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### "Dear Diary, I Think I'm Gay...LGBTQ Youth and Information Access Across the Decades"

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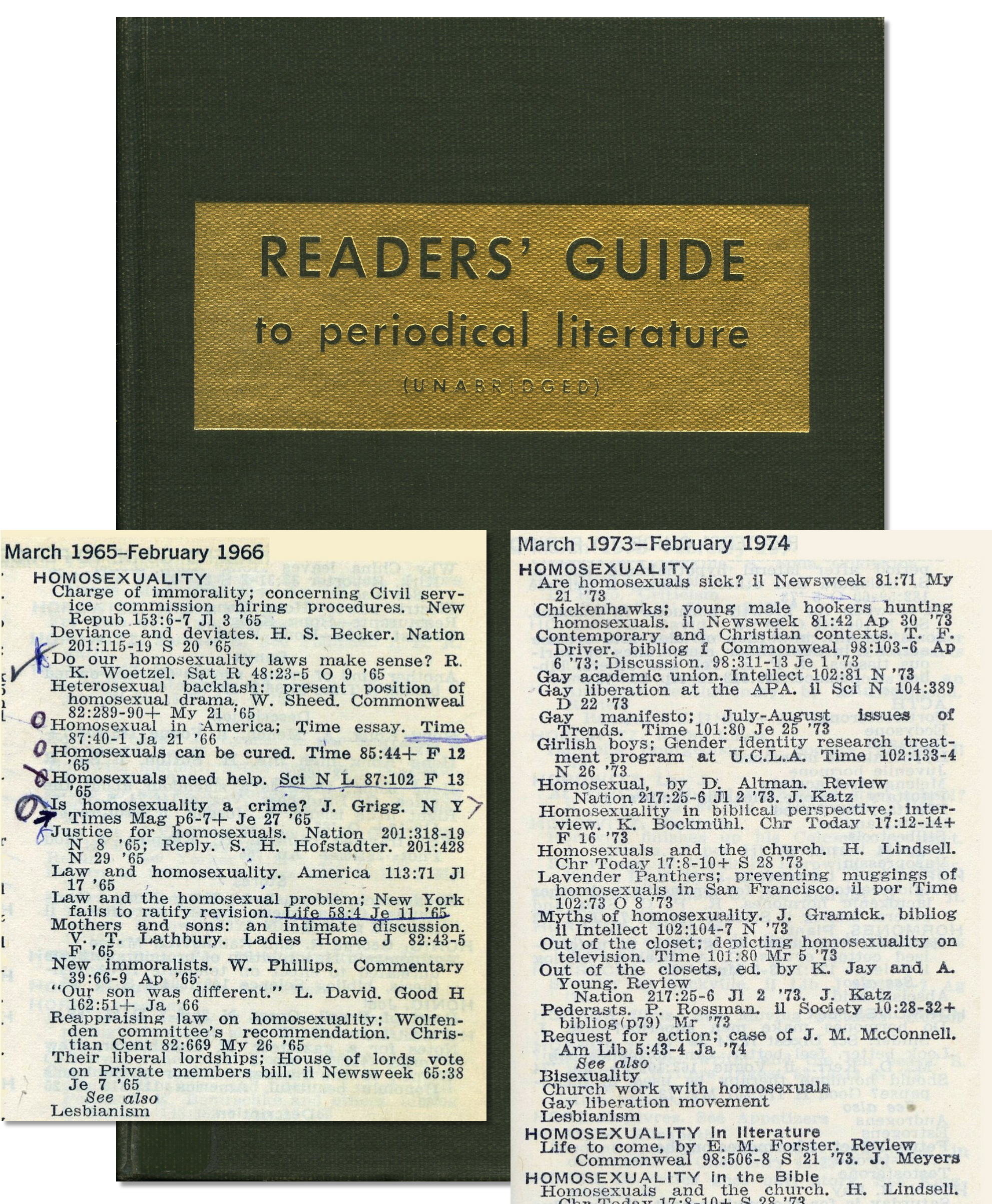
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## LIBRARY ACTIVITY 2—RGPL Exercise

- \* Group students, give each group *RGPL* volume.
- \* Students use worksheet ?s to explore *RGPL*s.
- \* Regroup and share insights from discussion.



## WORKSHEET:

Place yourself in the mindset of a teen/YA during this decade who has just started researching an LGBTQ identity using the *RGPL* and respond to the worksheet questions. **And for all of the things you find, continually ask yourself:**

*Do they present a diverse/positive representation of the LGBTQ community (do they challenge heteronormative culture)? Or do they seem to reinforce and/or reproduce heteronormative culture?*

- What subject term did you try looking up first? Did you find it, or did you have to try something else? Were the subject terms the same words we use today? Did you get referred to “See Also” for some other subject terms? What were the “See Also” terms, and how many were there?
- If there were subsections under your subject term, how many were there?
- How many article entries were listed under the subject term you decided to focus on?
- Would anything about your experience using the *RGPL* have created barriers (literal, psychological, and/or emotional) to your finding and/or using information? How would the experience have influenced your identity?

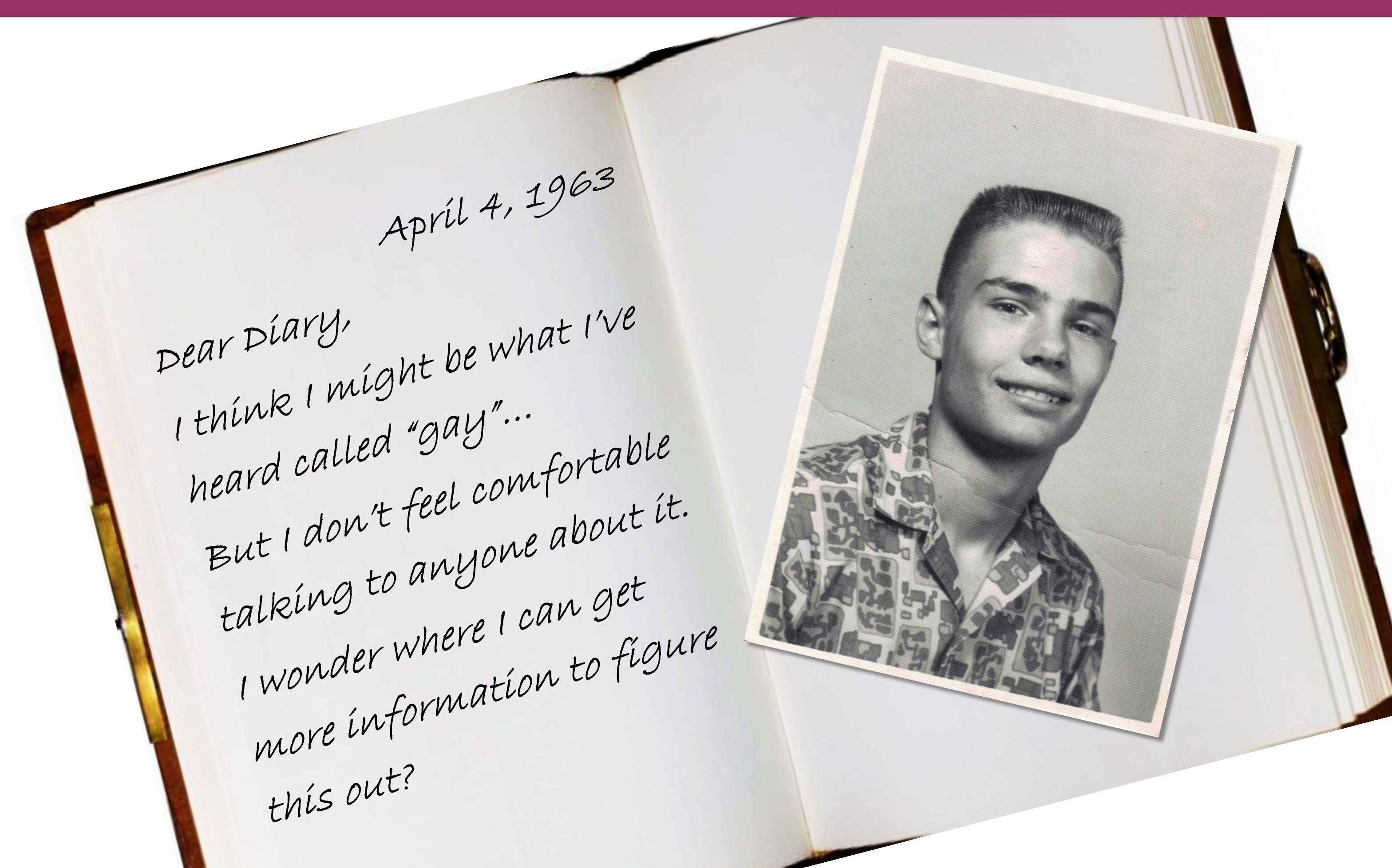
*Dear Diary, I think I'm gay...*

## LGBTQ Youth and Information Access Across the Decades

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### THE ASSIGNMENT—Queer Identities “Decades Paper”

Imagine you are a teen/YA “coming out” into an LGBTQ identity during your assigned decade (from the 1950s to the present). Seek out sources a teen/YA could access to explore your identity and write a four-page Diary as your teen/YA identity and a one-page Reflection as yourself re: the experience.



### LIBRARY ACTIVITY 1—Mini Lecture

- \* Discuss concepts of heteronormativity, hegemony, critical information literacy, & intersectionality.
- \* Present how these concepts, when combined, lead to the questions to consider when the students are writing and researching for the Decades Paper (see PPT slides below) .

#### HETERONORMATIVITY + HEGEMONY + CRIT INFO LIT + INTERSECTIONALITY =

How is heteronormativity as a hegemonic, hierarchical social system:

- historically situated?
- influenced by intersectionality?

And how does it exert power and influence over information production, dissemination, access, and consumption?

#### WE CHALLENGE YOU TO CONSIDER...

• how the sociohistorical and heteronormative context of your decade influences:

- the process by which you would search for information
- the overall accessibility of information
- the “credibility” of such information (i.e., how credible is the info if it is biased by the dominant heteronormative culture?)
- your identity as a teen/YA in this decade

• how the research process itself would have created barriers (literal, psychological, and/or emotional) in LGBTQ youth's access to information within your decades, and what challenges persist in present day.

## LIBRARY ACTIVITY 3—LibGuide

- \* Include prompts challenging students to reflect on their research process & information access issues teens/YAs likely faced in their decades.

<http://research.library.gsu.edu/qi>

RGPL Research - Kickin' It Old Skool

*Some things to think about...* Would you as a teen in your decade have known what words were being used to describe what you are experiencing —would you have been comfortable asking for help from a librarian, and would they have known either? Would they be the same words we use today? LGBTQ-focused publications existed as early as the 1950s—but was the *RGPL* even indexing those publications, and, even if it was, what are the chances your library would've had them?

News/Magazine Articles

*Some things to think about...* While the GSU Library has lots of magazines available (and now even online), if you were living in a rural area with a "small town" library, would it have the magazines you are looking for, even the mainstream stuff, let alone more "obscure" magazines (i.e., magazines geared at the LGBTQ community)? Would most libraries even today have LGBTQ publications?

Films & TV Shows

*Some things to think about...* What would be the likelihood that your average, mainstream theater or TV station in the 1940s, 1950s, etc., would have been showing these films/shows—or even for any of the decades? Before VCRs, DVD players, and now streaming online video, your local theater and your TV would have been your only outlet...

*Some things to think about...* If you were watching these educational films in school or on a news program, how would their coming from "authority" figures like teachers, reporters, scientists, etc., influenced your likelihood of questioning the credibility of the information?

Books @ GSU & AFPL

*Some things to think about...* We tend to assume that scientists, doctors, and scholars are "objective" and "neutral"—but how might the dominant heteronormative culture have influenced their perspectives, and perhaps biased their judgment in researching and writing these books?

*Some things to think about...* Would your local library have carried these “Stonewall Book Award” LGBTQ-focused young adult books during your decade? Would all of them even today?

About the Internet/WWW...

*Some things to think about...* Even though the Internet/WWW arrived in the mid-1990s, would every teen have had a computer with Internet in their homes? And, even if they did, would they have felt comfortable searching at home, for fear that their parents might see what they were searching for? Would their public or school libraries have had computers? And, would the school or public libraries' computers have had filters on them (like many do today), and thus possibly filter out LGBTQ websites?