

UNAPOLOGETICALLY QUEER

By: Cierra White

Hi Readers! Welcome back to my blog! Since my last post my views and understanding of Queer history has evolved. I would advocate for the inclusion of queer history in Virginia academic and public memory because Queer history is American history. Queer history is an integral part of society as same-sex couples were not always viewed as different, couples didn't have to always hide their relationships, and gender roles used to be fluid in society. All of this is essential to understanding the world we live in and the social institutions that shape our learning. I would respond to criticism regarding queer history in Virginia academic by stating the Queer history matters. Queer history in the forms of movements such as gay liberation, lesbian feminist, queer movement are just as important to being taught in schools as the Civil Rights Movement or the Suffrage movement.



My concept of intersectionality is defined as multiple forms of inequality are interconnected and overlapped so when addressing inequality you must look at all forms of inequality and how they may affect one person versus another person because this is a complex framework to recognize all individuals' experiences. The concept of intersectionality can be seen through Black Respectively during the turn of the century as being black at the time was already dangerous but by adding queerness and being black lead to intense amounts of fear in the Black community.



I have divided specific time periods into subcategories that have factored into my evolution of Queer history. Throughout these time periods my understanding has changed due to readings in the book, "A Queer History of the United States." At first, I just knew about the impact of the Stonewall riots and how that led to the LGBTQ movement. It was interesting to learn about how women had freedoms and rights to choose their own sexual partners because at the time all sexual relations were welcomed as a naturally occurrence. In the beginning of North American societies gender roles were not fixed therefore the majority of people did not follow any gender roles. It wasn't until the emergence of Puritans that strict rules about sex, gender roles, and marriage became fixed in society. I also found the history of romantic friendships between women very interesting because I feel like women's history is often excluded when talking about early LGBTQ history in schools. I think that these networks of friendships that helped women take care of one

another, help with childcare, and provided women with a sense of security are essential to understanding Queer history and Women's history. Also, as a history minor that has studied the Civil War, I find it interesting how it was never mentioned that over four hundred women dressed as men to fight in the Civil War.

Queer History in Colonial and Early America:

In early Colonial America notions of gender and sexuality shaped queer history.

- An individual job was defined by their gender
- During the Jamestown era there were strict laws regarding Sodomy in which individuals were hung
- Gender Roles were not fixed
- Women has sexual equality & power
- Europeans came and enforced their own ideology on tribes



Early 19th Century Queer History:

Industrialization and the westward expansion brought new opportunities and expanded behaviors for Queer people, but also sought to further discriminate against Queer individuals.

- Massive amounts of prostitution took place because Queer individuals could not find jobs as no one would hire them
- Romantic Friendships
- Ideas of white masculinity were tied to ideologies of Manifest Destiny
- Chinese Immigrants faced discrimination & humiliation because they were willing to do domestic work
- Industrialization made it easier for individuals to be unmarried

Turn of the Century Queer History:

The turn of the century was a turning point in Queer History because the LGBTQ community started advocating and fighting for their human rights and freedoms to life as they wanted harassment free.

- Gay male culture started to emerge at an accelerated rate
- During this time the suffrage movement was taking place as women were demanding the right to vote and more political power, they faced backlash as men viewed this as women taking over and becoming dominant/masculine.
- The emergence of Blues music which had a lot of references to same-sex relations and a lot of Blues singers did a lot of cross dressing and breaking of gender norms.
- Black Community tried to conform to white standards in terms of being more conservative in their dressing and gender norms, it was an emphasis to repress queerness in the Black Community.

- Study of sexology emerged and was used to show that gender roles were wrong
- Ideologies emerged that a person's gender identity couldn't be changed but bodily sex could
- Genital conversion surgery emerged in Denmark
- Social Movements such as the Civil Rights Movements empowered LGBTQ community to have militant voices to advocate for their human rights