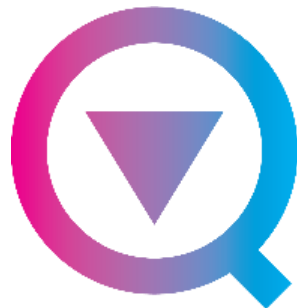


**Queer & Trans
Asian Americans and
Pacific Islanders (AAPIs)
History & Futures
Presented by Julia Elting**



ACRS
**QUEER
VISION**
ACCESS PROGRAM



ASIAN COUNSELING
and REFERRAL SERVICE

Introduction



- Julia Elting
- They/them/theirs pronouns
- Queer Vision Access Program Coordinator at Asian Counseling and Referral Service

Learning Goals

- Introduction to LGBTQ history and policies in the US
 - Introduction to AAPI history in the US
- Introduction to *some* LGBTQ identities within AAPI cultures
- Familiarity with AAPI LGBTQ activists and historical figures

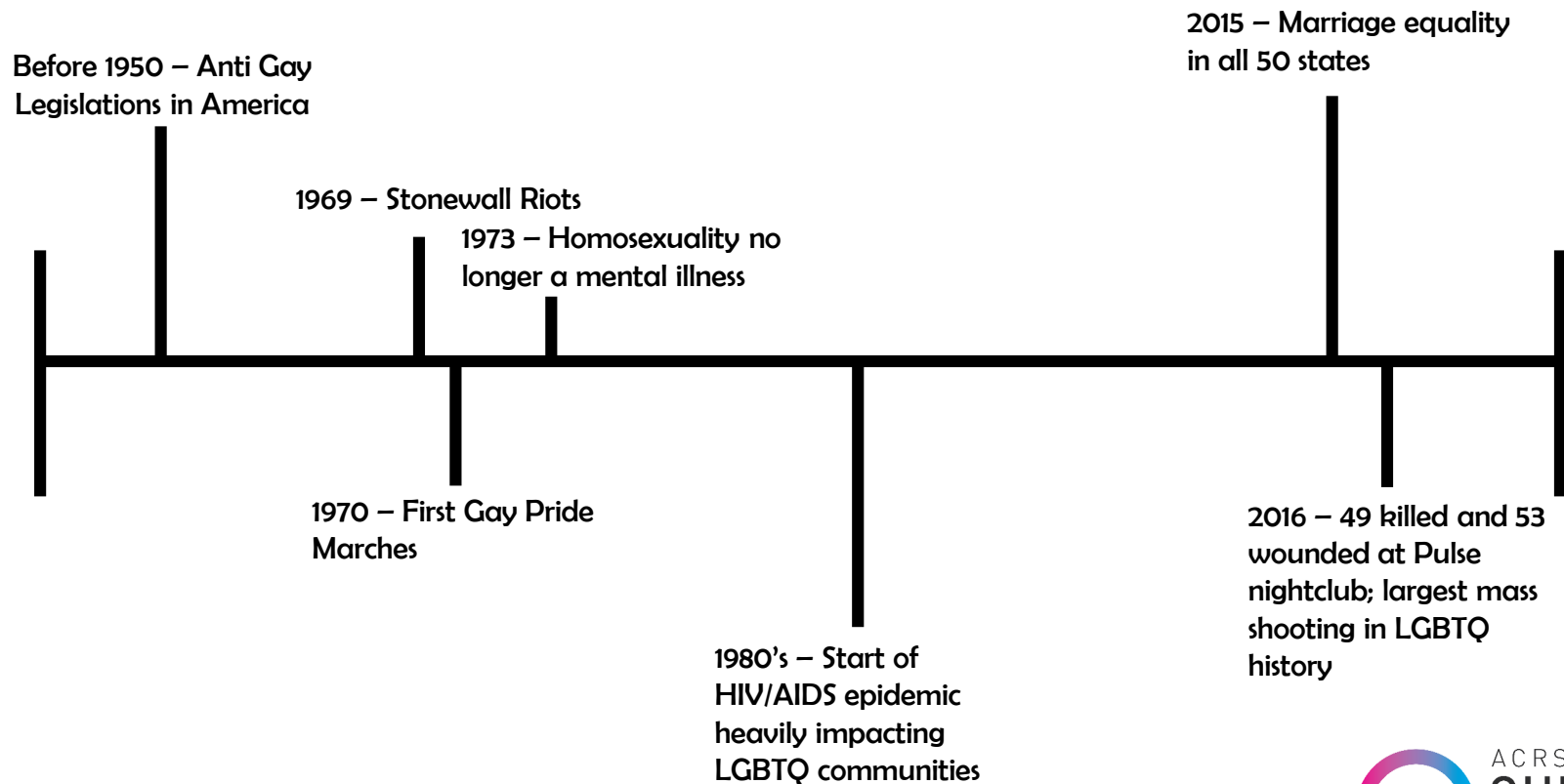


Content Warning

•As the history of the US contains violence against many minority groups, there may be disturbing things that are brought up in parts of this presentation. Please take care of yourself and take breaks as needed.



LGBTQIA+ Timeline



Stonewall Inn – June 29, 1969 – New York



- Stonewall – gay bar owned by the mafia, where LGBT people can socialize and gather in secret
- Police raid of Stonewall
 - Pointed guns at patrons, arrested people, and hurt people in the bar; patrons fought back against police
- There were violent demonstrations and rebellion that went on for 6 days after the police raid
- Stonewall was crucial to the Gay Liberation movement during Civil Rights era
- Key activist leaders: Storme DeLarverie, Marsha P. Johnson, and Sylvia Rivera
- One year anniversary marches across US considered first Pride parades



Stonewall Inn – June 29, 1969 – New York



Chrysanthemum Tran (she/her)



- Vietnamese American trans woman
- Poet, performer, educator
- Teaching artist for Providence Poetry Slam youth team



Anti-gay legislation

- 1950's – Harder for LGBTQ people to get federal jobs
 - 1955 – Government and State departments began firing people who were suspected to be gay
- Up until 1962, sodomy laws prohibited sexual activity between two men
- Difficult for LGBTQ people to socialize without being discriminated against, harassed, and arrested
 - It was illegal for gay people to congregate in one place



Homosexuality in the DSM

- 1973: American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed the diagnosis of “homosexuality” from the second edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)
- This change was influenced by mainstream gay rights movements including the Stonewall Riots
- Prior to 1973: gay, lesbian, and bisexual sexual orientations were classified as various different mental illnesses
- Gay Liberation Front and other activists protested APA’s convention in San Francisco



1980's – The start of HIV/AIDS epidemic



Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID)

Kaposi's Sarcoma



Pneumocystis Carinii
Pneumonia



- Gay and bisexual men were heavily impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic
- AIDS was initially called Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID)
- Due to homophobia, US government was slow to respond to the epidemic
- Distrust between LGBTQ communities and US Government increased
- Survivors of this era are in their 70s now and may still be impacted by those lost

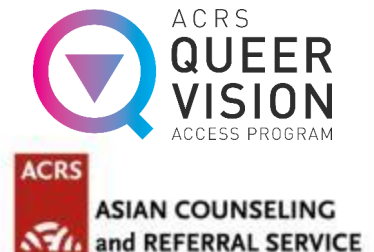


1980's – The start of HIV/AIDS epidemic

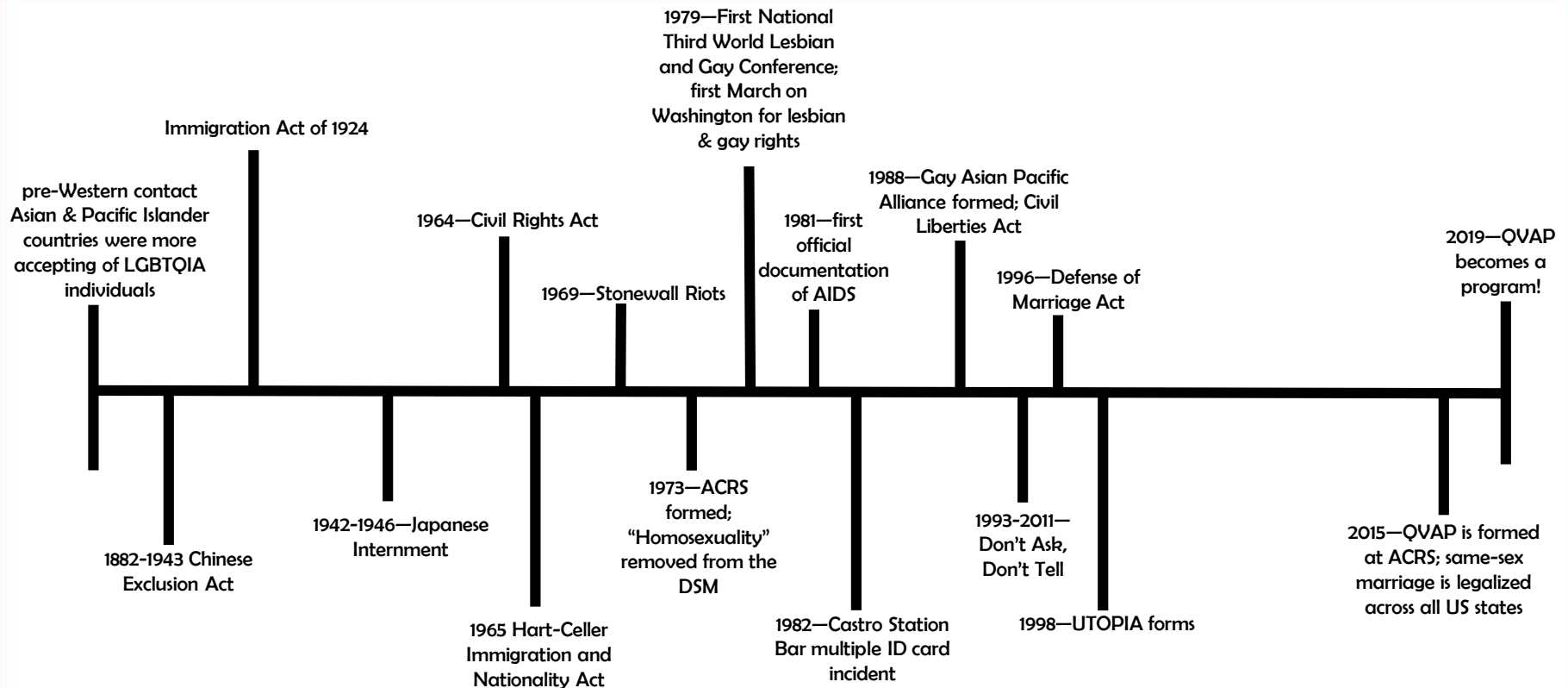


2010 – 2020 – Success and Challenges

- 2013 – All-gender bathroom bill
- 2015 – June 26 – US Supreme court legalizes recognition of same-sex marriage in all 50 states
- 2016 – Pulse Nightclub Shooting
- 2017 – The deadliest year for LGBTQ people with a total of 52 reported anti-LGBTQ homicides
- As of 2018-19, reported 21 trans people of color murdered from period of December – November
- 2019 – Supreme Court hears landmark cases on title VII sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination
- 2020 – COVID-19 impacts LGBTQ people of color at disproportionately high rates



AAPI LGBTQIA+ History in the US

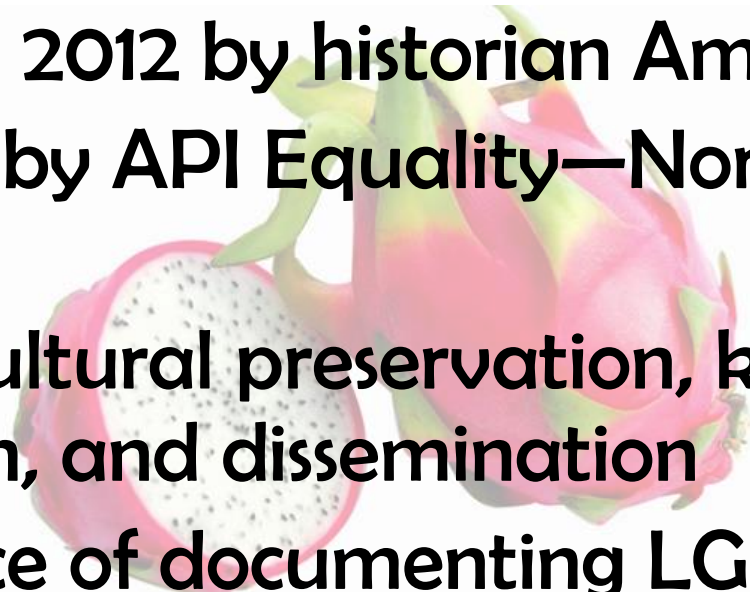


ASIAN COUNSELING
and REFERRAL SERVICE



Dragon Fruit Project

- Formed in 2012 by historian Amy Sueyoshi
- Produced by API Equality—Northern California
- Goals of cultural preservation, knowledge production, and dissemination
- Importance of documenting LGBTQ API history



Amy Sueyoshi (she/her)

- Historian specializing in gender, sexuality, and race
- Founding co-curator of GLBT History Museum in San Francisco
- Activist and leader in the LGBTQIA community in the San Francisco Bay Area and nationally



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Babaylan (Philippines)
- Spiritual guide/priestess role of those who identified as women. Those assigned male at birth were welcomed into this role as well.
- Colonization and demonization of Babaylans by Spanish



Norma Timbang (she/her)

- Identifies as Filipinx, disabled, queer, pansexual
- One of the founding mothers & former executive director of API Women & Safety Center (now API Chaya)
- Lovingly referred to as “Auntie Norma” by younger community organizers in Seattle



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Aikāne and Māhū (Hawai'i)
- Aikāne were same-sex relationships in pre-colonial Hawai'i that were accepted by the community
- Māhū were priests and healers of a third gender; māhū meaning “in the middle”

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu (she/her)

- Also known as Kumu Hina
- Native Hawaiian māhū activist, filmmaker, community leader
- Subject of the feature documentary film *Kumu Hina*



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Fa'afafine (Samoa)
- Third gender / non-binary in Samoa
- Culturally specific, no exact Western equivalent
- Traditionally perform feminine roles in the Samoan family structure



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Takatāpui (Maori)
- The term existed in pre-colonial New Zealand to describe same-sex relationships
- Originally meant for intimate same sex partners, but now used as an umbrella term for all LGBTQ Māori people

Elizabeth Kerekere (she/her)

- Founder/Chair of Tīwhanawhana Trust, scholar, activist within the LGBTQ+ community in New Zealand
- Identifies as takatāpui



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Hijra (South Asia)
- Hijras have been mentioned in ancient texts
- British colonizers tried to eradicate Hijras during the British Raj (1858 - 1947) through anti-hijra laws



Alok Vaid-Menon (they/them)



- Gender non-conforming transfeminine writer and performance artist
- Malayali and Punjabi immigrant parents from Malaysia and India
- Author of **Femme in Public** and **Beyond the Gender Binary**

Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries



duan xiu zhi pi (斷袖之癖)
Translated as “Passion of the cut sleeve.” Based on Emperor Ai of the Han dynasty, who cut off his sleeve instead of waking up his sleeping lover, Dong Xian. This became an idiomatic expression for homosexuality in China.

Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries



Avalokiteśvara or Guan Yin,
goddess of mercy or compassion

- This bodhisattva is variably depicted, described and portrayed in different cultures as either male or female
- The Chinese name Guanyin is short for Guan shi yin, which means "[The One Who] Perceives the Sounds of the World"

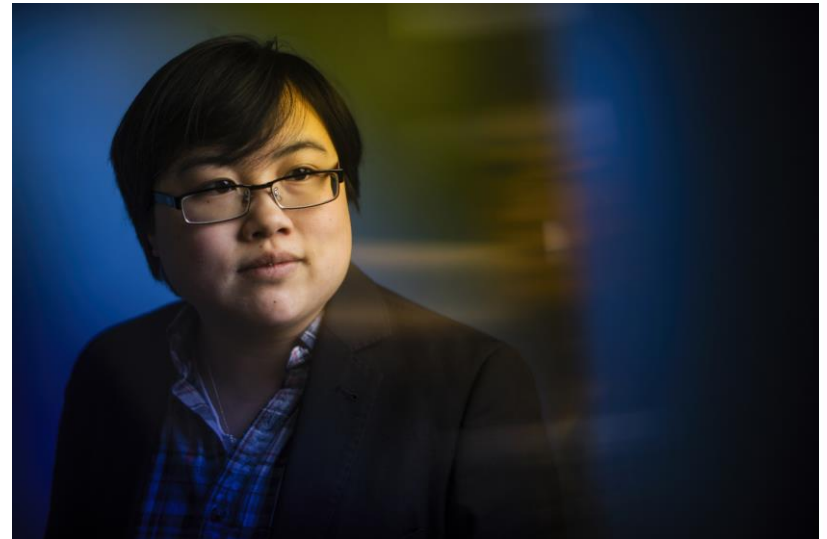
Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Golden Orchid Society (金兰会
Jīnlán huì)
- Qing dynasty social movement
based in Guangdong, China
- Chinese women's organization that
celebrated 'passionate friendships'
and embraced same-sex intimacy



Lydia X. Z. Brown (they/them)

- Also known as Autistic Hoya
- Chinese transracial adoptee
 - Genderqueer
- Disability justice advocate
- Writer, organizer, attorney



Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- Korean traditions pre-dating Western LGBTQ identities
 - Hwarang warrior elite: archers who dressed in flowing gowns and wore makeup
 - Namsadang: actors who went from village to village with youth who played roles of women
- Paksu mudang (right): male shaman who performed women's role in shamanic spiritual traditions



Pauline Park (she/her)



- Korean transgender woman
- Author, trainer, activist, and community organizer
- Co-founder of Queens Pride House and Out People of Color Political Action Club (OutPOCPAC)

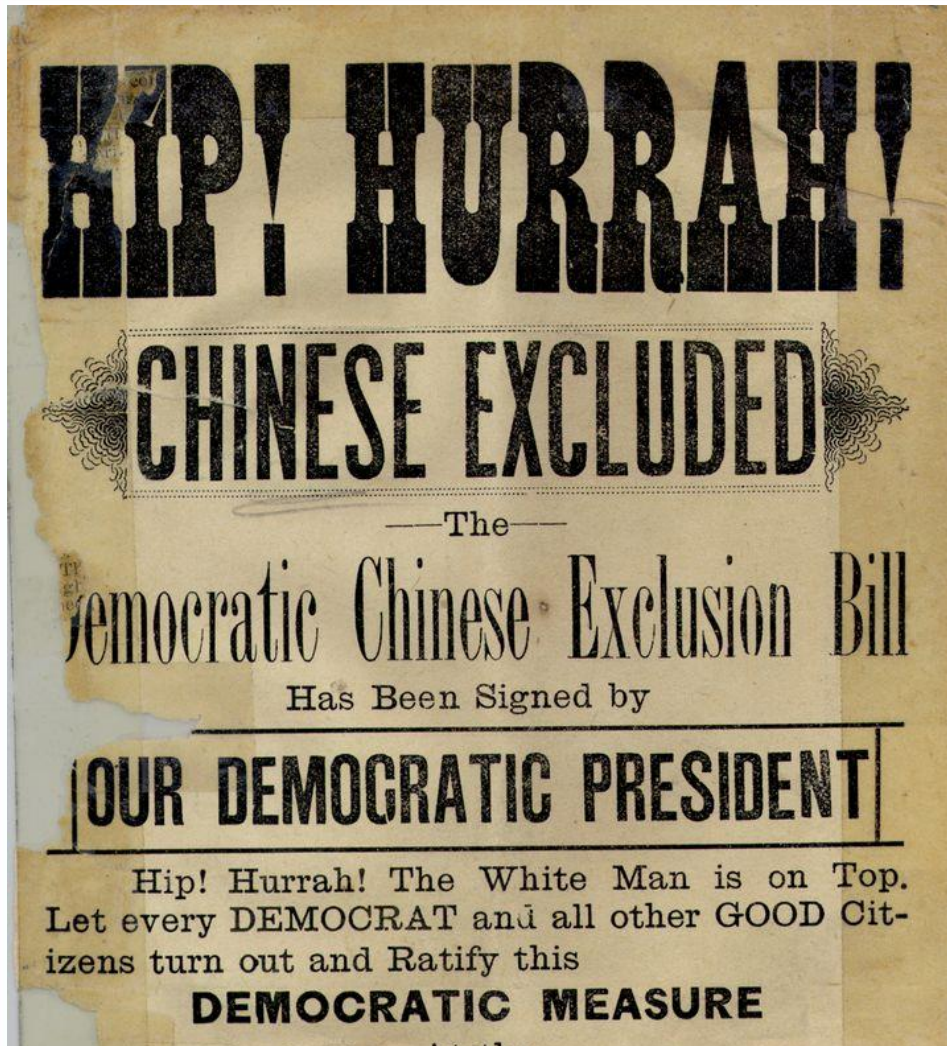
Pre-Western Contact LGBTQ representation in AAPI Countries

- “Much of Asia’s queer historical and cultural traditions did not fit neatly into the individualistic containers of L, G, B, and T. The queer figures of Asia’s past—and, to an extent, present—generally occupied roles as spirit mediums, shamans, and healers; their gender and sexuality were mutually intertwined with each other, and also with their communal and spiritual roles. Together, they resist categorization by a modern, Western vocabulary.”

— Pauline Park



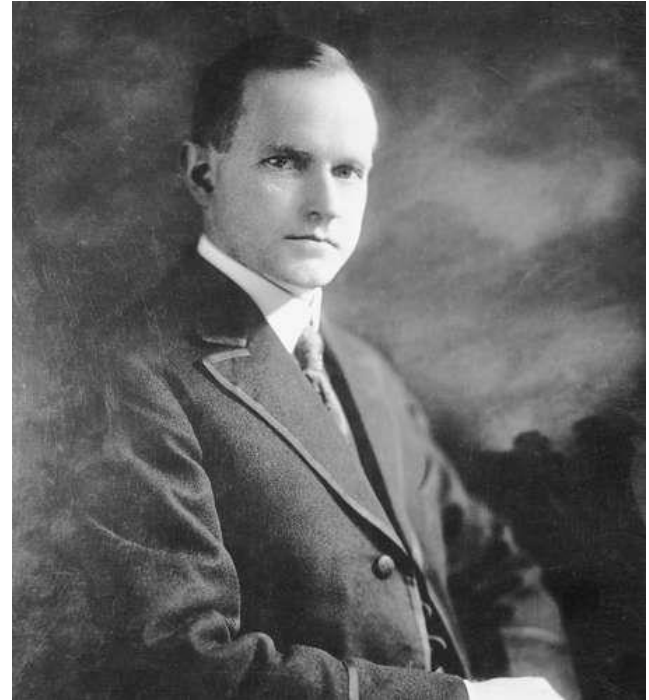
1882-1943 Chinese Exclusion Act



- Signed into law on May 6, 1882
- First significant law restricting US immigration
- US workers believed their wages were declining because of Chinese workers

Immigration Act of 1924

- Signed into law on May 26, 1924 by President Calvin Coolidge
- Desire for White Americans to isolate after WWI
- Immigration limited to those with a college education and/or special skills
- Set quotas and limited immigration from certain countries—specifically Mexico, Eastern & Southern European countries, and Japan



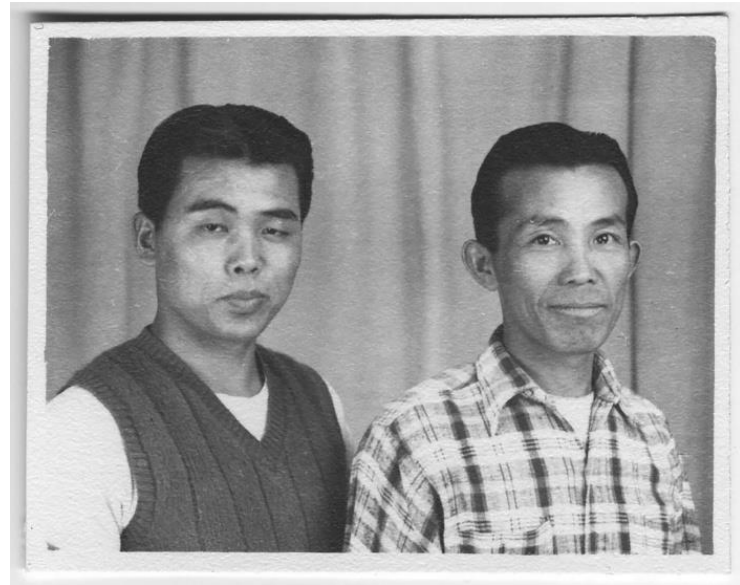
Japanese Internment 1942-46

- Established during WWII by FDR
- Executive Order 9066
- About 120,000 Japanese Americans were interred from 1942-46
- Internment in stalls or cow sheds with little food and poor sanitation
- Korematsu v. United States
- Endo v. United States
- Last internment camp and reparations paid



Jiro Onuma

- Gay Japanese American who was incarcerated during Japanese internment
- Had gay relationships within the concentration camps
- Wartime pictures might be the only known photographs of adult gay Issei in the American concentration camps



Civil Rights Act 1964

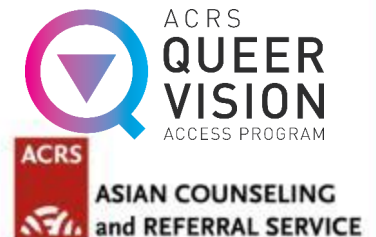
- Proposed by President JFK, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson
- Banned segregation in public places on the basis of race, religion, national origin
- Barred workplace discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, gender
- Forbade the use of federal funds for any discriminatory program
- Fought for by civil rights activists



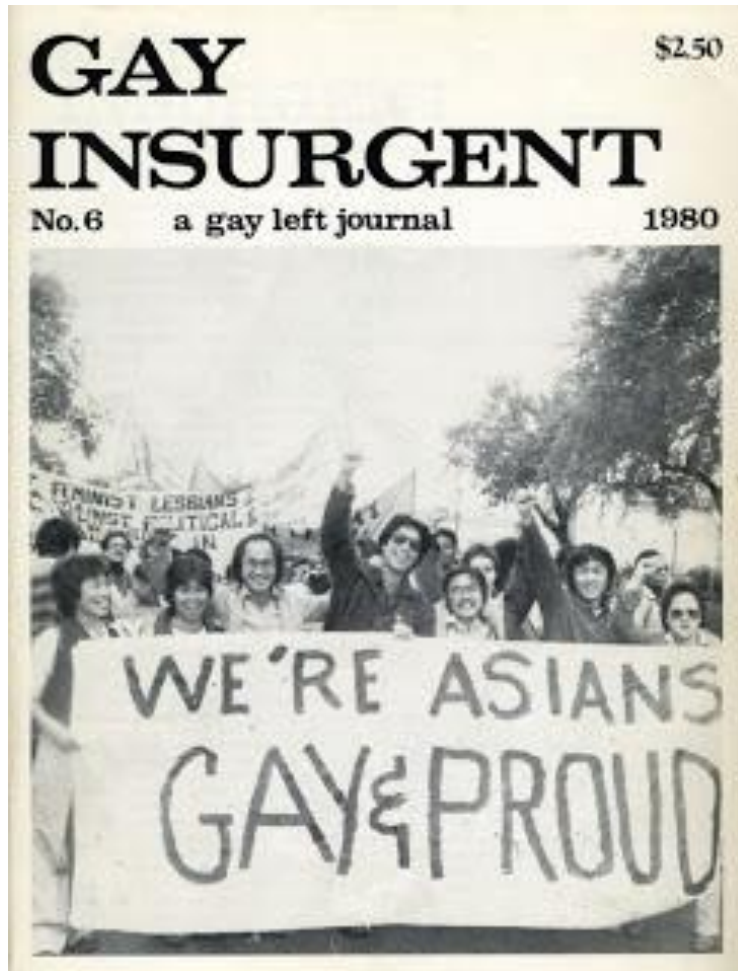
ACRS formed 1973



- ACRS was formed by social workers and community advocates
- Desire to provide culturally relevant mental health services to the AAPI community in Seattle & surrounding areas



First National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference 1979

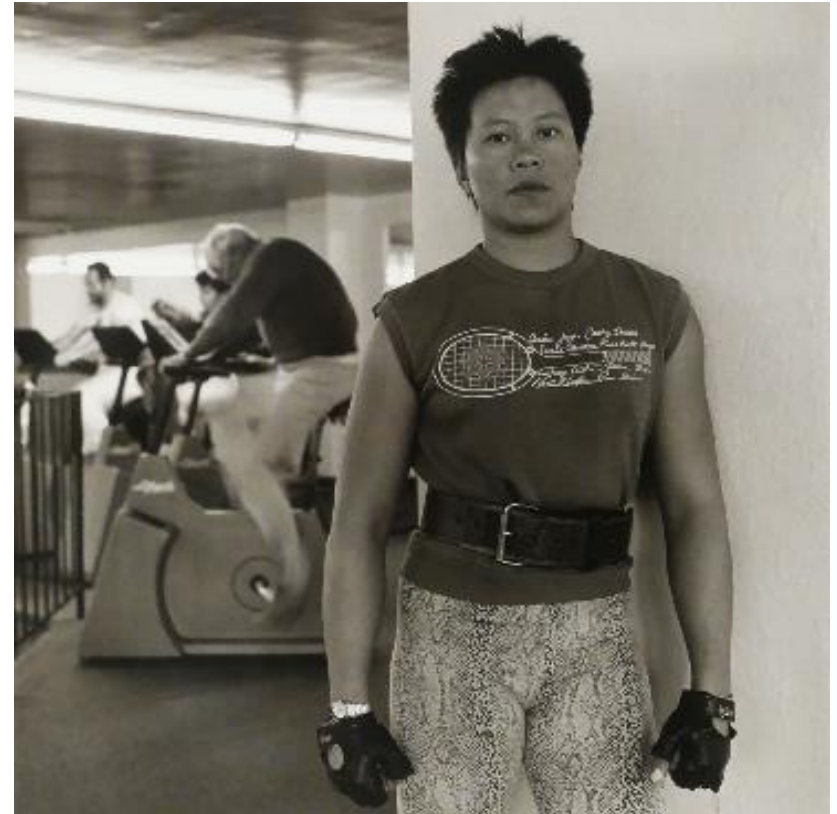


- Coincided with the 1979 March on Washington
- Organized by the National Coalition of Black Gays
- Gave a voice to queer minorities
- Inclusion of people of color in the mainstream queer rights movement
- Queer APIs represented by the Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective



Kitty Tsui (she/her)

- Author of *Words of a Woman who Breathes Fire* and *Breathless*
- First recorded Chinese American lesbian to be a published author
- Founding leader of the API lesbian movement in San Francisco



Takeaways

- **AAPI LGBTQ people exist now and have always existed!**
- **LGBTQ identities are neither new or exclusively Western**
- **Rights for people of color and LGBTQ people had to be fought for in this country**
- **Identities that can be labeled as “LGBTQ” by a Western understanding had/have specific cultural significance for many AAPI cultures**



Resources

- Dragonfruitproject.org
- Glb.t.org
- Subversities.blogspot.com
- Paulinepark.com
- Qaspace.apiequalityla.org
- History.com



Questions?

**For further discussion or additional
questions, please contact me:
juliae@acrs.org**



Thank you!

