**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.
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.

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.
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

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.
"STRIKING OUT AGAINST THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE": 1970S LGBTQ CAMPUS ORGANIZING IN THE MICHIGAN STUDENT PRESS

Exhibit Description: "Striking Out Against the Conspiracy of Silence": 1970s LGBTQ Campus Organizing in the Michigan Student Press offers a selection of fifty texts drawn from student-run newspapers at ten public universities and one private college in Michigan from 1960 to 1986. These unmined materials provide a distinctive student lens on key developments of gay liberation, lesbian-feminism, emerging queer visibility, uneven progress, and persistent backlash as they made their mark on the Midwest. Together these sources welcome new interrogations of student history, Michigan history, the histories of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and queer pasts.

THE QUEER HISTORY OF THE WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Exhibit Description: This source set explores the important role of queerness and queer suffragists in the campaign for the 19th Amendment. The traditional narrative of women's suffrage history sanitized the lives of suffragists contributing to the historical erasure of the queer history of the movement. Yet, it was often their very queerness that helped propel the movement forward. This source set highlights the alliances that queer suffragists built and the innovative strategies they developed to protect and preserve their most intimate relationships as they defied the gender and sexual norms of their day.
“ARE THEY REALLY?”: QUEER LIFE AT MILLS, 1900–1980

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 Pasts' first collaboratively produced exhibit.

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

EXHIBITS IN DEVELOPMENT

• Coalitions Resisting the Toronto Bathhouse Raids
• Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Exploring LGBTQ History with T-shirts

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

GenderWatch  LGBT Thought and Culture
GQ Magazine Archive  Men's Magazine Archive
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