With mixed emotions, we write our final column as co-chairs. We have worked hard these three years to advance the organization as a space for LGBTQ history and historians to flourish. As two mid-career scholars, we have had to balance Committee on LGBT History commitments with obligations at our own institutions, public history engagement, and family duties. As such, we have not been able to do all we imagined with the committee. Still, serving together as co-chairs has been one of the most rewarding experiences of our careers. We have been able support scholars from graduate students to field leaders, fundamentally improve the experience of the AHA annual meeting, strengthen organizational infrastructure, and give the CLGBTH a decisive public voice on policy and issues. On a personal note, we have also built a lasting friendship with each other for which we are profoundly grateful.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the focus and effort of the committee’s other officer: Phil Tiemeyer. Phil not only extended his term but also combined roles of secretary and treasurer to make the organization much more effective. Our communications comrades have been equally indispensable: David Palmer streamlined our web presence, newsletter editor Stephanie Gilmore pushed us to go digital, and Katie Batza has provided beautifully edited book reviews. Katie is moving on after this issue, and so we thank her for her service. Join us in welcoming
Not to gloat, but check out highlights from the organization’s accomplishments over the past three years:

1. Our membership system allows more people to be active members (and for the organization to collect more dues) than ever before. Annual membership now runs from AHA to AHA. Online registration through Paypal has provided us with an efficient way to collect dues and donations. Take a look at how easy it is to renew and/or add a small year-end (tax-deductible!) donation.

2. We have drastically cut costs by switching to a digital newsletter. This will allow the organization to direct resources toward other vital work that advances LGBTQ historical scholarship.

3. Online payment and the digital newsletter pushed us to build an up-to-date database of current and former members that includes current emails. Through this database, we have a powerful tool for communication for everything from elections to calls for action.

4. Our third “conference within a conference” at the American Historical Association meeting in New York City was a smashing success. Through this new format, we have gotten more people on the AHA program than ever. Our programming has generated numerous publications, collaborations, and networks. The increasingly big footprint has also provided our members spaces of comfort, inquiry, and respite at the AHA. In NYC, we also held a business meeting. Our co-hosted reception with the Coordinating Council for Women in History and the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities is easily among the best parties of the AHA.

5. Social media has grown as a mechanism to support our work. Don maintained the Facebook page for the past three years, doubling page “likes” from 720 to 1435, with “fans” from 45 countries, and making the space a more robust place for information sharing and interaction. We hope the next governing board reengages our Twitter handle as well!

6. We oversaw the selection of 10 book, article, and public history prizes, with the assistance of expert prize committee chairs and members. We thank 2015 prize committee members Estelle Freedman, Mir Yarfitz, and T.J. Tallie for their service. The CLGBTH under our administration also launched a new tradition: the Boswell and Nestle Prizes.

7. Finally, our leadership on promoting LGBT-inclusive K-12 history education has been solidified through the publication this fall of our groundbreaking report, Making the Framework FAIR: California’s History-Social Science Framework Proposed LGBT Revisions Related to the FAIR Education Act. Don worked with professors Leila Rupp (UC Santa Barbara) and David Donahue (Mills College) to coordinate contributions from 20 scholars from around the U.S. After publication, Don worked tirelessly on behalf of the CLGBTH in coalition with Our Family Coalition, Equality California, and the GSA Network to ensure that as many of the report’s recommendations as possible find their way into California’s K-12 U.S. History Framework. In addition to these coalition partners, parents, students, educators, administrators, scholars, and organizations have lent their voices to a process that mixes politics, community organizing, and scholarship. Don is deeply grateful for their activism. He reported at AHA on the outcomes to date of this two-
year (and ongoing) effort. Making a lasting and meaningful change in this blueprint for the ways that California educators teach U.S. history will have implications far beyond the state for generations to come.

We are excited to pass the torch to incoming co-chairs Nick Syrett and Amanda Littauer. We are particularly pleased to continue the practice of differently gendered co-chairs with this transition. We hope CLGBTH members will expand this commitment in the future, and specifically elect more trans* leadership. We are absolutely thrilled that so many people have stepped up and offered to serve on the governing board.

The Committee on LGBT History has such a vital role to play in our lives as historians and on the shape of this profession that continues to be largely white, heterosexual, cisgender, and male. Jennie is certain that the connections she made to the committee when in graduate school (serving as newsletter editor when Marc Stein and Leisa Meyer chaired) have made meaningful queer historical networks possible. Don could not be more grateful to have revitalized and grown his relationship to such a vibrant community of colleagues and friends. His service as co-chair has allowed him to propel forward a number of queer historical scholarly, public history, and advocacy projects. We are strongest and smartest when we practice collaboration and imagine collective action. The Committee on LGBT History can and does develop spaces for people who too often feel excluded. It also makes the profession more affirming of queer people and scholarship. We thank you for giving us the chance to play our role. The work continues.

Jennifer Brier and Don Romesburg

Greetings from your new co-chairs, Amanda Littauer and Nick Syrett. Amanda is an assistant professor of history and the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Northern Illinois University, and Nick is an associate professor of history at the University of Northern Colorado. Although following in the footsteps of Don and Jennie is daunting, we are happy to serve in leadership roles in this dynamic and exciting organization (if we do say so ourselves).

Welcome to this unusual double issue newsletter, and thanks for your patience. Our intrepid former newsletter editor, Stephanie Gilmore, suffered from a family emergency and loss last fall that required her full attention, and we wish her continued healing. We have now transitioned to our new newsletter editor (and board member), April Haynes, whom we thank for taking over sooner than expected.

The Committee on LGBT History is off to a strong start this year, which we kicked off with a robust AHA mini-conference on “Promiscuous Interdisciplinarities.” Although the AHA accepted only four panels for their regular program, we supported another nine panels through our affiliate status for a total of thirteen impressive and diverse sessions. We also had a well-attended business meeting, a dynamic discussion with the new board, and a (crowded!) reception that we co-sponsored with the Coordinating Council on Women in History and the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians. One of our first duties as new co-chairs was to announce the winners of two prizes. The John Boswell Prize for an outstanding book in queer history was awarded to co-winners Afsaneh Najmabadi and Phil Tiemeyer and the Joan Nestle Prize for an outstanding paper written by an undergraduate in queer history was awarded to Shay Gonzales (see further description later in the newsletter). Congratulations to all three winners!
Moving forward to next year’s awards, this newsletter includes the call for three prizes: the **Gregory Sprague Prize** for an outstanding published or unpublished paper, article, book chapter, or dissertation chapter completed by a graduate student; the **Audre Lorde Prize** for an outstanding article; and the **Allan Bérubé Prize** for outstanding work in public or community-based history. A number of past award winners are generously serving on the awards committees, and we strongly encourage you to nominate your own or others’ work in these areas. The deadline is **November 1**.

As of January we also said goodbye to two board members and welcomed four new historians to our governing board. Thanks to Colin Johnson and Tim Stewart-Winter for their years of service. Please join us in welcoming April Haynes, Aaron Lecklider, Andrew Israel Ross, and Cookie Woolner to the board for three-year terms!

Plans for the 2016 AHA in Atlanta are shaping up nicely. The great news is that all six of the panels proposed for inclusion in our “Queer Migrations” subtheme were accepted by the AHA, and we will sponsor at least three additional affiliate sessions. We will need your help in recruiting even more submissions next year; it is never too early to start planning panels, particularly those that help us expand beyond cisgendered, white, modern, U.S. histories. We hope you can join us at the 2016 AHA in Atlanta and will share more details in the fall newsletter.

Thanks to board members Andrew Ross and Tamara Chaplin, we are thrilled to draw your attention to our new and improved website: [http://clgbthistory.org/](http://clgbthistory.org/). Now that our social networking has moved primarily to Facebook, we have removed the outdated community forum from the website, which boasts a streamlined design and features recent publications by members. New and renewing members can click the “Join/Renew” tab to pay dues through Paypal and lifetime members can always show their support for the organization by clicking the “Donate” button. We are also working to update and expand our resources, including dissertations, syllabi, and K-12 teaching materials and standards. Regarding communications, Nick and board member and treasurer Phil Tiemeyer have updated our email listserv (for members only), and Amanda has resurrected the CLGBTH twitter account (@clgbth). Please send us your professional news via Facebook and/or Twitter so that we can spread the word through our ever-expanding networks.

At our April board conference call, we decided to move ahead with ideas for a CLGBTH mentoring program that would pair grad students and junior scholars with mid-career and senior scholars doing work in LGBTQ history. Pairs would meet at the AHA and proceed from there according to their own needs and preferences. Thanks to Alex Warner and Cookie Woolner for planning this initiative, and keep an eye out for more information and calls for participation in the fall.

We welcome your thoughts and ideas about the work of CLGBTH. Please get in touch anytime: alittauer@niu.edu & nicholas.syrett@unco.edu.

Have a lovely summer!

**Amanda Littauer and Nick Syrett**

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**PRIZE WINNERS**

Congratulations to the winners of the 2015 John Boswell and Joan Nestle Prizes!

The **John Boswell Prize** is awarded to the author of an outstanding book on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history published in English in the prior two years.
The 2015 co-winners are Afsaneh Najmabadi (Harvard University) and Phil Tiemeyer (Philadelphia University).


*Professing Selves* is a powerful and skillful history, as well as an ethnography, that provides a sensitive reading of ideas about transsexuality in relation to medical practices over the 20th century, showing the reconfiguration of trans from intersexual to homosexual contexts and then to a post-Revolutionary state-sanctioned independent category. It provides an excellent introduction to both Iranian debates on sexuality and to wider understandings of the self, while considering carefully the limits of both ‘trans’ and ‘queer.’


*Plane Queer* incorporates a wide range of sources to make a very compelling case for why we must consider flight attendants in relation to larger histories of capital, sexuality, civil rights, and queer work. Accessibly and deftly written, the book offers complex interpretations of the intertwining of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Tiemeyer adds an important new narrative to the history of gender and the workplace.

The Joan Nestle Prize is awarded to the author of an outstanding paper on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history completed in English by an undergraduate student in the prior two years.

The 2015 winner is Shay Gonzales (University of Colorado, Denver).

Shay Gonzales, “Culture War in the ‘hate state’: ACT UP/Denver before and after Amendment 2.”

The Committee was impressed by the originality of the topic and of the analysis, which is based on careful use of newspaper and archival sources to understand shifting gay political strategies in Colorado in the 1990s.

Thanks again to the committee members: Estelle Freedman (chair), T. J. Tallie, and Mir Yarfitz.

The Organization of American Historians (OAH) Committee on the Status of LGBTQ Historians and Histories is very proud to announce the launch of a fundraising campaign to support the creation of an annual Ph.D. dissertation prize in U.S. LGBTQ history.

The prize will be named in honor of John D’Emilio and administered by the OAH. John’s groundbreaking Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation on the history of the U.S. gay and lesbian movement, completed in 1982 and published as *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* by the University of Chicago Press in 1983, has influenced countless scholars and activists, in and beyond the discipline of history and the field of LGBTQ studies. His outstanding work as a teacher, scholar, mentor, activist, and public intellectual at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, and the University of Illinois, Chicago, along with his many contributions to the growth and development of LGBTQ history, make him a deserving recipient of this honor.

In the context of John’s recent retirement, we think this is the perfect moment to launch this campaign. The OAH, which gave its Roy Rosenzweig Distinguished Service Award to John in 2013, is the ideal institutional sponsor. The fields of U.S. history and LGBTQ studies will benefit greatly from the establishment of an OAH prize that honors the best new Ph.D. dissertations on U.S. LGBTQ history.
Please show your support by making a tax-deductible donation (use appeal code LGBTQ). We welcome contributions of any size, but hope you will be as generous as possible. Join us in honoring John D’Emilio and supporting the work of emergent leaders in the field of U.S. LGBTQ history.

Marc Stein (San Francisco State University), Chair 2013–15
Regina Kunzel (Princeton University), Chair 2015–16
Anne E. Parsons (University of North Carolina, Greensboro), Chair 2016–17
Leila J. Rupp (UC Santa Barbara), Member

The Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History will award the Audre Lorde and Gregory Sprague Prizes in 2016.

The Audre Lorde Prize is awarded for an outstanding article on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history published in English in 2014 or 2015.

The Gregory Sprague Prize is for an outstanding published or unpublished paper, article, book chapter, or dissertation chapter on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history completed in English by a graduate student in 2014 or 2015. The prize is underwritten by the Gerber/Hart Library in Chicago.

Students, faculty, authors, readers, editors, or publishers can nominate. Self-nominations are encouraged. Please email PDFs of submissions to each committee member with the nominee’s name and prize name in the subject line. Questions can be addressed to prize committee chair, James Green.

2016 Prize Committee

James Green, Brown University, Chair
James_Green@brown.edu
Stephen Vider, Yale University,
Stephen.Vider@gmail.com
Chelsea Del Rio, University of Michigan,
cheldel@umich.edu

Emailed submissions must be postmarked by 11:59pm (Pacific time), 1 November 2015.

Winners will be announced at the Committee on LGBT History’s annual reception at the 2016 American Historical Association conference in Atlanta.
The Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History will award the Bérubé Prize in 2016. The Allan Bérubé Prize is for outstanding work in public or community-based lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history completed in 2014 or 2015. The Bérubé Prize is underwritten by the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, CA. Learn more at [http://clgbthistory.org/prizes/allan-berube-prize](http://clgbthistory.org/prizes/allan-berube-prize).

Activists, students, faculty, authors, exhibitors, readers/viewers, editors, sponsors, or publishers can nominate. Self-nominations are encouraged. Please email PDFs of submissions to each committee member with the nominee’s name and prize name in the subject line. Questions can be addressed to prize committee chair, Amy Sueyoshi.

2016 Prize Committee

**Amy Sueyoshi**, San Francisco State University, Chair, [sueyoshi@sfsu.edu](mailto:sueyoshi@sfsu.edu)

**Mark Bowman**, Chicago Theological Seminary [lgbtran@gmail.com](mailto:lgbtran@gmail.com)

**Victor Salvo**, Legacy Project Chicago [victorsalvo@legacyprojectchicago.org](mailto:victorsalvo@legacyprojectchicago.org)

Emailed submissions must be submitted by 11:59pm (Pacific time), 1 November 2015. Supplemental materials (DVDs, exhibition materials, etc.) should also be postmarked by 1 November. Please contact the committee members in advance via email to obtain the appropriate addresses.

Winners will be announced at the Committee on LGBT History’s annual reception at the 2016 American Historical Association conference in Atlanta.

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**NEW BOOKS**

**Martin Duberman**, *The Emperor has No Clothes: Doug Ireland’s Radical Voice* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2015).

Following the death in October 2013 of the radical gay journalist Doug Ireland, Martin Duberman decided to put together a volume of his writing. CLGBTH members will be interested to know that the book is now completed. Entitled *The Emperor has No Clothes: Doug Ireland’s Radical Voice*, it is available at Amazon.com.

The early reception, happily, has been enthusiastic.

Edmund White: “Doug Ireland was a radical left voice, trustworthy and eloquent, as respected by the French as by the Americans. We have no one as sharp and penetrating now.”

Sarah Schulman: “This collection... is the only kind of history that produces revelations about the reader’s own time.”

John Berendt: “Doug Ireland served as a moral lodestar for the embattled left.”

Michael Bronski: “This collection... is startlingly illuminating.”

Martin Duberman asks CLGBTH members to spread the word about the book, especially by posting this announcement on appropriate websites and blogs. Doug Ireland’s witty, perceptive insights deserve to live on.


In *“No One Helped”* Marcia M. Gallo examines one of America’s most infamous true-crime stories:
the 1964 rape and murder of Catherine “Kitty” Genovese in a middle-class neighborhood of Queens, New York. Front-page reports in the New York Times incorrectly identified thirty-eight indifferent witnesses to the crime, fueling fears of apathy and urban decay. Genovese’s life, including her lesbian relationship, also was obscured in media accounts of the crime. Fifty years later, the story of Kitty Genovese continues to circulate in popular culture. Although it is now widely known that there were far fewer actual witnesses to the crime than was reported in 1964, the moral of the story continues to be urban apathy. “No One Helped” traces the Genovese story’s development and resilience while challenging the myth it created.

“No One Helped” places the conscious creation and promotion of the Genovese story within a changing urban environment. Gallo reviews New York’s shifting racial and economic demographics and explores post–World War II examinations of conscience regarding the horrors of Nazism. These were important factors in the uncritical acceptance of the story by most media, political leaders, and the public despite repeated protests from Genovese’s Kew Gardens neighbors at their inaccurate portrayal. The crime led to advances in criminal justice and psychology, such as the development of the 911 emergency system and numerous studies of bystander behaviors. Gallo emphasizes that the response to the crime also led to increased community organizing as well as feminist campaigns against sexual violence. Even though the particulars of the sad story of her death were distorted, Kitty Genovese left an enduring legacy of positive changes to the urban environment.

Reviewed by Geoffrey J. Giles, University of Florida

Heinz Rutha was the mentor and idol of many youths in interwar Czechoslovakia. Franz Veitenhansl, describing to the police his relationship as a 15-year-old with Rutha, admitted that he “took my penis in his mouth and sucked until the semen came” (148). Of course, he was not a homosexual! Rutha, and the youths with whom he had sex, were sure of that. As Willi Hoffmann told the police, he had learned about homosexuality at school and understood that it was all about “inserting the penis in the anus” (249). Mutual masturbation was OK! This perception seems to have been widespread in the German-speaking lands.

The focus of this book is not primarily on questions of sexuality, but on the Sudeten German minority in Czechoslovakia after the First World War. The author presents a straightforward political history of limited interest, except for specialists in Central Europe, that makes one recall Neville Chamberlain’s dismissive comment about that faraway country of whose people we know nothing. But it is partly redeemed by his digressions on the interplay between homoeroticism and right-wing ideology, hitherto explored mainly in Germany proper. This is not an interpretation à la Klaus Theweleit, positing the links between sexuality and the susceptibility toward extremism. It is more the description of a chimeric attempt to build a political elite through intense male bonding, in some ways similar to Germany’s Nazi movement without the paramilitarism. The author characterizes Heinz Rutha as “a pioneer in applying...homoerotic theory practically and single-mindedly to shape a militant nationalist program” (9). He never refers to George Mosse’s insight that the growth of nationalism and sexual propriety went hand in hand in the 19th century; but here is a fascinating counter-example of sexual deviancy and nationalistic fervor employed as mutual reinforcement.

The book begins with Rutha’s suicide in his jail cell, awaiting trial for homosexual offenses. This scandal has been written about before, but Cornwall has unearthed hidden gems from Czech archives, including a diary from Rutha’s private safe, which shed fresh light on his sexuality. Like many of his generation, Rutha (born in 1897) enthusiastically joined the Wandervogel youth movement. After the First World War, he gathered a breakaway ‘Rutha Circle’ of groups, beholden to him alone and leaning toward narrow German nationalist and even anti-Semitic ideas. Cornwall examines carefully the intellectual underpinnings of these youth groups, including Hans Blüher’s famous book praising the Wandervogel as an “erotic phenomenon”, which was a bit too troubling for Rutha. A more significant influence came from Walter Heinrich, who introduced him to Plato. Here was a life-saver for Rutha, for now his attraction for young men could appear respectable, even noble. He rejected Hans Blüher as “unchaste and cynical” but nonetheless embraced the eros and state-creating drive that was common to both writers (118).

Viennese professor Othmar Spann, also a mentor of Heinrich, decisively shaped Rutha’s political outlook. Spann advocated a society formed around medieval-type estates (Stände), headed by brilliant spiritual leaders—the philosophers of Plato’s Republic, to whom absolute obedience would be owed. Cornwall repeatedly stresses that the “harmonious social elitism” of Spannism, so central to Rutha’s thinking, was quite different from German National Socialism, in that race and Social Darwinism were merely secondary factors, and Jews were “not wholly alien to the national community” (124f.). It may be that he lets Spann off too lightly.

Rutha became squarely involved in the interwar practical politics of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, especially the Sudeten German Party (SdP). Its leader, the subsequent Nazi Gauleiter Konrad Henlein, appointed Rutha as his foreign policy adviser. Cornwall takes pains to explain that Rutha was not a slave of Nazi ideology, a conclusion reached earlier in Ronald Smelser’s 1975 study, The Sudeten Problem. It seems probable that Rutha genuinely but naively held that Nazi Germany would leave the Sudeten Germans to flourish independently. The Czech state might become, in his words, a “better Switzerland” (201). However, Cornwall suggests that by 1937 Rutha may have felt that the “future lay with joining the German Reich” (220). In the event, any shift in his politics became irrelevant after his arrest in October 1937 and suicide four weeks later. In the interim he strenuously denied being a homosexual. The police built up an impressive case, portraying Rutha as a typical pederast who had preyed on adolescents, luring them with decadent poetry and pictures of classical nudes: “Obviously this had to have an impact on maturing youths, developing in them a psychological disposition toward unnatural methods of love” (248). Obviously? Some of them actually developed into robust married heterosexuals. Kurt Franzke, in describing how he had been kissed and masturbated in Rutha’s bed, saw this merely as a “sign of friendship” from the mentor he venerated (239). While incarcerated, Rutha told his lawyer: “I have never dishonored them. They were too sacred to me” (251). And by this he probably meant anal sex; any intimacy short of that was permissible.

Following his suicide, twelve young men were tried for homosexual offenses. However, the trial was really all about Heinz Rutha. And two years later, Nazi police chief Reinhard Heydrich brought up the Rutha case with Hitler, in order to justify a sweeping purge of the Sudeten Hitler Youth, in which some 200 men were arrested on charges of homosexuality in the now occupied territory. Many of those involved had been associates of Rutha, but Cornwall misses the opportunity to examine further the use of homosexuality as a tool of political denunciation. He writes that, “in the absence of trial papers, we rely mainly on the Nazi press to give a hint of the prosecution case.” He draws his hint from the flawed translation of a partial excerpt of a commentary in the SS newspaper. That article names some thirteen “not exactly unknown” men
allegedly found guilty of not only homosexual, but political crimes, all centered around Rutha. Almost none of them feature in Cornwall’s index, and unfortunately he does not pursue what could have been a significant coda, having failed to spot a file in the German Federal Archives about this witch-hunt. The Nazis feigned concern that Rutha was creating a Männerbund that aimed eventually to control the state—staatstragend as the SS article cites it as a direct quote by Rutha. The state would be supported on the shoulders of a homosexual clique, whose loyalties would lie more with one another than to the state itself. This renewed the political rationale for homophobia that Hitler had used to justify the murder of his friend and trusty lieutenant, Ernst Röhm, in 1934. To drive the point home, the SS declared that even those “bestial Jews around Magnus Hirschfeld” had been “mere choirboys” compared with the devious Rutha crowd. There could be no more damning charge: these homosexuals were worse than Jews! Yet huge crowds had turned out to honor Rutha at his funeral, rejecting the accusations against him. Cornwall’s closing words of the book go a little too far: Rutha “was sacrificed on the twin altars of Sudeten German patriotism and homosexuality” (267). That makes him sound like too much of a hero. As a member of the Sudeten German minority, he wanted to dominate the Czech majority in that newly democratic country. As a homosexual, he felt superior to women and assigned them to an inferior place in his scheme of things. Both these attitudes were quite wrong-headed.


Reviewed by Lance Poston, Ohio University

In the infancy of US LGBT History as an academic subfield in the 1980s and 1990s, very few, if any, regional histories existed. Through the efforts of two generations of academics, however, many works focusing on different LGBT themes and neighborhoods are now available to new generations of scholars and laypeople, deepening our understandings of our collective pasts. Many of these works rescued queer voices from heteronormative obscurity by highlighting individual and communal contributions to creating gay-friendly spaces and reshaping US society in more inclusive and affirming ways. Not surprisingly, the country’s major urban areas were some of the first locations for queer community building that led to broader activist movements. Scholars have established the centrality of these communities in shaping the national landscape, including George Chauncey’s study of New York, Marc Stein’s of Philadelphia, and Nan Boyd’s of San Francisco. It is surprising that no writer focused on the history and contributions of Chicago’s early LGBT community until 2013. Seeking to remedy this historiographical gap, St. Sukie de la Croix offers a concise and accessible introduction to gay Chicago through the 1960s in *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago before Stonewall*.

De la Croix begins his study of pre-1970 LGBT Chicago with a standard nod to pre-European concepts about gender and sexuality that were much more fluid than later colonial views of how one should act or with whom one should sleep. Relying on a few classic works of the history of sex and sexuality, he describes interactions between early explorers and natives, focusing especially on encounters with berdache and other two-spirited individuals in American Indian groups. Jumping to the late nineteenth century, his second chapter outlines early medical conceptions of non-heteronormative sexualities, focusing specifically on three Illinois doctors and the treatments they prescribed for sexual “deviants”.

Continuing to trace LGBT themes in Chicago in a linear fashion, De la Croix devotes chapters three through seven to nineteenth century developments. These chapters explore topics as diverse as the regulation of brothels, the participation of “male impersonators” in the Civil War, and the development of burlesque culture.
Perhaps the most interesting of these chapters examines early descriptions of Towertown. In this section, De la Croix paints a picture of a vibrant and diverse neighborhood that was one of the first places in the city for "sexual misfits" to interact. His descriptions of this black Chicago neighborhood are valuable both for identifying an early significant queer space and for showing the centrality of women and racial minorities in creating and maintaining a subversive culture.

Moving into the twentieth century, De la Croix discusses European sex reformers and their impact on Chicago in his eighth chapter. Focusing mostly on Magnus Hirschfield, he describes how increased study of sex and sexuality led to the growth of the Society for Human Rights in the 1920s, the first gay rights group in the United States. While this first gay rights group did not last beyond the 1920s, other cultural productions with queer themes flourished. In chapters nine and ten De la Croix explores this influx of LGBT artists and their colorful work in new novels and the booming blues and jazz scene of the decade.

Chapters twelve, thirteen, and fourteen chronicle the 1930s and 1940s in Chicago. Progressing chronologically, these chapters recount organized crime involvement in bathhouses and bars that catered to growing numbers of gays in cities across the country. These bars were often located in lower income black and Latino neighborhoods and were frequently raided by police. The clientele of these marginalized establishments mushroomed during and after World War II as queer service men and women found one another through the military and relocated to urban gay spaces after the war. While his narrative of the years immediately before and after the war is not very original, De la Croix highlights many specific places in the Windy City that have been overlooked.

Considering the post-war decades, chapter fifteen frames the Cold War Era similarly to David Johnson in The Lavender Scare, focusing on witch hunts for suspected communists and gay individuals in government and private sector jobs. The 1950s and 1960s are also shown to be a time when LGBT oriented publications expanded in in Chicago. De la Croix links new queer-themed publications to the rise of physique culture and beefcake magazines in chapter sixteen, lesbian pulp novels in chapter seventeen, and black plays and novels in chapter eighteen.

The final four chapters of Chicago Whispers prove the most original and interesting, relaying developments in the city's queer nightlife scene that included police raids and media sponsored outings of LGBT individuals. Although the cycle of police payoffs allowing gay establishments to operate until efforts aimed at "cleaning up" city streets forced new raids was true nationwide, new materials that De la Croix presents about the investigation of abusive police tactics and blackmail rings in the city is noteworthy. Through a collection of Chicago Tribune stories, De la Croix establishes a clear connection between bar owners fighting back against police abuses in 1969 and the imprisonment of many vice cops for abuses. This type of backlash story illustrates that corrupt cops were sometimes held accountable for their harassment of gays before in the 1960s and 1970s, creating a more nuanced picture of the history of urban LGBT life. Finally, the concluding chapter on sodomy laws traces legal developments impacting queer communities in Illinois from the implementation of sodomy laws in the 1890s to their groundbreaking repeal in 1961, situating the state as the first to adopt more progressive policies in the last half of the twentieth century. In the end, Chicago Whispers is most valuable as a much-needed queer history of the third most populous city in the US. The voices of many individuals De la Croix highlights as key players in the development of LGBT Chicago would be lost to history without this work. Moreover, the nearly three hundred pages of newly collected and synthesized information elevates Chicago to its rightful place as a key location for social negotiations of gender and sexuality in the US and an important site for the birth of gay rights.
struggles before the 1970s. In telling this very important story, De la Croix should also be applauded for his inclusion of extensive materials about the roles people of color and transgender individuals played in Chicago’s queer past.

While De la Croix certainly lives up to the common categorization of career journalists as some of the most accessible and engaging writers of history, he falls short in his analysis at several points. A quick glance between portions of the text and bibliography reveals the lack of clear connections between specific statements and their particular primary sources of origin. This comparison also shows that De la Croix used a disturbingly narrow selection of archival material—mostly excerpts from the Chicago Defender and Chicago Tribune—to make claims about a very broad period of US history. On the other hand, De la Croix never promises a professional historian’s dream manuscript of queer Chicago. In the introduction, he notes that this work sought to remedy his frustrations about a lack of material on the history of LGBT Chicago and, at least by this standard, he was very successful. In the end, while this work may not be suited for classroom use, it is valuable to LGBT Midwesterners as a history of their largest city and to researchers as a concise collection of important individuals and spaces in Chicago’s queer past.


Western society has witnessed sweeping changes in the acceptance of LGB civil rights in recent years. Marriage equality for lesbians and gays has reached 37 states in the US and 19 countries. With limited rights available in additional states and countries around the world, some argue that the changes have swept away the need to prioritize the history and literature of the LGB civil rights movement. Positive changes always give those that oppose those rights the opportunity to argue that a minority group no longer needs the protection of law in civil society. Recent conservative political movements to limit or eliminate equal opportunity and civil rights laws in the United States provide instructive examples of this. Also, the eagerness of LGBT and progressive groups to declare victory, while heartening, may be somewhat premature. The riots at the Stonewall Inn, and arguably the birth of gay pride occurred in 1969. The concept of gay shame is a much older phenomenon. For the purposes of this review, I refer to the post-Freud pathology established by the creation of the pseudo-medical words “heterosexual” and “homosexual” where homosexual was defined as abnormal. With few exceptions, being “diagnosed” as homosexual was (and in some cases, still is) considered shameful. Gay shame as a social phenomenon comes from medico-legal pathology and bowdlerized biblical arguments. Both are presented as authoritative and non-conforming actors face ostracization.

Gay Shame (the collection) provides an intriguing way of examining the rubric of gay shame discussed through the contributions of the authors and participants at the conference held at the University of Michigan in late March of 2003. The collection presents conference speeches as a series of articles, some reactions to the conference from non-attendees, and a DVD that contains photos and multi-media presentations.

What is gay shame theory and how is it relevant to the academic discussion of the sociability of gay and lesbians in Western society? One possible answer may be that gay shame emerged as a way to counter the hetero-normalizing effects of gay pride, and this is suggested in Gay Shame itself. Halperin aptly defines gay pride’s goals as “...the complete destigmatization of homosexuality, which means the elimination of both the personal and social shame attached to same-sex eroticism” (3). An admirable idea, but Halperin also argued that this idea has not entirely transcended personal or social shame. So, if the goal of gay pride is to transcend shame,
why does shame still plague the gay community? Shame may include uncomfortable feelings about inhabiting the wrong body type in gay and lesbian communities, ageism, HIV status, perceived gender roles, and what might be viewed as unsavory or unhealthy sexual practices. This list, while not exhaustive, merely highlights the challenges to LGB acceptance (and self-acceptance) in society (12). Gay shame is an immutable condition that cannot be addressed fully by the idea of pride. This is the central argument presented by the various participants and contributors to both the conference and the book.

One of the major goals of the conference and the book was to “de-discipline” (15-16) queer studies (and presumably LGBT history as well). For example, Ellis Hanson’s “Teaching Shame” (132 and DVD) was not only visceral and raw, but highly controversial. Hanson’s course that he describes in his article combines Plato’s Symposium with images of unrepentant gay (male) sexuality that he used in a multi-media presentation in the classroom. I found the course fascinating; Hanson employed a dynamic between the “teaching body” and the “student body” and visual shock similar to that of Robert Mapplethorpe’s photography. The use of pornographic images of a gay Latino porn actor discomfits the reader and created a measure of academic controversy. Some of the conference participants opined that Hanson’s course reinforced gay white male privilege and exemplified negative stereotypes associated with gay Latinos and hypermasculinity. In my estimation the presentation and article resulted in a healthy discussion surrounding the politics of identity, feminism, and gay male white privilege, while also showcasing the need for academics to carefully consider the unintended consequences of their actions.

In “Tough,” Terry Galloway used an on-camera, dramatic performance as a means to address both the masculine stereotypes facing lesbians and the challenges of disability through the lens of shame (196 and DVD). In her performance she literally redraws herself into a male with a black eye pencil to draw five o’clock shadow and dons a hat and baggy trench coat to become a “tough,” hard-boiled detective. In this manner, Galloway drew upon her life experience as a way to discuss her personal survival as a self-described imperfect, queer female and allowed her to redraw the lines between realities and possibilities. Examples of that type of performativity abound in gay and lesbian subculture. The use of drag to entertain, amuse, and teach refined down to the level of personal performativity may be used to expose “shameful fictions” (200) and allow that redrawing of the lines.

But not all of the contributors were eager to fully embrace the rubric of shame. In “The Trouble with Shame,” (277) George Chauncey conceded in his argument that shame “is a problem that is good to think with.” But Chauncey also cautioned that shame, as a particular tool within the rubric of Queer Studies had to be conscientious and attend to the specific shaming processes and effects and “to distinguish the latter from the former.” (282) Chauncey as an LGBT historian takes the measured approach. While this might be viewed as conservative, Chauncey concedes the utility of shame as a tool or a lens through which to view modern LGB problems.

Gay Shame is a remarkable book. Although the original idea was to “de-discipline” Queer Studies, it managed to produce a valuable body of academic material that influences queer theorists and LGBT historians. The articles in the collection each provide a way of thinking about shame from different points of view, whether they be spectacle, performance, community, disability, or otherwise. In a world driven by black and white comparisons, this book is pleasantly grey. It allows the specialist reader to investigate, explore, and even speculate without having to necessarily agree with a specific thesis. The multi-media aspect also allows non-specialist readers or undergraduate students to access the deep and complex concepts and using that rubric alone, I am attracted to it.

Reviewed by Charles W. Gossett, CSU Sacramento

Scholars from a number of disciplines have contributed to this volume that focuses primarily on the variety of queer expressions of sexuality found in sub-Saharan Africa. Many of the authors are PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers, and assistant professors. Thus, not surprisingly, many of these chapters sound like they have been lightly adapted from larger works, such as dissertations. This is not to say that the individual essays are not of interest, only that there is a fair amount of attention to establishing scholarly bona fides and demonstrating familiarity with the appropriate literature; this sometimes slows down the reading and might have not been included had more of the chapters been written especially for the edited volume alone. Still, the editors have done a good job of bringing forth new voices and perspectives, primarily from African scholars who are likely going to be influencing the scholarly discussions of queerness in Africa in the coming years.

Although the book’s title is Sexual Diversity in Africa, the focus is primarily on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered experiences rather than a comprehensive look at all kinds of sexual diversity. The opening essay from the editors discusses the question of what terminology to use and confess that in the end they “agreed to disagree” but generally use lgbti when not talking about any specific group covered by those letters. While the editors and authors acknowledge colonial influences shaping the debate (and the actions) of modern African governments today, there is a greater focus on both local traditions and neo-colonial (and neo-liberal) forces that must be taken into consideration in understanding sexual diversity in Africa today.

Olajide Akanji and Marc Epprecht open the collection with an examination of how the issue of gay rights enters the broader debate over human rights in the African context. They have identified strategies used by lgbti activists to gain the attention of international and, especially, African human rights organizations with varying degrees of success. The essay provides a useful discussion of the major documents lgbti citizens (and visitors) in African countries use to claim and protect both legal and humanitarian rights.

Notisha Massaquoi investigates the lives of lgbti Africans in the diaspora by using interviews with refugees to Canada. Even though Canada is fairly welcoming to lgbti refugees, Massaquoi’s informants help us to understand some of the complications refugees face as histories of marriage and children in their countries of origin lead immigration officers to conclude that the applicant isn’t gay or at least isn’t “gay enough” to face persecution in his or her home country and, therefore, is ineligible for asylum. Some of the individual stories are quite harrowing although, as the author notes, there is a persistent “invisibility” to outsiders with which lgbti Africans must deal.

The third chapter is the most straightforward “history” chapter, with well-known scholar, Marc Epprecht, summarizing the historical development and debates over homosexuality in Africa. This is a very useful summary, although limited in length as part of collected work, that will encourage many members of the CLGBT Committee to follow up with the sources he cites.

Stella Nyanzi’s chapter begins with a fascinating essay within an essay on the challenges she faced trying to convince others that it was important for an African scholar to study lgbti issues in Africa. She then moves to the core of her work with an analysis of the political and rhetorical aspects of a declaration by the President of The
Gambia in 2008 that all homosexuals must leave the country immediately. She supplements her analysis with interviews with primarily heterosexual informants. Her analysis, which is persuasive, focuses on how the President was using this rhetoric to strengthen his political standing and, possibly, attract support from certain Arab countries as The Gambia moved toward the idea of instituting Shari’a law.

Unnoticed by many international observers, South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established to investigate and recommend punishments for crimes and abuses in the apartheid era also addressed the treatment of homosexuals by the government prior to 1994. Vasu Reddy, Lisa Wiebesiek, and Crystal Munthree, describe the practices of health workers with the South African Defense Forces to identify and “correct” gay and lesbian military members principally through the military’s use of aversion therapies. They note that addressing this topic as part of the TRC process, helped reinforce other pro-lgbt policies, such as the constitutional protections, as part of the culture of the new South Africa. Melissa Hackman, however, in the next chapter, describes how the TRC had some unintended consequences, as well, opening an opportunity for some people to participate in conversion therapies offered principally by Christian-affiliated organizations. By adapting the confessional style (and its corresponding forgiveness), some individuals found themselves seeking a way to put their “homosexual tendencies” aside and move forward as either heterosexual or celibate.

Shari Dworkin, Amanda Lock Swarr, and Cheryl Cooky interrogate the Caster Semenya “affair,” in which an Olympic-contending track star was required by the sporting authorities to undergo gender testing given complaints that she was not female. The authors approach the affair (as they choose to call it) as a study in intersectionality — race, class, and gender. They outline various positions taken by key actors, but in the end it seems the offense expressed by ordinary South Africans was that their race and nationality had been besmirched; in turn they sought to “normalize” and “feminize” the runner rather than address the question of sexual diversity directly.

Although the editors have grouped the essays in the final part of the book under the heading “Comparative” it consists of a series of interesting case studies that only incidentally try to systematically compare one to another. S.N. Nyeck presents an intriguing case study of political paranoia in Cameroon through the analysis of political cartoons of a press campaign to publicly “out” presumed homosexuals in high places in Cameroonian society. Nyeck concludes that there was a rather cynical use of homosexuality as a political tool by opposition parties frustrated by the failure of other efforts to oust the current regime. Although unsuccessful in Cameroon, the practice of increasing nationalist fervor by attacking allegedly homosexual political opponents became a model for places like Uganda. Two case studies from Ghana follow. Serena Dankwa examines lesbian life in an urban area from an anthropological perspective. She discusses situational gender and relational masculinity and describes in detail the behaviors and physical appearances of her subjects and how they think of themselves and their place in society. Kathleen O’Mara makes an interesting observation in her chapter when she characterizes much of what she has seen in the lgbti communities in Accra, Ghana, to pre WWII New York as described by George Chauncey. But she notes that given the need (and desire) of a variety of international human rights and health non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to have clearly identified groups of lgbti local people is forcing a more rapid adoption of western-style organizations.

The final substantive chapter by Christophe Borqua (translated by Michael Bosia) also relies heavily on Chauncey’s work to try to help us understand the social organization of homosexual men in Bamoko, Mali. His is the
most explicit (and most comparative) argument in this collection against the idea of a common evolutionary pattern of the development of human rights for LGBTI people. He concludes by noting that in Bamako there will continue to be “plural models of homosexuality” for the foreseeable future.

The book ends with a very brief afterword by Professor Sylvia Tamale, formerly of Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, who became well known when she began speaking out against the increasingly homophobic policies of her country around 2006-07. Her goal is to place this work in the wider context of the study of sexuality writ large on the African continent. For most readers, the availability of particular individual chapters is likely to be the chief value of this book to their own work. But the introduction of western scholars to such a wide variety of African researchers and writers is also a valuable contribution as the movement for global human rights goes forward.


Reviewed by Gillian Frank, Princeton University

Over the past decade, images of lesbian mothers, gay fathers and their children have figured prominently in the political struggle for gay marriage and gay civil rights. Children in particular have testified before the courts and in state legislatures and humanized gay and lesbian relationships by portraying their parents as healthy and loving. The efficacy of this activism, on display in recent court and legislative victories, spotlights a remarkable shift that has taken place in American culture and politics since WWII. In the middle of the twentieth century the courts, the police and medical authorities deemed gays and lesbians harmful to children. In the past decade, an emergent consensus now claims that it is harmful to children to discriminate against gay and lesbian parents.

Daniel Rivers’ beautifully written and wide ranging book, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers and their Children since WWII*, maps the history of these transformations by studying how lesbian and gay parents raised children and also transformed a culture that deemed them antithetical to families. In so doing, *Radical Relations* troubles the historically “assumed heterosexuality of the American family” and calls attention to the oppression, survival strategies, childrearing practices, and activism of lesbian and gay parents (2). Rivers’ study invites historians to reconsider the homophile movement, gay liberation and lesbian feminism by focusing on these movements’ generational politics. The book’s seven chapters interweave more than a hundred oral histories with a wealth of archival documents in order to present a national history of lesbian and gay parenthood and activism. The epilogue reviews contemporary conflicts over lesbian and gay parents and their children.

The first two chapters focus on the pre-gay liberation era. Chapter 1, “Families in Hiding,” traces the experiences of gay men and lesbians who had children within heterosexual marriages. Itcatalogues the social and legal pressures these parents experienced at a moment when a social consensus maintained that same-sex desire was incompatible with parenthood. The chapter also calls attention to the complexity of the institution of marriage by showing how many gay men and lesbian women did not leave heterosexual marriages because they feared that their children would be taken away from them.

The first stirrings of lesbian and gay parental activism took place in this context, as the second chapter, “The Seeds of Change,” details. Here, the book focuses on the origins of gay and lesbian parental activism in lesbian headed households and lesbian and gay male homophile organizations. This chapter also introduces one
of the book’s major themes, the ways in which children of lesbians and gay men acted as “emissaries between their families and the heterosexual world” (46). These children, contends Rivers, helped “create space for their families in a cultural milieu that saw their families as an impossibility” (46). Throughout the first two chapters on the pre-liberation era, Rivers does much to illuminate the struggles of men and women—whom the author describes as “gay” and “lesbian”—to reconcile their same-sex sexual desires with their heterosexual marriages and with being parents. Further investigation into how and when these men and women embraced or rejected the terms “gay” and “lesbian” would enrich our understanding of their complex and changing relationship to sexual identity, parenthood and marriage.

Legal and medical scholars will find much of interest in the third chapter, “In the Best Interests of the Child,” which analyzes 122 lesbian and gay custody cases from 1967 to 1985. The chapter’s title signals how gay and lesbian parents struggled against a widely held perception that “the best interests of the child” aligned with being raised in a heterosexual household. By highlighting gay and lesbian activism, the importance of psychiatric testimony, and a shift in judicial perception, Rivers smartly maps the decline of judicial bias against gay and lesbian parents and the corresponding transformation of medical and cultural perceptions of gays and lesbians. These court challenges, Rivers explains, acted as consciousness-raising and organizing opportunities for lesbian and gay activist groups, eroded prejudices against them, and brought issues of parenthood and marriage to the center of the LGBT civil rights movement.

The fourth and fifth chapters separately examine lesbian mother and gay father organizations. The divided focus reflects the gendered and separate experiences of gay and lesbian parents who nonetheless faced similar legal and social oppression. Chapter four, “Lesbian Mother Activist Organizations, 1971-1980,” explores the multifaceted activism of lesbian feminist organizations, which included struggles for custody, reproductive, welfare and adoptive rights. Rivers’ narrative expands historians’ understanding of lesbian feminism by showing how lesbian mothers, informed by lesbian feminists’ intersectional critiques of patriarchal families, mobilized politically and formed communities around a series of high profile custody battles. Their activism, he avers, “aided the feminist redefinitions of motherhood in the 1970s and helped lead the way to the current focus on domestic and family rights within the modern civil rights movement” (96).

The fifth chapter, “Gay Fathers Groups, 1975-1992,” explores how gay men “were pivotal in the development of a new politics of gay family respectability” because they portrayed familial images of gay fatherhood that challenged stereotypes of predatory gay men (111). Importantly, this chapter foregrounds how structural gendered inequalities produced important differences between gays and lesbians in terms of parenting strategies and political activism. Whereas lesbian mothers groups focused resources on custody battles, gay fathers were unlikely to have custody or to leave their marriages. Their support groups accordingly helped men develop strategies to maintain relationships with their current and former spouses and their children.

The groundbreaking sixth chapter, “The Culture of Lesbian Feminist Households with Children in the 1970s,” covers a vast amount of territory—sperm donor networks, antisexist child rearing ideologies, the experiences of children of lesbian parents, debates over the place of male children—and thereby reveals the richness of lesbian feminism itself. In a fascinating account of grassroots sperm donor networks, Rivers not only reveals lesbian feminism reproductive rights activism but also its role in shaping the reproductive rights revolution. Historians of childhood will value how the chapter attends to generational conflict. Rivers carefully explains the ways in which lesbian feminist influenced
their children’s values even as these children “had to negotiate the distance between the values of the larger society and those of their radical families” (153). Importantly, in considering how lesbian feminists transmitted their resistant values to their own children, Radical Relations invites a reconsideration of how historians periodize lesbian feminism as a movement confined to the 1970s.

The seventh and final chapter, “She Does Not Draw Distinctions Based on Blood or Law,” incisively analyzes how lesbian and gay men contributed to a reproductive rights revolution and transformed popular understandings of family. Rivers examines the lesbian and gay baby boom between 1980 and 2003 and details the ways in which lesbians and gay men increasingly and openly created families through donor insemination, adoption and foster parenting. Their efforts, though initially met with resistance from private institutions, policy makers and legislatures, ultimately resulted in increased legal recognitions of non-heterosexual family arrangements. These lesbian and gay households, Rivers argues, “drove a shift toward family and domestic advocacy in the LGBT civil rights movement and fundamentally challenged the assumption in American society that the family was, by definition, heterosexual” (206).

At this writing, struggles over gay and lesbian families remain central to the LGBT civil rights movement and continue to be a flashpoint in contemporary politics. Daniel Rivers has offered readers an invaluable tool with which to contextualize and understand these struggles. More than this, with its clear prose, an astounding array of primary sources, an eloquent synthesis of secondary sources, and a lucid explanation of key terms, Radical Relations has the distinction of being both a groundbreaking and an eminently teachable book that will appeal to undergraduate students and advanced scholars alike.


Reviewed by Nikolai Endres, Western Kentucky University

What do Fred Astaire, Marlon Brando, Leonard Bernstein, Rock Hudson, Tyrone Power, Charles Laughton, Noël Coward, Paul Newman, Jack Kerouac, Dennis Hopper... have in common? They all had sex with Gore Vidal. But being in bed with Gore entailed a lot more than sex, and it is that story that Tim Teeman, a British journalist now based in New York as Senior Culture Editor at The Daily Beast, conveys in his (first) book: “Vidal’s own sexuality occupied a more vexed, hidden, undeclared, un-trumpeted place. He said he was bisexual, but few of his friends who generally believe he was gay, believe he was. Vidal thought ‘gay’ referred to a sexual act, rather than a sexual identity” (5).

There are chapters on Vidal’s hatred of his mother and close relationship with his father; on Jimmie Trimble, Vidal’s great love who was killed on Iwo Jima in 1945, an affair that Vidal may have romanticized later; on Vidal’s relationship with Howard Austen (or Auster, who predeceased Vidal), which infamously lasted for over half a century because, according to Vidal, the two did everything together except have sex: “This may be true, but another more basic truth – lived out by many couples, deeply in love and committed to one another – is that sex can tail off, or cease to be so important” (50).

Teeman then tries to explain Vidal’s oft-repeated claim that “homosexual” should be an adjective only, not a noun, by evoking Vidal’s patrician and southern origins, where homosexuality remained unspeakable and where one’s reputation was at stake: “Vidal was not going to be screwed in bed, or in public” (91). True enough, but here I would have brought in Vidal’s most glaring contradiction. While Vidal’s famous gay novel The City and the Pillar (1948, revised 1965) may be about two “perfectly normal boys,” Jim Willard and Bob Ford, sexually Jim is
perfectly abnormal, repeatedly failing in his pursuit to have sex with women. Moreover, although Teeman does quote Jason Epstein, Vidal’s former editor, that Vidal’s belief in sexuality as a continuum had “its roots in classical civilization” (15), a sophisticated engagement with Greek and Roman erotic models would have been helpful here, because Greek and Roman sexualities do provide one answer to Vidal’s baffling man that everyone is bisexual. Instead, Teeman cites Michelangelo Signorile’s idea that while nowadays many gay people accept a homosexual identity, they are generally suspicious of sexual labels.

When Teeman gets to the AIDS epidemic, he quotes one of Vidal’s clumsiest dismissals of the catastrophe – “my virological skills are few” (125) – but goes on to show a very different side. When Vidal’s nephew Hugh Steers contracted the disease, Vidal supported him financially and deeply mourned his death at age thirty-two. At the same time, it is undeniable that Vidal, who never came out publicly, refused to get involved in AIDS activism.

Teeman next considers literary manifestations of Vidalian sexuality. He mentions, for example, some of the reservations that Christopher Isherwood voiced immediately after the publication of *The City and the Pillar*: its anti-Semitism, racism, and negative gay stereotypes. Because the novel has such iconic status, these issues have rarely been questioned critically. Teeman rightly argues that the most interesting discussions of sexuality can be found in Vidal’s essays. (In fact, there may be an academic consensus that Gore’s most outstanding achievements are his essays rather than his novels.) Teeman cites from “Pink Triangle and Yellow Star,” “The Birds and the Bees,” “Sex and the Law,” and “Sex is Politics.”

Teeman’s most controversial claim begins with the notorious confrontation between Vidal and William F. Buckley at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, with the two trading barbs about Nazis and queers. Apparently, Vidal was afraid of some kind of J. Edgar Hoover file that Buckley had on him, with one particularly damaging accusation: that Vidal had sex with minors. (Buckley’s son later destroyed the file without reading it.) Vidal was remotely and indirectly involved with NAMBLA, the American Man/Boy Love Association, although he was never a member. All in all, there isn’t much evidence for statutory rape accusations.

Teeman is at his most trenchant and original when covering Vidal’s final years, a period not included in Fred Kaplan’s voluminous biography published in 1999. Marred by physical ailments (immobility, obesity, alcoholism, dementia), loneliness, and anger directed at almost anyone, Vidal comes across as sadly pathetic, as someone no one wanted to be in bed with any more.

Teeman began with a number of questions: “Why did Vidal like sex and orgies with prostitutes and young men? How young were those men? Why did he never write about AIDS? Was his keenly felt desire for a political career, to be president, ultimately thwarted by his homosexuality?” (9). Teeman answers all of them, but, needless to say, these are questions that cannot be answered definitively, which probably accounts for Vidal’s multifaceted reputation in the gay world: “suspicion, anger, celebration, respect and bafflement” (217-18).

Reviewing *In Bed with Gore Vidal* for an academic audience proved somewhat of a challenge, for it is not an academic book. As I said, Teeman is a journalist, which is the volume’s strength and weakness. His sources are wide-ranging, revelatory, and mostly popular: Vidal’s nephew Burr Steers, Vidal’s half-sister Nina Straight, and the sister of Vidal’s partner Howard Austen, Arlyne Reingold; actresses Susan Sarandon and Claire Bloom, novelist Edmund White, director Matt Tyrnauer, and activist Sean Strub; Tennessee Williams’ former lover David Schweizer, Vidal’s two caretakers Fabian Bouthillette and Muzius Dietzmann; and Vidal scholars Christopher Bram, Dennis Altman, Jay Parini, and Fred Kaplan. (Teeman was also
granted access to unpublished material from an abandoned Vidal biography by Walter Clemons.)

Teeman's penetrating style makes for fast-paced reading. We learn that "Gore had a medium sized cock, seven inches, he looked circumcised but wasn’t" (74), while Rock Hudson’s "cock was so big it would hang down to the next step [in the sauna]. All the old guys would complain about it. But he didn’t use it – he was a bottom" (76). Many of these titillating tidbits are derived from Scotty Bowers’ *Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of the Stars*, enlarged and enhanced through Teeman’s own conversations with Bowers.

There are also some delicious surprises: Vidal reportedly did fabulous imitations of Truman Capote, of Bette Davis, and of Greta Garbo; there is only one difference between American and Italian men, according to Gore: "Italian boys have dirty feet but clean assholes, while American boys have clean feet but dirty assholes" (98); Edmund White remembers Vidal’s preference for "straight" guys: "You might say, ‘Why don’t you go out with my good-looking gay friend Bob?’ to someone like Gore, and he’d say, ‘And do what – bump pussies?’" (108); Gore, ever the iconoclast, was "all for corporal punishment, but only between consenting adults" (266).

Academically, though, readers will find more Fellini than Foucault, more interviews than scholarship, more Hollywood than Harvard. *In Bed with Gore Vidal* is, after all, "a book with sexuality at its heart" (6).

**Phil Tiemeyer, Plane Queer: Labor, Sexuality, and AIDS in the History of Male Flight Attendants (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).**

Reviewed by Ian Darnell, University of Illinois at Chicago

Queer people, although perhaps closeted on the job, can be found in most every profession. Certain lines of work, however, have an especially queer reputation. At the oft-overlooked intersection of the fields of labor and LGBT history, the origins and evolution of what Allan Bérubé called “queer work” are compelling research questions, but until recently they had been pursued little by scholars. Phil Tiemeyer, then, makes an important contribution with *Plane Queer*. A study of male flight attendants, this book could rightly be considered the first of its kind: a monograph on the history of a “gay-identified career” (229n12). *Plane Queer* should prompt readers to think deeply about how work and workers’ struggles fit into the LGBT past and present.

According to Tiemeyer, the queerness of airline stewards was twofold. On one level, the profession was queer because for most of its history it attracted gay men to a degree vastly disproportionate to their prevalence in the general population. While asserting that exact figures are impossible to determine, Tiemeyer reports that former flight attendants whom he interviewed estimated that in the 1950s between 30 and 50 percent of stewards were gay and in the 1970s between 50 and 90 percent (6). Given their remarkable concentration in the profession, stewarding was sometimes an avenue for self-assertion, community-building, and public visibility for gay men. Yet on another level, Tiemeyer contends, *all* male flight attendants were queer, regardless of their sexual orientation, because they transgressed gender norms by performing what was typical considered women’s work. They thus “invited scrutiny as failed men and likely homosexuals” and, as Tiemeyer puns, they stood out as “plainly queer” (3, 227n2).

Focusing primarily on the United States, Tiemeyer chronicles the fortunes of this doubly queer workforce from its beginnings in the 1920s to the 2010s. He demonstrates that airlines’ willingness to hire male flight attendants varied through the years, as did the public’s perception of these men. In ways that were bound up with larger legal, economic, and cultural shifts, periods of tolerance and even admiration of stewards alternated with times when sexism, homophobia, and AIDS phobia demonized male flight attendants and threatened to eliminate them from the profession entirely.

Tiemeyer traces these tensions to the early years of commercial aviation. At first, how to gender the
The newly invented profession of flight attendant was a matter of debate. Weighing financial concerns and the “mixture of notionally masculine and feminine tasks” (19) assigned to these workers, some airlines opted for stewards and others for stewardesses. Over time, however, technological advances made flying safer and more comfortable, and the flight attendant’s role increasingly emphasized service, charm, and sex appeal—developments that raised doubts about stewards’ manliness. Making creative use of his sources, Tiemeyer shows that already in the 1930s characterizations of male flight attendants as “gender misfits” and “‘male hostesses’” circulated in American culture (15). Moreover, because of the airlines’ affluent, urbane, and overwhelmingly male customer base, stewards of the prewar era operated in a climate of softened masculinity and subtle homoeroticism.

Tiemeyer next recounts the near disappearance and then reappearance of male flight attendants during the postwar decades. In the immediate aftermath of World War II airlines hired many returning veterans as stewards, but most later switched to a policy of hiring women exclusively. This was in part a simple economic calculation—stewardesses had become less costly than stewards and brought a “domesticating touch” that was thought to attract passengers who might otherwise be intimidated by air travel (59). Meanwhile, Tiemeyer argues, the heightened homophobia of the Cold War years cast intense suspicion on male flight attendants—many of whom, as it turns out, were gay and all of whom practiced a profession widely regarded as effeminate. By the late 1950s, men had been all but shut out of the job.

The “steward’s demise,” however, turned out to be relatively brief. With its provision against sex-based employment discrimination, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 offered men as well as women a legal foundation for pursuing careers previously closed to them. In *Diaz vs. Pan Am* (1971)—a case Tiemeyer analyzes in intriguing detail—the federal judiciary determined that airlines could no longer bar men from working as flight attendants. Soon after, large numbers of stewards took to the skies—a great portion of whom were members of the first post-Stonewall generation of young gay men.

In two poignant chapters, Tiemeyer takes stock of the effects of AIDS on male flight attendants. Many died, and hysteria surrounding the disease led airlines to put HIV-positive stewards on permanent medical leave, even if they were still able and willing to work. Tiemeyer highlights the experiences of Gär Traynor, a gay flight attendant with AIDS who, with the help of his union, regained his right to work in a historic labor arbitration decision in 1984. Tiemeyer also considers the case of Gaëtan Dugas, an Air Canada steward unfairly made infamous as “Patient Zero” in *And the Band Played On* (1987), Randy Shilts’s best-selling account of the early years of the AIDS crisis.

In his final chapter, Tiemeyer carries the history of male flight attendants into the neoliberal 1990s and twenty-first century. He explores a troubling paradox. Thanks to the successes of the LGBT movement—and to airlines’ desire to stay in the good graces of LGBT customers—gay stewards now enjoy a range of workplace rights, including corporate anti-discrimination policies and domestic partnership benefits. At the same time, however, deregulation and declining union power also mean that all flight attendants, whatever their sexual orientation, face deteriorating working conditions, slashed compensation, and decreased job security. In the end, Tiemeyer reaches a conclusion worth pondering by LGBT scholars and activists alike: “true parity cannot be attained through ‘gay-friendly’ corporate policies alone but depends instead on a combination of civil rights efforts and economic and legal structures that protect the aspirations of service sector employees” (225).

Some aspects of *Plane Queer* might give readers pause. Tiemeyer’s insistence that all male flight attendants were “queer” is provocative and productive. Yet some might question whether it is an appropriate descriptor for heterosexual and otherwise conventionally masculine flight attendants, especially as Tiemeyer largely ignores how these straight stewards understood the “transgressive” nature of their career choice. *Plane Queer* also does little to position gay stewards in a broader landscape of anti-LGBT employment
discrimination and of “queer work.” A general
discussion of the obstacles sexual minorities faced
on the job and their strategies for earning a living in
spite of them could have added rich context to
Tiemeyer’s study. Finally, compared to Tiemeyer’s
sustained and nuanced exploration of gender and
sexuality, the analytical category of class—so
central to labor historiography—is often submerged.
*Plane Queer* could have benefited from a more
careful consideration of stewards’ class status and a
discussion of how it intersected with other aspects
of their identity.

These problems aside, the book has much to offer.
Written in an engaging and accessible style, it is
well suited to classroom use and could easily be
appreciated by non-specialists. Offering a
consistently stimulating examination of a novel
topic, it should generate much-needed conversations
about the experiences of LGBT working people and
inspire new historical investigations of “queer
work.”

**Graham Willett and Yorick Smaal, eds.**
*Intimacy, Violence and Activism: Gay and Lesbian Perspectives on Australasian History and Society*
(Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Monash University

**Reviewed by Jeffrey Cisneros**

*Intimacy, Violence and Activism* is the seventh book
in the successful Gay and Lesbian Perspectives
series published by Monash University. It consists
of thirteen chapters, covers a range of topics and
offers differing perspectives from authors across the
professional spectrum including PhD candidates,
academics, research fellows, post-doctoral fellows,
archivists, legal scholars and a self-admitted
recovering academic. Too often I have read
academic collections wherein the authors coming
from the same career perspective limit the value of
the book. Not so with this one. Willett and Smaal
structured the book to be accessible to a wide
audience without sacrificing value for the academic
reader. I found the material in the chapters
challenging and informative.

In the first chapter, Chris Brickell examines male
intimate relationships through the writings and
photographs of men in New Zealand prior to World
War One. The author is concerned with the
behavior exhibited in the moments before the lens
of the camera where “public and private worlds
intersect.” Brickell gathered photographs from
photography studios located in rural New Zealand
and the subjects were mostly blue-collar workers
and farmers. His investigation touches a time in
New Zealand where ‘homosexual’ identities were
slow to emerge, providing a tantalizing but “messy”
and blurry picture of the world of male intimacy in
New Zealand.

In Chapter Two, John Waugh investigates the case
of George Bateson, who was arrested for having
anal sex with a young ship’s carpenter in his hotel
room in 1860. Waugh examines this case in
particular because of the legal entrapment of
Bateson and a cache of letters written by Bateson
giving his version of the events. The value of
Waugh’s investigation is that it helps determine the
frequency of entrapment in late Victorian Australia
and recovers a rare primary source account written
by the prisoner.

Amanda Kaledelfos explores a murder-
suicide pact
gone wrong in Melbourne in early 1872. Kaled
elfos
does an excellent job of mining a small trove of
primary sources that trace the case from the ill-fated
“friendly” duel between the two men and the
eventual execution of the surviving partner for his
lover’s murder. This chapter discusses the
intersection of crime and punishment, masculinity,
and medical knowledge in urban Melbourne while
also partially filling the lacunae of 19th century gay
history.

Yorick Smaal investigates the policing of working
class male sexuality during the late 19th century.
Smaal argues that public policing of sexual acts
between men relied more on citizen reports than the
sophisticated vice operations that were prevalent in
large cities elsewhere.

Lisa Featherstone addresses the “heterosexuality” of
sources and methods in Australian history. She
concludes that it is not the small number of

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historical sources touching upon sexuality but the lack of sources that discuss the history of sexuality from a queer viewpoint that poses the greatest challenge to historians. For example, a report of the New South Wales Royal Commission on declining birthrates provides public and private details, but fails to mention anything about sexuality other than heterosexual. The overall invisibility of Australian lesbians, mentions of criminalized sexual behaviors, or alternative sexual practices (BDSM, et. al.) prior to the 1960s make research challenging.

Sophia Gluyas discusses the “forgotten lesbian” in 1970’s Australian cinema. Utilizing a study by Shelia Jeffreys on how historians write about female romantic relationships, Gluyas investigates how fiction in cinema may or may not address hidden truths. For example, in the Picnic at Hanging Rock, the director Peter Weir fails to address the lesbian crush of Sara for Miranda and de-emphasizes it. Using this example among others, Gluyas exposes a pattern of cinema rendering lesbians invisible.

Scott McKinnon investigates the relationship between Australian gay men and Hollywood movie musicals from the 1930s until the early 2000s, two movie musicals in particular feature prominently in Australian gay culture, The Wizard of Oz (1939) and The Sound of Music (1963). McKinnon uses oral history to investigate perceived feminized elements of gender and performativity in Australian gay culture and how it relates to identity formation.

Robert French discusses the employability of gays in the Commonwealth Public Service. Australian employment policies did not disqualify homosexuals from appointments to government service nor did the discovery of their orientation formally call for dismissal prior to the early 1950s. The US had been dismissing and jailing homosexuals from about 1947. French discusses the pressures that changed this policy.

Rebecca Jennings’ chapter is a compelling study on lesbian feminist theories of intimacy in Australia in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Jennings talks about the women’s movements efforts to deconstruct the nuclear family as a capitalist construct. Her knowledge of the political and social dynamic allows the reader to gain a clearer picture of lesbian history in the urban spaces of Australia.

Alan Peterson gives an extensive discussion of the bar scene in major cities as viewed through the lens of the 1970’s gay press. The political relevance of the gay bar scene was debated extensively by gay Australians. With great sensitivity, Peter rejects any dichotomy between activists and bar-goers.

Graham Willett investigates the Adelaide Homosexual Alliance and the origins of the modern Australian gay community. Willett makes a powerful argument for the importance of AHA to the overall community and as a place where the movement survived during the years after gay liberation had waned in Australia. It is a study rooted in primary sources including letters, papers, and oral history interviews between 1970 and 1982.

Shirleene Robinson provides a comparative study of ACT UP in Australia and the United States. The transnational context allows for a robust discussion of the necessity of ACT UP even in a nation where the federal government had a more appropriate response to the discovery and spread of HIV/AIDS.

Jess Rodgers chapter examines queer student activism in Australian universities from the mid-1990s forward. Rodgers handles the challenge of an area dominated by US-centric studies with remarkable deftness and helps to build a strong foundation for future Australian studies.

Intimacy, Violence, and Activism is an excellent book, especially for those seeking to compare Australasian Gay and Lesbian history with that of their own nation. For non-academic readers, this book is a superb start to understanding key aspects of Australasian history of the gay and lesbian movements.