

The Origins of the Valley LGBTQ+ Timeline

In 2002, I was drafted to edit a chapbook updating Northampton's history as part of its 350th birthday celebration by adding information about the town's LGBTQ+ past.

Not only had I lived in "Hamp"(Northampton) for thirteen years, but starting in 1970 I became active in local Gay, Women's, Anti-War, and Lesbian Feminist social change movements. Over the years, my interest in the creative process led me to keep track of the change I was witnessing and then share my observations. My work included curating an exhibit and publication about the first decade of the Valley Women's Movement (Common Woman Club on Masonic Street., 1978) and presenting slideshows on the Valley Lesbian community, including at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians (Smith College, 1984).

In order to see what might be included in a Northampton LGBTQ+ history, I went through my accumulated work, research files and odd stacks of papers, making note of the names of groups, spaces, and associated activity with years and locations. Northampton was clearly a major Valley center drawing people here from around the area, thus a Valley-wide context needed to be established to identify any connections.

By 2003, my notes had accumulated into the immense Valley-wide timeline you can see here, a scribbled-over and often difficult-to-read document really only meant to be a reference for me to work from. It was, and still is, fragmentary, incomplete, unverified, in question. For example, an entry might be based on a single alternative newsletter calendar listing for, say, a gay men's support group. We still have no idea if anyone showed up to that first meeting or if many did attend and continued meeting regularly for years.

The timeline allowed me to identify the Northampton thread of activity within the Valley over a few decades. Once pulled out for further examination, it was invaluable in creating an outline of crucial content to include, particularly starting in the 1970s as more and more populations chose to be more visible.

The proposed chapbook never happened. I naively assumed that folks who had been part of various pieces of the story would be willing and able to contribute brief histories, and I would only have to edit them together into coherency. Though trying to draft much of it myself, the deadline and 2004 'Hamp birthday passed without an LGBTQ+ update. The research and drafts got filed away until 2014 when a new high-speed internet connection opened possibilities. See that story on my [Wicked to Wedded blog](#). In the intervening years, I've worked with Historic Northampton to put the timeline in a digital form on their website so that it is widely available. We invite your [comments, contributions, and suggestions](#).

Kaymarion Raymond, October 2026

Girls club continued but at some point changed name →

Hampden County:

[SWC → SWU]	[SWU]	[SWU closes]	VWMA moves to Springfield	VWMA	VWMA in Springfield	→ moves back to Northampton
Bar continuum unknown			year? attempt to organize a Geomarch in Springfield	bars		
Girls Club? — changes name & ownership at some point to The Hideaway or our Hideaway						

