

# Queers IN HISTORY 2025

the encyclopedia of historical lesbian,  
gay, bisexual and trans people

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*Shoreham House*

# the 2025 edition

2025 marks the 32nd anniversary of *Queers in History*, first released in 1993 on diskettes and later on CD-ROMs as the first widely available “new media” title in bookstores. Constantly updated, it was republished 16 years later in 2009 as a trade paperback, marking the beginning of an era when many public figures began coming out, making it difficult to keep up with new entries.

Now, another 16 years later, this revised edition expands further with new people, updates, and a continued focus on a historical timeline spanning 5,000 years. Trans people have been included since the start, though earlier editions had omissions this update aims to address. The hardcover has outgrown the bounds of a single volume and must now be split in two parts (A–K and L–Z) by last name. This format will be easier for readers to handle.

One of the original intentions for *Queers in History* was that it should eventually become unnecessary. The hope was that the value of the contributions queer people have made and continue to make to society would become widely known and accepted. In the years following publication of the paperback, that seemed to be happening.

In 2025, however, we see governments erasing words like “trans,” “non-binary,” “gender” and “pronoun” from publications, websites, libraries, archives, scientific studies, schools and even the signage of national monuments like The Stonewall Inn. In the US, Executive Orders mandate dropping the “T” from LGBTQ+ (as if they didn’t exist) and promulgate the easily-disproved fiction that people are born and remain as one of only two pure genders. The “B” is next to go and eventually “L” and “G” too. It looks like there may be as much need for this book and more like it, as ever there was.

CAPITALIZED NAMES indicate people whose biographies appear elsewhere in this book.

## mercedes de acosta — author

**Born 1893 in France; Died in 1968**

PHOTO BY ARNOLD GENTHE (1919)

Author, playwright and poet Mercedes de Acosta was one of the first Westerners to become interested in Eastern spirituality. She was a vegan who believed in “astral travel” and spent time in India in the 1930s with guru Meher Baba.

Acosta thought she was a boy until she was seven—her mother called her Rafael. She grew up to be a remarkably beautiful woman who was notably successful at finding other beautiful women to love.

In her autobiography *Here Lies the Heart*, the author claimed affairs with Marlene DIETRICH, Greta GARBO, Isadora DUNCAN, Alice B. TOKLAS, Eva LE GALLIENNE and socialite Dorothy (“Dickie”) Fellowes-Gordon, among others. The parties Acosta threw at her fabulous Brentwood home—next door to Garbo’s—were notorious among Hollywood’s gays and lesbians in the 1940s.

Acosta’s relationship with Garbo was particularly close, with Acosta often acting as an adviser during film productions. After Acosta published her tell-all memoirs, however, Garbo never spoke to her again.

Truman CAPOTE often used Acosta as his “trump card” in a game called “International Daisy Chain,” linking people together by their shared sexual partners. According to art historian John Richardson:

“Mercedes was the best card to hold. You could get to anyone ... from Cardinal SPELLMAN to the Duchess of Windsor.”

**FURTHER READING: ACOSTA. HERE LIES THE HEART**



# Nick Adams — actor

Born 1931 in US; Died in 1968

NICK AND ELVIS

Nick Adams, most famous for his role as a wandering Confederate soldier, Johnny Yuma, in the TV series *The Rebel* (1959–1962), was known to some as a “Hollywood hustler,” one of the legions of beautiful young men and women who advance their careers by sleeping with Hollywood’s powerful. He was often associated with James DEAN. In 1951, as two unknown actors, they appeared in a Coca-Cola commercial together. Later, Adams had a small role alongside Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*.



In 1963, Adams was nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for *Twilight of Honor*. He appeared in *Frankenstein Conquers the World* in 1966.

David Bret, in his 2002 book *Elvis: The Hollywood Years*, revealed an affair between Adams and Elvis PRESLEY. Elvis’s step-mother, Dee Presley, confirmed Bret’s account in *The Intimate Life and Death of Elvis Presley*, according to researchers who have read her unpublished manuscript.

FURTHER READING: RUTLEDGE, THE GAY FIRESIDE COMPANION

# ai ti — politician

Born 27 BC, in China; Died in 1 BC



The term “cut sleeve” is used to allude to the tradition of same-sex practice in pre-modern China. The origin of the term can be traced back to Ai Ti, Emperor Ai of Han, who once cut off the sleeve of his shirt to avoid disturbing his sleeping lover, Dong Xian.

Another code-phrase for gay love, “passion of the half-eaten peach,” refers to a similar gesture

made by an earlier Chinese emperor, Duke Ling of Wei (534–492 BC), who, while walking through an orchard, was offered said fruit by his male lover.

**FURTHER READING: DUBERMAN, HIDDEN FROM HISTORY**

## HORATIO ALGER — AUTHOR

**Born 1832 in US; Died in 1899**

Horatio Alger wrote a series of immensely popular “rags to riches” boys’ books that helped establish the distinctly American myth that adversity can be overcome through “unyielding perseverance and basic moral principles.” Alger’s novels typically follow a well-worn storyline: a down-and-out street urchin struggles to escape grinding poverty through hard work in a humble occupation. As a result of an extraordinary act of courage or virtue, he attracts the attention of a wealthy older gentleman, who rewards his heroism and takes him home to live happily ever after with him in luxury.



The characters in Alger’s novels undoubtedly expressed Alger’s own erotic fantasies. He fled to New York in 1866 after being run out of Brewster, Massachusetts—where he’d been pastor of the Unitarian Church—for:

“the abominable and revolting crime of unnatural familiarity with boys.”

Alger turned that allegation into an industry, following the age-old advice to “write what you know.”

In New York he discovered the world of impoverished young street kids eking out a living by shining shoes and peddling newspapers. Though nearly forty, Alger practically lived at the News-boys’ Lodging House, surrounded by the youths who fascinated him.

Alger began writing stories that provided potent depictions of the American Dream and a “Horatio Alger story” became synonymous with the economic promise held out by American culture. His inspirational books—which sold over 100 million copies—include *Ragged Dick*, *Luck and Pluck; or John Oakley’s Inheritance* and *Tattered Tom*. These, along with other books like *Mark the Match Boy* and *Ben the Luggage Boy*, were popular not

only with their intended audience of young men, but also with older men who shared Alger's erotic interests.

Like one of the rescuers in his tales, Alger gave away most of his royalties to needy young men. After his death, his sister destroyed all his personal papers to avoid scandal. Today the Horatio Alger Association provides scholarships to young men (and women) in financial need.

**FURTHER READING: DWYER, READER'S DIGEST STRANGE STORIES, AMAZING FACTS OF AMERICA'S PAST**

## ANTINOUS — CONSORT

**Born 111 in Turkey; Died in 130**



STATUE DEPICTING ANTINOUS AS THE EGYPTIAN GOD OSIRIS (BRITISH MUSEUM)

Born in a province of Imperial Rome that is now in Turkey, Antinous was the handsome young lover of the emperor HADRIAN. When Antinous drowned in the Nile at age eighteen, the anguished emperor declared him reborn as a god and Antinous was worshipped as such for hundreds of years. He was the subject of countless sculptures, medallions, coins and religious shrines. According to some histo-

rians, the early homophobia of the Christian church may have been partly motivated by competition with the cult of Antinous, since he died young and was believed to have risen from the dead like the Egyptian god Osiris and the Christian God Jesus.

**FURTHER READING: LAMBERT, BELOVED AND GOD**

## elizabeth arden — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1878 in UK; Died in 1966**



PHOTO BY ALAN FISHER

Elizabeth Arden's name is a household word; her line of cosmetics are popular the world over. She invented the beauty industry at a time when most women were preparing their own lotions and creams at home. Using artful packaging to convey an image of quality, Arden collaborated with a chemist to create the first "scientific" makeup formulations. She introduced modern eye makeup to America and created the concept of the makeover. In the 1930s, it was

said that there were only three American names known in every corner of the globe: Singer Sewing Machines, Coca-Cola and Elizabeth Arden.

Less well known was Arden's intimate relationship with literary agent Bessie Marbury (1856–1933). It was perhaps a case of opposites attract: Arden was beautiful, fit and politically conservative, while Marbury was an older, overweight political firebrand. While they were together, Arden supported her girlfriend's Democratic fundraising and feminist activities. They spent many weekends at Marbury's Maine home, Lakeside Farm.

After Marbury's death in 1933, Arden bought the property with the intention of fulfilling Marbury's wish that it be turned into a home for working women—though it eventually became part of a luxury resort instead.

**FURTHER READING: RICHARDS, LESBIAN LISTS**

## newton arvin — author

**Born 1900 in US; Died in 1963**

Newton Arvin, the distinguished American literary critic and biographer of Herman MELVILLE, had numerous gay relationships, including a passionate tryst in the late 1940s with author Truman CAPOTE. At the time, Arvin was a mousy forty-five-year-old professor and Capote a vivacious twenty-two-year-old who later became his student.



Despite his success in love, Arvin spent most of his life tormented by his sexual orientation. He once wrote of his closeted existence:

“I feel as if I were—indeed I am—going about in disguise, though luckily it is a disguise I have worn so long that no doubt it looks as if it fitted me.”

In 1960, officers of the Massachusetts State Police arrested Arvin on pornography charges after the office of the United States Postmaster General intercepted soft-core gay-themed pictures mailed to Arvin. His name had been found on a seized mailing list. The resulting scandal destroyed his career and resulted in the arrest and firing of two colleagues, Edward Spofford and Joel Dorius. In all, seven men were arrested.

The convictions of Spofford and Dorius were overturned in 1963. In 2006, *The New York Times* described the objectionable materials as “‘beefcake’ magazines and pictures of men—illegal pornography then, but much of it like today’s Calvin Klein underwear ads.”

**FURTHER READING: RUTLEDGE, THE GAY FIRESIDE COMPANION**

## FRANCIS BACON — PHILOSOPHER

**Born 1561 in UK; Died in 1626**

Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St. Alban, had a stellar career as a politician, lawyer, writer, philosopher and scientist. First elected to Parliament in 1584, he advanced under the guidance of the Earl of Essex, whom he later tried for treason. Knighted in 1603 by gay King JAMES I, Bacon was named Solicitor-General in 1609, Attorney-General in 1613, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1617 and Lord Chancellor in 1618. He was offered the title Earl of Oxford but could not afford the associated financial burden, so he was instead created Baron Verulam in 1618. Finally, he was given the title Viscount St. Alban in 1621, as a reward for his forty years of service.

Bacon and his brother Anthony were both known for their love of working-class young men, often employing them as servants. Biographer John Aubrey noted that, as Lord Chancellor, Bacon:





“always gave judgment *secundum aequum et bonum*” (according to the just and the good looking).

Aubrey characterized Bacon as a pederast.

In *Of Marriage and Single Life*, Bacon wrote:

“He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public.”

Though at age forty-eight he finally did marry, according to his biographer Sir Simonds D'Ewes:

“yet would he not relinquish the practice of his most horrible & secret sinne of sodomie, keeping still one Godrick, a verie effeminate faced youth, to bee his catamite and bedfellow.”

A surviving letter from the Bacons's mother to Anthony complained about Francis's servants, especially his keeping:

“that bloody Percy, as I told him then, yea as a coach companion and bed companion.”

Bacon remembered Henry Percy in his will, but little else is known about the Welsh servingman who was intimate with one of the most brilliant and powerful men of all time.

**FURTHER READING: BOWEN, FRANCIS BACON, THE TEMPER OF A MAN**

## CLIVE BARKER — DIRECTOR

**Born 1952 in UK**

Clive Barker is the popular author of many excellent sci-fi and horror novels. After several of his books were made into unsatisfactory films, he became a director and made hits of his own: *Hellraiser*, *Nightbreed* and *Lords of Illusion*. Among his monstrous creations are Pinhead, the Cenobites, Candyman and the Nix.

Barker was one of the producers of *Gods and Monsters*, the story of gay Hollywood director James WHALE (played by Ian MCKELLEN).

In an interview for *Out* magazine. Barker noted:



"It's easy for someone in my position to be gay. My books have always been full of sex ... gay sex, lesbian sex, heterosexual sex."

## natalie clifford barney — poet

**Born 1876 in US; Died in 1972**

AGE TEN. PORTRAIT BY CAROLUS-DURAN

Natalie Clifford Barney was at the center of literary and artistic life in 1920s Paris. The daughter of a prominent American family—her father was president of the Barney Railroad Car Foundry—and a poet herself, she hosted a salon in her home at 20 rue Jacob, where renowned writers and artists met for refreshments, conversation and flirtation every Friday afternoon for over sixty years.

Barney became known in literary circles as L'Amazone when Remy de Gourmont—one of many men who fell in love with her—published a series of *Lettres à l'Amazone*. She inspired Radclyffe HALL to write *The Well of Loneliness*, in which Barney is represented by the character Valerie Seymour. Liane de POUGY dedicated *The Sapphic Idyll* to Barney, as did Renée Vivien her *Studies and Preludes*. Barney was Flossie in the *Claudine* novels of COLETTE and Evangeline Musset in Djuna BARNES'S *Ladies Almanack*.

Barney's books include *Acts and Intermissions*, *The Feminine Lover*, *Scatterings*, *In Memory of Dorothy Irene Wilde*, *Secret Memoirs*, *Our Secret Loves*, *Reflections of an Amazon* and *A Few Sonnet-Portraits of Women*.

From the time she was nineteen, Barney was a flamboyant open lesbian, eventually becoming known as the Pope of Lesbos. In her memoirs, Barney referred to attempts by her family to change her:

"Albinos aren't reproached for having pink eyes and whitish hair, why should they hold it against me for being a lesbian? It's a question of nature: my queerness isn't a vice, isn't 'deliberate,' and harms no one. What do I care, after all, if they vilify or judge me according to their prejudices?"

Barney was a stunning, long-haired blonde who seduced every attractive woman in sight. She traveled only in high society, so



she got the cream of the crop: countesses, baronesses, princesses, debutantes, poets and painters.

Among her conquests were the poet Renée VIVIEN, the fabulously beautiful courtesan Liane de POUGY and Oscar WILDE's brilliant niece, Dolly Wilde. One of Barney's lovers, Olive Custance, later married Lord Alfred DOUGLAS (Oscar Wilde's lover) and Natalie was godmother to their child.

Barney and painter Romaine BROOKS were inseparable lovers for over fifty years, but they split up when they were both over ninety, after Barney refused to give up her younger lover—a countess in her sixties named Gisele. Brooks refused to see or speak to Barney again during the final few years of their lives.

**FURTHER READING: CHALON. PORTRAIT OF A SEDUCTRESS: THE WORLD OF NATALIE BARNEY**

## James BARRY — medical DOCTOR

**Born ca. 1789 in Ireland; Died in 1865**



James Barry was a surgeon who rose through the ranks to become the second-highest medical office in the British Army. He was Inspector General of Military Hospitals and served throughout the British Empire.

Assigned a female identity at birth, he first adopted male clothing and appearance as a means of entry to the all-male medical school at University of Edinburgh. In 1812, he received his MD. He strictly maintained a male identity for the rest of his life.

He joined the army in 1813 and was Assistant Surgeon to the Forces by the end of 1815. In 1816 he was posted to Cape Town, where he soon attained the high position of Colonial Medical Inspector. He improved sanitation and water systems, improved conditions for enslaved people, prisoners and the mentally ill, and provided a sanctuary for the leper population.

Only after his death was it found that he possessed the anatomy of a female. The servant who laid out the body and discovered this had a few choice words for Barry's personal physician, Major D.R. McKinnon, who wrote:

"I had been intimately acquainted with that gentleman for a good many years, both in the West Indies, & in England, and I never had any suspicion that Dr Barry was a female. I

attended him during his last illness ... I was sent for ... the woman who performed the last offices for Dr Barry was waiting to speak to me. Amongst other things she said Dr Barry was a female & that I was a pretty doctor not to know this & that she would not like to be attended by me. I informed her that it was none of my business whether Dr Barry was a male or a female—that I thought it as likely he might be neither, viz. an imperfectly developed man. She then said that she had examined the body & that it was a perfect female ... The woman seemed to me to think that she had become acquainted with a great secret & wished to be paid for keeping it. I informed her that all Dr Barry's relatives were dead, & that it was no secret of mine, & that my own impression was that Dr Barry was a Hermaphrodite. But whether Dr Barry was male, female, or hermaphrodite I do not know, nor had I any purpose in making the discovery as I could positively swear to the identity of the body as being that of a person whom I had been acquainted with as Inspector General of Hospitals for a period of eight or nine years."

## KATHARINE Lee Bates — poet

Born 1859 in US; Died in 1929



Katharine Lee Bates was Professor of English at Wellesley College, but that is not her claim to fame. In 1893 she wrote a poem that, when set to music, became one of the most popular patriotic songs: "America the Beautiful." Bates also wrote *College Beautiful and Other Poems*, *Rose and Thorn*, *Sunshine and Other Verses for Children*, *Hermit Island* and *Fairy Gold*.

One day in the summer of 1893, Bates joined a group of friends on a hike to the top of Pike's Peak and, as she later wrote:

"When I saw the view, I felt great joy. All the wonder of America seemed displayed there, with the sea-like expanse."

Spacious skies, amber waves, majestic purple mountains and fruited plains. That evening she wrote a poem about her epiphany, which she titled "America the Beautiful."

Two years later she submitted the poem to a religious journal and it was published on July 4, 1895. “America the Beautiful” quickly became a sensation and composer Samuel Ward created a catchy melody to accompany the text. The song is a perennial candidate to replace the unsingable “Star-Spangled Banner” as the US national anthem.

In 1887, while teaching at Wellesley, Bates met fellow teacher Katharine Coman (1857–1915). The two women remained devoted to one another for the rest of their lives. So many of the college’s female professors lived together in same-sex relationships that a union between two women came to be widely known as a “Wellesley marriage.”

Coman authored numerous books and articles on US history and economics. She started the economics department at Wellesley and helped to found Denison House, a famous settlement house in Boston.

In 1915 Coman died at the age of fifty-seven. Grief-stricken, Bates wrote a collection of poems for the woman she had shared her life with for nearly thirty years.

**FURTHER READING: DYNES, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HOMOSEXUALITY**

## **FRIEDA BELINFANTE — MUSICIAN**

**Born 1904 in Holland; Died in 1995**



Frieda Belinfante was a prominent symphony conductor who fought against the Nazi occupation of Holland while disguised as a man. She later escaped to the US where she faced discrimination due to her same-sex orientation.

In 1937 she was appointed as artistic director and conductor of the esteemed Concertgebouw and became the first woman known to conduct an orchestra. Her career was disrupted three years later, when Germany invaded Holland. As a prominent Jew she had the opportunity to escape but chose to stay and fight as part of the resistance.

She worked with Willem ARONDEUS in the *Raad van Verzet* (Resistance Council) to forge documents that allowed others to

escape to other countries. She devised a plan to sabotage the population registry that the Nazis were using to identify undesirables for transport to the death camps. The efforts of their small group saved many lives, but they were eventually exposed and rounded up. Belinfante disguised herself as a man to throw them off her trail. She continued resistance for several months before escaping to Switzerland.

After the war, she emigrated to US and settled in Laguna Beach, California where, in 1954, she was the founding artistic director and conductor of the Orange County Philharmonic. As the orchestra became established there was pressure to appoint a man to her position. In 1962, at a board meeting, a rival exposed her as a lesbian. Whether or not anyone was surprised, she was summarily terminated.

She continued to pursue her love of music as a private teacher. In 1987, the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the City of Laguna Beach both declared February 19 “Frieda Belinfante Day,” honoring her contributions to musical culture in the region.

The love of her life was composer Henriëtte Bosmans (1895–1952).

## HARRY DALEY — policeman

**Born 1901 in UK; Died in 1971**

Harry Daley was an unusual British policeman, not only because he was gay, and not only because he was out to his fellow Bobbies, but also because he hobnobbed with much of literary London of his time, including most of the Bloomsbury group. Beyond that, he was writer E.M. FORSTER’s lover for seven years.



We know something about Daley from his discreet autobiography, *This Small Cloud*, published long after his death. Daley realized he was gay when he was a child, and considered it as “this small cloud” that followed him. His congenial spirit and jolly appearance made him a popular

figure, “plump, curly-haired, genial and rather cocky in manner,” as P.N. Furbank described him.



If anyone had a problem with Daley it was more to do with his empathetic nature and liberal politics at a time, before World War II, when fascism was on the rise in England. Many in the ranks of the police, who were tasked with keeping the working class “in line,” belonged to the anti-semitic militant blackshirts, the “British Union of Fascists.” They gave Daley grief about his friendliness to the Jewish residents of his precinct.

During the war he was promoted to sergeant and later promoted to a desk job, which he didn’t like. He probably didn’t think much of his place in history, but enjoying a successful career as Britain’s first openly gay policeman was a significant achievement. Being gay was no particular hindrance to him and perhaps gave him a world view that improved his usefulness to the community.

## CHEVALIÈRE D’ÉON — SOLDIER

**Born 1728 in France; Died in 1810**



PORTRAIT BY THOMAS STEWART

Charlotte d’Éon de Beaumont served France as a soldier, diplomat and spy. Identified as female at birth, Éon was raised as a boy and lived most of the first half of his life as a man. Éon’s androgynous characteristics facilitated her infiltration of the court of Russia, where she spied for French King Louis XV while posing as a maid of honor to Empress Elizabeth.

After age 49, Éon lived as a woman and was officially recognized as such by Louis XVI, who granted her funds to buy dresses. Before then, in male garb, she was a captain of dragoons fighting in the Seven Years’ War. She drafted the treaty that ended that war.

She was known worldwide for her gender-switching as well as her vast military and diplomatic accomplishments. An autopsy revealed “male organs in every respect perfectly formed,” but also “breasts remarkably full.”

## BRIAN epstein — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1933 in UK; Died in 1967**

Brian Epstein was the homosexual manager of The Beatles who charted the Liverpool mop-tops’ rise to fame. It all started one evening when the prim and proper businessman stumbled into the steamy Cavern Club, where the scruffy, leather-jacketed Beatles were twisting and shouting.

Epstein was immediately fascinated by the possibilities and enchanted by John Lennon. He went to work on their rough image,



dress the band in fashionable suits by Douglas Millings and hiring stylists to touch up their soon-to-be-famous androgynous hairstyles. The combination of Paul McCartney's melodies, John Lennon's intellect and Brian Epstein's gay sensibilities created sex/music/fashion havoc that energized the cultural revolution of the 1960s.

When Epstein published his 1964 autobiography *A Cellarful of Noise*, Lennon joked to Epstein that he should have called it:

*A Cellarful of Boys.*

Legend has it that Epstein and Lennon slept together once, during a visit to Spain. Later Lennon told his friend Peter Shotton:

"I let him toss me off and that was it."

An interesting version of what may have happened between the two inspired the 1991 film *The Hours and Times* by Chris Munch. Imagine.

**FURTHER READING: ALYSON PUBLICATIONS, ALYSON ALMANAC**

## cole escola — playwright

**Born 1986 in US**

Cole Escola wrote and starred in the phenomenal Broadway play, *Oh, Mary!*, which was a critical and popular success in the 2024–25 season. *Oh, Mary!* deals with, among other things, Abraham LINCOLN's same-sex desires. The premise derives partly from Escola's 2017 sketch, that he called *Queers in History*. The editors of this book, following the lead of Philip Nobile, Larry KRAMER and C.A. Tripp, first broke the news about Honest Abe in 2009. We're pleased to think it might have been inspirational to Cole. They came out as non-binary in 2022.

# FREDERICK THE GREAT — SOLDIER

Born 1712 in Prussia; Died in 1786



At the age of eighteen, Prussian Crown Prince Frederick was forced to watch as his lover, twenty-five-year-old Lieutenant Hans von Katte, was executed by order of his father, King Frederick William. The pair had been planning an escape to England. Instead, Katte was led to the grounded Frederick's window, where the prince blew his soldier-boy a kiss and begged his forgiveness. "Monseigneur, there is nothing to forgive," von Katte replied as he knelt to be beheaded. Frederick fainted before the final moment.

The king imprisoned Frederick for a year, during which time he commenced two of his most enduring relationships, with Lieutenant Count von Keyserling and Michael Gabriel Fredersdorf (1708–1758). VOLTAIRE wrote of Fredersdorf:

"This soldier, young, handsome, well made and who played the flute, served to entertain the prisoner in more than one fashion."

Prior to meeting von Katte, Frederick had formed an attachment to his father's seventeen-year-old page, Peter Christopher Keith. Frederick's sister Wilhelmine recorded that the two:

"soon became inseparable. Keith was intelligent, but without education. He served my brother from feelings of real devotion and kept him informed of all the king's actions ... though I had noticed that he was on more familiar terms with this page than was proper in his position. I did not know how intimate the friendship was."

Frederick William soon exiled the page and assigned a supposedly incorruptible young soldier, Lieutenant Borcke, to be his son's friend. Frederick became enamored of the Lieutenant, writing:

"My wearisome affection breaks from me and discloses to you the feelings of a heart filled with you and which cannot be satisfied save in knowing that you are fully convinced of the tender friendship with which it adores you."

There is no record of the Lieutenant returning the interest.

As an adult and King of Prussia, Frederick retreated to the magnificent palace he built at Potsdam, where women were excluded and same-sex love was celebrated in literature, music and verse. Though his long-time companion, Fredersdorf, was of peasant stock, he named him to be his royal valet, then promoted him to director of the royal theatre and eventually chancellor of the kingdom.

In July 1750, Frederick wrote a flirtatious letter to his gay secretary and reader, Claude Étienne Darget (1712–1778): “Mes hé-morroïdes saluent affectueusement votre v[erge].” (“My hemorrhoids affectionately greet your cock.”)

Near the end of his life Frederick grew increasingly solitary. When Fredersdorf decided to marry, Frederick snidely suggested:

“Have your marriage ceremony today rather than tomorrow if that will contribute to your care and comfort; and if you want to keep a little page and a little scout with you as well, do so.”

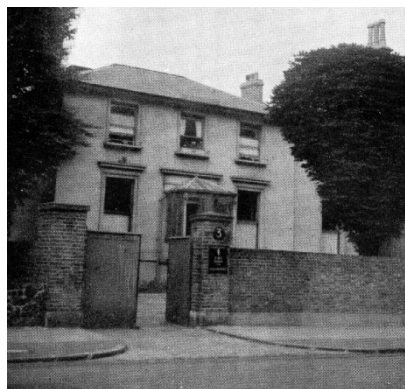
Fredersdorf and Keyserling were replaced for a time in the king’s affection by the charming Italian writer Francesco ALGAROTTI.

Somehow Frederick found time to invade Silesia, lead victorious armies in the War of the Austrian Secession and the Seven Years War and establish Prussia as one of the strongest powers in Europe. He also built up the economic strength of his country, introducing scientific methods of production to industry and agriculture, draining swamps and replanting the forests. He was adored by his people, who called him Old Fritz, but to history he is known as Frederick the Great.

**FURTHER READING: RICHARDSON, MARS WITHOUT VENUS**

## maundy gregory — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1877 in UK; Died in 1941**



ABBEY LODGE, HOME OF MAUNDY GREGORY,  
LATER ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS

It is sometimes a fine line between a businessperson, a politician and a con artist; a spy, a criminal, influence peddler, extortionist and a clever murderer. Maundy Gregory spectacularly crossed all those lines repeatedly in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He was involved in several of the most notorious scandals and mysteries of his era. His exploits caused mention

of his name to be forbidden to this day in some circles.

Appropriately, he began his career as an actor, with some success due perhaps as much to his business acumen as his histrionic ability. He started managing other actors' careers and joined a well-known talent agency run by F.R. Benson. He soon moved into theatre production where he achieved some success and started to make important social connections. Unfortunately, he was soon entangled in controversies over non-payment of wages to musicians, performers and staff. This ended his career in show business.

He took on a job as a hotel detective, which proved to be more lucrative. It's likely his salary was supplemented by blackmailing guests, particularly foreigners, who had been caught in compromising positions.

He attracted the attention of British intelligence services who were anxious to have information about potential spies, agents and other undesirable aliens. This began his rise in official circles, hobnobbing with politicians and the aristocracy. He used those connections to provide valuable services to people who might need favors from officials—a political fixer. He'd split his fees with the parties providing dispensations and was soon working directly with the top leaders of the Liberal party including Prime Minister Lloyd George. They provided the favors and he provided much-needed funds for the party.

He soon established himself as the go-to for well-heeled snobs who couldn't wait for the King to get around to bestowing them with "honours" including knighthoods, baronetcies and other titles. With enough money donated to Maundy Gregory, their name would be submitted by the PM to the King for consideration. It's estimated that during the 1920s Gregory was raking in millions of pounds each year (worth 50 times as much in 2025 pounds) and was pursuing an outrageously extravagant lifestyle. He made his home at "Abbey Lodge" which later became EMI Recording Studios on Abbey Road.

Of course, his business had to be done in secret, and Gregory was good at keeping secrets. After all, he was gay during a time when same-sex activity was illegal in UK, and blackmail was a routine expense for him as well as providing income. Gregory had an intense interest in openly gay writer Frederick ROLFE and made a point to befriend his biographer, A.J. Symons. From Symons he purchased the original set of *Venice Letters* written by Rolfe and described as:

"the most painful and the most erotic homosexual correspondence in English."

There were occasional threats to Gregory's illicit business. MP Victor Grayson (a gay man himself) discovered Gregory's "Honours for Sale" dealings with Lloyd George and started to go public with his findings. In September 1920, Grayson was seen with Gregory as they entered one of Gregory's homes on an island in the misty Thames. Grayson was never seen again and his disappearance is an unsolved mystery.

It all came crashing down after passage of the "Honours Act of 1925" put a stop to his cash flow. He was soon facing bankruptcy, but the untimely death of a long-time friend rescued him. Edith Rosse (1873–1932) and her husband, composer Frederick Rosse (1867–1940) moved in with Gregory, but Frederick soon moved out. Mrs. Rosse was persuaded to name Gregory as her heir and executor of her will, instead of her own family. Within days, she became ill and died. The official cause of death was "Bright's Disease," according to the doctor who signed her death certificate. Gregory arranged for her to be quickly buried in a grave that he had selected in a churchyard near the Thames in Berkshire. The particular grave he chose was near the riverbank, where she was interred in an unsealed coffin below the high-water table.

A few weeks later, her family found out that she had died and they immediately suspected Gregory had something to do with it. They convinced police to exhume the body, but by then the river had dissolved it, along with any evidence of poison. Gregory, it seems, got away with the perfect murder.

In 1933, Gregory was arrested for violating the Honours Act. A general panic ensued among the many knights and barons who had purchased their "honours" from him, not to mention the politicians who had facilitated the deals. Arrangements were made for Gregory to plead guilty, thus avoiding the revelations that would occur during a trial. No other names were named, and the descendants of those who purchased titles can still point with pride to them today. Some even enjoy the benefits of hereditary titles that were obtained illicitly.

After trial, as part of the secret agreement, Gregory exiled himself to France, where he lived very quietly. After he died, it took nine years for his passing to be noted in the UK press though he had, for decades, been one of the most wealthy and powerful persons in Britain. His extensive files at MI5 are kept secret to this day.

**FURTHER READING: MCMILLAN, HONOURS FOR SALE**

## alan hart — medical doctor

**Born 1890 in US; Died in 1962**

Alan Hart was a physician who worked in sanitariums and X-ray clinics in New Mexico, Illinois, Washington and Idaho. He

pioneered the use of X-Ray photography to screen patients for tuberculosis and conducted mass screenings that saved thousands of lives, as noted in *Scientific American*.

Hart was identified as female at birth, but always self-identified as male. His family quickly, though somewhat reluctantly, adapted to his boyish ways. His grandparents' obituaries, from 1921 and 1924, both list Hart as a grandson.

At school he was forced to present as female, but upon returning home each day he resumed his "masculine" activities. According to an article in the *Halls Summit News* of June 10, 1921:

"Young Hart was different, even then. Boys' clothes just felt natural. Hart always regarded himself as a boy and begged his family to cut his hair and let him wear trousers. Hart disliked dolls but enjoyed playing doctor. He hated traditional girl tasks, preferring farm work with the menfolk instead. The self reliance that became a lifelong trait was evident early: once when he accidentally chopped off his fingertip with an axe, Hart dressed it himself, saying nothing about it to the family."

Hart's college sweetheart was a young lady named Eva Cashman. Of course, some aspects of his life presented difficulties to be overcome. His medical degree was issued in his female birth name, though a sympathetic senior staffer filed them as "Hart, Lucile (aka Robert L.), M.D."

When Hart began his work on TB, it was one of the leading causes of death in US. As a highly contagious disease that spread quickly through the lower classes who lived in crowded conditions, the stigma—and the threat of forced isolation—caused many victims to avoid diagnosis. Hart possessed particular discretion and compassion that encouraged patients to seek out his clinics. Early detection and treatment reduced deaths by 90% during Hart's lifetime.

Hart confronted the difficulties of his gender situation and, in 1917, requested surgery to eliminate menstruation. His doctor, Joshua Allen Gilbert (1867–1948), was reluctant at first but became convinced that gender-affirming surgery and treatments were appropriate. Gilbert published his case notes in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* in 1920. He noted that "from a sociological and psychological standpoint [Hart] is a man" and that living as one was Hart's only chance for a happy existence:

"the best that can be done. ... Let him who finds in himself a tendency to criticize offer some constructive method of dealing with the problem on hand. He will not want for difficulties.

The patient and I have done our best with it."

Hart married his first wife, Inez Stark, in February 1918. That ended quickly and unhappily but Hart found a long-term marriage with Edna Ruddick that lasted from 1925 to the end of his life.

## HERBERT HUNCKE — muse

**Born 1915 in US; Died in 1996**

The “Beat Generation” of the 1950s wrote about rebellion, spirituality, exploration, criminality, drug experimentation, anti-materialism and sexual freedom. Hubert Huncke lived the life that inspired them and gave their movement its name. He introduced William S. BURROUGHS to heroin (Burroughs was already a morphine addict) and was the title character “Herbert” in Burroughs’s book, *Junkie*. He gave Jack KEROUAC and Allen GINSBERG entrée into the seamy side of life in New York’s grimmest neighborhoods. He was called, “The Mayor of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.” One of his favorite sayings was an old African-American phrase:

“I’m beat to the socks.”

Huncke epitomized everything they idolized. Kerouac used Huncke as the basis of his *On the Road* character Elmo Hassel. “Huncke’s bloody feet” (after walking miles in the snow) make an appearance in Ginsberg’s epic poem *Howl*.

Huncke was a druggie by age 12 and by 16 he had discovered the joys and profitability of selling sex to men. He became an important informant and scout for Dr. Alfred KINSEY’s research on sexuality in the 1940s.

Kerouac described Huncke in his “Now it’s Jazz” reading from *Desolation Angels*, chapter 77:

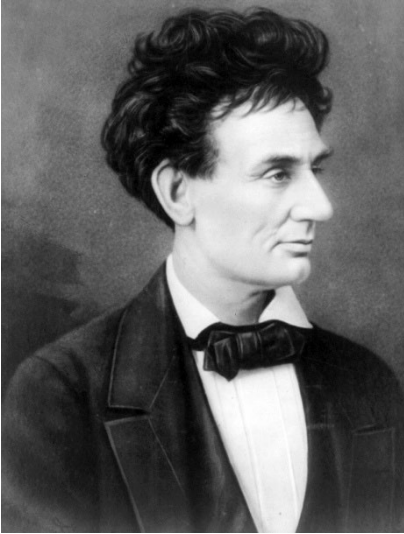
Huck, whom you’ll see on Times Square, somnolent and alert, sad, sweet, dark, holy. Just out of jail. Martyred. Tortured by sidewalks, starved for sex and companionship, open to anything, ready to introduce a new world with a shrug.

His longtime companion, Louis Cartwright, was murdered on the streets of Manhattan in 1994.



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN — POLITICIAN

Born 1809 in US; Died in 1865



Abraham Lincoln is included in this book because after extensive research in 19<sup>th</sup> century documents, newspapers and books, we've concluded the 16th US President ... was queer. No, we weren't there and no, we don't have any photos to prove Lincoln was gay. But we have documented undisputed facts that have been ignored or covered up by most historians for over 160 years. We think a reasonable examination of those facts reveals that not only was Honest Abe a gay man, but he was comfortable

with his sexual orientation and it had a big impact on how he conducted his life and the US Civil War. Here's something to read:

... Reuben and Charles have married two girls,  
but Billy has married a boy.

The girls he had tried on every side,  
but none could he get to agree.

All was in vain, he went home again,  
and since that he's married to Natty.

So Billy and Natty agreed very well,  
And mama's well pleased with the match.

The egg it is laid, but Natty's afraid  
The shell is so soft it never will hatch.

That's an excerpt from a poem published in Indiana in 1829. Kinda racy. It caused quite a stir in the neighborhood and was remembered long after the poet went on to bigger things. That's right, a poem about two young men who get married and try to have a baby! Maybe the earliest gay-themed poem known in US literature. Written by none other than a twenty-year-old Abraham Lincoln.

We know about Abe's gay poem because it was included in the first edition of one of the earliest biographies of the President, written by William Herndon, who had known Lincoln well. Mysteriously, it was left out of later editions for nearly 33 years and almost forgotten.

Today, you might be able read it on Wikipedia, except somebody keeps deleting the links to the article about Lincoln's sexuality. I expect that whole Wiki article will disappear some day, maybe for another 33 years.

Here's a little bit more of Abe's story.

On April 15, 1837, an impoverished Abraham Lincoln, twenty-eight years old, arrived in Springfield, Illinois to set up his first law practice. One of his first stops was at the general store, where he thought he might buy a bed. Standing behind the counter was a twenty-two-year-old man, the shopkeeper Joshua Fry Speed (1814–1882). Speed totaled up the cost of the bed, mattress, blankets, pillows etcetera to be a whopping seventeen dollars. Well, that was a lot of money back then and Abe simply didn't have it. As Speed later recalled, when he looked across the counter, "I never saw a sadder face." Lincoln asked if he might buy the bed on credit.

But Josh had a better idea. Taking Lincoln by the hand, he led him up the steps to his living quarters above the store, showed him the small room with a bed in the corner and said, "Why don't you just sleep here with me?" And the two men continued to live and sleep together for nearly four years in that bed in that room.

Some historians note that it was common for men to share beds in those days, there was a shortage of beds. But they fail to recognize that many of those men were also lovers.

It's true, there was a shortage of beds and as men traveled around they might arrive at a roadside inn where there was lack of space, so they might be forced to share a room or even a bed with one or two other men for the night. There were many jokes about what went on in those shared beds too.

But it was very unusual for two grown men to happily sleep together at home for so long the way that Abe and Josh did. And it's not like Joshua Speed couldn't afford an extra bed; after all, he was a bed salesman! He was practically the Sealy Posturepedic of Springfield, Illinois.

Nearly four years later, Abe learned that Josh was leaving him and going back to his native Kentucky. Abe was devastated and suffered symptoms of what today we would call a nervous breakdown, an episode known to historians as Lincoln's "fatal first," January 1, 1841. Well, New Year's Day is not one of our favorites either. By the way, there is not a shred of evidence to support the contention of some historians that Lincoln also broke off an engagement with Mary Todd or suffered any of the other myriad setbacks that some have postulated to explain what upset him on that fateful day, other than the well-documented impending separation from Speed.

Lincoln was depressed, perhaps even suicidal and wrote, "I am now the most miserable man living. Whether I shall ever be better I can not tell; I awfully forbode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me."

At that time, Lincoln was almost 32 and Speed was 26, so this was no childhood phase. In fact, the two men remained close until the end of Lincoln's life. As Abe grew older, he continued to have intimate relationships with other men.

As president, Lincoln formed a close attachment to a soldier, Captain David V. Derickson, who was the commander of his guards. In 1862 and 1863, they shared a bed in the White House and a getaway cottage at the outskirts of town. You can be certain there were plenty of extra beds in the White House.

Lincoln's same-sex relationships did not go unnoticed by contemporaries and early biographers. Virginia Woodbury Fox, a well-connected Washingtonian, wrote in an 1862 diary entry:

"Tish says, 'there is a Bucktail Soldier here devoted to the President, drives with him and when Mrs L. is not home, sleeps with him.' What stuff!"

Even thirty-three years later, Thomas Chamberlain, one of Lincoln's bodyguards, remembered the relationship of the two men when he wrote a history of the regiment:

"Captain Derickson, in particular, advanced so far in the President's confidence and esteem that, in Mrs. Lincoln's absence, he frequently spent the night at his cottage, sleeping in the same bed with him, and—it is said—making use of His Excellency's night-shirt!"

Scandalous stuff. Some historians like to say these observers and others were not implying a sexual relationship, only that the two men were exceptionally close friends and it was perhaps slightly improper for a common soldier to become so close to the President. But the fact that people of the time invariably noted the men slept together only when Mrs. Lincoln was not around, indicates to me that they had an inkling what was going on—they were aware that the relationship was somehow hidden from his wife and perhaps a substitute for Lincoln's terrible marriage to Mary Todd.

One of the more notable aspects of Lincoln's personality was his discretion. He maintained an air of mystery, even secrecy, such that no one ever claimed to know what he was really thinking. On the other hand, he felt compelled to know every detail about the circumstances surrounding him. These traits, which may have been related to his desire to somewhat obscure his sexual orientation, served him well as the hands-on commander-in-chief during the Civil War.

We will likely never know for sure if Abraham Lincoln had sexual relations with those men. But it seems clear he had a passionate desire for same-sex intimacy to an extent that attracted notice among the people who knew him.

**FURTHER READING: TRIPP, THE INTIMATE WORLD OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

## pepi II neferkare — poLItician

**Born 2284BC, in Egypt; Died in 2184BC.**

Pepi II succeeded to the double throne of Egypt at age six and is thought to have ruled for ninety-four years (ca. 2278BC to ca. 2184BC), which if true would be the longest reign of any monarch in history. He ruled during a time of declining power for the central government of the Old Kingdom. As his regal duties required, Pepi married several women, including his half-sister Neith and his niece Iput.

He conducted an affair with one of his male generals, Sa-sen-et. Fragmentary papyri dating back to 1295BC, describe an encounter that was witnessed by a spying commoner named Teti, who noticed Pharaoh walking on his own one night around 10 pm. Teti followed him to the home of Sa-sen-et, where Pepi “threw up a stone and stamped his foot, at which a [ladder] was lowered down for him. He climbed up and Teti son of Henet waited. When his divine person had done what he wanted to with [the general], he returned to the palace.” Other papyri tell of another tattletale, “the pleader from Memphis,” who attempted to report Pharaoh’s gay escapades, only to be shouted down by members of the royal court.

## Walther Rathenau — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1867 in Germany; Died in 1922**



The assassination of Walther Rathenau on June 24, 1922, marked a turning point in Germany's history. Rathenau was Germany's first (and so far only) Jewish Foreign Minister.

Born into a wealthy family—his father owned the German General Electric—Rathenau established himself as one of the leading industrialists in Europe before World War I. During the war he was in charge of the supply of raw materials and labor that sustained the German military.

The other side of the hard-headed businessman was a cultured, sophisticated writer, musician and philosopher. He was quiet about his sexual orientation and his bachelorhood was regarded as an indication of devotion to his work. In reality, he was devoted to racist writer Wilhelm Schwaner (1863–1944), one of the founders of the *völkisch* movement in Germany and an early promoter of the symbolic swastika. The bond between the two men transcended politics.

Rathenau's murderers were rightwing anti-Semites, precursors of the National Socialists who would soon come to power under Adolf Hitler. His funeral service was held in the Reichstag and the president of the Republic delivered an oration. Five hundred thousand people watched the procession in Berlin and memorials were held throughout the nation. The shock of Rathenau's assassination triggered runaway inflation: A week later, it took 400 marks to buy a dollar and it was up to 1,700 by the end of that August. With the panic that followed, hope was lost for a stable, democratic Germany.

**FURTHER READING: HAFNER, DEFYING HITLER**

## ERNST RÖHM — SOLDIER

Born 1887 in Germany; Died in 1934



Ernst Röhm was an overweight, unattractive queer who escaped a domineering father into the German military prior to World War I. During the war, he was severely wounded, suffering facial wounds that left him scarred for the rest of his life.

After the war, he found comradeship in the beer halls of Munich, where he joined the Nazi party and encountered Adolf Hitler (1889–1945). They became close friends.

To Röhm, Hitler offered the promise of security, protection, sharply tailored uniforms, badges

and troops to command. To Hitler, Röhm and other gay followers offered unquestioning and loyal service, with the threat of exposure and expulsion held as leverage against them.

In the early days of the Nazi party, he managed public events by renting venues and rallying crowds of supporters. With his military background, Röhm was assigned the responsibility of organizing the vicious Nazi stormtroopers (SA or Sturmabteilung) called the Brownshirts.

Hitler gathered many gay men (his “fairies”) in high positions around him but in 1934 he broached his end of the agreement in the “Night of the Long Knives” when they were rounded up and eliminated. He no longer needed them as he pursued his larger objectives of cleansing Germany of diversity: Jews, Romani, Queers and dissidents all had to go. Röhm was executed on July 1, 1934.

**FURTHER READING: ALDRICH AND WOTHERSPOON, WHO’S WHO IN GAY & LESBIAN HISTORY**

## BAYARD RUSTIN — POLITICIAN

Born 1912 in US; Died in 1987



Bayard Rustin was an organizer and driving force of the civil rights movement from the 1940s through the 1980s. In 1941 he organized protest marches for the Congress of Racial Equality. In 1947 he organized “freedom rides” to North Carolina to protest segregated buses. From 1953 to 1955 he was Executive Director of the War Resisters League. From 1955 to 1960 he was an aide to Dr. Martin Luther King, helped organize the Montgomery bus boycott, organized marches at the political conventions of

1960 and helped form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1963 he organized the *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom*, where King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. From 1964 to 1987 he was head of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. At one point segregationist Senator Strom Thurmond, unable to attack Rustin’s credentials as an activist, denounced him from the Senate floor as a homosexual, a draft dodger and a communist.

Despite his central role, Rustin was sometimes kept in the background for fear of his sexual orientation becoming an issue. He experienced firsthand the devastating effects of homophobia, even from colleagues in political organizations that claimed to be seeking civil rights for everyone. Until recently, his importance was obscured, leading historian John D’Emilio to call Rustin the “lost prophet” of the civil rights movement.

In 1953 Rustin was arrested in Pasadena, California and charged with vagrancy and lewd conduct in the backseat of a car with two other men. He eventually pleaded guilty to a single, lesser charge of “sex perversion” (as consensual sodomy was officially referred to in California at the time) and served sixty days in jail. Rustin was fired following his conviction.

As he grew older, Rustin often spoke to LGBT+ groups, urging them to continue the fight for civil rights for all minorities.

Rustin was an avid collector of art, particularly of 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century religious art and icons, elaborately carved walking sticks and African-American memorabilia. He was arrested in New York City



in 1972 for possession of a dangerous weapon: one of his ornate walking sticks. Among his treasured prints was “Negro Expulsion from Railway Car, Philadelphia,” from *The Illustrated London News*, 1856, depicting an immaculate Octavius Catto being evicted from his seat while two white women look on.

Rustin was survived by his partner of ten years, Walter Naegle (b. 1949), who was also his executor and chief archivist. In recent years Rustin’s contributions have begun to be more widely recognized. A public high school in Westtown, Pennsylvania, bears Rustin’s name. The documentary film *Brother Outsider* explores his life and work.

**FURTHER READING: DYNES, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HOMOSEXUALITY**

## jack smith — artist

**Born 1932 in US; Died in 1989**

This book, *Queers in History*, is almost as much about the vagaries of fame as it is about the impact of sexuality. Many of the people profiled within were among the most powerful and well-known of their time, yet some are almost forgotten today. Others died in obscurity but are idolized by millions today. The artist Jack Smith falls into another category: not nearly as well-known as he should have been while alive, and nearly forgotten decades after his death, despite his undeniable impact on art and filmmaking.

What sets these groups apart? Often it has little to do with how they lived their lives and more to do with the actions of those who outlived them. Their heirs often have an incentive to keep their memories alive, for financial reasons or because of their personal appreciation of the artist. An artist who dies without a will is less likely to be remembered than one who cleverly designates heirs who will vigorously protect and promote their legacy. If LEONARDO hadn’t willed *Mona Lisa* to his beloved companion Salai, the painting might not have survived.

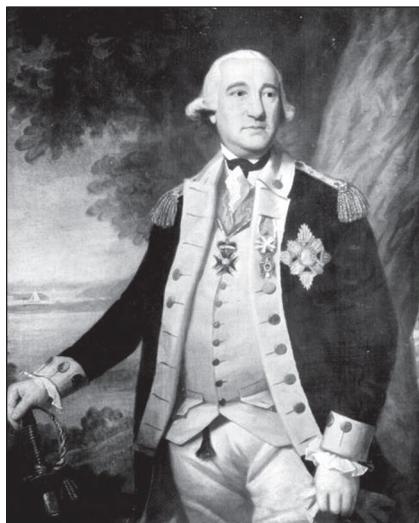
Jack Smith was a filmmaker, photographer and artist who worked in New York in the 1960s–1980s. His first and last successful film was *Flaming Creatures* (1963), a disturbing vampire story that featured male nudity, cross-dressed bodies in various poses and a voyeuristic camera. It was declared obscene by the New York Criminal Court which, of course, meant every rising artist and filmmaker in NYC had to see it. It became a popular “midnight movie” at the Tivoli/Adonis Theatre in the city. Its traces may be found in the works of Andy WARHOL, John WATERS, Todd HAYNES, Laurie Anderson, Cindy Sherman and others.

When he died after a long battle with AIDS, his apartment was crammed with his life’s work. Without a will, his estranged sister Sue Slater became his sole heir by default. She wanted nothing

more than to abandon it all to the trash heaps. Performance artist Penny Arcade and filmmaker J. Hoberman preserved and archived Smith's work. As Slater began to realize the value of the estate, she launched a nearly 20-year legal battle, which she eventually won. An agreement was made for a gallery to purchase the remaining artworks from her, thus preserving what was left of Smith's tattered legacy. Retrospectives in 1997 and 2018 have kept interest alive, but Jack Smith may never take the place as a pioneer in art history that he deserves.

## FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON STEUBEN — SOLDIER

**Born 1730 in Prussia; Died in 1794**



A hero of the American Revolution, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Rudolf Gerhard August von Steuben knew that discipline has its virtues. And that's just what he instilled in the Continental Army through the bitter winter of 1778 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

The former aide to FREDERICK the Great fled his native Prussia for the new world amid allegations of improper relations. An anonymous member of the court of Baden wrote:

"It has come to me from different sources that M. de

Steuben is accused of having taken familiarities with young boys which the laws forbid and punish severely. I have even been informed that that is the reason why M. de Steuben was obliged to leave Hechingen and that the clergy of your country intend to prosecute him by law as soon as he may establish himself anywhere."

Steuben made his way to America, where George Washington was desperate for experienced officers. Washington asked Steuben to help bring some order to the tattered Continental troops fighting (and losing to) the British.

On February 23, 1778, the ragtag soldiers at Valley Forge were astonished by the spectacle of the silk and fur-robed baron arriving in a grandiose twenty-four-belled sleigh drawn by black Percheron draft horses, caressing his sleek miniature greyhound Azor. He was followed by a retinue of African servants, a French cook, his aide-de-camp Louis de Pontiere and his seventeen-year-old

private secretary/lover, Pierre-Étienne du PONCEAU. Steuben quickly took matters into his own hands and began intensive training of one hundred soldiers as a model company. They in turn schooled others in his military tactics.

In 1779 Steuben wrote, with assistance from Ponceau, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, which became the standard training manual for the army for over thirty years.

Steuben legally adopted two handsome soldiers: William North (who later became a US Senator) and Ben Walker. A third young man, John W. Mulligan, Jr. (b. 1773), also considered himself one of Steuben's "sons." His birth father, John "Hercules" Mulligan, had been Alexander HAMILTON's roommate many years before.

Prior to moving in with Steuben, young Mulligan had been living with Charles Adams (1770–1800), son of then Vice-President John Adams. The future president and his wife, concerned about the intense nature of the relationship, insisted that Adams and Mulligan split up. The anguished boys wrote to Steuben of their devastation at being separated. With compassion for the heartbroken couple, Steuben offered to take both young men into his home, writing to Mulligan on January 11, 1793:

"Your letter of the 7th was handed me yesterday by Mr. Hamilton. [Alexander?] In vain, my dear child, should I undertake to explain to you the sensation which the letter created in my heart. Neither have I the courage to attempt to arrest the tears you have so great reason to shed. For a heart so feeling as yours this was the severest of trials and nothing but time can bring consolation under circumstances so afflicting ... Despite moral philosophy I weep with you and glory in the human weakness of mingling my tears with those of a friend I so tenderly love. My dear Charles ought, ere this, to have received my answer to the touching letter he wrote.

"I repeat my entreaties, to hasten your journey to Philadelphia as soon as your strength permits. My heart and my arms are open to receive you. In the midst of the attention and fêtes which they have the goodness to give me, I enjoy not a moment's tranquility until I hold you in my arms. Grant me this favor without delay, but divide your journey, that you may not be fatigued at the expense of your health."

Some historians try to interpret letters and messages like these by claiming people were different then, or by characterizing them as signs of "brotherly love" or of the two parties being "like father and son." Other historians recognize that some things don't change and the idea of a sixty-two-year-old bachelor welcoming a

distraught nineteen-year-old and his boyfriend into his home—and his open arms and heart—meant then what it means now.

Adams lived with Mulligan and Steuben for a little while, but Mulligan stayed on for many years, serving as Steuben's secretary until the baron's death. As Joseph Alfred Scoville wrote in *The Old Merchants of New York City*. Mulligan "served him with a fidelity and love which won him the friendship and confidence of his protector. Steuben concentrated all the tenderness of his heart on his friends, as he had no family relations and there are few examples to be found in which the feeling of kindness and good fellowship were so fully reciprocated as between Steuben and his friend."

When Steuben died, he left the bulk of his estate to his adopted sons. To Mulligan he bequeathed his library, maps and \$2,500, a large sum, especially considering the baron was not a wealthy man.

**FURTHER READING: SHILTS, CONDUCT UNBECOMING**

## peter thiel — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1967 in Germany**

PHOTO BY GAGE SKIDMORE



Peter Thiel was born into a German family in Frankfurt, which was then in "West Germany." They first came to the US when he was one year old. His father, Klaus Friedrich Thiel (1938–2022), was a chemical engineer employed by various mining companies in South Africa and South West Africa (now Namibia)—both then under apartheid.

As they moved from place to place, Thiel attended seven elementary schools, including one in Swakopmund that left its mark on young Peter. Strict discipline and corporal punishment seemingly had

the opposite of the intended effect, producing a man who claims to rebel against the rules and follow a libertarian philosophy. He is now a billionaire who uses his fortune to support conservative causes, right-wing politicians and the use of "big data analysis" for military and intelligence (spying) operations. Maybe the ruler on the wrist had its intended effect after all.

In 1977, the Thiels settled in Foster City, California, a newly-created upper-class enclave on the San Francisco Bay, which later found itself on the fringes of "Silicon Valley."

Young Thiel traveled into the world of fantasy and science fiction, *Dungeons & Dragons*, Robert Heinlein and J.R.R. Tolkien. He read *The Lord of the Rings* many times and has named his business ventures after things and places created by Tolkien: Palantir, Valar, Mithril, Lembas, Arda and Rivendell. He seems to have missed most of the broader messages found in Tolkien such as to show kindness and empathy for the ordinary, humble people who struggle against (and ultimately overcome) the threat of oppressive, intrusive and destructive regimes. Thiel does not live the life of a Hobbit, an Elf or an Ent.

His philosophy has been perhaps affected more by Ayn Rand's Objectivism, which he encountered during his high school years. Rand was a product of her times who found the notion of lesbians to be "disgusting" but she was a staunch defender of the individual's right to be left undisturbed by government regulation of sex. This aspect of her philosophy has held some attraction to LGBTQIA+ readers.

In 1998, with Max Levchin and Luke Nosek, Thiel founded the company that later became Paypal, which innovated the electronic wallet. Their work came to the attention of Elon Musk, who was one of the founders of X.COM, which had set itself up as an online bank. Musk recognized the potential of payments processing, the only operation other than government that can "tax" virtually every economic transaction. Musk changed X's focus, terminating its non-payments banking functions. Thiel eventually replaced Musk as CEO of X as it went public as Paypal in 2002. eBay then acquired the company for \$1.5 billion of eBay stock, launching the greater careers of Thiel and Musk.

Thiel is openly gay and married Matt Danzeisen (b. ca. 1966) in 2017, but in 2019 he started a relationship with Instagram model Jeff Thomas (ca. 1987–2023). After Thiel cut Thomas off in early 2023, Thomas was seen jumping from the balcony of his Miami apartment to his death.

Thiel has posited, "Is there something about the gay experience, being gay ... that pushes us even more than other people toward competition?" Competition, to Thiel, is not necessarily a good thing, as it diminishes the individual's chances for success:

"Is this a reason that we (gay people) ended up sometimes underperforming because we are insecure about things, we want to get validated by winning various competitions?"

The path of least resistance seems to be the road that Thiel prefers to follow. If wealth is the gauge of success, Peter Thiel is supremely successful.

# JEREMY THORPE — POLITICIAN

Born 1929 in UK; Died in 2014

IMAGE BY TRINITY MIRROR



Jeremy Thorpe was leader of the Liberal Party in UK from 1967–1976 and was touted to eventually become Prime Minister. As a Member of Parliament since 1959, he was regarded as “one of the more dashing” politicians as he hobnobbed with royalty. Thorpe was briefly considered as best man at the 1960 wedding of Antony Armstrong-Jones to Princess Margaret (the Queen’s sister) but was rejected when security checks indicated that he might have homosexual tendencies.

At that time same-sex acts were still illegal in UK. The security agency MI5, which routinely keeps records on all MPs, added this information to Thorpe’s file.

In late 1961 a young acquaintance named Norman Scott (b. 1940) showed up at Thorpe’s office in Parliament, following up on Thorpe’s offer to help him if ever needed. Thorpe took him to his mother’s home where they began a sexual relationship. In a bout of depression in December 1962, Scott told a friend of his plans to kill Thorpe and commit suicide. The threat was reported to Scotland Yard, who took no action other than to notify MI5 to add the information to Thorpe’s file.

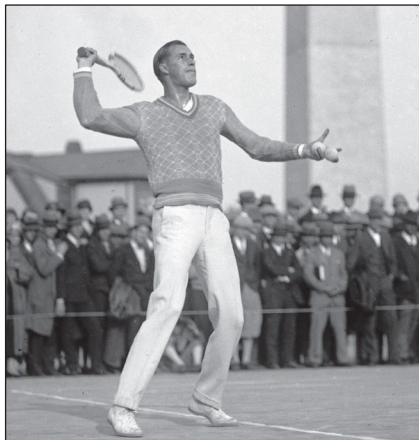
Scott was a loose cannon that presented a constant threat to Thorpe’s career and potential ruin of the party’s chances. By 1975, with a prospective change of government, action was finally undertaken in the form of a bungled attempt on Scott’s life. A gunman, Andrew Newton, was allegedly hired by party operative Peter Bessell to rub Scott out. Rather than shooting Scott “like a sick dog,” the gunman killed Scott’s dog instead.

In 1979 Thorpe was tried on charges of conspiracy and incitement to murder. The trial was a disaster of confusing testimony from reluctant prosecution witnesses. Thorpe was acquitted of the charges, but his star-crossed political career was over.

The “Thorpe Affair” formed the basis of a 2016 book, *A Very English Scandal*. In 2018, Stephen Frears directed Hugh Grant as Thorpe and Ben WHISHAW as Scott in a TV mini-series based on the book.

## BILL TILDEN — athlete

**Born 1893 in US; Died in 1953**



“Big” Bill Tilden was a world tennis champion and wildly popular sportsman. He won three Olympic medals. Wimbledon Men’s Singles (1920, 1921, 1930). Wimbledon Doubles (1927), US Singles (1920, 1925, 1929), US Doubles (1918, 1921, 1923, 1927), US Clay Court Singles (1918, 1922, 1927) and the US Davis Cup team (1920–1930). Some sports writers consider him the greatest American athlete of all time.

Tilden spent much of his adult life cultivating a succession of ballboys and youthful tennis protégés, of whom Vinnie Richards (1903–1959) was the most noted. Tilden had no sexual relationships with women at all and apparently very few sexual encounters with members of his own sex until he was well into his forties and becoming increasingly effeminate in his public persona.

Tilden was arrested on November 23, 1946, on Sunset Boulevard when he was caught with his hand in a teenage boy’s pants (the boy was a prostitute whose services Tilden had solicited). Tilden could have been charged with a felony (“lewd and lascivious behavior with a minor”) but was charged only with a misdemeanor (“contributing to the delinquency of a minor”). He was sentenced to a year in prison and served seven and a half months.

He was arrested again on January 28, 1949, after picking up a sixteen-year-old hitchhiker and making advances. The new charge too could have been prosecuted as a felony, but the judge sentenced Tilden to a year for his probation violation and let the punishment for the new charge run concurrently. He served ten months.

Tilden spent the rest of his life living down his “disgrace.” He disappeared from public view and died in obscurity.

**FURTHER READING: WALLACE ET AL, THE SECRET SEX LIVES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE**

## BILLY TIPTON — musician

**Born 1914 in US; Died in 1989**

Identified as female at birth, Dorothy Lucille Tipton began to pass as a man at age 21, as he began his professional career as a



bandleader, pianist, horn player and singer. He adopted his father's nickname and went by Billy Lee Tipton.

Still identified as female by his friends, Tipton lived with a female dancer named Non Earl Harrell (1900–1967) and his fellow musicians figured they were lesbians. By 1940 Tipton was living as a man off stage as well as on and he spent the rest of his life that way, disguising his female features. When he and Harrell broke up in 1942, Tipton began a relationship with a singer named June. In 1946 he began seven years with an 18-year-old named Betty Cox. Despite an active sexual life with Tipton, albeit always in the dark, Cox never realized he was not anatomically male. All told, Tipton had at least five wives and adopted three sons.

During the 1930s and '40s, Tipton toured the US with bands including Louvenie's Western Swingbillies and Scott Cameron's band. With George Meyer's band he performed with The Ink Spots, the Delta Rhythm Boys and Billie Eckstine. In 1951 he formed The Billy Tip Tipton Trio.

In 1958, fame beckoned with an offer from a Reno casino for an extended run, opening for LIBERACE. Billy declined the gig and left the limelight to become a booking agent in Spokane. Diane Wood Middlebrook, in her ground-breaking biography of Tipton, *Suits Me*, speculates that he shunned wider attention for fear that his secret would be revealed. Tipton was exposed only after he died and paramedics discovered his female anatomy.

## RONALD wayne — BUSINESSPERSON

**Born 1934 in US**



PHOTO BY KEITH STERN

Ronald G. Wayne is an inventor, writer, engineer and businessman. He holds 12 US Patents for technical innovations such as a “Synchronized Stroboscopic Display Device,” and is the author of two books. Along with Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, Wayne was a founder of Apple Computer Company.

Wayne grew up during the privations of the Great Depression and World War II, which had a profound effect on his appreciation of money in all its forms. He developed a lifelong passion for collecting US stamps and coins and has been a prominent dealer of rare items since the 1960s. His book, *Insolence of Office* focuses on the nature of money and the dangers of currencies that are no longer

based on fixed amounts of precious metals. Wayne forecasts worldwide economic disaster as a result of the use of “fiat money” which has no inherent value.

At New York’s School of the Industrial Arts, Wayne studied product design and draftsmanship. While employed as a draftsman, illustrator and technical writer, Wayne taught himself to design and build electronic circuitry. He had always been fascinated by how things really work and recalls the day his mother brought home an early television set in 1948. After watching the show that was on the screen, he turned the set around to peer into the inner workings of tubes and wires.

When he turned 18, Wayne presented himself to his local draft board and made a point of responding to the psychological tests forthrightly. The board quickly determined he was unfit for military service, probably due to a recruiter’s suspicions about his sexual orientation. This left him free to participate as a civilian in the post-war boom, often employed by electronics companies that were supplying the US military with the latest technology.

A visit to Las Vegas when he was 22 marked the beginning of his fascination with coin-operated slot machines. He designed and marketed forerunners of modern video slots, including an electro-mechanical craps machine.

In 1973, Wayne went to work for Atari, Inc., the legendary innovators of coin-operated video games such as *Pong* and *Breakout*. As their chief draftsman, Wayne implemented Atari’s first proper documentation system and parts catalog.

It was at Atari that he met a young freelance engineer named Steven Jobs. Despite a 20-year age difference, the two men became friends. Jobs was charmed by the literate, philosophical Wayne, who was firmly rooted in reality, which was something Jobs insistently questioned. Jobs was already thinking of starting his own business and was interested in the experience and organizational skills Wayne had demonstrated at Atari and in his slot machine ventures.

Jobs had somehow figured out that Wayne was gay and this only intrigued him further. As Walter Isaacson reports in his biography, *Steve Jobs*, Jobs asked Wayne, “When you see a beautiful woman, what do you feel?” Wayne replied:

“It’s like when you look at a beautiful horse. You can appreciate it, but you don’t want to sleep with it. You appreciate beauty for what it is.”

Jobs introduced Wayne to his friend and fellow engineer, Steve Wozniak. In early 1976, Jobs and Wozniak embarked on the design and marketing of a basic personal computer, but they could not agree on the terms under which Wozniak would supply his

designs to the proposed venture. Jobs asked Wayne to step in as a facilitator and the three of them met in Wayne's Mountain View apartment to iron out an agreement. The result was a partnership dated April 1, 1976, forming Apple Computer Company with three founders: Jobs and Wozniak holding 45% each and Wayne with a 10% stake.

Wayne went on to create the first logo for Apple, an ornate 19<sup>th</sup> century woodcut-style image featuring Isaac Newton and a tree. He also drew the schematics and devised the warranty form and operation manual for the first Apple computer model.

The original agreement for Apple Computer Company represented "a potential of both risk and profit" to the three founders and concern about that risk motivated Wayne to rescind his ownership stake after less than two weeks, for the princely sum of \$800. A 10% share of Apple, Inc. today might be worth more than \$50 billion but Wayne has no regrets about passing up this opportunity to be a tycoon. As he says in his fascinating autobiography, *Adventures of an Apple Founder*:

"I consider it pointless to waste my tomorrows in meaningless hand wringing over 'what might have been.'"

From the beginning, Apple Computer has been in the forefront of supporting LGBT+ rights in the workplace. When Steve Jobs resigned in 2011, he chose a gay man, Tim Cook, to succeed him.

## we'wha — two-spirit

**Born 1849 in US; Died in 1896**



Many American Indian tribes included special people once called *berdache*, now known as "two-spirit" or *Iha-mana*, who occupy gender roles of both men and women. These people were important to the religious and social life of the tribes. We'wha (or Weiwha) was made famous when she traveled to Washington in 1886, creating a sensation. US officials had asked the tribe to send them "their best woman." They naturally chose to send We'wha, their finest drag queen. White people were fasci-

nated by We'wha, who dressed and acted as a woman, but was otherwise clearly a man. Washington society went into a strange

state of denial, referring to We'wha as an Indian princess and refusing to believe she was not a biological woman.

We'wha was happily married to a male Zuni tribesman. Other famous “two-spirit” people include Kauxuma Nupika, a nineteenth-century Kutenai Indian and Co Pak, a twentieth-century Klamath Indian, both born females living in male roles.

**FURTHER READING: ROSCOE, THE ZUNI MANWOMAN**

## xicomecoatl — politician

**Born ca. 1490 in Mexico**



PORTRAIT BY JUAN GONZÁLEZ & MIGUEL GONZÁLEZ (1698)

Xicomecoatl was ruler of the city of Cempoala, the capital of the Totonac empire. In 1519 he submitted to the conquistador Hernán Cortés, becoming the first ally of the Spaniards as they conquered the Aztec Empire. Cortés promised to protect Xicomecoatl's people from the ravages of their dreaded enemy, Montezuma.

Xicomecoatl was openly gay and the Spanish found many others in Cempoala who enjoyed same-sex relationships. According to the Mexican historian José Antonio Crespo, Xicomecoatl had 50 men around the age of 20 in his court, who served his sexual pleasure. Díaz del Castillo wrote about temple priests:

“... they had men dressed up like women, who were going to gain in that damned job ... and according to what we were told and got to know, those priests were sons of sires, and did not have women, instead they had the damned job of sodomy ...”

Homosexuality was not tolerated by the Catholic Spaniards, who called it a sin and used it as a justification for persecution.