

# Queers IN HISTORY

*The Comprehensive Encyclopedia  
of Historical Gays, Lesbians,  
Bisexuals, and Transgenders*

keith stern



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# Billie Joe armSTRONG

MUSICIAN

Born 1972 in US



MUG SHOT FOLLOWING DRUNK DRIVING ARREST

Billie Joe Armstrong is the frontman for Green Day, one of the most popular bands in the US. Their 1994 album *Dookie* won the Grammy for Best Alternative Album. They've sold over 50 million records worldwide. Billie Joe plays guitar, sings, and writes

most of the material for the group. Many of their songs refer to the tensions of adolescent sexuality, including same-sex feelings. For instance, "Coming Clean" might well be re-titled "Coming Out," with lines like "Skeletons come to life in my closet."

Billie Joe has been quite candid about his bisexuality, going so far as to provide an interview to *The Advocate*, in which he said: "I think I've always been bisexual. I mean, it's something that I've always been interested in. I think everybody kind of fantasizes about the same sex. I think people are born bisexual, and it's just that our parents and society kind of veer us off into this feeling of 'Oh, I can't.' They say it's taboo. It's engrained in our heads that it's bad, when it's not bad at all. It's a very beautiful thing."

After the band hit the big time and Armstrong became a father, he tended to downplay that aspect of his life, telling *BAM* magazine, "I don't want to go around waving a gay flag or anything."

FURTHER READING: [WIKIPEDIA](#)

# 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, particularly their own servants. In the words of early biographer John Aubrey, as Lord

Chancellor, Bacon “always gave judgment *secundum aequum et bonum*” (according to the just and the good looking). Aubrey also 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’ mother to Anthony complained about Francis’ 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 serving-man 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*

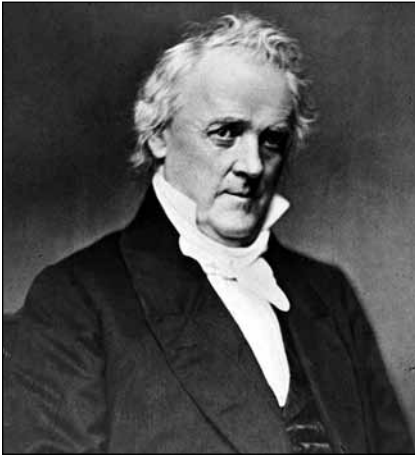


# James BUCHANAN

POLITICIAN

*Born 1791 in US*

*Died in 1868*



James Buchanan took the oath of office of President of the United States in March 1857. He was the first—and so far only—lifelong bachelor to become President. It's not that he never considered marriage, though: "I feel that it is not good for a man to be alone," he once wrote, "and should not be astonished to find myself married to some old maid who does not expect from me any romantic affection."

Rumors about his sexual orientation began circulating in the 1830s, and his relationship with William R. KING remains the subject of speculation to this day. King served as an Alabama senator (1819–1844 and 1848–1853) and as Vice President of the United States under President Franklin Pierce (1853).

King and Buchanan were roommates for many years, and their correspondence reveals an intimate and passionate relationship. King's

official US Senate biography notes, "In the closeness of their relationship in the years after 1834, King and Buchanan—both lifelong bachelors—became known as 'Siamese Twins.'"

Aaron Brown, a leading Democrat, called King "Aunt Fancy" and "Buchanan's better half." Andrew Jackson referred to King as "Miss Nancy."

Buchanan's grave was vandalized in 1994, and unkind words about his sexuality were spray-painted on his tombstone.

FURTHER READING: ALYSON PUBLICATIONS,  
ALYSON ALMANAC

# JOAN CRAWFORD

ACTRESS

Born 1905 in US

Died in 1977



In 1924, Broadway producer J.J. Shubert noticed a young dancer named Lucille LeSueur in a Chicago chorus line. By 1928, after studio head Louis Mayer insisted on a name change to Joan Crawford, she was the

biggest female star of silent pictures. Crawford deftly made the transition to talkies and starred in a string of hits for MGM in the 1930s and '40s, often playing tough, somewhat macho, independent women. Masculine padded shoulders, created for her by the designers ADRIAN and Schiaparelli, became fashion de rigueur.

Crawford's screen presence and characterizations attracted a moviegoing audience that included a significant number of lesbians and gay men. In her scathing biography, *Mommie Dearest*, Crawford's daughter Christina recalled how flocks of women would camp outside the mansion gates, waiting for a glimpse of their idol "like birds waiting for a few crumbs of bread." Noting that the fans seemed to be "mostly secretaries by profession" and "all were single," Christina wrote, "I knew about my mother's lesbian proclivities." Joan didn't hesitate to exploit her devoted female admirers, employing them for free household work and sexual companionship.

Though Crawford was married four times (each time for about four years) and carried on passionate affairs with men (including Clark GABLE), she enjoyed sex with women, especially women she employed or could otherwise control and dominate. One exception to the "Joan's way or no way" rule was Dorothy ARZNER, the strong-willed director who was Crawford's lover for a time.

Actress/comedienne Martha RAYE claimed that she and Crawford had a love affair while they were both on tour for the USO, entertaining American troops during World War II. Crawford apparently also had a one-night tryst

with Marilyn Monroe. According to a recording of Monroe made by her psychiatrist in 1956, “We went to Joan’s bedroom... Crawford had a gigantic orgasm and shrieked like a maniac. Next time I saw Crawford, she wanted another round. I told her straight-out I didn’t much enjoy doing it with a woman. After I turned her down, she became spiteful.” Crawford retaliated by publicly criticizing Marilyn’s appearance as a presenter at the Academy Awards, calling her vulgar and “a disgrace to Hollywood.”

FURTHER READING: MADSEN, STANWYCK

## JODIE foster

ACTRESS

Born 1962 in US

Jodie Foster began her acting career at age three, appearing in several Disney TV productions. By the time she achieved worldwide fame, at age thirteen in *Taxi Driver*, she had already made eight features, including *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore* and *One Little Indian*. She won a Best Actress Oscar for *The Accused* in 1988 and another for *Silence of the Lambs* in 1991. She has also won multiple Golden Globes, BAFTAs, and SAG Awards.

For many years, Foster was determined to protect the privacy of her personal life, despite persistent rumors going back to her college days. As a condition for journalists who wanted to obtain an interview, Foster would reportedly insist that no questions be asked about her sexual orientation.

Foster was critical of her brother Buddy, not only for writing about his suspicion that Jodie was gay or

bisexual, but also for revealing that their mother had a long-term domestic partnership with another woman. “I grew up with two gay parents,” he wrote in his autobiography *Foster Child*. “I had my Aunt Jo and my mother.”

Speculation about Jodie Foster ended in December 2007 when she publicly acknowledged her “longtime friend” and roommate for fourteen years, film producer Cydney Bernard, as “my beautiful Cydney, who sticks with me through the rotten and the bliss.” Foster has done nothing to discourage the press and public from recognizing this as her coming out.

Foster and Bernard are raising two young sons, Charles and Kit, both of whom were the products of artificial insemination. Speculation is that their father was producer Randy Stone, one of the founders of the Trevor Project, which offers counseling to gay and questioning youth. Stone died in February 2007.



# emile griffith

BOXER

*Born 1938 in Virgin Islands*

In 1961 Emile Griffith knocked out Benny “The Kid” Paret to win his first welterweight title. After making one successful defense, Griffith lost the title back to Paret by a decision in a rematch. On March 24, 1962, they met for the third time in a title match. As they were weighing in before the fight, Paret made an unkind reference to what was an open secret in the boxing world. “Maricón,” he taunted, using the Spanish word for faggot. The fight almost began right there in the locker room. In the ring, they battled until round 12, when Griffith unleashed a ferocious attack, backing Paret into a corner. Paret started to go down, but caught the top rope with his arm. Griffith loosed an onslaught of blows before the referee called the fight. Paret was taken from the ring on a stretcher. Ten days later, he died of his injuries at the age of twenty-five.

In a 2005 *Sports Illustrated* interview, Griffith commented, “I will dance with anybody. I’ve chased men and women. I like men and women both. But I don’t like that word: homosexual, gay, or faggot. I don’t know what I am. I love men and women the same, but if you ask me which is better... I like women.”

In his professional career, Griffith fought ten world champions and boxed 339 title-fight rounds, more than any other boxer in history. He is

enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

# MITCH RYDER

MUSICIAN

*Born 1945 in US*



PHOTO BY THKRAFT

Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels were the bad boys of 1960s rock. Their 1966 smash “Devil with a Blue Dress On” is a classic in the proto-punk genre. In 1967 “Sock it to Me—Baby!” spawned a nationwide catchphrase.

Some of Ryder’s early songs have gay overtones, for instance “Sally Go Round the Roses,” which has the singer declare: “Here it is almost 1968 and you still ain’t straight.” Ryder yells to Sally, “the saddest thing in the whole wide world, see your baby with another girl.” Ryder then adds to the confusion, singing “saddest thing in the whole wide world, love a guy who loves another girl.”

In 1978 Ryder came out and released the overtly gay solo album *How I Spent My Vacation*.

FURTHER READING: DYNES, *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HOMOSEXUALITY*

# DEBORAH sampson

*Born 1760 in US*

*Died in 1827*



SCULPTOR, LU STUBBS, SHARON PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
MASSACHUSETTS

Deborah Sampson wore male drag to smuggle herself into the Continental Army. Under the name of Robert Shirliff, she served throughout the War of Independence without being exposed. At one point she was wounded in the head and thigh. She allowed an army doctor to treat the head wound but prevented him from treating her thigh, which she disinfected herself with rum and then extracted the bullet with a penknife. After the war ended, she was honorably discharged from the army.

Sampson had several affairs with women while in the public guise of a man. She traveled to the Ohio frontier (still as soldier Shirliff) where

she purchased the freedom of a young white girl held captive by Indians, taking the girl as her wife.

When Sampson's true gender was discovered, she was denied her veteran's pension. Paul Revere, in recognition of Sampson's patriotic contributions, provided some financial support.

FURTHER READING: SHILTS, *CONDUCT UNBECOMING*