



Handout 2 - LGBTQ+ Timeline 1940-1973

Information from gsafevi.org

1942

With guidance from psychiatrists, the U.S. military creates recruitment guidelines in order to screen for and exclude gay men from service.

1944

After conducting an investigation on the presence of lesbian activity in the Women's Army Corps training center in Georgia, the U.S. military calls for more stringent screening processes to exclude lesbians from the Women's Army Corps.

1947

Under President Truman's National Security Loyalty Program, the State Department begins firing employees suspected of being homosexual.

1950

Activist Harry Hay creates The Mattachine Society in Los Angeles, a "homophile" organization advocating tolerance of homosexuality.

1952

Christine Jorgensen becomes the first American to undergo sex reassignment surgery. It becomes an international news story.

1953

President Dwight D. Eisenhower issues Executive Order #10450, which bans the Federal Government from employing people suspect of homosexual activity. The ban is adopted by many state and local governments.

1955

Poet Allen Ginsberg gives a public reading of his poem *Howl* in San Francisco, which directly addresses LGBTQ+ culture. The police charge Ginsberg with obscenity, but lose in court.

1956

Novelist and intellectual James Baldwin publishes *Giovanni's Room*, a male love story.

1957

A Navy report concludes that there is no evidence that "homosexuals cannot acceptably serve in the military" or that they are security risks. The report is suppressed until 1967.

1961

Studios in Hollywood begin to allow the depiction of gay men and lesbians in films.



1962

Illinois becomes to the first state to decriminalize homosexual contact between consenting adults.

1963

Senator Strom Thurmond attempts to disrupt the Civil Rights March on Washington by accusing March organizer Bayard Rustin of being a Communist and a “pervert.”

1965

Homophile activists including Barbara Gittings and Frank Kameny beginning picketing the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia to protest government discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

1967

The Student Homophile League at Columbia University becomes the first lesbian and gay campus group to gain official recognition.

1969

LGBTQ+ people resist arrest after a police raid the Stonewall Inn in New York City’s Greenwich Village. The riots initiate the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

1972

In *Baker v. Nelson*, the Minnesota Supreme Court rules that state law limits marriage to opposite-sex couples, and that this limitation isn’t in violation of the United States Constitution. The United States Supreme Court dismisses an appeal, thereby establishing the precedent on same-sex marriage.

1973

Reversing past policy, The American Psychiatric Association declares that homosexuality is not a psychiatric disorder.

Adapted and updated from Out of the Past: 400 Years of Lesbian and Gay History in America (PBS Online); Bending the Mold: An Action Kit for Transgender Youth (NYAC & Lambda Legal); The American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline; Just the Facts about Sexual Orientation and Youth: A Primer for Principals, Educators, and School Personnel (Just the FactsCoalition)