

Historical homos

Get used to 10 Oregonians who are (were) here and are (were) queer

In recognition of national Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual History Month, the Portland-based Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest has released a list of 10 gay and lesbian Oregonians who made history.

• Lucille Hart, aka Dr. Alan Hart, was the first documented transgendered person in Oregon history. Hart, who was born in 1890, was raised in Albany from early childhood as Alberta Lucille Hart, but she lived much of her life as a man.

Dr. Alan Hart became one of the leading physicians in the field of tuberculosis detection, published several novels and married a woman. He received a master's degree in public health from Yale University in 1948 and died in 1962. Follow-

• W. Dorr Legg (1904-1994) was the founder of *ONE* magazine and was a professor at Oregon State University from 1935 to 1942. In 1952, while living in Los Angeles, Legg started *ONE* magazine, the first successful gay periodical in the United States.

• Nell Pickerell (1883-1922), who was also known as Harry Livingstone, succeeded in passing as a man for more than two decades in Seattle, Portland and points in between.

As Livingstone, she was employed as a bartender, piano player, singer, ranch hand and truck driver. Throughout her life, Pickerell was the object of derision. Rumors that three Seattle women who had fallen in love with the handsome "Harry Livingstone" had committed suicide followed her for years. *The Oregonian* called her "the most notorious male impersonator on the West Coast."

• Gale Wilhelm (b. 1908) was born and raised in Eugene. Wilhelm wrote what are generally considered to be the first lesbian-themed novels in American literature. *We Too Are Drifting* (1935) and *Torchlight to Valhalla* (1938) are her best known works.

• Architect and conservationist John Yeon (1910-1994) was born in Portland and was the son of John Baptiste Yeon II, a millionaire lumber merchant. Yeon inherited his father's fortune when he was just nine years old.

He served on Oregon's first State Park Commission in 1932 and was later made chairman of the National Resources Board, set up to preserve the Columbia River Gorge. As an architect, he is best known for having designed the landmark Aubrey Watzek House in Portland.

• Journalist Randy Shilts, who was born in 1951, was the author of the best-selling book about the beginning of the AIDS crisis *And the Band Played On*. Shilts graduated from the University of Oregon in the early 1970s. He won the prestigious William Randolph Hearst Award for outstanding writing among college journalists, however, upon discovering that Shilts was openly gay, the Hearst Foundation revoked the award. Shilts worked for many years as a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He died of AIDS complications in 1994.

• Peggy Burton is an Oregon school teacher who was fired by Cascade Union High School in Turner in 1971. The reason? Because she was a lesbian. Rather than just walk away, she filed suit in U.S. district court. Though she ultimately lost the case, she brought attention to the problem of sexual orientation discrimination. Students and teachers at Burton's high school dedicated their yearbook to her courage, but an angry superintendent confiscated 300 volumes, removing the dedicatory page prior to distribution.

• Ko-come-ne-pe-ca was a Native American guide, courier and peace messenger to early Oregon explorers. The earliest written documents in the Oregon territory make mention of this cross-dressing woman who, accompanied by her lover/wife, met Oregon explorer David Thompson at Fort Astoria in 1811. Her many heroic adventures are detailed in Jonathan Ned Katz's *Gay American History*.

Compiled by Inga Sorensen

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Randy Shilts

ing his wife's death in 1982, the bulk of Hart's \$220,000 estate was bequeathed in his memory to the Oregon Medical Research Foundation for use in leukemia research.

• Cooking author James Beard (1903-1985) was born and raised in Portland. He studied at Reed College and was expelled in 1922 for homosexual dalliances with students and at least one professor. He later moved to New York, where he became known for his lavish parties and culinary creations that featured the native fare of his Oregon boyhood. Beard went on to write several best-selling cookbooks. In 1974, he was given an honorary degree by the same school that had expelled him 50 years earlier.

• R. Peter Gantenbein (1914-1984) was a gay grandson of *Oregonian* publisher Henry Pittock. Gantenbein was born in Pittock Mansion and later saved it from a bulldozer by selling it to the City of Portland for \$225,000. He was influential in ensuring that the landmark was restored to its original splendor—the mansion is currently one of the area's most popular tourist attractions.

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