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LGBTQ+ History Lesson

Inquiry Question: How did *The Ladder* magazine provide lesbian women support in the 1950s?

Standard: 11.8



Inquiry Question:

How did *The Ladder* magazine provide lesbian women support in the 1950s?

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Content Standards

11.8 Students analyze the economic boom and social transformation of post–World War II America.

CCSS Standards:

Reading, Grades 6-12

- RH 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- RH 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- RH 7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- RH 9: Integrate information from diverse information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Writing, Grades 6-12

- WH1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- WH4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. 9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

Speaking and Listening, Grades 6-12

- SL1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in- groups, and teacher-led with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts and issues, building on other ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Overview of Lesson

- Students will experience strategies that will help them analyze primary sources.
- Students will examine and use literacy strategies that will help them access primary sources.
- Students will engage in close reading and text-based discussions in various settings including in pairs/groups and as a classroom.
- Students will generate at least one writing task that is Common Core based.



Sources

- Interview with Lillian Faderman
- Calendar of Events
- Article
- Reader Response
- Panel of Experts Q/A
- Advisory

Procedures

1. The teacher will give students historical background knowledge on the struggles faced by lesbian women in the 1950's. Students will read passages from an **Interview with Lillian Faderman**. The teacher will use the following protocol to have students share their ideas on the reading.
 - a. Students will read the *Interview with Lillian Faderman* using the **Say Something** protocol. Students think out loud, listen closely to each other, and develop shared understanding of the text. Students will choose the stopping point(s), or have partners decide together how far they will read silently before stopping to “say something.” When students do say something it will be in relation to the following question: According to the interview, how did lesbian women struggle during the 1950s?
 - b. At the end of the reading the teacher can have a few students share their thoughts about the topic.
2. The teacher will use the PowerPoint to give students background knowledge about the Daughters of Bilitis and *The Ladder* magazine.
3. The teacher will do a **Jigsaw Activity** to analyze Sources A – D. Depending on the size of the class using Source E is optional.

Directions for a Jigsaw Activity

- **Divide students into 4 to 5 people per group.**
 - Have the same number of students in each team.
- **Divide your content into 4 to 5 sources.**
 - Divide the content into the same number of sources as the number of students in each group.
- **Assign one source to each person in the Jigsaw Group.**
 - Each person is expected to teach their source to the rest of the group.
 - At this point, students don't interact with other members of their group; they read and study their own source independently.
- **Have students meet in Expert Groups.**
 - After each student has studied his or her source independently, they gather with all the other students who have been assigned to the same source. (A's with A's, B's with B's, etc).
 - Within each Expert Group, students compare their ideas and work together to prepare a presentation of the main ideas of their source to their Jigsaw Groups.

- During this time, gaps in individual students' knowledge can be filled, misconceptions can be cleared up, and important concepts can be reinforced.
- **Have students return to Jigsaw Groups.**
 - Now that students have studied and discussed their source in their expert groups, they return to their original jigsaw groups, where each student takes a turn presenting their source.
 - Students listen carefully, take notes, and ask clarifying questions.
 - After each student has presented within the Jigsaw Group, students will discuss the Inquiry Question using information that they received within their group.
- 4. The teacher will **Debrief** the activity by writing out the types of support that the Ladder magazine gave their readers. The teacher will engage students in a **Whole Group Discussion** on the following question: *How did the support provided by The Ladder help lesbian women navigate the times they lived in?*
- 5. The teacher will then ask students the following question that students will discuss in a **Turn and Talk**: *What types of supports do LGBTQ students need today?* Have students share out some of their ideas. Discuss the types of supports offered at your school site and in your community for LGBTQ youth.

Assessment

Students will engage in a **Structured Writing Assignment** on the following question: **What types of support did *The Ladder* give its readers and how did this support help its readers navigate the 1950s?** In this writing assignment students will explain at least three types of supports offered by *The Ladder* and discuss how that helped lesbian women navigate the 1950s. Students must provide evidence to support their claim.

Bibliography

All primary sources courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive, <http://one.usc.edu/Articles>:

Interview with Lillian Faderman: Chronicles of LGBT struggles, *The Socialist Review*, February 2009

<http://socialistreview.org.uk/333/interview-lillian-faderman-chronicles-lgbt-struggles>

Daughters of Bilitis, Historical Essay, *Zoë Sonnenberg*, 2015

http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Daughters_of_Bilitis

Video clip:

Civil Rites & Civil Rights: Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HksGMTXRxA>

Sources:

The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957



Source A: "Interview with Lillian Faderman: Chronicles of LGBT struggles." The Socialist Review, February 2009.

By Rita McLoughlin

What was it like coming out as a working class lesbian in the 1950s?

The 1950s were probably the worst time ever to be a lesbian in the US. I look at what the Western world is like now for lesbians and it's a different universe. Of course I recognize that young lesbians might have trouble with their families and still feel that there are certain jobs where they can't be out, but they have no conception of the constant fear lesbians lived in then... Once I jaywalked across the street holding hands with my first lover who was a very butch woman - she was dressed, as it was considered in those days, like a man. Now everyone wears pants and tailored jackets but then that wasn't the case. This policeman stopped us, ostensibly for jaywalking, made us get into the car and drove around the block and parked. It was very threatening. He made her get out of the car. I had no idea what he would do. I thought I was going to be arrested but he just lectured me, saying I didn't look like somebody like Jan (the woman's name) and that she was bad business. Finally he just let us both go...I heard many worse horror stories of butches and femmes who were picked up and sometimes raped, and I heard horror stories about raids on bars. There were many times when I got to bars just after a raid had taken place, where the bar was empty with just vice squad officers around.

Could you tell us about how lesbians were treated during the witch hunts of Senator Joseph McCarthy?

It was particularly middle class women who were concerned about their livelihood during the McCarthy era. If you were a teacher or you worked in any kind of government position and it was discovered that you were lesbian, you could be fired on the grounds of immorality. There were witch-hunts of lesbians working in government positions and they were frequently fired...

What were the main differences between the middle class lesbian groups and organizations and the working class lesbians' bar culture?

...for the most part middle class lesbians were terrified of the bars because they were often raided. That was true in all the big US cities. Lesbian or lesbian and gay bars weren't safe and the names of everyone who was arrested would be in the newspapers. You would risk losing your job, and middle class lesbians who had extensive training as teachers or social workers or nurses didn't want to blow it all by being arrested. Instead they would have house parties and extended circles of friends who could do things that they considered safe.

For working class lesbians it would have been much harder to invite 20, 30 or 40 friends over to your small digs. So the only place to socialize or form a community was in the bar.

For many working class lesbians the bar culture was an absolutely wonderful thing because that's where they formed friendship circles. They could be who they were - if they were butch they could dress in butch garbs.





Yet it was so dangerous. There was also another danger. Alcoholism was so big in the lesbian community in the 1950s and 1960s because you couldn't stay in the bar unless you bought a drink, and you couldn't nurse one drink all night: you had to have several if you wanted to stay.



Source B: Calendar of Events. The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 - DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS BUSINESS MEETING AT 8 P.M., 2174 CALIFORNIA ST., SAN FRANCISCO, BASEMENT APARTMENT.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 - GAB 'N JAVA, AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION SESSION FEATURING TOPICS PERTINENT TO THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE LESBIAN. AT 8 P.M., 2217 FILLMORE ST., SAN FRANCISCO.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 - ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS. RESERVATIONS TO ONE OF THE OFFICERS OR TO THE DOB OFFICE BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, PLEASE!

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 - LADDER WORK PARTY COMPOUNDED OF EQUAL PARTS OF WORK AND SOCIALIZING. IT IS THE ONLY WAY BOB CAN GET THE LADDER ASSEMBLED AND MAILED, SO COME ON DOWN AND HELP OUT FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS OR SO. FROM NOON ON AT THE DOB OFFICES.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15 - THE TRADITIONAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY BRUNCH OF THE DOB. RESERVE THIS DATE AND BRING ALL YOUR FRIENDS, MALE AND FEMALE. THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO THE DOB. TIME AND PLACE WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF THE LADDER. PLAN NOW TO ATTEND.

NOTICE TO NEW YORKERS: NEXT BUSINESS MEETING OF THE NEW YORK CHAPTER, BOB, WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, AT 2 P.M. AT 1133 BROADWAY, ROOM 304. ALL WOMEN IN THE NEW YORK AREA ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

DOB NOW HAS AN ACTIVE CHAPTER IN NEW YORK AND GROUPS FORMING IN RHODE ISLAND AND LOS ANGELES. ADDRESS IN NEW YORK IS DOB, 1133 BROADWAY. IN RHODE ISLAND WRITE TO P. O. BOX 14, WEST WARWICK. THOSE IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA WHO ARE INTERESTED SHOULD WRITE TO DOB HEADQUARTERS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

Source C1: "Article: Bread and Butter Tips." The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957.

Bread and Butter Tips

Homosexuals Can Get Jobs - And Keep Them!

What was to have been a panel of four (two men and two women) qualified persons in the personnel and employment agency fields wound up with just two WOMEN at the December Mattachine Society public discussion meeting. However, the gals were not daunted by the absence of their male cohorts and proceeded, with the adept direction of Dr. Vera Plunkett as moderator, to give the predominantly male audience some very apt tips on employment and the homosexual.

Helen Sanders, publications director of the Daughters of Bilitis, who is experienced in the printing trades and the retail store field, pointed out that the prospective employee has his services, a very marketable product, to sell.

"Anyone with fears about a job should examine himself and find out what he has to offer," she said. "No employment questionnaire asks other than are you a male or a female - certainly not if you are a homosexual. This problem comes into being only if you yourself bring it to the job."

Joyce McCreery, who previously served as personnel interviewer for a large paper company, conducted a sample interview using a member of the audience as a guinea pig. She brought out the fact that the firm she worked for checked the three previous employers and investigated further where there were very short periods of employment. She stressed the importance of self-confidence and ability to express oneself about the job desired as well as the necessary qualifications for the particular job.

Both speakers pointedly advised the job applicant to fill in the lapses of time in their work records regardless. "But by all means remember what you said!" Miss Sanders hastened to add.

That the undesirable service discharge is not the hazard it has been supposed was also brought out. Many have been bonded, and many others are working on jobs even though the

Source C2: "Reader Response." The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957.

"I cannot tell you what a source of both inspiration and pleasure The Ladder contained for me within its pages. I, as an invert, can only know of what momentous importance such a movement as yours can mean, for the ultimate good of all of us.

"Like so many others . . . I am living a completely repressed existence, sublimating my nature, whenever possible, in my profession.

"One of the insertions in The Ladder caught my attention and I could not help but muse over it with some irony. The part about 'Come out of hiding'. What a delicious invitation, but oh, so impractical. I should lose my job, a marvelous heterosexual roommate, and all chance of finding work . . . I would be blackballed all over the city.

"I am interested-very much interested in becoming a member of the Daughters of Bilitis. Although at present discretion prevents me from making any moves to help the cause . . . there is one very effective weapon we, who must fight from a hiding place, still have - the fountain pen and the typewriter."

J. M., Cleveland, Ohio

Money helps, too. -Ed.

Source D: "Panel of Experts Question and Answer Session." The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957.

RAISING CHILDREN IN A DEVIANT RELATIONSHIP

Small group discussions for women interested in the problems encountered in raising children in a deviant relationship will be sponsored by the Daughters of Bilitis in the San Francisco Bay Area. Several professional leaders in the nursery school and parent-education field have offered to participate as discussion moderators and lend assistance based on their knowledge and experience.

Certainly all mothers and any other women interested in this subject should contact the Daughters of Bilitis, P. O. Box 2183, San Francisco 26, California. Discussions will be set up in the very near future.

For those out of town who have expressed interest, THE LADDER will print a series of articles based on these discussions.

Suggestions for other topics of discussion will be welcome.

HOW SECURE IS YOUR JOB?

This weighty problem will be thoroughly hashed out at the discussion meeting Tuesday, Feb. 26, when a panel of experts in the field takes over to answer the question.

Nick MacKenzie has many years of experience in personnel and employment agency work; Marjorie Arnold is a social worker who has also worked with personnel and employment over a career of many years; D. Stewart Lucas, president of Mattachine Society, and Helen Sanders, president of the Daughters of Bilitis, have both had much experience both as employees and in counselling homosexuals and others on job problems. Moderator of this discussion, which promises to be one of the most stimulating and helpful of any we have held, will be Dr. Vera Plunkett, who always sheds a great deal of light on any subject.

Plan to attend. You may be worrying needlessly. See page 11 for details of time and place.

Source E: "Advisory on 'Your Legal Rights' Booklet." The Ladder Magazine, 1956-1957.

'YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS'

Copies of a booklet entitled "Your Legal Rights" based on the Illinois Criminal Code, which has been prepared by the Legal Department of the Chicago Area Council of the Mattachine Society, are now available.

While the booklet is specifically based on the statutes of the State of Illinois, it is significant in that similar statutes are in effect in virtually all the states. By consulting the penal codes for other states, particularly those sections pertaining to sex offenses, vagrancy, etc., as well as municipal codes where applicable, this booklet can be readily adapted to fit the situation in any U.S. jurisdiction.

As pointed out in "Your Legal Rights", many private citizens, through ignorance and fear, fail to avail themselves of those laws created to protect individuals from harassment and persecution by society or its agents. This state of affairs is particularly prevalent among minority groups whose social ostracism frequently makes them feel a personal guilt or inferior status before the law. It is essential that these groups be apprised of their legal rights and learn to replace fear with a true knowledge of legal procedure for their own protection.

"Your Legal Rights" was prepared by the Mattachine Society with the assistance of Attorney Pearl M. Hart of Chicago. Copies may be obtained at 25¢ each from the following addresses:

Chicago Area Council
Mattachine Society, Inc.

Post Office Box 3513

Merchandise Mart Post Office
Chicago 54, Illinois

Mattachine Society, Inc.
693 Mission St., Rm. 307
San Francisco 5, Calif.