

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, including projects that focus on the experiences and perspectives of under-represented historical groups, including people of color, trans people, and people with disabilities.

ITS EDITORS AND THEIR VISION

Every exhibit includes 20–40 primary source documents and an introductory essay. 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 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 is a visiting Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Mills College. Her teaching focuses on comparative social movements, critical historiography and violence studies.

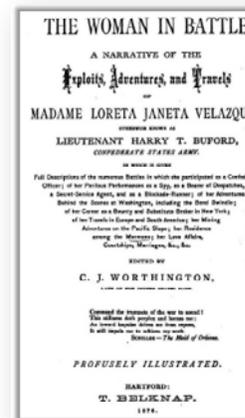
RECLAMATION PROJECTS: AN ARCHIVE OF QUEER LATINIDAD



Pablo Mitchell
History and Comparative American Studies, Oberlin College

Exhibit Description: This collection takes an expansive view of the history of queer Latinidad in the United States, drawing on a wide array of archival sources ranging from legal records and census documents to personal letters and newspaper articles.

The documents assembled here reflect the considerable diversity of the U.S. Latinx community in the 19th and early 20th centuries as Latin American and Caribbean immigrants to the East Coast and Florida joined the country's long-standing Mexican-descent population in the United States.



THE CITY NIGHTCLUB: A COMMUNITY OF QUEER YOUTH IN PORTLAND, OREGON 1977–1997

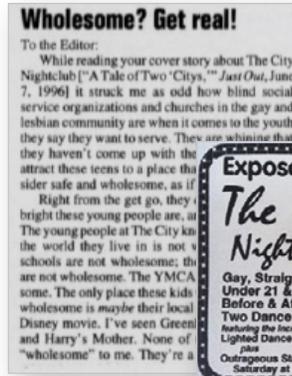


Lisa Arellano
*Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies,
Mills College*

Exhibit Description: From 1983 to 1997, The City Nightclub was an all-ages gay nightclub in Portland, Oregon. By design, the venue made youth sexuality and sexual identity explicit, an acknowledgment that placed the club in a complex and often contentious relationship with local authorities and some members of the local community.

Beyond simply acknowledging that young people were gay, The City Nightclub was perceived as enabling intergenerational and commercial gay sex, triggering heightened scrutiny and the eventual closure of the club. The club's history offers a vivid example of how state power seeks to manage and control youth sexuality through familial frameworks and the criminalization of desire.

This history also reveals that the club was not merely a safe haven for Portland's queer (and often homeless) youth, but a battle zone for the City of Portland and the club's proprietor, who was a fierce critic of state policing.



POWER, POLITICS, AND RACE IN THE 1968 PHILADELPHIA STUDY OF PRISON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

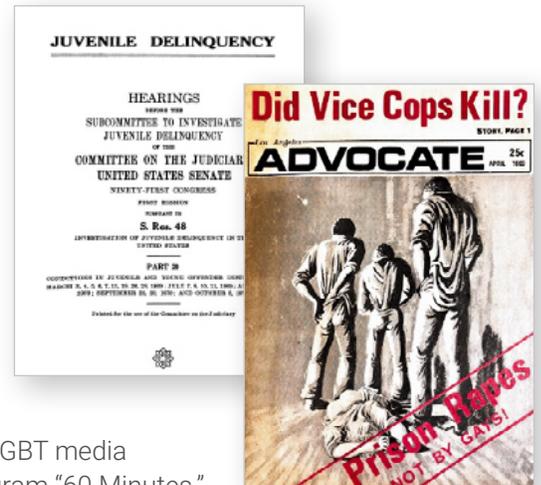


Marc Stein
*Professor of History, San Francisco
State University*

Exhibit Description: This exhibit focuses on a groundbreaking 1968 study of same-sex sexual violence in Philadelphia's male prisons. The explosive report addressed racial dynamics, situational homosexuality, masculinity crises, and the causes of sexual violence.

The exhibit's primary sources include the 1968 Davis study, mainstream and LGBT media articles, transcripts of U.S. Senate hearings, and a clip from the television program "60 Minutes."

The introductory essay situates the Davis study in its time and place, discusses the media coverage, describes the responses of government officials and social scientists, and provides suggestions about how to interpret the primary sources.



AIDS KNOWS NO BORDERS: PROTESTING THE BAN ON HIV-POSITIVE MIGRANTS, 1990–1993



Karma Chavez
Chair in the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

Exhibit Description: This exhibit features ephemera related to two instances of transnational organizing in which AIDS activists in New York and San Francisco played significant roles: (1) the boycott and protests against the 1990 and 1992 International AIDS Conferences, and (2) activism for Haitian refugees detained on Guantánamo Bay from 1991 to 1993 because the US government claimed they had HIV. These materials help us to understand the strategies that groups of AIDS activists who were largely accustomed to addressing their own life and death concerns in a domestic context used to activate audiences in defense of people who lived or originated outside of US national borders.



ARE THERE REALLY ONLY TWO ASIAN LESBIANS IN CHICAGO? QUEER ASIAN VISIBILITY AND COMMUNITY FORMATION IN CHICAGO 1980S–1990s



Laura Fugikawa
American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Colby College

Exhibit Description: This collection considers the invisibility of Chicago queer Asians and the creation of queer Asian community organizations in the 1980s–1990s.

When read as a collection, newspaper articles, community newsletters and oral histories trace a significant, albeit still understudied, history of community organizing in Chicago. These documents provide insight into a myriad of issues relevant to community members, and the reasons queer Asian community groups emerged when and where they did.

The material also illuminates how this experience of feeling invisible and ignored, and specifically disregarded by mainstream and non-Asian gay communities, inspired Asian American acts of visibility and community organizing on the local, national and international scale.

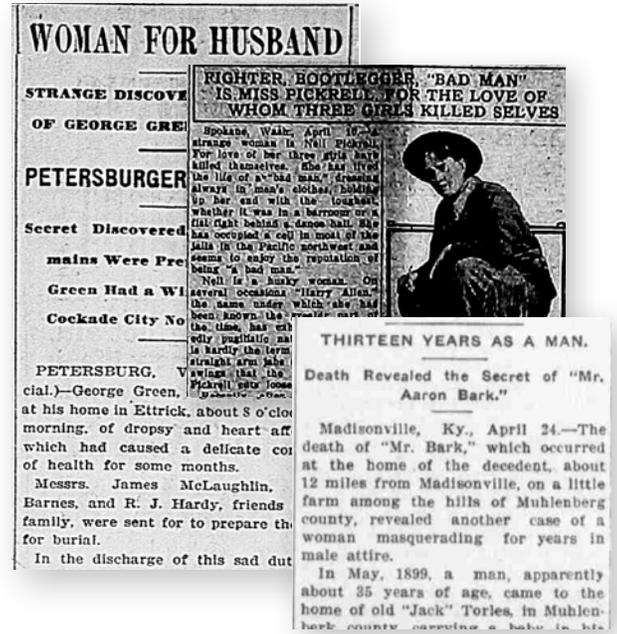


"A REVELMENT MOST SENSATIONAL": ELEVEN STORIES OF TRANS LIVES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1878–1914



Emily Skidmore
Associate Professor of History,
Texas Tech University

Exhibit Description: This exhibit explores eleven cases of individuals who were assigned female at birth and who lived as men in the United States between 1878 and 1914. With an emphasis on newspaper stories, this exhibit is a rich resource to understand the ways in which Americans thought about gender, sexuality, the characteristics of men and women, and the permeability of gender boundaries around the turn of the twentieth century. These stories provide ample evidence of the long history of gender transgression in the United States—a history which, as this exhibit points out, took place in both large cities and rural outposts.



SODOMITES AND GENDER TRANSGRESSORS IN 1840s NEW YORK



Marc Stein
Professor of History,
San Francisco State University

Exhibit Description: This exhibit examines newspaper reports about Sodom, sodomy, sodomites, and gender transgressors in 1840s New York. The introductory essay addresses questions about whether these sources, most of which condemned the city's sodomites, provide strong evidence of early same-sex sexual subcultures in the United States. The essay also examines references to age, class, gender, nationality, race, and religion in press reports about sodomites and compares the media coverage of sodomites to contemporary media reports about gender transgressors.

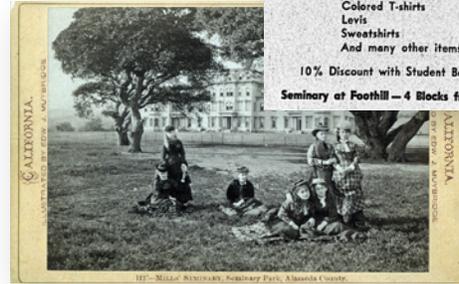
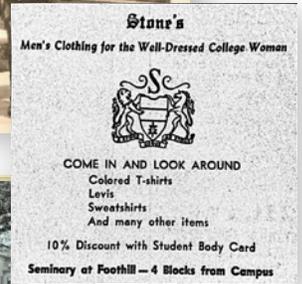


“ARE THEY REALLY?": QUEER LIFE AT MILLS, 1900–1980



Lisa Arellano
Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies,
Mills College

Exhibit Description: “Are They Really?” Queer Life at Mills College, 1900-1980 contains documents about the diverse history of queerness at a women's college in California. The exhibit's thirty-three primary documents include archival photographs, student scrapbooks, campus ephemera, and student yearbooks. The introductory essay considers the challenges of detecting both queerness and normativity in college archival collections. The project was created during a semester-long undergraduate practicum course and is Queer Past's first collaboratively produced exhibit.



TOPICS IN DEVELOPMENT

- Queer Suffrage
- Queer Student Organizing
- Black Gay Men, HIV and Cultural Production

QUEER PASTS CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Queer Past's 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

GenderWatch

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LGBT Studies in Video, Volumes I and II

LGBT Thought and Culture

Men's Magazine Archive

Women and Social Movement Library

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