Adapted with permission from *Out of the Past: 400 Years of Lesbian and Gay History in America* (Byard, E. 1997, www.pbs.org/outofthepast) with additions and updates from *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 Facts Coalition).

Additional materials and study guide by GSAFE (www.gsafewi.org)

### **READ MORE**

This resource has primarily been adapted from PBS Online's *Out of the Past: 400 Years Lesbian and Gay History in America* (Byard, E., 1997, www.pbs.org/outofthepast/). The interactive timeline online allows users to click on dates to read details about people, policies, and events that have shaped the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people living in the United States.

Several items on the PBS timeline online expand to reveal more details and in-depth descriptions. These have been marked with the bolded words **READ MORE** on this document.

Three examples of the expanded readings you will find online are shared at the end of this document. We encourage you and your students to go online to READ MORE about the people, places, and events that capture your attention.

Each item on this timeline, of course, offers an opportunity to read more. The PBS site includes an extensive bibliography for further research and exploration. GSA for Safe Schools also offers a bibliography of suggested reading in LGBT history.

#### WATCH

Six of the people featured on the PBS timeline are profiled in the documentary *Out of the Past* and have been marked with the bolded words **WATCH** on this document. These individuals are:

- Michael Wigglesworth
- Sarah Orne Jewett
- Henry Gerber
- Bayard Rustin
- Barbara Gittings
- Kelli Peterson

The documentary is available for purchase through various retail and online stores for about \$10. It is an excellent resource for your GSA and school library.

The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) published a teachers' guide to accompany the documentary. The 31-page resource contains historical context, ideas for discussion, and suggested assignments for each of the video's six segments. A glossary, bibliography and resource section are also included. The teachers' guide is available as a free download from the GLSEN website (www.glsen.org).

Many additional films and documentaries have captured the events, individuals, and issues that have shaped and defined the progress of the LGBT community in the U.S.

#### Ways to Use this Timeline

This timeline was designed as a starting point for classroom and student club discussions, exploration, and research. A sample lesson plan is included. However, there are many additional ways to use this resource.

The timeline can be printed, copied, and posted in full or in part in the classroom, on a bulletin board, or in a display case.

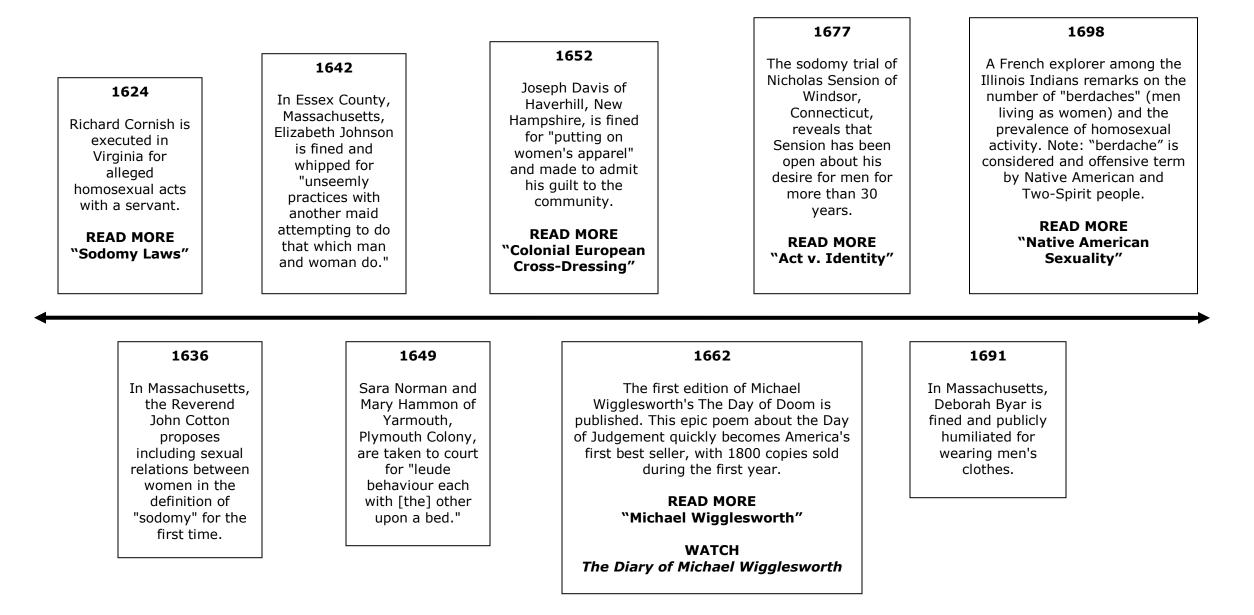
Another option is to search the timeline and build smaller timelines based around themes ("Famous Lesbian," "LGBT People of Color," "LGBT People and the Military") or time periods ("The Modern Gay Rights Movement," "Early Gay American History").

Make your own version of LGBT Jeopardy and divide your class or club into teams. Create a multiple choice quiz from the timeline and post the group results in your room. Consider taking the quiz as a school staff.

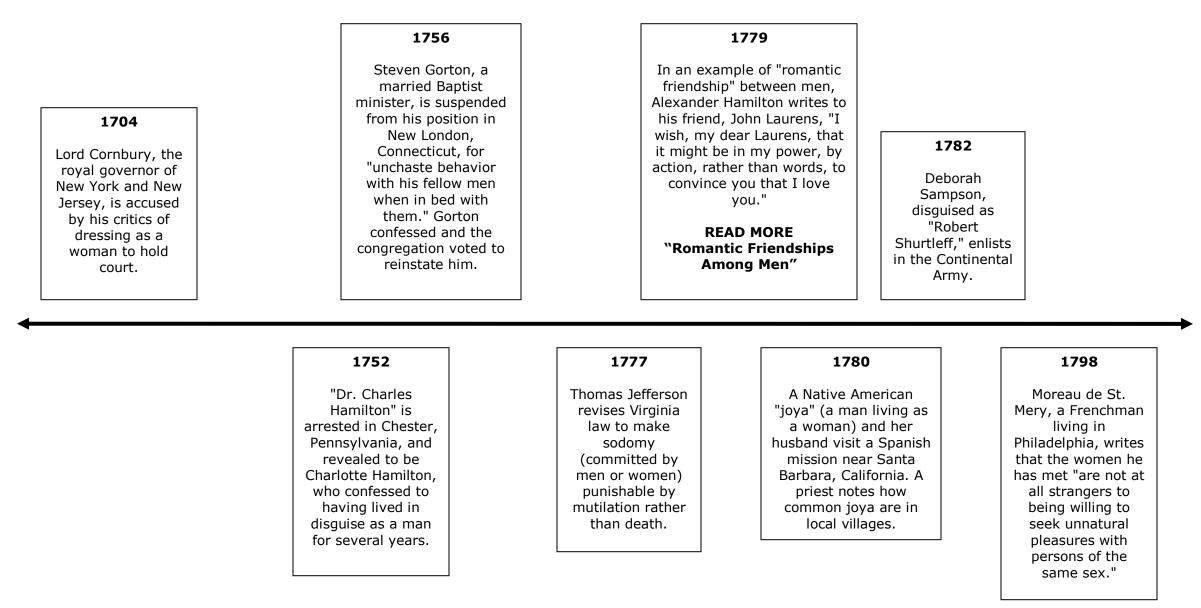
Use the timeline as the starting point for research projects. Another class or group project could involve researching and presenting local LGBT history and/or gathering oral histories.

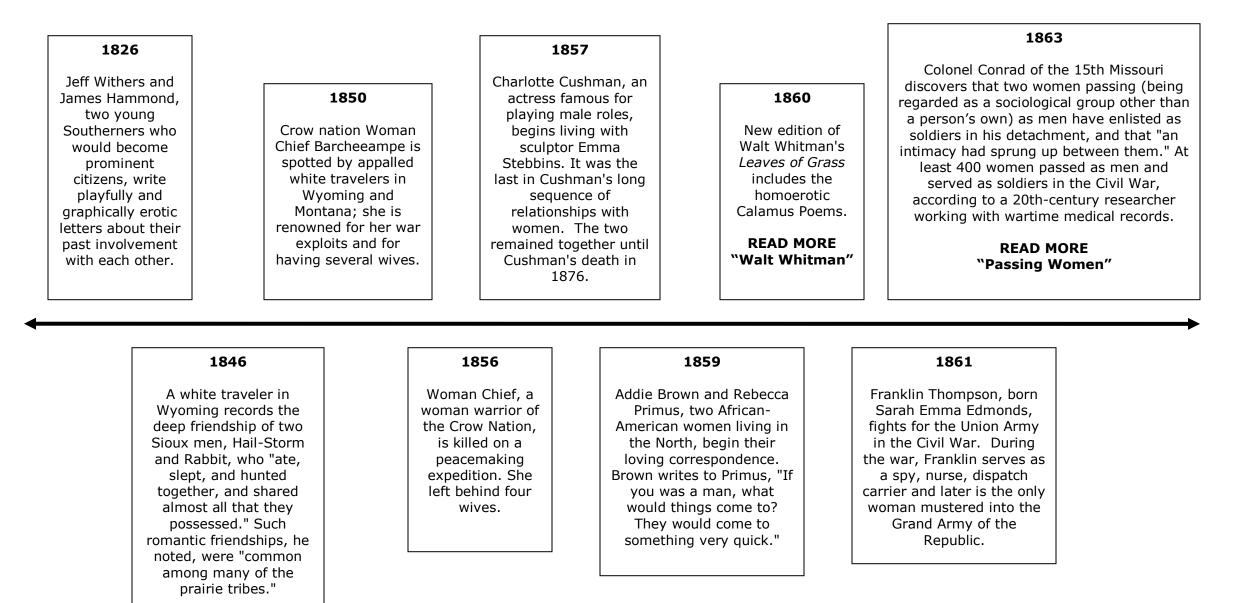
Hold a movie night or show segments of films or documentaries in your classroom that profile people and events from the timeline.

Create a library display feature books with LGBT themes or by LGBT authors.



4





1875 In San Francisco, assing woman Jeanne Bonnet leads an all- woman gang of former prostitutes who swear off men and support themselves through neft and shoplifting. In 1876, Bonnet was nurdered by an angry pimp while sleeping with her lover, Blanche Buneau.	<b>1878</b> "Mrs. Nash," a laundress with the 7th US Cavalry who had several soldier husbands, dies in the Dakota Territory and is revealed to have been a man. Her last husband, a corporal, committed suicide after the revelation.	1886 We'Wha, an accomplished Zuni Weaver and potter, is two spirit – born male but living as a woman. She spends six months in Washington, DC, and meets President Grover Cleveland, who never realizes this six- foot Zuni maiden was born male.	Frances white te activist, v autobiog loves of each othe numerou That so lit said at surprises	890 Willard, a emperance writes in her raphy: "The women for er grow more is each day. tle should be bout them me, for they erywhere."	1895 Angelina Weld Grimke, a young woman who would become a celebrated poet of the Harlem Renaissance, writes to Mamie Burrill, "If you only knew how my heart beats when I think of you. Your passionate lover, Angelina."	
1876	1882	1889		1894	1896	
Fitz-Green Halleck, a popular poet whose defenses of love between men influenced Walt Whitman, is honored with the first statue commemorating an American poet, unveiled in New York's Central Park by President Rutherford B. Hayes.	A young Oscar Wilde calls on Walt Whitman in Camden, New Jersey, in the midst of a triumphant cross- country speaking tour. Widespread press coverage of the tour noted Wilde's effeminacy, and one newspaper wrote, "There is a school of gilded youths eager to	Jane Addams and her "devoted companion," Ellen Gates Starr, found Hull House in Chicago. <b>READ MORE</b> <b>"Women's Independence and Sexual</b> <b>Possibility"</b> Dr. G. Frank Lydston reports that "there is in every community of any size a colony of male sexual perverts known to each other, likely to congregate together, and characterized by effeminacy of voice, dress, and manner."		"Frank Blunt," a married man, is convicted of theft in Font du Lac, Wisconsin, and is revealed to be a woman named Anna Morris. Gertrude Field, Morris' wife, vows to appeal the conviction.	Writer Sarah Orne Jewett publishes "Martha's Lady," a short story celebrating the redemptive power of love between women. Jewett lived for nearly 30 years in a "Boston Marriage" (romantic friendship with Annie Adams Fields. <b>WATCH</b> Scenes From a Boston Marriage	
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	embrace his peculiar tenets."	n and Gay History in America (PBS Onl	ne); <i>Bending the</i>	Mold: An Action Kit for Trai	READ MORE "Sarah Orne Jewett"	

### A German paper supportive of homosexuals prints an anonymous "Letter from Boston," which reports: "Here, as in Germany, homosexuality extends throughout all classes, from the slums of the North End to the highly fashionable Back Bay. Reliable homosexuals have told me names that reach into the highest circles of Boston, New York, and Washington, DC, names which have left me speechless with astonishment."

1907

### 1915

On a speaking tour crossing the country Emma Goldman defends lesbianism and homosexuality. Goldman's appearances prompted many women, unhappy with having to hide their lesbianism, to share their stories with her.

Havelock Ellis notes customs of "sexual inverts."

READ MORE "Gay Codes"

### 1925

Blueswoman Ma Rainey is arrested in her house in Harlem for having a lesbian party. Her protege, Bessie Smith, bails her out of jail the following morning. Rainey and Smith were part of an extensive circle of lesbian and bisexual African-American women in Harlem.

READ MORE "Blueswomen in Harlem"

#### 1926

Crow warrior hero Osh-Tish, a "bade" (man who dressed as a woman), dies. White Indian agents had attacked Osh-Tish and the bade tradition for years, and no other Crow men took up the bade role after his death.

The Broadway performance of The Captive, a play about a lesbian relationship, prompts a New York State law making the performance of any play depicting "sex perversion" a misdemeanor. The law remained on the books until 1967.

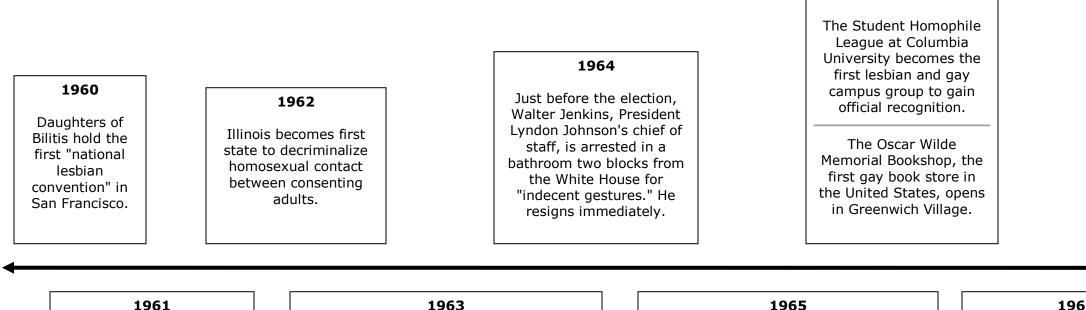
#### 1914 1917 1924 1925 1928 Henry Gerber and six other Medical article links US immigration Eva Kochever, a Polish-Jewish Radclyffe Hall's Well of law is modified men in Chicago found the *Loneliness*, a novel banned women's participation immigrant, opens "Eve Addam's Tearoom" in Greenwich Village. The in the suffrage to ban "persons Society for Human Rights, in England for its lesbian movement with with abnormal the United States' first lesbian gathering place had a sign content, is published in the "repressed sexual instincts" known gay-rights at the door which read, "Men are United States and becomes homosexuality." admitted but not welcome." In an immediate best-seller. from entering organization. the United 1926, the tea room was raided, and In 1929, an appellate court **READ MORE** States. WATCH Eva Kochever was deported, holds that the book is not Henry Gerber's "Medical Theory and charged with "disorderly conduct" obscene, and the book is Declaration and writing an "obscene" book, Homosexuality" even more widely Lesbian Love. distributed. **READ MORE** "Henry Gerber"

		022							1948
1931 ne Baltimore Afro- merican covers a local drag ball, describing the coming out of new ebutantes into gay society." READ MORE "Coming Out"	1933 Eleanor Roosevelt and her lover, journalist Lorena Hickok, begin their voluminous correspondence as Roosevelt moves into the White House. During one separation Hickok writes: "I've been trying today to bring back your face. Most clearly I remember your eyes, with a kind of teasing smile in them, and the feeling of that soft spot just north-east of the corner of your mouth against my lips."		1935 Sigmund Freud writes "Letter to an American Mother," urging compassion and tolerance for homosexuality. READ MORE "Freud's Letter to an American Mother"		1941 Gay men and lesbians become part of the massive mobilization for World War II, transforming lesbian and gay life in the United States. READ MORE "World War II and the Growth of Gay Communities"		<b>1944</b> The Army conducts an investigation of lesbian activity at the Women's Army Corps training center in Georgia. Its findings lead to a call for more stringent screening of WAC recruits.		Kinsey's study of sexuality in the US reveals that 50 percent of American men and 28 percent of American women have "homosexual tendencies," shocking the American public. Gore Vidal's novel <i>The City</i> and the Pillar is published, providing readers with an insider's portrait of gay life.
<b>19</b> Molly Dews friend of	on, a close	1934 Hollywood adopt	s the co	19	)39	1	942		1947

1950 The Mattachine Society, a "homophile" organization aimed at promoting tolerance of homosexuality, is founded in Los Angeles by Harry Hay. <b>READ MORE</b> 'The Mattachine Society" The lesbian-themed novel <i>Women's Barracks</i> becomes a bestseller.	1953 President Dwight D. Eiser Executive Order #10450 employment of homose federal government. Many governments soon ado policies. One, the first openly lest national publication in the puts out its first issue. In Supreme Court ruled that was not obscene and could through the US of	bower issues banning the cuals by the state and local oted similar Dian and gay United States, 1958, the US the publication be distributed	1955 n, Phyllis Lyon, and six omen found Daughters tis, the first national a rights group, in San Francisco. insberg gives a public ling of <i>Howl</i> in San . The police charge him cenity but lose in court. READ MORE	A Navy report con evidence that ' acceptably serve they are securit suppress The American declares that "ho consideration in e in sensitive po lesbians facing o	<b>1957</b> Includes that there is no homosexuals cannot in the military" or that cy risks. The report is sed until 1967. Civil Liberties Union omosexuality is a valid valuating the risk factor sitions," and advises fficial discrimination to heterosexual.
<	1952	1954	1956		1958

Christine Jorgensen is the first American whose sex reassignment surgery became public. Her surgery causes an international sensation, and for many, she is the first visible transsexual in the media. The Army-McCarthy hearings include the gay-baiting of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's aide Roy Cohn and Army attorney Jack Welch before a national television audience. James Baldwin, African-American novelist and intellectual, publishes *Giovanni's Room*, a male love story. Barbara Gittings forms the first East Coast Chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis.

READ MORE "Daughters of Bilitis"



Hollywood studios alter the production code to allow the depiction of gay men and lesbians again, as long as the subject is treated with "care, discretion, and restraint."

Senator Strom Thurmond attempts to derail the Civil Rights March on Washington by accusing March organizer Bayard Rustin of being a Communist and a "pervert," Thurmond failed, and in August, more than 250,000 people converged on the nation's capital to demand jobs and freedom for African-Americans.

> WATCH The Baiting of Bayard Rustin

> > **READ MORE** "Bayard Rustin"

1967

Barbara Gittings, Frank Kameny and other homophile activists stage the first public picketing to protest government discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Pickets are held at the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

WATCH Barbara Gittings: A Fate on the Front

> **READ MORE** "Barbara Gittings"

#### 1969

Transgender and gendernonconforming people are among those who resisted arrest in a routine bar raid by police on June 28 on the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village, thus helping to ignite the modern LGBT rights movement.

**READ MORE** "The Stonewall Riots"

1970		1975					
Lesbians stage "Lavender Menace" protest action at a feminist conference, pressing The National Organization for Women, and the <b>1973</b>		longer exclude homosexuals	US Civil Service Commission announces it will no longer exclude homosexuals from government employment.		1977		
		gay legislator as she take	Elaine Noble becomes the first openly lesbian or gay legislator as she takes her seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.			1979	
women's movement in general, to change its stance on lesbianism. <b>READ MORE</b> "Lesbian Feminism"	The American Psychiatric Association declares that homosexuality per se is not a psychiatric disorder.		ble by amending its to include the phrase mage not associated as or one's biological	movement for lesbian and gay rights. READ MORE "Anti-gay Organizing on the Right"		Over 100,000 people take part in the first March on Washingto for Lesbian and Gay Rights.	
	1972	1974	1976		1978		
In <i>Baker v. Nelson</i> the Minnesota Supreme Court rules that state law limits marriage to opposite-sex couples and that this limitation does not violate the United States Constitution. The United States Supreme Court dismisses an appeal, thereby establishing the precedent on same-sex marriage.		The Lesbian Herstory Archives open to the public in the New York apartment of Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel. In 1993, the Archives' large and growing collection moved to a Brooklyn brownstone.	The first Michigan W Music Festival is h Hart, Michigan. The is one of the larges most visible lesbian in the United Sta	eld in festival st and events	Harvey Milk, Francisco city sup "Mayor of Castr and Mayor Georg are murdered in former city supe White	pervisor and ro Street," ge Moscone City Hall by ervisor Dan	
		Disco introduces gay culture to the mainstream.			READ MO "Harvey I	-	
		READ MORE "Disco Decade"					

1981

Doctors identify first cases of what they term "Gay-Related Immune Deficiency" (GRID). Soon the disease's name is changed to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

The Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press is founded by Barbara Smith, Cherrie Moraga, Audre Lorde, Hattie Gossett, and Myrna Bain in New York City. That same year, Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua co-edit This Bridge Called My Back: The Writings of Radical Women of Color.

> READ MORE "AIDS" and "Woman of Color Organize"

### 1985

Rock Hudson acknowledges that he has AIDS, prompting widespread public attention to the epidemic.

The Times of Harvey Milk, a documentary about the career and the murder of the gay San Francisco city supervisor, wins an Academy Award.

### 1987

ACT UP (Aids Coalition to Unleash Power) is founded in New York City. The group's tactics rejuvenate lesbian and gay activism.

#### READ MORE "AIDS and ACT UP"

The Second National March on Washington for gay and lesbian equality draws 500,000.

### 1989

Celebrated jazz musician Billy Tipton dies in Spokane, Washington, revealing that he is a woman. Tipton, who played in big bands in the '40s and '50s, lived for 56 years as a man, marrying several times and raising children.

#### 1982

Wisconsin passes the first lesbian and gay civil rights bill in the United States. The law prohibits bias in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

#### 1986

In *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Supreme Court rules that the Constitution allows states to pass and enforce sodomy laws targeting homosexuals.

#### READ MORE "Bowers v Hardwick"

Conservative activist Terry Dolan dies of AIDS. His funeral is attended by conservative political associates such as Senator Orrin Hatch and Pat Robertson, as well as by Dolan's gay friends.

#### 1988

The first National Coming Out Day is observed on October 11 to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National March on Washington.

The governing board of the City College of San Francisco approves the creation of the first gay and lesbian studies department in the United States.

> READ MORE "Lesbian and Gay Studies"

1990

The Gay and Lesbian Independent School Teachers Network (GLSTN) is founded. Only two known high school student clubs, known as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), exist in the US at the time.

Term "outing" is coined by *Time* magazine to describe Michelangelo Signorile's campaign to identify closeted celebrities and elected officials.

Policies restricting the immigration of lesbians and gays to the United States are rescinded. Immigration restrictions on people with HIV and AIDS, however, remain in place.

### 1992

Black lesbian poet Audre Lorde dies of breast cancer. At the time of her death, she was the poet laureate of New York State.

### 1995

President Bill Clinton signs an executive order forbidding the denial of security clearances on the basis of sexual orientation. Being closeted and vulnerable to blackmail, however, is still a possible grounds for a clearance denial.

### 1991

FTM activist Jamison "James" Green takes over Lou Sullivan's FTM newsletter and transforms it into FTM International, Inc., the world's largest information and networking group for female-to-male transgender people and transsexual men.

Karen Thompson is named legal guardian of her lover, Sharon Kowalski, eight years after a car accident left Kowalski paralyzed and speech-impaired. Kowalski's family had refused to recognize the pair's relationship, and the ruling was a major victory for lesbian and gay couples. 1993

The Minnesota state legislature enacts the first statwide law banning discrimination against transgender people.

Cheryl Chase founds the Intersex Society of North America to build awareness and offer support to intersex people.

Transgender youth Brandon Teena is raped and murdered in Humboldt, Nebraska. This crime brings attention to transgender discrimination and violence and becomes the subject of the award-winning film, *Boys Don't Cry*.

Senator Sam Nunn's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy for the US military becomes law. The law includes the determination that "persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" are an "unacceptable risk" for inclusion in the military. Witch hunts against gay men and lesbians in the military continue to this day.

The third lesbian and gay March on Washington draws over 1 million participants.

1996

President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act, denying federal benefits to same-sex spouses should gay marriage ever become legal, and creating an exception to the US Constitution to allow states to disregard same-sex marriages performed in other states.

Kelli Peterson founds a Gay-Straight Alliance at East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. The city school board bans all "non-curricular" student clubs in order to keep the group from meeting.

WATCH Kelli Peterson and a New Generation of Activists

> READ MORE "Kelli Peterson"

### 1998

Wisconsin Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin becomes the first openly gay person to win election to a first-term seat in Congress.

Matthew Shepard is tied to fence, beaten, and left to die by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson outside Laramie, WY on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The incident gains national media attention and sparks vigils around the world. Shepard dies five days later. His death inspires the award-winning play *The Laramie Project* 

### 1996 (cont)

Students at the University of Virginia organize the first Day of Silence in response to a class assignment about non-violent protests.

A federal appeals court issues the first judicial opinion in US history finding that a public school could be held constitutionally accountable for not stopping antigay abuse. Ashland, WI school officials knew of anti-gay abuse directed at student Jamie Nabozny but did not intervene. Those officials later offer a settlement of nearly \$1 million to Nabozny.

In *Romer v. Evans*, the Supreme Court strikes down Colorado's Amendment 2, which denied gays and lesbians protections against discrimination, calling them "special rights." According to Justice Anthony Kennedy, "We find nothing special in the protections Amendment 2 withholds. These protections . . . constitute ordinary civil life in a free society."

### 1997

Trans Activist Leslie Feinberg published *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*, a who's who of transgender people throughout world history that traces the roots of transgender oppression.

### 1999

The American Counseling Association Governing Council adopts a position "opposing 'reparative therapy' as a 'cure' for individuals who are homosexual." Numerous medical, health, and mental health organizations – representing over 480,000 professionals – adopt position the "homosexuality is not a mental disorder and thus not something that needs to be or can be 'cured.'"

2000		
Vermont becomes the first state in the country to legally recognize civil unions between gay or lesbian couples. The law states that these		2008
"couples would be entitled to the same benefits, privileges, and responsibilities as spouses." It stops	2004	The California Supreme Court rules that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to
short of referring to same-sex unions as marriage, which the state defines as heterosexual.	Massachusetts legalizes same- sex marriage, officially becoming the first state in the U.S. to do so.	marry. California becomes the second state in the U.S. to legalize same-sex marriages later that year.

2003

The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Lawrence v Texas* that sodomy laws in the U.S. are unconstitutional. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote, "Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct."

V. Gene Robinson is elected bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. He enters office in 2004, becoming the first openly gay, non-celibate priest to be ordained a bishop in a major Christian denomination.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that barring gays and lesbian from marrying violates the state constitution. The Massachusetts Chief Justice concludes that to "deny the protections, benefits, and obligations conferred by civil marriage" to gay couples is unconstitutional because is denies "the dignity and equality of all individuals" and makes them "second-class citizens."

### 1624 - Sodomy Laws

European colonial governments sought to control the sexual behavior of the people within their settlements. The British, French, and Spanish all passed laws regarding sex outside of marriage and "sodomy" - a range of same-sex sexual activities. In early British colonies, as under English law, sodomy was a capital crime (punishable by death). One of the earliest recorded convictions for sodomy in the colonies was that of Richard Cornish, a sea captain executed in Virginia for an alleged sexual assault on another man.

Colonial authorities were not always certain which sexual acts fell under the category of "sodomy." Religious leaders debated the point in the early 1600s, and the laws adopted by different colonies varied in what specific acts were punishable by death. Most only dealt with sexual acts between men. One law also covered sexual activity between women. Despite the severity of the laws, however, we know of only a few instances of executions in sodomy cases during the colonial period. People were more likely to be tried for the lesser offense of "lewd behavior," which did not incur the death penalty. Sodomy was a difficult charge to prove - two witnesses were required, and there was no possibility of a tell-tale pregnancy - and people may have been reluctant to place their neighbors' lives in jeopardy with such a dire accusation.

### 1652 - Colonial European Cross-dressing

Men dressing as women (and, to a lesser extent, women dressing as men) was not uncommon in European society, usually among common people in the context of social protests and Carnival celebrations. Men who crossdressed were more likely to be in disguise or making a political statement than expressing anything about their sexual identity in the manner of a modern-day "drag gueen." Colonial laws actually made it a crime to crossdress, usually imposing a fine and some form of public contrition for the offense. Laws about what people could wear were generally intended to preserve social order and maintain a hierarchy within society, and were not directly concerned with homosexuality. However, evidence from England in the early 1700s indicates that there was some link between cross-dressing and male homosexuality in British popular culture. In London, observers wrote about a type of man referred to as a "mollie," who enjoyed sex with other men. Some mollies wore women's clothes. The accusations of cross-dressing lodged against New York's royal governor in 1704 may have been meant to make this association in order to ruin his reputation.

Women's motives for dressing as men were also probably mixed - to lodge a protest or to be in disguise. However, the possible sexual aspects of women's cross-dressing should not be overlooked. A writer describing Deborah Sampson's career as a male soldier during the Revolutionary War took great pains to explain Sampson's reported affairs with other women while disguised: "It must be supposed that she acted more from necessity than voluntary impulse of passion; and no doubt succeeded beyond her expectations, or desires."

#### 1677 - Acts v. Identity

Looking at historical evidence of homosexual behavior, it is hard to figure out how people in the past understood and interpreted same-sex sexuality. In New England, for example, laws and religious thinkers condemned many different kinds of sexual activity (both heterosexual and homosexual) as sinful acts, but it is not clear whether people who engaged in sexual activity with people of the same sex were considered to be a different kind of person - like a "gay man" or a "lesbian" in modern society. It is also unclear whether all members of the society shared the official attitude toward homosexuality expressed by harsh anti-sodomy laws.

The 1677 sodomy trial of Nicholas Sension offers some interesting clues as to popular attitudes toward and perceptions of homosexual activities in colonial society. Historian Richard Godbeer points out that Sension had been open about his desire for other men for many years, and had not faced any serious punishment for his behavior despite his notoriety. His neighbors who testified in court had resisted his advances, but hadn't felt the need to report him to the authorities. Godbeer notes that witnesses at the trial also used language which might suggest that they understood Sension to be a different kind of person who was attracted to other men.