History of the LGBT Population, Political Movements, and Important Figures

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Documentary and Feature Films

After Stonewall: From the Riots to the Millennium
DOC AFTE 1999
In 1969 the police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, leading to three nights of rioting by the city's gay community. With this outpouring of courage and unity the Gay Liberation Movement had begun. Chronicles the history of lesbian and gay life from the riots at Stonewall to the end of the century. Captures the hard work, struggles, tragic defeats and exciting victories experienced since then. It explores how AIDS literally changed the direction of the movement.

Alfred Kinsey and his Continuing Impact on the Human Rights of Sexual Minorities
DOC ALFR 2006
Lecture given by Justice Michael Kirby at Indiana University on October 14, 2006.

Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community
DOC BEFO 1985
Traces the social, political and cultural history of homosexuality in America from the 1920s to 1969; the beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement after a police raid on Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City; and the three-day riot that followed.

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin
DOC BROT 2002
This feature-length portrait unfolds both chronologically and thematically, using interviews with others, and Rustin's own voice, taken from his writings, papers, correspondence, and recorded interviews.

The Celluloid Closet
DOC CELL 1996
Assembles footage from over 120 films showing the changing face of cinema homosexuality from cruel stereotypes to covert love to the activist cinema of the 1990s. Many actors, writers and commentators provide anecdotes regarding the history of the role of gay men and lesbians on the silver screen. Based on the book by Vito Russo.

Coming Out Under Fire
DOC COMI 1994
The real-life experiences of gay men and women who served in America's armed forces during and after World War II in the face of prejudice and persecution are recounted in this moving, award-winning documentary.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt
DOC COMM 1989
The story of the AIDS Memorial Quilt established by the San Francisco NAMES Project Foundation in 1987 to commemorate the lives lost to AIDS. From the thousands memorialized in the quilt, profiles five individuals--including a recovered IV drug user, a former Olympic decathlon star and a boy with hemophilia--whose stories reflect the diversity and common tragedy of those who have died from AIDS. Celebrates their unique personalities and achievements, interweaving these personal histories with a chronology of the epidemic's development and the negligence of the government.

How to Survive a Plague
DOC HOWT 2012
The story of the brave young men and women who successfully reversed the tide of an epidemic, demanded the attention of a fearful nation, and stopped AIDS from becoming a death sentence. This improbable group of activists bucked oppression and infiltrated government agencies and the pharmaceutical industry, helping to identify promising new medication and treatments and move them through trials and into drugstores in record time.

Kinsey
KINS 2005
A portrait of a man driven to uncover the most private secrets of the nation, and journey into the mystery of human behavior. His 1948 book Sexual behavior in the human male irrevocably changed American culture and created a media sensation.

Let's Get Frank
DOC LETS 2005
A biography of politician Barney Frank, a Democratic representative from Massachusetts and one of the few openly gay politicians in America.

Milk
MILK 2009
Harvey Milk is a middle-aged New Yorker who, after moving to San Francisco, becomes a Gay Rights activist and city politician. On his third attempt, he is elected to San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors in 1977, the first openly-gay man to be elected to public office in the United States. The following year, both he and the city’s mayor, George Moscone, are shot to death by former city supervisor, Dan White, who blames his former colleagues for denying White’s attempt to rescind his resignation from the board. Based on the true story of Harvey Milk.

Paragraph 175
DOC PARA 2000
Historian Klaus Muller interviews survivors of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals because of the German Penal Code of 1871, Paragraph 175.

Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria
DOC SCRE 2005
Tells the little-known story of the first known act of collective, violent resistance to the social oppression of queer people in the United States - a 1966 riot in San Francisco’s impoverished Tenderloin neighborhood, three years before the famous gay riot at New York’s Stonewall Inn.

The Stonewall Archives Volume 1: The Before Stonewall Interviews
DOC STON 2006
Traces the social, political and cultural history of homosexuality in America from the 1920s to 1969; the beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement after a police raid on Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City; and the three-day riot that followed. Contains original interviews and performances recorded for the film, and uses extensive archival film, movie clips and personal recollections to construct an audiovisual history of the gay community before the Stonewall riots.

Stonewall Uprising
DOC STON 2011
Veteran filmmakers Kate Davis and David Heilbroner (Adolescent Addict, Jockey) explore the dramatic event that launched a worldwide rights movement. Told by those who took part, from drag queens and street hustlers to police detectives, journalists, and a former mayor of New York, and featuring a rich trove of archival footage, this AMERICAN EXPERIENCE film revisits a time when homosexual acts were illegal throughout America, and homosexuality itself was seen as a form of mental illness.

List compiled by the GLBT Student Support Services Office at Indiana University Bloomington
The Times of Harvey Milk
DOC TIME 1984
Documents the life, career, and assassination of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person elected to public office in San Francisco. Milk was shot to death, along with mayor George Moscone, by city supervisor Dan White on Nov. 22, 1978; White was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and was paroled in 1985. Examines Milk's life leading up to his assassination, his successful efforts to politically represent San Francisco's gay community, and the city's reaction to the assassinations through extensive news footage and personal recollections.

We Were Here: The AIDS Years in San Francisco
DOC WEWE 2011
David Weissman’s We Were Here revisits the San Francisco of the 80s and 90s, using the city's experience with AIDS to open up a conversation about both the history of the epidemic and the lessons to be learned from it. Yet the film reaches far beyond San Francisco and beyond AIDS itself as it illuminates the power of a community that comes together with love, compassion, and determination.

Word is Out: Stories of Some of our Lives
DOC WORD 2010
Interviews with 26 diverse people who speak out about their experiences as gay men and women.

Books

The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies by Vitto Russo
8.2301 RUSce 1995
Examining the images of homosexuality and gender variance in Hollywood films from the 1920s to the present, Russo traces a history not only of how gay men and lesbians had been erased or demonized in movies but in all of American culture as well. Chronicling the depictions of gay people such as the "sissy" roles of Edward Everett Horton and Franklin Pangborn in 1930s comedies or predatory lesbians in 1950s dramas (see Lauren Bacall in Young Man with a Horn and Barbara Stanwyck in Walk on the Wild Side), Russo details how homophobic stereotypes have both reflected and perpetrated the oppression of gay people.

Eminent Outlaws: The Gay Writers Who Changed America by Christopher Bram
9.100 BRAem 2012
Describes how the trailblazing, post-war gay literary figures, including Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Truman Capote, and Allen Ginsberg, paved the way for newer generations, including Armistead Maupin, Edmund White, and Edward Albee.

Gay America: Struggle for Equality by Linas Alsenas
2.640 ALSga 2012
Gays and lesbians play a very prominent role in American life today, whether grabbing headlines over political gains, starring in and being the subject of movies and television shows, or filling the streets of nearly every major city each year to celebrate Gay Pride. However, this was not always the case. Profusely illustrated, Gay America reveals how gay men and women have lived, worked, and loved for the past 125 years.

The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed by Judy Shepard
3.100 SHEme 2009
The mother of Matthew Shepard shares her story about her son's death and the choice she made to become an international gay rights activist. Today, the name Matthew Shepard is synonymous with gay rights, but before his grisly murder in 1998, Matthew was simply her son. For the first time in book form, Judy Shepard speaks about her loss, sharing memories of Matthew, their life as a typical American family, and the pivotal event that changed everything. It not only captures the historical significance and civil rights issues, but it also chronicles one ordinary woman's struggle to cope with the unthinkable.
Milk: A Pictorial History of Harvey Milk by Dustin Lance Black
9.0003 BLAmi 2009
This official illustrated companion book features oral histories, archival photographs, behind-the-scenes stills, and the story of the new Focus Features film directed by Gus Van Sant (Good Will Hunting, My Own Private Idaho), starring Academy Award winner Sean Penn (Mystic River, Dead Man Walking) as gay-rights icon Harvey Milk.

October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard (2012) by Leslea Newman
9.204 NEWoc 2012
Relates, from various points of view, events from the night of October 6, 1998, when twenty-one-year-old Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was lured out of a Wyoming bar, savagely beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die.

Palimpsest: A Memoir by Gore Vidal
9.0043 VIDpa 1995
Memoir by author Gore Vidal recalling his first forty years of life, his associations with the rich and famous, and meditations on writing, history, acting, and politics.

The Quilt: Stories from the Names Project edited by Cindy Ruskin
6.7405 RUSqu 1988
Details the construction by sometimes unlikely quilters with a story to tell and the project's nationwide tour of 25 cities, culminating on The Mall in Washington, D.C.

Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde
3.616 LORsi 2007
Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches is a collection of essays and speeches by Audre Lorde, black lesbian poet and feminist writer. The book is considered a classic volume of Lorde's most influential works of non-fiction prose and has been groundbreaking and formative in the development of contemporary feminist theories.

Truman Capote by George Plimpton
9.0043 PLitr 1997
Using oral biography, a technique that perfectly matches the style of his subject, George Plimpton blends the voices of Capote's lovers, haters, acquaintances, and colleagues into a highly readable narrative. Here we are present for the entire span of Capote's life: his Southern childhood and his early days in New York; his first literary success with the publication of Other Voices, Other Rooms; his highly active love life; the groundbreaking excitement of In Cold Blood, the first "nonfiction novel"; his years as a jet-setter; and his final days of flagging inspiration, alcoholism, and isolation.

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