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Encyclopedia of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history in America : Volume 3

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Abstrak

The Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America (ELGBT) is the product of eighteen months of concentrated labor by hundreds of researchers and editors, but in a larger sense it has been made possible by more than fifty years of activism and more than thirty years of scholarship in the United States. Without the campaigns for equality, freedom, justice, and liberation waged by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists since the 1950s and without the growth of LGBT studies since the 1970s, this encyclopedia would never have been imagined, much less published. Intended for use by the general public, including students, teachers, and other researchers, the encyclopedia draws on the expertise of scholars in virtually all humanities and social science disciplines and various interdisciplinary fields. Reflecting the field of LGBT studies as a whole, the volumes showcase the work of community-based researchers and academics based in colleges and universities. The result is a unique and up-to-date resource that we hope will make a lasting contribution to the pursuit of knowledge about central aspects of U.S. history, culture, politics, and society. The Oxford eng Dictionary offers three definitions of the term encyclopedia: 1. The circle of learning: a general course of instruction. 2. A literary work containing extensive information on all branches of knowledge. 3. An elaborate and exhaustive repertory of information on all the branches of some particular art or department of knowledge. From its earliest usage, the term encyclopedia has referred to means and methods of satisfying desires for knowledge. As many of the entries in ELGBT make clear, however, desires have changed dramatically over the course of history, as have ideas about and responses to them and attitudes about whose desires should be recognized and fulfilled and who should recognize and fulfill them. Circles of learning in the past may have had homoerotic and gender-crossing dimensions, but for centuries encyclopedias have offered a general course of instruction in how to hate, despise, loathe, pathologize, control, erase, and eradicate sexualities and genders viewed as transgressive. In recent decades, encyclopedias have generally ignored such subjects or have treated them as scientific, medical, biological, and psychological matters, not historical ones. Even today most encyclopedias fail to treat LGBT topics adequately or relegate such subjects to the margins.