

### Lesson Plan: The Biltmore Invasion by the Gay Liberation Front



Inquiry Question:
How did the Biltmore Invasion lead to the de-pathologization of homosexuality?

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History Content Standards: 11.11

History Framework, 11th Grade, p. 421

**Psychology National Standards: Types of Treatment 1.3** 

#### **Inquiry Question:**

How did the Biltmore Invasion lead to the de-pathologization of homosexuality? (Cause and Effect)

#### **Essential Question:**

How did queer folks fight for their full humanity?

#### **Content Standards:**

CA Social Studies Standard: 11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

Psychology National Standards: Types of Treatment 1.3 Describe appropriate treatments for different populations, including historical use and misuse of treatment

#### **CCSS Standards:**

History and Social Science CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

#### **History Framework:**

Page 421: "Students also examine the emergence of a movement for LGBT rights, starting in the 1950s with California-based groups like the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, these fairly secretive organizations created support networks; secured rights of expression and assembly; and cultivated relationships with clergy, doctors, and legislators to challenge teachings and laws that condemned homosexuality as sinful, sick, and/or criminal. In the 1960s, younger activists, often poorer and sometimes transgender, began to confront police when they raided gay bars and cafes in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and most famously at the Stonewall Inn in New York City in 1969. Organizations such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance called on people in the movement to "come out" as a personal and political act"

Page 422: "By the mid-1970s, LGBT mobilization led to successes: the American Psychiatric Association stopped diagnosing homosexuality as a mental illness; 17 states had repealed laws criminalizing gay sexual behavior; 36 cities had passed laws banning antigay discrimination; and gay-identified neighborhoods had emerged in major cities."

#### Lesson Overview:

In this lesson students will learn about the event known as the Biltmore Invasion that helped push the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to de-pathologize homosexuality in the 1970s. Students will begin by watching a recent video of Caroyln Weathers describing the event in her own words. They will then read an excerpt from Lilian Faderman's book, "Gay L.A." to get some background about the event and the formation of the Gay Liberation Front's Los Angeles chapter. After answering and reviewing some comprehension questions, student will predict how this event might impact the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness. They will then analyze three primary source documents in their groups. For each document, students will complete a graphic organizer with the source, 2 details and 1 question. After completing the graphic organizer for their assigned document, students will discuss in their groups what they learned from their document as their group mates record on their own graphic organizer. Finally, students will respond to the inquiry question, "How did the Biltmore Invasion lead to the de-pathologization of homosexuality?" This response should have a clear claim, at least two pieces of evidence and reasoning.

#### **Background Information**

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) is the association responsible for the classification and diagnosis of psychiatric illnesses. Since its first publication in the 1950s, the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) classified homosexuality as a mental illness. Since the 1920s in Los Angeles, The Biltmore Hotel was a popular hang out spot gay men and became an important space of community and comraderie. In 1970, the APA hosted its Behavior Modification Conference at the Biltmore and was presenting on the use of electroshock therapy as a cure to homosexuality. It was then that the Gay Liberation Front invaded the event and led a protest of about 30 people. Shortly after this event (in 1973), the DSM definition of sexual deviance was modified to exclude homosexuality.

#### Vocabulary

- Gay Liberation Front
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)
- Depathologization
- Sexual Deviance

#### **Teacher Resources**

This lesson may take 2 days to complete with 1.5hr block periods.

Link to Teacher Slide Deck

Link to Document Set

Link to Graphic Organizer

#### **Other Sources**

- Secondary Sources
  - Video: That Time Gay Activists Took Over an Anti-Gay Film Screening Ft.
     Carolyn Weathers. MSNBC. Created 2015
  - Background Reading: Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians. Lilian Faderman and Stuart Timmons. Published 2006.
- Primary Sources
  - Photo #1: Adrignola, Mark. 1970. "Lee Heflin and Dr. Albert Marston share the podium at the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) zap of the Behavior Modification Conference in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel. May 1970." University of Southern California Libraries.
  - Photo #2: Adrignola, Mark. 1970. "Stan Williams at the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) zap of the Behavior Modification Conference in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel. May 1970." University of Southern California Libraries.
  - Photo #3: Adrignola, Mark. 1970. "The Gay Liberation Front (GLF), including Steve Beckwith (jacket and tie) and Del Whan, zaps the Behavior Modification Conference in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel. May 1970." University of Southern California Libraries.
  - Advocate Article: "Psychologists get Gay Lib 'Therapy". The Advocate, November 11-24, 1970
  - DSM I: American Psychiatric Association. (1952). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (1st ed.). https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596

#### **Procedures**

Day 1: Introduction to Biltmore Invasion, Secondary Source Reading & Prediction

- 1. Warm Up: Students will begin the lesson with answering the warm up question. Teacher will project an image of the Biltmore Hotel (located across the street from Pershing Square) and ask the students "Do you recognize the building pictured? If so, where is it located? If not, where do you think it is?" Teachers will call on students to share out the responses they wrote. Teacher will also reveal how the Biltmore used to be a popular hangout spot for gay folks in the 1920s and that today's lesson will be focused on revealing a lesser known event that happened there in 1970 known as the Biltmore Invasion.
- 2. **Introduce Event:** Teacher will project Youtube video, "That Time Gay Activists Took Over an Anti-Gay Film Screening". As students watch, they will respond to the questions on their paper.
  - a. Something that stood out to me was...
  - b. This made me feel/think/realize...
  - c. Something I am wondering is...

Students will share out in their groups and then the teacher will call on students to share out to the whole class.

- 3. Teacher will introduce inquiry question: How did the Biltmore Invasion lead to the de-pathologization of homosexuality? Teacher will break down the question, ensuring that students understand the meaning of the words, "pathologize" and "depathologize". Teacher can also choose to share the original definition of sexual deviance from the DSM I that includes homosexuality. Students can discuss why they think it was included originally and the other forms of deviance that were included along with it.
- 4. Secondary Source Reading: Students will popcorn read or group read through Document A, the excerpt from Gay L.A. by Lilian Faderman. The reading is chunked to allow for easier understanding. As students read each paragraph, they will answer the comprehension questions that go along with it. Students will answer the questions in their groups and the teacher will circulate to help students who need support. The teacher will call on students to either write their answers on the board or share out loud to the class as they record their answers on the board.
- 5. Exit Slip: Students will answer the exit slip question on an index card or Google Form before they leave, "Make a prediction: how do you think that the Biltmore Invasion will impact the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness?" Students can also leave any questions/comments/concerns that they have on the exit slips

#### Day 2: Primary Source Document Analysis, Group Share & Writing Response

- 1. Warm Up: Teacher will review the material from the day before with the warm up. Students will answer the question, "When did the GLF first form in LA and what was the reaction to it?" Teachers will call on students to share out the responses they wrote. Teacher can also choose to do a debrief on student's exit slip question with their predictions
- 2. **Visual Discovery:** Teacher will use "See, Think, Wonder" Protocol to analyze three images from the Biltmore Invasion. All images courtesy of ONE Archives. Teacher will project the images one by one and give students 5 minutes for each image to write down and share in their groups. The teachers can also call on students to share out their responses to the whole class.
- 3. Primary Source Analysis: For the purpose of the primary source analysis, the article from The Advocate has been chunked into three separate sections. Therefore, students can be split into groups of three (either teacher-selected or self selected). Each person in the group will be given a section of the Advocate article. From there, students will read, annotate and analyze the article. They will also complete the graphic organizer, writing down the source, a golden line and answer the inquiry question.
- 4. Group Share Out: After students complete their own section of the graphic organizer, they will share out to their groups as their group mates write down, starting with Document A. This process will continue until everyone has shared and everyone has filled out their graphic organizer.
- 5. Class Share Out: Teacher can call on students to share out their thoughts, reflections, comments before moving on to the final writing response using the following sentence starters
  - a. Something I noticed...
  - b. Something that stood out to me...
  - c. Something I have a question about...
- 6. Final Writing Response: Students will answer the Inquiry Question: "How did the Blltmore Invasion lead to the depathologization of homosexuality?" Students' responses should utilize at least 3 pieces of evidence (video, primary source, secondary source, etc). They should also include a clear claim, evidence and reasoning.

#### Assessment(s)

Formative Assessment

- Comprehension Questions: Secondary Source Reading
- Exit Slip: Prediction about Biltmore Invasion

#### Summative Assessment

Final Writing Response to Inquiry Question

#### **Extension of Lesson**

As an extension of this lesson, students can read the <u>article</u> from Q Voice News in which the APA apologizes for its history of discrimination against the LGBTQ community. Students could have a socratic seminar discussion/community circle discussing if this was enough to restore the harm or if more should be done. Students can bring up their own suggestions around the idea of reparations, restorative justice and healing for the LGBTQ community.

#### **Bibliography**

Adrignola, Mark. 1970. "Lee Heflin and Dr. Albert Marston share the podium at the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) zap of the Behavior Modification Conference in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel. May 1970." University of Southern California Libraries.

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American Psychiatric Association. (1973). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (3rd ed.). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596">https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596</a>

Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians. Lilian Faderman. Published 2006.

"Psychologists get Gay Lib 'Therapy". The Advocate, November 11-24, 1970.

That Time Gay Activists Took Over an Anti-Gay Film Screening Ft. Carolyn Weathers. MSNBC. Created 2015.

#### **Document A**

**Secondary Source**: Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians. Lilian Faderman.

A major goal of the Gay Liberation Front was to pull homosexuals out from the shadows - where they'd been relegated by a hostile society and their own fears - and into the sunshine. The GLF organized three "Gay-Ins" in 1970, each attracted thousands of frolickers who dares to be openly gay under "GAY POWER" and "GAY IS GOOD" balloons and banners. The LAPD assigned large contingents of policemen and Vice Squad officers to patrol and intimidate Gay-In participants. But the times had already changed so much in Los Angeles that GLF was able to get a lawyer to file a temporary restraining order claiming violation of civil rights.

| 1. | What was the reaction of the LAPD to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front in Los Angeles? Why do you think they reacted this way? |
|----|--|
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|    |  |

When GLF staged the first Los Angeles gay pride parade in June 1970, the police again tried to interfere: GLF was denied a parade permit by the hostile chief of police. Ed Davis, who told newspaper reporters that he would approve a march of "thieves and burglars" more happily than one of homosexuals; but the Gay Liberation Front managed to convince the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) - which had refused to help the homophiles in the 1950s - to come to their aid in 1970. On June 28 of that year saw the fulfillment of Chuck Rowland's 1950s prophecy about the proud day to come when homosexuals would march "arm in arm, ten abreast, down Hollywood Boulevard" - though Chief Davis was able to get one last lick in by preventing the parade from starting before 7 PM.

2. How did the chief of police respond to LA's first pride parade? Which organization support the Gay Liberation Front?

One of the most effective Gay Liberation Front actions of 1970 was staged in October at an international Conference on Behavioral Modification, at the Biltore Hotel in downtown LA. As Carolyn Weathers recalls, she, together with other GLF members, "interspersed our hippie-clad selves among the suited psychiatrists". In the midst of Philip Feldman's presentation on an aversion therapy cure for homosexuality that used electric shocks, one GLFer rose up and cried, "Are we going to stand for this shit?" The others shouted, "Hell no!" and stormed the stage, grabbed the mike and screamed at the audience, "We're sick all right - sick of having ourselves defined by sexist straight psychiatrists." Don Kilhefner, who counseled gay youth for the Gay Liberation Front, told the stunned doctors, "You have imprisoned us in your mental institutions and brainwashed us into hating ourselves. I'm working with a teenage boy right now who wants to kill himself because of you people - and you're going to, by God, sit there and listen to us for a change." Several of the doctors rose up to support them and a dialogue ensued. The 1970 incident in LA was one of the first in which gays challenged the mental health establishment's classification of them as "sick".

| 3. | What was the proposed cure for homosexuality at the Conference on Behavioral Modification?                            |
|----|---|
|    |   |
| 4. | What was the response of the doctors who were presenting at the conference? Why do you think they responded this way? |

#### **Document B**

**Source:** "Psychologists get Gay Lib 'Therapy". *The Advocate*. November 11-24, 1970. Liberation Publications Incorporated.

Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front invaded and set off an uproar at a lecture on aversion therapy for homosexuals at the 2nd Annual Behavioral Modification Conference October 17.

Before it was over they had succeeded in turning the lecture - held on the second day of the three-day conference - into a kind of group therapy session. The conference was sponsored by California State College - Los Angeles; the University of Southern California; and the Los Angeles Behavioral Modification Group.

Some 140 persons were watching a film being shot by British psychologist Dr. M. Philip Feldman of the University of Birmingham when GLF activists in the audience raised shouts of "Barbarism!", "Medieval Tortute" and "This is disgusting!"

**Note:** The Advocate magazine, established in 1967, is the oldest and largest LGBT publication in the United States and the only surviving one of its kind that was founded before the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan, an uprising that was a major milestone in the LGBT rights movement.

#### **Guiding Questions**

- 1. How did GLF activists describe the film being shown? What were they protesting?
- 2. Who was Dr. Philip Feldman?
- 3. **Predict:** Why do you think it was described as a "group therapy session"?

#### **Document C**

**Source:** "Psychologists get Gay Lib 'Therapy". *The Advocate*. November 11-24, 1970. Liberation Publications Incorporated.

"I had hoped we could get through with Dr. Feldman's film and presentation and open dialogue and discussion," Dr. Marston told the audience and the demonstrators. "How can you have dialogue when you've got us up here as a show?" Beckwith objected. Up to this point, there had been little reaction from the rest of the audience - many but not all of them, practicing psychologists.

In the first part of his lecture, before the film, Dr. Feldman had stressed the ethical responsibility involved in using such techniques and had said that they were used only on homosexuals who had sought help and whom the researchers had been convinced genuinely wanted to change.

"I do not serve as the agent of society. I'm not here, either in America or in England, to do society's bidding. I'm here to help people who ask for this."

**Note:** The Advocate magazine, established in 1967, is the oldest and largest LGBT publication in the United States and the only surviving one of its kind that was founded before the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan, an uprising that was a major milestone in the LGBT rights movement.

#### **Guiding Questions**

- 1. Who made up the majority of the audience at the conference?
- 2. Dr. Feldman claimed to only help which group of individuals?
- 3. **Infer:** Why do you think Dr. Feldman says he is doing "society's bidding"?

#### **Document D**

**Source:** "Psychologists get Gay Lib 'Therapy". *The Advocate*. November 11-24, 1970. Liberation Publications Incorporated.

Asked after the lecture what he thought of the Gay Lib demonstration, [Dr. Feldman] said, "we were half expecting it. We hoped it wouldn't occur but the way it worked out, it worked out very well, when in fact, we got talking with each other."

"I would prefer- you see- this is not in any way, the English style - I would prefer a bit more decorum"

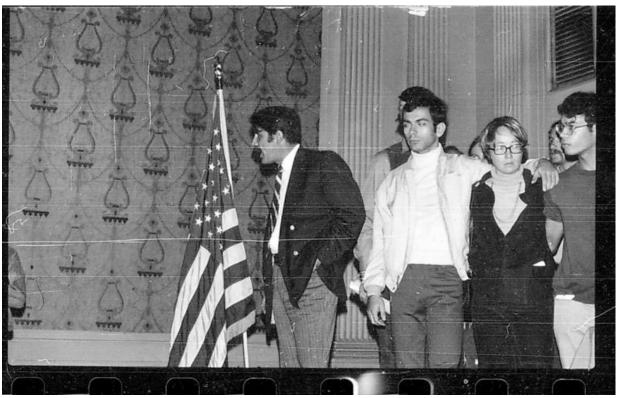
"This kind of action tends to have shock value, to make people think about issues that they may have been unaware of or ignored and in that sense it can provide a very valuable service to the community"

**Note:** The Advocate magazine, established in 1967, is the oldest and largest LGBT publication in the United States and the only surviving one of its kind that was founded before the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan, an uprising that was a major milestone in the LGBT rights movement.

#### **Guiding Questions**

- 1. What did Dr. Feldman think about the demonstration?
- 2. Why is the event described as being of "shock value"? What's the significance of this use of language?
- 3. **Hypothesize:** What impact do you think the Gay Liberation Front's action will have on the classification of homosexuality?









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## A gay 'nation' in the Sierras?



## **Psychologists get** Gay Lib 'therapy'

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#### **BEHAVIOR**

Continued from Page 8

stayed to hear—and occasionally challenge, the rest of Dr. Feldman's lecture. He gave up on the film but did show some slides dealing with his work.

In oversimplified form, the technique worked out by Dr. Feldman and since tried with varying degrees of success by other researchers consists of showing the subject a photo of an attractive male and giving him a weak electric shock if he does not reject it within a specified time—initially eight seconds.

As the treatment progresses, more and more attractive photos are used and the "safe-viewing" period randomly varied. Interspersed with the photos of males, the subject is allowed to view, if he chooses, photos of females without shock.

One of the most important results of the experiment, Dr. Feldman said, was an indication in the results that there may be two main groups of homosexuals—those whose homosexuality is learned, or conditioned, and those in whom it may be produced by some other factor.

Those homosexuals who had never had any heterosexual arousal "don't change after this treatment no matter how much they want to," he said.

On the other hand, those who have been aroused by the opposite sex at some time in their lives showed about a 60 percent level of improvement in ability to function as heterosexuals after the treatment.

He theorized that in this latter group, homosexuality may be a learned response replacing a heterosexual outlet blocked by fear of the opposite sex. Aversion therapy seems to work with this latter group, he said, because it reverses the object of the anxiety from females to males.

He said he had found to his surprise that the successfully treated group did not seem to have any difficulty dealing with males in purely social situations, "In fact, in some cases, they actually seemed to get along better. I'm afraid I don't have any explanation for this."

**Proceeded Cautiously** 

He said that he had originally gone into the experiments with some misgivings and had proceeded very cautiously. He had gotten into it, he said, only in attempting to find some way to help those homosexuals who were severely troubled by their homosexuality.

He said he did not think anyone had any moral right to use such techniques on unwilling homosexuals or anyone else "who doesn't ask for them."

On the other hand, he said he would be perfectly willing to help the homosexual who is happy with his homosexuality but who would like "to be able to adjust that. "I'm not making ethical judgments about homosexuality."

Asked after the lecture what he thought of the Gay Lib demonstration, he said, "We were half expecting it. We hoped it wouldn't occur. But the way it worked out, it worked out very well, when in fact, we got talking with each other.

"I would prefer—you see, this is not in any way, the English style—I would prefer a bit more decorum."

He has written a book entitled Homosexual Behavior: Therapy and Assessment to be published by Pergamen Press next year.

Dr. Marston was cautious in his

Dr. Marston was cautious in his assessment of the results of the demonstration.

"This kind of action tends to have shock value, to make people think about issues that they may have been unaware of or ignored, and in that sense it can provide a very valuable service to the com-

munity.
"On the other hand, it can turn some people off."

## TELSTAR PROD.

## The Biltmore Invasion

**Graphic Organizer**Using the documents, complete the graphic organizer below

| Document | Sourcing | According to the document, how do you think the Biltmore Invasion will lead to the depathologization of homosexuality? | Evidence from the document that supports the response |
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| А        |          |  |   |
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| <b>Inquiry Question:</b> How did the Biltmore Invasion lead to the depathologization of homosexuality? Use evidence from <b>at least 3 documents</b> to answer the question. You may also use evidence from the background essay. Your response should have a clear claim, evidence, and reasoning. |  |  |  |  |  |
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