Dear Friends:

June is Pride Month. At NYAM, we celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and reaffirm our commitment to achieving health equity by breaking down the barriers and changing the systems that prevent everyone from having an equal chance at a healthy life. This month’s features from the NYAM Library focus on LGBTQ+ heroes from the 19th and 20th centuries, including two NYAM Fellows.

From the Collections: "Familiar faces, hidden eyes: the story of homosexual men in America today"

From June 1980 to 1985, gay man NYAM Fellow Howard Brown (1921–1985), was the “health czar” of New York City, administering the Department of Hospitals, the Community Mental Health Board, and the NYC Medical Examiner’s Office. The threat of AIDS led him to resign, and soon thereafter, to take up the gay liberation cause. His 1973 public coming out made front-page news. Brown died less than two years later; his legacy includes Howard Brown Health, a Chicago-based LGBTQ+ oriented health care agency, and his landmark 1973 autobiography.

From the Collections: "Nurse and spy in the Union Army"

Sarah Emma Edwards (1846–1902) lived an unconventional life. During the Civil War she assumed the identity of Frank Thompson and served in the Union Army. In her sensational memoir, Nurse and Spy in the Union Army (1902), she recounts being in the thick of battle, here as the cavalryman shaving in a Confederate, Edwards’ story has been included in multiple books on America’s LGBTQ history.

Noted Elsewhere: "Cured"

The title is bitterly ironic. This film explores the changing perceptions of gayness in the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s, from curable illness to something to celebrate. The documentary, directed by Patrick Sammon and Bennet Singer, culminates with the 1973 vote by the American Psychiatric Association to remove "homosexuality" from its diagnostic manual of mental illnesses. Watch the trailer now and stay tuned for a NYAM-sponsored private online screening and panel discussion this summer.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Library. As we wait, stay safe, stay engaged and stay connected.

The NYAM Library Team

Your support helps us preserve the Library’s treasures, share them with researchers and the public, and safeguard the history of medicine to inform the future of health.

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About NYAM

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) tackles the barriers that prevent every individual from living a healthy life.

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