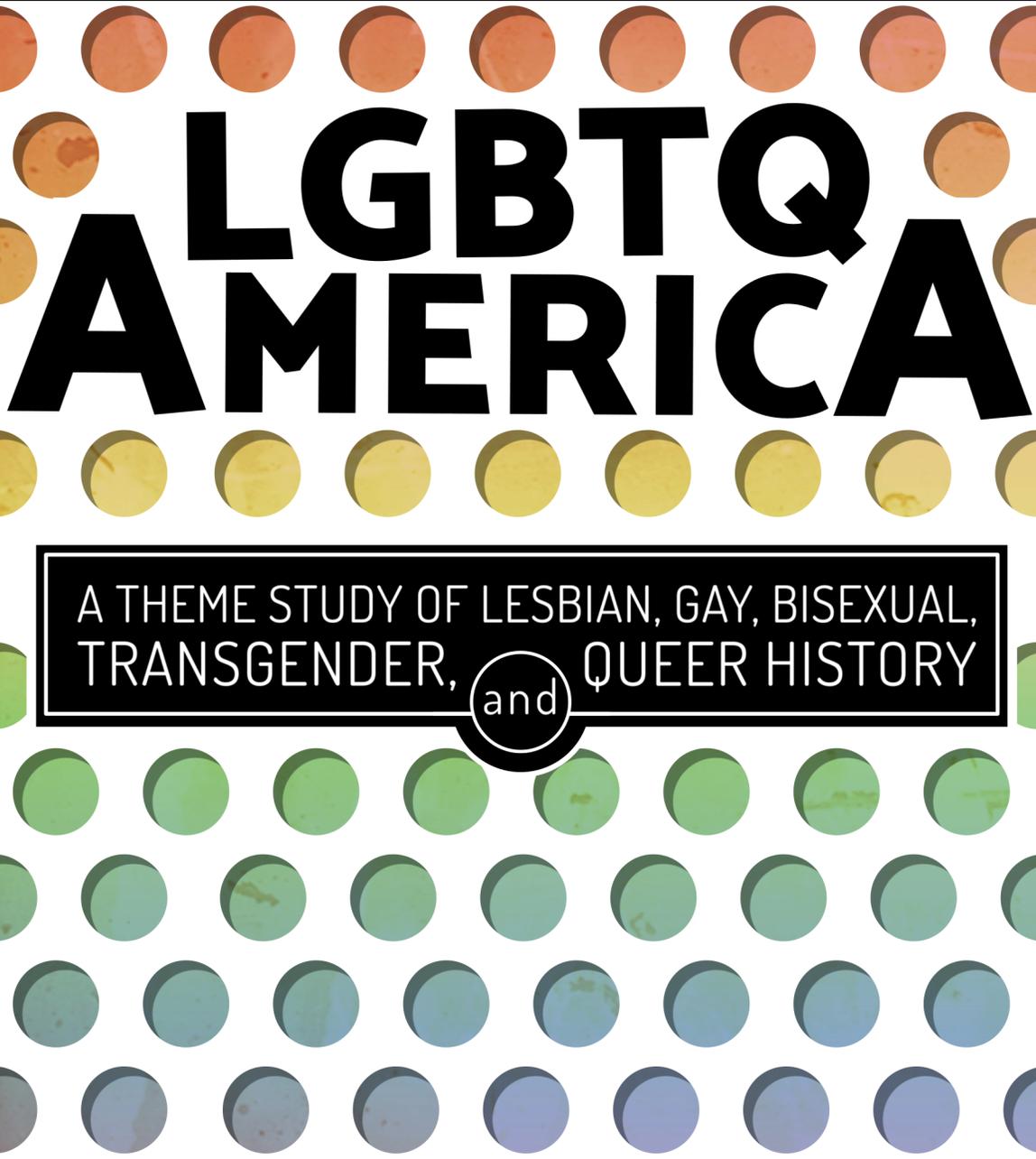


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LGBTQ AMERICA

A THEME STUDY OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDER, and QUEER HISTORY

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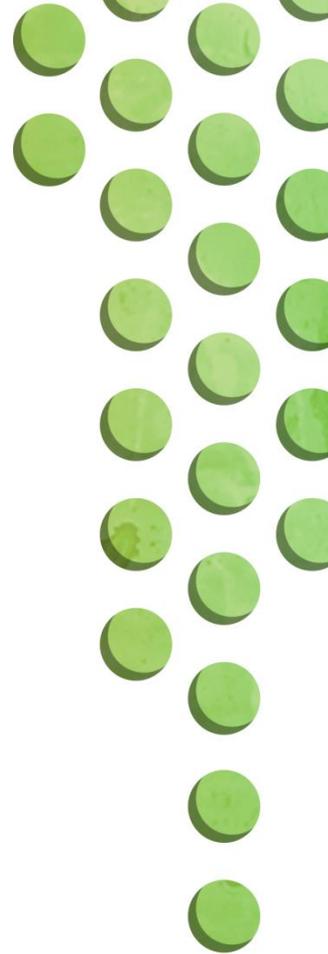
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THEMES

The chapters in this section take themes as their starting points. They explore different aspects of LGBTQ history and heritage, tying them to specific places across the country. They include examinations of LGBTQ community, civil rights, the law, health, art and artists, commerce, the military, sports and leisure, and sex, love, and relationships.

15 MAKING COMMUNITY: THE PLACES AND SPACES OF LGBTQ COLLECTIVE IDENTITY FORMATION

Christina B. Hanhardt

Introduction

In the summer of 2012, posters reading "MORE GRINDR=FEWER GAY BARS" appeared taped to signposts in numerous gay neighborhoods in North America—from Greenwich Village in New York City to Davie Village in Vancouver, Canada.¹ The signs expressed a brewing fear: that the popularity of online lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) social media—like Grindr, which connects gay men based on proximate location—would soon replace the bricks-and-mortar institutions that had long facilitated LGBTQ community building. The owner of Quest, a popular gay bar that hosted drag nights in Baltimore's Highlandtown neighborhood

¹ Steve Weinstein, "Nightlife Suffers as Gay Men Move Online," *Village Voice*, June 2012; the signs in Vancouver are noted by Amin Ghaziani in *There Goes the Gayborhood?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

for almost fifteen years, blamed the bar's closure in 2014 on, among other changes, the popularity of gay "hook up" apps like Grindr.² There are no studies that definitively prove what, if any, role online technology has played in the number of LGBTQ bars still remaining. But the concern that one social environment would replace the other points not only to the continued growth of LGBTQ virtual life—which has been an important means of exchange across boundaries of geography, accessibility, and age since the 1990s—but also to the historically significant role of bars and other sites of leisure in fostering LGBTQ sociality and of the key role of communication networks in the history of LGBTQ community formation.³

Historian John D'Emilio was among the first scholars to theorize the origins of self-identified lesbian and gay *community*. In his famed 1983 essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity," D'Emilio contended that the rise of a system of wage-based labor had allowed for individuals to detach from their prescribed roles within heterosexual families.⁴ By the middle of the twentieth century, the continued growth of the industrial city and the rise of single-sex environments central to wartime economies, would together help to provide the conditions of possibility to transform the often isolated experiences of same-sex sex and desire into lesbian and gay collective identities. Each decade that followed would bring about the continued birth and loss of bars, clubs, workplaces, parks, community centers, parade routes, commercial markets, protest sites, and other institutions formal and not, that would be claimed—and, at times, disavowed—in the name of LGBTQ community.

² Kevin Rector, "Looking Out: Quest Bar in Highlandtown to Close This Weekend After Last Hurrah," *Baltimore Sun*, August 7, 2014. Quest Bar was located at 3607 Fleet Street, Baltimore, Maryland near Brewer's Hill and was popular with regulars from there and the nearby suburb of Dundalk. See Michael Farley, "Leaving the Gayborhood," *City Paper*, June 10, 2014.

³ For an excellent history of communication networks in fostering the growth of lesbian and gay communities see Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). For a study of the vexed uses of early gay online networks see John Edward Campbell, "Virtual Citizens or Dream Consumers: Looking for Civic Community on Gay.com," in *Queer Intersections: Revisiting Online Media and Queer Sexualities*, eds. Kate O'Riordan and David J. Phillips (New York: Peter Lang, 2007). See also Johnson, Hutchins, and Schweighofer (this volume).

⁴ John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 100-113.

Social theorist Miranda Joseph has critiqued the concept of *community* as one that universalizes difference and thus obscures the power dynamics of social relations. She argues that claims to community are often romanticized, and that this dynamic risks masking conflict and minimizing the role of the marketplace. These claims can also assume that visions of community are shared when they often are not. Joseph grounds her analysis in a case study of Theatre Rhinoceros in San Francisco, a nonprofit association dedicated to theater by and about gay people that was founded in 1977. She shows how some members of the theater company used the terms of “community” in ways that excluded or marginalized other members, in particular people of color, bisexuals, and transgender people.⁵

Today Theatre Rhino (as it is best known) describes itself as “the world’s oldest continuously producing professional queer theater.”⁶ From 1981 to 2009, the theater was located in the Redstone Building, also known as the San Francisco Labor Temple, which has housed many labor and nonprofit groups and was the first home to the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society (now the GLBT Historical Society).⁷ The Redstone Building was landmarked by San Francisco in 2004 for its role in that city’s labor history, including for its status as a key site of organizing for the 1934 General Strike.⁸

The commemoration of the Redstone Building’s role in labor history combined with Joseph’s analysis of how internal social hierarchies can be legitimized reminds us that any claims to *community*—be that by Theatre Rhino or by historic preservation—can actually be quite vexed. The process of “making community” in US LGBTQ history, in neighborhoods and homes,

⁵ Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁶ “San Francisco Professional Queer Theater,” Theatre Rhinoceros website, accessed July 17, 2015, <http://www.therhino.org/history.html>.

⁷ The Redstone Building is located at 2926-2948 Sixteenth Street, San Francisco, California.

⁸ San Francisco Landmark #238, San Francisco Labor Temple, a.k.a. Redstone Building, 2926-2948 Sixteenth Street at Capp, built in 1914 and expanded in 1939, “San Francisco Landmarks,” NoeHill in San Francisco website, <http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf238.asp>.



in bars and parks and on softball fields, in community centers and via newsletters, and in ever-expanding online networks is always in process and changing over time and place. And the ideal of community is defined not only by whom it includes, but also by whom it leaves out; by shifting definitions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identity; and by conflicts over the best or appropriate use of place and of the value of LGBTQ visibility. In this chapter, other aspects of identification and difference including race, gender, class, ability, and location are also understood to shape the form and the function of the diverse places in which sexual and gender minorities have made, asserted, and challenged collective identities.

Neighborhoods

It is no accident that the signs announcing the doom promised by online sites like Grindr would be posted in so-called *gayborhoods*—areas that are known as historically home to a large number of LGBTQ residents and/or businesses. These include well-known areas of major cities such as New York’s Greenwich Village (especially the part known as the West Village), San Francisco’s Castro District, and Chicago’s East Lakeview (also called Boystown). There are also the gay-identified neighborhoods of other cities, such as Hillcrest in San Diego (California), Dupont Circle in Washington (District of Columbia), Midtown in Atlanta (Georgia), Old Towne East in Columbus (Ohio), Montrose in Houston (Texas), the French Quarter in New Orleans (Louisiana), plus whole towns unto themselves like Northampton and Provincetown in Massachusetts, Rehoboth Beach in Delaware, and West Hollywood in California.⁹ In these places, the

⁹ For a history of Los Angeles, see Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); for Chicago see Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); for Washington, DC, see Genny Beemyn, *A Queer Capital: A History of Gay Life in Washington DC* (New York: Routledge, 2014) and Kwame Holmes, “Chocolate to Rainbow City: The Dialectics of Black and Gay Community Formation in Postwar Washington, D.C., 1946-1978,” PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011; for Atlanta see Wesley Chenault, “Atlanta Since Stonewall, 1969-2009: A Local History,” (a collaborative project between the Atlanta History Center

presence of rainbow flags, public displays of same-sex affection, same-sex parent families, and businesses catering to LGBTQ markets are all seen as among the signs that mark an area as welcoming to LGBTQ people.

While some of these areas have longstanding reputations as popular amongst lesbian and gay people, the concept of a gay enclave as it is best known today—as a place of LGBTQ residence, leisure, and business—is a product of the late 1960s and 1970s. Prior to then, sexual and gender minorities were most associated with those places also home to a mix of other social outsiders, be that in bohemian or artist districts (such as New York’s Greenwich Village or San Francisco’s North Beach) or in the seedy streets of those cities’ vice districts and so-called skid rows (such as New York’s Times Square or San Francisco’s Tenderloin). By the late 1960s, things began to change, and gay tenants—in particular white and middle-class ones—were increasingly seen as desirable tenants.¹⁰

This corresponded with the growth of a mass movement following the Stonewall uprisings (discussed later in this chapter) that put the goal of lesbian and gay visibility further into the mainstream, and, in turn, neighborhoods were increasingly seen to be a primary expression of collective identity and pride. Here, lesbian and gay claims to place—as sites of residence and business and communal public life—would replace ideas of neighborhood based in uses deemed illegal or illicit or assumed private. As one journalist explained in late 1969, vice districts that were associated with public and commercial sex could not be called gay

and the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History), accessed July 21, 2015, Outhistory.org; and Wesley Chenault, “An Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940-1970,” PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2008; for New Orleans see Lawrence Knopp, “Gentrification and Gay Neighborhood Formation in New Orleans: A Case Study,” in *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life*, eds. Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (New York: Routledge, 1997); for Columbus, Ohio see the film *Flag Wars*, directed by Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras (New York: Praxis Films, 2003); for Provincetown, see Karen Krahulik, *Provincetown: From Pilgrim Landing to Gay Resort* (New York: NYU Press, 2005).

¹⁰ David Rothenberg, “Can Gays Save New York City?” *Christopher Street*, September 1977, 6-10.



neighborhoods, since their “gay legions are transient rather than permanent.”¹¹

In the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of lesbian and gay *community* in gay enclaves would, at least in part, begin to consolidate into what would become by the 1990s a niche market. Historic preservation efforts led by gay men were variably touted as, on the one hand, leading to the improvement of neighborhoods in decline while providing community for those often exiled from family, or, on the other hand, as a kind of vanguard for the profit-driven redevelopment of areas abandoned by the state and capital years before.¹² In this context, shops, restaurants, and clubs catering to lesbians and gay men increasingly helped to transform certain consumer practices into community claims (and community expressions into consumer goods).¹³ In some places, such as San Francisco, this corresponded with political redistricting that facilitated the election of gay-identified politicians in areas with significant gay populations. Among the most famous example was in San Francisco’s Castro District, where Harvey Milk—one of the country’s first out, gay politicians—played a key role in making that neighborhood into a vibrant gay enclave.¹⁴ His camera shop, Castro Camera—where Milk worked prior to election, and then later based his campaigns—functioned as a kind of community center, where gay men, some lesbians, and many of their political and personal allies would gather for both social and political action.¹⁵

¹¹ Hector Simms, “New York Gay Ghettos,” *Gay*, December 15, 1969, 4-5.

¹² For more detailed analysis of the history of and debates about gay neighborhood growth, see Christina B. Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). See also Dubrow (this volume).

¹³ See Jeffrey Escoffier, “The Political Economy of the Closet: Notes Toward an Economic History of Gay and Lesbian Life Before Stonewall,” in *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life*, eds. Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Alexandra Chasin, *Selling Out: The Gay and Lesbian Movement Goes to Market* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000). See also Johnson (this volume).

¹⁴ The first ever openly gay or lesbian candidate to win political office in the United States was Kathy Kozachenko who was elected to city council in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1974.

¹⁵ For a history of the neighborhood that emphasizes its function in gay political community formation see Manuel Castells, “City and Culture: The San Francisco Experience,” in *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 97-172; for one that also considers the role of Harvey Milk, see Timothy Stewart-Winter, “The Castro:



Figure 1: Walk Without Fear March from DuPont Circle north along Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC, November 9, 1997. Safe streets programs continued into the 1990s. The Walk Without Fear was an annual event to galvanize the community to fight violence. Photo by Elvert Barnes.¹⁶

Although inclusive in many ways, not all LGBTQ people were treated as a part of the “imagined community” of these new gay neighborhoods, and conflicts about who belonged on their streets—as well as within their local businesses, homes, and institutions—would be debated then and for years to come.¹⁷ For example, in the late 1970s and early 1980s gay “safe streets” patrols walked the boundaries of many gay neighborhoods providing protection from anti-gay threats; nonetheless, at times, activists’ sense of who was or was not LGBTQ would trade in stereotypical assumptions that correlated LGBTQ identity with whiteness and middle-

Origins to the Age of Milk,” *Gay and Lesbian Review*, January-February 2009, 12-15. In 2000, the building that housed both Milk’s apartment and camera store, located at 575 Castro Street, was designated a San Francisco city landmark.

¹⁶ License: CC BY-SA 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/perspective/25520469563>

¹⁷ The concept of an “imagined community” comes from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

class status (Figure 1).¹⁸ Moreover, during these years, transgender people remained most identified with vice districts and other areas associated with practices still considered illicit. By the 1990s and 2000s, real estate in gay enclaves such as the West Village, Castro, and Boystown had reached such high market values, that wealthy residents (gay and not) increasingly targeted nonresident LGBTQ youth of color who socialized in these areas, calling them undesirable outsiders, and undermining young people's claims to these neighborhoods as historically gay havens.¹⁹ Throughout all of these years, one of the most contested sites of belonging would also be one of the most celebrated places in LGBTQ community history: the bar.

Bars and Clubs

Since before the emergence of formal gay neighborhoods, bars and nightclubs have played an important role in building LGBTQ community and in some places functioned as an anchor for later residential concentration. Indeed, long before the LGBTQ movement had taken form, bars provided a place where LGBTQ people could openly express affection, socialize with friends, and network with others without fear of punishment or shame. For all of these reasons and more, many scholars argue that gay bars should be considered among the first LGBTQ activist spaces, emphasizing that their patrons and owners often advocated on behalf of the most stigmatized and despised. For example, historian Nan Alamilla Boyd tells the story of places like the Paper Doll and the Black Cat, both in San Francisco, where the development of a shared language and culture helped to forge community. As she describes:

.... [they] functioned as community centers where gay, lesbian, and transgender people could make friends, find lovers, get

¹⁸ Hanhardt, *Safe Space*. This was also a feature of the popularity of the so-called "clone look" among white gay men, that cast those with different styles and aesthetics as outsiders. See Martin P. Levine, *Gay Macho: The Life and Death of the Homosexual Clone*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (New York: New York University Press, 1998). Safe streets patrols picked up again in the very late 1980s and early 1990s; examples include the San Francisco Street Patrol, Pink Panthers in New York, and Q-Patrol in Seattle.

¹⁹ Hanhardt, *Safe Space*.

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information, or plan activities. As a result, San Francisco's queer bar-based community was able to pool its resources, strengthen its ties, and ultimately, develop a foundation for its own brand of political mobilization.²⁰

This was by no means restricted to San Francisco, and scholars have shown this to also be the case in bars from the Midwest to the South, which provided protection along with pleasure (Figure 2).²¹

But as was the case in gay neighborhoods in later years, nightlife leisure reflected many of the dominant divisions clearly visible during



Figure 2: The Nu-Towne Saloon in Phoenix, Arizona opened in 1971. A fire in 2010 gutted the interior; the owners restored it, and the bar reopened a year later. It remains in business. Photo by Don Barrett, 2014.²²

²⁰ Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 61. The Paper Doll was located at 524 Union Street; the Black Cat at 710 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, California. The Black Cat Club is a contributing element (but not for LGBTQ history) to the Jackson Square Historic District, listed on the NRHP on November 18, 1971.

²¹ Ibid. Also see John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*; John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). See also Graves and Watson, Shockley, Capo, Herczeg-Konecny, and Auer (this volume).

²² License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/donbrr/14687483338>. The Nu-Towne Saloon is located at 5002 East Van Buren Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

daylight hours. For example, during the first half of the twentieth century in New York City, the Oak Room at the Plaza Hotel was popular with “respectable” white gay men who would quietly gather among other businessmen, while the various Automats in the Times Square area were known as raucous environments enjoyed by self-identified “fairies” whose gender expressions and behaviors were often stigmatized by other gays as too feminine or sexual.²³ The Supreme Court ruling that prohibited formal racial discrimination in Washington, DC, restaurants in 1953 did not stop the tacit whites-only policy of places like the Lafayette Chicken Hut; instead, bars like Nob Hill enjoyed great popularity among African American patrons for many years.²⁴ (In fact, when it closed in 2004, Nob Hill had been the city’s oldest, continuously running gay bar.) Moreover, both Chicken Hut and Nob Hill catered to more middle-class patrons; black working-class gay men and lesbians as often socialized in mixed bars or at house parties, held in people’s homes.²⁵

Men dominated the scene of early gay bar culture more than women for many reasons. These included men’s greater financial access to the public sphere and independence from domestic obligation as well as their stronger sense of safety on the streets, especially after business hours. But lesbian and bisexual women, too, found community in bars, sometimes sharing space with gay men, other times in places of all-women. Sometimes one type of bar would become the other; for example, A. Finn Enke describes how owner Emmet Jewell had opened the Town House in St. Paul, Minnesota as a straight bar in 1969, but by 1970 had converted it into a gay bar and by 1975 the Town House was known as “*the women’s bar*” of that region.²⁶ The fact that it had its roots in a bar of

²³ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994). The Plaza Hotel is located at 768 Fifth Avenue, New York City, New York. It was listed on the NRHP on November 29, 1978 and designated an NHL on June 24, 1986.

²⁴ Beemyn, *A Queer Capital*. The Lafayette Chicken Hut (now demolished) was located at 1720 H Street NW, Washington, DC. Nob Hill, at 1101 Kenyon Street NW, Washington, DC, opened in 1953. Since 2004, this has been the location of the Wonderland Ballroom.

²⁵ Beemyn, *A Queer Capital*.

²⁶ A. Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 38, 45. The Town House remains open at 1415 University Avenue West, St. Paul, Minnesota.

mixed clientele is significant. In fact, many working-class lesbians socialized in what Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis have called “street bars,” that catered to those active in a range of criminalized economies.²⁷ That is not to say that there were no women-only bars; for example, Detroit’s Sweetheart Bar opened in 1939 and had a special back room that catered to lesbians in particular; it was followed ten years later in that city by the Palais, which not only served drinks, but also hosted the kinds of community-making events that women in same-sex relationships were often excluded from or denied by their biological families, like birthday parties and wedding celebrations.²⁸

The important role played by bars in early LGBTQ community formation also accounts for their significance in early LGBTQ activism. In 1966, members of the first, nationwide gay organization (then known as a “homophile” organization), the Mattachine Society, staged a “sip in” at Julius’ Bar in New York City, protesting laws that prohibited serving liquor to homosexuals.²⁹ A year earlier, in 1965, transgender women were among those who fought back against police harassment at Compton’s Cafeteria, a late-night hangout in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District.³⁰ Philadelphia and Los Angeles also saw high profile bar- and cafeteria-based conflicts that predated what would become the most famous of them all—the three-day riot outside the Stonewall Inn, New York City.³¹ The

²⁷ Elizabeth Lapovksy Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁸ Roey Thorpe, “The Changing Face of Lesbian Bars in Detroit, 1938-1965,” *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories*, ed. Brett Beemyn (New York: Routledge, 1997). The Sweetheart Bar was located at 3928 Third Street, Detroit, Michigan. Opened in 1939, it has since been demolished. The Palais was located at 655 Beaubien Street, also in Detroit; it was open from 1949 through 1975.

²⁹ John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. Julius’ Bar is located at 159 West 10th Street, New York City. It was added to the NRHP on April 21, 2016.

³⁰ See Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008) and *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria*, directed by Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman (San Francisco: Frameline, 2005). Compton’s Cafeteria was located at 101 Taylor Street, San Francisco, California. The building is a contributing element to the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District, listed on the NRHP on February 5, 2009.

³¹ On Philadelphia, see Marc Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). On Los Angeles, see Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.* The Stonewall Inn is located at 51-53 Christopher Street, New York City. Stonewall, which includes the area in front of 51-53 Christopher Street and Christopher Park where the riots took



protests were in response to the police raid of Stonewall—then a regular occurrence at gay bars—and they helped to further radicalize the LGBTQ movement and bring it greater visibility and militancy in the years following.³²



Figure 3: Activists at the San Francisco Civic Center Plaza during the White Night riots, May 1979. Burning police cruisers are in the background. Photo by Daniel Nicoletta.³³

Even in what is often referred to as the post-Stonewall period, bars played an important role in galvanizing community action, especially in smaller, less well-known contexts, and continued police attacks on bars were often understood as

direct assaults against the gay and lesbian community in general. For instance, in 1979, police beat patrons and smashed the windows of the Elephant Walk, a bar in the Castro District in San Francisco, in retaliation for gay activist protests against the manslaughter (rather than murder) verdict given to Dan White, who had killed Harvey Milk (Figure 3).³⁴ Earlier that year, police had also reportedly assaulted two lesbians leaving Amelia's, a women's bar in San Francisco's Mission District; soon after,

place from June 28 through July 3, 1969 was listed on the NRHP on June 28, 1999; designated an NHL on February 16, 2000; and declared the Stonewall National Monument (an NPS unit) on June 24, 2016.

³² On Stonewall, see Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Plume, 1993).

³³ License: CC BY-SA 3.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:White_Night_riots.jpg. The San Francisco Civic Center Historic District was added to the NRHP on October 10, 1978 and designated an NHL on February 27, 1987.

³⁴ Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1988). The Elephant Walk, a mixed gay and lesbian bar open from 1974 through 1996, was located at 500 Castro Street, San Francisco, California; this is currently the location of Harvey's, a gay bar and restaurant that opened in 1996. The police violence was part of the White Night riots.

women gathered to organize against police violence more generally.³⁵ In 1982, over eleven hundred people organized in response to the police raid of Blue's, a historically black and Latino gay bar in New York's Times Square.³⁶ This conjoined the continued harassment of lesbian bars in New York, which were targeted for removal by city administrative strategies; both the Duchess and Déjà Vu, the latter of which had a large clientele of women of color, were denied liquor licenses despite a lack of official complaints in this same period.³⁷ Activists also protested police sweeps that profiled transgender women of color for suspected prostitution in Greenwich Village, especially near the piers at the end of the historic Christopher Street and up along the west side of Manhattan to the Meatpacking District (itself part of the Gansevoort Market Historic District).³⁸

During the 1980s and 1990s, LGBTQ activists protested multiple ID door entry and other policies that limited access to bars by their owners; many of these actions were coordinated by organizations such as Black and White Men Together (in cities all across the country; now part of the National Association of Black and White Men Together, which also includes the groups Men of All Colors Together and People of All Colors

³⁵ Hanhardt, *Safe Space*. Amelia's, one of the nation's first woman-only bars, opened in 1978 at 647 Valencia Street, San Francisco, California. It closed circa 1991, when it was replaced by the Elbo Room.

³⁶ "Marchers Protest Raid on 43rd Street Bar," *New York Times*, October 16, 1982; Eric Lerner, "Militant Blues Rally Draws 1,100," *New York Native*, November 8-21, 1982; Sarah Schulman, "Who Wants to Drive Blues Out of Business," *Womannews*, November 1982 (included in her book *My American History: Lesbian and Gay Life During the Reagan Years* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For a more detailed analysis of the broader significance of the raid on Blue's, see Christina B. Hanhardt, "Broken Windows at Blue's: A Queer History of Gentrification and Policing," in *Policing the Planet*, eds. Christina Heatherton and Jordan Camp (New York: Verso Press, 2016). Blue's was located at 264 West 43rd Street, New York City.

³⁷ The Duchess was located at 101 Seventh Avenue South, New York City.

³⁸ See Dykes Against Racism Everywhere, Open Letter/Undated Statement (circa 1983), DARE File, Lesbian Herstory Archives, Brooklyn, NY. The Gansevoort Market Historic District was added to the NRHP on May 30, 2007. For more information on the Meatpacking District, see the web page of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation: <http://www.gvshp.org/gvshp/preservation/gansevoort/gansevoort-main.htm>. Pier 45 has long been a meeting place and refuge for gay men, LGBTQ youth, transgender women, and many members of the mostly African American ballroom community. Tragically, the body of transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson was recovered from the waters off Pier 45 in the early 1990s. The Zoo, at 421-425 West 13th Street, New York City, opened in 1970 and was the first gay nightclub to open in the Meatpacking District. It is within the Gansevoort Market Historic District.



Together) and by Dykes Against Racism Everywhere and Salsa Soul Sisters in New York, among other groups.³⁹ Racial segregation and class divisions not only shaped who went where due to explicit or subtle practices of exclusion, but were also influenced by the broader political and economic geography. The presence of bars with large LGBTQ clientele in black neighborhoods meant that some African Americans avoided these places, since they had a higher risk of exposure to family and neighbors who might pass by or drop in. Vacation communities, such as Cherry Grove on New York's Fire Island, could provide anonymity and seclusion, but were mostly accessible only to the intimate circles of the middle-class and wealthy men and women who could afford to own homes.⁴⁰ As a result, public spaces—parks, playgrounds, beaches, and other waterfront spaces—among many others, have served as key spaces of informal and free community building, especially for the most marginalized of LGBTQ people.

Parks and Fields and Open Spaces

For some LGBTQ people, bars have held too many risks of exposure, or have not been accessible because of *de facto* or *de jure* racial segregation, hostility to women, or exclusions based on ideas of appropriate class, gender, or sexual expression. Although forgotten in the telling of many, much of the energy behind the famed riots at Stonewall was fueled not only by bar *patrons* but also by LGBTQ street youth, who hung out at Christopher Park (also known as Sheridan Square), across the street from

³⁹ For a brief history of such protests in San Francisco, see Don Romesburg, "Racism and Reaction in the Castro – A Brief, Incomplete History," written for *IsBadlandsBad.com* in 2004 and now posted at https://www.academia.edu/9677965/Racism_and_Reaction_in_the_Castro_A_Brief_Incomplete_History, accessed July 23, 2015. For a history of New York based protests, see Abram J. Lewis, "Within the Ashes of Our Survival': Lesbian and Gay Antiracist Organizing in New York City, 1980-1984" *Thinking Gender Papers*, UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2010, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4zr1v4bq>, accessed July 23, 2015. Also see Sarah Schulman's commentary in *My American History*, esp. 55-56.

⁴⁰ Esther Newton, "The 'Fun Gay Ladies': Lesbians in Cherry Grove, 1936-1960," in *Creating a Place for Ourselves*; Esther Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, [1993] 2014). The Carrington House in Cherry Grove, New York was listed on the NRHP on January 8, 2014. The Cherry Grove Community House and Theater, 180 Bayview Walk, Cherry Grove, New York was listed on the NRHP on June 4, 2013. Both of these locations were listed for their importance in the creation of Cherry Grove as an early LGBTQ haven.

the bar at the intersection of Christopher, Grove, and West 4th Streets, right off of Seventh Avenue.⁴¹ Many youths participated in sexual economies—due in mixed measures to circumstance and choice—and as a result, their role has been played down in popular histories.⁴² But it is exactly those kinds of unrecognized—and, more importantly, unregulated—spaces of collective gathering and exchange that have played a key role in bringing the broadest mix of LGBTQ people together. And, as scholars Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant have argued, most, if not all, formal gay institutions are at least somewhat indebted to a history of sexual commerce, be it in the form of sex work, public sex, or sex-themed shops (from video stores to peep shows).⁴³

Indeed, it has often been outside—on the street, in the park, in a public field—sometimes under different auspices than assumed and at other times under the cover of foliage that LGBTQ people have found each other. As scholars have shown, the search for what is often called *public sex* should not be considered simply some kind of furtive means of fulfilling bodily urges, but an effective mode of building social networks for supportive and sometimes lasting purposes. Some of these places were well known—often because they were patrolled by the police and arrests then publicized in the press—and others were only made familiar through hushed word of mouth and an often tacit acceptance by authorities.

These places have included Lafayette Square in NW Washington, DC, with a history extending back at least to the 1890s; the so-called Meat Rack on Fire Island (that connects the Pines and Cherry Grove areas); and the Ramble in New York City's Central Park; it also has included rest stops along highways, such as Roadside Park No. 75 along US Highway 45 and

⁴¹ David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2004).

⁴² By sexual economies, I refer to a variety of modes by which both sexual services—from sex acts to sexual entertainment—are exchanged for money or other resources, legally or not.

⁴³ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 563.



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various other parks along Interstate 59 in Mississippi.⁴⁴ But it also includes places that are semipublic: toilets and changing rooms in those same parks but also in schools and department stores. It might also include bathhouses, from the Turkish Baths in lower Manhattan in the early twentieth century, to the St. Marks Baths in that city's East Village in the middle of that century, the latter of which conducted voter registration, public health education, and held holiday parties (Figure 4).⁴⁵

As historian John Howard shows, some of the places most associated with anti-gay and lesbian sentiment—such as churches or schools—would



Figure 4: The Crew Club, a gay bathhouse in Washington, DC, 2009. Photo by AgnosticPreachersKid.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ On the Ramble, see Lisa W. Foderero, "In Central Park, a Birders' Secluded Haven Comes with a Dark Side," *New York Times*, September 13, 2012. On Mississippi, see Howard, *Men Like That*, 111. Central Park was added to the NRHP on October 15, 1966 and designated an NHL on May 23, 1963.

⁴⁵ Allen Bérubé, "The History of Gay Bathhouses," in *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, ed. Dangerous Bedfellows (Boston: South End Press, 1996). Bathhouses were also common in places like Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, DC, and others.

⁴⁶ License: CC BY-SA 3.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crew_Club_-_Washington,_D.C..JPG. The Crew Club is located at 1321 Fourteenth Street NW, Washington, DC. The building is a contributing property to the Fourteenth Street Historic District, added to the NRHP on November 9, 1994.

also host some of the most sustained and intimate forms of gay sexual communion.⁴⁷ In these contexts, sex became far from a private practice, but became an act that could be explicitly partnered with education (such as about public health) and facilitate the distribution of collective community resources (i.e. housing information). This is also the argument writer Samuel Delany has made about the theaters of Times Square in New York City. He shows how informal sexual exchanges between men from a wide range of race and class backgrounds in Times Square constituted social contact that provided short-term and lasting interpersonal and material benefits. But as Delany also points out, not all of the sexual exchanges were *gratis* and some involved the exchange of sex for money.⁴⁸ In fact, places of public and commercial sex have not always been separate, and often coexist within a local community or economy.

One example is along waterfronts—piers, ports, and docks—where numerous economies, be they maritime, industrial, or sexual, have flourished alongside each other. George Chauncey describes the rich mix of activities at the Newport, Rhode Island Army and Navy YMCA in the early twentieth century, a place that functioned as a kind of gay “headquarters” for sexual and social exchanges throughout the seaport town.⁴⁹ One of the better-known sites is the waterfront alongside New York City’s west side of Manhattan, especially the stretch of piers that extend from what today is Battery Park to the sections north of the Chelsea neighborhood. In the 1970s and 1980s, deindustrialization had led to the abandonment of warehouses in the area as well as parts of the piers themselves, which then became active sites of public and commercial sex. The geography of sexual and social communities was often divided not only along lines of commerce, but also race and gender; white gay men

⁴⁷ Howard, *Men Like That*.

⁴⁸ Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

⁴⁹ George Chauncey, “Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identity and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era,” *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 189-211. The Army-Navy YMCA was located at 50 Washington Square, Newport, Rhode Island. It was listed on the NRHP on December 29, 1988.



often gathered in the areas at the end of Christopher Street, and transgender people of color gathered north, closer to the Meatpacking District (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Morton Street Pier, Greenwich Village, New York City, New York, 1981. Photo courtesy of Richard C. Wandel.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the increased policing of other public spaces in New York, such as Washington Square Park, moved informal social gatherings of LGBTQ people of color, many youth, to the waterfront, which had been neglected for years. During this time, a community of transgender women also made a home amongst the city's parking and

storage area for salting trucks (used in the winter for de-icing); their efforts to maintain dignity and a viable life are captured by the documentary *The Salt Mines*.⁵⁰ By the start of the twenty-first century, the area at the end of the famed Christopher Street had become an active gathering place for LGBTQ people of color *and* an active investment site for real estate. The eventual redevelopment of the derelict piers into a public park brought into sharp focus debates between residents (gay and straight, renters and homeowners) and nonresident users of the area, drawn to it for its historic role as a community gathering place, that are still ongoing today.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *The Salt Mines*, directed by Susana Aikin and Carlos Aparicio (San Francisco: Frameline, 1990.)

⁵¹ See Hanhardt, *Safe Space*. Hanhardt notes here that the historic preservation of the Stonewall Inn and its environs (listed on the NRHP in 1999 and designated an NHL in 2000) was invoked by residents in order to block expansion of exits from the PATH train which connects the historically black and Latino working-class cities of Newark and Jersey City (in New Jersey) to the neighborhood.



Figure 6: The area of Jacob Riis Park in Queens, New York near the abandoned tuberculosis hospital has traditionally been where the LGBTQ community has congregated. Photo by David Shankbone, 2013.⁵²

For lesbians, the geography of known spots for public sex between women has been sparser, but places like Riis Beach in New York's Rockaways most certainly have been charged erotic sites where people would often find companionship for a lifetime, or just one night (Figure 6).⁵³ As Joan Nestle wrote of waiting for the bus on Flatbush Avenue to make the final public transportation leg to the beach in "Lesbian Memories 1: Riis Park, New York City, ca. 1960," "There were hostile

⁵² License: CC BY 3.0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abandoned_Tuberculosis_Hospital_Jacob_Riis_Beach_Rockaways_New_York_2013_Shankbone.JPG. Jacob Riis Park is part of the Gateway National Recreation Area, a unit of the NPS. It was established on October 27, 1972.

⁵³ Joan Nestle, "Restriction and Reclamation: Lesbian Bars and Beaches of the 1950s," in *Queers in Space: Claiming the Urban Landscape*, eds. Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter (New York: Bay Press, 1997). Jacob Riis Beach Historic District was listed on the NRHP on June 17, 1981. It was incorporated into the Gateway National Recreation Area, a unit of the NPS, on October 27, 1972. Here it is worth noting that women sex workers include lesbian and bisexual women, and that the public sites available for sexual exchanges with men are considerably more plentiful.

encounters, the usual stares at the freaks, whispered taunts of faggot, lezzie, is that a man or a woman, but we did not care. We were heading to the sun, to our piece of the beach where we could kiss and hug and enjoy looking at each other.” She continues to describe a scene as rich with desire as it is self-aware of its vulnerability, and committed to finding protection in community.⁵⁴

Lesbians also have pursued other forms of collective physical activity. Softball was one popular sport; in Oakland, California the group Gente was an all-woman-of-color softball team that included lesbian poet Pat Parker. They organized in part in response to the racism of white lesbian bars, but they also saw softball as a way to affirmatively forge community that might extend far beyond the softball field. In an interview with the lesbian magazine the *Tide*, the members of Gente said:

There’s a lot of third-world sisters out there that don’t have anything to do with sports. But it’s going to come time when we’re going to hook up with each other. The only way we can do that is to get together when we can on some common ground. Right now the common ground is softball. But we’re not going to be limited by that.⁵⁵

In fact, it was common that the public spaces of softball teams might facilitate political activity; in other examples from that same period, the softball team the Wilder Ones in Minneapolis was explicitly identified as lesbian feminist, and the socialist feminist Chicago Women’s Liberation Union’s outreach group (called “Secret Storm,” also the name of their newsletter) was forced to address issues of sexuality as they coordinated political work alongside softball games in public parks in Chicago like Horner and Kosciusko Parks.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Joan Nestle, “Lesbian Memories 1: Riis Park, New York City, ca. 1960,” *Common Lives, Lesbian Lives* (Summer 1983): 14-16.

⁵⁵ sudi mae, “We Have to Be Our Own Spark: An Interview with ‘Gente’ Third-World Lesbian Softball Team,” *Tide*, July 1974.

⁵⁶ Enke, *Finding the Movement*.

But, as many scholars have noted, gender, race, and class have stratified different LGBTQ people's access to *both* public and private space, and tracing the sites of community building can be difficult for those who have limited access to private property or for whom visibility on the street can correlate with an increased risk of violence. As a result, spaces were also more ephemeral—a favorite stoop on which transgender women would hang out, a home in which lesbians held regular potlucks, or a rotating set of bars, clubs, and houses that would host parties that might be used as a way to raise money for that month's rent or a communal need or collective project. Many of these places cannot be recorded in the history of community preservation, but some, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, would begin to formalize in the form of community centers.

Community Centers



Figure 7: The Pacific Center for Human Growth, Berkeley, California. Photo by Rina Herring, 2011.⁵⁷

Since 1971, the Women's Building in San Francisco—located first on Brady Street and then soon after (and ever since) at 3543 Eighteenth Street—has been a community center that served as political meeting hall, switchboard,

⁵⁷ License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Front_of_Pacific_Center_for_Human_Growth_2011_1_19.jpg

collective meeting site, shelter, and organizational home to many lesbian and LGBTQ-centered efforts. The Pacific Center for Human Growth in Berkeley, California soon followed in 1973 and was also well known in the area for its therapy services and self-help groups (Figure 7).⁵⁸ All across the country small and large community centers have provided vital services and social gathering places for a diverse cross section of the LGBTQ community—from HIV testing to social dances, from meetings for Alcoholics Anonymous to those for ACT UP direct action planning, from crafts clubs to youth groups. Some have been held in church basements and municipal recreation halls; others have worked collectively to buy buildings, incorporating as nonprofit (and, even, on occasion for-profit) organizations (Figure 8).⁵⁹

Today the biggest LGBTQ center is in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles LGBT Center dates its origins to services first provided in 1969; it now spreads out



Figure 8: Home of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 2002 to 2011. Photo by BlowSky, 2007.⁶⁰

over no fewer than six locations in the region, and is run by 450 employees and over 3,000 volunteers who, the organization self-reports, “provide services to more LGBT people than any other organization in the world.”⁶¹ Opened in 1970, the Pride Center of the Capital Region in Albany,

⁵⁸ The Pacific Center for Human Growth is located at 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California.

⁵⁹ Enke maps an impressive variety of formal and informal gathering places in *Finding the Movement*.

⁶⁰ License: Public Domain.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MilwaukeeLGBTCommunityBuilding.JPG>. The community center was located at 315 West Court Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

⁶¹ See “About,” Los Angeles LGBT Center website, accessed August 14, 2015,

<http://www.laigbtcenter.org/about>. For a critical look at the vexed history of the center’s inclusions and exclusions, see Jane Ward, *Respectably Queer: Diversity Culture in LGBT Activist Organizations*

New York is the oldest LGBTQ community center in the United States still operating from their original location.⁶² Other large LGBTQ community centers include the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center (The Center) in New York City which also hosts health services, a coffee shop, archive, and computer services; the San Francisco LGBT Center, which provides services as diverse as financial, housing, and health, and also includes a gallery with rotating exhibits; the Phillip Rush Center in Atlanta which provides meeting spaces for LGBTQ-themed groups in that city; the Montrose Center in Houston, Texas which provides support groups and health services alongside cultural and social events; this is also the case for the Q Center in Portland, Oregon. In fact, the list is much longer than many would expect, and includes centers in places as diverse as Pocatello, Idaho; Missoula, Montana; White Plains, New York; Wichita, Kansas; Highland, Indiana; and Port St. Lucie, Florida.⁶³

Bookstores, Newsletters, Magazines, and Online Networks

Although the list of locations with LGBTQ community centers is much longer than that of the aforementioned cities, it is also the case that in smaller places the idea of a community center can take a wide variety of forms. In smaller municipal and rural regions and even in some urban neighborhoods, places with other *official* purposes can take on dual identities, with local businesses functioning as de facto centers for members of the LGBTQ community, broadly defined. These include the

(Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008). The Los Angeles LGBT Center was previously known as the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center.

⁶² The Pride Center of the Capital Region is located at 332 Hudson Avenue, Albany, New York.

⁶³ The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Center (The Center) opened in 1983 and is located at 208 West 13th Street, New York City; San Francisco's LGBT Center, incorporated in 1996, is located in the Fallon Building at 1800 Market Street; the Phillip Rush Center is located at 1530 Dekalb Avenue NE, Atlanta, Georgia; the Montrose Center in Houston, Texas was founded in 1996, and is currently in its third location at 401 Branard Street (from 1998 through 2003, it was located at 803 Hawthorne Avenue, Houston; from 2003 through 2010 it operated out of 3400 Montrose Boulevard, Houston); the Q Center in Portland, Oregon is located at 4115 North Mississippi Avenue. A detailed list of centers can be found on the website for Centerlink: The Community of LGBT Centers at:

<http://www.lgbtcenters.org/Centers/find-a-center.aspx>.



backrooms of cafes, school groups for LGBTQ students and their allies, barbershops and beauty salons, or a range of self-help or neighborhood-based tenant groups. This was certainly the case with Harvey Milk's camera shop mentioned earlier in this chapter. The 1991 documentary *DiAna's Hair Ego* shows how a South Carolina hairdresser made her salon into an open space to discuss HIV-AIDS and sexuality in general among a wide variety of clients; over a decade earlier, the Chelsea Gay Association was a neighborhood group that provided support to lesbians and gay men in New York before the founding of that city's community center.⁶⁴ It is also worth noting that today many LGBTQ centers or large LGBTQ organizations have marketed themselves into the commercial landscape of neighborhoods. The organization the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has stores in Provincetown, Massachusetts and San Francisco, California that sell clothing and other merchandise adorned with the HRC logo and/or rainbow flags, in essence using the market place as an explicit way to build community claims.⁶⁵

This is despite the fact that the rainbow flag, now considered by many an international symbol of LGBTQ community and flown by businesses, community centers, and activists alike, was designed by artist Gilbert Baker in San Francisco as part of that city's 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade (Figure 9).⁶⁶ To be sure, artists have been central to the process of LGBTQ community-making—be that in the shared love for certain musical anthems (say, the popularity of the song *You Make Me Feel [Mighty Real]* by the gay disco singer and songwriter Sylvester, also from 1978);⁶⁷ the

⁶⁴ *Diana's Hair Ego*, directed by Ellen Spiro (New York: Women Make Movies, 1990); on the Chelsea Gay Association, see Hanhardt, *Safe Space*.

⁶⁵ The two existing stores can be found at 209-211 Commercial Street in Provincetown and 575 Castro Street (previously the location of Harvey Milk's Castro Camera) in San Francisco (see: <http://shop.hrc.org/hrc-store-locations>). There previously had been a store located at 1633 Connecticut Avenue NW in Washington DC, but it has since closed. For a more detailed discussion of the marketing of identity and growth of LGBTQ-themed niche markets see Chasin, *Selling Out*.

⁶⁶ See Linda Rapp, "Rainbow Flag," in *The Queer Encyclopedia of Visual Arts*, ed. Claude J. Summers (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2004), 268-270.

⁶⁷ See Joshua Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester: The Legend, The Music, The Seventies in San Francisco* (New York: Picador/Holt, 2005).



Figure 9: Rainbow flags representing the LGBTQ community, as well as flags for the bear and leather self-identified subcultures, 2016. Photo courtesy of Eva C. Hageman.

long legacy of gay theater and the varied venues in which performances are staged, from Theatre Rhino (named in this chapter's introduction) to the feminist WOW Café Theatre in New York;⁶⁸ the wide mix of comedy clubs, drag show performances, and cabaret lounges (such as the former Valencia Rose and Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint in San Francisco from the 1980s and 1990s, Club Heaven in Detroit during that same time, or the various East Village bars and clubs that hosted Kiki and Herb performances in New York in the 1990s and 2000s);⁶⁹ or the galleries, exhibit spaces, and other sites that cross, challenge, and reconstruct the

⁶⁸ Holly Hughes, Carmelita Tropicana, and Jill Dolan, eds. *Memories of the Revolution: The First Ten Years of the WOW Café Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2015). WOW Café Theater was founded in 1980 and located at 330 East 11th Street, New York City, New York by 1981; since 1984 it has had a home at 59-61 East 4th Street, New York City, New York.

⁶⁹ For a study of queer performance venues that cites Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint, see Tim Miller and David Roman, "Preaching to the Converted," *Theater Journal* 47, no. 2 (May 1995): 169-188; on later ball culture in Detroit, see Marlon Bailey, *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance and Ballroom Culture in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); on the performance duo Kiki and Herb, see Shane Vogel, "Where Are We Now? Queer World Making and Cabaret Performance," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 29-59. For a longer history of queer cabaret performance see Shane Vogel, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Club Heaven had been located at 19106 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan and closed by the mid-1990s.



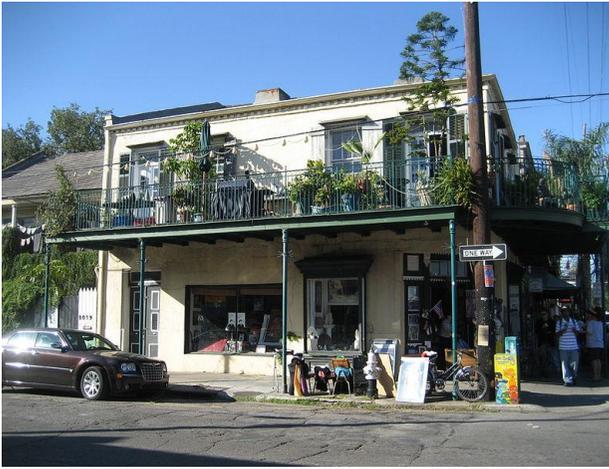


Figure 10: LGBTQ bookstore, Faubourg Marigny Art and Books (FAB), New Orleans, Louisiana. FAB opened in 1977 and remains in business. Photo by Infrogmation, 2008.⁷⁰

boundaries between commercial, nonprofit, and community-based practices.

One of the most common types of businesses to function as community center has been the gay, lesbian, and LGBTQ bookstore. Be that A Different Light in San Francisco and West

Hollywood, Washington DC's Lambda Rising, New York City's Oscar Wilde Bookshop, or Outwrite in Atlanta—all of which are now gone—or Giovanni's Room in Philadelphia—which was recently threatened with closure—these bookstores have served as meeting places for reading groups and activist organizations and as social hangouts before and after events, or while shopping or browsing (Figure 10).⁷¹ This practice has been particularly strong in the history of lesbian feminist community building around women's bookstores. Women's bookstores have functioned as incubators for activism, research, and writing, as networks for interpersonal support,

⁷⁰ License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChartresFrenchmenBooksOct08.jpg>. FAB is located at 600 Frenchmen Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

⁷¹ The first location of A Different Light Bookstore was at 4014 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, California from 1979 through 1992. The last Different Light Bookstore, at 489 Castro Street, San Francisco, closed in 2011. See also Johnson (this volume). Lambda Rising first opened in 1974 in the Community Building at 1724 Twentieth Street NW, Washington, DC. In 1979, it moved to 2001 S Street NW, and in 1984 moved to 1625 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC; it closed in 2010. The Oscar Wilde Bookshop, which was located at 15 Christopher Street, New York City from 1973 through 2009 began as the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop at 291 Mercer Street, New York City in 1967. Outwrite Bookstore and Coffeeshouse in Atlanta was located at 991 Piedmont Northeast; opened in November of 1993, it closed in January 2012. Giovanni's Room opened in 1973 at 232 South Street, Philadelphia and moved in 1979 to its current location at 345 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Charis Books and More can be found at 1189 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, Georgia; previously it was located at 419 Moreland Avenue in that same city.

and as a place to distribute feminist theories and ideas.⁷² Many women's bookstores were explicitly or tacitly lesbian in their focus; this included Mama Bears Bookstore in Oakland, which closed in 2003 after twenty years; Old Wives Tales in San Francisco, which lasted for almost twenty years before closing in 1995; and Charis Books and More, which is still operating in Atlanta, having first opened in 1974.⁷³

Today people express concerns about the disappearance of LGBTQ bookstores much like they do bars, especially since, in earlier years, bookstores had provided some of the first formal gathering places for otherwise loose structures of community identity and affiliation. As historian Martin Meeker contends, among the earliest ways a unified "gay community" was forged was via the printed word. He traces the history of the publications of the early homophile movement in the 1940s-1960s, demonstrating how the exchange of newsletters—like the Mattachine Society's *ONE Magazine* or the Daughters of Bilitis' *The Ladder*—helped lesbian and gay people know that their experiences were not singular, and they were not alone.⁷⁴ The gay-owned Pan Graphic Press facilitated the distribution of many of these specific publications; gay presses also were key to the availability of pornography, pulp fiction, and dime store novels that created community through networks of readers.⁷⁵ This was particularly the case among lesbian feminists: Naiad Press, Diana Press, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Persephone Press, Firebrand Books, and Seal Press are but a few examples.⁷⁶ And as the national LGBTQ

⁷² For a fuller discussion of women's bookstores, see Kristen Hogan, *The Feminist Bookstore Movement: Lesbian Antiracism and Feminist Accountability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

⁷³ Mama Bears Bookstore was located at 6536 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, California from 1983 through 2003. Old Wives Tales in San Francisco opened on Hallowe'en day 1976 at 532 Valencia Street. In 1978, the shop moved to 1009 Valencia Street, where it remained until it closed in 1995.

⁷⁴ Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired*; also see Craig Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012).

⁷⁵ Ibid; also see Julian Carter, "Gay Marriage and Pulp Fiction: Homonormativity, Disidentification, and Affect in Ann Bannon's Lesbian Novels," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15, no. 4 (2009): 583-609.

⁷⁶ Junko Onosaka, *Feminist Revolution in Literacy: Women's Bookstores in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Also see Julie R. Enszer, "Night Heron Press and Lesbian Print Culture in North Carolina, 1976-1983," *Southern Cultures* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 43-56 and Julie Enszer, "The Whole Naked Truth of Our Lives: Lesbian-Feminist Print Culture from 1969 to 1989," PhD diss.,



movement gained momentum by the late 1980s, magazines, newsletters, and journals continued to be key forums in which individuals at the center of *and* at the margins of the mainstream movement communicated with each other—magazines like *The Advocate*, *Out*, and *Curve* found their way onto mainstream bookstore shelves while newsletters like *ONYX* and *Azalea*, both written by and for lesbians of color, created an alternative record of their experiences and ideas, often distributed by mail, by hand, or in local bookstores and with strikingly different kinds of commercial and personal ads.

By the 1990s, chat rooms and, later, blogs, social media, and other online networks, would supplement and even replace some of these publishing networks. Moreover, they would serve multiple purposes—as tools of dating, socializing, activist organizing, education, and much more. These would also be some of the main platforms on which new identities in the so-called alphabet soup of LGBTQ identity would be crafted and cultivated. As scholar Mary Gray shows, the Internet has played a key role in providing a sense of community belonging and knowledge among young people, especially in rural areas.⁷⁷

But counter to the fears described in the introduction to this chapter, the Internet has functioned not only as a substitute for but also as a supplement to in-person interaction, both for dating and activism. One great example has been the use of digital applications for LGBTQ walking tours that guide people through the places of LGBTQ history to forge

University of Maryland, 2013. Naiad Press operated out of a private residence in Weatherby Lake, Missouri from 1973 through 1980, when the offices moved to Tallahassee, Florida; Diana Press was founded in 1972 and had offices at 12 West Twenty-Fifth Street, Baltimore, Maryland (now demolished) from 1974 through 1977 before moving to Oakland, California; Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, was founded in Boston, Massachusetts in 1980 and moved to New York City in 1981; Persephone Press was founded in Watertown, Massachusetts in 1976 by Pomegranate Productions, a lesbian-feminist collective, and sold to Beacon Press in 1983; Firebrand Books had offices at 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York from 1985 through 1994, when they were sold and moved to Michigan; Seal Press was founded in 1976 in Berkeley, California and continues to operate there today; Cleis Press was founded in 1980 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is currently based in Berkeley.

⁷⁷ Mary Gray, *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

community across generations.⁷⁸ Another example is the use of social media to reach out to LGBTQ communities for direct action activism; in fact, Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi, the three women who founded #BlackLivesMatter, explicitly name queer politics as a part of their vision.⁷⁹

In sum, the form of a community is less significant than the individuals who comprise it and ideals that motivate it. Be it online or on-the-ground, sustainable communities have been forged through the collective labor and love of those who consider themselves to be a part of them, even in the face of changing and challenging political, economic, and cultural forces. These contexts can provide opportunities for some as they foreclose chances for others, and what might seem like a time of progress might also include the repeal of already assumed wins. This dynamic can be seen in campaigns to challenge police raids of the Atlanta Eagle leather bar in November 2009, the threat of closure faced by Giovanni's Room Bookstore in 2013, the incrimination of those with HIV/AIDS, or the poverty and violence that so many transgender women of color continue to face, to name but a small handful of examples.⁸⁰

Although the places and spaces of LGBTQ community formation are sure to shift, there is no doubt that they will still be found in physical and

⁷⁸ Examples include the "Whose Streets Our Streets" walking tour of New York created by Wesley Flash and Anne Goodfriend, online at <http://whosestreetsourstreets.org>, and YesterQueer developed by Stewart Van Cleve for Minneapolis, see Rick Nelson, "A Local Archivist Offers a Guided Tour Through Minneapolis Gay History," *Star Tribune*, June 19, 2014, <http://www.startribune.com/archivist-offers-guided-tour-through-minneapolis-gay-history/263685961>.

⁷⁹ Alicia Garza, "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," *The Feminist Wire*, October 7, 2014, <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2>.

⁸⁰ Information about the raid of the Atlanta Eagle, 306 Ponce De Leon Avenue NE, Atlanta, Georgia, which opened in 1987, and the federal lawsuits that followed can be found at "Police Raid at the Atlanta Eagle," <http://atlantaeagleraid.com>; for information on the saving of Giovanni's Room, see Connie Wu, "Nation's Oldest Bookstore Rescued from Closing," *Out Traveler*, July 25, 2014, <http://www.outtraveler.com/destination-guide/philadelphia/2014/07/25/nations-oldest-lgbt-bookstore-rescued-closing>; for an analysis of the racial and sexual politics of the criminalization of those with HIV see Steven Trasher, "A Black Body on Trial: The Conviction of HIV-Positive 'Tiger Mandingo,'" *Buzzfeed*, November 30, 2015, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/steventhrasher/a-black-body-on-trial-the-conviction-of-hiv-positive-tiger-m>; and information about the disproportionate poverty and violence experienced by transgender women of color, as well as strategies for collective action to change this, can be found in the resources collected by the Sylvia Rivera Law Project at <http://srlp.org/resources>.



virtual spaces across scales, and in practices official and not. In this way, the landmarks of LGBTQ history will still be remembered in parade routes down Christopher Street in New York City or memorials held along with the AIDS Quilt on the National Mall in DC, but they will also continue to be made in the informal gathering spots and stoops in central cities well known to LGBTQ youth before the police ask them to “move along” and in the small town institutions and rural economies that thrive even as they also remain marginal to so many national LGBTQ imaginaries.⁸¹ And people will both gather under and reject, remake, and debate banners that read *homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, femme, butch, queer, same-gender loving, transgender, nonbinary, aggressive, asexual, polysexual, intersex, leather*, and so much more.⁸² It is in these collective efforts—artistic, activist, and every day, sometimes rife with conflict and often with internal contradictions—that LGBTQ community is and will continue to be made.

⁸¹ See Hanhardt, *Safe Space* for a discussion of the demands to “move along” in Greenwich Village; other examples of this dynamic can be found in Gallery Place in Washington, DC, and Boystown in Chicago. The National Mall in Washington, DC, was listed on the NRHP on October 15, 1966. It is part of the National Mall and Memorial Parks unit of the NPS, established in 1965. The urban focus on LGBTQ history is manifested by both the shape and content of this chapter and the study itself, thus marking a crucial direction for future research. Nonetheless, excellent work in LGBTQ rural studies already exists, and includes the previously mentioned John Howard, *Men Like That* and Mary Gray, *Out in the Country*, as well as new works, such as Colin Johnson, *Just Queer Folks: Gender and Sexuality in Rural America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013); Mary L. Gray, Brian J. Gilley, and Colin R. Johnson, eds. *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies* (New York: NYU Press, 2016); Martin Manalansan, Chantal Nadeau, Richard T. Rodriguez, Siobhan Somerville, “Queering the Middle,” special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 20, no. 1-2 (2014): 1-12, as but a few examples.

⁸² For a study of the spatial influence of “post-gay” identities, see Amin Ghaziani, *There Goes the Gayborhood?*