

LGBTQ Genealogy

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A Guide to LGBTQ Genealogy

- Look at family history through a new lens – a rainbow prism.
- We all have LGBTQ people in our family's history. Adding their stories will enrich your narrative.
- Clues to sexuality may be found in:
 - Photographs
 - Census
 - Newspapers
 - Police records
 - Obituaries or tombstones
 - Military discharge records
 - Phone books (Gay neighborhoods)
 - Professions
 - Domestic Partner Registries and recent Marriage records
 - LGBTQ Archives around the world
- Once all documentation has been gathered, put it into the context of LGBTQ History.
- Write ancestor stories openly without judgments, being aware of personal filters or bias.
- Sexuality is inherent to family history and being aware of non-heterosexual ancestors is no different.



A Software Change Wishlist

- Ability to enter spouses with accurately defined relationships: marriage, domestic partnership, civil unions, partners, co-parents, unmarried...
- Link any two people together, then define their relationship independently
- Allow for more than 2 parents, with gender-neutral labeling
- Evolve standard genealogy documents need to report on FAMILY groups, not just DNA lines
- Allow for birth sex, trans sex, and gender identification
- Adopt the latest GEDCOM standard removing religious control of genealogical data

“Bias, ego, ideology, patronage, prejudice, pride, or shame cannot shape our decisions as we appraise our evidence. To do so is to warp reality and deny ourselves the understanding of the past that is, after all, the reason for our labor.”

-- Elizabeth Shown Mills



LGBTQ History (Brief)

- Attitudes and tolerance changed toward same-sex relationships throughout history. The terms “Romantic Friendships” or “Boston marriage” were used in Europe and the early USA. Extreme negative attitudes against homosexuals arose in the U.S.A. in the 1930s.
- Partner was a term used in 20th-century censuses. It may be a clue for finding same-sex couples, but it was not exclusively used for that purpose.
- The Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village, NY on 28 June 1969 marked the beginning of the *modern* LGBTQ rights movement.
- There is a long history of expulsion and prosecution of LGBTQ people in the U.S. Military. Currently, LGBTQ people can serve and be open about their sexuality.
- Less than honorable military discharged personnel were concentrated in certain cities that gave rise to gay neighborhoods.
- Entrepreneurial professions offered more protection should someone’s sexuality become public, offering mobility to start over in new locations. Those that worked for schools or government agencies were at significant risk of losing their livelihood. LGBTQ job protection only began in June 2020 by the US Supreme Court decision.
- Domestic Partnership began as an idea in 1979. A grassroots group in Berkeley brought this concept to the Berkeley Education Board in 1984. This idea spread throughout the world allowing for the acceptance of Same-Sex Marriage.
- Homosexuality was decriminalized in the entire U.S.A. in 2003 with the Supreme Court case of Lawrence vs. Texas. Some parts of the world still punish homosexual acts with death.
- Same-Sex Marriage was Federally recognized in the U.S.A. in 2013 with the Supreme Court case of U.S. vs. Windsor. Marriage is available in most of the western hemisphere.

Online Resources

- Jeffrey Gent, "Homo History" - www.homohistory.com
- One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse - stevemorse.org/census/ancestry.html
- List of LGBT Periodicals on Wikipedia - en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LGBT_periodicals
- B.A.R. Online Searchable Obituary Database - obit.glbthistory.org/olo/index.jsp
- OskiCat UC Berkeley Library Catalog for the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Serial Collection - digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/sfbagals/
- Online Archive of California – Finding Aid to the San Francisco Police Department Records, 1870-1983 - pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/csf/sfpl/sfpd.pdf
- Lloyd Sealy Library – Collection: Criminal Trial Transcripts of New York County Collections (1883-1927) - dc.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/index.php/Detail/Collection/Show/collection_id/23
- NARA Military Service Records - www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records
- NARA Requesting Copies of Older Military Service Records - www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records
- NARA Location of Service Records - www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/locations
- Documentary - *Citizen Change: Taking the first steps to marriage equality* - citizenchange.weebly.com/

- State of California Domestic Partnership Registry – www.sos.ca.gov/registries/domestic-partners-registry/forms-fees/
- City of San Francisco Domestic Partnership Registry - sfgov.org/countyclerk/declaration-domestic-partnership
- UK Civil Partnership records from the General Records Office - www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate
- GALE – Archives of Sexuality and Gender - www.gale.com/primary-sources/archives-of-sexuality-and-gender
- Lavender Legacies Guide - www2.archivists.org/groups/diverse-sexuality-and-gender-section/lavender-legacies-guide
- Discovering LGBT History: Records in the National Archives' Collection - lgbtqarchives.tumblr.com/
- Tamara Jones GEDCOM Blog - www.tamurajones.net/AGentleIntroductionToGEDCOM.shtml
- GEDCOM.org
- Many LGBTQ Archives – domestic and international

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