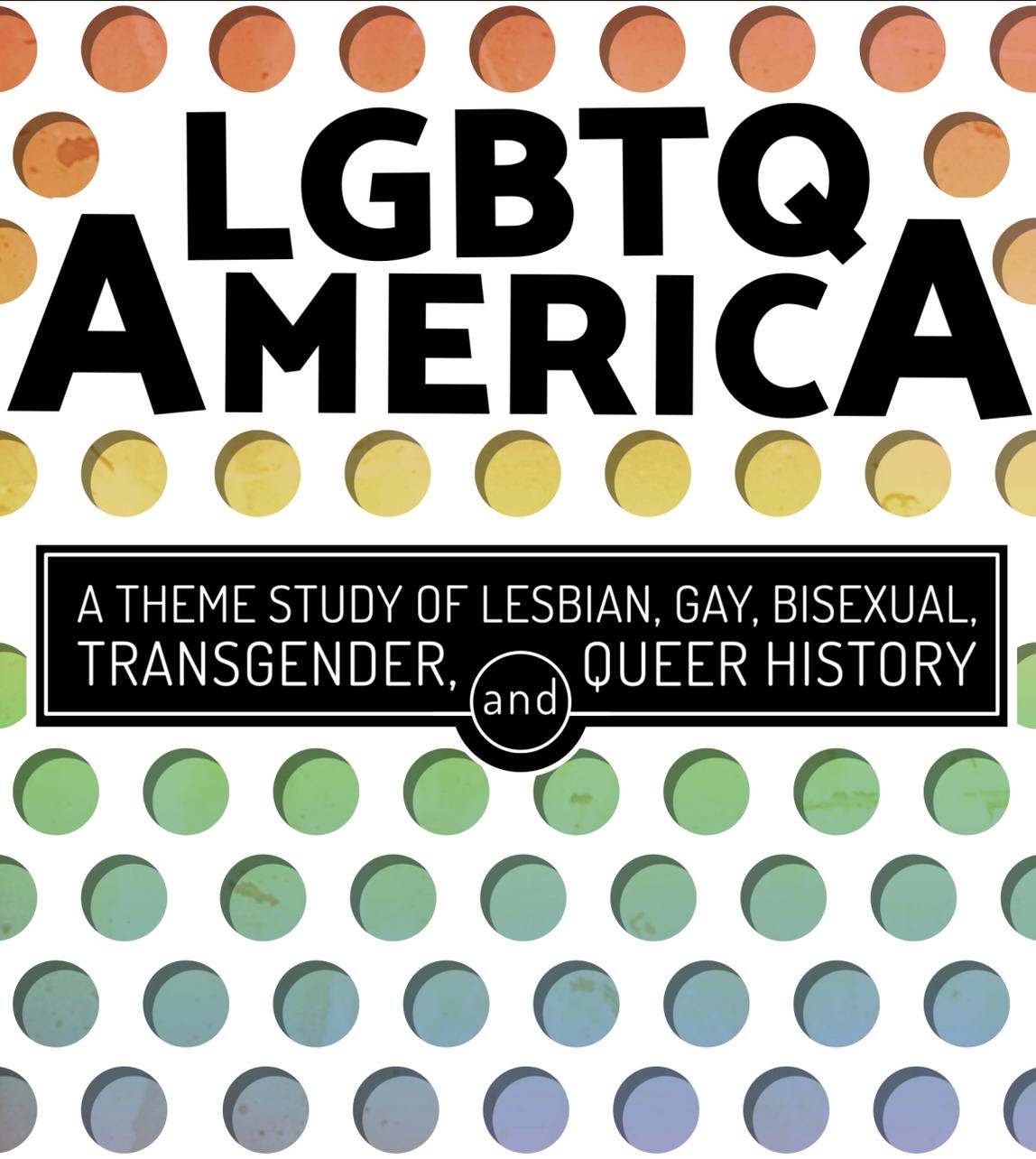


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LGBTQ AMERICA

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

Edited by Megan E. Springate



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PLACES

Unlike the Themes section of the theme study, this Places section looks at LGBTQ history and heritage at specific locations across the United States. While a broad LGBTQ American history is presented in the Introduction section, these chapters document the regional, and often quite different, histories across the country. In addition to New York City and San Francisco, often considered the epicenters of LGBTQ experience, the queer histories of Chicago, Miami, and Reno are also presented.

26 PRESERVATION OF LGBTQ HISTORIC & CULTURAL SITES—A NEW YORK CITY PERSPECTIVE

Jay Shockley

For over two decades, New York City has been in the forefront nationally in the historic preservation of LGBTQ historic and cultural sites. Beginning in the early 1990s, a number of historic preservationists, historians, and artists began documenting LGBTQ history and worked on projects to bring official commemoration and public awareness of significant LGBTQ sites.

Given that New York is the largest American city and has a dense urban building fabric, and also that the various New York LGBTQ communities have been so prominent in LGBTQ rights and other social movements, and all aspects of American arts and culture, it is no surprise that there are many notable sites. New York City is also extraordinarily fortunate in the fact that it has had strong historic preservation protections since 1965, and many neighborhoods and sites associated with LGBTQ history are extant through historic district designations, even if their LGBTQ histories

have often not been officially recognized. Greenwich Village, in particular, one of the first neighborhoods in the city that allowed, and gradually accepted, an open gay and lesbian presence in the early twentieth century, resulting in its emergence as an early, nationally significant LGBTQ enclave, has multiple historic districts that have thus far protected many sites.

A number of strategies have been employed to bring these “hidden histories” to light: identifying previously unknown sites and reinterpreting historic sites through maps, guidebooks, walking tours, public talks, online guides, and street-marking projects; weaving LGBTQ history into documentation of individual landmark and historic district designations; and using a variety of tools to advocate for official recognition of significant representative sites. Unlike the City of San Francisco, for instance, which recently commissioned a four-year long project to produce a context statement for its LGBTQ history and associated sites, New York City has not had an officially sanctioned overall survey of LGBTQ sites, despite extensive documentation within city landmarks designation reports. The currently-evolving, independent New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project, founded in 2014, will do this through a comprehensive survey, documentation, and evaluation of LGBTQ-associated properties in all five boroughs of the city. Below is a chronology of these efforts over the past two decades, as well as a case history of Greenwich Village.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Reports (1992 on) and Pride Month Website Slide Shows (2013-2015)

In 1992, Andrew S. Dolkart in *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, the official guidebook to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission’s designated landmarks and historic districts, included for the first time several LGBTQ sites, including the Stonewall Inn¹. Also

¹ Andrew S. Dolkart, *Guide to New York City Landmarks* (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1992).

beginning that year, staff members of the commission's research department began to include LGBTQ history, where appropriate, in official designation reports for projects to which they were assigned.² The commission did not undertake an effort to locate significant LGBTQ historic sites, so that this staff effort was rather random and in no way reflected an ordering of the most important LGBTQ sites or the diversity of the city in terms of boroughs or race or other criteria. However, as a result of these staff efforts and research, New York City has far more official landmark designation reports that document LGBTQ history and specific extant sites than any other American city. New York lagged behind at least five other cities in designating landmarks specifically for their LGBTQ associations. In June 2015, after years of staff and public advocacy, the commission designated the Stonewall as New York City's first landmark recognized for its LGBTQ history.³

Many of the LGBTQ-related sites documented by staff and designated by the commission were in the greater Greenwich Village area of Manhattan [see case study below], though there were some chance or surprise discoveries in the rest of the city. On occasion, there was the opportunity to introduce an LGBTQ context in a discussion of, for instance, a building type. The Wilbraham is a prime example of a bachelor flats building, a type of residential hotel that developed in the late nineteenth century exclusively for men. At that time, nearly half of men over the age of fifteen in the city were unmarried, and housing options were severely limited for single men, who were seen as a threat to marriage and traditional gender roles. Historian George Chauncey, in his pioneering book *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay*

² This was led primarily by Jay Shockley and Gale Harris.

³ Jay Shockley began to publically advocate for the Stonewall to be designated as an individual NYC landmark in 2009 when he was invited to speak on LGBTQ preservation by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP). Under Andrew Berman, GVSHP became a political force for LGBTQ preservation after the loss in 2012 of the building at 186 Spring Street, which had been home to a number of early LGBTQ rights leaders. The Stonewall, located at 51-53 Christopher Street, was designated as part of the Greenwich Village Historic District (GVHD) on April 29, 1969, just months before the uprising. It was the first LGBTQ site listed on the NRHP (June 28, 1999), the first LGBTQ NHL (February 16, 2000), and the first LGBTQ National Monument (June 24, 2016). It was designated an NYC Landmark on June 23, 2015.

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Male World, 1890-1940, recognized these apartments as significant early private spaces for some upper-middle-class/professional gay men.⁴

Another Landmarks Preservation Commission research staff effort has been the re-interpretation of already designated landmarks and buildings in historic districts all over the city from an LGBTQ perspective, via slide shows posted on the commission's official website for Pride Month in 2013 through 2015.⁵ The variety of such sites chosen, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, allowed for a greater diversity, including associations with African Americans, women, and the boroughs other than Manhattan:

Bethesda Fountain, Central Park

Sculptress Emma Stebbins (1815-1882) designed her masterpiece Angel of the Waters in the 1860s while living in Rome with her lover Charlotte Cushman, a leading actress of the American and British stages. Stebbins was but one of a number of lesbian artists who formed a circle around Cushman. This fountain is the earliest public artwork by a woman in New York City and was the only sculpture sanctioned as part of the early design and construction phase of Central Park.⁶

"Clear Comfort" (Alice Austen House)

Alice Austen (1866-1952) lived for much of her life in this early family farmhouse on Staten Island. A photography pioneer most active from the 1880s to the 1920s, she produced about eight thousand images. Among these are Austen and friends dancing together, embracing in bed, and

⁴ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994). The Wilbraham, located at 1 West 30th Street, remains a residential building. Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *The Wilbraham Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2004), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

⁵ This was done by Jay Shockley, Gale Harris, and Christopher D. Brazee.

⁶ Central Park was designated an NHL on May 23, 1963, listed on the NRHP on October 15, 1966, and designated an NYC Scenic Landmark on April 16, 1974.



Figure 1: Julia Martin, Julia Bredt, and self: dressed up. Photo by Alice Austen, 1891. From the Collection of Historic Richmond Town.

cross-dressing, photographs that were unique for their time and have become iconic for the LGBTQ community (Figure 1). In 1899, Austen formed an intimate relationship with Gertrude Amelia Tate (1871-1962), who came to live here from 1917 until the property was lost to foreclosure in 1935 and the women were forced to separate. The house became a public museum in 1975, though for decades the real story of the owners' lives was actively discouraged in the museum's interpretation. In recent years, the Historic House Trust has reversed this policy.⁷

⁷ The Historic House Trust Newsletter (Fall 2010) included contemporary re-creations of several of Alice's images by photographer Steven Rosen. The Austen House is located at 2 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island. It was designated an NYC Landmark on August 2, 1967, added to the NRHP on July 28, 1970, and designated an NHL on April 19, 1993.

Oliver Smith House

This Brooklyn Heights residence was purchased in 1953 by Oliver Smith (1918-1994), one of the most famous theatrical designers of his day and a twenty-five time Tony Award nominee. He created the original sets for such Broadway shows as *Guys and Dolls*, *West Side Story*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music*, *Hello Dolly!*, and such ballets as *Rodeo* and *Fancy Free*. Smith was associated with an influential group of gay writers, artists, and intellectuals, and perhaps influenced by his time at February House (a noted gay commune that once stood at 7 Middagh Street, since demolished), he established his own home as a center of gay culture in Brooklyn. From around 1955 to 1965, he rented the garden apartment to Truman Capote (1924-1984).⁸

Paul Rudolph Apartments

Paul Rudolph (1918-1997), architect and chairman of the Department of Architecture at Yale University, began renting an apartment in 1961 by the East River in Midtown. After purchasing the building in 1976, he converted it into apartments and added a remarkable, sculptural penthouse completed in 1982. This work is emblematic of the architectural contribution of the LGBTQ community to American architecture and Rudolph's acclaim as one of America's most innovative twentieth-century architects. From 1922 to the early 1950s, this had been the home of "First Lady of the Theater" Katharine Cornell and her husband, director-producer Guthrie McClintic, who had one of the most famous Broadway "lavender marriages" of their day.⁹

⁸ Capote supposedly wrote portions of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (published 1958) and *In Cold Blood* (published 1966) while living here. The Smith House is located in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, which was designated an NHL on January 12, 1965, designated by NYC on November 23, 1965, and added to the NRHP on October 15, 1966.

⁹ The term "lavender marriage" usually refers historically to a marriage between a gay man and lesbian, often done for social and professional reasons. The Rudolph Apartments was designated an NYC Landmark on November 16, 2010.

Audre Lorde House

The acclaimed black lesbian feminist writer/activist Audre Lorde (1934-1992) resided on Staten Island from 1972 to 1987 with her partner, psychology professor Frances Clayton. During her time here, Lorde held professorships at Hunter and John Jay Colleges and wrote several books of poetry and essays, as well as her renowned autobiographical works, *The Cancer Journals* (1980) and *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1984).¹⁰

Lesbian Herstory Archives

Celebrating its fortieth anniversary in 2014, the Archives houses the world's largest collection of materials by and about lesbians and their communities. Established in the Manhattan apartment of Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel, the Archives moved in 1993 to Brooklyn. A combined research facility, museum, and community center, it owns a vast library of books and journals, subject and organizational files, unpublished papers, conference proceedings, reference tools, audio-visual materials, art, and ephemera.¹¹

OLGAD Map, REPOHistory, and Gay New York (1994)

In 1994, the year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion in New York City, a group of eight historic preservationists and one architect participated in the short-lived Organization of Lesbian + Gay Architects and Designers (OLGAD) and produced one of the first known public attempts in the city to introduce the issue of LGBTQ preservation

¹⁰ The Lorde House is located in the St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District, Staten Island, designated by NYC on June 22, 2004.

¹¹ The Archives is located at 484 14th Street in the Park Slope Historic District, Brooklyn, designated by NYC on July 17, 1973, and added to the NRHP on November 21, 1980.

and historic sites.¹² One of the group's members, Ken M. Lustbader, had recently broached this topic in his Columbia University historic preservation thesis "Landscape of Liberation: Preservation of Gay and Lesbian History in Greenwich Village."¹³ OLGAD's map "A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks" (Figure 2) was intended as

a sampling of LGBTQ-related sites, with walking tours of Greenwich Village, Harlem, and Midtown, displaying a wide range of extant buildings. These included well-known landmarks, such as hotels and theaters, listed for their LGBTQ connections, as well as bars and social meeting places, residences of notable people, and gay rights movement locations. This map led the Municipal Art Society and others to begin sponsoring LGBTQ walking tours.

Many of the sites were located in Greenwich Village, which had the largest map. In Harlem, one of New York's most significant African American neighborhoods, just one of the significant sites featured is the famous Apollo Theater, where nearly every important African American entertainer played during its heyday as a showcase for black performers from the 1930s into the 1970s. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual luminaries such as Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, Ethel Waters, Jackie "Moms"

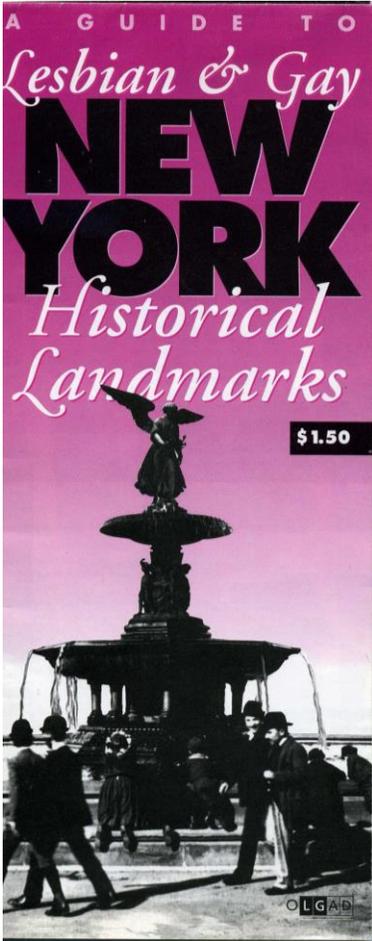


Figure 2: Organization of Lesbian + Gay Architects and Designers, "A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks" map (1994).

¹² Joan C. Berkowitz, Don L. Dinkel, Jr., Andrew S. Dolkart, Gale Harris, Mary Jablonski, Ken M. Lustbader, Tom Reynolds, and Jay Shockley.

¹³ Ken M. Lustbader, "Landscape of Liberation: Preservation of Gay and Lesbian History in Greenwich Village," master's thesis, Columbia University, 1993.

Mabley, Little Richard, Johnny Mathis, Alex Bradford, and James Cleveland appeared there. During the 1960s, a popular attraction was the drag Jewel Box Revue, America's first traveling troupe of gender impersonators featuring a racially integrated cast of twenty-five men and one woman, Master of Ceremonies Stormé DeLarverie.¹⁴

The OLGAD map was not the only project that sought to recognize important LGBTQ sites as part of Stonewall's twenty-fifth anniversary. REPOHistory, an activist group of visual and performance artists, writers, filmmakers, and historians who sought to publicly repossess aspects of history that had generally been ignored, undertook a Queer Spaces project. They designed pink triangle signs giving the LGBTQ history of nine Manhattan locations, which they then erected on street signposts.¹⁵ George Chauncey's *Gay New York*, also published that year, was an immensely important contribution to raising awareness of the incredibly rich history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century New York City. Two subsequent guidebooks that listed many LGBTQ sites in New York in 1997 were *The Queerest Places: A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites and Stepping Out: Nine Tours Through New York City's Gay and Lesbian Past*.¹⁶

Effort to Have the Stonewall Declared a National Historic Landmark (1994)

In connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall, OLGAD members worked to have the Stonewall Inn (Figure 3) declared a National

¹⁴ The Apollo Theater is located at 253 West 125th Street. It was designated an NYC Landmark and NYC Interior Landmark on June 28, 1983, and listed on the NRHP on November 17, 1983. Organization of Lesbian + Gay Architects and Designers (OLGAD), "A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks" (1994); LPC website, Pride Month slide show (PMSS), 2014, <http://www.nyc.gov/landmarks>.

¹⁵ These included the site of the first ACT UP demonstration at Trinity Church, 74 Trinity Place, listed on the NRHP and designated an NHL on December 8, 1976; Everard Baths, 28 West 28th Street; Julius' Bar, 159 West 10th Street; and a headquarters of the Daughters of Bilitis.

¹⁶ Paula Martinac, *The Queerest Places: A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997); and Daniel Hurewitz, *Stepping Out: Nine Tours Through New York City's Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997).

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Historic Landmark (NHL).¹⁷ The designation did not happen at this time for two reasons: the lack of building owner support which was necessary in order to proceed, and the lack of precedence. Since there had never been any prior LGBTQ NHL historic context or theme study developed, the Department of the Interior deemed it impossible to determine the Stonewall's significance. Further, the successes of the gay rights movement were seen as too recent and too limited at that point; a street riot was questioned as the most worthy site for commemoration; Stonewall was not considered a defining moment or event for the LGBTQ



Figure 3: The Stonewall Inn, 51-53 Christopher Street, New York City, New York. Photo by John Barrington Bayley, circa 1965. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

community's "basic humanity" to be demonstrated (or commemorated) to American society; and written gay history was misinterpreted as too "lacking" to provide sufficient historical background.¹⁸

Thirtieth Anniversary of Stonewall – National Register of Historic Places (1999) and National Historic Landmark (2000)

Just four years later, the Stonewall nomination became a priority, facilitated by openly-gay John Berry, who was serving as Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior.¹⁹ Sponsored by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic

¹⁷ This effort was led by OLGAD member Gale Harris.

¹⁸ Memorandum, March 4, 1994, NPS, Department of the Interior.

¹⁹ Stephen Morris, Chris Thomson, and Jim Gasser, members of Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees (GLOBE), began meeting about the Stonewall in 1998, *Interior GLOBE News* (Spring 2000).

Preservation, the nomination was fast-tracked for listing on the New York State Register and then the NRHP in 1999, and the Stonewall became an NHL in 2000.²⁰ The nomination focused solely on the significance of the Stonewall to LGBTQ history, since the building was already part of the Greenwich Village Historic District, and included the surrounding streets and Christopher Park where the Stonewall Rebellion took place. This expansion of the site to include the park and streets was promoted by Kathleen LaFrank, of the New York State Historic Preservation Office, who suggested Civil War battlefields as a boundary precedent. In order to address the issue of the NRHP fifty-year threshold, the nomination extensively quoted from contemporary newspapers and journals, personal reminiscences, scholarly books, and historians' statements, which established Stonewall's "exceptional significance" due to its impact on the history of civil rights both nationally and internationally. The Stonewall was the first and only specifically LGBTQ-related listing on the NRHP until the Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence was added in 2011, and was the only LGBTQ NHL until the Henry Gerber House was designated in 2015.²¹

New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project (2014-2015)

In 2011, three former OLGAD members, Jay Shockley, Andrew S. Dolkart, and Ken M. Lustbader, wishing to raise the discussion of LGBTQ historic preservation on a national level, led the session "Beyond Stonewall: Recognizing Significant Historic Sites of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community" at the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Buffalo. When the Department of the Interior, in 2014, announced the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund

²⁰ The nomination was written by Andrew S. Dolkart with Jay Shockley, using in part research later published in: David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004).

²¹ The Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence, in the Palisades neighborhood of Northwest Washington, DC, was added to the NRHP on November 2, 2011. The Gerber House, in the Old Town Triangle neighborhood of Chicago, was designated an NHL on June 19, 2015.

Grants to Underrepresented Communities, for projects that would assist in broadening the diversity of sites on the NRHP and as NHLs, the three men submitted an LGBTQ grant application through the New York State Historic Preservation Office. The New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project was awarded a federal grant of \$49,999, and subsequently leveraged additional foundation support.

The New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project, initially conceived as a two-year project, is currently surveying, documenting, and evaluating previously unknown and undocumented properties in all five boroughs of the city associated with LGBTQ historic and cultural themes, as well as those already locally designated or listed on the NRHP, flagged for LGBTQ connections. A publically accessible, online map of sites will be created, using outreach and input from professionals, organizations, archives, and community members. Although New York City has been a national leader in the LGBTQ rights movement, no survey or comprehensive documentation currently exists of sites associated with LGBTQ history. The project provides context and baseline documentation for New York City's LGBTQ history and extant sites; establishes a resource for future scholarship and preservation efforts; and will produce new NRHP nominations, amended NRHP listings, and local designations. The first NRHP nomination by the project was Julius' Bar, which was listed on the New York State Register in March 2016 and on the NRHP in April 2016.²²

Greenwich Village: An LGBTQ Historic Preservation and Cultural Case History

Within greater Greenwich Village, including the East Village and also a few sites in the immediately adjacent SoHo and Union Square neighborhoods, there are numerous, disparate extant sites representing the history of the LGBTQ community from the 1850s to the present. These include bars, popular meeting places, cultural institutions, housing

²² Julius at 159 West 10th Street, New York City was added to the NRHP on April 21, 2016.

accommodations, theaters, residences of noted persons, and sites associated with LGBTQ civil rights. Greenwich Village was one of the first neighborhoods in New York City that allowed, and gradually accepted, an open gay and lesbian presence, which resulted in its emergence as an early and nationally significant LGBTQ enclave. The following discussion is not meant in any manner as a definitive history of the LGBTQ community in New York, or the various communities within the larger community. It represents a partial site-based narrative of New York's first "gay" neighborhood that emerges based solely on documented and extant sites drawn from the various projects mentioned in this chapter above. In particular, many of these sites are documented in official city landmark designation reports, a fact which is unique nationally. New York City is fortunate in the fact that so many LGBTQ-associated sites are protected by historic district designations, within Greenwich Village alone by six historic districts.

Early Known Gay and Lesbian Life from the 1850s to the 1890s

The period from the 1850s to the 1890s is the first recorded emergence in New York of what would now be regarded as LGBTQ spaces, a number of which are extant. The earliest currently known is Pfaff's, operated from 1859 to 1864 by German-born proprietor Charles Ignatius Pfaff, which was a Rathskeller-like beer/wine cellar restaurant in the Coleman House Hotel, extending into the sidewalk vaults (basement area below the sidewalk). It became a favorite haunt of the Bohemians of the 1850s, including artists, writers, and actors. Walt Whitman, iconic in the United States and Europe as one of the first people to openly express the concept of men loving men via his poetry, was a central figure among this group from 1859 to 1862. During his Pfaff's period, around 1859, Whitman wrote twelve famously homoerotic "Calamus" poems that were included in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. A portion of Pfaff's was known as a place for men looking for other men. Although Pfaff's vault



Figure 4: Former location of The Slide, 157 Bleecker Street, New York City, New York, 1980s. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

space has been destroyed, the basement, along with the rest of the hotel, survives.²³

In Gay New York, Chauncey identified the 1890s as one of the earliest periods in the city when one very specific, and “notorious,” aspect of the emerging gay male community—the subculture of flamboyantly effeminate “fairies”—became noticed by a wider public. He posited that this subculture was more fully and publicly integrated into working-class than middle-class culture.²⁴ While the Bowery, Lower East Side, and Tenderloin were the most notorious New York centers for “commercialized vice” and

“homosexual rendezvous” at this time, there were also such spots on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village. Upper middle-class men, in particular, and some women, were attracted to downtown, in part to witness the “depravity” of the lower classes and thus to be scandalized or titillated (or both). For example, The Slide (Figure 4) was popularly identified by 1890 as “New York’s ‘worst dive’ because of the fairies ... gathered there.”²⁵ A “slide,” in prostitutes’ jargon of the time, was “an establishment where male homosexuals dressed as women and solicited men.”²⁶ Contemporary newspapers, purporting to defend the public’s

²³ The Coleman House Hotel, 645-647 Broadway, is located in the NoHo Historic District, designated by NYC on June 29, 1999. LPC, PMSS, 2014. The only other known extant New York City location associated with Whitman is his house in Wallabout, Brooklyn, where he completed an early version of his *Leaves of Grass* in 1855.

²⁴ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 34.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68. Chauncey suggested that The Slide, in a rowhouse basement, was so named to specifically announce its character, even though its “fairies” did not in fact dress as women.

morals, spotlighted the most sensational aspects of this underworld. The Slide was closed by police in 1892 and the proprietor convicted of keeping a “disorderly house.”²⁷ Another “dive,” the Black Rabbit, was personally raided in 1900 by Anthony Comstock of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Of this establishment, he fumed “that he has never before raided a place so wicked, and that ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ would blush for shame at hearing to what depths of vice its habitués had descended.”²⁸

On the opposite side of the social spectrum were a number of LGBTQ individuals who operated within the spheres of upper New York society, politics, and culture. The Victorian lesbian power couple Elsie de Wolfe, often credited as America’s first professional interior designer, and Elisabeth Marbury, one of the world’s leading, and pioneering female, theatrical producers (Figure 5), lived in a house near Union Square between 1892 and 1911. They first met in 1887, and their relationship lasted nearly forty years. Their Sunday afternoon salons



Figure 5: Elsie de Wolfe and Elisabeth Marbury.²⁹

²⁷ The Slide was located at 157 Bleeker Street in the South Village Historic District (SVHD). “The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community’s Presence in the South Village,” in LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report (New York: City of New York, 2013), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

²⁸ “Black Rabbit Club is Closed Forever,” *New York Herald*, March 15, 1899, 12; and “Raid on ‘The Black Rabbit,’” *New York Times*, October 6, 1900, 2. The Black Rabbit was located at 183 Bleeker Street in the SVHD.

²⁹ From Elisabeth Marbury, *Reminiscences by Elisabeth Marbury* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1932).

here were attended by notables connected with the worlds of the arts, society, and politics. By coincidence, the house next door was, according to a 1914 biography, a place where the great gay Irish wit and writer Oscar Wilde lodged while touring America in 1882.³⁰

Murray H. Hall (1840-1901) was a Tammany politico who lived as a man for over thirty years but after death was revealed to have been a woman, creating an international press furor and attracting the attention of pioneering sexologist Havelock Ellis. In 1872, Hall married Cecilia Florence Lowe, a school teacher, and by 1874 Hall had established an employment agency chiefly representing domestic help. The couple moved several times but remained close to the Jefferson Market Police Court since Hall was also a bail bondsman. Hall's last home/office was an apartment on Sixth Avenue. As a Tammany figure, Hall played poker and pool with city and state officials and other political leaders and was often able to secure appointments for friends.³¹

The Gay and Lesbian Presence in the 1910s and 1920s

After a period of decline as a desirable residential neighborhood, Greenwich Village was becoming known, prior to World War I, not only for its historic and picturesque qualities and affordable housing, but also for the diversity of its population and their social and political ideas. In the 1910s, gay men and lesbians frequented the many cheap Italian restaurants, cafeterias, and tearooms that the Village became known for. After the war and increasingly in the 1920s, they appropriated their own spaces, despite some opposition from fellow Villagers. This represented the first instance in New York City of covert middle-class gay and lesbian commercial enterprises, and started the Village's reputation as its most famous gay neighborhood. As Chauncey wrote, "the Village...came to

³⁰ LPC, *East 17th Street/Irving Place Historic District Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 1998), researched and written by Gale Harris and Jay Shockley; and LPC, PMSS, 2013.

³¹ According to one source, Hall (née Mary Anderson) was born in Scotland and at about age sixteen began dressing as a man, taking the name John Anderson. Anderson married young, but had a roving eye and an angry wife who disclosed Anderson's gender to the police. Fearing arrest, Anderson fled to America in 1870 and assumed the name Murray H. Hall. "Murray Hall Fooled Many Shrewd Men," *New York Times*, January 19, 1901, 3; GVHD; and LPC, PMSS, 2014.

represent to the rest of the city what New York as a whole represented to the rest of the nation: a peculiar social territory in which the normal social constraints on behavior seemed to have been suspended and where men and women built unconventional lives outside the family nexus.”³²

In 1914, the block of MacDougal Street just south of Washington Square emerged as a cultural and social center of the Bohemian set, with the Liberal Club, radical feminist Heterodoxy Club, and Washington Square Bookshop. The next-door Provincetown Playhouse from 1916 to 1929 was a serious amateur theater, and though most famous in this period for playwright Eugene O’Neill, it was also associated with figures prominent in the gay and lesbian community including Edna St. Vincent Millay, Djuna Barnes, Katharine Cornell, Tallulah Bankhead, and Eva Le Gallienne.³³ Washington Square Park was by the early twentieth century a popular cruising ground for gay men, and its west side became known as the “meat rack.”³⁴ While West 3rd and 4th Streets had housed some of the speakeasies and tearooms run by and/or catering to New York’s burgeoning lesbian and gay community after the war, this block of MacDougal became an important LGBTQ nucleus, especially after a series of police crackdowns on spots elsewhere in the Village in 1924 and 1925.

One such place on this block was “Eve Addams” Tearoom, a popular after-theater club run in 1925 and 1926 by Polish-Jewish lesbian emigre Eva Kotchever (Czlotcheber), with a sign that read “Men are admitted but not welcome.” A Village columnist in 1931 reminisced that her club was “one of the most delightful hang-outs the Village ever had.”³⁵ After a police raid, Kotchever was convicted of obscenity (for *Lesbian Love*, a collection of her short stories) and disorderly conduct, and was

³² Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 237, 243-244.

³³ Washington Square Bookshop was located at 135 MacDougal Street, the Liberal and Heterodoxy Clubs at No. 137, and the Provincetown Playhouse at No. 139. Of these locations, only a portion of the facade of the playhouse survives.

³⁴ GVHD; OLGAD.

³⁵ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 242.

deported.³⁶ The Black Rabbit (unrelated to the earlier Bleecker Street establishment with the same name), another of “the Village’s gay stamping grounds,”³⁷ was closed by the police around 1929 and became the Minetta Tavern in 1937.

Webster Hall, one of New York’s most historically and culturally significant large nineteenth-century assembly halls, has been the venue for countless events including conventions and political and union rallies, particularly for the working-class and immigrant populations of the Lower East Side. In the 1910s and 20s, it became famous for its Bohemian masquerade balls (Figure 6). It was significant as a gathering place for the city’s early twentieth-century lesbian and gay community, who felt welcome to attend the balls in drag, and then sponsored their own events by the 1920s. Among the many notables who attended events here at this time were artist Charles Demuth and writer Djuna Barnes.³⁸

The Village attracted a large number of artistic and socially progressive residents, among them many like-minded gay men and lesbians. One of the most notable and enduring Village cultural institutions is the Little Red School House, often considered the city’s first progressive school, founded by lesbian reform educator Elisabeth Irwin (1880-1942). As early as 1912, Irwin worked at revising public school curriculum, and started her progressive “Little Red School House” curriculum in 1921. With the threat of public funding cuts, she was urged to found her own private, independent primary school. In 1932, the school moved to Bleecker Street and a high school (now Elisabeth Irwin High School) was added in 1940.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid, 240. Allegedly “the police had received many complaints about objectionable persons visiting the tea room.” “Sentenced for Giving Book,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1926, 13. Eve Addams’ Tearoom was located at 129 MacDougal Street. LPC, *129 MacDougal Street House Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2004), researched and written by Jay Shockley; SVHD.

³⁷ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 241. The Black Rabbit was located at 111 MacDougal Street in the SVHD.

³⁸ Webster Hall is located at 119-125 East 11th Street. LPC, *Webster Hall and Annex Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2008), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

³⁹ The Little Red School House is located at 196 Bleecker Street in the SVHD. The Irwin High School is located in the Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District, designated by NYC on August 16, 1966, and added to the NRHP on July 20, 1973.



Figure 6: Masquerade ball in the 1910s or 1920s at Webster Hall, 119-125 East 11th Street, New York City, New York. Photographer unknown.⁴⁰

Irwin continued to direct the school until her death. Her partner of thirty years was Katharine Anthony, a social researcher and feminist biographer. They lived nearby and were members of the Heterodoxy Club.⁴¹

Author Willa Cather, then an editor at McClure's Magazine, lived on Washington Square from about 1908 to 1913, with her partner Edith Lewis. Edna St. Vincent Millay was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry (1923), and "Vincent" had a number of relationships with women before her marriage. One of Millay's many Village residences was on Bedford Street in 1922-1923.⁴²

⁴⁰ License: Public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Drag_Ball_in_Webster_Hall-1920s.jpg

⁴¹ Their house on Bank Street is in the GVHD; Martinac, 112-113.

⁴² Cather's apartment was at 82 Washington Place West. This building and Millay's residence are in the GVHD. OLGAD.

LGBTQ Social and Cultural Life, 1930s to the 1950s

From the 1930s, and particularly after World War II, the area of Greenwich Village south of Washington Square continued as the location of many known bars and clubs that catered to, welcomed, or merely tolerated, the LGBTQ community. Reflecting the not wholly hospitable climate of the post-war period, even in this neighborhood, many of these bars (largely lesbian) were located in the shadow of the elevated train that ran along West 3rd Street. Louis' Luncheon (1930s-1940s) was a hangout popular with gay men and lesbians, writers, and chorus girls. Tony Pastor's Downtown (1939-1967) had a mixed clientele of lesbians and tourists, some gay men, and female impersonators. Raided on morals charges in 1944 for permitting lesbians to "loiter" on the premises, Pastor's survived apparently with mob backing. The New York State Liquor Authority, however, revoked its liquor license in 1967 because, in the homophobic language of the agency, it had "become disorderly in that it permitted homosexuals, degenerates and undesirables to be on the license premises and conduct themselves in an offensive and indecent manner."⁴³ Among the numerous other lesbian bars nearby were Swing Rendezvous (c. 1940-1965), also a jazz club, Ernie's Restaurant/Three Ring Circus (c. 1940-1962), mostly heterosexual but also attracting working-class lesbians, Mona's (c. late 1940s-early 1950s), and Pony Stable Inn (c. late 1940s-1968), remembered by African American lesbian poet Audre Lorde in *Zami Sister Outsider Undersong*.⁴⁴

The San Remo Cafe (c. 1925-1967) was a working-class bar that became a famous Bohemian hangout that attracted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, among its most prominent patrons, many gay artists and writers. These included Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, W. H. Auden, Harold Norse, John Cage, Larry Rivers, Frank O'Hara, and Merce Cunningham. The Music Box (c.

⁴³ "Liquor License is Revoked at Tony Pastor's Night Spot," *New York Times*, March 18, 1967, 15.

⁴⁴ Louis' Luncheon was located at 116 MacDougal Street. Tony Pastor's Downtown was located at 130 West 3rd Street. Swing Rendezvous was located at 117 MacDougal Street. Ernie's Restaurant/Three Ring Circus was located at 76 West 3rd Street. Mona's was located at 135 West 3rd Street. All of these buildings are in the SVHD.

1950-1972) was one of the places listed in a 1955-1956 FBI investigative report of “notorious types and places of amusement” in the Village that stated “A majority of the bars and restaurants in this area cater to lesbians and homosexuals, quite a few of whom reside in the area and are not inhibited in the pursuit of their amorous conquests. In the bars and



Figure 7: Apartment building, 171 West 12th Street, New York City, New York. Photo by John Barrington Bayley, c. 1965. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

restaurants there will also be found a segment of the tourist trade who go to the Village to observe the lesbians and queers at play and to enjoy the atmosphere of the ‘gay life.’”⁴⁵

Farther west in the Village, the Stewart (later Life) Cafeteria opened in 1933, quickly became a popular haunt for lesbians and gay men. Its plate-glass windows allowed visitors to the Village to gawk at the homosexuals inside, frequently attracting crowds.⁴⁶ In today’s East Village, the Mafia-controlled 181 Club (1945-1953), called “the homosexual Copacabana,” was one of the

⁴⁵ FBI, “Notorious Types and Places of Amusement” (April 1956), cited by the OutHistory website, October 2013, <http://www.outhistory.org>. The San Remo was located at 93 MacDougal Street, and the Music Box at 121 West 3rd Street. Both buildings are in the SVHD.

⁴⁶ The Stewart Cafeteria was located at 116 Seventh Avenue South, in the GVHD. OLGAD.

most luxurious gay and lesbian clubs in the United States and featured lavish shows of female impersonators.⁴⁷

Greenwich Village continued to attract many notable LGBTQ residents. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt had key associations with Village women beginning in the 1920s. An apartment building on West 12th Street (Figure 7) housed many influential women between 1920 and 1950, including lesbians of note: Communist Party leaders Grace Hutchins and Anna Rochester, political radical Polly Porter, Democratic Party leader Mary Dewson, artist Nancy Cook, and educator Marion Dickerman, who organized the Todhunter School on the Upper East Side, and the Val-Kill furniture factory in partnership with Roosevelt, on her property near Hyde Park, New York. From 1933 to 1942, Roosevelt rented an apartment “haven” in the East 11th Street house of two close friends, writer Esther Lape and attorney Elizabeth Read. The couple, who lived here for over two decades, were influential suffragists, political reformers, and founders of the League of Women Voters. Roosevelt maintained her own apartment on Washington Square in 1942-1949.⁴⁸

Photographer Berenice Abbott (1898-1991) and her partner Elizabeth McCausland (1899-1965) lived and worked in two flats they shared in a Village loft building from 1935 to 1965. An influential art critic and historian, McCausland wrote the text for Abbott’s classic photographic series *Changing New York*, published in 1939. Djuna Barnes was a longtime resident of a modest rowhouse on Patchin Place after the publication of her lesbian novel *Nightwood* in 1936.⁴⁹ St. Luke’s Place with its stately houses has long been a favored address for leaders in the arts and entertainment industry. Among its famous residents were painters Paul Cadmus (1904-1999) and Jared French (1905-1988), lovers

⁴⁷ The 181 Club was located in the former Louis N. Jaffe Art Theater, 181-189 Second Avenue. LPC, *Louis N. Jaffe Art Theater Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 1993), researched and written by Jay Shockley; and LPC, PMSS, 2014. The building was listed on the NRHP as the Yiddish Art Theatre on September 19, 1985.

⁴⁸ The apartment building at 171 West 12th Street, house on East 11th Street, and apartment building at 29 Washington Square West are located in the GVHD; OLGAD.

⁴⁹ Abbott and McCausland resided on Commerce Street. This building and Patchin Place are located in the GVHD. LPC, PMSS, 2013 and 2014; OLGAD.

when they moved there in 1935. French married artist Margaret Hoening in 1937 and they continued to share their home with Cadmus, who was joined by a new lover, painter George Tooker (1920-2011). In 1948, their friend George Platt Lynes photographed them here. Another close friend, British author E. M. Forster, was their houseguest in 1947 and 1949, and other visitors included Tennessee Williams, Cadmus's brother-in-law Lincoln Kirstein, and Andy Warhol.⁵⁰

In the 1950s, the celebrated African American authors, civil rights activists, friends, and early gay-rights pioneers James Baldwin (1924-1987) and Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) moved to the Village. Baldwin was openly gay and many of his works centered on gay or bisexual characters and frankly explored issues of identity, race, and homosexuality.⁵¹ Calling himself a “transatlantic commuter” he lived much of his life abroad while maintaining a series of residences in New York. From around 1957 to 1963 he rented a Village apartment. Hansberry, meanwhile, joined the Daughters of Bilitis homophile organization in 1957 and penned several essay-length letters about such topics as sexual identity, feminism, and homophobia to its publication, *The Ladder*. She moved into an apartment on Bleecker Street in 1953, shortly after she married Robert B. Nemiroff. In 1960, using a portion of the profits from her wildly successful play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the couple—who later divorced amicably— purchased a residence near Washington Square. Hansberry became involved with one of the building's tenants, Dorothy Secules, and the two remained partners until Hansberry's premature death from cancer.⁵²

⁵⁰ The Cadmus-French-Tooker residence is located in the GVHD. Playwright-screenwriter-director Arthur Laurents (1917-2011) also bought a house on St. Luke's Place around 1960 and resided there until his death in 2011, for most of the time with his partner Tom Hatcher (d. 2006). Over that long period, Laurents wrote the screenplays for *The Way We Were* (1973) and *The Turning Point* (1977) and won Tony Awards for his book for *Hallelujah, Baby!*; his direction of *La Cage aux Folles* (1984), and a revival of *Gypsy* (2009). LPC, PMSS, 2013 and 2014; OLGAD.

⁵¹ These included his second novel *Giovanni's Room* (1956), *Another Country* (1962), and *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968).

⁵² Baldwin's apartment on Horatio Street, and Hansberry's residences on Bleecker Street and Waverly Place are all located in the GVHD. LPC, PMSS, 2014.

The LGBTQ community has had a disproportionately significant and immeasurable impact on the cultural life of Greenwich Village and all of New York City, particularly in its theaters, which have featured the work of LGBTQ actors, directors, playwrights, and the various associated professions, as well as performers in its cafes and clubs, and as patrons of all of these venues. In the 1950s, Greenwich Village and the East Village became the cradle of what became the off-Broadway and off-off Broadway theater movements. The former Jaffe Art Theater, one of the most tangible reminders of the heyday of Yiddish theater in twentieth-century New York, was particularly renowned as the Phoenix Theater from 1953 to 1961. Founded by Norris Houghton and T. Edward Hambleton, it featured the work of directors including Tony Richardson and such performers as Montgomery Clift, Will Geer, Farley Granger, Eva Le Gallienne, and Roddy McDowall.⁵³ Actress-manager Julie Bovasso, in 1955, established and directed the Tempo Playhouse in the East Village, where she is credited with the American premieres of works by Jean Genet, including *The Maids*, as well as Gertrude Stein's *In a Garden* and *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*.⁵⁴



Figure 8: The former Caffe Cino, 31 Cornelia Street, New York City, New York, 2010. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

⁵³ The Phoenix Theater was located at 181-189 Second Avenue. LPC, *Louis N. Jaffe Art Theater Designation Report*.

⁵⁴ The Tempo Playhouse was located on St. Mark's Place. In 1964 this location also became a venue for the showing of early Avant-garde "underground" films by the Film-Makers' Cooperative under Jonas Mekas, then film critic of *The Village Voice* and editor-publisher of *Film Culture* magazine. The work of the Kuchar Brothers was introduced here, including the premiere of *Lust for Ecstasy*. The district

Caffe Cino (Figure 8) is widely recognized as the birthplace of off-off Broadway theater and is also significant as a pioneer in the development of gay theater. In 1958, Joe Cino (1931-1967) rented a ground-story commercial space, originally intending to operate a coffee shop with a small exhibition space for concerts, poetry readings, and art exhibits. He then allowed patrons to stage small Avant-garde theatrical performances. His partner Jon Torrey worked as electrician and lighting designer. Many of its early productions featured gay characters or subject matter. The staging of Lanford Wilson's *The Madness of Lady Bright* in 1964 was both the Cino's breakthrough hit and an early play to deal explicitly with homosexuality. Caffe Cino provided an important platform for newly emerging gay playwrights such as Doric Wilson, H. M. Koutoukas, Bob Heide, Bill Hoffman, Lanford Wilson, Tom Eyen, Jeff Weiss, David Starkweather, Charles Stanley, and Robert Patrick. The coffeehouse itself also became an important gay meeting spot, offering an alternative to bars and bathhouses. It closed in 1968, a year after Cino's suicide following Torrey's accidental death.⁵⁵ Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square, with an activist congregation, had begun sponsoring Avant-garde exhibits and performances in the 1940s and playwright/minister Al Carmines staged his own works here after 1958.⁵⁶

1960s – Early 1970s – the Early LGBTQ Rights Movement and Cultural Influence

Inevitably, Greenwich Village has many of the sites most associated with the struggle for LGBTQ rights in New York City, and nationally, over the decades. Julius' Bar by the 1950s attracted a gay clientele, despite

attorney's office raided the theater, seizing Jack Smith's allegedly "obscene" film *Flaming Creatures* and arresting Mekas, and he was again arrested for showing Genet's *Un Chant d'Amour*. LPC, *Hamilton-Holly House Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2004), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

⁵⁵ Caffe Cino was located at 31 Cornelia Street. LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2010), researched and written by Olivia Klose Brazee, Marianne Percival, and Virginia Kurshan; and LPC, PMSS, 2013.

⁵⁶ Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South, was designated an NYC Landmark on May 17, 1966, and listed on the NRHP on October 16, 1974. OLGAD.

the treatment they received. With the New York State Liquor Authority's (SLA) regulations against serving liquor to "disorderly" patrons, and its interpretation that homosexuals were per se in that category, the bar's management pursued a policy of not encouraging the presence of gay men. On April 21, 1966, members of the New York Mattachine Society staged a "sip-in" at Julius' to challenge SLA regulations. The tactic was that men would enter the bar, declare their sexual orientation, and order a drink—knowing that they would be turned away. The group then filed a complaint of discrimination with SLA, and the publicity attracted favorable public support and the attention of the New York City Commission on Human Rights. This was a hugely significant pre-Stonewall assertion of LGBTQ rights and paved the way for the right of gay people to peacefully assemble and the legalization of gay bars.⁵⁷ That same year, a mass protest against the Lindsay administration's attempt to "clean up" Washington Square was staged from Judson Memorial Church, which was used in the 1960s-70s for lesbian and gay political gatherings.⁵⁸ In 1967, gay activist Craig Rodwell opened the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop on Mercer Street, which was the nation's first lesbian and gay book store. It became a community meeting center as well.⁵⁹

The Stonewall Inn is considered one of the most significant sites associated with LGBTQ history in New York City and the entire country. In June 1969, a routine police raid on this bar resulted in active resistance, setting off days of confrontation and demonstrations, with unprecedented cries for "gay pride" and "gay power." The Stonewall Rebellion sparked the next phase of the gay liberation movement, which involved more radical political action during the 1970s, and also inspired the LGBTQ pride movement. The first anniversary of the uprising was commemorated in June 1970 as Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day, the main event being a march from Greenwich Village to Central Park.

⁵⁷ Julius' Bar, which remains in operation, is located at 159 West 10th Street, in the GVHD. LPC, PMSS, 2013 and 2014. It was listed on the NRHP on April 21, 2016.

⁵⁸ OLGAD.

⁵⁹ The first location of the shop was in the apartment building at 291 Mercer Street. From 1973 to 2009, the shop as the Oscar Wilde Bookshop, was located at 15 Christopher Street, in the GVHD. OLGAD; and LPC, PMSS, 2014.

In the immediate aftermath of Stonewall, one of the earliest organizations formed was the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Though of brief duration, the Gay Community Center was located (c. 1970-1971) on West 3rd Street (formerly Tony Pastor's Downtown). GLF had Sunday meetings and dances here, and this was also the headquarters of Radicalesbians, spun off of the male-dominated GLF in 1970, and the meeting place of Gay Youth, for GLF members under the age of eighteen.⁶⁰ A former firehouse in SoHo served as the headquarters of Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) (Figure 9) in 1971-1974. Formed in 1969 when a number of members broke away from the more radical GLF, GAA was primarily a



Figure 9: Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, 99 Wooster Street, New York City, New York. Photo by John Barrington Bailey, circa 1972. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

political activist organization whose exclusive purpose was to advance LGBTQ civil and social rights. It lobbied for the passage of local civil rights laws, banning police entrapment and harassment, the creation of fair employment and housing legislation, and the repeal of sodomy and solicitation laws. Many of the group's activities were planned at the Firehouse, including sit-ins and picket lines. Perhaps the most famous GAA tactic was the "zap," a direct, public confrontation with a political figure regarding LGBTQ rights designed to gain media attention. The Firehouse also served as an

⁶⁰ The Gay Community Center was located at 130 West 3rd Street, in the SVHD.

important community center and hosted numerous social events, particularly Saturday night dance parties and Firehouse Flicks, a movie series selected by activist and film buff Vito Russo.⁶¹

During the 1960s, the influence of the LGBTQ community on off- and off-off-Broadway theater continued as strongly as before. The Provincetown Playhouse, in a later incarnation, housed Edward Albee's first play *The Zoo Story* (1960).⁶² The Cherry Lane Theater, formed in 1924-1926 as an experimental theater by Edna St. Vincent Millay with friends, developed a close association with Albee in the early 1960s, presenting *The American Dream*, *The Sandbox*, and *The Death of Bessie Smith*. In 1969, the theater featured a retrospective look at the life and career of Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*.⁶³ La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in the East Village was founded in 1961 by Ellen Stewart and opened in its current location in 1969. Today it is widely considered the oldest, most influential, and most prolific of all the off-off-Broadway stages. Though commercial theater has never been its focus, a number of La Mama plays achieved success on Broadway, including Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy*, and its resident director, Tom O'Horgan, later produced the influential hit *Hair*. Among the many notable playwrights and directors associated with La Mama have been Jean-Claude van Itallie, Tom Eyan, Lanford Wilson, William Hoffman, Charles Ludlam, Terrence McNally, Joseph Chaikin, John Vaccaro, Marshall Mason, and Meredith Monk.⁶⁴

1970s to the Present

While the LGBTQ bar and social scene in Greenwich Village had emerged around MacDougal Street in the 1910s-1920s and remained

⁶¹ The Firehouse, at 99 Wooster Street, was designated as part of the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District by NYC on August 14, 1973, while GAA still occupied the building and their lowercase lambda symbol was displayed on the facade. The district was designated an NHL on June 2, 1978, and listed on the NRHP on June 29, 1978. LPC, PMSS, 2013 and 2014.

⁶² SVHD.

⁶³ The Cherry Lane Theater, at 38 Commerce Street, is in the GVHD. OLGAD.

⁶⁴ La Mama is located at 74 East 4th Street. LPC, AschenbroedelVerein (later Gesangverein Schillerbund/now La Mama Experimental Theatre Club) Building Designation Report (New York: City of New York, 2009), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

centered in the South Village through the 1960s, there was also a migration northwest, to venues on Greenwich Avenue in the 1950s. Christopher Street became one of the best-identified LGBTQ locations in the world after Stonewall, and the popularity of the thoroughfare was sustained in the 1960s and 1970s by many gay-owned and gay-friendly bars and businesses. Gay men had traversed to the western terminus of Christopher for decades, to the piers along West Street for sexual encounters. By the early 1970s, the western end of Christopher Street and adjacent blocks along West Street, long established with seamen-oriented waterfront taverns, had become a nucleus for bars catering to a gay clientele. Six of the fourteen buildings that comprise the Weehawken Street Historic District have housed gay bars from that time to the present.⁶⁵

North of Christopher Street, in the meatpacking district (today's Gansevoort Market Historic District), another type of LGBTQ nightlife—very late and usually sexual—emerged (Figure 10). The *New York Times* in 1995 described its varied activities: “nightspots lie scattered, often tucked away, among the frigid warehouses of beef, pork, veal and poultry...The meatpacking district runs around the clock, and throughout, there are marked shifts in what goes on...Burly men in stained white overalls often unload meat trucks in the predawn hours just as club kids and bikers emerge from late-night hangouts...The district has always had a vibrant gay and lesbian night scene.”⁶⁶ The first of the new businesses (other

⁶⁵ These included West Beach Bar & Grill, 388-390 West Street (c. 1970-1980); Choo Choo's Pier, 392-393 West Street (c. 1972); Peter Rabbit, 396-397 West Street (c. 1972-1988); Ramrod, 394-395 West Street (c. 1976-1980); Sneakers, 392-393 West Street (c. late 1970s-1999); Badlands, 388-390 West Street (c. 1983-1991); and Dugout/RockBar, 185 Christopher Street (c. 1985-present). LPC, *Weehawken Street Historic District Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2006), researched and written by Jay Shockley.

⁶⁶ “Shifting Shadows and the Multiple Personality of the Meatpacking District,” *New York Times*, February 5, 1995. The earliest gay club here was the Zoo, 421-425 West 13th Street, in 1970. This was followed by Cycle/Den/ Zodiac/O.K. Corral/Mineshaft, 835 Washington Street (1970-85); Triangle/Barn/Attic/Sewer/J's Hangout/Hellfire, 669-685 Hudson Street (1971-2002) (Figure 10); Clit Club/Mother/Jackie 60, 859-877 Washington Street (1990s); Lure, 405-409 West 13th Street (1995-2003); and Locker Room/Mike's Bar, 400 West 14th Street (1990-1993). LPC, *Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2003), researched and written by Jay Shockley. The Gansevoort Market Historic District was listed on the NRHP on May 30, 2007.

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than clubs) in the district was Florent Restaurant opened in 1985 by Florent Morellet in a 1949 diner, which became quite popular as an all-hours spot and performance venue.⁶⁷

Two of New York's most famous LGBTQ clubs opened in the East Village. The Pyramid Club (1979-present) became a defining venue in the 1980s for Avant-garde music and "politicized" drag performers such as Lypsinka, Lady Bunny, and RuPaul, and sponsored early benefit concerts for AIDS. The Saint (1980-1988), owned by gay entrepreneur Bruce Mailman and located in the former Commodore Theatre (later Fillmore East), was one of the most spectacular and expensive dance clubs the city had ever seen.⁶⁸

Numerous LGBTQ notables in the arts have continued to reside and work in the Village. The Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, one of



Figure 10: 669-685 Hudson Street building, New York City, New York, 2003. Courtesy of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

⁶⁷ It was located at 69 Gansevoort Street, in the Gansevoort Market Historic District (GMHD).

⁶⁸ The Pyramid Club is located at 101 Avenue A, and the Saint was located at 105 Second Avenue. LPC, *East Village/ Lower East Side Historic District Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2012), researched and written by Christopher D. Brazee.

America's most influential dance companies, was located in a penthouse of Westbeth Artists' Housing (former Bell Telephone Laboratories) along the Hudson River waterfront from 1971 until 2010.⁶⁹ Star chef James Beard and his partner, architect Gino Cofacci, purchased a house on West 12th Street in 1973. The ground-floor interior was re-designed for the kitchen, site of Beard's famous classes and cooking demonstrations, and the building later became the James Beard Foundation.⁷⁰ After the front portion of the Jaffe Art Theater was converted into apartments, residents included Jackie Curtis, drag "superstar" in Andy Warhol films, photographer Peter Hujar (1975-1987), and artist David Wojnarowicz (1980-1992).⁷¹ The last apartment of iconic artist Keith Haring (1958-1990) was on LaGuardia Place. Author/playwright Paul Rudnick, who lived in the 1990s in the former apartment of actor John Barrymore, wrote the play *I Hate Hamlet* (1991), which was set in this apartment and featured the ghost of Barrymore.⁷²

As New York's longest-established gay neighborhood, the Village remained the location of a number of significant institutions. From 1975 to 2016, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, the city's first LGBTQ synagogue (established 1973), worshiped at Westbeth, led by Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum since 1992.⁷³ The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center (now Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center) was organized in 1983 and took title to a former school building in 1984. A focal point for LGBTQ activities in the metropolitan area, each year the Center welcomes more than three hundred thousand visitors and is used by over four hundred community groups to host meetings, social and cultural events, and health-based programs. The Center witnessed the

⁶⁹ The Cunningham Dance Studio was located at 55 Bethune Street. LPC, *Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2011), researched and written by Jay Shockley. Bell Telephone Laboratories was listed on the NRHP on May 15, 1975. It was listed again as Westbeth on December 8, 2009.

⁷⁰ The James Beard Foundation, at 167 West 12th Street, is in the GVHD. OLGAD.

⁷¹ The former Jaffe Art Theater is located at 181-189 Second Avenue. LPC, *Louis N. Jaffe Art Theater Designation Report*.

⁷² Haring's and Rudnick's apartments were located in the SVHD.

⁷³ The synagogue was located at 57 Bethune Street. LPC, *Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex*; and LPC, PMSS, 2014.

founding of GLAAD (formerly Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, 1985) and ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, 1987). The important community service group SAGE (Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders) also met here for over twenty years. In 1988, it housed the Quilt Workshop to create panels for the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. For Stonewall's twentieth anniversary in 1989, the Center presented *Imaging Stonewall*, a site specific installation of fifty artworks that included a mural by Keith Haring in the second floor men's room (restored 2012). In 1990, the LGBT Community Center Archive was established under the curatorship of Rich Wandel and now houses thousands of papers, periodicals, correspondence, and photographs donated by individuals and organizations. Today, the Center remains a major forum for politicians and gathering place for political groups, an important center for cultural events, and a gathering place for the LGBTQ community in times of trouble and celebration.⁷⁴ The former Rectory of St. Veronica's Roman Catholic Church was selected by the Catholic Church to become a hospice for homeless AIDS patients and the facility opened in December 1985. From 1993 to 2003, the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project and Empire State Pride Agenda were located in the meatpacking district.⁷⁵

Finally, one former restaurant location has taken on historic significance in light of the path-breaking Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Windsor* in 2013. *Portofino* (c. 1959-1975) was an Italian restaurant in the South Village that was a discreet meeting place frequented on Friday evenings by lesbians. The case that overturned the federal Defense of Marriage Act had its roots in the date here in 1963 of Edith S. Windsor and Thea Clara Spyer. The couple eventually married in

⁷⁴ The Center is located at 130 West 13th Street, in the GVHD. LPC, PMSS, 2014.

⁷⁵ The Rectory of St. Veronica's Roman Catholic Church was located at 657 Washington Street. LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2006), researched and written by Jay Shockley. The Anti-Violence Project and Empire State Pride Agenda were located at 647 Hudson Street, in the GMHD.

Canada in 2007 and Windsor challenged the act after receiving a large tax bill from inheriting Spyer's estate.⁷⁶

Summary

New York City, the largest American city, has played a prominent role in the LGBTQ rights and other social movements, and is recognized as one of the most important centers for all aspects of American arts and culture. There are many known extant historic and cultural sites of import to the LGBTQ community and nation. Since the early 1990s, various efforts towards their documentation, recognition, and commemoration have placed New York in the forefront nationally in LGBTQ historic preservation. Greenwich Village is an example of an historic “gay” neighborhood that can be analyzed for its significant sites. However, much work remains to be done in New York—such as further research and evaluation of known sites, uncovering currently unknown ones, and, above all, representing the great diversity of all of the communities within the greater LGBTQ community of the city. The New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project, among many other efforts, will hopefully accomplish these tasks and continue to provide inspiration for other projects around the nation.

⁷⁶ Portofino was located at 206 Thompson Street, in the SVHD.