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Pride in the Archives

On June 28, 1969, the Stonewall Riots began following a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, one of New York City's best known LGBTQ clubs. Forty-seven years later, the site was [declared a National Monument by Presidential Proclamation](#). The nomination for its status as a National Monument is in the [National Archives Catalog](#).



A view of Stonewall Inn Historic Site 1999. National Register of Historic Places Registration, [National Archives Identifier 75319963](#)

The month of June was chosen to honor the LGBT+ community because of the Stonewall Riots, which are viewed as the beginning of the modern-day LGBT+ rights movement.

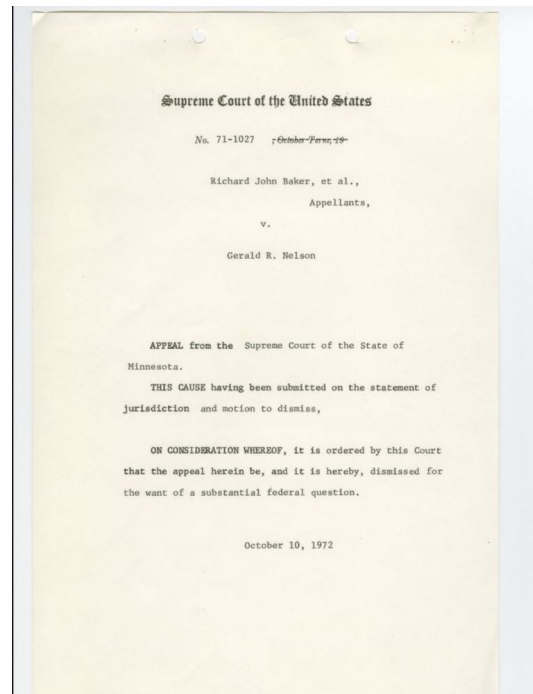
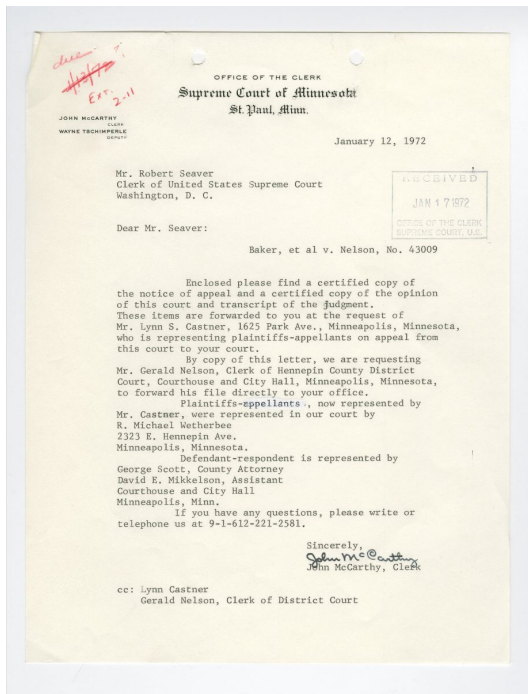


The White House is lit with the colors of the rainbow in celebration of the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, June 26, 2015. [National Archives Identifier 176549838](#)

Records at the National Archives constitute a rich documentary history of the experience of LGBT+ individuals. Here are a few examples of records from the National Archives Catalog documenting such experiences:

Baker v. Nelson

The earliest same-sex marriage case to be reviewed by the Supreme Court was [Baker v. Nelson in 1972](#). On May 18, 1970, University of Minnesota students Richard Baker and James Michael McConnell applied for a marriage license in Minneapolis. The District Court Clerk of Hennepin County, Gerald Nelson, denied the couple's application because they were both men. In response, Baker and McConnell sued the county office for discrimination, but the court dismissed the couple's claims and ordered the clerk not to issue the license.



Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Baker V. Nelson, #71-1027. [National Archives Identifier 26318353](#)

After their appeal was dismissed by the Minnesota Supreme Court, Baker and McConnell filed an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, where it was also dismissed “for want of a substantial federal question,” meaning the Court decided the issue did not directly relate to Federal laws. Although Baker and McConnell’s case was never technically heard by the Supreme Court, its dismissal set a lasting precedent against same-sex marriage, culminating in the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996.

Gay Students Organization of the University of New Hampshire, et al. vs. Thomas N. Bonner, et al.

This file unit consists of documents comprising [U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire civil action case number 73-279](#). Filed in 1973, this is one of the earliest cases involving gay and lesbian civil rights. In their complaint, the plaintiffs stated that the defendants had denied their constitutional rights, including those secured by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

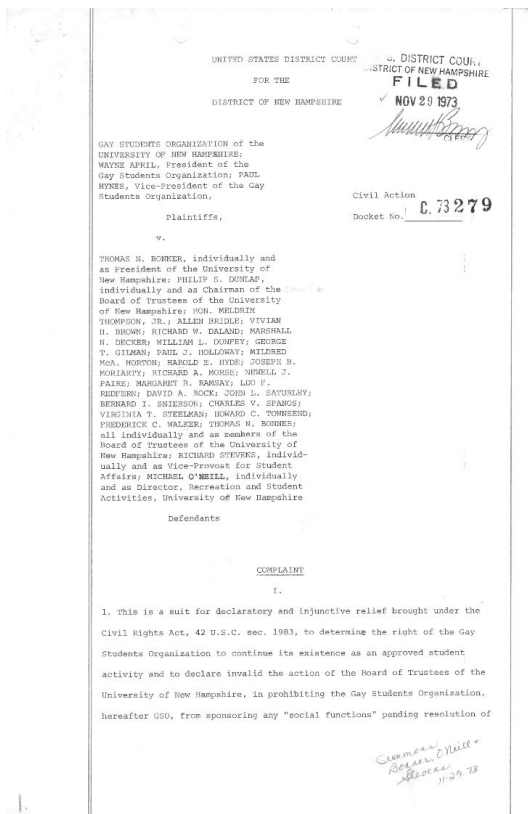
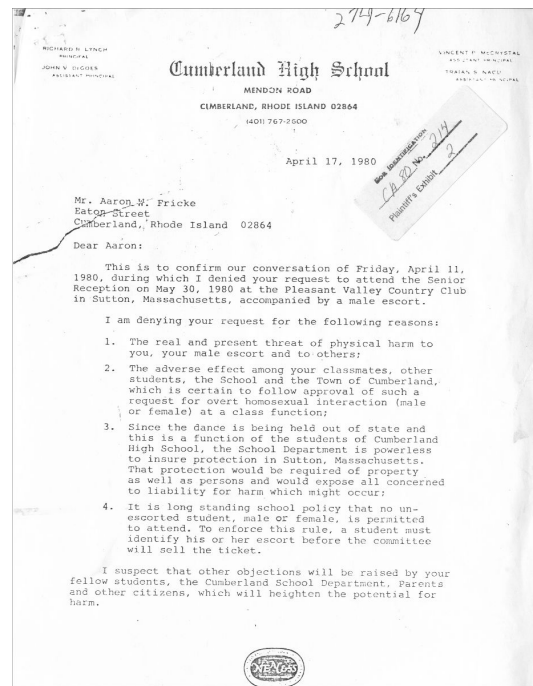


Image: Gay Students Organization of the University of New Hampshire, et al. vs. Thomas N. Bonner, et al., Complaint, 11/28/1973. [National Archives Identifier 40945142](#)

Aaron Fricke v. Richard B. Lynch

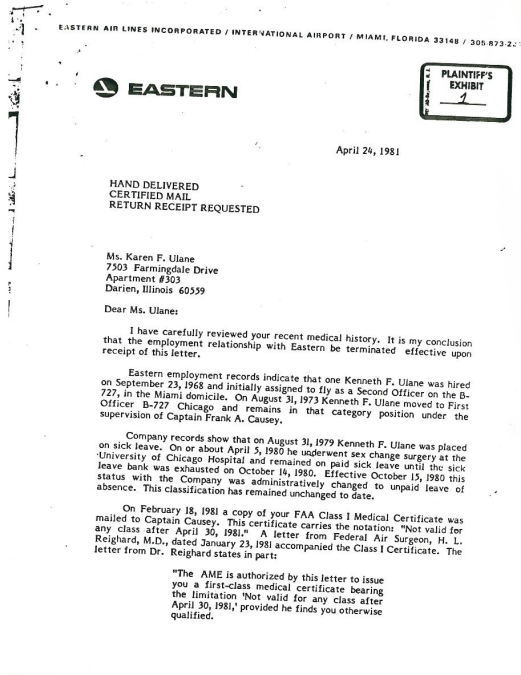
This file unit consists of material related to civil action case file number 80-214, [Aaron Fricke v. Richard B. Lynch](#). The subject matter of this case file relates to redress sought by the plaintiff, an eighteen-year-old male high school student, who had been denied by school officials of attendance at a school function with a male companion.

[National Archives Identifier 29033010](#)



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Karen Ulane



[Karen Ulane](#) was a transgender airline pilot who, after sex reassignment surgery, was fired from her job at Eastern Airlines. She sued her employer for sex discrimination and won but the case was overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The case was from 1981 and an early legal precedent for transgender people. [NARA has some of the evidence submitted in the case.](#) Ulane died in a plane crash on May 22, 1989. View [Karen Ulane's record](#) on Social Networks and Archival Context (SNAC).

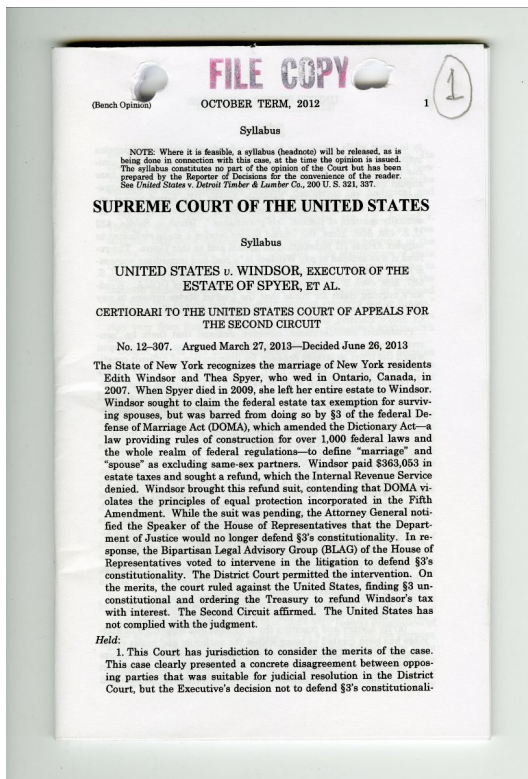
Image: Exhibit, Termination Letter #1, 4/24/1981, [National Archives Identifier 12008912](#)



President Barack Obama views the Gay Pride Flag with Gilbert Baker, the artist who designed the flag, prior to a reception in recognition of LGBT Pride Month, in the Blue Room of the White House, June 9, 2016. [National Archives Identifier 176549434](#)

United States v. Edith Windsor

In the [2013 case United States v. Windsor](#), the Supreme Court ruled the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA, passed in 1996) unconstitutional. DOMA defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman, allowed states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages granted under the laws of other states, and prohibited married same-sex couples from collecting Federal benefits.



Although it did not legalize same-sex marriage, *United States v. Windsor* was a milestone in the fight for marriage equality. The decision forced the Federal Government to treat same-sex marriages equally under the law and made tax benefits previously restricted to opposite-sex couples available to same-sex couples. However, this ruling only extended to Federal laws; individual states did not have to recognize same-sex marriages.

[National Archives Identifier 29308667](#)

Obergefell v. Hodges

Obergefell v. Hodges is a landmark civil rights case in which the Supreme Court ruled that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples and that all states must recognize marriages in other states regardless of sexual orientation. Learn more on the Pieces of History blog, [Milestones on the Road to Marriage Equality](#).

Listen to the audio recordings of the Supreme Court [argument](#) and [opinion](#) in the National Archives Catalog:

- Argument: Obergefell v. Hodges [14-556] Question 2, 4/28/2015. [National Archives Identifier 183518302](#)
- Opinion: Obergefell v. Hodges [14-556], 6/26/2015. [National Archives Identifier 183518316](#)



The White House is lit with the colors of the rainbow in celebration of the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, 6/26/2015. [National Archives Identifier 118817917](#)

Visit [National Archives News](#) to browse additional LGBT+ records, holdings, and resources including:

- Pieces of History: [Pride in Protesting: 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising](#)
- Discovering LGBTQ History: [Marriage in Minnesota, 1970](#)
- [The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage](#)
- [Amending America: LGBTQ Human and Civil Rights](#)
- Pieces of History: [American Pride for Astronaut Sally Ride](#)



People gather on Pennsylvania Avenue holding balloons that spell out "Love Wins" as the White House is lit with the colors of the rainbow in celebration of the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, 6/26/2015. [National Archives Identifier 138925688](#)

Start your research on History Hub



Have a question? Find your answer on [History Hub](#)!

For those looking to conduct research or learn more about Civil Rights, Court Records, and LGBTQ-related records, we encourage you to browse recent posts and questions on History Hub, including:

Seeking reasons employees were fired during the "Lavender Scare"

On what grounds was Frank Kameny's appeal to the Supreme Court denied?

- Civil Rights Blog: [LGBTQIA+ Equal Protection Records in Federal Courts](#)
- [Court Records Community](#)
- [Looking for sources on the 1969 Stonewall event](#)

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[Citizen Archivists, there's a group just for you!](#) You can share tips and strategies, find new challenges, and get support for your work. Get started with our poll: [What kinds of records do you like to transcribe?](#)

COVID-19 Update

The National Archives is committed to the health and safety of our visitors and staff. We are closely monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19, and we are working with public health officials and our counterpart agencies to monitor and respond to the evolving conditions and following CDC guidelines.

For more information, visit <https://www.archives.gov/coronavirus>

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