

# **QUEER JOY**

**How the  
LGBTQ+  
community  
exists as a  
safe space**

**By Chris Thornell**

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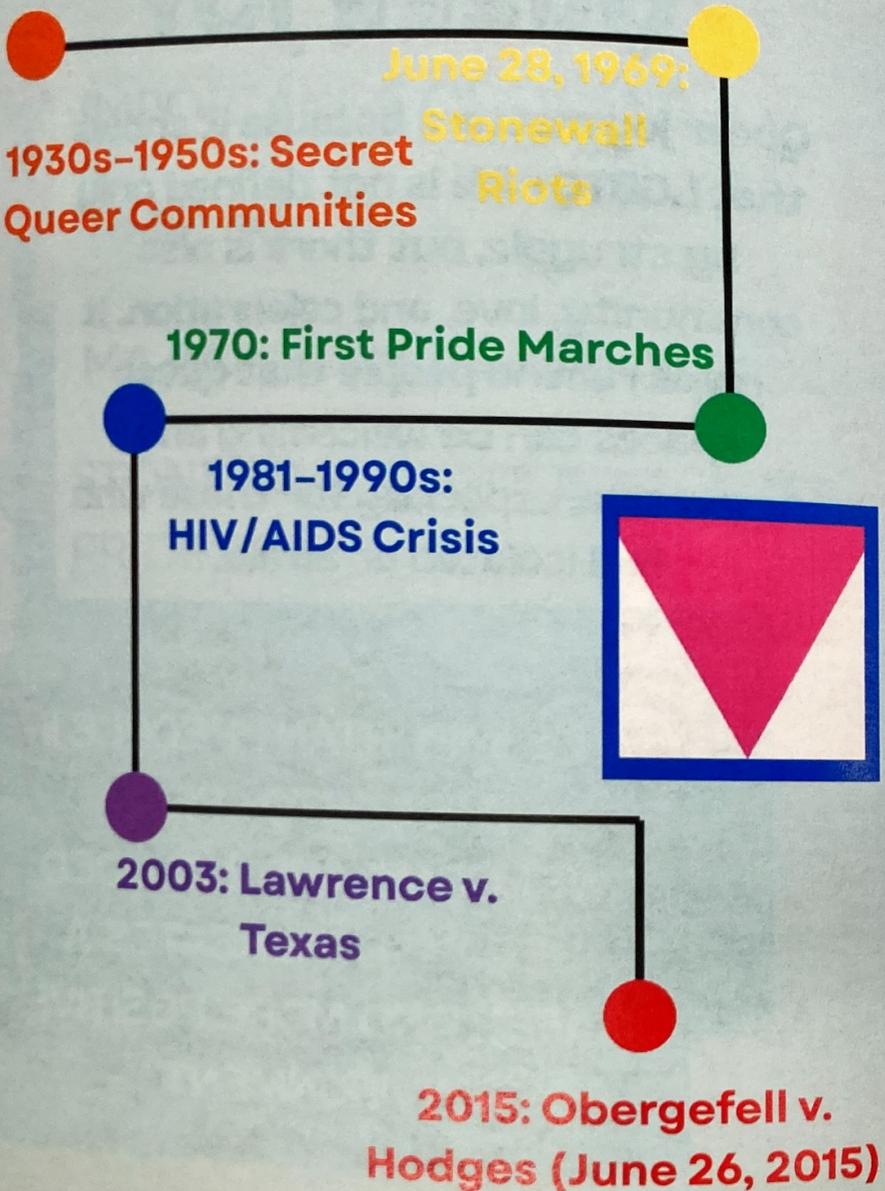
LGBTQ+ STORIES

## IMPORTANCE OF QUEER JOY

Queer joy matters because it shows that LGBTQ+ life is not defined only by struggle, but there is also community, love, and celebration. It helps remind people that queer spaces can be welcoming and supportive, especially for those who feel isolated or afraid.

**“IT’S IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE LGBTQ+ FEEL WELCOME AND INCLUDED BECAUSE IT CREATES A SAFER AND MORE POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT”**

# TIMELINE



# MOTHER OF BLUES

In a time when being queer was taboo, Ma Rainey used music to openly express her attraction to women which created a space for queer joy during a time many people still were forced to hide.

## Songs Referencing Sexuality

- Prove It on Me Blues
- Shave 'Em Dry Blues
- Bo-Weevil Blues
- Don't Fish in My Sea



# STONEWALL

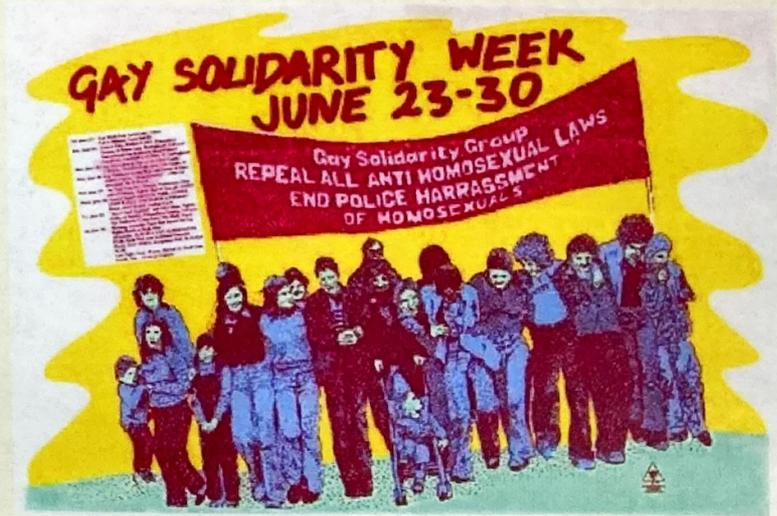
## RIOTS

**The Stonewall Riots began after years of police harassment and discrimination towards the LGBTQ+ community. People were tired of being targeted, arrested, and humiliated by the police simply for being themselves.**

**Even though the riots inspired a powerful movement, the experience was heartbreaking.**



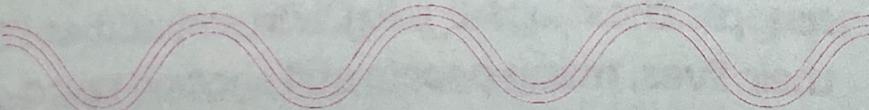
The 1971 Atlanta Pride was one of the first pride marches in the South, and it was inspired directly by the courage and resistance of the Stonewall Riots. Despite the fact being at a pride event could cost people their job, dignity, and sometimes their lives, many people still showed up to support this community.



# ATLANTA

# PRIDE 1971

**QUEER JOY HELPS PEOPLE  
FEEL SEEN, SUPPORTED, AND  
CONFIDENT IN THEMSELVES.**



Even today, the LGBTQ+ community still faces struggles. Laws in some states make it harder for trans youth to get care, allow discrimination in schools and workplaces, and create unsafe environments. These challenges often lead to mental health issues, fear, and disruption in the education of LGBTQ+ youth.

# Struggles

# Community

Despite challenges, the LGBTQ+ community creates joy by offering support, connection, and acceptance through shared experiences. Even during difficult times, resilience and happiness can shine through when people have the support of their community.

**Where can you find community?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

HOW IS THE

LGBTQ+

COMMUNITY

A SAFE

SPACE?

CHARLIE



HE/HIM

"People think I'm missing out on love, but I'm not. It's not romantic, but that doesn't mean I don't love."

In an environment where so many people's lives revolve around romantic relationships, Charlie spent so long trying to force himself to fit in. He didn't even know what was different or "wrong" with him, all Charlie knew is that he wasn't happy. Discovering the term aroace helped Charlie feel seen for the first time, allowing him to finally be happy as he was.

# RHYANN

THEY/THEM

In their small town, feeling out of place was something Rhyann was used to. They didn't have much access to the LGBTQ+ community, so understanding their identity was something Rhyann struggled with. Discovering they were nonbinary was a journey, but when they did, I watched Rhyann go from completely isolated to lighting up every room they're in.

"I thought I was the only one who felt like this. Finding out I wasn't alone probably saved my life"

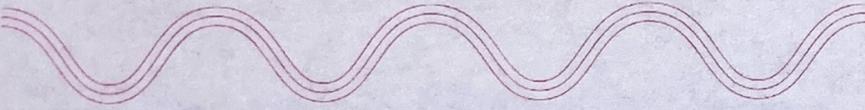
Felix had been prepared for their struggle to understand, but his parents' outright refusal to acknowledge him as a son was an unfortunate shock to all who knew them. After coming out, Felix described how his home life switched from perfect to downright hostile. They moved out as soon as they could with the help of other LGBTQ+ individuals in our community.

# FELIX

HE/THEY

"Yeah, I miss (home), but if I were still there, I would miss myself more."

A kind community can do a lot for a person. Ellie wasn't afraid to come out because she had seen her community's supportive actions for LGBTQ+ individuals. Through coming out, Ellie found even more supporting and loving individuals to share her life with.



"I am forever grateful for the support of my friends and family. They made it easy for me to be myself".

**SHE/HER**

**ELLIE**

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**CITATIONS**

**“I dreamed last  
night I was far from  
harm.”**

**-Ma Rainey**