

I was raised a little sissy boy. Everybody called me "joto," "queer," "sissy," and all that stuff. I was wondering, *how come they're calling [that]? I don't even know the meaning of all these words, and they're calling me all these names just because I'm feminine.* We were raised in a place where queers, sissies, and jotos were in the closet—they were pushed back somewhere. But I was very flamboyant. I had these little hot pants on before hot pants was even in style. When I was around maybe seven or eight, I was wearing hot pants, girl.



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In those times, boys discovered each other with each other. We weren't told about sex at all from our parents. We had to use trial and error. Most of the little boys, when I grew up, we used to play with each other. I loved that, because I was one of those girls, but we didn't know that—didn't know anything. I fell in love with my best friend. I used to have a love affair on him for years and years. Even until now, I still have a love affair for him, but he's gone.

Then a lot of things happened through the years. One of my friend's older brothers, we were playing with each other. He was just about four or five years older than me, letting me do things to him that I thought were normal because we used to always play with each other, so it wasn't a big deal.

I **not pants, girl.**

Anyway, growing up, I knew sissies, but we didn't know that we were sissies. We were just feminine boys. You know what I mean? We didn't know the meaning of "queer," "sissy," none of that stuff because we were just growing up being little boys but very feminine.

This was in the 1950s, right? You were born in 1946.

Right, 1950s.

My father died. My mother moved us to San Ysidro, California. We moved in with my sister. We lived in a mobile home, and this older man—I was around 12, I think—got me in his trailer. That was the first time that I ever experienced a climax. I thought I was going to die.

[Later], we moved to Stockton, California where I met my first gay man.

What was that like?

Big, tall, handsome, very feminine boy that everybody made fun of him and stuff like that. We were going to have an affair, but we were two girls, so we just said, "Oh no. It's not going to work out for us." That was my first gay [friend]. Then I thought, "Oh my God. I'm not the only one." I mean, we were feminine boys, but we didn't know what "gay" or "queer"—none of that—meant until I was at least 12 or 13, maybe 14.



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them look feminine? I was walking down Santa Clara Street in San Jose, and this guy picked me up—beautiful Irish redhead. Red hair, red hair everywhere. I could be in love with that boy. It was just a quickie, you know? Then he told me, "Well, there's a whole bunch of you guys over there on Saint James Park." I thought, "Oh really?"

There was a park right downtown in San Jose called St. James Park. I met my best friends there, the gay sissies of San Jose. We started hanging out at Saint James Park. We couldn't go to the bar because we were too young, so we hung around Around the Clock cafeteria or restaurant. We used to go to the park and get our tricks and make money and then go eat or something.

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"When I was a hustler, I was a boy. When I was in a relationship, I was a girl."

When I was a hustler, I was a boy. When I was in a relationship, I was a girl. I had to have a man with me. I may go down on him and stuff like that, but as far as me playing a man's part on my love of my life or my boyfriend? Never. I would drop him right there and then, because I didn't want another girl with me. I wanted a man.

I met this guy. He was an older man. He was married, but he used to like to play with young boys, so he picked me up, and became my sugar daddy. I played the man part because he was older and he liked young boys. I go, "Hey, it's money. Money that I don't have, and I'm too young to work." He would take me to Santa Cruz. He would take me all over the state. One day, he took me to San Francisco. I was around 15 or 16.

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Sent on July 7, 2018 Friday

The beginning of Gay History in San Jose, Ca. and San Francisco, Ca. Tenderloin
1960's till now.

I am in the process of writing my life story, and filming a live tour of San Jose, Tenderloin than 1960's
and now 2018.

Goggle my name. Felicia Elizondo

I knew I was different compared to other boys.

Our Gay History in the 1960's in San Jose, Ca. and San Francisco's Tenderloin.

The first gay man I met was Victor Torres when we were living in Stockton, Ca. I was around 15 years
old. I knew then I was not the only one. We moved to San Jose, Ca.

I was walking on Santa Clara Street. I met a gay man, he was white and with red hair and blue Irish I
think, had sex with him, He told me where to find people like me at St. James Park.

How I met the 1960's San Jose queens. Hanging around at Saint James Park, at Around the Clock Café or
in front of the Crystal Gay bar. I met my best friends Bernie, Tommy and a lot of others.

St. James Park was a pickup place for sex or getting paid for sex.

We were teenagers. Word of mouth is how we found out about anything that had to do with our Gay
Community.

San Jose High school was horrible for me. Voted head cheerleader, I was bullied and harassed by
students. I could not fulfill my duties as head cheerleader.

I was here in the Tenderloin in early and late 1960's.

I came to TL when I was in high school was with my sugar daddy (Wally) 1962-1963; I was a teen age
male hustler, I found a world that I never knew existed.

Bernie was one of my best friends at the time, we used to play hooky from school just to come to the
Tenderloin.

We met a queen name Siro. In the early 1960's. He was a hair fairy, makeup, little hairdo, angora
sweater, skin tight pants, and tennis shoes.

It was against the law to dress like a girl, It was as close to looking like a girl as we could get.

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In 1965, I decided I did not want to be this way, I enlisted in the Navy, I went thru all the manly things men did. I decided to volunteer to go to Viet Nam, maybe I would get killed, all this confusion would end. I really tried to change. Had sex with two women. If the military or woman didn't make me a man nothing would, it didn't.

I had enough, I went to my priest and told him I was gay, the Navy gave me an undesirable discharge.

In the early 70's I went in front of a lot Military Officers,

I told them that I was transgender. Later my discharge was reversed to an Honorable discharge.

Four queens moved in 1967 to the TL from San Jose. we moved into the El Rosa Hotel 166 Turk St., Tenderloin San Francisco, that was the only place that would rent to us. My room was #15. Amanda was the clerk. Amanda let us bring tricks home for an extra \$5.00. We turned to prostitution to survive.

Living in the Tenderloin I met Larry. We moved to Chicago. Went to a lot of movie, Midnight Cowboy, I saw West Side Story about 50 times.

What changed my life was when we went to see the Christine Jorgensen movie, who had the first sex change in 1951. She had been in the Army.

I finally realized that this who I am. I didn't know how I was going to get there, but where there is a will there is a way.

People came to the Tenderloin because it was word of mouth, to start a new life, a new Identity.

Tenderloin was a revolving door; a lot of people came and went. Either you stayed, or you didn't.

The Tenderloin was the Gay Mecca in the 1960's.

It was not on the Television News,

It was not in the major newspapers.

Yes, we were Hotos, Sissies, Queens, Queers, Lesbians, male hustlers, female impersonators, intersex.

Compton's Cafeteria was the center of the universe for us.

It was the place to unite with each other. To make sure some of us had made it thru the night

The best thing that happened to us was Compton's Cafeteria because any time of the day or night we knew we could find someone eating or drinking coffee.

The Center for Special Problems was an organization that helped us understand why we were this way. It gave us a new Identity

Finally, we had someone to tell us it was Ok, that what we were was ok. We were born that way. We came to be open and be free. But behind all that freedom, we were putting our lives in danger.

To survive we had to turn to prostitution, sell drugs, clip tricks (robbing them) when we were desperate. To buy food and pay rent, if we didn't have money than we were on the streets.

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Lucky that we had family in our sisters and brothers, they would take us in until we got on our feet.

There one place where we could feel like normal kids was Play Land at Ocean Beach, it was a carnival. We were kids again.

We had to survive, nobody would hire us because we were sissies.

We were lost souls trying to understand what future was in store for us.

We were out when being queer was against the law.

Being a Queer was a death sentence to all of us. Going to jail or being killed.

Most of us were harassed, beaten up, thrown in jail, murdered, killed, raped, for just being who we were, Queer.

Most of our families didn't want most of us. We were thrown out like trash.

I personally have been harassed, beaten up, thrown in jail, raped. I have proof of my time in jail.

I got arrested three time or maybe more. contributing to a delinquency of a minor, but we were both minors.

I was arrested for obstructing a sidewalk, five counts of prostitution all of these were thrown out of court.

One night I was going out on the town, to San Francisco's nightclubs. I went to the Ally Cat on Mason St, it was a Disco Club this guy asked me to dance. I said no. I thought he had let it go but I was wrong, that night I went to the Shed on Market St, it was an after-hour club.

I was raped brutally, and I won't tell you the details Because I hate to relive it. He let me go I didn't report it, because the police would have told me that I asked for it, because of who I was. I drove home scared to death. I didn't come back to SF for a long time.

I always thought that the Lesbians and Queer men stay in the closet, got an education and good jobs. But us being sissies we had to be strong and be who we were meant to be. If we didn't we wouldn't be who we are today. We were out of the closet and suffer all that we suffered to be who I am today. A strong woman.

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Felicia A. Elizondo aka: Felicia Flames,

In 1970's I became a long distance telephone operator, for Pacific Telephone o Market St. in San Jose, Ca. I was one of the first male telephone operators in San Jose, Ca. In 1974 I transitioned at Pacific Telephone from male to female, and in November of 1974 at Chope Hospital in San Mateo, Ca. It is now San Mateo County hospital. I became a female and Blue Cross of California paid for my surgery. At the time I was named Elena Nicole Montez, because if the news got a hold of my story, I would not embarrass my family.

And my story begins.

Activist, Trailblazer, Historian, Tenderloin Queen, Pioneer, Legend, Icon, Diva, 31 years survivor of AIDS, Viet Nam War Veteran.

I am living legend, I lived it, I saw it.

A Tribute to all the 1960's Tenderloin Queens & Male Hustlers.

DeeDee Yubeta, Red, Vicky Marlane, Tamara C., Pat Monclaire, Ronnie Lynn, Amanda, Roberta(Teresita), Roxanna, these are only a very few out of hundreds of people that I met.

We honor all forgotten heroes. We can never forget the kids that were not wanted.

I am one of the organizers and a group of community members that started to make sure our Gay History would never be forgotten for another 40 years. We worked with Supervisor Jane Kim and her office.

We put Vicky Mar Lane's name on the 100 Block of Turk St. Than we worked on putting Gene Compton's Cafeteria Way name on 100 Block of Taylor St. We did.

Two plaques are on the corner of Turk St. and Taylor St. to honor all who fought the police that night in a Hot August night. We must never forget them.

Please don't forget all who came before you.

You have to know where you have been to know where you are going.

Felicia A. Elizondo aka: Felicia Flames

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Feel free to ask me any questions.

Thank you

I want to do this before I die.

1966 Gene Compton's Cafeteria Riot

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