



The 1900-1910's - ©Tucson LGBTQ Museum - All Rights Reserved (Text Format)

At the beginning of the [1900's](#), [Tucson's](#) population was 7,531 within the city's two (2) square mile area as [a strange new trend swept through American girls' schools](#) and [a number of women's and other colleges](#) including the [University Of Arizona](#): an intense form of [courtship](#), friendship, and [relationship between girls](#) known then as Smashing.



1904 Friends Who Had 'Smashed' In College

To do Smashing, a girl would choose to [devote herself to another girl in school](#), [send her items of affection](#) and [perform simple small tasks for the person](#) their affection was directed to. Then, when/if the girl being pursued finally did return this [show of affection](#), she was then officially considered smashed by her peers. These school born [relationships were often extremely intense](#) and often continued well after high school and college [in the form of romantic friendships](#). During the time they were referred to as ... [Boston Marriages](#). Around [Tucson Gays](#) and [Lesbians very discretely met and made new friendships](#) at the [Santa Rita Hotel's](#) cafe by always asking to be seated on the west side of the room, and something new called [Silent Moving Pictures could be seen downtown while an organist played](#).



1907 Train Depot Tucson, Arizona

Also, around [Tucson](#) after opening in [1907](#), both the inside and outside areas of the [train depot \(a.k.a. station\)](#) at 400 E. Toole Street downtown were very active pick up spots for locals. In the early [1900's](#) lower, middle, and upper-middle class [women could often live together as unmarried companions](#) and arousing relatively little suspicion or interest from their neighbors. There were a number of prominent women including [Jane Addams](#), a social reformer and co-founder of [Hull House](#) who spent almost all of her adult life living with [Ellen Gates Starr](#) who [co-owned a home with her](#). This emerging style of [relationships between women in the United States](#), as well as in Tucson was soon looked over closely by the ever more [popular views of the sexologists worldwide](#). Many [women would benefit from the work of the sexologists of the time](#) as the word [invert](#) quickly allowed women with the more [butch](#) tendencies to [very freely explore their masculine sides of themselves](#).



1905 "Gay Porn"

In the [1910's](#) Tucson had grown to a city of 13,531 people. [Traveling Vaudeville Shows](#) continued to perform regularly downtown attracting large diversion starved audiences as they passed through on their way to the bigger cities of the country. During this time period what would much later be known as the [4th Avenue Art's District](#) area was the [Barrio Tiburón](#) ([see article](#)) which was known as one of two (2) of the city's [red light districts](#), and regularly visited by [Tucson's Gays & Lesbians](#) of the time. In [1918 Tucson had established an aircraft hangar](#), and by 1919 had [opened its own airfield](#) that went through the different names of [Macauley Field](#) ([see article](#)), [Fishburn Field](#), [Tucson Municipal Flying Field](#), and finally [Mayse Field](#) (named after the [Mayse Air Service Company](#)) where later the [Tucson Rodeo Grounds](#) would be built at 4823 S. 6th Avenue.



1919 Mayse Air Service Tucson

Returning army soldiers and marines from [World War 1 1914-1918](#) who had been [poison gassed](#) by the [German Military](#) were flocking to new [Veterans Hospitals](#) like the [Tucson](#) area's original one ([VA Hospital #51](#)) that was purposely located very well away from the city's population thirteen (13) miles to the north of town off the dirt road heading to [Oracle Junction](#) on the former grounds of the privately owned [Pastime Park](#) which had been conveniently located just outside the jurisdiction of the [Tucson](#) city officials and [police](#) during its wildest days in the [1880's - 1890's](#) ([see 1800's](#)) as a [fun and pleasure center](#) often frequented by [Tucson's Gays, Bisexuals & Lesbians](#).



1904 University Of Arizona Men's  
Dorm Room

By the [1910's](#) a few automobiles began showing up at the homes of the more well to do [Tucson](#) homes, however horses and wagons still filled the dirt streets and roads. [Speedway Boulevard](#) ([see article](#)) which had been originally widened for those watching and betting on each other's horses to see who was the fastest was just beginning to feature a few of the

[new-fangled contraptions](#) racing down the boulevard as [Gays](#) of the time discretely met there along the [South Side of the dirt roads sidelines](#) during the races and often [Same Sex Relationships](#) formed as a result.

It was a time when proper people went to [Stage Play's](#) but the [fun](#) people [went to watch the Vaudeville Acts](#) being performed live downtown in [Congress Street area](#).

When a circus visited workers and school children around town were let off for the day and [businesses shut down so the whole town could go to the traveling circus](#) with its [clowns, animals, circus acts they offered every time one arrived in town](#). Through the very early [1900's](#), as [women's suffrage](#) faced several important federal votes, a portion of the [suffrage movement known as the National Women's Party](#) and [led by suffragette Alice Paul](#) became the [first cause to picket](#) outside the [White House](#). Due to that [manner of protest that was not acceptable to authorities](#) at the time, [suffragists were subject to arrests, rape, beatings by both police and the public, and many were jailed where they again faced beatings, starvation, torture, along with random interrogations at all hours of the day and night](#).



1917 City Hall Tucson

In [1918](#), Congress passed what became, when it was ratified by sufficient states the next decade, the [Nineteenth Amendment](#), which prohibited all state and federal agencies from any gender based restrictions on voting.

Many of the returning [World War 1](#) veterans migrating to the desert in [1918](#) with their war related [poison gas lung problems](#) including [those infected with Tuberculosis soon set up a tent city](#) out in the open desert just north of the present day [University of Arizona](#) (called [Bugville](#) or [Tentville](#) by [Tucson](#) townspeople). The conditions were a mixture of both harsh and squalid as the desert sand and hot winds swept through every space of the flimsy hastily made tents and tar paper shacks. There [same sex co-habitation was frequent](#), and others from Tentville [intermingled at times with Gays & Lesbians from town](#).



[1917](#) World War 1 [Doughboys](#)

As the 1910's came to a close in [Tucson](#) the population within the city had reached 19,982, and the year [1919](#) found both the nation and [Tucson](#) were [right on the edge of a new era in human sexual relations](#). The country, and its younger generation had just experienced the world's first [modern war](#) with [World War 1](#), and it was the first time airplanes flew overhead dropping hand thrown bombs out of their cockpits onto troops below, devastating machine guns killed hundreds of men in a matter of just minutes, tanks made their appearance, and poison gas had been used on United States and other soldiers. The country's and [Tucson's](#) mood was no longer on sacrifice, but instead it was firmly and directly [focused on pleasure like the country had never seen before](#).

Then, on [January 16th, 1919](#) the unbelievable began happening. Under [pressure](#) from the [Anti-Saloon League](#), certain church groups especially the Methodists, and the hundreds of [Ladies Societies](#) around the country, the U.S. Congress began the process that [in the decade just ahead would outlaw the manufacture and sale of alcohol](#) to the public. That law in itself would set the stage for what would come. And [what would come was the largest, wildest, and longest lasting party](#) the nation had ever seen.

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