**For immediate release:**

**Historic survey plan highlights sites of LGBTQ History**

*Golden, Colorado, June 5, 2023:*  In recognition of Pride Month, the Colorado Historical Foundation is pleased to share a statewide survey plan to identify sites associated with the history of Colorado’s LGBTQ communities.

“Witnessing and physically experiencing where significant events took place, or where specific people lived or gathered, heightens one’s sense of authentic connection with their own history,” says Colorado Historical Foundation Executive Director Catherine Stroh. “Unfortunately, honoring places as historically significant is woefully behind when it comes to sites associated with once marginalized people, such as those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer.” That is why the Foundation embarked upon a statewide survey plan to create a comprehensive historic context, highlight over fifty examples of LGBTQ-associated sites, and identify opportunities for ongoing research and site recognition. The project was conducted over three years by consultants Erika Warzel of Clerestory Preservation and Amy Unger of Pine Street Preservation, with funding by the History Colorado State Historical Fund.

Individuals whose sexual orientation or gender identity did not conform to established heterosexual or binary gender norms lived and loved in Colorado since humans first occupied the land. Their stories are inseparable from Colorado history, therefore the sites associated with their personal histories are many and varied. Bookstores, clubs, and locations of supportive centers catering to LGBTQ communities are documented throughout Colorado’s urban cores. The Coal Creek Arena in Aurora hosted the first Colorado Gay Rodeo. Veterans note several gay men and lesbians served at Camp Hale, a World War II Army installation once located near Redcliff. In 1975 County Clerk Clela Rorex bravely issued same-sex marriage licenses at the Boulder County Courthouse, long before such marriages were legalized. The Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins cared for gay Wyoming college student Matthew Shepard and updated over 815,000 website visitors worldwide on his status after he was severely beaten and later died.

Research found that many sites associated with LGBTQ history have already been lost to demolition due to deferred maintenance, urban renewal, or unrecognized significance. This underscores the urgency for ongoing research and documentation.

“This project builds upon the vital work of numerous historians documenting LGBTQ history in Colorado, many of whom gave valuable guidance and encouragement over the course of the project. We hope the survey plan provides helpful direction on where LGBTQ history can be found in tangible places, so that the visceral experience of this history can be honored and recognized,” says survey plan co-author Erika Warzel.

The LGBTQ survey plan is one of three on which the Colorado Historical Foundation collaborated with research historians to document sites associated with under-told histories. Other recently completed survey plans focused on sites across Colorado associated with women’s suffrage, and travel and leisure places welcoming to Black travelers during the Jim Crow era.

Site documentation helps tell a more complete historical record and can lead to a site’s official historic designation. Designation makes it possible to attract resources to help preserve sites for future generations.

View full survey plan and list of over 50 Colorado sites associated with LGBTQ History at
<https://cohf.org/recent-projects/>

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*The Colorado Historical Foundation, an independent nonprofit organization established in 1965, works to advance the study and preservation of Colorado’s history and historic places.* [*www.cohf.org*](http://www.cohf.org)