

# The Homophilic Bibliophile

## A few must-haves for your media library

Have you dedicated a section in your bookshelf for books of LGBTQI interest? You haven't? Well, let's change that. The following are books (and a couple films) that belong in any self-respecting gay history aficionado's home.

In the arena of sexuality studies, no work has functioned as an urtext for so many like Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (Vintage, 1990). Although, truth be told, if you read it carefully, you may wonder if Foucault would ever be on board with "gay pride." Foucault's premise is that medical and legal systems create sexualities, kinks, and intimacies through the process of pathologizing/criminalizing them. But gay libbers are reading this text and taking a different message away from it, instead choosing to see Foucault's discussion of sexuality as a topic ripe for theory, a kind of liberation on its own terms.

Hey, we don't have to go to France to find intellectual gold. In fact, we have our own smarty-pants here in Austin in the form of UT professor of English Ann Cvetkovich, whose latest book, *An Archive of Feelings* (Duke University Press, 2003), attempts (and succeeds) at putting a wide variety of archives and source material into dialogue: from Le Tigre lyrics to the Lesbian Herstory Archives in NYC. Cvetkovich's oral histories are unparalleled in that she is able to pair theory and everyday life without seeming trite or detached. Really, if you don't own this book, *prance*, don't walk, to BookWoman.

If it's gay pride we're talking about, then there are a slew of books that narrate a history of the emergence of gay-power movements. Not least of these is the documentary diptych of *Before Stonewall* (1984) and *After Stonewall* (1999). The stories of gay/lesbian life are told by those who lived them, including key political players and less visible activists. Equally as engaging are the primary documents to be found in the compendium edited by Karla Jay and Allen Young titled *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation* (1972; NYU Press reissue, 1992). Jay and Young gathered poetry, prose, academic articles, manifestos, press releases, and just about every other document they could get their hands on. Unfortunately, now the collection has gone the way of most of

the writings contained within it; the book is hard to locate and expensive to buy. What a shame! Speaking of shame, the completely underrated history of gay life post-Stonewall titled *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality* (Beacon Press, 2004), written by Patrick Moore, is one of the most intriguing and raucous histories of gay male sexuality – especially when it comes to bars and bar culture (and also happens to be a personal Gay Place fave).

For pre-Stonewall, George Chauncey's *Gay New York* (Basic Books, 1995) is indispensable, especially if you're a Yankee expat. So is Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests* (Routledge, 1997), which isn't so much about gay culture but about how cross-dressing has been represented in the history of visual culture. Also in a category of its own is Leslie Feinberg's *Trans Liberation* (Beacon Press, 1998), which compiles a slew of speeches by the transgender warrior. David Eisenbach's *Gay Power* (Da Capo Press, 2006) is your generic straight-up history of gay libber groups, while Daniel Harris' *Rise and Fall of Gay Culture* (Ballantine, 1999) is a dishy, if not pessimistic, version of alternate modes

of queer production: magazines, films, drag, and kink. If reading film's your thing, you'll find no better than Parker Tyler's *Screening the Sexes* (Da Capo Press, 1993), which is gossipy, campy, and so effing true. You'll want to get married



to this book. Oh, that's still illegal? Right.

And finally, if you just want to homo up your house or just put some pretty things on your coffee table, may I suggest these picture-heavy titles: Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman's *Becoming Visible* (Penguin Studio, 1998), Fred McDarrah and Timothy McDarrah's *Gay Pride* (A Cappella, 1994), editor Dian Hanson's *The Big Penis Book* (Taschen, 2008), and Joseph Bean's *International Mr. Leather: 25 Years of Champions* (Nazca Plains Corp., 2004). Each has more photographs than you can shake a grand marshal baton at, and that's saying a lot. ■

Texas State art history lecturer and Gay Place blogger Andy Campbell acknowledges that this roundup is in no way complete. For more, and to send in suggestions, see us online at [austinchronicle.com/gayplaceblog](http://austinchronicle.com/gayplaceblog).