

# History Happens

News from the



GLBT  
Historical  
Society  
*archives & museum*



Make a  
**DONATION**



Sign up as a  
**VOLUNTEER**

## July 2017

[From the Finance Director](#)

[In the Archives](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Visit Us](#)



Preservationist Shayne Watson (holding papers at left) leading a tour of Tenderloin historic sites

## From Mount Vernon Ladies to LGBTQ Heritage: Bringing Our Stories to the Field of Preservation

by Shayne E. Watson

LGBTQ heritage preservation -- and place-based history more generally -- anchor the stories and experiences of queer people to the physical

spaces where the history unfolded: the home of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, the Black Cat Café, the Turk Street Baths, Compton's Cafeteria, Folsom Street Barracks, the Women's Building of San Francisco, Buena Vista Park, the men's room in the basement at Macy's. These places don't exhibit extraordinary design; they are significant to us because they embody our histories.

Upper-class white women founded the first historic preservation organization in the United States in 1853. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union saved George Washington's Mount Vernon and sparked a national fervor for preservation based largely in patriotism. Over a century later, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 put the National Park Service in charge of place-based history at the federal level and established the National Register of Historic Places, the foremost list of historic sites in the United States.

### Queers on the National Register

For most of its history, the National Register foregrounded architectural history and essentially disregarded places important for their social or cultural histories. In 1999, more 30 years after the creation of the register, the Stonewall Inn in New York City was the first LGBTQ-associated site added to the list. For more than a decade, the Stonewall stood alone as the only queer listing out of nearly 90,000 properties recognized on the register.

We've made great progress in addressing the invisibility of the LGBTQ past in the field of preservation in the last five years, especially in San Francisco. In 2015, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted the [Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco](#), the most comprehensive local study of LGBTQ historic sites ever completed. In January 2017, San Francisco launched the [Citywide LGBTQ Cultural Heritage Strategy](#) to preserve and promote queer heritage -- the first city-sponsored LGBTQ cultural heritage preservation program in the world.

The GLBT Historical Society has been instrumental in both of these projects, serving as a fiscal sponsor for the first and as a member of the task force for the second. We're currently encouraging everyone interested in San Francisco's LGBTQ cultural heritage to [complete the city's survey on the subject](#). In addition, we recently launched our own Historic Places Working Group to make queer place-based history and site preservation an integral part of the Historical Society's mission. As chair, I'm eager to hear from people interested in getting involved. You can contact me [via e-mail](#).

*Shayne E. Watson is an architectural historian and preservation planner specialized in LGBTQ heritage. She serves as an administrator of [Preserving LGBT Historic Sites in California](#) on Facebook.*

## From the Finance Director

# Stories From 27 Years at the Historical Society



by Daniel Bao

In the Spring of 1990 I found myself sitting in the dark wood-paneled living room of a San Francisco Victorian filled to the brim with banker's boxes. I was a graduate student in Stanford Professor Estelle Freedman's class on the History of Sexuality in America, and she'd suggested I do research at the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern

California, as we were then called.

Bill Walker, one of the Historical Society's founders, helpfully brought me a box filled with 1950s issues of *ONE* magazine, and I spent the afternoon reading them, awed by the fact that "real live homosexuals" had organized and published a journal that long ago. Little did I know how my life would be changed by that afternoon's research.

A few months later, I was in the basement of the Redstone Building in the Mission, having joined the Archives Committee of the GLBT Historical Society. It was exciting to be in an official office space, though the street odors wafting from the emergency-escape door made it clear that the society had a ways to go. By 1995, our offices were above ground on Market Street and in 2003 we moved to Mission Street, where we stayed until last year.

### Moving With the Times

The Historical Society's moves were shadowed by my own. After serving on the Archives Committee for a few years, I found myself on the board of directors for 10 years, then served as acting executive director for a few months while we looked for a permanent ED. As soon as our new ED started in early 2004, I became the bookkeeper -- and more recently was named finance director under our new executive director, Terry Beswick.

My 27 years with the Historical Society have been more than interesting. Sometimes calm and quiet, and sometimes like a crazy roller coaster with no brakes. Looking back, I'm amazed at what we've been able to accomplish -- and proud, too. I look forward to the next 27 years and am confident that with support from the City and the community, we'll be able to create the world-class LGBTQ public history center we are planning through our [Vision 2020 initiative](#).

## In the Archives

### Documenting a Gay Transgender Pioneer



by Gerard Koskovich

Among the founding members and early board members of the GLBT Historical Society was a pioneering activist who helped open the way for transgender gay men to receive gender care while claiming their sexual orientation.

Louis Graydon "Lou" Sullivan (1951-1991) faced down a medical profession in the 1970s that insisted on heterosexuality as an outcome

for transition, gradually locating providers who were willing to buck the demands of heteronormativity. In 1986, he founded FTM International, an organization that provided a network of support for men like him.

Our archives include Sullivan's [complete personal papers](#), donated by his estate after he died of AIDS in 1991. Included in the collection are his extensive journals detailing his transition and the challenges it involved. Our holdings also include [the records of FTM International](#) and 58 issues of the organization's *FTM Newsletter* (1987-2005), as well as a small collection of personal letters from Sullivan to a trans man known only as David (collection no. 2009-02).

To learn more, read the new biography of Sullivan by historian Brice D. Smith: [Lou Sullivan: Daring to Be a Man Among Men](#) (Transgress Press, 2017).

*Gerard Koskovich is a [queer public historian](#) and communications director for the GLBT Historical Society.*

---

## Upcoming Events

### [Living History](#)

#### **We Were Rebels: Jae Whitaker Remembers Janis Joplin**

Thursday, July 6

7:00-9:00 PM



The GLBT History Museum  
4127 18th St., San Francisco  
\$5.00 | [Free for members](#)

A conversation with Jae Whitaker, an African American lesbian musician who moved to San Francisco in the early 1960s to participate in the Beat scene that was centered in the city's North Beach neighborhood. In 1963 she met the young Janis Joplin; the two became lovers and moved in together. Joey Cain, curator of our current exhibition "[Lavender-Tinted Glasses: A Groovy Gay Look at the Summer of Love](#)" will interview Whitaker about her early life, the Beat scene, her relationship with Joplin, her experiences during the Summer of Love, and her life in San Francisco over the past five decades. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

## [Exhibition Panel](#)

### [Faces From the Past: Bay Area Queer Lives Before 1930](#)



Friday, July 14  
6:00-9:00 PM  
The GLBT History Museum  
4127 18th St., San Francisco  
\$5.00 | [Free for members](#)

"Faces From the Past" is a new display in the "[Queer Past Becomes Present](#)" exhibition in our Main Gallery. Using tintypes, postcards, news clippings, arrest records and other historical documents, curators Paula Lichtenberg and Bill Lipsky examine over 150 years of queer presence in Northern California. The first of a series of programs in conjunction with the display, this panel will feature the curators, along with two historians. Independent scholar [Will Roscoe](#) will discuss Queen Califia, the semi-mythical figure after whom California is named, and the two-spirits of the Bay Area. San Francisco State University professor [Clare Sears](#) will speak on 19th-century San Francisco laws against cross-dressing and homosexual activity. A reception with the curators starts at 6 p.m., followed by the panel at 7 p.m. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

## [Author Talk](#)

### [Hollywood's Bisexual Closet: Marilyn Monroe and More](#)

Thursday, July 20  
7:00 - 9:00 PM  
The GLBT History Museum



4127 18th St., San Francisco  
\$5.00 | [Free for members](#)

A look at bisexuality behind the scenes in old Hollywood with Boze Hadleigh, the author of two books published last year that address the question: *Hollywood Lesbians: From Garbo to Foster* and *Marilyn Forever: Musings on an American Icon by the Stars of Yesterday and Today*. Rock Hudson once told Hadleigh, "I

don't believe in bisexuals," yet Hadleigh thinks bisexual activity may have been prevalent in the studio system, which showcased the beauty of both genders. For a shot at stardom, he notes, many comely heterosexual men took a turn on the gay casting couch, while ambitious lipstick lesbians tolerated the straight version. Sometimes a basically gay star such as Cary Grant acted bi for career's sake -- and a sex symbol could question her sexuality while maintaining a straight image, as did Monroe. Hadleigh will discuss these tales and more in his talk at the GLBT History Museum. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

## [Author Talk](#)

### [How the Sexual Revolution Remade San Francisco](#)



Thursday, July 20  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
Swedish American Hall  
2174 Market St., San Francisco  
\$15.00 | \$10 for SF Heritage members

Since the 1960s, San Francisco has been America's capital of sexual liberation and a potent symbol in its culture wars. In this talk, historian Josh Sides explains how San

Francisco gained its libertine reputation, unearthing long-forgotten stories of the city's sexual revolutionaries, as well as the legions of longtime San Franciscans who tried to protect their vision of a moral metropolis and proper neighborhoods. Sides is the author of *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* (Oxford University Press, 2009). Presented by [San Francisco Heritage](#) in partnership with the GLBT Historical Society. Purchase tickets [here](#). Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

## [Community Forum](#)

### [Fighting Back: The Making of a Queer Museum](#)

Tuesday, July 25  
7:00 - 9:00 PM



The GLBT History Museum  
4127 18th St., San Francisco  
Free | \$5.00 donation welcome

The latest in the GLBT Historical Society's monthly "Fighting Back" series exploring contemporary issues in a historical context, "The Making of a Queer Museum" will offer a multigenerational conversation about the role of museums in preserving and presenting the history and culture of marginalized communities. A panel of cultural activists, independent scholars and museum professionals will describe their involvement in establishing population-specific public history institutions in San Francisco and elsewhere. The panelists' remarks plus observations and comments from all who attend will contribute to San Francisco's [Citywide LGBTQ Cultural Heritage Strategy](#). Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

## Panel Discussion

### **Leather: Where We Came From, Where We're Going**



Friday, July 28  
7:00-10:00 PM  
The GLBT History Museum  
4127 18th St., San Francisco  
\$5.00 | [Free for members](#)

San Francisco has long been known for its groundbreaking LGBTQ leather and BDSM community. In conjunction with the new "South of Market: San Francisco's Leather Scene" display in the "[Queer Past Becomes Present](#)" exhibition in our Main Gallery, curator Greg Pennington will facilitate a discussion about the leather scene from the 1960s to the present and beyond. Prominent leather community members, authors and scholars will take part, including Race Bannon, Rajat Dutta, Jordy Tackitt-Jones and Gayle Rubin. The panel starts at 7 p.m., followed by a social hour with light refreshments starting at 9 p.m. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

---

SAVE THE DATE

**2017** **LIVING COLORS**  
The GLBT Historical Society Gala

**October 14th • Saturday • 6PM**

**The Green Room  
San Francisco War Memorial Performing Arts Center**



## Visit Us

### EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS

The GLBT History Museum  
4127 18th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 621-1107  
[www.glbthistory.org/museum](http://www.glbthistory.org/museum)

Monday - Saturday: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 PM

NOTE: Closed Tuesday, July 4 (Independence Day)

### ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER

The GLBT Historical Society  
989 Market St., Lower Level  
San Francisco, CA 94103-1708



(415) 777-5455

[www.glbthistory.org/archives](http://www.glbthistory.org/archives)

Call to schedule a research appointment.

**CREDITS:** Feature: Jon Haeber/California Preservation Foundation. In the Archives: Snapshot of Lou Sullivan from the Louis Graydon Sullivan Papers. Daniel Bao, Jae Whitaker & Queer Museum: Photos by Gerard Koskovich. Faces of the Past: Sailor arrested for sodomy (1908); courtesy Bill Lipsky. 181 Club: Photo by Henri Leleu (circa 1973). Leather: Photo by Robert Pruzan (1978).

**Editor:** Gerard Koskovich    **Design:** PEPE Creatives

Copyright © 2017 GLBT Historical Society

