

News articles in the Champaign Urbana Courier generally did not make outright discriminatory remarks about homosexuality. Unless the article quoted an interviewee, or a citizen's remark, presentations of homosexuality as a mental illness or perversion were absent from the articles I looked at. Negative comments about the mental health of homosexuals in interviews or other public opinions occurred in four out of twenty three articles I looked at. In "Four Lesbians Speak Frankly about Homosexuality" by Sharon Robinson the women interviewed are said to have undergone "Marathon group therapy". Words like paranoia and fear are used to describe the women's feelings about their homosexuality. One woman mentions an aunt's attempts to have her committed to a psychiatric facility, and another asserts that "[Lesbians are] not walking around with antennae molesting children." These remarks are mixed with more upbeat positive statements like "I'm really happy." An accompanying piece on professional attitudes towards homosexuality gives the opinions of a psychiatrist as well as a gynecologist/obstetrician and a minister (Robinson). Both doctors mention the possibility that homosexuals have a mental illness, while the minister suggests that they are just people in need of guidance (Robinson).

One article that explicitly links criminality with homosexual activities was "YAF Gains, Gay Lib Doesn't at Council Meeting" (Kroemer). This article quotes a gay man, Jeff Graubart, who attended the University of Illinois. At the Champaign City Council meeting he tried to bring attention to the criminal charges faced by people dressed in clothing that was judged not appropriate to their sex. Graubart brings up a party he had attended in which two female impersonators were arrested and fined. It appears that these issues were not pursued by the council at this time. A series of stories addressed the arrest

and charging of Graubart with trespassing following a non-violent protest. These articles do not explicitly link homosexuality and criminality, but they do define Graubart as a homosexual and his cause in the protest was to speak out against the unfair treatment he had received as a gay man.

Out of approximately 103 items from the Daily Illini, I found that about 25 made reference to the idea that homosexuality is a psychological or criminal problem. One article explained that University of Minnesota had refused to hire a gay man because in that state sodomy was a crime. According to the article, courts found this to be insufficient reasoning to refuse to hire a qualified person. A feature called “Lesbians Strive for an End to Bias” addresses campus psychological counseling services. In the article McKinley Health Center, the Psychological and Counseling Center, and Champaign County Mental Health Center are listed as potential sources of counseling, and the attitudes of some administrators and employees towards lesbians and gay men are listed. The article notes that no lesbians have been to McKinley or the Counseling Center in that year. According to the author Sharon Cohen, “Although there is a scarcity of clients visiting counselors, the attendance is not an indication of lesbians’ assimilation into society.” As evidence for this assertion she cites anecdotes of harassment that one lesbian couple she interviewed had faced. There seems to be a stubborn refusal to accept a potential explanation that although lesbians or gay men may face harassment, they may also be competent enough to deal with these problems without the need for psychiatric treatment.

Another article on a debate between Baptist ministers and the Gay Illini quotes one of the Baptist debaters as saying, “My personal conviction is that there should be laws punishing homosexuality.” The other articles which link criminal behavior to

homosexuality are the Daily Illini's coverage of Jeff Graubart's demonstrations at city hall. A series of five articles cover Graubart's protest, his sentencing, and the aftermath. Graubart was arrested for trespassing at the Urbana city building. This purpose of his non-violent protest was to bring attention to abuse he felt he had suffered at the hands of the Urbana police. The issue is compounded when Graubart is quoted describing himself as a "psychopathic vegetable." Psychological assumptions seem to have been made about Graubart, as Mayor Paley called counselors to consult with him and attempted to have him committed in order to remove him from the city building. Graubart may be suffering from a mental illness, as he himself seems to think, but these multiple stories reinforce the idea that homosexuals are unstable, criminal, mentally disturbed individuals in the community.

The need for psychiatric intervention in the lives of homosexuals is the explicit topic of one article entitled "2 analyze 'gay life' psychology." It addresses a discussion that had been held at the Red Herring called "Homosexuality-Disposition or Disease" where psychological reasons were suggested to explain homosexuality. An article In "Questioning the Heterosexual Values of American Society" Reid Smith gives a competing explanation for the criminalizing and pathologizing attitudes taken by many towards homosexuality. He writes of America's "Neurotic version of sex" as the real source of oppression for gay men and women.

The remainder of articles tend to reject the idea that homosexuality is a disease, but the fact that these assertions continually appear throughout the decade suggests that it continues to be a commonly held idea that people feel the need to speak out against. Letters to the editor confirm this idea. An article titled "I'm a Person Too" by Roger Wilson gave quotes from one student who had struggled with his gay identity throughout

high school and college. Interviewee Wayne Knights does not claim to be a picture of mental health, acknowledging sleeplessness, anxiety, and an eventual realization that he is “not a raving maniac.” Even these admissions seem insufficient for some readers. A letter to the editor in response to the article compares homosexuals to “alcoholics, hypochondriacs, and schizophrenics.” In another letter written about a week later, they are lumped in with “Nazis, Communists, gamblers and prostitutes” who he believes it is society’s right to exclude from the education of children if deemed necessary. This replicates views that make the status of homosexuality as a mental illness. Another letter later that year compares homosexuality to necrophilia and pedophilia. The Daily Illini staff does publish articles that are positive towards homosexuality, as well as a few letters, like “Being Gay No Problem” and “Western Tradition.”

For the articles I found, I attempted to determine the role of racial minorities in the gay rights movement. The ways available to do so were extremely limited, as race was almost never mentioned explicitly in a news item. A few articles by regular columnists included a small photograph of the author. These photographs were all of people who appeared to be white. Of the photographs I encountered, most were of public figures, such as city council members, public officials, or candidates for office. Willis Baker and Joan Severns appear in an article about a debate for city manager in which gay rights issues came up. In an article in the Daily Illini “Dr. Morton S. Tabin, a Champaign psychiatrist” is shown speaking at a Champaign City Council Meeting in favor of the Human Rights Ordinance (Miller). Urbana Mayor Hiram Paley is pictured in an article in the Daily Illini where he is criticized for the way he handled Graubart's nonviolent demonstration for gay rights. The paper also ran articles about the protest, which showed white male protester

Jeff Graubart, and Toby Schneiter engaged in a sit-in (Wingert). There were photographs accompanying a few stories, but it was hard to tell who was actually involved in a group, rally, or event, and who may have just been passing by. Photographs usually do not have captions telling the names of those pictured. One article from The Daily Illini explains that most participants in one Gay Illini Event preferred to be photographed from behind if at all. One image shows a dance floor with several backs turned towards the camera, while another is a close up shot of Kevin Cleeland, a white male active in the group. Photos accompany a story on Homecoming Queen candidate Tim Glisson, also a white male. Regardless of these problems obscuring the motives or identifications of some individuals the overarching fact is that most people pictured in any way are white. These few representations may reflect the relatively privileged space that white men occupy in the homosexual community.

Drawings used to accompany opinion pieces or editorials were of apparently white couples, both male and female, with the exception of a Daily Illini article from 1979 which shows a male couple that appears to be interracial (Austin). When actual photographs are chosen to appear with this sort of article, the photograph is either purposely shadowy, or of an unidentifiable couple holding hands, making it impossible to determine either race or gender (Robinson,). Three cartoons appear in the Daily Illini addressing Anita Bryant's campaign to get rid of gay rights in Florida. All people in the cartoons appear white, or are in shadow.

In some articles, detailed physical descriptions take the place of a photograph. It seems that authors try to balance the voyeuristic desires of readers while keeping the confidentiality of their informants. In an article talking about lesbians from the Champaign

Urbana Courier, the photograph is shadowy, but each of the four women interviewed for the article is described in detail. In the article we are introduced to “Kathy, a frank spoken blonde...Suzy, a 22-year-old University of Illinois student with long dark hair and a spirited personality... [and] Sandie, who was dressed similarly to the others in the casual jeans and T-shirt or blouse attire of the young” (Robinson). These descriptions assure the general public that lesbians are “normal,” that they are students, feminine, and otherwise typical youths. Nothing is said about the women’s race in this article. This article was published in 1972, but another article from 1979 follows a similar pattern in their discussion of gay men. “Don,” a pseudonym, is described as “a brown-haired, blue-eyed athlete,” while his friend Dave is “A lanky musician” (Austin). In the article “Where Gays Can Feel Unfettered” in the Daily Illini the patrons of bars are described in a similar level of detail. The photograph shows only apparently white patrons, and race is only mentioned briefly in regards to “a black transvestite [who] waltzed by dressed in white with a long curly wig” (). Here only the exoticized racialized exception to the norm receives any detailed description. Other bar patrons are described in terms of their conformity to typical styles of dress.

Gay Rights issues are often equated with race and gender politics in these newspaper articles, and in editorials and letters to the editor. It is common for interviewees in news stories who are in favor of gay rights to compare the movement to other civil rights struggles. One Champaign Council Member, Mary Pollock, implied that two members of the council who voted in favor of gay rights did so because as a woman and a black man they knew what it was like to feel oppressed. In other instances people who were against gay rights invoked the idea that people choose to be homosexual whereas race cannot be

chosen, and therefore, gay rights are unnecessary.

Racism surfaces in a series of letters to the editor most notably. A man identifies himself as Sri Premananda Saraswati Swami and takes a stance against homosexuality. In a letter of response, an anonymous author mocks India, which he presumes is the man's home nation, and engages in a number of stereotypes and inflammatory remarks supposedly in defense of a person's right to homosexual behavior. Saraswati's remarks are also extremely inflammatory, saying homosexuals are like babies who need to be toilet trained, and describing them as weak, simpering children. The remarks in response to this are not all so enraged as the anonymous author's, but I doubt that this letter did much to raise the moral position of the gay rights movement.

I found many references to the women's movement in articles about sexuality as one might expect. Some articles treated the relationship between the struggle for gay rights as the same as race-based and gender-based political movements. There is also a tension visible between issues of sexuality and gender, which crops up frequently in discussion of the Equal Rights Amendment, or lesbian involvement in either gay liberation or women's liberation organizations. A series of articles and letters in the Daily Illini discuss space for student groups in the Union. The Gay Illini were allotted a space in the same room as the Women's Student Union. According to Kevin Cleeland, he was told that this was a problem by the WSU because it "Might hurt the image of the Equal Rights Amendment." Members of the WSU responded, saying that this statement did not represent the group's opinion, and that "The WSU supports the rights of all women, including gay women, to choose their own lifestyles." Although this may have been the official party line, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that lesbians did not always feel welcome in Women's Rights

groups like the WSU. In the article “Four Lesbians Talk Frankly About Homosexuality” interviewees discuss problems they faced within the male dominated gay liberation group and the heterosexual dominated women’s liberation group.

A number of problems arise in this attempt to learn about attitudes towards homosexuality through analysis of print sources on the topic. The articles and especially letters to the editor tend to weed out those with moderate opinions and preserve militant arguments on both sides of issues. The potential for discrimination is still something feared in the gay and lesbian community today. Although letters could be written anonymously and authors were not always listed for editorials, the choice to publicize one’s view was potentially dangerous. When looking at the Lavender Prairie Collective Newsletters and the Student Advocate Newspaper I find it important to remember that these individuals began their projects with a like minded group of contributors on their side, and a like minded audience. The people producing and receiving the LPC Newsletter were mostly friends, close enough to comfortably hold events at each other’s homes. Women would sometimes send in updates on their travels with the knowledge that if it were published in the newsletter their friends would see it. My favorite example of this was “A Personal Letter to Friends in the Community” sent in by Susan. It seems a bit odd to publish personal correspondence in a newsletter, but perhaps this just shows how connected this particular group of women was. I noticed that the contributors for the newsletters, when listed usually only listed their first names. I originally thought that this was for anonymity, but I now believe they just expected all their readers to recognize them by first names or pseudonym only.

Similarity was not always seen as an advantage by readers of the Lavender Prairie Collective Newsletter, for example. A reader's criticism of the group's bias in regards to class is preserved in a letter written by a woman identified as Mary Jo. She wrote to the newsletter stating, "Most of the women who publish this newsletter have jobs and pretty [g]ood ones, as do most of the women associated with the feminist cause. They eat well and live well. Tell me, please, where the poor woman fits into the picture...I support women but when I find myself supporting only middle class, healthy, mostly white women, I start to wonder; who is this for? Is it for some women or all women?" Clearly, conflicts between a wish to be inclusive and a certain lifestyle similarity among members of the Lavender Prairie Collective coexist with tension in the newsletters. Events are often listed as including free child care and community events are generally inexpensive and communal. However, there are also numerous stories about professional academic organizations, announcements for events requiring a large financial commitment, and requests for financial support of the newsletter and other feminist and/or lesbian organizations in the area. The women of the Collective encouraged letters and feedback, but the limited audience may have worked against the likelihood that they would receive any.

In the case of The Student Advocate, I learned through my research that the Gay Illini shared office space with the paper which existed as a Registered Student Organization. It seems to me that articles like Robert Michael Doyle's "Gay Notes" series in the paper may have been due to the physical space shared by these groups and a want of content for the paper as much as by a similar outlook on gay rights.

Another issue I faced was the sheer volume of material to look through. The only way I was able to narrow my search was by using a limited index of articles through the Urbana Free Library Catalog, and by looking in the Student Life Archives for newspaper articles that had been clipped and preserved. These sources were extremely helpful, but far from complete. Clippings had been kept by a student at the university for the years he was in school only. Even over this brief span of time, the clippings included a number of articles that were not present in the Urbana Free Library's index of articles on homosexuality or gay liberation. For these reasons I feel that any evaluation of sources by statistical methods would be unhelpful. Even if I did have an accurate number for the articles in a given newspaper, I am not sure what this data would really tell me. Many Daily Illini articles addressed campus events, registered student organizations, or University politics. It seems natural that these issues would not be represented in papers like The Courier, and this might not be evidence of a more negative attitude towards homosexuality on the part of the editors or writers for the paper. It also seemed that articles on topics like gay rights legislation were covered with a basic level of neutrality, and that neither large paper made judgments in this context. What was interesting to me, therefore were the editorials, letters, and less event based stories which relied more on individual opinions. Of course even in the case of anonymous interviews, the people must be known as homosexuals to some extent, otherwise they could not have been contacted for the story.