

Jacob Dreiling

### Abstract

Beginning with 2003's *Lawrence v Texas* decision, life has gotten better for queer Americans. From political access to marriage equality, the tide has turned towards justice and equality. In the 1930s and 40s, however, this was not the case, despite a relatively hands-off approach by both the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations. The Roaring 20s, so famous for their sexual liberation and lifestyles of excess, were followed by a period of repression and practical living. But queer ingenuity thrived during this period, and their lifestyle was seen in the arts, the military, and public life for those savvy enough to spot it. From John Horne Burns' *The Gallery* to the works of Langston Hughes, queer people thrived and gave hope to those who dared not speak of their attraction for fear of legal retribution. Queer archives around the country such as the ONE archives in California and the National Queer Archives in New York maintain a host of personal letters, newspaper editorials in favor of queer protections, and even advertisements for queer society events, such as the legendary drag balls. Through the documents obtained from archival sources, as well as personal narratives and the arts, I will attempt to show how queer life in the 1930s flourished despite the Great Depression and legislative enforcement.

*Keywords:* queer lifestyle, queer literature, queer history, politics, Great Depression