

*LGBTQ Sites in Colorado:
A Survey Plan*

June 2023

Prepared by
Erika Warzel

Principal/Owner, Clerestory Preservation
and
Amy Unger

Principal/Owner, Pine Street Preservation



Pine Street Preservation

Prepared for the Colorado Historical Foundation
Funded by History Colorado State Historical Fund
Grant #2020-SP-005



FIGURE 1: AN EARLY GAY RIGHTS PROTEST IN DENVER ON THE CAPITOL LAWN, PICTURED IN A TIMELINE OF DENVER'S LGBTQ HISTORY PREPARED BY COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO STAFF. (WWW.CPR.ORG)

LGBTQ Sites in Colorado: A Survey Plan

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
Purpose	1
Participants	1
Funding	2
Project Area	2
Terminology	2
Methodology.....	5
Purpose and Value of Survey	6
Types of Survey	7
II. Evaluation of Existing Data.....	8
Previous Surveys of LGBTQ Sites.....	8
Designated Properties.....	8
Results of Windshield Survey.....	9
III. Context Statement – LGBTQ History in Colorado	10
Pre-European Settlement	12
Settlement to World War II.....	14
World War II to 1970	30
1970-1996	55
1996-present.....	125
IV. Property Types.....	138
V. Preservation Goals and Objectives	146
Factors Affecting Preservation.....	146
Public Input	147
VI. Recommendations.....	149
VII. Bibliography	156
Appendix A: Windshield Survey Table	159
Appendix B: Windshield Survey Map—Statewide	172
Appendix C: Windshield Survey Map—Denver	173

LGBTQ Sites in Colorado: A Survey Plan

I. Introduction

Purpose

Individuals whose sexual orientation or gender identity did not conform to established heterosexual and binary gender norms lived and loved in Colorado since humans first occupied the land. Their story is, broadly speaking, inseparable from the history of Colorado, encompassing all ethnicities and genders, the wealthy and the working class, indigenous people and immigrants, city dwellers and small-town residents, rural ranchers and military servicepeople, politicians and activists, and professionals of all stripes. A comprehensive history of Colorado's LGBTQ community has yet to be written, with scholars, journalists, and other writers who have explored this aspect of Colorado's history either focusing on a relatively small slice of the story or providing a general overview, often focused on people and events after 1970. The way in which that history is represented in tangible places throughout Colorado has likewise not been comprehensively studied and the majority of historic sites in Colorado with significant LGBTQ associations remain hidden, undocumented, and unrecognized. Such sites include places where LGBTQ activism and organization took place, where community members lived and worked, and where community members found safe places for gathering, creating, and affirming their lives and identities.

This project was conceived to aid in the identification and evaluation of physical places across Colorado associated with LGBTQ history by providing information that can be used to plan and prioritize future work in that effort. In addition to reviewing existing survey data, this survey plan includes a context statement that provides an overview of LGBTQ history in Colorado and identifies common property types that have been found to have LGBTQ associations.

Participants

The Colorado Historical Foundation (CHF), a nonprofit organization that works in a spirit of statewide collaboration to enhance and further historic preservation in Colorado through its core programs of Preservation Loans, Fund Stewardship, Project Support Services and Historic Preservation Easements, undertook this survey plan under the direction of Executive Director Catherine Stroh and Director of Preservation Programs Cindy Nasky. With funding from the State Historical Fund, CHF hired Clerestory Preservation, an independent historic preservation consulting firm led by Principal Erika Warzel, to complete the research and writing of the survey plan. The project was completed as a joint venture between Clerestory Preservation and Pine Street Preservation, an independent historic preservation consulting firm led by Amy Unger. An Advisory Committee of geographically diverse individuals with expertise in Colorado history, specifically LGBTQ history, was formed to provide input on the project from the perspective of community members and help identify sites in Colorado known to have LGBTQ associations. Members of the Committee included Nick Ota-Wang, Mardi Moore, Dominick Sekich, Kathleen Corbett, Kevin McManamon, David Duffield, Michael Martin, Rex Fuller, Kelly Nichols, Brooke Keith, and Aaron Marcus. Certified Local Government staff members Maren Bzdek (Fort Collins), Kara

Hahn (Denver), and Becca Dierschow (Denver) and State Historical Fund Survey Specialist Jenny Deichman provided additional input throughout development of the plan.

Funding

This project was paid for by a History Colorado – State Historical Fund grant (#2020-SP-005).

Project Area

Given that LGBTQ history is not geographically limited in any way, this survey plan covers the entire state of Colorado. Care has been taken to represent this large geographic reach as much as possible in the developed context, the selected properties for reconnaissance (windshield) survey, and recommendations for future survey.

Terminology

The vocabulary used to describe sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and romantic identities has changed extensively since theorists first used the term homosexual to describe same-sex desire in the 1860s. Throughout the twentieth century this vocabulary has continued to evolve, most rapidly in recent years. Many terms used in the past are now considered limiting, stigmatizing, inaccurate, or offensive, while others, such as “queer,” have been reclaimed by some community members; however, there is no universal agreement as to the appropriateness of its use. All agree, however, that it is most appropriate to describe individuals using the terminology they use when describing themselves. This practice is complicated, however, when discussing historical figures and events, given that how an individual who is no longer living self-identified is often impossible to know. In preparing this report, when the term(s) preferred by an individual or group of individuals are unclear or unknown, efforts have been made to avoid specific terms that may inadvertently mischaracterize an individual’s or group’s predominate identity.

The term LGBTQ is used throughout the report to broadly describe communities and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and other non-cisgender and non-heterosexual identities and sexual orientations. Use of the term “queer” in these circumstances has been avoided, given the historically complicated nature of the term and the fact that its use is not universally accepted. Based on guidance embodied in PFLAG National’s Glossary of Terms, last updated in June 2022, and the GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition, the following terms and definitions have been adopted when discussing more specific identities, concepts, and situations. Terminology used in statements quoted from other sources remain as it appears in the original text and terms used by individuals or groups to describe themselves are always given preference when known.

Assigned Sex: The sex assigned to an infant at birth based on the child’s visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.

Asexual: Commonly used to describe individuals who do not experience sexual attraction toward individuals of any gender. Asexuality is a sexual orientation, and is different from celibacy, in that celibacy is the choice to refrain from engaging in sexual behaviors and does not comment on one’s sexual attractions.

Agender: Individuals who identify as not having a gender. Agender people may describe themselves as genderless or gender neutral.

Bisexual: Commonly referred to as bi or bi+. According to bi+ educator and advocate Robyn Ochs, the term refers to a person who acknowledges in themselves the potential to be attracted—romantically, emotionally and/or sexually—to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree. The “bi” in bisexual can refer to attraction to genders similar to and different from one’s own. People who identify as bisexual need not have had equal sexual or romantic experience—or equal levels of attraction—with people across genders, nor any experience at all; attraction and self-identification determine orientation.

Cisgender (pronounced sis-gender): A term used to refer to an individual whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth. The prefix cis- comes from the Latin word for “on the same side as.”

Closeted: Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. A closeted person may be referred to as being “in the closet.” There are many degrees to being out/closeted; closeted individuals may be out (see Out) to just themselves, close friends, or to their larger network, or not publicly open about their status as LGBTQ+ people.

Coming Out: For LGBTQ+ people, coming out is the process of self-identifying and self-acceptance that entails the sharing of their identity with others.

Drag: The theatrical performance of one or multiple genders (often including makeup, costume, dance, lip-syncing, and temporary body modifications). Performers who present in a feminine manner are generally called Drag Queens, while performers who present in a masculine manner are usually called Drag Kings. These performances often push traditional boundaries of gender presentation by being very exaggerated, calling into question societally defined gender roles.

Feminine: Having qualities or an appearance stereotypically associated with women or conventionally regarded as female.

Gay: A term used to describe people who are emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.

Gender: Broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate.

Gender-Affirming Surgery (GAS): Surgical procedures that can help people adjust their bodies to match their innate gender identity more closely. Used interchangeably with gender-confirming surgery.

Gender Binary: The disproven concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and that everyone must be one or the other. *Gender Diverse Spaces*: Spaces, physical and otherwise, that welcome, support, affirm, and are available to anyone regardless of gender identity.

Gender Expression: The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Genderfluid: Describes a person who does not consistently adhere to one fixed gender and who may move among genders.

Gender Identity: A person's deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. Gender identity is a separate concept from sexuality and gender expression.

Gender Nonconforming (GNC): An umbrella term for those who do not follow gender stereotypes, or who expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity.

Gender Roles: The strict set of societal beliefs that dictate the so-called acceptable behaviors for people of different genders, usually binary in nature.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. This includes the often implicitly held idea that heterosexuality is the norm and that other sexualities are "different" or "abnormal."

Heterosexual: Refers to a person who is sexually attracted to a person of a different gender or sex. Also referred to as straight.

Homosocial/Homosociality: Refers to social bonds and nonsexual interpersonal attractions between persons of the same sex.

Homosocial Environments: Environments such as fraternities, sororities, schools, clubs, etc. that are more or less exclusive to one gender.

Intersex: Refers to people who are born with sex characteristics (including genitals, gonads, or chromosome patterns) that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies. An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of body variations, which may or may not be visible at birth. Relates to biological sex characteristics and is distinct from sexual orientation or gender identity.

Lesbian: Refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: An acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. The Q can also stand for questioning, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. Typically understood to include all gender identities and sexual orientations.

LGBTQ+: An alternative to LGBTQ, the acronym seeks to express the diversity of human gender expression and sexuality through addition of the "plus" symbol.

LGBTQIA+: An alternative to LGBTQ and LGBTQ+ that specifically references intersex and asexual identities.

Masculine: Having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men or conventionally regarded as male.

Nonbinary: Refers to people who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender nonconforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive.

Out: A term which describes people who openly self-identify as LGBTQ+ in their private, public, and/or professional lives.

Sex Worker: A person who engages in sexual activity for payment.

Sexual Orientation: The sexual attraction toward other people or no people. While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does not define one's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one. Typically, it is attraction that helps determine orientation.

Transgender: Often shortened to trans, a term describing a person's gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically to match their gender identity. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression—such groups include, but are not limited to, people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, and androgynous.

Transgressive Sexuality and Gender: Sexuality and/or gender expression that challenges socially accepted standards of behavior, belief, morality, or taste.

Methodology

Given that historic sites with LGBTQ associations are rarely identifiable by visual inspection, property types and sites were first identified through contextual research, followed by reconnaissance survey for sites that could be located. Preliminary findings of eligibility were based on visible integrity related to the known historic background.

During research of LGBTQ history in Colorado (and its connections with national developments), a database was compiled of sites referred to in primary and secondary sources consulted during historical context development and from lists compiled by preservation entities, researchers, and other groups, including History Colorado's Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, City of Boulder Historic Preservation, City of Fort Collins Historic Preservation, David Duffield, and Nick Ota-Wang. Limited research was conducted to pinpoint the location of identified sites and determine whether they remained extant. In addition, limited research was conducted to identify sites associated with significant individuals identified during the research process. Any extant sites were also added to the database.

It is important to note that this database is intended to be a representative, as opposed to comprehensive, listing of properties in Colorado with known LGBTQ associations. Several sites included in the database were identified via crowdsourcing or the recollections of LGBTQ community members. Efforts were made to verify the names and addresses of such sites, but in some cases, verification was not possible.

From this research, patterns of property types emerged and extant examples of each type were selected for reconnaissance survey. Efforts were made to select properties representative of a wide geographic area, a variety of time periods, and the diverse nature of the LGBTQ community. As a final step, a set of recommendations for future survey work were developed from the historic context and the results of the reconnaissance survey.

Purpose and Value of Survey

Survey of historic sites provides salient information related to a place's historic background, how it fits within a historic context of similar or related sites or areas, whether it has historic significance according to relevant evaluation criteria, and its level of historic integrity related to that significance. When synthesized, this information allows for an effective evaluation of a site or district's eligibility for historic designation, either through a local preservation program, the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties, and/or the National Register of Historic Places. Findings of eligibility, in turn, can help direct which properties or district should be considered for designation, i.e., official recognition of a place's historic importance. In short, survey is a baseline first step for preserving significant historic places. Without survey, a community cannot know which places are important and worthy of preservation.

To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a site, building, structure, district, or object must meet at least one of the following four criteria:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of person significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The Colorado State Register of Historic Properties has five criteria, which are similar to the National Register's four, with one additional criterion; of these, at least one criterion must be met in order for the property to be eligible:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history.
- B. Property is connected with persons significant in history.
- C. Property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan.
- D. Property is of geographic importance.
- E. Property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history.

The criteria for local designation programs, where in place, depend upon the establishing ordinance or law, but generally tend to be based upon either the National or State registers' criteria. The number of local designation criteria that must be met by the property in question also varies between communities, from at least one to several.

In addition to meeting the applicable significance criteria, a property must also possess a sufficient level of historic *integrity* as related to its significance. Not to be confused with the condition of a property, integrity refers to the level of change the property has undergone since its period of significance (the time period over which it gained its historic significance) and its impact on understanding or recognizing

the property's significance. Integrity is evaluated by considering seven different aspects, as defined by the National Park Service:

Location: the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

Setting: the physical environment of a historic property.

Design: the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

Materials: the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Workmanship: the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

Feeling: a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association: the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Types of Survey

There are two essential types of survey that provide different levels of information on a historic place or area: *Reconnaissance* and *Intensive*. *Reconnaissance* survey records resources with photography and basic information, such as the year of construction, notable features, and likely alterations based on observations in the field. It provides little to no historic background on a site, and cannot provide findings of eligibility related to historic associations that have not been uncovered or evaluated. Reconnaissance survey can, however, provide a general idea of likely integrity, and whether further research is warranted.

Intensive survey provides as complete a historic background on a property as possible through archival research on a building's construction, the people or events associated with the site, relevant areas of significance, and the integrity of the building related to those areas of significance. It is usually able to provide a solid evaluation of eligibility for designation based on findings of significance and integrity.

II. Evaluation of Existing Data

Previous Surveys of LGBTQ Sites

To date, a statewide survey of sites associated with the LGBTQ history has not been undertaken and no formal cultural resource surveys designed to identify LGBTQ sites within local communities appear to have been completed. A few projects, however, have sought to locate and publicize such sites in other ways. In 2016, the Preservation Planning Unit staff at History Colorado’s Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation— Astrid Liverman, Erika Warzel, and Heather Peterson—launched the Heritage Diversity Project to raise awareness and map information about Colorado’s diverse communities, including its LGBTQ community, through crowdsourcing. To date, the project’s [Historypin page](#) dedicated to recording Colorado places associated with LGBTQ history includes thirty-eight entries created by the general public and History Colorado staff. Certified Local Government staff in Boulder, Fort Collins, and Denver have also been engaged in efforts to identify LGBTQ sites within their respective communities. Boulder maintains a database of properties with known LGBTQ associations, and Fort



FIGURE 2: DENVER CENTRAL YMCA, CA. 1907-15. (OSCAR E. LINDEVALL, HISTORY COLORADO COLLECTION)

Collins has developed a walking tour of [LGBTQ+ sites in the city](#) and is currently at work on a historic context for the Civil Rights Movement in Fort Collins that includes the LGBTQ rights movement. Denver city staff have created a slideshow presentation giving an overview of LGBTQ history specific to that city with examples of associated sites noted.

The lack of cultural resource survey focused on LGBTQ history in Colorado results in very little to evaluate in terms of previous survey efforts and how future survey projects should be mounted. However, anecdotal

evidence and logic suggests that sites with LGBTQ associations are best discovered through archival research and oral interviews, as opposed to reconnaissance survey, given that these associations are typically undetectable through visual analysis alone.

Designated Properties

The number of designated historic sites in Colorado specifically recognized for their association with LGBTQ history is small, though some sites with LGBTQ associations, such as Denver’s Brown Palace, have been designated for their significance in other areas. It is likely that preservation consultant Diane

Wray's 2004 nomination for the Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex (5DV.2049, National Register listed July 30, 2004) was the first in Colorado to officially recognize historic significance associated with LGBTQ history. Efforts to recognize significant historic sites associated with LGBTQ history through listing in the National and State Register have increased since that time. In 2017, the First Unitarian Society of Denver (5DV.16713) was listed in the National Register not only for its architectural significance, but as the site of Colorado's first same-sex religious wedding ceremony, held in 1975. In 2018, a National Register amendment prepared by Erika Warzel recognized the Boulder County Courthouse as the site where the first same-sex marriage licenses in the United States were issued. A pending National Historic Landmark nomination for the courthouse will recognize the national significance of those events.

Results of Windshield Survey

A representative list of extant LGBTQ sites was developed concurrently with the context (beginning on page 10). Sites were identified through the research process, building upon the work of History Colorado, feedback from CLGs, and members of the Advisory Committee. The list for windshield survey was winnowed down to those places that presented as fully as possible the breadth of property types and locales. Nearly all of the context's property types (save for LGBTQ neighborhoods) are represented in the list, as are eleven of Colorado's counties that cover Front Range metropolitan areas from Fort Collins to Trinidad (where the vast majority of LGBTQ-associated sites can be found), as well as some mountain communities like Aspen and Breckenridge (see Appendix B, Statewide Map of Windshield Survey Sites and Appendix C, Central Denver Map of Windshield Survey Sites).

Since association with LGBTQ history was a prerequisite for inclusion in the list for survey, a preliminary evaluation of historic integrity was the main goal of the windshield survey.¹ In general, the LGBTQ-associated integrity of the sites surveyed was found to be surprisingly good. This may be because many sites' potential periods of significance are relatively recent. Furthermore, many are much earlier buildings that have had the benefit of some type of historic designation, most of which recognize a site's architectural merit. Indeed, of the fifty-seven extant sites selected for the windshield survey, one is listed in the State Register and thirteen are listed in the National Register (five individually listed, and eight listed as part of a historic district; see Appendix A, Table of Windshield Survey Results). Of these, three are listed in part due to their association with LGBTQ history, while all are recognized for their architecture or other historic associations, such as the development of the communities in which they stand. Due to the extended time period of LGBTQ history and the statewide-scope of this survey plan, the windshield survey should be taken as only a starting example of extant sites in Colorado and by no means an exhaustive list of subthemes or property types.

¹ Due to the statewide geographic reach of the windshield survey properties, in-person site visits were not possible for each one. Sites visited in person had photographs taken by either Erika Warzel or Amy Unger. Street-view images from Google Earth were collected for sites not visited in person and are indicated as such in the Table of Windshield Survey Results (Appendix A).

III. Context Statement – LGBTQ History in Colorado

Introduction

The breadth and depth of LGBTQ history in Colorado belies the ability to adequately touch upon all themes, events, or people that are associated with that history. The following context attempts to provide prominent themes and examples of historical events that have emerged through research as the most illustrative, or at least a good start. Instances of possible and needed further research are indicated as guideposts along the way, in the hopes that they will help readers continue the work of navigating, finding, evaluating, and recognizing LGBTQ sites in Colorado.

Intersectional LGBTQ History

As historian Megan E. Springate notes in the National Park Service’s *LGBTQ America* theme study, “LGBTQ is not a single community with a single history; indeed, each group represented by these letters (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) is made up of multiple communities. The axes of gender, generation, geographic location, ethnicity, and other factors play an important role in the history of LGBTQ America, shaping the various histories of LGBTQ communities across the nation and the places associated with them.”² In addition to varying gender identities and sexual orientations, LGBTQ people include those of all races, ethnicities, abilities, and classes, among other identities that shape a person’s life. Accordingly, the authors of this context have attempted to illustrate as much as possible the many intersections of identity within LGBTQ Colorado history, striving to find examples of LGBTQ stories of people and groups that go beyond upper- or middle-class, white, cisgender gay men, the LGBTQ group that has tended to receive the most attention in historical studies due to their social dominance. However, this proves more difficult when the storytellers within the gay community have also tended to be white and cisgender male, a tension that has existed since the early years of gay liberation. A review of this context will show that despite this dominance, many identities of LGBTQ people are found within Colorado.

In addition to attempting to illustrate the many identities within LGBTQ groups, care has been taken to geographically represent as much of Colorado as possible in this context. However, one cannot dispute that LGBTQ people and groups are most prominent in Colorado’s larger cities, particularly in Denver. This is primarily because larger cities have long attracted LGBTQ people as a place they can be themselves and find others. Due to the LGBTQ communities that form there, and the relative anonymity larger cities have historically offered, they also provide safer environments in which to be “out.”

A four-part series from 1985 in *Out Front* magazine on gay communities in Colorado offers an illustrative example: Phil Nash, the series’ author, focused on Boulder, Aspen, Northern Colorado (Fort Collins/Greeley), and Colorado Springs. The report on Northern Colorado highlighted the challenges facing LGBTQ people in smaller towns and rural areas, namely heightened homophobia and the vicious cycle it perpetuated of discouraging LGBTQ people from coming out, thereby preventing increased visibility for the community that could lead to greater acceptance (though creating that acceptance was

² Megan E. Springate, “A Note About Intersectionality,” *LGBTQ America*, 07-1 to 07-2.

by no means the LGBTQ community's responsibility). For instance, a Greeley Gay Alliance was known to exist in years prior to 1985, but membership had dwindled to nothing by the time of Nash's reporting, and a Greeley bar that hosted a gay night had become the target of homophobic violence.³ Many gays and lesbians interviewed by Nash for the series indicated that they traveled to Denver, Colorado's largest city, for relief and the chance to connect openly with others. Nash's reporting for the series and other mentions of gay life in smaller towns in the gay media often left interviewees and places unidentified for the sake of privacy and safety.

A Note on Sources

Not long ago, the ability to easily access and use sources related to LGBTQ history was limited, but over the last decade or two, thanks to the work of dedicated LGBTQ historians and history projects in Colorado and nationally, accessible sources have become more and more extensive and continue to grow in number. The following context has attempted to make the best use of what is now available, but in practice, many, many sources could not be consulted due to limitations in time and budget. The reader is reminded that sources referenced here are only a small fraction of what is available. Collections such as The Center's LGBTQ History Project, Katie Gilmartin's Colorado-based oral history interviews in the Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony, and collections at the Denver Public Library and History Colorado provide a wide range of sources, including oral histories, primary sources, photographs, and even artifacts that illuminate LGBTQ history in Colorado. The National Park Service's Theme Study of LGBTQ history in the U.S., *LGBTQ America*, provides a national context and is also available online.

The Colorado LGBTQ History Project: <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/programs/lgbtq-history-project/>

Katie Gilmartin Oral History Series from the Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony:
<https://wayback.archive-it.org/12142/20220517164142/https://alotarchives.org/collection/katie-gilmartin>

Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Department LGBTQ Collections:
<https://history.denverlibrary.org/research/gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-transgender>

History Colorado LGBTQ+ Collecting Initiative:
https://5008.sydneyplus.com/HistoryColorado_ArgusNet_Final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US

LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History (NPS):
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>

A Note on Evaluation of Significance

Due to the vast time period this context covers (pre-statehood to present), and the numerous LGBTQ communities, groups, and people that are associated with that history, it is not possible to tell all stories. By necessity, only examples that appear to illustrate the breadth and depth of LGBTQ history have been

³ Phil Nash, "Northern Colorado: Rumbblings Inside a Massive Closet," *Out Front*, March 1, 1985.

provided; when further research appears to be fruitful or needed for a better understanding, that has been noted, with occasional suggestions for starting sources. However, the historical import or significance of these examples have not been fully evaluated in this context because further research and analysis, which requires more in-depth understanding of a site's historical context within a particular LGBTQ community, is needed. Ideally, such analysis would include the reflections and input of people associated with that context.

Pre-European Settlement

Traditional Cultures

The presence of same-sex desire, transgender identities, and gender fluidity in North America's indigenous traditional cultures has been the subject of fascination for generations of European Americans and is discussed in numerous books and scholarly articles. Accounts of same-sex intimate relationships or transgender roles in traditional cultures have been documented by Spanish conquistadors and subsequent waves of European travelers through North America. However, diversity among different tribes' and cultures' beliefs and social customs of gender expression, identity, and fluidity have often been ignored, lumping all indigenous traditions into one broad category of sexual nonconformity. Furthermore, anthropological studies of what have been called, among many other terms, "berdache," "two-spirit," "alternate gender," and "third or fourth gender" people and roles vary widely in their methods and conclusions. Very few have relied on interviews with members of traditional cultures, and even fewer have been written by LGBTQ native people themselves.⁴

Several LGBTQ scholars have pointed out that more recent (1970s-90s) anthropological examinations of non-heteronormative activities and roles among native people are "unwitting projections backward" of the gay liberation movement's desire to find affirmation among earlier cultures free from homophobic norms, leading to conclusions that "profoundly distort" and simplify the role of "alternate genders" among traditional cultures.⁵ Indeed, anthropologist William Roscoe has implied that much of the scholarship on gender and sexual diversity in Native American cultures came on the heels of anti-gay U.S. policies like the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that claimed to rely on "millenia of moral teaching" as the basis for denying LGBTQ rights; pointing to traditional cultures as examples of how non-heteronormative people have held revered places within their societies was intended as counterpoint to that argument.⁶

Therefore, while one can unequivocally state that non-heteronormative people have existed in North America and Colorado for far longer than European explorers and settlers have been around to observe them, and that such traditional cultures continue today, only the people within these cultures are qualified, ethically and professionally, to discuss, describe, and evaluate the places and meanings

⁴ See for example, the essays in Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds. *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

⁵ Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "Warfare, Homosexuality, and Gender Status among American Indian Men in the Southwest," in *Long before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Thomas A. Foster, New York: New York University Press, 2007, 20.

⁶ Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, 4.

associated with them. As such, this context can only encourage that research into this subject and how it relates to historic sites in Colorado should be led by native LGBTQ people.

Trappers and Mountain Men

In his biography of Scottish aristocrat-turned-fur-trapper Sir William Drummond Stewart, historian William Benemann offers an account of how fur trapping in the Rocky Mountains offered a way for men in the first half of the nineteenth century to remove themselves from society for long periods of time and live in all-male environments. During the summer months used for trapping beaver, they typically traveled with a partner, their only companion for long stretches of time. While some of these partnerships were simply for business, others developed into more intimate relationships: the famous trappers Robert Campbell and William Sublette were described as having a close relationship that was exceptional among the trade for being both personal and business, with a “long-lasting emotional closeness.”⁷ Benemann maintains that “the question of self-selection among participants in the fur trade—of whether men consciously chose a profession in which they knew sex with other men would be acceptable— is particularly intriguing where free trappers are concerned, since they alone do not seem to have entered the profession for the money.”⁸

Benemann further explains how the romanticization of the Rocky Mountains in the 1830s-40s European and American periodicals as a “refuge for uninhibited male bonding,” combined with the influential novels of James Fenimore Cooper that presented male-male friendships as superior to male-female relationships, encouraged many young men of means and romantic notions to temporarily leave society and travel into the wilds in the company of trappers.⁹ Stewart, who never married and appears to have had close relationships with only men, spent several years in the mountains. In a last hurrah before returning to Scotland to claim his family estate, Stewart gathered a traveling party of trappers and aristocrats who made their way west from Missouri in 1842, traveling north through Colorado and ultimately holding a costume pageant with Elizabethan dress, “lavish tents,” liquor, and “imported delicacies” on the shores of what is now called Lake Fremont in southern Wyoming.¹⁰

Benemann goes on to note that after the collapse of the fur trade in the 1840s, many trappers were “profoundly changed by their years in the fur trade, unable to fit into settled society’s expectations.” Several retreated to remote settlements and trading posts together, particularly the Colorado Territory communities of Hardscrabble, Pueblo, and Greenhorn, to continue living in a “permanent state of non-marriage.”¹¹

Miners

As with the fur trade, mining in the remote mountains of Colorado were almost exclusively all-male environments, although this changed fairly quickly as settlements grew around the mining camps. Historian Peter Stoneley, in his account of the California gold rush and the accompanying practice of

⁷ William Benemann, *Men in Eden: William Drummond Stewart and Same-Sex Desire in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012; 61.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

homosociality (same-sex socialization), argues that contemporary observers of the mining camps thought they offered the opportunity for men to become their “true selves,” both literally in various stages of undress while mining, and figuratively, as free from the confines of domesticity and the “feminine milieu.”¹² Furthermore, the disorienting change that mining brought on society through the mass movement of young men to remote locations, brought an escape from the restraints of home.

See below for further discussion on the loosening of these restraints as men and women migrated across the country between the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Settlement to World War II

During the late-nineteenth century, a new framework for understanding same-sex desire and gender identity developed from the work of European sexologists. As public historian Susan Ferentinos points out, prior to this time, “sexual expression was understood more as a set of behaviors rather than a reflection of one’s core identity, and the regulation of sexual behavior was more the domain of religion and law as opposed to science and medicine.”¹³ This began to slowly change, however, as researchers increasingly turned to science and medicine to explain same-sex attraction and gender identity.

This work took place during a period in American history marked by rapid change and challenges to white middle-class dominance. Post-Civil War Reconstruction, growing immigrant populations, labor movements, and women’s rights groups threatened the existing power structure, which responded by establishing Jim Crow laws and other means of social control, including “anti-vice” campaigns. At the same time, science was increasingly applied to social and moral issues and theories of human difference developed to support established hierarchies. Theoretical constructs such as social Darwinism encouraged the classification of human traits as “desirable” or “undesirable,” with those deemed undesirable typically associated with the poor, people of color, and individuals with physical, mental, or intellectual challenges.¹⁴ Within this environment, a wave of intellectual inquiry into same-sex desire and gender expression took place and “the concept of homosexual—an individual whose physical attraction to others of the same sex was an essential part of who they were as a person” first emerged.¹⁵

German theorist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs is credited as the first to describe same-sex attraction as an innate human characteristic. In 1864, he articulated his theory in conjunction with the concept “gender inversion” or “sexual inversion,” which explained same-sex desire as resulting from a mismatch between an individual’s biological sex and inner gender. A biological male who sexually desired other men was thought to possess the sexual desire of a biological female, and vice versa. The theory was also used to explain individuals whose gender expression differed from established norms and did not challenge the prevailing binary view of sexuality and gender.¹⁶ Ulrich and others in the emerging field of sexology did not, however, address bisexuality and non-binary gender identities, a failure that would continue for

¹² Peter Stoneley, “Rewriting the Gold Rush: Twain, Harte and Homosociality.” *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 30, No. 2 (1996); 190.

¹³ Susan Ferentinos, *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 55.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

decades. In keeping with the binary perspective, Hungarian psychologist Karoly Maria Benkert, coined the term “homosexual” and “heterosexual” to differentiate between “inverted” males and females and cisgender individuals.¹⁷

The first studies of sexual variance in the United States appeared around 1889, with works published by doctors such as G. Frank

Lydston and James G. Kiernan, who defined homosexuality as a congenital defect or medical pathology that required aggressive treatment.¹⁸

According to Ferentinos, American researchers were “more likely to recommend harsh treatment of homosexuals and to link same-sex desire to urban environments, racial minorities, and the lower classes,” a viewpoint that many historians now understand as “part of a larger desire on the part of middle-class educated whites

to enforce their understanding of sexual morality on the larger population by using science to define what was acceptable and what was deviant.”¹⁹

Between 1880 and 1920, whites, Blacks, and immigrants of all genders, but most often young men, migrated to urban areas in order to take advantage of employment opportunities, escape oppression, violence, and poverty, or simply make a new life for themselves unfettered by familial and societal expectations. During this period, single men constituted as much as 40 percent of the male population in America’s largest cities, and the all-male subcultures that developed provided opportunities to meet other gay men and form community. Particular restaurants, saloons, clubs, and other social and entertainment venues gained a reputation as places where gay men gathered and certain public spaces such as parks and bathrooms, became places where “cruising,” the seeking of anonymous sexual encounters, took place. Denver’s Civic Center Park had a reputation as a place to meet male prostitutes as early as 1894 and Jim Foshee, a gay journalist and historian who lived in Denver in the 1970s, recalls that “an old gay man named Francis Terbor-Davis” told him that “as soon as Cheesman Park opened in



FIGURE 3: AERIAL VIEW OF CHEESEMAN PARK, CA. 1910-20. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTION, X-27154)

¹⁷ Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 52-53.

¹⁸ Ferentinos, 56.

¹⁹ Ferentinos, 57.



FIGURE 4: MEN PLAY CHESS AND CHECKERS IN A GAME ROOM AT THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (Y.M.C.A.) AT EAST 16TH AVENUE AND LINCOLN STREET. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, X-29169)

1907, homosexuals adopted the southern section of it as their own.”²⁰ Single-sex spaces like Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) dormitories, college and university residence halls, boarding schools, and athletic clubs also offered opportunities to meet individuals who shared the same sexual desires, though many were hesitant to reveal their sexual orientation for fear of reprisal.²¹

Gender and Sexuality in Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Colorado

In his 1914 book, *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*, Magnus Hirschfeld included a letter from an unnamed university professor in Colorado who describes a number of gay students whom he taught who then went on to successful careers in journalism, the theater, and teaching. Writing about the letter, Regis University associate professor Geoffrey W. Bateman states that “in spite of the presence of

²⁰ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary in which is Contained, in Chronological Order, Evidence of the True and Fantastical History of Those Persons Now Called Lesbians and Gay Men* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 50; Jim Foshee interview in Robert C. Steele, *Banned from California: Jim Foshee*. Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, 2020, 234.

²¹ Ferentinos, 50-1.

an emerging gay community, one that the [unnamed professor] characterizes as supportive, he also points out the difficulties these gay men faced. His letter also conveys the need for extreme discretion at times and a wariness of revealing too much too quickly about one's sexuality."²² Illustrating the high stakes that gay men faced at the turn of the twentieth century when acting on their same-sex desires, the unnamed Denver professor relates the story of an engineering student arrested for "carrying on with the boys in the YMCA building" and who subsequently committed suicide after his actions were publicly exposed.²³

Like many YMCAs across the United States, and presumably across Colorado, Denver's Central YMCA at 25 E. 16th Avenue (5DV.2049, National Register listed July 30, 2004), constructed in 1906, became a locus of gay life as early as the 1910s. LGBTQ activist and historian Terry William Mangan reported that the Grand Junction YMCA (demolished) was the "centre [sic] of gay activities for the entire area of the Western Slope" during the same period.²⁴ Diane Wray, author of the National Register nomination for the Denver YMCA notes, "it's important to remember, however, that this gay culture at the Central YMCA, and at other big city YMCAs, was completely hidden behind a screen of privacy and double entendres, including the use of the word 'gay' itself which was already established English slang by the 1920s."²⁵

Much like YMCAs, public bathhouses across Colorado provided semi-private spaces for gay people to interact. The unnamed professor's letter describes Denver's bathhouses as less accommodating than those in other large cities, but notes that six of the nine masseurs working in Denver bathhouses were known to be tolerant and likely gay.²⁶ In Steamboat Springs, an attendant reported



FIGURE 5: STEAMBOAT SPRINGS BATH HOUSE CA. 1913-1925. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MCC-1097)

²² Geoffrey W. Bateman, "Denver," 2004, Archives of the glbtq Encyclopedia Project, http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/denver_S.pdf.

²³ Katz, 51.

²⁴ Terry Mangan, "The Gay West," unpublished manuscript with Colorado Historical Society (now History Colorado), 26. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project, at <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Terry-Mangan-The-Gay-West.pdf>, accessed May 2022. Mangan helped pioneer the study of LGBTQ history in Colorado in the early 1970s.

²⁵ Diane Wray, Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex National Register Nomination, NRIS.04000736, 2004.

²⁶ Jackson Springer, "'Against the Order of Nature': Creating a Gay Identity Under the Law in Colorado, 1880-1914," senior thesis (History Department of Princeton University, 2018), https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/springer_jackson_thesis.pdf, 77-78; Katz, 50.



FIGURE 6: PALACE THEATRE, CA. 1870-80. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, X-24703)

finding several men “committing acts of lustful sin” at the town’s bathhouse built in 1884. During the mid-1880s, the bathhouse gained a reputation for attracting men who “engaged in unnatural sexual encounters while bathing.”²⁷

LGBTQ life was clearly not limited to Colorado’s major cities. Historians and authors such as Peter Boag, Robin Courtney Henry, Gregory Hinton, and Susan Lee Johnson have extensively documented female impersonation, gender fluidity, and same-sex relationships in homosocial communities such as mining and logging camps, railroad construction camps, and ranches with high male populations. In *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, Boag demonstrated the prevalence of non-normative gender expression in the American West, citing numerous examples of variations in gender identity and expression among both women and men.²⁸

A variety of factors have been cited as contributing to a greater tolerance for sex and gender variance in the rural American West, including physical distance from the established centers of religious, political, economic and moral control; the prevalence of sex-segregated populations; and the challenges of everyday life in harsh conditions. Same-sex sexual activity among males in communities such as mining camps has often been explained as largely stemming from a lack of female partners, which forced heterosexual men to turn to other men for sexual release. The acceptance of female impersonation in contexts such as dances and other entertainment was similarly attributed to a lack of females.

²⁷ Robin Courtney Henry, “Criminalizing Sex, Defining Sexuality: Sodomy, Law, and Manhood in Nineteenth-Century Colorado,” PhD dissertation, (Indiana University, August 2006), 158-59.

²⁸ Peter Boag, *Re-dressing America’s Frontier Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

Circumstances, as opposed to gender identity, were likewise often used to explain why a female would choose to present as a male, citing safety, adventure, criminality, or more lucrative employment as motivations. More recent scholarship complicates explanations that view same-sex relationships and gender fluidity in the West as temporary adaptations, suggesting that the West's bachelor communities and more relaxed social structure may have attracted individuals whose sexual desires and gender identities differed from the established norms, and allowed non-conforming individuals more freedom to express their true identities.²⁹

While it is clear that members of the LGBTQ community lived, worked, loved, and socialized throughout Colorado during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, evidence of the lives they lived and the places important to them is scant and often hidden behind coded language. Much of what has been publicly recorded regarding LGBTQ life during the late 1800s and early 1900s was done so in the context of criminal arrests or sensationalized accounts of incidents involving same-sex advances or cross-dressing. Though problematic due to media bias and fear of public exposure, these accounts can provide some insight into locations and areas where LGBTQ individuals lived and socialized, as well as the often unfair and unjust treatment they received at the hands of police.

On the evening of June 22, 1885, Walter Hill returned home and told his parents that he had met a man at Denver's Big Casino Saloon on 15th Street between Larimer and Holliday (Market) streets who sexually assaulted him. The boy's brother reported the alleged crime, and the same night John Ryan was picked up by police on a charge of vagrancy at Moses' Home, a saloon at 253 15th Street in Denver owned by Moses Kaltenbach. "Singled out as best answering the description" of the alleged attacker, Ryan was brought to the Hill home and identified as the man Walter had encountered that night. Ryan had allegedly propositioned Hill, who refused his advance, at the Big Casino, and "enticed him to West Denver" where he reportedly sexually assaulted him in "a clump of bushes" near Mullen's mill. Hill, policemen, and Moses Kaltenbach, owner of Moses' Home, served as a witness during Ryan's arraignment. Unable to post the \$1000 bail, Ryan was taken to county jail where he spent nearly three months before pleading guilty to "an infamous crime against decency, in the shape of an assault." Questions surrounding Ryan's involvement in the alleged crime apparently remained unanswered at the time of his sentencing.³⁰

Many working-class saloons like the Big Casino, Moses' Home, and others throughout Colorado, had well-earned reputations as rough-and-tumble places where moral standards were relaxed and sexual partners could be found, for a fee or not. It is likely that very few, if any, Colorado saloons operating in the late 1800s and early 1900s catered solely to a gay clientele, but it can be assumed that some drinking establishments were more welcoming than others and thus became known within the LGBTQ community as spaces where individuals, typically men, could socialize, seek sexual partners, and experiment with gender expression.³¹

²⁹ Ferentinos, 41.

³⁰ "Deserves to be Hanged," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 23, 1885; "Held to a Higher Court," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 25, 1885; 1885 Denver City Directory; 1900 U.S. Census Records; "Three Cases," *Rocky Mountain News*, September 19, 1885.

³¹ Springer, 33.

The Palace Theater at Fifteenth and Blake streets (no longer extant) offered performances by professional female impersonators such as J. Arthur Doty, St. Leon, and Gus Mills.³² Female impersonation was a popular mainstream entertainment in the late 1800s, but these types of performances may have attracted an LGBTQ crowd as well. Female impersonation of a less professional nature appears to have taken place in Denver saloons as well. In January 1898, Robert Evans, charged with alleged vagrancy and drunkenness, was described as spending considerable time in local saloons, especially the Castle Garden, where he “sings songs of all sorts...and is called a female impersonator. The people about give him beer and some times they throw in nickels.... As soon as people know what he is they throw him out.”³³ David Collins Seager, a self-described Harvard graduate from a wealthy Boston family who arrived in Denver in 1898, supposedly on business for Bland Mining Company, was engaged as “a singer in a local beer hall where he was paid \$1 per night for his services” before his arrest on suspicion of obtaining goods by false pretenses. When a women’s dress was found among his effects, “he said he was a female impersonator and was preparing to ‘do a turn’ at a Denver theater next week....”³⁴ In 1901, Caesar Attell, “the female impersonator of the hootchie-kootchie show at Nineteenth and Market streets,” was accused of stealing “a valise full of hairpins, soap, towels, brushes, powder, curling irons and other feminine accessories.”³⁵ Whether or not Evans, Seager, or Atell identified as what today would be called LGBTQ is unknown, but their stories suggest that female impersonation provided an opportunity for some males to experiment with alternative gender expression in 1890s Colorado.

The place where Atell performed would have been close to Moses’ Home and the Big Casino saloon, in an area that Princeton University graduate Jackson Springer identifies as a center of gay nightlife in Denver in his 2018 senior thesis, “Against the Order of Nature: Creating a Gay Identity Under the Law in Colorado, 1880-1914.” According to Springer, much of the gay activity that can be mapped was “centered on Fifteenth and Sixteenth Street from Blake to Curtis and on Larimer Street from Eleventh to Nineteenth.”³⁶ Springer also suggests that, in Denver, gay activity tended to occur near the city’s main transportation hub, Union Station, and along cable car lines, and his theory may apply to other cities as well. In 1880, a man in South Pueblo reportedly had a romantic encounter with a “man dressed in female attire” that he believed to be a woman behind the Grand Central Hotel, located one block from the Denver and Rio Grande railroad depot (southwest corner of South Main Avenue and East B Street, no longer extant).³⁷

Men across Colorado who presented as women for reasons other than entertainment were often subject to fines if found to be wearing female attire in public. In 1883, “a gay deceiver,” known variably as Frederick Olsten, Edward Martino, and Miss Amelia Johnson, was arrested in Denver for

³² Springer, 39-40. For more on female impersonators in Denver during the 1800s see Teddy Scott, “A Lady by Footlight: Female Impersonation in Nineteenth-Century Denver,” December 2019, <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A-Lady-by-Footlight.pdf>

³³ “Female Impersonator Evans,” *Denver Post*, January 3, 1898.

³⁴ “Flies High By Using His Wits,” *Rocky Mountain News*, March 25, 1898.

³⁵ “Bag of Feminine Gear,” *Denver Post*, September 8, 1901.

³⁶ Springer, 32-33.

³⁷ *Colorado Daily Chieftain*, May 15, 1880.

“promenading in female attire” and fined \$25 and court costs.³⁸ Osten/Martino, who reportedly once worked as a female impersonator in Chicago, asserted that he had not dressed as a woman “for fascinating men,” but to aid his search for a missing sister.³⁹

Arrests of men dressed as women was not limited to Denver. In 1888, a man in “Central” (presumably Central City) was fined \$17 for wearing female attire “on the streets.”⁴⁰ In the summer of 1889, a “young good-looking woman” arrived in Berthoud and was hired as a waitress at a local hotel. After falling ill with typhoid, the woman was found by a physician to be a young man named Phillip Poland “gaily masquerading in female attire.”⁴¹ A young man, Watts Olds, was arrested “for wearing woman’s clothes” in Montrose in 1910. Olds was said to have “attired himself in the costume of the gentler sex” and “promenaded the streets very much after the manner of a girl who is trying to ‘catch a feller.’” The arresting officer was apparently unsure if Olds’s actions constituted a crime, but later found, “that it was looked upon by the law as a serious offense.” Olds pled guilty but maintained that he had been “doing a little detective work” in an effort to catch a person who had been “molesting certain young ladies,” a story that officials were “inclined to accept...with a ‘little grain of salt.’”⁴²

In *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*, Hirschfeld’s unnamed professor described gay life in Denver with candor, discussing the professions of gay acquaintances, cross-dressing party-goers, male prostitution, and being propositioned by a soldier stationed at Fort Logan (5DV.694), who may or may not have been gay:

I know quite a number of homosexuals in Denver, personally or by hearsay. At this moment I can think of five musicians, three teachers, three art dealers, one minister, one judge, two actors, one florist, and one women’s tailor. Parties are given by a young artist of exquisite taste and a noble turn of mind, and some of his homosexual friends appear at these in women’s clothing. Prostitution is not common in Denver; male prostitutes can sometimes be met in the Capitol Gardens [Civic Center], but not a large number of them.... [I]n the vicinity of Denver there is a military fort [Fort Logan] with a force of a few hundred men. Last summer a soldier from there propositioned me on the street in Denver. I’ve heard that this happens quite frequently in San Francisco and Chicago. In all these cases it was difficult to tell whether the soldiers were really homosexual or just prostitutes, or whether they went with the men for lack of anything better. It’s never easy to draw the line, and things are so expensive nowadays that someone could easily be moved to earn a little pocket money in one way or the other.⁴³

³⁸ *Fremont County Record*, July 7, 1883; “In Female Attire,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 2, 1883; “Denver’s Mysterious Masquerader Who in Petticoats Sought Prey,” *Denver Republican*, July 2, 1883.

³⁹ “The Mystery of a Miss,” *Denver Republican*, July 3, 1883; “Personating a Woman,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 3, 1883.

⁴⁰ “Petticoats Beats Pants,” *Colorado Mining Gazette*, December 8, 1888.

⁴¹ “In Petticoats,” *Logan County Advocate*, November 23, 1889.

⁴² “Female Attire Comes High,” *Montrose Enterprise*, December 8, 1910.

⁴³ Katz, 50.

Policing Homosexuality and Male Crossdressing

Homosexuality, as defined during the late 1800s, was not prohibited by law in Colorado; only the physical act of penetration provided a basis for prosecution under the state's sodomy law established during its Territory era. Though applied relatively infrequently throughout the United States before 1900, sodomy laws disproportionately affected working class and minority men, who could face serious jail time if convicted.

In Colorado, relatively few accusations of sodomy appear in Colorado newspapers before 1920, though men who were convicted could receive significant sentences.⁴⁴ Most newspaper accounts of sodomy provide few if any details, making it impossible to ascertain the motive behind the accusations or the true nature of the alleged crime. Such accusations were not, however, limited to Denver.⁴⁵

William Pitcher, formerly the town marshal in Saguache, skipped bail and left the country before he could "answer to a revolting charge of sodomy" in June 1880.⁴⁶ In February 1890, John Harris, a Black man, was arrested in Aspen on a charge of sodomy.⁴⁷ No details were provided on his alleged crime; unable to pay the \$500 bail, Harris sat in jail until his release on March 13, after a grand jury found there was insufficient evidence to indict.⁴⁸ Martin (or Mark) Sullivan, who the *Canon City Record* specifically identified as a white man, was jailed in May 1903 on a charge of sodomy, with no details provided. After pleading guilty in July, he was sentenced to serve time at the Colorado State Reformatory in Buena Vista.⁴⁹ As in most cases, whether or not Pitcher, Harris, or Sullivan identified as gay or engaged in sex with other men is impossible to confirm given the paucity of information.

Though reports of alleged sodomy typically contained few details, newspapers did not shy away from sensationalizing other situations that appeared to involve gay or gender non-conforming individuals. In April 1895, Joe Gilligan and his companion, Elmer E. Brown, were arrested in their room at 1312 Tremont Street (no longer extant) and charged with burglary and forgery after returning from a performance at the Lyceum Theater (1717-1723 Curtis Street, no longer extant).⁵⁰

During the arrest, an address book containing the names of prominent men was found, along with "tell-tale" letters "written to him by men which are as affectionate as if written by a woman" and women's clothes, reportedly evidence "that this city has her 'Cleveland street' scandal and Oscar Wildism on a somewhat smaller scale." Excerpts from the letters were published in the *Denver Post*, along with a full accounting of the clothing and toilette articles found in the room.⁵¹

⁴⁴ "Want Pardons," *Denver Post*, May 13, 1898; "Sentences Passed," *Chaffee County Republican*, February 8, 1924.

⁴⁵ See Henry, "Criminalizing Sex, Defining Sexuality: Sodomy, Law, and Manhood in Nineteenth-Century Colorado."

⁴⁶ *Gunnison News*, June 5, 1880.

⁴⁷ "Darkey Arrested For Sodomy," *Aspen Daily Chronicle*, February 12, 1890.

⁴⁸ *Aspen Daily Chronicle*, February 13, 1890; "Local and Personal," *Aspen Weekly Times*, March 15, 1890.

⁴⁹ *Canon City Record*, June 18, 1903; July 2, 1903.

⁵⁰ "A Queer Case, This," *Denver Post*, April 25, 1895; Teddy Scott, "A Lady by Footlight: Female Impersonation in Nineteenth-Century Denver"

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Gilligan, described as “very girlish in his action and talk,” admitted to occasionally dressing in women’s clothes and reportedly threatened to out “others like himself” if they did not come to his aid.⁵² Described later as a “female impersonator,” and “the Colorado Oscar Wilde,” Gilligan was not charged with crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but did serve a short sentence in the Colorado State Reformatory for forgery.⁵³

In another sensationalized story from the late 1890s, W.H. Billings of Nederland in Boulder County, reportedly “became strangely infatuated with a person of his own sex and eloped with him.”⁵⁴ Born in Illinois around 1863, miner William H. Billings married Flora Waggoner on May 11, 1896.⁵⁵ According to newspaper reports, it was Flora’s fourth marriage; she had suffered domestic abuse in her first marriage, which ended with her husband’s suicide, and lost two husbands to fatal accidents prior to meeting Billings, who was engaged to Flora’s daughter from her first marriage at the time.⁵⁶

In September 1898, Billings, now working as a teamster, left his wife for Charles Edwards, a young man who would “frequent saloons where [he] would play a tune upon the banjo, turn a somersault and take up a collection.”⁵⁷ Described as a person “of slight build, with narrow, sloping shoulders, delicate eyebrows and a fair, soft complexion,” Edwards had been “accused of being a woman, but always indignantly denied it.”⁵⁸ After the sensationalized story was first reported in the *Denver Post*, Flora Billings said she suspected Edwards was a woman disguised as a man, perhaps in an effort to save face.⁵⁹

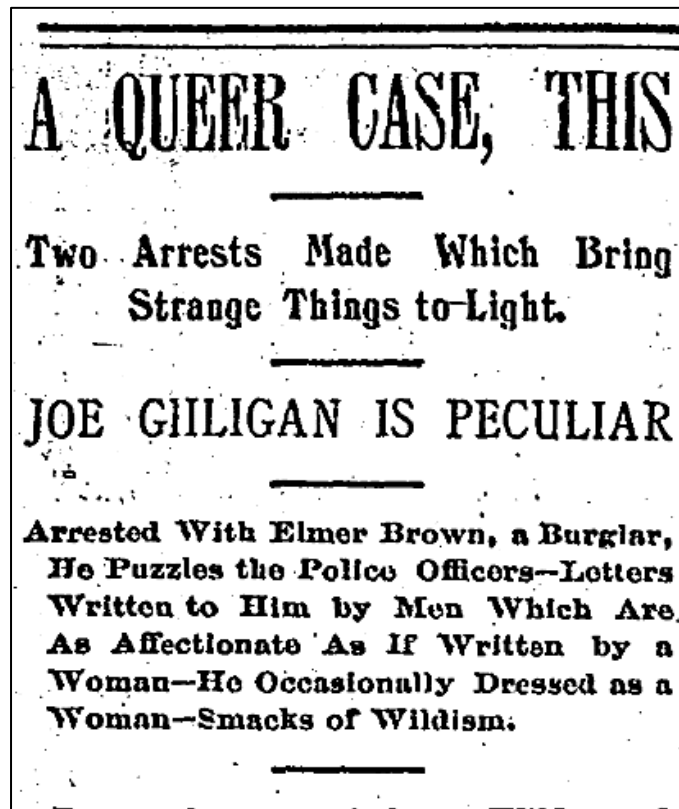


FIGURE 7: THE *DENVER POST* SENSATIONALIZED THE ARREST OF JOSEPH GILIGAN USING CODED LANGUAGE THAT STRONGLY IMPLIED HE WAS GAY. (*DENVER POST*, APRIL 25, 1895)

⁵² “A Queer Case, This,” *Denver Post*, April 25, 1895; Teddy Scott, “A Lady by Footlight: Female Impersonation in Nineteenth-Century Denver”

⁵³ “Gilligan is Held,” *Denver Post*, April 26, 1895; “The Impersonator [sic],” *Rocky Mountain News*, April 27, 1895; “Goes to the Reformatory,” *Denver Post*, May 23, 1895. Gilligan returned to Denver after his release, assuming the alias Arthur De Remur. He worked as a waiter at the Gilman boarding house at 322 Twentieth Avenue (no longer extant), before being arrested again for forgery; “Not What He Seemed,” *Denver Post*, April 17, 1896.

⁵⁴ “Fate Of Her Four Husbands,” *Denver Post*, September 26, 1898.

⁵⁵ Colorado Marriage Records, accessed via Ancestry.com.

⁵⁶ “Fate Of Her Four Husbands,” *Denver Post*, September 26, 1898.

⁵⁷ “Two Men Elope From Boulder County,” *Denver Post*, September 20, 1898.

⁵⁸ “Fate Of Her Four Husbands,” *Denver Post*, September 26, 1898.

⁵⁹ Ibid.



FIGURE 8: CLARA DIETRICH (DIETRICK), CA. 1890.
([HTTPS://SEVENAU.COM/2020/03/04/ORA-CHATFIELD-CHARLES-SHAW/](https://sevenau.com/2020/03/04/ora-chatfield-charles-shaw/)).

males, these residences also created opportunities for the expression of same-sex desire in a relatively private environment.

The *Gunnison Tribune* reported, however, that “Judging from the description of the man we would say that Edwards is quite well known in Gunnison, and still has a wife here whom he left....”⁶⁰

Billings apparently met Edwards at a local saloon and “after that the two men were seen in each other’s company frequently, so much so that Mrs. Billings asked her husband what it all meant.” Billings sold his team of horses and left with Edwards for Denver, prompting Flora Billings to ask the Denver police for help locating her husband.⁶¹ The two men were reportedly seen boarding an east-bound train together and in February 1900, Billings was included in a *Denver Post* story about missing men.⁶² Census records indicate that he likely returned to Colorado that year; he was recorded as living with Flora in Boulder County in 1900 and the 1906 Boulder city directory lists the couple as living at 2313 Pine Street.⁶³ William H. Billings died on November 27, 1913, and is buried in Boulder’s Green Mountain Cemetery.^{64,65}

Love and Desire Between Women

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, single women as well as men moved to urban centers, though in smaller numbers, often taking jobs as clerks and clerical workers and living in all-female housing situations. Intended to provide a safe environment and protection from predatory

⁶⁰ *Gunnison Tribune*, September 23, 1898.

⁶¹ “Fate Of Her Four Husbands,” *Denver Post*, September 26, 1898.

⁶² “Police Experience With Missing Men,” *Denver Evening Post*, February 5, 1900.

⁶³ 1900 U.S. Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com; 1906 Boulder City Directory, accessed via Ancestry.com.

⁶⁴ “William H. Billings,” findagrave.com.

⁶⁵ Jim Foshee interview in Robert C. Steele, *Banned from California: Jim Foshee*. Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, 2020, 234.

Educational options for women increased as well during this time. By 1880, a number of all-female colleges had been founded in the eastern and southern United States and commercial colleges and other vocational training institutions provided less-privileged women with competitive job skills. In homosocial spaces such as all-female boarding schools, colleges, and other educational facilities, same-sex experimentation and relationships could take place, again in relative privacy.

Educational and economic opportunities allowed some women to live independent of family and forego marriage, if they wished, and some chose to enter long-term relationships with other women, for a variety of reasons, including financial.⁶⁶ The fact that such couplings involved a sexual component cannot be assumed or discounted, given that primary sources such as letters between same-sex partners often employed the ambiguous language of nineteenth-century romantic friendship; and in instances when one partner sought work while presenting as a man, whether or not these circumstances constituted an expression of gender identity, pragmatism, or both can be difficult to prove.⁶⁷

In 1889, two single middle-class women, Clara Dietrich (b. 1863, also spelled Deitrich or Dietrick), a general storekeeper and postmistress in Emma, Colorado, near Carbondale, and Ora Lovina Chatfield (b. 1873), cousins by marriage, were reported to be “madly in love with each other.”⁶⁸ According to the *Aspen Daily Chronicle*, “Ora Chatfield was suffering greatly from nervous prostration and upon investigation it was revealed that she was desperately in love with Clara with whom she had been living. The two were torn apart and warrant was sworn out at Aspen for Clara for the purpose of investigating her sanity.... if the case comes into court it will be very attractive from a scientific standpoint.”⁶⁹

An early report of the couple’s affair that used the aliases “Belle” and “Blanche” painted Ora Chatfield as an unwilling participant in the affair, which Chatfield later refuted. Correspondence between the two women was said to be “full of the strongest and apparently most heartfelt and ardent expressions of affection” and Clara had suggested she could dress as a man so the couple could get married before a justice of the peace in Aspen.⁷⁰

In statements reportedly made to Chatfield’s father, Dietrich discounted mental illness as a factor and expressed the nature of their relationship:

I am in the full possession of my reasoning faculties and never was more sincere in my life. I tell you I love your daughter as she never was loved and never will be loved again. I know it is out of the usual order of things for one woman to have the passion grand for another, but in all coolness and candor let me assure you that with me it is no ephemeral dream of fancy, but my being’s destiny [sic]. You can’t understand it of course you can’t, and I don’t expect you to. The fact that my love for your daughter

⁶⁶ For a cultural history of friendship and love between women during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century see Lillian Faderman’s *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981).

⁶⁷ Ferentinos, 52-4.

⁶⁸ “All Love Affairs Outdone,” *Aspen Daily Chronicle*, July 7, 1889.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; Emma’s Sensation, *Aspen Weekly Chronicle*, July 8, 1889.

⁷⁰ “Mad Infatuation,” *Aspen Daily Times*, May 11, 1889.

exists, however, just as strong as the love of man ever was for woman is beyond question, and I am ready to prove it with my heart's blood.⁷¹

After the love affair was discovered, the couple eloped, traveled to Kansas City and were found by Pitkin County sheriff John W. White at the home of Dietrich's brother-in-law, Joseph Grannon. White returned Chatfield to her family later that month, with Dietrich staying behind in Kansas City.⁷² The couple's story was widely reported in newspapers across the United States, with the Savannah, Georgia *Morning News* characterizing same-sex desire as a mental illness, "It is thought that the older woman is not of sound mind, and a medical examination would probably establish the fact that the younger one was open to suspicion in the same direction."⁷³ Nine years later, Chatfield married Charles Elliott Shaw in Wyoming, where she lived before moving to Los Angeles and divorcing Shaw in 1920. Chatfield died in 1936 in Los Angeles. Dietrich wed Oliver Sheridan Tyler in 1890, a marriage that also ended in divorce, and moved to California where she died in 1955.⁷⁴ The actions of Grace (Williams) Evangelisto (Evangelist) in 1906 were likewise linked in newspaper accounts to mental illness. Evangelisto, the wife of Vetal Evangelisto (Evangelist) of 1231 Walnut Street (no longer extant), and Catherine Jones, a widow who lived at 1625 Platte Street (no longer extant) were arrested at Manhattan Beach, a former amusement park on the banks of Sloan's Lake in Denver (closed in 1914) "while indulging in a spasm of most intense love-making."⁷⁵ Evangelisto was dressed as a man at the time of the arrest and Jones claimed she believed herself to be in the company of a man named James Roosevelt, though the two had reportedly been "the closest personal friends for years, and almost daily have been in each other's company."⁷⁶ Evangelisto was not charged and released into her husband's care after he said she was not responsible for her actions.⁷⁷ Ironically, Evangelisto was arrested again two months later on suspicion that she was a man dressed as a woman.⁷⁸

Female Crossdressing and Male Gender Expression

Charles Vosbaugh, born Katherine Vosbaugh ca. 1820s, presented as a man for more than sixty years before passing away in Trinidad, Colorado, in 1907. Reportedly born in France, highly educated, and heir to considerable wealth in England, Vosbaugh adopted short hair and male attire while in Europe after "growing weary of being told to engage men to transact her business."⁷⁹ After relocating first to New York and later Missouri, Vosbaugh is said to have married a young pregnant woman who had been jilted by the baby's father. The couple moved to Trinidad where they opened a French restaurant. After the child died as an infant, the woman left Vosbaugh, who then found work in the 1860s as a sheepherder on the "Sam Brown ranch, near Trinchera," later becoming the camp cook.⁸⁰ The ranch where Vosbaugh

⁷¹ "Mad Infatuation," *Aspen Daily Times*, May 11, 1889.

⁷² "Brought Home," *Aspen Daily Chronicle*, July 20, 1889.

⁷³ *Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia), July 10, 1889.

⁷⁴ Catherine Sevenau, "Ora Chatfield & Charles Shaw," <https://sevenau.com/2020/03/04/ora-chatfield-charles-shaw/>.

⁷⁵ "Man Loves Man and Woman Woman In Two Queer Cases," *Denver Post*, August 14, 1906, 1, 7.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "Must Mrs. Grace Evangelisto Wear Fig Leaf To Keep Out Of Jail?," *Denver Post*, October 9, 1906.

⁷⁹ "Accident Alone Revealed Sex: Masquerades As Man For Nearly 60 Years," *Denver Post*, November 11, 1907, 1-2;

⁸⁰ "Accident Alone Revealed Sex: Masquerades As Man For Nearly 60 Years," *Denver Post*.

lived and worked for at least forty years may have been the Samuel T. Brown's Sheep Ranch (5LA.5824), however additional research is needed to confirm. Vosbaugh lived on the ranch until 1905, when he was taken to San Rafael Hospital after developing pneumonia and discovered by a physician to be female.⁸¹ After his death in November 1907, Vosbaugh was laid to rest in male attire per his wishes.⁸²

The story of Vosbaugh's life was widely reported in newspapers across Colorado and the United States, with some variation in details, but most emphasized that Vosbaugh presented as a male as a

means of accessing employment opportunities unavailable to women and only married to protect the reputation of his female partner.⁸³ Such a rationale was frequently offered when women were discovered to be presenting as men. After arrest on a charge of vagrancy in Pueblo in 1910, Sadie Carter reportedly said she had dressed as a man to gain better employment, working on a section gang for several years.⁸⁴ Shirley Martin of Lake City implied the same reason when she was arrested for wearing men's clothes in Lincoln, Nebraska. Martin said she had presented as a man, working in pool halls, restaurants, and at hard manual labor jobs, for four years, sending money home to her parents monthly.⁸⁵



FIGURE 9: CHARLES VOSBAUGH, BORN KATHERINE VOSBAUGH CA. 1820s, PRESENTED AS A MAN FOR MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS BEFORE PASSING AWAY IN TRINIDAD, COLORADO, IN 1907. (DENVER POST, NOVEMBER 11, 1907)

⁸¹ Ibid.; "Woman Who Posed As A Man," *New Era* (Walden, Co), November 21, 1907. The discovery of Vosbaugh's biological sex was reported in the *Aspen Daily Times* in October 8, 1905, where he was identified as Charles S. Crawford, and in the *Herald Democrat* (Leadville, CO) on October 8, 1905, under the name Charles S. Gaubagh.

⁸² "Woman Laid At Rest In Attire Of Man," *Denver Post*, November 13, 1907.

⁸³ "She Lived As Man 60 Years," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, November 12, 1907.

⁸⁴ "Sorry She Doffed Clothes Of A Man," December 16, 1910.

⁸⁵ *Ordway New Era*, February 16, 1912.

In 1912, John (Jack) C. Hill arrived in Meeker, where he worked as a cook at John Davitt’s restaurant, a bartender at Davitt’s saloon, and a ranch hand for Oscar Muse. Prior to arriving in Meeker, Hill had been homesteading a 160-acre parcel in Weld County near Wiggins, where Hill was well liked and said to date women. Aerial views of the parcel, the southwest quarter of Section 1 in Township 2 North of Range 61 West in the Sixth Principal Meridian, suggest that there are no extant buildings on the property. It was revealed that Hill was female when Hill traveled to Denver in October 1911 to prove up the patent, which had been entered under the name Helen A. Hilsher (b. ca. 1880).⁸⁶ At the time Hilsher explained that she “came west with another young woman with whom she subsequently quarreled” and determined to show the young woman that she could make a living homesteading without her, presented as a man for safety reasons.⁸⁷



FIGURE 10: DR. NINA JONES RESIDENCE, 403 S. EMERSON STREET, DENVER. (AMY UNGER)

At Muse’s ranch near Meeker, Jack Hill met Anna M. Slifka, daughter of local rancher Martin R. Slifka, and the two were officially married on November 14, 1912, settling on a ranch on Flag Creek.⁸⁸ In 1913, Anna Slifka’s brother, Victor, accused Hill of being a woman impersonating a man, and Hill was arrested. Slifka initially said she was aware that Hill was female and the two were working to earn enough money to attend an Eastern college for women, but when testifying at Hill’s arraignment she changed her story, saying she was

unaware that Hill was female.⁸⁹ Others testified at the hearing held in the district courtroom in the Rio Blanco County Courthouse on September 20, 1913, including Hill, who admitted to being born Helen Hilsher and gave an accounting of her romance with Slifka. Others testifying on Hilsher’s behalf included, Floyd Osborne, who had known Hilsher had been presenting as a man since leaving Denver, and Dr. Nina P. Jones, who was described as Hilsher’s “foster mother.”⁹⁰ Despite defense attorney R.L. Chambers’s argument for dismissal, Hilsher was bound over for trial and released on a \$250 bond.⁹¹

⁸⁶ “Girl Fools Them All,” *Wray Rattler*, October 5, 1911.

⁸⁷ “News Gathered From Exchanges,” *Wray Gazette*, October 6, 1911; “Meeker ‘Bride’ Denies Girl-Husband Informed Her of Sex,” *Rocky Mountain News*, September 21, 1913; “Dressed As Man, Girl Lives on Desert Farm, Makes Love to Women, Who Think Her Youth,” *Rocky Mountain News*, September 22, 1911.

⁸⁸ 1910 U.S. Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com; Colorado, County Marriage Records and State Index, 1862-2006, accessed via Ancestry.com; “Denver Girl, Posing As Man, ‘Weds;’ Lives With Her ‘Bride’ For Months,” *Denver Post*, September 20, 1913, 1, 2.

⁸⁹ “Denver Girl, Posing As Man, ‘Weds;’ Lives With Her ‘Bride’ For Months,” *Denver Post*, September 20, 1913, 1, 2; “The ‘Jack Hill’ Case,” *Meeker Herald*, September 27, 1913.

⁹⁰ “The ‘Jack Hill’ Case,” *Meeker Herald*, September 27, 1913.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

While awaiting trial, Hilsher left Rio Blanco County with Jones, staying first at Jones's house at 403 S. Emerson Street (located within the Alamo Placita Local Historic District, 5DV.7042) before relocating to Jones's ranch seven miles south of Roggen, with plans to travel to Chicago after her legal case was settled.⁹²

Prior to homesteading in Wiggins, Hilsher lived in Denver where she attended school and later worked as a teacher. In 1900, she was living as a boarder with Elenora Scrafford and her daughter Mabel, a school teacher, in the Highland neighborhood.⁹³ In 1903 and 1904 she is listed in the city directory at 333 E. 30th Avenue (no longer extant) and from 1905 to 1907 at 3327 W 29th Avenue (5DV.1233, within the A.M. Ghost Denver Landmark District).⁹⁴ The details of Hilsher's life after November 1913 have not been uncovered to date.

Interwar Period

To date little has been published on LGBTQ people in Colorado during the interwar period, though historians such as David Duffield are working to fill this gap. In general, the period can be characterized by increased public scrutiny and persecution of LGBTQ individuals, but also the resilience and growth of LGBTQ night life.

In the 1920s, Colorado governments increasingly began using legal means to suppress and control the LGBTQ community. Scholar Robin Courtney Henry argues that the enforcement of Colorado's sodomy laws, which began in the 1920s, represented "a significant change in the way that communities used law to enforce social norms regarding sexuality."⁹⁵ In 1922, Colorado held its first sodomy trial, *People v. Charles Wilkins*, and its second, *People v. Ralph Koontz*, in 1927. In addition to exemplifying the expanding efforts of governmental entities to control and suppress the LGBTQ community, Duffield points out that these cases and others can be "revealing not only in terms of the vilification experienced by gay men, but also provide insights into their lifeways, social circles, and the places were gay men interacted."⁹⁶

In *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, the historian George Chauncey coined the term "pansy craze" to describe a period during the 1920s and early '30s when drag performances experienced a surge in popularity in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.⁹⁷ Female impersonation had been a popular means of entertainment in Denver for decades and performers such as Julian Eltinge continued the tradition through at least the early 1920s. Further research is needed to understand the nature and extent of drag performances in Colorado during this period and the connections between the LGBTQ community and performance venues across the state.

⁹² "Girl 'Husband' is Rancher," *Montrose Daily Press*, November 18, 1913.

⁹³ 1900 U.S. Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com.

⁹⁴ Denver City Directory, 1903-1907, accessed via Ancestry.com.

⁹⁵ Henry, 8.

⁹⁶ David Duffield, "Colorado GLBT History Project – Timeline," draft timeline of LGBTQ history from 1860 to 1950, unpublished.

⁹⁷ See George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

As Colorado experienced the economic upheaval caused by the Great Depression, some New Deal programs like the Civilian Conservation Corp created male homosocial environments similar to the mining and logging camps of the 1800s. Colin R. Johnson examines these environments through an LGBTQ lens in *Just Queer Folks: Gender and Sexuality in Rural America*.⁹⁸ No research has been published to date on Colorado's CCC camps and other homosocial environments during this time and their potential associations with the LGBTQ community, but further research may reveal important connections.

The interwar period also saw the opening of what many consider to be Colorado's first gay bar, The Pit, in 1939 (no longer extant). After Prohibition ended in 1933, early gay bars like the Whitehorse Inn in Oakland, California, Cafe Lafitte in Exile, New Orleans, and the Black Cat Cafe in San Francisco, opened for business. The Pit is believed to have been located at 510 West 17th Street in the basement of the Drexler Hotel (demolished 1973). According to Duffield, "it was remembered by Gore Vidal as a dirty little bar in the basement of a hotel," and in oral histories "as the Snake Pit for its phallic allusions, but also for its heavily male clientele."⁹⁹

As it is today, Colorado's LGBTQ community during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century was incredibly diverse and included all ethnicities, nationalities, and economic classes as well as the full spectrum of non-conforming sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. The individuals discussed above are but a few examples illustrating aspects of Colorado's LGBTQ history, gleaned from historic newspaper reports and secondary sources, and much work remains to be done to fully document the intersectional aspects of LGBTQ history during this period. The experiences and circumstances of LGBTQ people in Colorado varied greatly at the individual level depending on one's class, ethnicity, nationality, and personal circumstances, but in general, the period from the 1870s to the onset of World War II can be characterized by LGBTQ people connecting and building the foundations of community while facing increasing scrutiny and antagonism as those communities grew more visible.

World War II to 1970

The period encompassing World War II through the 1960s was exemplified by a growing awareness among the general public and LGBTQ individuals that variations in sexual orientation and gender identity were common in the United States; expanding efforts to oppress LGBTQ individuals through government-sponsored discrimination; and the emergence of early gay and lesbian activist organizations, such as the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis.

World War II

As Allan Bérubé points out in *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II*, before 1940 the United States armed forces did not officially exclude or discharge homosexual men; only soldiers convicted of sodomy faced penalties. However, as the country mobilized in 1940 in response to German attacks on European nations, the number of American men who registered for the

⁹⁸ See Colin R. Johnson, *Just Queer Folks: Gender and Sexuality in Rural America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013).

⁹⁹ David Duffield, "Colorado GLBT History Project – Timeline."; Thomas Noel, "Gay Bars and the Emergence of the Denver Homosexual Community," *The Social Science Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April 1978, 61.

draft, more than 16 million, far exceeded the 900,000 active-duty positions authorized by Congress, and the Selective Service began to formulate policies that excluded groups thought to make poor soldiers or threaten discipline, including homosexuals, who were seen as suffering from mental illness. According to Bérubé, “As psychiatrists increased their authority in the armed forces, they developed new screening procedures to discover and disqualify homosexual men, introducing into military policies and procedures the concept of the homosexual as a personality type unfit for military service and combat—a concept that was to determine military policy for decades after the war.”¹⁰⁰ The prevailing concept of non-conforming sexuality and gender expression as mental illness would have a profound impact on civilian life as well, providing a basis for discrimination and ostracization, which would increase after the war’s end.

The United States’ entry into the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, however, necessitated a larger fighting force than previously planned. Some enlistment restrictions were relaxed and many gay and lesbian individuals were able to successfully navigate the screening questions designed to identify homosexuals and avoid rejection. The total number of gay men and lesbians who served during World War II is unknown, but Bérubé provides ample evidence of their presence in significant numbers.

In a memoir of his experience in 1943-44 while serving with Group 4 of Company C, 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion, at Camp Carson outside Colorado Springs, Andrew S. Mousalimas related his experience with “two gays, or queers as we called them at that time, in our outfit.”¹⁰¹ Mousalimas, who grew up on the streets of West Oakland, described being approached by gays many times while selling newspapers on street corners, “When a gay would make his move, we would con him, ask for street car fare to meet him, stash the money and never show up.”¹⁰² In 1943, he served with an allegedly gay soldier referred to as “Sgt. V.” A married man, Sgt. V. had allegedly made a pass at Mousalimas’s friend, Perry Phillips, during the night, causing a scuffle:

Up to this time Sgt. V. had not shown any gay tendencies. One morning, loud noises and a scuffle woke me. Perry in his shorts and undershirt had his rifle in his hands with bayonet out of the scabbard and was cussing Sgt. V., who was up against the wall. I jumped out of my bunk and grabbed Perry from behind and asked him what the hell was going on. Perry said, I'm going to kill the son of bitch; he tried to crawl into my bunk! Sgt. V. was scared to death and ran from the barracks. We did not report this incident, but a few days later Sgt. V. was transferred out of the battalion.¹⁰³

Another soldier in Mousalimas’s unit, “Cpl. A.,” was described as openly gay:

...Cpl. A., did not hide his homosexuality. In fact at short arm inspection, mandatory venereal disease inspection by the unit’s medical doctor, he would wear pink panties

¹⁰⁰ Bérubé, 2.

¹⁰¹ Andrew S. Mousalimas, “Camp Carson, Colorado: The Greek Battalion,” Greek / American Operational Group Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Memoirs of World War 2, 2004. <http://www.pahh.com/oss/pt1/p9.html>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

and strut like a model. He was a handsome man of 6 foot 1 inch in height and about 175 pounds in weight.... After the Nazis withdrew from Greece, Cpl. A. again volunteered and with 15 Greek/USOGs, joined the French/USOG to go to China. The troop ship, the General Callan, took 31 days from San Pedro to Calcutta, India, and the weather was very hot. In our sleeping quarters we wore only shorts and as young men in excellent shape, we were very horny. We had been combat veterans together in Greece and Yugoslavia, and Cpl. A. knew by this time we weren't interested in homosexual sex, but once in awhile he would wear his pink panties, strut around our bunk area, jab us on the side, and shake his ass. We would tell him to take a hike and he would giggle and back off. Cpl. A. was an outstanding soldier, a man I was very proud to soldier with, and someone you could always count on in combat.¹⁰⁴

Esther Wilhide, who served along with 200 other women in the Women's Army Corps Detachment at Camp Hale near Leadville (5EA.197, National Register listed 1992), did not personally know anyone who identified as gay within her unit, but acknowledged there were rumors of homosexuality, particularly



FIGURE 11: 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION SOLDIERS AT CAMP HALE PERFORM IN DRAG. DRAG ENTERTAINMENT WAS AN ACCEPTED AND COMMON PART OF MILITARY SOCIAL LIFE, IN WHICH SOLDIERS, BOTH GAY AND STRAIGHT, TOOK PART. (10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION RESOURCE CENTER, DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, TMD351-2020-634)

about the female soldiers assigned to the motor pool. It is certain that at least a few of the soldiers at Camp Hale were gay.¹⁰⁵ Don Slater, a Los Angeles native who would later become an early leader in the LGBTQ rights movement, served at Camp Hale for a short time in 1943 before illness led to his discharge that year.¹⁰⁶ Given the anecdotal evidence presented above, the presence of LGBTQ soldiers at other Colorado military installations such as Fort Logan and Lowry, Buckley, Leadville, La Junta, Pueblo, and Peterson Army Air Fields should always be considered.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Interview With Esther Wilhide, Andrea Lawrence, 1995, <https://temp.msudenver.edu/camphale/resources/interviews/estherwilhide/>.

¹⁰⁶ Linda Rapp, "Don Slater (1923-1997)," GLBTQ archive. file:///G:/My%20Drive/Projects_In%20Progress/LGBTQ%20research/slater_d_S.pdf

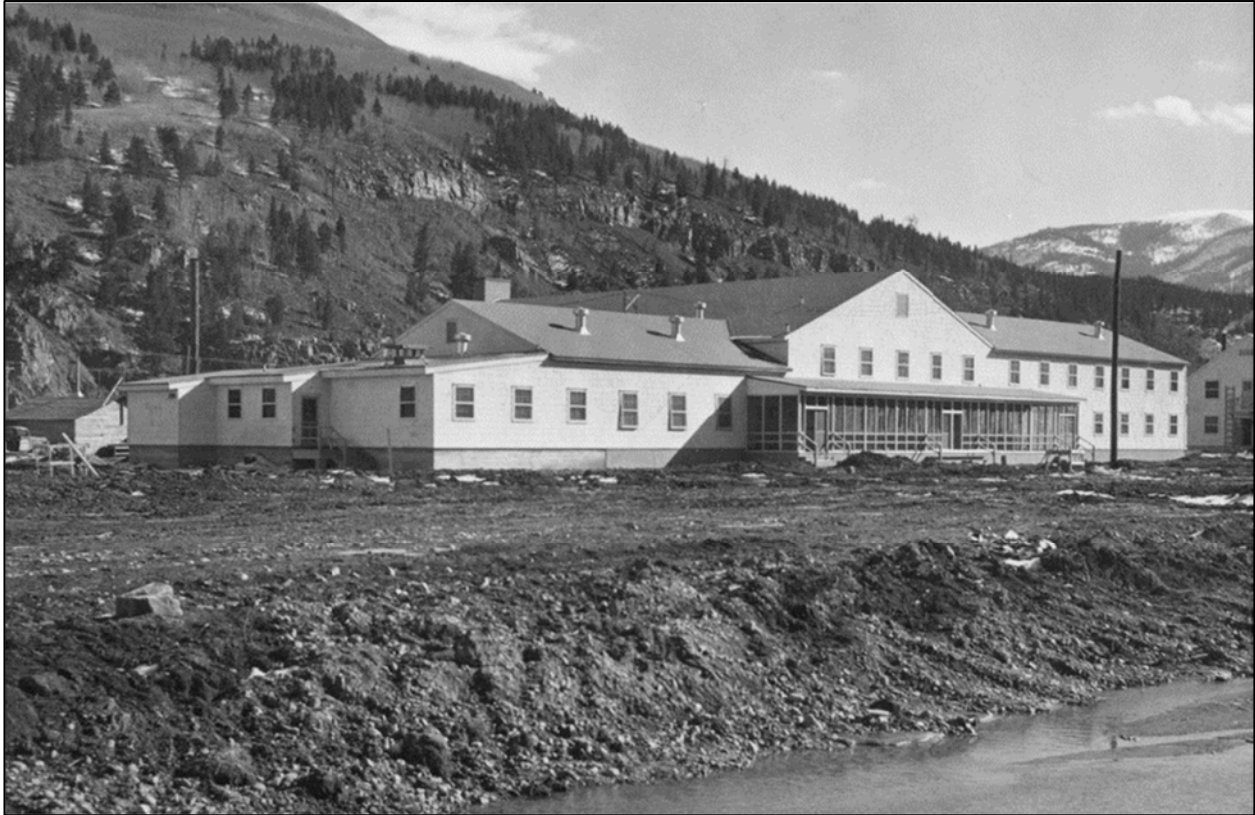


FIGURE 12: CAMP HALE SERVICE CLUB CA. 1940s. (COLORADO MOUNTAIN HISTORY COLLECTION/LAKE COUNTY CIVIC CENTER ASSOCIATION)

Aware that America's military forces included homosexuals despite efforts to screen them out, military psychologists and officers employed a variety of measures designed to control homosexual behavior, including educational programs, counselling, close supervision, and reassignment. Gay soldiers suspected of "deviance" may have been assigned to special units like the 620th Engineer General Service Company at Camp Hale, one of at least five units created by the War Department in October 1942 to house soldiers believed to be untrustworthy and/or undesirable. A similar unit, 358th Quartermaster Service Co., was based at Camp Carson near Colorado Springs.¹⁰⁷ Unintentionally, some of these efforts provided individuals who were just beginning to explore their sexual identity with information that helped them better understand themselves and a sense they were not alone.¹⁰⁸

The sex-segregated military environment, with its emphasis on comradeship and teamwork, encouraged the development of close same-sex relationships, regardless of sexual orientation, and provided opportunities for gays and lesbians to form community and partner under the guise of platonic friendship. For many gays and lesbians, the military also provided a new freedom to experiment and

¹⁰⁷ William Sonn, "SunLit Special: 'Something Like Treason' tells a bizarre Colorado-based story of WWII," The Colorado Sun, November 7, 2021. <https://coloradosun.com/2021/11/07/sunlit-something-like-treason-william-sonn/>; Heidi Beedle, "SOMETHING LIKE TREASON: Bill Sonn shares the untold story of Camp Hale," Colorado Springs iNDY, December 29, 2021. https://www.csindy.com/news/bill-sonn-shares-the-untold-story-of-camp-hale/article_9613eb42-6831-11ec-9145-13330be8eae8.html.

¹⁰⁸ Bérubé, 99-100

express oneself away from the constraints of family and hometown social mores. Within the context of military life, females could experiment with gender roles and expression in relative safety. Drag entertainment was an accepted and common part of military social life, in which soldiers, both gay and straight, took part. In an article on the history of drag in Denver, LGBTQ historian David Duffield notes that female impersonators performed at Buckley Air Force Base.¹⁰⁹

On base, LGBTQ servicepeople created their own cliques, participated in social events and recreational activities, and socialized at military service clubs, like the club at Camp Hale. According to Bérubé:

Gay men and women hung out at the service clubs for some of the same reasons that they went to gay bars. Service clubs were public places where they sometimes, “cruised” (looked for prospective partners), where couples spent time together, or where both couples and individuals hung out with a gay crowd, usually in the company of others who were not gay but “wise” [to the ways of gay life].¹¹⁰

In cities and towns close to military bases, gay soldiers patronized bars, cocktail lounges, cafes, hotel bars, and nightclubs, as well as established LGBTQ spaces such as YMCAs and cruising locales. With this influx of soldiers, gay nightlife flourished in military cities during World War II. In Denver, Mary’s Tavern at 1536 Broadway (no longer extant) near Denver’s Civic Center, became a favorite nightspot among gay



FIGURE 13: MARY’S TAVERN OCCUPIED THIS BUILDING IN THE 1500 BLOCK OF BROADWAY, DOCUMENTED IN 1975 BEFORE ITS DEMOLITION. THE BAR’S SIGNAGE IS JUST VISIBLE AT THE FAR RIGHT. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTION, AUR-253)

near Denver’s Civic Center, became a favorite nightspot among gay soldiers. According to Mangan, a charter member of the Denver Gay Coalition, Mary’s Tavern was “liberated by airmen from Lowry Air Force Base. It was patronized by a group that went in repeatedly and was blatantly gay in behavior. At first, they were thrown out or arrested. But they kept returning and eventually straight customers began going elsewhere.”¹¹¹

Engaging in same-sex relationships and/or openly LGBTQ behavior, on or

off base, however, put servicemen and women at risk of arrest and/or dishonorable discharge from the military. Those who received a dishonorable discharge for alleged homosexuality faced a host of repercussions, including ostracization, employment discrimination, and loss of veteran’s benefits. After

¹⁰⁹ David Duffield, “Denver Drag’s Long and Storied History,” *Out Front Magazine*, February 25, 2020, <https://www.outfrontmagazine.com/denver-drags-long-and-storied-history/>. Duffield does not indicate whether the performers were soldiers.

¹¹⁰ Bérubé, 101.

¹¹¹ Thomas Noel, “Gay Bars and the Emergence of the Denver Homosexual Community,” *The Social Science Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April 1978, 61.

the war, this persecution would lead to some of the earliest organized efforts to defend the rights of homosexuals.¹¹²

World War II profoundly impacted the lives of LGBTQ civilians as well. War time industry created millions of jobs in American cities that attracted workers from small towns and rural counties to urban centers. As Michael Bronski describes in *A Queer History of the United States*, World War II radically transformed the American economy and spurred a major shift in gender roles throughout the United States. As millions of men entered the armed services, women were hired in occupations and positions traditionally held by men, gaining greater control over their lives, and as a result, strong, independent single women grew in acceptance as a norm.¹¹³ Between 1941 and 1945, the number of women in the U.S. workforce increased from nearly 11 million to over 18 million, and many were employed by the defense industry.¹¹⁴ The Denver Ordnance Plant hired more than 10,000 women after opening in 1941, and WOWs, Women Ordnance Workers, comprised 25 percent of the workers at the Pueblo Ordnance Plant in 1943.¹¹⁵ Such job opportunities and changing gender norms allowed LGBTQ women to more easily support themselves and live their lives as they wished, independent of men.

Post-World War II

After the war ended, many veterans who had experienced their first same-sex relationship or discovered LGBTQ social life while in the military faced difficult choices. Returning veterans “had to make important life decisions about marriage and partners, education, where to live and work, how much to reveal about their sexuality to their families, and how deeply to become involved in gay social life.”¹¹⁶ Those who chose to embrace their difference often moved to urban areas, while “a great many gay male, lesbian, and bisexual veterans got married, settled down, and raised families after the war, putting their homosexuality on hold or finding ways to have homosexual relationships within the context of their marriages.”¹¹⁷

LGBTQ nightlife expanded in Denver after the World War II, a trend that likely took place in Colorado Springs and other larger urban areas across Colorado. LGBTQ women as well as men established spaces for themselves in taverns, bars, and nightclubs such as the Cherry Creek Tavern at 1302 Lawrence Street.¹¹⁸ In 1950, the *Denver Post* described a “West Denver tavern...where almost everyone present was female. The girls wore slacks and boyish bobs, danced with each other and shunned the company of men,” which may have been the Cherry Creek Tavern.¹¹⁹

¹¹² Bérubé, 232.

¹¹³ Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 154.

¹¹⁴ Marc Miller, “Working Women and World War II,” *The New England Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (1980): 42; <https://doi.org/10.2307/365288>.

¹¹⁵ Christine Pfaff, “Bullets for the Yanks: Colorado’s World War II Ammunition Factory,” *Colorado Heritage*, 12, no. 3 (1992); <https://www.peoacwa.army.mil/2018/04/23/student-exhibit-highlights-depot-women/>

¹¹⁶ Bérubé, 244.

¹¹⁷ Bérubé, 245.

¹¹⁸ Address of the Cherry Creek Tavern from information accompanying a photograph of the bar taken by Thomas Noel ca. 1980, Denver Public Library Digital Collections, AUR-613.

¹¹⁹ Sam Lusk, “Scavengers of Society: Acts of Sexual Degeneracy Are Difficult to Prove in Court.” *The Denver Post*, November 10, 1950, quoted in Moore, 59.

In 1948, Indiana University biology professor Alfred Kinsey released the first volume of a groundbreaking report on the sexual experiences of America's white population, with a second volume published in 1953. Known collectively as the Kinsey Report, Kinsey's work was based on extensive surveys and covered a wide array of topics including same-sex desire and experience and demonstrated that the sexual preferences and behavior of white American men and women varied far more widely than conventional thought suggested.¹²⁰ In more recent years, scholars have pointed out the flaws in Kinsey's research methodology and analysis, arguing that he overestimated the prevalence of homosexuality in America, but the work remains important for its pioneering nature. Ferentinos credits Kinsey's work as having two major impacts on American perceptions of non-conforming sexual and gender identities. First, the controversy generated by the report forced mainstream America to grapple with the realization that LGBTQ individuals lived, worked, and played in the same spaces occupied by heterosexuals. Second, the report provided another means for LGBTQ people, especially isolated individuals living in small towns and rural areas, to better understand themselves and know that they were not alone.¹²¹

After World War II, glimpses of LGBTQ life could increasingly be found in mainstream entertainment, such as pulp fiction novels and films like *Rebel without a Cause*. Portrayals of gays and lesbians, typically salacious in pulp fiction and covert in Hollywood films, usually ended in tragedy, with an intention to serve as cautionary tales.

Lavender Scare

As LGBTQ culture became more visible during the 1950s it collided head on with anxieties stemming from the Cold War between the United States and Russia. The threat of nuclear war created a cultural climate that "demanded conformity, considered difference dangerous, and portrayed marriage and children as the fulfillment of patriotic duty.... homosexuality went from being simply deviant to downright subversive."¹²² The United States government enacted a program of discrimination against homosexuals equal to its efforts to purge the country of suspected communists, identified by historian David K. Johnson as the "Lavender Scare."¹²³

The federal government espoused a view of same-sex desire as threatening to the American way of life by declaring suspected men and women security risks due to their alleged susceptibility to blackmail. The discrimination intensified after 1950 as McCarthyism created a climate of fear and suspicion across the country. In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which explicitly disqualified homosexuals from federal employment by prohibiting behavior that suggested an individual was unreliable or untrustworthy, which included "[a]ny criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, habitual use of intoxicants to excess, drug addiction, or sexual

¹²⁰ Ferentinos, 65.

¹²¹ Ferentinos, 65.

¹²² Ferentinos, 62.

¹²³ David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

perversion.”¹²⁴ According to Ferentinos, “between 1947 and 1953 twice as many civil servants lost their jobs because of alleged homosexuality than because of communist sympathies, and by the end of the 1950s as many as five thousand federal public servants had lost their jobs because of their sexual orientation. The numbers dismissed from the US military were even greater.”¹²⁵

These policies exemplified a shift in the mainstream’s attempts to suppress gay culture away from the regulation of sexual acts toward the persecution of individuals based solely on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. In Colorado, laws were passed that attempted to control the growing gay population in cities such as Denver. The Denver Morals Bureau (DMB), established in 1939 to crack down on vice in Colorado’s capital city, increasingly targeted homosexuals after the end of World War II, patrolling Civic Center Park and nearby areas frequented by gay men.¹²⁶ In 1949, the city passed an ordinance classifying homosexuality as a minor sex offense equal to exhibitionism and child molestation.¹²⁷ In 1953, Colorado enacted a Psychopathic Offender Law that “provided for indefinite commitment of those convicted of a number of sex crimes, including ‘unnatural carnal copulation’ and an attempt to commit it, if the offender were considered either a habitual offender or dangerous to the community.”¹²⁸ In 1954, Denver updated its 1886 ordinance that imposed jail time or fines on anyone appearing in “dress not belonging to their sex” to target males who cross-dressed, effectively outlawing male drag by making it illegal for males to dress as women but not vice-versa.¹²⁹ As David Duffield has pointed out, “Among other things, these laws led to police harassment in the 1950s and 1960s that spawned LGBT political activism in Colorado.”¹³⁰

Homophile Movement

While many LGBTQ activist groups such as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) formed in response to the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, they were not the first to organize in an effort to pushback against the mainstream’s effort to marginalize and criminalize LGBTQ culture. Collectively known as the homophile movement, “these early enterprises represent the first consistent inroads into promoting fair treatment for homosexuals and indicate that increasingly gays and lesbians were coming to understand themselves as a cohesive minority deserving legal protection against discrimination.”¹³¹ In addition to forming clubs and societies, individuals and groups began producing publications that would become vital communication tools.

Early organizations included the Veterans Benevolent Association, a social club for LGBTQ veterans formed in New York City in 1945. Two years later, Edith Eyde, under the pseudonym Lisa Ben (an anagram of “lesbian”) established *Vice Versa*, a lesbian newsletter based in Los Angeles, often identified

¹²⁴ National Archives, Office of the Federal Register, “Executive Orders,” <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.

¹²⁵ Ferentinos, 63.

¹²⁶ Keith L. Moore, “Queen City of the Plains?: Denver’s Gay History 1940-1975,” Master’s thesis, Colorado State University Department of History, 2010, 30.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹²⁹ David Duffield, “Hallmarks in Denver LGBT History,” *Out Front Magazine*, February 24, 2015.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Ferentinos, 66.



FIGURE 14: L TO R: MATTACHINE SOCIETY FOUNDERS PAUL BERNARD, CHUCK ROWLAND, BOB HULL, STAN WITT, RUDI GERBREICH, HARRY HAY, AND WILLIAM DALE JENNINGS (IN WHITE SHIRT AND TIE). (JIM GRUBER/WIKIPEDIA)

as the first successful LGBTQ publication. Around the same time, Merton L. Bird, a Black man, and his white partner, W. Dorr Legg, founded the Cloistered Order of Conclaved Knights of Sophisticacy, commonly known as the Knights of the Clock, in Los Angeles. Primarily an interracial social club for LGBTQ men and women, the group also attempted to educate the public about homosexuality and address issues impacting interracial same-sex couples.

Mattachine Society

Founded in Southern California in 1950 by a group of individuals that included Communist Party member and political activist Harry Hay, the Mattachine Foundation became the first homophile organization to establish a national following and substantively challenge discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The group's leftist politics informed a new perspective that reframed gays and lesbians as an oppressed minority that needed to wake up and organize to combat the injustices imposed upon them. Interestingly, a number of leaders in the Mattachines had connections to Colorado, as discussed below.

Organized around small groups, known as councils, that allowed members to maintain a level of anonymity, the society garnered national attention after one of its founders, William Dale Jennings, was arrested in 1952 for allegedly soliciting an undercover police officer in Los Angeles' Griffith Park, a

known gay cruising spot. Jennings bravely chose to fight the accusation in court, the first man to do so, admitting that he was gay but asserting that he had done nothing illegal. Functioning as the Citizens' Committee to Outlaw Entrapment, the Mattachines used the trial as a means to publicize the entrapment of gay men by vice detectives posing as gays, a common practice in the early 1950s, and call for police reform. The ten-day trial ended in a hung jury, with 11 to 1 voting for acquittal. The charge was dismissed, a significant victory for gay rights, and Jennings became "a permanent icon—and the infant movement's first hero."¹³²

Born in Amarillo, Texas, in 1917, William Dale Jennings moved to Denver before the age of two, living with his parents and sister Charlotte Elaine Jennings at 2241 S. Ogden Street before graduating from South High School in 1935.¹³³ By 1940, William Dale and his sister had relocated to Los Angeles, California, where Jennings "earned a reputation as a bright young playwright...writing, directing and producing his own short plays."¹³⁴ After serving in the Army during World War II, he returned to Los Angeles where he joined with



FIGURE 15: WILLIAM DALE JENNINGS CHILDHOOD HOME AT 2241 S. OGDEN STREET. (AMY UNGER)

Harry Hays and others to found the Mattachine Foundation. After the trial, Jennings founded another early homophile organization, ONE Inc., with Don Slater and Dorr Legg. The group began publishing ONE Magazine, a journal devoted to gay and lesbian issues in January 1953. With a national circulation in the thousands, the magazine reported on police and government harassment of gays and "challenged its readers to believe that homosexuals had a fundamental right to exist in American society."¹³⁵ Postal authorities sought to halt distribution of the magazine and the resulting lawsuit filed by ONE Inc. led to an important legal precedent.

In *ONE v. Olesen* the U.S. Supreme Court found that homosexual content in and of itself did not constitute obscenity and therefore could not be confiscated by the post office under the 1873 Comstock Law. The ruling allowed LGBTQ-related materials and publications, including the *Mattachine Review*, to reach a wider audience than ever before.

¹³² Dudley Clendinen, "William Dale Jennings, 82, Writer and Gay Rights Pioneer," *New York Times*, May 22, 2000.

¹³³ 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com; U.S. School Yearbooks, 1900-1999, accessed via Ancestry.com; U.S. World War II Draft Cards, 1940-1947, accessed via Ancestry.com.

¹³⁴ Clendinen, "William Dale Jennings, 82, Writer and Gay Rights Pioneer."

¹³⁵ Craig M. Lofton, *Masked Voices, Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America* (New York: SUNY Press, 2012), 18.

In 1953, Donald S. Lucas and Hal Call took over the Mattachine Foundation, renaming it the Mattachine Society and “moved it away from its communist roots by adopting a more conservative approach.”¹³⁶ Born in 1926, Donald Lucas grew up in the factory town of Portland in Fremont County, Colorado, where his father worked as a chemist for the Portland Cement Company, and graduated from Florence High School (215 Maple Avenue, 5FN.3046, National Register listed September 2, 2022).¹³⁷ The company housing where Lucas likely lived has been demolished, but further research may reveal other sites in Colorado associated with Lucas. During World War II he cleaned the hulls of Liberty Ships in Tacoma, Washington, before permanently relocating to San Francisco in 1949, where Lucas became “an early pioneer who unapologetically identified himself as a homosexual and slowly changed how people viewed gay and lesbians so they could emerge from the shadows without fear.”¹³⁸



FIGURE 16: DONALD STEWART LUCAS. (SFGATE.COM)

Homophile groups of the 1950s are often characterized as assimilationist and apolitical, but Susan Stryker, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society of Northern California, described Lucas as a social progressive who “would present this mild-mannered exterior to the world, while behind the scenes, what we were looking at was a much more progressive and radical person. In doing this, he accomplished more than if he had been more obvious.”¹³⁹

With Call, Lucas founded the Pan-Graphic Press in 1954, one of first publishers of books and pamphlets devoted to LGBTQ topics, principally to print the *Mattachine Review*. Debuting in January 1955, with Call as editor and Lucas as business manager, the *Review* was the organization’s official mouthpiece, publishing original essays, reprints of scientific studies, poetry, book reviews, and letters to the

editor in an effort to provide readers with “the true facts of the Mattachine Society and the place of the sex variant in the life of the community.” Less confrontational in tone than *ONE*, the *Review* promoted a noncombative assimilationist perspective that viewed education as the path to personal and social acceptance.

¹³⁶ Chuck Squatriglia and Christopher Heredia, “Donald Stewart Lucas—gay rights pioneer / He helped build foundation for later activists,” SFGATE (San Francisco Chronicle), September 25, 2003, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Donald-Stewart-Lucas-gay-rights-pioneer-He-2586102.php>. In documents associated with his early life, Donald Lucas’s middle name is documented as Sidney.

¹³⁷ 1930 and 1940 U.S Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com; U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, accessed via Ancestry.com; 1940 Florence High School Yearbook, accessed via Ancestry.com. In documents associated with his early life, Donald Lucas’s middle name is documented as Sidney.

¹³⁸ Chuck Squatriglia and Christopher Heredia, “Donald Stewart Lucas.”

¹³⁹ Ibid.

Lucas gave speeches, appeared on radio programs, and is featured in the 1961 television documentary *The Rejected*, generally acknowledged as the first program on homosexuality to be broadcast in the United States.¹⁴⁰ He also worked for Dr. Alfred Kinsey and others on studies that countered the established view of homosexuality as a mental illness. Lucas sought to unite homophile organizations with churches and the civil rights movement and was “among the first to realize that gays were fighting for the same rights as minorities, and together they could make greater inroads toward their common goal of equality.”¹⁴¹

Harold (Hal) L. Call was born in Trenton, Missouri, on September 20, 1917. After serving as an army officer in World War II, Call graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in journalism, and worked in various capacities at a number of weekly newspapers in Missouri. In September 1948, at age thirty-three, Call became publisher and part owner of the *World-Independent* in Walsenburg, Colorado, located in a “spacious one-story building on Main Street, a block and a half down from the courthouse.”¹⁴² Now in the high-profile position of a small-town newspaper publisher, Call became active in the chamber of commerce and local service clubs. He lived a closeted life, dating a woman named Jacky. Call described his life in Walsenburg:

I had to show up at these functions with a female friend; that was just the way it was done. So I dated Jacky and we went places together. But, I was also seeing Bill over in Alamosa across La Veta Pass, west of Walsenburg. Bill was my first Colorado gay partner and lover. But, meanwhile, the town folks of Walsenburg were expecting me to marry Jacky—and she was expecting it too!¹⁴³

On a trip to Denver, Call met Jack Feiertag, described as “a Ft. Lupton blue-eyed cowboy,” at the Ship’s Tavern bar at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver (5DV.110, National Register listed 1970), a known meeting place for gay men since the 1940s “where ranchers lassoed gay boys.”¹⁴⁴ The two fell in love,



FIGURE 17: BROWN PALACE HOTEL, 1953. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, X-22523)

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.; Produced by John Reavis Jr. and Irving Saraf for KQED-TV in San Francisco, *The Rejected* was first broadcast on KQED on September 11, 1961, and later syndicated to National Educational Television stations throughout the United States. The documentary can be viewed at <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/225539>.

¹⁴¹ Chuck Squatriglia and Christopher Heredia, “Donald Stewart Lucas.”

¹⁴² James T. Sears, *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine: The Hal Call Chronicles and the Early Movement for Homosexual Emancipation* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006), 20.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.



FIGURE 18: WENDELL PHILLIP SAYERS HOUSE AT 2835 GRAPE STREET IN DENVER. (AMY UNGER)

complicating Call's life in Walsenburg, where he was having some success with the newspaper but chafing at constraints of small-town life.¹⁴⁵ In July 1950, Call sold his interest in the newspaper and returned to his mother's home in Missouri, where Feiertag soon joined him. He joined the *Kansas City Star* as an advertising executive, moving to the newspaper's Chicago office after a year.¹⁴⁶ In August 1952, Call was arrested for alleged homosexual activity, which resulted in his firing. The arrest was a major turning point in Call's life, and in October 1952 he and Feiertag moved to San Francisco.¹⁴⁷ In March

1953, Call attended his first Mattachine meeting and thought, "This is the channel that I can work on in the future to help alleviate the threat that hung over the head of every homosexual."¹⁴⁸

After the Jennings trial in 1955, the Mattachine Society experienced a surge in membership with new councils forming in cities across the nation, including Denver. Wendell Sayers, a Black lawyer, experienced his first Mattachine Society meeting, held at a Denver area home, after a white gay friend suggested they attend. Sayers described the experience in a 1989 interview with historian Eric Marcus:

There was a group of guys sitting there, I imagine ten or twelve maybe. I went...to know or to meet somebody who was like me, I mean gay by that. That was my primary purpose in going...Once I found there were others, besides me, I was much better able to accept myself...talking about it, and going over experiences together, helped me to realize that maybe I'm not the only one.¹⁴⁹

As the only Black man in attendance and a lawyer, Sayers was not warmly received at first, "All they knew was I was a lawyer and they were afraid of me, I think, because I was a lawyer. They were terrified of the law. 'What's this guy doing here?' 'Who's he going to turn in?'"¹⁵⁰

Wendell Phillip Sayers was born in 1904 in Nicodemus, Kansas, a settlement founded by formerly enslaved African Americans in 1877. As an infant, he was adopted by Sarah F. Bates and William L. Sayers, the younger siblings of his birth parents. His adoptive parents lived west of Nicodemus in the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 139.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 140.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 148.

¹⁴⁹ "Wendell Sayers," *Making Gay History: The Podcast*, Season 1: Episode 2, <https://makinggayhistory.com/podcast/episode-1-2/>.

¹⁵⁰ "Wendell Sayers," *Making Gay History: The Podcast*.

predominantly white town of Hill City, Kansas, where Sayers grew up “in a very segregated society, which kept me always aware that I was different.”¹⁵¹

When Sayers realized in his teens that he was sexually attracted to men, he felt deeply alone and wanted to kill himself, “I was just completely down and out so to speak, I gave up, practically.” After hearing rumors that his son was “not natural” Sayers’s father sent him to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, where he was diagnosed as homosexual. Returning home, Sayers feared that his father, a successful lawyer elected to three terms as County Attorney, would reject him, but Williams Sayers accepted the news with grace and cautioned his son to conduct his relationships within the privacy and safety of the family home.¹⁵²

After studying law and graduating from Washburn College in Topeka, Kansas, Sayers opened a private law office in 1945 in the Ernest & Cranmer Building (demolished in 1963) at the corner of 17th and Curtis streets in Denver, specializing in real estate law and taking on several civil rights and discrimination cases.¹⁵³ Sayers initially lived at 2050 Ogden Street in the San Rafael Historic District (5DV.202, National Register listed 1986), later purchasing a home at 2835 Grape Street (extant) in the North Park Hill neighborhood, where he lived until his death at age 93 on March 27, 1998.¹⁵⁴

By 1953, Sayers had become the first Black assistant attorney general for the state of Colorado. He continued to attend Mattachine meetings while working in the Attorney General’s office and briefly attended the society’s 1959 national convention at the Albany Hotel (demolished 1976) in Denver, despite fears that his sexual orientation would be revealed.¹⁵⁵

The Denver Council of the Mattachine Society was officially formed by Elver Amos Barker in the fall of 1956, with five members attending the first recorded meeting in January 1957.¹⁵⁶ Like other councils



FIGURE 19: WENDELL PHILLIP SAYERS IN 1933. (WASHBURN COLLEGE YEARBOOK/ANCESTRY.COM)

¹⁵¹ “Wendell Phillip Sayers,” <https://www.findagrave.com>; Nicodemus National Historic Site, <https://www.nps.gov/nico/index.htm>; “W.L. Sayers Dies,” *Morland Monitor*, March 29, 1956; 1910 U.S. Census Records, accessed via Ancestry.com; “Wendell Sayers,” *Making Gay History: The Podcast*.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*; “W.L. Sayers Dies,” *Morland Monitor*.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*; Denver City Directories, accessed via Ancestry.com.

¹⁵⁴ Denver City Directories, accessed via Ancestry.com; “Wendell Phillip Sayers,” <https://www.findagrave.com>.

¹⁵⁵ “Wendell Sayers,” *Making Gay History: The Podcast*.

¹⁵⁶ Sears, 394; Nick Ota-Wang, “The Queen City: Denver’s Homophile Organizations from 1950-1970,” May 2020, <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Nick-Ota-Wang-Mattachine-Society-and->



FIGURE 20: COVER OF THE 1957 DENVER AREA MATTACHINE NEWSLETTER. (COLLECTIONS OF THE SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, ARCHIVES CENTER, COLLECTION AC1146, BOX 2, FOLDER 10)

across the United States, the Denver Mattachines published a monthly newsletter, maintained a library, hosted lectures and meetings, and held group therapy sessions, social events, and fundraisers.¹⁵⁷ At its peak, the council's mailing list included 200 individuals within a ten-state region.¹⁵⁸

Founding members included Barry Sheer (aka John P. LeRoy), a college student at the University of Colorado in Boulder and member of the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity; Nebraska native and X-ray technician Bill Matson, who maintained the group's library; and newsletter co-editors Rolland Howard Karcher (aka Rolland Howard), a Navy veteran, University of Denver graduate and state employee, and Harley Beckman, who worked at St. Joseph's Hospital.¹⁵⁹

Born in 1920 in Newcastle, Wyoming, Barker grew up on the family ranch before moving to Denver to attend the University of Denver.¹⁶⁰ In 1940, Barker was living at 2050 S. Gaylord Street while attending school and working at the downtown branch of the Denver Public Library.¹⁶¹ After graduating in 1943, he worked for pacifist organizations in Philadelphia and Denver before

beginning a career as a social worker while living at 1433 Downing Street (extant).¹⁶² Barker embraced his homosexuality, which he had tried to repress in his mid-twenties, after meeting a gay man at the Denver YMCA who introduced him to the city's gay culture. Barker frequented the Snake Pit, a bar in the

[Daughters-of-Bilitis-May-2020-version.pdf](#), 14-15. In Robert C. Steele's 2020 book, *Banned from California*, the Denver Mattachine Society is described as having six charter members.

¹⁵⁷ Sears, 341; Nick Ota-Wang, database of Denver Mattachine Society meeting types, dates, locations, and topics gathered from Mattachine Society Newsletters, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XC1NigT2aXbcm8QfWDklrwZ-Zbzc7Pe-VhXNTS27kwM/edit#gid=411373510>.

¹⁵⁸ Sears, 425. It is unknown if copies of the Denver Mattachine's mailing list survive.

¹⁵⁹ B. Erin Cole, "R-O: Race, Sexuality and Single-Family Zoning in Denver's Park Hill and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods, 1956-1989," Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, May 2014, 158; Sears, 394; Coloradan Yearbook, U.S. School Yearbooks, 1900-1999, accessed via Ancestry.com; U.S. Veterans' Gravesites, ca.1775-2019, accessed via Ancestry.com.

¹⁶⁰ 1920 U.S. Census, accessed via Ancestry.com; Sears, 340.

¹⁶¹ U.S. World War II Draft Cards, 1940-1947, accessed via Ancestry.com.

¹⁶² 1951 Denver City Directory.

basement of the Drexel Hotel (demolished 1973), and cruised Cheesman Park (5DV.5308), where “you could go up day or evening and meet the nicest fellows...”¹⁶³ He learned about the Mattachine Society through *ONE* magazine and relocated to the San Francisco area in the 1950s. Barker joined the Alameda County welfare office and was subsequently fired in 1953 when it was revealed that he was gay.¹⁶⁴

An active member of the Mattachine chapter at the time, Barker returned to Denver in August 1954, where he found work as a teacher in the Aurora Public Schools. He continued his involvement with the national Mattachine organization, serving as Director of Education, writing articles for the *Mattachine Review* under the pseudonym “Carl B. Harding,” and preparing the *Education Handbook*, a sixty-three page booklet containing individual and group projects, techniques for organizing meetings and group therapy sessions, and advice on working with the media and



FIGURE 21: ELVER AMOS BARKER RESIDENCE AT 1353 VINE STREET. (AMY UNGER)

conducting research that was distributed to councils throughout the United States. According to historian B. Erin Cole, Barker’s work established Denver as an “important hub for gay-male political and social organizing in the late 1950s.”¹⁶⁵

In 2020, Nick Ota-Wang documented the location of Mattachine meetings listed in the Denver organization’s newsletters between 1957 and 1961.¹⁶⁶ Meeting spots varied for privacy reasons and included the Little Banquet Restaurant at 1265 Broadway (no longer extant) and various meeting rooms at the Olin Hotel at 1420 Logan Street (5DV.49). The majority of meetings and events took place, however, at private residences, many within the Capitol Hill neighborhood, with meetings held most frequently at Elver Barker’s second-floor rear apartment at 1353 Vine Street (extant), and member residences at 486 Downing Street (5DV.6898), 216 Madison Street (no longer extant), and 3424 W. 23rd Avenue.¹⁶⁷ Society members typically used pseudonyms in newsletters and other documents to protect their privacy, making it challenging to identify the places where they lived and worked.

¹⁶³ Sears, 340.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Tyler Alpern, “Elver Barker Carl B. Harding,” <http://www.tyleralpern.com/ElverBarker.html>; Sears, 341-42; Cole, 157.

¹⁶⁶ Ota-Wang, Mattachine Society meeting database.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.; Sears, 423.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC (100-8362)

DATE: 10/26/59

FROM : SA [REDACTED] 7C

SUBJECT: HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY IN SAN FRANCISCO
(MATTACHINE SOCIETY)
INFORMATION CONCERNING

7C
7D

[REDACTED] advised SA [REDACTED] that
through the cooperation of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was able to procure [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] of the 1959 national convention of the
Mattachine Society held at the Albany Hotel in Denver on 9/7/59.

7D

A review [REDACTED] reflects the following
names contained therein of individuals from Denver who attended
the convention:

7C

CARL B. HARDING, Secretary of the Denver group of
the Mattachine Society and National Director of Education;

HARRY B. BATEMAN, JR., elected National Vice Chairman
of the Mattachine Society;

EARL GEBHARDT;
RICHARD JOYNER;
ELTON ALLBECK;
ROLAND HOWARD;
J. RANDOLPH GRAYSON;
STANLEY MITCHELL;

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/22/84 BY SP4/MLP

7C

BILLY MAYNARD MATSON, 1024 E. 17th Avenue, Denver,
Librarian of the Mattachine Society;

WENDALL SAYERS, Denver attorney, Denver Mattachine
Society legal counsel.

1 - 33-59

[REDACTED] 100-8362-11
JEO
WR

7C (2) mf
7C

FIGURE 22: 1959 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION MEMO IDENTIFYING MEMBERS OF THE DENVER MATTACHINE SOCIETY. (ONE NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN ARCHIVES. ARCHIVES OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER)

By 1959, the Mattachine Society had grown to 272 members with councils in seven cities.¹⁶⁸ The Denver council boasted seventeen members including J. Randolph Grayson and Harry Bateman (aka David L. Daniels), who along with Sheer, Matson, Karcher, and Beckman would assist Barker in bringing the sixth national convention of the Mattachine Society to Denver. Held on September 7, 1959, with a theme of “New Frontiers in Acceptance of the Homophile,” it was the only Mattachine convention held outside California or New York.¹⁶⁹ Speakers included Robert Allen, the majority leader of the Colorado House of Representatives, University of Colorado anthropology professor Omer C. Stewart, and Denver attorney William Reynard with the Colorado chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.¹⁷⁰

Barker and others aggressively publicized the event, and both the *Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News* reported on the upcoming convention.¹⁷¹ The public attention the convention received would have profound negative consequences. Several weeks later, officers with the Denver Morals Bureau searched the apartments of several Mattachine members including Barker and Matson, the group’s librarian. Matson’s resulting arrest for the “illegal possession of pornographic articles” was reported in the *Denver Post* and his home address (1024 E. 17th Avenue, no longer extant) and place of employment published. He

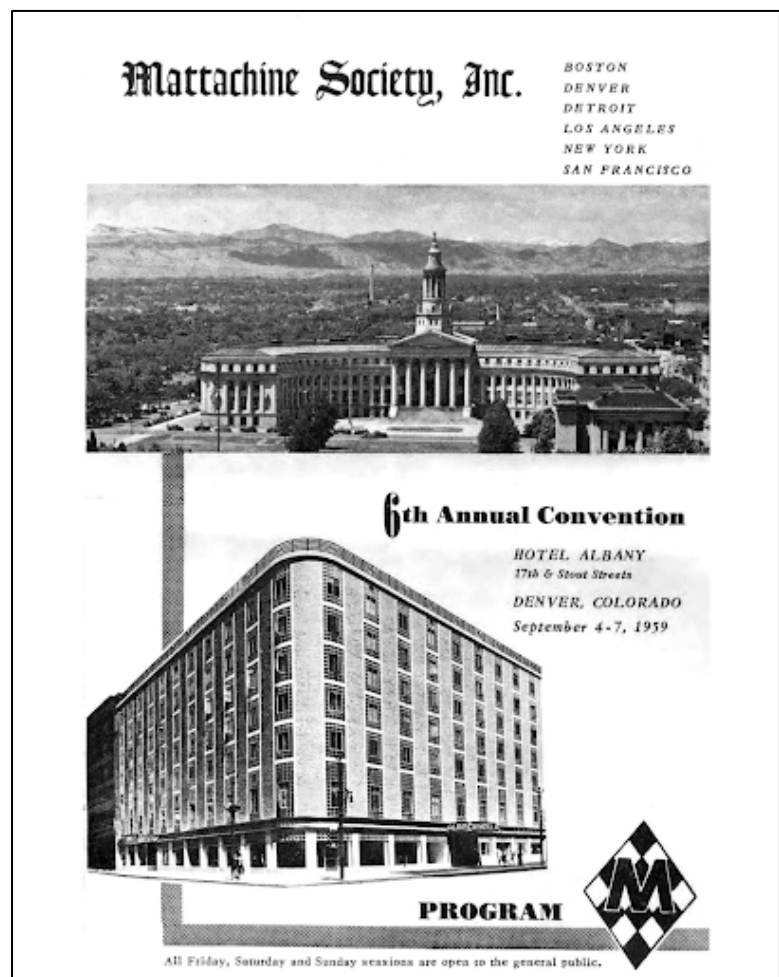


FIGURE 23: CONVENTION PROGRAM COVER, MATTACHINE SOCIETY ANNUAL CONVENTION, DENVER, CO SEPTEMBER 1959. (CENTER ON COLFAX COLORADO LGBTQ HISTORY PROJECT)

¹⁶⁸ Sears, 415; Mattachine: A Queer Serial, “Peddled Like Pornography,” Season 2, Episode 8, transcript, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b13254b8a79b212d0312c6/t/5f2dd11b3fa2e03e4754d9bd/1596838178563/208+Queer+Serial+Transcript.pdf>.

¹⁶⁹ Cole, 159; Loni Shibuyama, Finding Aid of the Mattachine Society Project Collection, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California, 2008, 2015, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt7w1035mz/entire_text/.

¹⁷⁰ “Conventions of the Past,” *Mattachine Review*, September 1960, 14.

¹⁷¹ “Mattachine Society to Meet,” *Rocky Mountain News*, August 30, 1959; “Group to Discuss Homosexual Needs,” *Denver Post*, September 4, 1959; “Group Seeks to End Homosexual Stigma,” *Rocky Mountain News*, September 6, 1959; Cole, 159.



FIGURE 24: OLIN HOTEL AT 1420 LOGAN STREET, DENVER, IN 2022. (AMY UNGER)

was subsequently fired from his job and sentenced to sixty days in jail and fined \$100. A file containing the names and addresses of people who had checked out books from the Mattachine library was confiscated during the raid of Matson's home.¹⁷²

In addition to the local Denver Morals Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was apparently actively investigating members of the Denver Mattachine. An October 1959 FBI memo listed the names or

pseudonyms of individuals who attended the convention, including Barker, Bateman, Grayson, Matson, and Wendell Sayers, who was listed as the Denver Mattachine Society's legal counsel.¹⁷³ Undeterred, the council continued to host public discussion forums, enlarged its library, and expanded distribution of its newsletter.¹⁷⁴

Fear of exposure, however, was a constant and looming concern. In November 1959, Hal Call came to Denver to give a talk at the Olin Hotel. In "Who's Afraid of What?" Call cautioned, "The homosexual must be realistic too, learning to discriminate as to when it is proper to 'stick his neck out' and when it is better to 'play it cool.'"¹⁷⁵ Matson returned to Nebraska after his release from jail and other members began to distance themselves from the organization. The Denver council continued to lose momentum, disbanding in 1961 and briefly regrouping as The Neighbors, which also disbanded that year.¹⁷⁶

Elver Barker left for California, where he earned a degree, later returning to the Capitol Hill neighborhood in 1972, establishing the Timberline Art Studio at 1713 E. 14th Avenue (unclear if extant) and working as an art teacher.¹⁷⁷ He lived in Denver, working as a painter, until his death in 2004.¹⁷⁸ At the time of his death, close friend Phil Nash remembered Barker as "very soft-spoken, but there was a powerful intelligence behind anything he had to say. He was a very courageous man, who had the clarity of his convictions a good 20 years before other people in the gay and lesbian movement had brought

¹⁷² Sears, 424; Ota-Wang, 21; Cole, 160.

¹⁷³ Ota-Wang, 21.

¹⁷⁴ Sears, 425.

¹⁷⁵ Sears, 425-6.

¹⁷⁶ Robert C. Steele, *Banned from California: Jim Foshee, Persecution, Redemption, Liberation...and the Gay Civil Rights Movement* (Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, LRCS, 2020), 244.

¹⁷⁷ Polk's Denver City Directory, 1976; "Mr. Elver Barker, 84," *Rocky Mountain News*, September 9, 2004.

¹⁷⁸ "Mr. Elver Barker, 84," *Rocky Mountain News*.

the movement to public visibility. He was working behind the scenes in very courageous ways long before other people in this community were.”¹⁷⁹

Daughters of Bilitis

In 1955, Rosalie Bamberger, a working-class Filipina American living in San Francisco with her partner Rosemary Sliepen, envisioned the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) as a private social club for women seeking an alternative to the lesbian bar scene. Bamberger, Sliepen, and three other couples, including Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, were the group’s founding members. The name Daughters of Bilitis was a reference to the “Songs of Bilitis,” an 1894 collection of erotic poetry allegedly written by Bilitis, a contemporary of Sappho, and translated from ancient Greek by French poet and writer Pierre Louys.¹⁸⁰

After Bamberger and other working-class members left during the organization’s infancy, Martin, the DOB’s first president, Lyon, and others grew the small group into a national organization focused on education and activism. In 1956, the DOB began publishing *The Ladder*, the second U.S. magazine for lesbians, and the first to be nationally distributed.¹⁸¹

Membership in the DOB was “open to all women over 21 who have a genuine interest in the problems of the female homophile and related problems of other minorities.” A self-proclaimed “women’s organization for the purpose of promoting the integration of the homosexual into society,” the DOB’s purpose was organized around four principal goals that emphasized promoting self-awareness among lesbians through the dissemination of information; breaking down “erroneous conceptions, taboos and prejudices” and promoting acceptance by educating the general public; supporting professional research on sexual variation; and legal activism. In 1967, the DOB’s goals were modified to place a greater emphasis on the lesbian identity and on individual expression.¹⁸²

In 1968, prominent DOB member Meredith Gray expanded on the group’s purpose:

As thousands of women turned to the Daughters for assistance in their personal searches to become more secure, productive citizens, the staff was simply swamped. The need was clearly seen to be far greater than the resources. Some members urged that greater attention be devoted to treating the “cause” rather than the “symptoms” of the lesbian’s alienation from society. They observed daily the self-destructive and socially destructive emotional violence which society generated by rejecting the allegiance and scorning the human potential of the homosexual. While some members considered concentration on the individual as a delusive form of flight from the central problem, others saw self-knowledge as the essential beginning of all knowledge. The Daughters’ statement of purpose is a statement of faith in the belief that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a situation—a complex set of relations between

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ *The Ladder*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1956, 2-3.

¹⁸¹ Kate Brandt, “Lisa Ben, A Lesbian Pioneer,” *Visibilities*, January/February 1990.

<https://queermusicheritage.com/viceversa0.html>. The first lesbian magazine is credited as being *Vice Versa*, published June 1947-February 1948 by Edith Eyde (aka Lisa Ben, an anagram of “lesbian”).

¹⁸² *The Ladder*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1956, 2-3; *The Ladder*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1956, 2-3;



FIGURE 25: THE KING'S INN AT 11800 EAST COLFAX AVENUE (NOW THE SUMMIT VIEW INN) HOSTED THE 1968 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS. (AMY UNGER)

one's self and society. The ideology which evolved, the ethos of the Daughters of Bilitis, is to support any and all legal means of improving the situation of the lesbian, either as an individual or as a group. This lack of specialization has contributed to the vitality of the corporation.¹⁸³

By 1958, chapters of the DOB existed in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, and later chapters apparently formed primarily on the east and west coasts.¹⁸⁴ *The Ladder's* subscription rolls presumably included a number of Coloradans (advertisements for the DOB and *The Ladder* appeared in the Denver Mattachine Society's newsletter), but in-person opportunities to build community appear to have been limited to participation in meetings of the Mattachine Society.¹⁸⁵

Though Colorado did not have an official chapter of DOB, the Denver metro area did play host to the DOB's national convention in 1968, held August 9-11 at the King's Inn (11800 East Colfax in Aurora, now the Summit View Inn). First held in 1960, the National Convention of Daughters of Bilitis typically drew DOB members from across the U.S. and included meetings, speakers, panels, tours, parties, luncheons, banquets, awards, and more. The 1968 convention was the first held in a city where the DOB had no chapter, and the number of attendees appears to have been relatively small. In her report on the DOB General Assembly published in the September 1968 issue of *The Ladder*, Sten Russell reported that fifteen members participated in all or part of the General Assembly, along with two professional guests. The DOB had arranged for "a Banquet speaker from one of the local Law Schools," but had to cancel the engagement "for lack of attending Daughters and guests."¹⁸⁶

Gender Identity and Expression After World War II

In the late 1940s and '50s, Alfred Kinsey's research into gender variance, and that of Harry Benjamin, challenged the assumed link between sexual orientation and gender identity. Benjamin, born and

¹⁸³ Meredith Grey, "Changing Times," *The Ladder*, vol. 12, No. 10, August 1968, 19-20.

¹⁸⁴ Ota-Wang, 25.

¹⁸⁵ Ota-Wang, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Sten Russell, "Report on the 1968 National D.O.B. General Assembly," *The Ladder*, Vol. 12, No. 11-12, September 1968, 12-13. Nick Ota-Wang describes the number of 1968 National Conference attendees as "quite a few" based on a review of reservation sheets included in the collection of the Gay Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society, Ota-Wang, 26.

trained in Germany, advocated for individuals who wished to alter their bodies through medical interventions to match their gender identities, procedures that the vast majority of American doctors viewed as unethical. For this reason, many people seeking gender-affirming surgery in the 1950s and '60s were forced to travel to Europe for treatment.

Assigned male at birth, New York native and World War II veteran Christine Jorgensen gained notoriety in the United States after undergoing gender confirmation surgery in Denmark in the early 1950s. Jorgensen's transition and public persona challenged mainstream norms. As Ferentinos writes, "Her status as a war veteran, her willingness to be in the public spotlight, and her traditionally feminine beauty challenged popular American understanding of the sexually variant as shamefaced and mentally diseased, inherently different from 'true' Americans."¹⁸⁷

As groups like the Mattachine Society and DOB raised awareness of gay and lesbian issues, gender non-conforming individuals were increasingly seen and heard as well. Virginia Prince, assigned male at birth, began experimenting with gender expression at a young age. In 1952, Prince and others briefly distributed the Long Beach, California, newsletter *Transvestia: Journal for the American Society for Equality in Dress*, perhaps the first publication to address issues of gender variance. Only two issues appeared in 1952, but in 1960 Prince revived the publication as the bi-monthly magazine *Transvestia*, "...dedicated to the needs of the sexually normal individual who has discovered the existence [sic] of his or her 'other side' and seeks to express it."¹⁸⁸

In 1961, Prince formed the Hose & Heels Club for heterosexual male crossdressers, which became the Alpha Chapter of the Foundation for Full Personality Expression (FPE or Phi Pi Epsilon) in 1962, and in 1975, the Society for the Second Self, also known as Tri Ess or Tri Sigma.¹⁸⁹ In 1966, Prince contacted Denverites Barbara Cook and Maureen Warfield to gauge their interest in forming a chapter in Denver. Cook remembers meeting Warfield at Furr's Cafeteria at 700 S. Colorado Boulevard (no longer extant), and deciding to "meet, dressed, one each month starting in January of 1967." Denver's anti-cross-dressing ordinance prohibited meeting in public spaces, and the group typically met at Cook's home south of the University of Denver (exact location undetermined by research to date). Cook and other members of the group were "surprised by how fast we grew with just the 'word of mouth' promotion and the referral from the national [Phi Pi Epsilon organization] in California." Within about a year, about fifteen people attended monthly meetings, including Dick Reece and other members of Denver's drag scene. Reece and the Denver chapter of Phi Pi Epsilon were instrumental in repealing Denver's anti-crossdressing ordinance in October 1974.¹⁹⁰

Drag shows, a form of public entertainment since the 1800s, became an increasingly important aspect of LGBTQ culture in Colorado after World War II. The Colorado drag troupe, The Turnabout Review (also

¹⁸⁷ Ferentinos, 65.

¹⁸⁸ "Purpose of *Transvestia*," *Transvestia*, Vol. 3, No. 21, June 1963, inside front cover; Ferentinos, 68.

¹⁸⁹ "Virginia Prince & *Transvestia*," University of Victoria Transgender Archives, <https://www.uvic.ca/transgenderarchives/collections/virgina-prince/index.php>.

¹⁹⁰ Barbara Cook, "The Gender Identity Group History," unpublished essay, 2000. <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AIY%2DoEJveHgiTXA&id=CA63316353910D3F%215189&cid=CA63316353910D3F&parId=root&parQt=sharedby&o=OneUp>

known as the Turn About Review and Turn About Revue), performed regionally in the '50s and '60s and reportedly held Christmas shows led by Dick Reese and others in Evergreen (specific location unknown) during the early 1960s.¹⁹¹

Members of The Turnabout Review also established the Gilded Cage, a bar in Denver's Auraria neighborhood (near 13th and Lawrence or 11th and Curtis, no longer extant), where Reese served as emcee of the club's drag show in 1964.¹⁹² According to David Duffield, the Turnabout Review "provided space for gender non-conforming people, many of whom later identified as Transgender women."¹⁹³ Cook, who with others founded the Gender Identity Center of Colorado (GIC) in 1978, described the Gilded Cage as a special space where "transgender people could be themselves, even though most dressed in the privacy of their own homes."¹⁹⁴

1960s

After The Neighbors disbanded in 1961, there was no formal organization dedicated to LGBTQ causes in Colorado until the Colorado Alliance for Homosexuals formed in 1971. That did not mean, however, that the LGBTQ community faded away. To the contrary, Denver's LGBTQ community continued to build on the groundwork laid by members of the Mattachine Society and others. The city's LGBTQ nightlife remained vibrant, with multiple bars catering to an inclusive clientele. The San Francisco-based *Citizens News*, self-proclaimed as "America's Leading Homosexual Publication," included reports from cities



FIGURE 26: COURT JESTER RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE IN 1978. (DONATED TO THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY BY THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS/STEVE GROER)

across the U.S., including Denver. In December 1964, an article by "Miles High" on Denver nightlife reported on the opening of the Chances R at 1611 Glenarm, the death of the owner of the Tick Tock Inn (1512 Broadway, no longer extant), new staff at the Cherry Creek Tavern, which served both a lesbian and gay clientele (1301 Lawrence Street, no longer extant), the biggest Halloween party ever held at the Court Jester Restaurant and Lounge (1645 [1636]

¹⁹¹ Vincent Boucher, Author Frank DeCaro Unravels Drag's Origins in New Book," *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 9, 2019; David Duffield, "Denver Drag's Long and Storied History," *Out Front Magazine*, <https://www.outfrontmagazine.com/denver-drags-long-and-storied-history/>.

¹⁹² "Denver Nights," *Citizens News*, Vol. 4, No. 3, December 1964, 11.

¹⁹³ David Duffield, "Queer Spaces in Denver 1870-1980," *Historic Denver*, <https://historicdenver.org/hd-news-spring-2022-cover-story/>.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Court Place, no longer extant), and a surprise birthday party for Dick Reese at the Gilded Cage.¹⁹⁵ Other bars with a LGBTQ clientele during the 1960s reportedly included the Belmont Hotel at 2058 Larimer Street (no longer extant), the City Dump at 1523 Welton Street (no longer extant), and the Kit Kat Club at 16th and Broadway (no longer extant).¹⁹⁶

In the following issue, *Citizens News* ran a lengthy first-person account of the harassment of Halloween revelers in drag by Denver police. Several drag shows were held that night in Denver-area night spots including the Tick Tock Inn, known for having the best drag show in town, and the Front Door (demolished 1972). Shortly after midnight a show was about to begin at the Cherry Creek Tavern where police had earlier in the evening confiscated “weapons” carried by costumed patrons. An estimated 75 drag performers



FIGURE 27: INTERIOR OF THE CHERRY CREEK TAVERN, A LESBIAN BAR AT 1301 LAWRENCE STREET IN DENVER, CA. 1980. (DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTION, AUR-613)

were waiting to go on stage when police raided the bar. Six people, including the owner, Lee (no last name given), were arrested on charges of cross-dressing and taken to the drunk tank. They were fined \$15 and given a suspended sentence provided they did not dress in drag for six months. The article’s author credited the women with saving the majority of drag performers from arrest and described the relationship between lesbians and gay men in Denver in the mid-1960s as such: “Here in Denver we all live as if we were one happy family and there is no fighting such as is in Los Angeles or San Francisco.... If a guy needs a date for business or family reasons he can as[k] one of the femmes and they are always ready to cooperate with us.”¹⁹⁷

In a dialogue with “Empress IV and female impersonator” Causha Lee, published in the March 1978 issue of *Out Front* magazine, Dawn Collier, described as an “Effemist and former female impersonator,” shared how “four other gay men and I put on the first public drag show in Colorado Springs at a bar called The Rathskellar” in the mid-1960s. Collier also describes producing drag shows at another bar in the city, The Purple Cow, featuring “female impersonators from The Queen Mary in Los Angeles like Bobbie Scott, Tanya, and Bobbie Tremain.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ “Denver Nights,” *Citizens News*, Vol. 4, No. 3, December 1964, 11.

¹⁹⁶ List of gay bars provided by David Duffield.

¹⁹⁷ “Denver Story,” *Citizens News*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1964, 1-3.

¹⁹⁸ “Feminism vs. Female Impersonation: A Dialogue with Causha,” *Out Front*, March 17, 1978, 19.



FIGURE 28: THE OCTOBER 1965 ISSUE OF *THE LADDER* FEATURED THE PROTESTS IN WASHINGTON THAT FALL.

The 1960s were a chaotic time in U.S. history, exemplified by cultural change, political unrest, increased sexual freedom and autonomy over one's body, public protests, and increasingly vocal and sometimes violent challenges to the status quo led by Black and women's rights groups, anti-war activists, and America's growing youth counterculture. Within the LGBTQ community, homophile groups like the Mattachine Society and DOB had advocated for the equitable treatment of LGBTQ individuals and worked to effect change through traditional political and legal channels with some success. Some members of homophile groups argued for a more radical approach. On July 4, 1965, members of the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) picketed outside Philadelphia's Independence Hall in one of the first organized LGBTQ rights demonstrations in the country. The protest, held annually on Independence Day until 1969, was organized with the assistance of gay activist Frank Kameny, co-founder of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Mattachine Society, who had organized a public protest at the White House in April 1965. Dismissed

from his civil service job in 1957 because he was gay, Kameny entered into a protracted, and ultimately unsuccessful, legal battle with the federal government over his firing. Kameny's case is considered the first known civil rights claim based on sexual orientation. In 1968, the North American Conference for Homophile Organizations (NACHO) formally adopted the slogan "Gay is Good" at the suggestion of Kameny, echoing the antiracist phrase "Black is Beautiful" promoting Afrocentric pride.

In San Francisco, the epicenter of LGBTQ activism in the West, Adrian Ravarour and Joel Thomas Williams formed Vanguard, believed to be the first LGBTQ youth organization, in 1965. The short-lived group organized demonstrations in front of businesses that discriminated against LGBTQ young people

living on the streets of the city's Tenderloin district.¹⁹⁹ Four years later, the Committee for Homosexual Freedom (CHF) formed in the city. Critical of the established homophile groups, CHF called for an alliance between gay, Black, anti-war, and women's rights activists and protested against businesses that perpetuated discriminatory employment practices, supported police harassment, and espoused anti-gay rhetoric.²⁰⁰

That same year, twenty-six-year-old leftist activist and gay man Carl Wittman wrote "A Gay Manifesto," in which he described the changes underway in the LGBTQ rights movement:

In the past year there has been an awakening of gay liberation ideas and energy.... Where once there was frustration, alienation, and cynicism, there are new characteristics among us. We are full of love for each other and are showing it; we are full of anger at what has been done to us. And as we recall all the self-censorship and repression for so many years, a reservoir of tears pours out of our eyes. And we are euphoric, high, with the initial flourish of a movement.²⁰¹

The anger that Wittman wrote of would very publicly explode in the early hours of June 28, 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. The resulting five-day street protest against police harassment of New York's LGBTQ community members signaled a turning point. In the 1970s, activists energized by the events in New York would build upon the groundwork laid by homophile groups in the 1950s and 60s as the fight for LGBTQ equality and civil rights in the United States entered a new era.

1970-1996

Following the June 1969 Stonewall Inn riots in New York City, a new generation of LGBTQ activism, focused on embracing identity and being "out" in greater society, took hold across the country, including in Colorado. This section covers the incredible growth and evolution of LGBTQ community and organizations beginning in 1970 through 1996, the year that Colorado's Amendment 2, a state constitutional amendment passed in 1992 that was a significant blow to political and legal rights for LGBTQ people, was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. Historical themes that emerge from a study of this period organically overlap with one another, as many people and organizations were involved in far more than just one. With the hope that it adds clarity to understanding this period, the following themes are discussed:

- Organizing and Community Building
- Politics and Law
- Communications

¹⁹⁹ Adrian Ravarour, "Vanguard 1965," <http://www.vanguard1965.com>.

²⁰⁰ "The Committee for Homosexual Freedom," *The Berkeley Revolution*, <https://revolution.berkeley.edu/committee-homosexual-freedom/>.

²⁰¹ Carl Wittman, "A Gay Manifesto," 1969, Vietnam War Era Ephemera Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Washington Libraries, <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/protests/id/416/>. Wittman's manifesto would be reprinted as a pamphlet in 1970 by The Red Butterfly, <http://paganpressbooks.com/jpl/TRB-WITT.PDF>.

- Entertainment and Recreation
- Religion
- Health and Medicine
- Businesses

In truth, many of these themes during 1970-1996 could warrant their own, in-depth context. Prominent events, various organizations, affiliated people, and examples of associated sites are presented to provide a basis for future research.

Organizing & Community Building

A generally well-accepted fact within LGBTQ history is that the uprising of the LGBTQ community in New York City at the June 1969 Stonewall Inn riots was a catalyst for the spread of the gay civil rights movement across the country, following on the heels of and contemporaneous with many other civil rights movements and the anti-Vietnam War movement. However, the gay liberation movement spread most rapidly among the coastal cities, where some LGBTQ community-building and activism was already underway, taking a bit longer before it reached Colorado. Jim Foshee, a gay man who had moved to Denver from California in 1969, recounted that the news of Stonewall did not immediately strike him as unusual: “During my first summer in Denver I found out about another gay uprising and rebellion that had just occurred—this time in New York City. I thought this one sounded a lot like the other gay public uprisings and protests and demonstrations that occurred before that [like the 1959 Cooper Do-nuts in Los Angeles, the 1966 riot at Compton’s cafeteria in San Francisco, and the 1967 raid of L.A.’s Black Cat Tavern].”²⁰²

As with many civil rights movements, there is no bright line in LGBTQ history separating the political from the personal, or the greater community from the individual. In other words, discussing LGBTQ history necessitates categorizations that belie the organic overlapping of people, groups, and goals. In the interest of categorizing the stories of LGBTQ groups in a meaningful way, not all are discussed in this section on organizing and community building. The groups and organizations discussed here (generally in chronological order of formation date) were typically formed with goals to challenge the persecution of the LGBTQ community in conjunction with fostering community building and providing support from within, and in some ways can be thought of as “all purpose” groups. Some LGBTQ groups formed around intersecting identities (such as race, ethnicity, or disability), or to combat racism/sexism from within; because their focus was to connect with and find support among similar people like the “all purpose” groups, they are also presented in this section. Groups organized solely around obtaining specific political or legal goals, or political/legal actions by the “all purpose” groups of this section, such as the 1973 City Council “Gay Revolt” led by the Denver Gay Coalition, are discussed in further detail in the Politics and Law section. Groups that formed to provide specific recreational opportunities in an exclusively LGBTQ setting, although they certainly overlapped with community building, are discussed in the Entertainment and Recreation section.

²⁰² Steele, *Banned from California*, 244. For more information on these and other earlier protests and riots, see for example, Megan E. Springate, “LGBTQ Civil Rights in America,” *LGBTQ America* Volume II, 18-27-18-28.

Gay Liberation Front and Lambda Services Bureau – Colorado Springs

The first Gay Liberation Front (GLF) formed in New York City immediately after Stonewall; independent groups across the country quickly formed under the same, or similar, name. (It is worth noting that these groups pointedly chose to use the word “gay” in their name, whereas their predecessors, such as the Mattachine Society, and other homophile groups, did not.) The first GLF formed in Colorado is believed to have been in Colorado Springs, which was co-founded in 1969 by Donaciano Martinez (other founders’ names unknown), a Chicano resident of Colorado Springs since childhood and an experienced community activist. Martinez recounted to *Out Front* in 2013 that “Living two decades in a very racist environment in Colorado Springs politicized me.”²⁰³ Martinez’s activism was initially centered around the Vietnam War, which he began protesting against in 1965. He described the Colorado springs GLF as “a very militant organization—we were very much in your face... We had a profound distrust in the political system back then, and had not even the slightest interest in becoming part of it.”²⁰⁴ The Colorado Springs GLF appears to have been disbanded by 1975, when Martinez relocated to Denver in order to work for Gerald Gerash’s law firm.²⁰⁵

In 1973, Martinez started the Colorado Springs organization Lambda Services Bureau (LSB) with his friend Truman (last name unknown).²⁰⁶ The goal of LSB was to begin a gay community center, but the organization ended up in a legal battle with the IRS over its nonprofit tax-exempt status when it refused to agree to “refrain from publicly stating that gays were as normal as straight people.”²⁰⁷ (See the section Politics and Law for further information on the IRS court case for LSB.) Despite a successful resolution to the case in 1977, LSB’s board of directors decided they could no longer move forward due to the heavy toll the case had on them, and the group dissolved later that year, donating its remaining financial assets to the Woman to Woman Bookstore in Denver (see Businesses).²⁰⁸ Besides co-founder Martinez and 1977 chairperson Dorothy Bell, other LSB leaders have not yet been identified through research to date.

Furthermore, research to date has not yet yielded specific places associated with the GLF in Colorado Springs, LSB, or Martinez during this period; however, History Colorado’s Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center has copies of the Colorado Springs GLF Newsletter in its GLBT Collection, which is likely to be a fruitful source for future research.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ Holly Hatch and Matthew Pizzuti, “Colorado’s LGBT Movement Since 1973,” *Out Front*, April 3, 2013; online at <https://www.outfrontmagazine.com/from-civil-disobedience-to-civil-unions-40-years-of-colorado-lgbt-activism/>, accessed June 29, 2022.

²⁰⁴ Hatch and Pizzuti, “Colorado’s LGBT Movement Since 1973.”

²⁰⁵ Martinez, 9-10.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Donaciano Martinez, 10.

²⁰⁸ “Lambda, Inc. Dissolved,” *Out Front*, November 4, 1977.

²⁰⁹ See History Colorado’s Guide to GLBT Research Resources in the Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center, online at <https://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2019/GLBTResourceGuide.pdf>, accessed June 29, 2022.

Boulder Gay Liberation Front

After an article in a Boulder newspaper stated the need for a local liberation movement group, the Boulder Gay Liberation Front (BGLF) was founded in November 1970 as a student group at the University of Colorado (CU). By 1972, BGLF was an officially recognized student organization that received university funding and an office in the University Memorial Center (5Bl.11006, 1669 Euclid



FIGURE 29: UNIVERSITY MEMORIAL CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-BOULDER. (AMY UNGER)

Avenue), the student center constructed in 1953 that became a hub of student activism in the 1960s and '70s.²¹⁰ The group's stated purpose was to serve as a "resource to Boulder's gay community, [including] providing social spaces, a library on gay topics, counseling services, political activity, and housing guides."²¹¹ BGLF hosted regular monthly dances at Hidden Valley Ranch in the 1970s and early '80s.²¹² Hidden Valley Ranch is presumed to be what is now called Boulder Valley Ranch, a working ranch owned by the City of Boulder near the Hidden Valley Trail north of the city.²¹³

In 1974, BGLF advocated for a local anti-discrimination law (see Politics and Law). John Muth, an early member of BGLF, recalls that the failure of the ordinance led many within the city's gay liberation movement to withdraw from political activism.²¹⁴ In 1983, BGLF changed its name to Gays and Friends of Boulder.

Stanley Hohnholz, a Boulder native and 1976 CU alumnus, was an early member of the Boulder GLF and collected the organization's newsletters and other related ephemera. Further research of Hohnholz's collection at the University of Colorado Boulder Libraries may yield additional information about BGLF-associated people and places, as well as other local LGBTQ organizations.

Fort Collins Gay and Lesbian Alliance

The Fort Collins Gay Alliance was originally organized in 1971 as Colorado State University's (CSU) Student Organization for Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals. Frank Aguilar, who was a CSU student at the time, was one of the early founders who went on to join Unity (see below). In 1974, CSU hosted a feminist conference, at which co-founders of the Daughters of Bilitis, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, served as workshop leaders. The CSU group renamed itself Fort Collins Gay Alliance (FCGA) and was formally

²¹⁰ University Libraries, Boulder Gay Liberation collection (COU:193), University of Colorado Boulder; online at <https://archives.colorado.edu/repositories/2/resources/2527>, accessed June 30, 2022.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² "Ranch Dances Return," *Out Front*, January 1, 1977.

²¹³ The January 1, 1977 *Out Front* article mentions that the City of Boulder owned the ranch with a lease to operator Buddy Hayes. Further research should attempt to verify.

²¹⁴ Phil Nash, "First in a Four-Part Series on Colorado Gay Communities: Boulder," *Out Front*, January 18, 1985.

recognized as a campus student group by the university in 1975.²¹⁵ The alliance included both student and non-student community members, with an office run out of CSU's Lory Student Center (5LR.9987, 1101 Center Avenue Mall).²¹⁶ In April 1976, FCGA began hosting an annual "Gay Lifestyles" symposium for LGBTQ people from across the state at the Lory Center, with films, lectures, national guest speakers such as Frank Kameny of the Mattachine Society, and dances.²¹⁷ Topics included gay professionals in society, employment with the federal government, gay pride, and gay rights, among many others.

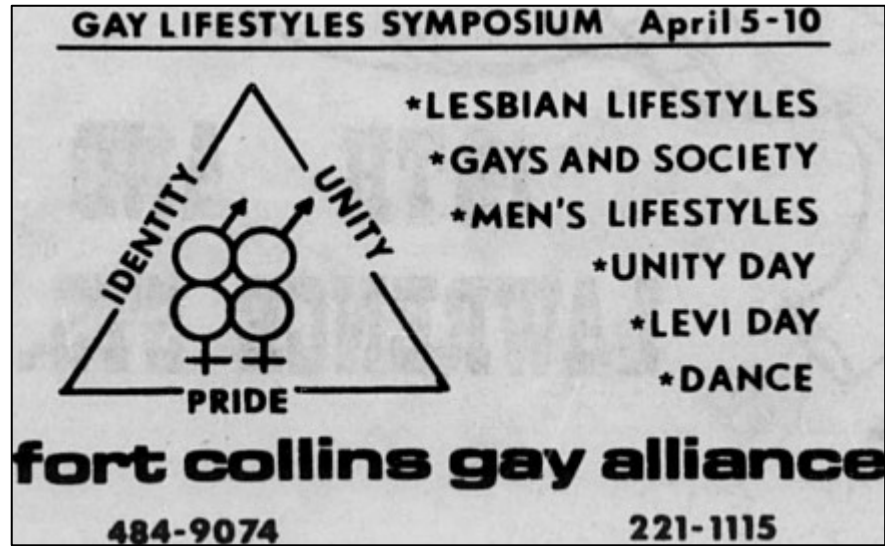


FIGURE 30: FCGA SYMPOSIUM AD. (*OUT FRONT*, APRIL 2, 1976)

FCGA also offered weekly coffeehouses, though the group had difficulty establishing a permanent location for these meetings. In the late 1970s through the early-1980s, FCGA hosted dances at the 1882 Bellvue Grange (aka Flowers General Store, 5LR.795, 2929 N. County Road 23, State Register listed 2006), which attracted between 150 to 400 people from Denver, northern Colorado, and Wyoming.²¹⁸ Reporting on a 1979 FCGA dance at the grange, *Out Front* noted that "A record-breaking crowd of almost 400 men and women was in attendance, and an improved sound system created an anomalous disco atmosphere in the quiet country setting."²¹⁹ The group also held dances at the Lincoln Center (417 W. Magnolia Street). In the early 1980s, the group renamed itself the Fort Collins Gay and Lesbian Alliance (FCGALA); in the ensuing years FCGALA provided LGBTQ speakers for classes at CSU, ran a telephone hotline, offered support groups, and hosted an annual Gay Awareness Week.²²⁰

²¹⁵ City of Fort Collins, "PRIDE: History of LGBTQ+ People in Fort Collins," Local History Projects online at <https://www.fcgov.com/historicpreservation/pride>, accessed June 25, 2022.

²¹⁶ City of Fort Collins, "PRIDE: History of LGBTQ+ People in Fort Collins." The original Lory Center was constructed in 1961, with major additions in 1967 and 1999 as documented in a 2001 site form in the Compass database. According to City of Fort Collins' Historic Preservation staff, several major portions of the Lory Center, and the LSC Theater space in particular, retain historic integrity. Further research should attempt to clarify the building's construction history and its correspondence with possible LGBTQ-associated significance.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*; "Symposium Date Set," *Out Front*, April 2, 1976; and Phil Nash, "Northern Colorado: Rumbly Inside a Massive Closet," *Out Front*, March 1, 1985.

²¹⁸ Nash, "Northern Colorado: Rumbly Inside a Massive Closet." It is unclear what date the current Lincoln Center building was constructed and to what degree of integrity it has from the 1980s, if any.

²¹⁹ "Ft. Collins Dance Smashes Record," *Out Front*, August 3, 1979.

²²⁰ Nash, "Northern Colorado: Rumbly Inside a Massive Closet."

The FCGALA was a founding organizational member of the Gay Community center of Colorado in Denver in 1975-77 (see below), with Frank Aguilar as the FCGALA representative. It is unknown at what date FCGALA disbanded, but it does not appear to be active today.

Gay Liberation Front – Denver

Denver's GLF formed in January 1971, under the leadership of Terry Mangan, a media librarian for the State Historical Society. The group met several times a week at the Denver Free University at 125 E. 18th Avenue (no longer extant).²²¹ When the Denver GLF joined anti-Vietnam War protestors in November 1971, they marched behind a GLF banner, marking the first time that gays had ever marched behind a gay rights banner in Denver, according to GLF member Jim Foshee.²²² At another Denver anti-war march in April 1972, Beat poet and one-time Denver resident Allen Ginsburg joined the GLF contingent. Due to internal disagreements, the Denver GLF disbanded in the summer of 1972, following a similar short-lived trajectory as the first GLF in New York.

Gay Coalition of Denver

As Gerald Gerash, an attorney and founding member of the organizations Gay Coalition of Denver and Unity explained in a 2016 collection of memoirs on the founding of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado:

In 1972 [when the Gay Coalition was founded], gay Denver was an extremely closeted community. Gays and lesbians lived hidden lives and in fear of exposure that could, and did, result in loss of a job and professional career—even eviction from one's home. We ventured out to meet other gays only in designated spaces, mostly the gay bars. Once there, we were afraid to use our real names. And arrests were a real possibility. We lived underground—in a gay world, entirely separate from the straight world. And the straight world didn't know our gay world even existed. We preferred that—for our own survival...²²³

Although it was not the first gay liberation group in Colorado, the Gay Coalition of Denver (GCD) proved a highly influential organization for LGBTQ rights in the state. GCD was formed in the fall of 1972 by Gerald Gerash; his partner, Lynn Tamlin, a former championship boxer from Wyoming; Jane Dundee, a Metropolitan State College student, feminist, and lesbian activist; Mary Sassatelli, Dundee's housemate; and Terry Mangan of the recently disbanded Denver GLF. The group met in Gerash and Tamlin's Capitol Hill apartment at 2330 E. 13th Avenue.²²⁴ As described by Gerash, the GCD members had already "sharpened [their] organizing teeth" through their various experiences in the women's and Black civil

²²¹ Steele, *Banned from California*, 247-48.

²²² *Ibid.*, 249.

²²³ Gerald A. Gerash, "On the Shoulders of The Gay Coalition of Denver," in *United We Stand: The Story of Unity and the Creation of The Center*, ed. by Phil Nash, Denver: The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado, 2016, 3.

²²⁴ Gerash, 3; and Steele, 251. Gerash and Tamlin's ca. 1920s apartment building is not in the Compass database, but is extant and appears to retain good integrity to the 1970s and earlier.

rights movements and the anti-Vietnam War movement and sought to foster an open gay culture that “joyfully asserted” their “inherent worth.”²²⁵

After GCD’s successful challenge to Denver City Council in October 1973 (see “Denver Gay Revolt” in Politics and Law section), the group was given \$2,000 by San Francisco bathhouse owner Dale Bentley, who had attended the council hearing and was impressed by GCD’s efforts. The money was used to open an office for GCD in Capitol Hill, which



FIGURE 31: GERALD GERASH AND LYNN TAMLIN’S APARTMENT BUILDING AT 2330 E. 13TH AVENUE IN DENVER’S CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD. (AMY UNGER)

immediately “drew people in, wanting to be in a safe and gay-affirming, nurturing space” (accounts of the GCD office location vary, see footnote).²²⁶ However, due to a lack of philanthropic interest among gay businesses and other potential funders to help keep the office running, GCD had to close its office within a year. Inspired by how the office space had become a type of community center, and disillusioned with the idea that the heterosexual mainstream could help lift up the gay community, Gerash decided to form an umbrella group of gay organizations that could use their collective power to form a permanent, self-sustaining center for the LGBTQ community (see Unity below).

From 1973-74, GCD also sponsored a weekly coffeehouse in conjunction with Denver Free University (rather than a separate commercial enterprise, “coffeehouse” in this sense was meant as a weekly gathering over coffee, offering films, readings, etc.). Known as Approaching Lavender, the coffeehouse was intended as an alternative to the gay bar scene, which tended to be centered around cruising and was often not welcoming of lesbians. Approaching Lavender met at Denver Free University’s second home at 1122 E. 17th Avenue, a ca. 1890 two-story commercial block (5DV.2431, extant).

Imperial Court System

The Imperial Court System is an international drag and charitable organization founded by performer and activist José Sarria in San Francisco in 1965, with the purpose of celebrating and fostering gay and drag culture, while fundraising for charitable causes. International Court “chapters” elect annual Empress, Emperor, and other officers (with various royal-themed titles such as “Czar,” “Princess Royale,”

²²⁵ Gerash, 4.

²²⁶ Gerash, 5; and “A Timeline Leading to the Founding of The Center, 1972-1977,” 20. Some sources indicate the address of GCD’s office was 1450 Pennsylvania, others, 1250 Pennsylvania (Unity Memoir “A Timeline,”), and still another as 1250 Lafayette (Phil Nash in communication to History Colorado in 2016 for its HistoryPin.org LGBTQ collection). Note that there is no 1250 Pennsylvania in current addressing conventions in Denver, but 1450 Pennsylvania and 1250 Lafayette are both extant.

etc.) in a coronation gala event. In Colorado, the oldest court is the Imperial Court of the Rocky Mountain Empire (ICRME), which formed in 1973 or 1974 (various sources conflict) in Denver. The founding of the Imperial Court System in Colorado had to contend not only with the homophobia it faced from the straight world, but the internal divisions within the LGBTQ community itself, many of whom did not understand the point of the Imperial Court. An article in *The Scene* newspaper from Salem Oregon’s Empress Sarina explained the need for solidarity with the Court representatives in order to maintain unity in the community.²²⁷ The first coronation of Empress Bridgette Peters and Emperor Phil Brant was held in April 1974 in the VFW Hall in downtown Denver, with 200 people in attendance.²²⁸



FIGURE 32: UNITED COURT OF THE PIKES PEAK EMPIRE FORMED IN COLORADO SPRINGS IN 1976.

Empress I Bridgette helped to create the Tobie Awards in 1974, an annual tradition which “honor[s] various members of the gay community for achievement and/or notoriety in various fields of endeavor,” in award categories for bartenders, bathhouse attendants, and female impersonators.²²⁹ Boulder Mayor Penfield Tate was awarded a Tobie for his support of an ordinance which would have provided anti-discrimination protection to lesbians and gays had it successfully passed (see Politics and Law). The Tobies appear to have morphed into a separate but closely affiliated organization called the Tobie Foundation, which is listed separately from the ICRME as one of the few gay community groups in the earliest issues of *Out Front* in 1976. Christi Layne, a well-loved drag queen in Denver, was the Foundation’s representative when Unity formed in

1975, with others representing ICRME (see below), and the foundation helped start the first Gay Pride events in Denver. The foundation was defunct by 1985, and possibly several years earlier.²³⁰ In 1981, Annie Brenman-West became the first woman to be elected as Empress for the ICRME.

The formation of affiliated organizations with ICRME in other areas of the state is a bit murky. “Rising Sun” is listed in *Out Front*’s list of gay and lesbian groups in 1976 with the address 707 N. Main Street, Pueblo (no longer extant). This was the same location as The Turquoise Club, a prominent (and possibly the only) Pueblo gay bar at the time. Rising Sun is not referenced as an organization in the magazine

²²⁷ For an in-depth look at the ICRME’s earliest years and its impact on the gay community, see Sarah Blattner, “Setting the Stage for Denver’s Royalty: The ICRME from 1974-76,” Colorado LGBTQ History Project, January 31, 2016, 7. Available online at <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Setting-the-Stage-by-Sarah-Blattner.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.

²²⁸ Blattner, 7. The location of the VFW hall in downtown has not yet been determined; further research should attempt to verify.

²²⁹ “Date Set for 1978 Tobies,” *Out Front*, August 11, 1978.

²³⁰ Denver Public Library Wester History Department, collections summary, Annie Brenman-West papers, 1978-2015, call no. C MSS WH2357.

past 1976; it may be that the name refers to the Imperial Court of the Rising Sun Empire of Southern Colorado, which advertised its Colorado Springs events in 1978 in *Out Front*. Rising Sun Empire may be linked to the United Court of the Pikes Peak Empire, which formed in 1976 as a “daughter court” of the Denver court and continues today.

Since they began, Imperial Court chapters have focused on raising money for the causes of their choice (both LGBTQ-focused and not) through drag shows and other events. *Out Front* issues have numerous references to various court fundraising events at multiple locales (mostly, but not always, in bars), which are impossible to document here. Further research may yield specific places that rise to the top as the most prominent of court venues. ICRME currently holds meetings at 1077 Race Street, a ca. 1960s high-rise condo building at Cheesman Park.

Denver Lesbian Center

The Denver Lesbian Center formed sometime prior to August 1973 and set up space in the basement of the Women in Transition House (a group providing support to women leaving their husbands and forming independent lives) at 1896 Lafayette Street (now the site of the St. Joseph Hospital complex).²³¹ The group announced in *Big Mama Rag* a few months later that it was considering hosting a regional conference for known lesbian groups in Boulder, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, and Albuquerque; it is unclear if this conference came to be.²³² In 1974, the center held weekly Sunday meetings and other events like potlucks in its office, but does not appear to have lasted beyond that year. People associated with the Denver Lesbian Center have not yet been determined through research to date; it is possible that many were also associated with the newspaper *Big Mama Rag*, the Woman to Woman Bookstore (see below), and/or other lesbian groups.

Lesbian Task Force of NOW

The Lesbian Task Force of the National Organization of Women (NOW) formed in Denver in 1974, with an immediate goal of achieving a statewide anti-discrimination bill in the Colorado legislature and establishing chapters of the Task Force in other cities.²³³ The group met regularly at the First Unitarian Society at 1400 Lafayette through 1976 and was a founding member of the Unity group (see below).²³⁴ Known members included Marge Johnson (also of the Gay Coalition of Denver), Carol Lease (of *Big Mama Rag* and later GCCC) and Cara Heller. The Task Force was defunct by 1985, possibly for several years.

Unity and The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado (The Center)

Unity was an umbrella organization of nine existing LGBTQ groups in Colorado that were invited by Gerald Gerash in 1975 to come together to form a gay community center, which underwent a few name changes before adopting its current name, known today simply as The Center.²³⁵ The groups that formed

²³¹ “Denver Lesbian Center,” *Big Mama Rag*, August 1, 1973.

²³² “The Denver Lesbian Center,” *Big Mama Rag*, October 1, 1973.

²³³ “Lesbian Task Force Mobilizes,” *Big Mama Rag*, September 1, 1974.

²³⁴ “Denver National Organization of Women,” *Big Mama Rag*, April 1, 1974; and “Inform,” *Out Front*, May 7, 1976.

²³⁵ For detailed information on the formation of Unity, its goals for a center for the LGBTQ community, and the many issues the members grappled with, see *United We Stand: The Story of Unity and the Creation of The Center*, ed. by Phil Nash, 2016.

Unity (with known representatives in parentheses) were: GCD (Gerash), Rocky Mountaineers Motorcycle Club (Bill Olson), FCGA (Bill Aguilar), Tobie Foundation (Christopher Sloan, aka Christi Layne), ICRME (Richard “Bucky” Reed and John Sheppard), Lesbian Task Force of NOW (Cara Heller), Boulder GLF, MCC (Rev. Virgil Scott), and Dignity. Other members from the outset were Jim McNulty, a local business owner and activist; Michael Richard, a banker and representative of The Terrace night club; Bob Janowski, a doctor and activist; Phil Nash, partner of Janowski and activist; and Michael Graczyk, representative of local gay bar The Apartment.



FIGURE 33: BUNK HOUSE LODGE IN BRECKENRIDGE. (AMY UNGER)



FIGURE 34: THE DUPLEX AT 1436 LAFAYETTE SERVED AS THE GAY COMMUNITY CENTER OF COLORADO’S FIRST HOME. (AMY UNGER)

It is unclear where Unity’s first meeting was held; the second meeting, sponsored by the gay Catholic group Dignity, was in May 1975 at the Oxford Hotel.²³⁶ Christopher Sloan and Bucky Reed recalled that the group met at a variety of locations at its beginning, with others recounting church basements, homes of various members, and the Pearl Street Complex Bar at 13th Avenue and Pearl Street (exact address unknown).²³⁷ Bill Olson noted that a Gay Community Center Trust Fund was established, with first deposits from the proceeds of the 1975 Gay Pride week event and from an ICRME show by Emperor Bucky Reed in August 1975.²³⁸ As Sloan recounts: “Unity was representative democracy at its finest. Inspired by the community activism of Gerald Gerash, along with anyone he could motivate to come to meetings and get involved, Unity was formed at a unique time in our history. People of like minds came together and put away any issues between them to learn about each other and work to form a brighter future.”²³⁹

In September 1976, a two-day retreat of Unity members was held at the Bunk House Lodge on the outskirts of Breckenridge (13203 Highway 9), where the group discussed in depth its various goals for a gay

²³⁶ Bill Olson, “Unity and How the Gay Community Center of Colorado Came To Be,” 15.

²³⁷ Sloan, with Reed, “Unity: A Recollection,” 16. Nash, and Timeline, 22.

²³⁸ Bill Olson, “Unity and How the Gay Community Center of Colorado Came To Be,” 15.

²³⁹ Sloan, with Reed, 16.

community center, how it would be run, and other details. Frank Aguilar of the Fort Collins Gay Alliance recalled that he and his friend Roger Haas strongly advocated that the center's name refer to its statewide reach, hence the agreed upon "Gay Community Center of Colorado" (GCCC) (Cara Heller, the lone lesbian representative, did not take issue with "Gay" meant as a catch-all for both gay men and lesbian women).²⁴⁰

GCCC officially incorporated in November 1976, and over the course of the first half of 1977, the Interim Board of Directors worked to open a center while simultaneously serving as "the main gay and lesbian organizing hub in Denver and Colorado."²⁴¹ In May 1977, the Coordinator Selection Committee chose Phil Nash to be the center's first coordinator. In August, GCCC opened to the public in its first home, a ca. 1919 two-story brick duplex at 1436 Lafayette (5DV.2653, extant) that was owned by the First Unitarian Church a few doors south at 1400 Lafayette. Nash stepped down from GCCC in 1980

in order to join *Out Front's* staff, where he became a prominent journalist in the local and national gay media (see Communications). Succeeding Nash were co-coordinators Carol Lease (previously a founder and writer for *Big Mama Rag*) and Joe Fisher, whose co-leadership was intended to ensure male and female representation at the Center. Within a few months, Fisher was fired for unspecified "difficulties."²⁴² Due to some contemporaneous financial challenges, the Center's Board postponed hiring a new male co-coordinator for several months, which was opposed by some who felt that the Center would lack male representation (though four out of the Center's seven board members were men). In July or August 1980, the Center changed its name to the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Colorado (GLCCC). In January 1981, *Out Front* published an extensive interview with Lease about her first year on the job.²⁴³

By August 1981, Lease had been named the Center's Executive Director, and the Center announced it was ready to hire an administrative assistant as the only other paid staff besides Lease.²⁴⁴ As historian

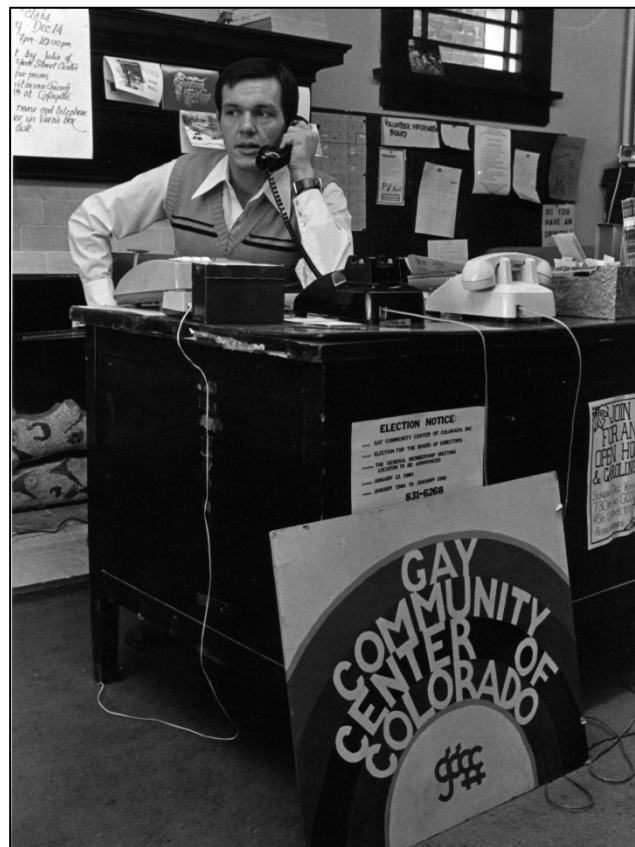


FIGURE 35: PHIL NASH AT THE CENTER'S OFFICES IN 1979. (THE CENTER)

²⁴⁰ Frank Aguilar, "Statewide Reach From the Start," 7.

²⁴¹ Timeline, 23.

²⁴² "Fisher Fired as GCCC Head," *Out Front*, May 30, 1980.

²⁴³ Phil Nash, "Interview: Carol Lease," *Out Front*, January 23, 1981.

²⁴⁴ "Community Center to Expand Staff," *Out Front*, August 21, 1981.

and former GLCCC board member (1983–84) Kathleen Corbett recalls, under Lease’s leadership GLCCC “became much more a force for equality and social justice,” and that Lease was “absolutely critical to the founding of CAP [Colorado AIDS Project, see Health and Medicine].”²⁴⁵ Known for her political outspokenness, Lease was targeted as the reason why the Center could not attract many supporters within the gay business community, particularly among the Tavern Guild which represented gay bar owners; in order to “break the logjam” of controversy, Lease resigned in July 1984.²⁴⁶ Further research on Lease’s impact should be conducted and include consultation with oral history interviews she has given over the years, including one with the Outwords Archive in 2016.²⁴⁷

In 1988, GLCCC moved to new quarters on the third floor of 1245 E. Colfax (extant), the same building that had housed the Haberdashery and *Out Front* magazine until 1983.²⁴⁸ A few years later in 1991, the Center moved to a larger space on the first floor.²⁴⁹ In 2010, the Center completed the remodeling of a ca. 1959 two-story commercial building at 1301 E. Colfax, which is its current home today.

*Gay Pride Week and Parade*²⁵⁰

In 1974, Denver’s first Gay Pride event, in commemoration of the June 1969 Stonewall uprising, was held in Cheesman Park, which consisted of about fifty people holding a “GAY IN” with signs and



decorations at the park’s Pavilion. In 1975, a second, larger GAY IN was held at the park, followed by a parade down the sidewalk of Colfax Avenue to Civic Center (participants had not secured a permit to march down the street). Gay Pride in 1976 became a week of festivities, with a carnival held at the Hide & Seek bar in Colorado Springs, a live show from Christi Layne at the Greek Amphitheatre in Civic Center Park, and an official parade

FIGURE 36: A “GAY-IN” AT THE CIVIC CENTER GREEK AMPHITHEATER AFTER THE 1980 GAY PRIDE PARADE. (HISTORY COLORADO)

²⁴⁵ Kathleen Corbett, comments on draft context, August 2022.

²⁴⁶ Nash, “The Carol Lease Resignation: To the Bitter End,” *Out Front*, July 20, 1984.

²⁴⁷ Carol Lease oral history interview with Mason Funk, July 21, 2016, online at <https://theoutwordsarchive.org/interview/carol-lease/>, accessed April 7, 2023.

²⁴⁸ “The Gay & Lesbian Community Center: New Building, New Directions,” *Out Front*, January 15, 1988.

²⁴⁹ *Out Front*, January 18, 1991.

²⁵⁰ For a more in-depth history of the Denver’s Gay Pride event, see Aaron Marcus, “PrideFest: A History of Denver’s Gay Pride Celebration,” History Colorado, June 15, 2017, online at <https://www.historycolorado.org/story/hc/2017/06/15/pridefest-a-history-of-denvers-gay-pride-celebration>, accessed July 2, 2022.

down Colfax from Cheesman Park to Civic Center, with floats, cars, and banners.²⁵¹ Over 600 people attended, and proceeds went to the Gay Community Center Trust Fund. The parade has grown exponentially and has been held nearly every year since; in 1992, 30,000 people attended, in part to protest that year's ballot item Amendment 2 (see Politics and Law).

Aspen Gay Coalition and Aspen Gay Ski Week

Contrary to the trend in other Colorado towns that saw legal victories after local LGBTQ organizations formed and had begun advocating for reform, Aspen's Gay Coalition was founded after the city ordinance was made law. According to an article on the LGBTQ community in Aspen in 1985, many gays in the mountain town had been drawn to its world-renowned cultural programs, such as the Aspen Music Festival, for decades.

Though many of the earlier arrivals were fairly private, "more open" gays began creating a local gay culture in the 1970s.²⁵² In 1976, Aspen easily passed an anti-discrimination ordinance; a year later the issue of protecting LGBTQ people from discriminatory practices made national headlines through the singer Anita Bryant's efforts to undo a similar ordinance in Dade County, Florida (see also the section on Aspen's ordinance in Politics and Law).

Bryant's anti-gay activism inspired some LGBTQ people in Aspen, including attorney Ralph Brendes, the author of the city ordinance, to form the group Aspen Gay Coalition (AGC, also called Aspen Gay Community) in 1977, announcing their intention to support and provide social activities for all gay men and women, while also educating the larger community. AGC met in the Aspen Community Church (5PT.33, 200 E. Bleeker Street, National Register listed 1975) and sponsored picnics, parties, campouts, and potluck suppers, and manned a support telephone line.²⁵³ Benefit drag shows were held in the Hotel Jerome. According to Phil Nash's article on AGC in 1985, the group had a mailing list of about 100, but lesbians did not participate in the organization.

Through at least 1985, AGC coordinated the Aspen Gay Ski Week, which had been started at around the same time as AGC by locals Jon Busch, David Hoch, Tom Duesterberg, and Russell Anderson. The event began as a party hosted by local ski clubs that grew into multiple parties over the course of several days, incorporating other events like a downhill drag contest. Today, Aspen Gay Ski Week is a fundraiser for AspenOUT, the trade name for the Roaring Fork (or Aspen) Gay & Lesbian Community Fund, which was



FIGURE 37: ASPEN COMMUNITY CHURCH IN 2015. (WOLFGANG MORODER)

²⁵¹ "Pride Week Gets Off," *Out Front*, June 25, 1976.

²⁵² Phil Nash, "Aspen: Of Gays and Glamor," *Out Front*, February 1, 1985.

²⁵³ Phil Nash, "Aspen: Of Gays and Glamor," *Out Front*, February 1, 1985; and "Aspen Group Seeks Support," August 11, 1978.

registered as a non-profit in 1996. Presumably the fund arose out of the initial formation of AGC, but research to date has not been able to verify.

Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

PFLAG is a support group for the loved ones of LGBTQ people that began in 1973 in New York City. Colorado's first chapter in Denver was begun by Betty Fairchild and some thirty-five other parents and LGBTQ loved ones in 1979. The group advertised in *The Denver Post* and *The Rocky Mountain News* with the double-purpose of raising awareness of its existence and educating the public.²⁵⁴

PFLAG Denver's first meetings quickly grew in size, requiring the group to find larger and larger meeting spaces; however, the locations were not advertised, with only a number to call for more information provided. Early fundraisers for PFLAG's public education campaign were held at the Brisbane Ballroom (999 Emerson Street, no longer extant) and B.J.'s Carousel (1380 S. Broadway), among other places.

Nancy Keene was the Denver chapter's first president, who served for thirteen years during the height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. Keene was also the co-founder of Denver's AIDS Family Support Group. Mayor Wellington Webb proclaimed February 3, 1993 as Nancy Keene Day, in part because she "worked tirelessly for civil and human rights for Denver's gay and lesbian community." Elinor Kirby Lewallen was another prominent board member of Denver's PFLAG chapter who staffed its helpline and speakers' bureau.²⁵⁵

Other PFLAG chapters in Colorado include Durango's, founded in 1992 by Betsy Stephens and Martha Elbert. Jean and Jacks Hodges started a Boulder chapter in 1993, meeting at the First United Methodist Church, where Rev. Julian Rush had been ousted a decade earlier for being gay (see the Religion section).



FIGURE 38: 3715 W. 32ND AVENUE, DENVER. (GOOGLE MAPS)

Gender Identity Center

The Gender Identity Center (GIC) was founded in 1978 by Sonja Smith, a transgender woman who was joined in 1980 by Anne Bolin, a doctoral candidate in anthropology; Tomye Kelley, a psychotherapist who had interned with Dr. Stanley Biber in Trinidad (see Health and Medicine); and Marie (last name unknown), a gender identity study group leader at GCCC.²⁵⁶ The GIC's purpose was to provide support and community for transgender people in Denver and beyond.²⁵⁷ In an *Out*

²⁵⁴ "Out Front Interviews Betty Fairchild," *Out Front*, January 11, 1980.

²⁵⁵ Lewallen's papers are at the Denver Public Library Western History Department, call no. C MSS WH2288.

²⁵⁶ A detailed history of the GIC can be found in Denver Public Library Western History Department's Julie Condolora Papers (call number WH2449).

²⁵⁷ Phil Nash, "Finding Her True Being: Sonja Smith," *Out Front*, June 27, 1980.

Front profile of her, Smith noted that “Coming out of the transsexual closet is, in many ways, much harder [than for gays and lesbians]. People who need to change their entire gender are less socially acceptable than those who are changing their sexual preference.”²⁵⁸ The Gender Identity Center opened in a ca. 1900 Victorian house at 3715 W. 32nd Avenue in Denver (extant) and remained there until 1994, when it relocated to a ca. 1960s commercial building at 1455 Ammons Street in Lakewood (extant).²⁵⁹ In 2018, GIC reorganized as the Transgender Center of the Rockies, and is now at 3460 South Federal Boulevard in Sheridan.

Your Own Understanding

In late 1980, Donaciano Martinez was one of several founders of a new organization, Your Own Understanding (YOU), who were “concerned about racial, sexual, and other kinds of discrimination within the gay community.”²⁶⁰ YOU organized picketing in February 1981 of three Denver bars well known in the community for discrimination against Blacks and women: The 1942, David’s, and The Country.²⁶¹ The group met twice each month at the GLCCC at 1436 Lafayette Street but appears to have disbanded by late 1981. A few male members went on to join GREAT Men of the Rockies (below).

*Gay, Racially Equal, and Together (GREAT) Men of the Rockies*²⁶²

A national group of gay men focused on combatting racism and encouraging interracial relationships in the gay community, known as the Association of Black and White Men Together (BWMT), was formed in June 1980 in San Francisco, with local chapters quickly forming across the country. Denver’s chapter was formed in March 1981 and chose the name Gay, Racially Equal, and Together (GREAT) Men of the Rockies in order to be welcoming of all races.²⁶³ The group sponsored “theatre outings, game nights, potlucks, picnics, parties, weekends out of town, business meetings, social opportunities, and rap groups,” and held fundraising events for GLCC and PFLAG.²⁶⁴ Monthly meetings were initially held at the GLCCC on Lafayette Street, but by 1982 had moved to St. Paul’s Methodist Church.²⁶⁵ In April 1983, GREAT hosted a benefit for an AIDS support group in conjunction with the GLCCC at B.J.’s Carousel, a well-known gay bar at 1380 S. Broadway.²⁶⁶ Long time members of the group included Tim Wilson and Allan Jones. GREAT renamed itself BWMT of Denver in 1985; the association and local chapter appear to remain active as of 2022.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. Note that the term “transsexual” is no longer used and that “transgender” is the preferred term to better reflect the issue of gender rather than sexuality.

²⁵⁹ Jamie Seemiller, “Gender Identity Center of Colorado,” Denver Public Library Western History Resources, online at <https://history.denverlibrary.org/news/gender-identity-center-colorado>, accessed July 1, 2022.

²⁶⁰ “New Group to Examine Social, Racial Discrimination,” *Out Front*, December 12, 1980.

²⁶¹ “Group Protests Alleged Discrimination at Bars,” *Out Front*, March 6, 1981.

²⁶² History Colorado holds a collection of GREAT materials in its Stephen H. Hart Library & Research Center (Mss.01165).

²⁶³ Phil Nash, “G.R.E.A.T. Men of the Rockies,” *Out Front*, October 16, 1981.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ “One-Time Events,” *Out Front*, August 6, 1982.

²⁶⁶ “G.R.E.A.T. Men Host AIDS Benefit,” *Out Front*, April 15, 1982.



FIGURE 39: MEMBERS OF THE RAINBOW SOCIETY FOR THE DEAF PERFORMING AT ROSSI'S CATERING HALL IN 1981. (CHARLIE DONALDSON/OUT FRONT, JANUARY 8, 1982).

Mile High Rainbow Society of the Deaf

Rainbow Society of the Deaf (RSD) was founded in 1977 in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida by Roy Parker as a way for LGBTQ deaf people, "a minority within a minority," to create a place for itself within the gay community.²⁶⁷ The Denver chapter, Mile High Rainbow Society of the Deaf (MHRSD) formed in 1978, with an announcement in *Out Front* that Denver would host the RSD's 1982 national convention.²⁶⁸ Various benefits to raise money for the convention were hosted by the Rocky Mountaineers Motorcycle Club, Knights of Malta, and the ICRME through 1981. In 1982, Larry Pike was the chapter's president, which had sixteen members, a third of whom were lesbian.²⁶⁹ The 1982 convention was held at the downtown Marriott Hotel (address not confirmed) and welcomed over 250 attendees. The greater gay community was welcomed to the event, which had interpretation for both the deaf and hearing. That same year, the national RSD changed its name to the Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Herbert M. Fradin, President of RSD "Letter to the Editor," *Out Front*, April 3, 1981.

²⁶⁸ "RMMC/K of M Benefits Gay deaf Convention," *Out Front*, November 28, 1980.

²⁶⁹ "Rainbow Society Plans Convention," *Out front*, February 19, 1982. Larry Pike remains MHRSD's registered agent.

²⁷⁰ Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, "History of NSRD-RAD," online at <https://www.deafrad.org/history>, accessed July 1, 2022.

MHRSD held numerous fundraising events for itself and other gay and deaf causes, like the Colorado AIDS Project and the American Deaf Volleyball Association, at various gay bars and other venues in Denver through at least 1991. MHRSD appears to remain active today. The location of its regular meeting place(s) over the years has not been determined through research to date.

LGBTQ Latino/a/x Groups

To date, there has not been any known study of the history and experiences of LGBTQ Latina/o/x people in Colorado or individual cities within the state.²⁷¹ The book *Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism* provides the stories of several people involved in both gay and Chicano movements in Texas and California, which can reasonably be extrapolated to the experience of many LGBTQ Chicano/Latino/a/xs in Colorado. These stories recount how neither movement appeared interested in the other, leading many LGBTQ Chicano/Latino/a/xs to form their own groups. Dennis Medina, a founder of the Gay Chicano Caucus in Houston, recollected that gay Chicanos “felt discriminated against in this LGBT community that was supposed to be open for everybody and where we were supposed to shed ourselves of prejudices of racism.”²⁷² Laura M. Esquivel of Los Angeles had similar experiences, noting that “At the time [in the 1970s and ’80s], gay issues were not perceived to affect Latina/os, and the gay community was as resistant to addressing issues of race as the larger society was and is.”²⁷³ However, Esquivel also notes that when she met Cesar Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers (UFW), he supported her idea of forming a Latina/o gay group, that he “was the first major civil rights leader to publicly speak out in support of gay rights,” and that UFW members often marched in the Los Angeles Pride Parade in the 1980s²⁷⁴

Despite a lack of historical study of LGBTQ Latina/os specific to Colorado, some instances of known associations between the two identities have arisen; they are presented here to reaffirm the existence of this history, and to emphasize the importance of and provide a basis for further research.

Donaciano Martinez, co-founder of GLF Colorado Springs, Lambda Services Bureau, and an early member of Unity, recalls that at Gerald Gerash’s law firm, where Martinez worked as a secretary beginning in 1975, two of the attorneys were involved in the Chicano movement, and that one of them was gay but remained in the closet “due to the anti-gay views of the Chicano movement back then.”²⁷⁵ Prior to working for Gerash, Martinez was a paralegal at Legal Aid in Colorado Springs. He was involved with both LGBTQ and Chicano activism in Colorado Springs and Denver.

²⁷¹ The 2022 historic context *Nuestras Historias: Mexican American/Chicano/ Latino Histories in Denver*, does not discuss LGBTQ people or issues, nor how the gay liberation movement intersected with the Denver Chicano rights movement. The use of the term “Latino/a/x” in this context takes its cue from the Denver report, which settles on Latino as an all-encompassing term to reference communities “that are Spanish speaking or descended from Spanish speaking ancestors, acknowledging the multi-cultural and multi-national diversity of Latino communities.” This context includes the feminine and gender-neutral “a/x” suffixes.

²⁷² Dennis Medina, “The History of Texas You Must Not Ignore,” in *Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism*, ed. by Uriel Quesada, Letitia Gomez, and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015; 51.

²⁷³ Laura M. Esquivel, “An East L.A. Warrior,” *Queer Brown Voices*; 93.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Martinez, 9-10.



FIGURE 40: DONACIANO MARTINEZ. (OUT FRONT, APRIL 3, 2013)

One example of common cause between the Chicano and LGBTQ movements was the boycott of Coors beer in the 1960-80s.²⁷⁶ In protest of the discriminatory hiring practices of the Coors Brewing Company in Golden, local chapters of Chicano/Hispano activist groups Crusade for Justice and American GI Forum began a boycott of Coors beer in 1966. Over the course of several years through the 1970s, the boycott grew in geographic scope and involved multiple civil rights groups, including LGBTQ activists who protested Coors' use of polygraph tests and alleged questioning of job applicants' sexuality during the hiring process.²⁷⁷ In 1976, the boycott became particularly powerful in California, where San Francisco city supervisor and gay activist Harvey Milk joined the effort. At the 1977 Denver Gay Pride Parade, many participants were aghast that organizers had chosen to serve Coors beer, and the resulting conflict rippled through the community for several years afterward.²⁷⁸ Reporting on the boycott in the local gay press tended not to mention its origins among Hispano/Chicano rights groups. Coors later hired Mary Cheney, the younger daughter of future Vice

President Dick Cheney and an out lesbian who lived in Conifer, Colorado, as a liaison to the LGBTQ community. Cheney coordinated large donations to gay causes in Coors' name, including as a Pride sponsor.²⁷⁹

Though not an example of LGBTQ Latinos/Chicanos forming their own space, a series of articles and letters in *Out Front* in 1979 illustrates that racial biases existed in the LGBTQ community, but that the idea of intersectionality between the two groups was on the mind of at least a few readers of the magazine. In late July of that year, *Out Front* reported on an attack on two gay men in the Broadway Terrace area by a "Chicano youth." In a letter to the editor, Katherine Davenport and Gerald Gerash criticized the use of the term, suggesting that doing so implied that the boy's race was intrinsic to his

²⁷⁶ For an in-depth history of the boycott and how it united several disparate groups including Black, Chicano, American Indian, LGBTQ, and women's right activists, see Allyson P. Brantley, *Brewing a Boycott: How a Grassroots Coalition Fought Coors and Remade American Consumer Activism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

²⁷⁷ "Gays at Coors," *Out Front*, September 9, 1977.

²⁷⁸ For example, see Tea Schook, "Denver Gays: 'Unity' is Questionable," *Big Mama Rag*, August 1, 1977.

²⁷⁹ "Cheney's gay daughter involved, but behind the political scenes," *USA Today*, October 15, 2004; and John Clous, "Why Nothing About Mary?" CNN.com online at <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/time/2000/07/31/mary.html>, accessed April 6, 2023.

crime, just as the reporting of crimes by “homosexuals” in the straight media implied the inherent criminality of all non-heteronormative people.²⁸⁰ A follow-up letter from Phillip Krasnowski opined that the original article led to assumptions that “the word ‘gay’ refers [only] to Anglo homosexuals; [and that] Chicanos are heterosexual.”²⁸¹

Ambiente Latino

In April 1982, *Out Front* reported on the formation of Ambiente Latino, a support group for gay Latino men, with an unnamed spokesperson for the group stating that they hoped to “offer social, cultural, recreational, political, and consciousness-raising activities. We welcome our gay raza.”²⁸² In the same issue, a Cinco de Mayo gathering for “Latina/Latino” gays was advertised, instructing to meet at the north end of Cheesman Park near the gazebo, or in case of rain, at 2435 Stout Street.²⁸³ Ambiente Latino regularly listed its Saturday evening meetings in *Out Front* through the spring and summer of 1982, with a phone number to call for location. The group never officially incorporated, and the years of its activity, or associated people and places, have not been found through research to date.

Gay and Lesbian Latino Alliance

The Gay and Lesbian Latino Alliance (with GALA the given acronym in reporting) incorporated as a nonprofit in Colorado on August 1, 1990, with offices at 869 Santa Fe Drive in Denver (extant), the apparent home or business of co-founder Robert Garcia-Williams. GALA’s other co-founders were Henry Montoya, Jr. and Peg Rizzo.²⁸⁴ The group’s stated mission was “to advocate for Latinos coming out/being out as it relates to pride of their Latino heritage,” but it also sought to provide HIV/AIDS education and prevention and build solidarity with other gay and lesbian organizations. In 1990, GALA and Denver attorney Walter Gerash (no apparent relation to Gerald) represented Col. Edward Modesto, who was stationed at the Ft. Carson Army base, in charges the Army made against Modesto for “conduct relating to his homosexual lifestyle.”²⁸⁵ The group sponsored a Miss Gay Latino Colorado event at its Cinco de Mayo festivities as a benefit for itself and the Latino AIDS Community Network. The 1991 Cinco de Mayo event was held at the Matchmaker at 1480 Humboldt Street in Denver.²⁸⁶ Later officers of GALA included Carlos Santistevan as President, with offices at 2550 Glenarm Place (apparently Santistevan’s

²⁸⁰ Katherine Davenport and Gerald Gerash, “Letter to the Editor: Implications,” *Out Front*, August 17, 1979.

²⁸¹ Phillip Krasnowski, “Letter to the Editor: Resent Implications,” *Out Front*, August 31, 1979.

²⁸² “Support Group Formed for Gay Latinos,” *Out Front*, April 30, 1982. The term “raza” has been used in the Chicano movement to signify “the people” of Latino and Mexican-American heritage; though the word translates to “race” in English, its use in the context of this quote should not be inferred as a direct correlation.

²⁸³ “One Time Events: Sunday, May 2,” *Out Front*, April 30, 1982. The building at 2435 Stout Street is a ca. 1886 private residence (5DV.104.96) in the Curtis Park Historic District (NRHP listed 1975, expanded 1983).

²⁸⁴ Articles of Incorporation, Gay and Lesbian Latino Alliance, Colorado Secretary of State records, Document #19901078732.

²⁸⁵ Madeleine Ingraham, “Homophobia Charged in Ft. Carson Investigation,” *Out Front*, October 5, 1990. The outcome of Modesta’s case has not been determined through research to date.

²⁸⁶ “Latino Alliance Presents Brown Sugar Show,” *Out Front*, June 7, 1991. The ca. 1920s commercial building at 1480 Humboldt is extant but not in the Compass database.

home) in 1993 until the organization dissolved in 2007.²⁸⁷ Further research is needed to assess GALA's events, community impact, and any other associated people and places.

Groups for Further Research

The limits of this context necessitate that not all organizations formed within the LGBTQ community during the period 1970-96 could be discussed here or in other sections. Other known groups which warrant further research on their impact and associated people and places include:

- Colorado Alliance for Homosexuals
- GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) – a non-governmental media-monitoring organization. The Denver chapter's records are at the DPL Western History Department, call no. C MSS WH2386.
- Every Woman's Coming Out Group – GLCCC's support group for lesbians coming out of the closet, facilitated by Tea Schook and Diane Buettner.
- Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force – EPOC formed out of (see also Politics and Law).
- Knights of Malta – referenced regularly in *Out Front* from the 1970s-90s; possible affiliation with ICRME.

It should be further noted that groups affiliated with other ethnicities or races beyond the predominant white culture and Latino/a/x have not been found to date, but should be a priority of future research.

Politics and Law

De-Criminalization and Anti-Discrimination Laws

Due to emerging LGBTQ activism, the late 1960s witnessed some small steps in the decriminalization of LGBTQ people by the repeal or lessening of laws across the country used to entrap, arrest, and punish them for activities that were either acceptable for straight people or were rarely applied to them. The change in these laws were inconsistent and often depended upon subjective judgments of "moral character" and the like.²⁸⁸ Following the Stonewall riots of 1969 and the radicalization of LGBTQ activism in the years afterward, incremental, yet substantial, legal reforms were obtained in the 1970s-80s, thanks in large part to local organizing. Although most of these reforms occurred at the local level, some were statewide.²⁸⁹ Much of these grassroots efforts were happening in coastal cities in California and along the Eastern seaboard, but Colorado was no exception. Christi Layne, in a 2015 interview with David Duffield, explained that "All of the restrictions were made to control us [the gay community] ... to keep us under the control of the police department."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ The ca. 1885 residence at 2550 Glenarm (5DV.10673) was surveyed in 1989 according to the Compass database; it appears to currently have good integrity.

²⁸⁸ Marc Stein, "Historical Landmarks and Landscapes of LGBTQ Law," 19-15-19-16.

²⁸⁹ For an in-depth analysis of how U.S. state laws have sought to restrict the rights of and punish LGBTQ people, see William N. Eskridge, *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

²⁹⁰ As quoted in Sarah Blattner, "Setting the Stage," 6.

Repeal of Anti-Sodomy Law, New Criminal Code, 1971

In 1971, Colorado became the first state in the American West to repeal its Territorial-era sodomy law.²⁹¹ Senate Bill 262 was a comprehensive revision to the state's criminal code written by State Senators John Bermingham and Ralph Cole, both of Denver.²⁹² Although the new code legalized consensual, of-age sodomy, it created the new crimes of "public indecency" (the definition of which could be read to include kissing) and "loitering for the purpose of engaging or soliciting another person to engage in prostitution or deviate sexual intercourse."²⁹³ This practice of exchanging one law for the other was part of a national trend, as *LGBTQ America*, the National Park Service's LGBTQ Theme Study, explains: "Most states that repealed their sodomy laws in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s passed new laws against loitering to solicit sodomy. Police in some locations, including Denver, Colorado, used these and other laws to increase their arrests of LGBTQ people after sodomy law repeal."²⁹⁴

"Gay Revolt" at City and County of Denver Building

In early 1973 over the course of a few months, Denver undercover police targeted and arrested hundreds of gay men in the Capitol Hill and Cheesman Park area on charges of "offering a lewd act," using a bus with a sign reading "Johnny Cash Special" as a ploy for men to enter the bus. Any reaction to the innuendo that the men would hear from the undercover police, other than immediately leaving the bus, resulted in an arrest.²⁹⁵ Fed



FIGURE 41: SPECTATORS FILL AN OVERFLOW ROOM AT THE DENVER CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING DURING THE OCT. 23, 1973 GAY REVOLT IN DENVER. (GERALD GERASH/OUTFRONTMAGAZINE.COM)

up with the egregious treatment and maintaining that the arrests were illegal in light of the 1971 state criminal code reform, the Gay Coalition of Denver immediately began protesting, meeting with the Denver City Councilmembers, and going to the press. GCD filed a lawsuit against the city and made plans

²⁹¹ George Painter, 4.

²⁹² Stein, 19-23; Jerry Kopel, "Sodomy Law in Colorado," online at <http://www.jerrykopel.com/a/sodomy-law-in-colorado.htm>, accessed June 27, 2022; and Kieran Nicholson, "John Bermingham Obituary," *Denver Post*, June 2, 2020.

²⁹³ George Painter, 4.

²⁹⁴ Stein, 19-28.

²⁹⁵ Rocky Mountain PBS, *Colorado Experience: LGBTQ*, October 21, 2016, episode online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1RrBtng8s>, accessed July 3, 2022.

for the gay community to attend *en masse* the City Council meeting set to review all of Denver’s criminal laws.²⁹⁶

The City Council hearing was held on October 23, 1973 in the City and County Building at 1437 Bannock Street (5DV.5989, contributing to the Civic Center National Historic Landmark, listed 2012). More than 300 people showed up at the hearing, spilling out of the council chambers into the surrounding hallways. The over three-hour forestalling by Council President Robert Koch did not dissuade the protestors. The resulting several hours of public testimony became, as GCD member Gerald Gerash called it, a “Gay Teach-In,” with heartfelt speeches in which community members described how they were discriminated against and the effect on their daily lives.²⁹⁷ As a result, at the following Council meeting the protested anti-gay laws were repealed.

Further Victories, 1974

In the 1974 case *People v. Gibson*, the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed that the 1971 state criminal code prohibiting loitering for deviate sex was unconstitutional.²⁹⁸ Information on the defendant-appellee, George E. Gibson, has not been found to date; Gibson’s lawyer was Milnor H. Senior, and attorneys with the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado filed an amicus curiae brief.²⁹⁹ The State Supreme Court building at the time, where the case was presumably argued and decided, is no longer extant.



**FIGURE 42: CAROL LEASE CA. 1981.
(THE CENTER)**

The GCD’s lawsuit filed in May 1973 brought further victories in October 1974, with the presiding judge ordering the police to stop their illegal arrests and harassment, and forbidding them from arresting gays and lesbians for public displays of affection permitted to straight people, or for cross-dressing. Furthermore, the police department was required to establish a gay community liaison.

Despite these legal successes, police harassment did not become a thing of the past. A series of police killings of transgender women in 1978 led to protests at Cheesman Park.³⁰⁰ And in April, 1981 Carol Lease, the then GLCCC coordinator, was arrested at the annual ICRME Coronation at the Paramount Theater (1621 Glenarm Place, 5DV.190, National Register listed 1980) for “causing a public disturbance.” In reality, the arrest arose from Lease questioning the authority of Denver police to require two men to separate (one was sitting on the other’s lap) because they could not “publicly demonstrate

²⁹⁶ Gerash, “On The Shoulders of The Gay Coalition of Denver,” 4.

²⁹⁷ Gerash, 4.

²⁹⁸ William N. Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*, Viking (2008), 180; and Supreme Court of Colorado, *People v. Gibson*, decided April 15, 1974. Online at <https://law.justia.com/cases/colorado/supreme-court/1974/25908.html>, accessed June 27, 2022.

²⁹⁹ The 1973 Denver City Directory indicates that Senior’s law office was 2013 United Bank Center.

³⁰⁰ “100 March in Protest of Gay Killings,” *Out Front*, April 7, 1978.

affection.”³⁰¹ Additional charges of resisting and interfering with a police officer were added one day before trial. Lease was defended by Paul Hunter, a well-known lawyer and businessman in the gay community, and found not guilty of all three charges.³⁰²

Anti-Discrimination Law in Boulder, 1974.

In 1974, Boulder became one of the first cities in the state to consider adding protections for LGBTQ people against discrimination. Introduced by Mayor Penfield Tate (Boulder’s first Black mayor), Ordinance 3975 sought to amend the city’s Human Rights Ordinance by prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.³⁰³ The measure was considered and approved by City Council in its chamber in February 1974, but outraged residents insisted that it be put as a vote to the electorate. Boulder GLF formed a group called the Concerned Citizens for Human Rights to educate the public about the ordinance, what it meant, and why it was needed.³⁰⁴ In May 1974 the voters rejected the measure by a margin of two-to-one. Taking the matter one step further, the bill’s opponents undertook a recall effort against Mayor Tate and Councilmember Tim Fuller. Fuller was recalled, and even though Tate avoided the same fate, he lost his bid for reelection in 1976. The Boulder Municipal Building at 1777 Broadway, constructed ca. 1951, was renamed for Tate in 2020. In 1987, Boulder restored sexual orientation as a protected class in its Human Rights Ordinance.

*Gay Marriage*³⁰⁵

In his book *Why Marriage?*, historian George Chauncey notes that the right of marriage was not a given goal of the gay liberation movement:

Some liberationists rejected everything they associated with heterosexuality, including sex roles, marriage, and the family. But others insisted on their right to do everything heterosexuals did, from holding hands with a partner in public to getting married—either of which could seem risky and even a transformative event given the invisibility and hostility surrounding homosexuals in the early 1970s.³⁰⁶

Yet the swell of political activism in the 1960s and ’70s encouraged a number of same-sex couples to pursue state recognition of their relationship, simultaneously seeking affirmation of their love for one another and taking political action. Activists took note that many state laws did not actually stipulate the required genders of couples wishing to marry. In the early 1970s, several instances of gay and lesbian couples seeking marriage licenses occurred in Minnesota, Kentucky, Florida, Connecticut, Illinois, and Wisconsin. All were denied.

³⁰¹ “Carol Lease Arrested at Coronation VIII,” *Out Front*, April 17, 1981.

³⁰² “News Update: Carol Lease Found Not Guilty,” *Out Front*, August 7, 1981.

³⁰³ Tate was elected a city council member in 1971, and then elected as mayor by fellow members of the City Council in 1974.

³⁰⁴ Phil Nash, “First in a Four-Part Series on Colorado Gay Communities: Boulder,” *Out Front*, January 18, 1985.

³⁰⁵ This section on the issuance of same-sex marriage licenses by Boulder County in 1975 has been adapted from Erika Warzel, “National Historic Landmark Letter of Inquiry: Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder, Colorado” Final draft, February 2021, on file with National Park Service.

³⁰⁶ George Chauncey, *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today’s Debate Over Gay Equality*, New York: Basic Books, 2004, 89.



FIGURE 43: BOULDER COUNTY STAFF MEMBER PAT PRINCE ISSUING THE FIRST SAME-SEX MARRIAGE LICENSE IN THE U.S. TO DAVE MCCORD AND DAVE ZAMORA ON MARCH 27, 1975. BOULDER COUNTY CLERK CLELA ROREX LOOKS ON IN BACKGROUND. (DENVER POST)

In Boulder, however, County Clerk Clela Rorex issued several licenses beginning in March 1975 with the intention of fairly applying state marriage laws to homosexual couples in absence of language specifically prohibiting such marriages. This act garnered attention through the national media such that additional same-sex couples from elsewhere in the country traveled to

Colorado with the express purpose of obtaining a marriage license in Boulder. In all, six licenses were issued before the State Attorney General's office dispensed an opinion that same-sex marriages were illegal and Rorex subsequently stopped issuing them. None of these six licenses were subsequently challenged or invalidated in court, and one would be the impetus for further testing of the laws as applied to the status of homosexual immigration in the case *Adams v. Howerton*.³⁰⁷

In addition to demonstrating their commitment to one another, gay and lesbian couples sought state recognition of their relationship to gain other protections afforded to straight couples, such as inheritance rights, hospital visitation, and tax benefits. As described by the Human Rights Campaign, "at the federal level, [gay and lesbian] couples were denied access to more than 1,100 federal rights and responsibilities associated with the institution [of marriage], as well as those denied by their given state."³⁰⁸

Gay marriage continued to be contentious within the state: in 1996, the state legislature passed a bill that would have prohibited same-sex marriage, but it was vetoed by Gov. Ray Romer, who called for the creation of a commission to study the need for and social impact of legal gay marriages (see later sections for discussion of laws after 1996 affecting same-sex marriage).

³⁰⁷ Margalit Fox, "Richard Adams, Same-Sex Spouse Who Sued U.S., Dies at 65," *The New York Times*, December 24, 2012.

³⁰⁸ Human Rights Campaign, "The Journey to Marriage Equality in the United States," <https://www.hrc.org/our-work/stories/the-journey-to-marriage-equality-in-the-united-states>, accessed July 3, 2022.

The Boulder County Courthouse, where Rorex's office was located, is a contributing building to the Downtown Boulder Historic District (5BL.240, National Register listed 1980); a 2018 nomination amendment for the district recognized the courthouse's significance, under Social History at the state level, for its association with the first same-sex marriage licenses issued in Colorado and the civil rights struggles of LGBTQ people. In 2021, the National Park Service agreed that the courthouse appears to have national significance, and a National Historic Landmark nomination is currently underway.



FIGURE 44: BOULDER COUNTY COURTHOUSE. (AMY UNGER)

Two Rulings for LGBTQ Nonprofits, 1974-80

As noted in the Communications section of this context, in 1974 the feminist-lesbian newspaper *Big Mama Rag* (BMR) applied for non-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service, which denied the application, in part because of BMR's "articles, lectures, editorials, etc., promoting lesbianism."³⁰⁹ BMR appealed this determination in the case *Big Mama Rag v. United States*, which was dismissed by a federal district court but later reversed in federal district appellate court on the basis of First Amendment rights. The appellate court noted that "The Treasury Department's Exempt Organizations Handbook has defined 'advocates a particular position' as synonymous with 'controversial.' Such a gloss clearly cannot withstand First Amendment scrutiny. It gives IRS officials no objective standard by which to judge which applicant organizations are advocacy groups - the evaluation is made solely on the basis of one's subjective notion of what is 'controversial.'"³¹⁰

In 1976, the Colorado Springs gay nonprofit Lambda Services Bureau had its nonprofit status revoked by the IRS, because, as reported in *Out Front*, its board of directors would not abstain from advocating that homosexuality was "normal."³¹¹ Lambda appealed on several grounds, including the First Amendment right to free speech. A year after a hearing at the IRS National Office in Washington, D.C., in July 1977, LSB learned it had won its appeal and had its 501(c)3 status reinstated. The ruling paved the way for all nonprofit gay and lesbian groups in the U.S. to obtain tax exemption without being forced to state that homosexuality was abnormal, though at the time *Big Mama Rag's* nonprofit status was still contested.³¹² LSB's team of lawyers and its board of directors at the time, other than chairperson Dorothy Bell, have not been verified through research to date.³¹³

³⁰⁹ U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, "Big Mama Rag, Inc., a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation, Appellant, v. United States of America et al," September 15, 1980, online at <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/631/1030/86772/>, accessed June 10, 2022.

³¹⁰ Ibid. BMR's lawyers for the case were Richard Jenkins, III, Jeffrey L. Yablon, and Harris Weinstein, all of Washington, D.C.

³¹¹ "Inform: IRS," *Out Front*, June 11, 1976.

³¹² "Lambda Wins!" *Big Mama Rag*, October 1, 1977.

³¹³ "Lambda Regains Tax-Exempt Status," *Out Front*, September 9, 1977.

Aspen's Gay Rights Ordinance, 1976

Aspen's anti-discrimination ordinance was the first of its kind to successfully pass in Colorado and made the ski town the only city in the state for over a decade that offered legal protections for gays and lesbians.³¹⁴ The ordinance was written by Ralph Brendes, a gay attorney who had moved to Aspen after finishing law school and came out several years later in his mid-thirties.³¹⁵ The ordinance, which passed with "little fanfare," offered protections on the basis of sexual orientation, age, and marital status, and "other classes of persons who frequently are targets of discrimination." Although groundbreaking for its time in Colorado, the law did not provide for municipal enforcement of the law, leaving it to gays who had been discriminated against, such as being kicked out of a bar for holding hands or dancing with a same-sex partner, to sue in court.³¹⁶ John Busch, a longtime gay resident of Aspen who wrote a column for *The Aspen Times*, considered this aspect of the law a mistake, and that as such its impact on fair treatment of gays was minimal.³¹⁷

The few Colorado cities who took up the issue of equal protection for LGBTQ people were not alone; municipalities across the country were considering passing amendments to their existing ordinances or creating new ones. Dade County, Florida commissioners passed such an amendment in 1977, kicking off a national firestorm when Anita Bryant, a singer, beauty pageant contestant, and citrus industry spokesperson, undertook a homophobic campaign to repeal it. Bryant's minor celebrity status helped attract the national press, with the result that her false characterization of the law as spreading "sexual sickness" to children became established fact for a large swath of the American public. When the Dade County law was repealed, it emboldened both the emerging religious right, which sought to combine conservative Christian faith with public policies, and the gay rights movement.³¹⁸

Denver's Anti-Discrimination Law, 1990

In July 1988, a group known as the Equal Protection Ordinance Coalition (EPOC) formed from the Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force to push for an equal protection (or anti-discrimination) ordinance in Denver. As *Out Front* writer Richard Tucker noted, Denver lacked such an ordinance entirely, so the effort was not simply to tack on "sexual orientation" as a protected class, but to pass a wholesale law that listed it among many others.³¹⁹ EPOC's co-founders Tea Schook and Tony Ogden were initially "flabbergasted" that Denver had no such ordinance at all, unlike in Boulder and Aspen. The group held an initial public meeting at the MCC of the Rockies on Clarkson Street with an invitation to not just the LGBTQ community, but also to "blacks, Hispanics, women and the disabled."³²⁰

In the midst of this challenge, EPOC also mobilized to support a change to the Denver zoning law, which had been used for decades to keep "undesirables" out of some of Denver's neighborhoods, to allow

³¹⁴ Phil Nash, "First in a Four-Part Series on Colorado Gay Communities: Boulder," *Out Front*, January 18, 1985.

³¹⁵ Phil Nash, "Aspen: Of Gays and Glamor," *Out Front*, February 1, 1985.

³¹⁶ "Aspen Gays Takin City, Local Bar to Task," *Out Front*, April 17, 1981.

³¹⁷ Nash, "Aspen: Of Gays and Glamor."

³¹⁸ Susan Berry Casey, *Appealing for Justice: One Colorado Lawyer, Four decades, and the Landmark Gay Rights Case: 'Romer v. Evans.'* Denver: Gilpin Park Press, 2016, 191.

³¹⁹ Richard Tucker, "Plans for Denver Gay Rights Ordinance Move Forward," *Out Front*, August 12, 1988.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

unrelated adults to live together in a single-family dwelling.³²¹ The law passed by a 7 to 6 vote in City Council Chambers on May 1, 1989.³²² Meanwhile, EPOC negotiated with city officials on the equal protection ordinance, working closely with the city attorney's office. Mayor Pena supported the bill, "declaring it is more important now because of a rise in hate crimes and that the city must provide remedies for persons who are discriminated against."³²³

Denver's Ordinance 1 for equal protections was sponsored by Councilmember Cathy Reynolds and dubbed in the press and by opponents as the "gay rights ordinance," a foreshadowing of the misinformation that would allow Amendment 2 to be passed in 1992 (see below). During negotiations with the city, EPOC supported a change that specified in the bill the denial of spousal rights to gay and lesbian partnerships in order to garner more support.³²⁴ The ordinance was passed 8 to 4 by Council on October 15, 1990.

Almost immediately, efforts to repeal the law were undertaken by an anti-gay group called Citizens for Sensible Rights (CSR), who had ties to Colorado Springs' growing evangelical groups. CSR sought to remove the "sexual orientation" class from the law but leave the rest intact.³²⁵ Though the group had some initial mis-steps, it was able to gather enough signatures to put the repeal on the city ballot; throughout the process, EPOC continued to fight against it. In April 1991, *Out Front* published a heartfelt call to "vote consciously with an appreciation of the gradually growing political sophistication of our community."³²⁶ A few weeks before the May 1991 election, EPOC held an anti-repeal rally at the Temple Events Center (aka Temple Emanuel, 1595 Pearl St., 5DV.715, National Register listed 1987). The repeal was defeated by 55 percent of the vote; the local press characterized the fight as making Denver's LGBTQ community "newly unified and politicized."³²⁷ A celebration was held on election night at the then Mammoth Events Center (aka Filmore Auditorium/Fritchle Automobile and Battery Company, 5DV.38, 801 E. Colfax Avenue).³²⁸

Amendment 2

Despite relief over Denver's ordinance remaining intact, it had become clear to the politically-engaged national LGBTQ community that the 1990s would be "Not-so-Gay," due to the emergence of what Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called the "Christo-Fascists" at a Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force conference at the Days Inn Hotel (location unverified) in 1989.³²⁹ Indeed, the victory

³²¹ B. Erin Cole, "R-O: Race, Sexuality and Single-Family Zoning in Denver's Park Hill and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods, 1956-1989," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of New Mexico, May 2014. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ErinCole-Thesis.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.

³²² "R-O Zoning Changed: Same-Sex Couples Can Now Legally Live Together," *Out Front*, May 19, 1989.

³²³ Richard Tucker, "Council Tackles Proposed Anti-Discrimination Ordinance," *Out Front*, September 21, 1990.

³²⁴ Bill Weber, "Gay Couples Denied 'Family' Status in Bill," *Rocky Mountain News*, October 9, 1990.

³²⁵ Casey, 195.

³²⁶ "Editorial: Claim Our Right to Love," *Out Front*, April 26, 1991.

³²⁷ J.R. Moehringer, "Gay-Rights Supporters Savor Win, Rejection of Ordinance 1 Preserves Law's Language Including Homosexuals in Anti-Discrimination Shield," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 22, 1991.

³²⁸ Casey, 199.

³²⁹ Richard Tucker, "CGLTF Plans for Not-so-Gay 90s," *Out Front*, November 3, 1989.

in Denver in May 1991 soon gave way to rumors that though anti-gay groups had failed in the more liberal capitol city, they were not giving up on Colorado.³³⁰

In March 1992, former U.S. Senator Bill Armstrong and Colorado for Family Values (CFV) in Colorado Springs, a group founded by Keven Tebedo, son of State Sen. Mary Anne Tebedo, mailed a letter to potential donors requesting financial support of a ballot initiative to block new civil rights protection for gays.³³¹ The letter campaign, which called gays “a grave threat,” apparently had ties to the U.S. Senate campaign of Terry Considine. In May 1992, more than 65,000 valid signatures had been gathered by CFV to place an amendment to the state constitution, known as Amendment 2, to ban anti-discrimination laws in Colorado from including protections for sexual orientation.³³² EPOC immediately went on the defensive, calling the proposal a hate campaign that would “legalize discrimination” and “repeal voters’ rights in their local communities.”³³³

As debate on the proposed amendment gained momentum on both sides over the course of 1992, groups of varying sizes that opposed the initiative formed to fight alongside EPOC, such as Moms and Dads Against Discrimination and Catholics Against Bigotry and Hatred.³³⁴ That year’s Gay Pride Parade attracted over 30,000 people to Civic Center Park to protest the ballot initiative at the Capitol steps, with Democratic U.S. Senate candidates Josie Heath, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and Dick Lamm as speakers.³³⁵ A debate between proponents and opponents of the measure was held outside at Metropolitan State College on September 22, 1992.

Despite optimism in the LGBTQ community and Democratic political circles that they would be successful in defeating the amendment, it passed on election day with 53 percent of the vote. Looking back on the measure’s success in 2011, gay activist Arthur Powers stated that he believed “there is a direct correlation between the success of the gay community during the AIDS crisis—and thereafter—and the emergence of Amendment 2... ‘They wanted to push us back in the closet,’ Powers said.”³³⁶

A week after Amendment 2 passed, *Rocky Mountain News* summed up the “aftermath” with stories of how gays and lesbians had been fired without warning, stores and bars had received bomb threats, and the GLCCC had received hate calls, though one of the measure’s authors insisted it didn’t give license to discriminate against gay people. In the same story, Colorado AIDS Project case manager Tim Robinson recounted how after Election Day he “walked up the Capitol steps and looked into the distance. And I thought about all the people out there who hate me.”³³⁷

³³⁰ Casey, 199.

³³¹ Virginia Culver, “Armstrong: Gays ‘a grave threat,’” *The Denver Post*, March 21, 1992.

³³² Gary Massaro, “Amendment Nullifying Laws on Gay Rights Makes Ballot,” *Rocky Mountain News*, May 13, 1992.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ See for example, Linda Castrone, “What’s a Family? It’s Relative: Colorado Groups Clash Over Definition,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 16, 1992; and Massaro, “Journalist Rallies Catholics in Support of Homosexual Rights, Vatican Paper Against Protection for Gays Is Wrong, Denverite Says,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 25, 1992.

³³⁵ Charlene Chu, “30,000 Rally to Favor Gay Rights Group Protests Ballot Initiative That Would Repeal Community Laws Against Discrimination,” *Rocky Mountain News*, June 29, 1992.

³³⁶ Garcia, “Band of brothers.”

³³⁷ Linda Castrone, “Amendment 2 Aftermath One Week Later, Colorado Gays Take Stock of What Happens Next,” *Rocky Mountain News*, November 11, 1992.

On April 25, 1993, a rally for gay rights was held in Washington, D.C. It was called by *The Denver Post* “one of the largest civil rights demonstrations held in the nation’s capital” with an estimated crowd of 300,000, several thousand of whom were Coloradans carrying a large banner reading “Colorado Under Siege.” Spectators chanted “Undo 2” and marchers all along the route carried “Boycott Colorado” signs. The reporters also noted that “The Colorado marchers carried 10-foot papier mache figures of the Statue of Liberty and a blind Justice. Smaller signs included a horse-drawn pioneer wagon with the inscription ‘Ban 2 or Bust’ and a placard saying ‘Colorado Law: Some People Are More Equal Than Others.’”³³⁸ A subsequent boycott of Colorado products and tourism greatly impacted the state’s economy.



FIGURE 45: FORMER COLORADO STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE JEAN DUBOFSKY IN 2006. (DONATED TO THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY BY THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS/MARC PISCOTTY)

Even before the results of Election Day in 1992 were known, a litigation strategy to challenge Amendment 2 should it be successful was underway. The effort was led by gay attorneys and activists Pat Steadman and Mary Celeste, who recruited former Colorado State Supreme Court justice Jean Dubofsky (the state’s first female justice and assistant attorney general) to serve pro bono, due to her experience and demonstrated commitment to social justice causes.³³⁹

Following Amendment 2’s success at the polls, several groups stepped forward to work on the legal fight to undo it, including the Colorado Legal Initiatives Project, Colorado Lesbian and Gay Law Association, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, and Speakers Bureau to End Discrimination, among many others. The case that went before the Colorado Supreme Court to overturn it became known as *Richard G. Evans et al v. Governor Roy Romer and the state of Colorado*; the court ruled the amendment unconstitutional in 1994. When the state appealed and the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, it was known as *Romer v. Evans*.³⁴⁰ In 1996, the Supreme Court upheld the state court’s decision: Amendment 2 was unconstitutional and therefore overturned.

Although some scholars of LGBTQ history warn that the significance of Amendment 2’s overturning in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Romer v. Evans* “should not be exaggerated,” because that decision did not

³³⁸ Michael Booth and Adriel Bettelheim, “300,000 Rally for Gay Rights - D.C. Marchers Seek Change, Acceptance,” *The Denver Post*, April 26, 1993.

³³⁹ Casey, 202-204.

³⁴⁰ Though Gov. Romer did not support Amendment 2, his role as Governor propelled him to defend state law in an appeal, and thus he is named as the appellant.

change the criminalization of same-sex sex or force governments to limit discrimination, the organization of the state's gay movement during this time clearly had an important impact in Colorado.³⁴¹ Ultimately, the legal and social effort to undo Amendment 2 over the course of 1992-1996 consists of numerous groups and people, events and places, that are impossible to include in the scope of this context. One vital account that should be included in further research is Susan Berry Casey's 2014 biography of Jean Dubofsky, *Appealing for Justice: One Colorado Lawyer, Four Decades, and the Landmark Gay Rights Case: 'Romer v. Evans.'* Possible associated sites with this significant event in Colorado's history may include the meeting places of the legal strategy team Celeste, Steadman, Dubofsky and currently unnamed others' offices or homes.

Further Topics for Research

Other topics in Colorado's political and legal LGBTQ history that should be considered for research include Tea Schook of EPOC's run for governor in 1990 (see for example: "A Lesbian Governor? You Bet, Says Tea Schook: Activist Takes on Romer, Media & Establishment," *Out Front*, May 4, 1990) and Joanne Conte, a transgender woman who served on Arvada's City Council from 1991-95 and who came out in 1993 before *Westword* could out her.

Communications

As LGBTQ people began to cultivate more of a voice for themselves in the 1970s, communications and media became particularly prominent and a powerful way to strengthen and build community. As Phil Nash, former GLBT Center director and later writer and journalist explained:

From city to city, the gay press is considered a training ground for writers. An excellent training ground in some respects, I might add. Rather than coming from an academic background in journalism, most gay journalists, including myself, get involved in writing and producing a publication for the gay community because we believe wholeheartedly in the need for good communication. We like to enhance and invigorate our readers and let them know that there are others much like themselves and very much unlike themselves who share common interests and for whom certain kinds of information is very important. Our media supply images that help us see ourselves from our own perspective -- rather than from the distorted and often homophobic perspectives of the non-gay media, which are still among the *least* sensitive institutions in our society to gay issues [emphasis original].³⁴²

Although many LGBTQ organizations had member newsletters, such publications were not for public distribution, often due to the protective nature of the groups. There were a few nationally distributed publications coming out of California, but of course they did not often touch upon topics local to

³⁴¹ Marc Stein, "Sexual Rights and Wrongs: Teaching the U.S. Supreme Court's Greatest Gay and Lesbian Hits," in *Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History*, ed. by Leila J. Rupp and Susan K. Freeman, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014, 248.

³⁴² Phil Nash, "Reflections of a Gay Journalist," *Out Front*, April 1, 1983.

Colorado. The outlets discussed below demonstrate the emergence, and in some cases lasting power, of the Colorado LGBTQ media in the 1970s-90s.³⁴³

Big Mama Rag

The first known publicly-distributed periodical in Colorado devoted to LGBTQ topics was the monthly feminist news journal *Big Mama Rag* (BMR), which covered lesbian perspectives and issues alongside those affecting straight women. The journal was conceived of and published in Denver beginning in 1972, with permanent offices established in 1974 in a basement apartment of a brick home at 1724 Gaylord Street (extant). BMR was run as a collective, with no one person in charge and with the all-volunteer staff cycling through various roles.

As history student Lisa Humphreys-Smith notes in her master's thesis on women's activist groups in Denver's Capitol Hill, "[BMR] were a mostly all-white group. Many of them identified as lesbian and joined the paper to express their sexuality and ideas of equality."³⁴⁴ Despite criticism from contemporaries for its white-centeredness, the paper regularly published stories about national feminists and lesbians of color and reported on the Chicano civil rights movement known as "El Movimiento."³⁴⁵

One of BMR's founders, Jacqueline St. Joan, as quoted by Amy Lily, noted that "By 1974 the paper changed from a homegrown local effort to a publication with a lesbian-feminist perspective and a national scope and readership."³⁴⁶ Due to its heavy reliance on volunteer work and donations for its operations, BMR applied for tax-exempt status as a charitable and educational non-profit, which was denied by the Internal Revenue Service; ultimately BMR prevailed (see Politics and Law).



FIGURE 46: COVER OF *BIG MAMA RAG*, MARCH 1975.

³⁴⁴ Lisa Humphreys-Smith, "Restructuring Feminism: A Comparative History of Women's History Activist and Service Provision Groups in Denver's Capitol Hill Area, 1968-1985," M.A. Thesis, University of Colorado History Program, 2016, 62.

³⁴⁵ See for example, Carol Lease, "Black Feminists Organize in NY," April 1, 1974; Lease, "Chicanas Fight Welfare Injustices," July 1, 1974; and Dorothy Child and Clare Strawn, "Denver Chicanas Harassed," October 1, 1975.

³⁴⁶ Amy Lily,



FIGURE 47: 1724 GAYLORD STREET, DENVER. (AMY UNGER)

Reference to a BMR-produced radio show is also mentioned in the 1974 legal case; in her profile of lesbian feminist Peg (Hickox) Rapp, historian Barbara J. Love indicates that in 1974 Rapp began a feminist lesbian radio show in Denver with Vicki Piotter, a BMR collective member (both also co-founded the Woman to Woman Bookstore (see Businesses)).³⁴⁷ The name of this radio show and from which station it was broadcast has not been determined through research to date.

In 1975, BMR's office was ransacked, with equipment and newspaper copies bundled for distribution destroyed, and an unidentified member of the collective subsequently threatened over the phone numerous times.³⁴⁸ Readers from across the country wrote in expressing their concern, support, and appreciation for the paper, often enclosing small donations to help with their letters.³⁴⁹

BMR introduced its April 1984 issue with an urgent note that the collective was down to three members and that more members were needed in order to continue: "We start off production this grey, rainy month anxiously awaiting and fearfully wondering whether there will be a next... for *Big Mama Rag-feminist newsjournal* [sic]."³⁵⁰ The paper recounted how its coverage of issues that "most feminist journals consider too revolutionary, and most revolutionary journals won't cover at all," and divisiveness within the local feminist community had led to the departure of some members. In the end, the April 1984 issue of BMR was its last.

Kathy Riley, a one-time member and continuing supporter and contributor to BMR, writes of her experience working on BMR and its eventual dissolution in 1984:

I had friends on the collective, and by the early 1980s when the paper closed after 10 years of publishing, I had become disillusioned with BMR. Too much quarreling in the collective, I thought, and an increasing ideological rigidity that drove newcomers away. In retrospect, I didn't acknowledge the larger context: the Reagan years had begun, we were getting older and looking for new ways--more stable and responsible ways--of earning our living and making change; the well-known difficulties of attracting and keeping volunteers.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Barbara J. Love, ed. *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975* University of Illinois Press, 2006. (374).

³⁴⁸ "Big Mama Rag Offices Vandalized," *Big Mama Rag*, September 1, 1975.

³⁴⁹ "Letters Home to Mama," *Big Mama Rag*, October 1, 1975.

³⁵⁰ "bmr: where we're at," *Big Mama Rag*, April 1, 1984.

³⁵¹ Kathy Riley, "Forty years ago: The Big Mama Rag newspaper collective," Kathy in transition blog, published online August 23, 2016, <https://kathyintransition.blogspot.com/2016/08/forty-years-ago-big-mama-rag-newspaper.html>, accessed June 13, 2022.

Other women who were instrumentally involved with BMR over its eleven-year run include Jacqueline St. Joan, a lawyer, judge, law professor, and child advocate; poet Chocolate Waters; Carol Lease, who went on to become the first executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center; and activist Marge Johnson, who testified at the 1973 Denver City Council “Gay Revolt” hearings and was a member of the Lesbian Task Force of NOW.

The Scene

This small monthly gay newspaper was founded in July 1973 by Ron Wilson, then a recent transplant to Denver from California. Although the paper provided news stories of local and national significance, its primary focus was on the local gay social scene and gossip revolving around gay bar life and associated events. As one contemporary described it, “*The Scene* was your stereotypical old bar rag, but it was all we had.”³⁵²

Due to a lack of funding, Wilson was forced for at least the first few years to use volunteers to put out issues of *The Scene*, most of whom would eventually become overworked and resign. As a result, the paper was often published at irregular intervals. It also had a reputation for “printing rumor as newsworthy fact, and devoting many column inches of misspelled words to gossip about luminaries in the Denver gay bar circuit.”³⁵³ Nevertheless, the paper maintained a loyal following and continued to be published for several years through at least 1981. It is not known by what date the paper ceased publication, but it was apparently defunct by 1983. The paper had a “work garage” and also utilized Ron Wilson’s house as the places at which the paper was produced; the location for either has not been determined through research to date.³⁵⁴

Rhinoceros

The Gay Coalition of Denver began publishing its own paper, *Rhinoceros*, in November 1974, presumably at the Coalition’s offices in Capitol Hill (see GCD in Organizing and Building Community section). Described as having an “overall cerebral style” (at least in comparison to *The Scene*), the paper could be overtly political and had no qualms about denouncing the outsized influence of bars on the gay social scene and their sometimes-oppressive employment practices.³⁵⁵ This stance presented an inherent



FIGURE 48: BMR COLLECTIVE MEMBERS VICKIE PIOTTER (LEFT) AND DEB TAYLOR IN THE LATE 1970s. (KATHY RILEY/KATHYINTRANSITION.BLOGSPOT.COM)

³⁵² Jim Foshee quoted in Robert C. Steele, *Banned from California*, Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, LRCS, 2020, 258.

³⁵³ Phil Nash, “Out Front: Then and Now...,” *Out Front*, March 29, 1985.

³⁵⁴ Steele, *Banned from California*, 260.

³⁵⁵ Steele, *Banned from California*, 261-262, quoting from numerous articles in *Rhinoceros* from November 1974-April 1975.

problem for the paper, as it relied on gay bars to take out paying advertisements to keep it afloat as well as providing a prominent display space for the paper's latest issue at their entrances. Journalist and historian Robert C. Steele notes that because of these factors, gay bars held quite a bit of sway over gay publications.³⁵⁶ Publishing material that cast the bars or their owners in an unflattering light meant risking the loss of that support. *Rhinoceros* held various fundraisers and sought other local gay-owned business advertisers, such as bookstores, Ashworth's Antiques (at 94 S. Broadway), and even a Capitol Hill-based laundry equipment repairman, but the paper was not able to pay for itself on top of the Coalition's other volunteer projects. After only six months of publication, the paper folded in April 1975.³⁵⁷

Out Front Magazine

Founded by Phil Price, then a journalism student at the University of Colorado in Boulder, *Out Front* distributed its premier issue on April 2, 1976, in which Price introduced the magazine as:

a long-awaited, much-needed, quality journal for the gay community... [which] will cater to the needs and desires of gays in this area and will provide an added dimension to the gay experience through feature articles, thought-provoking editorials, the latest news and exciting photography...

We view ourselves and other homosexuals as both gay people and members or [sic] a larger community, in that order. To restrict coverage to 100% gay news is to deny existence in the larger society.³⁵⁸

True to its mission, *Out Front* would become the most prominent and long-lasting of the gay publications that arose in Colorado, reporting on gay and lesbian events as well as providing crucial coverage on heavier topics such as violence against the gay community, the AIDS epidemic, and the passage of and fight against Amendment 2. As one reader stated, the magazine "brought a long-awaited professionalism to the gay press of Colorado."³⁵⁹ There appears to have been a not-so-friendly rivalry between *The Scene* and *Out Front*, with Phil Price making his opinion on the quality of his competitor well-known.³⁶⁰

Price acknowledged the fine line he had to walk in publishing a gay magazine that relied heavily on its advertisers, most of them gay bars, about which the publication at times had unflattering articles to print. In a 1983 interview with *Pink Triangle Radio*, Price explained: "I don't like the control that my advertisers have over my editorial policy and concerns."³⁶¹ Despite these challenges from the outset, *Out Front* was unequivocally successful, leading Phil Price to begin a Los Angeles edition of the magazine in October 1981. However, finding the demands of travel back and forth uncondusive to meeting two sets of deadlines, Price sold the California edition by 1983, which would go on to be folded into

³⁵⁶ Steele, *Banned from California*, 259.

³⁵⁷ Steele, *Banned from California*, 265.

³⁵⁸ Phil Price, "From the Editor," *Out Front Magazine*, April 2, 1976.

³⁵⁹ Gary Kramer, "Letter to the Editor," *Out Front*, September 9, 1977.

³⁶⁰ See for example *Out Front* pieces such as "Controversy Surrounds Scene Phrase," June 11, 1976 and "New Year's Resolutions," January 5, 1979.

³⁶¹ Bob Steele interview with Phil Price, *Pink Triangle Radio*, April 9, 1983; reprinted in Steele, 316.

Frontiers, one of the country's largest gay publications at the time.³⁶² Through at least the 1980s, *Out Front* published a regular anniversary issue titled *You Fruit*, which celebrated its April Fool's Day-adjacent first issue with satirical articles.

Although it professed to be for the entire gay community and featured stories pertaining specifically to lesbians, *Out Front* faced criticism for its lack of lesbian-centered content and did not add a regular female columnist, self-proclaimed "token dyke" and artist Mattie Sue Athan, until 1982. In a reminiscence of her first year at the magazine, Athan recalled the hostility she encountered towards some of her columns that covered topics such as opposite gender gay friendships and ladies' nights at some of the local gay bars.³⁶³ Price's sister, Patricia Price, a prominent feminist attorney in Denver, often placed ads in the magazine.³⁶⁴

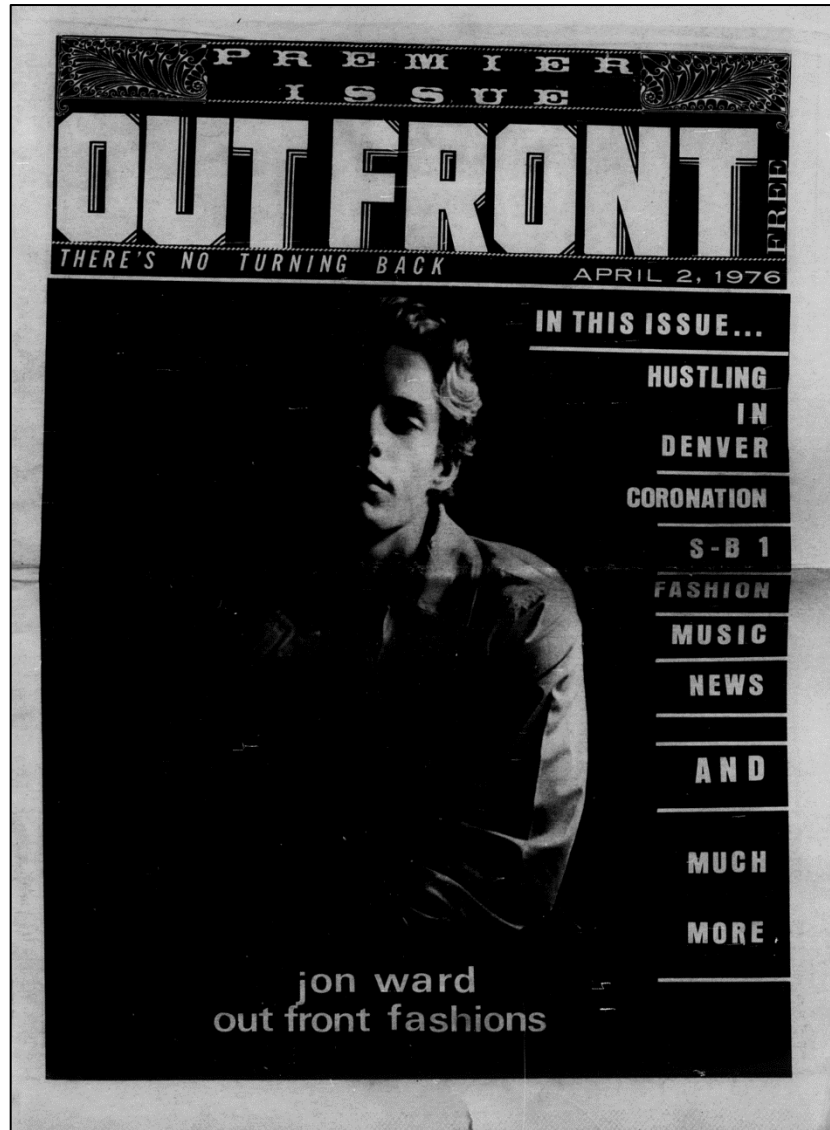


FIGURE 49: COVER OF THE APRIL 2, 1976, ISSUE OF *OUT FRONT*. (COLORADO HISTORIC NEWSPAPERS COLLECTION)

Phillip Lee Price (1954-1993) was born in Denver, Colorado to Agnes Gail and James W. Price and attended Machebeuf High School, where he was the photographer for the school yearbook, before becoming a student at the University of Colorado. Although some online sources maintain that Price began the paper in his parents' basement at 1801 Bellaire Street in Denver, the first issue of *Out Front* lists its offices as being at 2900 Aurora Avenue, Suite 226, a ca. 1973 apartment building in Boulder that may have been Price's residence at the time. Ancestry.com's U.S. Index to Public Records indicates that from 1981 until his death Price lived at 237 Pennsylvania Street in Denver. In a ca. 1992 autobiographical

³⁶² Bob Steele, "An Interview with the Publisher Himself," *Out Front*, April 1, 1983.

³⁶³ Mattie Sue Athan, "The Year of Living Dangerously," *Out Front*, April 1, 1983.

³⁶⁴ Steele, "An Interview with the Publisher Himself."



FIGURE 50: 1245 E. COLFAX AVENUE, DENVER. (AMY UNGER)

sketch from an unnamed source, Price stated that the “same nasty bogeyman that’s chasing Magic [Johnson] is trying to get a grip on me, but I won’t let him.”³⁶⁵ Price died of complications from AIDS in 1993 in the midst of reporting on the legal effort to undo the passage of Amendment 2 in 1992.

Price left the magazine in the care of his romantic partner, Greg Montoya, and Jay Klein, who together carried on publishing it until 2012, when it was acquired by Jerry Cunningham and JC McDonald. In 2020, the magazine and its parent company Q

Publishing, was bought by Maggie Phillips and Addison Herron-Wheeler, who rebranded the magazine as *OFM*. *Out Front* continues to be published today and proclaims itself as “one of the nation’s oldest continuous-running, independently owned and operated LGBTQ publications.”³⁶⁶

After moving operations from Boulder to Denver, *Out Front* at first had offices at 1212 E. 5th Avenue. In 1979, the magazine opened its first self-described “real” office at 1245 E. Colfax Avenue, in the same ca. 1966 building as The Haberdashery, a gay men’s clothing retail store, and which would later also house the Gay and Lesbian Community Center.³⁶⁷ In January 1983, The Haberdashery and *Out Front* lost their lease at 1245 E. Colfax, and the Haberdashery moved to 94 S. Broadway, the former location of another gay-owned business, Ashworth’s Antiques, at which *Out Front* maintained a drop box for classified advertising and correspondence beginning.³⁶⁸

Gay Press Association

The Gay Press Association (GPA) was formed in New York City in 1981 at a convention organized by Joe DiSabato, owner of Rivendell Marketing, an advertising firm that represented gay print media to national advertisers. *Out Front*’s Phil Nash attended, noting that the convention’s location within the Governor’s Suite of the Roosevelt Hotel was a step up from the “church basements, people’s homes or bars during the off hours” to which he was accustomed for gay organizational meetings.³⁶⁹ Nash was one of eighteen people selected by DiSabato, who represented a “cross section of publishers and editors from various parts of the United State in which significant gay communities had developed and whose publications reflected community interests,” to make proposals to the greater convention on how to form the association. After much discussion about whether the organization’s proposed name excluded

³⁶⁵ Ancestry.com <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/19563492/person/382122125429/media/b9154435-1ca3-4577-b494-029136ee8b64>

³⁶⁶ “How We Got Here,” *OFM*, online at <https://www.outfrontmagazine.com/about-us/>, accessed June 8, 2022.

³⁶⁷ “Out Front Milestones: The First Ten Years,” *Out Front*, April 11, 1986; Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Colorado [advertisement], *Out Front*, February 26, 1988.

³⁶⁸ “Classified and Customers,” *Out Front*, January 7, 1983.

³⁶⁹ Phil Nash, “The Gay Press Association: Who’s Who in Gay Publishing Assemble in New York,” *Out Front*, January 23, 1981.

lesbians, the name Gay Press Association was ultimately chosen with the understanding that “gay” was open for interpretation and potentially inclusive of lesbians.³⁷⁰ The Association’s stated mission, in part, was to set ethical journalistic standards for the gay press and foster its growth and development. Inaugural convention speakers included Armisted Maupin, author of *Tales of the City*. Nash was elected the GPA’s first board secretary.

The GPA held its second convention in Denver in 1982, which was organized by Nash and seventy-five GPA representatives from across the U.S.³⁷¹ The convention was held at the Downtown Denver Holiday Inn (possibly the Brown Palace Annex at 1715 Tremont Place) on Memorial Day weekend and hosted a few hundred attendees, with a keynote address from Randy Shilts (reporter for both *The Advocate* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* and later biographer of Harvey Milk), and Arthur Bell (reporter and columnist for *The Village Voice* who gave one of the first accounts of the 1969 Stonewall riots).³⁷² The GPA appears to have been in existence through 1987, holding annual conventions and awards across the country during that time.

Colorado Gaybreak

In 1974, Gay Coalition members Marge Johnson and Jim Foshee and others approached the sole public radio station in Denver, KCFR (Colorado Free Radio, 90.1 FM), to discuss the possibility of a gay public radio show. Although the station appeared open to the idea, it required someone from the group to have broadcast experience, which no one had, thereby scuttling the idea. This first failed effort for a radio show prevented Denver from joining the likes of San Francisco and Los Angeles, cities which already had gay radio shows.³⁷³

In 1977, Rory “Roar” Poliac, Mary Kupfer, Roger Rich, and other organizers were able to purchase an hour of broadcast time every Sunday morning from KWBZ (1150 AM), a Denver station devoted to talk radio, for a show called *Colorado Gaybreak*.³⁷⁴ In order to cover the show’s weekly cost of \$125, advertising spots were offered at \$50 for a minute, \$30 for thirty seconds, and \$17 for fifteen seconds.³⁷⁵ Poliac, a member of the Boulder Gay Liberation Front, headed the show, which adhered to KWBZ’s call-in talk format with segments on news, local calendar, arts and crafts, and a



FIGURE 51: *COLORADO GAYBREAK* LOGO. (REPRINTED IN *OUT FRONT*, APRIL 1, 1983)

³⁷⁰ The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives indicates that at some point the name became Gay and Lesbian Press Association (Gay and Lesbian Press Association Collection, 1980-1987 Coll2011.050*).

³⁷¹ Phil Nash, “Reflections of a Gay Journalist,” *Out Front*, April 1, 1983.

³⁷² “A Memorable Holiday Weekend,” *Out Front*, June 11, 1982.

³⁷³ Steele, *Banned from California*, 289.

³⁷⁴ Steele, *Banned from California*, 290.

³⁷⁵ “Gay Radio on the Air,” *Out Front*, July 8, 1977.

weekly special feature.³⁷⁶ Fundraisers, including a drag show by performer Lady Diana at Denver's Back Door III, were held to help finance the show.³⁷⁷

A month after going on air, Poliac departed the show and journalist Bob Steele became its executive director, with Ken Watts, a University of Colorado student, and Jeanette Graham, a middle-aged real estate agent and lesbian mother, serving as moderators.³⁷⁸ Although the show began to slowly increase its advertisers and was attracting a strong following, including listeners from nearby states due to KWBZ's strong broadcast signal, in March 1978 the station acquired new owners who immediately cancelled the show's contract.³⁷⁹

Pink Triangle Radio

In 1983, gay radio in Colorado was given another chance with the show *Pink Triangle Radio* on Boulder's public radio station KGNU (88.5 FM). Although Denver's KCFR had been open to hosting such a show a few years earlier, this time around a gay radio show did not fit within its "sophisticated programming" that had matured to include National Public Radio shows.³⁸⁰ For about a year starting in 1978, KGNU had hosted a show called *Gay Spirit* produced by Carl Armon and Ginny Oman, which never developed a strong following in the gay community due to its irregular airing. By 1983, however, KGNU was dedicated to getting gay radio programming "off the ground," with plans to also air the New York City-produced national show *Intergay*.³⁸¹

Pink Triangle Radio, so named as a reference to the pink triangle badges homosexuals were forced to wear by the Nazis during the Holocaust, similar to the yellow six-pointed stars for Jews, was produced by Bob Steele and included reporter Jim Foshee on staff, both previously of *Colorado Gaybreak*. Most staff members lived in Denver, where the show was pre-recorded, produced, and edited in one of their living rooms. Each week a few of them would bring the audio reels to Boulder for broadcast. Although KGNU's signal was "less than desirable" in its geographic reach, the show was able to be heard in some of Colorado's smaller mountain towns.³⁸²

The show did not follow *Gaybreak*'s call-in talk format, but instead featured "coverage of local events, local interviews, local investigative journalism of the gay community, music."³⁸³ The show was broadcast at noon every Thursday. A week after broadcasting its first show, *Pink Triangle*'s air time was expanded to include a second airing at midnight. KGNU's program director, Fergus Stone, noted that "We obviously are pleased with the quality of the program or we wouldn't have added an extra airing of the

³⁷⁶ *Colorado Gaybreak*'s mailing address was listed in *Out Front* as 1226 Marion St. #1, Denver, a 1920s apartment building that is still extant and which was presumably one of the organizer's residences at the time.

³⁷⁷ "Diana to do Gaybreak Benefit," *Out Front*, July 28, 1977.

³⁷⁸ "Gaybreak," *Out Front*, August 19, 1977; and Steele, 292.

³⁷⁹ Steele, 292.

³⁸⁰ Steele, 310.

³⁸¹ "Christmas Gift for Entire Gay Community: New Gay Radio," *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

³⁸² Steele, 312-313.

³⁸³ "Christmas Gift for Entire Gay Community: New Gay Radio," *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

show.”³⁸⁴ The show was underwritten by two Denver businesses, the Category Six bookstore at 909 E. Colfax, and Papplemousse card and novelty shop at 19 E. Bayaud Ave.³⁸⁵

Over the course of 1983, *Pink Triangle Radio* featured numerous interviews with and tributes for gay and lesbian artists, scholars, and leaders, including playwright Tennessee Williams, *Out Front*’s Phil Price, historian Jonathan Katz, musician Meg Christian, Beat poet Allen Ginsburg, English writer Quentin Crisp, and singer Holly Near. The show also aired an investigation of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Colorado’s practices in accumulating political power and money within the community, with both critics and defenders presenting their opinions.³⁸⁶

In 1984, Bob Steele relocated to Arizona for a job with the federal government, and production of *Pink Triangle* was suspended. According to a report by *Out Front*, the work of Steele’s replacement producer did not meet KGNU’s standards, but the station was willing to resume programming if the production quality was improved.³⁸⁷ In the end, the show never aired again, although KGNU continued to air the national show *Intergay*.

Further Media Outlets for Research

The LGBTQ media outlets discussed above by no means form a comprehensive list. Due to *Out Front*’s long-term success and proliferation, as well as easy access to its archive from 1976-1995, online through the Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection (coloradohistoricnewspapers.com), the magazine has been an important source for this context. However, it is important to recognize that not all LGBTQ voices are represented within its pages, especially from its earlier years; care should be taken to fully explore other sources and LGBTQ media outlets. For an example of the breadth of publications created for and by LGBTQ communities, see the list of serial publications in History Colorado’s Guide to GLBT Research Resources in the Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center.³⁸⁸ Other media outlets that warrant further research, especially since they present a more inclusive perspective beyond gay men in Denver, include:

- *LinC* (Lesbians in Colorado) later titled *Weird Sisters*, published monthly in the 1990s from Denver. The Denver Public Library’s Western History and Genealogy Department includes the full run in its collections.
- KCSU (Colorado State University Radio, Fort Collins), begun in 1964 as a student-run station, KCSU was later run as a professional station from 1977-1995. The station sponsored benefits to repeal Amendment 2 among other LGBTQ-associated activities.
- KRFC (Public Radio for the Front Range, Fort Collins) formed in 1995 when KCSU reverted back to being run solely by students. The group did not have a dedicated radio frequency until 2002 due to disputes with several Christian broadcasting groups, possibly related to its interest in LGBTQ programming.

³⁸⁴ “Pink Triangle Radio Expands Air Time After First Show,” *Out Front*, January 7, 1983.

³⁸⁵ Steele, 312.

³⁸⁶ “Horizontal Oppression? Pink Triangle Radio to Investigate GLCCC,” *Out Front*, September 2, 1983.

³⁸⁷ “Intergay to Air Again on KGNU,” *Out Front*, February 17, 1984.

³⁸⁸ The guide is available online at

<https://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2019/GLBTResourceGuide.pdf>, accessed June 29, 2022.

Entertainment and Recreation

In 1979, *Out Front* Magazine publisher Phil Price commented on Colorado's expanding gay community and the new fields of interest in which lesbians and gays could celebrate their abilities simultaneously with their sexuality:

It's gratifying to see our own gay community, and indeed, those around the country, branching out and exploring new fields of endeavor as gays. Athletics has been so exclusively heterosexual in form and appearance until now. Sports-minded gays are casting stereotypes aside and coming out in the open with their sexuality. The same is happening in other areas as well, such as the gay marching bands that have sprung up in a half dozen or so cities across the nation. Gay rodeo, business associations, skating groups and joggers' clubs, among other organizations, are also taking shape. We are finally venturing out of the all too comfortable shelter of bars or religious and political organizations to express our true selves. In short it is only now that we are truly beginning to see around us the manifestation of the diversity that makes our community sense the greatness that it possesses.³⁸⁹

As explained in the Organizing and Community Building section, LGBTQ groups that formed around a specific recreational activity are presented in this section. Their function overlapped with the "all purpose" groups that sought to build community among local LGBTQ people, but they simultaneously fostered particular interests. As elsewhere in this context, the groups presented here are meant to demonstrate the breadth of activities and is not an exclusive list. Furthermore, the significance of each group within LGBTQ history in the state has not been fully evaluated and should be assessed through further research.



FIGURE 52: ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MOTORCYCLE CLUB PIN. (QUEER MEMORY PROJECT OF NORTHERN COLORADO)

Rocky Mountaineers Motorcycle Club, 1968

As explained in a recent exhibit of Colorado's LGBTQ history at the History Colorado Center, *Rainbows & Revolutions*, a subculture of hypermasculine aesthetics, known as the leather community, developed in the gay community beginning in the 1950s. Colorado's first leather organization was the Rocky Mountaineers Motorcycle Club (RMMC), founded in 1968 by eight members at 1599 Williams Street, a ca. 1960s apartment building in Denver (extant).³⁹⁰ In addition to motorcycle rides through Colorado's scenic landscapes, the club also held entertaining fundraisers for various charities, similar to the ICRME. RMMC was a founding member of the umbrella group Unity in 1975 (see Organizing and Community Building). A 1977 article described a ride through Leadville,

³⁸⁹ Phil Price, "Up Front," *Out Front*, August 17, 1979.

³⁹⁰ "Rocky Mountaineers Celebrate 20th Anniversary in Oct.," *Out Front*, October 21, 1988.

noting that Molly Brown, the famous “Titanic heroine” from Denver, was a club mascot.³⁹¹

Beginning in 1971, an annual RMMC event was the Golden Fleece Run, in which members would ride and camp for several days at a chosen campsite, often with other leather clubs joining them. In 1981, the Mountaineers launched a fundraising campaign in order to purchase land in the mountains at which they could hold the Golden Fleece Run, and which would be available for other LGBTQ groups to use throughout the year; as the club explained in an *Out Front* announcement:

Due to problems arising around this country, many gay groups and organizations have encountered various difficulties in using public recreation lands and facilities for gay-oriented functions. Some major functions have been cancelled completely for lack of available land. Other functions have been relocated with much unnecessary extra work, and sometimes costing much more money than the original public sites. The need for gay-owned recreation land has become critical.³⁹²

By the beginning of 1985, RMMC had raised over \$25,000 but had not yet found a site that fits its requirements, which included a parcel of approximately 40 acres in the mountains with maintained road access and a large enough area of flat land.³⁹³ RMMC had apparently found a suitable property near Fairplay, but backed out of the sale after “strong opposition by neighbors.”³⁹⁴ Finally, in June 1988, RMMC acquired 41.4 acres near Fairplay, described as “Situated in a valley bordered on the east by Bureau of Land Management property, and on the south by another gay owner... The Club has emphasized that it was the gay citizens of Colorado who provided the funds to purchase the land. It will be available to the community for use on a graduated fee basis. A multi-purpose building is to be erected on the site, details of which are not finished at this time.”³⁹⁵ The exact location of the property and whether any buildings were constructed have not been determined through research to date. Long celebrated as Colorado’s oldest gay organization, RMMC disbanded in 2001.

Woman’s Outdoor Club, 1979

Founders of this lesbian outdoors group included Anne Rosenblum and Leona Lawrence, who was born and raised in Denver. The group conducted such activities as mountain climbs, fishing trips, bicycle tours, and an overnight cross-country ski at Duck Lake for members and their children.³⁹⁶ It is unknown for how long the group lasted; references to the Club in *Big Mama Rag* and *Out Front* do not extend past 1985. Research may provide further details; club papers are held by the Denver Public Library Western History Department, call no. C MSS WH2420. There is believed to be a strong connection between this group or an associated group and Northern Colorado/Fort Collins area—a civil rights context being prepared for Fort Collins at the time of this writing may provide further information.

³⁹¹ “RMMC News,” *Out Front*, June 17, 1977.

³⁹² “Rocky Mountaineers Report,” *Out Front*, September 4, 1981.

³⁹³ “Rocky Mountaineers Offer Land Finder’s Fee,” *Out Front*, February 15, 1985.

³⁹⁴ “Rocky Mountaineers— Colorado’s Oldest Gay Organization— Celebrates 18 Years,” *Out Front*, October 10, 1986.

³⁹⁵ “Mountaineers Purchase Land; GFR on New Site,” *Out Front*, July 1, 1988.

³⁹⁶ Various calendar notes in *Big Mama Rag*, 1980-83. Which Duck Lake in Colorado is referenced (BMR, January 1, 1983) is unknown.

The Group/Colorado Frontrangers, 1981

According to History Colorado's LGBT Collections, The Group (later named Colorado Frontrangers) began as a small group of gay men in 1981 who biked and ice skated together, and became an officially incorporated non-profit in 1989. Founding non-profit members were Jay A. Swope, David Ford, and John E. Allen. The name was changed in 1996 to "Colorado Frontrangers," under which the group remains active today.

Colorado Gay Rodeo Association, 1981

As Price mentioned in his 1979 editorial, one way in which the community explored new interests was rodeo and horsemanship, a celebrated sport and form of recreation for well over a century in the American West. Denver cowboy Mark Richardson began the annual "BUCK OFF!" contest in 1977, in which contestants rode a mechanical bull at the 1942 Club in downtown Denver.³⁹⁷ In 1979, *Out Front* began reporting on the annual gay rodeo held in Reno, Nevada (first held in 1976 as a fundraising event for the local International Court chapter).³⁹⁸ Several months later, the magazine featured a whole section on the National Western Stock Show held annually in Denver, noting that:

There are, of course, gay cowboys who participate in the sport of rodeo. Most keep a low profile among fellow contestants, however, as homosexuality is not "in" with the rodeo set. Most gay cowboys do not, as a rule, participate in urban gay activities, but some are not opposed to taking advantage of being in the big city for a week. An unusually large number of cowboy hats can usually be spotted at the various gay bars throughout the city during stock show week. While no one really knows how many gay cowboys there really are, the image of rugged independence has always made the cowboy a celebrated gay fantasy.³⁹⁹

Denverite Wayne Jakino (1942-2008), born and raised on a ranch near Durango, Colorado (location undetermined through research to date), opened the gay country-western bar Charlie's with Charlie Meyers and John King in 1981.⁴⁰⁰ That same year, inspired after attending the Reno rodeo, Jakino and other local gay horsemen founded the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association (CGRA), which opened offices in the basement of Charlie's at its first location at 7900 E. Colfax Avenue (not extant). CGRA's formation was listed as a community highlight for the year 1981 in *Out Front*, which noted that the organization was formed to "sponsor rodeo and dance events as well as to organize social events and group trips to other cities in which gay rodeo groups exist."⁴⁰¹ CGRA began fundraising with dance marathons at

³⁹⁷ "Bucking Off!" *Out Front Magazine*, January 25, 1980.

³⁹⁸ Dennis McBride, "Reno Gay Rodeo," *Gay History in Nevada and Las Vegas*, OutHistory.org, published 2009 online at <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/las-vegas/articles/rgr> (accessed June 2, 2022).

³⁹⁹ Pat Prince, "Rodeo Fever! Behind the Scenes at National Western," *Out Front Magazine*, January 25, 1980.

⁴⁰⁰ "Wayne Jakino Biography," International Gay Rodeo Hall of Fame. Online at <http://gayrodeohistory.org/HallOfFame/JakinoWayne.htm> (accessed June 2, 2022).

⁴⁰¹ "1981 The Community," *Out Front Magazine*, January 8, 1982.

Charlie's and held membership events, such as square-dancing lessons, at The Club in Pueblo and Hide & Seek in Colorado Springs.

In addition to providing travel packages to Reno's rodeo, CGRA held small events in which participants could show off their horsemanship. These "gymkhanas" (meets featuring sports contests or athletic skills) were hosted in 1982 and 1983 at a small farm north of Denver, referred to as CGRA's "ranch headquarters" and owned by partners Ron Jesser and Bob Vanderwyk, at 15000 Washington Street.⁴⁰² Participants partook in field day activities and horse events like barrel racing, and the CGRA horse drill team practiced its routine for the Grand Entrance at the National Gay Rodeo in Reno.⁴⁰³

Over the first weekend of June 1983, CGRA held its first actual rodeo under the name Rocky Mountain Regional Gay Rodeo at the still-extant Coal Creek Arena, owned by the City of Aurora at 20255 E. 6th Avenue. The three-day event was reported on with much anticipation by *Out Front* and attracted over one-thousand attendees to the small arena. Numerous Denver bars, including Charlie's, hosted supporting events, and a kick-off Wild West Show and cocktail party was held at the Ramada Inn at 1150 E. Colfax (demolished 2022), where Gov. Dick Lamm, Sen. Gary Hart, U.S. Rep. Pat Schroeder, and Denver City Council President Cathy Donohue welcomed attendees from across Colorado and other western states.⁴⁰⁴ The honor of Rodeo Grand Marshall was awarded in part on the amount of funds each contestant raised for charity; CGRA stated its preference for gay charities rather than organizations such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the charity of choice for the Reno rodeo.

Over the next few years, the Rocky Mountain Regional Gay Rodeo grew in popularity and size but continued to be held at the Coal Creek Arena. In 1986, CGRA moved the event to the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds, which required the approval of a liquor license by the City of Englewood. Whether the license would be granted was called into question when the city became aware that it was a gay event, but in the end the license was approved with little fanfare.⁴⁰⁵ The 1987 rodeo was also held at the fairgrounds, this time in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Regional Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival.

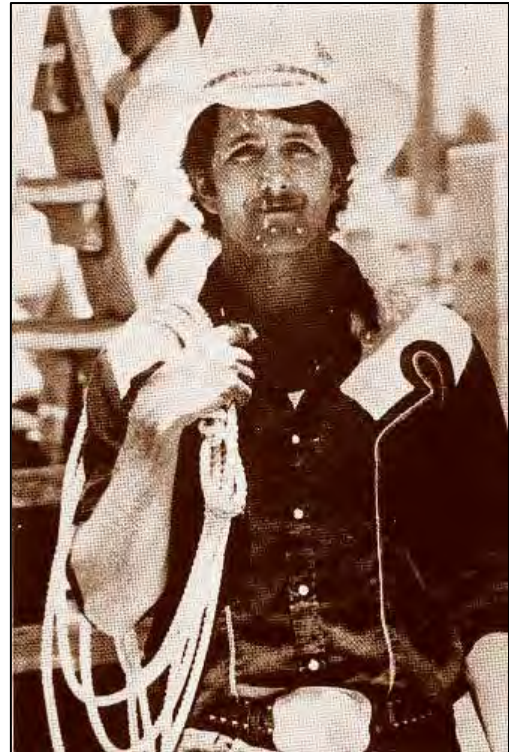


FIGURE 53: RON JESSER IN 1981, AFTER THE CALF ROPING EVENT IN THE RENO GAY RODEO. THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM WOULD BE REPRINTED IN 56 NEWSPAPERS, RESULTING IN JESSER BEING REFERRED TO AS THE "MOST PHOTOGRAPHED GAY COWBOY IN THE WORLD." (GAYRODEOHISTORY.ORG)

⁴⁰² It is unclear to what extent Jesser and Vanderwyk's farm remains; Google Streetview suggests that a farmhouse may still stand on the property.

⁴⁰³ *Out Front Magazine*, June 25, 1982 and September 2, 1983.

⁴⁰⁴ "Colorado Gay Rodeo Resounding Success" *Out Front*, June 10, 1983.

⁴⁰⁵ "Location of Rocky Mountain Regional Rodeo in Question" *Out Front Magazine*, May 9, 1986.

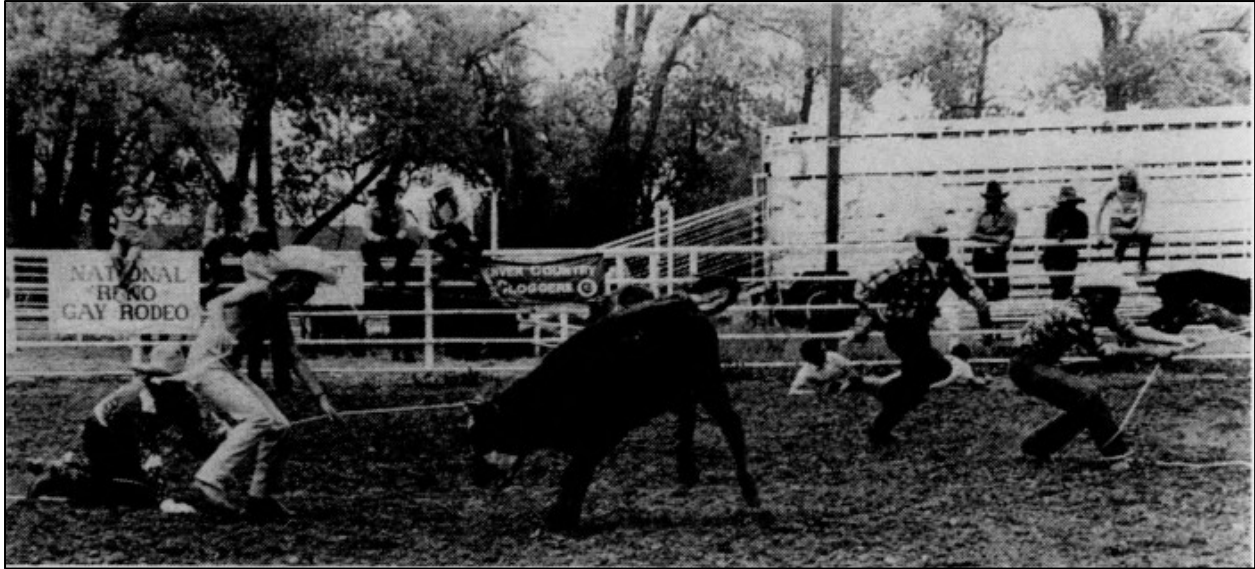


FIGURE 54: CALF ROPING AT THE FIRST ANNUAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL GAY RODEO AT COAL CREEK ARENA IN 1983. (*OUT FRONT*, JUNE 10, 1983)

In 1989, the rodeo relocated back to Coal Creek Arena, by which time the event was attracting two-thousand attendees from across the lower forty-eight states.⁴⁰⁶

The National Reno Gay Rodeo became defunct after its 1984 event, after a combination of conservative backlash and exhaustion in the local gay community from fighting the AIDS epidemic. In 1985, Wayne Jakino, Ron Jesser, and others, including gay rodeo groups from Texas, California, Oklahoma, and Arizona, formed the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA), an umbrella organization intended to “standardize the rules and regulations of gay rodeos throughout the country, set safety standards, and help foster an appreciation and understanding of rodeo.”⁴⁰⁷ (The IGRA’s national role is discussed in Katherine Schweighofer, “LGBTQ Sport and Leisure,” *LGBTQ America*, 24-27 to 24-28.) Today, CGRA is the longest continuously running gay rodeo in the U.S., and in the 2010s and ’20s has held its annual rodeo at both the Arapahoe and Jefferson county fairgrounds. Gay rodeo is especially lauded for its acceptance of all participants to compete in all rodeo events, which, as *Westword* has noted, means “not only that women can compete in rough stock [bull riding, steer wrestling, etc.], but that men can compete in events such as barrel racing and pole bending, which are women-only in professionally sanctioned rodeos — and everyone can do so in the gender with which they identify.”⁴⁰⁸ Recent scholarship on gay rodeo by Rebecca Scofield, such as the dissertation “Too Legit to Quit: Gay Rodeo, Camp, and the Performance of Gender in Reagan’s America,” (American Studies, Harvard University,

⁴⁰⁶ “Seventh Annual Regional Rodeo This Weekend” *Out Front Magazine*, June 30, 1989.

⁴⁰⁷ “Ron Jesser Biography,” <http://gayrodeohistory.org/HallOfFame/JesserRon.htm>. Like Jakino, Jesser was also born in Colorado and raised on a ranch. Jesser died of complications from AIDS in 1986.

⁴⁰⁸ Kyle Wagner, “In Gay Rodeo, Women Can Compete With the Big Boys — and Big Bulls,” *Westword*, January 6, 2016; online at <http://www.westword.com/news/in-gay-rodeo-women-can-compete-with-the-big-boys-and-big-bulls-7483308> (accessed June 2, 2022).

November 2015) may be helpful in further examination of CGRA's significance and discovery of other associated people and sites.

*Gay Games*⁴⁰⁹

The Gay Games, based on the Olympics and originally named the Gay Olympics, had its first games in San Francisco in 1982.⁴¹⁰ As with its namesake, the Games began with a torch relay across the country, with the torch being lit at the Stonewall Inn in New York City. The relay made its way through Colorado that July, beginning in Sterling where the Colorado group of athletes took over. The torch passed

through Fort Collins, Boulder, and Denver, then taken by bicycle through the mountains, hitting Idaho Springs, over Berthoud Pass, to Steamboat Springs, and then Craig before heading for Utah.⁴¹¹ Over 12,000 spectators and athletes attended, and entertainers such as Tina Turner performed. *Out Front* publisher and attendee Phil Price opined: "Certainly one of the finer aspects of the Games was the success achieved in bringing the men's and women's communities together. The Games were



FIGURE 55: "THE DENVER CONTINGENT AT OPENING CEREMONIES" OF THE FIRST GAY GAMES IN SAN FRANCISCO, 1982. (PHIL PRICE/OUT FRONT, AUGUST 20, 1982)

initially frowned upon by many lesbians because they thought it would be almost an exclusively gay male event."⁴¹² Becky Boyd of Denver took a gold medal in powerlifting, and a few silver (soccer) and bronze (400 meter mixed relay, bowling) medals were won in team sports by Colorado athletes.⁴¹³ It appears that all of Colorado's contingent consisted of athletes from Denver, who were organized by the Denver Athletic Union. The second Games (1986) were also held in San Francisco, the third in 1990 in Vancouver, and the fourth in 1994 in New York. The Gay Games continue to be held every four years through today.

⁴⁰⁹ This event should not be confused with a "Colorado Gay Olympics" held in Pueblo in 1978 (contests included volleyball, softball, pool, cheerleading, and dance) which was sponsored by the local Turquoise Club. The event does not appear to have been repeated. For more information on the background of the Gay Games, see Schweighofer, "LGBTQ Sport and Leisure," *LGBTQ America*, 24-32 to 24-34.

⁴¹⁰ The U.S. Olympics Committee immediately sued over use of the name, and successfully forced the event to change names immediately before it was set to begin; \$30,000 worth of merchandise could not be sold because of the name change.

⁴¹¹ "The Torch is Passed," *Out Front*, May 14, 1982.

⁴¹² Phil Price, "Gay Athletic Games," *Out Front*, August 20, 1982.

⁴¹³ "Denver Woman Wins Gold Medal at Gay Games," *Out Front*, September 17, 1982.

Sports Leagues

A review of *Out Front* and *Big Mama Rag* issues reveals numerous sports leagues and clubs that formed for lesbians and gays. Some of the most prominent sports (beside those discussed above) were softball, volleyball, and soccer. Cheesman Park in Denver was a popular place to hold games. See also Schweighofer, "LGBTQ Sport and Leisure," in *LGBTQ America* for further discussion of sports that were particularly popular among LGBTQ communities in the U.S. during this period.

Music Groups

Music and performance have been a catalyst for LGBTQ community building in the U.S. and Colorado since at least the 1980s. In particular, the choral arts have played an important role in the public expression of LGBTQ pride, activism, and community. Inspired by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (formed in 1981), the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA Choruses) was created in 1982 to foster artistic and organizational development of gay and lesbian choruses across the country.

A few prominent examples of Colorado music groups are discussed below, with some known associated sites noted. Future research is needed to determine what properties maintain long-standing, significant-person, or significant-event associations with each of them.

Denver Gay Men's Chorus (DGMC): founded in 1982 with eighty singers, today the chorus is a 140-member ensemble that performs "diverse and socially charged programming" across Colorado and the U.S. and is "recognized as the premier gay performing arts organization in the Rocky Mountain Region."⁴¹⁴ Initial auditions were held in February, 1982 at the First Unitarian Society of Denver in conjunction with GLCCC, and the first concerts were held in June, 1982 at the Aladdin Theater (2000 E. Colfax, demolished 1984).⁴¹⁵ Over its history, DGMC has performed at such venues as the Paramount Theater and Whatley Chapel (Colorado Women's College) in Denver, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, U.S. Air Force Academy Chapel in Colorado Springs, and Carnegie Hall in New York.

Denver Women's Chorus (DWC): as the chorus's website states, "DWC owes its existence to a group of brave lesbian singers who risked their livelihoods in 1984 to form a chorus that became both a safe place for its members and an outlet for musical expression. In the beginning, many singers did not allow their names to be printed in programs due to concerns they would face discrimination. Many feared for their jobs. Despite the obstacles they faced, they traveled to perform in New York and Washington D.C., joined in actions for social justice, and became the first treble chorus to perform at a GALA Choruses festival."⁴¹⁶ DWC's premiere solo concert was held at North High School (2960 N. Speer Boulevard), with other early performances held in conjunction with DGMC at Whatley Chapel; they also performed at the 1992 GALA Choruses festival in Denver.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ Denver Gay Men's Chorus, "About Us," online at <https://denverchoruses.org/dgmc/>, accessed April 6, 2023.

⁴¹⁵ "One Time Events," *Out Front*, February 19, 1982, and "Denver Gay Men's Chorus Slates First Concerts for June 24 and 26," *Out Front*, May 28, 1982.

⁴¹⁶ Denver Women's Chorus, "Our Herstory," online at <https://denverchoruses.org/dwc/>, accessed April 6, 2023.

⁴¹⁷ "A Celebration of Women and Music (Advertisement)," *Out Front*, March 29, 1985, and "Men's Women's Chorus Team up in Concert," *Out Front*, December 7, 1984.

Harmony: a Colorado Chorale: a mixed chorus for “gays, lesbians, family, and friends” began in 1991 under the direction of Carol White, who also founded DWC and the Parents PFLAG Chorus. Harmony held its first benefit event, a Halloween spaghetti dinner, at the First Unitarian Society of Denver on October 31, 1991.⁴¹⁸ The group’s inaugural performance followed a Parent PFLAG meeting at the University Park Methodist Church in December, 1991.⁴¹⁹

Rainbow Chorus: an alliance of straight and LGBTQ members from northern Colorado and southern Wyoming, formed in 1993 in part out of response to the passage of Amendment 2. The Fort Collins-based chorus long held practices at the Foothills Unitarian Church and held several concerts at the Plymouth Congregational Church (both Fort Collins, see Religion). The chorus apparently folded ca. 2007 due to financial issues, but reemerged in 2010 in partnership with Harmony.⁴²⁰

Diversity Chorus: formed in Colorado Springs in 1993, this chorus, like the Rainbow Chorus, was created in response to Amendment 2 passing the year before. One of the group’s earliest concerts was held to observe the annual passage of Amendment 2 at the Smokebrush Center (Colorado Springs, address unknown).⁴²¹ The group appears to have disbanded sometime in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

In June, 1992, the annual GALA Choruses festival was held in Denver with over 3,400 delegates in attendance, with events held at Boettcher Concert Hall and Temple Buell Theatre (both part of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Complex), and a “GALA store” at the Executive Tower Inn.⁴²² In June, 1994, the athletes that formed Colorado’s team for that year’s Gay Games in New York City received a send-off performed by DGMC, DWC, Harmony, Diversity Chorus, and The Rainbow Chorus at Boettcher Concert Hall.⁴²³

Mile High Freedom Band (MHFB): at the time this band formed in 1984 in Denver, it claimed to be the eleventh gay and lesbian band in the country.⁴²⁴ Initial practices were held twice weekly, first at an unnamed theater at 17th and Downing (no longer extant), then at the MCC Church on Bannock Street and Tracks bar. The band’s public debut, with about fifteen players “clad in jeans and red t-shirts” playing “I Am What I Am” from the musical *La Cage Aux Folles*, took place at Civic Center Park as part of that year’s Pride Day.⁴²⁵ The group has expanded greatly over the decades and today consists of multiple bands: MHFB Corps (the initial group), Winds, Swing, Strings, and Youth.

⁴¹⁸ “Halloween Spaghetti Dinner Slated,” *Out Front*, October 11, 1991.

⁴¹⁹ Larry Fowler, “Gay, Lesbian Choruses Light up the Season,” *Out Front*, December 20, 1991.

⁴²⁰ GALA Choruses “Member Spotlight: Reaching Out in Colorado,” online at <https://galachoruses.org/membership/member-spotlight/reaching-out-in-colorado/>, accessed April 6, 2023.

⁴²¹ “Ground Zero Plans ‘One Year Later’ Events,” *Out Front*, November 3, 1993.

⁴²² Madeleine Ingraham, “GALA Voices Ring with Pride, Harmony,” *Out Front*, June 24, 1992.

⁴²³ “Concert Sends Athletes to New York in Style,” *Out Front*, June 22, 1994.

⁴²⁴ Gregg Looker, “Letter to the Editor: Mile High Freedom Band Seeks Support,” *Out Front*, June 22, 1984.

⁴²⁵ Phil Nash, “I am what I am!,” *Out Front*, July 6, 1984.

Other Groups

Other groups that offered recreational or artistic opportunities for the LGBTQ community include the following, which may warrant further research to evaluate significance and discover associated people and places:

- Rocky Mountain Clogging
- “Gay Days” at Elitch Gardens
- Leaping Lesbian Follies (annual talent show begun in 1978, held at Denver’s St. Thomas Episcopal Church (2201 Dexter) and First Unitarian for at least the first few years; produced by Tea Schook and others)
- Startrip Productions (Music production company led by Tea Schook and others)
- Maven Productions (Music production company led by Nona Gandelman)

Religion

LGBTQ America, the National Park Service’s Theme Study of LGBTQ history in the United States, points out that religion can be a fraught subject in regards to LGBTQ identities and community. Although religion has been a means through which homophobia has proliferated and exerted power to silence LGBTQ people, thereby driving many of them away from the religious communities in which they were raised, it has also offered them safe haven and connection: “For a variety of reasons, some LGBTQ people seek nothing more than to survive and maintain low profiles within religious communities that can be virulently homophobic. But at other times, LGBTQ people demonstrate an amazing resourcefulness and creativity in transforming and creating forms of religious life that loudly proclaim their dignity and humanity.”⁴²⁶ Beginning in the late 1960s through the 1990s, many mainstream Judeo-Christian denominations began to grapple with how they recognized, welcomed, and ministered to LGBTQ people; this context can only hope to highlight some of the stories that represent this shift rather than document each instance. Some are of congregations formed exclusively by and for LGBTQ people; another demonstrates the internal conflicts within churches on how and whether to welcome openly LGBTQ people, and how LGBTQ people have responded. It should be noted that the following generally focuses on positive examples of LGBTQ people claiming space within religious traditions and does not convey the repression of and backlash against LGBTQ people that continues in some religious traditions today.

Metropolitan Community Church

Founded in 1968 in Southern California by Rev. Troy D. Perry, the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) was the first church group in the U.S. primarily focused on bringing a positive Christian ministry to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people. Unlike some churches that expressed love for LGBTQ people but sought to “correct” them by denying their sexuality and identity as LGBTQ, MCC embraced the community and sought to bring them closer to God in celebration as themselves. Rev. Perry had grown up in the Pentecostal Church and had become a minister, only to be defrocked when it was

⁴²⁶ Drew Bourn, “Struggles in Body and Spirit: Religion and LGBTQ People in US History,” in *LGBTQ America* 21-3.

discovered he was gay. Soon after, Perry attempted suicide. While in recovery, he experienced a series of self-described epiphanies that led him to establish the MCC and hold its first service in the living room of his Los Angeles-area suburban home.⁴²⁷

Perry advertised his new congregation in *The Advocate*, the nationally-distributed gay newspaper based in Los Angeles. The church attracted evangelicals as well as LGBTQ people

raised in other denominations. Within a few years, MCC had grown such that Perry and the other ministers who had joined him created a Universal Fellowship of MCC to support new MCC congregations established in other cities. By 1971, there were nearly thirty MCC churches across the country.⁴²⁸ As MCC minister Rev. Don Eastman describes it, “MCC began not only as an inclusive church but also as a social justice movement. Rev. Perry and many others in MCC were vocal and visible leaders in what was then called the gay liberation movement.”⁴²⁹ Perry constantly traveled throughout the U.S. and internationally in the 1970s and ’80s, speaking on behalf of gay rights. He was a frequent visitor to Colorado and was a featured speaker at the University of Colorado’s Conference on World Affairs, which was organized by Boulder Gay Liberation in conjunction with the University’s Sociology Department and held at various locations around the Boulder campus.⁴³⁰ In August 1977, the general conference of MCC congregations was held in Denver at the Cosmopolitan Hotel (no longer extant), with “Over 2,000 people from literally ‘all over the world,’” including Australia and Nigeria, in attendance.⁴³¹

As just one example of its many efforts to fight against the denial of equal rights for LGBTQ people, MCC brought suit against a 1977 decision by the Federal Bureau of Prisons not to allow gay chaplains into



FIGURE 56: IN 1979, MCC OF THE ROCKIES PURCHASED THIS FORMER PENTECOSTAL CHURCH AT 2090 S. BANNOCK STREET TO SERVE AS ITS FIRST PERMANENT HOME. (AMY UNGER)

⁴²⁷ “History of MCC,” Metropolitan Community Churches website, online at <https://www.mccchurch.org/overview/history-of-mcc/>, accessed June 14, 2022.

⁴²⁸ Rev. Troy D. Perry, “Gifts of Leadership for a Growing Church,” MCC History Project, online at <https://www.mccchurch.org/gifts-of-leadership-for-a-growing-church/>, accessed June 13, 2022.

⁴²⁹ Rev. Don Eastman, “A Journey of Truth and Transformation,” MCC History Project, online at <https://www.mccchurch.org/a-journey-of-truth-and-transformation/>, accessed June 13, 2022.

⁴³⁰ “Perry, Matlovich, Acanfora to Speak at CU Conference,” *Out Front*, March 4, 1977.

⁴³¹ “MCC Meeting,” *Out Front*, August 19, 1977.



FIGURE 57: REVEREND JUDY DAHL (LEFT) AND PARTNER TERRYLL MILLER (RIGHT). (PHIL NASH/OUT FRONT, JUNE 25, 1982)

federal prisons to counsel inmates.⁴³² In particular, as noted by historian George Chauncey, MCC was at the forefront of recognizing and performing same-sex marriage ceremonies in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴³³

In 1971, Colorado's first MCC congregation was established in Denver. Named MCC of the Rockies, the church held services and meetings in the First Unitarian Society of Denver's church at 1400 Lafayette Street (5DV.16713, National Register listed 2017) through 1979.⁴³⁴ After Boulder County Clerk Clela Rorex issued six marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples in the spring of 1975 (see Politics and Law), one of the couples, Anthony Corbett and Richard Adams, who had traveled from their home in L.A. to obtain a license, was married by their MCC minister from L.A. at the Unitarian Church.⁴³⁵ (The First Unitarian church was listed in the National Register and made a Denver local landmark in part in recognition of this significant event) The first couple to obtain a license from Rorex, Dave Zamora and

Dave McCord of Colorado Springs, had reportedly been married at the Faith MCC of Colorado Springs a few years prior, in 1973.⁴³⁶ (No information on Faith MCC, such as its founding date or location, has been discovered to date; it is no longer an active congregation.)

Under the leadership of Rev. Charlie Arehart, MCC of the Rockies was able to purchase its own building in 1979 at 2090 S. Bannock Street, a ca. 1940s former Pentecostal church (currently functioning as a youth boxing center).⁴³⁷ In an article reporting on MCC's new home, *Out Front* stated that "Those not familiar with M.C.C. should note that, as the first gay-support organization to buy property in Colorado, the group has passed a milestone in gay history, setting an example of dedication from which we may all

⁴³² Chuck Fager, "Federal Prison Building Boom on the Way," *The Straight Creek Journal* (Denver), February 9, 1978.

⁴³³ George Chauncey, *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today's Debate Over Gay Equality*, New York: Basic Books, 2004, 91-92.

⁴³⁴ "Gay and Proud," *The Paper* (Metropolitan State College, Denver), April 26, 1972. Note that the Unitarian Church is listed in the National Register in part for its association with LGBTQ history.

⁴³⁵ Karen Derrick-Davis et al., "First Unitarian Society of Denver (5DV.16713)," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2017, on file with History Colorado, Denver.

⁴³⁶ "Homosexuals Granted marriage Liscense [sic]," *Golden Transcript*, March 27, 1975.

⁴³⁷ "MCC to Sponsor 'Victory Dinner,'" *Out Front*, February 2, 1979. The church building appears on the 1950 Sanborn map of Denver with the label "Pentecostal Holiness Church." It does not have a site file in the SHPO's database of historic sites, Compass. Arehart earned his doctorate of theology from the University of Denver's Iliff School of Theology in 1982.

benefit.”⁴³⁸ At its new location MCC of the Rockies sought to open its building to other LGBTQ groups, including Hatikvah H’Shalom’s Friday-night Sabbath services for gay and lesbian Jews.⁴³⁹ In 1986, the church acquired its current home, the former First Congregational Church building at 980 Clarkson Street, thereby bringing the congregation back to Capitol Hill. The 1907 church (5DV.2681), designed by prominent Denver architect Robert S. Roeschlaub, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance soon after MCC of the Rockies gained ownership.

A search for other MCC congregations in Colorado reveals the following:

Chrysalis MCC was formed in Denver in 1982 by Rev. Judy Dahl, formerly an associate pastor at MCC of the Rockies, with the blessing and support of the older church. Dahl created Chrysalis to “reach lesbians and feminists with the Christian message divorced from the male imagery and language associated with religious practice.”⁴⁴⁰ The founding of Chrysalis was only the second time within the greater MCC Fellowship in which a separate women-centered church was created. Services were held at the 1910 St. Paul’s Methodist Church at 1615 Ogden Street (5DV.2873, contributing to Swallow Hill National Register Historic District, listed 1988). It is unknown for how long Chrysalis continued, but its schedule of services was not listed in *Out Front* beyond 1982.

For at least a few years, Boulder had an MCC congregation at 15th Street and Euclid Avenue (exact address unknown), which apparently formed in 1973 and was active through at least the late 1970s, when it was known to host Boulder Lesbian Network meetings.⁴⁴¹ The congregation disbanded at an unknown date.

Pikes Peak MCC in Colorado Springs began in 1979 in the garage of Rev. Joyce Setala and quickly grew in size. For twenty years, the church held services in the All Souls Unitarian Church at 730 N. Tejon Street (5EP.626, State Register listed 2007) until it bought its current home, a ca. 1980s commercial building at 1102 S. 21st Street, in 1999.⁴⁴²

In Fort Collins, an MCC congregation met at The Sagebrush, a gay bar at 934 S. Lemay, which opened in 1983 and later was known as the People’s Bar and then Nightingale’s.⁴⁴³ The current MCC congregation in Fort Collins, MCC Family in Christ Church, was formed in 1992 and currently holds services in the ca. 1960s Christ United Methodist Church at 301 E. Drake Road.

First Federated Christian Church, Denver

The First Federated Christian Church was founded in 1983 in Denver by pastors Brad Wilson and Herb Nobles, both of whom had previously led gay and lesbian churches in other states. “Federated” referred

⁴³⁸ “‘Scandals of ’79’ Benefit Slated,” *Out Front*, February 16, 1979.

⁴³⁹ “classifieds,” *Big Mama Rag*, October 1, 1979.

⁴⁴⁰ Phil Nash, “1982: the Year in Review, Religion,” *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

⁴⁴¹ For example, see “Feminist Calendar,” *Big Mama Rag*, September 1, 1978.

⁴⁴² “Our History,” Pikes Peak MCC website, online at <https://ppmcc.org/about-us/our-history/>, accessed June 15, 2002.

⁴⁴³ City of Fort Collins, “PRIDE: History of LGBTQ+ People in Fort Collins,” Local History Projects online at <https://www.fcgov.com/historicpreservation/pride>, accessed June 25, 2022. The extant building on South Lemay appears to date from the early 2000s and is presumed not to have hosted The Sagebrush.

to how the church joined the “best traditions of the Church of God-Anderson and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from which Wilson and Nobles respectively come.”⁴⁴⁴

First Federated held its first service on September 11, 1983 at St. Paul’s Methodist Church in Denver.⁴⁴⁵ About a year later, the church moved to the area of Denver known as Broadway Terrace along South Broadway. The church occupied the second floor of a three-story ca. 1890s commercial building at 432 S. Broadway, the first floor of which housed well-known gay businesses John Galt’s Bookstore and Tomorrow’s Body, a tanning salon.⁴⁴⁶ Wilson continued to serve as minister, but Nobles appears to have no longer been involved by that point.



FIGURE 58: 432 S. BROADWAY. (AMY UNGER)

Some of First Federated’s congregants sought to distinguish it from the Metropolitan Community Church and other LGBTQ-centered religious groups by maintaining that it was more “religious or spiritual” than its counterparts and was not another venue for “cruising.” Needless to say, this assertion was hotly contested by members of other churches, and the back-and-forth positions played out in a series of *Out Front* letters to the editor in late 1984.⁴⁴⁷ Although the church was regularly advertised in *Out Front* and

listed in the magazine’s events calendar through 1984, First Federated does not appear in issues past April 1985. Rev. Wilson continued to lead the church until his death from AIDS in 1987; presumably the church disbanded soon after, as it does not exist today.⁴⁴⁸

First Methodist Church of Boulder and Rev. Julian Rush

The internal conflict within religious groups as to whether gays and lesbians were not only welcomed as congregants but could also be spiritual leaders played out in Colorado with national attention. Over the summer of 1981, Rev. Julian Rush, the minister of education at First Methodist Church of Boulder for more than five years, informed several members of the church that he was gay. The father of two sons was much beloved within the congregation for his plays and musicals that made “Christ real” for the church’s youth. Rush’s courageous step came after having separated from his wife a few years prior and

⁴⁴⁴ “New Gay Church Forms in Denver,” *Out Front*, June 10, 1983.

⁴⁴⁵ “First Federated Church Plans Inaugural Service,” *Out Front*, September 2, 1983.

⁴⁴⁶ “First Federated Moves to South Broadway,” *Out Front*, August 31, 1984. The building at 432 S. Broadway is not in the Compass database.

⁴⁴⁷ For example, Dan Mahoney, “Letters to the Editor: Seeking Clarification,” December 7, 1984; and Patrick Casey, “Letters to the Editor: Churches and Cruising,” December 21, 1984.

⁴⁴⁸ History Colorado “Rainbows & Revolutions” exhibit; Object ID 2022.6.14.

beginning to volunteer at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Denver that June.⁴⁴⁹ This progression led him to the realization that he couldn't continue his ministerial or volunteer work without coming out within the church: "I knew that if I ever really claimed my gayness I was going to have to be a gay activist."⁴⁵⁰

As Rush recounted later to *The New Yorker*, "The six people I told didn't even flinch."⁴⁵¹ But upon telling First Methodist's senior minister Binford Gilbert, Rush's employment at the church was suddenly in question; Gilbert shared the information with the church's Staff-Parish Relations Committee, who voted 7-2 to ask Bishop Melvin E. Wheatley, Jr. of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) to replace Rush. Although First Methodist's fifty-member Administration Committee voted by an overwhelming majority to encourage the lower committee to reconsider, the recommendation was rejected.⁴⁵² *Out Front's* special report on the controversy noted that, "The turmoil within the First Methodist Church of Boulder over this issue threatens to change the very character of the church," with a large contingent of the membership supportive of Rush and threatening to leave if he was forced out, and another threatening to leave if he stayed.⁴⁵³

Bishop Wheatley, who was based out of Denver, had made a name for himself within the UMC's General Conference as a leader who "often stood alone in insisting that the church should view homosexuals not as wretched sinners but as people who can be Christians without qualification."⁴⁵⁴ (Jean and Jack Hodges, longtime parishioners in Boulder's Methodist community, recalled in an oral history interview that the bishop's own son was gay.⁴⁵⁵) Wheatley came to an all-congregation meeting at First Methodist on October 12, 1981 to hear the parishioners' views on Rush's employment, at which the general consensus was that though Rush was well-loved, his sexuality was incompatible with leading the church's youth, though the youth members themselves tended to be among his strongest supporters.⁴⁵⁶ The Hodges, whose youngest son would later come out to them, recalled that during these congregational meetings "some of the language used, it was so hurtful. It was hurtful to everyone... the fact that this man whom we loved, who hadn't changed—all we learned was one more bit of information—was so summarily dismissed—so easily, with such hatefulness..."⁴⁵⁷ After various attempts at compromise—such as keeping Rush on part-time to work on the annual play—failed, Wheatley agreed to appoint Rush elsewhere.

⁴⁴⁹ Rush's wife, Margaret Rush Hankins, was also a Methodist pastor, becoming the tenth woman to be ordained within the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UMC. They divorced in 1982. "Rev. Margaret Rush Hankins Obituary," *Denver Post*, June 24, 2018.

⁴⁵⁰ Phil Nash, "We Love Julian, But..." *Out Front*, October 30, 1981.

⁴⁵¹ Calvin Trillin, "U.S. Journal: Boulder, Colo.: Let Me Find a Place," *The New Yorker*, January 25, 1982, 80.

⁴⁵² Phil Nash, "We Love Julian, But..." *Out Front*, October 30, 1981.

⁴⁵³ Phil Nash, "We Love Julian, But..." *Out Front*, October 30, 1981.

⁴⁵⁴ Trillin, 83.

⁴⁵⁵ Jean and Jack Hodges Oral History Interview, 2008, Boulder Public Library, Carnegie Library for Local History, call number OH1542, online at https://localhistory.boulderlibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A31709?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=9a8714db84a8cf5216a8&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=7&solr_nav%5Bquery%5D=Gay

⁴⁵⁶ Trillin, 86-87.

⁴⁵⁷ Hodges Oral History Interview.

Though he had the authority to install Rush at the church of his choosing, Wheatley was reluctant to place the pastor where his presence would not be welcomed as “enabling [a church’s] ministry.” Coincidentally, St. Paul’s Methodist Church in downtown Denver had recently concluded that the survival of its small, aging congregation depended upon welcoming the neighborhood’s newest denizens, including Capitol Hill’s thriving gay population. Rush became a part-time minister there, with his salary paid by his supporters in Boulder, who continued to meet with him on Sunday afternoons in a “house fellowship.”⁴⁵⁸ Rush stayed at St. Paul’s for several months before leaving Colorado for a personal relationship; he returned within a year to become the director of the Colorado AIDS Project and continued his post as associate pastor at St. Paul’s.

Bishop Wheatley was charged by conservatives within the UMC General Conference in November 1981 with “disseminating false doctrine,” by proclaiming that gays were not only welcome as parishioners in Methodist churches, but could also serve as spiritual leaders. He was exonerated of the charge in May 1982. In October 1982, *Out Front* reported that the “highest judiciary authority in the [UMC] denomination verified Wheatley’s assertion that nothing in the church rules prevents gays and lesbians from being ordained or appointed to ministerial openings in the 9.7 million member church.”⁴⁵⁹ That same year, UMC adopted a program in which individual congregations could choose to become a “Reconciling Congregation” and affirm the full participation of lesbians and gays in the local church.

Despite the growing acceptance of gays and lesbians within some sections of the UMC, in 1984 the National Conference adopted a rule banning “self-avowed, practicing homosexuals” from the ministry.⁴⁶⁰ That same year, Wheatley told *The Denver Post* that “discrimination against gays is an absurdity and an atrocity” and that the “arrogant judgmentalism and punitive persecution (by some against gays) is too great a price for society to pay.”⁴⁶¹ It appears that some regional conferences, such as the Rocky Mountain Conference, chose not to strictly abide by this rule by not inquiring as to whether known gay pastors were celibate. Conservatives within the church continued to push back against having gays and lesbians as ordained leaders: in 1985, a lay leader at the Mancos, Colorado UMC led a revolt within the region’s annual conference, at which lay leaders passed a resolution “backing the church’s strict laws on homosexuality.”⁴⁶² In 1988, the years-long effort to dismiss Rush was dropped, but the issue would remain a topic of debate within the UMC for several years and was hotly contested at the national UMC conference held at the Denver Convention Center in April 1996.⁴⁶³

Today, the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UMC has been combined with the Yellowstone Conference under the Mountain Sky Conference based out of Centennial, Colorado. The location of Wheatley’s office in 1981-82 during the controversy at First Methodist in Boulder has not been determined through research to date. The 1892 Romanesque Revival-style First Methodist Church of

⁴⁵⁸ Trillin, 87.

⁴⁵⁹ Phil Nash, “1982: the Year in Review, Religion,” *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

⁴⁶⁰ “Gay Minister’s Return to Pulpit Won’s Spur Revolt, Officials Say,” *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, June 7, 1988.

⁴⁶¹ 1984 quote in Virginia Culver, “Bishop stood with gays amid great odds,” *The Denver Post*, March 11, 2009.

⁴⁶² “Gay Minister’s Return to Pulpit Won’s Spur Revolt, Officials Say,” *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, June 7, 1988.

⁴⁶³ Virginia Culver, “Methodists are ‘Mad as Hell,’ Gay-ban Backers Blast Statement,” *The Denver Post*, April 20, 1996.

Boulder (1401 Spruce Street, 5BL.1490) is a locally designated landmark that has previously been found eligible for the National Register.

St. Paul's Methodist Church, Denver

As discussed above, St. Paul's Methodist Church became a welcoming congregation in the early 1980s, and as a result, the church hosted several fledgling LGBTQ-centered churches such as First Federated Church and Chrysalis MCC and became



FIGURE 59: FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF BOULDER, 1401 SPRUCE STREET. (AMY UNGER)

the spiritual home of Rev. Julian Rush after he was forced out of First Methodist in Boulder. Though Rush soon after left Denver and St. Paul's, *Out Front* maintained that "his bold stance has left a legacy of a growing gay membership in the St. Paul's Church, which offers primary outreach to its elderly, single, and gay neighbors in Capitol Hill under Pastor George Christie."⁴⁶⁴ As noted above, Rush returned as associate pastor at St. Paul's and continued in this position for several more years.

Other LGBTQ Religious Groups and Congregations

Beginning in the late 1960s and growing rapidly in the 1970s-80s, many religious denominations had groups formed by LGBTQ congregants and leaders seeking a voice and recognition within their existing churches and synagogues, or forming entirely new ones. An example of this was documented in *Out Front's* review of religious news in 1982: "New groups for gay evangelicals, gay Lutherans, gay Mormons, gay Seventh Day Adventists, and others met with mixed success. One openly gay Baptist minister tried to form an altogether new religion after being fired from a suburban church, but the effort failed."⁴⁶⁵

LGBTQ America provides a summary of religious groups that have formed to affirm and be inclusive of LGBTQ people within their respective (mostly Christian or Jewish) denominations. Rather than repeat that effort, this context notes known instances in which these groups have formed in or are otherwise associated with places in Colorado during the period 1970-1996. The list of events or groups discussed below is by no means exhaustive and the lack of mention of certain traditions should not be inferred as a lack of association with LGBTQ history in Colorado:

⁴⁶⁴ Phil Nash, "1982: the Year in Review, Religion," *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

⁴⁶⁵ Phil Nash, "1982: the Year in Review, Religion," *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

Catholics

The organization of LGBTQ Catholics and allies known as “Dignity” was formed in 1969 by a priest in California. In 1976, a bicentennial meeting of the American Catholic Bishops in Detroit, focused on the question of justice in the church and society, urged the Catholic Church to recognize the work of Dignity in “reconciling” the Church with “its homosexual brothers and sisters.”⁴⁶⁶ The Denver chapter of Dignity was formed in 1974 by eight Catholics (names unknown) who received permission to start the chapter by the Archdiocese of Denver. The chapter held annual retreats beginning in 1975, and in 1984 held a regional conference. The conference was initially scheduled to be held at Regis University, but officials there backed out of hosting, and the conference was instead held at the Capitol Hill Community Center (location not yet verified). Programming included “The Spiritual Gay Person” by Greg Morey, a gay activist and director of education at Holy Trinity Parish in Westminster; “Realistic Goal Setting for Gay and Lesbian Organizations” by a group panel; and featured speakers Denver City Councilmember Cathy Donohue and Rep. Pat Schroeder.

Sunday evening services for Dignity members were held at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (5DV.111, 1530 Logan Street, National Register listed 1975) in the early 1980s. Beginning as early as 1984 through at least the early 1990s, Catholic mass and other Dignity events were held at the Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church (5DV.8077, 1100 Filmore Street, State Register listed 2001).⁴⁶⁷



FIGURE 60: THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 2201 DEXTER STREET, DENVER. (HISTORY COLORADO)

Episcopalians

Integrity, the national organization of LGBTQ Episcopalians and allies, was formed in 1974 by layperson Dr. Louie Crew, a faculty member of the historically Black university Fort Valley State in Georgia. The Denver chapter was organized by 1976, and in 1979, Integrity’s national convention was held in Denver at St. Thomas Episcopal Church (5DV.8350, 2201 Dexter Street, Denver local landmark and contributing to Park Hill National Register Historic District, listed 2004) immediately preceding the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, held at

Denver’s Currigan Hall. An opening banquet for the Integrity convention was held at the Ramada Inn on East Colfax. Convention speakers included founder Dr. Crew, Bishop R. DeWitt, and Charles Brydon of the National Gay Task Force.⁴⁶⁸ The Integrity Denver chapter held regular meetings through the early 1980s at St. Thomas Church, but by 1989 began holding meetings at St. Barnabas at 1280 Vine Street (5DV.722, contributing to City of Denver local Wyman Historic District).

⁴⁶⁶ “Dignity,” *Out Front*, December 2, 1976.

⁴⁶⁷ For example, “Calendar,” *Out Front*, January 17, 1986.

⁴⁶⁸ “Integrity Holds National Convention in Denver,” *Out Front*, September 14, 1979.

Baptists

Within the denomination of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), the group American Baptists Concerned for Sexual Minorities was formed in 1972 at the national ABCUSA convention in Denver, held at the Auditorium Theatre at 1323 Champa Street (5DV.521, National Register listed 1991).⁴⁶⁹ Further information about chapters in Colorado has not been found through research to date.

Latter Day Saints

A group of gay Mormons advertised Sunday services in *Out Front* in the 1980s, with only a phone number to call for information given. Further research may reveal associated members and locations.

Mennonites

The Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship formed with just three people in 1972 out of a small house at 400 Whedbee Street. The group appears to have embraced LGBTQ people from early on. At an unknown date, FCMF moved to its current location at 300 E. Oak Street.⁴⁷⁰

Atheists

The Gay Atheist League of American regularly advertised in *Out Front* in the 1980s-90s. Clearly disillusioned with religion's treatment of non-heteronormative people, the League used such language as "A good solid look at the history of Christianity and its Hebrew origins should remove any illusions from the mind of any gay person about the friendliness of either Christianity or Judaism to homosexuality... many gay men and women find it very difficult, indeed, painful, to take this honest look."⁴⁷¹ As with the Latter Day Saints, only a phone number for further information is typically given in the League's ads; further research may reveal more details of associated places and people.

United Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ (UCC) arose from the union of Christian and Congregational Churches in the 1930s. In 1972 members of the UCC formed the Gay Caucus (later re-named the Open and Affirming Coalition) and Rev. William R. Johnson in San Carlos, California became the first openly gay ordained minister.⁴⁷² In 1975 and 1977 UCC's General Synod "sustained the conviction that sexual and affectional preference should not be a basis for denial of human rights enjoyed by others."⁴⁷³ In 1987, First Congregational Church of Boulder became the first "Open and Affirming" UCC church in Colorado and the sixteenth in the nation, declaring their affirmation of people of all sexual orientations and gender

⁴⁶⁹ Bourn, 21-16; and "Baptists Meet," *Journal-Sentinel* (Westminster, Colorado), May 4, 1972. Among other names, the Auditorium Theatre is currently known as the Ellie Caulkins Opera House.

⁴⁷⁰ Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, "Our History," online at <https://www.fcmennonite.org/our-history.html>, accessed April 6, 2023.

⁴⁷¹ "Religion is the Problem, Not the Answer!" Gay Atheist League of America advertisement, *Out Front*, October 30, 1981.

⁴⁷² Bourn, 21-17.

⁴⁷³ United Church of Christ, "History: The United Church of Christ," online at <https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>, accessed June 25, 2022; and Virginia Culver, "Religions Still Wrangle; Gay Issues Continue to Divide Congregations," *The Denver Post*, May 21, 1996.



FIGURE 61: CONGREGATION NEVEI KODESH, 1925 GLENWOOD DRIVE, BOULDER. (AMY UNGER)

identities.⁴⁷⁴ The 1908 church, located at 1128 Pine Street (5BL.572) is a City of Boulder designated landmark and was found eligible for the National Register in 2001 for its architectural significance.

The Plymouth UCC in Fort Collins, located at 916 W. Prospect Road since 1956, is another early welcoming UCC congregation in Colorado and has hosted numerous LGBTQ groups, such as the Rainbow Chorus. The NPS Theme Study *LGBTQ America* also notes the following: “In 2004, openly transgender Rev.

Malcolm Himschoot was ordained at Washington Park UCC in Denver, Colorado. The following year, the UCC produced a documentary about his life and career, “Call Me Malcolm.”⁴⁷⁵ Washington Park UCC is located at 400 S. Williams Street in Denver (extant).

Reform Jewish

Congregation Tikvat Shalom (CTS) in Denver was initially formed as a social group in 1978 but in 1986 officially became a congregation, offering regular religious services.⁴⁷⁶ CTS organized events like cross country ski trips, held Seders at the MCC of the Rockies’ home at 2090 S. Bannock in the early 1980s, and hosted high holiday services at the 1984 Temple Sinai at 3509 S. Glencoe in 1985-86. In 1987, CTS moved to Warren Methodist Church (5DV.6313, 1359 Gilpin Street, in the City of Denver Wyman Historic District).⁴⁷⁷

Jewish Renewal

Boulder’s Jewish Renewal Congregation Nevei Kodesh was founded in 1993 to welcome people from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQ people, and is housed within a ca. 1960s former church at 1925 Glenwood Drive. Member Zhenya Gallon gave an oral history interview to Boulder Public Library discussing her involvement with a “havurah (a small group of like-minded Jews who practice and socialize together) of Jewish lesbians in Boulder” arising from the congregation.⁴⁷⁸

Unitarian Universalist (UU)

⁴⁷⁴ First Congregational UCC-Boulder, “History,” online at <https://firstcong.net/history/>, accessed June 20, 2022.

⁴⁷⁵ Bourn, 21-18, citing: Electa Draper, “Church’s Transgender Pastor Grateful for Life ‘Beyond My Wildest Dreams,’” *Denver Post*, March 14 2011, accessed December 3, 2015, [http://www.denverpost.com/ci_17608273; Call Me Malcolm](http://www.denverpost.com/ci_17608273;Call%20Me%20Malcolm), dir. Joseph Parlagreco, Warren, NJ: Passion River, 2005.

⁴⁷⁶ “Tikvat Shalom Becomes Congregation,” *Out Front*, March 28 1986.

⁴⁷⁷ “Tikvat Shalom Finds New Home,” *Out Front*, May 8, 1987.

⁴⁷⁸ Zhenya Gallon Oral History interview, 2011, Boulder Public Library, Carnegie Library for Local History, call number OH1761-V.

LGBTQ America states that “The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been one of the earliest and most vocal denominations to champion LGBTQ people.” UU pastor Rev. James L. Stoll came out in 1969 at a UU Student Religious Liberals conference for college students at the Colorado Springs-area La Foret Conference and Retreat Center, and is considered within the Unitarian Universalist Association to be the first known instance in which a minister came out publicly.⁴⁷⁹ Although Stoll did not serve a congregation after that, in 1970 the UU General Assembly passed a resolution to end discrimination against “Homosexuals and Bisexuals,” including employment within the church.⁴⁸⁰

In addition to the UU churches which hosted MCC congregations, other LGBTQ groups, and are associated with other significant events in LGBTQ history as noted elsewhere (particularly the First Unitarian Society of Denver), The Rainbow Chorus rehearsed in the ca. 1970 Foothills Unitarian Church at 1815 Yorktown Avenue in Fort Collins beginning in 1993 through the early 2000s. Foothills (along with other Colorado Unitarian churches) also hosted LGBTQ events such as a 1981



FIGURE 62: LGBTQ WELCOMING SIGNS AT FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN CHURCH, 1815 YORKTOWN AVENUE, FORT COLLINS, MAY 2022. (FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN CHURCH)

“Farewell to Colorado” tour for lesbian feminist and poet Chocolate Waters and the Fort Collins Gay and Lesbian Alliance’s National Coming Out Day coffee house in 1990.

Presbyterian

In 1974, the group Presbyterians for Gay Concerns (later named Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns) formed. This group and others took issue with a 1978 Presbyterian General Assembly ruling that although openly LGBTQ people could join and participate in Presbyterian Churches, they could not become ordained ministers or serve in any other leadership role. The result was the formation of the “More Light” Presbyterian churches network, in which local congregations can affirm their commitment to inclusivity of LGBTQ people. In Colorado, there are several such Presbyterian churches, although the years in which they joined the More Light network have not been determined to date. The Capitol

⁴⁷⁹ Bourn, 21-22; and UUA Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns, “Rainbow Project Timeline (Google Doc),” online at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UNQo0cnAJZw9p7SN-zKAVcE3DkrUYQAxRGCVdbN-Fnw/edit>, accessed June 25, 2022. The La Foret complex at 6145 Shoup Road includes the Taylor Memorial Chapel (5EP.1297, NRHP listed 1999) and the Ponderosa Lodge (5EP.5887, NR listed 2008).

⁴⁸⁰ Unitarian Universalist Association, “Discrimination Against Homosexuals and Bisexuals, 1970 General Resolution,” online at <https://www.uua.org/action/statements/discrimination-against-homosexuals-and-bisexuals>, accessed June 25, 2022.



FIGURE 63: HARRY HAY IN 1996.
(FAERICHIEE/WIKIPEDIA)

Heights Presbyterian Church at 1100 Filmore in Denver hosted numerous LGBTQ-centered events in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly for the Catholic gay group Dignity. Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church (1980 Dahlia Street, Denver, 5DV.9034, National Register listed 2004) became the home of the Denver Gay Men's Chorus in 1988.

Radical Faeries

LGBTQ America summarizes the Radical Faeries as "Similar to some earlier forms of gay Paganism and Wicca, [through which] participants envisioned a distinctively gay male spirituality that celebrated drag, sexuality, and nature."⁴⁸¹ The group was organized in 1979 at a conference outside of Tucson, Arizona by Harry Hay, the pioneering gay activist; Don Kilhefner, a founder of Los Angeles' Gay Community Services Center; and Mitch Walker, a Berkeley-based gay shaman and writer. The group held a second conference the following year in Colorado, kicking off the gathering with a "magic circle" in Denver's Cheesman Park, at which thirty "fairies" wrapped the park's Pavilion with "several hundred yards of rainbow-colored yarn."⁴⁸² For the week following, the group of 200 participants met at a campsite outside of Bailey, in Park County.⁴⁸³

The extent to which the Radical Faeries considered themselves a true spiritual or religious practice is unclear from contemporaneous reports on the group; for example, in some articles in *Out Front*, they are referred to as a gay men's social camping group.⁴⁸⁴ The group's ties to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a satirical group of "nuns" (gay men in drag with names such as Sister Florence Nightmare) from San Francisco, referred to as "the rodeo clowns of San Francisco's gay community" who dispersed "homophobic evangelists," further suggest the possibly less-than-serious nature of the Faeries' religious purpose.⁴⁸⁵

Health and Medicine

Mental Health

Homosexuality was first listed as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 1952, though the psychiatric community had treated it as such for far longer. In 1973, following a speech by a gay psychiatrist (disguised with rubber mask) at a 1972 APA conference in New York about how he and his gay colleagues had to hide their true selves in

⁴⁸¹ Bourn, 21-48.

⁴⁸² "Radical Fairies [sic] Meet in Colo. Mountains," *Out Front*, August 22, 1980.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*; note that *LGBTQ America* mistakenly states the conference was held in Estes Park. The campsite near Bailey has not been identified to date.

⁴⁸⁴ Cynthia A. Marquard and Danni Munson, "Camping it Up This Summer," *Out Front*, July 13, 1990.

⁴⁸⁵ Steven Warren, "The Nunsters," *Out Front*, April 15, 1983.

order to keep their medical license, the APA reversed course.⁴⁸⁶ A statement from the APA noted that linking homosexuality to mental illness had allowed it to be “a tool of discrimination in the private sector, and in the civil service, military, Immigration and Naturalization Service, health services, adoption and child custody courts.”⁴⁸⁷ As noted by historian George Painter, most people arrested under sodomy laws were sentenced to psychiatric treatment.⁴⁸⁸

Many LGBTQ mental health advocates emphasize that mental health concerns and risks of suicide among LGBTQ people do not stem from their sexual orientation or gender identity, but rather from “how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.”⁴⁸⁹ The broader implications of the psychiatric community’s changing attitude toward homosexuality since the 1970s has not been fully explored in Colorado, but an example of emerging mental health services for the LGBTQ community in the state has been found. The Feminist Counseling Collective, a gay and lesbian therapy group formed in Denver in 1977, is credited as the first to openly advertise to gays and lesbians in Colorado.⁴⁹⁰ The Collective’s founders included Ann Morrow, a former public-school counselor in Boulder, and Mike Holtby and Marilyn Huffman, who had previously worked together at a mental health center in Pueblo. While in Pueblo in the early or mid-1970s, Holtby and Huffman had begun a gay organization, the Morning Sun Alliance, as a social alternative to the one gay bar in town.⁴⁹¹ Morrow would go on to teach classes at the University of Denver School of Social Work and Metro and Arapahoe State Colleges on treatment issues for lesbians.⁴⁹²

The AIDS Epidemic

Sexually transmitted infections were a concern among the gay community before the emergence of AIDS. For example, “Safe Week” was launched by epidemiologist Barry Gaspard of the state Department of Health to screen for syphilis and gonorrhea and to educate gay men about the importance of frequent checkups and immediate treatment.⁴⁹³ Gaspard would launch the Gay, Lesbian Health Alliance of Denver.

⁴⁸⁶ Ellen Barry, “He Spurred a Revolution in Psychiatry. Then He ‘Disappeared.’” *New York Times*, May 2, 2022.

⁴⁸⁷ Richard D. Lyons, “Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality No Mental Illness,” *New York Times*, December 16, 1973.

⁴⁸⁸ George Painter, “The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Colorado,” 1991, ed. 2004; 4. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project, <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-History-of-Sodomy-Laws-in-the-United-States-Colorado.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.

⁴⁸⁹ The Trevor Project, “Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide,” online at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>, accessed April 5, 2023. Although statistics from previous years have not been fully explored, a 2022 survey by the Trevor Project found that 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide the year before, and that LGBTQ youth have a significantly increased risk of suicide among all young people aged 10 to 24.

⁴⁹⁰ Love, *Feminists Who Changed America*, 325; and Thomas Fitzpatrick, “The Straight Man Among Us, Mike Holtby,” *Out Front*, October 3, 1980. The location of the Collective’s offices has not been determined through research to date.

⁴⁹¹ The Morning Sun Alliance was apparently held in Holtby’s home in Pueblo, the address of which has not been determined through research to date (see Fitzpatrick, “The Straight Man Among Us”).

⁴⁹² Love, 325.

⁴⁹³ “Safe Week Shows Positive Results,” *Out Front*, July 24, 1981.

In 1981, illnesses associated with severely diminished immune systems in otherwise healthy, young, gay men were being reported from Los Angeles and New York, with some cases being attributed to a rare type of pneumonia, and others to a rare and aggressive cancer.⁴⁹⁴ In 1982, the growing epidemic was first termed “Gay-related Immune Deficiency (GRID)” which had the effect of deepening the misperception that the disease only affected gay men; it was renamed within a few months to AIDS (Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome). Colorado’s first case was diagnosed in 1982.

The history of AIDS in Colorado, its devastation on the state’s LGBTQ and straight community, and the various ways the LGBTQ community responded to it, is a vast subject that cannot be given justice in this context. As stated in a 2011 article in *Out Front*, “Every sub-culture of the gay community—from drag queens to leather daddies—was incorporated in the initial outreach during the AIDS epidemic... It would prove to be the first challenge for the ‘vibrant’ community since the initial Stonewall riots and fight for liberation.”⁴⁹⁵ In order to highlight the importance of this subject in LGBTQ history, a few examples of prominent organizations and events associated with the epidemic in Colorado are given below; they should be considered as only a starting point for further research.⁴⁹⁶

Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and the Denver Principles

From June 9-12, 1983, the fifth national Lesbian and Gay Health Conference was held in Denver at the 1974 Executive Tower Inn (1405 Curtis Street, rehabilitated 2001). As reported by *Out Front* a few months before, “The theme of the conference is ‘Health Pioneering in the 80’s’ and will feature workshops, panels, and presentations of papers focusing on lesbian and gay participation in health delivery.”⁴⁹⁷ Concurrently, the second annual National AIDS Forum was convened for 300 people to “map out national planning for patient care, organizational cooperation, and political strength.”⁴⁹⁸

Angered and disgusted by the thus-far general approach to AIDS as one of palliative care rather than aggressively advocating for prevention and a cure, AIDS activists Larry Kramer, Virginia Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force, and others sought to establish people with AIDS as more than patients or victims. A group of such activists attended the conference and forum in Denver, and, having “commandeered a hospitality suite,” penned what would be called the Denver Principles, considered the founding document of the People With AIDS (PWA) movement that rejected an AIDS diagnosis as meaning one’s life was over.⁴⁹⁹ The document asserted that people with AIDS were “catalysts for social

⁴⁹⁴ HIV.gov, “A Timeline of HIV and AIDS,” online at <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁴⁹⁵ Nic Garcia, “Band of brothers: those who suffered in Colorado were first to fight AIDS,” *Out Front*, August 9, 2011.

⁴⁹⁶ Among many other sources, Barry Jay Glass’s series on the first ten years of the AIDS epidemic in *Resolute*, the newsletter of the group People with AIDS Coalition of Colorado, should be consulted. Glass was a director of client services for the Colorado AIDS Project.

⁴⁹⁷ “GLCCC Asked to Assist with National Workshop,” *Out Front*, February 18, 1983.

⁴⁹⁸ “National Aids Forum Scheduled for Denver,” *Out Front*, April 29, 1983.

⁴⁹⁹ Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown, *We Are Everywhere: Protest, Power, and Pride in the History of Queer Liberation*, New York: Ten Speed Press, 2019, 232.

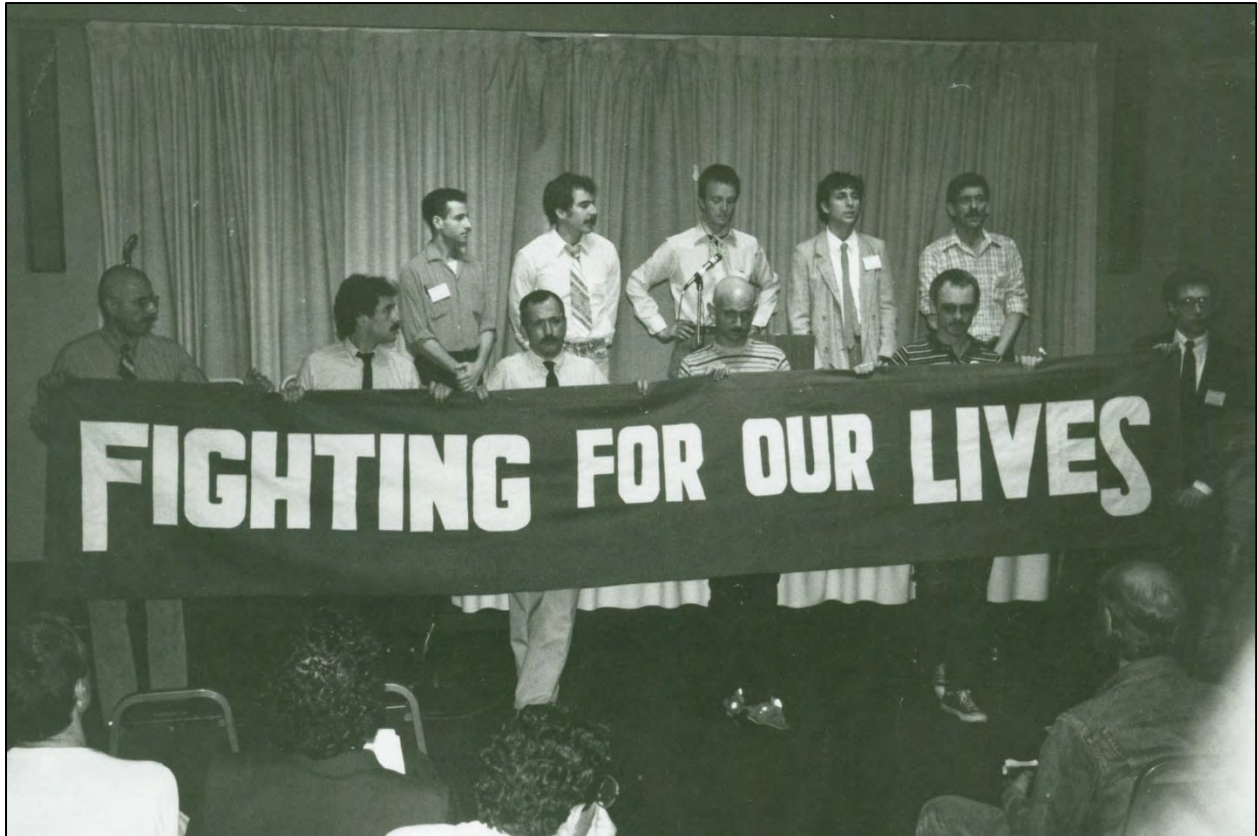


FIGURE 64: RICHARD BERKOWITZ AND TEN OTHER MEN READING THE DENVER PRINCIPLES AT THE 1983 NATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY HEALTH CONFERENCE. (NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE RECORDS, DIVISION OF RARE AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY)

change,” that they “could and should be their own health experts” and that they had a right to “full and satisfying sexual and emotional lives.”⁵⁰⁰

Historians Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown recount how the attendees at the larger health conference had spent the days in Denver exhausted and angered as they faced the “onset of a plague.” On the last day, the PWA activists overtook the stage and read off their principles, ending with “[PWAs have the right] to die—and LIVE—in dignity.” They go on: “Virginia Apuzzo, the conference’s last speaker, stood silently on the stage for ten minutes, visibly moved, collecting herself as the crowd wept and hugged. ‘Well,’ she said with a crack in her voice, ‘it is Gay Pride Month.’ The crowd erupted.”⁵⁰¹

Further information and sources on the Denver Principles and their impact on AIDS activism and treatment can be found online at <https://asld.org/storage/The-Denver-Principles-Flag-Project-Info.pdf> (accessed April 7, 2023.)

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

Colorado AIDS Project

The Colorado AIDS Project (CAP) was the first AIDS Service Organization (ASO) established in the state in July 1983, under the direction of Carol Lease as a joint effort between GLCCC and the city of Denver, with headquarters at the GLCCC.⁵⁰² At the time, only ten cases of AIDS had been reported in Colorado, but there was concern about its rapid rise in coastal cities. CAP's first part-time leader, David W. Holbrook, explained that the organization's two priorities were to meet the "financial, legal, medical, and emotional" needs of AIDS patients and their families; and to educate the public on the disease itself in the hopes of curbing its spread.⁵⁰³ The group immediately started fundraising for these activities, such as the "Torches in the Wind" race in Washington Park on August 21, 1983 and "A Celebration of Hope" at the Paramount Theater on October 1 (among many other events).⁵⁰⁴ CAP received public support from local politicians such as Mayor Federico Pena, Wellington Webb, and Councilwoman Cathy Donohue.

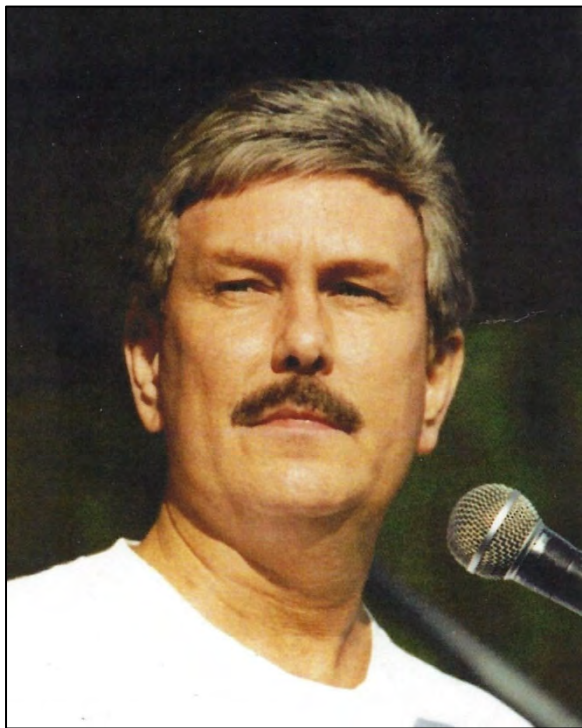


FIGURE 65: JULIAN RUSH. (LGBTQ RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES NETWORK)

In October 1983, Julian Rush, the former youth pastor at First Methodist Church in Boulder who had been removed from his position for coming out as gay (see Religion), was appointed as the new leader of CAP.⁵⁰⁵ CAP was run out of the attic of St. Paul's Methodist Church on Ogden Street (see Religion section), with countless fundraisers held at prominent venues around Denver over the years.

In 1992, there were 2,303 cases of AIDS in Colorado and 1,593 people had died from the disease. CAP had grown to twenty-six paid staff members and more than 300 volunteers, serving more than 600 clients (clearly CAP had outgrown GLCCC's space, but where it operated out of has not been determined to date). Services offered included emergency financial aid for rent and utilities, a food bank, individual and group counseling, and volunteer lawyers to help with wills and other legal matters. All of this was accomplished through federal grants and private donations, without

⁵⁰² "GLCC Develops AIDS Educational Program," *Out Front*, June 24, 1983; and Colorado Health Network, Inc. "Our History," online at <https://coloradohealthnetwork.org/about-us/>, accessed July 2, 2022. CAP's formal incorporation was under the name Colorado Health Network, with the assumption that AIDS would be a "finite project."

⁵⁰³ "Pena to Run in Benefit Foot Race for AIDS Project," *Out Front*, August 5, 1983. Holbrook stepped down after serving for three months and would go on to be a health educator at the Colorado Department of Health. He died at age 40 of AIDS in 1992. (Tillie Fong, "David W. Holbrook, Aids Educator, Activist," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 5, 1992.)

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; and Phil Nash, "Controversy Mounts Over GLCCC Control of AIDS Project," *Out Front*, October 28, 1983.

⁵⁰⁵ "Julian Rush Appointed New Head of AIDS Project," *Out Front*, October 28, 1983.

state or local government funding. CAP's biggest event at the time was its "From All Walks of Life" walk in Cheesman Park, which raised \$250,000 in 1991.⁵⁰⁶ An April 1993 day-long fundraiser called "Athletes Against AIDS/A Day of Love" was scheduled to feature tennis star and AIDS activist Arthur Ashe, but was almost canceled due to Ashe's death from AIDS on February 6, 1993.⁵⁰⁷

Rush received a Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award in 1991 from the Colorado King Holiday Commission for his work with CAP, and in a 1995 profile of him, his then twelve-year tenure stood out among a nationwide two-year average for community AIDS project leaders.⁵⁰⁸ Rush ultimately led CAP for seventeen years, stepping down in 2001.⁵⁰⁹

Regional, independent AIDS Projects were established in Boulder (BCAP, 1985), Colorado Springs (Southern CAP, 1985, in conjunction with El Paso County Health Department), Fort Collins (Northern CAP, 1986), and Grand Junction (Western CAP, 1989). A 1991 article on SCAP in Colorado Springs noted that the organization operated out of an unmarked storefront on South Tejon Street due to harassment from homophobic protestors at some of its fundraisers; asked to comment, CAP's Julian Rush stated that "The [low-profile] tactics they're taking down there are absolutely necessary for that community."⁵¹⁰ Locations of these groups during the 1970-96 period have not been determined through research to date.

Other groups that formed to support AIDS patients include Project Angel Heart, created in 1991 by Charles Robbins based on Los Angeles' Project Angel Food, which delivers meals to home-bound patients. Project Angel Heart established its own kitchen at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church before moving to Our Savior's Lutheran Church in 1996 (5DV. 8172, 915 E. 9th Avenue).⁵¹¹ The People with AIDS Coalition Colorado was formed in 1988 and published a newsletter, *Resolute*, that provided information on critical medications and services and was distributed nationally.

Religious Response to AIDS

The AIDS crisis presented a new challenge for the faith community and its attitudes towards LGBTQ people. In response to this challenge, an all-day, multifaith conference on AIDS and religion was held on October 31, 1989 at the Iliff School of Theology (5DV.9219, 2201 S. University Blvd., National Register listed 2006) with the purpose of discussing "theological perspectives, pastoral concerns, living with AIDS and attitudes about the deadly disease."⁵¹² Speakers included Rev. Julian Rush of CAP, who said that

⁵⁰⁶ Jane Hoback, "With Foresight and Fortitude, Aids Project Fights Good Fight," *Rocky Mountain News*, September 12, 1992.

⁵⁰⁷ "Colorado AIDS Fund-raiser Canceled," *The Denver Post*, February 7, 1993.

⁵⁰⁸ Bill Scanlon, "Death, Despair Don't Dampen Activist's Fervor: Colorado Aids Project Director Honored for 12 Years of Service," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 12, 1995.

⁵⁰⁹ John C. Ensslin, "17-Year Aids Project Boss Steps Down; Rev. Rush Cites Stress Related to Fund Raising as Key in His Decision," *The Denver Post*, March 17, 2001.

⁵¹⁰ Dan Njegomir, "AIDS Group Keeping Low Profile in Springs," *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, December 26, 1991.

⁵¹¹ Project Angel Heart, "Our History," online at <https://www.projectangelheart.org/about-us/history/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁵¹² "AIDS, Religion Topics at Iliff," *The Denver Post*, October 28, 1989.



FIGURE 66: DR. STANLEY BIBER AT HIS OFFICE IN TRINIDAD IN 2004. (DONATED TO THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY BY THE *ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS*/EVAN SEMON)

many people living with AIDS “feel anger and absolute rage” at how institutional churches refused to care for them, though many individuals might volunteer to help.⁵¹³

Political Response to AIDS

Even a cursory review of laws and policies proposed during the height of the epidemic reveals that many Colorado politicians relied on homophobic, fear-based attitudes to introduce egregious bills. Examples include a 1986 bill from State Rep. Dale Erickson of Fort Lupton that would have permitted public health officials to quarantine anyone who had patronized a gay bar, and State Sen. Mary Anne Tebedo of Colorado Springs’ 1989 bill that would have allowed insurance providers to investigate sexual orientation before issuing a health policy.⁵¹⁴ Some were

successful: Colorado became the first state to require that the names of people diagnosed with AIDS be reported to the state Health Department.⁵¹⁵ In response, advertising executive and AIDS patient Tom Witte formed the group Coloradans for Sane AIDS Policies (now known as the Coalition for Political Responsibility). Other groups that formed with complementary agendas include the Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force, ACT UP Colorado/Denver, and the Colorado AIDS Legislative Association. Further research on these groups and their political impact should be investigated further.

Some politicians were supportive of the AIDS-response community from the outset, such as Denver Mayor Federico Pena and State Sen. Pat Pascoe of Denver. Governor Roy Romer set up a Governor’s AIDS Council in 1989 to advise on AIDS testing and healthcare services.

⁵¹³ Virginia Culver, “AIDS Patients Resent Lack of Church Support,” *The Denver Post*, November 4, 1989.

⁵¹⁴ Garcia, “Band of brothers,”; and Brian Weber, “Tebedo wants insurance linked to sexual choice - Critics blast plan as discriminatory,” *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, February 24, 1989.

⁵¹⁵ John C. Ensslin, “A Brief History of AIDS: Denver Writer Tells the Story of Epidemic’s Toll in Colorado,” *Rocky Mountain News*, August 1, 1999.

*Gender Confirmation Surgery and Dr. Stanley H. Biber*⁵¹⁶

Dr. Stanley H. Biber (1923-2006), a former Army doctor from Iowa who served in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital during the Korean conflict, joined a United Mine Workers clinic in the southern Colorado town of Trinidad in 1954. Although he largely performed “everyday” surgeries such as appendectomies and Caesarean sections on clinic patients and residents of town and the surrounding area, Biber was also called upon to perform more specialized procedures such as plastic surgery.

In 1969, Biber was asked by a local social worker and friend, who had been assigned male at birth but had been taking estrogen and living as a woman for many years, to perform a surgery that would help her achieve “a body that fit her gender,” what is referred to today as Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS).⁵¹⁷ Biber agreed, although he was not familiar with the procedure; he subsequently asked for guidance from surgeons at Johns Hopkins University who had been performing GCS since 1966. The surgery was successful, and Biber soon had a growing practice in GCS, and Trinidad was renowned in the 1970s press as the “Sex Change Capital of the World.”

Biber advocated for and performed GCS until his retirement in 2004. His more than 5,000 patients had come from all over the world, “drawn by his reputation as a caring, competent, and ethical surgeon.”⁵¹⁸ Biber’s trainee in GCS, Dr. Marci Bowers, a transgender woman from Seattle, took over his practice.⁵¹⁹ Historian Kathleen Corbett has uncovered two extant sites in Trinidad known to be associated with Biber’s groundbreaking practice, the First National Bank Building (5LA.2179, contributing building to the Corazon de Trinidad Historic District, National Register listed 1970), which housed his offices, and the Mt. San Rafael Hospital (410 Benedicta Avenue). Corbett’s research evaluated both for their potential eligibility for the National Historic Landmark designation, which is currently under review by the National Park Service.



FIGURE 67: FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING, TRINIDAD. (JEFFREY BEALL/ WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Businesses

LGBTQ businesses have played an important role in the community by providing places to meet and to provide goods or services in an atmosphere where they could be out. Businesses also made important financial contributions to community organizations that offered support, classes, hotlines, and other

⁵¹⁶ This section on Biber’s gender confirmation surgery practice in Trinidad, Colorado has been adapted from Kathleen Corbett, Ph.D.’s research on properties associated with Dr. Stanley Biber (revised 2022).

⁵¹⁷ Corbett, 3.

⁵¹⁸ Corbett, 6.

⁵¹⁹ Bowers relocated her surgery practice to California in 2011, although she currently maintains offices in Trinidad (Corbett, 6).

services, and their advertising helped keep the LGBTQ media afloat. Even a cursory glance at an issue of *Out Front* or *Big Mama Rag* from the 1970s or '80s highlights the range of LGBTQ businesses on offer, most of which were in Denver: stereo and video equipment, clothing, antiques, bookstores, hairstyling, dry cleaning, appliance repair, and memorials, not to mention bars and bathhouses. It is worth noting that many seem to have shared buildings over the years, presumably because a landlord was LGBTQ themselves or was sympathetic.

Another influence of LGBTQ business owners was summed up by *Out Front* journalist Phil Nash in 1982: “One recent count tallied nearly three dozen gay owned and operated businesses in Broadway Terrace, and new ones are springing up both north and south of the main business district. While the development of the area is still considered fragile by many, it is a testimony to the creativity and the pioneering spirit of self-motivated gay businessmen to help revitalize center city commercial activity.”⁵²⁰ The cycle of LGBTQ people creating community in neighborhoods that were previously considered undesirable by the straight world, then finding their “gay-borhoods” attracting non-LGBTQ people because of the improvements they had made, is one that has been repeated over and over by marginalized groups.

The sheer number of LGBTQ businesses that were open during the period precludes an exhaustive listing of them; not all, or even many, may be historically important. Three types were particularly prominent as places that served LGBTQ people and provided them places in which they could safely meet, namely bathhouses, bars, and bookstores. Again, because of the large number of these business types that existed, only a few that help illustrate the diversity of the LGBTQ community and its geographical reach across the state are referenced below. (See also Windshield Survey table for extant sites.)

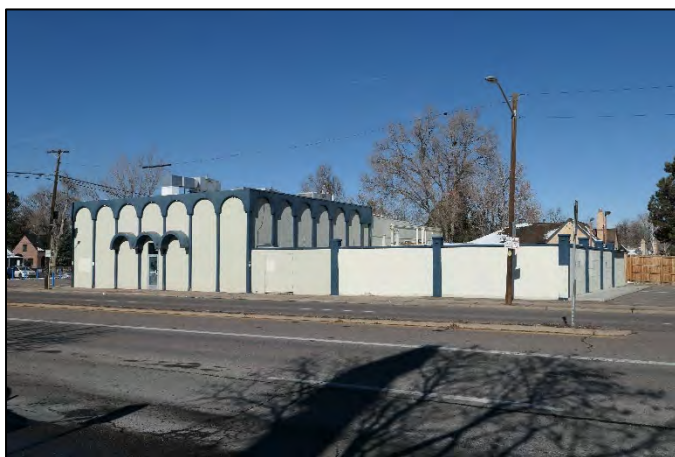


FIGURE 68: EMPIRE BATHS/DENVER SWIM CLUB, 6923 E. COLFAX, DENVER. (AMY UNGER)

Bathhouses

As discussed in earlier eras covered by this context, bathhouses have long been a place where gay men could discreetly meet, but in keeping with the sexual freedom ideals of the gay liberation movement, their appeal as places to find sexual partners was loudly referenced beginning in the 1970s in such ads as one for Empire Baths from 1977, which urged its patrons to “Stalk the Male Animal.”⁵²¹ Most bathhouses that existed in the 1970s and onward were located in Denver, with a few, such as Kona and the Cellar Baths in the basement of Hide & Seek

in Colorado Springs, located elsewhere. Phil Nash noted that “Perhaps the longest enduring gay-identified edifice is the Denver Swim Club on E. Colfax a few blocks east of Monaco. It was formerly

⁵²⁰ Phil Nash, “1982: the Year in Review, Business,” *Out Front*, December 22, 1982.

⁵²¹ Empire Baths advertisement, *Out Front*, July 28, 1977.

known as the Empire Baths, and dates from at least the mid-70s and has been open continuously ever since.”⁵²²

Bars

As public historian Susan Ferentinos has stated in her comprehensive context of LGBTQ history in Maryland, “many people consider [the gay bar] the ultimate representation of queer space” and it undeniably “has played an outsized role in LGBTQ social life, and often forms the anchor of LGBTQ neighborhoods and subcultures.”⁵²³ Author Melinda Lo, who immigrated to the U.S. from China as a young child and grew up near Boulder, recounted that in her young adulthood in the 1990s, as she discovered that her “sexual orientation [wasn’t] as straight as [she] thought,” LGBTQ bars served the same function as Chinatowns for her immigrant parents:

They were spaces where I spoke the language. I was accepted as family. They were places of joy; they were places of freedom. They were crucibles of emotion—pulsing, music-filled rooms where we were encouraged to feel everything. They were spaces full of drama, rooms ripe with possibility. For many people in the gay community, gay clubs are our living rooms and our sanctuaries; they are the places we meet the people we love, and the spaces where we find ourselves.⁵²⁴

It is important to note, however, that, as Ferentinos points out, “to focus exclusively on bars as vehicles for LGBTQ social life and support is to inadvertently favor some LGBTQ communities over others. Historically, gay and bisexual white men were much more likely to gather in gay bars than were women or racial minorities.”⁵²⁵ Furthermore, as discussed elsewhere in this context, many in the LGBTQ community were also wary of the dependence on bars as the way to build social connections, not least out of concern that overreliance on such social scenes encouraged alcoholism. The owners of one of Denver’s lesbian bars, the Velvet Hammer, ultimately closed in part because they “couldn’t, with good conscience, serve drinks to women when it was obvious that alcohol was contributing to their problems.”⁵²⁶ Students of LGBTQ history should be careful, however, to avoid disproportionately focusing on the negative aspects of the LGBTQ bar scene, thereby perpetuating negative stereotypes of LGBTQ relationships as fueled by alcohol or drug dependence.

Notwithstanding these cautions, bars have undoubtedly played a prominent role in LGBTQ life. As such, gay bars are some of the most easily identifiable LGBTQ spaces, and as such there are several lists of gay bar names and addresses that have been collected. Historian David Duffield of the LGBTQ History Project at the Center in Denver has compiled an extensive list of that city’s bars, while the City of Boulder has another. The database of identified LGBTQ sites that accompanies this report incorporates

⁵²² LGBTQ Collection on Historypin.org; *Contact*, March 19, 1975.

⁵²³ Ferentinos, 119.

⁵²⁴ Melinda Lo, “In the Club,” blogpost, June 12, 2016, online at <https://www.malindalo.com/blog/2016/06/in-the-club>, accessed April 7, 2023. Lo wrote this blogpost in response to the 2016 violent attack on the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

⁵²⁵ Ferentinos, 119.

⁵²⁶ Judy Barlow, “The Velvet Hammer—A Difficult Lesson,” *Big Mama Rag*, August 1, 1979.

these lists and adds many other sites. The Windshield Survey table includes a few extant sites that help illustrate particularly long-lasting bars, lesbian bars, and others outside of Denver. In addition, a few bars that are no longer extant but were important in their local community include:

- Velvet Hammer (2nd location): 3754 Chestnut Place, Denver (long-running lesbian bar)
- Box Car: 5935 N. Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs
- Turquoise Club: 707 N. Main Street, Pueblo (only gay bar in town for several years in early 1970s)

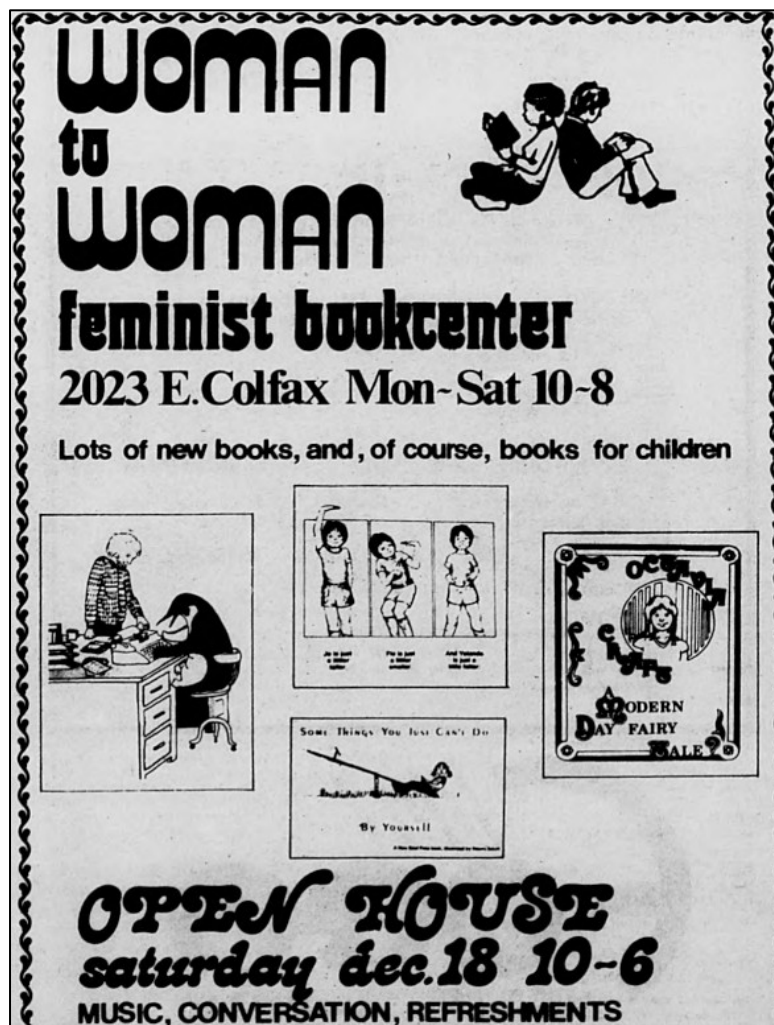


FIGURE 69: WOMAN TO WOMAN FEMINIST BOOKSTORE ADVERTISEMENT. (*BIG MAMA RAG*, DECEMBER 1, 1976)

Bookstores

In a discussion on the LGBTQ social scenes that offered alternatives to bars, Ferentinos describes the importance of bookstores in that they “served a dual purpose, both creating a space for social connection and disseminating information about LGBTQ culture and politics in the pre-Internet era, when such information was extremely difficult to access through mainstream channels.”⁵²⁷

History student Amy Lily asserts in her senior thesis’s examination of the feminist-lesbian movement, that in particular, bookstores were critical to lesbian identity because they allowed lesbian women to remove themselves from the oppressive norms of mainstream society while also promoting self-education through the store’s wares and discussions among patrons and staff.⁵²⁸ As such, these stores were much more than retail spaces, functioning as community centers with similar services. See the Windshield Survey table and site database for examples of LGBTQ bookstores in business in the 1970s-1990s.

⁵²⁷ Ferentinos, 122.

⁵²⁸ Amy Lily, 21.

1996-present

In 1992, after voters approved Amendment 2, the constitutional amendment preventing municipalities from enacting anti-discrimination laws protecting gay, lesbian, or bisexual people in Colorado, the LGBTQ community, legal experts, civil rights groups, and allies immediately organized in opposition. The effort to strike down the amendment quickly gained national attention and support.

A nationwide boycott of the “Hate State” severely affected the tourism industry and cost the state millions. In Colorado Springs, where the amendment originated, LGBTQ rights supporters organized boycotts of the city and the car dealership owned by Will Perkins, its lead sponsor. The city’s LGBTQ residents organized to oppose Amendment 2. According to University of Colorado at Colorado Springs professor John Harner, individuals “responded by coming out of the closet in unprecedented numbers” and the activist group Ground Zero formed to “focus opposition and challenge stereotypes and misperceptions about gays and lesbians.”⁵²⁹

An injunction affirmed by Colorado Supreme Court in July 1993, halted enforcement of the amendment until its constitutionality could be determined by the courts. Led by Boulder attorney Jean Dubofsky, the legal battle reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1995. In *Romer v. Evans*, the Supreme Court ruled Amendment 2 unconstitutional, signaling the court’s willingness to consider challenges to laws that discriminated against or imposed limitations on the LGBTQ community. In the decades that followed the 1996 landmark decision, the U.S. and Colorado saw a significant expansion of LGBTQ rights despite continued opposition from conservatives and sometimes violent bigotry.

Though Amendment 2 had been defeated, voters in Colorado continued to reject legislation and policies that expanded LGBTQ rights. In spring 1998, local voters passed a referendum preventing the Fort Collin’s City Council from amending the city’s non-discrimination law covering employment, housing, and public accommodations to include sexual orientation.

LGBTQ rights activists continued to fight for legal protections under Colorado law. In 2007, same-sex couples in Colorado gained the right to adopt children, and legislators expanded the state’s Employment

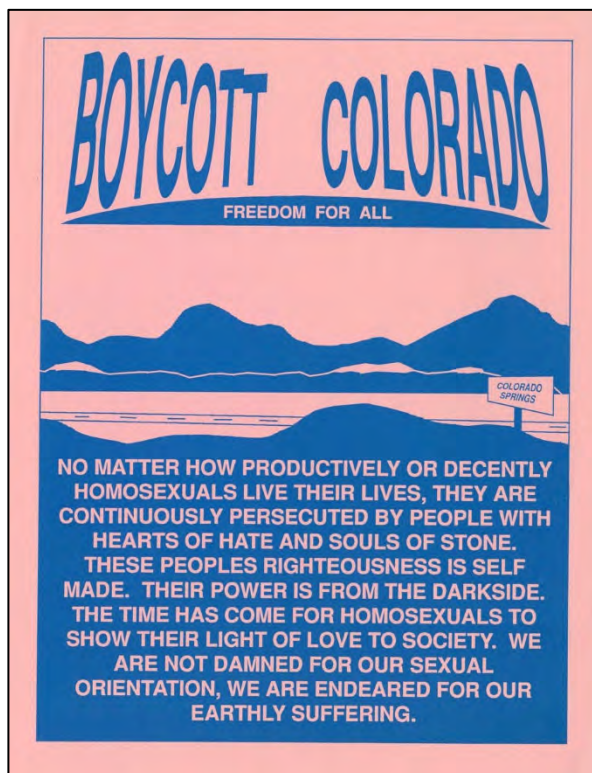


FIGURE 70: FLYER CALLING FOR A BOYCOTT OF COLORADO IN RESPONSE TO AMENDMENT 2. (DONNA JOHNSON/PIONEER SPRINGS PIONEER MUSEUM)

⁵²⁹ Dr. John Harner, “Amendment 2,” Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum, <https://www.cspm.org/cos-150-story/amendment-2/>.

Nondiscrimination Act to include sexual orientation.⁵³⁰ The following year, Governor Bill Ritter signed the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, which banned “discrimination based on a person’s religious belief or sexual orientation – including transgender people – in places of public accommodation, housing practices, family planning services and 20 other public spheres,” despite vocal opposition from conservative religious groups including Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family.⁵³¹



FIGURE 71: MASTERPIECE CAKESHOP, 3355 S. WADSWORTH, LAKEWOOD. (AMY UNGER)

Colorado made enormous strides in ensuring equality for members of its LGBTQ community after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Amendment 2 unconstitutional. However, the fight to protect those hard-earned rights and privileges continues as the composition of the federal courts evolve and conservative politicians sponsor legislation that restricts the lives of LGBTQ individuals. In 2012, Jack Phillip, owner of the Masterpiece Cakeshop in the Mission Trace Shopping Center at 3355 S. Wadsworth in Lakewood, refused to design a custom wedding cake for same-sex couple Charlie Craig and David

Mullins, arguing that to do so violated his religious beliefs. Craig and Mullins filed a discrimination complaint with Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which found that Phillips had violated the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act. After Colorado Court of Appeals affirmed the Commission’s decision and the Colorado Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal, Masterpiece Cakeshop petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case, which it did. In its ruling on *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, finding that although same-sex couples are protected from discrimination under the law and U.S. Constitution, religious and philosophical views can also be protected forms of expression and the commission had acted with anti-religious bias when applying Colorado’s anti-discrimination law. A similar challenge to the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act involving Lorie Smith a Denver designer who wishes to refuse to design wedding websites for same-sex couples is expected to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in the near future.

Same-Sex Marriage

The battle over same-sex marriage escalated with passage of the U.S. Public Law 104-199, known as the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which specifically denied same-sex couples the federal protections and privileges enjoyed by opposite-sex couples. Under DOMA, states with laws banning same-sex marriage were not required to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, and for federal purposes, marriage was defined as a legal union between one man and one woman. The law denied same-sex unions legal recognition at the federal level, impacting Social Security and federal employment

⁵³⁰ Associated Press, “New law lets workers sue over sexual orientation discrimination,” *Denver Post*, July 31, 2007.

⁵³¹ John Ingold, “Ritter signs controversial anti-discrimination bill,” *Denver Post*, May 29, 2008.

benefits, inheritance rights, income taxes, immigration protections for binational couples, next-of-kin status, military benefits, rights to creative and intellectual property, and many other federal protections and privileges. The law also had profound implications for LGBTQ parents. A nonbiological parent could not establish a legal relationship with the biological children of their same-sex partner, or take family medical leave to care for their children or partner. Same-sex couples were banned from adopting children, and unable to petition for child support, visitation, or custody if the relationship ended.

DOMA's proponents argued that same-sex marriage created an inappropriate environment for raising children and legal recognition of such unions would undermine opposite-sex marriage and create a slippery slope leading to polygamy, incestuous relationships, and child marriage. Proposed in anticipation of Hawai'i legalizing same-sex marriage, DOMA passed with strong support in Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton on September 21, 1996. After DOMA became law, the majority of U.S. states moved to enact bans on same-sex marriage. In Colorado, the General Assembly passed bills banning same-sex marriage in 1996 and 1997. Both attempts to deny same-sex couples the right to marry were vetoed by Governor Roy Romer, but in 2000, Colorado adopted a statute restricting marriage to "one man and one woman."⁵³²

In 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional under the Massachusetts Constitution. As a result, Massachusetts became the first state in the U.S. to legally recognize same-sex marriage. To avoid a similar challenge to Colorado's same-sex marriage law, Colorado voters passed Amendment 43 in 2006, which added the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the Colorado Constitution, and defeated the Colorado Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act, a measure that would have allowed same-sex couples in Colorado to enter domestic partnerships similar to civil unions.⁵³³

An attempt to similarly amend the U.S. Constitution in 2006 failed in the House of Representatives, despite support from President George Bush, suggesting the country was slowly moving toward greater acceptance of same-sex couples. By 2010, same-sex marriage was legal in Connecticut (2008), Vermont (2009), Iowa (2009), New Hampshire (2010), and the District of Columbia (2010).

In the meantime, advocacy groups worked with state lawmakers to extend a variety of rights and privileges to Colorado's same-sex couples. In 2009, lawmakers passed House Bill 1260, known as the Designated Beneficiaries Agreement Act, sponsored by Sen. Jennifer Veiga, Colorado's first openly LGBTQ state legislator, and Representative Mark Ferrandino, the first openly gay man to serve in the Colorado Legislature. The law gave same-sex couples and other unmarried adults the opportunity to name their partners as designated beneficiaries, granting them a number of rights related to inheritance and estate planning, insurance benefits, medical care, and property ownership. At the time, Joe Solmonese, president of Human Rights Campaign, a national gay civil rights advocacy group, recognized

⁵³² Tom Mcavoy, "With stroke of pen, 60 new laws created," *Pueblo Chieftain*, May 27, 2000; Uniform Marriage Act, C.R.S. 14-2-104(1)(b) (2000).

⁵³³ Kevin Simpson, "Colorado Amendment 43: Gay marriage banned; domestic partnerships also defeated," *Denver Post*, November 8, 2006.



FIGURE 72: GOVERNOR HICKENLOOPER SIGNS THE COLORADO CIVIL UNION ACT INTO LAW AT THE HISTORY COLORADO CENTER IN 2013. AROUND HIM ARE REPS. JOANN GINAL AND SUE SCHAFFER, SEN. PAT STEADMAN, AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE MARK FERRANDINO. (HISTORY COLORADO)

the law as “an important step toward equality” that “will provide lesbian and gay couples in Colorado, and their families, with important, tangible protections that are needed right now.”⁵³⁴

In 2011, openly gay Colorado Senator Pat Steadman, appointed to fill Jennifer Veiga’s seat after she resigned for family reasons, and Ferrandino introduced the Colorado Civil Union Act (SB13-011). Initially defeated by Republican legislators, a revised version of the bill passed the House and Senate in 2013 and was signed into law by Governor John Hickenlooper, a supporter of LGBTQ rights.⁵³⁵ The law authorized “any 2 unmarried adults, regardless of gender, to enter into a civil union.” Under the act, the “rights,

⁵³⁴ Ernest Luning, “Supporters applaud Ritter for signing Designated Beneficiary Agreement Act,” *Colorado Independent*, April 9, 2009.

⁵³⁵ Lynn Bartels, “Colorado civil unions bill signed by Gov. John Hickenlooper at History Colorado Center,” *Denver Post*, March 21, 2013.

benefits, protections, duties, obligations, responsibilities, and other incidents under law that are granted or imposed under the law to spouses” applied to parties in a civil union.⁵³⁶

That same year, the U.S. Supreme Court found Section 3 of DOMA, which denied federal recognition of same-sex marriages, a violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment in the landmark case *United States v. Windsor*. After the decision, the U.S. government began extending federal rights, privileges, and benefits previously limited to opposite-sex couples to married same-sex couples.

Marriage, however, was still not an option for same-sex couples living in Colorado, and they continued to be denied the newly established federal rights enjoyed by couples in states that supported same-sex marriage. In October 2013, Dr. Rebecca Brinkman and Margaret Burd filed a lawsuit challenging Colorado’s constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, after Adams County denied their request for a marriage license after thirty-four years together as a couple.⁵³⁷ Less than four months later, nine same-sex couples filed a similar lawsuit, *McDaniel-Miccio v. Hickenlooper*.⁵³⁸ The two cases were combined and on July 9, 2014, Colorado District Court Judge C. Scott Crabtree issued a summary judgement order ruling that Colorado’s ban on same-sex marriage violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and that civil unions did not ameliorate the ban’s discriminatory effect.⁵³⁹ Crabtree, however, ordered that the court’s judgment be stayed pending appeal. In his judgment Crabtree wrote, “While the striking down of laws banning same-sex marriages has been progressing at a rapid rate, it will take time for this issue to be finally resolved.”⁵⁴⁰

The battle over same-sex marriage was taking place in the federal courts as well. Six same-sex couples, legally married in other states, filed *Burns v. Hickenlooper* challenging Colorado’s ban.⁵⁴¹ U.S. District Judge Raymond P. Moore found in favor of plaintiffs on July 23, 2014, but the ruling immediately appealed, and a stay granted by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.⁵⁴²

After the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, which includes Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Utah, found Utah’s ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional on June 25, 2014, Boulder County Clerk and Recorder Hillary Hall immediately began issuing marriage licenses to

⁵³⁶ ACLU Colorado, “SB13-011: Colorado Civil Union Act,” <https://www.aclu-co.org/en/legislation/sb13-011-colorado-civil-union-act>.

⁵³⁷ Anica Padilla and 7News, “Adams County couple sues to overturn Colorado ban on same-sex marriage,” *Denver Post*, October 31, 2013; “Brinkman v. Long,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brinkman_v._Long.

⁵³⁸ Kirk Mitchell and Kurtis Lee, “Nine couples seek to overturn Colorado’s gay marriage ban,” *Denver Post*, February 19, 2014. According to the complaint, the nine couples were Kristian McDaniel-Miccio and Nan McDaniel-Miccio, Sandra Abbott and Amy Smart, Wendy Alfretdsen and Michelle Alfretdsen, Kevin Bemis and Kyle Bemis, Tommy Craig and Joshua Wells, James Davis and Christopher Massey, Sara Knickerbocker and Jessica Ryann Peyton, Jodi Lupien and Kathleen Porter, and Tracey MacDermott and Heather Shockey, Freedom to Marry, “The Freedom to Marry in Colorado,” <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/states/colorado>, <https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ftm-assets/ftm/archive/files/pdfs/McDanielMicciovHickenlooperComplaint.pdf>.

⁵³⁹ C. Scott Crabtree, Colorado District Judge (July 9, 2014). “Summary Judgment Order, Brinkman v. Long, No. 13-CV-32572, and McDaniel-Miccio v. Colorado, No. 14-CV-30731.” Colorado Seventeenth Judicial District Court, Adams County.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ “*Burns v. Hickenlooper*,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burns_v._Hickenlooper.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

same-sex couples, arguing that the decision established precedent for ending Colorado's ban.⁵⁴³ Colorado Attorney General John Suthers attempted to stop Hall, but the court found the clerk's actions to be an allowable act of civil disobedience.⁵⁴⁴ Denver County Clerk and Recorder Debra Johnson and Pueblo County Clerk Gilbert Ortiz had followed Hall's lead and continued to issue licenses to couples regardless of gender. Boulder County issued 202 licenses before the Colorado Supreme Court forced Hall to stop in July 2014. Disappointed by the Colorado Supreme Court's decision, Hall nevertheless complied saying, "Given the avalanche of recent cases determining that same-sex marriage bans are unconstitutional, I am hopeful the stay will be short-lived and that we will be able to resume issuing licenses soon."⁵⁴⁵ After the Supreme Court also ordered Denver County to stop, Pueblo ceased issuing licenses as well. Altogether, more than 350 same-sex couples had received licenses in just over a month.⁵⁴⁶

The various lawsuits were resolved when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the decisions of the Tenth Circuit court regarding same-sex marriage and the stay on *Burns v. Hickenlooper* was lifted. With precedent firmly established, the Colorado Supreme Court cleared the way and Attorney General John Suthers issued a statement on October 7, 2014, declaring, "There are no remaining legal requirements that prevent same-sex couples from legally marrying in Colorado. Beginning today, Colorado's 64 county clerks are legally required to issue licenses to same-sex couples who request them." In a public statement Hall celebrated the news: "This is a wonderful day for Colorado and especially for couples and their families who have been denied this fundamental right for far too long."⁵⁴⁷

Nearly one year later, on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the fundamental right to marry is constitutionally guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Same-sex couples could now marry in all U.S. states and territories. On June 24, 2022, however, the rights of same-sex couples were threatened anew when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which protected a woman's liberty to choose to have an abortion, and Justice Clarence Thomas suggested that *Obergefell* could be overturned as well.⁵⁴⁸ Congress reacted swiftly, passing the landmark Respect for Marriage Act, which repealed the Defense of Marriage Act and required that all U.S. states and territories recognize the validity of same-sex and interracial marriage. President Joseph Biden signed the act into law on December 13, 2022, thus ending further legal challenges to same-sex marriage in the U.S.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴³ "Herbert v. Kitchen," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitchen_v._Herbert

⁵⁴⁴ "Colorado ex rel. Suthers v. Hall," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_ex_rel._Suthers_v._Hall.

⁵⁴⁵ Ivan Moreno, "Boulder gay marriage licenses halted in Colo. court judgement," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 30, 2014.

⁵⁴⁶ Jordan Steffen and Kirk Mitchell, "Federal judge weighs arguments in Colorado gay marriage case," *Denver Post*, July 15, 2014, updated April 27, 2016; Jesse Paul and Jordan Steffen, "Colorado Supreme Court, Suthers clear way for same-sex licenses," *Denver Post*, October 7, 2014.

⁵⁴⁷ Paul and Steffen.

⁵⁴⁸ Adam Liptak, "In 6-to-3 Ruling, Supreme Court Ends Nearly 50 Years of Abortion Rights," *New York Times*, June 24, 2022; Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Thomas's concurring opinion raises questions about what rights might be next," *New York Times*, June 24, 2022.

⁵⁴⁹ Michael D. Shear, "Biden Signs Bill to Protect Same-Sex Marriage Rights," *New York Times*, December 13, 2022.

Acceptance of LGBTQ Military Personnel

After the conclusion of World War II, the pressure to enlist military recruits that existed during the war dissipated and in 1949 the Department of Defense (DOD) moved to clearly exclude LGBTQ soldiers from serving in all branches of the military, stating “Homosexual personnel, irrespective of sex, should not be permitted to serve in any branch of the Armed Forces in any capacity, and prompt separation of known homosexuals from the Armed Forces is mandatory.”⁵⁵⁰ Signed into law by President Harry S. Truman the following year, Article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice specifically prohibited military personnel from committing sodomy.

As the LGBTQ rights movement gained momentum in the 1970s and early '80s, the DOD sought to strengthen its anti-homosexual policies to withstand potential legal challenges. The revised regulations excluded “a person, regardless of sex, who engages in, desires to engage in, or intends to engage in homosexual acts,” defined as “bodily contact, actively undertaken or passively permitted, between members of the same sex for the purpose of satisfying sexual desires.” DOD justified its ban by arguing:

Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence in the military environment of persons who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission. The presence of such members adversely affects the ability of the Military Services to maintain discipline, good order, and morale; to foster mutual trust and confidence among servicemembers; to ensure the integrity of the system of rank and command; to facilitate assignment and worldwide deployment of servicemembers who frequently must live and work under close conditions affording minimal privacy; to recruit and retain members of the Military Services; to maintain public acceptability of military service; and to prevent breaches of security.⁵⁵¹

LGBTQ servicepeople were forced to hide their sexuality and gender identity from their commanding officers and fellow military personnel or face discharge. Between 1980 and 1990, approximately 17,000 servicemen and women (about 1,500 per year) were discharged for “homosexuality.” According to a 1992 United States General Accounting Office report on the DOD’s policy regarding gay, lesbian, and bisexual soldiers:

No determination that their behavior had adversely affected the ability of the military services to perform their missions was required. In terms of rank, gender, and race/ethnicity, the majority were enlisted personnel; most were men; and most were white. However, some groups were consistently discharged at a rate higher than their representation in the total active force or individual service. For example, between 1980 and 1990, the Navy, representing 27 percent of the active force, accounted for about 51

⁵⁵⁰ Bérubé, 261.

⁵⁵¹ United States General Accounting Office, *Defense Force Management: DOD’s Policy on Homosexuality*. GAO/NSIAD-92-98, June 1992, 2, <http://archive.gao.gov/d33t10/146980.pdf>.

percent of the discharges; and women, representing 11 percent of the total active Navy force, accounted for 22 percent of those discharged.⁵⁵²

Activists continued to fight against the DOD's anti-LGBTQ policy and public opinion began to change, prompting some Democratic politicians to call for reform, including presidential candidate Bill Clinton. After Clinton won the presidency in 1992, he quickly moved to make good on his campaign promise to lift the ban that prohibited gay, lesbian, and bisexual people from military service. Under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, enacted in 1993, gay, lesbian, and bisexual soldiers could serve, as long as they did not talk about their sexual orientation or engage in sexual activity, and commanding officers were banned from asking service members about their sexual orientation.

The compromise measure stopped short of allowing gay, lesbian, and bisexual servicepeople to openly express their sexual orientation, and those who did were discharged or turned away at recruitment centers. By 2006, as many as 11,000 soldiers were discharged for refusing to hide their sexual orientation. While the military continued to oppose repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, public opinion polls conducted by Gallup and the Pew Research Center found that a majority of Americans supported allowing military personnel to openly express their sexual orientation without fear of reprisal.⁵⁵³

During his 2008 campaign for president, Barack Obama pledged to overturn Don't Ask Don't Tell if elected. Under president Obama, the Pentagon reevaluated the policy and in a 2010 report found that repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell would not compromise military effectiveness. On December 22, 2010, President Obama signed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010, ending the policy banning gay, lesbian, and bisexual people from openly serving in the U.S. military; per the legislation, the policy repeal was officially implemented on September 20, 2011.

Transgender individuals, however, continued to be banned from service until June 3, 2016, when Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter announced that transgender military personnel could serve openly. That year a study conducted on behalf of DOD estimated around 2,450 transgender soldiers were serving on active duty and 1,510 in the military reserves.⁵⁵⁴ The policy change allowed transgender soldiers to serve openly and receive gender affirming medical care.⁵⁵⁵ The ban was briefly reinstated in 2019 under President Donald Trump and revoked in 2021 after President Joseph Biden took office. As of 2022, individuals who otherwise meet the qualifications for military service may serve openly regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

LGBTQ Hate Crime Legislation

Despite growing public support for the LGBTQ community across the United States during the 1990s, unfounded fear and persistent bigotry continued to threaten the lives of individuals who did not

⁵⁵² Ibid, 4.

⁵⁵³ Lizette Alvarez, "Gay Groups Renew Drive Against 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'," *New York Times*, September 14, 2006.

⁵⁵⁴ Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Radha Iyengar Plumb, Srikanth Kadiyala, Jennifer Kavanagh, Charles C. Engel, Kayla M. Williams, and Amii M. Kress, *Assessing the Implications of Allowing Transgender Personnel to Serve Openly*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016, xi, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1530.html.

⁵⁵⁵ Terri Moon Cronk, "Transgender Service Members Can Now Serve Openly, Carter Announces," *DOD News*, June 30, 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/822235/transgender-service-members-can-now-serve-openly-carter-announces/>.



FIGURE 73: MEMBERS OF THE FORT COLLINS COMMUNITY STOOD VIGIL FOR GAY COLLEGE STUDENT MATTHEW SHEPARD, WHO FOUGHT FOR HIS LIFE AT POUDDRE VALLEY HOSPITAL IN FORT COLLINS AFTER HE WAS SEVERELY BEATEN IN LARAMIE, WYOMING, ON OCTOBER 7, 1998. (COLORADOAN LIBRARY)

conform to the dominant sex and gender norms. In October 1998, two men severely beat Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, in Laramie, Wyoming, and left him for dead in a widely publicized anti-gay hate crime. Transported to Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins (1024 S. Lemay Avenue), Shepard later died of his injuries. As Shepard fought for his life, more than 815,000 people from around the world visited a website created by the hospital to provide updates on his condition.⁵⁵⁶

Shepard's tragic death highlighted the threat of violence that many members of the LGBTQ community lived with on a daily basis in the western United States. On June 16, 2001, Fred Martinez Jr., a Montezuma-Cortez High School student of Navajo descent, left home to attend the Ute Mountain Roundup Rodeo in Cortez, Colorado. Assigned male at birth, Martinez identified as *nádleehí* (gender fluid) and openly presented as female. Five days later, the sixteen-year-old's brutally beaten body was found in a canyon south of town. The crime received national attention, drawing comparisons with Shepard's 1998 murder after it was revealed that his attacker, eighteen-year-old New Mexico resident Shaun Murphy, reportedly bragged that he had "beat up a fag." Local law enforcement officials, however, hesitated to describe the murder as motivated by anti-LGBTQ bias, despite protests from LGBTQ activists and Martinez's mother, Pauline Mitchell.

⁵⁵⁶ City of Fort Collins Historic Preservation, "PRIDE: History of LGBTQ+ People in Fort Collins," <https://www.fcgov.com/historicpreservation/pride>.

Regardless, Murphy, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, could not be penalized under Colorado’s hate crime statute. Colorado’s 1988 Ethnic Intimidation Act addressed hate crimes motivated by race, color, ancestry, religion, or national origin, but not those based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.⁵⁵⁷ Despite calls to amend the law after Martinez’s murder, it would be four years before House Bill 1188 added sexual orientation and disability to the existing anti-bias law.



FIGURE 74: FRED MARTINEZ JR.
(OUTFRONTMAGAZINE.COM)

A 2011 PBS documentary directed by Lydia Nibley, *Two Spirits*, explored Martinez’s life and Navajo gender concepts, while encouraging greater awareness of issues facing LGBTQ youth. According to Cathy Renna, formerly of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, “Fred’s death had an indescribable impact on his family of course, but has also changed the local school, police, and rest of the community. The school now has policies related to bullying based on sexual orientation and last I heard, a GSA [gay student alliance]. The biggest change is the increased attention to LGBT youth issues in general — not just hate crimes, but bullying, suicide, and family acceptance and rejection of youth coming out.”

Violence against members of the LGBTQ community continued after 2005, however. The Colorado Anti-Violence Program reported 121 incidents of violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people in

Colorado in 2007, and reports of anti-LGBTQ violence increased by 24 percent that year. In July 2008, Angie Zapata, an eighteen-year-old Hispanic transgender woman who grew up in Fort Lupton and “dreamed of moving to Denver, becoming a professional drag queen and working as a cosmetologist,” was murdered in her Greeley apartment by a thirty-one-year-old man she met online, Allen Ray Andrade.⁵⁵⁸ Andrade said he bludgeoned Zapata to death after discovering she was transgender, blaming Zapata for his actions and employing the “gay panic” defense, “a legal strategy that cites a victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity as the causal factor for a defendant’s violent reaction—including murder.”⁵⁵⁹ Andrade’s defense failed, and Weld County District Attorney Kenneth R. Buck, now a U.S. Representative, successfully convicted Andrade of a hate crime. Twelve years after Zapata’s murder, Colorado Governor Jared Polis, the first-openly gay elected governor in the United States,

⁵⁵⁷ Paul Duggan, “Gay Youth’s Death Shakes Colo. City,” *Washington Post*, September 1, 2001; Advocate.

⁵⁵⁸ Dan Frosch, “Death of a Transgender Woman Is Called a Hate Crime,” *New York Times*, August 2, 2008.

⁵⁵⁹ One Colorado, “Gay Panic or Transgender Panic Defense bill sent to Governor Jared Polis for signature,” June 12, 2020, <https://one-colorado.org/new/6-12-gay-panic-or-transgender-panic-defense-bill-sent-to-governor-jared-polis-for-signature/>.

signed Senate Bill 20-221 banning the use of the gay panic or transgender panic defense.⁵⁶⁰ The law was signed at the LGBTQ Center in Denver, as Colorado became the eleventh state to ban such a defense. The bipartisan bill was sponsored by Republicans Sen. Jack Tate of Centennial and Rep. Matt Soper of Delta, and Democrats, Rep. Brianna Titone of Arvada and Sen. Dominick Moreno of Commerce City. In 2017, Titone became the first transgender legislator to serve in Colorado.⁵⁶¹

In October 2009, President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, expanding the definition of hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. In recent years, bias motivated crimes have increased in Colorado, despite expansion of state and federal hate crime laws. Between 2018 and 2021, the number of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation reported in Colorado tripled from 24 to 72, and crimes motivated by gender identity increased more than 600 percent, from 3 to 20.⁵⁶² As of 2022, Colorado One, the state's largest LGBTQ advocacy group, was actively working to further expand Colorado's bias-motivated crimes law to specifically include protections based on gender, gender identity, and gender expression.⁵⁶³

Club Q

As the writing of this context neared completion toward the end of 2022, tragedy befell the LGBTQ community through yet another act of violence, this time as a mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs. On the night of November 19, 2022, a gunman entered the club and opened fire on patrons, staff, and drag performers, killing five and wounding seventeen before being tackled and subdued by at least two patrons. Opened in 2001 in part because the city's longtime LGBTQ bar, Hide & Seek, was on the verge of closing, Club Q soon became a community center as much as a bar and nightclub. As one of the few LGBTQ-centered places in the small and generally conservative city of Colorado Springs, Club Q has been described as "a safe haven" and a place "for safety, love, and security."⁵⁶⁴ Tragically, this event illustrates that homo/transphobia remains a real threat today, and that places where LGBTQ people gather to celebrate their identity and find community can be targeted, making them both sites of refuge and violence. The "historic" significance of this tragedy remains to be evaluated and will require the distance of time. Nevertheless, it is clear that the event has had a substantial, calamitous impact on the personal lives of Colorado's LGBTQ community in the here and now and will continue to for years to come.

⁵⁶⁰ Colorado General Assembly, SB20-221, Gay Panic Or Transgender Panic Defense, <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb20-221>.

⁵⁶¹ Alex Burness, "Colorado becomes 11th state to ban LGBTQ "panic defense," *Denver Post*, July 13, 2020.

⁵⁶² United States Department of Justice, "Fast Facts on Colorado Hate Crime Incidents," 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/state-specific-information/colorado>; Colorado Crime Statistics, Hate Crime 2021, <https://coloradocrimestats.state.co.us/tops/report/hate-crime/colorado/2021>.

⁵⁶³ Amanda Horvath and Jeremy Moore, "Inclusivity is a very important thing, not just for the LGBTQ+ community but for everybody'," Rocky Mountain PBS, March 15, 2022, <https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/rocky-mountain-pbs/lgbtq-lobby-day/>.

⁵⁶⁴ Jesse Paul, Olivia Prentzel, Elliott Wenzler, and Lance Benzel, "Club Q was opened 21 years ago to ensure Colorado Springs' LGBTQ community would have a long-term home," *The Colorado Sun*, November 20, 2022, online at <https://coloradosun.com/2022/11/20/club-q-history-colorado-springs/>, accessed April 6, 2023.



FIGURE 75: INTERSEX ACTIVIST DANA ZZYIM IN 2016.
(RANDOLFE WICKER)

Recognizing the Other Letters in LGBTQ

The twenty-first century continues to see strides in recognizing other LGBTQ identities and communities beyond gay men and lesbian women, but struggles to gain equality, both within LGBTQ and greater society, continue. Intersex activist Dana Zzym, who identifies as nonbinary and lives in Colorado, is one prominent example. After six years of legal battles with the U.S. State Department, in 2021 Zzym became the first U.S. citizen to obtain an official U.S. passport using an “X” gender marker to indicate they do not fit into the binary of female or male.⁵⁶⁵ Zzym is the associate director and co-founder of the Intersex Campaign for

Equality (ICE), a group formed in 2015. In April 2022, thanks to Zzym’s and ICE’s efforts, the State Department made X-marker passports available to all U.S. citizens.

Coalition Building in Colorado

As the country entered the twenty-first century depictions of LGBTQ individuals in national popular culture increasingly revealed the diverse character of the community and the nuance of LGBTQ life. More and more individuals came out as LGBTQ, including prominent actors, musicians, politicians, and professional athletes. In Colorado, Denver’s annual PrideFest continued to grow in size, added a second day of celebration in 2010 and becoming the third largest pride festival in the United States by 2012. Similar festivals were established in other cities across Colorado during the 1990s and 2000s. Boulder hosted its first Pridefest in 1995. In 2004, Fort Collins held its first public pride event, “Pride in the Park,” in Library Park. Pueblo held its first pride celebration in 2006. Colorado West Pride, the largest celebration in the state’s western slope region, first took place in Grand Junction in 2012. In Colorado Springs, the epicenter of LGBTQ bigotry in the early 1990s, the city’s annual Colorado Springs Pride celebration, first held in 1990, ended in 2019 and will be replaced by Pikes Peak Pride in 2022 with a goal of appealing to a wider geographic area and broader spectrum of LGBTQ individuals.

During the 1990s and 2000s, hundreds of groups organized across Colorado to serve the diverse needs of the LGBTQ community and fight for social justice. More and more, these groups reflect the broad spectrum of individuals who identified as LGBTQ, not just adult middle-class white gays and lesbians. Though many groups are centered in larger cities with college and university campuses such as Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, and Fort Collins, several organizations exist in smaller, more rural towns as well. In more recent years, the work of activists, advocates, and allies have raised awareness of the ways in which discrimination and bigotry disproportionately impact gender non-conforming, transgender, and LGBTQ people of color in comparison with white gays and lesbians. Assumptions continue to be

⁵⁶⁵ National Public Radio, “Dana Zzym receives first U.S. passport with 'X' gender marker,” October 31, 2021, online at <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/30/1050782672/dana-zzym-receives-first-u-s-passport-with-x-gender-marker>, accessed April 6, 2023.

challenged as society’s understanding of sexual identity and gender expression expands and becomes more inclusive.

As this study has shown, non-heteronormative and gender nonconforming individuals have been part of Colorado’s history since humans first occupied the region, and, over time, great strides have been made in the LGBTQ community’s fight for understanding, recognition, equality, and inclusion. The Movement Advancement Project, a nonprofit organization that provides a comprehensive data on the current state of laws and policies impacting LGBTQ people across the United States, now identifies Colorado as a leader in LGBTQ equality, second only to California.⁵⁶⁶ The battle continues, however, as the rights, privileges, safety, and acceptance gained in recent decades are threatened by the actions of conservative lawmakers and as hate groups such as the Colorado Springs-based Family Research Institute engage in anti-LGBTQ rhetoric.⁵⁶⁷ History suggests that the Colorado LGBTQ community and its allies will continue to push back.



FIGURE 76: JAMES SCHWEIGERT (FOREGROUND, RIGHT) AND LELAND DERRYBERRY (BACKGROUND, JUST LEFT OF SCHWEIGERT) HELP CARRY A GIANT GAY PRIDE FLAG DOWN COLFAX AVENUE AND PAST THE STATE CAPITOL DURING THE 30TH ANNUAL PRIDEFEST PARADE AND RALLY IN DENVER SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2005. (DONATED TO THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY BY THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS /DENNIS SCHROEDER)

⁵⁶⁶ Movement Advancement Project, “Snapshot: LGBTQ Equality by State,” November 21, 2021. <https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/>.

⁵⁶⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, “In 2021, 18 Hate Groups Were Tracked in Colorado,” <https://www.splcenter.org/states/colorado>.

IV. Property Types

The following nine property types, informed by the work of public historian Susan Ferentinos, author of “Beyond the Bar: Types of Properties Related to LGBTQ History” and the Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study, were identified during this project as encompassing activities and people directly associated with LGBTQ history in Colorado: Sites of Social Life and Support, Protest and Political Organizing, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Spirituality, Persecution and Violence, Health and Medicine, Intersectionality, Military, Rural LGBTQ Life, and LGBTQ Neighborhoods.⁵⁶⁸ These categories often overlap and are not mutually exclusive; for example, a welcoming church may have hosted numerous LGBTQ social groups and/or activities, fitting into the property types of Social Life and Support and Spirituality, while a lesbian bookstore dedicated to supporting specifically women would fit into Social Life and Support, Businesses and Organizations, and Intersectionality. It should also be noted that the list of property types used in this survey plan can and should be expanded to include other types that future research reveals to be meaningful to LGBTQ history in Colorado.

Research for this project found many properties with LGBTQ associations to be no longer extant, especially those with periods of significance before World War II. Some sites, particularly gay bars and LGBTQ businesses, operated for only a brief period of time. Sites such as the Downtown Denver YMCA and Ship Tavern bar and restaurant within Denver’s Brown Palace Hotel that maintain LGBTQ associations from the early- to mid-twentieth century are particularly rare, thus enhancing their significance. Those with associations prior to the 1900s are extremely rare and therefore highly significant.

The majority of sites identified during this project are concentrated in Colorado’s largest urban areas, such as Denver, Colorado Springs, Boulder, Fort Collins, and Pueblo; however, that does not mean that such spaces did not exist in smaller cities and towns, only that they do not appear to have been documented in readily available research materials. The potential presence of such sites in areas outside Colorado’s larger urban areas should always be considered when conducting cultural resource surveys.

Sources that can aid in the identification of properties with LGBTQ associations include local and national LGBTQ newsletters and publications such as *Out Front*, *Big Mama Rag*, *The Ladder*, *Mattachine Review*, and the *Denver Area Mattachine Newsletter*; archival collections of materials associated with LGBTQ individuals and organizations; oral history interviews; city directories; and secondary sources, especially LGBTQ memoirs (see also “A Note on Sources” in Context Statement and the Bibliography).

Generally, the National and State Register Criteria A (association with significant event or historic trend or movement), and B (association with significant person(s)) are considered the most relevant for all LGBTQ property types. Criterion C may tangentially apply to LGBTQ property types if the property retains sufficient integrity and displays character-defining features of a style or type of architecture, represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value. Criterion D (ability to yield significant

⁵⁶⁸ Susan Ferentinos, “Beyond the Bar: Types of Properties Related to LGBTQ History,” *Change Over Time* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 148-158; Susan Ferentinos and Benjamin Egerman, *Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study*, Preservation Maryland and Maryland Historical Trust, September 30, 2020.

information from archaeological study) is beyond the scope of this report. Each discussion of the property types below presents further considerations when evaluating significance under Criteria A and B, and when applicable, Criterion C.

Sites of Support and Social Life

Places of entertainment, recreation, and other social activities that provided an opportunity for LGBTQ individuals to meet, receive support, and build community.

This category includes spaces where LGBTQ people could socialize and recreate freely in relative safety. These sites are particularly important in LGBTQ history due to their role in the formation of community and support networks, which allowed LGBTQ people to find one another, realize they are not alone, and resist pressure to deny their identity. In a history that found such community building fundamental, these sites may also be one of the most predominant LGBTQ property types and can include a wide range of building types. Examples include resorts, clubs, YMCAs, athletic organizations, USO and military service clubs, community centers, private homes or churches that frequently hosted support group meetings and social gatherings, public parks or grounds, gay bars, and bookstores. Such sites are likeliest to have an association from the era of the homophile movement (post-World War II) onward, as awareness of gender and sexual nonconformity grew. However, some sites, such as Cheesman Park in Denver that became a cruising locale as early as 1907, may date to much earlier. Dates of association may encompass an extended period or be just a year or two.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct, significant association with LGBTQ community support and social life and retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site hosted or housed entertainment, recreation, or other social activities that provided an opportunity for LGBTQ individuals to meet, receive support, and build community. Applicability of Criterion B may be possible, but only if the site demonstrates a strong association with an individual who had a significant impact on LGBTQ activities, such as their home or place of work. Establishing Criterion B eligibility would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, i.e., when it was associated with the person.

Sites of Protest and Political Organizing

Places where important political protests, conventions, and legal actions took place; sites associated with significant political activists, groups, and organizations.

This category includes sites associated with LGBTQ political activism and protest, political groups (headquarters and/or meeting places), locations of incidents that led to important legal cases, and sites associated with prominent political activists and LGBTQ politicians. As such, these sites are most likely to date from the era of gay liberation (ca. 1970) onward, when LGBTQ activism began in earnest. These sites can include government buildings or properties where protests occurred, the homes or work places of LGBTQ activists, or places also associated with Support and Social Life, such as an LGBTQ community center that hosted political organizing activities. The period of association may be relatively brief, as protests may have occurred over just a day or two, or the political organizing may have focused on one

particular issue or protest and then ended. However, in some cases, they may be associated with the lifework of a particular activist.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct association with important LGBTQ protests, political organizing, and/or efforts to gain equal rights. The property would also need to retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period during which the site maintained a direct association with the political activities or events. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant political leader, activist, or LGBTQ politician, such as their home or place of work; to establish this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person.

LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations

Businesses that catered to a largely LGBTQ clientele or addressed the specific needs of the LGBTQ community.

LGBTQ businesses played an important role in LGBTQ communities, offering various goods and services to LGBTQ individuals in a welcoming environment. This property type includes any type of business owned or predominately patronized by LGBTQ people as well as those offering specifically LGBTQ goods and services. Such places may include bookstores, bathhouses, bars or clubs, sex shops, law offices engaged in supporting LGBTQ individuals and rights, and offices of LGBTQ publications. As such, this property type may frequently overlap with sites of Support and Social Life or other types. Because they were typically not welcome in shopping or business districts that catered to straight people, LGBTQ businesses were often, but not always, located in traditionally LGBTQ neighborhoods, such as Denver's Capitol Hill area, and/or were on the fringes of, or removed from, more prosperous areas. Many LGBTQ businesses moved frequently as the areas where they would be welcome shifted over time. However, in some cases, a building may have a long association with one or many LGBTQ businesses and organizations, possibly due to an LGBTQ owner or ally who consistently welcomed them.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct association with an important business or organization owned or patronized by LGBTQ people and retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site consistently offered goods and services to the LGBTQ community. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible, but only if the site demonstrates a strong association with an individual who had a significant impact on LGBTQ activities, such as their place of work. To establish Criterion B eligibility would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, i.e., when it was associated with the person.

Sites of Spirituality

Places that specifically served the spiritual needs of LGBTQ individuals, locations of religious organizations that advocated for LGBTQ rights and welcomed LGBTQ members, and places associated with LGBTQ religious leaders and allies.

Spirituality sites are most likely to include churches and other religious buildings where LGBTQ congregations or those welcoming of LGBTQ members and leaders met or were housed. However, Spirituality sites may also include other building types, such as the commercial building at 432 S. Broadway where the First Federated Church held its services (and where LGBTQ Businesses also operated). Since churches and religious organizations frequently house activities beyond the religious, these sites are likely to have a strong overlap with sites of Support and Social Life and other property types. For example, St. Paul's Methodist Church not only welcomed LGBTQ congregants and religious groups, it hosted many other LGBTQ groups, including the Colorado AIDS Project. In some cases, sites of Spirituality may also overlap with sites of Intersectionality, such as congregations that formed exclusively for lesbian women. As with sites of Protest and Political Organizing, this property type is most likely to be associated with the gay liberation movement era (ca. 1970) and later, as mainstream religious denominations began to publicly welcome LGBTQ members and LGBTQ congregations formed.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct association with LGBTQ history as an important site of spirituality and retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site consistently served the spiritual needs of LGBTQ individuals and/or housed a religious organization that advocated for LGBTQ rights and welcomed LGBTQ members. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant LGBTQ religious leader or ally; establishing this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person. Due to many religious buildings' more elaborate and substantial architecture, it is possible that Criterion C may also be applicable, although this would be tangential to a site's LGBTQ associations.

Sites of Persecution and Violence

Places associated with the systemic persecution and oppression of LGBTQ individuals and sites of violence against LGBTQ community members.

This property type may include sites associated with police harassment and government persecution of LGBTQ individuals, such as the sites of police raids, arrests, and legal actions intended to marginalize and oppress LGBTQ people, and sites of violence against LGBTQ people. Sites of violence embody particularly painful moments in LGBTQ history, but as Ferentinos writes, "To adequately represent the LGBTQ past, sites associated with these unsettling incidents must be included in the preservation landscape, both as a testament to the victims of these crimes and as a reminder that such violence is still

a regular part of LGBTQ lives.”⁵⁶⁹ Though violence has affected the lives of many LGBTQ Coloradans, it is important to recognize that such violence has disproportionately targeted transgender people of color.

Although it is important to acknowledge painful and tragic events affecting LGBTQ people, care should be taken when considering the eligibility of sites associated with Persecution and Violence in order to avoid aggrandizing such events and their perpetrators. In some cases, in order to examine the impact of a violent event or act of oppression against an LGBTQ person(s), it may be appropriate to consider other sites associated with the event, such as the victim’s home, or where subsequent, related events occurred. To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct association with LGBTQ history as an important site of persecution, oppression, or violence against LGBTQ individuals that had subsequent impacts regarding the law, public awareness, etc. Sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period when a significant event or events took place, is also needed.

Health and Medicine

Places with associations related to LGBTQ health issues and the provision of LGBTQ health services and support.

The medical profession has played a large role in LGBTQ history since the late-nineteenth century. Properties related to this theme may include physicians’ offices and hospitals that consistently provided important care to LGBTQ individuals, such as gender-affirming treatment; sites related to the AIDS epidemic, including research, counseling, treatment facilities, and memorials; and sites related to prominent physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists who had a significant impact within the LGBTQ community. There may be overlap with sites associated with Support and Social Life, such as those associated with the Colorado AIDS Project, which provided both health and social support to people with AIDS, and the Gender Identity Center of Colorado, where transgender people found community but also access to gender-affirming care.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property must demonstrate a direct association with LGBTQ history as an important site related to medicine and health and retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site consistently provided important care to LGBTQ individuals and/or housed an organization that advocated for LGBTQ health and welcomed LGBTQ members. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible, if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant LGBTQ health leader or ally; establishing this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person’s contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person.

⁵⁶⁹ Ferentinos and Egerman, Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study, 131.

Sites of Intersectionality

Places that are associated with marginalized communities within the LGBTQ community.

Sexual orientation and gender identity intersect with numerous factors of advantage and disadvantage, including race, ethnicity, class, ability, physical appearance, and geographic location, which, as Ferentinos and Egerman describe, “create a unique set of experiences for each individual....[such that] there is no singular LGBTQ experience.”⁵⁷⁰ At times, they continue, “the needs and issues of one population under the LGBTQ umbrella conflicts with the needs and issues of another population. That is, issues of privilege and oppression exist within LGBTQ communities as well as beyond them.”⁵⁷¹ In response, organizations and groups have formed to serve the specific needs and interests of LGBTQ individuals whose identities intersect with marginalized communities—such as women, people of color, and the economically disadvantaged—as well as marginalized groups within the LGBTQ acronym, namely transgender and bisexual people. This property type may include separate spaces created to serve the specific needs of marginalized individuals or groups, locations of protests or actions initiated by such groups, and sites associated with LGBTQ individuals whose lived experience was significantly affected by issues of intersectionality. As such, this property type will likely overlap with many other types, particularly Support and Social Life, Health and Medicine, and Protest and Political Organizing. Sites of Intersectionality may be associated with any era, but are most likely to be found during the gay liberation movement and onward, when LGBTQ groups serving intersectional communities began to proliferate. Examples of sites of Intersectionality include the Woman to Woman lesbian bookstore and community center, the Gender Identity Center serving transgender people, and the home of Wendell Sayers, a Black lawyer and member of the Mattachine Society.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct significant association with marginalized communities or people within LGBTQ history. The site must retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site consistently served the specific needs of marginalized individuals or groups, or was associated with individuals, events, and activities related to issues of intersectionality. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible, if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant LGBTQ individual whose productive work life involved issues of intersectionality; establishing this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person’s contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person.

⁵⁷⁰ Ferentinos and Egerman, 140.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

Military Sites

Places associated with events and activities that significantly impacted LGBTQ military personnel, spaces that played a significant role in LGBTQ military life, and places associated with significant LGBTQ individuals within the U.S. military.

This property type may include places associated with important activities or events related to the treatment of LGBTQ members of the military, social spaces that played significant roles in the lives of LGBTQ soldiers, and sites associated with significant LGBTQ military personnel. Due to federal anti-LGBTQ policies within the military historically, these sites, such as military bases or college campus ROTC chapters, may overlap with those of Persecution and Violence; on the other hand, sites that catered to LGBTQ military members, such as specific bars, may overlap with those of Support and Social Life. LGBTQ-associated military sites are likeliest to have an association from the start of World War II onward, as awareness of non-conforming sexual and gender identities within the military grew, though earlier associations are possible.

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct significant association with LGBTQ history as related to the military, through events, activities, or people. The site must retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site was consistently associated with events and activities related to LGBTQ military personnel. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible, if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant LGBTQ individual whose productive work life involved the military; establishing this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person.

Rural LGBTQ Life

Rural and nonurban spaces associated with LGBTQ communities and individuals.

Historical studies of Colorado's LGBTQ community have frequently focused on urban areas where LGBTQ populations are more concentrated and outwardly visible. LGBTQ individuals, however, have lived, worked, partnered, and loved throughout Colorado—in early settlements, on rural ranches, in small towns, and other nonurban places across the state. Sites associated with rural LGBTQ life represent an important and underrepresented aspect of LGBTQ history and may include ranches owned or operated by LGBTQ individuals or where LGBTQ people worked, mining and logging camps with LGBTQ associations, and nonurban places associated with significant LGBTQ individuals. Identification of rural LGBTQ sites is even more challenging than usual due to historical obfuscation of LGBTQ associations in order to protect individuals and places from being targeted. Although only a few extant examples of rural LGBTQ sites, which can date to any era, were identified during research for this project, such as the Bellvue Grange where Fort Collins Gay Alliance dances were held in the 1970s and '80s, future surveys are likely to reveal more sites through committed research (see Potential Projects).

To be considered eligible under Criterion A of the National and State Registers, the property would need to demonstrate a direct association with LGBTQ history in a rural area and retain sufficient integrity to

be recognizable from its period of significance, typically the period in which the site was consistently associated with events and activities related to LGBTQ history. Eligibility under Criterion B may be possible if a site demonstrates a strong association with a significant LGBTQ individual or ally; establishing this would require further research and comparison of other properties associated with the individual as well as that person's contemporaneous peers. Integrity would need to be high enough for the property to be recognizable from its period of significance, typically when it was associated with the person.

LGBTQ Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods where LGBTQ people lived, worked, shopped, and socialized with an expectation of greater safety and acceptance.

As districts, LGBTQ neighborhoods can represent social, cultural, and economic networks that allowed LGBTQ communities to thrive while facing persecution and oppression. It is important to recognize, however, that the history of such neighborhoods is often complicated by socioeconomic issues, including gentrification and racial bias. Due to the many aspects of LGBTQ life they represent, neighborhoods are likely to include many other LGBTQ property types within their boundaries. LGBTQ neighborhoods are most likely to be associated with the gay liberation movement era and onward. Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood is Colorado's largest and most recognized example of this property type; Broadway Terrace, a stretch of South Broadway in Denver, was another thriving neighborhood of LGBTQ businesses in the 1980s, but its extent is unknown. Other smaller and less well-known LGBTQ neighborhoods likely existed or continue to exist in Colorado's largest metropolitan areas. Due to the size of such neighborhoods, their identification has been beyond the scope of this survey plan, but they may become apparent through future survey efforts in Colorado's largest urban areas (see Potential Projects).

V. Preservation Goals and Objectives

Factors Affecting Preservation

The most substantial factor in the preservation of LGBTQ sites is, simply put, their identification. Without knowing whether a place is associated with LGBTQ history, it becomes impossible, at best, to recognize and celebrate that historic significance, and at worst, to ensure the place is valued and preserved for it. This lack of data presents the greatest challenge to the preservation of sites associated with Colorado's LGBTQ history and highlights the urgent need to conduct surveys that seek to identify LGBTQ sites in communities across the state.

The most immediate threat to the preservation of LGBTQ sites is the permanent loss of a historically significant place. Many LGBTQ sites are modest or nondescript buildings with historical associations that are not readily visible. Coupled with the fact that they are frequently located in economically disadvantaged areas, they are especially vulnerable to demolition as a result of urban renewal efforts and gentrification. The danger of losing a historic site to demolition is significantly higher when a building's historic background, and its possible areas of significance, are not fully explored through intensive survey. Small municipalities and rural counties rarely have the time and staff available to conduct archival research on properties proposed for demolition, and historic commercial areas and residential neighborhoods in Colorado's fast-growing metropolitan areas, where much of the LGBTQ history recorded to date took place, are experiencing extensive development pressure that strains historic preservation staff resources. Many LGBTQ sites identified during research for this project have already been lost, especially those with associations from Colorado's early settlement through the 1950s, victims of urban renewal, deferred maintenance resulting in demolition, or unrecognized significance. Proactive survey efforts that provide local government staff with the information they need to make informed decisions regarding demolition requests are an important step toward preventing such losses. This is particularly true in communities where narrow views of what is historically important continue to dominate.

A Note on Integrity Evaluation

Even when a property's LGBTQ history is known, preconceived ideas about historic integrity can work against their designation and preservation. Biases and practices that favor architecturally significant buildings often influence the way that integrity is evaluated as well, creating barriers that can prevent the designation of sites associated with underrepresented communities. According to the *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, the question of integrity is ultimately answered by whether or not the property retains the identity for which it is significant. When evaluating the integrity of LGBTQ sites, it is important keep the following in mind:

- The vast majority of properties with LGBTQ associations will be eligible under Criteria A and B. As Megan E. Springate and Caridad de la Vega point out in *LGBTQ America*, the National Park Service Theme Study (2016), all seven aspects of integrity must be considered when evaluating a site, but “[s]ome aspects of integrity are weighted more heavily depending on the evaluation criteria used.” For example, a high level of integrity of materials and workmanship is more important when evaluating a property for architectural significance (Criterion C) than for

historical significance associated with important events, movement, trends, or individuals (Criteria A and B). The National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* supports this perspective, advising that one determine “which aspects of integrity are particularly vital to the property being nominated and if they are present.”

- According to NPS, a site is eligible for the National Register if it retains “the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance” during its period of significance. As such, when evaluating integrity, one should consider the following questions:
 - What is the period of significance for the site’s LGBTQ associations?
 - What are the “essential physical features” that would make the site recognizable to a visitor from that period? Are those features still present?
 - If a building has been altered, when did those changes take place? Alterations that occurred before or during the period of significance for LGBTQ associations should not diminish a site’s integrity.
- Do not conflate condition with integrity. A poorly maintained building that retains the essential features dating to its period of significance has sufficient integrity to be considered eligible.
- A lower level of integrity may be acceptable when a site is the only property, or the only surviving property, holding certain associations within a specific context. For instance, the only surviving site associated with an important lesbian newsletter in Boulder may be able to sustain a lower level of integrity to be eligible for the National Register.
- Properties that do not retain sufficient integrity for National Register listing may be eligible for the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. Integrity requirements for local landmarking vary widely and a community’s landmarking ordinance should be consulted for guidance.

Public Input

The goal of this survey plan is to create a useful road map for identifying and surveying LGBTQ sites that includes multiple examples to inspire and guide future researchers. To help reach that goal, an LGBTQ Advisory Committee was formed in the summer of 2021 to provide guidance and input as the project progressed. The advisory committee included members of the LGBTQ community and allies from across Colorado with expertise in the state’s LGBTQ history, the expression of that history within the built environment, and the development of historic site surveys. The committee’s expertise, perspective, and personal experience was invaluable throughout the project.

LGBTQ Survey Plan Advisory Committee Members

Maren Bzdek, Fort Collins	David Duffield, Denver
Kathy Corbett, Denver	Michael Martin, Durango
Jenny Deichman, Denver	Kevin McManamon, Aspen
Becca Dierschow, Denver	Mardi Moore, Boulder
Rex Fuller, Denver	Kelly Nichols, Denver
Kara Hahn, Denver	Nick Ota-Wang, Denver
Aaron Marcus, Denver	Dominick Sekich, Denver
Brooke Keith, Denver	

The LGBTQ Advisory Committee met with CHF staff and the preparers of this plan, Erika Warzel and Amy Unger, to discuss the project at its outset to provide input on the structure of the plan and proposed areas of focus. In the following months members of the committee provided information on LGBTQ sites, recommended useful resources, and reviewed and provided comments on the historic context that is included in this plan.

After the initial meeting with the Advisory Committee in June 2021, Warzel and Unger reached out to Certified Local Government (CLGs) staff in Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, Aspen, Durango, Steamboat Springs, Pueblo, Trinidad, and the Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs to solicit any available information on sites associated with LGBTQ history in those communities. Sites identified by the respondents were researched further and extant sites added to a working database of candidates for windshield survey.

In addition, data from the crowdsourced Historypin.org webpage for LGBTQ History established by History Colorado's Heritage Diversity Initiative was mined. The 38 pinned sites were researched further and extant sites added to the working database. The majority of the sites identified through the public input process are located in densely populated urban areas, highlighting the need to encourage survey in areas outside of Colorado's Front Range.

VI. Recommendations

Recommendations

Sites associated with LGBTQ history exist throughout Colorado, in its indigenous communities, historic ranches and mining camps, urban centers, and rural small towns—in essence anywhere that human beings have lived, worked, served, worshipped, socialized, and recreated. No formal cultural resource surveys devoted specifically to Colorado’s LGBTQ sites have been undertaken to date, however, and there is no shortage of opportunities (and needs) to identify, document, and evaluate such properties. The challenge lies in defining survey projects that are both manageable in terms of size and scope and likely to succeed in identifying sites that are strong candidates for further research and/or eligible for listing in local, State, or National registers.

The survey of LGBTQ sites is complicated by a variety of factors, often tied to the suppression of the LGBTQ community and erasure of its history—and of sites associated with that history—over time. The majority of surviving LGBTQ sites hold historical associations that are not readily visible and intensive survey is required to fully and properly evaluate these sites. The limited availability of primary source documentation, especially for the early periods in Colorado’s LGBTQ history, and the fact that historical sources often describe the location of LGBTQ-related sites in vague terms or not at all, makes such research challenging and highlights the need to engage members of the community in any survey purporting to document LGBTQ sites.

The diverse themes, wide geographic distribution, and unlimited timeline of LGBTQ history presents challenges as well. In preparing this survey plan, a number of good candidates for survey were identified; however, these findings are not exhaustive and many more sites with LGBTQ associations are waiting to be discovered through the development of local context documents and interviews with local LGBTQ historians and community members.

Any survey of LGBTQ sites is by definition thematic, and may be further defined by a subtheme or geographic area. Regardless of the methodology, the success of any survey will require actively engaging the local LGBTQ community in the project as well as other local stakeholders, including Certified Local Government program staff and commission members, local historical societies and museums, the interested general public, and owners of surveyed sites, with a goal to both collect and disseminate information between the groups.

Survey projects can take many forms, but should always be tied to well-defined goals. Surveys of LGBTQ sites can primarily seek to identify undocumented LGBTQ sites within a local community (Goal #1), or seek to document known LGBTQ sites in-depth and evaluate their eligibility for listing in the National and/or State Register (Goal #2), or, in some instances, combine these two goals in one project. The following chart outlines the suggested methodology for Goals #1 and #2, and the expected next steps after completion of the survey. The suggested methodologies can be applied to projects of any size, regardless if they are defined by geographic area or subtheme.

Goal #1: Identification of undocumented LGBTQ sites within a local community	
<i>Suggested Methodology</i>	<i>Next Step</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research to develop local LGBTQ context and identify associated extant sites • Conduct windshield survey of identified sites • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	Intensive survey of identified LGBTQ sites that appear to retain sufficient integrity related to their LGBTQ associations
Goal #2: In-depth documentation of known LGBTQ sites that appear to retain sufficient integrity and evaluation of eligibility for listing in the National and/or State Register	
<i>Suggested Methodology</i>	<i>Next Step</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research of LGBTQ community to develop local context (if none exists) • Conduct intensive survey of individual sites • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	Preparation of National or State Register nominations for properties found eligible for listing (with owner permission)

Survey Needs

Numerous extant properties associated with LGBTQ history are identified within this survey plan and may be used as a starting point for future survey projects, keeping in mind that many more LGBTQ sites await discovery. Those that appear to display sufficient integrity, and which are not yet listed in the National or State Register, should be a priority for intensive survey with a goal of evaluating their eligibility for designation. It is recommended that this work be undertaken within a community-based framework, prioritizing areas where LGBTQ sites are known to be concentrated, principally Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, and Colorado Springs. These surveys should follow the methodology recommended above for Goal #2. Sites evaluated as eligible for either the National Register or State Register should be considered for nomination, after sharing the discovered history of the property with its owner(s), discussing the value and benefits of nomination with them, and securing their consent to have the property listed. During the course of these surveys, additional candidates for intensive survey

are likely to be identified, warranting a second phase of survey work within the aforementioned communities.

Another clear need is for surveys designed to identify undocumented LGBTQ sites in Colorado's smaller communities, particularly those outside the Front Range. Such survey would encourage Coloradans across the state to recognize, understand, and value the important role that the LGBTQ community has played in the history of their hometowns.

Smaller communities with LGBTQ associations documented in the statewide context developed for this survey plan include Trinidad, Pueblo, Aspen, and Breckenridge. Such surveys would follow the methodology recommended above for Goal #1 and should also include the intensive survey of any LGBTQ sites identified in this plan that appear to retain sufficient integrity, such as El Chaperel in Pueblo, the Aspen Community Church in Aspen, and the Bunk House Lodge in Breckenridge. Once a list of extant sites in the local community is compiled, a follow-up project consisting of intensive survey of identified sites that appear to retain sufficient integrity should be conducted.

Thematic surveys targeting resources associated with specific LGBTQ movements, eras, identities, or property types can provide the opportunity to focus on a particular facet of LGBTQ history. These surveys can be conducted within either a statewide or community context; however, the survey of property types that potentially encompass a very large number of resources, such as LGBTQ Businesses, are likely best surveyed within a community-based framework. For these types of surveys, it is important that the theme and the time period covered be well-defined and sufficiently narrow for practical purposes. Potential thematic surveys could be organized around themes such as the Homophile Movement or LGBTQ Media, or property types identified in this survey plan such as Sites of Spirituality.

Designation Needs

LGBTQ sites identified in the windshield survey as already designated individually or as part of an historic district are likely able to have their nominations amended now in order to officially recognize their associations with LGBTQ history, though in many instances intensive survey should be conducted first to confirm those associations. A number of identified sites appear to be eligible for a nomination amendment, which would need to establish the local context for LGBTQ history in order to be successful. Since these properties are already listed, owner consent is not required for an amendment, but outreach to owners should be conducted regardless. Examples include Denver's Ship Tavern (Brown Palace Hotel) and Cheesman Park, First National Bank Building (offices of Dr. Biber) in Trinidad, Acacia Hotel in Colorado Springs, and the Boulder County AIDS Project (Armory Building).

Potential Projects

Project	Methodology	Estimated Cost
Intensive Survey LGBTQ Sites in Denver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research of LGBTQ community to develop local context* • Intensively survey 20-25 sites in Denver • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<p><i>Survey: \$16,000-\$20,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Local context and survey report: \$10,000</i></p> <p>Total: \$26,000-\$30,000</p>
Intensive Survey of Selected Windshield Survey Sites in Boulder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research of LGBTQ community to develop local context* • Intensively survey 10-15 sites in Boulder • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<p><i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Local context and survey report: \$10,000</i></p> <p>Total: \$18,000-\$22,000</p>
Intensive Survey of Selected Windshield Survey Sites in Fort Collins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research of LGBTQ community to develop local context* • Intensively survey 10-15 sites in Fort Collins • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<p><i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Local context and survey report: \$10,000</i></p> <p>Total: \$18,000-\$22,000</p>
Intensive Survey of Selected Windshield Survey Sites in Colorado Springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research of LGBTQ community to develop local context* 	<p><i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Local context and survey report: \$10,000</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensively survey 10-15 sites in Colorado Springs • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	Total: \$18,000-\$22,000
Nomination Amendments for LGBTQ sites already listed in the National or State Register (individually or as part of a district)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in owner and community outreach to share information and garner support. • Prepare NR nomination amendments to recognize LGBTQ associations for 5-10 sites. 	<i>Nomination amendments: \$30,000 - \$60,000 (approximately \$6,000 per site)</i> Total: \$30,000 - \$60,000
Identification of extant LGBTQ sites in smaller communities <i>Suggested priorities:</i> Trinidad, Pueblo, Aspen, Breckenridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Conduct in-depth research to develop local LGBTQ context and identify associated extant sites • Conduct intensive survey of known LGBTQ sites and windshield survey of sites identified during context development • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<i>Research and windshield survey: \$8,000 per community (estimated 80 hours at \$100/hour)</i> <i>Intensive survey: \$800-\$4,000 (1-5 sites per community at \$800 per site)</i> <i>Local context and survey report: \$6,000 per community (estimated 40 hours at \$100/hour)</i> Total: \$14,800-\$18,000
Intensive Survey of Selected Windshield Survey Sites associated with the Homophile Movement (Statewide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Intensively survey 10-15 sites associated with the Homophile Movement in Colorado • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i> <i>Survey report: \$4,000</i> Total: \$12,000-\$16,000

<p>Intensive Survey of Sites associated with LGBTQ Media (Statewide)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Intensively survey 10-15 sites associated with LGBTQ Media in Colorado • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<p><i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Survey report: \$4,000</i></p> <p>Total: \$12,000-\$16,000</p>
<p>Intensive Survey of LGBTQ Sites of Spirituality (Statewide)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage an advisory group of local LGBTQ historians and community leaders • Encourage information sharing through community outreach • Intensively survey 10-15 LGBTQ Sites of Spirituality in Colorado • Prepare survey report with findings and recommendations • Share findings with property owners and general public 	<p><i>Survey: \$8,000-\$12,000 (\$800 per site)</i></p> <p><i>Survey report: \$4,000</i></p> <p>Total: \$12,000-\$16,000</p>
<p><i>* Assuming a local LGBTQ context has not been completed by the time the survey is undertaken.</i></p>		

Potential Funding

The two primary sources of funding for historic surveys and nominations in Colorado are the State Historical Fund (SHF) and the Certified Local Government (CLG) grant programs, both overseen by History Colorado (which also serves as the State Historic Preservation Office). Both utilize public monies, and as such seek to fund projects that have a clear public benefit and wide community support.

SHF is funded by tax money raised from limited stakes gaming in the towns of Central City, Black Hawk, and Cripple Creek. Applicants must be either government entities within Colorado or non-profits certified as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service. In 2021, SHF revised its grant structure and requirements in order to fund a more diverse range of projects. Through its competitive grants available at select times per year, SHF can fund historic surveys and nominations (or nomination amendments) of properties to the National Register and/or State Register; such projects would more than likely fall under the \$50,000 limit for mini-grants (versus general). Competitive grants require a 25 percent cash match for nonprofit or government owners of properties, and 50 percent match for private owners. Non-competitive planning grants, which can be applied for at any time based on fund availability, have been expanded to include nominations up to a limit of \$15,000, with a 10/25 percent cash match ratio requirement for non-profit/private owners.

CLG grants may be applied for once a year and are funded by the state’s apportionment of the national Historic Preservation Fund; the pool of funds available depends upon that fiscal year’s funding as set by

the U.S. Congress. Applicants must be a CLG, and projects must generally be under \$25,000, but with no cash match required. Eligible projects include survey, nomination, and planning activities.

The National Park Service (NPS) offers various grants that may be applicable to funding survey and nomination of LGBTQ sites. In particular, the Under-Represented Communities (URC) grant specifically seeks to increase the number of National Register-listed properties associated with under-represented communities, including LGBTQ sites. URC grants may only be awarded to state historic preservation offices and CLGs, who may partner with other organizations; they are typically offered once a year, depending upon funding from the Historic Preservation Fund. Similarly, the African American Civil Rights Grant Program (AACRG) offers funding to states, tribes, local governments (including but not limited to CLGs), and non-profits for survey of sites associated with the civil rights struggle of African Americans, including prior to the twentieth century. Cash match is not required, but preference is given to projects that demonstrate partnership collaboration and community commitment, including the raising of a cash match. The AACRG would be applicable to a project focused on survey of sites associated with Colorado's African American LGBTQ community.

Potential projects for survey and nomination of LGBTQ sites may also be of interest to other organizations with a variety of missions that intersect with the themes of equality, LGBTQ history, or even the support of small communities. Examples that should be pursued for feasibility include the Gill Foundation and the Gates Family Foundation.

Several preservation grant programs focus on projects for sites beyond the survey and nomination phase, such as physical preservation/rehabilitation work, or the planning for such work. As such, these grants are not applicable to the suggested projects outlined above, but should be noted in outreach to owners as potential incentives of achieving National Register listing for association with LGBTQ history, along with the other typical incentives such as rehabilitation tax credit eligibility and SHF grant funds for physical work. Examples of these grants include NPS's History of Equal Rights (HER) grant program for properties associated with the struggle of people to achieve equal rights; and grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, such as the Peter Grant Fund for Colorado and National Fund for Sacred Places (for churches).

VII. Bibliography





- Benemann, William. *Men in Eden: William Drummond Stewart and Same-Sex Desire in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012.
- Big Mama Rag* (Denver, Colorado).
- Blattner, Sarah. "Setting the Stage for Denver's Royalty: The ICRME from 1974-76," Colorado LGBTQ History Project, January 31, 2016. Available online at <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Setting-the-Stage-by-Sarah-Blattner.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.
- Brantley, Allyson P. *Brewing a Boycott: How a Grassroots Coalition Fought Coors and Remade American Consumer Activism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.
- Casey, Susan Berry. *Appealing for Justice: One Colorado Lawyer, Four decades, and the Landmark Gay Rights Case: 'Romer v. Evans.'* Denver: Gilpin Park Press, 2016.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.
- Cole, B. Erin. "R-0: Race, Sexuality and Single-Family Zoning in Denver's Park Hill and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods, 1956-1989," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of New Mexico, May 2014. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ErinCole-Thesis.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.
- Colorado LGBTQ History Project, <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/programs/lgbtq-history-project/>.
- Cook, Barbara. "The Gender Identity Group History," unpublished essay, 2000.
- Corbett, Kathleen, Ph.D. Research regarding properties associated with Dr. Stanley Biber (revised 2022). *The Denver Post*.
- Esckridge, William N. *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*. New York: Viking, 2008.
- _____. *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981.
- Gustav-Wrathall, John Donald. *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Gutiérrez, Ramón A. "Warfare, Homosexuality, and Gender Status among American Indian Men in the Southwest," in *Long before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Thomas A. Foster. New York: New York University Press, 2007; 19–31.
- Henry, Robin Courtney. "Criminalizing Sex, Defining Sexuality: Sodomy, Law, and Manhood in Nineteenth-Century Colorado." PhD dissertation. Indiana University, August 2006.

- Jacobs, Sue-Ellen, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds. *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Johnson, Colin R. *Just Queer Folks: Gender and Sexuality in Rural America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. *Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary in which is Contained, in Chronological Order, Evidence of the True and Fantastical History of Those Persons Now Called Lesbians and Gay Men*. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Lily, Amy. "Living Activism through Lesbian Separatism: Building the Lesbian Community in Colorado 1970-1980," Senior Thesis (unknown institution), March 16, 2017. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/living_activism_amy_lily.pdf, accessed July 3, 2022.
- Love, Barbara J., ed. *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975*. University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- McBride, Dennis. "Reno Gay Rodeo," Gay History in Nevada and Las Vegas, OutHistory.org, published 2009 online at <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/las-vegas/articles/rgr> (accessed June 2, 2022).
- Mead & Hunt. *Nuestras Historias: Mexican American/Chicano/Latino Histories in Denver*. Prepared for City of Denver, Marc 2022. Online at https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/community-planning-and-development/documents/landmark-preservation/nuestrahistoriascontext_en.pdf, accessed June 15, 2022.
- Nash, Phil., ed. *United We Stand: The Story of Unity and the Creation of The Center*. Denver: The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado, 2016.
- National Park Service. National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995. Online at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf
- The New York Times*.
- Out Front Magazine* (Denver, Colorado).
- Painter, George. "The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Colorado," 1991, ed. 2004. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-History-of-Sodomy-Laws-in-the-United-States-Colorado.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2022.
- Quesada, Uriel, Letitia Gomez, and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, ed. *Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- "Ron Jesser Biography," International Gay Rodeo Hall of Fame. Online at <http://gayrodeohistory.org/HallOfFame/JesserRon.htm> (accessed June 2, 2022).

- Riemer, Matthew and Leighton Brown. *We Are Everywhere: Protest, Power, and Pride in the History of Queer Liberation*. New York: Ten Speed Press, 2019.
- Rocky Mountain News*.
- Roscoe, Will. *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Rupp, Leila J. and Susan K. Freeman., ed. *Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014.
- Scofield, Rebecca. "Too Legit to Quit: Gay Rodeo, Camp, and the Performance of Gender in Reagan's America," in *Riding Bareback: Imagining American Gender, Sexuality, and Race through Rodeo*, PhD dissertation in American Studies, Harvard University, November 2015.
- Scott, Teddy. "A Lady by Footlight: Female Impersonation in Nineteenth-Century Denver," December 2019. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A-Lady-by-Footlight.pdf>, accessed February 22, 2023.
- Springate, Megan E., ed. *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Foundation and National Park Service. Online at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>.
- Steele, Robert C. *Banned from California: Jim Foshee*. Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, 2020.
- Stoneley, Peter. "Rewriting the Gold Rush: Twain, Harte and Homosociality." *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 30, No. 2 (1996): 189–209.
- Supreme Court of Colorado, *People v. Gibson*, decided April 15, 1974. Online at <https://law.justia.com/cases/colorado/supreme-court/1974/25908.html>, accessed June 27, 2022.
- Trillin, Calvin. "U.S. Journal: Boulder, Colo.: Let Me Find a Place," *The New Yorker*, January 25, 1982; 80-88.
- Warzel, Erika. "National Historic Landmark Letter of Inquiry: Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder, Colorado" Final draft, February 2021, on file with National Park Service.
- "Wayne Jakino Biography," International Gay Rodeo Hall of Fame. Online at <http://gayrodeohistory.org/HallofFame/JakinoWayne.htm> (accessed June 2, 2022).
- Yehle, Lauren L. "Movement and Countermovement Dynamics Between the Religious Right and LGB Community Arising from Colorado's Amendment 2." Political Science Honors Thesis, University of Denver, June 12, 2019. Available online through Colorado LGBTQ History Project: https://lgbtqcolorado.org/dev2018/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/lauren_yehle_movement_counter_movement.pdf, accessed July 3, 2022.





Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

Photo	Site Name/ Map ref. #	Address	City	County	Site # (NR/SR)	Property Type(s)	Year(s) of Association	Integrity	Notes
	Coal Creek Arena/ 1	20255 E. 6th Avenue	Aurora	Arapahoe	—	Support and Social Life	1983-1985	Good	Site of first three Colorado Gay Rodeos/Rocky Mountain Regional Gay Rodeo; hosted event again 1989, and possibly also later years.
	King's Inn/ 2	11800 E. Colfax Avenue	Aurora	Arapahoe	—	Support and Social Life, Protest and Political Organizing, Intersectionality	1968	Fair	Site of 1968 Daughters of Bilitis national convention. Alterations appear to postdate 1968.
	Boulder Community Women's Center/ 3	1334 Pearl Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.240.51 (NR)	Support and Social Life, Intersectionality	1970s	Good	Lesbian community center founded in 1972; years extant unknown. NR-listed as contributing to Downtown Boulder Historic District.
	Boulder County AIDS Project (Armory Building)/ 4	934 Pearl Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.240.4 (NR)	Health and Medicine, Support and Social Life	1988-1990	Good	Boulder County AIDS Project founded in 1985; housed at 934 Pearl Street 1988-90. NR-listed as contributing to Downtown Boulder Historic District; also local landmark.

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Boulder County Courthouse/ 5	1325 Pearl Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.1553 (NR)	Protest and Political Organizing	1975	Good	Site of 1975 same-sex marriage licenses, six in total, issued by Clela Rorex. NR-listed as contributing building to Downtown Boulder Historic District; 2018 NR Amendment recognized LGBTQ association.
	Boulder Gay Liberation Front (University Memorial Center)/ 6	1669 Euclid Avenue	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.11006	Support and Social Life, Protest and Political Organizing	1972--	Good	BGLF, founded in 1970, became officially recognized student organization at University of Colorado in 1972 and given funding and an office in this building.
	Boulder Municipal Building-Penfield Tate Building/ 7	1777 Broadway	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.6039	Protests and Political Organizing, Persecution and Violence	1974	Good	Boulder City Council adopted an amendment to its Human Rights Ordinance here in 1974 that included sexual orientation; rejected by voters later that year. As a result City Councilmember Tim Fuller was recalled and Mayor Penfield Tate lost his reelection bid in 1976. Alterations unknown.
	Congregation Nevei Kodesh/ 8	1925 Glenwood Drive	Boulder	Boulder	—	Spirituality, Support and Social Life, Intersectionality	1993--	Good	Congregation Nevei Kodesh was founded in 1993 to welcome people from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQ people. A havurah (small group of like-minded Jews who practice and socialize together) of Jewish lesbians arose from the congregation.


Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Diamond Inn/ 9	1308 Pearl Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.240.49 (NR)	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s	Fair	NR-listed in Downtown Boulder Historic District. Now an Italian restaurant; extent of alterations unknown.
	First Congregational Church UCC of Boulder/ 10	1128 Pine Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.572	Spirituality	1987--	Good	In 1987, became the first "Open and Affirming" UCC church in Colorado and the 16th in the nation, declaring its affirmation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Found NR eligible in 2001.
	First Methodist Church of Boulder/ 11	1401 Spruce Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.1490	Persecution and Violence, Support and Social Life	1981	Good	Rev. Julian Rush came out as gay to congregation in 1981, setting off internal conflict within church whether he should keep his job or not. Eventually Rush was pushed out and reappointed to St. Paul's Methodist Church in Denver. In 1990s, church hosted local PFLAG meetings. Church has large 1960s addition; found NR eligible in 1986.
	Out Boulder County Pridehouse/ 12	2132 14th Street	Boulder	Boulder	5BL.2031	Support and Social Life	2004--	Good	Pridehouse established as a community center.





Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (* - photo from Google Streetview)

	<i>Out Front</i> (first location)/ 13	2900 Aurora	Boulder	Boulder	—	LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1976	Fair	First published address for <i>Out Front</i> , believed to be publisher Phil Price's apartment while he was finishing college at CU (ca. 1973 building). See 1245 E. Colfax, Denver for offices from 1979-1983.
	Word Is Out Womyn's Bookstore/ 14	2015 10th Street	Boulder	Boulder	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Intersectionality	1994 - 2008	Good	Lesbian bookstore. No major alterations.
	Ashworth's Antiques/Haberdashery (Collins Building)/ 15	94 S. Broadway	Denver	Denver	5DV.63	LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s-80s	Good	Ashworth's Antiques was a gay-owned business that closed in 1983, when the Haberdashery moved in. <i>Out Front</i> maintained a drop box here as well. Found NR eligible in 1981.
	<i>Big Mama Rag</i> Offices/ 16	1724 Gaylord Street	Denver	Denver	—	LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Intersectionality, Persecution and Violence	1974-1984	Good	<i>Big Mama Rag</i> offices housed in basement of this house until publication stopped in 1984; offices ransacked and staff member threatened in 1975. Alterations to roof form may date to BMR's tenure.
	Book Garden/ 17	2625 E. 12th Ave.	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1985-ca. 2004	Good	Women's bookstore opened in 1985 by Kasha Songer, with new ownership ca. 2002

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Carousel Lounge-BJ's Carousel/ 18	1380 S. Broadway	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1977-2011	Fair	When it closed in 2011, this bar run by Bob Engel was considered the longest running gay bar in Denver. Extent and dates of alterations unknown.
	Category 6 Bookstore (First Location)/19	909 E. Colfax Avenue	Denver	Denver	5DV.2608	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1982-ca. 1985	Good	"Denver's largest selection of Gay Literature," served primarily men. Run by Neil Woodward and Dan Otero.
	Cheesman Park/ 20	13th to 8th avenues between Humboldt and Race streets	Denver	Denver	5DV.5308 (NR)	Support and Social Life, Protest and Political Organizing	1907--	Good	Opened in 1907, site of cruising, Pride Parades, protests, and many LGBTQ social events. NR-listed as part of Denver's Parks and Parkways multiple property submission.
	Club Steam (Ochiltree Block)/ 21	2935 Zuni Street	Denver	Denver	5DV.2101.116 (NR)	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s	Good	Within the NR-listed Highland Park (Scottish Village) Historic District
	Denver City and County Building/ 22	1437 Bannock Street	Denver	Denver	5DV.5989 (NHL)	Protest and Political Organizing	1973	Good	Site of 1973 Denver Gay Revolt, at which hundreds of protestors spoke before City Council, which overturned anti-gay policing laws. Within Civic Center NHL district.

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Downtown Denver YMCA/ 23	25 E. 16th Avenue	Denver	Denver	5DV.2049 (NR)	Support and Social Life	1910s--	Good	Constructed in 1906. Believed to be first NR-listed site in Colorado for LGBTQ associations as where gay men could meet one another from the 1910s and onward.
	Dr. Nina P. Jones Home/ 24	403 S. Emerson	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life	1910s	Good	Dr. Nina P. Jones took Helen Hilsher in after it was revealed that Hilsher was living in Meeker as a man under the name Jack Hill and married to a woman, Anna Slifka. It is unknown if Jones was LGBTQ, an ally, or simply a friend of Hilsher's.
	Elver Barker Residence/ 25	1353 Vine Street	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life	1950s	Fair	Home of Elver Barker during the 1950s when he led the Denver Mattachine Society and frequently hosted meetings in his second-floor apartment. Some alterations, may date to Barker's time.
	Empire Baths-Denver Swim Club/ 26	6923 E. Colfax Ave	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s-2000s	Good	Bath house noted by Phil Nash as "Perhaps the longest enduring gay-identified edifice."





Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (* - photo from Google Streetview)

	<p>Executive Tower Inn/The Curtis Denver/ 27</p>	<p>1405 Curtis Street</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>5DV.1765</p>	<p>Health and Medicine</p>	<p>1983-1990s</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Site of 1983 AIDS Forum and Denver Principles; also hosted GALA Choruses Festival attendees in 1992. Constructed in 1974, rehabilitated in 2001; extent of alterations unknown.</p>
	<p>First Unitarian Society of Denver/ 28</p>	<p>1400 N. Lafayette Street</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>5DV.16713 (NR)</p>	<p>Spirituality, Support and Social Life</p>	<p>1971-2000s</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Hosted MCC of the Rockies 1971-79 and numerous LGBTQ-associated social groups and activities for several decades to today. NR listed for LGBTQ associations, namely as site of same-sex weddings in 1975.</p>
	<p>Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Colorado (first location)/ 29</p>	<p>1436 Lafayette Street</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>5DV.2653</p>	<p>Support and Social Life</p>	<p>1977-1988</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Ca. 1919 duplex residence owned by First Unitarian (next door) and leased for use as GLCCC from 1977-1988.</p>
	<p>Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Colorado (second location)/ 30</p>	<p>1245 E. Colfax Ave.</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Support and Social Life</p>	<p>1979-2010</p>	<p>Fair</p>	<p>GLCCC occupied third floor of this building in 1988, then first floor in 1991 before moving to current location in 2010. Haberdashery and <i>Out Front</i> in building until 1983. Alterations to ca. 1966 building appear extensive; difficult to discern.</p>

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	<p>Gender Identity Center/ 31</p>	<p>3715 W. 32nd Avenue</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Health and Medicine, Support and Social Life, Intersectionality</p>	<p>1978-1994</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Provided support and community, including access to gender-affirming health care, for transgender people in Denver and beyond.</p>
	<p>Gerald Gerash apartment/ 32</p>	<p>2330 E. 13th Avenue</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Support and Social Life, Protest and Political Organizing</p>	<p>1972--</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Gay Coalition of Denver organized in Gerash's apartment in this building and planned the 1973 Denver Gay Revolt here.</p>
	<p>Jefferson Building/ 33</p>	<p>432 S. Broadway</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Spirituality, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations</p>	<p>1980s</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>ca. 1890s commercial building that housed well-known gay businesses John Galt's Bookstore and Tomorrow's Body, a tanning salon. LGBTQ church First Federated Church on second floor 1984-ca. 1987.</p>
	<p>Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies (first independent location)/ 34</p>	<p>2090 S. Bannock Street</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>Denver</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Spirituality, Support and Social Life</p>	<p>1979-1986</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>First permanent home of MCC of the Rockies after being hosted by First Unitarian for several years. Many other LGBTQ social groups and events hosted here.</p>

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Olin Hotel/ 35	1420 Logan Street	Denver	Denver	5DV.49	Support and Social Life	1950s	Good	Mattachine Society meeting locale
	Ship Tavern (Brown Palace Hotel)/ 36	321 17th Street	Denver	Denver	5DV.110 (NR)	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1933--	Good	Opened in 1933, well-known locale for gay men to meet each other. NR listed in 1970.
	St. Paul's Methodist Church/ 37	1615 Ogden Street	Denver	Denver	5DV.2873 (NR)	Spirituality, Support and Social Life, Health and Medicine	1970s-1990s	Good	Numerous associations with LGBTQ congregations, social activities, and the Colorado AIDS Project. Contributing to NR-listed Swallow Hill Historic District.
	Three Sisters/ 38	3358 Mariposa Street	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Intersectionality	1973-ca.1991	Poor	Lesbian bar open through at least 1991. Extensive alterations from ca. 2000s.





Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (* - photo from Google Streetview)

	William Dale Jennings Home/ 39	2241 S. Ogden Street	Denver	Denver	—	Protest and Political Organizing	ca. 1918-ca.1940	Fair	Childhood home of William Dale Jennings, founding member of the national Mattachine Society and ONE Inc.
	Wendell Sayers House/ 40	2835 Grape Street	Denver	Denver	—	Protest and Political Organizing, Intersectionality	ca. 1950s-1998	Good	A gay Black man, Sayers was a member of the Denver Mattachine Society and provided legal advice to its members while serving as Colorado's first Black assistant attorney general. This was his home until his death in 1998. His office location is no longer extant.
	Woman to Woman Bookstore/ 41	2023 E. Colfax Ave.	Denver	Denver	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Intersectionality	1975-1983	Good	Co-founded by members of the <i>Big Mama Rag</i> collective; was also a community center with hotline, etc.
	Camp Hale/ 42	White River National Forest	Redcliff	Eagle	5EA.197 (NR)	Military	1940s	Poor	World War II Army installation; veterans noted several gay men and lesbians served here. Military buildings long since removed. NR listed in 1992 (landscape/ruins).
	The Exit/ 43	2028 Sheldon Ave.	Colorado Springs	El Paso	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	ca.1972-ca.1992	Fair	Considered the oldest gay bar in Colorado Springs when open. Alterations may date to period, but unknown.






Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Hide & Seek/ 44	512 W. Colorado Avenue	Colorado Springs	El Paso	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	ca. 1975-2005	Poor	Longest running gay bar in Colorado Springs before closing in 2005. In the 1970s-80s, Cellar Baths and lesbian bar Now Woman in basement.
	Jinx's-Acacia Hotel/ 45	104 E. Platte Avenue	Colorado Springs	El Paso	5EP.724	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s	Good	Exact dates of operation unknown. Found NR eligible in 2015.
	Kona Bathhouse/ 46	1004 S. Tejon Street	Colorado Springs	El Paso	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s	Good	Exact dates of operation unknown.
	Masterpiece Cakeshop/ 47	3355 S. Wadsworth	Lakewood	Jefferson	—	Protest and Political Organizing, Persecution and Violence	2012	Good	Location of actions that led to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission.
	Bellvue Grange (Flowers General Store)/ 48	2929 N. County Road 23	Bellvue	Larimer	5LR.795 (SR)	Support and Social Life, Rural LGBTQ Life	1970s-1980s	Good	Site of Fort Collins Gay Alliance Summer Heat dances during the late 1970s and early 1980s. SR-listed in 2006.


Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

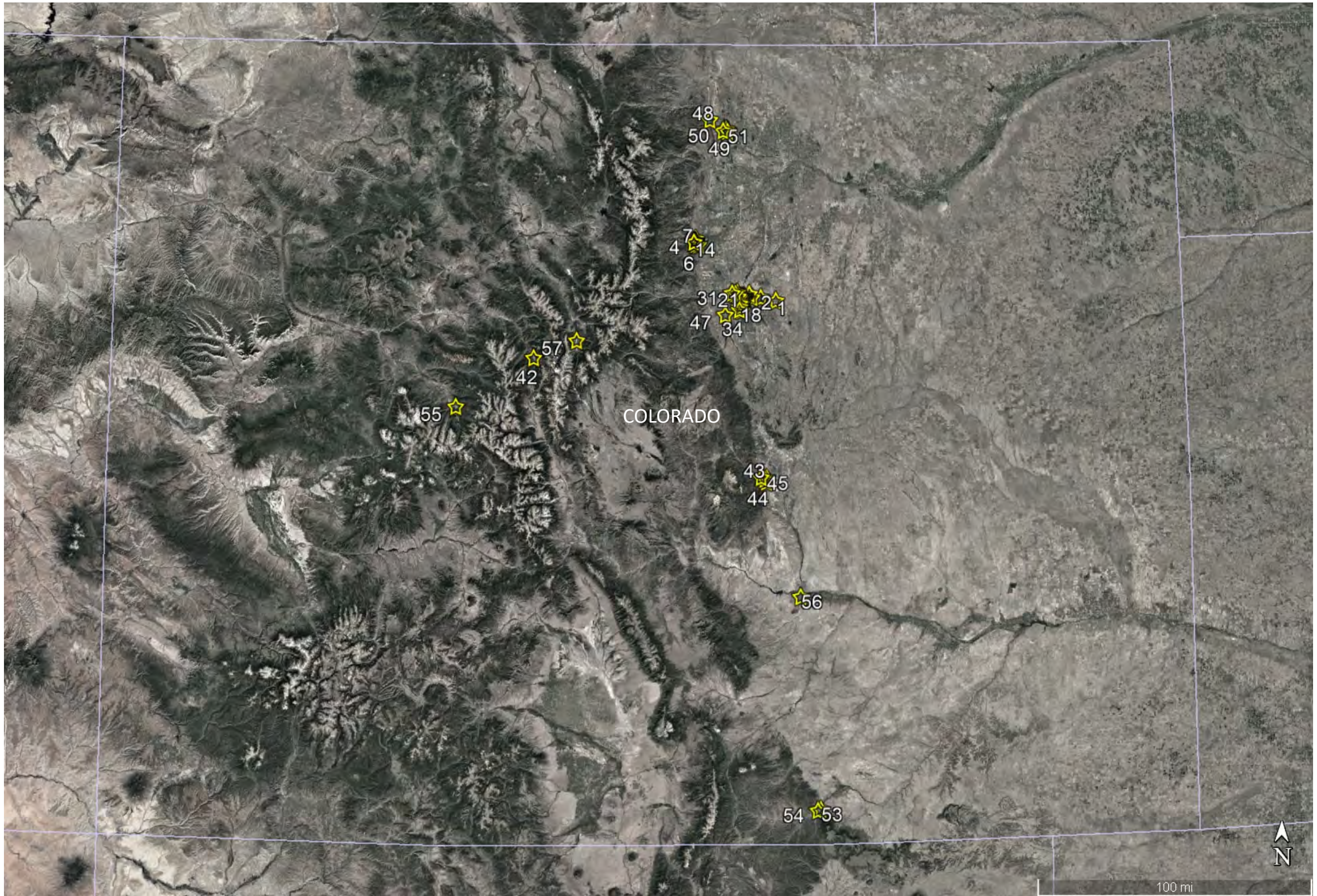
	A Quiet Corner Bookstore/ 49	803 E. Mulberry	Fort Collins	Larimer	5LR.2959	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations, Intersectionality	1994--	Good	Lesbian bookstore opened in 1994.
	CSU-Lory Student Center/ 50	1101 Center Avenue	Fort Collins	Larimer	5LR.9987	Support and Social Life	1970s--	Good	CSU's LGBTQ student group Fort Collins Gay Alliance officially recognized by university in 1975 and began meeting here, holding symposiums, lectures, and dances.
	Poudre Valley Hospital/ 51	1024 S. Lemay Avenue	Fort Collins	Larimer	—	Persecution and Violence	1998	Good	Wyoming gay college student Matthew Shepard was transferred to this hospital after being severely beaten. More than 815,000 people from around the world visited a website created by the hospital to provide updates on his condition. Shepard died of his injuries.
	Sagebrush Bar/Nightingale's/ 52	934 S. Lemay	Fort Collins	Larimer	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1983-1992	Fair	Opened 1983, drew patrons from over 150 miles around. Alterations unknown.
	Mt. San Rafael Hospital/ 53	410 Benedicta Avenue	Trinidad	Las Animas	—	Health and Medicine, Intersectionality	1970-2004	Fair	Dr. Biber conducted gender-affirming surgeries here. Extensive remodeling.

Appendix B. Table of Windshield Survey Results

In alphabetical order by county, city (- photo from Google Streetview)*

	Office of Dr. Stanley Biber/ 54	100 E. Main Street	Trinidad	Las Animas	5LA.2179.41 (NR)	Health and Medicine, Intersectionality	1970-2004	Good	Dr. Biber consulted with his patients here for his gender-affirming surgery practice. Within NR-listed Corazon de Trinidad Historic District.
	Aspen Community Church/ 55	200 E. Bleeker Street	Aspen	Pitkin	5PT.33 (NR)	Support and Social Life	1970s-1980s	Good	First home of Aspen Gay Coalition beginning in 1977, and where Aspen Gay Ski Week first organized. NR listed in 1975.
	El Chaperel/ 56	217 E. Northern Avenue	Pueblo	Pueblo	5PE.7231	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	ca. 1980s	Good	One of the few gay bars in Pueblo advertised in Out Front that is extant. Hosted Imperial Court drag events and visitors in town for the State Fair.
	Bunk House Lodge/ 57	13203 Highway 9	Breckenridge	Summit	—	Support and Social Life, LGBTQ Businesses and Organizations	1970s-	Good	Site of 1976 retreat forming GLCC with Unity member organization representatives; well-known gay resort through 1980s.

Appendix B. Map of Windshield Survey Sites - Statewide
Refer to Appendix A for site number



Appendix C. Map of Windshield Survey Sites – Central Denver
Refer to Appendix A for site number

