



A Timeline of Leather Culture in the United States



Motorcycle gangs became all the rage after WWII. A subset of these gangs were formed by homosexual men who had been discharged from the armed forces.

1940s

1947 The news media sensationalizes a motorcycle rally in California, calling it the **Hollister Riot**. This did nothing but fuel the fires of general discontent, bringing motorcycle clubs (and gay leather) into the mainstream.

Five years later, *The Wild One* brought motorcycle and leather culture to the big screen. Marlon Brando became a symbol of masculine independence in his jeans, T-shirt, and leather jacket and Muir hat.



1958

Chuck Renslow and Dom Orejudos open up Gold Coast, the first gay leather bar, in Chicago, IL. Renslow and Orejudos would later go on to found International Mr. Leather.

1966

Two leather bars on San Francisco's Folsom Street, **The Stud** and **Febe's**, open their doors, leading to an influx of bars to the area.

Women & Leather



1978

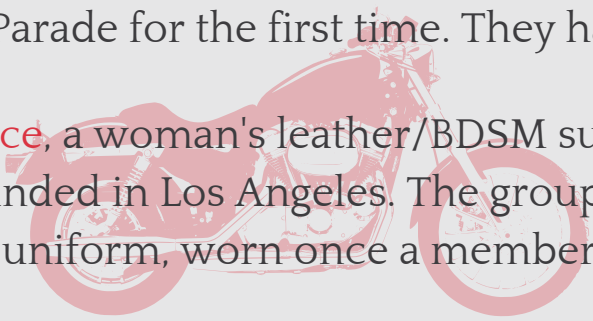
Pat Califia, Gayle Rubin, and sixteen other activists co-founded **Samois**, the first lesbian BDSM group in the United States.

1979

Dykes on Bikes led what was then called the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade for the first time. They have led it ever since.

1980

Leather and Lace, a woman's leather/BDSM support and social group, was founded in Los Angeles. The group had a code of conduct and a uniform, worn once a member had earned the right.



1984

Folsom Street Fair is founded, celebrating of all things kink and leather.



1986

The National Leather Association (NLA), is officially incorporated, hosting the first **Living in Leather (LIL)** conference.

1987

International Ms. Leather competition founded in California.

1997

American National Coalition for Sexual Freedom is founded.

2018

James Lee becomes the first person of colour to win the title of International Mr. Leather.

One year later, Jack Thompson becomes the first trans person of colour to win the International Mr. Leather.



These are just handful of the key moments in U.S. leather history. If you're curious to learn more, we'd encourage you to reach out to your local leather communities. Members are welcoming to newcomers, especially those who are sincere in their interest. These can be great ways to get involved with your kinky community.