

# Tucson Gay Museum History



**TUCSONGAYMUSEUM.ORG**

The original Tucson Gay Museum effort began on June 10, 1967, as a Gay (LGBTQ+) history archiving project when a few local Tucson, Arizona neighborhood school age boys came together in one of their families garages to collect local LGBTQ+ historical items, take and collect LGBTQ+ photographs of the people places and events of their time periods along with collecting historical items of the time periods before them.

Their original efforts collected thousands of LGBTQ+ event and organizations posters and flyers, gathered and saved [Gay & Lesbian](#) publications, made sound recordings in and around Tucson of the LGBTQ+ events, people, and those related subjects along with other LGBTQ+ historical items.

Soon the group of young men found themselves collecting LGBTQ+ historical related exhibit items from all around [Arizona](#), including [Phoenix & Tucson](#) along with other cities in Arizona later expanding to LGBTQ+ historical archives collections of some major cities of other states within the United States including those of [Alaska](#) [California](#) [Hawaii](#) [Texas](#) [Washington State](#) and [Washington D.C.](#)

The archives collections include original photographs and records from the 1950's to 2020's chronicling the beginnings of Phoenix and Tucson Gay & Lesbian (LGBTQ+) businesses, organizations, bars, bar owners, Drag Queen Performers, original and later 'Gay' Pride celebrations parades efforts and events, Anti-Gay Hate Crimes & Murders, protests, Community Centers, Youth Groups, AIDS Organizations, Business Leagues, and the many people who made up those LGBTQ+ Communities.

The Tucson Gay Museum is now one of a number of LGBTQ+ museums and historical archives collections within the Arizona LGBTQ+ Museum and still remains the oldest and the only surviving all-volunteer Gay (LGBTQ+) 1967 effort in Tucson and Arizona as its founders originally chartered into its organization in the summer of 1967.

The Tucson Gay Museum organizations founding members used their own funds and film loaded cameras often chemically developing the film at home in their early days of collecting, photographing, in time later movie camera filming, and archiving historical items and memorabilia to create historical exhibits since the summer of 1967. <sup>[3]</sup>

Over the succeeding years since those legendary, sometimes violent, and often very turbulent Gay Lesbian LGBTQ+ historical decades of the [1960s](#) [1970's](#) [1980's](#) [1990's](#) and after in Phoenix, Tucson, other [Arizona](#) communities and around the [United States](#) and beyond.

The Tucson Gay Museum's historical preservation projects gained broader focuses at times during different time periods including the production of LGBTQ+ related historical video and movie documentaries, an LGBTQ+ related TV Show 'OutWest', sponsoring Tucson and Phoenix LGBTQ+ events, providing at times educational exhibits in Tucson and Phoenix LGBTQ+ related and other events, working with local and national LGBTQ+ organizations, fielding LGBTQ+ historical documentary audio/visual field crews, working with national and international LGBTQ+ historical groups in LGBTQ+ historical preservation and in the startup of their efforts.

During the 2020 COVID Pandemic the Tucson Gay Museum purchased and freely distributed over 4,000 locally made protective masks to Tucson's AIDS Prevention Organizations, local LGBTQ+ Youth Groups, Straight Youth Groups, homeless shelters, front line health care, police, fire, grocery store, merchandise store, and other workers.

The Tucson Gay Museum was the World's First All Virtual LGBTQ+ Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Queer Museum.

