

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

STONEWALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: STONEWALL

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 51-53 Christopher St., Christopher Park, Christopher St., Grove St., Gay St., Waverly Pl., Greenwich Ave., Sixth Ave., and West 10th St. between Sixth Ave. and Seventh Ave. South.

Not for publication:

City/Town: New York

Vicinity:

State: New York

County: New York

Code: 061

Zip Code: 10014

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: x

Public-Local: x

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):

District:

Site: x

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

0

0

2

Noncontributing

0 buildings

0 sites

0 structures

0 objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 2

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: n/a

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	COMMERCE	Sub: bar
	RECREATION	Sub: park
	TRANSPORTATION	Sub: street

Current:	COMMERCE	Sub: bar
	RECREATION	Sub: park
	TRANSPORTATION	Sub: street

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: no style

Materials: [for 51-53 Christopher Street]

Foundation: stone
Walls: brick, stucco
Roof: asphalt
Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Stonewall is located in the center of the Greenwich Village Historic District (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated 1969, National Register listed 1979), a neighborhood on the lower west side of Manhattan. The nominated area is the site of a series of events, collectively known as Stonewall, that occurred between June 28 and July 3, 1969. The current nomination recognizes Stonewall for its significance in the area of gay rights, a theme not addressed in the documentation for the Greenwich Village Historic District. Stonewall was individually listed on the National Register for its association with gay rights in 1999.

The boundary of this nomination encompasses the full extent of the area in which the significant events occurred. The site includes the former Stonewall Inn (51-53 Christopher Street) and portions of the adjacent public spaces, including Christopher Park and streets and sidewalks on Christopher Street, Grove Street, Waverly Place, Gay Street, Greenwich Avenue, Sixth Avenue and West 10th Street. The inn, park and adjacent streets retain substantive integrity to the period in which the significant events occurred. The extent of the nominated area is outlined on the enclosed map, and the specific locations of the significant events are noted in section 8.

The Stonewall Inn is a two-story building constructed in c1843-1846. The building was originally constructed as two separate stables, a fact evident in the different heights of the east and west sections and the structural wall that runs through the building where the two stables would originally have had their party wall. In 1930, the buildings were combined for use as a restaurant and a new facade was designed. The 1930 facade remains intact today.

The building has a brick-clad ground floor, with stucco on the second story. The brick is laid in a running bond, with a soldier course at the top and bottom. The arched entrances have brick surrounds and the windows are marked by shallow, projecting brick sills. From left to right, the ground floor is articulated by a narrow round-arched entrance with new door and original fanlight; a rectangular window; a wide segmental-arched doorway with wooden double doors capped by an original fanlight (this was the main entrance to the Stonewall Inn); a second rectangular window; and a segmental-arched entrance, somewhat narrower than that to the west, with new door and original fanlight. At the far eastern end of the building, the facade is stucco, cut by a narrow rectangular doorway with modern door. The entrance doors to the bar and the glass in the bar's windows were destroyed on June 28, 1969, as part of the Stonewall uprising.

The stuccoed second story of each section of the building is articulated by three rectangular window openings, each containing casement sash. The windows on the lower section to the left have rectangular, iron flower-box holders; each supported by two iron brackets. The three windows on the eastern portion of the building have curved, iron flower-box holders, each supported by a single iron bracket.

At the time that the building was occupied by the Stonewall Inn, in the late 1960s, the interior was divided into two rooms (reflecting its original configuration as two separate buildings) and the decor was minimal. The dimly lit space was painted black and had two makeshift wooden bars. Most of the interior fittings of the bar were destroyed on the morning of June 28, 1969, when the police raided the establishment. Today, there are two commercial enterprises in the

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building. Although the interior finishes have changed, the open configuration of the two spaces echoes the configuration of the Stonewall Inn. The western section houses a bar, which is called the Stonewall in recognition of the historic Stonewall Inn.

Immediately across Christopher Street from the Stonewall Inn is Christopher Park, a triangular open space bounded by Christopher Street on the north, Grove Street on the south, Waverly on the east and West 4th Street on the west. The 1969 configuration of the park survives today. The park is surrounded by a historic iron fence, with an elegant arched entrance facing West 4th Street. The eastern portion of the park is heavily planted with trees, bushes and ivy. This section is also the site of a statue of Civil War general Philip Henry Sheridan, designed by Joseph P. Pollia and installed in 1936. The western portion of the park has border planting beds and an open area that was traditionally furnished with benches. In 1992, George Segal's sculpture *Gay Liberation* was installed in this section in recognition of the site's significance. As part of this installation, gay landscape designer Philip Winslow redesigned portions of the park, installing new brick paving and new benches.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally: __

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A X B __ C __ D __

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A __ B __ C __ D __ E __ F __ G X

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Criteria Exception: 8

NHL Theme(s): II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. Reform movements

Areas of Significance: social history

Period(s) of Significance: June 28, 1969 – July 3, 1969

Significant Dates: June 28, 1969, June 29, 1969, June 30, 1969,
July 2, 1969, July 3, 1969

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: n/a

Historic Contexts: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
M. Civil Rights Movements

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

Stonewall is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 because it is associated with events that outstandingly represent the struggle for gay civil rights in America. The nominated site encompasses a several block area in Greenwich Village that was the location of a series of events, collectively known as Stonewall, that occurred between June 28 and July 3, 1969. Stonewall is regarded by many as the single most important event that led to the modern gay and lesbian liberation movement and to the struggle for civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans. The Stonewall uprising was, as historian Lillian Faderman has written, "the shot heard round the world...crucial because it sounded the rally for the movement."¹

Although Stonewall occurred less than fifty years ago, the site meets the criteria for exceptional significance because its importance was widely recognized by scholars and citizens almost immediately, because it has been the subject of extensive scholarly research and interpretation, because it represents an outstanding and clearly defined episode in the history of civil rights in America, because its significance is recognized internationally, and because it has had a demonstrable effect on the lives of millions of Americans, as well as on American society in general. In the judgement of historian Martin Duberman, "Stonewall is the emblematic event in modern lesbian and gay history. As such," Duberman asserts, "Stonewall has become an empowering symbol of global proportions."²

The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar located at 51-53 Christopher Street in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. As part of a pattern of raids and harassment of gay establishments, the bar was raided by the New York City police at about 1:30 a.m. on the morning of Saturday, June 28, 1969. The reaction of the bar's patrons and of the crowd that assembled in the street (which included a diverse segment of the gay community and other Greenwich Village residents and visitors) was not typical of such events. Instead of dispersing, the crowd became increasingly angry as the Stonewall's employees and patrons were arrested. Soon participants began chanting, throwing pennies, beer cans and other objects, and the police were forced back into the bar. Reinforcements were called in, and for several hours the police tried to clear the streets while the crowd fought back. Over the next few evenings the uprising continued. Two quiet nights followed before the final episode of street fighting occurred, late Wednesday evening and early Thursday morning, July 2nd and 3rd. The street events occurred outside the Stonewall Inn, in Christopher Park (across the street from the bar), along Christopher Street between Seventh Avenue South and Greenwich Avenue, and along adjacent streets, notably Waverly Place, Gay Street, Greenwich Avenue, Sixth Avenue and West 10th Street. At its peak, the crowd included several thousand people.

¹ Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (NY: Penguin, 1991) 195.

² Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (NY: Dutton, 1993) xv.

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The struggle for gay rights did not begin that night, as groups had previously been organizing in New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles and other cities to plead for the recognition of gay and lesbian people and for an end to discrimination. However, Stonewall marked a major change, as gay men and lesbians began to demand their rights vocally and assertively. The events of Stonewall, as the uprising is most commonly referred to, became the major catalyst for change in the self-awareness of gay men and lesbians, for the development of a gay rights movement, and for the beginning of a change in the perception of gay men and lesbians by the heterosexual world. The importance of the event was recognized almost immediately, both by many of those who had participated or been onlookers, and by gay men and lesbians elsewhere in New York and around the country. Franklin Kameny, one of the most prominent early gay activists, remembered that:

By the time of Stonewall, we had fifty to sixty gay groups in the country. A year later there was at least fifteen hundred. By two years later, to the extent that a count could be made, it was twenty-five hundred. And *that* was the impact of Stonewall.³

Shortly after the rebellion, groups organized to maintain the activism. These included, notably, the Gay Liberation Front, followed soon by the Gay Activists Alliance. A few weeks after the raid, in commemoration of Stonewall, the first gay march took place, with participants parading from Washington Square to the Stonewall site. A year later, in commemoration of Stonewall, the first Christopher Street Liberation Day march took place, with thousands of gay men and lesbians marching from the Stonewall site to Central Park. Similar commemorative marches occurred in Chicago and in San Francisco and Los Angeles, where the marches were referred to as Christopher Street West. Annual New York marches continue to pass in front of the Stonewall and along the streets where the rebellion occurred.

Since 1969, the significance of Stonewall has been recognized internationally. Many historians have discussed the significance of the event in books and articles published by major presses. The uprising marks the emergence of cultural activity with specific and open gay and lesbian themes, inspiring a large body of work in fine arts, poetry, literature, theater, and motion pictures. Marches and parades, attracting tens of thousands of participants, have taken place in commemoration of the uprising in the United States, Europe, and Australia. Large numbers of organizations, institutions, and commercial enterprises have been named for Stonewall and Christopher Street. In 1979, on the tenth anniversary of the uprising, New York City announced that a commemorative statue by George Segal would be placed in Christopher Park. This work, *Gay Liberation*, was installed twelve years later in 1992. Also as a tenth-anniversary commemoration, the first national gay rights march was held in Washington, D.C. In 1989, in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the uprising, a portion of Christopher Street in front of the Stonewall Inn was renamed Stonewall Place; New York's Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center commissioned a series of major art installations, including several specifically relating to Stonewall; and the United States Post Office offered a special commemorative stamp cancellation. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall in 1994, upwards of one million people came to celebrate in New York by participating in the Gay Games and Arts Festival and a

³ Franklin Kameny, interview for "Stonewall: Myth, Magic and Mobilization," Public Radio International, 1994.

massive march, and the New York Public Library organized a major exhibition entitled *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall*. Significant art and architecture exhibitions and conferences were held in association with “Stonewall 25” celebrations. The Stonewall site, which receives visitors from all over the world, continues to be recognized as a place where a major event in the history of civil rights occurred in America.

Background

The Stonewall uprising has been widely recognized as an exceptionally significant event in the gay rights movement. Stonewall was not the first time members of the gay and lesbian community had sought their rights. Rather, its significance lies in its role as a catalyst for the decades of significant change that followed. In this sense, Stonewall has been compared to the Boston Tea Party and to Rosa Parks sitting in the front section of a bus.⁴ The Boston Tea Party was not the first act of civil disobedience in the Revolutionary period, but it was a significant turning point; Rosa Parks' act of civil disobedience was not the first step in the black civil rights movement, but her actions were a catalyst for change. In the same way, the events of Stonewall galvanized gay men and lesbians and led to the development of the modern gay rights movement.

In the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, gay and lesbian life in New York City and elsewhere in America had gone through phases of relative openness and strong repression.⁵ In 1960, few people would have publicly acknowledged that they were homosexual, since homosexual relationships were illegal in most states. In New York, people were often fired from jobs or evicted from apartments if their sexual orientation became known; same-sex dancing or kissing was illegal, as was the wearing of clothing traditionally worn by the opposite gender. Because it was illegal for a bar to sell a drink to someone who was known to be gay, there were few legitimate places where gay men and lesbians could meet in an open manner. The police frequently raided and closed bars with gay clientele and harassed or entrapped gay men.

The 1960s were, of course, a period of tremendous social change in the United States. Sexual liberation, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the black civil rights movement, and the women's rights movement, all of which had many gay and lesbian participants, changed the character of American society. All of these trends influenced the drive for gay rights. In the 1950s, what were known as “homophile” activists and “homophile” groups merely sought to have their right to exist recognized.⁶ The two major homophile organizations of this period were the Mattachine

⁴ Paul Ramirez, reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner*, wrote in his article “The Night That Gave Birth to a Movement,” June 4, 1989: 6, that Stonewall “is now recognized as a gay Boston Tea Party of sorts.” Gay rights activist Renee Vera Cafiero noted in an interview with Fred Wasserman, March 9, 1994, that “Stonewall was a spark. It was Rosa Parks. Rosa Parks was not the beginning of the black civil rights movement but somehow she was unifying”; quoted in Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman, *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America* (NY: New York Public Library, 1998) 23.

⁵ Gay life in New York in the first four decades of the twentieth century is discussed in detail in George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* (NY: Basic Books, 1994); see also McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*.

⁶ For the political history of the gay rights struggle in the 1950s and 1960s and the homophile organizations, see

Society, established by five gay men in Los Angeles in 1950, with a New York branch organized in 1955, and the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), a women's group organized in San Francisco in 1955, with a New York branch established three years later. These groups had small, primarily urban memberships. Most members were middle-class white men and women who sought, through peaceful protest and political lobbying, to have the public and the government recognize the rights of homosexuals to live their lives in peace. These groups and similar smaller organizations sponsored conferences, published newsletters, and organized protests. The latter included the series of July 4th demonstrations held between 1965 and 1969 in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. At these protests, well-dressed men and women carried signs with such slogans as "Homosexuals ask for redress of grievances" and "Homosexuals are American citizens also." In New York, members of the Mattachine Society forced the State Liquor Authority to license gay bars. They also forced a change in the drinking code by staging a "sip-in," in which men went up to a bartender and stated that they were homosexuals and wanted a drink (in which case, it was illegal to serve them). These groups had very small membership rolls and did not galvanize younger gay men and lesbians or more radical members of the community. By 1969, the time was ripe for a more assertive form of activism. The events that took place on June 28th-July 3rd in the Stonewall Inn and on the nearby streets were the spark that led to the development of this new movement.

The Stonewall and Its Environs⁷

The building at 51-53 Christopher Street that housed the Stonewall Inn in 1969 was originally two separate two-story horse stables. No. 51 was erected in 1843 for A. Voorhis and No. 53 in 1846 for Mark Spencer, who owned a large estate nearby. In 1898, No. 51 was enlarged to three stories, but its third floor was removed in 1930 when the two buildings were combined into one structure. As part of the 1930s renovations, the facade was redesigned as well, featuring a brick-clad ground floor and stuccoed second story with small projecting iron flower-box holders. The newly redesigned building was used as a restaurant.⁸ By the 1950s, the establishment was known as the Stonewall Inn Restaurant. The restaurant closed in c1966 and the space was converted into the Stonewall Inn, a bar with a dance floor that was established to cater to gay men. As documented by Martin Duberman, the new inn, which opened in February 1967, was operated by the Mafia. As Duberman states, "In 1966 [the Stonewall] was taken over by three Mafia figures who had grown up together on Mulberry Street in Little Italy."⁹

John D'Emilio, "It Didn't Start With Stonewall," *Gay Community News* June 23, 1979: 20; John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1970* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983); and McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 139-157.

⁷ Information on the physical and social characteristics of the Stonewall Inn compiled from many sources, including *The Homosexual Handbook* (1969) 130-131; Craig Rodwell, "Mafia On the Spot," *Hymnal* February 1968; David C. Scott, "Autobiography," unpublished paper (1983); Tina Crosby, "The Stonewall Riot Remembered," unpublished paper (1974); interview with Dawn Hampton (coatroom attendant, c1994).

⁸ Information on the early history of the building from New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report*, vol. 1 (NY: LPC, 1969) 117.

⁹ Duberman, *Stonewall* 183-184.

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It was common for the Mafia to be involved with gay establishments. Since it was difficult to get a legitimate liquor license for a gay bar, organized crime figures either obtained illegal licenses or opened bars without licenses and paid off the police. Like others of its type, the Stonewall did not have a liquor license. Rather, it was considered to be a “private club,” since clubs did not have to be licensed by the State Liquor Authority. Because it was a club, all patrons were supposed to be members and no money was supposed to change hands for drinks. Since the sale of liquor was forbidden, there was never a cash register at the Stonewall, and all money was kept in cigar boxes. Even with payoffs, bars like the Stonewall could be extremely profitable. Martin Duberman reports that on Friday night profits could be \$5,000, while on Saturday the take could be \$6,500.¹⁰

Since the Stonewall was run as a club and not a typical bar, patrons had to knock and were checked by a doorman looking through a peephole. Admission might be denied to those who were unknown or who were not accompanied by a companion who could vouch for them, since there was constant fear of permitting entry to plainclothes police officers. Patrons, or club members, paid an admission fee of three or four dollars and were given tickets for two drinks. Patrons were also supposed to sign in before entering. (Not all customers used their given names - Elizabeth Taylor and Judy Garland were frequent visitors!)¹¹

Since even Mafia-run bars were subject to periodic police raids (although the bar owners were frequently notified in advance), most did not exist for long and little money was spent on decor. The Stonewall was typical. The interior was divided into two major spaces. Upon entering, patrons walked into a small vestibule, with an office to the left and a coat check straight ahead. To enter the main room, a patron turned right. This large, dimly lit room was furnished with a makeshift bar that ran along the east wall and a dance floor to the rear. A door from the main room led into a large space known as the “back room,” which was actually in the west section of the building. This room was an open space, used for dancing or socializing, with a small service bar at the rear. There was no decorative detail and the interior was painted entirely in black, including the windows, which were also covered with plywood. A description printed in *The Homosexual Handbook* in 1969, noted that “There’s a certain hastiness about the look of the place. It seems to have only recently been converted from a garage into a cabaret; in about eight hours and at a cost of under fifty dollars.”¹²

The Stonewall opened at a time when the center of gay life in Greenwich village was beginning to move west, from the Washington Square area and Greenwich Avenue, down Christopher Street. Thus, the Stonewall, on Christopher Street between Waverly Place and Seventh Avenue South, was in the heart of a new gay area. For several years, the Stonewall catered to a broad mix of young, mostly white patrons. (Patrons were not carded and it was not uncommon for those under eighteen, then the legal drinking age in New York State, to be admitted). A 1968 guide to New York City’s gay scene described the Stonewall as “one of the most active spots in town

¹⁰ Duberman, *Stonewall* 185.

¹¹ McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 4.

¹² *The Homosexual Handbook* (NY: Ophelia Press, 1969) 130.

currently. Very crowded on weekends.”¹³ By 1969 the patronage had changed, including a larger number of black and Puerto Rican men, as well as men in drag and street kids.¹⁴

Christopher Park, a favorite hangout for young, often homeless, gay street kids, is located immediately across Christopher Street from the Stonewall Inn. This small triangular piece of land is one of several odd parcels created by the fact that the streets in the western portion of Greenwich Village are not laid out on a grid plan. Christopher Park is created by the juncture of Christopher Street, Grove Street, and West 4th Street at Seventh Avenue South.

The street pattern in this neighborhood is significant because it is one of the elements that contributed to the events of late June and early July 1969 and helps to explain why this police raid sparked a riot while other raids did not. Christopher Street runs east-west between Sixth Avenue and Seventh Avenue South; however, this short stretch of the street is interrupted by several cross streets. One arm of Waverly Place runs to the north and Greenwich Avenue extends to the northwest; Grove Street runs southwest from Christopher Street from a point just east of the Stonewall Inn; another arm of Waverly Place extends southeast from the point where Christopher and Grove merge; and Gay Street extends south connecting Christopher Street and Waverly Place. Thus, there are many streets leading directly into and out of the site of the Stonewall Inn.

The Stonewall Uprising

The following description of the Stonewall uprising is drawn from extensive research materials. Essentially, however, documentation of these events rests primarily on numerous consistent eyewitness accounts, media reports and police records.¹⁵

¹³ *New York City Gay Scene Quarterly* 1 (Spring 1968).

¹⁴ McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 4; Duberman, *Stonewall* 188-190; Interview, Kevin B. with Michael Scherker, June 5, 1990.

¹⁵ Much of the specific information about events at Stonewall is taken from extensive research material collected by David Carter for his forthcoming book on the Stonewall uprising, to be published by St. Martin's Press. Primary sources for the events of June and July 1969 include Dennis Eskow, "3 Cops Hurt as Bar Raid Riles Crowd," *New York Daily News* June 29, 1969: 30; Dick Leitsch, "Gay Riots in the Village" *Mattachine Society of New York Newsletter* August 1969: 1-3; Dick Leitsch, "The Hairpin Drop Heard Around the World," *Mattachine Society of New York Newsletter* July 1969: 21-23; Dick Leitsch, "Police Raid on N.Y. Club Sets Off First Gay Riot," *Los Angeles Advocate* September 1969: 3, 11; Jay Levin, "The Gay Anger Behind the Riots," *New York Post* July 8, 1969: 3; "No Place for Gaity," *New York Post* July 27, 1969; "Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths," *New York Times* June 30, 1969; Steven A. Rosen, "Police Harassment of Homosexual Women and Men in New York City 1960-1980," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 12 (1980-1981) 159-190; Howard Smith, "Full Moon Over the Stonewall," *Village Voice* July 3, 1969: 1, 25; Lucian Truscott IV, "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square," *Village Voice* July 3, 1969: 1, 18; "Village Raid Stirs Melee," *New York Post* June 28, 1969. The best synopsis of events at Stonewall can be found in McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 3-23. See also D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* 231-233; Mark Thompson, ed., *Long Road to Freedom: The Advocate History of the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 17-29; John Loughery, *The Other Side of Silence: Men's Lives and Gay Identities: A Twentieth-Century History* (NY: Henry Holt & Co., 1998) 314-320; Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants* (NY: Stein and Day, 1971) 17-23.

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The Stonewall uprising began in the early hours of June 28, 1969, when the police raided the Stonewall Inn. Apparently, the raid was a surprise to the bar's owners, especially because it had been raided by the police only a few days before. There has been speculation that the June 28th raid, occurring so soon on the heels of a previous raid, took place because June 1969 was the beginning of a mayoral election campaign season and, traditionally, there had been crackdowns on gay and lesbian bars during campaigns. Dick Leitsch, then head of the New York Mattachine Society, noted at the time that "It's time for the local elections and, as usual at that time in the Village, homosexuals are being harassed on the streets by the cops, [and] the clubs are being raided."¹⁶ One Stonewall patron told the *New York Post* that "there's a feeling that it's just [Mayor] Lindsay trying to out law-and-order" the other two mayoral candidates.¹⁷ Others speculated that the raids on the Stonewall and other Greenwich Village gay bars on previous nights resulted from the appointment of a new police captain to Greenwich Village's Sixth Precinct. Among those who attributed the raid to the new police captain were future novelist Edmund White and activist Craig Rodwell, both of whom observed the events of Stonewall.¹⁸

The events of the Stonewall uprising began in the early morning hours of Saturday, June 28, 1969. At approximately 1:15 a.m., eight plainclothes police officers, six men and two women, led by police inspectors Smyth and Pine, raided the Stonewall Inn. Apparently, the raid occurred after an undercover detective had observed the illegal sale of alcohol and issued a warrant. Since the bar had been active for several years, the sale of liquor on the premises could not have been a surprise to anyone. As was typical of such raids, the police checked the identities of the approximately two hundred bar patrons. Those with identification were allowed to leave, one by one, while those without identification, as well as bar employees and those in drag (cross-dressing was illegal), were held. Generally, as patrons were released from a bar raid, they left the scene as rapidly as possible. However, this raid was different.

As the patrons of the Stonewall left, a large crowd gathered on Christopher Street outside of the bar. The crowd included those who had been released and street kids who were hanging out in Christopher Park.¹⁹ Reportedly, there were approximately four hundred young men in the crowd. The size of the crowd increased as Village residents, weekend visitors and tourists happened by the event. Dick Leitsch recalled that "The patrons gathered on the street outside, and were joined by other homosexuals and Village residents and visitors to the area."²⁰ The *New York Post* reported that people were shouting "Gay Power" and "We Want Freedom."²¹

¹⁶ Letter from Dick Leitsch to *Village Voice* July 10, 1969: 49.

¹⁷ Levin, "The Gay Anger Behind the Riots."

¹⁸ Letter from Edmund White to Ann and Alfred Corn, July 8, 1969; Craig Rodwell, "Get the Mafia and the Cops Out of Gay Bars," leaflet written c. June 28, 1969.

¹⁹ "Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths."

²⁰ Leitsch, "Hairpin Drop" 21.

²¹ "Village Raid Stirs Melee."

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Upon exiting, patrons were surprised to find a cheering crowd, and many struck campy poses as the crowd applauded. Thus, initially, the mood on Christopher Street outside the Stonewall was celebratory. This changed when one or more police paddy wagons arrived. When the police tried to escort those who were arrested into the van[s], the crowd began booing and yelling, crowding in on the arresting officers. The police log report written after the event noted that, while “attempting to leave premises with prisoners they [the police] were confronted by a large crowd who attempted to stop them from removing prisoners.”

As more people were escorted out of the bar, the crowd became angrier. People in the crowd started throwing pennies at the police, followed by beer cans and bottles and street paving blocks or bricks. As the officers’ anger increased, there were a number of conflicts between police and members of the crowd. Among those beaten and arrested was folk singer Dave Van Ronk, who, ironically, had been drinking at a straight bar down the street and had come out to see what was happening.²² The eight officers were forced back into the Stonewall (dragging Van Ronk along with them) and locked the door in order to keep the angry crowd out. Once the police had barricaded themselves inside the Stonewall inn, the intensity of the crowd's reaction increased. Bricks and bottles shattered the windows of the bar and a parking meter was uprooted and used as a battering ram to beat down the door. According to *Village Voice* reporter Howard Smith, who was locked in the bar with the police, the officers became increasingly uneasy.²³ Police Inspector Smyth told *Newsweek* that he “was still shaking an hour later...[and that he'd] never seen anything like it.”²⁴

After several tries, the door to the Stonewall was smashed open and additional objects were thrown into the bar. With the door open and the plywood panels forced off of the broken windows, the police who were trapped inside were afraid that the crowd would surge in. They opened a fire hose, but it sent out only a weak stream of water. Following this, police drew their guns. As Howard Smith recounted, “a kind of tribal adrenaline rush bolsters all of us; they [the police] take out and check pistols....They aim unwavering at the door.”²⁵ Meanwhile, a small fire erupted in the bar, as lighter fluid was sprayed in through the windows. Finally, at about 3:00 a.m., fire trucks and members of the police force's Tactical Patrol Force (TPF) arrived at the scene. The latter was a trained riot-control force, established to deal with anti-Vietnam War protests. These officers wore helmets and visors and were armed with billy clubs and other weapons. After several confrontations on the street, the crowd, by then numbering an estimated four hundred to one thousand people, began to disperse.

Ultimately, thirteen people were arrested on the morning of June 28, 1969, “on charges ranging from Van Ronk's felonious assault of a police officer to the [bar] owner's illegal sale and storage

²² Smith, “Full Moon Over the Stonewall” 25; Truscott, “Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square” 18; “Village Raid Stirs Melee.”

²³ Smith, “Full Moon Over the Stonewall” 24.

²⁴ “Policing the Third Sex,” *Newsweek* October 27, 1969.

²⁵ Smith, “Full Moon Over the Stonewall” 25.

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of alcoholic beverages without a license.”²⁶ The Stonewall itself had been seriously damaged. The windows and door had been destroyed; the jukebox, cigarette machine, telephone, and cash boxes looted; and mirrors, toilets, and other fixtures had been smashed.²⁷ The entire series of events, from the beginning of the raid until the TPF cleared the streets, lasted about two hours.

Despite the short duration of the event, it proved to be of enormous significance. News spread rapidly by word of mouth, radio and television reports, and a short article written in the Saturday edition of the *New York Post*.²⁸ On Saturday, repairs began on the Stonewall. The windows were boarded up and the boards became broadsides for protest messages, including. “Support Gay Power,” “Legalize Gay Bars,” “TO FIGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY THEY INVADED OUR RIGHTS,” and “GAY PROHIBITION CORUPT\$ [sic] COP\$ FEED\$ MAFIA.”²⁹ Fliers proclaiming “Gay Power” were also distributed throughout the Village later on Saturday.

On Saturday night, thousands of demonstrators gathered outside of the Stonewall to protest the events of the previous evening. One participant remembered that:

The amazing part of Stonewall is how many people started coming down there as word spread. People came from every borough, people who never came to the Village were there. And if you were there, you were part of it.³⁰

According to Dick Leitsch, who witnessed the events, the crowd was orderly at first, with people shouting slogans such as “Gay Power” and “Equality for Homosexuals,” and then later, “Christopher Street belongs to the queens!” and “Liberate Christopher Street.”³¹ Initially, the crowd was almost entirely gay men, but as weekend visitors to the Village arrived, they joined the crowd; this group included many heterosexuals. In what was a revolutionary statement for the time; gay men were seen being affectionate in public, holding hands and kissing. The Stonewall Inn reopened, serving only soft drinks, but the commercial aspects of the bar soon became peripheral to the protest activities taking place just outside.

As the crowd grew in the early hours of Sunday morning, June 29th, it filled up Christopher Street and Christopher Park. Leitsch reported that:

Christopher Street, from Greenwich to Seventh Avenues, had become an almost solid mass of people -- most of them gay. No traffic could pass, and even walking the few blocks on foot was next to impossible.³²

²⁶ Truscott, “Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square” 18.

²⁷ Smith, “Full Moon Over the Stonewall.”

²⁸ “Village Raid Stirs Melee.”

²⁹ “Police Again Rout ‘Village’ Youths”; photograph taken on June 29, 1969 by Fred McDarrah.

³⁰ Interview with Candice Boyer, quoted in McGarry and Wasserman 10 and David Deitcher, ed., *The Question of Equality: Lesbian and Gay Politics in America Since Stonewall* (NY: Scribner, 1995) 77.

³¹ Leitsch, “Hairpin Drop” 21.

³² Leitsch, “Hairpin Drop” 22.

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The crowd prevented an empty city bus from traveling down Christopher Street and blocked traffic so that only one car could drive through at a time. At about 2:15 a.m., squad cars with about one hundred police officers from several precincts converged on the site. With the arrival of the police, the tenor of the jovial crowd changed, and suddenly garbage cans and other debris started flying. The TDF was called in, arriving in city buses at the corner of Greenwich Avenue and Christopher Street. The TDF decided to clear the area, first rushing crowds that had overflowed from Christopher Street onto Greenwich Avenue. People on Greenwich Avenue were forced to move either west on West 10th Street or south onto Sixth Avenue; but, due to the irregular street pattern, they were able to double back up either arm of Waverly Place and onto Christopher Street. The TDF then pushed westward from Greenwich down Christopher Street, proceeding as far as Waverly Place. Again, people doubled back around on side streets, running down Waverly Place and Gay Street and reappearing on the east end of Christopher Street, behind the TDF phalanx. In one of the most famous protest moments, a group of gay men, including street youths, formed a taunting chorus line in front of the TDF police officers and began dancing and singing "We are the Stonewall girls, We wear our hair in curls..."³³ The TDF soon scattered the group. By about 4:00 a.m., the TDF had regained control of the street.

On Sunday night/Monday morning, June 29th-30th, the Stonewall was open again. Ironically, according to Dick Leitsch, "the citizenry was treated to the sight of the cops begging homosexuals to go inside the bar that they had chased everyone out of a few nights before."³⁴ People again returned to the streets, but in smaller numbers than on the previous evening. The next two nights, Monday June 30th and Tuesday July 1st, were quiet, apparently due to inclement weather. But on Wednesday night, July 2nd, and Thursday morning, July 3rd, protests erupted again, perhaps inspired by the front page coverage of the weekend's events in the *Village Voice*, which reached the news stands on Tuesday evening. The crowd of between five hundred and one thousand protestors gathered in front of the Stonewall, setting fires in nearby trash baskets. The TDF arrived and again scattered the crowd. After a protestor was beaten, a melee erupted. Eventually, the police dispersed the crowds, thus ending the Stonewall uprising.

The Impact and Importance of Stonewall

For some gay and lesbian Americans, the impact of the events at and near the Stonewall Inn was immediate. Craig Rodwell was already a prominent gay activist, having opened the Oscar Wilde Memorial Book Shop, the world's first gay and lesbian bookstore, in 1967. Rodwell watched the events of Saturday morning and prepared a flyer that was handed out later that day. He hailed the events as historic, stating prophetically that:

They will go down in history as the first time that thousands of Homosexual men and women went into the streets to protest the intolerable situation which has existed in New York City for many years.³⁵

³³ Quoted in McGarry and Wasserman 11 and elsewhere.

³⁴ Leitsch, "Hairpin Drop" 23.

³⁵ Craig Rodwell, "Get the Mafia and the Cops out of Gay Bars."

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Early Monday morning, after 1 a.m., gay Beat poet Allen Ginsberg visited the Stonewall and was moved to tell *Village Voice* reporter Lucian Truscott:

Gay power! Isn't that great! We're one of the largest minorities in the country -- 10 per cent, you know. It's about time we did something to assert ourselves.

Truscott went on to note that:

Ginsberg expressed a desire to visit the Stonewall...and ambled on down the street, flashing peace signs and helling the TPF. It was a relief and a kind of joy to see him on the street. He lent an extra umbrella of serenity to the scene with his laughter and quiet commentary on consciousness, "gay power: as a new movement, and the various implications of what had happened...."

After visiting the Stonewall Inn, Ginsberg described how things had changed in the last day: "The guys there were so beautiful -- they've lost that wounded look that fags all had 10 years ago."³⁶

Truscott noted that this was the first time that he had heard the crowd described as beautiful.

By July, Dick Leitsch, writing in the Mattachine Society's *Newsletter*, referred to Stonewall as "The Hairpin Drop Heard Around the World." ('Hairpin drop' was gay slang for dropping hints of one's homosexuality.)³⁷ The *New York Post* quoted one young man who saw that his life had changed: "All my life, the cops have sneered and pointed at me and my friends....Well, the 'gay riot' means we're not going to take it any more."³⁸ Joan Nestle, who became one of the leading historians of the movement and founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives (the first and largest lesbian archive), was in the crowd on Sunday morning, holding the hand of her girlfriend in the middle of the street, "feeling like the world, really, had been turned upside down." The Lesbian Herstory Archives was founded a little over four years after Stonewall and, according to Nestle, it owes "its creation to that night and the courage that found its voice in the streets." She also reflected that:

I don't think that I really took in, at that moment, what it all meant, that our relationship with the police would, from that day on, be a different kind of relationship. But I knew that, being a gay person, in some sense a big shift had happened.³⁹

³⁶ Truscott, "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square" 18; Ginsburg's comments also quoted in "Police Raid on N.Y. Club Sets Off First Gay Riot," *Los Angeles Advocate* September 1969: 1.

³⁷ Leitsch, "Hairpin Drop."

³⁸ Levin, "The Gay Anger Behind the Riots."

³⁹ Joan Nestle, in Kate Brandt, "It Wasn't Just One More Raid...Stories From '69," *Deneuve*, May/June, 1994: 20, and David Isay, "Remembering Stonewall," *Pacifica Radio*, 1989.

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Indeed, Nestle's view of the changed relationship of the gay and lesbian community with the police was also perceived by the police themselves. Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine, one of the officers involved in the uprising, later observed that "after the Stonewall incident things were completely changed...They [homosexuals] were not submissive any more."⁴⁰

Over the next months and years, others commented on the personal impact of the events at Stonewall. Activist Bob Kohler noted in 1970 that "I don't know if the Stonewall riots will ever be recorded in history books but I do know that my world -- my safe, snug, little world has not been the same since."⁴¹ Virginia Apuzzo, who would later become one of the leading figures in the gay and lesbian movement and a respected advisor to President Bill Clinton, heard about the uprising on the radio while she was in a convent. She recalled that Stonewall:

hit me like a bolt of lightning. It was as if I had an incredible release of my own outrage at having to sequester so much of my life....It was only a matter of weeks before I left the convent and started a new life.

Apuzzo noted further that "Stonewall meant I wasn't alone, I wasn't isolated."⁴² Henry Baird, then a soldier in Vietnam, recounts how he heard about Stonewall and what it meant:

In 1969, I was in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. I was having lunch in the army mess reading the *Armed Forces* news summary of the day, and there was a short paragraph describing a riot led by homosexuals in Greenwich Village against the police, and my heart was filled with joy. I thought about what I read frequently but had no one to discuss it with, and secretly within myself I decided that when I came back stateside, if I should survive to come back stateside, I would come out as a gay person, and I did.⁴³

Aside from the immediate impact on gay and lesbian activists in New York, Stonewall also had an immediate impact on young gay men and lesbians from all parts of society. Many of those who became involved in the gay rights movement had previously taken part in the anti-war movement, the movement for black civil rights, and the early days of the women's liberation movement. These gay men and lesbians were increasingly unwilling to live their lives in secret and were determined to gain their own civil rights. Evidence of the changes taking place in the gay and lesbian community occurred as early as July 4th, 1969, the day after the uprising ended. For several years previous, a small group of well-dressed protestors had marched in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4th. In 1969, the tenor of this demonstration (the last of its type) changed dramatically, as more demonstrators appeared, many of whom refused to dress in the conservative style that had been deemed appropriate. Lilli Vincenz recalled that:

⁴⁰ Seymour Pine, in Isay, "Remembering Stonewall" 23.

⁴¹ Bob Kohler, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," *Come Out!* January 10, 1974: 14, quoted in McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 22.

⁴² Isay, "Remembering Stonewall," and interview with Fred Wasserman, April 1994, in McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible* 22.

⁴³ Ibid. 23.

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Normally a small, conservatively dressed and rather sedate group, the marchers - about twice the usual number - now were boisterous, wearing jeans and T-shirts and brimming with excitement about the previous week's events. It was clear that things were changing. People who had felt oppressed now felt empowered. They were ready to insist on their rights rather than just ask for them.⁴⁴

In New York, on July 27, 1969, several weeks after the events at Stonewall, a group of activists staged the first gay and lesbian march, proceeding from Washington Square Park to the Stonewall. By the end of July, activists had established a new organization, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF).⁴⁵ The GLF was, as John D'Emilio has written, "a self-proclaimed revolutionary organization in the style of the New Left."⁴⁶ The group sought to ally itself with other radical groups, such as the Black Panthers, in order to change American society. Within a few months, less revolutionary members left the GLF to establish the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), a group dedicated specifically to seeking gay rights.⁴⁷ Information about the Stonewall spread throughout the country and "within a year gay liberation groups had sprung into existence on college campuses and in cities around the nation."⁴⁸ Franklin Kameny, a major figure in the pre-Stonewall generation of gay activists, reported that:

By the time of Stonewall, we had fifty to sixty gay groups in the country. A year later there was at least 1,500. By two years later, to the extent that a count could be made, it was 2,500. And *that* was the impact of Stonewall.⁴⁹

On the first anniversary of Stonewall, the magazine *Gay* asked:

Where do you send the congratulatory telegram, the Happy Birthday greeting in commemoration of a year of astounding and unprecedented progress toward equality under the law and universal dignity for homosexuals in America?⁵⁰

The question was answered in the anniversary celebrations that took place in New York and in other cities. The Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee sponsored Gay Pride Week events and a Gay Pride March. The New York march was the result of a decision made by a group of homophile organizations meeting in Philadelphia in November 1969. These groups resolved that:

⁴⁴ Kimberly Scott, "Stonewall's Aftermath Spurred D.C. Successes," *Washington Blade* May 25, 1994.

⁴⁵ Fred and Timothy McDarrah, *Gay Pride* 9.

⁴⁶ D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* 233.

⁴⁷ For the GLF and the GAA, see Loughery, *The Other Side of Silence* 323-333, and Toby Marotta, *The Politics of Homosexuality* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981).

⁴⁸ D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* 233.

⁴⁹ Isay, "Remembering Stonewall."

⁵⁰ Teal, *The Gay Militants* 321.

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A demonstration be held annually on the last Saturday in June in New York City to commemorate the 1969 spontaneous demonstration on Christopher Street and that this demonstration be called CHRISTOPHER STREET LIBERATION DAY....[H]omophile organizations across the nation [should] be urged to hold parallel demonstrations on the same day.⁵¹

It was clear to the homophile movement leaders that conditions in the gay and lesbian community had changed dramatically and that the Independence Hall demonstrations were no longer appropriate. The *Village Voice* reported that the events, including workshops, dances, art shows, conferences, and a culminating “mass march” were “in celebration of the out-front resistance that grew out of the police raid on the Stonewall Inn one year ago.”⁵² The tone of this *Voice* article was also significant, since it reflected the impact of picketing at the newspaper's offices protesting the homophobic attitude of much of its reporting on gay and lesbian issues. The first Gay Pride March attracted several thousand people who walked from the site of the Stonewall uprising to Central Park. Similar marches were held on the same weekend in Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, where the marches were called Christopher Street West, a specific reference to the Stonewall.

On the second anniversary of Stonewall, the commemorative marches had increased in size and spread to other cities. Craig Rodwell estimated that in New York alone ten thousand people marched in observance of Christopher Street Liberation Day, with similar marches not only in California and Chicago, but also in Boston, London, Paris, and Stockholm, and smaller events (referred to as “Gay-Ins”) in other cities. The purpose of these events, according to Rodwell, was “to commemorate and reaffirm the new spirit of pride and determination among Gay people which emerged after the now historic ‘Christopher Street/Stonewall Riots.’”⁵³

In 1972, only three years after the actual events at Stonewall, Milton Lounsberry, executive director of New York's Church of the Blessed Disciple, commented that “in the eyes and hearts of many gay activists, that once relatively insignificant gay bar has become a sacred symbol of all they live and breathe for.”⁵⁴ Kay Tobin, a founder of the Daughters of Bilitis, wrote that same year about how influential Stonewall had already been:

Up to 1969, this movement was generally called the homosexual or homophile movement, and these terms are still frequently used. After a dramatic event in 1969, younger activists began calling it the gay or gay liberation

⁵¹ In *The Gay Militants* 300. Donn Teal notes that the resolution to hold a march in New York was made by Craig Rodwell, representing the Homophile Youth Movement, and Ellen Broidy of NYU's Student Homophile League. Although the resolution called for a march on the last Saturday in June, marches have actually been held on the last Sunday of the month.

⁵² "A Week of Gay Pride," *Village Voice* June 25, 1970.

⁵³ Craig Rodwell, "Gay and Free" *QQ Magazine*, November/December 1971: 22.

⁵⁴ Milton Lounsberry, "Remembering the Stonewall," *The Advocate* July 5, 1972: 2.

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movement....What was the dramatic event? ...in June 1969, New York police raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar on Greenwich Village's Christopher Street that was popular with male homosexuals. The bar's clientele took umbrage, and for the first time in history homosexuals fought back. The police were stunned....Word spread of the spontaneous rebellion and immediately the movement acquired a grass-roots appeal and began to burgeon. Many new activists consider the Stonewall uprising the birth of the gay liberation movement. Certainly it was the birth of gay pride on a massive scale.⁵⁵

Morty Manford, an early activist at the GAA, wrote:

The spirit of the Stonewall resulted concretely in the birth of the Gay Liberation Movement. The time was right. Prior to the Christopher Street riot there were perhaps 20 organizations in the United States. In the two years following the riot about 600 new groups formed.⁵⁶

Alan Young, co-author of a compilation of material on the growth of the gay liberation movement, also written in 1972, commented that:

On a June evening in 1969 police began what seemed like a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, Greenwich Village's most popular gay men's bar. The raid didn't go off as planned. We fought back. The gay liberation movement was born.⁵⁷

One year later, in 1973, the Gay Activists Alliance voted to seek landmark designation for the Stonewall Inn, which, by then, had gone out of business.⁵⁸ By the tenth anniversary of Stonewall, in 1979, commemorative marches had become an annual event in New York and in many other cities and towns in the United States and abroad. New York City declared June to be Lesbian and Gay Pride and History Month, a designation that has been repeated in New York and in other locations every year since. New York City announced that a sculpture by George Segal, entitled *Gay Liberation*, would be installed in Christopher Park. (The work, showing two women sitting on a bench and a pair of men standing nearby, was not actually installed until 1992.)⁵⁹ The tenth anniversary of Stonewall was also celebrated with the first national march on Washington for lesbian and gay rights, attended by several hundred thousand people; this was the largest march that had ever taken place in Washington up to that time.

⁵⁵ Kay Tobin, *The Gay Crusaders* (NY: Paperback Library, 1972) 8-9.

⁵⁶ Morty Manford, "A Comparative Study of Gay Liberationists and Columbia Homosexuals, unpublished paper, 1972.

⁵⁷ Carla Jay and Alan Young, eds. *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation* (NY: Douglas, 1972) 6.

⁵⁸ "Stonewall 'Historic'?" *The Advocate* August 15, 1973.

⁵⁹ The story of the Segal sculpture and the arguments over its installation are detailed in James M. Saslow, "A Sculpture Without a Country," *Christopher Street* February 1981: 23-32. See also Carol Vogel, "Art Market: George Segal Sculpture," *New York Times* June 19, 1992: sec. C, 16.

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In 1989, in recognition of the twentieth anniversary of Stonewall, New York's City Council voted to rename the portion of Christopher Street in front of the Stonewall as Stonewall Place, and Mayor Ed Koch participated in the formal ceremony on April 19, 1979.⁶⁰ Street signs were changed as part of this official city recognition of the significance of the events of June and July 1969. The U.S. Post Office also recognized the significance of Stonewall and offered a special stamp cancellation on Sunday June 25th, during the annual Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade; this was the first stamp cancellation for a specific lesbian and gay event. In recognition of the tenth anniversary, New York City's Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center commissioned several significant art installations, including a mural by Keith Haring.

The importance of the Stonewall events was summarized from the perspective of 1989 by Mattachine Society founder Harry Hay and by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Hay, who came to New York for the twentieth anniversary celebration, spoke of the "magnificent Stonewall Rebellion [which] erupted here in New York City...revealing in a flash our next new concept...gay - as a socially viable collective identity." In a lengthy article on the "gay revolution" in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the author stated:

The riot that ensued on the cobblestone streets of Greenwich Village started a revolution, forever changing the way most Americans view homosexuals and homosexuality....On that night, the gay liberation movement was born.⁶¹

On June 22-24, 1990, the Empire State Building was lit up for the first time in lavender light (lavender is the color associated with the lesbian and gay movement) in recognition of the importance of Stonewall; the commemorative lavender lighting has been repeated every year since then.

The commemorative events that celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall in 1994 were the most significant. A decision had been made by the Association of Lesbian/Gay Pride Coordinators, a group composed of those who organize lesbian and gay pride events throughout the country, that in 1994 all local gay pride celebrations should be scheduled so as not to conflict with a major march that would occur in New York. Thus, on the last Sunday in June, 1994, an enormous march took place in New York, with a route that took marchers in front of the United Nations and then into Central Park.⁶² Organizers of the march estimated that the crowd was 1.1 million people. There was also an alternative march, led by Mattachine founder Harry Hay and a group of Stonewall veterans, that began at the Stonewall Inn site and proceeded up Fifth Avenue. In addition to these marches, many other events commemorated "Stonewall 25," a selection of which are noted here.

⁶⁰ William Murphy, "'Stonewall Place' To Honor Gay Uprising 20 Years Ago," *New York Newsday* April 13, 1989: 29; "Koch Designates 'Stonewall Place,'" *New York Native* May 1, 1989: p.9.

⁶¹ Harry Hay, "The Gift to Be Gay: Remarks for the Stonewall Rebellion's 20th Anniversary," *New York Native* July 10, 1989: 18-19, and Mark Z. Barabak, "How a Bar Riot in N.Y. Began the Gay Revolution," *San Francisco Chronicle* March 13, 1989: sec. A, 1.

⁶² "Gay Marchers Press Ahead in 25-Year Battle," *New York Times* June 27, 1994: sec. A,1.

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-- New York was host to the Gay Games IV, an international sporting event that brought lesbian and gay athletes from all over the world to New York, with events held throughout the city, at sites that included Yankee Stadium.

--A cultural festival was held in conjunction with Gay Games IV.

--In recognition of the importance of Stonewall, the New York Public Library organized *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall*, an exhibition exploring New York's lesbian and gay communities; this was the first exhibition on the subject of gay and lesbian history ever held at a major American cultural institution.

--The New York Public Library's Performing Arts Division held two related exhibitions: the Theater Collection's *Out In Public: Post-Stonewall Performance and Protest* and the Dance Collection's *After Stonewall*.

--The Queens Public Library also put together a Stonewall exhibition, entitled *Remembering Stonewall*.

--Columbia University's Butler Library sponsored an exhibition entitled *Stonewall and Beyond: Lesbian and Gay Culture*, which the university described as a celebration of the "astonishing flowering of gay culture that has changed this country and beyond, forever."

--The Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center sponsored an exhibition entitled *Windows on Gay Life*, with installations on lesbian and gay history installed in shop windows along Christopher and nearby streets.

--OLGAD, the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Architects and Designers, held a symposium, "Design Pride '94: The First International Design Conference for Lesbian & Gay Architects and Designers," and organized a major exhibition in conjunction with DIFFA, the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, entitled *Design Legacies: A Tribute to Architects and Designers Who Have Died of AIDS*; OLGAD also published *A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks*.⁶³

--The Storefront for Art and Architecture sponsored a project called *Queer Spaces* by Repo History, an artists' collective that specializes in public art projects; this was a plaque program that analyzed and commemorated important sites in local gay history.

--En Garde Arts, a group that does site-specific theater, produced Tina Landau's *Stonewall, Night Variations*.

⁶³ See *Design Legacies: A Tribute to Architects and Designers Who Have Died of AIDS* (1994), exhibition catalogue, and *A Guide to Lesbian & Gay New York Historical Landmarks* (1994), map and guide. For an analysis of gay and lesbian design issues, see Herbert Muschamp, "Designing a Framework for Diversity," *New York Times* June 19, 1994: sec. 2,34.

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--Other theater events commemorating Stonewall 25, were Sir Ian McKellen's one-man show, *The Knight Out; Outrageous Comedy 1994*, hosted by Sandra Bernhard; and Charles Busch's *Dressing Up!*, with Busch, Charles Nelson Reilly, and a guest appearance by Milton Berle.

--The twenty-fifth anniversary was also celebrated by the U.S. Post Office, which issued commemorative cancellations for Stonewall and for Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival.

It has been said of the impact of Stonewall, that:

Prior to that summer there was little public expression of the lives and experiences of gays and lesbians. The Stonewall Riots marked the beginning of the gay liberation movement that has transformed the oppression of gays and lesbians into calls for pride and action. In the past twenty-five years we have all been witness to an astonishing flowering of gay culture that has changed this country and beyond, forever.⁶⁴

That culture has manifested itself in an increasingly large body of art, including fine arts, poetry, photography, theater, music, dance, film, history, and literature. While there have been, of course, countless significant American gay and lesbian artists, writers, etc., over the course of this nation's history, these individuals did not always have the societal freedom to be open about their personal experiences or to embrace openly gay and lesbian themes in their work. One of the most important and enduring effects of Stonewall, however, has been that gay and lesbian artists have been freed to explore their personal narratives and to create gay and lesbian themes, whether intended solely for a lesbian and/or gay audience, or for a wider public.⁶⁵

The recognition of Stonewall's significance is quite far ranging. The word "Stonewall" has become synonymous with gay rights and with the lesbian and gay community. Many organizations, institutions, and commercial enterprises have been named for Stonewall or Christopher Street. In New York City, for example, there is a Stonewall Democratic Club (a gay political organization), a Stonewall Community Foundation (a grant-making organization), a Stonewall Chorale (a singing group), and a Stonewall Business Association (a business support group). The significance of Stonewall has been recognized nationally and internationally. Cities and towns across America celebrate Gay Pride Day annually on the last Sunday in June in recognition of Stonewall, and similar events take place at about this time in London, Vienna and Berlin (both referred to as Christopher Street Day), Rome, Stockholm, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and elsewhere. Sydney, Australia held its first Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on June 24, 1978, but because June is winter in Australia, the date has since been changed. A few examples of organizations outside of New York City that use the Stonewall name are the National Stonewall Democratic Federation, a national gay and lesbian democratic political club; the Utah Stonewall Center, a statewide community support group; Stonewall Columbus, Ohio's oldest and largest gay rights advocacy organization; Stonewall Youth, Olympia, Washington, a support group for gay and lesbian youth; the Stonewall Immigration Group, a United Kingdom organization that

⁶⁴ Synopsis of Butler Library exhibit *Stonewall and Beyond: Lesbian and Gay Culture*.

⁶⁵ General works on lesbian and gay culture include Richard Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (NY: Routledge, 1990); John M. Klum, *Acting Gay: Homosexuality in Modern Drama* (NY: Columbia UP, 1994); Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet* (NY: Harper & Row, 1987).

deals with lesbian and gay immigration problems; and Stonewall, the professional lobbying group working for lesbian and gay equality in the United Kingdom.

The importance of Stonewall has been widely discussed in the scholarly and popular press. These books have been published by major presses, including the Stonewall Inn Editions imprint of St. Martin's Press. Most widely recognized is Martin Duberman's *Stonewall*, which tells the story of the events of Stonewall by focusing on the experiences of six individuals. The first line of the book states the significance of Stonewall clearly and succinctly: "'Stonewall' is the emblematic event in modern lesbian and gay history." Duberman continues:

"Stonewall" has become synonymous over the years with gay resistance to oppression. Today the word resonates with images of insurgency and self-realization and occupies a central place in the iconography of lesbian and gay awareness. The 1969 riots are now generally taken to mark the birth of the modern gay and lesbian political movement - that moment in time when gays and lesbians recognized all at once their mistreatment and their solidarity. As such, "Stonewall" has become an empowering symbol of global proportions.⁶⁶

Professor George Chauncey of the University of Chicago, who has studied pre-Stonewall gay life, has acknowledged that Stonewall "launched the modern lesbian and gay liberation movement, an event now commemorated every June throughout the Western world by gay pride marches drawing hundreds of thousand of participants."⁶⁷ John D'Emilio, professor of history and director of graduate studies in history at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, who has also studied pre-Stonewall gay life, wrote in 1979 that:

The Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village in June 1969 are a milestone in gay history and are rightly celebrated each year by lesbians and gay men throughout the United States. The riots initiated the gay liberation phase of the struggle of gay women and men for freedom.⁶⁸

In 1983, in his book *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, D'Emilio discussed how "the Stonewall riot was able to spark a nationwide grassroots 'liberation' effort among gay men and women."⁶⁹ Similarly, in his pioneering gay history of America, *Gay American History*, published in 1976, Jonathan Katz writes that "the Stonewall Rebellion of June 1969, when Lesbians and Gay men actively fought police harassment...mark[s] the birth of the recent Gay liberation movement."⁷⁰ In *The Gay Metropolis 1940-1996*, author Charles Kaiser suggests that:

⁶⁶ Duberman, *Stonewall* xv.

⁶⁷ George Chauncey, "Long-Haired Men and Short-Haired Women: Building a Gay World in the Heart of Bohemia," in Rick Beard and Leslie Cohen Berlowitz, eds., *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counter Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1993) 151.

⁶⁸ D'Emilio, "It Didn't Start With Stonewall," *Gay Community News* June 23, 1979: 20.

⁶⁹ D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* 233.

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No other civil rights movement in America ever had such an improbable unveiling....This 1960s version of the Boston Tea Party would do more than any other event to transform gay life in America.⁷¹

In her introduction to *Gay Pride*, Fred W. and Timothy S. McDarrah's photographic history of the gay and lesbian movement, Jill Johnston, an author, journalist, and lesbian theoretician, strongly states the importance of Stonewall:

The uprising of lesbians and gay men in late June-early July 1969 on the streets outside the Stonewall bar in Greenwich Village marks a great watershed moment in both cultural history and the lives of many citizens....It was the event that catalyzed the modern gay and lesbian political movement. It changed the way thousands, ultimately millions, of men and women thought of themselves. It designated the beginning of the possibility of integrated lives for those who had lived divided against themselves – split between who they really were and what they knew they were supposed to be....It represents the birth of an identity unprecedented in society.⁷²

The site of the Stonewall has become a tourist site, visited by many gay and lesbian visitors to New York City, as well as others seeking the roots of the modern lesbian and gay movement. Several guide books include a discussion of Stonewall, including Paula Martinac's *The Queerest Places: A National Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites*, which notes that:

The term “Stonewall” has become the international symbol of gay resistance and liberation, and the anniversary of the riots is an annual celebration around the world. Gay history is now commonly marked as being before and after Stonewall.⁷³

The Stonewall is the first entry in Daniel Hurewitz's *Stepping Out: Nine Tours Through New York City's Gay and Lesbian Past*; Hurewitz equates the Stonewall with such legendary European landmarks as the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Big Ben in London.⁷⁴ Historian Joyce Gold includes the Stonewall in her *From Trout Stream to Bohemia: A Walking Guide to Greenwich Village History*, where she notes that “this incident is considered the official beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement.”⁷⁵ The Stonewall is also cited in popular tourist guidebooks, such as

⁷⁰ Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History* (NY: Crowell, 1976) 337.

⁷¹ Charles Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis 1940-1996* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1997) 205.

⁷² Jill Johnston, “Firestorm on Christopher Street,” in Fred McDarrah and Timothy S. McDarrah, *Gay Pride: Photographs from Stonewall to Today* (NY: A Capella Books, 1994) ix.

⁷³ Paula Martinac, *The Queerest Places: A National Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites* (NY: Henry Holt, 1997) 120.

⁷⁴ Daniel Hurewitz, *Stepping Out: Nine Tours Through New York City's Gay and Lesbian Past*. (NY: Henry Holt, 1997) 4-8.

⁷⁵ Joyce Gold, *From Trout Stream to Bohemia: A Walking Guide to Greenwich Village* (NY: Old Warren Road

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the *New York Handbook*, which discusses the events at Stonewall and George Segal's commemorative sculpture and *Inside New York 1999*, which refers to Stonewall as “the climactic event that launched the gay rights movement in the United States.”⁷⁶ The New York City Parks Department has sponsored a video guided tour of Greenwich Village that features the Stonewall in a section narrated by Harvey Fierstein. The most recent edition of the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission's *Guide to New York City Landmarks* includes an entry on the Stonewall Inn in its discussion of the Greenwich Village Historic District:

At about 1:00 A.M. on June 28, 1969, the gay bar known as the Stonewall Inn was raided by the police, setting off events that resulted in the birth of the modern gay and lesbian rights movement. Although the raid itself was not an unusual event, the fact that bar patrons fought back, forcing the police to retreat, galvanized the community. The anniversary of the riot is celebrated annually around the world with parades and other gay pride events.⁷⁷

The place where the significant events of the Stonewall uprising took place, including the building on Christopher Street that housed the Stonewall Inn, Christopher Park, and adjacent streets, is a significant site in the history of America, generally accepted as the location of the events that inaugurated the modern lesbian and gay rights movement. These were events that changed American history and they continue to resonate in the struggle to bring equality to all Americans.

Press, 1988) 82.

⁷⁶ Christine Bird, *New York Handbook* (Chico, California: Moon Publications, 1997) 135, and *Inside New York 1999* (NY: Inside New York, 1999) 30. Other general guidebooks that discuss Stonewall include Carol von Pressentin Wright, *Blue Guide to New York* (London: A. & C. Black, 1991); Rachel Abi Farbiarz, ed., *Let's Go New York City* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Robert Heide and John Gilman, *Greenwich Village* (NY: St. Martin's Griffen, 1995); *Knopf Guides New York* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994); Francois Remillard, *New York City: A Ulysses Travel Publication* (Old Saybrook: Globe Pequot Press, 1998); Kate Sekules, *Citypack New York City: The Ultimate Key to the City* (NY: Fodor's, 1997); *Time Out Guide New York* (NY: Penguin Books, 1998); Martha E. Zenfell, ed., *Insight Guides New York City* (Singapore: APA Publications, 1998).

⁷⁷ Andrew S. Dolkart, *Guide to New York City Landmarks* (NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1997) 42.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Listed in the National Register.

Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

Designated a National Historic Landmark.

Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	18	584404	4509563
2.	18	584452	4509462
3.	18	584398	4509364
4.	18	584244	4509455
5.	18	584286	4509538

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nomination boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale. The boundary includes the building at 51-53 Christopher Street, Christopher Park and portions of surrounding streets and sidewalks, as delineated on the map. Except for the building noted above, the boundary excludes all buildings adjacent to the nominated area.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary was drawn to include the documented locations of the series of events that occurred between June 28, 1969 and July 3, 1969. These events, collectively known as Stonewall, took place in the Stonewall Inn, in Christopher Park, and on portions of immediately adjacent public spaces, including streets and sidewalks on Christopher Street, Grove Street, Waverly Place, Gay Street, Greenwich Avenue, Sixth Avenue and West 10th Street. The boundary was established based on extensive documentation of the significant events obtained from eyewitness accounts, media reports and police records. A complete description of the significant events and their locations within the nominated area is provided in the significance statement. The boundary encompasses the full extent of the area in which the significant events occurred.

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