

On the National Significance of the Stonewall Uprising

The purpose of this essay is to address the question of what constitutes the national historic significance of the Stonewall Uprising.

Perhaps it is best to begin by clearing some ground, for some persons have claimed that the Stonewall Uprising has been given more credit than it deserves for its historical importance in the movement for LGBT equality. Those who make such claims usually cite other examples of resistance before June of 1969 that involved standing up to police harassment and oppression in ways that were at least militant and sometimes involved breaking the law, resistance to police authority, and the use of violence, eg, the destroying of property in the Compton's Cafeteria clash.

Without belittling the courage of those who resisted police oppression at the pre-Uprising occurrences—including the Compton's Cafeteria event, the New Year's ball at California Hall in San Francisco, or at the Black Cat or the Patch club—the Stonewall Uprising was different from these and other similar pre-Uprising events for 6 reasons:

- (1) It was massive: several thousand people participated.
- (2) It was sustained: it lasted six days.
- (3) It was violent (while Compton's was violent, the violence was not on a scale comparable to that at the Stonewall Uprising).
- (4) Because it was massive, sustained, violent at times, and always militant, the Stonewall Uprising resulted in contesting the control of a significant section of an important neighborhood in one of the nation's largest cities.
- (5) It got into the national media and therefore changed consciousness.

(6) It transformed the LGBT civil rights movement (known as the homophile movement before Stonewall) from an extremely small movement into a mass movement by creating the gay liberation phase of the LGBT civil rights movement.

Since we have now demonstrated that the Stonewall Uprising was an event qualitatively and quantitatively different from other militant acts of resistance on the part of gay people previous to it, let us now examine its national significance.

My analysis is that Stonewall has national significance because it has meaning in two spheres vital to evaluating the impact of events of a political nature: history and symbolism.¹

The historic meaning is very easy to describe and document. The only reason that the Stonewall Uprising has any historic meaning is both simple and straightforward: it directly inspired the creation of a new phase of the ongoing organized political movement for gay civil rights, and this new phase then transformed what had been a very small movement into a mass movement, making possible most of the movement's successes since that time.² In other words, the earlier phase of the movement, known as the homophile movement, quickly went into decline with the birth of the "gay liberation

¹ All events elevated to the category of having national significance, it seems to me, would have to have historic meaning on a national level, but few are so important as to take on an iconic state, yet alone the ultimate status of being great enough to function as a national symbol.

² The pioneering activist Frank Kameny, PhD, and pioneering LGBT movement historian John D'Emilio, PhD, have supported this view. Kameny said, "By the time of Stonewall, we had fifty to sixty gay groups in the country. A year later there was at least fifteen hundred. By two years later, to the extent that a count could be made, it was twenty-five hundred. And that was the impact of Stonewall." (Source: "Stonewall National Historic Landmark Nomination," p. 19.) For D'Emilio on Stonewall, see, eg, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, 2nd edition, pp. 237-239, 249. D'Emilio has made a similar statement about the impact of Stonewall in his article "Kameny Always Knew He Was Sane," in the March 2012 issue of the *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*.

movement” that was inspired by Stonewall.³ The gay liberation movement grew rapidly and eventually became a mass movement. Thus the historic effect or impact of Stonewall was both direct and indirect: Stonewall directly inspired the creation of the “gay liberation movement” which then created a mass movement for “gay liberation” or “gay rights” (in the language of that era); thus the *direct* impact of the Uprising was the creation of a new phase of the movement for LGBT equality (to use today’s language) and the *indirect* effect of Stonewall was the creation of a mass movement. A historic parallel would be the fall of the Bastille, for the fall of the infamous prison was not the great historic event (the French Revolution), but the Bastille’s fall triggered the great event and thus has national significance for the French nation and her people. Similarly, the fall of the Bastille is celebrated as the French national holiday just as the Stonewall Uprising is celebrated annually with marches across the United States and around the world, and the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence, critical in setting off the American Revolution, is celebrated as an American national holiday.⁴

Of course, one could ask why the movement for LGBT civil rights having become a mass movement has national historic significance? The successes of this movement have been great, totally transforming the experiences not only of all LGBT citizens, but also changing how the rest of the population feels, thinks about, and lives their

³ Should anyone doubt that the gay liberation phase of the movement was a direct result of the Stonewall Uprising, consider that the first gay liberation organization was the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and they stated in their first public announcement, the one announcing their formation, that they had formed because of the police raid of the Stonewall Inn club. (See “Gay Revolution Comes Out,” *Rat*, August 12-16, 1969.)

⁴ In other words, we have here three events that are seen as important beginning points of major historic events but are not themselves the major historic events, but rather they are as seen as symbolic, causative, and intimately linked with (and therefore, as part and parcel of) these major historic events.

experiences of interacting with the ideas or conceptions of homosexuality, bisexuality, and a transgender identity, and, much more importantly, influencing how they interact with their fellow LGBT citizens. But to try to summarize the impact of the movement over the years since the gay liberation phase of the movement, consider the following: the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Lawrence v. Texas* found that laws that declared same-sex love to be illegal were unconstitutional, whereas in 1969 homosexual acts were illegal in 48 states; the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973; the 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision by the United States Supreme Court ruled that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples, whereas in 1969 no gay or lesbian couples could marry; many states, counties, and cities currently have laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, as do many corporations, universities, and other associations and organizations whereas none did in 1969; many religious denominations no longer consider homosexuality a sin; LGBT people can now serve openly in the military; LGBT issues are generally reported accurately, widely, and fairly in the news media; LGBT people are often included in and are commonly treated fairly and sensitively in fiction, plays, films, television, on the radio, and there are many websites that treat LGBT people and issues in an inclusive and fair manner. All of these changes in government, law, psychology, theology, the arts, the media, and public policy amount both to an enormous transformation in public consciousness regarding homosexuality, bisexuality, and the transgender but have also resulted in a great liberation for LGBT people who can generally now live full, free, and open lives.⁵

⁵ Some of the goals that have yet to be realized are federal legal protection against

To give the above historic facts, however, their necessary context, it is important to note that the homophile movement had been becoming more militant since 1961, when Frank Kameny first articulated the philosophy that the movement must see itself primarily as a civil rights movement that should accept nothing less than first-class citizenship.⁶ This is critical to understand for, without the local successes of the homophile movement in New York City in the mid-1960s (the ending of police entrapment and the progress toward legalizing gay bars), there is no doubt that the Stonewall Uprising would not have taken place.⁷ So while Stonewall has often been

discrimination against LGBT citizens, which is nonexistent (except in very rarefied circumstances), and that the history of this movement be fully integrated into the treatment of United States history, particularly in public schools.

⁶ The history of the homophile movement can be confusing for while the movement had its quiescent phase with the “research and education” approach during the Red Scare, Frank Kameny had the extremely radical view that the model for the movement should primarily be the black civil rights movement and that the movement should settle for nothing less than full equality, the approach he took in his 1961 brief to the United States Supreme Court. Soon after 1961 he took the approach that homosexuals were not mentally ill and led the charge to oppose the “sickness theory.” When he first articulated these views, there were a few people who were already militants or were ready to be radicalized, such as Kay Tobin, Barbara Gittings, Jack Nichols, Randy Wicker, and Craig Rodwell, soon to be followed by Julian Hodges and Dick Leitsch. Kameny eschewed the approach of the various Mattachine organizations. Yet, the total radicalness of his approach has often been overlooked, in part, I believe, because the organization he founded did not take the kind of name Kameny favored, a name that would have been explicitly linked to homosexual issues, but instead was named the Mattachine Society of Washington; it was so named only because Kameny was outvoted on what the name of the organization would be by the group’s first members.

⁷ This was the view of no less a figure than Craig Rodwell, a militant homophile activist who was frustrated with the homophile movement in New York City for not being militant enough for him. Everything that Rodwell says about the Stonewall Uprising must be paid careful attention because he was (1) the Stonewall Inn club’s main critic, (2) the main supporter and propagandist of the Stonewall Uprising when it occurred, and (3) the person who had the idea of celebrating the Uprising annually with a march. This also means that to see how the Uprising was viewed by LGBT activists in 1969, historians should carefully scrutinize the resolution Rodwell wrote (or cowrote) to honor the Stonewall Uprising with annual marches that was passed by the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) in November of 1969 and began the

(mis)interpreted and (mis)understood as a clean and a radical break with a timid and stodgy homophile past, on the contrary the truth is that a revolution within the homophile movement had already begun, precipitated by Frank Kameny and, in fact, it was the initial successes of the militants in transforming the homophile movement that made the Uprising possible in the first place. (In the Conclusions chapter of my history of the Uprising, I list over two dozen factors that contributed to causing Stonewall, but in terms of importance I place the New York City successes of militant homophiles such as Craig Rodwell, Dick Leitsch, Frank Kameny⁸, and Randy Wicker at the top of that list.)

The symbolic meaning of Stonewall is also straightforward but is a bit more subtle and complex to describe. The symbolic and iconic meaning of Stonewall is based upon the fact that during the Stonewall Uprising, one of the country's social groups seen and treated as the most despicable and considered to be the least likely and least able to stand up for itself not only did so, but did so unexpectedly, spontaneously, with great courage, and to a large degree succeeded both morally and practically in the Uprising. In other words, homosexuals in the opinion of most of society in the late 1960s were seen as immoral, criminal, and/or mentally ill. One reason homosexuals were so despised was because they were seen as not being true to their gender roles: lesbians were perceived as inappropriately masculine and gay men as inappropriately feminine. But because of the misogyny that is the basis of homophobia, gay men were seen as the greater threat to

tradition of marches that were later most commonly called "Gay Pride" or "LGBT Pride" marches.

⁸ Kameny is included in the list of militants who had an impact on New York City homophile successes as he not only inspired the Mattachine Society of New York to overthrow its governing body which was comprised of persons who advocated the nonmilitant "research and education" approach to the homophile movement but he was also elected to the organization's new board.

society compared with lesbians and therefore occupied a greater space in the public psyche. Because Stonewall was mainly an uprising of gay men, the bottom-line message of this revolt for many people was that, contrary to common belief, gay men were capable of both moral and physical courage. And that persons we would today describe as transgender also played a leading role in the Uprising was (and is), for many, proof in spades of such courage.

These observations go far toward explaining the power of Stonewall as a symbol, but another reason that this event has such power, especially for those who witnessed it at the time, is that the event was totally unexpected. The event was unexpected in large part because the Uprising was unplanned and therefore totally spontaneous, and at the time of the Uprising there were no indications that such an event was likely or even on the horizon.

Let us briefly review a list of examples in the legal sphere alone that will have to stand for all other spheres of life as a reminder of how powerless homosexual men and women felt at the time.

In *GayLaw*, William N. Eskridge, PhD, the country's leading authority on the law and homosexuality, summarized the litany of policies oppressive of homosexuals and gender nonconformists that were in place by the 1960s: "The homosexual in 1961 was smothered by law. She or he risked arrest and possible police brutalization for dancing with someone of the same sex, cross-dressing, propositioning another adult homosexual, possessing a homophile publication, writing about homosexuality without disapproval, displaying pictures of two people of the same sex in intimate positions, operating a lesbian or gay bar, or actually having oral or anal sex with another adult homosexual. The

last was a serious felony in all states but one, and in most jurisdictions also carried with it possible indefinite incarceration as a sexual psychopath. . . . If the homosexual were not a citizen, she or he would likely be deported. If the homosexual were a professional . . . she or he could lose the certification needed to practice that profession.”

This complete assault on lesbians, gay men, and those we today would call the transgender, combined with little or no support mechanism for these minorities, explains why the self-image of homosexuals was so negative in the 1950s and 1960s. The minds of gay people had been so colonized by the heterosexual world that almost none of them could imagine a positive gay identity, let alone a positive gay culture—and thus the idea of homosexual rights as a political cause, except for the extremely rare gay person who participated in the homophile movement, would not have occurred to most gay people; indeed, it did not even occur to most homosexuals who were very politically engaged. For example, Danny Garvin, who in 1969 lived in the only gay commune in New York City, often talked with his fellow commune members about the war in Vietnam and women’s rights, but they never had a single political discussion about homosexuality.

Michael Denny had been very politically involved since the late 1950s, when he was a teenager. He had sat in at the Woolworth counter in Providence, Rhode Island, in sympathy with the sit-ins conducted to protest segregation in the South and was thrown out of his high school for starting a front organization for Women Strike for Peace. When he went to the University of Chicago, he helped edit *The Hawk and the Dove* magazine, showing that in 1964 he was among the very few Americans who publicly questioned whether the United States should be in Vietnam. Still, he had never considered his homosexuality from a political perspective, explaining that, “Homosexuality was so

heavily psychologized that the idea of looking at it through a political lens just didn't occur to me."

This explains both why an action as radical (not to mention as successful!) as Stonewall was so unexpected and thus so powerful. In Denny's recollection, when as a student at the University of Chicago, in the early summer of 1969 he picked up a New York newspaper, his eye was drawn to a headline about homosexuals, and the impact was immediate: "Stonewall came like the thunder clap."

In 1969, Ginny Apuzzo was a nun in a convent who had gone there to confront the moral meaning of her lesbianism. She had just turned twenty-nine and had already observed three years of celibacy when the news of the Uprising coming over the radio made her suddenly realize that she was not alone. "It hit me with a bolt of lightning. It was as if I had an incredible release of my own outrage at having to sequester so much of my life. To me, it was the quintessential 'enough is enough.' And for me, I'd long since waited for somebody to give me permission to say 'enough is enough.'"

When Joan Nestle heard of the rioting she went down to the Village on Saturday, June 28, and stood in the street in front of the Stonewall Inn, looking at the police barricades and the crowds that had gathered. "There is a background to what happened in that bar, a building up of rage like volcanic steam, over the years. I remember standing there and knowing that a new time had come because that rage had exploded."

In Long Binh, Vietnam, US Army Specialist 3 Henry Baird sat eating lunch in the mess hall and reading a military newspaper. As he scanned the day's news summary his eye was drawn to a short paragraph that described a riot led by homosexuals against the police in Greenwich Village. Twenty years later he recalled, "My heart was filled with

joy. I thought about what I had read frequently but had no one to discuss it with.

Secretly within myself I decided that if I should survive to come back stateside I would come out as a gay person."

On the night of June 27, 1969, Robin Souza was traveling on the New Jersey Turnpike to Philadelphia with two female heterosexual friends. As they listened to a rock and soul station, Gary and his friends were amazed when the newscast announced that gay men and the police were fighting a pitched battle on the streets of Greenwich Village. Although Souza imagined a battle waged with guns, he felt impelled to immediately turn the car around and head for the Village to witness what was happening, but his fellow passengers dissuaded him from doing so as it seemed too dangerous.

The immediate power of Stonewall's impact is seen not just in the immediate shock felt by these witnesses but also in how it inspired them to action. Michael Denny packed up his belongings and moved to New York to figure out both his gay identity and what it meant to him. His exploration eventually led to his starting, with Chuck Ortleb and several other friends, the influential literary magazine *Christopher Street*, where many of the members of the Violet Quill first published their works. Later Denny founded the nation's first gay imprint, Stonewall Inn Editions, at St. Martin's Press. Robin Souza went on to become one of the founders of the Gay Activists Alliance⁹, the organization most responsible for the spread of the gay liberation movement that emerged from the Stonewall Uprising. Joan Nestle founded the Lesbian Herstory Archives, and Ginny Apuzzo became the executive director of the National Gay

⁹ Robin Souza, like so many others in an era of heavy repression, used a pseudonym, Gary Dutton, for his activism, and he is usually listed under that name when the list of the 13 cofounders of the Gay Activists Alliance is given.

and Lesbian Task Force before she was an advisor to President Bill Clinton. For each of these individuals who became activists because of the impact of Stonewall, there were hundreds if not thousands more like Henry Baird whose response to Stonewall took place on a personal level: when he returned stateside he kept his promise to himself and came out.

Immanuel Kant famously wrote about the French Revolution in “The Contest of Faculties” that “The occurrence in question does not involve any of those momentous deeds or misdeeds of men which make small in their eyes what was formerly great or make great what was formerly small. . . . No, it has nothing to do with all this. We are here concerned only with the attitude of the onlookers as it reveals itself in public while the drama of great political changes is taking place.” In other words, the French Revolution had the tremendous impact it did not because of its effects on those who participated in it but rather upon those who witnessed it. It was the same phenomenon with Stonewall: the event derived its power from the emotional shock it created in those who heard about it.

All of the above goes far to explain the powerful symbolism of Stonewall. But why does that power endure?

I believe that the answer lies in the meaning of historic or national symbolism itself. All nations and all important movements have their moments that have a power that exceeds what can be expressed by mere rational analysis of their historic effect. This is because these moments are symbolic, because they express the deepest truths experienced by the human heart. They become emblematic of the best in us, they symbolize our hopes and dreams, our feelings and yearnings, and all that we sense is our

potential: the vision of a world as it should be or could be or as it needs to be. Thus when we learn about American history, certain stories and events and people and moments are emphasized. For example, all school children learn the story of how Francis Scott Keyes watched through the night to see if Fort McHenry would fall under the intense British bombardment to which it was being subjected, and when he saw the flag still flying in the morning, he knew that an important battle had not been lost and expressed this moment of hope and the triumph of faith in the words that became our national anthem. The stories—or the images—of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., giving his “I Have a Dream” speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial, or of the American flag being raised over Iwo Jima, or of Rosa Parks refusing to move to a seat at the back of the bus are all moments and images that help define who we are, moments that exemplify our best and highest values and thus are potent symbols.

The narrative of the Stonewall Uprising is a very powerful story for a number of reasons. It seemed to come out of nowhere and was totally unexpected. It was a spontaneous event, totally unplanned and undirected. And it happened in a seedy club run by the Mafia, and the groups that first turned against the police were effeminate boys who lived on the streets, sissies rejected by their families and by society, prostitutes, a butch lesbian, and transgender men—that such a group could not only lead an effective revolt against the police but also terrify them seemed too good to be true. Yet this is what happened. And the police were astonished at the anger that they witnessed. And they were terrified. Seymour Pine, who led the raid, had written the manual used for hand-to-hand combat in World War II and been blown up by a mine in the Battle of the Bulge, yet he said he was never more afraid in World War II than he was inside that bar surrounded

by the hundreds of homosexuals who had the bar under siege. Charles Smythe, who helped lead the raid and had fought with Pine in the war, said he was still shaking an hour after the riot police rescued him. Thus Stonewall symbolizes both gay people standing up for themselves en masse for the first time—spontaneously—and winning. And this is the kind of raw material from which legends have always been fashioned.¹⁰

All who witnessed the Stonewall Uprising were transfixed by it. That is the reason that less than half a year after the Uprising much of the leadership of the homophile movement voted to celebrate the event annually. In 1970 the celebration was already a national one, including several cities beyond New York, and very soon thereafter became international. And the movement spawned by Stonewall continues to surge around the nation and the world. There was little international movement for LGBT civil rights before Stonewall, but the liberation movement inspired by the Stonewall Uprising has known no boundaries and has continued to overturn discriminatory and unjust policies in Europe, Asia, Africa, and every other part of the world. Thus the Stonewall Uprising is the most celebrated and symbolic event, both nationally and internationally, in the history

¹⁰ “Winning” here means victory in several senses: The demonstrators not only gave some of the police a terrible fright, but they were only dispersed after the city had to call in hundreds of police officers, including the riot police. Even then, the demonstrators did not follow police orders to disperse but successfully resisted the police for a period of hours on four of the Uprising’s six nights. Beyond the practical victory of mass sustained resistance to police control of what would be later characterized as “gay space,” there was the inherent moral victory of LGBT people collectively standing up for themselves.

of the LGBT movement for civil rights and equality from its earliest beginnings in Germany in the late 19th century down through the present day.

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**Stonewall National Monument Scholars' Workshop:
Report on Historical Context and Symbolic Significance**

Stonewall was not just one event: whether we call it an “uprising,” “rebellion,” or “riots,” we name multiple days and nights on the streets of Greenwich Village, followed by the months-long growth of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and other groups (including the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, Gay Activist Alliance, Third World Gay Liberation, and Radicalesbians). In addition to encompassing a range of activity, Stonewall was the product of many converging forces – both structures of repression and movements for change. This layered context, combined with the length and range of the uprising, means that Stonewall contained a multiplicity of experiences and meanings. It holds a similar multiplicity today.

Leaders from the homophile movement experienced the rebellion differently than did gay liberation activists. Some participants were present from the first hour forward, while others showed up on the second or third day; others joined in later by forming GLF and other groups. The stakes of the rebellion held different weight depending on race, class, gender, gender expression, and politics. Further, participants’ own social networks shaped who they perceived as taking part. Most accounts describe the uprising as led by radical youth and “street kids,” including trans women of color Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera alongside white gay men such as Martin Boyce and Bob Kohler. Other narratives displace Johnson or Rivera; and disputes over participation marked Stonewall almost from its inception. An honest accounting of Stonewall must foreground the uprising’s complexity, including its conflicts.

Complexity does not make it impossible to make sense of Stonewall. Rather, it makes Stonewall important to wider array of people, not only by prompting wider representation at the site, but also by enabling recognition of inequality – a reality often shut down in heroic portrayals of the past. Stonewall’s complexity also makes the site into an entry point for deeper engagements with history. It asks visitors to consider how historical narratives – specifically, those of LGBTQ life, people of color communities, urban development, policing, and social movements – weave together. Stonewall was catalyzed by a police raid, an action then fairly routine at gay bars; it took place in Greenwich Village, a site with a longtime bohemian history; it occurred in June 1969, a moment of widespread radicalism; and it was driven forward by

sexual and gender minorities, most of them young, working class, and/or people of color, all of them longstanding targets of marginalization.

In 1969, Stonewall Inn was considered more “seedy” than some gay bars, and more open to queer “street kids” and gender non-conforming people. These factors heightened police harassment, and at the same time, seemed to leave many bar-goers with less to lose. As this suggests, Stonewall was by no means the first time LGBTQ people had confronted harassment at bars, restaurants, or other sites. Homophile activists had posed court challenges across the 1950s, winning important rulings before the California Supreme Court that affirmed the rights of bars serving gay and lesbian people to hold liquor licenses (*Stoumen v. Reilly*, 1951), as well as the rights of gay and lesbian people to congregate in bars (*Vallerga v. Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control*, 1959).¹ Other actions ranged from individual resistance, to spontaneous riots, to organized protests. The best-known events include the Cooper’s Donuts uprising (May 1959, Los Angeles), the Dewey’s sit-in (April 1965, Philadelphia), the Compton’s Cafeteria riot (August 1966, San Francisco), and protests following police raids at the Black Cat (February 1967, Los Angeles).² Given such context, Stonewall’s first few hours might be seen as somewhat ordinary. Yet the length, scale, and reception of the rebellion soon dramatically outpaced past LGBTQ protests.

So what made Stonewall different? Three key factors were the responses of Greenwich Village passersby, significant numbers of whom joined the riots for some period of time; the breadth of press coverage, which came to include the *New York Times* and *Village Voice*, as well as the radical and gay press; and most of all, the broader politics of the moment, which was so widely and deeply marked by protest. Many participants in gay liberation marked both 1968 and 1969 as key turning points catalyzing their movement. They identified 1969 with Stonewall, and 1968 with the wide array of uprisings across the United States and globally: in Paris, Mexico

¹ Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 48, 61. See also Marc Stein, *Sexual Injustice: Supreme Court Decisions from Griswold to Roe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

² For a primer on these events, see especially Stein, *Rethinking*; Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (Basic Books, 2006); and Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman, *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (Independent Television Service, 2005).

City, Prague, and beyond.³ Though homophobia was widespread across the New Left, the street protests of the late 1960s were not sharply divided from queer life. Many were fueled by the counterculture, and at least one rebellion – the 1968 riots in Washington, DC – was sparked by police harassment in a “vice” district.⁴

The concept of “gay liberation” developed across the late 1960s, and had begun to be voiced in the radical and gay press a few months before the Stonewall uprising began.⁵ Hotbeds for the development of the movement could be found in several cities, including but not limited to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Early proponents of gay liberation saw themselves as pursuing something rather different from the existing homophile movement, which was rooted in goals of civil liberties and legal rights, and connected especially to networks of literature and progressive psychology. Significantly, several figures in the broader culture bridged homophile and gay liberationist politics; among these were public intellectuals such as Paul Goodman, James Baldwin, and Allen Ginsberg, whose writing spoke for sexual freedom and homoeroticism, and who linked their challenges to normative masculinity with other forms of political dissent. But the homophile movement was generally older, more professional, and more moderate than the emerging movement for gay liberation, which developed at the crossroads of the New Left and the counterculture – two radical movements rooted in urban and youth life.

Though not the only origin point for gay liberation, Stonewall dramatically fueled the growing movement. Within a month of the start of the Stonewall uprising, participants in New York City formed the first Gay Liberation Front, or GLF – a group that borrowed its name from the National Liberation Fronts of Algeria and Vietnam. The interplay between Stonewall and its broader historical contexts can be seen through the circulation and impact of news of the uprising, which disseminated quickly through the radical and underground press. Within months,

³ An example of this citation of 1968 can be seen in *Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives*, directed by Mariposa Film Group, New Yorker Films (1977).

⁴ Kwame Holmes, “Beyond the Flames: Queering the History of the 1968 D.C. Riot,” in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 304–322.

⁵ Vanguard, which played a role in the Compton’s Cafeteria riot, contributed to the articulation of gay liberation. Perhaps the best known early articulation was Carl Wittman’s “Gay Manifesto,” written during spring 1969 and first circulated in early May of that year. See Wittman, “A Gay Manifesto,” in *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*, ed. Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan (New York: Routledge, 1997), 380–390.

other GLFs formed around the country. In some cities, the name “Gay Liberation Front” replaced the moniker of an earlier group, while in others it named a new organization. News of Stonewall thus both helped to disseminate a model for activism, and to legitimate or name gay and lesbian radicalism that was already brewing.

The Stonewall Inn and Greenwich Village were stratified spaces, known to wide numbers of LGBTQ people yet fractured by race, class, gender, and gender expression; they were not always experienced as welcoming spaces by people of color. The uprising seemed to bridge such fractures, but perceived unity was fleeting. New York’s GLF produced an array of offshoots that spoke to experiences subsumed under the gay, normatively white and male, umbrella. These groups included the Radicalesbians, the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, Third World Gay Liberation (a people of color group), and the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA, which was largely composed of white gay men, but split from the GLF because it opposed lending support to the Black Panthers). Similar debates emerged in other cities, and reflected patterns that were neither caused nor redressed by Stonewall itself.

Throughout and following the uprising, gay liberationists sought to redefine sexuality by embracing the principle of revolutionary self-determination. Rhetorically, gay liberation remade a homosexual person into someone who was free – indeed, someone who had seized power to free themselves. Gay liberationists rejected existing sexual and gender norms and sought to replace them through new ways of living, forming relationships, and expressing gender and desire. Many gay, lesbian, and other LGBTQ radicals moved into collective households; many rejected monogamy; and all debated how to overturn gender and sexual “roles” (a key term of the time, roughly equivalent to the usage of “norms” today). Some embraced trans identities as crucial to collective liberation, but others saw them as “imitative” of heterosexual norms – a view that became used to justify harsh exclusions. Many activists debated sex acts: If penetration had been defined through patriarchy, did liberation mean no penetration at all; that both partners might, or should, take turns; or that the psychic weight of penetration might be lifted entirely, leaving everyone free to do – or not do – whatever they chose, without implying particular political meanings for sex? These and other questions were hotly debated within gay liberation, though not always in the movement’s most public forums.

More visibly, gay liberationists embraced a politics of popular democracy, including by seeking control of bars, parks, and other spaces of queer and urban life. Many defined gay

liberation as intrinsically linked with solidarity against racism, sexism, and war – in part because the anti-war and Black Power movements had lent the language of self-determination, and in part because police harassment targeted gay, lesbian, and trans people along with working-class people and people of color. The Vietnam War draft proved a crucial factor, and as gay liberation expanded, efforts to use gay identity to evade the draft grew. GLFs distinguished themselves from homophile groups by opposing the Vietnam War, rather than backing military inclusion; in addition, gay caucuses and leadership formed in Vietnam Veterans Against the War and GI anti-war groups.⁶ Gay liberationists forged alliances with the Black Panther Party, especially after August 1970 when Huey Newton made statements in support of gay liberation and gay radicals joined defense of Panther chapters.⁷ Well after the Stonewall uprising was over, gay liberation, lesbian feminism, and an array of other LGBTQ activism proliferated.

Stonewall took on symbolic meaning quite quickly – certainly by the first anniversary of the inception of the riots (June 1970), when activists in New York and Los Angeles led public marches marking a year since the event. By this time, activists were also beginning to use the term “Stonewall” to evoke “gay liberation”; for example, radicals in Los Angeles and San Francisco cited their dreams of gay political power by calling for a “Stonewall Nation.”⁸ The term “Pride,” now commonly used for events marking the anniversary of Stonewall, was not widely adopted until the early 1990s. Instead, in the 1970s and 1980s, organizers typically referred to their events with names such as “Gay Freedom Day” (eventually expanded to “Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual”; the inclusion of “transgender” was won at approximately the same time as the shift to “Pride”). Commemorations during the 1970s and 1980s were also more often labeled as “marches” than “celebrations.”

⁶ Justin David Suran, “Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam,” *American Quarterly* 53:3 (2001): 452-88; Emily K. Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (Berkeley: University of California, 2016), 39-40.

⁷ Amy Abugo Onigiri, “Prisoner of Love: Affiliation, Sexuality, and the Black Panther Party,” *The Journal of African American History* 94:1 (Winter 2009): 69-86; Marc Stein, “‘Birthplace of the Nation’: Imagining Lesbian and Gay Communities in Philadelphia, 1969-70,” in *Creating a Place for Ourselves*, 253-88; Jared Leighton, “‘All of Us Are Unapprehended Felons’: Gay Liberation, the Black Panther Party, and Intercommunal Efforts Against Police Brutality in the Bay Area,” *Journal of Social History* (2018), 1-26.

⁸ See references by the Alpine County Project in Hobson, *Lavender and Red*, 34.

Stonewall's symbolism became further constructed as it became used to name LGBTQ political agendas. The first Stonewall Democratic Club was founded in 1975 in Los Angeles; the name eventually became the most typical label for gay, lesbian, or LGBTQ caucuses in the Democratic Party, from local to national levels. At the same time, activists used "Stonewall" to index radicalism, critiquing more moderate (including liberal or Democratic) agendas. The slogans "Stonewall was a riot" and "Stonewall means fight back" became popular by the mid-1970s, appearing on buttons and banners. Coalitions of LGBTQ radicals often took the name "Stonewall Contingent" when they assembled together for marches or issued statements. Participants in San Francisco's White Night Riot – the May 1979 protest against the lenient sentence of Harvey Milk's assassin Dan White – saw their actions as recapturing Stonewall's spirit. Similar reclamations occurred at the height of the AIDS direct action movement, voiced by activists in the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).⁹ Through such acts of naming, activists and advocates sought to define the heart of LGBTQ freedom through reference to Stonewall. Meanwhile, the creation of other markers of LGBTQ identity – Gilbert Baker's rainbow flag, the pink triangle and black triangle, the labyris – constructed a field of symbolism into which "Stonewall," as a heroicized and debated origin story, could fit.

The field of LGBTQ history records activism, including origin points for gay liberation, well before June 28, 1969. Yet Stonewall remains critical both as uprising and as symbol. Today, the site accrues new meanings with each way it is used: as a gathering point for celebration; as a location for mourning – over HIV/AIDS, over the Pulse nightclub shootings, over the deaths of trans people of color; as a place claimed for national histories. Its commemoration can either recognize, or gloss over, the differences and conflicts that structured the uprising. Certainly, some visitors to the Stonewall National Monument will demand a single meaning from the site. But historians, docents, and other interpreters seeking to reflect the site's history will be most honest when they direct sightseers away from the urge for simplicity, and towards insight into the uprising's many catalysts, varying experiences, and contested meanings.

⁹ See, for example, Douglas Crimp's construction of a historical timeline in Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy," *October* 51 (winter 1989): 3–18.

STONEWALL ESSAY FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

4 January 2018, Eric Marcus

Title: Making Peace with Stonewall

It's time for me to make peace with Stonewall. For the past three decades I've done battle with the Stonewall riots (uprising, rebellion...) and I'm worn out. The fight began in the summer of 1988 when I first discovered that Stonewall didn't mark the beginning of what was then called the gay civil rights movement. I was shocked to learn that the conflict between bar patrons and the New York City police that began after a raid in the early morning hours of June 28-29, 1969, on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village came nineteen years after the founding of the Mattachine Society, the first of the "homophile" organizations. It wasn't even the first time that "gay people fought back" against police repression. Or the second. Or even the third!

These revelations only came to me when I started work on my book about the movement. The book wasn't my idea. In 1988 I was a twenty-nine-year-old journalist working at CBS News when I got a call from an editor at Harper & Row (now HarperCollins) who asked if I'd consider writing an oral history of the gay civil rights movement—a book like Studs Terkel's *Working*. "I'm not a historian or an academic," I protested. But the editor liked how I'd written dialogue in my first book, *The Male Couple's Guide*, and based on what he'd read he thought I could write for a general audience. Besides, he told me, he wanted someone who was fresh to the subject, someone who came to it without preconceptions.

I was definitely fresh to the subject because I knew almost nothing about my history beyond what I'd picked up from attending hearings at New York City Hall for an ill-fated gay rights bill in the early 1980s and standing on the sidelines at a handful of Pride marches in San Francisco and New York. Still, I was intrigued by the idea and as an out gay man at CBS News I was already keenly aware of the limits on how far I could advance there. So I decided to take on this new challenge.

Once I started my research it took about five minutes for my one key preconception—that it all began at Stonewall—to be upended. That’s when the rage and sense of betrayal kicked in. Why didn’t I know this history? Why was it kept from me? Who was to blame? I should have blamed my education—or lack of education—but instead I blamed Stonewall. Stonewall was like the guy at the party who sucks the air out of the room. Everything starts with him and there’s no space for anyone else to get a word in edgewise.

As I began conducting interviews with some of the earliest, pre-Stonewall activists my anger only grew stronger. I found myself channeling the rage and hurt that so many of the people I interviewed experienced over having seen their accomplishments diminished or ignored every time they heard or read that Stonewall marked the beginning of “the modern gay rights movement.” I had the privilege to record the stories of people who founded the earliest organizations, mounted the first public protests, and brought the first legal cases in a world that was hostile to LGBTQ folks in ways that we can hardly imagine today—people who stood up and said, “We’re not sick, we’re not sinful, we’re just as good and moral as anyone else and we demand our rights.” They did this at a time when speaking out could cost you your job, your family, and even your home. Almost no one listened, but they persisted.

My battle plan quickly came into view. I’d put Stonewall in its rightful place in history as I came to see it through my conversations with the people who had lived that history. Stonewall would be a historical pivot point, but given how much play it had already gotten, I wouldn’t give it undue attention. My focus would be on what came before and after. Of course it hadn’t occurred to me at the time that in choosing how much (or little) “play” to give Stonewall that I was seeing Stonewall through my own lens. Like anyone writing about history, I brought my own subjectivity to the page.

Over the past three decades I’ve written essays about Stonewall, moderated panel discussions, advised on a documentary, and written more than a few letters to the editors of the *New York Times*—all in an effort to set the record straight about Stonewall and to challenge some of the

more persistent and, to my mind, glaring myths about what happened and didn't happen, who was there and who wasn't, who did what, and what Stonewall has come to represent.

Over that time, I like to think I've gained a clearer perspective on what Stonewall was. The image that comes to my mind is that of an open flame and a can of gasoline. The open flame was a volatile mix of rage and yearning—the rage of an oppressed people who yearned to live without fear of being hounded by the police, fired from their jobs, scorned by their loved ones, demonized by the church, and diagnosed and tortured by psychiatrists. That open flame burned in every major city in the country during an era when large-scale confrontations with the police—over the Vietnam War and civil rights—were already commonplace.

It was in that context that the police raided the Stonewall Inn on the night of June 28-29, 1969, unwittingly providing the fuel that ultimately blew the movement wide open. But the explosive growth that followed wasn't an accident. As I came to understand, it took the efforts of people who, because of their previous organizing experience and determination, recognized the opportunity to harness the raw energy released at Stonewall, had the knowledge and skill to channel it, and the experience and political savvy to use the existing movement infrastructure to build the foundations of a newly supercharged national movement. Of course many others came fresh to the movement after Stonewall. So the riot may have been spontaneous, but I continue to believe that what came in the aftermath would have been impossible without the groundwork laid with the blood and sweat of the earlier activists.

Even as I've fought to convey that view—my view—of Stonewall, I've had to accept that my perspective isn't the only one. I've also had to accept that people grow attached to myths, even when those myths unnecessarily embellish the already compelling facts. Take the legendary kick line of high-heeled drag queens on Christopher Street outside the Stonewall challenging a phalanx of policemen in riot gear and chanting "We are the Stonewall girls, we wear our hair in curls..." The kick line and chant were real, but the high-heeled drag queens were actually street kids, mostly teenagers, "flames" in various degrees of "scare drag," not dresses and wigs, and definitely not wearing high heels. The street kids knew better. As Martin

Boyce, who was at Stonewall the night of the riot explained to me, you can't run from the police in heels. But the idea and image of high-kicking, high-heeled rioters in full drag makes for a better, and more cinematic, story.

There are things that we'll never agree on about Stonewall, whether we're so-called scholars, self-identified "gay history geeks," inquisitive high school students, or simply veterans of the movement. Just get a group of interested people in a room and ask who threw the first rock or cocktail glass if you want to test my assertion. But I like to think that we can still find plenty of common ground: that Stonewall was a pivotal event in the LGBTQ civil rights movement, that it was an opportunity seized upon by activists who recognized its potential as both a catalyst and a symbol, and that they had the creativity and foresight to enshrine Stonewall as a symbol by tying it to an annual celebration (protest or pride march or festival or picnic or fun run or...).

What I don't think anyone in 1969 could have imagined was that Stonewall would grow to become an international symbol strong enough that it could be what each of us needs Stonewall to be—whether that's a symbol of freedom, of an oppressed people fighting back, a symbol of hope, an inspiring rallying cry, or all of the above.

As I leave the Stonewall battlefield and look ahead to the 50th anniversary of the uprising, I'm happy to let the people who were closest to the events at Stonewall in 1969 be the ones to tell the story of what happened—through their recorded oral histories or printed testimony. And if you're looking for the definitive fact-based account of what happened, David Carter's book, *Stonewall* is it.

But while I still care deeply about the facts, what I'm more interested in now is how people experience the idea of Stonewall, what it means to them, and how it inspires them in their lives today. Just don't try to suggest that Stonewall was the "start of the modern gay rights movement," or "where pride began." I still have some fight left in me.

###

Stonewall National Monument
Scholars Workshop on National Significance, October 27-29, 2017

Reflection on the National Significance of the Stonewall Riots

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I first learned about the Stonewall Riots in a U.S. history class that I took in college in the 1990s. We read Martin Duberman's pathbreaking book *Stonewall*, which in 1994 had recently been issued in paperback. This was the first time that I and most of my classmates learned anything at all about the LGBTQ rights movement in school. The story of the Stonewall Riots fit well within the broader context of the course on America in the 1960s, a period of great social upheaval and protest. Activists in the Civil Rights Movement for racial justice and the Anti-War Movement openly challenged policing practices, unjust laws, and government authority. It made sense to me as a young student that momentum from one movement would spill over and inspire other movements. And so it was that people who belonged to a much despised and heavily stigmatized minority--commonly referred to as homosexuals--began to feel that they too could fight back, using political advocacy, educational campaigns, and public protest to do so.¹

Much has been made of a shift in consciousness among LGBTQ people during the 1970s from one of shame to one of pride; from a people who cowed at the sight of police officers raiding

¹ Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993). Also see John D'Emilio *Sexual Politics Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1983).

their bars to a people who fought back; from a people with everything to lose if they were 'outed' to a people who realize they in fact had nothing to begin with—no rights, no respect, no dignity—and therefore nothing to lose. Was Stonewall itself the catalyst for this transformation or did it earn such a designation upon later reflection? The answer to this question is complicated and speaks to the multiple ways that the general public, U.S. historians, LGBTQ people of all ages, and LGBTQ activists from the era relate to and learn about the Stonewall Riots.²

For those who were in the bar that night and others who joined the crowd in the streets outside for nights to come, the energy of the community was electric and life-changing. New people flocked to longstanding homophile organizations, calling for a change in tactics and attitude seemingly overnight. Activist and social groups proliferated in major cities and even smaller ones, too. Yes, Stonewall was a catalyst.³

Long before Stonewall and in many different parts of the country, however, LGBTQ people came together to socialize, advocate, and educate, from nineteenth-century gender-bending performances, to turn of the century speakeasies and house parties, to mid-century editorial meetings of the early gay and lesbian press, to gatherings of sex-workers in resistance and

² Early important histories include Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Crowell, 1976); Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (Plum, 1990); Eric Marcus, *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990: An Oral History* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

³ David Cater, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (St. Martin's Press, 2004); Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (Simon & Schuster, 2015).

solidarity, to the organized and visible protests of homophile groups.⁴ Sexual and gender minorities have formed community and fought back against the major institutions that have oppressed them, including religious organizations, the medical community, local, state, and federal governments, and an extensive body of laws that criminalized many aspects of our lives. Despite an abundance of great scholarship on the dynamic histories of gender and sexual minority people and communities from even the earliest decades of our nation's founding, few are aware of this dynamic and troubling past.

U.S. history textbooks and curriculum have only recently begun to include references to an LGBTQ past.⁵ Historians and editors agreed that Stonewall was the single most important event in LGBTQ community history. The Stonewall Riot is not only the placeholder for the LGBTQ rights movement but is often the only mention of LGBTQ people in U.S. history textbooks. Stonewall marks the beginning of mainstream America's recognition of our very existence in public life. Through it, we are associated with and defined by cities, nightlife, and illicit activities. We are an interracial community of street hustlers, workers, professionals, and students who are gay, trans, gender nonconforming, lesbian, bisexual, femme, butch, queens, and bears. In this remembering, it is as if we rose from the ashes one night to fight the police and thereafter were accepted and assimilated into modern American culture, culminating in the legalization of same-sex marriage. But Stonewall's significance was far from clear at this

⁴ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic, 1995); Marc Stein, *City Of Sisterly And Brotherly Loves: Lesbian And Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Chicago: U Chicago, 2000); Marcia Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (2006); Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Seal Press, 2008).

⁵ Jen Manion, "The Absence of Context: Queer Politics Without a Past," *QED: A Journal of GLBTQ World Making*, (2014), 1 no. 2 (2014), 115-131.

time. Rather, its rise in prominence and designation as the origin of the modern LGBTQ rights movement was earned later, upon reflection and commemoration, after two decades of struggle and political advocacy for LGBTQ rights. Its role in historical memory far exceeds its role as a catalyst for social change at the time.

Stonewall is most frequently commemorated as a starting point—with New York at the center—but must be remembered within a broader and older national context. After reading a book about Stonewall in the 1990s, I never thought much about it again. How could this be if Stonewall is as important as everyone says it is? I will elaborate on three reasons that I—and many others—think of Stonewall’s significance as a matter of historic memory more than as a singular catalyst for change.

First, I am not a New Yorker. Stonewall has been made into a national story, much as New York is heralded as America’s great city. Other protests by trans and queer people against discrimination and police harassment, from Philadelphia’s Dewey’s Diner in 1965 to Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966, are of vital importance to communities in those cities but have never been given the same national significance. Living in Philadelphia, I began to learn of the organizing efforts of the 1950s and 1960s, including the Annual Reminder protests in front of Independence Hall. Major cities all across the country from San Francisco to Chicago to Washington DC to Miami to LA have rich and important historic legacies which anchor LGBTQ

communities and inspire transformative activism just as much as—and sometimes more than—Stonewall.⁶

Second, there is no singular LGBTQ rights movement. Rather, I came out in the 1990s into a community of lesbian feminists who were deeply committed to anti-racist politics and thinking critically about the interconnectedness of structural oppression.⁷ Writers such as Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Angela Davis, Cherrie Moraga, Dorothy Allison, Patricia Hill Collins, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Gloria Anzaldua helped me to think about LGBTQ rights and issues in a broad and intersectional way. From this vantage point, the mainstream LGBTQ rights movement—which by then was heralding Stonewall as its point of origin—was not doing enough to address how racism, classism, and sexism shaped our lives as LGBTQ people. Many LGBTQ writers and activists were anchored in racial justice and women’s rights groups, aspiring to do transformative and integrated social justice work. Sometimes this work and alignment was a response to the dominance of gay white men in leadership of the LGBTQ movement, who were more likely to advocate a narrow, single issue approach to gay rights.⁸

⁶ Nan Boyd *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (University of California, 2005); Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970* (Chicago: U Chicago, 2006); Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian L.A. and the Making of Modern Politics* (University of California, 2008); C. Todd White, *Pre-Gay L.A.: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights* (University of Illinois, 2009); Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Julio Capo, *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2017).

⁷ Lesbian culture and communities have been both separate from and intermixed with gay male and transgender subcultures. See Lillian Faderman *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia U, 1991); Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Kennedy, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Esther Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America’s First Gay and Lesbian Town* (Boston: Beacon, 1993).

⁸ See Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor 1995) and Kevin Mumford, *Not Straight, Not White: Black Gay Men from the March on Washington to the Aids Crisis* (UNC, 2016).

Third, as a historian of the carceral state and the long-ago past, reflecting on Stonewall makes me think about the centuries of unjust laws, government discrimination, and police brutality against LGBTQ people.⁹ Religious views often shaped laws, and these laws served to justify medical diagnoses that deemed us unfit parents, teachers, neighbors, workers, and citizens. The legacy of these cruel and discriminatory values lives on all around us.¹⁰ Religious leaders still condemn us. Families still reject us. Police still harass us. Medical providers refuse to treat us. The impact of these cruel and discriminatory values is even more pronounced in the lives of youth, elderly, poor, incarcerated, immigrant, racial minority, and transgender people. For example, over 40% incarcerated women in the U.S. are sexual minorities.¹¹ A whopping 16% of transgender adults have been in prison or jail, over five times the rate for all adults.¹² A devastating 44% of LGB youth report being threatened, injured, or bullied at school and nearly one-third of them attempted suicide.¹³ LGBTQ elderly people face higher poverty rates, greater economic insecurity, greater isolation, and significant health disparities compared to straight people.¹⁴ The list goes on. If Stonewall is first and foremost a story of LGBTQ people challenging police harassment and unjust laws that criminalized same-sex intimacies, cross-dressing, and

⁹ David Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: U Chicago, 2006); Joey L. Mogul, Andrea Ritchie, Kay Whitlock, *Queer Injustice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States* (Beacon Press, 2011); Jen Manion, *Liberty's Prisoners: Carceral Culture in Early America* (University of Pennsylvania, 2015).

¹⁰ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Discrimination-and-Harassment-in-Law-Enforcement-March-2015.pdf>

¹¹ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/incarceration-rate-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-people-three-times-the-general-population/>

¹² <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/standing-lgbt-prisoners-advocate-s-guide-ending-abuse-and-combating-imprisonment>

¹³ <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

¹⁴ <https://www.sageusa.org/issues/general.cfm>

our public gatherings, then we must attend not only to the origins of these laws but also their legacies.¹⁵

We have begun to see the LGBTQ community as one that has secured a fair number of “rights” in a relatively short period of time. Federal recognition of same-sex marriage, achieved in 2015 with the decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, is seen as the crowning achievement of forty years of legal advocacy.¹⁶ It’s important to celebrate same-sex marriage as a tremendously significant civil rights gain. But in illuminating the central themes and context for Stonewall, the through line leads not to marriage but really to what has defined the criminalization of same-sex desire for centuries: sodomy and cross-dressing. Laws against sodomy are older than the country itself and can be found in statutes of the American colonies. Their impact and enforcement varied but they were used robustly in the twentieth century to terrorize, shame, and blackmail people with same-sex desire. Even in the 1980s and 1990s after significant civil rights gains, the criminalization of sodomy was used to deny LGBTQ people parental custody, adoption rights, employment protections, hospital visitation, relationship recognition, and access to public accommodations. The laws against sodomy were finally overturned nationally by the 2003 Supreme Court Case *Lawrence v. Texas*.¹⁷ With that, our love was no longer a crime. Anti-cross dressing laws were widely introduced in cities across the country throughout the nineteenth century. They have been used to punish stigmatize, marginalize, and oppress a whole host of

¹⁵ William N. Eskridge, Jr. *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf

¹⁷ <https://epic.org/privacy/gender/lawrencectx.pdf>

people including transsexuals, drag queens, sex workers, butches, studs, AGs, lesbians, and other transgender/gender nonconforming people. While the ordinances themselves have been overthrown, the debate over the rights of non-binary, gender non-conforming, and transgender people to participate in civic life and utilize public accommodations in accordance with their gender identity has only just begun. The fight for liberation from gender and sexual norms was at the heart of the Stonewall Riots—and it lives on in the transgender rights movement of today.

EXPLAINING STONEWALL

Lillian Faderman

“Stonewall” as a place and an historic event is the single most significant icon of the LGBTQ community. It is also the one bit of gay lore that those not part of the LGBTQ community are likely to have heard of. Its iconic weight was confirmed when President Barack Obama in his 2012 inaugural address named it on a par with Seneca and Selma as representing a pivotal historical moment: President Obama rightly assumed that “Stonewall” would be understood by most of his listeners to stand for a critical salvo in America’s history of the struggle for equal rights.

Necessary Precursors to the Stonewall Uprising

The Stonewall Uprising, spontaneous as it was, can also be said to have been years in the making. “Gay” people (as most LGBTQ people called themselves throughout the 1950s and ‘60s) started organizing seriously with the establishment of homophile groups such as Mattachine in 1950 and Daughters of Bilitis in 1955. The organizing began because gays were victims of unrelenting and ubiquitous prejudice: the law said they were criminals; psychiatric professionals said they were mentally ill; theologians said they were sinners; and employers—governmental as well as private—said they were unfit for employment. Legal persecution of homosexuals was so prevalent that few even dared join a homophile organization: gay people were justifiably scared that authorities would seize membership rosters and that members would be thrown in jail—or at least outed in newspapers, fired from jobs, and shamed in front of neighbors and family. Neither Mattachine nor DOB grew beyond several hundred members.

In 1961, Frank Kameny founded Mattachine Society Washington. He was determined to make the organization more openly confrontational in its fight for the rights of homosexuals. In 1965, he organized pickets—in front of the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, Independence Hall in Philadelphia—through which he hoped to bring homosexuality out of the

shadows and the demand for homosexual civil rights into the sunlight. While Kameny never succeeded in getting more than a few dozen picketers to join him, his audacity was a harbinger of change for gay people.

Frank Kameny and a few other 1960s activists had been inspired by the drama of other civil-rights struggles. Kameny had actually been at Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. He'd held aloft a "Mattachine Society" placard at the March—though only the four other Mattachine members who were with him knew what the placard signified. They yearned for a homosexual March on Washington; but they knew that there weren't yet enough gays who would dare march as blacks were marching. The pickets were their compromise.

But Kameny was convinced that gays must learn from black people how to be even more confrontational in demanding their rights. In the summer of 1964, in the midst of six consecutive nights of rioting to protest police behavior in Harlem, Kameny addressed a meeting of New York Mattachine about the slow progress of gay civil rights: "Negroes tried for ninety years to achieve their purposes by 'educating' the public out of its prejudices"; but their achievements during all that time "were nothing compared to those of the past ten years" when "negroes became vigorous [in their] social actions," Kameny pointed out to his audience, who were surely aware of the riots that were going on a few miles away.¹ The gay struggle must take a page from the black struggle, he was implying. However, the "vigor" of a "social action" such as the Harlem riots was unthinkable for Kameny's middle-class, middle-aged listeners at that 1964 Mattachine Society meeting.

But other tactics of the black movement did serve as inspiration for a number of gay protests in the mid-1960s. For instance, Dick Leitsch, president of New York Mattachine, inspired by black sit-ins, staged a "sip-in" in a Greenwich Village bar to begin a legal challenge to the State Liquor Authority's prohibition against serving homosexuals. That same year also saw a mini-riot at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco when police harassed the drag queen clientele as per usual: this time the queens, about fifty of them, many of them black and Latino, fought back.

¹ Frank Kameny, "Civil Liberties: A Progress Report, 1964 speech at Freedom House, NYC: see my book *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), p. 138.

Other militant movements of the 1960s, such as the anti-Vietnam War movement, the feminist movement, the movement for Latino and Native American civil rights—all became inspiration for gay activists. After the Black Cat, a Los Angeles gay bar, was raided in 1967, organizers staged a multi-night mass protest—anti-war-movement style—to rally consciousness about police harassment of gays. After the Patch, another Los Angeles gay bar, was raided in 1968 and a couple of men arrested, the bar’s owner and its patrons were inspired by radical feminist “zaps,” such as the feminists’ invasion of a bridal fair in Madison Square Garden where they released cages of mice: The Patch protestors descended on police headquarters with arms full of floral bouquets and demanded the release of their “sisters.” Yet daring and remarkable as those protests were for homosexuals, they remained small and had seemingly little impact.

The people who rioted after the raid on the Stonewall Inn in June 1969 may or may not have known about the earlier gay protests. But they had surely heard on the nightly news of the March on Washington; the black riots in Harlem, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta; the anti-war demonstrations that attracted tens of thousands; the mass protest by leftist youths at the 1968 Democratic Convention; the feminist zaps on the Miss America Pageant, on Wall Street, on the inauguration of Richard Nixon. The ethos of the times was inescapable. In the repressive and repressed 1950s, the Stonewall Uprising would not have been possible. It would not have been probable if it had not been preceded by almost an entire decade of dramatic protests.

Why Stonewall?

Though the 1960s saw a variety of gay protests, none came close to the Stonewall Uprising in drama, duration, and size. The riots that followed a raid of the Stonewall Inn was a response to a long history of police harassment of the one institution that gay people believed to be theirs: the gay bar. In cities all over America, the gay bar had never been simply a place where you went to get a drink. It was the one place where patrons dared let their homosexuality show in public. It was where they went for a sense of community and camaraderie; it was where they went to meet potential romantic and sexual partners. It was virtually the only institution that gay people had. Yet by raids and entrapment, law enforcement was constantly challenging

gay people's right to congregate in even so paltry an institution as the gay bar. As post-raid protests at bars such as The Black Cat and The Patch had demonstrated, the urge to fight back against persecution of gays on their home base was building throughout the 1960s. But with Stonewall that urge exploded as it never had before. Why?

Topography explains a lot about why Stonewall—and not other places, in other cities where gay people had been just as brutalized by the law—became the critical gay protest. A topographical comparison with Los Angeles makes the point most vividly. Los Angeles was not only the site of some of the first protests against police raids of gay bars; it had also been the first home of the first on-going homophile organization, the Mattachine Society. Los Angeles had long been a leader in homophile activism. Even the first lesbian periodical (*Vice Versa*) and the first homophile periodical (*ONE*) had been founded there. But Los Angeles, spread out over 450 square miles, had no equivalent to Greenwich Village, where droves of bohemians, hippies, and nonconformists strolled its 1 ½ square miles. The density of the Village, crowded with offbeat types, was crucial in expanding the number of rioters and protracting the duration of the Stonewall Uprising.

Compare a 1966 incident in Los Angeles: The National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations had voted to protest the “less-than-honorable discharge” given to those in the Armed Forces who were discovered to be homosexual. The protests were to bring to the public's attention that a less-than-honorable discharge became a permanent part of a man's record and his life was forever ruined. On Armed Forces Day, May 21, 1966, there were small protests in a handful of cities. In Los Angeles, the founder of Mattachine, Harry Hay, was named chair of the protest, and the group deliberated on how to get its dramatic message to the public. Their plan was quintessentially Los Angeles. In that spread-out city, there was no one place where huge numbers of people walked. Hay's group would have a motorcade. The cars would carry big banners announcing “10% of all GIs are Homosexual” and “Sex Belongs to Private Conscience.” Thousands of Angelenos may indeed have seen the passing motorcade and been sympathetic. But there was no opportunity for them to congregate in large numbers, to feel the group outrage, to express that outrage on the streets. An Uprising such as the one that took place in Greenwich Village three years later could only have happened there or some other place with similar topography—and in the 1960s there were few such place in America.

Topography alone cannot, of course, account for why Stonewall became the most salient icon of the struggle for LGBTQ rights. The passion that triggered the riots had to be redirected before it burnt itself out. And in Greenwich Village it was, because radical activists who throughout the 1960s had cut their teeth on various militant movements understood how to focus that passion. In the wake of the riots, they founded groups such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, they staged Stonewall commemorations such as Christopher Street Liberation Day, and they made Stonewall the long-lived symbol of the gay revolution.

Stonewall's meaning to the various segments of the LGBTQ community

Throughout the almost-half-century since the Uprising that followed the June 28, 1969 raid on the Stonewall Inn, the iconic importance of Stonewall has never stopped growing. Stonewall has had such deep significance for virtually every demographic of the diverse LGBTQ community that legends still keep proliferating about who was there, who started the resistance to the police harassment, whose actions were the most inspiring, the most dramatic, the most effective. The tremendous furor over Roland Emmerich's 2015 film *Stonewall* demonstrates how zealously communities within the LGBTQ community view their place in what has become the legend of Stonewall. Emmerich presented a hunky blonde Indiana boy as the one who hurled the rock that started the riots. Even before the film was released, its trailer sparked a huge boycott because, protestors complained, Emmerich had "whitewashed history"; he'd failed to show that Stonewall was "driven by transwomen of color, drag queens, [and] butch lesbians."² Reviewers such as African American lesbian Irene Monroe went so far as to observe that the film was a prime example of why there was a gulf between LGBTQ people of color and LGBTQ whites: it was because "the dominant [i.e., white and cisgendered] queer community rewrote and continues to control the narrative of Stonewall."³

Inarguably, it is the historian's job to ignore the heat of factions and to be coolly scrupulous in recounting historical fact. David Carter—who interviewed more participants of the

² Ebiri Bilge, "Stonewall Fails Across the Board, *Vulture*, September 25, 2015.

³ Irene Monroe, "The Stonewall I Remembered Just Wasn't White," *The Advocate*, August 11, 2015.

Uprising than any other scholar—suggests in his book *Stonewall* that according to his informants it would be a huge exaggeration, even misrepresentation, to say that the Uprising was “driven by” transwomen of color, drag queens, and butch lesbians. Yet, for better or worse, the legends that take root in the aftermath of historical events often have emotional resonance for many people that is far greater than historical facts. Regardless of the racial and gender makeup of the rioters, regardless of who did what on those four nights of early summer in 1969, Stonewall has become for LGBTQ communities of color and for transgender people a major point of pride. Though there were few women who actually played a role in Stonewall, the Uprising has even become a great point of pride for queer women through the legend of the butch lesbian who is said to have set off the rioting when she escaped from a police car and yelled to the crowd, “Why don’t you guys do something?”

Mainstream gays too recognize the importance of the Stonewall Uprising and even lay some claim to it. Though they were not among the rioters, they understand Stonewall as the prime activator—much more effective than anything that had preceded it—in the movement for LGBTQ civil-rights. As early as July 1969, the newsletter of the moderate New York Mattachine described the Uprising in “gayspeak” as “the hairpin drop heard round the world.”⁴ The Uprising also had impact on previously cautious and conservative gay individuals. Dr. Howard Brown who’d resigned as New York City health commissioner in 1967 because he feared columnist Drew Pearson would out him in the pages of the *New York Times*, lived up the street from the Stonewall Inn. When he ran out to see what the commotion was about that night of June 28, he understood immediately, as he later wrote, that he was seeing a civil-rights struggle—and it eventually “broke the spell of [his] fears.”⁵ Dr. Brown went on to co-found the National Gay Task Force in 1973, an organization whose first members were middle-class professionals who finally dared to come out of their closets, determined to fight for gay rights on a national level.

That same year, 1973, the boldness that had been sparked by the Uprising also saw the founding of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a mainstreaming organization which went on to fight in the courts for the rights of gay and lesbian parents, the right of LGBTQ

⁴ Dick Leitsch, “The Hairpin Drop Heard Round the World,” *New York Mattachine Newsletter*, July 1969.

⁵ Howard Brown, *Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives: The Story of Homosexual Men in America Today* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 20.

students to organize, and eventually the right of same-sex couples to marry. Though the Stonewall Uprising was carried out by the young and disenfranchised, there is no question that what they did helped emboldened a much broader segment of the community. The line that leads from the Stonewall Uprising to the establishment of the mainstreaming organizations which have been in the forefront of the most successful battles for LGBTQ equality—including the right to marry and the right to serve in the military—is easy to discern.

The Steady Growth of the “Stonewall” Legend and Its Effect on LGBTQ People Everywhere

Not many non-gay newspapers recognized the significance of the Stonewall Uprising immediately after the fact. The *New York Times*, for instance, reported the events of June 28 in a short article on page 33 with the title “Four Policemen Hurt in ‘Village’ Raid.”⁶ The *New York Daily News* covered the riots only to mock them in an article titled “Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad.”⁷ But the gay people who had spent the previous years as activists in various militant movements recognized that Stonewall could become the emblem for a new gay movement that was no less militant and dramatic than the other movements of the 1960s, whose workings they knew well. Within a week of the Stonewall riots these seasoned activists formed the radical Gay Liberation Front and organized a march to commemorate the one month anniversary of the riots. Two thousand people showed up to march. Never before in the history of the world had there been so many out homosexuals in one public place.⁸

A new mood of gay anger and gay pride, inspired by the Stonewall Uprising, very soon caught fire. Gay Liberation Fronts sprang up not only in big coastal cities but in places such as Iowa City, Louisville, Atlanta, Tallahassee—as well as in England, Germany, Denmark, New Zealand. Before the Stonewall Uprising, there had been no more than two or three dozen homophile organizations. One year after, there were approximately a thousand gay organizations. Two years after, there were 2500.

⁶ “Four Policemen Hurt in ‘Village’ Raid,” *New York Times*, June 29, 1969.

⁷ Jerry Lisker, Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad,” *Daily News*, July 6, 1969.

⁸ See my discussion of gay organizing in the wake of the riots in *The Gay Revolution*, chapters 12 and 13.

The spirit of Stonewall was also spread through gay pride parades which began as an anniversary celebration of the Stonewall Uprising. In New York, the first parade, held one year after the events at Stonewall, was called “Christopher Street Liberation Day.” The Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front’s parade, held on the same day, was named “Christopher Street West.” Now, into the 21st century, pride parades sparked in the memory of Stonewall have grown to attract millions around the globe, including countries such as Uganda, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Indeed “Stonewall” has become virtually synonymous with the movement for LGBTQ equality everywhere. In the U.K, for instance, the organization “Stonewall Equality” was started in 1989 to fight internationally for gay rights; it continues to this day, as does “Stonewall Japan,” which was started in 1995. In America, “Stonewall Democrats” is a national caucus within the Democratic Party, with chapters in thirty states, including Alabama, Georgia, and Arkansas. The University of Massachusetts funds a “Stonewall Center” for LGBTQ students. The American Bar Association gives a “Stonewall Award” to lawyers and judges who have successfully fought against LGBTQ discrimination. Though the participants in the Stonewall riots were almost all marginalized and disenfranchised young people, “Stonewall” has morphed into a meaningful international emblem to all segments and socio-economic classes of LGBTQ people: it signifies the refusal be passive in the face of persecution, the mass exodus from the closet, the assertion of pride in being oneself, and the demand for equal protection under the law.



Workshop Participants

Scholars

Tristan Cabello (Ph.D, History, Northwestern University) is Director of American Studies at American University (Washington, DC). Cabello's research explores the intersection of race, sexuality, class identities and popular culture in modern American culture. His first monograph *Queer Bronzeville: Race, Sexuality and Black Chicago, 1920-1980* documents the making of African American queer identities in Chicago in the 20th century. Prior to joining American University, Cabello taught at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University and Bowdoin College. At American University, he teaches various courses in the American Studies Program. Among them, "AIDS in America," "In The Life: Black Queer Culture and History," and "Transnational Sexualities."

David Carter has been an activist for LGBT civil rights since the late 1970s when he lived in Wisconsin. His work there helped to make that state the first to pass a statewide LGBT civil rights law (1982). Carter wrote the proposal for two series by Chelsea House Publishers for young adults: *Issues in Gay and Lesbian Life* and *Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians*. Carter also wrote his first two books, biographies of George Santayana and Salvador Dalí, for Chelsea House. He was hired by Allen Ginsberg to edit the poet's interviews (*Spontaneous Mind: Selected Interviews 1958–1996*, HarperCollins, 2001). After he had begun researching the Stonewall Uprising, he used his unpublished work to help write the nomination to add the Stonewall Riots site to the National Register of Historic Places (1999); the same nomination was used to declare the site a National Historic Landmark (2000). His *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (St. Martin's Press, 2004) was used as the basis for the American Experience film, *Stonewall Uprising* (2010), and Carter served as the consultant for the film, which won a George Foster Peabody Award. He recently worked with the National Parks Conservation Association to help create the Stonewall National Monument. For 11 years, he has been researching his next book, a biography of Dr. Franklin E. Kameny.

Lillian Faderman is an internationally known scholar of lesbian and LGBT history and literature, as well as ethnic history and literature. The *New York Times* named three of her books on its "Notable Books of the Year" list: *Surpassing the Love of Men*, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, and *The Gay Revolution*. The *Guardian* named *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* one of the Top 10 Books of Radical History. The *Guardian* interviewed Sarah Waters, who named *Surpassing the Love of Men* as her most formative book. Faderman's work has been translated into numerous languages, including German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Turkish, Czech, and Slovenian. Among her many honors are six Lambda Literary Awards, two American Library Association Awards, and several lifetime achievement awards for scholarship, including Yale University's James Brudner Award, the Monette/Horwitz Award, the Publishing Triangle Award, the Golden Crown Literary Society Trailblazer Award, the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives Culture Hero Award, and the American Association of University Women's Distinguished Senior Scholar Award.

Emily K. Hobson is an Assistant Professor of History and Gender, Race, and Identity at the University of Nevada, Reno and the author of *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (University of California Press, 2016). A scholar of radical social movements and LGBTQ history in the postwar United States, she earned her PhD in American Studies & Ethnicity from the University of Southern California. Hobson has published articles or chapters in sources including the *Journal of*

American History, *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, *Routledge History of Queer America* (forthcoming), *The Rising Tide of Color* (University of Washington Press, 2014), and the award-winning volume *Understanding and Teaching U.S. LGBT History* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2014 and 2017). Her work has been recognized with honors including the Joan Heller-Diane Bernard Fellowship from the Center for LGBTQ Studies at the City University of New York and a fellowship from the John R. and Dora Haynes Foundation. She serves on the governing board of the Committee for LGBT History. Her work in progress includes a primary source anthology of US radicalism from 1970 through 2001 (co-edited with Dan Berger) and a book monograph on activism to confront HIV/AIDS in prisons in the 1980s and 1990s United States.

Jen Manion is Associate Professor of History at Amherst College and author of *Liberty's Prisoners: Carceral Culture in Early America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) which received the 2016 Mary Kelley Best Book Prize from the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. Manion is co-editor of *Taking Back the Academy: History of Activism, History as Activism* (Routledge, 2004) and has published nearly three dozen essays and reviews in the areas of U.S. History and Histories of Gender & Sexuality. Jen is the recipient of over a dozen fellowships, including one from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2012-2013 to examine transgender representation in the 18th and 19th century for a project entitled, "Born in the Wrong Time: Transgender Archives & The History of Possibility, 1740-1890." Manion was elected to the Governing Board of the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History (an AHA affiliate) from 2008-2011 and served as an advisor on the pioneering exhibition, "That's so Gay: The Not-So-Hidden History of Gayness in Early American Culture," at the Library Company of Philadelphia in 2014. Manion received a BA in history from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in history from Rutgers University.

Eric Marcus is the creator and host of the Making Gay History podcast, which mines his decades-old audio archive of rare interviews — conducted for his award-winning oral history book of the same name about the LGBTQ civil rights movement — to create intimate, personal portraits of both known and long-forgotten champions, heroes, and witnesses to history. His other books include *Is It A Choice?, Why Suicide?*, and *Breaking the Surface*, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling autobiography of Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis.

Kevin Mumford is Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; he received his Ph.D. in History from Stanford University (1993); A.B. in History with Honors, University of Wisconsin—Madison (1986); selected publications include *Not Straight, Not White: Black Gay Men From the March on Washington to the AIDS Crisis* (UNC, 2016); *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*, (NYU, 2007); *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Columbia, 1997); "The Trouble With Gay Rights: Race and the Politics of Sexual Orientation in Philadelphia, 1969-1982" *Journal of American History*, 98 (June 2011), 49-72; "Homosex Changes: Race, Cultural Geography, and the Emergence of the Gay," *American Quarterly*, 48 (September 1996), 395-414; reprinted in *Locating American Studies: Evolution of a Discipline*, ed. Lucy Maddox, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1999), 385-407. His awards include Fulbright Senior Scholar, Erfurt Universitait (2011); Warren Center for the Study of American History at Harvard University (2008); Schomburg Fellow, NEH Library Award, (2005); Binkely-Stephenson Award, Organization of American Historians and Audre Lorde Prize, American Historical Association, and his latest book received was a Stonewall Honor Prize from the American Library Association, and finalist for the Randy Shilts Prize and Lambda Literary Prize. He teaches courses on the construction of race, African American history, and the history of sexuality, and is currently working on a study of social mixtures in postwar U.S. culture.

Moderator

Susan Ferentinos is a public history consultant specializing in the history of gender and sexuality. She was a contributor to the National Park Service *Theme Study in LGBTQ Heritage* and is the author of *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), which won the 2016 National Council on Public History Book Award. Her current projects include a survey of potential National Historic Landmarks related to LGBTQ history in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic United States and a National Register nomination for the house of sexologist Alfred C. Kinsey, author of the mid-twentieth-century "Kinsey Reports." Prior to starting her own consulting practice, Dr. Ferentinos served for nearly ten years as public history manager of the Organization of American Historians, where she advocated for the needs of public historians within the larger historical profession and collaborated with the National Park Service on over a hundred cultural resource and interpretive projects.

Presenter

Jay Shockley is a founder and co-director of the New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project. He retired in 2015 as senior historian at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission where since 1979 he researched and wrote over 100 designation reports covering all aspects of the city's architectural, social, and cultural history. In 1993, he helped pioneer the concept of recognizing LGBT place-based history by incorporating it into the Commission's reports. As part of the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Architects + Designers (OLGAD), he also co-created the 1994 map, "A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks." With Andrew S. Dolkart, he co-authored the Stonewall nomination, which resulted in the first-ever National Register of Historic Places (1999) and National Historic Landmark (2000) listings for an LGBT site. He was the creator and leader of the panel program "Beyond Stonewall: Recognizing Significant Historic Sites of the LGBT Community" at the 2011 National Trust for Historic Preservation conference in Buffalo, New York. He was the author of the chapter "Preservation of LGBTQ Historic & Cultural Sites – A New York City Perspective" in the National Park Service's *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History* (2016). He was the co-author of the recent "LGBT History Tour: Greenwich Village, NYC" for the National Parks Conservation Association.