



The Harvey Goldberg Series for Understanding and Teaching History

The Harvey Goldberg Series for Understanding and Teaching History is a series of college and secondary history instructors a deeper understanding of history as well as the tools to help them teach it creatively and effectively. Each volume focuses on a specific historical topic and offers a wealth of content resources, providing concrete examples of how teachers can approach the subject in the classroom. Named for Harvey Goldberg, a professor renowned for his history teaching at Oberlin College, Ohio State University, and the University of Wisconsin from the 1960s to the 1980s, the series reflects his commitment to helping students think critically about the past and the goal of creating a better future. For more information, please visit www.GoldbergSeries.org.

Series Editors

John Day Tully is an associate professor of history at Central Connecticut State University and was the founding director of the Harvey Goldberg Center for Excellence in Teaching at Ohio State University.

Matthew Masur is an associate professor of history at Saint Anselm College, where he is codirector of the Father Guerin Center for Teaching Excellence. He is a member of the Teaching Committee of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations and writes on American-Vietnamese relations.

Brad Austin is a professor of history at Salem State University. He has served as chair of the American Historical Association's Teaching Prize Committee and worked with hundreds of secondary school teachers as the academic coordinator of the Teaching American History grants.

Advisory Board

Boyle Northwestern University
Dunn Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University
Fink UIC Distinguished Professor of History, University of Illinois at Chicago
Early Ibach Meeker High School, Meeker, Colorado
W. McCoy J.R.W. Small Professor of History, Director, Harvey Goldberg Center for the Study of Contemporary History, University of Wisconsin-Madison
J. Staley Director, Harvey Goldberg Center for Excellence in Teaching, Ohio State University
Tran McLean High School, McLean, Virginia
Wineburg Margaret Jacks Professor of Education and (by courtesy) of History, Director, Stanford History Education Group, Stanford University

Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History

Edited by

LEILA J. RUPP

SUSAN K. FREEMAN

The University of Wisconsin Press

The University of Wisconsin Press
1930 Monroe Street, 3rd Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53711-2059
uwpress.wisc.edu

3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden
London WC2E 8LU, United Kingdom
eurospanbookstore.com

Copyright © 2014

The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System

All rights reserved. Except in the case of brief quotations embedded in critical articles and reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any format or by any means—digital, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—or conveyed via the Internet or a website without written permission of the University of Wisconsin Press. Rights inquiries should be directed to rights@uwpress.wisc.edu.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Understanding and teaching U.S. lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history /
edited by Leila J. Rupp and Susan K. Freeman.
pages cm — (The Harvey Goldberg series for understanding and teaching history)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-299-30244-3 (pbk.: alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-299-30243-6 (e-book)

1. Gay and lesbian studies—Study and teaching—United States.

2. Sexual minorities—History—Study and teaching—United States.

I. Rupp, Leila J., 1950–, editor of compilation.

II. Freeman, Susan Kathleen, editor of compilation.

III. Series: Harvey Goldberg series for understanding and teaching history.

HQ75.16.U6U53 2015

306.76071—dc23

2014009612

Contents

Preface

Introduction

The Ins and Outs of U.S. History: Introducing
Students to a Queer Past

SUSAN K. FREEMAN and LEILA J. RUPP

Outing the Past: U.S. Queer History in Global
Perspective

LEILA J. RUPP

Part One: The Challenge of Teaching Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History

Forty Years and Counting

JOHN D'EMILIO

Putting Ideas into Practice: High School Teachers Talk
about Incorporating the LGBT Past

DANIEL HUREWITZ

Questions, Not Test Answers: Teaching LGBT History
in Public Schools

EMILY K. HOBSON and FELICIA T. PEREZ

Observing Difference: Toward a Pedagogy of Historical
and Cultural Intersections

KEVIN MUMFORD

of North Carolina Press, 2010); Karen Graves, *And They Were Wonderful Teachers: Florida's Purge of Gay and Lesbian Teachers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Stacy Braukman, *Communists and Perverts under the Palms: The Johns Committee in Florida, 1956–1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

9. Billy Graham, quoted in K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 37.

10. For a fuller discussion of the Lavender Scare in the context of the post-9/11 war on terrorism, see Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), particularly his chapter "Potomac Fever."

Public Figures, Private Lives

Eleanor Roosevelt, J. Edgar Hoover, and
a Queer Political History

CLAIRE BOND POTTER

Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of four-term U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, probably thought about J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, only occasionally. But he was very aware of her. Beginning in 1936, when FDR authorized Hoover to keep tabs on "subversive" political movements—this category eventually embraced many Americans, including communists, civil rights activists, peace activists, homophile groups, and feminists—the conservative director kept his eye on the progressive first lady. Eleanor Roosevelt's papers at the FDR Presidential Library reveal no indexed references to Hoover, but a visit to the FBI's Freedom of Information Act Reading Room would reveal thirty-seven thick folders of reports on Mrs. Roosevelt, her friends, and her political allies.¹

Roosevelt and Hoover can be a good pairing for a political history class, however. Their complex erotic lives allow teachers to introduce students to themes in the history of sexuality, challenging them to think about why sex might matter to the study of power and how the words that describe sexual identity changed over the course of the twentieth century. These two political brokers—who could not have been more different in terms of class background, ethics, political roles, and social vision—can be identified from the present as homosexual, bisexual, or,

in the case of Hoover, said to have cross-dressed, perhaps transgender. However, historians also need to think about how they would have described themselves. Mrs. Roosevelt might have pointed out that she was married to one man for most of her adult life. The hardworking Hoover would have deflected attention from his sexuality by insisting that he was a bachelor and "married" to his work. Neither statement is untruthful, but there is certainly more to be said.

Before we begin to untangle these important historical issues, let's begin with what the biographers agree, and disagree, about when they discuss two figures that helped shape twentieth-century politics in the United States.

The Facts Ma'am, Just the Facts

This line, spoken by Detective Joe Friday on the 1960s TV show *Dragnet*, reminds us that before leaping into guessing games about a historical figure's queer private life, students should address what is well known. Much of this information is now available on the Internet. When students are alert to what is, and is not, a reliable source, they can assemble a chronology, agreed-upon facts, and dominant interpretations. They can mark gaps and disputed aspects of that person's biography for further investigation. They can establish keywords to show how descriptions of intimate life have changed over time. Students will want to avoid incorporating social media or fan websites that lack documentation, although these sites should be bookmarked for later conversations about how popular culture and history differ.

What might such an exercise about Eleanor Roosevelt and J. Edgar Hoover reveal?

Over seven thousand volumes describe Roosevelt, her politics, and her intimate life.² Born in 1884 to Elliott and Anna Roosevelt, Eleanor was the niece of President Theodore Roosevelt. When she was ten her mother died of diphtheria; subsequently, her alcoholic father committed suicide. Raised by her grandmother and tutored at home, she was in England between 1899 and 1902 attending a school run by the feminist Marie Souvestre. She fell in love with and married her fifth cousin Franklin in 1903. Unlike other female New Dealers, Roosevelt did not attend one of the private women's colleges where intense female friendships and the desire for careers blossomed. Despite that, in the early years of her marriage she was swept up in New York's progressive

movement. As Dáša Francíková's essay indicates, in these highly feminized, and feminist, social work and labor circles, educated women committed their lives to ending poverty and to friendships with each other. Few of these activists would have embraced the term *lesbian*, a word associated with sexual perversion, prostitution, or mental illness, but many viewed loving female partnerships as a moral and social equivalent to marriage.³

Eleanor gave birth to six children between 1906 and 1916; one died in infancy. Yet her sexual relations with Franklin, though frequent enough to result in pregnancies, may have been unhappy. Her daughter Anna told historian Doris Kearns Goodwin that Eleanor viewed sex as an "ordeal to be borne," a quote Goodwin understood to mean that Roosevelt was asexual.⁴ Franklin may have been equally unhappy, however. The Roosevelts' relationship foundered when Eleanor discovered in 1918 that her husband and her personal secretary were lovers. The marriage barely survived, and their intimate life did not. Often living apart, they subsequently forged a partnership and deep friendship based on shared political ambitions. Following FDR's paralysis from polio in 1921, Eleanor helped her husband to rebuild his political career and win the presidency in 1932: he served until his death in 1945. With Eleanor's help, he created the New Deal welfare state, challenged racial segregation, won a world war, and crafted a modern liberal vision for a global twentieth century.

Eleanor played a crucial part in this national history. She transformed the role of the first lady by taking on political issues that her critics thought were inappropriate for a woman. If FDR moved far too slowly on racial issues, Eleanor challenged white women of her own class to address their racism by choosing to sit with African American delegates at women's political meetings. Many of the women who rose to prominence in the Democratic Party during the New Deal were drawn from her feminist circles, among them Mary Dewson, who made her life with Polly Porter; the educator Mary McLeod Bethune, a member of FDR's Black Cabinet; and Frances Perkins, the first woman secretary of labor. Both of the latter were married to men.⁵

Students might well ask how a president and his wife could have separate lovers (in Franklin's case, perhaps several at once) without their arrangement becoming the source of personal friction, not to mention public censure. One answer might be found in the friendships and love that can develop outside sexual relations, another in a press

corps that saw politicians' private lives as off limits, that agreed never to publish pictures of Roosevelt that would reveal his disability, and that drew a veil across what we might call the Roosevelts' "queer," non-monogamous marriage. Could this brilliant political alliance, with its complex domestic life, survive contemporary media scrutiny today?

Probably not. The Roosevelts' political marriage coincided with the rise of radio, "talking" film, and newsreels, which, added to newspaper coverage, expanded the media environment dramatically much as the Internet would sixty years later. However, public figures understood the danger of losing control of one's image by the 1920s, and the profession of public relations evolved to counter that. The Roosevelts employed a former newspaperman, Louis M. Howe, who expanded the Roosevelts' press coverage but also created rules the press had to follow. Around the same time, J. Edgar Hoover created a public relations department that churned out carefully controlled stories about and images of the director, as well as books and movies about G-men aimed at all audiences. Hollywood studios not only installed "morals clauses" in performers' contracts to protect themselves from scandal, but they too employed large staffs of publicists to groom stars as properly heterosexual. They cultivated the goodwill of gossip columnists and sometimes arranged sham marriages to divert the public's attention from bisexual, lesbian, and gay rumors surrounding stars such as Rock Hudson, Cary Grant, Joan Crawford, Sal Mineo, Montgomery Clift, and Marlene Dietrich.⁶

It was not unusual for celebrity wives to live apart from their husbands; nor was it odd for a woman of Eleanor Roosevelt's background to be seen with intimate female friends. Private estates, discrete servants, and ideas about respectability also conspired to make sexual arrangements well known to the Roosevelts' family and friends invisible to others. In the 1930s, Eleanor was almost certainly having an affair with the progressive journalist Lorena Hickok; later she may have also been romantically involved with New York state trooper Earl Miller, her bodyguard from 1928 to 1941. Her FBI file also links her romantically to her friend and biographer Joseph Lash.⁷ After FDR's death, Eleanor, who continued to be powerful within the Democratic Party, serving in three different posts at the United Nations before her own death in 1962, never remarried. That, too, was not unusual.

J. Edgar Hoover's trajectory was slightly different. When he began his professional career, he called himself a bachelor, but as he hit the

crest of his career in the mid-twentieth century, the meaning of that word changed. A respectable identity for a young man in 1916, to be a bachelor was socially suspect by the time of the Second World War, when unmarried men were closely scrutinized for signs of homosexuality. However, the nature of Hoover's private life is a challenge to the best researchers.⁸ Compared to the small library of work available on the first lady, there are fewer than two hundred volumes about J. Edgar Hoover, a man who was known for gathering information on others—and expunging information about his own past.⁹ (Here students might be urged to think about how subjects try to shape political memory: on the day of his death, Hoover's loyal secretary, Helen Gandy, destroyed volumes of her boss's personal files.) Unlike Eleanor Roosevelt, Hoover was not protected by social privilege as a young man. He was born into a family of middle-class Washington, DC, bureaucrats in 1895, worked his way through college, forming close friendships with his Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers. After earning a law degree in 1916, Hoover went to work for the Justice Department, creating innovative information systems to track "enemy aliens" and domestic radicals during the First World War. By 1924 he had survived two scandals—the Palmer Raids and the Teapot Dome Affair—and become director of the Bureau of Investigation (renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI, in 1936). He kept that job for forty-eight years, serving six presidents and creating a modern surveillance apparatus that, as David K. Johnson explores in his essay in this volume, worked to purge homosexuals from the government in the 1950s.¹⁰

Rumors about Hoover's homosexuality persisted throughout his career. Here students might be taught the delicate art of reading evidence for insinuation, coded language, and planted news items. In 1927 one Washington columnist smirked about Hoover's "light" step (gay men were said to be "light in the loafers") and his recreational antique shopping. If Roosevelt's class position allowed privacy, Hoover's profession allowed him to craft publicity that deflected speculation about his private life. In 1930 he was named one of Washington's most eligible bachelors, perhaps something he arranged through one of his publicists, a newspaperman named Courtney Riley Cooper. In exchange for tips about high-profile arrests, gossip columnist Walter Winchell treated him like a Hollywood star, publishing items that paired him with female celebrities. By Hoover's side in every nightclub, and in the car on the way home, was handsome Clyde Tolson, his closest professional assistant



J. Edgar Hoover in an unguarded moment of intimacy with Clyde A. Tolson, probably in the 1940s. The pair loved horse racing, fishing, and going to night clubs. (© Corbis, reprinted with permission)

and constant companion after 1928.¹¹ They ate lunch together, they vacationed together, and as they aged Tolson sometimes spent the night at Hoover's house when he was unwell.

Although the grand themes of Hoover's career include wars on crime, anticommunism, infiltrating the civil rights and antiwar movements, and the creation of a modern surveillance state, increasingly he is also remembered as a gay man who harbored a special animus toward other LGBT people. Early biographers such as Athan Theoharis and Richard Gid Powers suggest psychological links between what they view as Hoover's divided self and his ethical failures in the public sphere. In 1993 a third biographer altered the conversation about Hoover forever by publishing one woman's memory that she had seen Hoover, dressed as a woman, perform a series of sexual acts with male prostitutes. Yet this evidence, like so much of the evidence we have about sexuality, requires classroom scrutiny. Students will want to discuss

the nature of secondhand observation and whether Hoover, a secretive person, would engage in transgressive public sex. More important, the story is uncorroborated by any other source and the witness was paid for the interview, something that neither oral historians nor journalists view as a good practice.¹²

But might it still be true? As lurid as this story seems, it is a good moment for students to discuss the ways in which contemporary political reporting also mixes the personal and the political. Reporters and political enemies elevate one fact (New York governor Eliot Spitzer used campaign funds to buy time with sex workers) over another fact (Spitzer had a long and proud history of prosecuting white-collar crime) in ways that can seem only judgmental. But does a focus on sexual controversies deflect public scrutiny from more significant achievements? Does it hide, or highlight, serious abuses of the public trust?

Together Roosevelt and Hoover present a series of other interesting questions for teachers and students interested in the intersections of political biography and the history of sexuality. Is it accurate to write into LGBT history sexually complex people who would not have recognized themselves as part of that past? What does it mean for LGBT people to "claim" a homophobic and reactionary figure like Hoover? Is it reasonable to privilege Roosevelt as part of our lesbian or bisexual history, given that she privileged her social identity as a wife and mother?

We Are Everywhere, but Who Are We?

Because of his antiradicalism and homophobia, J. Edgar Hoover became the kind of homosexual that gays disavow. What used to be understood as justifiable privacy is now often thought to be dishonest. As Joshua Gamson has argued, "The ultimate slimeball is not so much the gay man as the gay man who *lies* about his sexual desires."¹³ The equally closeted Eleanor Roosevelt, however, has been embraced as a lesbian by many queers. For decades members of the Lesbian Herstory Archives were at the front of New York's Gay Pride Parade with large posters of women they claimed as theirs, and Roosevelt was among them.

In itself this difference tells a story about politics that teachers should emphasize. The story of LGBT politics in the United States has been crafted as part of a progressive tradition of inclusion and fairness

that Eleanor Roosevelt exemplifies. Students might even see the New Deal itself as part of a lesbian feminist past; as did the “political lesbians” of the 1970s, many of Roosevelt’s female political allies viewed marriage and childbearing as incompatible with a life of work. One provocative discussion could be organized around the question of whether lesbians and feminists of Roosevelt’s generation would have viewed legal gay marriage and the rearing of children in LGBT families as progress or—as some queers do today—a distraction from the important work of radical change.¹⁴

Does J. Edgar Hoover’s story give us similar insight into the history of conservatism? Students could pair public statements by such right-wing figures as Andrew Sullivan and Mary Cheney, or organizations such as the Log Cabin Republicans, with Hoover’s policy positions on a range of issues: “foreign” radical influences, crime, sexual disorders, and the importance of domesticity and monogamy. Like Roosevelt’s, Hoover’s biography raises the question of whether sexuality can facilitate right-wing political networks. Hoover’s allies included Roy Cohn, a closeted gay man on the staff of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s; the senator himself, though married, was rumored to have done so to quash gossip about his own sexuality. In other words, if Hoover fits the stereotype of a self-hating gay man, he may also offer us insight into gay male conservative networks whose political work behind the scenes includes keeping each other’s secrets.¹⁵

Of course students might come to the conclusion that Roosevelt is a hero and Hoover a villain and they deserve different treatment by historians. During the AIDS crisis, gay activist and journalist Michelangelo Signorile came to this conclusion when he announced in 1992 that he would begin “outing” closeted queers, but only those who used their power against other LGBT people.¹⁶ Connecting Roosevelt’s and Hoover’s secrecy about their sexuality to Signorile’s controversial tactic can provide an opportunity for a conversation about when, and under what circumstances, it is ethical to reveal facts about other people’s lives that they clearly prefer to keep private. A related task would be to ask students excited about modern queer identities and political movements to understand historical figures in *their* context. Sexual identities—like all identities—have evolved over time. They often present differently within a time period as well; naming practices, for example, can signal an individual’s attachment to a *particular* queer community defined by class, race, region, education, military service, or incarceration.

The stakes for secrecy about Eleanor Roosevelt and J. Edgar Hoover were also set by twentieth-century medical experts and psychiatrists who viewed sexuality outside procreative marriage as immature, undisciplined, criminal, and/or a sign of mental illness. To publicly claim a lesbian or gay identity was not impossible, but it was incompatible with the virtues associated with public service in the mid-twentieth century. It is no accident that Harry Hay, a founder of the first homosexual organization, the Mattachine Society, was a communist, not a New Deal or Fair Deal Democrat, and an artist and organizer, not a politician or a civil servant.

Nevertheless, teachers who want to encourage students to make strong arguments will want to emphasize the fact that historians have disagreed for decades about whether, and how, to assemble evidence about the sex lives of public figures. Ongoing, and different, controversies surround politicians as well known as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. One excellent classroom exercise would be to look at political and cultural interests in keeping sexual secrets that emerge after an individual’s death. For example, it was presumed in Jefferson’s lifetime that he had fathered children with his slave and half sister Sally Hemings. A century later, however, historians and white descendants who viewed interracial sex and the realities of slavery as shameful scrubbed these events from the record as incompatible with the virtues of a founding president. Only recently has the legal historian Annette Gordon-Reed decisively changed public opinion—returning it to what Jefferson’s contemporaries commented on openly.¹⁷

This brings us to an important issue. Film dramatizations can suggest to students that disputed sexualities are documented fact. *Hyde Park on Hudson* (2012), for example, proposes that all speculation about Eleanor’s sexuality and the Roosevelts’ open marriage is settled. While clips from these films usefully illustrate aspects of a political history course, when students view them in their entirety they will see that the stakes for historical fiction are different from the stakes for historical scholarship. These stakes include the nature of the story and the capacity of the audience to understand complexity.

Students should also be urged to discuss whether representations of a subject’s queerness, though true, are presented in a way that is potentially homophobic. In Clint Eastwood’s movie *J. Edgar* (2011), Hoover and Roosevelt are pitted against each other as queer figures, one evil and one virtuous. Eastwood portrays Hoover’s career as shaped by his tortured efforts to contain a sexual nature that he understands to be

deviant. (As a useful aside, the good-looking Leonardo DiCaprio allows us to imagine Hoover as a reasonable object of male desire as well.) In one scene, after the death of his mother, we see Hoover draping himself in her lingerie before a mirror, a clear reference to gender confusion and cross-dressing. In another scene, Hoover announces with glee to an astonished Clyde Tolson that he has secured a now famous letter that Roosevelt wrote to Lorena Hickok, describing her memory of "that soft spot just northeast of the corner of your mouth against my lips."¹⁸

The powerful pair giggle like boys, and Hoover vows to use the threat of lesbian scandal to blackmail the first lady into curtailing her activism. The class can be asked to scrutinize a scene such as this for the ways in which the filmmaker weaves together real archival evidence with unproven gossip and outright fiction to depict the political struggle between liberals and conservatives within the New Deal. By making this conflict so personal, Eastwood's argument also erases the real political stakes of the period. Unless the instructor urges them to view this scene through an historical, rather than presentist, view, students may be inclined to see Roosevelt only as a sympathetic victim and Hoover's blackmail as simply an example of why homophobia is wrong.

The scene (which most certainly would not have occurred, as Hoover kept his most dangerous and sexual evidence in a closed file) also portrays Hoover as a hypocrite and bully rather than the committed conservative he was. Viewers already *know* that Hoover lusts after his best friend and is doing his best to conceal it from himself. In an equally invented moment, Hoover loses control, kisses Tolson, then attacks him in a panic and insists that Tolson initiated the kiss. This fictional scene is confirmation that Hoover will lie and hurt even his dearest friend to protect his own political power and influence by remaining in the closet. As a scene that speaks to many queer students' contemporary experience of homophobic violence, teachers might want to discuss it in advance to avoid triggering anxiety. However, they will also want to alert students to the risk of over-identification with this character. Tolson's unrequited love and loyalty mark him as a sympathetic figure for the rest of the film. In reality, he was implicated in all Hoover's targeting of liberal and radical political groups.

In historical fiction, sexuality frames a character in addition to conveying information. Whereas a middle-class, striving bureaucrat such as Hoover is portrayed as shamed and anxious, in *Hyde Park on Hudson* the polyamorous sexual arrangements of the upper-class Roosevelts

are—if complex—a sophisticated, fun backstory to facilitating America's entry into the Second World War on the side of Great Britain. If Eastwood's film shrinks the context for understanding Hoover's sexuality, *Hyde Park on Hudson* reduces Eleanor Roosevelt's sexuality and politics to one theme in a heterosexual bedroom farce. Early in the film, Bill Murray's FDR refers to Eleanor's clique of progressive women as "she-men," a slang term for lesbians.¹⁹ This puts the audience on notice that the president is a liberated husband. As we also quickly learn, Roosevelt's paralysis is no bar to vigorous heterosexual couplings with a loving group of women who see to his professional and sexual needs. One of them is a distant cousin, Margaret "Daisy" Suckley, later the president's first archivist, whose private journals and letters formed the basis for a book, a radio play, and the film script.²⁰

Both films should serve to remind students that fiction can provoke us to revisit well-known public figures with new questions. They also give us ammunition for deflecting questions about whether homosexuality is too controversial for our history curricula. Surely if the sexual lives of Roosevelt and Hoover are discussed in major motion pictures, they belong in the classroom! But the films do not answer the question: what's the intellectual payoff for students, particularly students of political history, in thinking critically about sexuality?

In the earliest days of LGBT history, the editors of one volume argued that it could be "reassuring for gay people, raised in a society with no positive images of themselves, to claim gay heroes."²¹ But teachers need to help students account for the queer figures that make us uncomfortable and angry, too. It is unlikely that anyone will ever carry a poster of J. Edgar Hoover in a gay pride parade. But learning more about him not only helps us understand the history of the closet, but it helps us trace a long history of men who have sex with and/or love men but reject the idea that they are gay. It also helps us think about the ways in which gossip about sexuality should point us to other political and social dynamics that shape history.

Empowering education for LGBT students and their allies is important, as is educating heterosexual teachers and students about the ways they might unconsciously reinforce homophobia by ruling the private lives of LGBT people out of bounds for classroom discussion. However, unlike Dan Savage's hugely popular *It Gets Better* Project, in which queer adults speak from the heart to teenagers about overcoming prejudice, or campus activism that build empowering communities, history

is not social work. True, understanding the past enhances our political and ethical lives, but uncovering must be accompanied by the search for meaning. As one edited collection frames its mission, queer history should "illuminate how sexual politics has organized social relationships in differing and contradictory ways over time."²²

In a contemporary moment when the private lives of politicians and celebrities are constantly scrutinized, students will almost surely be hooked by the sexual secrets of powerful people. The teaching challenge is to make queer political history more than an opportunity to pull back the heterosexual curtain. The language used and diversions created by the most powerful among us can teach us a great deal about how other, far less important individuals might have protected themselves during the twentieth century, as homophobia became more pronounced in law, medicine, and psychiatry. Teaching about closeted lesbian and gay identities also allows students to discuss the ways in which sexual and erotic networks can provide political language and become an aspect of political networking. As strange a pair as they make, Eleanor Roosevelt and J. Edgar Hoover demonstrate that queer history intersects the history of formal politics. Students who accept the challenge of such complex lives will surely become better readers, researchers, and political thinkers when they have the confidence to embrace the challenges of this field.

NOTES

1. See the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>. Selections from the thirty-seven volumes of documents on Eleanor Roosevelt can be found at the FBI's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) website, <http://vault.fbi.gov/search?SearchableText=eleanor+roosevelt>.

2. Of these, aside from Mrs. Roosevelt's autobiographical writings, seven volumes stand out. Joseph P. Lash wrote two: *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971); and *Eleanor: The Years Alone* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972). The others are Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, the Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); Blanche Cooke's series *Eleanor Roosevelt*, vol. 1: 1884-1933 (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), and vol. 2: *The Defining Years, 1933-1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), with a third projected volume forthcoming; Hazel Rowley, *Franklin and Eleanor: An Extraordinary Marriage* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Transformative First Lady* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

3. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 227; Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
4. Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 19.
5. Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Susan Ware, *Partner and I: Molly Dewson, Feminism, and New Deal Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).
6. Jennifer Frost, *Hedda Hopper's Hollywood: Celebrity Gossip and American Conservatism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); William J. Mann, *Behind the Screen: How Gays and Lesbians Shaped Hollywood, 1910-1969* (New York: Viking, 2001); Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987); Claire Bond Potter, *War on Crime: Bandits, G-Men, and the Politics of Mass Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).
7. Hickok's papers can be found at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/pdfs/findingaids/findingaid_hickok.pdf. Private papers that were opened in 1978 contain substantial evidence of her relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt; three hundred of them have been collected in Rodger Streitmatter's *Empty without You: The Intimate Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok* (New York: Free Press, 1998).
8. Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
9. Prominent biographies that address Hoover's sexuality include Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: Free Press, 1988); John Stuart Cox and Athan G. Theoharis, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Anthony Summers, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: Pocket Books, 1993); Ronald Kessler, *The Bureau: The Secret History of the FBI* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).
10. See also David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
11. Potter, *War on Crime*, 48, 129.
12. Claire Bond Potter, "Queer Hoover: Sex, Lies, and Political History," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 3 (September 2006): 355-81.
13. Joshua Gamson, *Freaks Talk Back: Tabloid Talk Shows and Sexual Nonconformity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 68.
14. J. Jack Halberstam, *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012).
15. Andrea Friedman, "The Smearing of Joe McCarthy: The Lavender Scare, Gossip, and Cold War Politics," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2005): 1105-29;

Athan Theoharis, "Operation Adlai/Adeline: How the FBI Gaybaited Stevenson," *The Nation*, May 1990.

16. Michelangelo Signorile, *Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

17. See Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingways of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009); for Lincoln's intimate friendship with Jonathan Speed, see Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

18. Cooke, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, 2:195.

19. Slang that signals gender inversion is highly changeable. In the twenty-first century, the phrase seems to have reemerged in Japan as a way to describe transsexual men (see YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGffv1GwOCc>), in the United States in 1990s rap to describe black men who conform to white social ideals (see Paris, "Bush Killa [Hellraiser Mix]," *Sleeping with the Enemy*, Scarface Records, 1992), and in twenty-first century England to describe male-born women whose genitals do not conform to their gender identities. See Zoe O'Connell, "The NHS Governance Group: Debates on 'Unintentionally Creating She-Men,'" *Complicity* (blog), March 2012, <http://www.complicity.co.uk/blog/2012/03/unintentionally-creating-she-men/>.

20. Barbara Ireland, "At the Home of FDR's Secret Friend," *New York Times*, September 7, 2007, <http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/09/07/travel/escapes/07daisy.html>; Geoffrey C. Ward, *Closest Companion: The Unknown Story of the Intimate Friendship between Franklin Roosevelt and Margaret Suckley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

21. Martin Baum Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr., eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Meridian, 1990), 3.

22. Jennifer Pierce, "Introduction," in *Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project*, *Queer Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xii.

Community and Civil Rights in the Kinsey Era

CRAIG M. LOFTIN

Histories of lesbians and gay men who lived during the 1950s and early 1960s tend to paint a negative portrait of the period. They describe how the federal government purged and blacklisted its homosexual employees because of Cold War national security hysteria. They discuss how homosexuality was illegal at the time and detail how police used undercover entrapment techniques to ensnare gay men in particular into an unsympathetic criminal justice system. Other studies analyze the medical profession's inclusion of homosexuality in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the official diagnostic of mental illness, from 1952 to 1973. Isolation, paranoia, and victimhood dominate these narratives. The perceived experience of being gay in the 1950s resembles a film noir movie from the time, complete with shadowy tension, sexual temptation, fear of discovery, anxiety that one's life could unravel at any minute, and the sense that disaster lurks around every corner.

Gay people undoubtedly suffered in the years following the Second World War, as David K. Johnson's essay in this volume makes clear, but that is only part of the story. There were also major leaps forward in gay consciousness, activism, and visibility. As the front cover of the August 1958 issue of *ONE* suggests, a gay pride ethic was beginning to circulate throughout a national gay community with its own publications and advocacy organizations. This ethic even spread beyond urban gay subcultures into suburban and rural spaces. Despite widespread persecution, political hysteria, and police surveillance, gay men and lesbians were asserting themselves individually and collectively in bolder ways than the picture of relentless persecution allows.