

RAINBOW REVOLUTIONARIES

50 LGBTQ+ PEOPLE
WHO MADE HISTORY

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FOR ELEANOR AND MOLLIE, ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART —S. PRAGER

FOR EDNA, YOU FOLLOWED YOUR HEART —S. PAPWORTH

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Rainbow Revolutionaries: 50 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History

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ISBN 978-0-06-294775-8

The artist used Adobe Photoshop along with textures made from watercolors, fine liners, pencils, and acrylics to create the digital illustrations for this book.

Book design by Alison Klapthor

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First Edition



A TIMELINE OF LGBTQ+ HISTORY

Note: Pre-1492 to the 20th century: The precolonial world has a wealth of LGBTQ+ diversity. What is considered “normal” for genders and sexualities varies greatly from culture to culture across all inhabited continents before European standards are imposed.

BC era: Several cave paintings and other ancient representations have been found from this time period showing LGBTQ+ people. Sappho writes about female-female love, and Catullus and others write about male-male love.

27 BC – AD 476: Roman Empire. Bisexuality is common, and multiple Roman emperors marry men publicly.

476–1492: Middle Ages. LGBTQ+ people are used as scapegoats for society’s problems and as a result are often executed.

1300–1600: Renaissance. Many LGBTQ+ artists contribute to this artistic time period in Europe, including Leonardo da Vinci.

1428–1521: Aztec Empire. The Aztecs punish same-sex acts by death.

1478–1834: Spanish Inquisition. Over 1,600 people are investigated for homosexuality; many are punished for it, including being put to death.

1740: China criminalizes homosexuality for the first time in the country’s history.

1791: France decriminalizes homosexuality, the first European country to do so. This also applies to all French-controlled territories overseas.

1815–1914: Height of British Empire. The UK conquers much of the world and brings its anti-LGBTQ+ laws with it. Of the countries where anti-LGBTQ+ laws are still on the books, more than half retain those laws from when they were British colonies.

1869: The word “homosexuality” is first publicly printed in Germany.

1871: Britain’s Criminal Tribes Act goes into effect in India. One of the groups it criminalizes are the hijra, a South Asian gender that has existed since ancient times. Today the hijra have legal recognition in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

1873: Japan criminalizes homosexuality for the first time in the country’s history.

1897: Magnus Hirschfeld founds the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Germany, considered the world’s first LGBTQ+ rights advocacy group.

1916: Charles Webster Leadbeater founds the Liberal Catholic Church in Australia, considered the first religious group to minister openly to gay men and lesbians.

1918–1937: Harlem Renaissance. A time of incredible African American contributions to the arts. It includes many LGBTQ+ artists, such as Langston Hughes.

1924: The Society for Human Rights is founded in Chicago, the first LGBTQ+ rights organization in the Americas. While this organization only lasted a few months, it paved the way for longer-lasting groups to be founded in the 1950s.

1933–1945: Nazis control Germany. It is estimated that over fifty thousand men are sent to concentration camps for loving men.

1965: A small group of people pickets Independence Hall in Philadelphia, considered to be one of the first public demonstrations for LGBTQ+ rights.

1967: The group Nuestro Mundo is founded in Argentina, considered the first LGBTQ+ rights group in Latin America.

1969: The Stonewall Rebellion happens in New York City, a huge riot that sparks the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement. Canada decriminalizes homosexuality.

1970: The first Pride is organized in New York City as a celebration of the anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

1972: Sweden becomes the first country in the world to allow people to legally change their sex.

1981: HIV/AIDS epidemic begins. Nearly half a million people die of complications due to HIV/AIDS by the year 2000. Today, people living with HIV/AIDS can lead full lives.

1996: South Africa's new constitution says that no one can discriminate against someone for being LGBTQ+, the first national constitution in the world to do so.

2001: The Netherlands legalizes marriage equality, the first country in the world to do so.

2003: Alex McFarlane (an intersex person) receives an Australian passport and birth certificate with the gender marker "X" instead of "M" or "F."

2018: The Supreme Court of India strikes down a colonial-era anti-homosexuality law.

GLOSSARY



The terms used in the LGBTQ+ community are as diverse as its people. The definitions provided here are not definitive. Each term means something personal to each individual and may not be the same as what is listed below. Language is always changing, just like us!

Activist: A person who works for change. Bayard Rustin, Simon Nkoli, and Sylvia Rivera are some examples of activists in this book.

Agender: Not identifying as any gender.

AIDS (see *HIV*)

Androgynous: Appearing not entirely male and not entirely female but somewhere in between or completely outside of those two options.

Asexual (ace): Not having any or having very low desire for sex or sexual partners.

Assigned at birth: When a doctor sees a vagina on a baby and says, “It’s a girl,” or sees a penis and says, “It’s a boy.” Sometimes a baby doesn’t have what is clearly a penis or vagina and the doctor will make an assignment anyway. The doctor is always just making a guess and doesn’t know the gender identity of the baby.

Bisexual (bi): Attracted to members of the same gender and also to people of other genders. The attraction is not necessarily split evenly between people of male and female genders and does not have to be restricted to people of only male and female genders.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity matches up with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Example: when the doctor says, “It’s a boy!” and then the child grows up to feel like a man inside.

Coming out: When someone tells people that they are LGBTQ+.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of certain people just because of who they are.

Drag: Dressing as a different sex or gender than you identify as for a performance.

Gay: Someone who is exclusively attracted to people of the same sex or gender.

Gender/Gender identity: How someone identifies internally (examples: man, woman, gender-queer, etc.). Different from “sex,” which is biological (examples: male, female, intersex, etc.) and refers to physical characteristics. People can identify with no gender (agender), two genders (bigender), changing between genders (genderfluid), or many other possibilities. Many cultures and countries have their own sets of genders different from those just listed, like the muxe of Mexico, kathoey of Thailand, and bakla of the Philippines.

Gender affirmation surgery: Any surgery that helps a trans person feel more comfortable in their body. Surgeries can be one part of a physical transition, but whether or not someone chooses to have any gender affirmation surgeries does not make them more or less of the gender they identify as.

Heterosexuality: Being straight.

Homophobia (biphobia, transphobia): Disliking gay people (or bi people or trans people) just because they are gay (or bi or trans). Not cool!

Homosexuality: Being gay.

HIV (HIV/AIDS): HIV is the virus that leads to the AIDS disease. Someone can have HIV without having AIDS. HIV/AIDS appeared in the 1980s and took the lives of many LGBTQ+ people, though you don't have to be LGBTQ+ to have it. Today there are treatments for HIV that allow people living with it to lead a full life.

In the closet: Not having come out yet (see *Coming out*).

Integrated: (see *Segregation*)

Intersex: Someone whose combination of physical characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, etc.) isn't exclusively male or female. For example, Lili Elbe was born with both testes and ovaries, so she was intersex.

Lesbian: A woman or nonbinary person attracted to women or nonbinary people.

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning. In this book, we use this shortened abbreviation to refer to all LGBTQ+ people including asexual and intersex people.

Marriage equality: When everyone can marry the person they love, including a man marrying a man or a woman marrying a woman. Some places that don't allow full marriage equality do have "civil unions" and/or "domestic partnerships," which have some but not all of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of marriage (and, of course, not the name).

Nonbinary: An umbrella term for people who do not identify as either male or female; a similar term is "genderqueer." Also a gender identity in itself.

Nonviolence/Nonviolent: Using protests that don't include violence to get what you want. Bayard Rustin is an example of someone who used nonviolence.

Out: Having shared that you are LGBTQ+ with people in your life or even with the public. "To out someone" means to do this without the person's permission (never do this!).

Pansexual: Attracted to people regardless of gender.

Polyamorous: When someone openly has multiple partners at the same time.

Present/Presentation: When someone presents as a certain gender, it means they are letting people know that gender by their appearance, words, or actions.

Pride: Pride is a special holiday for the LGBTQ+ community around the world. It is traditionally celebrated in June because the Stonewall Rebellion happened in June.

Queer: This word started off as a hateful slur against LGBTQ+ people, but was reclaimed starting in the 1990s as a proud identity label. It is sometimes used as an umbrella term referring to all LGBTQ+ people at once and it is sometimes used individually as a way to identify as not straight and/or not cisgender. It means a lot of different things to different people, and some people still associate it with being anti-LGBTQ+.

Segregation: Separating people based on race. Josephine Baker, Bayard Rustin, and Simon Nkoli are some of the LGBTQ+ people in this book who worked for integration, the opposite of this form of discrimination.

Sex: Sex is different from “gender.” Sex means male, female, or intersex, usually referring to how someone was assigned at birth. Gender is how someone feels and knows they are inside, even if that is not the same as their sex.

Straight: Someone who is exclusively attracted to people of a different sex or gender.

They/Them: Gender-neutral version of singular pronouns like “he,” “him,” “she,” “her.” When we use they/them pronouns for a person in this book, it is because it is the closest match we have in our modern language, not because they necessarily used those pronouns in their time.

Transgender (trans): A person whose gender identity does not match up with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Example: when the doctor says, “It’s a boy!” and then the child grows up to feel like a woman inside. An umbrella term encompassing many identities, including transsexual.

Transition: When someone changes physically and/or socially from one gender to another.

Two-Spirit: Indigenous peoples from Native Nations recognize many different genders. “Two-spirit” is a modern, intertribal umbrella term, created in the 1990s by Native people, to bridge Indigenous and western ideas of gender and sexuality. If We’wha was alive today, her identity as “łamana,” a Nation-specific term, would be included under this new, two-spirit umbrella.

PRIDE FLAGS



Pride flags have become a universal symbol of LGBTQ+ identity and community . . . and they keep evolving!

Original Rainbow (1978)



Modern Rainbow (1979)



Philadelphia (2017)



Progress (2018)



IDENTITY FLAGS



While the LGBTQ+ community can be united in many ways, it's made up of people of dozens of unique identities. Here are specific flags for a few of them:

Bisexual (1998)



Lesbian (2010)



Intersex (2013)



Transgender (1999)



Pansexual (2010)



Agender (2014)



Asexual (2010)



Genderqueer (2011)



Nonbinary (2014)



LGBTQ+ SYMBOLS

Before the Pride flag was created in 1978, LGBTQ+ people had many other ways to identify each other and show their pride. Here are just a few, many of which are still in use today.



These interlocking male symbols represent pride of men who love men.



These interlocking female symbols represent pride of women who love women.



This is a transgender pride symbol.



Originally used to identify homosexual prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, the pink triangle was reclaimed as a gay pride symbol in the 1970s.



Originally used to identify certain prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, the black triangle was reclaimed as a lesbian pride symbol in the 1970s.



The “biangles” are a bisexual pride symbol, based on the pink triangle.



The labrys (an ancient double-headed ax) has been a lesbian symbol since the 1970s.



This lowercase Greek letter lambda became an LGBTQ+ symbol starting in the 1970s.



This bisexual pride symbol was made as an alternative to the "biangles" that used symbolism from Nazi history.



Oscar Wilde regularly wore a green carnation on his suit to signal homosexuality, popularizing it as a symbol for 1890s men. Other flowering plants with LGBTQ+ associations include violets, lavender, calami, and pansies.



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