Coordinates: 40.7338°N 74.0021°W

Stonewall riots

The **Stonewall riots** (also referred to as the **Stonewall uprising** or the **Stonewall rebellion**) were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay (LGBT) community[note 1] against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City. They are widely considered to constitute the most important event leading to the gay liberation movement[1][2][3][4] and the modern fight for LGBT rights in the United States.[5][6]

Gay Americans in the 1950s and 1960s faced an anti-gay legal system.[note 2][7] Early homophile groups in the U.S. sought to prove that gay people could be assimilated into society, and they favored non-confrontational education for homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. The last years of the 1960s, however, were very contentious, as many social/political movements were active, including the civil rights movement, the counterculture of the 1960s, and the anti-Vietnam War movement. These influences, along with the liberal environment of Greenwich Village, served as catalysts for the Stonewall riots.

Very few establishments welcomed openly gay people in the 1950s and 1960s. Those that did were often bars, although bar owners and managers were rarely gay. At the time, the Stonewall Inn was owned by the Mafia.[8][9][10] It catered to an assortment of patrons and was known to be popular among the poorest and most marginalized nonheterosexuals: drag queens, transgender people, effeminate young men, butch gay women, male prostitutes, and homeless youth. Police raids on gay bars were routine in the 1960s, but officers quickly lost control of the situation at the Stonewall Inn. Tensions between New York City police and gay residents of Greenwich Village erupted into more protests the next evening, and again several nights later. Within weeks, Village residents quickly organized into activist groups to concentrate efforts on establishing places for gays to be open about their sexual orientation without fear of being arrested.

After the Stonewall riots, gays in New York City faced sex, race, class, and generational obstacles to becoming a cohesive community. Within six months, two gay activist

Stonewall riots

The Stonewall Inn, taken September 1969. The sign in the window reads: "We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the Village.— Mattachine."

Date	June 28–29, 1969
Location	Stonewall Inn 40°44′01.67″N 74°00′07.56″W
Goals	Gay liberation and LGBT rights in the United States
Methods	Riot, street protests
Parties to the civil conflict	
New York Police Department Tactical Patrol Force Fourth, fifth, sixth, and ninth Precincts	Stonewall Inn patrons
Number	

organizations were formed in New York, concentrating on confrontational tactics, and three newspapers were established to promote rights for gays. Within a few years, gay rights organizations were founded across the U.S. and the world. On June 28, 1970, the first gay pride marches took place in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco,[11] and Chicago commemorating the anniversary of the riots. Similar marches were organized in other cities. Today, LGBT Pride events are held annually throughout the world toward the end of June to mark the Stonewall riots.[12] The Stonewall National Monument was established at the site in 2016.[13]

Day 1: 10 NYPD officers (inside the Inn) **Day 2**: Multiple NYPD Precincts	**Day 1**: 500 – 600 supporters outside the Inn **Day 2**: ~1000 supporters inside and outside the Inn

As of 2017, plans were advancing by the State of New York to host the largest international LGBT pride celebration in 2019, known as Stonewall 50 – WorldPride NYC 2019, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.[14] In New York City, the events produced by Heritage of Pride will be enhanced through a partnership made with the I ❤ NY program's LGBT division and will include a welcome center during the weeks surrounding the events. Additional commemorative arts, cultural, and educational programming to mark the 50th anniversary of the rebellion at the Stonewall Inn will be taking place throughout the city and the world; it is believed that 2019 will be the largest international LGBT pride celebration held in history.[14] In addition to events requiring paid admission, a march open to the public is scheduled for June 30, 2019.[15] During the anniversary, the NYPD apologized for the 1969 Stonewall raid.

Contents

Background

Homosexuality in 20th-century United States

Following the social upheaval of World War II, many people in the United States felt a fervent desire to "restore the prewar social order and hold off the forces of change", according to historian Barry Adam.[16] Spurred by the national emphasis on anti-communism, Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted hearings searching for communists in the U.S. government, the U.S. Army, and other government-funded agencies and institutions, leading to a national paranoia. Anarchists, communists, and other people deemed un-American and subversive were considered security risks. Homosexuals were included in this list by the U.S. State Department on the theory that they were susceptible to blackmail. In 1950, a Senate investigation chaired by Clyde R. Hoey noted in a report, "It is generally believed that those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons",[17] and said all of the government's intelligence agencies "are in complete agreement that sex perverts in Government constitute security risks".[18] Between 1947 and 1950, 1,700 federal job applications were denied, 4,380 people were discharged from the military, and 420 were fired from their government jobs for being suspected homosexuals.[19]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and police departments kept lists of known homosexuals, their favored establishments, and friends; the U.S. Post Office kept track of addresses where material pertaining to homosexuality was mailed.[20] State and local governments followed suit: bars catering to homosexuals were shut down, and their customers were arrested and exposed in newspapers. Cities performed "sweeps" to rid neighborhoods, parks, bars, and beaches of gay people. They outlawed the wearing of opposite gender clothes, and universities expelled instructors suspected of being homosexual.[21]

In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (*D.S.M.*) as a mental disorder. A large-scale study of homosexuality in 1962 was used to justify inclusion of the disorder as a supposed pathological hidden fear of the opposite sex caused by traumatic parent–child relationships. This view was widely influential in the medical profession.[22] In 1956, however, the psychologist Evelyn Hooker performed a study that compared the happiness and well-adjusted nature of self-identified homosexual men with heterosexual men and found no difference.[23] Her study stunned the medical community and made her a heroine to many homosexuals,[24] but homosexuality remained in the *D.S.M.* until 1974.[25]

Homophile activism

In response to this trend, two organizations formed independently of each other to advance the cause of homosexuals and provide social opportunities where gays could socialize without fear of being arrested. Los Angeles area homosexuals created the Mattachine Society in 1950, in the home of communist activist Harry Hay.[26] Their objectives were to unify homosexuals, educate them, provide leadership, and assist "sexual deviants" with legal troubles.[27] Facing enormous opposition to their radical approach, in 1953 the Mattachine shifted their focus to assimilation and respectability. They reasoned that they would change more minds about homosexuality by proving that gays were normal people, no different from heterosexuals.[28][29] Soon after, several women in San Francisco met in their living rooms to form the Daughters of Bilitis (D.O.B.) for gay women.[30] Although the eight women who created the D.O.B. initially came together to be able to have a safe place to dance, as the DOB grew they developed similar goals to the Mattachine, and urged their members to assimilate into general society.[31]

One of the first challenges to government repression came in 1953. An organization named ONE, Inc. published a magazine called *ONE*. The U.S. Postal Service refused to mail its August issue, which concerned homosexuals in heterosexual marriages, on the grounds that the material was obscene despite it being covered in brown paper wrapping. The case eventually went to the Supreme Court, which in 1958 ruled that ONE, Inc. could mail its materials through the Postal Service.[32]

Homophile organizations—as homosexual groups self-identified in this era—grew in number and spread to the East Coast. Gradually, members of these organizations grew bolder. Frank Kameny founded the Mattachine of Washington, D.C. He had been fired from the U.S. Army Map Service for being a homosexual, and sued unsuccessfully to be reinstated. Kameny wrote that homosexuals were no different from heterosexuals, often aiming his efforts at mental health professionals, some of whom attended Mattachine and DOB meetings telling members they were abnormal.[33]

In 1965, news on Cuban prison work camps for homosexuals inspired Mattachine New York and D.C. to organize protests at the United Nations and the White House. Similar demonstrations were then held also at other government buildings. The purpose was to protest the treatment of gays in Cuba[34][35] and U.S. employment discrimination. These pickets shocked many gay people, and upset some of the leadership of Mattachine and the DOB.[36][37] At the same time, demonstrations in the civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam War all grew in prominence, frequency, and severity throughout the 1960s, as did their confrontations with police forces.[38]

Compton's Cafeteria riot

On the outer fringes of the few small gay communities were people who challenged gender expectations. They were effeminate men and masculine women, or people assigned male at birth who dressed and lived as women and people assigned female at birth who dressed and lived as men, respectively, either part or full-time. Contemporary nomenclature classified them as transvestites, and they were the most visible representatives of sexual minorities. They belied the carefully crafted image portrayed by the Mattachine Society and DOB that asserted homosexuals were respectable, normal people.[39] The Mattachine and DOB considered the trials of being arrested for wearing clothing of the opposite gender as a parallel to the struggles of homophile organizations: similar but distinctly separate. Gay and transgender people staged a small riot at the Cooper Do-nuts cafe in Los Angeles in 1959 in response to police harassment.[40]

In a larger event in 1966 in San Francisco, drag queens, hustlers, and transvestites were sitting in Compton's Cafeteria when the police arrived to arrest men dressed as women. A riot ensued, with the patrons of the cafeteria slinging cups, plates, and saucers, and breaking the plexiglass windows in the front of the restaurant, and returning several days later to smash the windows again after they were replaced.[41] Professor Susan Stryker classifies the Compton's Cafeteria riot as an "act of anti-transgender discrimination, rather than an act of discrimination against sexual orientation" and connects the uprising to the issues of gender, race, and class that were being downplayed by homophile organizations.[39] It marked the beginning of transgender activism in San Francisco.[41]

Greenwich Village

The Manhattan neighborhoods of Greenwich Village and Harlem were home to a sizable homosexual population after World War I, when men and women and those in between who had served in the military took advantage of the opportunity to settle in larger cities. The enclaves of homosexuals, described by a newspaper story as "short-haired women and long-haired men", developed a distinct subculture through the following two decades.[42] Prohibition inadvertently benefited gay establishments, as drinking alcohol was pushed underground along with other behaviors considered immoral. New York City passed laws against homosexuality in public and private businesses, but because alcohol was in high demand, speakeasies and impromptu drinking establishments were so numerous and temporary that authorities were unable to police them all.[43]

The social repression of the 1950s resulted in a cultural revolution in Greenwich Village. A cohort of poets, later named the Beat poets, wrote about the evils of the social organization at the time, glorifying anarchy, drugs, and hedonistic pleasures over unquestioning social compliance, consumerism, and closed mindedness. Of them, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs—both Greenwich Village residents—also wrote bluntly and honestly about homosexuality. Their writings attracted sympathetic liberal-minded people, as well as homosexuals looking for a community.[44]

Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village

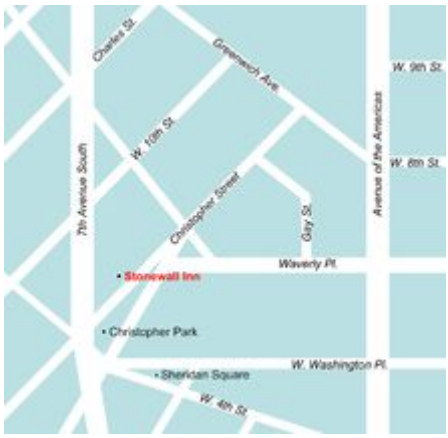
By the early 1960s, a campaign to rid New York City of gay bars was in full effect by order of Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr., who was concerned about the image of the city in preparation for the 1964 World's Fair. The city revoked the liquor licenses of the bars, and undercover police officers worked to entrap as many homosexual men as possible.[45] Entrapment usually consisted of an undercover officer who found a man in a bar or public park, engaged him in conversation; if the conversation headed toward the possibility that they might leave together—or the officer bought the man a drink—he was arrested for solicitation. One story in the *New York Post* described an arrest in a gym locker room, where the officer grabbed his crotch, moaning, and a man who asked him if he was all right was arrested.[46] Few lawyers would defend cases as undesirable as these, and some of those lawyers kicked back their fees to the arresting officer.[47]

The Mattachine Society succeeded in getting newly elected Mayor John Lindsay to end the campaign of police entrapment in New York City. They had a more difficult time with the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA). While no laws prohibited serving homosexuals, courts allowed the SLA discretion in approving and revoking liquor licenses for businesses that might become "disorderly".[48][10] Despite the high population of gays who called Greenwich Village home, very few places existed, other than bars, where they were able to congregate openly without being harassed or arrested. In 1966 the New York Mattachine held a "sip-in" at a Greenwich Village bar named Julius, which was frequented by gay men, to illustrate the discrimination homosexuals faced.[49]

None of the bars frequented by gays were owned by them. Almost all of them were owned and controlled by organized crime, who treated the regulars poorly, watered down the liquor, and overcharged for drinks. However, they also paid off police to prevent frequent raids.[50][10]

Stonewall Inn

The Stonewall Inn, located at 51 and 53 Christopher Street, along with several other establishments in the city, was owned by the Genovese crime family.[8][10] In 1966, three members of the Mafia invested $3,500 to turn the Stonewall Inn into a gay bar, after it had been a restaurant and a nightclub for heterosexuals. Once a week a police officer would collect envelopes of cash as a payoff, as the Stonewall Inn had no liquor license.[51][52] It had no running water behind the bar—used glasses were run through tubs of water and immediately reused.[50][10] There were no fire exits, and the toilets overran consistently.[53] Though the bar was not used for prostitution, drug sales and other "cash transactions" took place. It was the only bar for gay men in New York City where dancing was allowed;[54] dancing was its main draw since its re-opening as a gay club.[55]



Location of the Stonewall Inn in relation to Greenwich Village

Visitors to the Stonewall Inn in 1969 were greeted by a bouncer who inspected them through a peephole in the door. The legal drinking age was 18, and to avoid unwittingly letting in undercover police (who were called "Lily Law", "Alice Blue Gown", or "Betty Badge"[56]), visitors would

have to be known by the doorman, or look gay. The entrance fee on weekends was $3, for which the customer received two tickets that could be exchanged for two drinks. Patrons were required to sign their names in a book to prove that the bar was a private "bottle club", but rarely signed their real names.[10] There were two dance floors in the Stonewall; the interior was painted black, making it very dark inside, with pulsing gel lights or black lights. If police were spotted, regular white lights were turned on, signaling that everyone should stop dancing or touching.[56] In the rear of the bar was a smaller room frequented by "queens"; it was one of two bars where effeminate men who wore makeup and teased their hair (though dressed in men's clothing) could go.[57] Only a few transvestites, or men in full drag, were allowed in by the bouncers. The customers were "98 percent male" but a few gay women sometimes came to the bar. Younger homeless adolescent males, who slept in nearby Christopher Park, would often try to get in so customers would buy them drinks.[58] The age of the clientele ranged between the upper teens and early thirties, and the racial mix was evenly distributed among white, black, and Hispanic patrons.[57][59] Because of its even mix of people, its location, and the attraction of dancing, the Stonewall Inn was known by many as "*the* gay bar in the city".[60]

Police raids on gay bars were frequent—occurring on average once a month for each bar. Many bars kept extra liquor in a secret panel behind the bar, or in a car down the block, to facilitate resuming business as quickly as possible if alcohol was seized.[8][10] Bar management usually knew about raids beforehand due to police tip-offs, and raids occurred early enough in the evening that business could commence after the police had finished.[61] During a typical raid, the lights were turned on, and customers were lined up and their identification cards checked. Those without identification or dressed in full drag were arrested; others were allowed to leave. Some of the men, including those in drag, used their draft cards as identification. Women were required to wear three pieces of feminine clothing, and would be arrested if found not wearing them. Employees and management of the bars were also typically arrested.[61] The period immediately before June 28, 1969, was marked by frequent raids of local bars—including a raid at the Stonewall Inn on the Tuesday before the riots[62]—and the closing of the Checkerboard, the Tele-Star, and two other clubs in Greenwich Village.[63][64]

Riots

Police raid

At 1:20 a.m. on Saturday, June 28, 1969, four plainclothes policemen in dark suits, two patrol officers in uniform, and Detective Charles Smythe and Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine arrived at the Stonewall Inn's double doors and announced "Police! We're taking the place!"[66] Stonewall employees do not recall being tipped off that a raid was to occur that night, as was the custom. According to Duberman (p. 194), there was a rumor that one might happen, but since it was much later than raids generally took place, Stonewall management thought the tip was inaccurate.

Layout of the Stonewall Inn, 1969[65]

Historian David Carter presents information[67] indicating that the Mafia owners of the Stonewall and the manager were blackmailing wealthier customers, particularly those who worked in the Financial District.[10] They appeared to be making more money from extortion than they were from liquor sales in the bar. Carter deduces that when the police were unable to receive kickbacks from blackmail and the theft of negotiable bonds (facilitated by pressuring gay Wall Street customers), they decided to close the Stonewall Inn permanently. Two undercover policewomen and two undercover policemen had entered the bar earlier that evening to gather visual evidence, as the Public Morals Squad waited outside for the signal. Once inside, they called for backup from the Sixth Precinct using the bar's pay telephone. The music was turned off and the main lights were turned on. Approximately 205 people were in the bar that night. Patrons who had never experienced a police raid were confused. A few who realized what was happening began to run for doors and windows in the bathrooms, but police barred the doors. Michael Fader remembered,

> Things happened so fast you kind of got caught not knowing. All of a sudden there were police there and we were told to all get in lines and to have our identification ready to be led out of the bar.

The raid did not go as planned. Standard procedure was to line up the patrons, check their identification, and have female police officers take customers dressed as women to the bathroom to verify their sex, upon which any men dressed as women would be arrested. Those dressed as women that night refused to go with the officers. Men in line began to refuse to produce their identification. The police decided to take everyone present to the police station, after separating those cross-dressing in a room in the back of the bar. Maria Ritter, then known as male to her family, recalled, "My biggest fear was that I would get arrested. My second biggest fear was that my picture would be in a newspaper or on a television report in my mother's dress!"[68] Both patrons and police recalled that a sense of discomfort spread very quickly, spurred by police who began to assault some of the gay women by "feeling some of them up inappropriately" while frisking them.[69]

> When did you ever see a fag fight back?... Now, times were a-changin'. Tuesday night was the last night for bullshit... Predominantly, the theme [w]as, "this shit has got to stop!
>
> —anonymous Stonewall riots participant[70]

The police were to transport the bar's alcohol in patrol wagons. Twenty-eight cases of beer and nineteen bottles of hard liquor were seized, but the patrol wagons had not yet arrived, so patrons were required to wait in line for about 15 minutes.[68] Those who were not arrested were released from the front door, but they did not leave quickly as usual. Instead, they stopped outside and a crowd began to grow and watch. Within minutes, between 100 and 150 people had congregated outside, some after they were released from inside the Stonewall, and some after noticing the police cars and the crowd. Although the police forcefully pushed or kicked some patrons out of the bar, some customers released by the police performed for the crowd by posing and saluting the police in an exaggerated fashion. The crowd's applause encouraged them further: "Wrists were limp, hair was primped, and reactions to the applause were classic."[71]

When the first patrol wagon arrived, Inspector Pine recalled that the crowd—most of whom were homosexual—had grown to at least ten times the number of people who were arrested, and they all became very quiet.[72] Confusion over radio communication delayed the arrival of a second wagon. The police began escorting Mafia members into the first wagon, to the cheers of the bystanders. Next, regular employees were loaded into the wagon. A bystander shouted, "Gay power!", someone began singing "We Shall Overcome", and the crowd reacted with amusement and general good humor mixed with "growing and intensive hostility".[73] An officer shoved a transvestite, who responded by hitting him on the head with her purse as the crowd began to boo. Author Edmund White, who had been passing by, recalled, "Everyone's restless, angry, and high-spirited. No one has a slogan, no one even has an attitude, but something's brewing."[74] Pennies, then beer bottles, were thrown at the wagon as a rumor spread through the crowd that patrons still inside the bar were being beaten.

A scuffle broke out when a woman in handcuffs was escorted from the door of the bar to the waiting police wagon several times. She escaped repeatedly and fought with four of the police, swearing and shouting, for about ten minutes. Described as "a typical New York butch" and "a dyke–stone butch", she had been hit on the head by an officer with a baton for, as one witness claimed, complaining that her handcuffs were too tight.[75] Bystanders recalled that the woman, whose identity remains unknown (Stormé DeLarverie has been identified by some, including herself, as the woman, but accounts vary[76][note 3]), sparked the crowd to fight when she looked at bystanders and shouted, "Why don't you guys do something?" After an officer picked her up and heaved her into the back of the wagon,[77] the crowd became a mob and went "berserk": "It was at that moment that the scene became explosive."[78][79]

Violence breaks out

The police tried to restrain some of the crowd, knocking a few people down, which incited bystanders even more. Some of those handcuffed in the wagon escaped when police left them unattended (deliberately, according to some witnesses).[note 4][80] As the crowd tried to overturn the police wagon, two police cars and the wagon—with a few slashed tires—left immediately, with Inspector Pine urging them to return as soon as possible. The commotion attracted more people who learned what was happening. Someone in the crowd declared that the bar had been raided because "they didn't pay off the cops", to which someone else yelled "Let's pay them off!"[81] Coins sailed through the air towards the police as the crowd shouted "Pigs!" and "Faggot cops!" Beer cans were thrown and the police lashed out, dispersing some of the crowd who found a construction site near-by with stacks of bricks. The police, outnumbered by between 500 and 600 people, grabbed several people, including folk singer Dave Van Ronk—who had been attracted to the revolt from a bar two doors away from the Stonewall. Though Van Ronk was not gay, he had experienced police violence when he participated in antiwar demonstrations: "As far as I was concerned, anybody who'd stand against the cops was all right with me, and that's why I stayed in... Every time you turned around the cops were pulling some outrage or another."[81] Ten police officers—including two policewomen—barricaded themselves, Van Ronk, Howard Smith (a writer for *The Village Voice*), and several handcuffed detainees inside the Stonewall Inn for their own safety.

Multiple accounts of the riot assert that there was no preexisting organization or apparent cause for the demonstration; what ensued was spontaneous.[note 5] Michael Fader explained,

> We all had a collective feeling like we'd had enough of this kind of shit. It wasn't anything tangible anybody said to anyone else, it was just kind of like everything over the years had come to a head on that one particular night in the one particular place, and it was not an organized demonstration... Everyone in the crowd felt that we were never going to go back. It was like the last straw. It was time to reclaim something that had always been taken from us.... All kinds of people, all different reasons, but mostly it was total outrage, anger, sorrow, everything combined, and everything just kind of ran its course. It was the police who were doing most of the destruction. We were really trying to get back in and break free. And we felt that we had freedom at last, or freedom to at least show that we demanded freedom. We weren't going to be walking meekly in the night and letting them shove us around—it's like standing your ground for the first time and in a really strong way, and that's what caught the police by surprise. There was something in the air, freedom a long time overdue, and we're going to fight for it. It took different forms, but the bottom line was, we weren't going to go away. And we didn't.[82]

The only photograph taken during the first night of the riots shows the homeless youth who slept in near-by Christopher Park, scuffling with police.[83] The Mattachine Society newsletter a month later offered its explanation of why the riots occurred: "It catered largely to a group of people who are not welcome in, or cannot afford, other places of homosexual social gathering... The Stonewall became home to these kids. When it was raided, they fought for it. That, and the fact that they had nothing to lose other than the most tolerant and broadminded gay place in town, explains why."[84]

This photograph appeared in the front page of *The New York Daily News* on Sunday, June 29, 1969, showing the "street kids" who were the first to fight with the police.

Garbage cans, garbage, bottles, rocks, and bricks were hurled at the building, breaking the windows. Witnesses attest that "flame queens", hustlers, and gay "street kids"—the most outcast people in the gay community—were responsible for the first volley of projectiles, as well as the uprooting of a parking meter used as a battering ram on the doors of the Stonewall Inn.[85] Sylvia Rivera, a self-identified street queen[86][87] remembered:

> You've been treating us like shit all these years? Uh-uh. Now it's our turn!... It was one of the greatest moments in my life.[88]

The mob lit garbage on fire and stuffed it through the broken windows as the police grabbed a fire hose. Because it had no water pressure, the hose was ineffective in dispersing the crowd, and seemed only to encourage them.[note 6] When demonstrators broke through the windows—which had been covered by plywood by the bar owners to deter the police from raiding the bar—the police inside unholstered their pistols. The doors flew open and officers pointed their weapons at the angry crowd, threatening to shoot. *The Village Voice* writer Howard Smith, in the bar with the police, took a wrench from the bar and stuffed it in his pants, unsure if he might have to use it against the mob or the police. He watched someone squirt lighter fluid into the bar; as it was lit and the police took aim, sirens were heard and fire trucks arrived. The onslaught had lasted 45 minutes.[89]

Escalation

The Tactical Patrol Force (T.P.F.) of the New York City Police Department arrived to free the police trapped inside the Stonewall. One officer's eye was cut, and a few others were bruised from being struck by flying debris. Bob Kohler, who was walking his dog by the Stonewall that night, saw the T.P.F. arrive: "I had been in enough riots to know the fun was over... The cops were totally humiliated. This never, ever happened. They were angrier than I guess they had ever been, because everybody else had rioted... but the fairies were not supposed to riot... no group had ever forced cops to retreat before, so the anger was just enormous. I mean, they wanted to kill."[90] With larger numbers, police detained anyone they could and put them in patrol wagons to go to jail, though Inspector Pine recalled, "Fights erupted with the transvestites, who wouldn't go into the patrol wagon." His recollection was corroborated by another witness across the street who said, "All I could see about who was fighting was that it was transvestites and they were fighting furiously."[91]

The TPF formed a phalanx and attempted to clear the streets by marching slowly and pushing the crowd back. The mob openly mocked the police. The crowd cheered, started impromptu kick lines, and sang to the tune of Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay: "We are the Stonewall girls/ We wear our hair in curls/ We don't wear underwear/ We show our pubic hair."[92][93][note 7] Lucian Truscott reported in *The Village Voice*: "A stagnant situation there brought on some gay tomfoolery in the form of a chorus line facing the line of helmeted and club-carrying cops. Just as the line got into a full kick routine, the TPF advanced again and cleared the crowd of screaming gay power[-]ites down Christopher to Seventh Avenue."[94] One participant who had been in the Stonewall during the raid recalled, "The police rushed us, and that's when I realized this is not a good thing to do, because they got me in the back with a nightstick." Another account stated, "I just can't ever get that one sight out of my mind. The cops with the [nightsticks] and the kick line on the other side. It was the most amazing thing... And all the sudden that kick line, which I guess was a spoof on the machismo... I think that's when I felt rage. Because people were getting smashed with bats. And for what? A kick line."[95]

Craig Rodwell, owner of the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, reported watching police chase participants through the crooked streets, only to see them appear around the next corner behind the police. Members of the mob stopped cars, overturning one of them to block Christopher Street. Jack Nichols and Lige Clarke, in their column printed in *Screw*, declared that "massive crowds of angry protesters chased [the police] for blocks screaming, 'Catch them!' "[94]

Christopher Park, where many of the demonstrators met after the first night of rioting to talk about what had happened, now features a sculpture of four white figures by George Segal that commemorates the milestone.[96]

By 4:00 a.m., the streets had nearly been cleared. Many people sat on stoops or gathered nearby in Christopher Park throughout the morning, dazed in disbelief at what had transpired. Many witnesses remembered the surreal and eerie quiet that descended upon Christopher Street, though there continued to be "electricity in the air".[97] One commented: "There was a certain beauty in the aftermath of the riot... It was obvious, at least to me, that a lot of people really were gay and, you know, this was our street."[98] Thirteen people had been arrested. Some in the crowd were hospitalized,[note 8] and four police officers were injured. Almost

everything in the Stonewall Inn was broken. Inspector Pine had intended to close and dismantle the Stonewall Inn that night. Pay phones, toilets, mirrors, jukeboxes, and cigarette machines were all smashed, possibly in the riot and possibly by the police.[89][99]

A second night of rioting

During the siege of the Stonewall, Craig Rodwell called *The New York Times*, the *New York Post*, and the *Daily News* to inform them what was happening. All three papers covered the riots; the *Daily News* placed coverage on the front page. News of the riot spread quickly throughout Greenwich Village, fueled by rumors that it had been organized by the Students for a Democratic Society, the Black Panthers, or triggered by "a homosexual police officer whose roommate went dancing at the Stonewall against the officer's wishes".[63] All day Saturday, June 28, people came to stare at the burned and blackened Stonewall Inn. Graffiti appeared on the walls of the bar, declaring "Drag power", "They invaded our rights", "Support gay power", and "Legalize gay bars", along with accusations of police looting, and—regarding the status of the bar—"We are open."[63][100]

The next night, rioting again surrounded Christopher Street; participants remember differently which night was more frantic or violent. Many of the same people returned from the previous evening—hustlers, street youths, and "queens"—but they were joined by "police provocateurs", curious bystanders, and even tourists.[101] Remarkable to many was the sudden exhibition of homosexual affection in public, as described by one witness: "From going to places where you had to knock on a door and speak to someone through a peephole in order to get in. We were just out. We were in the streets."[102]

> You know, the guys there were so beautiful—they've lost that wounded look that fags all had 10 years ago
>
> –Allen Ginsberg

Thousands of people had gathered in front of the Stonewall, which had opened again, choking Christopher Street until the crowd spilled into adjoining blocks. The throng surrounded buses and cars, harassing the occupants unless they either admitted they were gay or indicated their support for the demonstrators.[103] Sylvia Rivera saw a friend of hers jump on a nearby car trying to drive through; the crowd rocked the car back and forth, terrifying its occupants. Another of Rivera's friends, Marsha P. Johnson, an African-American street queen,[86][87][104] climbed a lamppost and dropped a heavy bag onto the hood of a police car, shattering the windshield.[105] As on the previous evening, fires were started in garbage cans throughout the neighborhood. More than a hundred police were present from the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth Precincts, but after 2:00 a.m. the T.P.F. arrived again. Kick lines and police chases waxed and waned; when police captured demonstrators, whom the majority of witnesses described as "sissies" or "swishes", the crowd surged to recapture them.[106] Street battling ensued again until 4:00 a.m.[105]

Beat poet and longtime Greenwich Village resident Allen Ginsberg lived on Christopher Street, and happened upon the jubilant chaos. After he learned of the riot that had occurred the previous evening, he stated, "Gay power! Isn't that great!... It's about time we did something to assert ourselves", and visited the open Stonewall Inn for the first time. While walking home, he declared to Lucian Truscott, "You know, the guys there were so beautiful—they've lost that wounded look that fags all had 10 years ago."[107]

Leaflets, press coverage, and more violence

Activity in Greenwich Village was sporadic on Monday and Tuesday, partly due to rain. Police and Village residents had a few altercations, as both groups antagonized each other. Craig Rodwell and his partner Fred Sargeant took the opportunity the morning after the first riot to print and distribute 5,000 leaflets, one of them reading: "Get the Mafia and the Cops out of Gay Bars." The leaflets called for gays to own their own establishments, for a boycott of the Stonewall and other Mafia-owned bars, and for public pressure on the mayor's office to investigate the "intolerable situation".[108][109]

Not everyone in the gay community considered the revolt a positive development. To many older homosexuals and many members of the Mattachine Society who had worked throughout the 1960s to promote homosexuals as no different from heterosexuals, the display of violence and effeminate behavior was embarrassing. Randy Wicker, who had marched in the first gay picket lines before the White House in 1965, said the "screaming queens forming chorus lines and kicking went against everything that I wanted people to think about homosexuals... that we were a bunch of drag queens in the Village acting disorderly and tacky and cheap."[110] Others found the closing of the Stonewall Inn, termed a "sleaze joint", as advantageous to the Village.[111]

On Wednesday, however, *The Village Voice* ran reports of the riots, written by Howard Smith and Lucian Truscott, that included unflattering descriptions of the events and its participants: "forces of faggotry", "limp wrists", and "Sunday fag follies".[112][note 9] A mob descended upon Christopher Street once again and threatened to burn down the offices of *The Village Voice*. Also in the mob of between 500 and 1,000 were other groups that had had unsuccessful confrontations with the police, and were curious how the police were defeated in this situation. Another explosive street battle took place, with injuries to demonstrators and police alike, looting in local shops, and arrests of five people.[113][114] The incidents on Wednesday night lasted about an hour, and were summarized by one witness: "The word is out. Christopher Street shall be liberated. The fags have had it with oppression."[115]

Aftermath

The feeling of urgency spread throughout Greenwich Village, even to people who had not witnessed the riots. Many who were moved by the rebellion attended organizational meetings, sensing an opportunity to take action. On July 4, 1969, the Mattachine Society performed its annual picketing in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, called the Annual Reminder. Organizers Craig Rodwell, Frank Kameny, Randy Wicker, Barbara Gittings, and Kay Lahusen, who had all participated for several years, took a bus along with other picketers from New York City to Philadelphia. Since 1965, the pickets had been very controlled: women wore skirts and men wore suits and ties, and all marched quietly in organized lines.[116] This year Rodwell remembered feeling restricted by the rules Kameny had set. When two women spontaneously held hands, Kameny broke them apart, saying, "None of that! None of that!" Rodwell, however, convinced about ten couples to hold hands. The hand-holding couples made Kameny furious, but they earned more press attention than all of the previous marches.[117][118] Participant Lilli Vincenz remembered, "It was clear that things were changing. People who had felt oppressed now felt empowered."[117] Rodwell returned to New York City determined to change the established quiet, meek ways of trying to get attention. One of his first priorities was planning Christopher Street Liberation Day.[119]

Gay Liberation Front

Although the Mattachine Society had existed since the 1950s, many of their methods now seemed too mild for people who had witnessed or been inspired by the riots. Mattachine recognized the shift in attitudes in a story from their newsletter entitled, "The Hairpin Drop Heard Around the World."[120][note 10] When a Mattachine officer suggested an "amicable and sweet" candlelight vigil demonstration, a man in the audience fumed and shouted, "Sweet! *Bullshit!* That's the role society has been forcing these queens to play."[121] With a flyer announcing: "Do You Think Homosexuals Are Revolting? You Bet Your Sweet Ass We Are!",[121] the Gay Liberation Front (G.L.F.) was soon formed, the first gay organization to use "gay" in its name. Previous organizations such as the Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis, and various homophile groups had masked their purpose by deliberately choosing obscure names.[122]

The rise of militancy became apparent to Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings—who had worked in homophile organizations for years and were both very public about their roles—when they attended a G.L.F. meeting to see the new group. A young G.L.F. member demanded to know who they were and what their credentials were. Gittings, nonplussed, stammered, "I'm gay. That's why I'm here."[123] The G.L.F. borrowed tactics from and aligned themselves with black and antiwar demonstrators with the ideal that they "could work to restructure American society".[124] They took on causes of the Black Panthers, marching to the Women's

House of Detention in support of Afeni Shakur, and other radical New Left causes. Four months after the group formed, however, it disbanded when members were unable to agree on operating procedure.[125]

Gay rights demonstration in Trafalgar Square, London, including members of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). The GLF in the UK held its first meeting in a basement classroom at the London School of Economics on October 13, 1970. The organization was very informal, instituting marches and other activities, leading to the first British Gay Pride March in 1972.

Gay Activists Alliance

Within six months of the Stonewall riots, activists started a citywide newspaper called *Gay*; they considered it necessary because the most liberal publication in the city—*The Village Voice*—refused to print the word "gay" in G.L.F. advertisements seeking new members and volunteers.[126] Two other newspapers were initiated within a six-week period: *Come Out!* and *Gay Power*; the readership of these three periodicals quickly climbed to between 20,000 and 25,000.[127][128]

G.L.F. members organized several same-sex dances, but G.L.F. meetings were chaotic. When Bob Kohler asked for clothes and money to help the homeless youth who had participated in the riots, many of whom slept in Christopher Park or Sheridan Square, the response was a discussion on the downfall of capitalism.[129] In late December 1969, several people who had visited GLF meetings and left out of frustration formed the Gay Activists Alliance (G.A.A.). The G.A.A. was to be entirely focused on gay issues, and more orderly. Their constitution started, "We as liberated homosexual activists demand the freedom for expression of our dignity and value as human beings."[130] The G.A.A. developed and perfected a confrontational tactic called a zap, where they would catch a politician off guard during a public relations opportunity, and force him or her to acknowledge gay rights. City councilmen were zapped, and Mayor John Lindsay was zapped several times—once on television when G.A.A. members made up the majority of the audience.[131]

Raids on gay bars did not stop after the Stonewall riots. In March 1970, Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine raided the Zodiac and 17 Barrow Street. An after-hours gay club with no liquor or occupancy licenses called The Snake Pit was soon raided, and 167 people were arrested. One of them was Diego Viñales, an Argentinian national so frightened that he might be deported as a homosexual that he tried to escape the police precinct by jumping out of a two-story window, impaling himself on a 14-inch (36 cm) spike fence.[132] *The New York Daily News* printed a graphic photograph of the young man's impalement on the front page. G.A.A. members organized a march from Christopher Park to the Sixth Precinct in which hundreds of gays and liberal sympathizers peacefully confronted the T.P.F.[127] They also sponsored a letter-writing campaign to Mayor Lindsay in which the Greenwich Village Democratic Party and Congressman Ed Koch sent pleas to end raids on gay bars in the city.[133]

The Stonewall Inn lasted only a few weeks after the riot. By October 1969 it was up for rent. Village residents surmised it was too notorious a location, and Rodwell's boycott discouraged business.[134]

Gay Pride

Christopher Street Liberation Day on June 28, 1970 marked the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots with an assembly on Christopher Street; with simultaneous Gay Pride marches in Los Angeles and Chicago, these were the first Gay Pride marches in U.S. history.[135][136] The next year, Gay Pride marches took place in Boston, Dallas, Milwaukee, London, Paris, West Berlin, and Stockholm.[137] The march in New York covered 51 blocks, from Christopher Street to Central Park. The march took less than half the scheduled time due to excitement, but also due to wariness about walking through the city with gay banners and signs. Although the parade permit was delivered only two hours before the start of the march, the marchers encountered little

resistance from onlookers.[138] *The New York Times* reported (on the front page) that the marchers took up the entire street for about 15 city blocks.[139] Reporting by *The Village Voice* was positive, describing "the out-front resistance that grew out of the police raid on the Stonewall Inn one year ago".[137]

By 1972, the participating cities included Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Miami, Minneapolis, and Philadelphia,[140] as well as San Francisco.

> There was little open animosity, and some bystanders applauded when a tall, pretty girl carrying a sign "I am a Lesbian" walked by.
>
> –*The New York Times* coverage of Gay Liberation Day, 1970[139]

Frank Kameny soon realized the pivotal change brought by the Stonewall riots. An organizer of gay activism in the 1950s, he was used to persuasion, trying to convince heterosexuals that gay people were no different than they were. When he and other people marched in front of the White House, the State Department, and Independence Hall only five years earlier, their objective was to look as if they could work for the U.S. government.[141] Ten people marched with Kameny then, and they alerted no press to their intentions. Although he was stunned by the upheaval by participants in the Annual Reminder in 1969, he later observed, "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."[142]

Similar to Kameny's regret at his own reaction to the shift in attitudes after the riots, Randy Wicker came to describe his embarrassment as "one of the greatest mistakes of his life".[143] The image of gays retaliating against police, after so many years of allowing such treatment to go unchallenged, "stirred an unexpected spirit among many homosexuals".[143] Kay Lahusen, who photographed the marches in 1965, stated, "Up to 1969, this movement was generally called the homosexual or homophile movement... 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."[144] David Carter, in his article "What made Stonewall different", explained that even though there were several uprisings before Stonewall, the reason Stonewall was so historical was that thousands of people were involved, the riot lasted a long time (six days), it was the first to get major media coverage, and it sparked the formation of many gay rights groups.[145]

Legacy

Unlikely community

Within two years of the Stonewall riots there were gay rights groups in every major American city, as well as Canada, Australia, and Western Europe.[146] People who joined activist organizations after the riots had very little in common other than their same-sex attraction. Many who arrived at G.L.F. or G.A.A. meetings were taken aback by the number of gay people in one place.[147] Race, class, ideology, and gender became frequent obstacles in the years after the riots. This was illustrated during the 1973 Stonewall rally when, moments after Barbara Gittings exuberantly praised the diversity of the crowd, feminist activist Jean O'Leary protested what she perceived as the mocking of women by cross-dressers in attendance. During a speech by O'Leary, in which she claimed that drag queens made fun of women for entertainment value and profit, Sylvia Rivera and Lee Brewster jumped on the stage and shouted "You go to bars because of what drag queens did for you, and *these bitches* tell us to quit being ourselves!"[148] Both the drag queens and gay feminists in attendance left in disgust.[149]

O'Leary also worked in the early 1970s to exclude trans people from gay rights issues because she felt that rights for trans people would be too difficult to attain.[149] Sylvia Rivera left New York City in the mid-1970s, relocating to upstate New York,[150] but later returned to the city in the mid-1990s to advocate for homeless members of the gay community.[150][151] The initial disagreements between participants in the movements, however, often evolved after further reflection. O'Leary later regretted her

stance against the drag queens attending in 1973: "Looking back, I find this so embarrassing because my views have changed so much since then. I would never pick on a transvestite now."[149] "It was horrible. How could I work to exclude transvestites and at the same time criticize the feminists who were doing their best back in those days to exclude lesbians?"[152]

O'Leary was referring to the Lavender Menace, a description by second wave feminist Betty Friedan for attempts by members of the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) to distance themselves from the perception of N.O.W. as a haven for gay women. As part of this process, Rita Mae Brown and other gay women who had been active in N.O.W. were forced out. They staged a protest in 1970 at the Second Congress to Unite Women, and earned the support of many N.O.W. members, finally gaining full acceptance in 1971.[153]

The growth of gay feminism in the 1970s at times so conflicted with the gay liberation movement that some gay women refused to work with gay men. Many gay women found men's attitudes patriarchal and chauvinistic, and saw in gay men the same misguided notions about women as they saw in heterosexual men.[154] The issues most important to gay men—entrapment and public solicitation—were not shared by gay women. In 1977 a Lesbian Pride Rally was organized as an alternative to sharing gay men's issues, especially what Adrienne Rich termed "the violent, self-destructive world of the gay bars".[154] Veteran gay activist Barbara Gittings chose to work in the gay rights movement, explaining "It's a matter of where does it hurt the most? For me it hurts the most not in the female arena, but the gay arena."[154]

Throughout the 1970s gay activism had significant successes. One of the first and most important was the "zap" in May 1970 by the Los Angeles G.L.F. at a convention of the American Psychiatric Association (A.P.A.). At a conference on behavior modification, during a film demonstrating the use of electroshock therapy to decrease same-sex attraction, Morris Kight and G.L.F. members in the audience interrupted the film with shouts of "Torture!" and "Barbarism!"[155] They took over the microphone to announce that medical professionals who prescribed such therapy for their homosexual patients were complicit in torturing them. Although 20 psychiatrists in attendance left, the G.L.F. spent the hour following the zap with those remaining, trying to convince them that homosexuals were not mentally ill.[155] When the A.P.A. invited gay activists to speak to the group in 1972, activists brought John E. Fryer, a gay psychiatrist who wore a mask, because he felt his practice was in danger. In December 1973—in large part due to the efforts of gay activists—the A.P.A. voted unanimously to remove homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*.[156][157]

Gay men and women came together to work in grassroots political organizations responding to organized resistance in 1977. A coalition of conservatives named Save Our Children staged a campaign to repeal a civil rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida. Save Our Children was successful enough to influence similar repeals in several American cities in 1978. However, the same year a campaign in California called the Briggs Initiative, designed to force the dismissal of homosexual public school employees, was defeated.[158] Reaction to the influence of Save Our Children and the Briggs Initiative in the gay community was so significant that it has been called the second Stonewall for many activists, marking their initiation into political participation.[159]

Rejection of prior gay subculture

The Stonewall riots marked such a significant turning point that many aspects of prior gay culture, such as bar culture formed from decades of shame and secrecy, were forcefully ignored and denied. Historian Martin Duberman writes, "The decades preceding Stonewall... continue to be regarded by most gays and lesbians as some vast neolithic wasteland."[160] Sociologist Barry Adam notes, "Every social movement must choose at some point what to retain and what to reject out of its past. What traits are the results of oppression and what are healthy and authentic?"[161] In conjunction with the growing feminist movement of the early 1970s, roles of butch and femme that developed in female gay bars in the 1950s and 1960s were rejected, because as one writer put it: "all role playing is sick."[162] Gay feminists considered the butch roles as archaic imitations of masculine behavior.[163] Some women, according to Lillian Faderman, were eager to shed the roles they felt forced into playing. The roles returned for some women in the 1980s, although they allowed for more flexibility than before Stonewall.[164]

Author Michael Bronski highlights the "attack on pre-Stonewall culture", particularly gay pulp fiction for men, where the themes often reflected self-hatred or ambivalence about being gay. Many books ended unsatisfactorily and drastically, often with suicide, and writers portrayed their gay characters as alcoholics or deeply unhappy. These books, which he describes as "an enormous and cohesive literature by and for gay men",[165] have not been reissued and are lost to later generations. Dismissing the reason simply as political correctness, Bronski writes, "gay liberation was a youth movement whose sense of history was defined to a large degree by rejection of the past."[166]

Lasting impact and recognition

The riots spawned from a bar raid became a literal example of gays fighting back, and a symbolic call to arms for many people. Historian David Carter remarks in his book about the Stonewall riots that the bar itself was a complex business that represented a community center, an opportunity for the Mafia to blackmail its own customers, a home, and a place of "exploitation and degradation".[167] The true legacy of the Stonewall riots, Carter insists, is the "ongoing struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality".[168] Historian Nicholas Edsall writes,

The Stonewall, a bar in part of the building where the Stonewall Inn was located. The building and the surrounding streets have been declared a National Historic Landmark.

> Stonewall has been compared to any number of acts of radical protest and defiance in American history from the Boston Tea Party on. But the best and certainly a more nearly contemporary analogy is with Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1955, which sparked the modern civil rights movement. Within months after Stonewall radical gay liberation groups and newsletters sprang up in cities and on college campuses across America and then across all of northern Europe as well.[169]

Before the rebellion at the Stonewall Inn, homosexuals were, as historians Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney write,

> a secret legion of people, known of but discounted, ignored, laughed at or despised. And like the holders of a secret, they had an advantage which was a disadvantage, too, and which was true of no other minority group in the United States. They were invisible. Unlike African Americans, women, Native Americans, Jews, the Irish, Italians, Asians, Hispanics, or any other cultural group which struggled for respect and equal rights, homosexuals had no physical or cultural markings, no language or dialect which could identify them to each other, or to anyone else... But that night, for the first time, the usual acquiescence turned into violent resistance.... From that night the lives of millions of gay men and lesbians, and the attitude toward them of the larger culture in which they lived, began to change rapidly. People began to appear in public as homosexuals, demanding respect.[170]

Historian Lillian Faderman calls the riots the "shot heard round the world", explaining, "The Stonewall Rebellion was crucial because it sounded the rally for that movement. It became an emblem of gay and lesbian power. By calling on the dramatic tactic of violent protest that was being used by other oppressed groups, the events at the Stonewall implied that homosexuals had as much reason to be disaffected as they."[171]

Joan Nestle co-founded the Lesbian Herstory Archives in 1974, and credits "its creation to that night and the courage that found its voice in the streets."[120] Cautious, however, not to attribute the start of gay activism to the Stonewall riots, Nestle writes,

The sign left by police following the raid is now on display just inside the entrance

> I certainly don't see gay and lesbian history starting with Stonewall... and I don't see resistance starting with Stonewall. What I do see is a historical coming together of forces, and the sixties changed how human beings endured things in this society and what they refused to endure... Certainly something special happened on that night in 1969, and we've made it more special in our need to have what I call a point of origin... it's more complex than saying that it all started with Stonewall.[172]

The events of the early morning of June 28, 1969 were not the first instances of homosexuals fighting back against police in New York City and elsewhere. Not only had the Mattachine Society been active in major cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago, but similarly marginalized people started the riot at Compton's Cafeteria in 1966, and another riot responded to a raid on Los Angeles' Black Cat Tavern in 1967.[173] However, several circumstances were in place that made the Stonewall riots memorable. The location of the raid was a factor: it was across the street from *The Village Voice* offices, and the narrow crooked streets gave the rioters advantage over the police.[140] Many of the participants and residents of Greenwich Village were involved in political organizations that were effectively able to mobilize a large and cohesive gay community in the weeks and months after the rebellion. The most significant facet of the Stonewall riots, however, was the commemoration of them in Christopher Street Liberation Day, which grew into the annual Gay Pride events around the world.[140]

Stonewall (officially Stonewall Equality Limited) is a gay rights charity in the United Kingdom, founded in 1989, and named after the Stonewall Inn because of the Stonewall riots. The Stonewall Awards is an annual event by Stonewall held since 2006 to recognize people who have affected the lives of British nonheterosexuals.

The middle of the 1990s was marked by the inclusion of bisexuals as a represented group within the gay community, when they successfully sought to be included on the platform of the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation. Transgender people also asked to be included, but were not, though transsexual-inclusive language was added to the march's list of demands.[174] The transgender community continued to find itself simultaneously welcome and at odds with the gay community as attitudes about binary and fluid sexual orientation and gender developed and came increasingly into conflict.[39][175] In 1994, New York City celebrated "Stonewall 25" with a march that went past the United Nations Headquarters and into Central Park. Estimates put the attendance at 1.1 million people.[176] Sylvia Rivera led an alternate march in New York City in 1994 to protest the exclusion of transgender people from the events.[12] Attendance at LGBT Pride events has grown substantially over the decades. Most large cities around the world now have some kind of Pride demonstration. Pride events in some cities mark the largest annual celebration of any kind.[12] The growing trend towards commercializing marches into parades —with events receiving corporate sponsorship—has caused concern about taking away the autonomy of the original grassroots demonstrations that put inexpensive activism in the hands of individuals.[12]

A "Stonewall Shabbat Seder" was first held at B'nai Jeshurun, a synagogue on New York's Upper West Side, in 1995.[177][178]

In June 1999, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated 51 and 53 Christopher Street and the surrounding streets as a National Historic Landmark, the first of significance to the nonheterosexual community. In a dedication ceremony, Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior John Berry stated, "Let it forever be remembered that here—on this spot—men and women stood proud, they stood fast, so that we may be who we are, we may work where we will, live where we choose and love whom our hearts desire."[179] The Stonewall Inn itself was named a National Historic Landmark in 2000, and it is located in the Greenwich Village Historic District, a preserved area.[180]

On June 1, 2009, President Barack Obama declared June 2009 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, citing the riots as a reason to "commit to achieving equal justice under law for LGBT Americans".[181] The year marked the 40th anniversary of the riots, giving journalists and activists cause to reflect on progress made since 1969. Frank Rich in *The New York Times* noted that no federal legislation exists to protect the rights of gay Americans. An editorial in the *Washington Blade* compared the scruffy, violent activism during and following the Stonewall riots to the lackluster response to failed promises given by President Obama; for being ignored, wealthy LGBT activists reacted by promising to give less money to Democratic causes.[182] Two years later, the Stonewall Inn served as a rallying point for celebrations after the New York Senate voted to pass same-sex marriage. The act was signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo on June 24, 2011.[183] Individual states continue to battle with homophobia. The Missouri Senate passed a measure its supporters characterize as a religious freedom bill that could change the state's constitution despite Democrats' objections, and their 39-hour filibuster. This bill allows the "protection of certain religious organizations and individuals from being penalized by the state because of their sincere religious beliefs or practices concerning marriage between two persons of the same sex" discriminating against homosexual patronage.[184]

Obama also referenced the Stonewall riots in a call for full equality during his second inaugural address on January 21, 2013:

> We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths—that all of us are created equal—is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall.... Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law—for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well.

This was a historic moment, being the first time that a president mentioned gay rights or the word "gay" in an inaugural address.[185][186]

In 2014, a marker dedicated to the Stonewall riots was included in the Legacy Walk, an outdoor public display in Chicago celebrating LGBT history and people.[187][188]

On May 29, 2015, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission announced it would officially consider designating the Stonewall Inn as a landmark, making it the first city location to be considered based on its gay cultural significance alone.[189] On June 23, 2015, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission unanimously approved the designation of the Stonewall Inn as a city landmark, making it the first landmark honored for its role in the fight for gay rights.[190]

A banner hanging from the top of the building the day after President Obama announced the National Monument

On June 6, 2019, nearly fifty years to the day after the Stonewall Riots, the New York City Police Commissioner, James P. O'Neill, apologized on behalf of the N.Y.P.D. for the actions taken by police officers that day.[191][192] This was done during World Pride month which will be celebrated in New York City to mark the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall.

National monument

On June 24, 2016, President Obama announced the establishment[193] of the Stonewall National Monument, a 7.7-acre site to be administered by the National Park Service. The designation, which followed transfer of city parkland to the federal government, protects Christopher Park and adjacent areas totaling more than seven acres; the Stonewall Inn is within the boundaries of the monument but remains privately owned.[194] The National Park Foundation formed a new nonprofit organization to raise funds for a ranger station and interpretive exhibits for the monument.[195]

Media representations

Film

- *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (1984), a documentary of the decades leading up to Stonewall
- *Stonewall* (1995), a fictionalized presentation of the events leading up to the riots
- *After Stonewall* (1999), a documentary of the years from Stonewall to century's end
- *Stonewall Uprising* (2010), a documentary presentation using archival footage, photographs, documents and witness statements
- *Stonewall* (2015), another fictionalized drama about the days leading up to the riots
- *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* (2016), a short, experimental film about transgender rights pioneers Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, set on the night of the riots

Music

- Activist Madeline Davis wrote the folk song "Stonewall Nation" in 1971 after attending her first gay civil rights march. Released on Mark Custom Recording Service, it is widely regarded as the first gay liberation record, with lyrics that "celebrate the resiliency and potential power of radical gay activism."[196]
- The song " '69: Judy Garland", written by Stephin Merritt and appearing on *50 Song Memoir* by The Magnetic Fields, centers on the Stonewall Riots and the idea[note 5] that they were caused by the death of Judy Garland.
- New York City Opera commissioned the English composer Iain Bell and American librettist Mark Campbell in 2018 to write the opera *Stonewall* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the riots, to be premiered on June 19, 2019, and directed by Leonard Foglia.[197]

Theatre

- *Street Theatre* (1982) by Doric Wilson[198][199]

Notable participants

- Stormé DeLarverie
- Marsha P. Johnson
- Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt
- Sylvia Rivera
- Craig Rodwell

See also

- Stonewall 50 – WorldPride NYC 2019
- Stonewall National Monument
- LGBT culture in New York City
- LGBT Pride March New York City
- List of incidents of civil unrest in New York City
- List of pre-Stonewall LGBT actions in the United States
- List of incidents of civil unrest in the United States

Footnotes

1. At the time, the term "gay" was commonly used to refer to all LGBT people.

2. Illinois decriminalized sodomy in 1961, but at the time of the Stonewall riots every other state criminalized homosexual acts, even between consenting adults acting in private homes. "An adult convicted of the crime of having sex with another consenting adult in the privacy of his or her home could get anywhere from a light fine to five, ten, or twenty years—or even life—in prison. In 1971, twenty states had 'sex psychopath' laws that permitted the detaining of homosexuals for that reason alone. In Pennsylvania and California sex offenders could be committed to a psychiatric institution for life, and [in] seven states they could be castrated." (Carter, p. 15) Through the 1950s and 1960s, castration, emetics, hypnosis, electroshock therapy, and lobotomies were used by psychiatrists to try to "cure" homosexuals. (Katz, pp. 181–197.) (Adam, p. 60.)
3. Accounts of people who witnessed the scene, including letters and news reports of the woman who fought with police, conflicted. Where witnesses claim one woman who fought her treatment at the hands of the police caused the crowd to become angry, some also remembered several "butch lesbians" had begun to fight back while still in the bar. At least one was already bleeding when taken out of the bar (Carter, pp. 152–153). Craig Rodwell (in Duberman, p. 197) claims the arrest of the woman was not the primary event that triggered the violence, but one of several simultaneous occurrences: "there was just ... a flash of group—of mass—anger."
4. Witness Morty Manford stated, "There's no doubt in my mind that those people were deliberately left unguarded. I assume there was some sort of relationship between the bar management and the local police, so they really didn't want to arrest those people. But they had to at least look like they were doing their jobs." (Marcus, p. 128.)
5. In the years since the riots occurred, the death of gay icon Judy Garland earlier in the week on June 22, 1969 has been attributed as a significant factor in the riots, but no participants in Saturday morning's demonstrations recall Garland's name being discussed. No print accounts of the riots by reliable sources cite Garland as a reason for the riot, although one sarcastic account by a heterosexual publication suggested it. (Carter, p. 260.) Although Sylvia Rivera recalls she was saddened and amazed by the turnout at Garland's funeral on Friday, June 27, she said that she did not feel like going out much but changed her mind later. (Duberman, pp. 190–191.) Bob Kohler used to talk to the homeless youth in Sheridan Square, and said, "When people talk about Judy Garland's death having anything much to do with the riot, that makes me crazy. The street kids faced death every day. They had nothing to lose. And they couldn't have cared less about Judy. We're talking about kids who were fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. Judy Garland was the middle-aged darling of the middle-class gays. I get upset about this because it trivializes the whole thing." (Deitcher, p. 72.)
6. Rivera reports being handed a Molotov cocktail (there were no eyewitness accounts of Molotov cocktails the first night although many fires were set), that she identified only because she had seen them on the news: "I'm like, 'What am I supposed to do with this?' And this guy said, 'Well, I'm going to light it, and you're going to throw it.' And I'm like, 'Fine. You light it, I throw it, 'cause if it blows up, I don't want it to blow up on me.' It's hard to explain, except that it had to happen one day..." (Deitcher, p. 67.)
7. Some references have the last line as "...pubic hairs" instead.
8. One protester needed stitches to repair a knee broken by a nightstick; another lost two fingers in a car door. Witnesses recollect that some of the most "feminine boys" were beaten badly. (Duberman, pp. 201–202.)
9. Carter (p. 201) attributes the anger at *The Village Voice* reports to its focus on the effeminate behavior of the participants, with the exclusion of any kind of bravery. Author Edmund White insists that Smith and Truscott were trying to assert their own heterosexuality by referring to the events and people in derogatory terms.
10. "Hairpin drop" was gay slang that meant to drop hints about one's sexual orientation. (LaFrank, p. 17.)

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External links

- "Police Records Document Start of Stonewall Uprising" (http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/22/police-records-document-the-stonewall-uprising/), *The New York Times*, June 22, 2009
- Newspaper reports of the event (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/index.html)
- New York City Pride (http://www.nycpride.org)
- "Media Could Use a Stonewall Uprising of Their Own" (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karl-frisch/media-could-use-a-stonewa_b_221793.html) by Karl Frisch, *The Huffington Post*
- "A Look Back at the Uprising that Launched the Modern Gay Rights Movement" (https://www.democracynow.org/2009/6/26/stonewall_riots_40th_anniversary_a_look) –video report by *Democracy Now!*, begins at 12:40 in the archived June 26 2009 episode (https://archive.org/details/dn2009-0626_vid) at the Internet Archive; incorporates portions of *Remembering Stonewall*, a 1989 radio retrospective narrated and produced by David Isay (subsequent founder of StoryCorps), and an interview with historian David Carter, author of the aforementioned 2004 book *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*
- *Stonewall Uprising* in PBS' *American Experience* (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/stonewall/)
- *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0464189/) on IMDb , 2005 documentary by Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker about the riots at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco leading up to Stonewall
- Stonewall National Historic Landmark (http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=-1888210723&ResourceType=Site)

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