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Part of **Clarivate**

QUEER PASTS is a collection of primary source exhibits for students and scholars of queer history and culture, curated by academic editors Marc Stein and Lisa Arellano. The database uses “queer” in its broadest and most inclusive sense, to embrace topics that are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender and to include work on sexual and gender formations that are queer but not necessarily LGBT. Each of the document collections in the database will include a critical introductory essay that helps explain the significance of the primary sources in historical terms and in relationship to previous scholarship.

This database seeks to broaden the field of queer history, prioritizing projects featuring under-represented histories and encourages critical reflections on the archives used and materials presented.

PRIMARY SOURCE EXHIBITS

Every exhibit includes an introductory essay and 10–40 primary source documents that provide firsthand accounts of queer histories, experiences, and identities. The documents will appear in both their original form and in (searchable) transcription. The introductory essay will help explain the significance of the primary sources in historical terms and in relationship to previous scholarship. Editors Marc Stein and Lisa Arellano ask the exhibit editors to address the strengths, limitations, and characteristics of their archive and to explore the ways in which archives are constructed, constrained, and contested.

INTRODUCING THE EDITORS: MARC STEIN AND LISA ARELLANO



Marc Stein is the Jamie and Phyllis Pasker Professor of History at San Francisco State University. He is a historian of U.S. law, politics, and society, with research and teaching interests in constitutional law, social movements, gender, race and sexuality.



Lisa Arellano, Associate Director of Research at The Mills Institute. Her teaching focuses on comparative social movements, critical historiography and violence studies.

UNFOLDING OUR HISTORY: EXPLORING POST-STONEWALL LGBTQ HISTORY WITH T-SHIRTS



Eric Gonzaba
Assistant Professor of American Studies,
California State University, Fullerton

Exhibit Description: This exhibit examines the role of t-shirts in the post-Stonewall LGBTQ movement as symbols of identity, activism, and community. It argues that these everyday items, often overlooked, provide unique insights into the diverse experiences and narratives within the LGBTQ community. The essay explores how t-shirts have been used to express queer identities, commemorate significant events, and navigate the intersection of commerce and activism. Despite their limitations as historical sources, t-shirts offer a valuable lens to understand the evolution of LGBTQ cultures and the complexities of queer politics over the past five decades.



COALITIONS RESISTING THE TORONTO BATHHOUSE RAIDS AND BEYOND, 1968–1982



Tom Hooper

Assistant Professor in the Department of
Equity Studies, York University

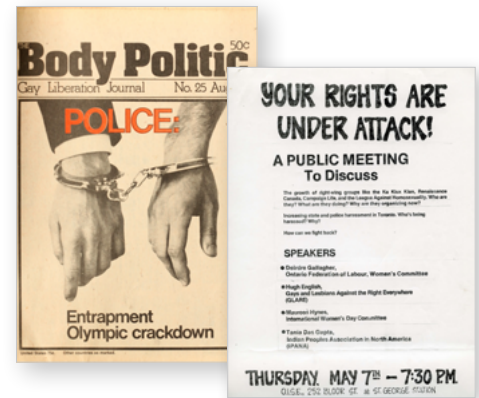


Exhibit Description: On February 5, 1981, 200 police agents in Toronto stormed four gay bathhouses and arrested 286 men, charging them with criminal code offenses. This event has become entrenched within popular narratives of LGBTQ history in Canada. These narratives have been designed to celebrate progress and they encourage LGBT communities to favorably identify with the Canadian state. Forgotten in these processes are intersections between the policing of gay men and state relationships with multiple struggles, including reproductive justice, Black civil rights, trans activism, disability activism, and sex work activism. This detachment obscures long histories of criminalization and police harassment prior to the raids, but also the ways in which these patterns have endured after 1981. The items showcased in this exhibit contribute to a reclamation of intersectional queer pasts and a radical remembering of resistance struggles.

“THE WORLD’S MOST ARRESTED LESBIAN”: CORONA RIVERA AND THE NEW YORK GAY ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE, 1970–1972



Marc Stein

Professor of History,
San Francisco State University

Exhibit Description: This exhibit focuses on one of the most active lesbian and Latinx members of one of the most influential LGBT political groups in the United States in the early 1970s. The introductory essay presents an overview of Rivera’s life as an activist, including her many direct action protests, her several police arrests, and her most significant carceral experience. The essay also explores the gender politics of media representations and historical narratives about the Gay Activists Alliance of New York City, juxtaposing Rivera’s visibility in the former and her invisibility in the latter.



CHESSER AND HOLLY: A CASE OF QUEER, INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN THE TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY FRONTIER



Rachel Trusty

Visiting Professor of Women's and
Gender Studies, Bucknell University



Exhibit Description: In 1888, James Chessser and Georgeanna Holly legally married in Fort Smith, AR. Chessser was a white man, and Holly was a Black or mixed-race, gender-non-conforming individual. Chessser was arrested in July, and it was at that time that his marriage to Holly was revealed to the court. They were both tried and found guilty of buggary. This exhibit examines Fort Smith as a border town to Indian Territory to argue that the city worked as a liminal, local-national space that attracted certain individuals for work and play, and provided an atmosphere where Chessser and Holly could court, legally marry, and cohabitate. Following national cultural and legal trends related to sodomy and anti-miscegenation laws, the couple was caught up in a rapidly changing carceral system. Using this case as a framework, this exhibit will utilize this case study to explore the construction of sexual and gender norms in a post-civil war America.

ADDITIONAL EXHIBITS INCLUDE:

- *The City Nightclub: A Community of Queer Youth in Portland, Oregon, 1977–1997* curated by Lisa Arellano
- *Power, Politics, and Race in the 1968 Philadelphia Study of Prison Sexual Violence* curated by Marc Stein
- *"Are They Really?" Queer Life at Mills College, 1900–1980* by Lisa Arellano
- *Striking Out Against the Conspiracy of Silence: 1970s LGBTQ Campus Organizing in the Michigan Student Press* by Time Retzlöff
- *Sodomites and Gender Transgressors in 1840s New York* by Marc Stein
- *Are There Really Only Two Asian Lesbians in Chicago?: Queer Asian Visibility and Community Formation in Chicago, 1980s–1990s* by Laura Sachiko Fugikawa
- *"A Revelation Most Sensational": Eleven Stories of Trans Lives in the United States, 1878–1914* by Emily Skidmore
- *AIDS Knows No Borders: Protesting the US Ban on HIV-Positive Migrants, 1990–1993* by Karma R. Chávez
- *Reclamation Projects: An Archive of Queer Latinidad, 1850–1921* by Pablo Mitchell



QUEER PASTS CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Queer Pasts is now seeking proposals for new document projects. We prioritize projects that focus on the experiences and perspectives of under-represented historical groups, including people of color, trans people, and people with disabilities.

We are currently especially interested in projects focused on disability, indigenous, and/or African American histories.

Please go to <https://alexanderstreet.com/products/queer-pasts> to learn more about this project and for further information about submitting a proposal.

RELATED PRODUCTS

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