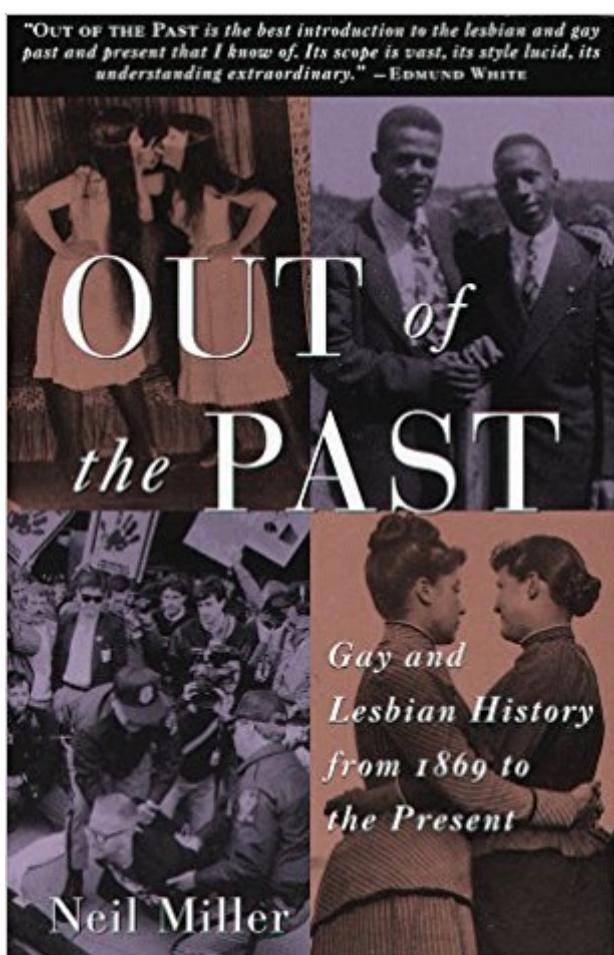


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# Out Of The Past: Gay And Lesbian History From 1869 To The Present



## **Synopsis**

A unique and hugely absorbing narrative history of gay life--from Oscar Wilde to the 25th anniversary of Stonewall--by the award-winning journalist and distinguished author of *Out in the World*. Miller accompanies his narrative with essays and excerpts from contemporary and historical writings. Photos and line drawings.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Bachelor lawyer Abraham Lincoln shared a bed with Illinois storekeeper Joshua Speed for three years starting in 1839. Because of its portrayal of a lesbian "Boston marriage," Henry James's *The Bostonians* was omitted from the 26-volume Scribner edition of his works published 1907-1917. The facts recounted in this chronicle of gay and lesbian history from Walt Whitman to the movie *Philadelphia* range from the trivial to the interesting to the revelatory, with chapter-length narratives on the Harlem Renaissance and Paris in the 1920s; the Oscar Wilde and Radclyffe Hall trials; the romantic relationships between Eleanor Roosevelt and reporter Lorena Hickok; homosexual entanglements among the Bloomsbury set; and Native American men who dressed and lived as women. Miller (*Out in America*) uses a conventional textbook style that at times infuriates with the simplicity of its tone. Although he uses fairly well-known primary source material, his excerpts are intriguing: A moving passage from Marvin Leibman's *Coming Out* Conservative illustrates his experience with discrimination in the military during WWII; Gide's autobiography recaptures his impression of meeting Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas at 25. This overview shows how some recent advances merely reprise gains made and lost in the past; while some past activities outdid anything

in the present. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Miller applies his sturdy journalist's prose to the task of producing a popular history of gay men and lesbians since the coining of the word homosexuality in an anonymous German pamphlet in 1869. Drawing on the large library of self-consciously gay scholarship amassed since the 1969 birth of gay liberation, Miller treats each major topic as it arises in the historical record. Many of the resulting 31 chapters include, besides the main narrative, excerpts from writings and sidebars on figures or developments germane to the chapter subjects. Although Miller covers recent developments in other parts of the world quite well, this is, because of the way gay history has unfolded during the past 125 years, an account of events primarily in the West--indeed, mostly in the U.S. Reflecting, perhaps, the secular and leftist biases rampant among gay writers and activists, Miller overlooks two major developments--the growth of gay religious groups and the burgeoning of political conservatism among gay male intellectuals--but he's no radical toady, and what he does cover he presents fairly and very accessibly. Ray Olson

I am currently reading Out of the Past. It has given me an overview of the history of homosexuality. It has given me an understanding of how homosexuality was seen and reacted to in the past and how far the gay community has come. It also breaks it down in different societies such as; England, France, Germany and how each had its own laws to keep the homosexuals down and treated as less than human. There were times when the homosexual were persecuted, imprisoned and punished for who they were. They were treated as if they were sick. They were also entrapped, in other words they were set up and in doing so they would lose their jobs and blacklisted for future blackmailing. The homosexual community has come along way but it seems that they still have a long way to go. They are still shunned and don't share the legal rights as any other citizens. It seems that the law doesn't include them in the right to liberty and freedom as any heterosexual enjoys. The day that the homosexual community are totally accepted as part of the fabric of this world, only then will they enjoy total freedom and enjoy who they are for what they are no more and no less. They have a right not only because they are homosexual but because they are human beings just like me and you, like our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers.

Very timely, Nowaday it help the modern society to understand the situation on lgbt. Great touch on the story line

real title should be 'mostly gay history, some few comments about lesbians, aren't they helpful with the AIDS stuff '.but as the author freely admits it's mostly about the gay side. so, lesbians kinda get honorable mention in some few paragraphs, which was really disappointing to me. it's a bit gossipy in sections, but it's also clearly not information you're going to run across in the average history book, so i'm glad it's in my collection.

Great book, fast delivery

This book is the BEST resource I have found on capturing the multi-faceted, insightful, humorous and moving stories of gay and lesbian history in our country (and abroad). As a professor of psychology, this is an invaluable text for numerous history classes. Kudos to Neal Miller for researching this rich, rich history, written in a manner that is imminently engaging and fascinating.

This was required for a class I took. I'm not a book reader so I only read what was required. Well written and does a good job of keeping you engaged in some topics. Great price for a lot of words. Even came with a book marker from the store who sent it.

Neil Miller's done a great job of pulling together aspects of (western) gay history. I've read some of the sources for his lesbian chapters and he uses them intelligently to summarise main points. I assume he's does the same with the male stuff and material from other countries which was previously unfamiliar to me. His style is readable, succinct and balanced about how we look at the past from our current viewpoints. One feature of the book which is particularly pleasing is his use of extracts from writings he's referred to in his central text. This adds a good variety to the voice of the work AND the extracts are long enough (two or more pages in length) to inspire further study. I also like A) the pictures of famous historical figures, there's something particularly moving about them, (I never knew Willa Cather was so gorgeous!) and B) the balance of genders and countries covered is better than average. My advice - read it!

If you are interested in history, I highly suggest this book. Marginalized for eons, gay people are now an integral part of history. Relegated to the backburner, or whispered about in history sources, gay people have come forward with a great history. Within this collection, there are heartaches and triumphs, but always searching for the ideal of equality one day. Another good thing about this book is that it includes non-Western gay and lesbian history as well, yet another subject ignored by the

"mainstream" history. An incredibly transfixing and fascinating book, I couldn't put it down, and read into the late hours of the evening.

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