friends, especially for those rejected by families and other care support due to stigma. While many hotels across the nation became informal hospices, people quickly realized that those dying of AIDS and AIDS-related complexes required specialized care, as they often experienced long stretches of feeling well, to the point at which an individual became terminal was difficult to pinpoint— unlike with many cancers, for example.

---

[701] "Chicken Soup brigade aim of PGMC and CAP," *Just Out,* May 25, 1984, 5.; W.C. McRae, "News from CAP," *Just Out,* October 1, 1986, 11.

[702] Addresses from CAP's Fall 1989 Education Programs schedule advertised in *Just Out*, October 1, 1989, 10.

[703] The room CAP used has not been identified, and one letter to the editor mentioned that CAP staff initially would join the bathhouse users to offer condoms but were later scarcely seen and "never left the room the club [had] set aside." See Brown McDonald, "C.A.P. Receives grant for condom campaign," *Just Out*, August 1 1985,7.; Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People,* 255.; Jon Sauer, "Reality Check," *Just Out,* January 23, 2004, 4.

[704] "Our Story," About Us, About, Cascade AIDS Project, https://www.capnw.org/.

[705] The following information on Juniper House is summarized excerpts from the 2024 draft National Register of Historic Places nomination for Juniper House. See Ernestina Fuenmayor with Shayne Watson, "Juniper House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form.

Starting on February 11, 1987, Portlanders John Trevitts, Doug Foland, and Jan Weyeneth set the goals and aspirations for a dedicated HIV/AIDS end-of-life care facility. They aimed to create a centrally located facility requiring minimal modifications. Trevitts invested 80 percent of the funds needed to start the project and leased a house located in Portland's Buckman neighborhood as Foland began rallying volunteers. During this period, the address of the nondescript converted Craftsman style residence was kept secret to maintain the privacy of the residents and to avoid hostile reactions.

Operating between May 6, 1987 and September 1989, Juniper House (2006 SE Ankeny St.) played a revolutionary role. Staff and volunteers addressed the vital needs of 90 individuals in a compassionate, home-like environment at a time when most mainstream healthcare facilities refused to admit individuals with HIV/AIDS due to widespread social stigma and fear of transmission. "Although the purpose of the old house [was] to serve the dying, it remain[ed] a place of life and laughter." Foland spoke in 1987 that the house built "a sense of community" for residences. People were active doing work around the house, authored a journal, and designed an AIDS Quilt panel. Additionally, Juniper House participated in various media efforts aimed at increasing public awareness and reducing stigma by showcasing residents' experiences in KGW-TV and Oregon Public Broadcasting documentaries in 1987 and 1988.

Despite ceasing operations in September 1989, Juniper House influenced later care initiatives. As the first such facility exclusively for people with HIV/AIDS in Oregon, Multnomah County requested detailed documentation of care protocols to guide future efforts. Weyenth later opened Our House (currently at 2727 SE Alder St.), another HIV/AIDS end-of-life care facility.

HIV/AIDS Day Centers

Day centers materialized in the 1990s as a novel avenue to support and care for people with HIV/AIDS. Though no cure was found at the end of the 20th century, medical improvements with AZT meant those with HIV/AIDS were generally living longer by the 1990s; people continued to face physical, mental, and social challenges.[706] Portland's HIV Day Center (first at 3835 SW Kelly St., currently at 2941 NE Ainsworth St.) launched in May 1990 to address these needs. Daily meals, snacks, basic nursing services, and resource referrals were coupled with a vibrant social setting offering a spectrum of events, forums, lectures, and gatherings.[707] As the inaugural free-standing, community-based program of its nature in the United States, the HIV Day Center set a standard for an inclusive space where individuals living with HIV/AIDS could connect, share experiences, and derive assistance within a supportive and nurturing environment.[708]

[706] "The First AIDS Drugs," CCR Landmarks, Center for Cancer Research, National Cancer Institution, https://ccr.cancer.gov/news/landmarks/article/first-aids-drugs#:~:text=In%20a%20randomized%20trial%2C%20it,the%20perinatal%20transmission%20of%20HIV.
[707] Various ads, *Just Out*.
[708] "HIV Services," Our Programs, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, https://emoregon.org/hiv-services/.

HIV/AIDS Activism

As the epidemic unfolded in the early 1980s, numerous advocacy and support organizations driven by a shared commitment to addressing the needs of people with HIV/AIDS emerged. Recognizing the importance of consolidation and efficiency, many of these entities merged over time to pool resources and expertise for enhanced quality of services that could better meet escalating demands. Ultimately, these groups assumed pivotal roles in raising awareness, generating crucial funds for individuals living with HIV/AIDS, delivering essential services, offering compassionate care, and organizing for change. The proliferation of these organizations stands as a testament to the magnitude of the crisis and the remarkable resilience of diverse populations in responding to HIV/AIDS. While too numerous to detail, a selection of actions, organizations, and places are highlighted below to showcase the diversity of HIV/AIDS activism.

Awareness and Fundraising

Emerging in 1983, and intensifying through the 1990s, volunteers, friends, chosen family, organizations, and institutions rallied together to lead HIV/AIDS awareness and fundraising campaigns to support Portlanders with HIV/AIDS. Awareness and information of mitigation behaviors and measures, such as practicing safe sex with condoms, was imperative during this time. Condoms emerged as focal points in numerous education campaigns and protests, particularly following revelations that latex condoms were effective in preventing HIV/AIDS transmission. Condoms marked a symbol of "not only *safe* sex . . . but safe *sex*," for activists who did not shy away from sexuality and sexual diversity within awareness initiatives.[709] Many nationwide and in Portland emphasized that queer people were especially pivotal in safe *sex* initiatives, as they "have always known that sex is not, in an epidemic or not, limited to penetrative sex . . . *It is our promiscuity that will save us.*"[710] In 1985, CAP received $1,880 from the Venereal Disease Action Council to distribute condoms in Portland bars and baths, influencing the formation of Bartenders Against AIDS to assist the distribution.[711] Grants for CAP campaigns continued to expand through the late 1980s, with Oregon Health Division allocating $10,000 in 1988 for enhanced campaigns that included condom distribution in Portland bars, conducting safe sex seminars, and crafting targeted advertisements to promote condom use.[712]

Activists and organizations tirelessly sought funding for critical research, medical care, and essential living expenses through an array of events. Given the lack of equitable government funding, grassroots fundraising played a pivotal role in filling this gap. Campaigns engaged with all Portlanders in unique and

[709] ACT UP/ San Francisco, "Our Goals and Demands," (informational flyer), 1988, quoted in Joshua Gamson, "Rubber Wars: Struggles over the Condom in the United States," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 no. 2 (October 1990): 277.
[710] Douglas Crimp, "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic," *October,* 43 (Winter 1987): 253.
[711] "CAP Receives grant for condom campaign," *Just Out,* August 1, 1985, 7.
[712] Notable, CAP advertisements were pulled from TriMet buses within a week following a critical article in *The Oregonian.* See David Reinhard, "AIDS Prevention or gay promotion?," *Sunday Oregonian,* July 3, 1988.; Craig Harris, "AIDS Ads Removed from Tri-Met Buses" *The Oregonian,* July 13, 1988, sec. B01.; "Tri-Met adamant, ads banned permanently," *Just Out,* September 1, 1988, 9.

creative ways. For instance, some Portlanders took to the streets in CAP's annual "From All Walks of Life" which kicked off in 1987 at Tom McCall Waterfront Park (98 SW Naito Parkway). The event gained momentum and increasingly garnered support from political and public figures, including Portland Mayor Bud Clark, Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts, the executive director of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Rev. Rodney I. Page, State Representative Gail Shibley, and Multnomah County Commissioner Gladys McCoy.[713]

Portland's art scene also heavily fundraised for HIV/AIDS support. Created by figures from Portland's visual arts community, such as Larry Kirkland, John Forsgren, and William Jamison, alongside Dr. James Sampson and Sara Perry, chairwoman of the Metropolitan Arts Commission in 1987, "ART/AIDS" aimed to establish sustainability funding sources for long-term healthcare and draw attention to the profound cultural, social, and medical ramifications of HIV/AIDS.[714] Cultural institutions such as Portland Performing Arts Center (1111 SW Broadway), Powell's Books (1005 W Burnside St.), Oregon Art Institute (1219 SW Park Ave.), Portland Art Museum, and Jamison's own gallery, Jamison / Thomas Gallery (217 SW 1st Ave.) participated.[715] In 1988, Cinema 21 (616 NW 21st Ave.) hosted Portland's first lesbian and gay film festival with a screening of *On the Brink: An AIDS Chronicle* to raise funds for Juniper House.[716]

Funding to support people with HIV/AIDS changed in the 1990s, particularly with the 1990 federal enactment of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency (CARE) Act. The CARE Act "created the largest federal outlay for services to people in cities and states hit hardest by the AIDS epidemic."[717] Portland's cumulative cases of HIV/AIDS in 1994 permitted the city to receive grants available for areas with 2,000 or more cases, marking "the first time since the act's passage in 1990 that the region was eligible for Title I funds."[718] Multnomah County Chair Beverly Stein soberly reflected in 1995on the ability to majorly expand services: "it's sad that we've reached the point where we've become

[713] "1200 from all walks of life raise 90,000," *Just Out,* September 1, 1987, 3.; "From All Walks of Life," *Just Out,* July 1, 1987, 10.; "From All Walks of Life raises $115,000," *Just Out,* October 1, 1989, 17.; "From All Walks of Life," *Just Out,* October 1, 1993, 14.
[714] Jonathan Nicholas, "Artistic endeavor," *Oregonian*, July 17, 1987, C1.; W.C. McRae, "Artists plan AIDS fundraiser," *Just Out,* August 1, 1987, 10.; "ART/AIDS benefit," *Just Out*, September 1, 1987, 19.; "ART/AIDS: Galleries, bookstores plan AIDS benefit," *Just Out*, October 1, 1987, 6.; "Tour helps AIDS patients," *Oregonian*, October 3, 1987, B2, 3M.; Barry Johnson, "Who's Taking Part Art Community Works to Help AIDS Patients," *Oregonian*, October 9, 1987.; Beverly Butterworth, "Gallery-Hopping Benefit Raises Funds for AIDS Care," *Oregonian*, October 18, 1987, 2.
[715] "ART/AIDS schedules weeklong benefit," *Just Out*, April 1, 1989, 10.; Paul Pintarich, "Kincaid, Lebowitz Schedule April Readings," *Oregonian*, April 4, 1989, D6.; Phil Hunt, "A Lot of Art in a little time," *Oregonian*, April 21, 1989, F22.; Stuart Tomlinson, "Special Show, Special Cause," *Oregonian*, April 21, 1989, F6.; Jay Brown, "'G' word taboo at ART/AIDS," *Just Out*, May 1, 1989, 4.; William Jamison, "Concerns misplaced?," J*ust Out*, June 1, 1989, 4.
[716] Ted Mahar, "First Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Offers 12 films during week," *Oregonian,* June 10, 1988.; Ad, *June* 1, 1988, 16, 19.
[717] Graves and Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco,* 313.; Also See "Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program," Health Resources and Services Administration, https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/.
[718] In December 1994, Portland was awarded $986,510 dollars through the CARE Act. In February 1995, an additional $1.5 million in supplement funds were awards to the city. Inga Sorensen, "A Grim Milestone," *Just Out,* July 7, 1995.

eligible for these funds, but we're also very pleased we're now able to expand services to people living with HIV/AIDS."[719]

Addressing issues of racism, ableism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination pervasive within many mainstream HIV/AIDS service organizations entrenched "in the white-establishment structure" became an increasing priority for many Portland HIV/AIDS activists.

> **AIDS programs, regardless of where they are, they typically are all white, their staff is all white, with maybe one or two people of color.**
>
> — Portland healthcare activist Elizabeth Walker reflecting on HIV/AIDS services in 1989 [720]

Elizabeth Walker, Amani Jabari, and other LGBTQ+ Portlanders and Seattleites formed Oregon Minority AIDS Coalition (OMAC, formerly People of Color United Against AIDS) in 1987 to bridge demographic gaps in HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and outreach services.[721]Initially headquartered at the International Refugee Center of Oregon (IRCO, formerly at 1336 E. Burnside St.), OMAC united several advocacy groups and diverse Portlanders to share materials and advocate for existing programs to become more inclusive, according to the organization's sole paid staff member, Mary Li.[722] OMAC supported informational house parties to educate Portlanders on HIV/AIDS, recognizing the significance of people-based strategies, family structures, and community circles.[723] In 1993, the organization under new Executive Director Emmally Williams-Mitchell moved to a "three-room suite at 3415 NE Broadway" where the organization could foster a more inclusive and accessible space for "any and everybody."[724]

Remembering those who passed from HIV/AIDS and AIDS-related complex (ARC) was another avenue to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. In 1986, Portland Metropolitan Community Church (2400 NE Broadway Ave.) participated in a global 50-hour prayer vigil initiated by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.[725] Over 200 attendees participated in the city's first AIDS vigil which featured workshops covering topics such as prevention strategies, support for families impacted by HIV/AIDS, and the empowerment of people with AIDS.[726] This emotionally powerful event provided a needed forum for education, compassion, and solidarity, becoming an annual event with involvement from additional

---

[719] Ibid.

[720] Anndee Hochman, "Elizabeth Waters: Health Activist," *Just Out,* August 1, 1989, 15.

[721] The Seattle organization became the People of Color Against AIDS Network. Amani Jabari, "Oregon Minority AIDS Coalition," *Rainbow News,* Fall 1989, 7.

[722] Andee Hochman, "Mary Li, AIDS educator," *Just Out,* January 1, 1989, 11. Li later became one partner of the first same-sex couple to marry in Multnomah County, leading her to be one of the plaintiffs in Li & Kennedy V. State of Oregon. This lawsuit challenged the Oregon marriage statute discriminating against same-sex couples. For more information, see "Li and Kennedy V. State of Oregon, ACLU Oregon, https://www.aclu-or.org/en/cases/li-and-kennedy-v-state-oregon.

[723] Mary Li, interviewed by Cayla McGrail, May 22, 2024, not recorded.

[724] Irene K. Hislop, "Ready to face the challenges," *Just Out,* January 1, 1993, 12.
Irene K. Hislop, "Ready to face the challenges," *Just Out,* January 1, 1993, 12.; Out About Town, *Just Out,* June 17, 1994, 20.

[725] "MCC plans AIDS vigil of Prayer," *Just Out,* September 1, 1986, 5.

[726] Ibid. Though outside the scope of this project's 1905-1994 period, Lutheran Inner-City Ministries (4219 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., currently Albina Head Start) hosted Portland's first African American HIV/AIDS Vigil in 1999. See Shona Dudley, "Vigil and Vigilance," *Just Out,* May 7, 1999, 9.

congregations and organizations.[727] Two years later, in 1988, Portland showcased the final touring display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt.[728] Hosted by University of Portland in the Earl A. Chiles Center (5000 N. Willamette Blvd.), the display was part of quilt creator Cleve Jones's efforts to raise funds and support local communities, spread a message of "compassion and love," and grieve those who had passed.[729] Eugene *Oregon Daily Emerald* journalist Kelvin Wee described the impact of seeing the quilt in person: "As I walked into the Chiles Center, I was taken aback by the display. It was draped from ceiling to floor and wall to wall. It was overwhelming and magnificent.[730] The poignant closing ceremony on July 30, 1988, featured performances by the Oregon Symphony, Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Portland Lesbian Choir, and various other artists.[731]

Direct Service Organizations

HIV/AIDS services and community care emerged immediately in 1981 as an indispensable lifeline for individuals navigating myriad challenges beyond their health status. As people in the mid-1980s were not only succumbing to AIDS but also persevering through debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS and AIDS-related complexes, a network of volunteer-led programs stepped up to address the diverse needs of Portlanders living with HIV/AIDS. Portlanders were "very active in responding to the AIDS crisis."[732] Of the many efforts supporting individuals with HIV/AIDS during the 1980s and 1990s, notable direct service providers included the Brinker Fund, Esther's Pantry, Community Health and Essential Support Services (CHESS), and Personal Active Listeners (PAL) Project.

Chester Brinker / Rose Empress XXIV Esther Hoffman Howard, one of the first Portlanders to pass from HIV/AIDS complications on May 5, 1984 at Good Samaritan Hospital, advised local organizations on the importance of practical support for people with HIV/AIDS before his passing; this subsequently influenced multiple initiatives named in his memory.[733] For instance, his family and close friends established the Chester / Esther Brinker Medical Memorial Fund to offer crucial financial support for Portlanders with

[727] For example, the 1987 vigil included Gil Gerald, then "director of minority affairs of the National AIDS Network," and Oregon State Health Division. For additional history on MCC's AIDS Vigils, see Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People,* 271-273.

[728] San Francisco activist and artist Cleve Jones conceived the quilt in 1985. By 1987, Jones and others began assembling quilt squares commemorating people who passed. See "NAMES project begins assembling national 'AIDS Quilt'," Just Out, August 1, 1987, 7.; Jonathan Pearlman, Landmark Nomination for NAMES Project Building/Jose Theatre, San Francisco, 2.; "The History of the Quilt," Quilt, National AIDS Memorial, https://www.aidsmemorial.org/quilt-history.; Names Project Quilt Coming to Portland," *Just Out*, February 1, 1988, 7.; Harold Moore, "AIDS Quilt at Chiles Center," *Just Out*, May 1, 1988, 16.; "Names Project opens Portland Office," *Just Out*, June 1, 1988, 12.; "Names Project/Portland established," *Just Out,* August 1, 1989, 12.

[729] "Local gay and lesbian community assistance needed for NAMES Project quilt tour," *Just Out*, March 1, 1988, 15.

[730] Kelvin Wee, "AIDS Quilt not big enough to soak up tears," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, August 2, 1988, 8.

[731] "Quilt scheduled announced," Just Out, July 1, 1988, 7.; "The NAMES Project Quilt Visits Portland," 32.; Harold Moore, "A Legacy of Love," *Just Out*, September 1, 1988, 14.; Anndee Hochman, *Just Out*, September 1, 1988, 14.

[732] Cindy Cumfer, personal communication with Cayla McGrail, April 27th, 2024.

[733] W.C. McRae, "Helplessness, or helpfulness and AIDS: Portland's PAL project," *Just Out*, July 1, 1985, 6.; "Oregon Gay History Timeline," Oregon Queer History Collective, https://www.glapn.org/6020timeline.html.

HIV/AIDS; it was later managed by CAP with various benefit events providing funding.[734] "As the Brinker Fund board members visited [Portlanders], they quickly realized that, in additional to housing-related support, many needed food."[735] As a result, Esther's Pantry became the city's premier "LGBTQ+ affirming shopping-style food pantry" located in the basement of LGBTQ+ bar Embers Avenue (110 NW Broadway).[736] Esther's Pantry expanded its offerings in the late 1980s to include personal care items and later clothing with the addition of Tod's Corner (named in memory of Portlander Tod Hutchins who worked with the Brinker Fund).[737]

Concurrently to Esther's Pantry, starting in June 1985, the non-profits Community Health and Essential Support Services (initially named Chicken Soup Brigade then Community Health Support Services) and the Personal Active Listener (PAL) Project formed to ensure Portlanders with HIV/AIDS received a range of personalized support.[738] PAL Training Coordinator Larry Whitson summarized in 1988 "What people need often is practical support: 'Get me to the doctor'; 'Help me figure out how to take care for financial stuff'; 'Listen to me when I'm scared'; 'Hold me when I'm scared.'"[739] Between the programs' start and early 1986, CHESS/PAL provided "direct service to more than 300 persons, used more than 17,000 volunteer hours . . . [and] managed more [than] 200 fully active volunteers," underscoring the momentous impact of HIV/AIDS in Portland.[740] In February 1986, CHESS/PAL received significant financial support from Multnomah County Board of Commissioners; the awarded $30,000 marked "the first time that any government body in Oregon ha[d] provided funding for community based *social services* to persons and families living with AIDS."[741] Recognizing the growing urgency of Portland's HIV/AIDS crisis, CHESS/PAL merged with CAP in 1986 and shared office space (408 SW 2nd Ave., #420). The strategic consolidation, as described by then CAP Executive Director Brown McDonald, intended to bolster outreach, improve

[734] "The night Brinker died, Portland bar J.R.'s West (300 NW 10th Ave.) held a drag show and raised more than $900 to help his parents with medical bills. But his parents didn't accept the money for their own use; instead, they returned the dollars to the community." See Pat Young, "Helping Hand," *Just Out,* March 3, 2000, 7.
[735] Ibid.
[736] Embers Avenue owner Steve Suss recalled in a 2011 interview the shoppers "remember[ed] the Embers from coming here in their heyday and having a good time. And now that they're close to death and they've lost their prime of youth and don't look good they didn't want to come here anymore. This is not a place for somebody who is sick. It's a place for somebody who wants to get out and have a good time. So we thought it would be best to move it." Associated addresses of Esther's Pantry include a "board member's garage" (no address provided), House of Light (597 N Dekum), 27761 NE Halsey St. It continues to operate today in Milwaukie. See Jaymee R. Cuti, "Under New Management: Esther's Pantry in Reliable Hands," *Just Out,* September 1, 2006, 13.; Oral history interview with Steve Suss, by Danita Doun and Lachelle Ogden, SR 11236, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.
[737] Hutchins' estate started the Corner. In 1990, the clothing initiate moved to the HIV Day Center. It continues to operate today in Milwaukie. See "Tod G. Hutchins," *Just Out,* August 1, 1988, 22.; "Tod's Corner offers clothing to PWA's," *Just Out,* October 1, 1988,21.
[738] "PAL Project gets Underway," *Just Out,* June 1, 1985, 5.; "The PAL Project," *Just Out,* June 1, 1987, 36
[739] Andee Hochman, Larry Whitson: PAL extraordinaire," *Just Out,* June 1, 1988, 15.
[740] Pat Scott, "'A Need to make a difference' Steve Fulmer and the men and women of CHESS/PAL Project," February 1, 1986, 13.
[741] "CHESS Awarded $30,000," *Just Out,* February 1, 1986, 6.

access to services, and increase fundraising, thereby enhancing support for those grappling with the profound challenges posed by the epidemic.[742]

Civil Disobedience

Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, HIV/AIDS activists intensified their civil disobedience efforts in response to escalating discrimination, sickness, and death. Notably leading the charge was AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), renowned for their bold and targeted protests of Wall Street, the FDA, the CDC, the Catholic Church, and other institutions they believed to be complicit in the health crisis.[743] Though HIV/AIDS activists' civil disobedience radically shaped HIV/AIDS activism, the depth of Portland's ACT UP chapter and other similar activist groups is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, representative moments are touched on to examine how Portlanders engaged with civil disobedience to draw attention to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

HIV/AIDS activist Michael Petrelis, who arrived in Portland in 1988, played a pivotal role in establishing Portland's ACT UP chapter in December 1988; he galvanized local support to prioritize AIDS issues in political organizing.[744] Regular meetings convened on Wednesdays at Multnomah County Library Central Branch (801 SW 10th Ave.) and in Metropolitan Community Church's basement (2400 NE Broadway) to refine the organization's strategic action plan aimed at dispelling misconceptions and increasing education over the following months.[745] On December 14, 1988, ACT UP/Portland's inaugural protest targeted KGW-TV offices (1501 SW Jefferson St.) in response to "irresponsible and sensationalized portrayals" of individuals with HIV/AIDS in a *Midnight Caller* drama series episode.[746] ACT UP/Portland members Carl Goodman, Kelly Tadlock, Steven Squires, and Petrelis were arrested in the television station's office, though no charges were filed.[747]

ACT UP/Portland participated in larger public demonstrations to draw attention to medicine and prevention. First, on February 28, 1989, ACT UP / Portland joined forces with the San Francisco and Seattle chapters to stage a non-violent picket and protest outside of the Portland FDA office.

---

[742] "AIDS agencies merge," *Just Out,* June 1, 1986, 4.; 'Brown McDonald," Oral Histories, CAP Archive, https://caparchives.org/oralhistory/video-play.php?video_id=19.

[743] "ACT UP Accomplishments- 1987 – 2012," ACTUP, https://actupny.com/actions/.

[744] Harold Moore, "What about AIDS?" *Just Out*, December 1, 1988, 15.; Harold Moore, "On the warfront," *Just Out*, February 1, 1989, 11. For additional history on Michael Petrelis, see Michael Petrelis and Sarah Schulman, April 21, 2003, ACT UP Oral History Project, The New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6075fe20d281ea3f320a7be9/t/60da605b28313122d802c124/1624924251882/020+Michael+Petrelis.pdf.

[745] Moore, "On the warfront."; Michael MacKillop, "ACT UP Sets Portland agenda," *Just Out*, February 1, 1989, 11.; ACT UP / Portland "Join Us," *Just Ou*t, November 1, 1990, 33.

[746] The episode focused on a character deliberately infecting people with HIV. See Ibid.; Jay Brown, "'Midnight Caller' episode reinforces ignorance, fear," *Just Out*, February 1, 1989, 4.; "After It Happened," Wikipedia, Last Updated February 27, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/After_It_Happened.

[747] Brown, "'Midnight Caller' episode."

> **This protest had clearly been billed as a non-violent act of civil disobedience. I remember because there had been a lot of back and forth at our ACT UP meetings about how to handle this protest. We decided the best way was the nonviolent way. We even contracted the authorities prior to the action to let them know it would be nonviolent. So not only did they know this was going to happen, they knew it was going to be peaceful.**
> — Catherine Smith reflecting on the FDA protest in 1995 [748]

Over 200 people attended, with protestors disrupting traffic and vandalizing the building. The bold actions underscored their demands for the release of crucial medications. Within weeks, on March 15, about a dozen members protested condom censorship at *The Oregonian* offices (1500 SW 1st Ave.) by tossing hundreds of condoms and flyers around the office condemning the newspaper's refusal to publish condom information then demonstrating at the main entrance with signs.[749] ACT UP/Portland member and lawyer Wayne Harris explained the activist group's views: " . . . We question whether Stickel's prudish self-righteousness can justify censorship of public health information to help stop the spread of AIDS and other STDs. Its publisher should be part of the solution, not part of the problem."[750] During the outside demonstration, Harris announced the group's plan to "randomly place condoms and education material about their use inside newspapers in *Oregonian* newspaper boxes throughout the state" in efforts to share accurate HIV/AIDS prevention information.[751]

In 1990, ACT UP/Portland joined national boycotts and HIV/AIDS discrimination awareness campaigns. First, in September, activists emptied kegs of beer on SW Harvey Milk Street in protest of beer companies like Miller funding discriminatory legislatures like Senator Jesse Helms (R- North Carolina) who refused to improve HIV/AIDS funding.[752] On December 3, 1990, about 50 activists blocked traffic on the Burnside Bridge for National AIDS Awareness Day with protests seeking to draw attention to the 1,000 Oregonians diagnoses with AIDS "while AIDS prevention, education, and treatment services remain grossly underfunded," according to ACT UP.[753]

While ACT UP/Portland dissolved by the early 1990s, activism continued through different reorganizations of members.

---

[748] Sorensen, "Justice Served," *Just Out*, July 21, 1995, 15.
[749] "AIDS activists toss condoms in Portland newspaper offices," *Seattle Gay News*, March 24, 1989, in ACT UP: The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power Collection, Box 28, Folder 7, New York Public Library, New York City, New York.
[750] Ibid.
[751] Ibid.
[752] "Miller added to boycott," *Just Out,* September 1, 1990, 7.; "Miller/Marlboro boycott rally," November 1, 1990, 33.; "Boycott not over," *Just Out,* December 1, 1990, 27.
[753] "Activists block Burnside Bridge," *Just Out,* January 1, 1991, 12.

HIV/AIDS Impacts Portland Summary

From 1981 to 1994, LGBTQ+ Portlanders and allies crafted various initiates, organizations, and political tools during the HIV/AIDS epidemic to dispel widespread fear and stigma while raising funds and awareness. HIV/AIDS activism in a spectrum of Portland places from end-of-life care facilities to bars, offices to churches, represented a vibrant reaction to intersecting medical and social crises compounded by ignorance and homophobia. By the early 1990s, advancement in care transformed HIV/AIDS from a fatal illness to a manageable chronic condition — something that would not have been possible without this activism. Though access to care remains disparate to this day, HIV/AIDS activism was a crucial cornerstone of LGBTQ+ life; as these activists eloquently proclaimed, "Silence=Death."[754]

[754] For additional history on "Silence=Death," see "Poster, Silence=Death," Collections, National Museum of American History, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_1051178.; James Emmerman, "After Orlando, the Iconic Silence=Death Image Is Back. Meet One of the Artists Who Created It.," Outward, Slate, July 13, 2016, https://slate.com/human-interest/2016/07/silence-death-artist-avram-finkelstein-on-history-of-queer-art-and-activism.html.

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://lwhasten.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, 1969 [774]

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.; 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 Ligori, 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=OCXIfg0Bcho.
[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.glbtqarchive.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, 1989 [819]

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 Luckett, 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, 1997, 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, 2013 [852]

[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 Cunnhingham, "Cathartic chums," *Just Out,* February 1, 1992, 19.; "Definition of An Icon: One on One with Rupert Kinnard," PrideIndex, 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.