



# news

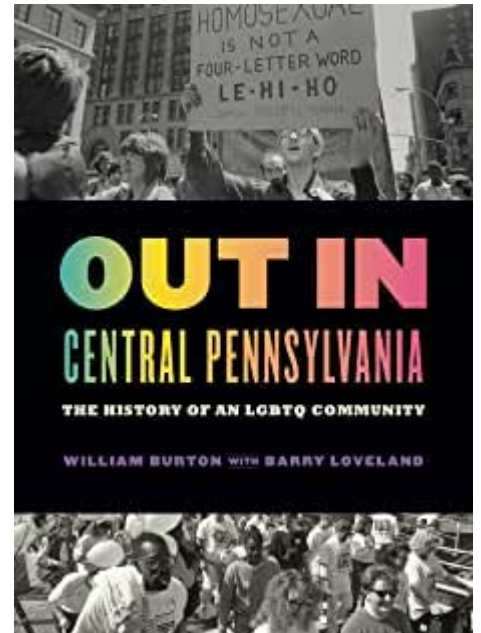
Summer 2020

## ***Out in Central Pennsylvania*** **launches June 24**

Our book *Out in Central Pennsylvania: The History of an LGBTQ Community*, by William Burton with Barry Loveland was released in June by Penn State University Press.

A virtual book launch event was held June 24 hosted by the Midtown Scholar Bookstore, the LGBT Center of Central PA and Penn State University Press. It featured a conversation with the authors about the book, Q&A, and readings of selected passages. Visit our website at <https://centralpalgbtcenter.org/out-in-central-pa> to learn more. If you missed the virtual launch event it was recorded and available to view [here](#).

The book explores the early years of gay life in central Pennsylvania in the 1950's and 1960's with the appearance of the first gay and mixed gay/straight bars.



Cover design.



Harrisburg Men's Chorus performs at Gay and Lesbian Pride Festival at Reservoir Park, Harrisburg, courtesy of the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, Archives and Special Collections, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA; photo by Pep Rox

It discusses the development of the first gay and lesbian organizations and first activists and leaders in several small cities in PA, and the beginning of campus organizing at Penn State. It chronicles efforts by Governor Milton Shapp to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for state employees and in the policies and programs of all state agencies. It is through this effort that many of the early leaders and activists came together to form the PA Rural Gay Caucus, which led to the first gay lobby days, the first statewide LGBTQ+ conferences and the first LGBTQ+ protest marches in the state outside of Philadelphia. The book covers the local response to

the HIV/AIDS crisis, the work for passing local non-discrimination ordinances, the lesbian movement, the rise of Pride celebrations, providing safe space for LGBTQ+ youth, the transgender movement, election of local LGBTQ+ politicians, the development of the LGBT Center and many other topics.

The narrative includes Profiles of some of the leaders and heroes of the local movement with much of the content in their own words based on their oral history interviews. The text is supported by 86 historical photos and other images of historical documents and artifacts.

Our next virtual author event will take place on July 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM, hosted by Penn State University Press. Titled "Pennsylvania Stories", this event will feature the authors of 3 new books on PA history, including *Out in Central Pennsylvania*. Check out the [Facebook event](#), and [register here](#)!

## Oral history videos now online

About 40 videos from our oral history collection are now online on the LGBT Center of Central PA's special History Project playlist on YouTube. More are being added all the time, so check back frequently to see what is available. See the current playlist [here](#). Eventually we plan to have all of our oral history videos uploaded to this site, except for any that have restricted access.

## Pandemic delays traveling history exhibit

In January 2019, the William Way LGBT Community Center in Philadelphia mounted an exhibit on the LGBTQ+ Cuban refugees who came to the United States as part of the Mariel Boatlift in 1980. Many of the refugees came to Fort Indiantown Gap, one of just a few processing centers set up to resettle the Cuban immigrants.

This groundbreaking exhibit, *With Open Heart and Open Arms: LGBTQ Cuban Refugees and the LGBTQ Community's Response to the Mariel Boatlift*, is now being adapted to become the next traveling exhibit in a collaborative effort with our History Project through the PA LGBT History Network.



*Patsy Lynch, photographer, Cuban refugees at Fort Indiantown Gap, 1980*

Please note that because of the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the displays of this exhibit are delayed. Exhibits scheduled for April through August have been cancelled and are being re-scheduled. Currently, plans are to debut the exhibit at the Historic Harrisburg Resource Center September 1 - 30. The most current information on the schedule of the dates and venues for the exhibit will be posted to our web page, [www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/withopenheart](http://www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/withopenheart).

# NEH grant enables start of digitization project

A CARES grant received from the National Endowment for the Humanities is the final piece of funding needed to hire a limited-term archivist at Dickinson College to digitize the History Project collection. The project has already received funding from the Schlegel-Deibler Foundation.

The project will start in early July and will include scanning materials from the collection, creating metadata, or descriptive information that will be tagged to each document file, and posting to an online catalogue of the collection. Collections are being prioritized for digitization to include most of the oldest, rarest, most popular and more susceptible to damage from excessive handling. The project will last at least one year and may be extended if additional funding is available.

## Progress continues

We continue to make progress on many fronts with the History Project. We currently have oral history interviews completed with 152 individuals (and transcriptions completed for all but four interviews). We have more than 100 linear feet of artifact and archival collections.

Visit our web pages at [www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/lgbt-history-project](http://www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/lgbt-history-project) which features links to the full transcripts to our oral history interview collection, descriptive guides to the artifact and archival collection, a Flickr album with nearly 400 photos of artifacts, documents and historical photos in our collection, digital exhibits online, a map/guide to Harrisburg's LGBTQ+ history sites and a Google map showing hundreds of locations of LGBTQ+ history sites in central Pennsylvania.

## Cleaning out your closets, drawers, etc.?

Many of us are stuck at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and starting to do those little projects around the house of cleaning out our closets, drawers, cabinets, basements and attics to get rid of stuff we have accumulated but no longer need or want. We are always looking for historical materials pertaining to **local** LGBTQ+ history and many of you probably have such items buried in closets, attics, basements and in drawers you rarely look through. Please take some time to check for any items like organization newsletters, flyers, photographs, videos, newspaper clippings, t-shirts, buttons and other documents and artifacts that you may have that relate to LGBTQ+ organizations, events or other aspects of the life of the LGBTQ+ community here in central Pennsylvania. We are also always looking for people who would like to be interviewed for our oral history collection. Contact us to donate these materials or sign up for an oral history interview at [history@centralpalgbtcenter.org](mailto:history@centralpalgbtcenter.org). Thank you!

## LGBT Center of Central PA History Project

*Founded in 2012, celebrating our 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary!*

*Winner of the 2014 J. Franklin Jameson Award from the Society of American Archivists*

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<http://www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/lgbt-history-project>

[facebook.com/LGBTcentralpa](https://www.facebook.com/LGBTcentralpa)

Working in partnership with the Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/lgbt>

