

# LGBTQIA+ History: A Timeline of Resilience



Sharing LGBTQIA+ history with youth is a vital protective factor because it transforms feelings of isolation into a sense of historical belonging. Research indicates that 75% of LGBTQIA+ youth recall feeling "different" in childhood, and many experience minority stress caused by societal rejection and discrimination. By teaching youth that gender and sexual diversity are not modern phenomena from the revered Two-Spirit roles in Indigenous cultures to historical figures like Baron von Steuben in 1778 we provide them with a lineage of resilience.

This knowledge can help counter the mental health challenges and suicide risks often associated with rejection. Affirming that "we have always been here and will always be here" reinforces a young person's inherent value and empowers them to see their identities not as contradictions, but as part of a long and enduring human legacy.



### Early Foundations (1778–1945)

- **1778:** Baron von Steuben arrives at Valley Forge and trains the Continental Army.
- **1869:** The word "homosexuality" first appears in print in the U.S..
- **1924: Society for Human Rights** founded in Chicago—the first known gay rights organization in the U.S..
- **1939–1945:** WWII; Use of the Pink Triangle in Nazi camps and the work of **Alan Turing**.

### Organizing & The First Wins (1950–1965)

- **1950: Mattachine Society** founded by Harry Hay in Los Angeles.
- **1955: Daughters of Bilitis** founded in San Francisco (first lesbian rights organization).
- **1958: *One, Inc. v. Olesen*:** Supreme Court affirms the right to publish pro-homosexual material.
- **1963:** March on Washington; **Bayard Rustin** organizes the event and MLK's speeches.

### Resistance & Revolution (1966–1978)

- **1966: Compton's Cafeteria Riot** in San Francisco led by transgender women and drag queens.
- **1969: Stonewall Uprising** in NYC; a catalyst for the modern LGBTQ rights movement.
- **1970:** First Pride marches held in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.
- **1973:** The APA removes homosexuality from the DSM.
- **1978: Harvey Milk** is assassinated; the **Rainbow Flag** is designed by Gilbert Baker.

## Crisis & Culture (1981–1998)

- **1981:** First cases of what would later be called **AIDS** are reported.
- **1987: ACT UP** (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) is formed.
- **1988:** First National Coming Out Day observed.
- **1993:** "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy begins.
- **1996: Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)** signed into law.
- **1998: Matthew Shepard** is murdered in a hate crime; *Will & Grace* premieres.

## The Path to Equality (2003–2021)

- **2003:** *Lawrence v. Texas*: Supreme Court strikes down sodomy laws.
- **2004–2005:** Massachusetts legalizes same-sex marriage; *Brokeback Mountain* premieres.
- **2009:** Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. **Hate Crimes Prevention Act** signed; *RuPaul's Drag Race* premieres.
- **2010:** "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repealed.
- **2015:** *Obergefell v. Hodges*: Same-sex marriage becomes legal nationwide.
- **2016: Sarah McBride** speaks at the DNC; Pulse Night Club shooting; Stonewall becomes a National Monument.
- **2020:** *Bostock v. Clayton County*: Workers are protected from discrimination.
- **2021: Pete Buttigieg** becomes the first openly gay Cabinet member.



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