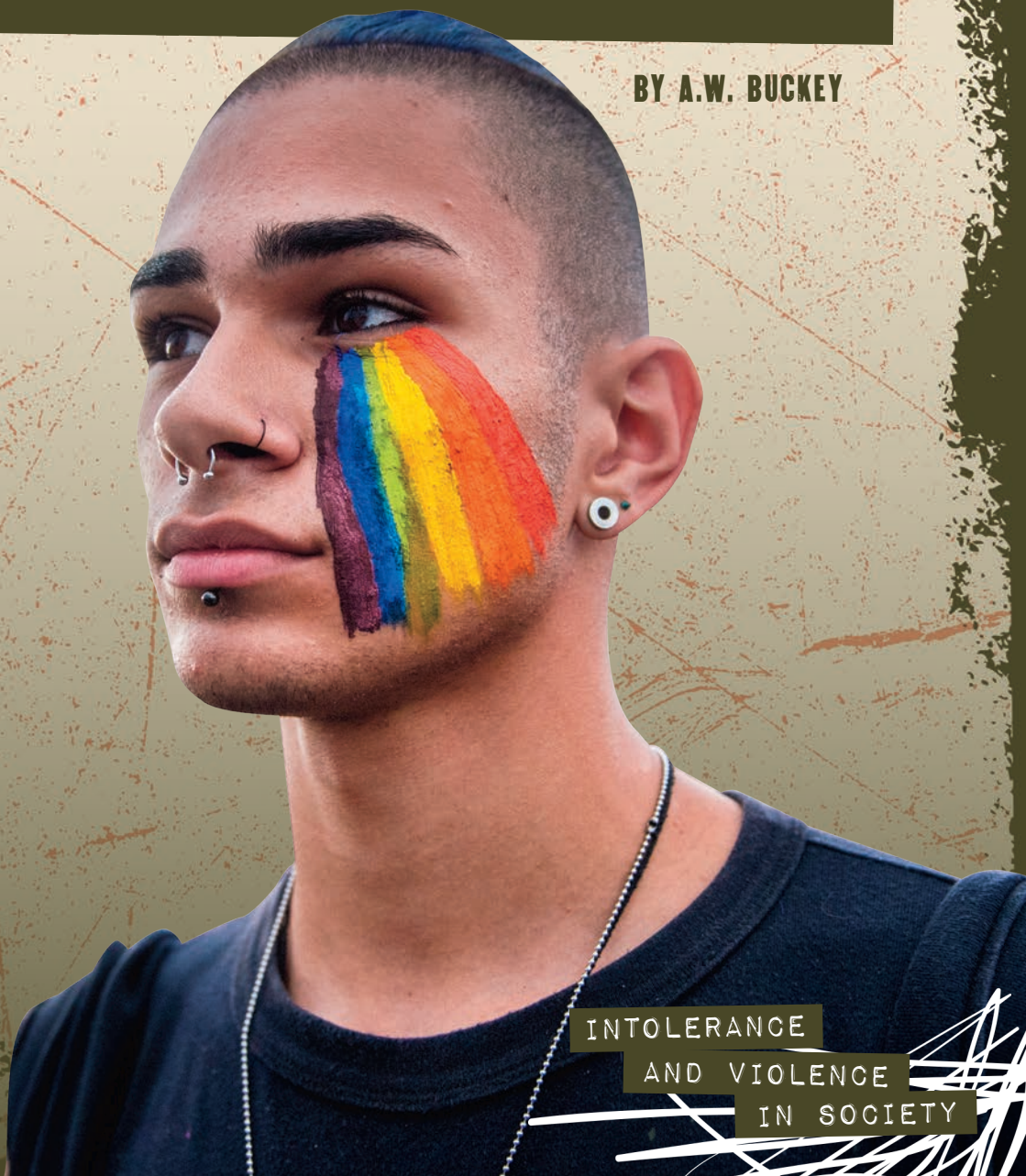


# LGBT

# INTOLERANCE

BY A.W. BUCKEY



INTOLERANCE  
AND VIOLENCE  
IN SOCIETY



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# IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF

## INTOLERANCE AND VIOLENCE

**1868**

The word *homosexual* is first used to describe a person who primarily has same-sex desires.

**1970**

The first Pride March commemorates the anniversary of Stonewall. The march later becomes a global LGBT tradition.

**1620s**

European settlers bring anti-sodomy laws to the American colonies.

**1948**

The Kinsey Institute releases a report, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, that suggests that many people have a mix of same-sex and opposite-sex desires.

**1300s**

**1300s**

In Europe, anti-sodomy laws are used to punish people who engage in unlawful sex, including same-sex acts.

**1600s**

**1860**

**1940**

**1960**

**1952**

Christine Jorgensen, a transgender woman, becomes the first American to undergo sex reassignment surgeries.

**1969**

A police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City, leads to six days of protests and activism by the New York LGBT community.





## CHAPTER ONE

# WHAT IS THE HISTORY BEHIND


# LGBT INTOLERANCE?

Novelist E. M. Forster was born in England in 1879. From a young age, Forster knew he was attracted to other men. He kept his desires secret and wrote novels about relationships between men and women. Forster had his first sexual experience in his late thirties and later fell in love with a male train conductor. After he accepted the truth of his sexuality, Forster wrote less for the public. His only novel discussing love between men was published after his death, although it had been written fifty years earlier. Forster's long, secretive path to love and happiness led him to reflect on the lives of others who kept their sexuality secret. "I see beyond my own happiness and intimacy," Forster wrote, "occasional glimpses of the happiness of 1000s of others whose names I shall never hear, and I know that there is a great unrecorded history."<sup>6</sup>

Forster's words point to a difficult truth about LGBT history. Members of the LGBT community have often had to keep their identities and relationships secret in order to survive. This means countless details of LGBT history will always be unknown. In addition, norms of sexual orientation (the gender or genders a person is attracted to), gender identity (the gender a person identifies as), and gender expression (the ways in which a person lives out gender



identity) vary greatly throughout history. There have always been people who loved others of the same sex and people who identified outside of traditional gender norms. At the same time, members of the LGBT community have faced powerful cultural, institutional, and personal barriers to safety and inclusion.



**“I know that there is a great unrecorded history.”<sup>6</sup>**

—E. M. Forster, *on the gaps in LGBT history*

## **EARLY IDEAS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

Gender fluidity, or the idea that there are gender identities that shift between or exist beyond male and female, is not a new concept. Many ancient civilizations worshipped gods who could change gender or combine characteristics from more than one sex. The ancient Norse god Loki could change from male to female, bearing children in the female form. The Middle Eastern goddess Ishtar had a similar power, but she could also change the gender of others. Many Hindu gods and goddesses also displayed gender fluidity.

In ancient Greece and Rome, it was common and accepted for mature men to take younger men as their lovers. There are also artistic and historical records of sexual love between women, although these relationships were not considered as acceptable by society. Many other ancient cultures accepted same-sex relationships, as long as the people in these relationships also fulfilled the roles of heterosexual marriage and childrearing. For example, in China around 20 BCE, an emperor named Ai was well known for his lack of interest in women and love for a married male member of the court. One legend

## SAPPHO

Sappho was a Greek poet who lived on the island of Lesbos from about 610 to 570 BCE. Some scholars believe that Sappho, who probably married a man and had children, ran a school for young women on the island. The school was devoted to worshipping Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and the women who attended the school learned about love and sex, including with other women. Although Sappho was very famous, only a few poems and fragments of her work have survived. Much of Sappho's poetry addresses love and desire. Some of her work seems to be about love and sexual desire for women, and many believe that she wrote poetry to female lovers. For example, one poem talks about a reluctant lover: "For even if she flees, soon she shall pursue. And if she refuses gifts, soon she shall give them. If she doesn't love you, soon she shall love even if she's unwilling." For this reason, Sappho became an icon representing women who love other women. The word *lesbian* comes from the island of Lesbos where Sappho lived. The adjective *sapphic* is sometimes used to describe things relating to lesbianism.

*Quoted in Julia Dubnoff, "Poems of Sappho," University of Houston, n.d. [www.uh.edu](http://www.uh.edu).*

describes Ai and his lover, Dong Xian, napping together. The emperor got ready to get up but couldn't bear the thought of waking Dong Xian, who was resting on his sleeve. Instead, the emperor cut the sleeve of his own robe off. "The passion of the cut sleeve" became a coded reference to sexual and romantic love between men.<sup>7</sup>

## PRE-MODERN GENDER AND SEXUAL NORMS

In pre-modern Europe, most people followed strict sexual and gender norms influenced by Christianity and traditional cultures. Men and women followed separate rules for gender expression. Men dressed in gender-specific clothing, and women were expected to

look traditionally feminine. Men and women had different jobs and household roles. However, there are records of people who lived outside of these rules. Saint Marinos, or Marina the Monk, was born female but lived as a male monk in fifth-century Lebanon. Historians have found evidence that some early Christian churches may have blessed same-sex unions between men. However, most European Christian societies followed sexual norms that did not allow same-sex love and intimacy. Sex was only accepted as an act between husbands and wives for the purpose of producing children.

These sexual standards were often enforced with anti-sodomy laws. The word *sodomy* comes from the Biblical city of Sodom. The Christian Bible's Book of Genesis describes the people of Sodom as "sinning greatly," but it does not describe what their sins were.<sup>8</sup> Over time, many came to understand the crimes of Sodom as unlawful sexual acts, generally oral or anal sex. In the Middle Ages, sodomy became a crime that could be punished by death in some circumstances. While anti-sodomy laws were often applied to heterosexual acts, they began to be used to forbid sex between men in the 1600s. The European colonists who overtook North America brought European Christian sexual and gender norms with them. In 1636, an influential Massachusetts preacher suggested that sex between women should be considered sodomy as well. In the colonial United States, there were at least two cases of women being punished for having sex with other women. Hundreds of years later, in the 1960s and 1970s, many US states continued to use anti-sodomy laws to penalize LGBT people, particularly gay men. These laws were used to prevent gay people from raising children or visiting their own children, to oppress them in the workplace, and to prevent them from speaking out against discrimination. For example, until the





*We'Wha became a well-known representative of the Zuni people and met President Grover Cleveland in 1866. We'Wha was born male but embraced traditionally feminine characteristics.*

twenty-first century, Virginia and Mississippi courts used anti-sodomy laws to deny gay parents custody of their own children, portraying the parents as criminals. In 2003, a US Supreme Court ruling declared these anti-sodomy laws unconstitutional.

Along with recorded accounts of same-sex relationships, there are also accounts throughout US history of people dressing and living as a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth. In the 1890s, a man named Frank Blunt was convicted of theft in Wisconsin. After his arrest, Blunt was revealed to have been born female.

In several Native American cultures throughout history, there have been people who lived in gender roles that were neither traditionally male

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