



HRA Santa Fe | PO Box 8640 | Santa Fe, NM 87504-8640

## US Timeline of Important Events

- February 3, 1870 – The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, granting African American men the right to vote by declaring that the “right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
- 1876 – Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- 1876 – Colorado is given statehood.
- 1881 – Clara Barton founds the American Red Cross
- 1882 – President Chester A. Arthur signs into law the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Act was a result of decades of racial and economic animosity towards immigrants.
- 1886 – We’wha, a Zuni Native American from New Mexico is received in Washington by President Grover Cleveland. Referred to as a “Zuni Princess,” they were a skilled weaver, potter, and the most famous Ihamana (a traditional Zuni gender role, now described as mixed or pangender or Two-Spirit.)
- 1889 – North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington are all given statehood.
- 1890 – The National Women Suffrage Association is founded.
- 1890 – Idaho and Wyoming are given statehood.
- 1896 – The Supreme Court case, Plessy v Ferguson rules that segregation is constitutional so long as it maintained “separate but equal” conditions.
- 1896 – Utah gains statehood.
- 1898 – Spanish-American War  
US acquires Puerto Rico and Guam  
US occupies the Philippines and Cuba
- 1900 – Rebellion in the Philippines. Resulted from the US occupation of the Philippines, as the US refused to recognize the new Filipino government. Sporadic fighting between US troops and the Filipino government continued until 1913.
- 1903 – Wright brothers complete their first successful flight in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.
- 1907 – Record-breaking year for immigration from Europe to the United States. Ellis Island is the hub for all immigration.
- 1907 – Oklahoma gains statehood.
- 1909 – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded in New York City as an advocacy group for racial equality.
- 1912 – Women campaign for suffrage publicly with a suffrage parade.
- 1912 – New Mexico and Arizona are given statehood.

- 1913 – Woolworth Building completed in NYC (tallest building in the world at the time)
  - Symbolizes urbanization
- 1914 – Panama Canal completed & opened for ships
  - Globalization of trade
- 1917 – National Highways Association gains momentum & lobbies for a network of national Highways.
- 1917 – Congress passes the Asiatic Barred Zone Act which barred immigration from certain Asian countries.
- 1918 – Congress passes the US Sedition Act which bans “any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or Constitution of the United States.”
- 1919 – The International Labor Organization (ILO) is established at the Paris Peace Conference, to advocate for human rights in labor regarding issues such as employment discrimination, safe working conditions, fair wages, fair working hours, and forced labor.
- 1919 – The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom is founded.
- 1920s – Masquerade or drag balls became very popular in the Prohibition Era, especially in areas of NYC such as Harlem and Greenwich Village.
- 1920 – 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ratified, granting women suffrage.
- 1921 – Congress passes the Snyder Act, which grants all Native Americans born in the US full citizenship.
- 1922 – The International Federation of Human Rights Leagues is established, comprised of fourteen independent human rights organizations.
- 1924 – The Immigration Act of 1924 is passed by Congress which bars “aliens ineligible to citizenship.” (This was meant to target Asian immigrants in particular.) It further stipulates that only whites can be naturalized as US citizens.
- 1924 – The Society for Human Rights is founded in Chicago by Henry Gerber.
  - The first documented gay rights organization.
- 1925 – Blues singer Ma Rainey is arrested in her home in Harlem for having a lesbian party. Bessie Smith, her protégé, bailed her out the following day. Rainey and Smith were part of a growing community of lesbian and bisexual African American women in Harlem.
- 1926 – The Geneva Conference passes the Slavery Convention, effectively demonstrating the international consensus to end all conditions of slavery worldwide.
- 1927 – Charles A. Lindbergh flies solo from New York to Paris
- 1928 – *The Well of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall is published. The book brings themes of homosexuality and sexual orientation into societal conversation.
- 1929 – Stock market crashes and triggers Great Depression
- 1932 – Dust Bowl conditions on the Great Plains leave many farmers unemployed
  - Many displaced agricultural workers became migrant farmers in California (travelling across New Mexico and Arizona)
- 1933 – FDR launches the New Deal, an initiative aimed at reversing the effects of the Great Depression. The New Deal included legislation that established Social Security, banned child labor, legalizes trade unions, and creates millions of jobs.
- 1935 – FDR establishes the WPA (Work Projects Administration) to fight unemployment

- The WPA supported the creation of over 2,000 posters by artists, with the goal of encouraging tourism and publicizing federal programs in everything from art to safety.



poster of a coal miner by Isadore Posoff

- 1939-1945 – 6 million European Jews are murdered in the Holocaust. Also targeted by the Nazis were “Gypsies, Communists, Soviet POWs, Poles, Ukrainians, people with disabilities, labor unionists, ‘Habitual’ criminals, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Free Masons and indigent people such as vagrants and beggars.”
- 1941 – President FDR delivers his State of the Union, in which he identifies the “Four Freedoms” essential to all humans: freedom of speech, from of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.
- 1942 – After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the President FDR signs Executive Order 9066, which forces 120,000 Japanese Americans into internment camps.
- 1943 – Congress passes the Magnuson Act, repealing the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917.
- 1945 – The United Nations is established. In its charter it promises to “promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all.”
- 1948 – The American Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is adopted. The US led the effort to draft both.
- 1950 – The Mattachine Society is established by activist Harry Hay. It is one of the first gay rights groups in the country, and one of the longest sustained.
- Focused on social acceptance and support within the gay community
- 1950 – Senator Joseph McCarthy launched his campaign against Communism, accusing many top-ranking government officials of being Communists.
- 1952 – The American Psychiatric Association’s diagnostic manual lists homosexuality as a “sociopathic personality disturbance.”
- 1952 – Congress passes the Immigration and Nationality Act that reverses all previous racial and ethnic barriers to naturalization of immigrants in the US.
- 1952 – Christine Jorgensen is the first American woman to publicly come out as transgender.
- She spoke openly about gender confirmation surgery and hormone replacement therapy. She became an international sensation as she was the first transgender person to be visible to many through the widespread media.
- 1953 – President Eisenhower signs an executive order that prevented homosexuals from working for the federal government, citing “security risks.”
- 1954 – The Supreme Court rules that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional in *Brown v Board of Education*.
- 1955 – The first documented American lesbian rights group is formed in San Francisco, called the

- Daughters of Bilitis (DOB).
- Hosted private social events only, as they feared police raids, as well as threats and discrimination they would receive in public bars and clubs
- 1956 – African American novelist, James Baldwin, publishes his debut novel, *Giovanni's Room*, which explores bisexuality and homosexual relationships.
- 1957 – Great Britain decriminalizes homosexuality but bans homosexuals from serving in the military.
- 1959 – Alaska and Hawaii become states.
- 1961 – Illinois repeals their sodomy laws, decriminalizing homosexuality.
- 1961 – President John F. Kennedy appoints Eleanor Roosevelt to lead the first Presidential Commission on the Status of Women.
- 1961 – The first televised documentary in the US about homosexuality airs in California.
- 1961 – Amnesty International is founded.
- 1963 – Civil rights activist and openly gay man Bayard Rustin is the chief organizer of the March on Washington at which Martin Luther King delivers his “I Have a Dream Speech.”
- September 19, 1963 – The first gay rights demonstration took place in NYC, in protest to discrimination against LGBTQ soldiers in the military.
- 1964 – Martin Luther King Jr. wins the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership of nonviolence resistance to racial injustice in America.
- 1964 – The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits all major forms of discrimination in schools, the workplace, towards voters, and in general society.
- 1965 – President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Immigration Act of 1965, eliminating ethnic quotas on immigration.
- 1966 – The Compton Cafeteria Riot broke out in San Francisco when trans women were arrested for breaking gendered clothing laws and denied service.
- 1967 – The “Los Angeles Advocate” is founded.
- 1968 – René Cassin wins the Nobel Peace Prize for drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 1969 – The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) is founded.
- June 28, 1969 – Police raid the Stonewall Inn in NYC, prompting protests and demonstrations.
- 1969 – “Los Angeles Advocate” is renamed “The Advocate.”
- The oldest running LGBTQ publication.
- June 28, 1970 – Community members marched through NYC on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The event was called the Christopher Street Liberation Day, but is now considered the first gay pride parade.
- 1970 – Marsha “Pay It No Mind” Johnson and Sylvia Rivera co-found Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries (STAR).
- 1971 – The US government stops the automatic dismissal of LGBTQ employees.
- 1972 – Title IX is passed, stating that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be exclude from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”
- 1972 – The Equal Rights Amendment passes the House of Representatives and the Senate, but not enough states ratify the Amendment by the seven year deadline, allowing the ratification to expire.

- 1973 – Roe v Wade is decided, with the Supreme Court ruling that the Constitution protects a pregnant woman’s right to choose to have an abortion without excessive restriction by the government.
- 1973 – Lambda Legal becomes the first legal organization to fight for gay and lesbian rights.
- They became their own client when they were denied non-profit status
  - They are eventually granted non-profit status by the New York Supreme Court.
- January 1, 1973 – Maryland becomes the first state to statutorily ban same-sex marriage.
- March 26, 1973 – The first meeting of “Parents and Friends of Gays” is held, which becomes the national organization “Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays” (PFLAG) in 1982
- June 24, 1973 – UpStairs lounge arson attack.
- Located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a three-story building in the French Quarter in New Orleans.
  - 32 people died from the fire or subsequent smoke inhalation.
  - Until the 2016 Pulse shooting in Orlando, the UpStairs Lounge attack was the deadliest attack on a gay club in US history.
- December 15, 1973 – The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the DSM-II Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders by a vote of 5,854 to 3,810.
- 1974 – Kathy Kozachenko is the first openly LGBTQ American elected to any public office when she wins a seat on the Ann Arbor City Council in Michigan
- 1974 – Elaine Noble becomes the first openly gay candidate to be elected to state office in the US when she is elected to the Massachusetts State legislature
- January 14, 1975 – The first federal gay rights bill is introduced to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation. The bill is brought before the Judiciary Committee but never for widespread Congressional consideration.
- March 1975 – Technical Sergeant Leonard P. Matlovich comes out to his commanding officer and is forcibly discharged from the Air Force as a result.
- He was a Vietnam War veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star
  - In 1980, the Court of Appeals condemns the dismissal as improper and Matlovich is awarded his back pay and a retroactive promotion
- 1976 – Professional tennis player Renee Richards is banned from competing in the women’s US Open after undergoing gender reassignment surgery in 1975. The US Open cited a “women-born-women” rule to ban Richards’s participation.
- Richards challenges the decision and the New York Supreme Court rules in her favor in 1977.
  - Richards competes in the 1977 US Open.
- 1977 – A human rights bureau within the US State Department is created.
- 1977-1981 – Billy Crystal portrays one of the first openly gay characters in recurring role on a prime time television show in “Soap”
- January 9, 1978 – Harvey Milk is inaugurated as San Francisco city supervisor, making him the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California.

- In November, Harvey and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone were murdered by Dan White
  - White was a recently-resigned public official who wanted Moscone to reappoint him
  - White only served 5 years in prison under the charge of voluntary manslaughter
- 1978 – Gilbert Baker designs and makes the first rainbow flag in honor of Milk and symbolic of the LGBTQ community
- 1978 – The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is formed during the US Commission on Civil Rights Hearing.
- 1978 – The Lesbian Task Force is founded by the NCADV.
- October 14, 1979 – Between 75,000 and 125,000 people took part in the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.
- 1980 – The Democratic Party is the first to add “gay rights” to their platform at the 1980 Democratic National Convention.
- March 2, 1982 – Wisconsin outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation, becoming the first state to do so.
- 1982 – Nearly 800 people are infected with Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder (GRID). By December of 1982, GRID had been renamed AIDS.
- 1983 – Lambda Legal wins the first HIV/AIDS discrimination lawsuit in *People v West 12 Tenants Corp.*
- Neighbors of Dr. Joseph Sonnabend attempted to evict him from the building because he was treating HIV-positive patients
- 1984 – Project 10 is started by educator and youth advocate Virginia Uribe to support LGBTQ students in a high school in LA. Project 10 is eventually adopted by the entire LA School District.
- 1985 – The Senate votes to impose sanctions on South Africa to protest apartheid.
- 1985 – The first memorial to gay victims of the Holocaust is unveiled at the Neuengamme concentration camp. The pink granite stone reads, “Dedicated to the Homosexual victims of National Socialism.”
- 1987 – The direct-action group, ACT UP, is founded in a community center in NYC to draw attention to the AIDS crisis through civil disobedience.
- 1989 – Jazz musician Billy Tipton dies, revealing that Tipton was assigned female at birth but lived and identified as male for his adult life.
- 1990 – The Americans With Disabilities Act is made law, establishing “a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability.”
- 1991 – Audre Lorde is named the State Poet of New York. A social justice advocate, novelist, poet, and essayist, Lorde also cofounded The Kitchen Table Women of Color Press and edited the lesbian publication “Chrysalis.”
- 1992 – The US ratifies the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- However, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has still not been ratified by the US.
- November 30, 1993 – President Bill Clinton signs a military directive called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” that prohibits openly gay and lesbian Americans from serving in the armed forces, while simultaneously outlawing the harassment of those who had not yet come out.



1994 – Pedro Pablo Zamora, a Cuban-American TV personality, became one of the first openly gay men with AIDS portrayed in the media when he appeared on MTV's reality show *The Real World: San Francisco*.

November 1995 – The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act is implemented as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.

- The law makes it legal for judges to exact harsher sentences if evidence shows that the victim of a crime was chosen as a result of their “actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.”

September 21, 1996 – Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act which defines marriage as the “legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife” and prohibits federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

December 3, 1996 – Hawaii becomes the first state to recognize the equality of heterosexual and homosexual couples when Honolulu Circuit Court Judge Kevin Chang ruled that the state does not have the legal right to ban same-sex couples from marrying.

1996 – Kelli Peterson founds the first Gay/Straight Alliance at East High School in Salt Lake City. To keep the club from meeting, the city school board bans all “non-curricular” clubs.

April 1997 – Ellen DeGeneres comes out on the cover of *Time* magazine.

April 30, 1997 – Ellen's character on her TV series “*Ellen*” became the first leading character to come out on a prime time network TV show

April 1, 1998 – Coretta Scott King urges the civil rights community to help fight homophobia and discrimination based on sexual orientation.

October 6-7, 1998 – Matthew Shepard, a 21 year old student at the University of Wyoming is found by a cyclist after having been tied to a fence and beaten. He later died due to injuries sustained in the attack.

October 9, 1998 – Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney make their first appearance in court after their arrest for the murder of Shepard. Both were later sentenced to life in prison.

April 26, 2000 – Vermont becomes the first state to legalize same-sex marriage.

2002 – The US uses a detention camp in Guantanamo Bay to hold suspects of terrorism without a trial.

2002 – NYC expands its definition of gender to recognize transgender and gender non-conforming people in housing, employment, and public accommodations under NYC Human Rights Law.

June 2003 – The US Supreme Court declares a Texas statute prohibiting consensual sexual activity between homosexual adults to be unconstitutional in their *Lawrence v Texas* decision

February 24, 2004 – President George Bush said that he supported a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, which he claimed was the only way to protect the sanctity of heterosexual marriage, “the most fundamental institution of civilization.”

May 17, 2004 – The first legal same-sex marriage takes place in Massachusetts.

September 6, 2005 – The California state legislature becomes the first to pass a bill allowing same-sex marriage, but Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoes the bill.

October 25, 2006 – The New Jersey Supreme Court rules that the state legislature must provide the same rights and benefits of marriage to same sex couples that are afforded to heterosexual

couples

- May 15, 2008 – Limiting marriage to heterosexual couples is ruled as unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court in *re: Marriage Cases*.
- November 4, 2008 – Voters in California approve Proposition 8 which makes same-sex marriage illegal.
- August 12, 2009 – Harvey Milk is posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Obama.
- October 28, 2009 – The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act is signed into law by President Obama.
- 2009 – The David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act, or David’s Law, is introduced in the House of Representatives. The purpose of the Act was to make sexual orientation a “protected class,” the likes of race or gender.
- August 4, 2010 – Proposition 8 is deemed unconstitutional by a federal judge.
- September 20, 2011 – “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is repealed, ending the ban on homosexuals serving openly in the military.
- 2011 – US Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan announces in a statement that students have the right to form gay-straight alliances under the Equal Access Act of 1984.
- 2011 – *When We Were Outlaws: a Memoir of Love and Revolution* by lesbian activist and LGBTQ rights advocate Jeanne Cordova is published.
- May 9, 2012 – President Obama becomes the first sitting US president to publicly support same-sex marriage when asked about it in an ABC interview.
- September 4, 2012 – The Democratic Party officially becomes the first major political party in the US to publicly support same-sex marriage at the Democratic National Convention.
- November 6, 2012 – Tammy Baldwin is the first openly gay politician (and first woman from Wisconsin) elected to the US Senate.
- 2012 – The FDA approves the first daily preventative drug for the transmission of HIV.
- June 26, 2013 – In the Supreme Court case *United States v Windsor*, the Court determines that section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional, therefore ruling that legally married same-sex couples are entitled to federal benefits. The court also dismisses a case regarding California’s Proposition 8.
- October 6, 2014 – The Supreme Court denies review of 5 different marriage cases, allowing state court rulings to stand, and therefore ruling that same-sex couples in Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana, and Wisconsin all have the right to marry. This decision opens the door for the right to marry in Colorado, Kansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
- 2014 – The Supreme Court rules that transgender students are protected from discrimination under Title IX.
- 2014 – Laverne Cox becomes the first transgender woman to win an Emmy as Executive Producer of the MTV documentary *Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word*
- June 9, 2015 – Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announces that the Military Equal Opportunity policy was amended to include gay and lesbian soldiers.
- June 26, 2015 – The Supreme Court rules that states cannot ban same-sex marriage, legalizing same-



sex marriage in all 50 states.

July 27, 2015 – Boy Scouts of America President Robert Gates announced that, “the national executive board ratified a resolution removing the national restriction on openly gay leaders and employees.”

May 17, 2016 – Eric Fanning is confirmed by the Senate to be the secretary of the Army. This confirmation made Fanning the first openly gay secretary of an American military branch.

June 24, 2016 – President Obama announces the designation of the first national monument to LGBTQ rights, the Stonewall National Monument.

June 30, 2016 – Secretary of Defense Carter announced the Pentagon is lifting the ban on transgender soldiers serving openly in the military.

August 5-21, 2016 – At least 41 openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual Olympians participate in the summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Only 23 participated in the 2012 London Olympics.

November 9, 2016 – Kate Brown is sworn in as the governor of Oregon. Brown becomes the highest-ranking LGBTQ official in the United States.

April 4, 2017 – The 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals rules that the Civil Rights Act also protects LGBTQ employees against workplace discrimination.

- The case was brought before the Court after Kimberly Hively sued Ivy Tech Community College for violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act when they denied her employment.

June 27, 2017 – Residents in the District of Columbia can now choose gender neutral options on their driver’s licenses.

June 30, 2017 – The Department of Defense places a six month delay on allowing transgender citizens to enlist in the military. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis stated that the government would use the “additional time to evaluate more carefully the impact of such accessions on readiness and lethality.” About a month later, Donald Trump tweeted that the “United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the US Military...”

November 7, 2017 – Virginian Danica Roem unseats a 26 year incumbent to become the first openly transgender individual to be elected to a state legislature in US history.

February 26, 2018 – The Pentagon confirms that the first transgender individual has signed a contract to join the US military.

March 4, 2018 – Daniela Vega becomes the first openly transgender presenter at the Oscars when she introduces a performance of “Mystery of Love” from “Call Me By Your Name” sung by Sufjan Stevens. Vega starred in the Oscar-winning foreign film “A Fantastic Woman.”

March 23, 2018 – The Trump administration announces a policy banning most transgender people serving in the military.

November 6, 2018 – Democratic Representative Jared Polis is elected as governor of Colorado, becoming the nation’s first openly gay governor.

June 30, 2019 – New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signs a law banning the legal implementation

of the Gay and Trans Panic Legal Defense Strategy.

- The strategy allowed perpetrators of violent crimes against members of the LGBTQ community to cite the victim's sexual orientation as the cause of their violent reaction.

September 22, 2019 – Billy Porter becomes the first openly gay African American man to win an Emmy for best lead actor in a drama series for his work on Pose.

<https://www.history.com/news/gay-culture-roaring-twenties-prohibition>

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