

LGBTQ Theme Study Fact Sheet

October 2016

The National Park Service (NPS) is America's storyteller. NPS explores the stories related to the legacies of all Americans, ranging from the Paleo-Indians who first settled North America 12,000 years ago leading up to the nation's present tapestry of complex cultures. Our history is diverse and the NPS is dedicated to telling the most inclusive story about the American experience. Central to that narrative is the history of Civil Rights. As a lead up to its [Centennial Year](#), during, and following, NPS has been, is and will continue to work hard to tell the stories about the struggle for freedom, justice and equality for our country's most underrepresented populations, including women, African-Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Native Alaskans and Hawaiians.

NPS' effort to tell the stories of all Americans is referred to as the [Heritage Initiative](#). Through rigorous research, thoughtful interpretation, continual partnerships and collaborations with the general public and a variety of organizations, NPS has been able to expand the number of sites dedicated to the legacies of underrepresented people while expanding upon interpretations currently shared at existing NPS sites. In 2014, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell extended this commitment even further by announcing the [LGBTQ Heritage Initiative](#), a comprehensive, first-of-its-kind project to explore how the legacy of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals can be recognized, preserved and interpreted for future generations. A theme study, written and peer-reviewed by more than 30 subject matter experts was completed and released on National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2016.

Highlights of the Theme Study

LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History (www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm) is a publication of the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service and was funded by the Gill Foundation. Experts in LGBTQ Studies wrote and peer-edited each chapter of the theme study.

Introduction

This section gives background on the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative, which has goals of both interpretation and preservation. It defines the terms used throughout the theme study and provides a broad social history of LGBTQ in America. The ideas in this introductory section resonate throughout the rest of the theme study.

Preserving LGBTQ History

The chapters in this section provide a history of archival and architectural preservation of LGBTQ history in the United States. An archaeological context for LGBTQ sites looks forward, providing a new avenue for preservation and interpretation. This LGBTQ history may remain hidden just under the ground surface, even when buildings and structures have been demolished.

Inclusive Stories

Most LGBTQ narratives are white, middle-class, largely male, and urban. To include other communities, NPS asked the authors to look beyond the more well-known stories. Inclusion within each chapter, however, isn't enough to describe the geographic, economic, legal, and other cultural factors that shaped these diverse histories. Therefore, we commissioned chapters providing broad historical contexts for two-spirit, transgender, Latino/a, African American, and Asian American Pacific Islander, and bisexual

communities. These chapters, read together, serve as examples of rich, multi-faceted narrative within a fuller history of the United States.

Themes

The chapters in this section explore different aspects of LGBTQ history and heritage, tying them to specific places across the country. They include examinations of LGBTQ community, civil rights, the law, health, art and artists, commerce, the military, sports and leisure, and sex, love, and relationships.

Places

This section looks at LGBTQ history and heritage at specific locations across the United States. While the authors present a broad LGBTQ American history in the Introduction section, these chapters provide examples of the regional, and often quite different, histories across the country. New York City and San Francisco are often considered the epicenters of LGBTQ experience. However, there are queer histories across the nation, like in Chicago, Miami, and Reno.

Legacy

People engage with history in many ways beyond just reading books and reports. This section begins with an introduction to nominating LGBTQ places to the National Register of Historic Places and to the National Historic Landmark program. Chapters on interpreting LGBTQ history at historic sites and teaching LGBTQ history in the classroom complete this section. These chapters are designed to be resources for those writing and reviewing nominations. They can also be used by NPS interpreters, museum staff, teachers, professors, students, parents and others who wish to incorporate LGBTQ history and heritage into their programs, lessons, exhibits, and courses.

Accomplishments

- Prior to the Obama Administration there were no national monuments dedicated to the contributions of LGBTQ Americans and only one LGBTQ identified site – the Stonewall Inn – was designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- During Pride Month in 2016, [President Obama designated the Stonewall National Monument](#) as the country's first LGBTQ national monument.
- Today there are 10 LGBTQ sites designated as a National Historic Landmark or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
 - [The Henry Gerber House](#) in Chicago, IL – June 19, 2015
 - [The Furies Collective House](#) in Washington, D.C. – May 2, 2016
 - [Edificio Comunidad de Orgullo Gay de Puerto Rico](#) (commonly known as Casa Orgullo or Pride House) in San Juan, Puerto Rico – May 1, 2016
 - [Julius' Bar](#) in New York NY – April 20, 2016
 - [Bayard Rustin Residence](#) in New York, NY – March 8, 2016
 - [Cherry Grove Community House & Theater](#) in Cherry Grove, NY – June 4, 2014
 - [Carrington House](#) in Fire Island Pines, NY – January 8, 2014
 - [James Merrill House](#) in Stonington, CT – August 28, 2013

- [Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence](#) in Washington, DC – November 2, 2011
- [Stonewall National Monument in New York, NY](#) – June 1999, 2000; June 24, 2016
- NPS has already begun to broaden interpretations at select existing sites to include programming and interpretations about the contributions of LGBTQ Americans. Last year, Independence Hall in Philadelphia was host to celebrations related to the 50th Anniversary of the [Annual Reminders](#) protest that gay and lesbian activists held annually between 1965 and 1969 to remind people that not all Americans had the same rights under the Constitution. A historic marker at Independence Hall now commemorates the civil protest.
- Through the Park Service's [Urban Agenda](#) program, Urban Fellows in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Tucson are now engaged in exploring new opportunities for LGBTQ-related programming and interpretation at existing urban parks. There are national park units in 40 of the country's 50 most populated metropolitan areas.
- As a result of the Park Service's engagement with the public on LGBTQ history, citizens in several states have been inspired to preserve LGBTQ history and forged efforts to have state historic markers placed to commemorate LGBTQ related places and events.
- NPS, in collaboration with [History Pin](#), a nation-wide, web-based project is now available to enable individuals, communities, and other organizations to "pin" places of LGBTQ history and heritage, making a truly crowd-sourced and image-rich map.

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