



## The 1940's Exhibit Collection©

Tucson Gay LGBTQ Museum And Library

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Text, Audio, And Photographic Format Exhibit

**"My Cousin Was On The U.S.S. Arizona, I'm Enlisting In The Navy!"**

December 7, 1941 University of Arizona College Student



1940 Movie 'Arizona' Filmed At Old Tucson Studios

As Tucson entered the 1940's, it was still a somewhat sleepy backwater town of 36,818 people living within the city's 7.8 square mile limits with some horses and wagons still being seen on the streets as they were also becoming quickly replaced by automobiles and delivery trucks.

Out at the University of Arizona (Originally started as the Arizona College of Mines) the original building of Old Main had sat empty and some roof timbers had fallen down forcing it to be condemned by local building safety authorities in 1938 due to its disrepair from a long period of neglect and lack of use.

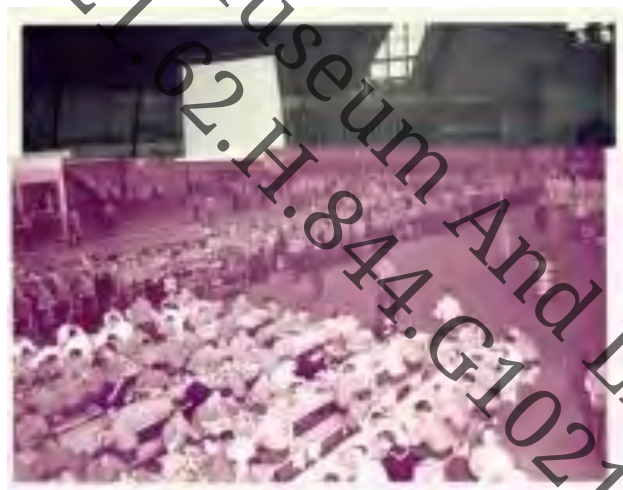
Old Main was already scheduled for total demolition and the entire removal of the debris out to the county landfill as soon as the funds could become available for the work to start.



Sunday 7:30AM December 7, 1941 USS Arizona

Then, suddenly on the morning of December 7, 1941 with the attack on Pearl Harbor, the sinking of the USS Arizona and many other United States Navy warships, and the loss of over 2,000 U.S. Citizens lives the fates of Old Main, Bear Down Gymnasium, Tucson, and the entire world was changed forever.

Hundreds of thousands of young men (many merely no more than teenage boys 14-17 often lying about their age) soon passed through very rushed military training at buildings like the quickly government funded then quickly remodeled Old Main were pressed into service as military training centers right along with Bear Down Gymnasium which was turned into both an all-male barracks and a military training center as World War 2 had just landed with both feet very firmly on Tucson's front door step!



January 1, 1942 Bear Down Gymnasium  
University of Arizona In Tucson

Soon war materials related factories and businesses operations began opening up everywhere around in both Tucson and Pima County. For Tucson's \*Homosexuals (Gay's and Lesbian's) it meant jobs, jobs, and more jobs working right at the home front in Tucson.

For the able bodied men it meant being shipped out at Tucson's downtown train station to military training camps located all over the United States, and quickly being sent up to the war front to fight. For the able bodied women it meant clerical, medical, and other non-combat related jobs in all the branches of the military.

Often during the initial processing the inductees were suddenly asked, ***Are You A Homosexual?*** To which everyone would of course say NO and move on to the next processing station. At the time \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) only had their "GAYDAR" to operate with and would quickly but discretely form into small groups to safely network while sharing their secret stories.



1940 Telephone Newspaper  
Ad In Tucson

In Washington D.C. the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt lived her Bisexual Life while married to the President Franklin Roosevelt. At the same time Eleanor had her four (4) yearlong love and relationship affair with Associated Press journalist Lorena 'Hick' Hickock who had originally been assigned to cover the White House. First Lady Eleanor was a true champion for human rights & freedoms and always pushed hard for them. Curiously, her husband Franklin Delanor Roosevelt had an affair with Eleanor's secretary in 1918, and after that Eleanor refused to and never had any further sexual contact with her husband for the rest of her and his life.

Overseas in both the European and Asian Theatres of World War 2 the fighting had been already been raging there prior to the United States entering the fight. In 1940 Nazi German Army troops marched into France, then on into its capital of Paris taking over all of France making it yet another war prize and part of Germany. Nazi German officials had worked out a system of identification for what it termed its undesirables and enemies of the Nazi German Government.



1940 Gays Executed By Nazi German Government

Thus was born the Pink Triangle as an identifier of \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) in both in Germany and inside the growing list of the many countries the Nazi government and its military was rapidly taking over and making a part of its Nazi Empire (a.k.a. Third Reich - 3rd Rein in English).



In Germany all \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) were arrested then sent off to prison or to the concentration camps (the first of the Nazi Death Camps was setup on March 10, 1933), considered as the very lowest form of prisoner, and always automatically scheduled for extermination regardless when or if the execution or extermination was ever carried out.

MARKINGS OF CAMP INMATES IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS						
Form and Color of Markings						
	POLITICAL	HABITUAL CRIMINALS	EMIGRANTS	JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES	HOMO- SEXUALS	VAGRANTS
Basic Colors						
Markings for Repeaters						
Inmates of Penal Battalions						
Markings for Jews						
Special Markings	 Race Defiler Male	 Race Defiler Female	 Escape Suspect	<div>2307</div> Number of Inmate		
	 Pole	 Czech	 Members of Armed Forces	 Special Inmate		

1938 Nazi German Government Death Camp Prisoners Identity Symbols

In Tucson \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) along with a wide variety of Hipsters still discretely met at times in dark hotel bars or cafes like the **Hotel Congress**, **Pioneer Hotel**, **Santa Rita Hotel**, and the Red Light (Whore House) districts in Tucson until they were shut down.

The first widely known \*Homosexual (Gay) bar-cocktail lounge (but with a mixed crowd including many Bisexuals) called the **Town House** bar-cocktail lounge-packaged liquor opened in early 1944 located in the downtown business area of Tucson at 27 S. Scott Avenue and quickly attracted a growing and regular crowd of loyal \*Homosexual (Gay) patrons.

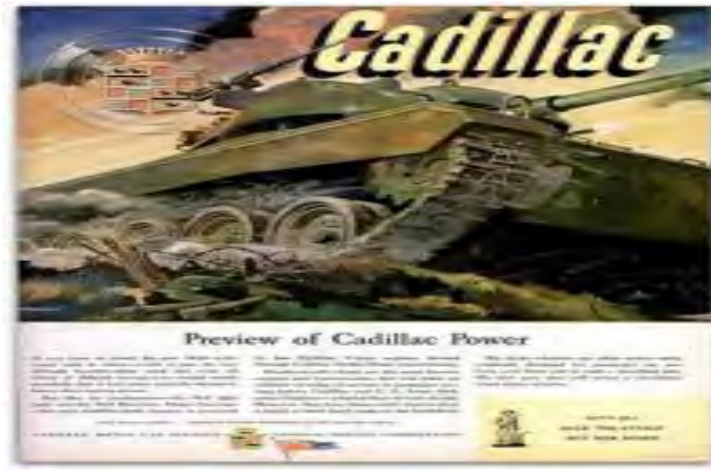


1949 Santa Rita Hotel In Tucson

Tucson's \*Homosexual (Gay) movers and shakers of the 1940's mid to latter time period were Ray Birmingham, Terry Cohen, Tom Garnish, and George Rederus all of whom regularly hosted their own very private outdoor outings around the Tucson and Pima County areas while also hosting many also very private events at their own homes predominately on the weekends including the popular Sunday Clothing Optional Pool Parties, BBQ's, and Potluck Dinners which would include fun group games popular in the time period, dancing, contests with and without prizes, 'Stand Up Drag', singers, musicians, along with other live performances.

On weekends and especially Sundays there was always a standing dinner invitation to all of Tucson's \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) to meet at the **El Torero Restaurant** located at 231 E. 26th Street where one could be 'Their Self' without any worries.

Additionally, the **Red Light Districts** of Tucson and any city in the United States for that matter had always provided places where \* Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) could blend in and often secretly own-operate some of the very profitable establishments and bars there themselves.



1943 Cadillac Magazine Advertisement In Tucson

Around Tucson and elsewhere throughout the United States at the time with the country's sudden entrance into World War 2 on December 7th, 1941, a very sharp, quick, monumental change happened in the \*Homosexual Female (Lesbian) culture.

Suddenly, there was an intensely critical need for all able bodied men to leave all their jobs for service in the military skyrocketing a demand for labor in Tucson's war parts factories, other war materials production operations, and other jobs many of which war related were located south of the city in Pima County.

That area later became Tucson's International Airport.

The critical labor demand immediately thrust all available women into the workforce often including high school teenagers. With the abrupt absence of men, quickly all females increased their bonding leading to new levels of relationships and intimacy at the Tucson home front.



1943 Around Town

The same bonding was happening to the many hundreds of thousands of women who had enlisted in the military, which at first during the time period was very lenient toward Lesbianism because they badly needed servicewomen.



Ironically, when World War 2 ended and women were no longer needed for the war effort, those same Lesbians in the military were systematically found out, discharged, and then shipped back to the nearest American port where they had to make it back home entirely on their own.

This huge movement of Lesbians relocating in many of the nation's large urban areas and those with military bases such as Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego, and even the relatively small Tucson largely contributed to the great growth of Lesbian Culture in the cities all around the United States during the time period of the mid to latter 1940's.



1942 Navy Trainees World War 2  
University of Arizona Bear Down Gym Barracks

During the early 1940's Tucson saw a very large influx of military men and women from all around the United States many of whom brought with them their big city desires and lifestyles.

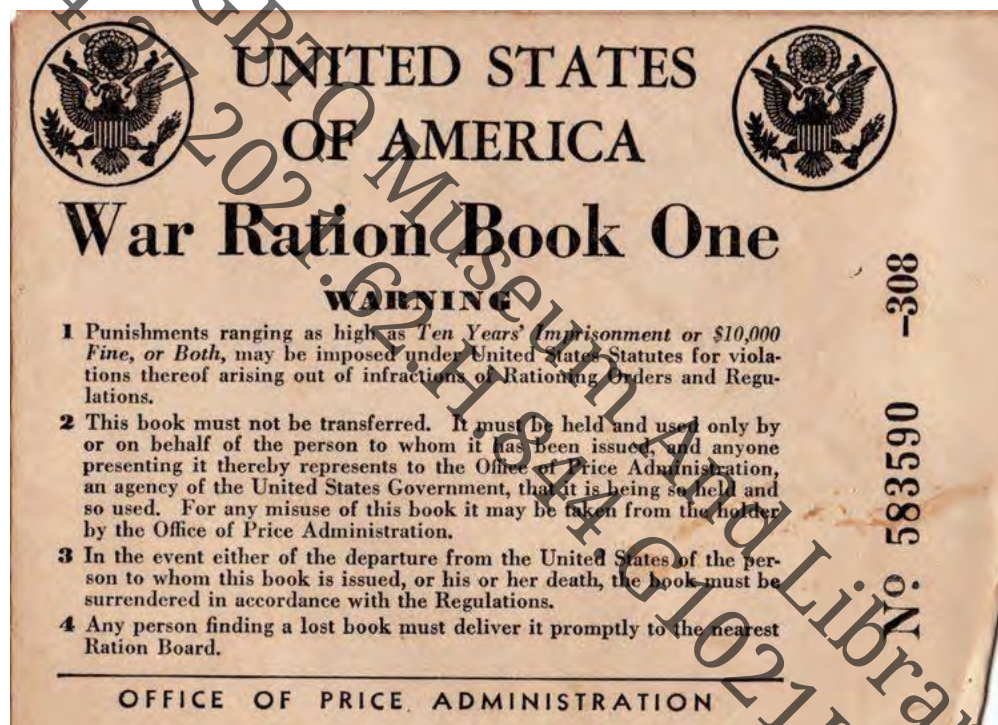
Tucson's two Red Light Districts were still in full swing at the time, but repeated demands by high ranking military officials to shut those districts down fell on very deaf ears at first with Tucson city officials during a time when Henry O. Jaastad served as Mayor and Harold C. Wheeler served as the Tucson Police Chief. It was not until a final threat of the military threatening to make all of the entire City of Tucson "Off Limits" to ALL military personnel and to ALL military commodities buyers that Tucson city officials leaned hard on the Red Light Districts business operators and owners to cease their operations.



1942 Around Town

Quickly understanding that if not one of the thousands of military men and women then stationed in and passing through Tucson would ever be allowed to leave their bases and barracks, that all the military purchasing agents-buyers would not be allowed to purchase any needed supplies locally in Tucson, and the devastating resulting economic loss the city would face as it was literally just barely crawling itself out of the Great Depression proved far too much for the Tucson City Council, prominent businessmen, and other local government officials.

Almost immediately Tucson's Red Light Districts along with their underground \*Homosexual (Gay and Lesbian) owned or friendly establishments disappeared almost overnight. To insure their compliance armed U.S. soldiers patrolled the areas 24 hours a day until the United States Army Generals overseeing things were sure there was nothing still operating day or night.



1943 World War 2 Food And Gasoline Rationing 'Book'

On the federal government level in the United States by 1944, a new U.S. Military Policy Directive decreed that 'All Homosexuals' were to be committed to military hospitals, once there examined by psychiatrists and discharged under Regulation 615-360, section 8, which soon led to the term "He/She is a Section 8."





1942 Old Main Building At University  
Of Arizona World War 2 Wartime Restoration  
Tucson, Arizona

During that time period of the 1940's and beyond many in the military who had at times openly been involved in same sex activities, had relationships, had been frequenting suspected or known \*Homosexual bars-establishments went deep underground and became even less trusting of those outside their very close circle of friends they already knew in order to escape the purges that would destroy their military records for life (and often follow them into their civilian lives).



1945 The United States Military Bombs Nagasaki & Hiroshima Japan

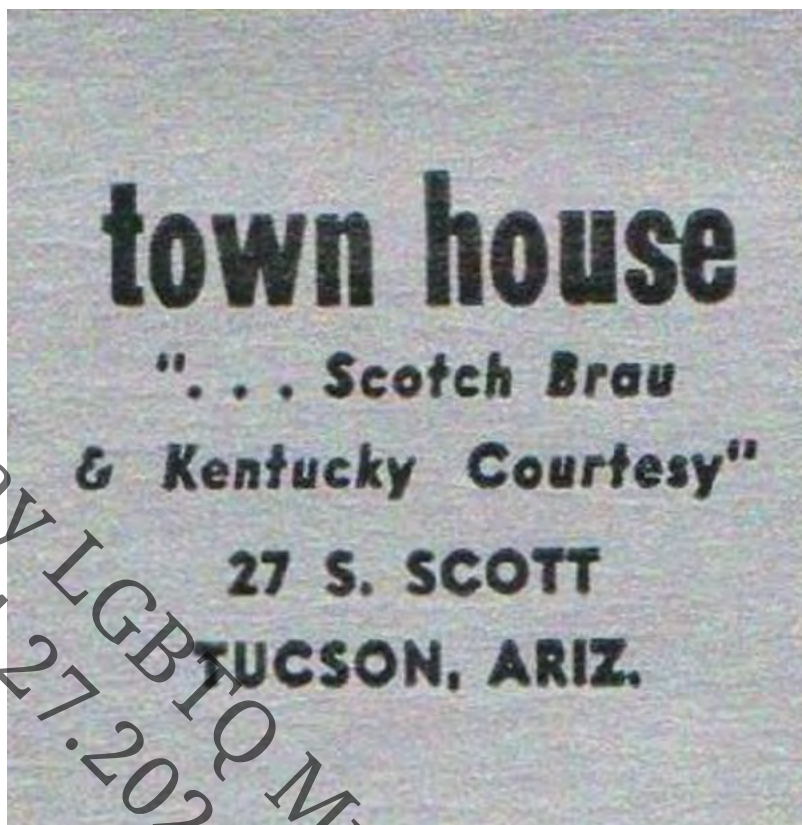
From the end of World War 2 in 1945 with the surrender of Imperial Japan and then the surrender of Nazi Germany, there was great pressure in the remaining 1940's on everyone to have mainstream nuclear families which pushed many \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) to try marriage with opposite sex partners, and even many well-known \*Homosexual Figures in the United States soon joined right in on the idea. For Bisexuals of the era that transition was far smoother.



1947 Anti Communist & Anti-Homosexual Literature in Tucson

At times the fear of Communism taking over the United States was joined with the existing fear of homosexuals by those seeking their own political gain by creating numerous scapegoats. Both actual and merely suspected \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians) were systematically found out and then fired from their government jobs as the seeds for a full scale witch hunt in the United States began to germinate.

In Tucson, Arizona the **Town House** bar and cocktail lounge which also sold package liquor opened in 1944 and is regarded as Tucson's first \*Homosexual (Gay) bar (mixed with a straight crowd and including many Bisexuals).



The '**Town House**' as Tucson's locals called it often using that simple two word phrase as a code was located downtown at 27 S. Scott Avenue, Tucson, Arizona.

The comings and goings at the **Town House** bar and lounge were purposely kept relatively 'low key and discrete' to help stay under the radar of the Tucson Police Department and local city officials. The mix of clientele was not random or ever by any accident.

Mixing of a bar's patrons especially during different hours of the day, evening, and or night then also mixing things up on different days of the week could give anyone out in public who was watching the outward impression Town House was just another downtown bar and lounge during the very conservative time periods between the 1940's and later in the 1950's that the Town House was in business.





1949 Inside The **Town House**

One popular element of this fear were the cheap dime store pulp fiction novels, written about the always sensational racy escapades of seemingly endless wildly neurotic and crazed fictional \*Homosexuals (Gays and Lesbians).

In 1947 Gay film maker Kenneth Anger's Homosexual film 'Fire Works' was released during a time when being a \*Homosexual was illegal and cause for their arrest in the United States.



1946 Mt. Lemmon Catalina Mountains Tucson Area

Still, in Tucson in 1949 as the decade of the 1940's came to an end with its population of 44,548 citizens within the 9.5 square mile of Tucson's city limits, the town could be a place that often afforded those of Hipster and other Alternate Lifestyles some respite and the ability to find their own niche in The Old Pueblo regardless of how they were doing things anywhere else around the United States.

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