



4.1 We've Been There, Trans History Shorts

Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Time: 40 minutes

Subject Area: Queer History, Trans History, Race

Overview:

The group will watch or listen to any combination of six short documentaries. The first five are directed by Rhys Ernst (co-producer of *Transparent*). Sadly there are no subtitles for these documentaries and the sixth was made in collaboration with the ACLU and Laverne Cox.

The Six shorts focus on:

Lucy Hicks Anderson- Black Trans woman who ran a boarding house/bar in prohibition era California, was one of the first LGBTQ people to go to court over marriage in the US. 5 minutes, 23 seconds.

<https://tinyurl.com/Lucy-Hicks-Anderson>

STAR, Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera- Two PoC Trans women/gender nonconforming individuals who were leaders of the Stonewall Riots. Founder of STAR, one of the first Trans/gender non conforming advocacy hearts. 5 Minutes, 19 Seconds

<https://tinyurl.com/STAR-LGBTQ>

Albert Cashier- Trans Man, soldier for the Northern Army during the civil war. 4 minutes, 56 seconds.

<https://tinyurl.com/AlbertCashier>

Little Ax- Trans man gospel singer in the 1940's to the 1970's. He had a successful career and grew up with a loving family. 4 minutes 20 seconds.

<https://tinyurl.com/LittleAx>

Lou Sullivan- Gay trans men, eventually succumb to HIV/AIDS. He helped found the LGBT historical society and lead the movement to separate gender and sexuality and allow for gay trans folks. 4 minutes, 7 seconds.

<https://tinyurl.com/LouSullivan>

Beyond Stonewall-

Laverne Cox narrates a history of trans resistance that predates Stonewall and precipitates Stonewall.

<https://tinyurl.com/BeyondStonewall>

Goals:

- Understand trans rights movements did not start with Stonewall
- Be exposed to different trans person's of color
- Find belonging in a rich and lengthy history

Materials:

- Way of projecting/watching or listening to videos

Procedure:**Step One:**

Poll the group for which videos people would like to watch/listen to, all of the videos is more than acceptable!

Step Two:

After playing a video offer a few minutes to reflect in whatever way the group would like to (silent reflection, writing, small groups, large group discussion)

Step Three:

Once all the videos have been played offer reflection time again

Discussion Questions

Lou Sullivan:

- Does one's gender decide their sexuality? For example can a trans woman be a lesbian?
- What is gatekeeping in the context of trans/gender nonconforming people? Do you experience gatekeeping? What does gatekeeping look like? (If no one knows what gatekeeping is, here is a common definition: the activity of controlling, and usually limiting, general access to something)
- What was the AIDS Epidemic?
- "In a way, I don't even feel bad about having AIDS I feel it is almost a poetic justice. Because AIDS is still seen at this point as a gay man's disease. It proves I did do it, I was successful... They told me it was impossible to live as a man but it looks like I am going to die as one." Can deeply negative and awful experiences have a way of validating one's identities?

Lucy Hicks Anderson

- LGBTQ identity is often seen as predominantly white and middle class to wealthy do stories like Lucy's challenge that narrative? What about your own experiences?
- What does it mean to "pass" as an identity? Can all people "pass" as their gender identity? What problems can arise from not "passing"?

STAR, Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera

- How do people within the LGBTQ community discriminate or excluded others via race, class, religion, etc? Have you ever felt excluded by people within the LGBTQ community because of your own identities?
- Why was Stonewall necessary to kickstart LGBTQ rights movements in America? What was special about Stonewall?
- Do you think the police raid that started the Stonewall Riots were unique to Stonewall and New York City or were similar occurrences happening across the country?

Little Ax

- Little Ax was essentially believed to be cisgendered, is this desirable?
- Is trans identity valuable in and of itself or is the goal to be seen as cisgendered?

Albert Cashier

- How do we place stories like Albert's in recent conversations around trans people's service in the military?
- While people who didn't know Albert, the mental hospital, discriminated against him, those that knew him stood by him, is this a common trend?

Beyond Stonewall

- How can you work to make your own school a more accepting and inviting place for trans and nonbinary students?
- Why has Stonewall gotten so much of the focus even though there were other similar riots in other cities?
- Is it important to place one's identities within a historical tradition? For example, the 1950's and 60's civil rights movements when talking about African American identity or The Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the same era when talking about Hispanic and Latino identity.