

Media Contact:

Kayla Siefker, Gale, part of Cengage Group

248-378-3376

kayla.siefker@cengage.com

Gale Celebrates Pride Month with LGBTQ+ Fellowship Projects That Explore Queer History Using Digital Humanities Tools

LGBTQ+ History Scholars Make Significant Contributions to Gender and Identity Studies Using Gale's Archives of Sexuality and Gender and Gale Digital Scholar Lab

ALA Annual 2023 Conference, CHICAGO – June 22, 2023 – In celebration of Pride Month, [Gale](#), part of Cengage Group, and the [Committee on LGBT History \(CLGBTH\)](#) are sharing the project findings of how the five recipients of the inaugural Gale-CLGBTH Non-Residential Fellowship program used [Archives of Sexuality and Gender](#) and [Gale Digital Scholar Lab \(The Lab\)](#) to further their research into LGBT history.

In [2022](#), The five fellows were given access to *Archives of Sexuality and Gender* and *The Lab* for a period of six months. At the end of their access period, each scholar submitted a report on how they used the resources to advance their LGBTQ+ studies.

Here are some of the innovative ways and exciting discoveries the fellows made using these digital humanities methodologies:



- **Dr. Jacob Bloomfield, Zukunftscolleg Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Konstanz, Germany**

Project: [Tutti Frutti: Little Richard, Sex, Gender and Transgression in America and Europe](#)

Bloomfield examined how the gender-nonconforming African American recording artist Little Richard became one of the most popular musicians in the U.S. and Europe during the 1950s and pre-“sexual revolution” 1960s. Bloomfield used archival research to investigate whether Richard was historically a source of inspiration to queer observers or whether Richard’s status as a queer icon is a more recent phenomenon.

According to Bloomfield, the *Archives of Sexuality and Gender* was hugely valuable in advancing his research on Richard. “I found a great set of commentary about Richard written in LGBTQ publications dated between the 1960s and the 2000s,” he said. “The ability to browse historical newspapers and periodicals was the most valuable feature offered by Gale’s *Archives of Sexuality and Gender*. As gauging reception is a critical part of my research, *The Lab*’s tools regarding that were valuable to me.”

- **Elio Colavito, Doctoral Student in History, University of Toronto**

Project: [Mapping Transtopia: Trans-Masculine Mutual Aid \(1970–2005\)](#)

Colavito is researching the history of trans-masculine resource sharing and community care by mapping out the various ways that trans-masculine people built infrastructures for living and surviving. Using *The Lab*’s powerful tools, Colavito was able to make significant discoveries that helped them to better understand how trans-masculine people used the gay and lesbian press. They could demonstrate the geographical footprint of letters

from Gale's *Archives of Sexuality and Gender*, by creating a digital map that served as a digital humanities and public history approach to historical research and knowledge sharing.

"I used *The Lab* to sort and filter my search results, which allowed me to organize my data very quickly," explained Colavito. "The topic modeling feature was particularly useful. It presented different sub-themes from the research, which ultimately helped me make choices about how I would organize the themes in my StoryMap."

- **Jack Jen Giesekeing, Associate Professor of Geography, University of Kentucky**

Project: [Dyke* Bars](#)ⁱ

Giesekeing researched the legacy and impact of the dyke* bar for LBQT*S people in U.S. cultural geographies. "I looked at well over a thousand records about closing, closed, and/or gone lesbian bars," Giesekeing shared. Gale's *Archives of Sexuality and Gender* helped Giesekeing observe adjacent trends as well, such as the lack of reporting on arsons in lesbian+ bars and the increased focus on sexual assaults in the 1990s. Giesekeing's research forms part of a larger book project, *Dyke Bars*: Queer-Tran Spaces for the End Times*.

As Giesekeing works on their book manuscript, Gale's resources helped them analyze their findings to better understand patterns in how lesbian+ bars are discussed in popular narrative, and how the dyke bar* is determined in relation to, as Giesekeing describes it, a range of "other/ed" and "invisibilized" queer spaces.

- **Trevor Ladner, Educator and Researcher, Los Angeles**

Project: [LGBT Lives and Legal Rights: Impacts of Progress of Struggle](#)

Ladner researched LGBTQ+ teachers who fought for their rights to due process, equal protection, and freedom of speech in the later 20th century. He used Gale's *Archives of Sexuality and Gender* and *The Lab* to design a unit on civil rights in the court system for use in his 12th grade U.S. government course, that takes students beyond the headlines and encourages them to develop critical-thinking skills. "I found the build tool to be the most valuable tool in *The Lab* for accessing materials that could be used by my students for primary source analysis or research," said Ladner. "I found the keyword search and filters to be extremely effective for narrowing down my search results to relevant materials. I made great use of the 'search within' function to look for specific legal cases."

"As a queer teacher myself, it was incredibly meaningful for me to have this opportunity to examine the experiences of other LGBTQ+ educators who have paved the way for me," he said.

- **Justin Salgado, Doctoral Student in History, Ohio State University**

Project: [Out at the Rodeo: The Maintenance of the Gay Rodeo \(1980s – Present\)](#)

Salgado researched the history of the Comstock Gay Rodeo in Reno, Nevada, examining reactions to it as captured in local newspaper articles. After spending time with Gale's *Archives of Sexuality and Gender*, he quickly realized how much more there was to explore and was able to use the collection to broaden the scope of his work to understand national patterns. "I was able to combine these sources into specific data sets and run analyses ... to get a better picture of themes through a [larger] geographical lens," he explained.

Additionally, *The Lab's* powerful analysis tools offered new perspectives on the rodeo experience that invited new avenues of inquiry, particularly on gay tourism, that Salgado had not previously considered. "The tools provided by the fellowship have...created a more inclusive and diverse data set to analyze that is much more representative of the community that I am discussing in my work," said Salgado.

The Gale-CLGBTH Non-Residential Fellowships help scholars expand the field of humanities, gender, and sexuality studies through research or teaching. The program's goal is to encourage emerging research in LGBTQ+ studies by

allowing scholars to contribute additional insights through digital humanities methodologies. Each fellow received a \$2,500 stipend (funded by Gale) and access to *Archives of Sexuality and Gender*, the largest historical collection available in support of gender studies and sexuality, spanning from the 16th to the 20th century.

They also received access to *The Lab*, a cloud-based digital humanities tool that helps researchers tell impactful visual stories with data from Gale's archives. It provides researchers with invaluable text and data mining tools to advance their work using digital humanities methods.

For more information on Gale-CLGBTH Non-Residential Fellowships, visit its [webpage](#) or stop by Gale booth #4411 at the ALA Annual conference in Chicago, June 23-26 to learn more.

About Cengage Group and Gale

Cengage Group, an education technology company serving millions of learners in 165 countries, advances the way students learn through quality, digital experiences. The company currently serves the K-12, higher education, professional, library, English language teaching and workforce training markets worldwide. Gale, part of Cengage Group, provides libraries with original and curated content, as well as the modern research tools and technology that are crucial in connecting libraries to learning, and learners to libraries. For more than 65 years, Gale has partnered with libraries around the world to empower the discovery of knowledge and insights – where, when and how people need it. Gale has 500 employees globally with its main operations in Farmington Hills, Michigan. For more information, please visit www.gale.com.

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ⁱ The trans* asterisk allows Gieseke to investigate the dyke bar that remains to be written—to open up the multiple and contingent meanings of what a dyke* bar was, is, and yet could be.