

CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT FOR LGBTQ HISTORY IN SAN FRANCISCO

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION



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I. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Citywide Historic Context Statement for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) History in San Francisco (LGBTQ Historic Context Statement) was funded by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the City and County of San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The project directors and authors of the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement are public historian Donna Graves and architectural historian Shayne Watson; both Watson and Graves meet the National Park Service's (NPS) professional qualification standards for historic preservation. The fiscal sponsor for the grant is the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Historical Society in San Francisco. The LGBTQ Historic Context Statement was adopted by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission on November 18, 2015.

A historic context statement is a historic preservation planning tool used by federal, state, and local governments to guide the identification, documentation, and evaluation of historic properties associated with a specific theme.¹ Themes can range from the history of city to a style of architecture to a cultural group. Historic context statements are composed of two primary parts: a narrative discussion of the patterns, events, cultural influences, and individuals or groups relevant to the theme; and technical information that serves as a guide for future identification and analysis of historic properties associated with the theme.

The overarching theme of the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement is the development of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco. Major sub-themes explored are:

- Early Influences on LGBTQ Identities and Communities (19th Century to 1950s)
- Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco (Early 20th Century to 1960s)
- Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities (1933 to 1960s)
- Homophile Movements (1950s to 1965)
- Evolution of LGBTQ Enclaves and Development of New Neighborhoods (1960s to 1980s)
- Gay Liberation, Pride, and Politics (1960s to 1990s)
- Building LGBTQ Communities (1960s to 1990s)
- LGBTQ Medicine (1940s to 1970s)
- San Francisco and the AIDS Epidemic (1981 to 1990s)

The narrative discussion documents LGBTQ history in San Francisco from the Native American period through the early 1990s. The geographical scope of the study is citywide and incorporates all neighborhoods in San Francisco that played a crucial role in the city's LGBTQ past.

¹ For the purposes of this report, "historic properties" will be used as a catchall term for buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, sites, and historic districts.

The LGBTQ Historic Context Statement is not intended to be inclusive of all aspects of LGBTQ history or associated sites, but instead aims to provide a broad overview of the many and complex patterns, events, influences, individuals, and groups that shaped this history. The format and content of this report were developed using guidelines established by NPS and the California Office of Historic Preservation.²

The LGBTQ Historic Context Statement builds on the pioneering work of Damon Scott and Friends of 1800, a San Francisco-based advocacy organization, who, in 2004, completed the country's first LGBTQ historic context statement: "Sexing the City: The Development of Sexual Identity Based Subcultures in San Francisco, 1933-1979." This study expands on "Sexing the City" by researching diverse LGBTQ experiences in more depth and by lengthening the chronological scope of study. The authors extended the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement into the early 1990s to capture information about the impact of HIV/AIDS in San Francisco. Guidelines established for the National Register of Historic Places recommend using a 50-year threshold for evaluating the significance of historic properties as a way to "assure historical perspective and avoid judgments based on current or recent popular trends."³ However, National Register criteria for evaluation allows for recognizing historic properties of the more recent past if they are of *exceptional significance* at the national, state, or local levels.⁴ Sufficient scholarship has been produced to establish that the AIDS epidemic has been among the most significant events to shape LGBTQ history in San Francisco, the nation, and the world.

II. NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

As consciousness about the ways that gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, and other dimensions of identity affect politics, culture, history, and most aspects of United States society, our language evolves as well. Academics, demographers, journalists, and average Americans struggle to find appropriate words to describe themselves and others. Words for specific groups of people shift over time and carry new and additional meanings. For example, "queer" went from being a pejorative to an all-inclusive term meant to challenge narrow definitions of gender and sexual orientation. Just as "Hispanic," "Latino," "Mexican-American," and "Chicano" may all be used to describe the same San Franciscan, "gay," "lesbian," or "queer" may be used to describe the same individual.

Sexual identity terminology, like most identity labels, is highly political and has changed substantially over the last decades. As Elizabeth A. Armstrong wrote in her book *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950 to 1994* (2002): "The continually evolving and highly contested nature of this movement means that there exists no term to accurately apply to it for the entire period from 1950 to 2000."⁵ Historians debate which terms to use in writing LGBTQ history (including the acronym LGBTQ), and the report authors deliberated over what approach would be most appropriate.

2 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (Washington, DC: 1983, as amended). See also California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources* (Sacramento, CA: 1995).

3 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, authors), *National Register Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years* (Washington, D.C.: 1998), ii.

4 Ibid.

5 Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950 to 1994* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2002), xix.

Given the evolving nature of these terms, the authors of this report have employed a few strategies. Anachronistic terms are used when they are adequately descriptive (e.g., “homophile” for the organizations in the 1950s and 1960s that were precursors to the gay rights movements, or “gay” or “homosexual” as umbrella descriptors when discussing the 1960s and 1970s). Narrow terms such as “gay men” or “lesbians” are used to describe specific groups of participants in events or organizations; these terms are indicators of gender specificity and were used in instances when bisexual or transgender people were not documented as participants. Although “bisexual” and “transgender” were not added to the popular lexicon until the late 20th century, they are used throughout the narrative as a way of providing consistency and clarity. The umbrella term “queer” is used to present an inclusive picture and in cases where participation by specific groups is unknown (e.g., a post-Prohibition bar that was a mix of gay, lesbian, transgender, and possibly bisexual clientele).

CHAPTER 2.

LGBTQ HISTORY



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – CALIFORNIA AND SAN FRANCISCO

NATIVE AMERICAN CALIFORNIA

When Europeans arrived in 1492, nearly one third of all Native Americans living in the current boundaries of the continental United States were in the area that is now California.⁶ From San Francisco Bay to Point Sur, there were over 10,000 people belonging to 40 different territorial groups speaking up to a dozen different languages.⁷ The Spanish referred to the coastal groups collectively as *Costeños*, or people of the coast (later mistranslated into *Costanoan*). Descendants of San Francisco Bay Area tribes call themselves *Ohlone*.⁸ Approximately 30 to 40 Ohlone villages encircled San Francisco Bay.

Native Americans who adopted the traditional dress and gender roles of the opposite sex or dual gender roles were present in most Native American bands and tribes. British, French, and American explorers and colonists who encountered gender non-conforming Native Americans called them *berdache*, a term translated as “kept boys” or “boy slaves.”⁹ (In the 1990s, Native American activists adopted the term “two-spirit” to replace berdache as a way of resisting the colonial terminology.) Anthropologists describe two-spirit as a third gender or intermediate sex, neither male nor female, that embodies a mixture of social, ceremonial, and economic roles carried out by both men and women.¹⁰ Many Native Americans believed that two-spirits had supernatural powers, allowing them to serve as spiritual intermediaries between the human and divine worlds.¹¹

In California, two-spirits existed in over 30 Native American groups, including the Costanoan tribelets.¹² Documentation of two-spirits among the Ohlone is sparse compared to other California tribes (most notably the Chumash of the Santa Barbara channel) but historian Malcolm Margolin asserts that they were an “accepted part of life” in the coastal regions.¹³ Margolin describes an Ohlone two-spirit home: “One of them leads a man’s life, but the other has chosen the women’s way. He wears women’s ornaments, grinds acorns with the women, gathers roots, and makes baskets. The two men are living together, fully accepted by the other villagers.”¹⁴ Ethnohistoric literature shows that two-spirits in many California tribes were often mortuary specialists or

6 Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2005), 13.

7 Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), 1.

8 Margolin, *Ohlone Way*, 1.

9 Historian Scott Morgensen explains that beginning in the 1980s, Native American queer activists began to critique the use of the term berdache as an “erroneous colonial term” that “project[ed] masculinism and sexualization.” In 1990, at the International Gathering of American Indian and First Nations Gays and Lesbians in Winnipeg, Canada, Native activists adopted the term “two spirit” as a way of resisting the colonial terminology. See Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 36-38, 81. Historian Will Roscoe notes that the term “berdache” was never used in California, where “Spaniards employed terms like *hermafrodita* and *sodomita*. And, intriguingly, a frontier (intertribal, intercultural) term ... *joya*, ... which was used in the areas of the Chumash and certain inland, central California tribes.” (Personal communication between Will Roscoe and Shayne Watson, November 1, 2015.) For more information on two-spirits, see Walter L. Williams, *Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (1992); Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (2000); Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (1997); and Sabine Lang, *Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Gender in Native American Cultures* (1998).

10 Brian Joseph Gilley, *Becoming Two-Spirit: Gay Identity and Social Acceptance in Indian Country* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 8.

11 Sandra E. Hollimon, *The Third Gender in Native California: Two-Spirit Undertakers Among the Chumash and Their Neighbors*, 183 (in Cheryl Claassen and Rosemary Joyce, *Women in Prehistory: North America and Mesoamerica*).

12 Nona Christensen Willoughby, *Division of Labor Among the Indians of California* (cited in Karen Smith Gardner, *Diet and Identity Among the Ancestral Ohlone: Integrating Stable Isotope Analysis and Mortuary Context at the Yukisma Mound [Ca-Scl-38]*, 162-163).

13 Margolin, *Ohlone Way*, 84.

14 *Ibid.*, 1.

undertakers, responsible for grave digging, burials, and ceremonial events.¹⁵ In some cases, the indigenous words for two-spirit and undertaker were synonymous.¹⁶

SPANISH CALIFORNIA

Europeans first arrived in the present-day boundaries of California in 1540 when Spaniards explored two hundred miles of the Colorado River basin. Jesuit missionaries established a presence in the northern frontier of New Spain (now Baja California) in 1697 with the construction of the first of 18 missions. In 1765, Carlos III became king of Spain and ordered that all Jesuits be banished from Spanish territories. The Jesuits were arrested, exiled, and replaced with Franciscans from Mexico City under the leadership of Junípero Serra.

The overarching goal of Spain's settlement in California was to stake a claim on the region before other countries—Russia in particular—moved in. To that end, the Spanish established *presidios* (military garrisons), Catholic missions, and *pueblos* (secular townships). The first settlement in California, and the first of the 21 missions that would eventually extend across California, was Mission San Diego de Alcalá, dedicated by Father Junípero Serra in July 1769. San Francisco was established with a mission (Mission San Francisco de Asís) and a presidio in 1776. Today, the Spanish mission system is viewed not only as the critical step in the founding of Spanish California, but also as “catastrophic,” a “violent intrusion into the culture and human rights” of the Native Americans in California.¹⁷

One important remnant of the Spanish period in California is the extensive manuscripts left by the early explorers and later the Franciscan missionaries and military governors. One of the earliest written accounts of two-spirits in California was a simple description in 1540 by Spanish navigator Hernando de Alarcón: “There were among these Indians three or foure [sic] men in womens [sic] apparell [sic].”¹⁸ In the 18th and 19th centuries, Francisco Palóu, Juan Crespí, Gerónimo Boscana, Pedro Font, and Pedro Fages developed prolific documentation of everything they encountered in California, including two-spirits. Father Pedro Font illustrates a scene among Native Californians in 1775-76:

Some men dressed like women, with whom they go about regularly, never joining the men ... I asked who these men were, and they replied that they were not men like the rest, and for this reason they must be hermaphrodites, but from what I learned later I understood that they were sodomites dedicated to nefarious practices.¹⁹

In 1775, Father Pedro Fages describes the Chumash as being “addicted to the unspeakable vice of sinning against nature,” reporting that each mission settlement had a two-spirit “for common

15 Sandra E. Hollimon, *The Third Gender in Native California*, 183.

16 David Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 48.

17 Starr, *California*, 40-41.

18 Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (NY: Crowell, 1976), 285. See also Hernando de Alarcón, “The Relation of the Navigation and Discovery which Captaine Fernando Alarchon Made,” *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose), 286.

19 Font 1930 as cited in Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 41.

use.”²⁰ Father Francisco Palóu writes about a two-spirit he encountered at Mission Santa Clara, a former Ohlone settlement:

The Father Missionaries of the Mission noticed that among the women (who always worked separately and without mixing with the men) there was one who, by the dress, which was decorously worn, and by the heathen headdress and ornaments displayed, as well as the manner of working, sitting, etc., had all the appearances of a woman ... they concluded that he must be a man. [The Natives confirmed] that it was a man, but that he passed himself off always for a woman and always went with them and not the men.²¹

First-hand accounts by soldiers and missionaries make it clear that the Spanish wanted to eradicate two-spirits among the indigenous people. Pedro Font warns: “There will be much to do when the Holy Faith and Christian religion [take over].”²² The Spanish enacted cruel punishments against two-spirits. Two-spirit couples were separated and sent to distant missions. At Mission Santa Clara, Spanish soldiers took the two-spirits into custody, stripped their clothes, and forced them to sweep the plaza (women’s work); the two-spirits later fled the mission.

MEXICAN CALIFORNIA

Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and became a federal republic in 1824, with California designated as a territory. Mexico’s constitution, based on that of the United States, laid out a path for a secular society composed of a free and equal citizenry. As a result, in 1833 the Mexican government ordered that all mission land be secularized and divided among Hispanicized Native Americans and new colonists willing to settle in California (nonnatives considered California an undesirable place to live at the time). This ushered in a period of land-grant ranchos, during which more than 600 land grants were handed out to colonists, subdividing California into massive ranchos and creating a group of wealthy landowners known as Mexican dons.²³

During California’s period of Mexican rule, the United States and other countries began to encroach on California, prefiguring the international settlement that the state—and San Francisco in particular—would become by the mid-19th century. The Russians established Fort Ross on the coast north of San Francisco in 1812; American fur trappers arrived from the east in 1826; the English surveyed San Francisco Bay in 1827; the French sent scouts in 1841; and in 1845, the Irish proposed to the president of Mexico to settle 10,000 Irish Catholic colonists in the state as a way of preventing a Protestant takeover of California by the Americans or English.²⁴

Out of all the Euro-American attempts to stake a claim on California, the United States succeeded. It declared war on Mexico in May 1846, and in February 1848, after a series of revolts and battles, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, transferring all Mexican territory north of the Río Grande to the United States.²⁵ California became a state in September 1850.

20 Albert Hurtado, “When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers,” in Elizabeth Jameson and Susan H. Armitage, *Writing the Range Race, Class, and Culture in the Women’s West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 127.

21 Francisco Palóu, *Palóu’s Life of Fray Junípero Serra*, trans and ed. Maynard J. Geiger O.F.M. (Washington D.C.: American Academy of Franciscan History, 1945), 198-199.

22 Quoted in Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 10.

23 Starr, *California*, 37, 49.

24 *Ibid.*, 55-62.

25 *Ibid.*, 73.

YERBA BUENA AND SAN FRANCISCO

Early Development

Nonnative American settlement in Yerba Buena (the original name of San Francisco) began in June 1776 when an expedition overseen by Spanish soldier Juan Bautista de Anza arrived within current city boundaries and set up camp near Mountain Lake in today's Presidio of San Francisco; the expedition party was composed of 240 soldiers and soldier-colonists and four civilian families.²⁶ Soon after their arrival, the Spanish established a presidio and a mission, Mission San Francisco de Asís (later called Mission Dolores). The religious and military installations in Yerba Buena operated until about a decade after Mexico took California from Spain. Beginning in 1834, California governor José Figueroa ordered soldiers stationed at the presidio to move to Sonoma, and Mission Dolores was secularized and largely abandoned.

Between 1833 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Yerba Buena was subdivided into large land grants issued by the Mexican government to private citizens. The tiny town expanded in a short period of time to include many more residents—so many, in fact, that it prompted Francisco de Haro, Yerba Buena's first *alcalde*²⁷ (local government official) to hire Swiss engineer Jean Vioget to survey the area and plat streets. Vioget's survey in 1839 included Dupont (later renamed Grant), Kearny, and Montgomery Streets and a plaza in the area that became Portsmouth Square.²⁸ In 1847, the newly appointed *alcalde*, Washington A. Bartlett, changed the name of the town from Yerba Buena to San Francisco and hired surveyor Jasper O'Farrell to revise and expand Vioget's 1839 survey. O'Farrell laid an orthogonal grid over the town and established Market Street as the main artery.²⁹ The O'Farrell grids have been revised and expanded over time but generally still exist today.

A series of major events in the second half of the 19th century changed the landscape of the entire country, especially California and San Francisco. Gold was discovered in California in 1848; the Civil War ended in 1865; the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869; the Industrial Revolution started to gain steam in the 1870s; and the country went through a series of severe economic depressions beginning in 1873 and 1893, and shorter recessions in 1884 and 1907. These factors and others led to mass immigration and migration to California, as well as to rapid urbanization. An estimated 25 million immigrants entered the United States between 1870 and 1910.

After the Gold Rush, San Francisco transformed suddenly and dramatically from a small village of 1,000 residents to an "instant city" of 50,000 people.³⁰ Half of those residents were born overseas.³¹ By the 1870s, San Francisco was the tenth largest city in the country, with nearly 150,000 residents.³² That number grew after the depression of 1873 spurred even more people migrating to California in search of work.³³ With the growth in population, residential neighborhoods formed around San Francisco's central business district, with working-class residents in the South of Market area and the merchant class owning homes northwest of Market Street or in upper-class enclaves such as

26 Sally Woodbridge, *San Francisco in Maps & Views* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2006), 18.

27 After the United States overthrew the Mexican government in California in 1846, U.S. Army general Stephen Watts established an interim governmental framework that was based roughly on previous laws governing Mexican California.

28 Woodbridge, *San Francisco*, 26.

29 *Ibid.*, 33.

30 Roger Lotchkin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), xxxvii.

31 William Issel and Robert Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 14.

32 *Ibid.*, 24.

33 Starr, *California*, 108.

South Park and Rincon Hill.³⁴ Chinatown was home to the segregated Chinese community, eight percent of the city's population in 1870.³⁵ By 1873, streets throughout the entire city had been platted. The Market Street Railroad and other competing companies provided streetcar access to residential neighborhoods such as Western Addition, the Mission District, Russian Hill, Pacific Heights, and Golden Gate Park.

19th Century Neighborhoods in San Francisco

Central Business District

San Francisco's downtown at the turn of the 20th century was centered on the city's financial hub north of Market Street. The downtown area included the warehouse and wholesale district on the waterfront; the Barbary Coast—the nickname for six blocks of Pacific Street extending west from the waterfront; the shopping and hotel district at Union Square; and the high-density residential district now known as the Tenderloin. Though Market Street was often seen as the dividing line between the city's commercial and financial center to the north and the industrial sector to the south, in most places the real dividing line was Mission Street. Downtown's residential population in the Tenderloin was divided almost equally between men and women—mostly nonimmigrants—working in the central business district; the number of single-occupancy apartment building and hotels made this area one of the densest in the city outside of Chinatown and South of Market.³⁶ The residential area on downtown's waterfront was equally dense, but more working-class (two-thirds of the inhabitants were men, half of them born outside the United States, and only half of them married).³⁷

South of Market

South of Market at the turn of the 20th century was home to 20 percent of the city's population; half were foreign-born and most lived in cheap hotels and lodging houses crowded between industrial and manufacturing sites of various sizes.³⁸ A majority of the population was single men who either worked in the neighborhood or were seasonal migrant workers "lying up in San Francisco" during breaks from mining, fishing, or working in the lumber or agricultural fields.³⁹ South of Market's waterfront was even more skewed toward men. In 1900, 70 percent of the waterfront population was male.⁴⁰ The waterfront catered to a predominantly male population by featuring boarding houses, saloons, restaurants, and bathhouses.

Chinatown

San Francisco's Chinatown at the turn of the 20th century was centered on Grant Avenue from California to Broadway. Because of institutionalized racism, the neighborhood was segregated from the rest of San Francisco and operated under its own social and economic systems—"virtually autonomous with its own forms of government exercised through clan and district associations," according to historians William Issel and Robert Cherny.⁴¹ Chinatown's population was 90 percent male in 1890, the highest number of males of all the neighborhoods. (It was 78 percent male as late as 1920.) The disparity of the sexes was the result of the early influx of male Chinese laborers and relatively few Chinese women immigrants; federal immigration practices discouraged female immigrants. In 1852, Chinese males outnumbered females 1,685 to 1. When the Chinese Exclusion

34 Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 16.

35 *Ibid.*, 56.

36 *Ibid.*, 75.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*, 58.

39 *Ibid.*, 60.

40 *Ibid.*, 58-60.

41 *Ibid.*, 70-73

Act of 1882 prevented Chinese from migrating to America and prohibited Chinese from marrying non-Chinese, it became nearly impossible for Chinese men to marry and form families.⁴² Chinese men, explains historian Peter Boag, “persisted longer than other groups of males in the [West] in homosocial or what is usually referred to as bachelor communities.”⁴³ After decades of severe racism against the Chinese in San Francisco, many of Chinatown’s population fled the city—nearly half by 1890.⁴⁴

North Beach

Originally called the Latin Quarter, North Beach was clustered around the intersection of Montgomery (later Columbus) Avenue and Broadway, but also included Telegraph Hill. First settled by French, Italian, South American, Spanish, and Portuguese residents, the neighborhood became known as Little Italy by the turn of the 20th century. Two-thirds of the population was working-class men, half of whom were Italian born.⁴⁵

Other Neighborhoods

Other neighborhoods in San Francisco at the turn of the 20th century were the Mission District, the Western Addition, and Nob Hill-Pacific Heights. The Mission District was home mostly to white (Irish and German descent) working- and lower-middle class families living in single-family homes and two-family flats; it was one of the least dense areas in San Francisco.⁴⁶ San Francisco’s middle class lived in the Western Addition. Women outnumbered men, and the neighborhood was home to the city’s largest concentration of Germans.⁴⁷ Nob Hill and Pacific Heights became the most exclusive neighborhoods in the city after the cable cars made them more accessible; many of the large mansions there were owned by railroad barons and silver kings.

San Francisco in the 20th Century

The first half of the 20th century saw immense change in San Francisco as massive development projects extended the city’s boundaries; industry and labor were slowly transformed; increasingly diverse populations created more ethnically separate neighborhoods; massive infrastructure projects made the city more accessible by rail and automobile; and redevelopment projects permanently altered the landscape. The rapid urbanization and industrialization of American cities, including San Francisco, fostered widespread change in the sex lives of people living in cities. As single men and women moved out of rural areas and into metropolises in search of work, they gained anonymity and freedom from small-town social controls, making it easier to nurture nonnormative romantic relationships.

Post-Earthquake Rebuilding

After the 1906 earthquake and fires, some parts of San Francisco were decimated while some remained almost wholly intact. Downtown, South of Market, Chinatown, and most of North Beach were destroyed and rebuilt relatively quickly atop the 1847 O’Farrell street grid.⁴⁸ Most of the Mission District, Western Addition, and Pacific Heights survived intact. After the earthquake, South of Market became known as the “domain of single men” as the number of residential and commercial spaces catering to bachelors increased and the average number of people per household

42 Peter Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 147.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 73.

45 *Ibid.*, 73-75

46 *Ibid.*, 63-66.

47 *Ibid.*, 66-70.

48 Starr, *California*, 176.

increased to 19.⁴⁹ By 1910, ninety percent of South of Market’s waterfront population was male.⁵⁰ North Beach became more Italian after 1906 and its density increased to an average of 8 to 10 people per dwelling. The Mission District saw an increase in working-class Irish as they fled the South of Market area after the earthquake.⁵¹ The demographic of the Western Addition began changing after 1906 when a Japantown started to develop, and again after World War I, when African Americans started settling west of Fillmore between Geary and Pine.⁵²

Citywide Development

While most of the eastern half of San Francisco was completely built out by the 1920s, the western half remained largely undeveloped. The first third of the 20th century was a period of intensive development and expansion in the city. The Mission District expanded southwest into Portola, Excelsior, Miraloma, Ocean View, and Ingleside.⁵³ Upper-class districts were developed in Presidio Heights, Sea Cliff, Forest Hill, and St. Francis Wood. The completion of the Twin Peaks Tunnel (1918) and the Sunset Tunnel (1928) provided the impetus to develop the west side of San Francisco.⁵⁴ The nation’s love affair with the automobile in the 1920s made people less reliant on public transportation and spurred development in even more far-flung neighborhoods. From the 1920s to the 1940s, “vast areas of the Sunset and Richmond Districts in western San Francisco, and the Excelsior District in southern San Francisco, were built out ... with tract housing, primarily single-family dwellings with integral garages.”⁵⁵ Nearly all residents of the Sunset District were listed as “white” in the 1940 census—89% were American citizens (mostly California natives); immigrants were mostly from Europe, predominantly Irish and Italian.⁵⁶ A second building boom occurred after World War II to meet the housing needs of thousands of returning veterans as well as defense workers who decided to settle in the city. “San Francisco led the nation in residential construction immediately following the end of World War II. More house building permits—17,000 by May 1946—were authorized in San Francisco than in any other city in the U.S.”⁵⁷

Changing Demographics

The city continued to increase in cultural diversity but also grew more segregated by race and class during this period. During World War II, the African American neighborhood in the Fillmore expanded, especially after Japanese American residents living in the area were forcibly relocated and incarcerated in internment camps in 1942 under Executive Order 9066, and another African American neighborhood was established near the shipyards at Hunter’s Point. After World War II, Irish Catholics left the Mission District for the suburbs or for new neighborhoods in the Sunset District. The Mission District became predominantly Latino as immigrants from Central America and Mexico moved in. Large numbers of Asian immigrants arrived in the late 1960s, expanding the boundaries of Chinatown and creating a second Chinese neighborhood in the Richmond District. By the 1970s, San Francisco was 14 percent Asian, 13 percent African American, and 12 percent Latino/a.⁵⁸

49 Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 60, 78.

50 *Ibid.*, 58-60.

51 *Ibid.*, 63-66.

52 *Ibid.*, 66-70.

53 *Ibid.*, 78-79.

54 Mary Brown, “Sunset District Residential Builders, 1925-1950,” Historic Context Statement prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department (2013), 21.

55 *Ibid.*

56 1940 census data. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 79.

57 “San Francisco Leads in Housing Permits,” *Architect & Engineer* (May 1946): 29. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 31.

58 Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 216.

Economy and Deindustrialization

The heart of the city's economy through the first third of the 20th century was on the waterfront, comprising a massive network of shipping piers, warehouses, markets, and centers for distribution, production, and processing. The Produce Market, centered on Front and Clay Streets in what is now Jackson Square Park, was the distribution headquarters for all produce coming into or leaving the city. The northern and southern waterfronts were also the sites of manufacturing, including food processing in the north and iron works and shipbuilding in the south. Lighter manufacturing was scattered through the north waterfront and South of Market area. San Francisco's economy began to change permanently in the 1930s when the city's workforce organized to fight for basic worker rights. A critical period in San Francisco's labor history started in May 1934, when waterfront workers went on strike and closed the port for two months; a deadly clash between strikers and police on July 5, 1934 left two workers dead. During World War II, manufacturing jobs peaked when the Bay Area became a center for defense production, but soon after the war San Francisco slowly deindustrialized as waterfront and heavy industrial jobs moved to the East Bay, and San Francisco's economy became focused on service-based industries, notably finance and tourism. Financial jobs nearly doubled in the 1950s while employment on the waterfront was reduced 25 percent; the advent of containerization of water-borne commerce in the 1960s spelled the death of the San Francisco waterfront as a site for loading and unloading ships.⁵⁹

Infrastructure

San Francisco through the mid-1930s was accessible only by land from the south or water from the north, west, and east. The Ferry Building was one of the busiest terminals in the world in the 1920s, with 50,000 ferry commuters entering and leaving San Francisco each day.⁶⁰ Beginning in the late 1930s, major infrastructure projects made San Francisco more accessible to commuter and tourist traffic. The San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge (1936) and the Golden Gate Bridge (1937) suddenly provided easy direct access by car and passenger rail from the east and by car from the north. When completed in 1937, the Bayshore Freeway (U.S. Route 101) was the first freeway linking San Francisco to San José. Development of new infrastructure slowed in the 1940s but picked up again the following decade. In 1952, the Broadway Tunnel opened, creating a link between North Beach and the western half of San Francisco. By 1955, Interstate 280 provided a second direct route to San Francisco from San José. In 1959, State Route 480, which included the Doyle Drive skyway approach to the Golden Gate Bridge and the double-deck Embarcadero Freeway skirting the Bay, established a route through the eastern and northern parts of the city but also erected a physical barrier between San Francisco residents and the waterfront, adding insult to the slowly dying industry there. From 1967 through 1971, a five-story tunnel was bored underneath Market Street, laying the groundwork for subway stations that opened in the early 1970s (BART) and early 1980s (Muni).

Redevelopment

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was established in 1949, and in the 1960s major redevelopment projects began to change the landscape and composition of San Francisco. The first large-scale redevelopment was the 10-acre Golden Gateway project that demolished a huge swath of the city's historic waterfront from Broadway to Market Street, including the Produce Market and warehouse district near North Beach. Beginning in the mid-1960s, "slum removal" projects in the Western Addition resulted in the demolition of thousands of Victorian homes and the displacement or relocation of 10,000 residents, a majority of whom were African American and

59 John Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (New Jersey: Princeton Press, 1983), quoted in Chris Carlsson, "The Progress Club: 1934 and Class Memory," James Brook, Chris Carlsson & Nancy J. Peters, eds., *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture: A City Lights Anthology* (San Francisco, Calif: City Lights Books, 1998), 76.

60 Starr, *California*, 186.

Japanese American. The project also introduced the Geary Expressway, which bisected the African American community in the Fillmore District to the south and the Japanese American community and Pacific Heights to the north. The last major redevelopment project of the 20th century took place in the South of Market Area in the 1970s, when several city blocks were leveled to make way for the Yerba Buena project, which includes Moscone Center. The Yerba Buena project was an effort by city planners to clear the city's "skid row" to be replaced with a convention center. Dozens of historic residential hotels, bars, light-industrial buildings, empty lots, and junkyards were cleared to make way for the new development, displacing many of the city's working-class residents.⁶¹

II. EARLY INFLUENCES ON LGBTQ IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES (19TH CENTURY to 1950S)

EARLY MEDICAL THEORIES AND LITERATURE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

In the United States through the first half of the 19th century, any form of sexuality that was nonnormative was understood to be voluntary or circumstantial (acquired or artificial) rather than congenital (innate). Such sexuality was categorized as illegal vice, so it fell under the jurisdiction of police, lawyers, and judges, not medical professionals. Beginning in the mid-19th century, medical literature focusing on nonnormative sexuality became more widely accessible to physicians in the United States. The literature began to categorize nonnormative sexuality as a "social problem" requiring medical attention, and physicians began to be consulted during legal cases about sex crimes.

The concept of homosexuality being congenital rather than voluntary was presented in 1864 when German jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who identified as a member of the third sex (a male with a "woman's soul" who desires men), published a series of essays about same-sex sexuality.⁶² Ulrichs' essays call for the decriminalization of homosexual love and the recognition of same-sex marriage. His theories were adopted by many other writers on sexuality, including Károly Mária Kertbeny, the Austrian-born writer who first published the terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" in 1868.⁶³ German sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing adopted the congenital theory but suggested that any sexual act not ending in pregnancy is by nature pathological or degenerative (reverting to a prior evolutionary status). He published his findings on the degeneracy theory in 1886 in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, the first study on nonnormative sexuality to reach a wide audience in Europe and the United States. Krafft-Ebing coined many new labels for the various sexual "perversions" documented in his case studies.

British sexologist Havelock Ellis denounced Krafft-Ebing's theory of degeneracy in 1897 when he published the groundbreaking study *Sexual Inversion*. In that work, Ellis agrees that the nature of nonnormative sexuality is congenital, but disagrees that it was pathological. He posits that the differences between sexes come down to a matter of degrees and that nonnormative sexuality was merely one extreme of a condition evident in all humans.⁶⁴ Ellis's beliefs were highly controversial in Europe and the United States. The first American edition of *Sexual Inversion*, published in 1901, was released only to doctors and lawyers. Men and women with nonnormative sexuality who had access to the work of Ellis and Krafft-Ebing (that is, the mostly white middle and upper

61 Brook, Carlsson, and Peters, *Reclaiming San Francisco*, 82.

62 David Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 408.

63 Kertbeny first used the terms in private in 1868 and published them in his writings in 1869. See Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 409.

64 *Ibid.*, 411.

classes) “devoured” the studies.⁶⁵ British playwright Oscar Wilde was influenced by Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and British novelist Radclyffe Hall, author of *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), a highly significant early lesbian novel, was influenced by both Krafft-Ebing and Ellis. Physicians claimed that gay men and lesbians, such as Wilde and Hall, used the literature to justify their sexuality.

Another important advancement in the study of nonnormative sexuality came in the late 19th century in France and Germany, where physicians first started to analyze the distinction between a nonnormative *identity* and a nonnormative *act* (i.e., a gay-identified man versus a homosexual sex act). This distinction allowed for the possibility that identity and sexual expression are not wholly intertwined. Although the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual” had been introduced decades earlier, the concept of homosexuality and heterosexuality as categories of sexual identity were first introduced during this period.⁶⁶

While the medical field transformed its understanding of the causes of nonnormative sexuality, confusion about the relationship between gender and sexuality persisted. Throughout most of the 19th century, European and American medical journals conflated gender expression (e.g., cross-dressing) with sexuality and categorized both as “sexual inversion.” In stark contrast to our current understanding of sexuality and gender, which generally defines sexuality as biological and gender as a social construct, women in the 19th century who displayed masculine traits were categorized as lesbians, and men who were effeminate were categorized as gay (using today’s terms).⁶⁷ A well-documented consequence of this misunderstanding was that progressive women (many heterosexual) who chose to wear pants for comfort or practicality, were mocked in newspapers for being sexual inverts (i.e., lesbians). (For more on this topic, see “Progressive Era Women’s Reform Movements.”) One of the first doctors to publish on the topic of gender deviance was the German physician Karl Westphal. In 1870 he published a study called “Contrary Sexual Feeling,” in which he writes about a 35-year-old woman who, throughout her entire life, “had a great desire to be a man.”⁶⁸ Havelock Ellis wrote that the “principal character of the sexually inverted woman is a certain degree of masculinity.”⁶⁹ It is important to note that the topic of gender deviance during this period was often presented in binary terms: heterosexual (normal) and homosexual (abnormal).

The late 19th century saw medical-based efforts to decriminalize nonnormative sexuality. Krafft-Ebing was an advocate for decriminalization of homosexuality. The influential American sexologist James Kiernan took a similar position in the 1880s; in his work he argues that if sexuality is congenital, then individuals should not be prosecuted for their sexuality because they are not responsible for their actions.⁷⁰ In Germany in 1897, physician Magnus Hirschfeld and his colleagues founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee with the goals of decriminalizing homosexuality and defending the rights of homosexuals. These were progressive positions at a time when individuals continued to be arrested and imprisoned for nonnormative sexual activity.

While some physicians did advocate for decriminalization of homosexuality, others proposed policies for long-term incarceration to prevent the individuals from “corrupting” others. In the first decades of the 19th century, physicians proposed castration or vasectomies to prevent procreation

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 407.

67 Ibid., 385.

68 Ibid., 380.

69 Havelock and Ellis quoted in Ibid., 381.

70 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 166.

among gay men and lesbians. In the United States, many states had legislation forcing convicted sex offenders (including homosexuals) to be sterilized.⁷¹

Psychiatrist Sigmund Freud introduced the next major change in medical theory in the 1910s. Freud developed a psychoanalytic theory that explains homosexuality in psychological rather than biological terms. Freud viewed nonnormative sexuality as a symptom of arrested development, a sign that individuals have not progressed beyond adolescence years when same-sex affection and attraction is common. Freud's theories were widely disseminated and were accessible to the public. His negative views of lesbianism in particular have had a lasting impact on public perception about homosexual relationships. Lesbian relationships, which were viewed as asexual in the 19th century, were "looked upon with greater suspicion" in the early 20th century.⁷² Consequently lesbians "found it more difficult to live together unobtrusively" in part because Freud's theories "intensified social rejection."⁷³ Historian Lillian Faderman argues that it is this shared sense of social rejection and isolation that brought lesbians together and served as one impetus in the formation of lesbian communities.⁷⁴

Finally, another major advancement in the study of homosexuality came in 1948 when American biologist Alfred C. Kinsey published *Sexual Response in the Human Male*. The findings of Kinsey's research, which included interviews with 5,940 men about their sexual histories, suggest that human sexuality is naturally varied—along the same lines as Darwin's theory of natural selection and variation of species. "By creating a broad-based statistical analysis of human sexual response," writes historian Justin Spring, Kinsey was able to "demonstrate the existence of widespread variations throughout the American population at all levels of society."⁷⁵ *Sexual Response* upended existing theories about homosexuality because it "suggested that variations in sexual behavior were not based on acts of will and individual choice ... Rather they were based on widespread biological variations existing within the human population: in other words, on genetic variation."⁷⁶ Furthermore, Kinsey's research finally provided the data to substantiate earlier hypotheses by Havelock Ellis and Freud that sexuality cannot be divided into categories of heterosexual and homosexual, but instead falls along a continuum. Kinsey's work suggests that the word *homosexual* be used as an adjective rather than a noun, "for clearly many men who self-identified as heterosexual engaged in homosexual activity."⁷⁷

In 1953, Kinsey published *Sexual Response in the Human Female*, which, together with his previous work, became known as the Kinsey Reports. The Kinsey Reports were instant bestsellers and made Kinsey a highly controversial figure. "The discovery of widespread sexual deviation and the revelation of the full extent of this deviation would at first shock America," notes Spring, but Kinsey's findings ultimately help[ed] make the case for increased sexual tolerance."⁷⁸ One of the most important consequences of the Kinsey Reports was the positive effect it had on the psyches of homosexual men and women. "Through statistics, Kinsey had presented these individuals with a whole new way of understanding the sexual self. Among those with a homosexual orientation, feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, and depression could be particularly intense, and so Kinsey's

71 Katz, *Gay American History*, 140-146.

72 Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 428.

73 *Ibid.*, 428.

74 Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 59.

75 Justin Spring, *Secret Historian: The Life and Times of Samuel Steward, Professor, Tattoo Artist, and Sexual Renegade* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), 114.

76 *Ibid.*

77 *Ibid.*, 116.

78 *Ibid.*, 114.

findings were profoundly enlightening—and, by extension, healing—to these people.”⁷⁹ Justin Spring concludes that Kinsey’s research, even though subjected to decades of analysis, “remain[s] fundamentally unchallenged and unaltered to this day.”⁸⁰

19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY SEX LAWS AND POLICING IN CALIFORNIA AND SAN FRANCISCO

State and local legal systems and codes were used to control and repress nonnormative sexuality and gender expression throughout California’s history. Beginning in the mid-19th century, California had laws that made it possible to arrest people for nonnormative sexual or social behavior or acts. When California became a state in 1850, the first legislature outlawed sodomy, also known as “the infamous crime against nature.” Cross-dressing was illegal in San Francisco as early as 1863 when the Board of Supervisors passed a law prohibiting a person to appear in public “in a dress not belonging to his or her sex.” The cross-dressing law was part of a “good morals and decency” program to crack down on indecency in the city, especially prostitution.⁸¹ An arrest for cross-dressing carried a maximum fine of \$500 and six months in the county jail.⁸² Over 100 people were arrested for cross-dressing in San Francisco by the end of the 19th century.⁸³

When California’s first penal code was written in 1872, it included laws against vagrancy, which was a catchall term for crimes such as drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling. When the penal code was amended in 1891, the definition of vagrancy was broadened to include a “lewd or dissolute person who lives about houses of ill-fame.” The definition of vagrant was simplified in 1903 to “idle, lewd, or dissolute person.” Another statute introduced in 1903 made it illegal to “personif[y] any person other than himself” with “intent of accomplishing any lewd or licentious purpose,” making cross-dressing a misdemeanor.⁸⁴

Most people arrested in California in the 19th century for nonnormative sexual acts were arrested for vagrancy. Prosecution for sodomy-related crimes during this period was rare.⁸⁵ This began to change after the turn of the century for a variety of reasons. Media coverage of a handful of cases of nonnormative sexuality in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which showed increasingly negative attitudes toward nonnormative sexuality, added to the public’s growing concern about sexual deviance and had a substantive effect on sex laws throughout the country. In Long Beach, California, in 1914, when police discovered two sex clubs involving over 30 men, the men were arrested but not convicted because California’s Crime Against Nature law did not address oral sex.

In San Francisco, a highly publicized sex case known as the Baker Street Scandal unfolded in 1918.⁸⁶ Beginning in February of that year, the United States Army at the Presidio, working with the San Francisco Police Department, began an investigation and a 10-day sting operation at a

79 Ibid., 115.

80 Ibid.

81 Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 2.

82 San Francisco General Ordinances (1915), ordinance no. 819, quoted in Amy Sueyoshi, “Mindful Masquerades: Que(e)rying Japanese Immigrant Dress in Turn-of-the-Century San Francisco,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 26 (2005), 75.

83 Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 62.

84 William N. Eskridge Jr., *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003* (New York: Viking, 2008), 59.

85 Ibid., 21.

86 The authors are grateful to Dr. Robert W. Cherny for directing us to an essay by Elwood “Woody” Miller called “The Baker Street ‘Club’ Scandal.” Miller’s essay, written for Dr. Cherny’s HIST 790 class at San Francisco State University, is full of important primary source information about the Baker Street case, including newspaper accounts and military trial transcripts.



LEFT: Site of the Baker Street Club in 1918, 2531-2533 Baker Street
(Photo by Shayne Watson)

Morals Squad Takes 11 Men In Two Flats

Other Arrests Expected; Well-Known Citizens Suspected

In a raid conducted by Lieutenant Charles Giff of the police morals squad and members of the provost guard on two elaborately furnished flats at 2525 and 2527 Baker street yesterday afternoon, eleven men were arrested on charges of immoral conduct and taken to the City Prison, where they were held under \$1000 cash bail each.

The men arrested are: Max Koenig, a retired merchant living at 2544 Baker street; Oscar Frank, insurance broker of 2381 Vallejo street; Willard Wood, a jewelry store salesman; Hugh Allen, a musician; Austin W. Tobin, a clerk; Clarence H. Thompson, a decorator; Raymond Monteford, a clerk; Holf Teichman, a salesman; Walter Schneider, a cutter; George Malife, a jewelry salesman; and William H. Boady, a soldier stationed at the Presidio.

Koenig, Allen and Frank gave bail and were released.

Detective Draper Hand of the morals squad said last night military and naval authorities, co-operating with the police, expect to arrest a number of other men involved in the so-called vice ring in the next few days. Hand said several well-known men and a number of soldiers and sailors were suspected. Military investigations led to the raid yesterday.

"We have evidence indicating that this was a regular organization of immoral men," said Hand.

CONFESSIONS DISCLOSE VICE RING IN S. F.

Scores Involved by Lieutenant and Civilians Seized in Flats, Say Police

RIGHT: *San Francisco Chronicle* articles announcing Baker Street Club arrests and trial
(Newspapers.com)

residence at 2531-2533 Baker Street (partially extant at the rear)⁸⁷, near the Presidio's Lombard Street gate.⁸⁸ It was the home of Hugh Allan, a gay man, who was known to host other gay men for gatherings at his house. Through the investigation of Allan's Baker Street home, the police uncovered an underground gay community involving dozens of servicemen and civilians.⁸⁹ The men were questioned, arrested, and sent to trial. Their detailed testimonies reveal an active gay network in San Francisco in the 1910s, one that gathered at private residences and bathhouses across San Francisco. All of the servicemen who were convicted were dishonorably discharged and sent to federal penitentiaries (one sent to Alcatraz). One soldier tried to commit suicide, and another fled the country. Several civilians stood trial and were convicted of sodomy. Some of the men had their convictions overturned because of confusion over the language in California Penal Code Section 288a, which defined fellatio and cunnilingus as felonies punishable for up to 15 years in prison.⁹⁰ The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the court acquitted the men "on the grounds that the word intended to define the crime with which the Baker-street 'club' members were charged [fellatio] is not an English word that clearly expresses its exact meaning ... either in law or in psychopathology."⁹¹ The California Supreme Court decision notes that while the law's attempt to suppress "sins against decency" was commendable, it was outweighed by the importance of "the liberty of the individual ... even the most debased wretch in the land."⁹² Historian William Lipsky writes that one of the most important revelations related the Baker Street Scandal is that it presents a surprisingly progressive view of gay communities in San Francisco in 1918:

Many of the men [involved in the scandal] were gay in almost every modern sense of the term except their use of term itself: they were sexually attracted to other men; aware of their same-sex desires; and aware that their sexuality was inherent and instinctive. They were not isolated in any way from each other or the society around them. They sought out like-minded men for company as well as intimacy. They found partners for consensual erotic enjoyment through mutual friends and social events, at known meeting places, and through chance encounters. Although they needed to be discrete in public about their private relationships, their lives contained "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men," regardless of their age, education, social background, class status, religious affiliation, profession, or domestic relationships.⁹³

The Long Beach and San Francisco cases ultimately led to substantive revisions to sodomy laws throughout California and the country and resulted in increasing numbers of arrests related to nonnormative sexuality. In 1915 the California legislature modified the penal code to add "fellatio" and "cunnilingus" to the list of felonies, making it the first state in the country to codify oral sex as a serious crime.⁹⁴ In 1921, the penal code was revised again when fellatio and cunnilingus were changed to "oral copulation," and engaging in "any act ... which openly outrages public decency" was added as a misdemeanor. Under these new laws, explains legal theorist William Eskridge, "almost any kind of activity deviating from standard sexual intercourse or gender presentation

87 The building that housed the Baker Street Club appears to be extant, though Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps show that the addresses changed from 2525-2527 to 2531-2533 sometime before December 1950.

88 "Morals Squad Takes 11 Men in Two Flats," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 27, 1918, 8. Cited in Miller, "The Baker Street Club Scandal."

89 "Confessions Disclose Vice Ring In S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 28, 1918, 2. Cited in Ibid.

90 A footnote in the code calls Section 288a unconstitutional because "fellatio" and "cunnilingus" are not written in the English language; *The Codes of California: As amended and in force at the close of the forty-third session of the Legislature*, 1919, Google Books.

91 "Baker-St. Vice Case Thrown out of Court," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 1919. Cited in Miller, "The Baker Street Club Scandal."

92 Ibid.

93 William Lipsky, "Comments: Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco," November 2015.

94 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 53.

could be a crime in California.”⁹⁵ In 1927, California made it illegal to loiter near public schools and other places where children were present—likely a response to a growing fear that male homosexuality and pedophilia were intertwined; this law was expanded in the 1940s to include public toilets and parks, which led to a crackdown on gay cruising and public sex.⁹⁶

The first state in the country to decriminalize sodomy among consenting adults was Illinois, in 1961. Although minor modifications were made over the decades to the sections of California’s penal code regulating same-sex sexual acts, until 1975 sodomy remained essentially illegal in California.

CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

After President James Polk announced to the country in December 1848 that gold had been discovered in California, the state’s nonindigenous population exploded from less than 10,000 to 255,000 in 1851.⁹⁷ The foothills of the Sierra Nevada were suddenly flooded with Native Americans, *Californios* (the Spanish-speaking descendants of the Spanish and Mexican colonizers, now American citizens), Sonoran Mexicans, Chileans, Peruvians, French, Chinese, Americans, and others. The few small towns that existed throughout California at the time, including San Francisco, temporarily were largely abandoned as many residents raced for the mountains. The mass migration to California and the frenzied scramble for gold were unprecedented in American history, and the situation in the goldfields turned societal norms upside-down. The disparity between the population of men and women during the Gold Rush—12.2 males for every female in 1850⁹⁸—created what historian Susan Lee Johnson describes as a tense atmosphere characterized by the “presence of curious young men and lonely husbands” and the “distance from customary social constraints and proximity to competing cultural practices.”⁹⁹ California historian Kevin Starr calls it a “landscape of loneliness, longing, and regret comparable to the separations of wartime.”¹⁰⁰ The scarcity of women and wives and the pent-up sexual energy among the men not only led to atrocities against the few women who were present in the goldfields—rape, prostitution, enslavement, and murder—but also opened social space for emotionally intense homosocial relations, cross-dressing, and, more than likely, homosexual sex.

Male Homosocial Activity and Cross-Dressing

One well-documented example of homosocial activity among men during the Gold Rush is the stag dance, an all-male dance often featuring men dressed as women coupled with men dressed as women. One of the earliest recorded stag dances during the Gold Rush was held on July 4, 1849, on the *Panama*, a ship bound for San Francisco. Of the 220 passengers on board only four were women, so for the “Fancy Dress Ball,” some of the young men dressed in calico gowns.¹⁰¹ In the goldfields, stag dances were held at dance halls. The stag dance, according to Johnson, was a popular form of leisure in the Gold Rush during which “gendered and racialized meanings got made, unmade, and remade.”¹⁰² An all-male dance held in 1852 at Angel’s Camp in the southern goldfields featured men as square-dance partners: “The absence of ladies...was a difficulty which was very easily overcome ... [every man] who had a patch on a certain part of his inexpressible [would be a woman for the

95 William Eskridge and John A. Ferejohn, *A Republic of Statutes: The New American Constitution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), 352-353.

96 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 92.

97 Starr, *California*, 80.

98 Albert Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque, N.Mex.: 1999), 76.

99 Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 174.

100 Starr, *California*, 88.

101 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 64.

102 Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 144.

night].”¹⁰³ Stag dances persisted beyond the Gold Rush period and outside of the goldfields. At a saloon in San Francisco’s Barbary Coast in 1865, during a time when women were still relatively scarce in San Francisco, a man named Daniel Conness asked Frank Lewis to join him in a “stag waltz.”¹⁰⁴ At first demurring, Lewis finally consented and the two men danced “until their heads swam.” After the dance, Lewis discovered that he had been robbed and later remembered Conness “feeling in his bosom” during the dance. A newspaper account noted the moral of the story: “Keep out of the [Barbary Coast] and avoid stag waltzes.”¹⁰⁵

Outside of stag dances, male-to-female cross-dressing was prevalent throughout the American west during the Gold Rush period. In urban areas, news reports of men arrested for dressing as women were common. An early example occurred in San Francisco in May 1852 when a man was arrested for cross-dressing and fined \$25.¹⁰⁶ Cross-dressing during this period reflected a variety of motivations: cross-gender identities (before the concepts transgender and transsexual existed); practical reasons such as comfort or access to gender-restricted work; and as costume for stage performances. Historian Peter Boag suggests that some instances of male cross-dressing were motivated by the lack of women in the west and the “fierce demand” for traditionally female tasks and services, such as housekeeping, laundry, or cooking; in these cases, men passed as women in order to carry out female roles.¹⁰⁷ Whatever the real motives behind cross-dressing, they were seldom revealed to the public. When interviewed by the police or local press about their reasons for cross-dressing, men often claimed they dressed as women as a joke or that they were out on a lark. For example, in 1891 a prominent white journalist named Edward J. Livernash was arrested in San Francisco for attempting to board a ferry dressed as an African American woman; Livernash claimed he cross-dressed as a “practical joke,” but was found guilty and fined \$50.¹⁰⁸ Newspapers often speculated that men disguised themselves as women to carry out crimes.¹⁰⁹ It wasn’t until the late 19th century that the local press and public began to express suspicions about connections between cross-dressing and nonnormative sexuality.

Without documentation, it is difficult to discern the extent to which actual homosexual activity occurred during the Gold Rush, but sexologist Albert Kinsey speculated that sex was common “among pioneers and outdoor men in general.”¹¹⁰ These types of men, according to Kinsey, took the attitude that “sex is sex, irrespective of the nature of the partner with whom the relation is had.” Although men who had sex with other men certainly existed during the Gold Rush, Susan Lee Johnson notes that men who kept diaries in the mid-19th century would have been reluctant to keep written accounts of their nonnormative sexual relationships.¹¹¹

Women in the Gold Rush

The Gold Rush era also was an extraordinary period for women in California. When California achieved statehood in 1850, the constitution afforded women (married or not) the right to own property in their own name, a rarity throughout the rest of the United States at the time.¹¹² A year

103 J.D. Borthwick quoted in Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 173.

104 *Daily Alta California*, August 22, 1865.

105 *Ibid.*

106 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 67.

107 *Ibid.*, 74.

108 *The San Francisco Morning Call*, October 3, 1891.

109 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 69-70.

110 Kinsey quoted in Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2000).

111 Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 173.

112 Starr, *California*, 93.

later, the California legislature made it easier for men and women to divorce, and divorce rates grew steadily.¹¹³ This was also the beginning of the nation's women's-rights movement, launched in 1848 at the now-famous convention in Seneca Falls, New York. It was within this larger context that the relatively few women who ventured to the American West during the Gold Rush were afforded opportunities and independence rare for women elsewhere in the Victorian United States. Financial independence allowed women to live alone or to form relationships, platonic or sexual, with other women.

The sex trade was a common form of work for women in the goldfields—and like their counterparts throughout the world in the 19th century, some female sex workers in the goldfields undoubtedly formed intimate relationships with one another. Susan Lee Johnson recounts that life in the brothels was “tedious and confining,” and often “fostered same-sex eroticism in the context of enforced proximity, economic coercion, and the constant scrutiny of public authorities.”¹¹⁴ Unlike most other parts of the country at the time, female sex workers in the goldfields could support themselves and live independently of men—either alone or with other women. Johnson notes that in the early years of the Gold Rush, women sex workers were “treated with deference” and allowed to “move about socially where they would otherwise be ostracized ... even able to marry out of their profession.”¹¹⁵ The population of women in the goldfields was multi-national, but not all races of sex workers were treated equally: French sex workers were preferred while Chinese and Latina women were often subjected to racist treatment.¹¹⁶ Latina women were particularly vulnerable because of a popular stereotype that they were all prostitutes.¹¹⁷ Chinese women were “so synonymous with prostitution,” according to historian Amy Sueyoshi, that in 1875 the United States government instituted immigration laws aimed at Chinese women that “forbade the entry of immoral women.”¹¹⁸

In addition to working in the sex trade, some women in the goldfields (mostly French, Chilean, and Mexican) made livings by working in—and sometimes owning—restaurants, laundries, saloons, dance halls, and gaming houses.¹¹⁹ Toward the end of the Gold Rush, indentured and enslaved Chinese women were responsible for most of the service-based work in the goldfields.¹²⁰ Anglo-American women, the last group of women to arrive in the goldfields, were less likely to seek independent careers and many were vociferous opponents of the “social ills” of the Gold Rush—drinking, gambling, and sexual commerce.¹²¹

A cultural pattern that was common in the American West during the Gold Rush was female-to-male cross-dressing. Historian Peter Boag explains that the reasons women cross-dressed during this period continue to be debated, but similar to their male counterparts, there are a few generally agreed-upon motives: practicality or necessity or cross-gender identities (before the concepts transgender and transsexual existed). Many women who migrated to the West looking for work or adventure dressed as men during the journey because it was unsafe for women to travel long distances without male protectors, but also because male clothing was more practical

113 Ibid., 88.

114 Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 78.

115 Ibid.

116 Jacqueline Barnhart, *The Fair but Frail: Prostitution in San Francisco, 1849-1900* (Reno: 1986), 40-50. Quoted in Rachel Van, “Mary Jane Megquier: San Francisco as Refuge,” *Ex Post Facto – Journal of the History Students at San Francisco State University X* (2001).

117 Ibid.

118 Amy Sueyoshi, comments on Draft LGBTQ Historic Context Statement, December 29, 2014.

119 Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 76-77, 290-291.

120 Ibid., 298.

121 Ibid., 279, 282.

and comfortable.¹²² Women also cross-dressed to find work after realizing quickly that there were few paid positions for women outside of prostitution, housekeeping, or entertainment.¹²³ Because women were prohibited from mining, they had no choice but to dress as men if they wanted to work in the goldfields. One example of this is Marie Suize, also known as “Madam Pantaloon.” After arriving in San Francisco from France during the height of the Gold Rush and not finding work, Suize headed for the goldfields. A newspaper reported:

[S]ince, being unable to obtain work as a female, and being strong and hearty, she determined to don the apparel of the sterner sex and fight life’s battle as a man. She was unable to obtain steady work in [San Francisco], and went into the interior, where she worked as a farm hand, and finally at mining, in Jackson, Amador county.¹²⁴

While dressed in men’s clothing, Suize spent nearly 20 years working in the mines in Amador County and owning and operating the region’s most famous winery and a liquor store. She went largely unnoticed until 1871 when, while drinking in a saloon in San Francisco’s North Beach neighborhood, Suize was arrested because “something in her manner was unlike that of a man.”¹²⁵

CROSS-GENDER ENTERTAINMENT AND IDENTITIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

Cross-Gender Entertainment on the Stage

Cross-dressing on stage was a popular form of professional and amateur entertainment throughout the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Theater acts featuring cross-dressers were popular in minstrel and vaudeville shows. The first minstrel shows used race as comedy and featured white men dressed in blackface mimicking African American songs and dances; minstrel groups were also known for imitating German, Irish, and Chinese immigrants. Men who dressed as women as part of these minstrel troupes were some of the first female-impersonators to appear on the American stage.¹²⁶ Blackface minstrel shows appeared in San Francisco as early as 1848.¹²⁷ In the 1850s, more than 66 minstrel troupes performed in the city.¹²⁸ The Lyceum Minstrels featured W.D. Corrister and M. Lewis as impersonators of Ethiopian women, with Mr. Lewis billed as “the Exquisite Exponent of Colored Female Loveliness.”¹²⁹ Vaudeville eventually replaced minstrelsy and expanded to feature circus-like variety shows. In San Francisco, vaudeville shows were performed at venues such as Maguire’s Opera House on Washington, the Metropolitan Theatre on Montgomery, the Wigwam at Geary and Stockton, and the Alhambra Theatre on Bush (none extant).

Female-impersonating performers in San Francisco from the mid-19th century through the first decades of the 20th century are too numerous to list, but a few are worth mentioning. Bothwell Browne was one of the well-known female impersonators on the West Coast. He grew up in San Francisco and by the early 1900s was a “darling of San Francisco’s vaudeville stage.”¹³⁰ Browne performed as Cleopatra at the Grand Opera House on Mission Street and in the “Serpent of the Nile” at the Empress Theatre on Market Street; his other venues were the Pantages and Central

122 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 33.

123 The explanation that women cross-dressed during Gold Rush because the social context of the American west gave them little choice is defined by scholars of cross-dressing as the “progress narrative” and is commonly debated. See *Ibid.*, 57.

124 *Stockton Daily Independent*, “Dispatches from San Francisco,” April 21, 1871. See *Ibid.*, 207.

125 *Ibid.*

126 Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 29.

127 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 65.

128 Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 31.

129 “Amusements,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, November 10, 1858. See also “Amusements,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, August 10, 1857.

130 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 31.

The Quickest Lightning Change on Record



When a woman looks at the lightning change which she has made, she is apt to say, "I wish I could do it again." But she is not alone in this. Many of our readers have seen the same thing. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one.



When a woman looks at the lightning change which she has made, she is apt to say, "I wish I could do it again." But she is not alone in this. Many of our readers have seen the same thing. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one. It is a fact that the lightning change is a very common one.



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Dainty Fans of Famous Queens

The Coquette's Deadliest Weapon

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1900 San Francisco Morning Call article showing male-impersonating performer Zelma Rawlston transforming from female to male (California Digital Newspaper Collection)

Theater on Market Street (none extant). In 1905, Julian Eltinge gave his first appearance in San Francisco at the Orpheum on O'Farrell Street (not extant).¹³¹ Eltinge was one of the most famous female impersonators of the 20th century and went on to become a Hollywood star in the 1910s. In San Francisco he was billed as the "male Vesta Tilley." (Tilley was an international male-impersonating sensation from Britain.)

Chinese female impersonators were common in Chinatown theaters, which could be attributed to a long-standing tradition in China of all-male theater productions. In the early 1890s, Ah Ming had a contract at a theater on Washington Street and was making \$6,000 a year (equivalent in purchasing power to more than \$150,000 in 2014). Ming's obituary reads: "As a female impersonator ... Ming led all of his countrymen" and was rumored to have performed for the "crowned head of China."¹³² Yung Lun, a female impersonator at a Chinese theater on Jackson Street, "was paid a high salary, but fan tan and lottery kept him always in debt."¹³³ Me Chung Chen was another female impersonator at a theater on Jackson Street.¹³⁴

Male-to-female cross-dressers were more common than their female-to-male counterparts, but women performing as men also appeared in minstrel troupes. In August 1863, famous American stage performer Adah Isaacs Menken played a Tartar prince in *Mazeppa* at Maguire's Opera House on Washington Street. The show drew a huge audience that waited outside for hours on opening day and filled the theater every night of the series. Newspapers described Menken's performances as venturing "out of the common run" and creating an "idealized duality of sex."¹³⁵ Menken caught the eye of gay San Francisco author Charles Warren Stoddard who admired her "half-feminine masculinity."¹³⁶ (Stoddard and Menken are discussed in further detail in the section titled "Bohemianism.") In the 1860s, Salle Hinckley of the Buislay Troupe performed as "Don Guzman" at San Francisco's Metropolitan Theatre on Montgomery Street. A newspaper account made sure to note Hinckley's attractiveness and womanly grace and that, "like few [other male impersonators]" she did not cater to the "morbid taste by absolutely unsexing herself."¹³⁷ In 1896, England's Tina Corri and America's Ella Ellis performed at the Orpheum on O'Farrell Street, with Ellis dubbed as "America's Vesta Tilley." Zelma Rawlston, a famous male-impersonator from New York performed in San Francisco in 1900. In describing why she became a male-impersonator, Rawlston said: "I did an impersonation of Vesta Tilley that made a hit, and so I ... struck my forte. I like to do men, but my men are gentlemen. I study men ... to try to be as mannish as I can; but I never had any trouble.... I hadn't the slightest difficulty in acquiring a manly stride."¹³⁸ Grace Leonard, billed as "Stageland's Most Artistic Male Impersonator" and "The Ideal American Boy," performed at the Empress on Market Street in 1912.

Cross-Gender Entertainment in the Barbary Coast

A second form of cross-gender performance—somewhat seedier than cross-dressing performances in mainstream theaters—took place in the saloons and burlesque theaters in entertainment districts like the Barbary Coast, Chinatown, portions of Market Street, and later, the Tenderloin. The Barbary Coast was San Francisco's principal entertainment district from the Gold Rush through the 1910s,

131 *San Francisco Call*, September 17, 1905.

132 *San Francisco Call*, November 27, 1892.

133 *San Francisco Call*, May 22, 1901.

134 "Chinese Riot in Theater," *San Francisco Call*, February 17, 1903.

135 Quoted in Ben Tarnoff, *The Bohemians: Mark Twain and the San Francisco Writers Who Reinvented American Literature* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014), 57.

136 Quoted in *Ibid.*

137 "The Buislay Troupe," *Daily Alta California*, April 16, 1866.

138 "Zelma Rawlston," *Times-Picayune*, June 7, 1898.

stretching west along Pacific Avenue from the waterfront to Montgomery Avenue (now Columbus) with branches down Kearny Street and Broadway. The streets were lined with saloons, concert and dance halls, gaming houses, and brothels. The area was considered blighted throughout its history, riddled with “squalor, poverty and crime,” and home to the “dregs of the city’s population.”¹³⁹ The saloons were known as “deadfalls,” and the streets were “cruised” or “sailed” by patrons called rangers or pirates. Theft, assault, and murder were weekly if not daily occurrences—mostly carried out against “greenhorns,” visitors from rural areas outside of the city looking to spend their money on alcohol and sex. The Barbary Coast was home to a mix of races with American, Irish, German, and African American saloonkeepers and patrons of many nationalities. The area also was a draw for soldiers stationed at the Presidio and merchant marines arriving at the port of San Francisco. As San Francisco neighborhoods continued to develop to the south and west through the end of the 19th century, the Barbary Coast and other northern environs were neglected and cut off from the major street-car lines leading to the Market Street hub, adding to the district’s reputation as a desolate wasteland.¹⁴⁰

Female impersonators performed on stage in Barbary Coast establishments but also worked in the area’s sex trade, either to serve the needs of men looking for nonnormative sex, or with the intention of duping men into thinking they were with biological women, sometimes with the intention of robbing them. Saloons and theaters in San Francisco’s entertainment districts were known for their private, curtained “boxes” lining the walls; sex for sale was common in this setting. There are many early examples of female impersonators engaging in homosocial and homosexual activity in San Francisco dives, but only a few will be listed here.

In 1894, a female impersonator named Bert Larose was employed at Bottle Meier’s theater at 513 Pacific Avenue (not extant).¹⁴¹ Bert Larose was a “beardless youth with a falsetto voice” who made a “precarious living by performing as a woman in Barbary Coast theaters and dives.”¹⁴² Bottle Meier’s was a notorious dive that featured a row of curtained boxes where women were known to “lure the unwary to ruin.”¹⁴³ In May 1894, Larose—“nicely painted and wearing his skirts”—drew the attention of an old farmer from Napa. After a few beers, the farmer was “smitten with the fictitious charms of [Larose]” and invited him into a private box where the two “caressed ... kissed ... hugged” until the farmer was kicked out. The next morning, hung-over and missing over \$250 in cash, the farmer accused Bert Larose of theft. Larose was arrested, convicted of grand larceny, and sent to San Quentin for a six-year term.¹⁴⁴

A second early example is the Dash at 574 Pacific Avenue (extant), one of the largest dance halls built in the Barbary Coast after the 1906 earthquake. Originally called the Seattle Saloon and Dance Hall, the name changed in 1908 when ownership transferred to Joe Stevens, Jim Stevens, and Billy Harrington. The Dash was described as being the “home of unspeakable vices and the most depraved type of men,”¹⁴⁵ where, according to historian Nan Alamilla Boyd, “homosexual sex could be purchased in booths for a dollar.”¹⁴⁶ The exterior of the building was covered with “gaudy paintings” of scantily clad women and a large sign announcing “Free Show Within.” The interior was lined with curtained boxes, “in which are ensconced degenerate female impersonators.”¹⁴⁷ The

139 “On the Hills,” *Daily Alta California*, February 1, 1886.

140 “The Northern Part of the City,” *Daily Alta California*, December 18, 1876.

141 *San Francisco Call*, May 31, 1894.

142 *San Francisco Call*, August 3, 1894.

143 *San Francisco Call*, August 8, 1893.

144 *San Francisco Call*, September 2, 1894.

145 “Dive Men Officials for Cook,” *San Francisco Call*, October 20, 1908. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

146 *Ibid.*, 25.

147 “Dive Men Officials for Cook.” Cited in *Ibid.*



RIGHT: Rendering of Bottle Meier's Theater at 513 Pacific Avenue and newspaper article about female-impersonator Bert Larose (California Digital Newspaper Collection)



IN FEMALE GARB.
—
**An Actor Plays the Part
of a Siren.**
—
IS CHARGED WITH ROBBERY.

LEFT: 574 Pacific Avenue, home of The Dash in 1908 (Photo by Katherine Petrin)

Dash, like many other Barbary Coast saloons, was operated by criminals whose main goal was to dupe the unwitting. The Dash is often called San Francisco's "first gay bar," but likely it was one of many early examples of a typical entertainment-district saloon featuring female impersonators engaging in homosocial or homosexual activity—either with the intention to deceive or to meet a demand for nonnormative sex.

Cross-Gender Identification

As with cross-dressing during the Gold Rush period, San Franciscans cross-dressed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for many reasons, but primarily because the men and women maintained cross-gender identities, or because it was practical or provided a sense of security (for women dressed as men). When discussing cross-gender identities in the 19th century, historians caution against applying labels such as gay, lesbian, and transgender because it is difficult to know if the men and women identified in these ways, especially in a period before the terminology existed and before the social roles in question were clearly distinguished from one another. There are many documented cases of cross-dressing in San Francisco that can be analyzed as early cases of cross-gender identification; a few examples will be provided here.

One of the more documented cases of a female-to-male cross-dresser in San Francisco is Jeanne Bonnet, arrested over twenty times in the 1870s for cross-dressing. Bonnet was known for wearing "hoodlum" suits preferred by San Francisco's working-class men.¹⁴⁸ She had short hair and a taste for hard liquor, according to historian Clare Sears, and she posed as a man so she could frequent the bars and brothels of the Barbary Coast.¹⁴⁹ Bonnet was renowned for enticing female sex workers to leave their brothels. After convincing French sex worker Blanche Beunion to escape prostitution and her male lover, Bonnet was murdered in 1876 while spending the night with her.¹⁵⁰

In the 1890s, a biologically male carpenter named Ferdinand Haisch, living at 407 McAllister Street (not extant), became a local sensation for cross-dressing, drawing "hundreds of curiosity seekers" to Haisch's house.¹⁵¹ Haisch had a wardrobe full of women's gowns, all of which Haisch made by hand. Police arrested Haisch in 1895 after receiving complaints of a "strange woman" walking the streets of Hayes Valley. When Haisch was arrested, she was wearing a green silk shirt, red stockings, silver-buckled garters, high-heeled shoes, and a woman's hat.¹⁵²

One of the Bay Area's most famous cross-dressers was Babe Bean, born in San Francisco in 1869. Bean's birth name was Elvira Virginia Mugarietta, daughter of Jose Marcos Mugarrieta, San Francisco's first Mexican consul, and Eliza Alice Garland.¹⁵³ While living in Stockton in 1897, Babe Bean was arrested for dressing in men's clothing and became a local celebrity thanks to constant press coverage. Later that year, Bean was arrested in San Francisco for cross-dressing and explained to the officers that traveling in men's clothing afforded "more protection than skirts."¹⁵⁴ Bean joined the military as a man in 1898 and served in the Spanish-American War in the Philippines. After returning to San Francisco, Bean adopted the Anglo-American name Jack Garland and spent the rest of his life working as a nurse and social worker. When Garland died in 1936, he created another

148 Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 64.

149 *Ibid.*

150 *Ibid.*

151 Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*, 72.

152 Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 64.

153 Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Bodies in Motion: Lesbian and Transsexual Histories," Martin B. Duberman, ed. *Queer World: The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 138.

154 "Wears Trousers But Her Tongue is Silent—A Mysterious Young Woman Who Lives in a River Ark at Stockton," *San Francisco Call*, August 24, 1897. Cited in Sueyoshi, "Mindful Masquerades," 75.

media stir when it was revealed that his “true sex” was female. Historians have analyzed Garland’s cross-gender identity as both lesbian and transgender.¹⁵⁵

There are early cases of cross-dressing that fall somewhere between cross-gender entertainment and cross-gender identification. Theater historian Laurence Senelick writes about an early underground community he calls a “queer and transgender demi-monde” that was able to thrive because of its connection to mainstream cross-gender entertainment.¹⁵⁶ In the Barbary Coast and later the Tenderloin, explains Nan Alamilla Boyd, “female impersonators transported the language and gestures of a nascent queer culture to the popular stage,” and “enabled audiences to negotiate the boundaries of a changing sexual landscape.”¹⁵⁷ Gay and transgender women “passed as women” on stage, “but they also passed in real life, citing their performer status as a justification for cross-dressing.”¹⁵⁸ One example of a cross-gender performer who was likely part of San Francisco’s “queer demimonde” is Arthur Powell. In 1905, Powell and Charles Regal, while posing as brothers, shared a room at a lodging house in South of Market at 329 Minna Street (not extant). The South of Market area before the 1906 earthquake contained the city’s largest and densest collections of lodging houses, mostly occupied by young, single working-class men. Neighbors reported that Powell and Regal dressed alike, were inseparable, and “slept days and went out nights.”¹⁵⁹ Arthur Powell was described as “extremely effeminate” and sometimes performed as a female impersonator in a local theater troupe. In April 1905, Charles Regal left San Francisco after allegedly stealing Powell’s watches and diamond ring, leaving Powell so distraught that he committed suicide. Regal, either despondent over his companion’s death or fearing consequences after initially being charged with Powell’s murder also committed suicide, leaving their story shrouded in mystery.¹⁶⁰

Cross-Dressing in the Popular Press and Public Response

Cross-dressing in the 19th and early 20th centuries, though relatively common, was often covered in newspapers when men and women were arrested for impersonating the opposite gender.¹⁶¹ Up until the late 19th century, press coverage of cross-dressers rarely focused on sexuality—it was viewed as a one-off occurrence, a prank, a necessity to get a job, or, in the case of cross-gender entertainment, as part of one’s job. Newspaper descriptions of female-to-male cross dressers often focused on the woman’s underlying femininity and attractiveness.¹⁶² All of this began to change in the late 19th century for a variety of reasons. First, this period coincided with increased dissemination of medical literature regarding nonnormative sexuality (as discussed in “Early Medical Theories and Literature on Homosexuality”). The popular press gained access to new scientific and psychoanalytical theories—especially theories about the degenerative nature of homosexuality and cross-dressing.¹⁶³ As a result, newspaper articles started to show “increasing suspicion” of a link between cross-dressing and sexuality.¹⁶⁴ According to historian Sharon Ullman, male-to-female cross-dressers in particular came under increased scrutiny as the newspapers

155 Boyd, “Bodies in Motion: Lesbian and Transsexual Histories,” 138-139.

156 Laurence Senelick, “Boys and Girls Together: Subcultural Origins of Glamour Drag and Male Impersonation on the Nineteenth-Century Stage,” in Lesley Ferris, ed., *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (London: Routledge, 1993), 85. Senelick is quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 34.

157 Ibid.

158 Ibid., 36.

159 “Young Man Dies in Room and Murder is Suspected,” *San Francisco Call*, August 16, 1905.

160 “His Death Increases Mystery,” *San Francisco Call*, August 28, 1905.

161 Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 57.

162 Ibid., 44.

163 Ibid., 33.

164 Ibid., 57.

“increasingly focused specifically on (homo)sexuality when reviewing, critiquing, and considering the character of men who performed theatrically as women.”¹⁶⁵ By the turn of the century, newspapers were conflating cross-dressing with sexual deviancy and using descriptors borrowed from popular medical literature such as “sexual invert.”

A second reason for changes in popular perceptions of cross-dressing, specifically in the publicity surrounding women dressing as men, was the women’s reform movements of the late 19th century, which sought to expand women’s voices in the public sphere and argued for control of social behaviors perceived as detrimental to women and children. As the movements grew in size and power, the male-dominated press accused the reformers of violating gender norms and described the women in derogatory terms, such as “mannish” or “sexless” or “man-woman.” Male opponents of the women’s reform movements believed that male culture and the traditional family structure were under attack. (Women’s reform movements are discussed in detail in “Progressive Era Women’s Reform Movements”.) All of this reinforced the public’s perception that there was something fundamentally wrong with women who deviated from traditional gender roles and customs. As a result, the popular press no longer feminized female-to-male cross dressers. Instead, articles focused on the women’s underlying masculinity and newspapers increasingly linked women’s cross-dressing to sexual deviance.

Finally, perceptions of cross-dressing (and ultimately, nonnormative sexuality) were also changed by a handful of legal cases in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that drew international media attention to homosexuality. First there was the Cleveland Street Scandal in London in 1889 that exposed an upper-class male brothel. Although not widely reported in the United States, this case did make the news and had a part in contributing to public perceptions about homosexuality. A few years later, in 1895, Oscar Wilde—who had made a high-profile appearance in San Francisco in 1882— was convicted of sodomy and gross indecency stemming from his “flamboyant and contemptuous manner” and a concern that he was corrupting young men, not just sexually but through his artistic lifestyle.¹⁶⁶ The Oscar Wilde trials received significant press coverage throughout the United States—by far the most widely disseminated press coverage up to this point about a public trial involving a gay man. As proof that the American press was paying attention to these international cases, when a male-to-female cross-dresser named Joseph “Maude” Gilligan was arrested in Denver in 1895, the *Denver Evening Post* compared the case to London’s Cleveland Street Scandal and described Gilligan as a “real Oscar Wilde.”¹⁶⁷ Major scandals involving gay sex in Portland, Oregon, in 1912, and Long Beach, California, in 1914, received wide media attention across the country. The case in Long Beach involved the arrest of 31 men for participating in a consensual oral sex ring. Peter Boag writes that these two events “crystallize[d] in the public mind the connection between males’ effeminate gender activities, cross-dressing, and their homosexuality.”¹⁶⁸

As the popular press’s perceptions of cross-dressing began to change, public perceptions shifted as well. Newspapers, according to Boag, “had a substantially more profound influence on popular views about cross-dressing” than anything else, including medical literature, which was largely inaccessible to lay readers.¹⁶⁹ Because of this influence, the American public around the turn of the 20th century began to question the motives behind cross-dressing. Historian Allan Bérubé

165 Sharon Ullman, *Sex Seen: The Emergence of Modern Sexuality in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 45-71. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 74-75.

166 Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 393.

167 *Denver Evening Post*, April 25, 1895. Quoted in Boag, *Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past*, 83.

168 *Ibid.*, 82.

169 *Ibid.*, 42.

notes, “homosexual activities in San Francisco, secret to begin with, were forced to go even further underground. The trials and jailing of Oscar Wilde drove them even deeper into the shadows.”¹⁷⁰ Cross-dressing on the stage also was affected. Female-impersonating stage performers, Julian Eltinge for example, were forced to project strongly heterosexual and masculine images off stage to avoid speculation about their sexuality. In 1912, a writer for the *San Francisco Call* expressed his distaste for a cross-gender performance in San Francisco: “Personally I have always loathed a female impersonator. The anomaly of their behavior has this great disadvantage—the better they are the more I hate ‘em.... And sex deception is repugnant fundamentally.”¹⁷¹

By the 1920s and, especially, 1930s, the growing public perception linking cross-dressing to nonnormative sexuality forced the performances off of mainstream stages and into underground venues such as nightclubs and cabarets. Between 1935 and 1937, female impersonation was banned in large cities, including Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Los Angeles.¹⁷² In San Francisco after the repeal of Prohibition, however, cross-gender performances became the primary form of entertainment in the nightclubs that catered to LGBTQ people (discussed in “Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco”).

PROGRESSIVE ERA WOMEN’S REFORM MOVEMENTS

Introduction

The Progressive Era was a 30-year period of sweeping reform as American citizens fought to end public corruption and prostitution and for changes to political, economic, and social systems, including alcohol control, suffrage rights, labor conditions. Women were responsible for many of the reform movements, including in San Francisco where women (mostly white members of the middle and upper classes) “organized to outlaw prostitution, provide aid to the poor, protect child laborers, limit men’s access to alcohol, and gain suffrage rights.”¹⁷³ The Progressive Era culminated in major laws governing labor conditions and in constitutional amendments such as prohibition of alcohol (Eighteenth Amendment) and women’s right to vote (Nineteenth Amendment).

For women in the 19th century—lower and middle-class women in particular—it was difficult to achieve financial independence because they had little or no access to higher education and were excluded from most occupations. This began to change with economic development and establishment of private colleges for predominantly white and upper class women. Mills College, established in Benicia, California in 1852 and moved to Oakland, California in 1871, was the first women’s college west of the Rocky Mountains. UC Berkeley admitted women beginning in 1868, and Stanford University admitted women when it opened it 1891.¹⁷⁴ In 1880, there were forty-thousand American women enrolled in 153 colleges and universities; fifty percent of the women who graduated in the following decade did not marry.¹⁷⁵ With college degrees, women began to fight for access to previously all-male professions in the fields of law, medicine, and architecture—yet they continued to be underrepresented compared to men. By 1890 there were 250,000 female elementary school teachers and 4,500 female physicians in the United States.¹⁷⁶ The ability to obtain careers led to financial independence for a small number of women, which made same-sex

170 Allan Bérubé, “Lesbians and Gay Men in Early San Francisco: Notes Toward a Social History of Lesbians and Gay Men in America” (March 1979), Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

171 “One Impersonator Able to Escape Perversion,” *San Francisco Call*, October 28, 1912.

172 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 38.

173 *Ibid.*, 39.

174 Starr, *California*, 158.

175 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 13-14. See note 6.

176 Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 386.

(homosexual and homosocial) relationships feasible because women did not have to rely financially on men. Of course, this drew scrutiny as people like Havelock Ellis made connections between women's access to education and an increase in lesbianism.¹⁷⁷ The San Francisco-based *Pacific Medical Journal* reported in 1902: "Female boarding schools and colleges are the great breeding grounds of ... homosexuality."¹⁷⁸

Two notable women in San Francisco who were able to maintain successful professional careers and live independently in the early 1900s were architect Emily Williams and her partner, metal artist Lillian Palmer.¹⁷⁹ Emily Williams began as a teacher, but after meeting journalist Lillian Palmer in 1898 she was inspired to pursue architecture. In 1901, Williams and Palmer moved to San Francisco where Williams studied drafting at the California School of Mechanical Arts (now Lick Wilmerding High School). Williams was unable to find work in the male-dominated architecture field, so she struck out on her own. Her first project was a vacation home for herself and Palmer in Pacific Grove, which she designed and constructed by hand, with Palmer's help, in 1904. Williams' sister, impressed by the cottage, commissioned three more cottages on adjacent lots. These projects led to many other residential buildings in Pacific Grove, Carmel, San Jose, and San Francisco, including homes for Dr. Anna Lukens, one of the first female physicians in the country, and Mrs. Jessie Jordan, wife of Stanford University President David Starr Jordan. The *San Jose Mercury and Herald* commented on Williams' work in 1906: "Miss Williams' houses have won her an enviable reputation.... They are not only beautiful and artistic, but convenient, livable and planned to save steps and with places to put things."¹⁸⁰

In 1908, Williams and Palmer travelled to Europe where Williams studied classical architecture and Palmer practiced metal work. When they returned to San Francisco, Williams and Palmer shared a house with Palmer's parents at 1476 Willard Street (extant) until Williams designed a home for the two of them at 1037-39 Broadway, completed in 1913 (extant). Williams and Palmer lived together in the Broadway house through the 1920s; the 1920 census sheet lists Williams as "head" and Palmer as "boarder". The women also shared a Williams-designed vacation home in the Santa Cruz Mountains called "Wake Robin," which was destroyed by fire around 1940.

Lillian Palmer was an equally successful businesswoman. After returning from Europe, she opened The Palmer Shop at 1345 Sutter (not extant), where she manufactured and sold metal art, becoming known as San Francisco's "woman blacksmith" and one of the most well-regarded metal artists in the west. In 1915, Palmer and Williams received a commission from the women-owned Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Company of Minnesota to design an exhibition booth for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco; Palmer designed the light fixtures for the exhibit. The *San Francisco Chronicle* praised Palmer's work in 1917: "Miss Palmer leads one of the most successful electric fixtures organizations in this vicinity ... Its substantial and widespread success is indicated by the fact that its electric fixtures are sought for and shipped to New York, Alaska and Mexico."¹⁸¹ Palmer was active in the suffrage movement and was an ardent advocate for women in business. In 1916, she co-founded and was the first president of the Business and Professional Women's Club of San Francisco, originally headquartered at 54 Kearny Street but moved to 575

177 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Discourses of Sexuality and Subjectivity: The New Woman, 1870-1936," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 271.

178 Ibid.

179 Thanks to Inge Horton for the lead on Emily Williams. All information on Emily Williams is from Inge S. Horton, *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area: The Lives and Careers of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 2010).

180 *San Jose Mercury and Herald*, November 11, 1906. Quoted in Ibid.

181 "California Women in Public Life," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1917, 51.



ABOVE LEFT: Emily Williams and Lillian Palmer residence at 1037-39 Broadway (Photo by Shayne Watson)



ABOVE RIGHT: 1907 *San Francisco Call* article about metal artist Lillian Palmer (California Digital Newspaper Collection)



RIGHT: Pioneering architect Emily Williams (Inge Horton)

Market Street in 1920 (both buildings not extant).¹⁸² Palmer was quoted as saying, “Women in business must play the game as men have established it.”¹⁸³

Sometime in the late 1930s, Williams and Palmer moved to a home designed by Williams in Los Gatos. Williams died there in 1942, Palmer in 1961. Palmer’s obituary notes her lifelong relationship with William but described the two women as “very close friends.”¹⁸⁴ The two women are buried together in Los Gatos.

Right to Vote

In the second half of the 19th century, American women started pushing for social reforms, especially the right to vote. Some of the earliest leaders in the suffrage movement started out as abolitionists. When the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London in 1840, the eight female delegates from the United States were banned from attending because of their gender.¹⁸⁵ Understanding the similarities between their lack of basic rights and those of the enslaved African Americans they were fighting to free, two of the delegates—Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—organized the first women’s rights convention in 1848, held in Seneca Falls, New York. In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton joined with Susan B. Anthony and formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) to campaign for equal rights in the workplace, marriage, and home, in addition to control of one’s body and access to divorce. That same year, another group of women founded the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). The two organizations joined in 1890 to form the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). These suffrage groups, and later the National Women’s Party, fought for decades until 1920 when finally the Nineteenth Amendment granted all women the right to vote. (Women in California were granted suffrage in 1911.)

Some of the most well known reformers were involved in long-term relationships with other women, including suffrage leader Susan B. Anthony; M. Carey Thomas, second president of Bryn Mawr College; and Jane Addams, cofounder of the Hull House settlement house in Chicago. Historian Lillian Faderman documents the reformers’ same-sex relationships but cautions against labeling them as *lesbian* because lesbian as an identity did not yet exist. Instead, Faderman uses *lesbian* as an adjective to describe their “intense woman-to-woman relating and commitments,” and notes that their “chief sexual and/or affectional and domestic behaviors” were shared only with other women.¹⁸⁶

San Franciscans joined the suffrage fight early. One of the first women in the American West to campaign for women’s rights was Laura de Force Gordon, a trailblazing lawyer and newspaper editor whose speech in 1868 at Platt’s Hall on the corner of Montgomery and Bush (not extant) was one of the first public statements in the West to address equal rights for women. In 1870, she helped found the California Woman Suffrage Society, which met regularly in San Francisco at Dashaway Hall on Post Street (not extant). At an early gathering of the Woman Suffrage Society in 1870, a woman read a “declaration of independence modeled after that of 1776” that declared “women to be free and equal” to men and “independent of their oppressive laws and usages.”¹⁸⁷

182 Louis S. Lyon and Josephine Wilson, *Who’s Who Among the Women of California, An Annual Devoted to the Representative Women of California* (San Francisco: Security Pub. Co., 1922).

183 “Woman, Couldn’t Write, Turns Blacksmith: Miss Lillian Palmer, ‘The Woman Blacksmith,’” *Prescott Evening Courier*, January 4, 1926.

184 Sue Kinney, “Lillian Palmer Dies; Charter BPWC Member,” *Los Gatos Weekly*, 1961.

185 Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done for America – A History* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 20.

186 *Ibid.*, 3.

187 *San Francisco Call*, May 20, 1870.



TOP: Image from May 1895 *San Francisco Call* article about Susan B. Anthony and the second annual Women's Congress of the Pacific Coast at Golden Gate Hall



LEFT: Image from 1912 *San Francisco Call* article about dress-reform advocate Dr. Mary Walker, shown in tuxedo at right

(California Digital Newspaper Collection)

In 1871, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton made their first trip to San Francisco and were hosted by Governor Leland Stanford at the Grand Hotel on the corner of Market and New Montgomery (not extant). On another trip to San Francisco in May 1895, Susan B. Anthony attended the second annual Women's Congress of the Pacific Coast at Golden Gate Hall on Sutter Street (not extant). Presided over by philanthropist and education reformer Sarah B. Cooper, the multi-day conference was featured in a full-page spread in the *San Francisco Call*:

Women, women! All kinds and degrees of women. They filled halls and balcony; they stood against the walls and ... filled the aisles. They were enthusiastic and hopeful and full of excitement ... Before [the conference] concluded its first day's labors, the home, the new woman, motherhood and child training, and that universally interesting subject, marriage, were handled vigorously—the latter, in several instances, without gloves.¹⁸⁸

Susan B. Anthony was the star of the show. Her seat at the president's table was "as gorgeous as a regal throne ... tied with orange ribbons—the suffrage color."¹⁸⁹ Other famous suffragists in attendance were Dr. Anna Shaw (known as Anthony's "first lieutenant"); Dr. Millicent Shinn, a child psychologist and the first female to receive a Ph.D. from the University of California; and Laura de Force Gordon.

Dress Reform

The campaign for women's dress reform in the 19th century relates to female-to-male cross-dressing. Beginning in the Victorian period, reformers pushed for the right of women to wear clothing that was more comfortable and practical (e.g., loose-fitting pants or "bloomers") than the restrictive costumes popular at the time (e.g., full-length dresses with extremely tight corsets). Women also fought for the right to wear practical clothes for activities such as bicycle riding and swimming. One of the lead proponents of dress reform in the late 19th century was Dr. Mary Walker, who worked as an army surgeon before becoming a reformer. Walker dressed in self-designed "masculine" clothes for most of her life and went around the country lecturing about women's rights, including dress reform. The dress reform movement was largely unsuccessful, as the media and the public in the late 19th and early 20th centuries grew increasingly dismissive of (and even hostile toward) women's reform movements, especially any movements that disrupted gender norms. Newspapers depicted Walker as a curiosity and sexologists assumed she was a lesbian, referring to her as an "invert." Lillian Faderman references a 1902 article in a San Francisco medical journal that referred to Walker as "the most distinguished sexual invert in the United States."¹⁹⁰ (Faderman also points out that many of Walker's relationships were with women, including lawyer Belva Lockwood, the first woman to argue before the Supreme Court, with whom Walker lived for several years.¹⁹¹) When Walker was on a lecture tour in the Bay Area, she was received with great fanfare. "The sensation of California [S]treet, yesterday, was the appearance of Mrs. Dr. Mary Walker, dressed in a nondescript style of apparel, being a pair of pants and a singular appearing coat or cloak, made of black silk ... and she trotted along, flanked on either side by strong-minded looking females of the maiden persuasion."¹⁹²

188 "Woman's Congress 1895," *San Francisco Call*, May 21, 1895.

189 *Ibid.*

190 Faderman, *To Believe in Women*, 259.

191 *Ibid.*

192 "Mrs. Dr. Mary Walker," *Daily Alta California*, September 3, 1875.

New Women

Women who were involved in these early reform movements became known as New Women; an 1888 article in the journal *Alpha* characterized such women in these words:

[A] woman who has open before her the broad avenues of usefulness, who has ambition and energy to develop her powers, who will not be satisfied to tie herself down in the soul-cramping marriage ... has learned [that] woman's highest duty to herself and humanity demands her full development as *Woman*, not as *Wife* or a *Mother*.¹⁹³

The idea of educated, financially independent women not committing themselves to marriage or motherhood was too progressive for most late-19th century Americans; the public response to the New Women was brutal. Psychiatrist William Lee Howard equated New Women to lesbians, saying "the female possessed of masculine ideas about independence" and the "female sexual pervert, are simply different degrees of the same class—degenerates."¹⁹⁴ Havelock Ellis accused reformers of "encouraging women to abandon marriage and motherhood."¹⁹⁵ These responses stemmed from a fear of female domination, especially domination by women who did not conform to gender norms, according to historian David Greenberg. "The preservation of male domination in the face of women's aspirations to equality depended on men possessing qualities that clearly differentiated them from women. It consequently became necessary to police ... women who exhibited them."¹⁹⁶

Newspapers accused New Women of intentionally trying to overshadow (or become) men, driving men to fear a loss of male privilege. New Women were decried as sabotaging the traditional male and female relationship.¹⁹⁷ As was the case with Dr. Mary Walker, the media painted New Women as sexless or masculine, calling them "man-woman," or "mannish" or "manly." An 1895 article in the *San Francisco Call* addressed a heated public debate about women wanting to wear pants when riding bicycles and for other sports activities: The "'sporting woman,' the 'mannish woman,' and the 'bicycle woman' bring disgrace on the true woman ... The 'mannish' woman [is] a creature entirely useless and an unnecessary evil in this country, which should not be encouraged."¹⁹⁸ Later in 1895, the *San Francisco Call* featured an editorial by a Presbyterian minister:

The New Woman ... may be manly, for manliness is a virtue common to both sexes; but a mannish woman is intolerable, and mannishness ought not to be a quality of any woman. Common sense teaches that comfort, safety and propriety demand proper garments for [certain activities], but there is no cause today, nor has there ever been, for a woman to obliterate the distinction which God has intended to make perpetual.¹⁹⁹

Also in 1895, the *San Francisco Call's* coverage of the Women's Congress of the Pacific Coast focused on the masculine aspects of many of the female attendees, including describing Susan B. Anthony's "lieutenant" Dr. Anna Shaw as "manly."²⁰⁰

193 Quoted in Faderman, *To Believe in Women*, 256.

194 Quoted in Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 41.

195 Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 387.

196 *Ibid.*, 388.

197 Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*, 47.

198 *San Francisco Call*, June 9, 1895, 2.

199 "Reverend D.B. Greigg, Presbyterian minister, Baltimore, MD," *San Francisco Call*, October 1, 1895, 11.

200 "Woman's Congress 1895," *San Francisco Call*, May 21, 1895.

In San Francisco, the New Woman was nicknamed the “Frisco Girl,” an image that historian Amy Sueyoshi says was promoted in direct opposition to the East Coast New Woman, which some San Franciscans decried as “unpleasant.”²⁰¹

BOHEMIANISM TO BEATS

San Francisco’s bohemian roots extend to the middle of the 19th century, but the concept of bohemianism persisted well into the 20th century. After the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, some of San Francisco’s earliest LGBTQ spaces such as Finocchio’s, Mona’s, and the Black Cat Café were often described as “bohemian,” meaning that patrons were a mix of artists, writers, performers, and LGBTQ people. In a sense, San Francisco’s bohemian community became the city’s LGBTQ community, so background on bohemianism is worth describing here.

The term bohemian is defined as a person—usually artists, writers, journalists, and actors—living an unconventional, often economically marginal life, typically in an enclave with others. The concept was first introduced in France in the early 19th century when communities began forming around restaurants and cafes frequented by creative and artistic people. The idea caught on in the United States in New York, where the bohemians were a group of artists and writers who congregated at a bar called Pfaff’s. The group included gay poet Walt Whitman and male-impersonating actress Adah Isaacs Menken, who performed in San Francisco in the 1860s. After the Civil War, some of the original New York bohemians moved to San Francisco.

San Francisco’s First Bohemians

One of the first proponents of a bohemian community in San Francisco was poet and journalist Bret Harte. Harte arrived in San Francisco in 1860 and was hired at the *Golden Era* newspaper, described as the “flagship of the city’s flowering literary scene.”²⁰² Writing under the pseudonym “the Bohemian,” Harte wrote about the New York bohemian scene and set out to replicate it in San Francisco.²⁰³ Harte identified strongly with the concept of bohemia. It was “more than just a byword for wild living. It came to represent a creative alternative to the mundane and the mercenary in American life.”²⁰⁴ He wrote of San Francisco: “Bohemia has never been located geographically, but any clear day when the sun is going down, if you mount Telegraph Hill, you shall see its pleasant valleys and cloud-capped hills glittering in the West like the Spanish castles of Titbottom.”²⁰⁵

Harte was joined at the *Golden Era* by other famous earlier literary figures that also promoted the concept of bohemia: Mark Twain, Ina Coolbrith, and California’s earliest known gay author, Charles Warren Stoddard. When the *Overland Monthly* was started in 1868, Harte, Coolbrith, and Stoddard were the first writers. These three individuals, with the help and support of Mark Twain and Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King, are credited with founding San Francisco’s literary culture. “What connected them was their contempt for custom, their restlessness with received wisdom. They belonged to Bohemia because they didn’t belong anywhere else.”²⁰⁶ Outside of the newspaper offices, San Francisco’s first bohemian headquarters was Ina Coolbrith’s house on Russian Hill (not extant).²⁰⁷ Her regular salons “formed the core of literary San Francisco” for

201 Amy Sueyoshi, comments on Draft LGBTQ Historic Context Statement, December 29, 2014.

202 Ben Tarnoff, *The Bohemians: Mark Twain and the San Francisco Writers Who Reinvented American Literature* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014), 45.

203 Quoted in *Ibid.*, 58.

204 *Ibid.*, 46.

205 Bret Harte quoted in *Ibid.*

206 *Ibid.*, 47.

207 Coolbrith lived at 1604 Taylor Street (1901-1906), 17 Macondray Lane (1907-1909), and 1067 Broadway (1909-1919).

several years in the 1860s.²⁰⁸ Stoddard, who became lifelong friends with Coolbrith, said he “was nowhere more at home than” at Coolbrith’s home.²⁰⁹

Charles Warren Stoddard

Charles Warren Stoddard was one of the first writers in the United States to speak relatively openly about his homosexuality. Born in New York in 1843, Stoddard’s family moved to San Francisco in 1855. Stoddard was working at a bookstore on Montgomery Street in 1862 when he began submitting poetry to the *Golden Era* under the pseudonym Pip Pepperpod. His poetry caught the attention of Thomas Starr King, the Unitarian minister and very influential proponent of literary arts in San Francisco. King became a strong supporter of Stoddard, inviting him to participate in a lecture series on American poetry. Through King, Stoddard was introduced to Bret Harte, Ina Coolbrith, and Mark Twain.

Stoddard was remarkably aware of his homosexuality, which was rare in mid-19th century America. From a young age, he was bullied for being “too girly.”²¹⁰ When male-impersonating actress and New York bohemian Adah Isaacs Menken performed in San Francisco, Stoddard wrote in his journals that he “fantasized about inhabiting a woman’s body, so that his ‘physique’ could be ‘made whole.’”²¹¹ He derived inspiration from gay poet Walt Whitman, especially the veiled homosexual references in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.²¹² Stoddard’s friend, Charles Phillips, wrote about him: “If the Eternal Feminine is an unremitting question mark, then Stoddard should have been born a woman. He has—is—a woman’s soul in all its strange and endless changeableness.”²¹³

In 1864, in the middle of a nervous breakdown, Stoddard travelled to Hawaii where he formed a deep friendship with native Hawaiian Kane-Aloha. Stoddard wrote about his relationship with Kane-Aloha (now understood to be homosexual) and noted that they “reveled in riotous living. We had certainly transgressed the unwritten law but we were not in the least sorry for it.”²¹⁴ Stoddard said that first trip to Hawaii changed “the whole current” of his life.²¹⁵

Stoddard’s first book of poetry, *Poems*, was published in 1867; it was a collaboration between Anton Roman, Stoddard’s friend and publisher, Bret Harte, and artist William Keith. In 1869, as a contributor to the *Overland Monthly*, Stoddard published an article titled “A South Sea Idyll,” a homoerotic short story about his experiences in Hawaii. In 1873, Stoddard’s collection of writings from Tahiti and Hawaii were published under the title *South-Sea Idylls*. In 1903, Stoddard published *For the Pleasure of His Company: An Affair of the Misty City*, an autobiographical novel with homosexual themes set in San Francisco.

Stoddard mingled with both writers and artists, forming strong friendships with Jules Tavernier and portraitist Joseph Strong and his artist sister, Elizabeth—all of whom had studios at 728 Montgomery Street (extant), a headquarters for artists in San Francisco well into the 20th century. Stoddard was also friends with writers Mary Austin, Joaquin Miller, and George Sterling.

208 Tarnoff, *The Bohemians*, 119.

209 *Ibid.*, 120.

210 *Ibid.*

211 Quoted in *Ibid.*, 57.

212 *Ibid.*, 43.

213 Brian McGinty, “Charles Warren Stoddard: The Pleasure of His Company,” *California Historical Quarterly* 52 (Summer 1973), 161.

214 Quoted in Tarnoff, *The Bohemians*, 93.

215 *Ibid.*, 86.



Charles Warren Stoddard (Courtesy Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley)

Stoddard formed an intimate relationship with poet Yone Noguchi in the late 1890s. Noguchi arrived in San Francisco from Japan in 1893 and soon fell in with the bohemian circle, living for a period at Joaquin Miller's home in Oakland.²¹⁶ Noguchi and Stoddard corresponded through letters before meeting in person. Historian Amy Sueyoshi writes about Stoddard falling hard for Noguchi, and "unashamedly gr[owing] explicit about his attraction for Yone ... yearn[ing] to embrace Yone in person and keep him by his side forever."²¹⁷ Stoddard called Noguchi "all beautiful" and "all worthy of love."²¹⁸ Noguchi was equally enthralled and described Stoddard's letters as "moonbeams" lighting his "lonely walks" at night.²¹⁹ The two poets finally met in person in 1900. Although Noguchi remembered the meeting as "heavenly" and a "dream realized," the two men never became lovers.²²⁰ As Sueyoshi explains, Noguchi, who dressed in Western clothes, disappointed Stoddard's taste for the "exotic," especially "Orientalism." Noguchi recalled: "I am positive he prayed that I would come to him in some Japanese robe at the least."²²¹

Stoddard lived in San Francisco off and on until the late 1880s, bouncing around between apartments at 1005 Powell (1868-69), 514 Sutter (1872), 42 Hawthorne (1876 and 1883), 3 Vernon Place (1879-80), and 616 Harrison Street (1880-81) (none extant).²²² By 1905 he had given up on San Francisco: "San Francisco I cannot stomach. It goes quite against the grain."²²³ Stoddard died in Monterey in 1909.

Bohemian Club

After the first wave of bohemians established the idea of bohemianism in the city, a group of journalists, artists, and musicians formalized the concept by founding the Bohemian Club in 1872. The first clubhouse was located at the Astor House on Sacramento near Webb (not extant), but the club soon moved to 430 Pine Street over the California Market (not extant), and then finally to its current location at 624 Taylor Street (extant). Founding members included Thomas Newcomb, editor at the *San Francisco Call*, author Henry George, poet Ambrose Bierce, and Arpad Haraszthy, a pioneer California winemaker. Honorary member Charles Warren Stoddard participated in some of the club's early events, including the first "mid-summer high jinx" in 1878 at the Bohemian Grove on the Russian River. Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde's visits to the club in the late 1870s and early 1880s "decisively shaped the bohemian movement in San Francisco."²²⁴

The Bohemians initially pledged to exclude businessmen from the club—the club's motto is "Weaving Spiders Come Not Here"—but the rule was eventually modified and the Bohemians became less focused on artists and more a club for wealthy businessmen who could afford to support the arts. When Oscar Wilde visited the club in 1882, it is rumored that he remarked: "I never saw so many well-dressed, well-fed, business-looking Bohemians in my life."²²⁵

216 Amy Sueyoshi, "Intimate Inequalities: Interracial Affection and Same-sex Love in the 'Heterosexual' Life of Yone Noguchi, 1897–1909," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29 (Summer 2010), 26.

217 Ibid.

218 Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, D.C., to Yone Noguchi, London, January 31, 1903, in Ikuko Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi: Collected English Letters* (Tokyo, 1975). Quoted in Ibid., 27-28.

219 Yone Noguchi, San Francisco, to Charles Warren Stoddard, July 27, 1897, HM37887, Huntington Manuscripts, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Quoted in Ibid., 28.

220 Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, September 24, 1900, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. Quoted in Ibid., 28.

221 Yone Noguchi, "In the Bungalow with Charles Warren Stoddard: A Protest against Modernism," *National Magazine*, December 1904, 306. Quoted in Ibid., 29.

222 San Francisco city directories.

223 Charles Warren Stoddard quoted in McGinty, "Charles Warren Stoddard," 163.

224 Starr, *California*, 154.

225 Roy Morris, Jr., *Declaring His Genius: Oscar Wilde in North America* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 140.

Montgomery Street: San Francisco's Bohemian Artery

Beginning in the 1850s, San Francisco's artistic and literary community was located in a remarkably cohesive district along Montgomery Street near Jackson Square and North Beach. Many of the city's writers and artists had offices located in or surrounding the Montgomery Block, a four-story building located on the 600 Block of Montgomery Street (not extant). Most of the earliest bohemian hotels—the Lick House, Russ House, and Occidental Hotel—were located on Montgomery Street. Chileon Beach's bookstore where Charles Warren Stoddard worked for two-and-a-half years was on Montgomery. Anton Roman & Co. Publishers, the bookseller that started the *Overland Monthly* and published Stoddard's *Poems* was at 417-419 Montgomery (not extant). Montgomery was also home to the studios of some of the city's most well known artists, including photographers Edward Muybridge and Carleton Watkins.²²⁶

The Montgomery Block, an enormous building filling the entire east side of the block at 600 Montgomery Street where the Transamerica Pyramid exists today, was an early and lasting headquarters for bohemians in San Francisco. Built in 1853, the building initially housed offices on the upper floors and a public bathhouse and saloons below.²²⁷ Toward the last quarter of the 19th century, newspapers and bohemians moved in. City directories show artists working in the Montgomery Block as early as the 1870s, including Elizabeth M. Walton, one of San Francisco's earliest female artists. Charles Warren Stoddard also is rumored to have lived there.²²⁸

The Montgomery Block became a full-fledged bohemian mecca when a restaurant called Coppa & Piantanida opened on the ground floor at 622 Montgomery Street around 1903. Coppa's, as it became known, was owned and operated by Guiseppe (Joseph) "Papa" Coppa and Felix Piantanida. Xavier Martinez, whose studio was one block north of Coppa's, became a regular and was instrumental in forging a bohemian community around the restaurant and the building. Martinez spent time with the bohemian community in Paris and must have seen a similarity in San Francisco's Latin Quarter, as that part of Montgomery was known. A group of bohemians painted the interior walls of Coppa's with cartoons and quotations from Rabelais, *Alice in Wonderland*, Kant, George Sterling, Whistler, and a line from Oscar Wilde's *Salome*: "Something terrible is going to happen."²²⁹ A frieze by Martinez that lined the top of the walls featured a series of black cats, a symbol of bohemianism based on the famous Le Chat Noir café in Paris. Below the cats was a list of names of local bohemians and famous literary figures, including Sappho, the Ancient Greek poet who was famous for her expressions of love for women and for the introduction of the word "lesbian," derived from the island of Lesbos where she lived and led a female community. A table in the center of Coppa's was reserved for nightly meetings of the bohemians, a scene described by the *San Francisco Call* in 1905:

You see, San Francisco's coming on! The spirit that moves men to paint moves men to love good wine, a good dinner, a good companion, a good song, a good story. This is the Latin spirit that's impregnating us, and it is this influence that promises to expand our Puritanical notions of men and things.²³⁰

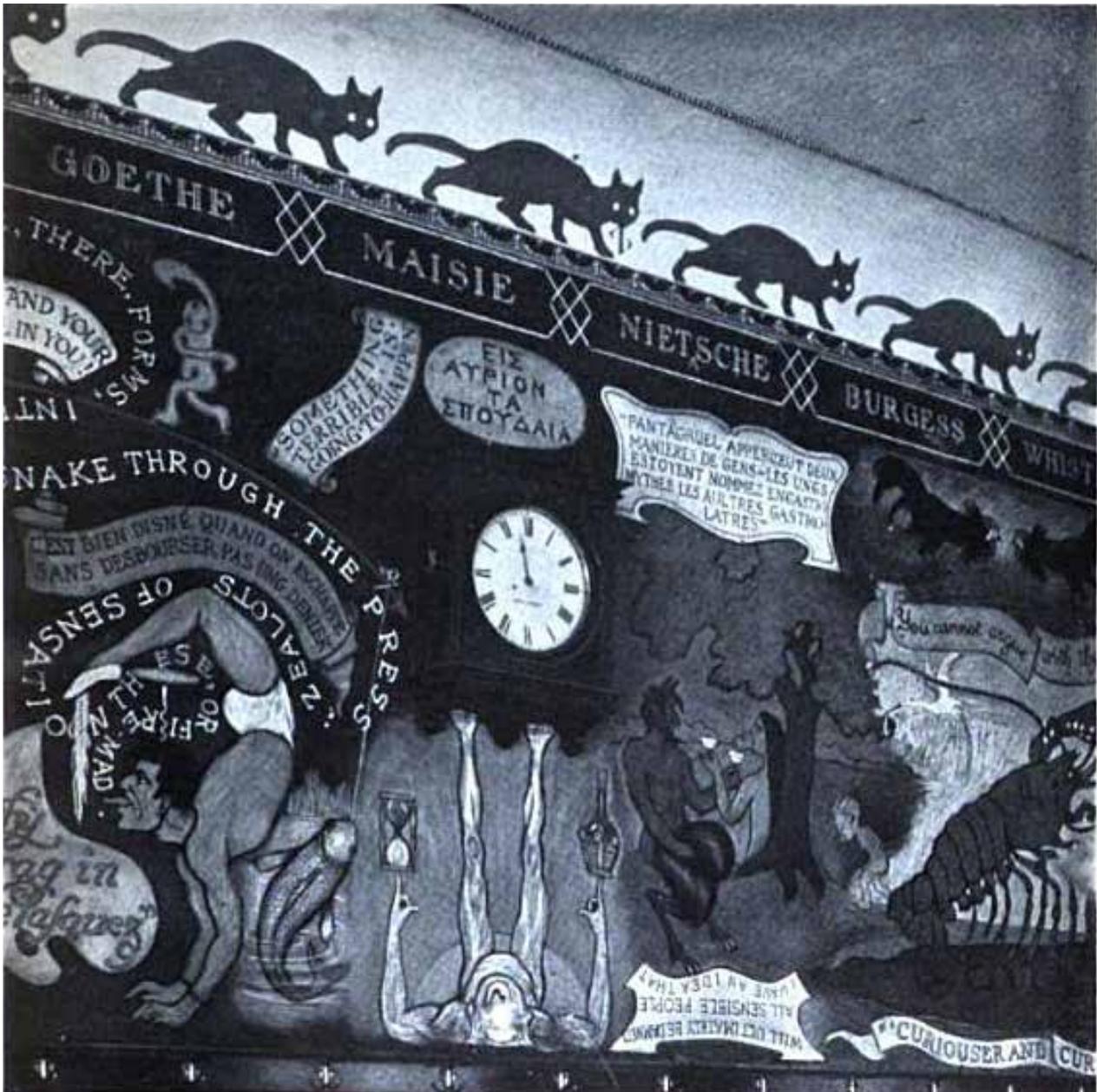
226 San Francisco city directories.

227 Ibid.

228 This could not be verified in city directories.

229 Mabel Croft Deering, "San Francisco's Famous Bohemian Restaurant," *The Critic: An Illustrated Monthly Review of Literature, Art and Life* XLVIII (January-June 1906).

230 Laura Bride Powers, "Among the Interesting San Francisco Studios is that of the Mersfelders," *San Francisco Call*, June 11, 1905, 19.



Mural by artist Porter Garnett in Coppa's at 622 Montgomery Street titled, "Father Time under the Clock" (From a 1906 article by Mabel Croft Deering)

Coppa's became so famous that tourists and curious locals flooded in to gawk at the bohemians—a theme repeated 30 years later at queer nightclubs such as Mona's and Finocchio's. Artist Peter Garnett painted a mural on the wall poking fun at the tension between the bohemians and the tourists.

The 1906 earthquake and fire had a lasting impact on the bohemian community in San Francisco. The San Francisco Art Association's Mark Hopkins Institute of Art—the city's first school for arts—was destroyed. Many of the city's artist studios were burned or looted. Most artists left San Francisco permanently, moving to the East Bay, Carmel on the Monterey Peninsula, Los Angeles, New York, or Europe. The Montgomery Block was one of the few buildings downtown to survive the devastation, but Joseph Coppa decided to move his restaurant to 423 Pine Street (not extant). San Francisco political and business leaders took advantage of the post-earthquake devastation to carry out campaigns to rebuild the city anew and do away with bohemian hangouts:

Montgomery [S]treet has changed...for the better. In its entire length there is not one resurrection of the one time gay and festive places where long haired bohemians foregathered, nor one studio where art may be lured, alackaday for Bohemia! [I]n the place of the timeworn, historic rookeries and shanties which sheltered these idealists immense stone buildings are rising.²³¹

The description above by the *San Francisco Call* in 1908 was true for the southerly section of Montgomery Street in the financial district where new multistory office buildings were rising, but not for the blocks between Clay and Pacific, where the bohemian community became even stronger after the earthquake. With the addition of so many new office buildings closer to Market Street, rents dropped at the Montgomery Block and other artistic headquarters such as 617, 712, and 728 Montgomery (the latter two are extant). By the 1920s, that section of San Francisco was once again a thriving artistic and literary community.

Post-Earthquake Expansion of Bohemian Community

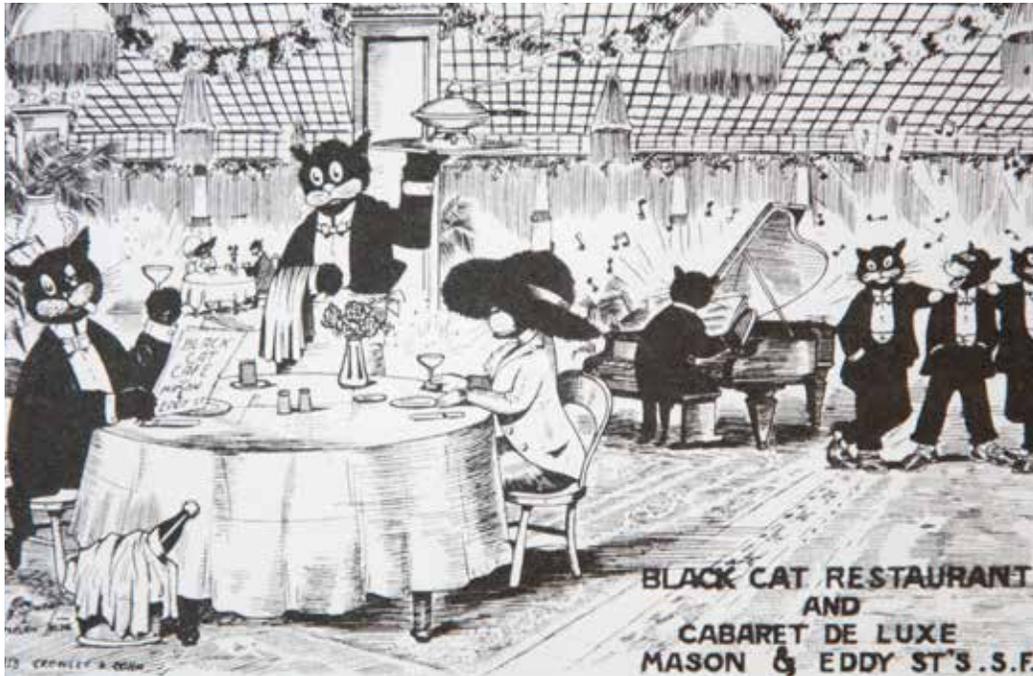
By the 1890s, the word "bohemian" became a catchall term for anything new, artistic, or edgy. Bohemian cafes and hotels opened across the city, including the Bohemia Café at 711 Market Street (not extant), the Bohemia Hotel at 1800 Powell Street (not extant) in the heart of the Latin Quarter (North Beach), and La Boheme Café at 643 Montgomery Street (not extant) across from the Montgomery Block.²³² Many of the bohemian restaurants followed the Coppa's model, including the original Black Cat Café.

The Black Cat Café opened after the 1906 earthquake in the Tenderloin at 56 Mason Street (extant)—a building constructed in 1908 near the intersection of Eddy. This intersection before and after the earthquake was an entertainment center hosting the Olympia Theater, known for vaudeville; the Tivoli Theater, one of San Francisco's grandest theaters before it was destroyed in 1906; and the Old Poodle Dog restaurant, one of the city's most famous early French restaurants. The Black Cat Café could have been modeled on the bohemian café in the Montmartre neighborhood of Paris called *Le Chat Noir*. San Franciscans were exposed to *Le Chat Noir* in the *San Francisco Call* in the 1890s, which described the café as home to the "Bohemian with long hair and unkempt beard," and popular with "incoherents...decadents and other eccentric people."²³³ San Francisco's Black Cat Café was one of many entertainment spaces that opened downtown after

231 *San Francisco Call*, April 12, 1908.

232 San Francisco city directories.

233 *San Francisco Call*, January 8, 1893.



TOP: Postcard for the Black Cat at Mason and Eddy (Courtesy Tenderloin Museum)
BOTTOM: The building at 56 Mason that once housed the Black Cat in the ground floor space (Photo by Shayne Watson)

the 1906 earthquake. In part simply a continuation of the bohemian trend started at Coppa's, the exoticism of the new restaurants also was due to Mayor Patrick Henry McCarthy's campaign to make San Francisco the "Paris of America."²³⁴

The Black Cat Café opened in November 1911. Charles Ridley was the proprietor and orchestra leader. It featured French dinners and performances "startling for originality and uniqueness" with waiters "costumed in carnival dress" who promised to "outshine anything ever before attempted ... in San Francisco."²³⁵ Thanks to the Black Cat, the intersection of Mason and Eddy became a "mecca of the café crowds."²³⁶ By 1913, the *San Francisco Call* described the Black Cat as "the most popular entertainment [resort] in bohemia ... unsurpassed for popularity."²³⁷ The Black Cat Café closed in May 1921 as part of a crackdown on vice in the Barbary Coast, North Beach, and the Tenderloin. "There will be no more dancing at the Black Cat Cafe," the *Call* reported. "This was a decision of the Police Commission ... to sweep Mason Street ... clean of cafe dancing permanently."²³⁸ Bohemians in San Francisco fought to keep the café open, including author Peter Clark McFarlane and muckraking journalist William Henry Irwin.²³⁹ A second Black Cat Café opened in North Beach after the repeal of Prohibition (discussed in detail in "Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco").

San Francisco's Second Wave of Bohemians

When Walt Whitman released the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, it not only became one of the country's most important works of poetry, but it presented provocative notions about sexuality. Whitman's work described the concept of "adhesiveness" (same-sex romantic affections) between men, celebrating "manly attachment" and "the need [of the love] of comrades."²⁴⁰ As a result of the negativity surrounding *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman lost his federal government job at the Indian Bureau, but his poetry inspired other gay and lesbian authors throughout the world, including Charles Warren Stoddard and Oscar Wilde, who called Whitman "the herald of a new era" and the "precursor of a fresh type."²⁴¹ And in turn, Whitman, Stoddard, and Oscar Wilde served as inspiration for two members of San Francisco's second wave of queer literary bohemians, gay novelist and short-story writer Clarkson Crane and lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow.

Clarkson Crane

Clarkson Crane was an early openly gay writer living and working in San Francisco in the 1920s and 1930s. Born in Chicago in 1894, Crane moved with his family to California around 1910. While at UC Berkeley in the 1910s, Crane wrote for campus publications *The Occident*, *The Pelican*, and the yearbook, *Blue and Gold*. He joined the United States Army in 1917, working as an ambulance driver during World War I in France and receiving a distinguished French military honor, the Croix de Guerre. He was honorably discharged at the Presidio of San Francisco in 1919. After the war, Crane began his writing career, submitting short stories to various magazines. He wrote his first novel, *The Western Shore*, while he was living in Paris in the mid-1920s. *The Western Shore* focuses on college life in the 1910s and is notable in the context of LGBTQ history for featuring a homosexual main character, a professor teaching English at UC Berkeley in 1919. Crane wrote nine novels, but only

234 "Making Plans for Hilarity and Gay Life: Amusement Caterers Preparing to Put the 'Paris of America' Idea to Actual Test," *San Francisco Call*, December 19, 1909.

235 "Black Cat Cafe Will Celebrate Anniversary," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 8, 1913. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

236 "Bohemian Section of the San Francisco Sunday Call," *San Francisco Call*, February 25, 1913.

237 "Black Cat Offers Great Show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 8, 1913. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

238 "Police Commission Stops Cafe Dances," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 26, 1921. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

239 "Dance License for Down Town Café Rejected," *San Francisco Call*, November 15, 1921. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

240 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 14.

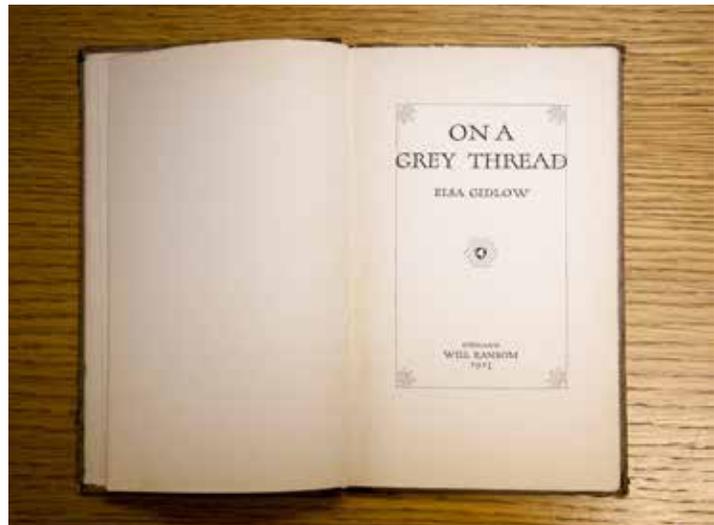
241 Quoted in *Ibid.*, 15.



LEFT: Gay author Clarkson Crane (Courtesy UC Berkeley)

BELOW: The GLBT Historical Society's copy of poet Elsa
Gidlow's *On A Grey Thread* (Photo by Shayne Watson)

BOTTOM: Elsa Gidlow on the roof of her apartment
building at 150 Joice Street (Gidlow's autobiography)



three were published. Many of his unpublished novels—including *The Cambrians*, *The Lotus Eater*, *Passing Stranger*, and *The One and the Many*—feature gay and lesbian characters and themes.²⁴²

Crane joined San Francisco's bohemian community when he moved to the city in 1926. He taught at the University of California Extension School and worked as night librarian at the Mechanics' Institute Library on Post Street. That same year, Crane met his partner of 47 years, Clyde Evans. Soon after arriving in the city, Crane moved to an apartment at 34 Joice Street (extant). Lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow lived at 150 Joice (no longer extant), and the two formed a deep and enduring friendship.²⁴³ During the Great Depression—by 1934 at the earliest—Crane rented a studio in the Montgomery Block where he hosted writing courses sponsored by the Works Progress Administration. One of Crane's favorite gay haunts was Ocean Beach, especially the southernmost area known as Mussel Rock Beach, a nude beach and meeting spot south of Fort Funston. Crane was a regular at the piano bar called the Red Lizard at 545 Washington Street and the Black Cat at 710 Montgomery Street, both across the street from the Montgomery Block. Clarkson Crane and Clyde Evans left San Francisco for the East Bay in the mid-to-late 1930s. Clarkson Crane died in 1971.

Elsa Gidlow

Lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow was born in England in 1898, and she grew up in Yorkshire, England, and in Canada. When she was in her early 20s, Gidlow moved to New York, where she found a job at the progressive *Pearson's* magazine. In 1923, she published a book of poetry titled *On a Grey Thread* that featured romantic poems dedicated to her first lesbian love. Literary historians recognize the book as the first book of openly lesbian poetry published in North America. In one of Gidlow's more explicit poems, "Mnasidika" (1917), she writes about lying with her female lover, touching her skin, playing with her hair, and "[t]hose rising hills where [her] breasts begin."²⁴⁴

In 1924, Gidlow began a relationship with the second love her life, Violet Winifred Leslie Henry-Anderson (nicknamed Tommy). Gidlow and Tommy moved to San Francisco and lived in the middle flat of a three-story building at 150 Joice Street for 13 years. Gidlow described Joice as a "charming, alley-like short street...with a beautiful overgrown sunken garden."²⁴⁵ When not writing poetry, Gidlow earned a living by working as an editor for the *Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing*.

Elsa Gidlow was inspired by English lesbian poet and novelist Radclyffe Hall after reading Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), an international best seller about the struggles of an upper-class British lesbian. "I knew nothing about [Hall], imagining she might be a struggling writer like myself; I resolved to write to her, expressing appreciation for the courage it must have taken to so expose herself."²⁴⁶ Gidlow sent Hall a sampling of her lesbian love poems and Hall responded with an invitation to meet her in Paris. After meeting Hall there in 1928, Gidlow said, "It greatly excited me to personally meet another lesbian besides myself writing about our passions and tribulations. Alone on the literary island of heterosexuality, it was like sighting a friendly ship on the horizon."²⁴⁷

242 Biographical information by Marjorie Bryer and Willie Walker, "Finding Aid to the Clarkson Crane Papers," Clarkson Crane Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

243 Elsa Gidlow, *Elsa, I Come with My Songs: The Autobiography of Elsa Gidlow* (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1986), 181-182. See also Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, December 29, 1997 and February 21, 1998, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

244 *On A Grey Thread* (Will Ransom, 1923), Elsa Gidlow Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

245 Gidlow, *I Come with My Songs*, 181-182.

246 *Ibid.*, 217.

247 *Ibid.*

While in Europe, Gidlow was introduced to Magnus Hirschfeld at his world-renowned Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin; Hirschfeld led Gidlow on a personal tour of the Institute's archives and museum of erotica.²⁴⁸ Gidlow was also inspired by an early work of lesbian fiction by Elizabeth Bowen called *The Hotel* (1927). She described it as a "study of ... types fairly new to literature though not to life ... the Lesbian."²⁴⁹

Before moving out of the city and founding Druid Heights, an artistic community in Muir Woods, Gidlow spent many years exploring San Francisco. "The city held a bohemianism of easygoing unconventionality. There was an indefinable atmosphere of acceptance of one's right to be oneself."²⁵⁰ Gidlow's journals offer glimpses into a pre-Prohibition lesbian life in San Francisco, including stories about Gidlow and Tommy meeting lesbians in Chinatown during a festival and having dinner at the home of a lesbian couple in the 1920s. In 1928, Gidlow wrote: "Had lunch alone at Mandarin Café [400 Grant Avenue] and watched the girls dancing together."²⁵¹ Gidlow also describes her treasured experiences with Dr. Margaret Chung, the first known Chinese American female physician, who sometimes dressed in masculine clothes but whose sexuality has been a subject of debate.²⁵² Chung, who lived and worked in Chinatown, was an object of affection for Gidlow: "She interests me more profoundly than anyone I have met in San Francisco ... I do adore her. I could all too easily lose my head and heart to her."²⁵³ When Gidlow left for a trip to France and said goodbye to Dr. Chung, Gidlow notes in her journal: "She gave me a pint bottle of bourbon...and what I value many times more, a spontaneous kiss on the mouth. I had never dared to hope she would kiss me."²⁵⁴

One of Gidlow's favorite places to relax and write in San Francisco was Ocean Beach: "I made some of my best poems to the rhythm of those days of pounding surf and ocean solitude," she said.²⁵⁵ "Clarkson [Crane], with a fair young boy and I walked miles up the beach ... found a glorious and deserted spot and there in our scant bathing suits absorbed the sun, the sea, the cloudless sky and all the incredibly happy beauty of the place ... A setting incomparable."²⁵⁶ Gidlow also went to Mona's, noting that "Mona's was the only one at that time that reported to be lesbian"; Coppa's (the second location on Pine); and the Black Cat, which she visited with Clarkson Crane. Gidlow was active in an artistic community that included photographer Ansel Adams, art patron Albert Bender, sculptor Beniamino Bufano, and textile designer Dorothy Liebes. Bender's flat in the Studio Building on Post near Franklin and Liebes' mansion on Nob Hill were popular gathering places for Gidlow and the city's bohemian set.

Gidlow's partner Tommy died in 1935 at the age of 51, after which Gidlow moved to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, first to 1158 Page Street (not extant) and later to 779 Page Street (extant). Gidlow lived for 13 years in a former summer cottage in Fairfax, Marin County, before moving to Druid Heights in Muir Woods. Gidlow died at Druid Heights in 1986.

248 Ibid., 226-227.

249 Journal Typed, 1928-1929, Box 9, Elsa Gidlow Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

250 Gidlow, *I Come with My Songs*, 184.

251 Journal Typed, 1928-1929, Box 9, Elsa Gidlow Papers.

252 See Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards* (University of California Press, 2005).

253 Journal Typed, 1928-1929, Box 9, Elsa Gidlow Papers.

254 Ibid.

255 Gidlow, *I Come with My Songs*, 205.

256 Journal Typed, 1928-1929, Box 9, Elsa Gidlow Papers.



LEFT: Residence of gay poet Robert Duncan and artist Jess at 3267 20th Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

BELOW: Jess, Madeline Gleason, Robert Duncan, Robin Blaser, and James Broughton in San Francisco, 1957 (*Poet Be Like God*, 1998)



Post-WWII Poetry and the Beats

Robert Duncan and Jess

One of the first public declarations of homosexual identity published in the United States was by poet Robert Duncan, whose essay titled “The Homosexual in Society” appeared in the journal *Politics* in March 1944. A Bay Area native, Duncan had received a psychiatric discharge from the U.S. military for being homosexual three years earlier. “The Homosexual in Society” compared the situation of homosexuals to the marginalized place of African Americans and Jews in the U.S. Duncan began writing poetry in the mid-1930s while an undergraduate at UC Berkeley. Later, when he submitted poems to the prestigious *Kenyon Review*, the editor, John Crow Ransom, initially accepted them but ultimately rejected the work based on his having read the poet’s “Homosexual in Society” essay and deciding that the poems were tainted by Duncan’s sexual “advertisement.”²⁵⁷

After several years on the East Coast, Duncan returned in 1945 to the Bay Area and to UC Berkeley where he began friendships with gay poets Jack Spicer and Robin Blazer. Author Michael Davidson describes these poets and the others who gathered around them as maintaining “an almost medieval sense of loyalties and hierarchies that would secure a sense of community against a homophobic society.”²⁵⁸ The group encompassed writers and visual artists such as Philip Lamantia, William Everson, Madeline Gleason, Helen Adam, and James Broughton. Spicer served as an important hub for many Bay Area poets until he died in 1965. He organized weekly “Blabbermouth Nights” at a North Beach neighborhood bar called The Place (1546 Grant Avenue), which created community “through a spirit of play and competition.”²⁵⁹

In 1951, Duncan met the visual artist Jess Collins (known as Jess) and they began a relationship that lasted until Duncan’s death in 1988. The couple lived in a series of San Francisco homes that provided domestic tranquility as well as social conviviality through dinners, houseguests, and art-making and music-listening sessions.²⁶⁰

For other LGBTQ artists, the Duncan-Jess household presented a remarkable encounter with an openly gay couple whose “matter-of-fact commitment and elegant lifestyle radically overthrew clichéd notions about gender roles, conventional marriage, and bourgeois routine,” according to authors Michael Duncan and Christopher Wagstaff.²⁶¹

Filmmaker Lawrence Jordan describes the infectious nature of the Duncan-Jess household: “They had a very delicate...Very powerful magic in their house that could turn a young artist completely on to the world of the magic of art.”²⁶² Madeline Gleason, a close friend of Jess and Duncan, initiated what has been described as the first regular poetry reading series in 1947 at the Lucien Labaudt Gallery (1407 Gough Street); Jess and Duncan introduced Gleason to her life partner, Mary Clark Greer, in 1955 and encouraged Gleason’s growing interest in painting.²⁶³

257 Michael Davidson, *San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) xxiii-xiv.

258 *Ibid.*, 28.

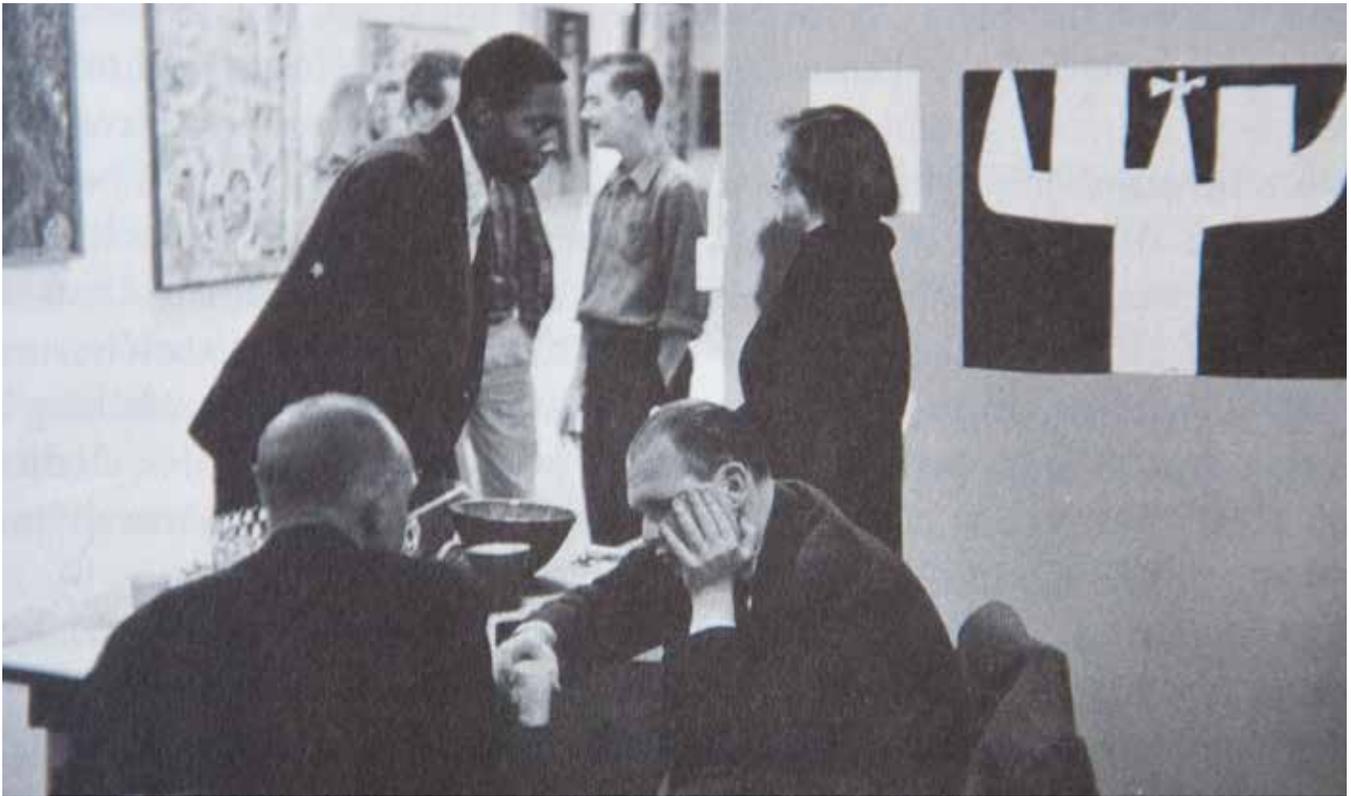
259 *Ibid.*, 150.

260 Michael Duncan and Christopher Wagstaff, *An Opening of the Field: Jess, Robert Duncan, and Their Circle* (Portland, OR: Pomegranate Communications Inc., 2013), 39 and San Francisco City Directories show the couple living at 1350 Franklin St. (1951), 1724 Baker Street (1952-54), De Haro Street (1956-58 no number), Stinson beach in Marin County (1958-61), 3735 20th Street (1961-1967) and 3267 20th Street (1967 until Jess’s death in 2004).

261 *Ibid.*, 40.

262 *Ibid.*, 39.

263 *Ibid.*, 212-213.



ABOVE: Opening night of Six Gallery where Allen Ginsberg first read his poem "Howl" in 1955 (*Poet Be Like God*, 1998)



LEFT: The former home of Six Gallery at 3119 Fillmore Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

Allen Ginsberg and "Howl"

In the fall of 1952, Duncan, Jess, and artist Harry Jacobus opened King Ubu Gallery in a former garage at 3119 Fillmore Street (extant), where they showed art works and hosted performances during its one-year existence. The site achieved lasting fame in its next iteration as the Six Gallery (Jack Spicer was among the six founders), where Allen Ginsberg read his poem "Howl" in October of 1955. "Howl" was, Ginsberg later asserted, his coming out of the closet. While the 29-year-old poet's friends knew he was gay, the poem was "a public statement of feelings and emotions and attitudes that I would not have wanted my father or my family to see."²⁶⁴ Publication of "Howl" the following year by the press associated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti's City Lights Bookstore (261 Columbus Avenue, extant) led to a widely publicized California State Superior Court trial on obscenity charges, which Ferlinghetti won with assistance from the American Civil Liberties Union.

Although Ginsberg left San Francisco in 1957, he and the other Beats associated with him defined a new San Francisco "counterculture" that drew intense media and popular attention. Historian John D'Emilio claims that, "through the Beats' example, gays could perceive themselves as nonconformists rather than devious, as rebels against stultifying norms rather than immature, unstable personalities."²⁶⁵ Historian Nan Alamilla Boyd describes Beat writers as reinterpreting male sexuality apart from the rigid constraints of Cold War homophobia, but clinging to a more "narrow and distinct" brand of masculinity that disdained "the more flamboyant and effeminate homosexualities in San Francisco's sexual underworld."²⁶⁶

III. EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF LGBTQ COMMUNITIES IN SAN FRANCISCO (EARLY 20TH CENTURY to 1960S)

DEVELOPMENT OF BAR-BASED COMMUNITIES

San Francisco in the Prohibition Period

The anti-alcohol movement in California started in the 1880s when a large influx of Protestant Anglo-Americans settled in Southern California. Throughout the history of the movement, temperance was more popular in Southern California than in the northern part of the state.²⁶⁷ European immigrants, especially from Germany and Italy, were key players in alcohol production and distribution; in cities like San Francisco, having a majority immigrant population, temperance was resisted. The Anti-Saloon League, created in 1893, became the nation's most powerful anti-alcohol group, influencing temperance politics throughout the country. By 1894 Prohibition ordinances went into effect throughout California.

San Franciscans supported alcohol in part because the majority immigrant population disagreed with the American concept of prohibition, but also because of the importance of saloons, both socially and economically. Saloons were a critical component of urban communities in the 19th century. For single men living in crowded lodging houses, saloons provided a space to socialize and basic services such as free lunch, check cashing, and mail pickup and delivery. For immigrant groups, saloons provided a space for translation services and job placement. The economic benefits of alcohol in the United States were strong. Alcohol was one of the major industries in the 19th century, spurred by the increase of European immigrants to the United States after the Civil War. By the turn of the century, there were 300,000 saloons across the country. In San Francisco in the

²⁶⁴ Richard Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent: Art, Poetry, and Politics in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 151.

²⁶⁵ Regina Marler, ed., *Queer Beats: How the Beats Turned America onto Sex* (San Francisco: Cleis Press Inc., 2004), xxxii-xxxiii.

²⁶⁶ Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 124.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

there were more saloons per capita than anywhere else in the country—double the numbers in New York or Chicago.²⁶⁸ After the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1919 and Prohibition went into effect nationwide in 1920, San Francisco defied federal and state efforts to curb alcohol distribution and consumption, gaining the reputation of being the “wettest in the west.”²⁶⁹ Prohibition was largely ignored in San Francisco, notes historian Nan Alamilla Boyd.²⁷⁰

Paradoxically, the Prohibition period in the United States was one of the most exciting and fertile periods in United States history. The 1920s were an iconoclastic period, supporting the establishment of avant-garde movements like Surrealism in art, Modernism in architecture, and the Jazz Age in music. It was also a period of sexual curiosity and rebellion. Just as urbanization in the late-19th century provided the freedom and privacy for single men and women to form same-sex relationships, the popularity of the automobile in the 1920s helped make unsupervised dating and sexual relationships infinitely easier. Gender boundaries became increasingly blurred as popular culture exploited images of masculine women and effeminate men.²⁷¹ Cross-gender performance again became a popular form of entertainment; drag balls in New York, Chicago, and New Orleans “were reported without alarm in the newspapers,” and “high-society ‘straights’ like the Astors and Vanderbilts came to admire the costumes.”²⁷²

The 1920s also saw the emergence of queer themes in popular culture. Ernest Hemingway featured lesbian characters in both *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). As mentioned earlier, in 1928 Radclyffe Hall published *The Well of Loneliness*, the first openly lesbian work of fiction by a lesbian author. At least three Broadway plays produced in the 1920s touched on queer themes: Shalom Asch’s *God of Vengeance* (1923); Edouard Bourdet’s *The Captive* (1926); and William Hurlbut’s *Sin of Sins* (1926).²⁷³

Some of the earliest known queer communities in the country gathered in the 1920s in speakeasies —places where alcohol could be purchased illegally during Prohibition— including establishments located in Harlem and Greenwich Village in New York City. Little documentation exists about queer spaces in San Francisco during and prior to Prohibition, but certainly there were spaces frequented by the nascent LGBTQ communities. Finocchio’s, discussed in detail in the section “North Beach: San Francisco’s First Bar-Based LGBTQ Community,” started out as a speakeasy and after Prohibition became famous for its cross-gender performances. Lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow wrote in her journal about another speakeasy in North Beach that she visited with Dr. Margaret Chung in 1928:

We went to a queer place in what is called “Dagoetown” (a term I do not like). A ring at the door bell of a dingy house brought [an] Italian to the front door ... we were led along passageways to a door that opened (I think, at some sort of signal)—to reveal a miniature bar, brass rail, bottles, glasses, bartender and all.²⁷⁴

Community historian Clyde Evans remembers that his lesbian neighbors frequented a bar at Fisherman’s Wharf in the early 1930s, likely at the end of Stockton or Powell: “We hadn’t realized there was a lesbian bar down there, but we went one night and were surprised at all the well-

268 Ibid., 26.

269 Kenneth D. Rose, *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition*. Quoted in Ibid., 39.

270 Ibid.

271 George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

272 Ibid.

273 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 66.

274 Journal Typed, 1928-1929, Box 9, Elsa Gidlow Papers.

dressed lesbians, some looking quite masculine and some were looking quite feminine. And they're all dancing and having a lovely time...I don't think there were any men there."²⁷⁵ Evans also remembers going to the Old Grotto (also known as the Red Lizard) at 545 Washington Street (not extant) during the Prohibition years with his long-time partner, gay author Clarkson Crane.

Repeal of Prohibition

The repeal of Prohibition in 1933 was a watershed in LGBTQ history, as queer bars subsequently opened all over the United States. Thriving bar-based communities developed in Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit and Flint, Washington, D.C.; and throughout New York, including Greenwich Village, Buffalo, and Cherry Grove on Fire Island. In San Francisco, spaces catering to gay men, lesbians, and transgender men and women appeared soon after repeal. Historian Nan Alamilla Boyd writes extensively about the post-Prohibition period in San Francisco and concludes that queer-friendly spaces appeared and were able to thrive after Prohibition for a variety of reasons: the assignment of liquor licensing to a state agency focused on collecting taxes; the establishment of the nightclub (successor to the speakeasy) as a new entertainment model; and a boom in sex and race tourism.

In 1933, California voters passed the Liquor Control Act, which authorized the State Board of Equalization, the state's tax agency, to regulate liquor sales and distribution; by contrast, in many other states, liquor was controlled at the local level, which meant more direct policing oversight of bars. With the State Board of Equalization overseeing alcohol, there was more emphasis on liquor taxation than on liquor control.²⁷⁶ And with alcohol suddenly legal again and with very little control at the local level, small taverns and nightclubs appeared all over San Francisco.

The nightclub also emerged as a popular post-Prohibition entertainment venue, primarily for a handful of reasons: anyone could open a nightclub and they were inexpensive to operate; by offering entertainment and being more than drinking establishments, nightclubs could serve hard liquor, which after Prohibition was restricted to hotels, restaurants, and clubs.²⁷⁷ As Boyd notes, "Nightclubs became the terrain of the owner-entrepreneur."²⁷⁸ This situation gave nightclub and bar owners in San Francisco the freedom to maintain control of all aspects of their venues, unlike those in cities such as New York where gay and lesbian bars were controlled by organized crime. Nightclubs spurred the growth of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco because, with very little official oversight, owners were able to create discreet spaces where LGBTQ people felt safe to congregate in public.

The concept of public spaces providing the protection needed for establishing and nurturing community is critical to understanding LGBTQ history. As described in previous sections, any display or form of nonnormative sexuality was criminal, and most people viewed nonnormative men and women as pathological. Anyone arrested for a sex crime faced having his or her name, occupation, and home address printed in the newspaper, which frequently led to disastrous consequences such as lost jobs, financial instability, and ostracism by family and friends.

Architectural critic Aaron Betsky suggests that early queer nightclubs and bars could be viewed as figurative public closets: "a place to hide, to create worlds...in a secure environment... where you can define yourself, constructing an identity out of what you have collected, in a space

²⁷⁵ Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, 1997-1998.

²⁷⁶ Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 48.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

that is free and boundless exactly because it hides in the dark recesses.”²⁷⁹ Historian Daniel Hurewitz describes such places as a “third space ... at the margins of society that can be adopted as [sites] for contesting power, [places] where new identities, actions, and opportunities can be constructed.”²⁸⁰ Indeed, during a time when LGBTQ people were forced to hide from the law and hostile heterosexuals, these early public spaces served as community centers where a formerly disconnected and disparate population was able to coalesce.

Sex and Race Tourism

The post-Prohibition nightclub provided a space in which cross-gender entertainment could be revived, and San Francisco’s tourism industry, which thrived on sexualized and racialized entertainments, encouraged the renaissance. Nan Alamilla Boyd writes that sex tourism was “a primary factor in the emergence of San Francisco’s publicly visible queer communities, and race tourism was its constant companion.”²⁸¹ Sex and race tourism, according to Boyd, “showcased difference and, in doing so, generated a permissive quality of same-sex and cross-race sexual display. As sexualized entertainments became part of San Francisco’s allure, tourist industry dollars cast a thin veneer of protection around the city’s queer entertainments.”²⁸²

San Francisco has been a destination city since the Gold Rush, easily luring visitors with its natural beauty and culturally “exotic” neighborhoods such as Chinatown and the Barbary Coast. One of San Francisco’s first major tourism campaigns was for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in 1915, the world’s fair in the Marina District that lasted for nine months and drew nearly 19 million visitors and \$4.7 million in revenue. Exhibits at the PPIE prefigured the types of sights that drew tourists to San Francisco in subsequent decades, such as awe-inspiring structural masterpieces like the Palace of Machinery, the largest structure in the world at the time, or tastes of the exotic displayed at various performances in the Joy Zone, the fair’s amusement center: Japanese wrestlers and dancers at Japan Beautiful; “real live Indians” at the Wild West Show; Tijuana “Jungle Queens” at the Tehuantepec Village; and “a bit of the romantic South Sea Islands with natives in their native costumes living just as they do in their island home” in the Samoan Village.²⁸³

San Francisco’s obsession with the exotic was repeated in the late 1930s when the city celebrated the completion of the Golden Gate and San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridges – although by this time the obsession had a more obviously sexual edge. In 1937, the official opening ceremony for the Golden Gate Bridge was called the Golden Gate Bridge “Fiesta” to celebrate San Francisco being “Fiesta minded from the days when that little huddle of shacks” was still known as Yerba Buena.²⁸⁴ The official souvenir program advertised Finocchio’s and Mona’s, two of San Francisco’s earliest queer spaces. The ad for Finocchio’s read: “Is it true what they say about Finocchio’s?? Always something different.” And Mona’s: “Life begins at Mona’s, a rendezvous for discriminating bohemians.”²⁸⁵

The Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) on Treasure Island opened in 1939, drawing 17 million visitors in a year.²⁸⁶ The Exposition’s fun zone, called the “Gayway,” featured the Sally Rand

279 Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1997), 17.

280 Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 12-13.

281 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 80.

282 *Ibid.*, 15.

283 “Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915 Souvenir Guide,” The Souvenir Guide Publishers, Hobart Building, San Francisco (1915), 16-17.

284 “Official Souvenir Program, Golden Gate Bridge Fiesta, San Francisco, May 27 – June 2, 1937,” Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District Redwood Empire Association and the City and County of San Francisco (1937).

285 *Ibid.*

286 “Guide to the Golden Gate International Exposition Records, 1936-1939,” Online Archive of California, <http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf2d5n98c4>.

Nude Ranch, a “dude ranch a la 1939,” where naked “cow-babes” wore “boots, but no saddles.”²⁸⁷ And the “Hormone Woman” at the Hall of Science told visitors about how sex hormones “play a vital role in making woman what she is! In making man what he is!”²⁸⁸ Advertisements in the GGIE guidebook lured visitors to San Francisco with descriptions of places such as the 365 Club at 365 Market Street (not extant), where tourists could “see and talk to the Girl in the Fish Bowl,” a scantily clad woman swimming in an enormous fish tank.²⁸⁹ The city also beckoned visitors to San Francisco with the newly unveiled 49-Mile Scenic Drive, which directed drivers through such culturally exotic tourist neighborhoods as Japantown, Chinatown, and North Beach.

Capitalizing on the lure of the exotic in the new century, San Francisco planners and civic leaders carried out campaigns to market neighborhoods like Chinatown and North Beach to tourists. After the 1906 earthquake destroyed Chinatown, traditional Edwardian-style buildings were constructed with Chinese-inspired ornamentation, such as recessed or projecting balconies, upturned eaves and roof corners, sloped tiled roofs, and parapets with Chinese inscriptions.²⁹⁰ “Western architects or contractors,” writes historian David Cheunyan Lai, “tried to create ‘chinoiserie’ or exotica by modifying or manipulating standard Western architectural forms.”²⁹¹ In 1925, elaborate Chinese-inspired streetlights were installed (ironic, given that this was one year after the 1924 Immigration Act was passed, preventing Asians from entering the country). “The marketing of Chinatown to white tourists,” according to Boyd, “signaled the beginning of a new era of racial exploitation, one in which cultural difference became a valuable, even protected commodity in the city.”²⁹² Boyd notes that the best example of this was the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, which featured a three-acre, \$2 million Chinese Village, and advertised San Francisco’s real Chinatown in the guidebook as the “largest Chinatown in the world” with “more than 25,000 Chinese liv[ing] and work[ing] in a colorful section that is a first-call for most San Francisco visitors.”²⁹³

Chinatown merchants opened entertainments geared specifically toward tourists. One of the most famous was a Chinese-themed nightclub called Charlie Low’s Forbidden City at 369 Sutter Street (extant), which ran from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. The sexualized and racialized performances at the Forbidden City were a big hit with tourists and drew a large LGBTQ clientele, as well.²⁹⁴ Another popular spot for tourists and LGBTQ people in Chinatown was Li Po, still in operation at 916 Grant Avenue. Li Po was advertised in a 1939 tourism guide: “Love, passion, and nighttime ... what a combination! You will find all three any evening you stroll into the jovial and informal Chinatown cocktail lounge, the Li Po.”²⁹⁵ The guidebook *Where to Sin in San Francisco* (1939) directed tourists who were feeling “mood exotic” to the Twin Dragon on Waverly Place, famous for its “Throne Room.” Other popular tourist spots were the Chinese Pagoda with its “Mystery

287 Jack Lord and Jenn Shaw, *Where to Sin in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Book Cellar, 1939). Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

288 “Official Guide Book, Golden Gate International Exposition, World’s Fair on San Francisco Bay, First Edition,” The Crocker Company, San Francisco (1939), 106.

289 *Ibid.*, 7.

290 David Chuenyan Lai, “The Visual Character of Chinatowns,” Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 81. See also Marina McDougall and Hope Mitnick, “Location: San Francisco,” Brook, Carlsson, and Peters, *Reclaiming San Francisco*, 155.

291 Lai, “The Visual Character of Chinatowns,” 81.

292 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 79.

293 “Official Guide Book, Golden Gate International Exposition.”

294 Oral history narrator Merle Woo, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, recalled that lesbians of color patronized the Forbidden City in the 1950s. For more on sex and race tourism, see Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 78-83.

295 *San Francisco Life* 7 (November 1939), 25. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 79.



International Settlement entertainment district on Pacific Avenue, c. 1940s (Courtesy Shayne Watson)

of the Orient” at 830 Grant Avenue (extant) and the Lion’s Den at 950 Grant Avenue (extant), “Chinatown’s exotic underground nite club.”²⁹⁶

Another exoticized neighborhood, North Beach, was popular with tourists early in the city’s history because of its proximity to the Barbary Coast and because of the sense of cultural exoticism evoked by the community’s multinational roots. This popularity was sustained through the Prohibition period as cheap rents and restaurants in what was then known as the “Latin Quarter” drew artistic and creative types to the neighborhood. After the repeal of Prohibition, North Beach became even more popular as a tourist destination, especially for its sexually charged entertainments. In North Beach, tourists mixed freely with the gay, lesbian, and transgender communities at such nightclubs as Finocchio’s, Mona’s 440 Club, and the Black Cat Café. Finocchio’s was particularly known for its sex- and race-based performances. When Finocchio’s “Mexican headliner” needed to be replaced in the 1950s, gay rights pioneer José Sarria auditioned for the position. “They always had a Latin singer,” he said.²⁹⁷

World War II had a profound impact on the entertainment industry in San Francisco, which was a way station for servicemen and servicewomen, and a destination for workers employed by defense industries throughout the Bay Area. Nightlife entertainment in the 1940s, especially in North Beach, was driven by a “desire for amusement, fantasy, humor, and escape.”²⁹⁸ Big-band orchestras reigned and “all of America was dancing.”²⁹⁹ Restaurants and nightclubs continued to push the envelope of convention. Some of the more exotic tourist sites across San Francisco during World War II were the Timothy Pflueger-designed Art Deco style Bal Tabarin at 1025 Columbus Avenue (extant, now Bimbo’s 365 Club); Omar Khayyam’s at 200 Powell in Union Square (extant); the Persian Room at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel (extant); and many establishments in the International Settlement on Pacific Avenue, including Izzy Gomez’ Café at 848 Pacific Avenue (not extant), where patrons were encouraged to dance on tables; the Hurricane and its tropical Hawaiian façade at 533 Pacific Avenue (extant); and Goman’s Gay 90s at 555 Pacific Avenue (extant), where a parrot pecked open a dancer’s sarong.³⁰⁰

North Beach: San Francisco’s First Bar-Based LGBTQ Community

North Beach after the repeal of Prohibition had an international, working-class feel. The neighborhood’s main artery, Broadway, was a colorful mix of blue-collar industries near the Embarcadero, and restaurants, hotels, and clubs farther west. In 1938 there were over 30 restaurants and clubs and 18 hotels squeezed into the eight-block stretch between the Embarcadero and Powell Street. Broadway was dominated by Italian businesses, but there also were clusters of businesses with Swiss, French, Mexican, and Spanish themes.³⁰¹ The North Beach bohemian scene was thriving in the 1930s and still centered on Montgomery Street near Jackson Square. The area teemed with artists and writers taking advantage of cheap rents. The Montgomery Block had become a bohemian residential enclave. Gay author Clarkson Crane had a studio there, and so did Mona Sargent, the woman who opened the city’s first lesbian bar after the repeal of Prohibition. The 700 and 800 blocks of Montgomery (and adjacent alleys) were home to many of the city’s most well

296 “Official Souvenir Program, Golden Gate Bridge Fiesta.” See also Kevin Starr, *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace, 1940-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 83.

297 José Sarria, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, July 9, 1997, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

298 Starr, *Embattled Dreams*, 8.

299 Ibid.

300 *San Francisco Life*, October 1945, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. See also Starr, *Embattled Dreams*, 82.

301 San Francisco city directories. Cited in Shayne E. Watson, *Preserving the Tangible Remains of San Francisco’s Lesbian Community in North Beach, 1933 to 1960* (master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 2009), 52.

known artists, including photographer Dorothea Lange, painter Maynard Dixon, and sculptors Ralph Stackpole and Robert Boardman Howard.³⁰²

The international and bohemian feel of North Beach after the repeal of Prohibition made the area a bustling hub of activity and a huge draw for locals and tourists, but what drew queers to the neighborhood? Community historian Reba Hudson, who arrived in the neighborhood in the 1940s and stayed there for the rest of her life, said:

[North Beach] was the most exciting, vital neighborhood ... no prejudice, no nothing ... a working example of democracy ... truly European. [People] didn't care if you were gay or not ... [People] just gravitated to [North Beach] and were accepted in [North Beach]. It was the only place they were accepted. North Beach has always had that reputation.³⁰³ Community historian Roberta Bobba said the cheap rents, the weather, and the bohemians, who were always "more accepting," drew her to the neighborhood.³⁰⁴ The bohemians, said Reba Hudson, "were always very tolerant of anyone and everyone."³⁰⁵ Self-titled bohemian Mona Sargent, a heterosexual woman, said, "We're not offended at how the other fellow lives. That's where I was a true Bohemian."³⁰⁶ Sargent said North Beach was "like a small town. I said hello to everybody. Everybody on Broadway was nice to me."³⁰⁷

As gay and lesbian bars and restaurants appeared in North Beach and Telegraph Hill, more men and women moved to the neighborhood, creating the city's first queer residential enclave and establishing the roots of San Francisco's LGBTQ communities. North Beach resident Charlotte Coleman said, "All the gays lived on Telegraph Hill."³⁰⁸ Roberta Bobba lived in a small cottage on Telegraph Hill near neighborhood landmark Julius' Castle for 14 years. Mona Sargent lived in various apartments on Telegraph Hill, including her apartment at 24 Windsor Place (extant), which became a lesbian hangout; Reba Hudson moved into Mona's old apartment in the 1950s, and Connie Smith, owner of Miss Smith's Tea Room (a lesbian bar on Grant Avenue) was known to spend time there.³⁰⁹ Lesbian bar proprietor Rikki Streicher also lived on Windsor Place, although the exact address is unknown.³¹⁰ Later, Streicher lived above the Paper Doll (a gay and lesbian bar at 524 Union Street) when she worked there as a cocktail waitress. She said, "I lived in every alley in North Beach. There's not [an alley] I wasn't a resident of at some point."³¹¹ Many other lesbians lived in an apartment building across from Miss Smith's Tea Room, above the Savoy Tivoli at 1434 Grant Avenue (extant), and over the space that housed the Paper Doll.³¹²

Gay and Lesbian Bars and Restaurants in North Beach

Between 1933 and 1965, over twenty nightclubs, bars, and restaurants catering to gay, lesbian, and transgender people opened in North Beach.³¹³ The high number of bars that appeared within a short period of time is a testament to the popularity of these spaces. Most of the early bars and nightclubs

302 Ibid.

303 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), October 31, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

304 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, October 22, 1981, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

305 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), 1992.

306 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, July 25, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

307 Ibid.

308 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

309 Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Life During Wartime," Conversation between Reba Hudson and Nan Alamilla Boyd, May 29, 1992, *OurStories* 8 (Spring 1993).

310 Rikki Streicher, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

311 Ibid.

312 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), 1992.

313 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 245.

had mixed clientele, but places like Mona's had more lesbians than gay men. "San Francisco's queer public culture" in the 1930s and 40s, writes Nan Alamilla Boyd, "could be characterized as one that both gay men and lesbians shared, rather than one that made finite distinctions between the sexes of its clientele."³¹⁴ That may have been the case in public, but in private, Susan Stryker and Jim van Buskirk note, "lesbian and gay subcultures diverged more often than they intersected ... sociologically, gay men and lesbians were often worlds apart. Quite independently of men, women who had sex with other women had their own social networks, their own butch/femme styles of gender presentation."³¹⁵

Out of the dozens of LGBTQ North Beach establishments, only a few will be documented in this section. The places included here—such as Finocchio's, Mona's, and the Black Cat Café—represent some of the earliest and most significant queer spaces in San Francisco, or they were associated with significant events or individuals, or they were simply popular or unique. This list of places is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Finocchio's

Finocchio's opened at 441 Stockton Street (extant) in the late 1920s or early 1930s. It started out as a restaurant owned by Marjorie Faxon Finocchio.³¹⁶ Marjorie was born in Kansas around 1891. She married Italian immigrant and hotel operator Joseph Finocchio, who later worked part-time as a bouncer at Finocchio's.³¹⁷ The Finochios lived in apartment buildings on Stockton Street near Sutter Street in the 1920s and 1930s.³¹⁸ Sometime in the mid-1930s, Finocchio's moved to the second floor of a two-story building at 406 Stockton Street near Sutter (demolished).

Finocchio's revived San Francisco's historic cross-gender entertainment model when it began featuring female-impersonation shows during Prohibition. Community historian Clyde Evans described the atmosphere at Finocchio's on Stockton as "very homo."³¹⁹ Performances featured young male performers who lived in the Montgomery Block: "They were very exotic looking boys and when they went down the corridor ... they left a trail of perfume."³²⁰ As noted earlier, exoticism was hugely popular in the 1920s and 1930s, but Finocchio's stood out. "Everyone came to see the show. And to drink," said Joseph Finocchio.³²¹ Finocchio's earliest performances "featured a female impersonator paired with an 'exotic dancer'—a 'hula dancer' or 'young Chinese dancer.'"³²² Clyde Evans recalled that every show began with the song "About a Quarter to Nine," after which an "exotic oriental boy would come out and do his dance."³²³

Gay-rights pioneer Harry Hay, a student at Stanford University just south of San Francisco in 1930–1932, said that Finocchio's was a popular gay pick-up spot in the early 1930s. Hay said men met each other at Finocchio's by going through a very discreet and orchestrated process overseen by the maître d': "If you wanted to meet a young man who was sitting at [another table], you had the waiter take a bottle of wine and a glass on a little tray and your card, and he carried it from you [to

314 Ibid., 70.

315 Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), 35.

316 Finocchio's first appears in city directories in 1931 as a restaurant under Marjorie Finocchio's name.

317 Census data. See also Harry Hay, interviewed by Chris Carlsson, "Pickups and Finocchio's (1995)," *Shaping San Francisco*, <https://archive.org/details/ssffHAYPIKED>.

318 San Francisco city directories.

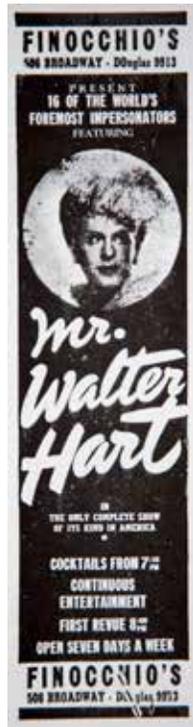
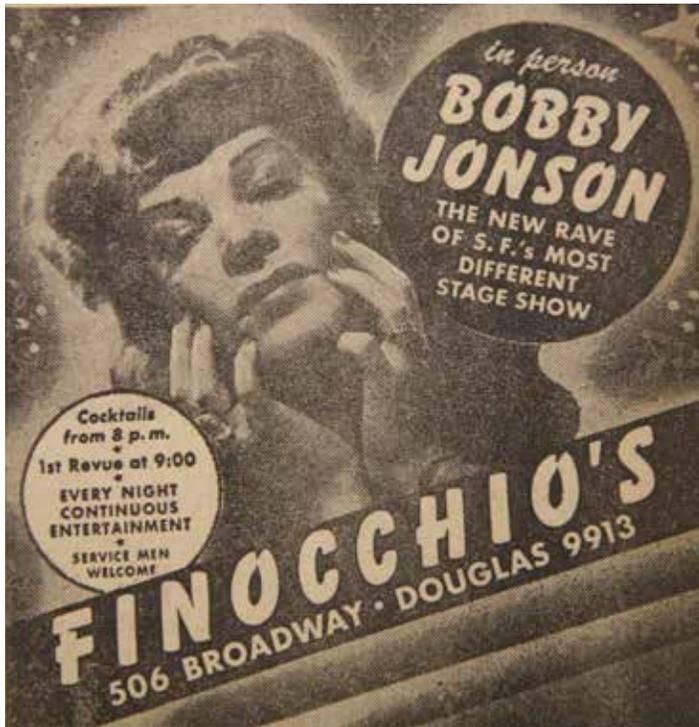
319 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, April 12, 1983, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

320 Ibid.

321 Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 52.

322 Ibid., 52.

323 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, 1983.



LEFT: Advertisements for female-impersonating performances at Finocchio's (Courtesy The GLBT Historical Society)

BELOW: 506 Broadway Street, home of Finocchios from 1930s to 1999 (Photo by Shayne Watson)



the other table].”³²⁴ If a connection was made, the maître d’ would invite both men to the same table and make introductions.

Sometime between 1937 and 1939, the Finocchios moved their nightclub to an expansive upstairs space at 506 Broadway near Kearny (extant). Described as “swank and lavish,” the club was accessed by a stair at the left side of the building and featured a stage and an orchestra. Marjorie and Joseph Finocchio made Finocchio’s on Broadway a North Beach institution. Marjorie was in charge of the nightclub and became known to her performers as “Madame Marg.” Female impersonator Laurie Knight said she “truthfully admired” Marjorie. “It took a strong woman to run that place.”³²⁵ Finocchio’s performances featured some of the country’s most famous female impersonators, including Ray Bourbon, who started doing female impersonation in London and Hollywood; Walter Hart, billed as the “Male Sophie Tucker”; and Lucian Phelps, who started working at Finocchio’s in the 1940s.³²⁶ A 1939 guidebook described the performers: “Wigged, gowned, rouged, lipsticked, and mascara-ed, ten beautiful boys become singing, clowning, ravishing women. In a revue of revues. It’s a Rabelous rendezvous. It’s different!”³²⁷

The nightly shows at Finocchio’s became the model for famous nightclubs throughout the country, including the My-O-My Club in New Orleans, the Jewel Box Lounge in Kansas City, and the 82 Club in Manhattan.³²⁸ Historian Eric Garber said the professional female impersonators at nightclubs like Finocchio’s served as heroes to the pre-Stonewall gay community because of their overt queerness.³²⁹

Finocchio’s also had a seamy side. Along with other early queer nightclubs, such as Mona’s 440 Club and the Black Cat Café, Finocchio’s “functioned as part of an urban economy of visible and highly trafficked sex tourism,” according to Nan Alamilla Boyd.³³⁰ Performers encouraged customers to purchase more drinks by offering sexual favors (more drinks meant higher paychecks because performers were paid based on number of drinks sold). The scheme caught the attention of the police, and Finocchio’s was raided in 1936 when it was still located on Stockton Street. Marjorie and Joseph Finocchio were arrested along with five female impersonators, including Walter Hart.³³¹ A year later, the San Francisco police chief cracked down on female impersonation in the city, announcing that “lewd entertainers must be stopped!”³³²

Finocchio’s on Broadway was popular with both the queer community and tourists. Since many of Finocchio’s performers were gay, gay men especially were drawn to the nightclub. When asked how gay men met each other in the 1930s and 1940s, Clyde Evans said, “Sometimes at Finocchio’s... [It was] known as a gay spot, and one assumed that everyone that went there was gay.”³³³ Understanding how popular the performances were with tourists, Marjorie and Joseph Finocchio “more or less... geared [the shows] toward the tour buses,” said community historian

324 Harry Hay, interviewed by Chris Carlsson, 1995.

325 Laurie Knight, interviewed by David de Alba, July 14, 2004, <http://www.david-de-alba.com/Knight2.htm>.

326 Eric Garber, “Finocchio’s: A Gay Community Landmark,” *The San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* 3 (June 1988), 1.

327 Lord and Shaw, *Where to Sin in San Francisco*, 93. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

328 Garber, “Finocchio’s,” 1.

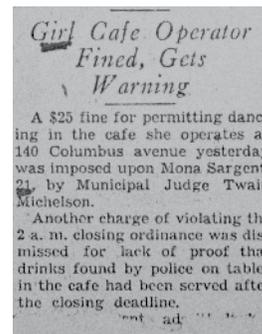
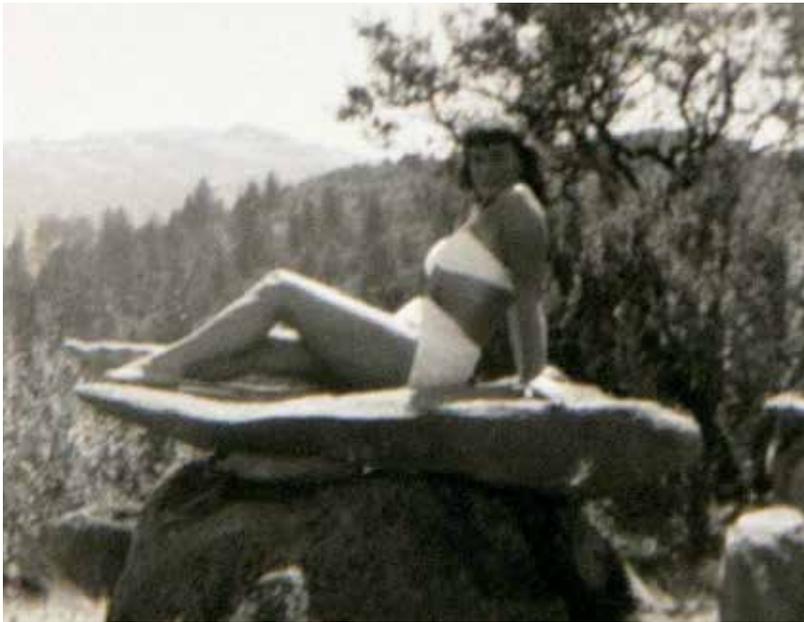
329 Eric Garber cites a pioneering 1972 study by anthropologist Esther Newton in Garber, “Finocchio’s,” *Newsletter*.

330 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 52.

331 *Ibid.*, 53.

332 Quoted in *Ibid.*

333 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, 1997-1998.



TOP LEFT: Mona Sargent, date unknown (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM LEFT: Interior view of Mona's at 451 Union Street in 1934 (Photographer unknown, Associated Press)

TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: Newspaper articles announcing Mona Sargent's run-in with police for allowing dancing at Mona's Barrel House at 140 Columbus Avenue (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

Gerald Fabian.³³⁴ Finocchio's business thrived as an official stop on the Gray Line Nightclub Tour for over fifty years. In 1988, 75,000 tourists made the pilgrimage.³³⁵ At the end of his career, by the 1980s, Joseph Finocchio said 99% of his customers were straight.³³⁶

Marjorie Finocchio died in San Francisco in 1956 and Joseph Finocchio died in 1986. Joseph's second wife, Eve, operated Finocchio's until it closed in 1999.

Mona Sargent's Bars

Mona's (451 Union Street)

Mona Sargent, a heterosexual bohemian, opened what would become San Francisco's first lesbian bar. She was born Mona Nystrom in Santa Rosa, California in 1910. She joined San Francisco's bohemian community around 1928 when she moved into a studio in the Montgomery Block.³³⁷ Mona cultivated a large circle of bohemian friends and became known as the "belle of the artists' colony" and later "queen of Telegraph Hill."³³⁸ She and her friends called themselves the "mad bohemians."³³⁹ Sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s, Mona married a former UC Berkeley football player named Jimmie Sargent, and the two of them moved to an apartment on Telegraph Hill.

Soon after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, Mona and Jimmie Sargent opened a bar called Mona's at 451 Union Street (not extant) on the southwestern slope of Telegraph Hill. A friend of Jimmie's gave the couple \$500 to start the bar, knowing that it would be popular because of Mona's huge circle of friends.³⁴⁰ Jimmie wanted to call the bar "Jim Sargent's," but his friend said, "No. You go play football. We're callin' it Mona's."³⁴¹ Before Mona's opened in the former bakery space, she and her friends cleaned it up and invited an artist to decorate the walls. A photograph taken of Mona's in September 1934 depicts an intimate space with high ceilings, dark, wood-paneled walls, wooden booths and tables, and large murals of naked women; in the corner near the bar, an artist painted a portrait of a patron. The photograph's caption reads:

One of the arty cafes that now are encroaching on the old Barbary Coast district of San Francisco. This scene is in Mona's, favorite lounging place for the Telegraph Hill artistic colony ... The large mural in the center of the picture is a satire of the WPA Artists project. The portrait artist at the lower right identifies himself only as 'Rich.'³⁴²

In 1936, Mona's was advertised in a tourism guide: "[A] new spot on Telegraph Hill which boasts a cozy fireplace among its attractions. Notable among its other allures are murals by Telegraph Hill artists...[It's] not far enough up the hill to require yodeling or a feather to negotiate, but uppish enough to have atmosphere."³⁴³

334 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, November 30, 1989 and January 23, 1990, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

335 Grey Line Tours, "San Francisco Sightseeing: Nightclub Tours," 1985. See also "Finocchio's," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 1988.

336 "Finocchio's 45 Years of Guys Dolled up as Women," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 1981.

337 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

338 "After the Ball," *San Bernardino County Sun*, February 12, 1937, 15.

339 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 64.

340 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

341 Ibid.

342 "San Francisco Telegraph Hill," AP Images, <http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Watchf-Associated-Press-Domestic-News-California/5308051423d344d0b7a37f7f932d8120/1/0>.

343 *San Francisco Life*, January 1936, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

The clientele were mostly friends of Mona Sargent. Her friend Reba Hudson remembers: "Mona just was going to open a place for her friends. Just a bohemian joint, a little beer and wine place to have a drink and talk and discuss ideas and do what bohemians do.... Drink and carry on and have intellectual conversations."³⁴⁴ Clyde Evans frequented Mona's and said it had a younger, attractive crowd and was always packed, "mainly by young students."³⁴⁵ Evans said Mona Sargent greeted everyone who came in.

After two years at 451 Union Street, neighbors complained about the noise and the crowds and asked the Sargents to move.

Mona's Barrel House (140 Columbus Avenue)

Mona and Jimmie Sargent moved their bar to the basement space at 140 Columbus Avenue (extant) near Pacific Avenue in 1936. Mona Sargent said the space "hadn't been used in years.... [I]t had a nice, long bar, a few booths."³⁴⁶ The Sargents decorated the space with barrels, covered the floor with sawdust, and the bar became known by patrons as Mona's Barrel House.

Mona's Barrel House became a draw for lesbians when the bar started featuring male-impersonating waitresses as entertainment.³⁴⁷ Mona Sargent remembers hiring her first lesbian waitress after learning that the woman had been kicked out of her parents' house for being gay: "She cried and told me [she was a lesbian] and said her folks shut the door in her face."³⁴⁸ Capitalizing on the popularity of cross-gender entertainment, Sargent hired even more lesbian waitresses and they started dressing in tuxedos and performing on stage. She said, "We had a piano player that always played for some entertainment ... Waitresses started getting up and singing.... It just happened...I wasn't a smart enough businesswoman to think, 'Oh boy, I'll have gay people [as waitresses]' ... It just slowly evolved."³⁴⁹

Before lesbians started frequenting her bar, Sargent said she "didn't know about lesbians," only that "they were called 'lady lovers.'"³⁵⁰ She said the "little tomboy girls" came with the "arty crowd."³⁵¹ By 1938, Mona's was so popular with cross-dressing patrons that a police officer who stopped by the bar said he "was unable to distinguish which were the men and which were the women."³⁵² He concluded that Mona's "was a pretty low place ... frequented by an extremely low class of patrons, of whom the best that could be said was that they were of 'questionable' virtue." The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Mona's Barrel House was a "well-known little hot spot" and was packed every night.³⁵³

344 Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 64-65.

345 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, 1997-1998.

346 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

347 Ibid.

348 Ibid.

349 Ibid.

350 Ibid.

351 Ibid.

352 "Cops Moan Low Down Over Mona's," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 30, 1938, 15/2, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

353 "Time Flies, Mona Moans," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 7, 1938, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.



ABOVE: Exterior of Mona's 440 Club at 440 Broadway



LEFT: Patrons at Mona's 440 Club

(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

Mona Sargent stayed at 140 Columbus until 1938.³⁵⁴ She contracted tuberculosis and left the management of the bar in Jimmie's hands while she recovered for 11 months. When she returned, she found that Jimmie had not paid the bills and was cheating on her. She promptly divorced him and decided to move the bar to 440 Broadway, where it remained until 1952.

Mona's 440 Club (440 Broadway)

Mona Sargent opened Mona's 440 Club at 440 Broadway (extant) in 1939. Mona's 440 Club became an institution for lesbians in San Francisco and remained the only lesbian-oriented club in the city until after World War II. The building at 440 Broadway, built in 1915, contained Mona's and a restaurant on the ground floor, and residential units on the two floors above. The nightclub space was owned by Charlie Murray, who was going broke and asked Sargent to partner with him. Murray was aware of Sargent's popularity and wanted her name on the marquee. Sargent agreed to partner with Murray but insisted that the space be re-decorated to her taste.³⁵⁵ Historic photographs show a simple neon sign on the façade that read "Mona's." At some point in the bar's history, a marquee out front advertised Mona's as the place "Where girls will be boys."³⁵⁶ Reba Hudson described the club's interior:

It's just like a real long room with a stage at the end of it. A big place. Typical nightclub thing. You entered at the front and the bar was over at your left. Hat check room at the end of the bar. Then a big arch and you entered what they called the showroom in nightclubs in those days. And there was a line of booths down one wall, then tables in where you could utilize space around the stage. And the stage was right in the center at the time that it was Mona's. Later on, the stage, when it was Ann's 440, everything was the same except the stage was at the end of the showroom instead of in the center. It was kind of a horseshoe shaped thing with a piano up there and steps going up."³⁵⁷

Similar to Sargent's bar on Union Street, the walls at Mona's 440 Club were decorated with murals of naked and "slightly tart" women.³⁵⁸

Mona's 440 Club was known for its nightly cross-gender entertainment featuring male-impersonating performers dressed in tuxedos. The performers, many of whom were lesbian, were convincing as men because they had closely cropped haircuts and used body straps to flatten their breasts.³⁵⁹ One of the most popular performers at Mona's was an African American singer named Gladys Bentley, billed as "America's Greatest Sepia Piano Artist" and the "Brown Bomber of Sophisticated Songs."³⁶⁰ Bentley went to Mona's after a successful career performing in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s. At Mona's 440 Club, writes Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Bentley packed her 250 pound frame into a tuxedo, flirted with women in the audience, and dedicated songs to her lesbian lover."³⁶¹ Bentley also performed in Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s at clubs such as the Swanee Inn, Frank Mell's Hollywood Mad House, The Jade, Larry Potter's Supper Club, and Nu-Paradise.³⁶²

354 San Francisco city directories.

355 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

356 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

357 Boyd, "Life During Wartime," *OurStories*.

358 Lord and Shaw, *Where to Sin in San Francisco*, 57.

359 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

360 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 76.

361 *Ibid.*

362 Advertisements in the *Los Angeles Times*. Cited in Watson, *Preserving the Tangible Remains of San Francisco's Lesbian Community in North Beach*, 62.

Other famous male-impersonating singers at Mona's 440 Club were Beverly Shaw, Jimmy Reynard, Kay Scott, and Jan Jansen.³⁶³ Beverly Shaw performed at Mona's through the mid-1940s and then at the Chi-Chi Club, another gay and lesbian bar across the street at 467 Broadway (extant). Reba Hudson said Shaw "had a real penchant for young attractive new faces in town" and always had several girlfriends at once.³⁶⁴ Long-time lesbian bar proprietor Rikki Streicher described Shaw as having great sex appeal: "Wow, wow, wow!"³⁶⁵ Jimmy Reynard went to Mona's after performing at Hollywood's famous Café International; a headliner known for her sappy ballads, she was "very handsome" and "the whole house was in love with her all the time," said Roberta Bobba.³⁶⁶ Kay Scott started singing at Mona's Barrel House in 1936 and was on the bill at Mona's 440 Club through 1946; she was billed as the "Gay Troubadour of Song" and sang "Rabelaisian ditties...dirty ditties" with the audience.

The cross-gender performances at Mona's 440 Club attracted a huge lesbian following. Charlotte Coleman said she first heard about Mona's when she was living on the East Coast and made a pilgrimage to the bar soon after arriving in San Francisco.³⁶⁷ For many lesbians, Mona's 440 Club was the first public space where they saw and met women like themselves. Reba Hudson and her friends were hugely impressed by their first night at Mona's: "They were females...dressed in dinner clothes and the best looking dykes you'd ever seen in your life, wearing these beautifully tailored tuxes.... God, it just boggled our minds!"³⁶⁸ She said, "[We] had never seen a male-impersonator before or seen anyone that was really openly gay before. All the entertainment was ... all slanted towards gay innuendo, that kind of thing. It was just totally out and out ... lesbianism! Right out there in the open and proud of it."³⁶⁹

Many lesbians connected with Mona Sargent on an emotional level and felt safe in her club. Charlotte Coleman recalled:

Everybody liked [Mona]. She was straight, but she was really good. If any police came in she would do anything for you—she would stop them at the door and [say], "you don't touch my women." She was really sweet but also really tough when it came to us. She wouldn't let anybody bother anybody.³⁷⁰

An oral history narrator remembered that everybody at Mona's "was really nice and sort of took us under their wing."³⁷¹ Sargent recalled a night when two young women looked at her with tears in their eyes and said, "Ruby and I thought we were the only two people in the world that were like this, and we didn't know what to do."³⁷² Sargent understood the importance of providing a public space where women could congregate: "The lesbians were in their own crowd, having a good time. They had found a place and people that understood them. [No one said], 'Get out of here, you Goddamn lez'."³⁷³ Lesbians formed friendships and romantic connections at Mona's, but because same-sex physical affection was illegal they had to be discreet. They "could hold hands under the

363 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

364 Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 75.

365 Rikki Streicher, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

366 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

367 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, July 1992, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

368 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), 1992.

369 Boyd, "Life During Wartime," *OurStories*.

370 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

371 Unidentified voice in Mona Sargent's interview, *Mona (Sargent) Hood*, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

372 *Ibid.*

373 *Ibid.*



TOP: Performers at Mona's 440 Club
BOTTOM: Butch/fem couple at Mona's 440 Club
(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

table but nothing else. No dancing was allowed that I remember,” according to Roberta Bobba.³⁷⁴

Mona’s 440 Club was equally popular with tourists, and the bar was often featured in tourism guides, including *San Francisco Life*. Another guidebook, *Where to Sin in San Francisco* (1939), directed tourists who were looking for “boy-girls,” to go to Mona’s: “The little girl waitresses look like boys. The little-girls-who-sing-sweet-songs look like boys. And many of the little girl customers look like boys ... There’s a wandering artist in a green beret who’ll sketch you for a buck. And Mona. *Herself*.”³⁷⁵ Tourists frequented Mona’s 440 Club and similar queer spaces because, according to Nan Alamilla Boyd, they “wanted to experience unfamiliar sexual worlds.”³⁷⁶ Sargent said the clientele at her club was “one-third gay, one-third our regular crowd [bohemians], and one-third tourists.”³⁷⁷ She was adamant that her business did not survive on tourism alone. When the Gray Line bus tour dropped off tourists at her club she said, “You can come in if you want, but there’s just standing-room only...I don’t need [your business].”³⁷⁸ Lesbian businesswoman Charlotte Coleman said Mona’s was “mostly women” but the lesbians and tourists comingled. Roberta Bobba recalls that Mona’s 440 Club also was popular for military servicemen wanting to see the lesbians.

In the 1940s and 1950s when policing agencies were commonly raiding bars, Mona’s 440 Club was never bothered. Sargent said the police “knew me. I’d lived on [Telegraph] Hill before that and I’d go down and just knew cops.”³⁷⁹ When asked why Mona’s 440 Club became one of the most popular bars in San Francisco, Sargent replied: “Because it was new. There weren’t any others ... It was because I was the first...they’d come up from Los Angeles, there weren’t any there then, and celebrities would come in. And things just kind of fell in.”³⁸⁰ Rikki Streicher called Mona’s the “rock of the women’s bars.”³⁸¹

Mona Sargent sold her share of Mona’s 440 Club to Charlie Murray in the mid-1940s, but the club continued to operate under her name until 1952. In October 1953, the club became the “new and different” Ann’s 440 Club, with Ann Dee and Norma Clayton as the managers. Norma Clayton, a butch lesbian, was rumored to be Ann Dee’s lover.³⁸² Ann’s 440 Club retained a gay and lesbian clientele through the early 1960s, but it was predominantly an entertainment venue. Lesbian singer Beverly Shaw was Ann’s first headlining act.³⁸³ And in 1960, the club featured the cabaret act starring noted male-to-female transsexual Christine Jorgensen, who had made an enormous media splash in 1952 as the first American revealed as having had what was referred to at the time as sex-change surgery.³⁸⁴

Mona Sargent after the 440 Club

After she left the 440 Club, Mona Sargent partnered with Tom Arbulich at the Paper Doll at 524 Union Street, which became a very popular and long-standing queer restaurant and bar (described in detail in a later section of this chapter). Her time at the Paper Doll was short-lived, and in 1948 Mona opened her fourth club, Mona’s Candle Light, at 473 Broadway (extant), across the street from her 440 Club (which at that time still used her name). Mona’s Candle Light was also

374 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

375 Lord and Shaw, *Where to Sin*. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

376 *Ibid.*, 75.

377 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

378 *Ibid.*

379 *Ibid.*

380 *Ibid.*

381 Rikki Streicher, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

382 Pat Bond, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, May 18, 1981, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

383 Miscellaneous club announcements, Grace Miller Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

384 Display ad and listing for the run in *San Francisco Hotel Greeters Guide* (July 1960). Thanks to Gerard Koskovich for this reference.

popular with LGBTQ residents. As with her other nightclub interiors, Mona hired an artist friend to decorate Mona's Candle Light. The club was popular, "busy, busy every night with great write-ups," according to Sargent.³⁸⁵ She described Mona's Candle Light as "a place where people of all walks of life can meet their own friends."³⁸⁶ Sargent stayed at the Candle Light through at least 1950 and later quit the bar business. Mona Sargent retired near Santa Rosa, California; she died in 2001.

Black Cat Café

Early History

The Black Cat Café opened at 710 Montgomery Street (extant) after the repeal of Prohibition, and soon became a bohemian anchor in the Jackson Square/North Beach neighborhood in San Francisco. It was located on the first floor of the Canessa Building, underneath the Canessa Printing Company, a press founded by Italian immigrant Atilio Canessa in the early 1900s.³⁸⁷ The interior of the Black Cat was a big, open space with high, beamed ceilings and large clerestory windows over the storefront.³⁸⁸ A long, wooden bar ran along the north wall—on the left as one entered the space—and tables and chairs cluttered the rest of the floor. Dark wood wainscoting lined the walls and was painted with replicas of famous portraits such as Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. By the 1940s, a small stage was located at center rear of the floor. A piano and dressing area were located behind a curtain, and tables pushed together in front of the curtain created an informal stage. Decorations in the Black Cat over the years were eclectic. Nautical-themed objects such as netting, anchors, lanterns, and sea creatures hung from the ceilings and over the stage. A figurehead and a bell were affixed to a post adjacent to the stage. In the 1940s, artist Alex Anderson, born in the Philippines and educated at UC Berkeley, decorated the walls with his murals—possibly the figures painted on the wainscoting.³⁸⁹ Framed paintings, many for sale, filled the rest of the walls.

According to historian Nan Alamilla Boyd, the Black Cat's first manager was Charles Ridley, the same man responsible for San Francisco's original Black Cat Café at 56 Mason (described earlier in "Bohemianism").³⁹⁰ The Black Cat's early clientele was a broad mix of bohemians, intellectuals, dockworkers, people from the neighborhood; many literary celebrities were known to stop in, including John Steinbeck, William Saroyan, Truman Capote, and Allen Ginsburg. Community historian Gerald Fabian described it as a cross-section of class, race, and sexuality.³⁹¹ Gay artist Earl McGrath remembers the Black Cat as a "scungy little dive," but...very romantic, you could hear it[.] I can always remember my heart quickening when I came near. As you approached you could already sort of pick out the voices of your friends. It was a real drinking establishment. Sailors and hookers and just about everything in there. Intellectuals; painters; it was very "modern," in that sense, because you had everything from transvestites to businessmen to girls out on dates with young boys.³⁹²

The Black Cat was "very democratic," according to Clyde Evans. "[W]e all assumed that it was a Bohemian place and that it didn't matter if we were lesbian or heterosexual, that anything went,

385 Mona (Sargent) Hood, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

386 Ibid.

387 San Francisco city directories. The Canessa Printing Company was still operating at 708 Montgomery Street as late as 1931.

388 Interior descriptions are based on historic photographs housed at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, University of Southern California and the José Sarria Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

389 Thomas Albright, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-1980: An Illustrated History* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1985), 258.

390 This historical note could not be verified through primary sources. See Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 56.

391 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

392 Earl McGrath, interviewed by Kevin Killian, September 19, 1991. Quoted in Lewis Ellingham and Kevin Killian, *Poet Be Like God: Jack Spicer and the San Francisco Renaissance* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 41-42.

provided the other person was agreeable.”³⁹³ The first waves of Black Cat patrons entertained themselves by drinking red wine, playing checkers and chess, and talking about books and exchanging ideas.³⁹⁴ Earl McGrath remembered the Black Cat as an “existentialist hangout” because “everybody was reading Sartre and Camus and all that stuff.”³⁹⁵

Austrian holocaust survivor and libertarian Solomon “Sol” Stoumen purchased the Black Cat in 1945 when he was in his 30s.³⁹⁶ (Stoumen was heterosexual.) Stoumen was the proprietor of the Red Lizard at 545 Washington, another popular bohemian bar that featured cross-gender entertainment.³⁹⁷ When Stoumen took over the Black Cat, author Henry Evans snarked, “The place changed hands and the new owner encouraged the fruit and the place went to hell.”³⁹⁸ Similar to Finocchio’s and Mona’s 440 Club, the Black Cat became overtly queer in the mid-1940s when it started hosting cross-gender entertainment. Some of the earliest performances at the Black Cat featured cross-dressing men performing as old women with long-time Black Cat pianist Jimmy “Hazel” McGinnis accompanying.³⁹⁹ Clyde Evans called those early performances “marvelous ... something that really should have been orchestrated and put into a ballet.”⁴⁰⁰

José Sarria at the Black Cat

In the 1950s, the Black Cat became famous for its drag performances by José Julio Sarria. Sarria was born to a Colombian mother and a Nicaraguan father at St. Francis Hospital in San Francisco in 1923. After serving as an Army officers’ steward during World War II and during the American occupation of Berlin in 1945–1947, Sarria attended San José State University, where he studied to become a teacher. Sometime in the early 1950s, Sarria was arrested for sexual solicitation at the Oak Room in the St. Francis Hotel—a life-changing event because the morals arrest made him ineligible for a teaching license.⁴⁰¹ Before starting at the Black Cat, Sarria performed in drag at a gay bar in Oakland called Pearl’s and at the Beige Room in San Francisco, a popular drag bar on Broadway (discussed in detail in a later section of this chapter). Given his natural talents, Sarria realized, “I might be able to make a living this way.”⁴⁰² Sarria worked as a waiter at the Black Cat before starting his famous drag shows. His first performances were informal, spur-of-the-moment numbers. Eventually he was performing three shows a night, accompanied by Hazel McGinnis on piano. “He bantered with the crowd, lavishing attention on beautiful men and mocking the discomfort of naïve out-of-towners,” writes Nan Alamilla Boyd. “He dressed outrageously, played all the parts, and often interrupted arias with witty repartee, political commentary, or his own interpretations of the opera’s characters.”⁴⁰³ Sarria remembers, “I was the entertainer, and I, whether or not I knew it at the time or whether or not anyone else realized it, I changed the character of the Black Cat. I became the Black Cat.”⁴⁰⁴

393 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, 1997-1998.

394 Burt Gerrits, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, February 9, 1980, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

395 Earl McGrath, interviewed by Kevin Killian, 1991. Quoted in Lewis and Killian, *Poet Be Like God*, 41-42.

396 Christopher Lowen Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco: Policing and the Creation of a Cosmopolitan Liberal Politics, 1950-1972* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 84.

397 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

398 Henry Evans, *Bohemian San Francisco* (San Francisco, CA: The Porpoise Bookshop, 1955), 32. Quoted in *The San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* 5 (Winter 1989), 9.

399 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, 1983.

400 *Ibid.*

401 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 57.

402 *Ibid.*, 20-24.

403 *Ibid.*, 58.

404 José Sarria, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 22.



TOP: Jose Sarria performing at the Black Cat Cafe (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)
BOTTOM: Full house at the Black Cat Cafe (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

José Sarria's performances were enormously popular. Photographs of the interior taken during his operas in the 1950s show a packed house with patrons standing on the bar or sitting on stacked-up crates to catch a glimpse of the stage.⁴⁰⁵ Gerald Fabian recalls, "[T]hose nights when the crowd was very large, it was difficult to get to the bar and very difficult to work oneself into ... Black Cat."⁴⁰⁶ Like Mona's 440 Club and Finocchio's, the Black Cat became an institution on San Francisco's tourist circuit. "The tour buses would come by the Black Cat, and the drivers would say, 'You want to see a good show, go there and see this. [José Sarria] does four shows a night.'"⁴⁰⁷

After a while, and in response to ongoing police raids and surveillance at the Black Cat, José Sarria began to infuse politics into his performances. Understanding the political power he could wield from the stage, Sarria started to "address the Black Cat's regular customers as part of a community, a 'gay community.'"⁴⁰⁸ Sarria used the stage as a pulpit to convince his audience that they could effect radical change if they came out of the closet and joined together to form a community: "[W]e had to work together...we were responsible for our lives. We could change the laws if we weren't always hiding."⁴⁰⁹ One of Sarria's famous slogans during this period was, "United we stand, divided they arrest us one by one."⁴¹⁰ Gay-rights pioneer George Mendenhall said that Sarria's political statements were highly influential and marked the "beginning of [his] awareness of my rights as a gay person."⁴¹¹ Mendenhall remembers that José would energize the crowd by saying, "Let's unite." Mendenhall adds:

[H]e would have everybody in the [Black Cat] stand, and we would put our arms around each other and sing "God Save Us Nelly Queens" [José Sarria's parody of God Save the Queen]. If you lived at that time and had the oppression coming down from the police department and society, there was nowhere to turn ... and to be able to stand up and sing "God Save Us Nelly Queens" – we were really saying, "We have our rights, too."⁴¹²

In 1961, using the Black Cat Café as a political headquarters, Sarria ran for city supervisor—the first known openly gay candidate anywhere in the world to run for public office. Had he won, he also would have been the first Latino to win a supervisor's seat in San Francisco.⁴¹³ Sarria helped "shape a nascent gay movement," explains Boyd, and his trail-blazing political efforts at the Black Cat helped transform the queer bar into "a kind of politicized community center—a site for the development of new political ideas and responsibilities."⁴¹⁴

Sarria went on to help found homophile organizations, the precursors to gay rights organizations, including the League for Civil Education (LCE), the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), and the Tavern Guild (discussed in detail in "Homophile Organizations"). In 1964, Sarria became the self-appointed "Her Royal Majesty, Empress of San Francisco, José I, The Widow Norton," as he established the Imperial Court, which eventually grew into a still-existing network of non-profit

405 Historic photographs, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives and The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

406 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, 1983.

407 José Sarria, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 23.

408 *Ibid.*, 59.

409 Michael Robert Gorman, *The Empress is a Man: Stories from the life of José Sarria* (New York: Haworth Press, 1998), 162. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 59.

410 *Ibid.*

411 Quoted in Allan Bérubé, "The First Stonewall," *San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Program* (1983), Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

412 *Ibid.*

413 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 60.

414 *Ibid.*, 62.

LGBTQ charitable organizations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Sarria died at his home in New Mexico in 2013. His memorial service was held at Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill.

Closing of the Black Cat Café

After a long legal battle to retain the Black Cat's liquor license (discussed in detail in "Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities"), owner Sol Stoumen lost his final appeal to the Supreme Court of California, and in October 1963 the Alcoholic Beverage Control agency in Sacramento announced that they were going to "bolt the Cat doors shut, 'come hell or high water.'"⁴¹⁵ Over 2,000 people showed up on October 31, 1963, to mourn the loss of the Black Cat's liquor license. Newspaper columnist Herb Caen said it was the "biggest crowd in town, stretching from Washington to Pacific."⁴¹⁶ The crowd included "drag queens and businessmen, college students and mink-clad society matrons, men in t-shirts and boots, and tourists—all gathered to show support for the cause of gay civil liberties and to say goodbye to a San Francisco institution."⁴¹⁷ At midnight, the crowd sang "God Save Us Nelly Queens" one last time.⁴¹⁸ One of Sol Stoumen's attorneys, Matthew B. Weinberg, said the loss of the Black Cat moved him to tears: "That place is like an institution. This is like losing the cable cars or the Golden Gate Bridge."⁴¹⁹ When the Black Cat finally closed, José Sarria said it was the "end of the gay community's communication center."⁴²⁰

Other North Beach Bars and Restaurants of Note

While Finocchio's, Mona's 440 Club, and the Black Cat Café were the earliest and most significant queer bars in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood, other nightclubs, bars, and restaurants that opened in North Beach from the 1940s through the 1960s are worth mentioning.

Tommy's 299 Club

Tommy's 299 Club opened at 299 Broadway at Sansome (not extant) in 1948. Tommy's 299 was the first bar in San Francisco owned by an openly lesbian woman, Eleanor "Tommy" Vasu. Vasu was born in Ohio around 1917-18; she moved to San Francisco in the late 1940s.⁴²¹ She was famous around town for her short hair, expensive suits, Cadillac convertible, and gangster friends.⁴²² Community historian Pat Bond described Tommy in these words:

[S]he made a lot of money and she would go with hookers a lot. And she would buy them fur coats and John Fredericks [sic] hats. [A]nything you wanted, Tommy could get it for you. You wanted a watch, she'd bring out forty watches. She liked being a gangster, like Frank Sinatra, that kind of [thing]. She was in drag from the time she was twelve. All her life.⁴²³

415 "Black Cat' Hangs on to its last Life," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 25, 1963, Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

416 Quoted in Bérubé, "The First Stonewall," *San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Program*.

417 Klages, "When the Bar Was the Only Place in Town," *The San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* 4 (Spring 1989), 4.

418 Ibid.

419 "Black Cat' Hangs on to its last Life," *San Francisco Chronicle*.

420 José Sarria, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

421 Census data and San Francisco city directories.

422 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, May 29, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 88.

423 Pat Bond, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1981.

Roberta Bobba said that Tommy “passed as a man completely ... role-playing was so embedded in her.”⁴²⁴ Herb Caen described Tommy as a “a short-haired, long-tempered girl ... a gentleman among ladies.”⁴²⁵

Tommy’s 299 Club was located in a four-story brick building two blocks west of the Embarcadero. Like Mona’s Barrel House, the floors were covered in sawdust. The Firenze Hotel filled the upper two floors of the building and was known to be a hot spot for prostitution. Several oral history narrators recalled that Tommy was heavily involved in prostitution, and served as a pimp for girlfriends involved in the sex trade.⁴²⁶ Prostitutes and lesbians mingled freely at Tommy’s 299, according to Charlotte Coleman.⁴²⁷ The illicit activity drew the attention of police in 1949, and the club was raided, resulting in the arrest of eight women on vagrancy charges.⁴²⁸

Boyd calls Tommy Vasu a “lesbian entrepreneur” and notes that “policed women like Vasu manipulated the laws and cultural practices that restricted their behavior to build economic resource and expand the public space available to lesbians in San Francisco.”⁴²⁹ Vasu went on to open two more lesbian bars in North Beach, Tommy’s Place and 12 Adler Place (discussed in detail in “Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco”). In addition to running bars, Tommy operated the Romolo parking lot at 530 Broadway from the late 1950s through mid-1960s.⁴³⁰

Tommy’s 299 Club closed in 1952. The building at 299 Broadway was demolished sometime between 1956 and 1959 to make way for an Embarcadero Freeway on-ramp. In August 1969, Tommy Vasu was convicted of selling heroin and served five years at Tehachapi State Prison in Vacaville, California.⁴³¹ She was murdered a few years after she was released.

Paper Doll

The Paper Doll opened in 1949 at 524 Union Street (extant), just west of Grant and three blocks north of Broadway. The Paper Doll was unique because it was one of the first restaurants catering to the queer community in San Francisco—if not the first—and because it provided a public alternative to nightclubs and bars. The Paper Doll was located on the ground floor of a two-story, wood-frame building next to the alley Cadell Place. The interior was composed of a long bar on the left and booths and tables on the right.⁴³² There were two banquet rooms at the back of the space that could seat over 100 people. Community historian Joseph St. Amand recalls that the North Beach artist colony helped decorate the Paper Doll’s interior when it first opened. He said artist Emmy Lou Packard, friend of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, painted murals on the interior walls, while Rita Covelick designed a “collage window.”⁴³³

The Paper Doll’s first manager was Tom Arbulich, a longtime North Beach restaurateur who ran the business until 1956, when he sold it to Dante Benedetti.⁴³⁴ Mona Sargent was associated with the Paper Doll during its first few years in existence, serving as the bar’s hostess. Sargent

424 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

425 Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 8, 1961, 19. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 88.

426 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992. Quoted in *Ibid.*

427 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992. Cited in *Ibid.*

428 “Eight Women Held in Raid,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 16, 1949, 1. Quoted in *Ibid.*

429 *Ibid.*, 90.

430 San Francisco city directories.

431 California Department of Corrections, case records, in Nan Alamilla Boyd’s possession. Cited in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 273.

432 Dante Benedetti, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, July 10, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

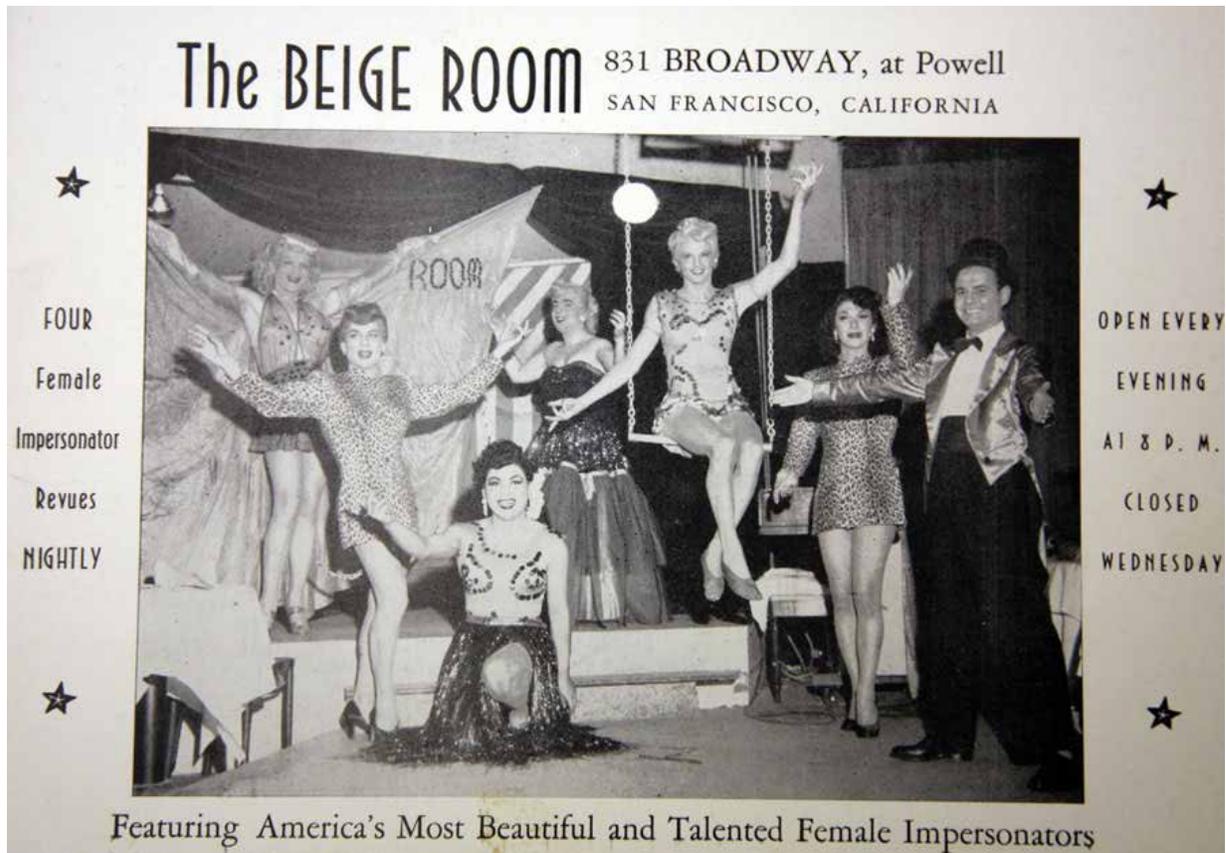
433 Joseph St. Amand, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, August 2, 1991, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

434 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 82.



LEFT: The Paper Doll at 524 Union Street

BELOW: Beige Room postcard
(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)



was responsible for “turn[ing] it on as a gay bar,” according to former patrons.⁴³⁵ The clientele at the popular Paper Doll was a mix of men and women. Charlotte Coleman said the Paper Doll was “where we all met and grew up.”⁴³⁶ It was “the number one place that we went every Friday and Saturday night.”⁴³⁷ Coleman liked the Paper Doll because it was located away from the more touristy Broadway: “Women used to pick bars that were tucked away, quiet little areas and districts and what not, and the Paper Doll, at that time, was.”⁴³⁸ Roberta Bobba recalled that gay men sat at the bar and lesbians squeezed into the large booths:

The waitress would say, ‘Well ... can we seat two more people with you?’ So they’d sit down next to you. And then a little while later it’d get real busy and they’d stick in two more. So there you were, every time you went, you met some new people ... you got to know all the ladies in town.”⁴³⁹

Bobba says women went to the Paper Doll for an elegant dinner.⁴⁴⁰ Gerald Fabian, who described the Paper Doll as mostly lesbian, said it was always packed—“one of the places on the circuit that you went to.”⁴⁴¹ Gay author Samuel Steward hung out at the Paper Doll in the early 1950s and noted in his journal that it was “so packed they were drinking outside on the steps.”⁴⁴²

The Paper Doll was one of the earliest spaces in San Francisco that functioned as an informal community center where “gay, lesbian, and transgendered people could make friends, find lovers, get information, or plan activities.”⁴⁴³ The Paper Doll remained in operation through 1961. Charlotte Coleman said queer places such as the Paper Doll stayed open longer than most queer spaces because they doubled as restaurants, and according to Coleman policing agencies were more tolerant of bars with restaurants.⁴⁴⁴

Beige Room

The Beige Room first opened at 2215 Powell Street (extant) but in 1951 moved to 831 Broadway near the Broadway Tunnel, which was completed the following year. The nightclub was located in a 1938 Art Deco building that also housed the Unión Española de California, a Spanish cultural organization. Gerald Fabian described the bar interior as having the ambiance of a big nightclub, with open arena-like setting and a big staircase that featured in many of the performances.⁴⁴⁵ For a brief period, trapeze swings hung from the ceiling. The original owners were Al Burgess and Isadore “Chinkie” Naditz.

A lower-budget, but decidedly queerer version of Finocchio’s, the Beige Room became famous for its female-impersonation performances in the 1950s. One of the establishment’s most popular performers was Lynne Carter, a white man known for impersonating African American singers such as Pearl Bailey and Josephine Baker.⁴⁴⁶ After attending a performance by Kay Thompson and

435 Charlotte Coleman, Rikki Streicher, Mona Hood, and Reba Hudson, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

436 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

437 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

438 Ibid.

439 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

440 Ibid.

441 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

442 Quoted in Spring, *Secret Historian*, 197.

443 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 61.

444 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

445 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

446 Sam Irvin, “Stop Performing in Slacks!,” http://kaythompsonwebsite.com/Stop_Performing_in_Slacks!.pdf.

the Williams Brothers at the Venetian Room at the Fairmont in 1953, Carter “slipped into a pair of slacks, grabbed a long scarf, hired four hunky dancers, and ... debuted Lynne Carter and the Four Cartiers” at the Beige Room.

Another famous drag performer, Laurie Knight, recalled his time at the Beige Room:

I was there five years, no vacations, one night a week off. We did three to four new shows a year; three shows a night; four shows on Saturday. The Gray Line Tour Bus arrived at 8 p.m. on Saturdays. We would do a special show for them, and then three more shows for our regular audience. Funny thing, some people always left the Gray Line Tour and stayed for our second show.⁴⁴⁷

Other popular performers at the Beige Room were T.C. Jones, Ray Saunders, and Kenneth Marlowe.⁴⁴⁸ José Sarria was an early performer. Community historian Gerald Fabian performed “Madame Butterfly” and “Un Belle Dia” at the Beige Room when he lost his job at Gump’s and was hard up for money.⁴⁴⁹ He said his costume made him look like a “plus seven” Shirley McClaine in a red wig. Fabian recalled that, unlike Finocchio’s, which followed a stringent hiring process, the Beige Room was more of an “underworld operation...with a lot more freedom in [whom] they hired.”⁴⁵⁰ Many of the performers were openly gay, giving the Beige Room an “insider’s appeal,” according to Boyd.⁴⁵¹ “[F]emale impersonators at the Beige Room both legitimized queer culture and set the standard for flamboyant drag performance ... the Beige Room was the place where San Francisco’s drag culture flourished.”⁴⁵²

The Beige Room had a mixed clientele and was popular with the transgender, gay, and lesbian communities. Patrons could dance—only in male-female couplings—in addition to attending performances. Many former patrons recall that it was a ritual to go dancing at the Beige Room on Sunday nights.⁴⁵³ Halloweens at the Beige Room were an institution. The Beige Room closed in 1958.

Gordon’s

Gordon’s restaurant and bar opened at 840 Sansome Street near Broadway (extant) in the early 1950s and is remembered by many gay men as one of the earliest restaurants in San Francisco catering to the queer community.⁴⁵⁴ It was located on the ground floor and in the basement of a five-story brick building, around the corner from the former location of Tommy’s Club 299. Original owners Gordon Jones, a chef, and William L. Bowman worked together at the Paper Doll before opening Gordon’s.⁴⁵⁵ Jones and Bowman were two of the first gay men to own a gay establishment in San Francisco. Community historian Joe Baron said Gordon’s was for the “fuzzy sweater set.”⁴⁵⁶ It was “dressy, which meant that you wore a tie ... You were judged by the other people in the bar by the way you dressed, and if you [weren’t] ... appropriately dressed, you were more or less

447 Laurie Knight, interviewed by David de Alba, 2004.

448 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 130.

449 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

450 Ibid.

451 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 130.

452 Ibid., 130, 132.

453 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

454 San Francisco city directories.

455 Gordon’s, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

456 Joe Baron (pseud.), interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, July 21, 1991 and August 4, 1991, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Interview edited by Boyd.



LEFT: Former home of Gordon's restaurant at 840 Sansome Street
(Photo by Shayne Watson)



RIGHT: Charlotte Coleman, lesbian bar owner and businesswoman
(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

ignored.” Burt Gerrits recalled that Gordon’s was popular in the 1950s with gay men working in the financial district.⁴⁵⁷

Around the late 1960s, Sandy Sanchez purchased Gordon’s, and the basement space became a dance club known as the Playroom. Gordon’s was still popular in the early 1970s. It was described in 1970 as the “most elegant of San Francisco’s gay spots.... An extremely attractive place with ... black leather booths, graceful arches, rich red tablecloths, gold wallpaper and replica tablets of Greek sculpture suspended dramatically along the wall. The clientele is mainly a lot of older gentlemen in business suits.”⁴⁵⁸ Gordon’s closed around 1972.

The Front

Charlotte Coleman opened The Front at 600 Front Street at Jackson (not extant) in 1958. It was the first of many lesbian and gay bars owned and operated by Coleman in San Francisco. After Tommy Vasu, Coleman was the second openly lesbian woman in San Francisco to own a lesbian bar. Coleman was born in 1923 in Rhode Island. She joined the Coast Guard when she was 21 and settled in San Francisco after serving her term. Before opening The Front, Coleman worked as an auditor for the Internal Revenue Service. When an investigation in the 1950s revealed that she was a lesbian, Coleman was discharged from the IRS. (In the 1950s, the FBI, working with local police departments, oversaw a broad surveillance program of civil servants suspected as homosexuals.⁴⁵⁹) She recalled feeling crushed when she lost her job, but said “in the end it was the best thing that ever happened to me ‘cause it forced me to go into business for myself.”⁴⁶⁰

The Front was located in a two-story industrial building in the heart of the city’s produce and warehouse district.⁴⁶¹ It was adjacent to a massive, block-long vegetable market. Coleman said she intentionally located The Front in an area “where nobody was around” as a way to prevent police raids, which reached a peak in the late 1950s. “[N]obody would notice the gay people coming and going too much.”⁴⁶² She described the bar as being in “an old warehouse type building”⁴⁶³ and “long and narrow and old. It had that old-fashioned tin wallpaper on the walls and high, high ceilings.”⁴⁶⁴ There were tables and chairs and a little stage and dressing room, all built by Coleman. For a while she had a kitchen in the back and served food.

Before she could afford to hire help, Coleman worked the bar by herself. She described a typical day at The Front:

I used to open up around noontime or so. I worked seven days a week ... I’d get there and wash the floor and clean the ladies room and men’s room, stock the beer bar. As soon as I’d get that done I’d open up and I’d stay there until two o’clock in the morning ... some nights I was so tired I’d just lay down on the bowling machine and went to sleep. I couldn’t make it home.⁴⁶⁵

457 Burt Gerrits, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1980.

458 John Burks, San Francisco, April 1970; Gordon’s, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

459 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 132.

460 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

461 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps. Cited in Watson, *Preserving the Tangible Remains of San Francisco’s Lesbian Community in North Beach*, 104.

462 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

463 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

464 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

465 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

Coleman wore slacks and a jacket with a tie to work. "I wanted to look like I was gay and that's the way I dressed."⁴⁶⁶ She wanted The Front to be a lesbian bar, but "there were no gay papers to advertise in."⁴⁶⁷ It became popular by word of mouth.

The Front was strictly lesbian and didn't attract tourists. The clientele was "mostly young...going to school and going to college."⁴⁶⁸ Her patrons had very little money, and many were unemployed. Those who had jobs would only show up once a week and "spend a few bucks."⁴⁶⁹ Coleman said men working in the produce district, known as "lumpers," would stop by for a drink. "They'd come in and drink beer in the daytime ... They sit and wait until the truck comes in then they all get out and unload it ... They'd call us the fruits, and they were the vegetables. They were nice guys. If something broke they would try to help us—they didn't try to harass or anything."⁴⁷⁰ Performances at The Front featured female and male impersonators: "We had whatever was around," said Coleman.⁴⁷¹ One of the first events held in the space was a St. Patrick's Day brunch fundraiser for the lesbian homophile organization the Daughters of Bilitis.

Coleman experienced police harassment at The Front and she lost her liquor license after incurring multiple morals charges.⁴⁷² Around the same time, she lost the lease on the building because the city was making plans to demolish the produce market as part of the massive Golden Gateway redevelopment project. It was good timing for Coleman because she was ready to leave the lesbian-bar business, which she concluded was not lucrative. "Women weren't making [the] kind of money they had to have to go [to the bars]."⁴⁷³ And she was tired of the lesbian drama: "I had a lot of fun at The Front," Coleman recalled, but "the women got into so many fights. Pulling hair and dumping beers over each other."⁴⁷⁴

Coleman closed The Front in 1961 and opened the Golden Cask, a bar for gay men on Haight Street. "I wouldn't even let women in with slacks," she said.⁴⁷⁵ The building that housed The Front was demolished in the 1960s. The former site of The Front is now part of Jackson Square Park.

DEVELOPMENT OF SEX-BASED CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

Bathhouses, streets, parks, public restrooms, movie theaters, beaches, and other public spaces where cruising and hustling took place allowed vast, but discreet, sex-based cultures and communities to develop in San Francisco. "Because *all* sex acts between men were ... illegal," writes historian Allan Bérubé, "gay men were forced to become sexual outlaws ... experts at stealing moments of privacy and at finding the cracks in society where they could meet and not get caught."⁴⁷⁶ Historian George Chauncey argues that cruising and hustling on city streets and sex in public spaces mirrored, or blended with, the sexualized street culture of working-class heterosexual neighborhoods in urban areas in the first half of the 20th century. Young people living in crowded homes, who were constantly scrutinized by family members, "tried to construct some measure

466 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

467 Ibid.

468 Ibid.

469 Ibid.

470 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

471 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

472 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

473 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

474 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992.

475 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

476 Allan Bérubé, "The History of the Baths," *Coming Up!* (December 1984), Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

of privacy for themselves in spaces middle-class ideology regarded as ‘public.’”⁴⁷⁷ Writing about his experience in a Jewish immigrant family in New York’s Lower East Side, composer Samuel Chotzinoff coined the phrase, “privacy could only be had in public.”⁴⁷⁸

Public spaces served as community centers and “sites of sexual rendezvous” for both straight and gay communities, but for gay men these sites were even more important.⁴⁷⁹ Not only did they allow gay men to find one another when gay networks were small or nonexistent, but they were places where men could “find collective support for their rejection of the sexual and gender roles prescribed them” — thereby planting the seeds for community formation.⁴⁸⁰

The experiences of gay men and transgender women are the predominant focus of this section; for a variety of reasons, those populations were more inclined to seek sex in public and to form communities around sexual activity, but there also is some mention of sex as it relates to lesbians and bisexual men and women.

Bathhouses

Bathhouses, according to George Chauncey, were the “safest, most enduring, and one of the most affirmative of the settings in which gay men gathered in the first half of the 20th century.”⁴⁸¹ Unlike the streets, parks, and other places where gay men engaged in sex, bathhouses “were theirs alone.”⁴⁸² Allan Bérubé writes that gay bathhouses, along with gay and lesbian bars, played a critical role in the development of LGBTQ communities throughout the country by providing a relatively safe and private space where gay men could meet and engage in sex.⁴⁸³ Bathhouses “exemplify the manner in which men built a social world on the basis of a shared marginalized sexuality,” Chauncey concludes.⁴⁸⁴

The original bathhouses functioned as a public utility. In crowded cities in the 19th and early 20th centuries, bathing facilities in lodging and boarding houses were rudimentary, if they existed at all. Public baths provided basic facilities for cleanliness and health, such as baths, showers, and steam rooms. San Francisco’s first bathhouses date back to the Gold Rush. In 1851, the city had four; by the start of the 20th century there were over 20.⁴⁸⁵ Some of the earliest bathhouses in San Francisco combined swimming with bathing; these included the Lurline Ocean Water baths at Bush and Larkin Streets (not extant), in operation from the 1800s through the 1930s, and the Sutro Baths at Lands End (partially extant), which opened in the early 1900s. The James Lick Baths, established in 1890 at 165 10th Street (extant), is a San Francisco Landmark (#246). One of the longest-running bathhouses in San Francisco was the Burns Hammam baths at 229 Ellis Street (extant). Established around 1911, the Burns Hammam remained in business through the early 1940s, when the name was changed to the San Francisco Turkish Baths. The San Francisco Turkish Baths operated through the 1980s. Other long-running bathhouses were Finnilla’s Finnish baths at 2284 Market Street (1930s–1980s) (not extant) and Jack’s Baths at 1052 Geary and 1143 Post Street (approximately 1936–1980s) (both extant).

477 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 202.

478 Quoted in *Ibid.*

479 *Ibid.*, 204.

480 *Ibid.*

481 *Ibid.*, 208.

482 *Ibid.*

483 Bérubé, “The History of the Baths,” *Coming Up!*

484 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 208.

485 San Francisco city directories.

Bérubé's research on the history and significance of the gay bathhouse reveals that public bathhouses evolved into gay meeting spaces as early as the late 1800s. Documentation shows that the transformation occurred in four major phases. First, in the 19th century, gay men would occasionally have sex at public baths—or find partners there with whom to have sex elsewhere. Later, men began to identify favorite places, such as a certain bathhouse or YMCA where managers or employees were known to tolerate gay sex by looking the other way. In the 1920s and 1930s, the first bathhouses specifically targeted to homosexual men began to emerge; in these spaces, notes Bérubé, “sex was permitted in closed and locked ‘cubicles,’” but the clientele was not exclusively gay. And finally, in the 1950s and 1960s, what Bérubé calls the first “modern gay bathhouses” appeared, catering exclusively to gay clientele and serving the sexual needs of gay men.⁴⁸⁶

Bathhouses were critical in the development of gay communities because their benefits went beyond sex. They served as “refuges from society’s prejudice against homosexuals, as oases of freedom and homosexual camaraderie.... Old friendships could be renewed, ‘new intimacies’ were ‘ever in the air.’ Patrons socialized with each other in the common areas.”⁴⁸⁷ Bathhouses were one of the few spaces where gay men could encounter others and form relationships. Bérubé illustrates this when he tells the story of two soldiers meeting at Jack’s Baths in 1944. The two men went their separate ways during the war, but Bob Ruffing said the meeting “seemed so good to each of us that we decided to get together after the war and give it a whirl.”⁴⁸⁸ They reunited, and their one experience at Jack’s Baths turned into a “fifteen-year love affair.” Community historian George Mendenhall added that the baths were particularly important for men “who lived in really skid-row situations or in a little room.”⁴⁸⁹ The baths served as “a living room situation,” where patrons “could read magazines ... [enjoy the] snack bar ... if you didn’t want to have sex, some people would just go there and have steam and enjoy the social atmosphere and leave. [Baths were] just a place to relax.”⁴⁹⁰

For men who wanted to use the baths for sex, another benefit of the bathhouses was that they provided a safer alternative to sex in public areas like Union Square, which were often under surveillance by policing agencies. Bathhouses also added a layer of protection from violence, Chauncey explains:

There was always the danger ... that a man taken home from the streets would try to rob or blackmail his host, or that a sexual encounter in a park would end in violence. Men who went to the baths avoided such dangers, for they were able to leave their valuables and identification papers stored safely in a locker and were surrounded by other gay men who could come to their assistance in the event of trouble.⁴⁹¹

Bathhouses were not totally immune from danger. Like gay and lesbian bars, policing agencies raided bathhouses. Community historian Tom Redmon recalled that some bathhouse owners established measures to protect patrons. At Jack’s Baths, the owner would signal patrons that the bathhouse was being raided by flashing a light. “[I]f they hit that light, turned it on and off, on and off, then [patrons] knew that there was vice squad in the front entrance, and that they were coming in. And so, if you were in a room with somebody, you got the hell out of there in a hurry.”⁴⁹² George

486 Bérubé, “The History of the Baths,” *Coming Up!*.

487 Ibid.

488 Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 119.

489 George Mendenhall, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, November 13, 1991, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

490 Ibid.

491 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 219.

492 Tom Redmon, interviewed by Len Evans, May 17, 1984, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Mendenhall recalled that Jack's Baths also had a public address system that management would use to announce raids, warning customers: "Please be in your rooms. One person to a room. We're enforcing our regulations, one person to a room."⁴⁹³

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, gay bathhouses went through "dramatic changes," according to Bérubé. "They established themselves as a major gay institution that could both shape and respond to the rapid social, sexual and political changes that were taking place."⁴⁹⁴ Bathhouses became increasingly focused on sex and less on public health: in the mid-1960s, "orgy rooms" were installed; in the 1970s, with the introduction of video, pornography was introduced; also in the 1970s, bathhouses began to feature fantasy environments recreating public sex scenes outside of the baths, with interior décor imitating such settings as public toilets, parks and bushes, YMCAs, theaters, and prisons. Bathhouse owners encouraged gay artists to decorate the walls with erotic murals: "For some artists, these murals were the first opportunity to create and display their art for an exclusively gay audience."⁴⁹⁵ Dave's Baths (100 Broadway, extant), Folsom Street Barracks (1145 Folsom Street, not extant), Liberty Baths (1157 Post Street, extant), and Bulldog Baths (132 Turk Street, extant) had elaborate murals by gay artists. Bathhouses also doubled as entertainment centers with movie nights, singers and bands, dancing, and holiday celebrations. Bathhouses reached a peak in the early 1980s, as the number of gay and non-gay bathhouses in San Francisco grew from nine in 1960 to 15 in 1980.⁴⁹⁶ In the 1980s, as the bodybuilding craze was picking up, many bathhouses were modified to become more like gyms. In the early 1980s, when the AIDS epidemic hit San Francisco, the San Francisco Health Department ordered the closure of bathhouses across the city. The last bathhouse to close was the 21st Street Baths, which finally shut its doors in May 1987.⁴⁹⁷

Following is a selective overview of the city's earliest, longest-running, or more popular gay bathhouses.

Sultan Turkish Baths

Historian William Lipsky describes the Sultan Turkish Baths at 624 Post Street (extant) as "the earliest known gay-friendly business in the city."⁴⁹⁸ The Sultan Turkish Baths opened in 1907 and billed itself as "Positively the Grandest [bathhouse] in the West."⁴⁹⁹ All seven stories of the building were dedicated to bathhouse use. The Sultan Turkish Baths featured a restaurant on the first floor, the baths on the second floor, a lounge on the third floor, rooms for rent on the fourth floor, more rooms and bath facilities on the fifth floor, and hotel rooms and long-term apartments on the sixth and seventh floors.

The Sultan Turkish Baths is identified in interview transcripts from the 1918 Baker Street sex scandal as being popular for gay cruising and sex.⁵⁰⁰ Another bathhouse noted in the transcript is the Burns Hammam baths at 229 Ellis Street. The Sultan Turkish Baths closed c. 1927 and the building was converted to a hotel.

493 George Mendenhall, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1991.

494 Bérubé, "The History of the Baths," *Coming Up!*

495 Ibid.

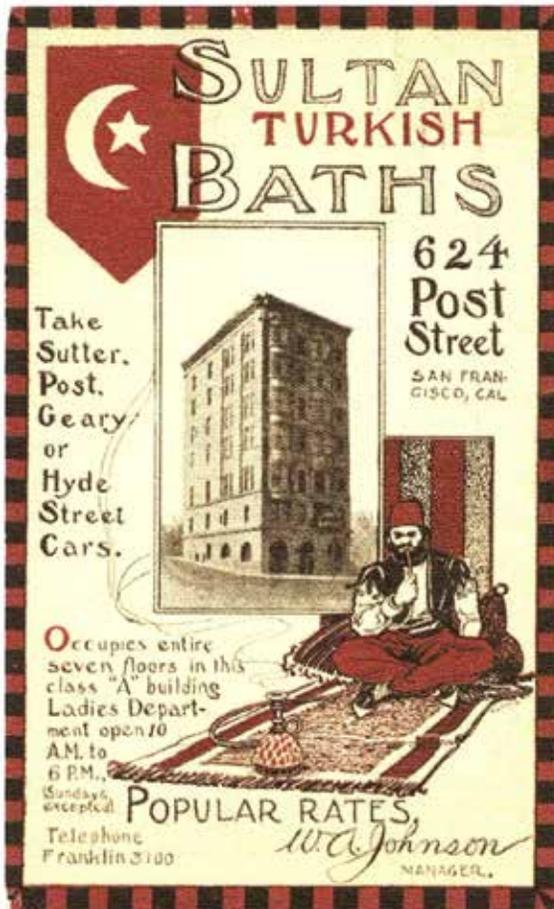
496 San Francisco city directories.

497 Ilana DeBare, "Last Gay Bathhouse in S.F. Agrees to Close Its Doors," *Los Angeles Times*, http://articles.latimes.com/1987-05-08/news/mn-2810_1_gay-bathhouse.

498 William Lipsky, "Comments: Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco," November 2015.

499 Sultan Turkish Baths advertisement, *San Francisco Call*, June 30, 1907. (Provided by William Lipsky.)

500 Personal communication between William Lipsky and Shayne Watson, February 9, 2016. "Proceedings of a General Court-Martial," Record of Trial by General Court-Martial of Private John Bosworth (2365336), Company "F," 62nd Infantry, Case 114885, 16-17.



LEFT: Advertisement for Sultan Turkish Baths (Courtesy Bill Lipsky)

BELOW: Former home of Jack's Baths at 1143 Post Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)



Jack's Turkish Baths

Jack's Turkish Baths was one of the longest-running gay bathhouses in San Francisco. Jack W. Gartman opened Jack's Turkish Baths at 1052 Geary near Van Ness in the mid-1930s under the management of Alfred C. Birch.⁵⁰¹ An advertisement in 1940 describes Jack's as offering a "hot room, a steam cabinet, and a soap rub with private room for \$1.25 [on Saturdays the soap rub went up to \$1.50]." Jack's was a men's-only bathhouse and was open day and night. An early visitor described the scene:

It had as many small cubicles (each with a cot, chair, closet, a locking door) as possible; a steam room, warm room, masseurs, showers, [toilet room]. By midnight on Friday and Saturday nights, the Baths was filled to beyond capacity ... Someone spread the rumor that the U.C. football team came over from Berkeley every Monday evening.⁵⁰²

In 1941, Jack's Turkish Baths moved one block away to 1143 Post Street. Jack's was popular with servicemen during World War II. One former soldier said, "It was *good*. Very, very busy."⁵⁰³ Another soldier said that he slept at Jack's Baths during World War II when lodging in San Francisco was impossible to find.⁵⁰⁴

Jack's on Post Street featured a communal steam room, showers, and private rooms for rent. By the 1950s, the bathhouse was a well-known gay meeting spot: "Track meet starts at 11 p.m. Many guests bring their own basket lunch, and at 2 a.m., lunch time. Baths in connection, no extra charge."⁵⁰⁵ Community historian Gerald Fabian described Jack's as beautiful and more upscale than the Third Street Turkish Baths, another popular gay bathhouse. Clyde Evans, community historian and partner of gay author Clarkson Crane, remembered a communal orgy room.⁵⁰⁶ In the 1970s, Jack's was still in operation but catered to an older crowd: "Shunned by the younger, giddier crowd and left to the older, action-oriented guys, this place is a sure thing."⁵⁰⁷

Various members of the Gartman family oversaw operations at the baths up to the 1970s.⁵⁰⁸ Jack's Baths closed in the 1980s.

Palace Baths / Third Street Turkish Baths

The Palace Baths, later known as the Third Street Turkish Baths, was one of San Francisco's most notorious public spaces for gay sex. Located at 85 Third Street (not extant) at Mission, the establishment appeared in the city directory in 1951 under management of Harold C. Iliff, though some accounts state that the baths were open as early as World War II. Between 1963 and 1980, city directories show that the building at 85 Third Street was vacant, indicating that the baths had closed or the business had gone underground.

The baths at 85 Third Street were in the basement of the building. The space was described by Gerald Fabian as "cold ... smelly and dirty [and] ... really raunchy."⁵⁰⁹ Clyde Evans said the baths

501 San Francisco city directories.

502 Bérubé, "The History of the Baths," *Coming Up!*.

503 Ibid.

504 Burt Gerrits, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1980.

505 Jack's Baths was included in the Mattachine Society's bar guide in the 1950s; Jack's Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

506 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, 1983.

507 *International Guild Guide* (1976); Jack's Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

508 Bérubé, "The History of the Baths," *Coming Up!*.

509 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

were filled with cockroaches and noted that the lobby had a cashier's booth protected by a cage. Men engaged in sexual activities in door-less cubicles located off a long hallway. The Palace Baths catered to a large cross section of clients: "All classes of men went there and there was no pretense about it."⁵¹⁰ Fabian said the employees tended to be hustlers.

Club Turkish Baths/Bulldog Baths

From at least the 1950s to the early 1980s, the building at 182 Turk Street (extant) housed one of the city's most popular gay bathhouses. The Club Turkish Baths was one of San Francisco's first modern gay men's bathhouses, catering almost exclusively to a gay clientele. In 1954, the Mattachine Society described the scene: "It has a snack bar and soft drinks available. Foam rubber mattresses. Real Plush. \$3.00 Fridays, \$3.50 Saturdays, Open 8 pm to 10 am."⁵¹¹ By the 1970s, the Club Turkish Baths was described as the "talk of Gay America," and "old and well-established." Weekends at the baths were "paved with horny, action-oriented guys of all ages and types who are looking for good times, rather than frills."⁵¹²

In 1979, the Club Turkish Baths became the Bulldog Baths and the space was redecorated. The Bulldog Baths marketed itself as the "largest bath in the USA."⁵¹³ The elaborate interior of the Bulldog Baths featured two tiers of jail cells, a birdcage, and a garage-themed room with a full-size semi truck. New York artist M. Brooks Jones decorated the walls of the orgy room with a huge mural depicting men having sex among semi trucks parked in the moonlight.

Sutro Bath House

The Sutro Bath House opened in 1974 at 312 Valencia Street (extant), next door to the Valencia Gardens public housing project. (There was no connection to the historic Sutro Baths at Lands End.) It moved to 1015 Folsom Street (extant) around 1977. In the early 1980s, Sutro Bath House featured Gay Western Nights with live western music, "cowboy and cowperson strippers," and San Francisco's "biggest dance floor" for country and western dancing, covered by a 60-foot skylight "that can open to the stars when it gets too hot."⁵¹⁴ The "Bisexual Boogie" was held every Tuesday. The bathhouse also featured a café, barbershop, gift shop, and massage parlor. Sutro Bath House was one of the only public sex clubs that welcomed lesbians and bisexual women. Owner Bill Jones says, "Mine was the only [sex club that allowed women that] I knew of. We had a few Sunday nights for women only, and it was very successful, but my regular [male] customers were pissed off because they couldn't come in so we had to stop those nights. From what my female employees told me, the orgy room with the mirrored ceiling was the most popular room on those nights."⁵¹⁵ The Sutro closed in 1984 when the City ordered bathhouses to shut down in the midst of the AIDS crisis.

Osentó

The only bathhouse in San Francisco that catered exclusively to women was Osento in the Mission District. Osento operated from 1981 to 2008 in the lower floor of a Victorian residential building at 953-955 Valencia Street (extant). The Japanese name presumably linked the business to the long tradition of communal bathing in Japan. Maggie Jochild, an Osento patron, recalls paying a \$2.00 entry fee before entering a locker and shower room. The main space was a "large tiled room with

510 Ibid.

511 San Francisco Mattachine Society convention bar guide (1954); Club Turkish Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

512 Spartacus Gay Guide (1976); Richard Young, *QQ Magazine* (Summer 1970); John Francis Hunter (1972); Club Turkish Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

513 Sex Clubs, General, Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

514 Ibid.

515 Personal communication between Juliet Demeter, GLBT Historical Society, and Bill Jones, former owner of Sutro Bath House, July 14, 2014.



BULLDOG BATHS
 132 TURK
 in cooperation with
DRUMMER MAGAZINE
 INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE ITS
 FIRST ANNIVERSARY
 of Serving San Francisco's Hottest Men
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 / 9 P.M. until 1 A.M.
 Rooms \$7 / Lockers \$4
 Refreshments and Surprises
 in the DRUMMER Tradition
 Free **HARDWARE** to the first 200 Men
 1980 **MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED**

SUNDAY
6 P.M. to Midnight
WOMEN ONLY!
NO MEN ALLOWED!

NO MEMBERSHIP FEE REQUIRED

SUTRO BATH HOUSE
 1015 Folsom Street (near 13th)
 San Francisco 626-9444

PHONE
863-9963

Castro Rock Steam Baths
MEN ONLY - PRIVATE ROOMS
Open 24 Hours

582 CASTRO STREET
BETWEEN 18TH & 19TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

TOP LEFT: First anniversary party flyer for Bulldog Baths at 132 Turk Street
 TOP RIGHT: Advertisement for women's night at Sutro Bathhouse at 1015 Folsom Street
 BOTTOM: Business card for Castro Rock Steam Baths
 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

a very hot pool lined with wide rims on which you could sit or lie to cool off/chat...⁵¹⁶ Behind that was “a small back room with pads to lie on, and a small outdoor patio with a cold plunge.” Another patron, Stephanie Rosenbaum, says, “Unlike the men’s bathhouses, [Osento] really was a place for bathing. Although I heard stories of late-night sauna nookie, I never witnessed any; the rules were no sex (‘not even with yourself’), and privacy was respected. But if you couldn’t touch, you could look: it was a place to experience the myriad beauty of real women.”⁵¹⁷

Other Bathhouses of Note

Other early or popular bathhouses of note were the Castro Rock/Castro Steam Baths at 582 Castro Street (extant) and Dave’s Finnish Baths at 451 Washington (later 100 Broadway) (extant).

Across the street from Harvey Milk’s residence and camera shop in San Francisco’s Castro district, the Victorian building at 582 Castro Street was home to one of the city’s longest-running bathhouses. Opened around 1933–1934 by Alex Sergo and his wife, who lived upstairs in the building, the bathhouse was known as the Castro Baths and later as the Castro Rock Steam Baths. The Castro Rock Steam Baths became an exclusively gay bathhouse in the 1970s when considerable numbers of gay men began living in and frequenting the Castro. Carl Driver describes the baths in 1971: “An older, converted house, rather seedy with peeling paint, etc. but very convenient to the Upper Market–Castro area.”⁵¹⁸ In 1976, the *Spartacus Gay Guide* said: “Open 24 hours and catering to a crowd as varied as the neighborhood; young, not-so-young, freaky, conservative affluent and poor.”⁵¹⁹ The Castro Steam Baths closed in the late 1970s.

Dave Tricaldi and his friend Rex Allen opened Dave’s Finnish Baths in 1959 at 451 Washington Street, near the produce market. Allan Bérubé’s research suggests that Dave’s Finnish Baths might have been the first gay-owned bathhouse in San Francisco. Community historian Gerald Fabian described Dave as an exquisitely beautiful musician and very hospitable. In 1969–1970, Dave’s Finnish Baths moved to 100 Broadway, where it featured a snack bar called The Nelly Deli, a television lounge, a steam room, and an orgy room. Zane Tomas was the manager.⁵²⁰ In 1971, Dave’s Baths was described as “probably the most popular [bathhouse] in the city,” with two levels of cubicles and a large steam room.⁵²¹

An early gay business in the Mission–Valencia District was a “small, clean, neighborhood bathhouse” at 3244 21st Street (not extant) called the 21st Street Baths, which opened in 1963.⁵²² Also known as The Baths, it had a steam bath, a TV lounge, and private rooms for gay men. The 21st Street baths stayed in operation for over 25 years; after the City ordered the closure of bathhouses in 1984, the establishment defied the order and held out until May 1987, when it finally agreed to close to settle an enforcement suit the City had filed; it was the last gay bathhouse in San Francisco. About a year after the establishment shut down, the building was destroyed in a fire.

Sex in Public Spaces

Outside of the bathhouses, men and transgender women had sex in the streets, parks, public restrooms, and anywhere else one could steal away for a moment of privacy. Public parks were

516 Maggie Jochild, “Osento Memory,” <http://maggiesmetawatershed.blogspot.com/2014/05/osento-womens-bathhouse-san-francisco.html>.

517 Stephanie Rosenbaum, “Osento, 1980-2008,” *The Adventures of Pie Queen: Osento, 1980-2008*, <http://piequeen.blogspot.com/2008/08/osento-1980-2008.html>.

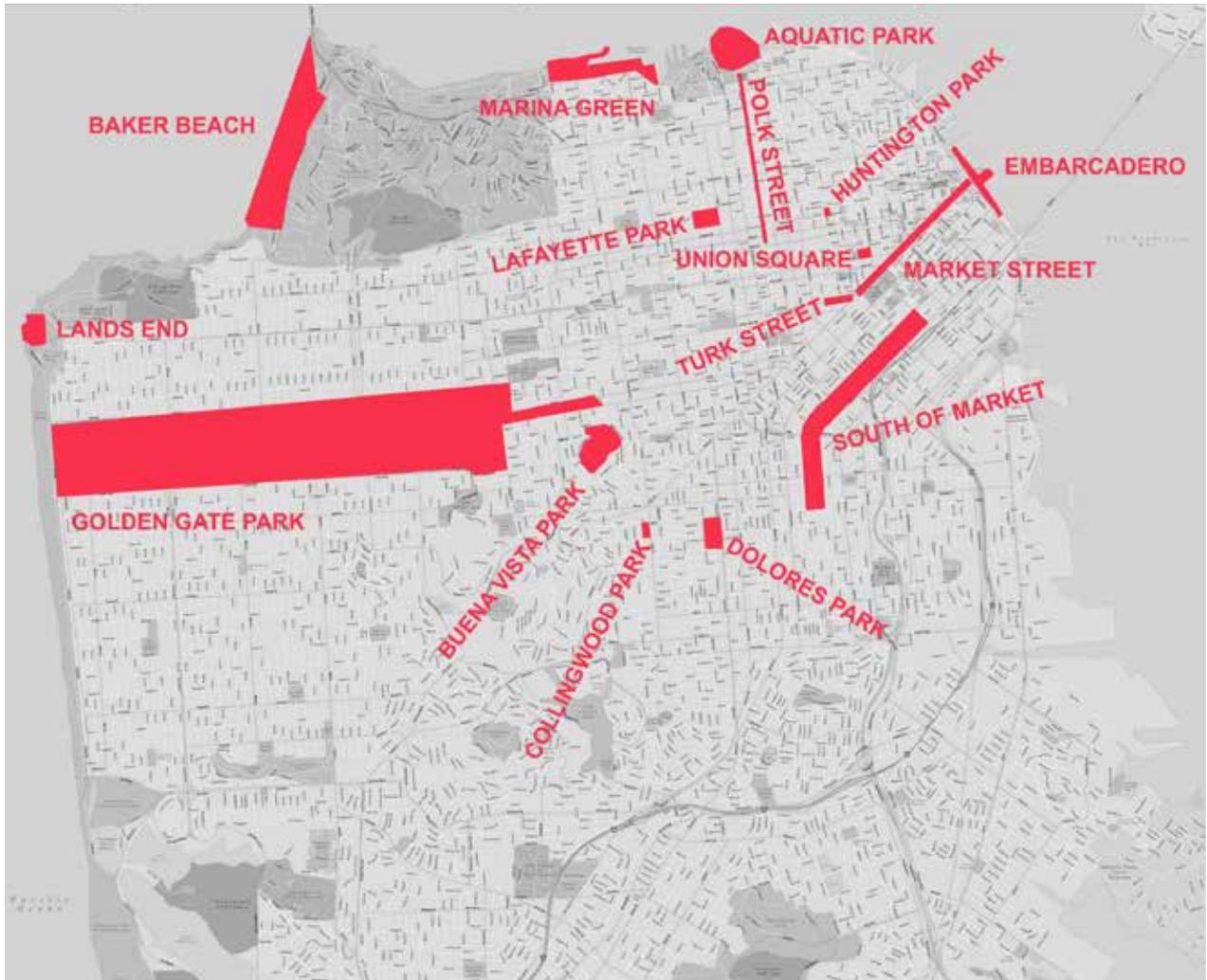
518 Castro Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

519 Ibid.

520 Dave’s Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

521 Carl Driver (1971); Dave’s Baths, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

522 Eric Garber, “Valencia’s First Gay Bars,” *The San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* 5 (Fall 1989), 5.



Map showing some of the areas in San Francisco known for cruising, hustling, and sex in public from the early 20th century through at least the 1980s (Map by Shayne Watson)

popular because they were dark at night, and the bushes and trees provided a sense of privacy and protection.⁵²³ Public restrooms, known as T-rooms (short for toilet rooms), were easy hookup spots because they were accessible, segregated from women, and the stalls created semi-private spaces.⁵²⁴ For prostitutes and hustlers, gay bars “functioned as extensions” of the streets and were important because they provided a consistent customer base and they “offered shelter from the elements.”⁵²⁵

Men hooked up either by “cruising” for each other, or by engaging in paid sex with gay or trans hustlers or street prostitutes. Men who engaged in public sex did so for various reasons: they preferred not go to bars, or they were too young or had little money; they were in relationships or lived with their families and therefore could not bring someone home; or they simply liked the thrill of sex in public.⁵²⁶ In some cases, hooking up with strangers or paying for sex was easier because it was anonymous and it “saved all the hassle” of meeting in very public places like bars.⁵²⁷

Cruising in San Francisco can be traced back to the 19th century. Gay author Charles Warren Stoddard alludes to sex in public in *South-Sea Idylls* (1873) when he describes an evening on the Embarcadero: “We sauntered down the dark streets along the city front.... one or two shadows seemed to be groping about in the neighborhood, making more noise than a shadow has any right to make.”⁵²⁸ Another early account of gay cruising is in Magnus Hirschfeld’s *The Homosexuality of Men and Women* (1914), which describes soldiers propositioning men in the streets of San Francisco.⁵²⁹ Garwood Simons, a soldier court-martialed during the 1918 Baker Street sex scandal, revealed three more early gay cruising spots: the Inside Inn at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1915), where he had “affairs” with three or four men; Shreve and Company jewelers (200 Post Street, extant), which he called “notorious” for gay hookups; and the Hotel Voltaire (1529 Hyde Street, extant), “reputed to be a rendezvous.”⁵³⁰

The popularity of cruising gained in the first decades of the 20th century, and areas known for cruising changed over time because of policing and crackdowns, redevelopment, and shuffling of LGBTQ neighborhoods. Cruising for sex became even more popular during World War II as the number of servicemen going in and out of the city peaked. Servicemen escaped to the city whenever they qualified for leave, taking designated buses or hitchhiking. Popular cruising areas during World War II included the Pepsi-Cola Center for Service Men and Women at 944 Market Street at Mason (extant), where “covert sexual activity was lively.”⁵³¹ During World War II, Pepsi-Cola Company sponsored and operated centers in New York City’s Times Square; in Washington, D.C.; and San Francisco. The centers served as canteens for men and women in the military, providing showers and barbers, banking, messaging services, lounges and reading rooms—all for free. They also offered low-cost food and free Pepsi. San Francisco’s Pepsi-Cola Center had dormitory facilities where servicemen and women could sleep. Cruising and hustling also increased during certain periods such as the sexually liberated 1960s, and in the 1980s when many bathhouses closed.

523 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 196.

524 *Ibid.*, 197.

525 *Ibid.*, 193.

526 *Citizens News* 111 (February 1964), Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. See also Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 111.

527 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, July 2, 2000, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

528 Charles Warren Stoddard, *South-Sea Idylls* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Company), 301-302. Thanks to William Lipsky for this note.

529 Magnus Hirschfeld, *The Homosexuality of Men and Women* (1914), translated by Michael A. Lombardi-Nash (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2000), 625. Thanks to Gerard Koskovich for this citation.

530 “Proceedings of a General Court-Martial,” Record of Trial by General Court-Martial of Garwood Simons, Army Field Clerk,” Case 115870, addendum. Thanks to William Lipsky for this citation.

531 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 109.



LEFT: Pepsi-Cola Center for Service Men and Women at 944 Market Street (From Ebay)
 RIGHT: 1968 *San Francisco Chronicle* article about gay cruising and hustling on Market Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

The following section presents a sampling of areas in San Francisco that sustained a culture of cruising and hustling for long periods of time. Unless noted, many of these areas were active from at least World War II through the early 1990s, and some are still active today. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Market Street

One of the earliest cruising areas in San Francisco was lower Market Street from the Embarcadero to Fifth and Mason Streets, an area known for gay cruising and hustling as early as the 1920s.⁵³² One reason for the popularity of this strip was that it served as a connection between the waterfront and the Tenderloin, and it was an entertainment corridor dotted with movie theaters, restaurants, bars, and all-night cafeterias. The balconies of movie theaters, according to historian George Chauncey, were popular for gay and straight sex because they were dark, often empty, and many times ushers would take bribes in exchange for privacy.⁵³³

In the late 1920s and 1930s, the Morse Hotel at 1045 Market Street (extant), according to Lou Rand Hogan (aka Toto le Grand), was popular for hookups:

[The Morse Hotel] had six floors, with ... an old-style circling staircase, with an open "well" in the center that reached to the skylighted roof. The place was run by a "Miss" [William] Hayes, a shrewd old bag who specialized in gay-oriented hotels. Perhaps 65% of the guests at the Morse were gay – of some stripe or another. The halls were wide and warm ... So, old sailors ... simply lay down in the halls to sleep a few hours. The "paying guests" made frequent tours of inspection, and dragged in anything that looked tasty.⁵³⁴

The Morse Hotel was forced to close when a sailor was thrown down the stairwell and killed, and the building became Weinstein Company's Department Store in the 1940s. Gay author Samuel Steward, who was staying at the Embarcadero YMCA in the early 1950s, wrote about walking down Market Street after a night out at the bars: "I walked the long way home down Market, to see the doorways filled with young toughs, available for \$\$, dangerous—very like Rome ... very exciting."⁵³⁵

Third and Fifth Streets off of Market Street were equally popular for cruising, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. Third Street between Market and Howard was a famous pick-up spot for gay men because of the proximity of the Palace/Third Street Baths at 85 Third Street; the Peerless Theater at 128 Third Street (not extant), which specialized in racy films; multiple side alleys known for cruising; and various inexpensive hotels where gay men could have one-night-stands.⁵³⁶ The basement of the Lankersham Hotel at 55 Fifth Street (extant) also was a popular spot for gay sex.⁵³⁷

Fifth Street was popular for cruising during World War II because it provided direct vehicular access to the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge and military bases on Treasure Island and in the East Bay. Allan Bérubé quotes from an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* encouraging drivers to pick up soldiers: "You would want the break if you were in their shoes ... Why not give them

532 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 24.

533 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 194.

534 Toto le Grand (Lou Rand Hogan), "The Golden Age of the Queens," *The San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* 3 (March 1988), 6.

535 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 174.

536 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Allan Bérubé and Eric Garber, 1983.

537 Robert (no last name given), "Down Memory Lane: San Francisco As I See It," *OurStories* (Newsletter of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California) 6 (Fall 1990), 4.



TOP LEFT: Former home of Queen Mary's Pub at 133 Turk Street, known for a gay and trans hustling scene

TOP RIGHT: The Tea Room Theatre at 145 Eddy, one of the longest-running gay porn theaters in San Francisco, in operation in the Tenderloin since the 1970s

LEFT: The Nob Hill Theatre at 729 Bush Street, in operation since the 1960s, helped sustain a gay sex culture in the Union Square/Nob Hill area

(Photos by Shayne Watson)

a ride?"⁵³⁸ Consequently, as Bérubé notes, the routes between bases and cities like San Francisco became popular gay cruising areas. William P. Gaddis remembers cruising Fifth Street "like mad trying to pick up a sailor to take home across the Bridge. We kept maneuvering ourselves into position and just then someone else would pick them up right from under [our] very noses. But finally we managed and got a very nice kid who is over at the Air Station."⁵³⁹

Market Street continued to be popular for cruising and hustling through the 1960s and 1970s. In the late 1960s when the city demolished portions of Market Street to build the underground BART and Muni lines, the area was generally an undesirable place to be, as described in 1968: "Between Fifth and Seventh, Powell and Jones, Market street is squeezed by Skid Row and the Tenderloin. It looks seedy and dog-eared. It is caught in the din and riot of rapid transit construction."⁵⁴⁰ In part because of the seamy nature of the area, Market Street was a hotbed for hustling. Hustlers favored the 900 and 1000 blocks, which featured a combination of pool halls, theaters, taverns, discount stores, clothing and jewelry stores, and favorite restaurants like the Doggie Diner at 1029 Market (extant) and the late-night Clinton's Cafeteria at 1059 Market (extant). One of the popular hustling spots was the sidewalk in front of the Flagg Brothers' shoe store at 950 Market Street (extant).⁵⁴¹ The corner of Mason, Turk, and Market Streets, which connected to the Market Street hustling district, was known as the "Meat Market" or "Meat Rack" for the amount of gay hustling and prostitution that took place there. The Donut Palace at 1019 Market Street (extant), another all-night eatery, was popular as well, especially after Compton's Cafeteria at 101 Taylor Street (extant) in the Tenderloin reduced its closing time to 9:30 PM:

Homosexual hustlers wander up from The Meat Rack at the corner of Market and Mason in search of friends and customers ... Transvestites on their way from the Tenderloin to the drag queen bars on Sixth Street—the 67 and the Hot Spot—occasionally stop by [for] a cup of coffee, a donut and gossip.⁵⁴²

The second balcony at the Strand Theater at 1051 Market Street (extant) was another famous spot for gay sex.⁵⁴³

The Tenderloin

The Tenderloin was popular for gay cruising beginning in at least the 1940s. Areas known as tenderloins were located in many cities around the country: Scollay Square and the Combat Zone in Boston; Ninth Street in downtown Washington, D.C.; Times Square in New York; the French Quarter in New Orleans; and Broadway in San Diego. During World War II, tenderloins became popular with gay men because they provided basic and entertainment services, including bus stations, arcades, tattoo parlors, theaters, tailors, cafeterias, bathhouses, gay prostitutes, brothels, cheap hotels, and locker clubs where servicemen could check their uniforms and rent civilian clothes.⁵⁴⁴

Sex was a big part of life in San Francisco's Tenderloin from early in its history. When the Red-Light Abatement Act shut down the city's brothels in 1914 and forced the sex trade onto the streets,

538 Quoted in Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 107.

539 Letter from William P. Gaddis Jr. to Johnny Holmes, June 17, 1942, William P. Gaddis, Jr. Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

540 Rob Haeseler, "The Hangout Corner," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 7, 1968, Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

541 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2000.

542 Haeseler, "The Hangout Corner," *San Francisco Chronicle*.

543 Strand, Sites Database, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Version October 27, 2008.

544 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 116.

prostitution moved into the Tenderloin. Gay and transgender prostitution and hustling became popular when some of the Tenderloin's first gay bars appeared: the Old Crow at 962 Market Street (extant) c. 1935 and the Silver Rail at 974 Market Street (extant at front, demolished at rear) c. 1942.⁵⁴⁵ Turk Street from Jones to Mason was one of the main drags for cruising and hustling from the 1940s to the 1980s. As mentioned above, the hustling area known as the Meat Market at Mason, Turk, and Market Streets was a hot spot for gay hustling and prostitution.

Businesses that helped sustain the Tenderloin's cruising and hustling scene through the 1980s were residential hotels such as the Dalt at 34 Turk Street (extant) that advertised in gay papers; bars such as the Old Crow and Queen Mary's Pub at 133 Turk Street (extant) that supported the hustling trade; the Club Turkish Baths (later Bulldog Baths) at 132 Turk Street; the Turk Street News at 66 Turk Street (extant), one of the city's first adult bookstores; sex theaters like the Pleasure Palace at 120 Turk Street (extant) and the Turk Street Follies at 105 Turk Street (extant), both of which featured porn shows; restaurants such as Compton's Cafeteria at 101 Taylor Street (extant) and Chukker's at 88 Turk Street (extant); and, importantly, apartment buildings and residential hotels such as the El Rosa Hotel at 166 Turk Street (extant) that provided housing for transgender sex workers and gay hustlers.

Union Square

Union Square was a popular cruising area from at least the 1940s through the 1980s. The sidewalk at the south side of the St. Francis Hotel near the corner of Geary and Powell was known as the St. Francis corner and was renowned for its high-priced hustlers. One of the most popular earlier public restrooms used for sex was in the basement of Macy's Union Square. Men who cruised in Union Square headed to Macy's for sex, even as late as the 1970s and 1980s when the employee restroom was "infamous for completely out and open [sex] in the middle of the floor for all to enjoy," according to long-time San Francisco resident Philip Rossetti.⁵⁴⁶ Beginning in the 1960s, the newsstand at St. Francis corner was one of the few places in the city to purchase the *Berkeley Barb*, one of the area's first newspapers to feature advertisements for sex. It was distributed every Friday at noon. "The guy would [be] mobbed ... people would just flock to get the *Barb*."⁵⁴⁷ According to George Mendenhall, Timothy Pflueger's Art Deco masterpiece at 450 Sutter was "notorious for its men's room" and was one of the main stops for men working in the financial district who toured a circuit of restrooms in office buildings downtown.⁵⁴⁸ Other areas in Union Square popular for sex were the bushes in the park, and the stairwells and restrooms at the Sutter-Stockton Garage.

Some of the gay bars in the area that helped sustain the long-term use of Union Square for cruising and hustling were the Claridge Room, an upstairs space at 153 Maiden Lane (extant) and the Orchid Room and Oak Room at the St. Francis Hotel (301 Powell Street) (extant), where gay rights activist José Sarria was arrested in the 1950s on charges of lewd activity in the men's room.

545 The Old Crow first appears in the city directory in 1943. Beginning c. 1935, 962 Market Street housed a bar owned by the same family that later owned the Old Crow (Fred, Magnus, and Hugo Jensen) through at least the late 1950s. It is not clear if the bar was named the Old Crow as early as 1935. The Silver Rail started out as a restaurant and cocktail lounge. In 1946-47, a police journal advertised the Silver Rail Café & Dude Ranch Cocktail Lounge at 974 Market Street. In 1952, the Silver Rail was the victim of an extortion scheme run by James Tarantino, publisher of gossip magazine *Hollywood Nite Life*. Ted Davis, Silver Rail co-manager and bartender, was forced to pay \$100 a month for five months for an advertisement in *Hollywood Nite Life* to prevent the Silver Rail from being exposed as a gay bar. Tarantino was convicted of extortion and blackmail in 1953, and Davis was one of many witnesses called to testify.

546 Philip Rossetti, interviewed by Shayne Watson for Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco, August 7, 2014.

547 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2000.

548 George Mendenhall, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1991.

Waterfront

Since very early in the city's history, San Francisco's Embarcadero, especially south of Market Street, was an enclave for single male workers, featuring lodging and boarding houses, cheap restaurants, and taverns. This scene persisted well into the 20th century. Community historian Gerald Fabian described the Embarcadero at mid-century as a mix of longshoremen, workers, produce warehouses, old hotels, and old restaurants that survived from earlier in the century.⁵⁴⁹

The Embarcadero YMCA was completed in 1926 at 169 Steuart Street between Mission and Howard (extant), facing the Embarcadero. It featured a gym and rooms for rent upstairs. Men cruised each other in the showers and restrooms. By World War II, the Embarcadero YMCA had become a favorite spot for gay sexual activity. Allan Bérubé writes: "In the YMCA hotels ... gay and GI life merged, with men cruising each other in the showers and climbing into and out of each other's beds ... YMCA hotels in nearly every city ... were active cruising grounds throughout the war."⁵⁵⁰ Famed sexologist Alfred Kinsey called the Embarcadero YMCA the "most notorious Y in the states."⁵⁵¹ One of the most vivid accounts of the waterfront YMCA comes from author Samuel Steward, who spent two summers there in 1953 and 1954 and kept meticulous written records of his stays. Steward stayed in a room that faced the Embarcadero Freeway and called the YMCA a "Christian bordello ... inhabited primarily by men freshly returned from the armed forces and merchant marine, and desperate for sexual release ... Sailors everywhere! All branches [of the service]!"⁵⁵² He noted that competition for sex was fierce. The atmosphere of intense and open homosexuality changed suddenly in 1954 when a soldier committed suicide in the building and the military conducted an investigation that uncovered decades of sexual activity among male residents. Steward's journal entry describes the experience:

[I] could tell that something had changed. There was a kind of furtiveness everywhere: people were quiet, there was no loud talk of any kind, and everyone walked with eyes almost painfully (and certainly maidenly) downcast.⁵⁵³

YMCA employees distributed a list of house rules denouncing homosexuality and encouraging a "Christian atmosphere." Steward said, "I don't see why [the YMCA] didn't simply say 'we're trying to get rid of the homos here,' ... they certainly seem to have succeeded."⁵⁵⁴ Still, the Embarcadero YMCA was a hotspot for gay sex through the rest of the 1950s. Gerald Fabian described the sex scene as "so open, it was so easy."⁵⁵⁵ Community historian Tom Redmon called the YMCA a "male whore house."⁵⁵⁶ By the 1960s, according to men who were early frequenters of the YMCA, sexual activity there began to decline. Many of these men attribute this decline to the opening of gay bathhouses during the same period.⁵⁵⁷

Two early bars on the Embarcadero helped sustain the sex culture on San Francisco's waterfront: Sailor Boy Tavern at 24 Howard Street (not extant) near the Embarcadero YMCA (opened in the late 1930s) and the Ensign Club at 1 Market Street (extant) (opened about 1940). The Sailor Boy Tavern is referred to as San Francisco's "first proto-leather bar," because it catered to gay military men

549 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

550 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 109-110.

551 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 180.

552 *Ibid.*, 173-174.

553 *Ibid.*, 193.

554 *Ibid.*

555 Jerry Fabian, interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

556 Tom Redmon, interviewed by Len Evans, 1984.

557 Bérubé, "The History of the Baths," *Coming Up!*

and was known to have a rough clientele. The Ensign Club, open from the 1940s to the early 1960s, was notorious for sex in the basement. Fabian recalls the Ensign as having “a real wild” T-room in the basement that often flooded. “There were the wildest orgies...that would go on down there in that [T-room]...with all kinds of men...all the races were down there...so popular.”⁵⁵⁸ Another oral history narrator recalled: “The Ensign Club was something else—never anybody at the bar; they were all downstairs, which was the reason for going there in the first place.”⁵⁵⁹ Exhibitionism and voyeurism were part of the scene.

Other spaces on or near the waterfront that were popular for cruising and sex were the restrooms in the Ferry Building and in the Transbay Terminal, and in the 1970s and 1980s, the public restrooms at the Embarcadero Center. Raids on waterfront bars and the Embarcadero YMCA were frequent in the 1940s and 1950s.⁵⁶⁰ The waterfront scene was altered drastically when the double-deck Embarcadero freeway was completed in 1958, making the waterfront less desirable and more isolated for many business activities, and thus more popular for discreet gay sex.

Nob Hill

By the mid-1950s, Huntington Park at California and Taylor had become, according to the police, “a major meeting spot for homosexuals” and was “frequented by thugs who prey on the sex variants.”⁵⁶¹ The police noted that the park became active after the bars closed at 2 a.m. In the 1960s, when Nob Hill and Polk Street were centers of the gay male community, Huntington Park became even more popular. Nob Hill resident David Harrell said Huntington Park was a good place for cruising because of the high bushes encircling the park perimeter. “The hedges were taller than I am, and so if you were inside, you were pretty well protected. I would go down there every night ... and drag someone home.”⁵⁶²

Businesses that helped sustain the cruising culture on Nob Hill were the Top of the Mark at the Mark Hopkins Hotel at 999 California (extant), especially popular with gay men during World War II, and the Stanford Court Hotel at 905 California Street (partially extant). Gay author Samuel Steward stayed at the Stanford Court in 1954 when he was refused lodging at San Francisco’s YMCAs for being a suspected homosexual. The hotel, which he noted was “for men only,” had community showers and toilets and was a known hotspot for gay sex. He notes in his journal:

[The Stanford Court was] a great place for the gay ones to stay when they came to town. The freedom was so nice and the management so liberal that a lot of people paid for the whole month willingly [even if only staying a week] ... [F]or \$50 a month, you live in a plush little room with wall-to-wall carpeting, quiet corridors, community showers—and absolutely no surveillance of any kind! *Vraiment*, they expect you to be queer ... they really didn’t very much care at all what went on in the showers.”⁵⁶³

Another business on Nob Hill that contributed to the area’s gay culture was the Hyde-Cal Bar (1390 California Street) (extant), which later became the Inn Debt and Chez Jacques. The Nob Hill Cinema and Arcade at 729 Bush Street—still in business today—opened as a private members-only theater before it became a gay porn theater in the late 1960s. The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the Nob

558 Jerry Fabian interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

559 Robert, “Down Memory Lane,” *OurStories*.

560 Jerry Fabian interviewed by Willie Walker, 1989-1990.

561 “Cops Crack Down on Nob Hill Park ‘Terror,’” July 29, 1954, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

562 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2000.

563 Quoted in Spring, *Secret Historian*, 194.

BAY CITY HOMOSEXUAL RING BROKEN, COPS SAY

10 Aug 52
(Exclusive to The Keyhole)
SAN FRANCISCO — An alleged homosexual ring was broken up at Baker's Beach in the Presidio, with the arrest of six men for lewd conduct.

The accused were arrested by fast-moving MP's—armed with walkie-talkies, telephoto cameras, and high-powered binoculars—as part of "Operation Look-out."

The accused are Robert Gregg, 25, a seaman; Henry Rickard, 27, an auto agency clerk; Gerard Sharkey, 36, a musician; Jose Sevilla, 23, a drama coach; James Walsh, 43, a photo refinisher; and Sgt. 1/C L. V. Skelly, 32.

Skelly was turned over to the Provost Marshall for prosecution.

The other civilians were brought before Joseph Karesh, U. S. Commissioner for prosecution. Each was released after posting \$500 bail.

The arrests was the Army's answer to numerous complaints of nude bathing and other indecencies in the small cove near Land's End.

Possible penalty on the offense is six months in jail and a \$500 fine.



TOP: Newspaper article describing gay sex activity among servicemen and civilians at Baker Beach in the Presidio of San Francisco in 1952 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM: Presidio Avenue entrance gate at the Presidio of San Francisco, reportedly a gay cruising hotspot in the 1930s (Courtesy National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Park Archives and Records Center)

Hill Cinema in 1977: "The Nob Hill Cinema and Arcade ... is a members only club." Previously the Club Hangover, it "seats fewer than 100 souls and has been called 'The Radio City Music Hall of gay porno theaters.'" It's a "tidy little theater, serves free java in the lobby." The arcade was located at the rear of the theater. It was a "30-foot hallway with lots of little rooms off it. The rooms have doors on them, but no lights inside ... Each room has one wall with oddly shaped apertures in it."⁵⁶⁴

Presidio of San Francisco

The Presidio of San Francisco has early ties to the city's gay sex scene. Edward Prime Stevenson's book *The Intersexes: A History of Similosexualism as a Problem in Social Life* (1908) describes cities in the United States with known homosexual activity, including San Francisco. San Francisco's gay sex scene, according to the author, included prostitution among soldiers at the Presidio, "a garrison noted for its homosexual contingent ... especially during the time of the sudden Spanish American War excitement."⁵⁶⁵ In the 1930s, gay rights pioneer Harry Hay was involved in a gay sex network associated with the Presidio. Hay describes a guardhouse off of one of the Geary-side gates (likely the Presidio Gate⁵⁶⁶) that was headquarters for the network:

The [1930s] were wide open, wild ... What was particularly interesting about the guardhouse was that you went to that particular guardhouse in the Presidio ... on Wednesday nights. The guy who was in charge of the guardhouse was friendly. He would make connections between men in the Army who were interested in being "fiddled with" and civilians, and they would hang in or around the guardhouse, and dates would be made. The guardhouse on Wednesday nights was the ... place.⁵⁶⁷

According to Hay, he and his friends had sex with servicemen in the bushes around the guardhouse.

Baker Beach was one of San Francisco's most popular gay cruising areas beginning around the 1940s when it became known for nude sunbathing and gay activity. In the mid-1950s, an "alleged homosexual ring" at Baker Beach was infiltrated by military police, and the servicemen involved in the ring were court martialed.⁵⁶⁸

Miscellaneous Parks, Beaches, and Other Public Spaces

Cruising in Buena Vista Park in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood started as early as the 1960s and reached a peak in the 1980s. The activity became so popular in the early 1960s that the Haight-Ashbury Improvement Club convinced the city's Park and Recreation Department to cut down the shrubs.⁵⁶⁹ More attempts to crackdown on cruising in San Francisco parks came in 1980 on the heels of an inflammatory national CBS documentary called *Gay Power, Gay Politics* that focused on gay sex in public and suggested that sex in parks was tied to child molestation.⁵⁷⁰

Golden Gate Park has been popular for cruising and public sex since at least the 1960s. Some of the

564 John L. Wasserman, "On the Town: Trucking at the Nob Hill Cinema," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 24, 1977, Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

565 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*.

566 Personal communication between Shayne Watson and Robert Thomson, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer at the Presidio of San Francisco, October 14, 2014.

567 Harry Hay, interviewed by Chris Carlsson, "Gay Sex before Zippers (1995)," *Shaping San Francisco*, <https://archive.org/details/ssfHAYBVDCT>.

568 "6 Arrested in Perversion Case Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 22, 1956, Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

569 *Citizens News* 111 (February 1964), Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

570 Greg Varner and Claude J. Summers, "American Television, News," in *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Culture*, http://www.glbtc.com/arts/am_tv_news.html.

popular areas for sexual activity through at least the 1980s (with some still active) were the bushes near the windmills; the soccer fields; the horseshoe pits (popular with USF students and workers at nearby hospitals); the Rhododendron Dell; and all the public restrooms, but especially near the Conservatory of Flowers, the bison, the tennis courts, the softball diamonds, off of John F. Kennedy Drive near the 19th Avenue entrance, and the tulip path near the windmills at the far western end of the park.⁵⁷¹

Lafayette Park in Pacific Heights was a hot spot for cruising and sex through the 1980s. Community historian Charles “Chuck” Larsen, a pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) offers a vivid description of the park in the 1970s:

Lafayette Park in San Francisco was a gay paradise. When the sun went down, the few straight people who had been there during the day left, and it was ours. By ours, I mean forty or fifty gay men walking around in suggestive poses. And what I didn’t realize was you’d follow them into the bushes, and there were these little clearings they’d made. And at any time there’d be forty to fifty men having sex all over Lafayette Park. And you’d just walk through and you’d see somebody and you’d follow them or they’d follow you.⁵⁷²

Areas along the Marina Green and at Aquatic Park were popular cruising spots by the 1950s. Gay poet Jack Spicer and his friends hung out on the roof of the Art Deco bathhouse at Aquatic Park, where the “westernmost benches were favored by gay sunbathers.”⁵⁷³ Spicer and other gay men also sunbathed on the grass between the bocce ball courts and the Sea Scout building. Other cruising areas known for sexual contacts were the public restrooms on the Marina Green and at the St. Francis Yacht Club, and in the shower room at Aquatic Park.

Dolores Park and Collingwood Park saw an increase in cruising in the 1970s as nearby Castro and the Mission-Valencia neighborhood became queer enclaves. In 1970, a newspaper reported, “In recent weeks, an undetermined number of Gays have been arrested in Dolores Park on charges of solicitation and lewd conduct.” The San Francisco Police Department cracked down on Dolores Park after discovering “much cruising and scrambling in the bushes.” The police used undercover officers to entrap men engaging in public sex.

San Francisco’s beaches also were popular cruising spots. Ocean Beach on San Francisco’s west side was known as gay meeting place as early as the 1920s. The beaches at Lands End were also hot spots for nude sunbathing and cruising.

Other popular cruising areas in San Francisco from the 1940s through at least the 1980s were Coit Tower; the reservoirs on Russian Hill and Twin Peaks; Lake Merced Boathouse; and various art museums. Sex was known to occur in the restrooms in various department stores and restaurants, including the Emporium (basement), Weinstein’s on upper Market Street, Woolworth’s throughout the city, Carl Wilke’s Cafeteria in the deYoung Building, and J.C. Penney at 5th and Market Streets.⁵⁷⁴

571 Various newspaper articles, Allan Bérubé Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. See also Betty and Pansy’s Severe Queer Review of San Francisco (1993).

572 Jason Ruiz, “Private Lives and Public History: On Excavating the Sexual Past in Queer Oral History Practice,” Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez (eds.), *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116.

573 Lewis and Killian, *Poet Be Like God*, 101.

574 “T-Room Traps,” *Citizen News* III (January 27, 1964), Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRIVATE RESIDENCES

Private parties and gatherings at private residences played a crucial role in the development of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco because they afforded individuals the freedom to be themselves while avoiding the risks associated with going out in public. Private gatherings served as an alternative to the bars for young people, people with little money, or people of color and other communities, such as drag queens, who felt ostracized by or out of place in the bar- and sex-based communities.⁵⁷⁵ And perhaps most importantly, private parties fostered intimacy because, in contrast to the bars, men and women were allowed to touch, dance, and act romantically. These meetings in private residences became even more important in the 1950s when policing and bar raids made going out in public especially risky.

Reba Hudson, a lesbian who arrived in San Francisco in 1943, described the private party scene in North Beach in the 1940s and 1950s: “Besides the bars we had dinner parties at home, lots of parties at home. We did a lot of socializing because we were all right here within blocks of each other ... There was about fifteen of us that hung out together. There were little cliques.”⁵⁷⁶ When the bars closed, Hudson and friends took the party home: “Wind up going to somebody’s house after 2 o’clock. Lot of parties. Lots of good times.”⁵⁷⁷ Pat Bond, who was also active in the 1940s scene in North Beach, described the parties at her house on the corner of Bush and Franklin across from Stemple’s Bakery: “[W]e all had a room in this old beat-up house. Nobody wanted to work because you were afraid you’d miss something ... [W]e were wild ... had dances and parties after the bars closed.”⁵⁷⁸ Community historian Mildred Dickemann recalled that some gay men “threw really very expensive parties” because they had disposable incomes. She said, “I remember going to parties where there was a bar in the home, there was a hired bartender serving and that kind of stuff.”⁵⁷⁹ One important aspect of private parties, noted by Dickemann, a butch lesbian who later transitioned to a transgender man, was that men and women were allowed to dress in ways that would be risky in public: “When we went to a party like that we would dress the way we wanted to dress.”⁵⁸⁰ Dickemann said she wore pants to “express [her] butchness,” but she had to run from the car to the party, or wore a long coat, to avoid being caught cross-dressing in public.⁵⁸¹

House parties were particularly important for women of color who felt uncomfortable or were not welcome in the bars or for various reasons preferred to socialize in private. According to Thelma Davis, an African American woman who arrived in San Francisco in 1951:

San Francisco had lots of house parties ... They would just have one house party after the other. Every weekend there would be a party somewhere ... Sometimes you had to pay a cover charge to go in, sometimes you didn’t. You’d bring your own drinks if you wanted to, or else they would sell you drinks ... They’d make a big pot of spaghetti or chili or something. And then all you would do would be to dance. You’d dance and mingle and stuff like that.⁵⁸²

575 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 112.

576 Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 65.

577 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), 1992.

578 Pat Bond, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1981.

579 Mildred Dickemann, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, October 8, 1991, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

580 Ibid.

581 Ibid.

582 Thelma Davis, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, November 21, 1991, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.



Images from lesbian house parties,
c. 1950s (Courtesy GLBT Historical
Society)

Davis also remembered a private club in the 1950s attended by women in distinct butch/fem roles, which would have drawn scrutiny in the bars:

[T]his private club ... was so amazing because I had never seen gay women so in the role of being studs! It was a private house that they had rented, or a basement or something. When we got there they had all these women that were dressed up in men's clothes ... They had on suits and the shoes and the socks; the whole bit."⁵⁸³

Thelma Davis said the house parties she attended in San Francisco "were mainly black. There were a few Caucasians, but not a lot, just a few."⁵⁸⁴ She remembered that "Blacks [gave] parties for themselves." Another African American named Ethel Whitaker (at one time Janis Joplin's lover), described a more mixed and sporadic private party scene in San Francisco:

There was a guy named Kitty Gaikin, he was Japanese and there was another fellow named Kanai, I think he was Filipino. Now he would have parties every Saturday night, after the bars closed we still had to have somewhere to go drink and talk and stuff like that. Allen Ginsberg used to go there all the time and he used to just sit there. And there used to be straight people, gay people. Kanai was gay, but straight people came. He had a small place but he had it fixed up really nice. Janis [Joplin] and I used to go up there a little bit after the bars closed, that type of thing. But as far as gay women were concerned ... there was like one [party] every three months.⁵⁸⁵

Nan Alamilla Boyd writes about a tightly knit community of drag queens in the 1950s that hosted elaborate private parties at homes throughout San Francisco. "[A] queer culture of high drag evolved" at private parties, according to Boyd.⁵⁸⁶ Henry Diekow (aka Baroness Von Dieckoff) was a member of a "circle of gay socialites who moved regularly from the Beige Room to private parties and nightclubs."⁵⁸⁷ The circle was comprised of the "mink and coronet set," a "clique of well-dressed queers and queens who frequented the Beige Room but also staged parties and informal drag contests in their homes." Diekow described a party at her home in 1951: "The beautifully appointed drawingroom is always filled with the cr me of the intellectual clich . Music, Art and sparkling conversation soon fill the house."⁵⁸⁸

Private parties served a different purpose for San Francisco's leather community beginning in the 1960s. David Harrell tells a story about how a night out at the bars in the South of Market area often led to private sex parties at vacant apartments. At the end of the night, someone would announce the party location and everyone would follow. There "might be music; there might not. But there'd be no lights ... you just go in there and [there were] two or three hundred men in various stages of undress in this dark apartment, you know, at three o'clock in the morning. And that seemed to happen a lot."⁵⁸⁹

583 Ibid.

584 Ibid.

585 Ethel Whitaker (pseudonym), interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, August 30, 1992, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

586 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 130.

587 Ibid.

588 "Henry Diekow, "Bag-a-Drag by the Bay," December 15, 1951, Dieckoff Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Quoted in Ibid., 131.

589 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2000.

IV. POLICING AND HARASSMENT OF LGBTQ COMMUNITIES (1933 to 1960S)

The period from the mid-1940s through 1950s was one of the most difficult in American LGBTQ history. While new queer spaces continued to appear and communities coalesced around them, governmental agencies became intent on reversing the progress. Policing of queers in San Francisco intensified during this period for a confluence of reasons. World War II brought hundreds of thousands of young men and women to the Bay Area, prompting the military to set boundaries as a form of social control. McCarthyism and the federal antigay witchhunt known as the Lavender Scare cast a pall on all things related to “sexual deviancy.” A handful of new legislation in the 1950s radically changed the way queer people and places were policed in California. And as a consequence of all of these developments, media coverage of queer people intensified, resulting in an increasingly negative public perception of nonnormative sexuality and a call to policing agencies to crack the whip.

WORLD WAR II

Homosexuality and the Military

During World War II, potential recruits to the United States armed services were put through a screening process whereby military doctors asked about homosexual activity and made subjective diagnoses based on characteristics such as nonnormative gender mannerisms. Despite the screening, however, homosexuality was prevalent throughout the war. “Since the government’s need for manpower was immediate,” writes historian Justin Spring, “military authorities did little to crack down on possible homosexual activities among servicemen ... during the early stages of the war (only later, when men were no longer needed, would the large number of career-destroying expulsions begin).”⁵⁹⁰

Wartime created a situation similar to the Gold Rush when men and women were segregated from each other for long periods of time. This was compounded by the emotional and physical intensity of war, resulting in strong same-sex bonds between servicemembers stationed together who were often living in exotic locations far from home, including San Francisco. In addition, some men and women deliberately joined the military as a way to meet potential same-sex romantic partners. Pat Bond, who was stationed for a time at Letterman Hospital in the Presidio, said one of the reasons she joined the Women’s Army Corps (WACS) was because “it was 90 percent gay ... there were all these dykes. It was unbelievable. And everybody was going with someone or had a crush on somebody or was getting ready to go with someone.”⁵⁹¹

While military officials often tolerated a certain amount of homosexuality as long as it was discreet and not disruptive, especially among lesbians, the Navy was notorious for sending sailors to naval psychiatric hospitals or prison for homosexual behavior. In 1941, a quarter of the patients in the psychiatric wards of the country’s two main Naval hospitals were admitted for homosexuality.⁵⁹² After the war, thousands of soldiers were dishonorably discharged on the basis of charges of homosexuality. Between 1950 and 1980, 40,000 to 50,000 men and women were discharged from the military on these grounds.⁵⁹³

590 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 84.

591 Pat Bond, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1981.

592 Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, 445.

593 *Ibid.*

A secondary effect of World War II was the way it changed American values related to family and home. While most men were shipped off to war, many married women went to work for the first time in their lives—a new dynamic that left women affirmed and empowered by their efforts and men fearing that their traditional role as breadwinners was threatened. (Many unmarried women, divorcees, and widows worked before the war.) When the war ended, as legal theorist William Eskridge notes, this new dynamic led to the sudden release of a “pent-up nostalgia for old-fashioned marriage.”⁵⁹⁴ More male-female couples were married in the decade following the war than any other period in American history.⁵⁹⁵ “The comeback of marriage reassured men and women that traditional boundaries were intact after the great traumas of war and depressions,” explains Eskridge, but also it morphed into a “deep suspicion of the *unmarried*” and “*unmarriageable*”—especially homosexual men and women.⁵⁹⁶ Displays of nonnormative gender also were perceived as a threat to the post-war nuclear family, according to historian John D’Emilio; and masculine women and effeminate men were particularly vulnerable to persecution.⁵⁹⁷ Many parents feared that homosexuals, supposedly unable to marry and have children of their own, multiplied their numbers by recruiting other people’s children and contaminating them with their so-called disease. It was in this context that threatening labels like “predatory homosexual” or “vampire lesbian” were created.⁵⁹⁸

San Francisco in World War II

The turn of the 20th century and the following decades brought a substantial increase in military defense installations throughout the Bay Area. The Pacific Coast’s first Naval Training Center was established on Yerba Buena Island, the Pacific Fleet was created and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, and World War I created an even larger surge. When the United States entered the war in 1917, the population surged at local bases, including the Presidio and Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco.⁵⁹⁹ World War II created an even bigger increase in the Bay Area’s defense-related population as San Francisco and the surrounding area became a center for military industry and the point of embarkation for the Pacific Theater. Between December 1941 and August 1945, over 1.6 million military personnel left from San Francisco for the war in the Pacific.⁶⁰⁰ It was one of the country’s primary hubs of activity during the war, reports historian Kevin Starr, and “every man, woman, weapon, bullet, torpedo, vehicle, foodstuff, medical supply, and piece of mail intended for the Pacific passed through” the city.⁶⁰¹ Many men and women moved into the area to fill the hundreds of thousands of jobs suddenly available during the war. Navy ship-repair facilities were located at Hunters Point in San Francisco and Mare Island in the North Bay. In 1942 Mare Island was the largest maritime facility in the country, employing 10,000 civilians.⁶⁰² The Kaiser and Marinship shipbuilding facilities in Richmond and Sausalito put more women to work than ever before in history, giving them an “unprecedented boost in their income and self-esteem.”⁶⁰³ Forty percent of Marinship’s work force was female. When the war ended in 1945, 1.32 million American women lost their war-related jobs.

594 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 79.

595 Historian Dr. Robert W. Cherny notes: “This reflects, in some significant part, those who put off marriage during the Great Depression for economic reasons and during WWII because of wartime separations.”

596 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 79-80.

597 John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38.

598 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 80.

599 Hine and Faragher, *The American West*.

600 Starr, *Embattled Dreams*, 84.

601 *Ibid.*, 78.

602 *Ibid.*, 76.

603 *Ibid.*, 157.

Historian Allan Bérubé describes World War II as having an unprecedented influence on San Francisco's queer community:

One of the most dramatic changes brought about by the war mobilization was that gay bars moved closer to the center of gay life. Sometimes with only a few hours in a big city, gay male and lesbian GIs were forced to rely on commercial establishments near the heart of the city to find the gay life quickly. As a result, bars, cocktail lounges, cafes, and nightclubs that catered to the gay crowd flourished during the war, stretching the prewar gay nightspots to their limit and beyond. These establishments often were clustered in the parts of town that were flooded with GIs, introducing the gay life to a wider population of young men and women.⁶⁰⁴

Bérubé adds that military personnel on leave in San Francisco revived the "devil-may-care spirit of the Barbary Coast days."⁶⁰⁵ Community historian Reba Hudson said the city was "[a]live 24 hours a day" because the defense factories operated through the night.⁶⁰⁶ "By uprooting an entire generation," writes Allan Bérubé, "the war helped to channel urban gay life into a particular path of growth—away from stable private networks and toward public commercial establishments serving the needs of a displaced, transient, and younger clientele."⁶⁰⁷ Finally, World War II had a profound impact LGBTQ life in San Francisco because many of the gay and lesbian men and women who either served in the military or were employed at the Bay Area's military industrial sites decided to stay in the Bay Area after the war, which helped sustain the city's queer culture.

Military Policing

Throughout the war, the armed forces went to great lengths to control the enormous population of military personnel in San Francisco. In 1941 Congress passed the May Act, giving the military the authority to police civilian places near military bases and shut down any that promoted prostitution and other so-called vices (heterosexual and homosexual). Military police joined with the San Francisco Police Department and State Board of Equalization officers to police queer spaces in San Francisco. As part of this effort, the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board (AFDCB) created an off-limits list of nightclubs that personnel were forbidden from frequenting. (An unintended consequence of the list was that it publicized queer spaces, making them even more known and popular among gay and lesbian military personnel.)

Policing of nightclubs in San Francisco started early in the war, and military jeeps patrolling streets in front of suspected vice establishments were a common sight.⁶⁰⁸ "The constant threat of raids, arrests, and police surveillance," writes Bérubé, "sent a clear message to gay male and lesbian GIs that the military and local governments did not want them to associate with each other in public and even in private."⁶⁰⁹

In 1942 and 1943, 63 nightclubs had their liquor licenses suspended and 25 others were cited, including known queer hangouts Finocchio's, the Black Cat Café, and the Top of the Mark.⁶¹⁰ In May 1943, military police conducted a large-scale raid operation, which included the Black Cat Café, the Subway (address unknown) and the Silver Dollar in the Tenderloin, and the Rickshaw

604 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 113.

605 "Barbary Coast Days Recalled by Frisco Boom," *Variety*, November 4, 1942. Quoted in Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 125.

606 Boyd, "Life During Wartime," *OurStories*.

607 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 126.

608 Kevin Starr, *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

609 Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 126.

610 *Ibid.*, 125.



Military police (upper left) watching patrons in the Black Cat Cafe, which was declared off limits to military personnel during World War II (From *Coming Out Under Fire*, 1990)

at 37 Ross Alley (extant) in Chinatown; all of the bars had their liquor licenses suspended. During the Rickshaw raid, according to Bérubé, “a couple of lesbians protested and were beaten up.”⁶¹¹ Beginning in February 1945, the whole nation went dark at midnight as War Mobilization Director James F. Byrne instated a curfew on all bars and cabarets and any other “places of public amusement.”⁶¹²

Military policing of queer spaces in San Francisco continued through the Korean War in the 1950s. In 1951 and 1952 the AFDCB declared over a dozen bars off limits to military personnel because they were frequented by homosexual men and women, including: the Beige Room, the Black Cat Café, Finocchio’s, Mona’s Candle Light, the Paper Doll, Tommy’s 299, the Chi-Chi Club, the Club Alabam (1820 Post Street, demolished), Jim Dolan’s Supper Club (406 Stockton, demolished), and the 585 Club (585 Post, extant). The list included all three exclusively lesbian bars open at the time—Mona’s Candle Light, the Paper Doll, and Tommy’s 299.⁶¹³

Like their civilian counterparts, gay and lesbian military personnel faced severe consequences if they were caught in a gay bar, or worse, in a homosexual act. Servicemembers were easy to detect because they were required to wear uniforms when on leave—leading some men to rent lockers where they could check their uniforms and borrow civilian clothes. Personnel who were arrested or detained served time in military prison. They also faced the possibility of dishonorable discharge.

MARINE COOKS AND STEWARDS UNION

One of the few industries that would hire men discharged from the military for homosexuality was the civilian maritime industry, especially the luxury passenger ocean liners operated by such companies as Matson, headquartered in San Francisco. Gay men and other minority groups were able to work in the maritime industry because they were protected by a left-leaning union called the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards (MCS). The MCS was established in San Francisco in 1901 and was initially a racist union, formed as a way to protect white men’s jobs from Chinese and Japanese seamen who were being hired by the shipping companies at lower wages.⁶¹⁴

Historian Allan Bérubé devoted intensive research to understanding why the MCS protected homosexuals during a time when they were ostracized by all other sectors of society. He concluded that it boiled down to issues of race, class, and sexuality. Up until the 1930s, the luxury liner companies refused to hire anyone but white men. White men filled the traditionally male maritime roles, such as longshoreman, engineman, fireman, and deckhand—but they also filled roles traditionally carried out by African American men on land, such as steward and cook. Without African Americans, the less masculine work—described by Bérubé as “queer work”—was often filled by white, gay men. They worked as waiters, cooks, bakers, porters, room stewards, bellhops, janitors, hairdressers, laundrymen, and bartenders. Bérubé writes about a Matson official who said his company “preferred having gay men working as stewards because... ‘If it wasn’t for these boys, who else would we get to do that kind of women’s work—to turn down the beds and lay out ladies’ nightgowns?’”⁶¹⁵

In the 1930s, at the peak of labor activism, the MCS organized seamen support for the 1934 longshoremen’s strike that shut down ports on the West Coast and the national seamen’s strike in

611 Excerpt from letter written by serviceman Jim Kepner to Army pen pal in May 1943. Quoted in *Ibid.*

612 Charles Jr. Grutzner, “Midnight Curfew on Cabarets, Bars to Start Monday; Byrnes’ Request,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1945. Quoted in Watson, *Preserving the Tangible Remains of San Francisco’s Lesbian Community in North Beach*, 69.

613 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 128.

614 Allan Bérubé, *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, & Labor History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 282.

615 *Ibid.*, 264.

1936. As part of the strikes, MCS union members began to successfully integrate African American and Filipino men into the MCS, earning them jobs on the previously white liners.⁶¹⁶ These early integration efforts came at a cost. MCS members were stigmatized and “treated as riff-raff, who were doing ‘women’s work,’ who were men of color or worked with men of color, who were gay or worked with queens, and who were communists or worked with communists.”⁶¹⁷ But the stigma made the MCS even stronger, and the union is an example one of the first times in U.S. history that homosexual men—white, African American, and Asian—organized alongside heterosexual men to protect themselves and each other. “[T]hey were developing an early form of gay activism,” according to Bérubé. “This came decades before the more middle-class and white homosexual movement emerged in the 1950s.... [T]hese workers used their unions to improve their lives as homosexuals, sometimes fighting for racial equality at the same time.”⁶¹⁸ Gay member of the MCS Mickey Blair recalls, “Marine Cooks and Stewards took the dignity that was in each of us and built it up, so you could get up in the morning and say to yourself ‘I can make it through this day.’ Equality was in the air we breathed.”⁶¹⁹ A sign over the job board at the MCS union hall at 86 Commercial Street (not extant), read: “Equality in hiring regardless of race, religion, or national origin or political affiliation.”⁶²⁰

During World War II, membership in the MCS increased from 4,500 to over 15,000.⁶²¹ New members included homosexual men who wanted to serve in the military but were afraid of the government’s antigay policies. The MCS also hired men who had been discharged from the military for homosexuality. After being discharged from the Navy in 1943 for being gay, David Barrett recalls that one of his superiors said to him, “The only people who will hire you now are the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union.”⁶²²

Members of the MCS were patriotic and loyal to their country. They joined other unions in making a “no strike pledge” to President Roosevelt that waived their right to strike for better wages and working conditions until the war was over.⁶²³ When the Navy tapped civilian vessels to assist in transporting military personnel and cargo, many members of the MCS lost their lives when their ships were attacked. According to Bérubé, civilians were killed during World War II “at a casualty rate higher than any branch of the military service” other than the Marine Corps.⁶²⁴

After World War II, MCS membership became even more diverse. African American men who had been laid off from West Coast shipyards were recruited by the MCS and made up more than half of the union’s membership.⁶²⁵ The MCS organized for integration of more women—white and African American—onto the ships, and by 1949 MCS members were dedicated to equality for both sexes.⁶²⁶ When Matson refused to rehire stewardesses after the war, the MCS fought the decision and won.

During the Korean War, the MCS and other left-leaning unions, became targets of the federal government’s anticommunist and antihomosexual hysteria. Beginning in the fall of 1950, the Coast Guard began screening maritime workers as part of President Truman’s Port Security Act. Before

616 *Ibid.*, 264, 267.

617 *Ibid.*, 268.

618 *Ibid.*, 266.

619 *Ibid.*, 311.

620 *Ibid.*, 282.

621 Bérubé cites another figure of 3,000 to 19,000.

622 *Ibid.*, 312.

623 *Ibid.*, 313.

624 *Ibid.*, 282.

625 *Ibid.*, 314.

626 *Ibid.*, 237.

any ship left the port, workers were screened and removed from the ship if they were determined to be national security risks. Three quarters of workers removed from ships were African American. Many of the screened men were homosexual. In 1950, the MCS was one of a handful of unions kicked out of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. By the mid-1950s, the MCS had been shut down—“destroyed under a barrage of anticommunist and antihomosexual attacks spearheaded by state and federal agencies, the Coast Guard, ship owners, newspapers, and rival unions.”⁶²⁷

More research is merited to uncover sites in San Francisco that are associated with this highly significant union. Bérubé concludes:

The men and women in the Marine Cooks and Stewards Unions on both coasts from the 1930s to the 1950s developed a working-class movement dedicated to racial equality and economic justice. Together they transformed an all-white, all-male racist union into one that was mostly men of color, that included great numbers of visible ‘queens,’ and that integrated women into the workforce.⁶²⁸

FEDERAL ANTIHOMOSEXUAL WITCH HUNTS

In the late 1940s, the country was at the peak of cold war paranoia, and fears of communist subversion were in full swing. In 1947 the United States Senate started attacking President Truman and the State Department for allowing communists and homosexuals to infiltrate the government. Homosexuals were viewed as a security risk because they were susceptible to blackmail. Caving under the pressure, Truman instituted a program to rid the federal government of all security risks, especially gay men and lesbians. Between 1947 and 1950, 192 cases of so-called sex perversion were investigated, and most of the men and women under scrutiny were forced to resign.⁶²⁹ Many other homosexuals—even those who were not being investigated—resigned “rather than face the possible public disgrace of dismissal.”⁶³⁰ Furthermore, over 3,200 military personnel were discharged—triple the number discharged during World War II, and 1,700 applicants were denied federal jobs because background checks revealed records of homosexual conduct. In 1949, the Defense Department made it clear that no known homosexuals would be allowed in the military.

In 1950 Joseph R. McCarthy, the junior senator from Wisconsin, stood up in the United States Senate and announced that he had proof of 57 card-carrying communists employed by the State Department and that he knew of 81 to 200 more who were communist supporters. That same year, Nebraska senator Kenneth Wherry called for an investigation to look into homosexuals and communists still under government employ. Wherry was quoted as asking, “Can [you] think of a person who could be more dangerous to the United States of America than a pervert?”⁶³¹ A series of investigations and senate hearings focusing on homosexuals in the government and military dragged on for years. Between 1950 and 1965, the military discharged between 2,000 and 5,000 personnel—mostly women—because of suspected of homosexuality. As for employees in civil service, historian David Johnson estimates that 5,000 gay men and lesbians were forced out on charges of homosexuality during the first decade of the Cold War.⁶³²

627 Ibid., 314.

628 Ibid., 237.

629 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 100.

630 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 132.

631 Quoted in Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 100.

632 David Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 166. Quoted in Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 102.

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INQUIRY BY SENATE ON PERVERTS ASKED

126 PERVERTS DISCHARGED

State Department Reports Total
Ousted Since Jan. 1, 1951

PERVERTS CALLED GOVERNMENT PERIL

384 OUSTERS LISTED IN STATE DEPARTMENT

The Eisenhower program calls for the dismissal of any employee who might "act contrary to the best interests of national security." It is aimed at homosexuals, alcoholics and "blabbermouths," as well as Communists and Red sympathizers.



ABOVE: Various headlines in the *New York Times* from 1950 to 1953 about federal attack on gays and lesbians in government employment (*New York Times*)

LEFT: Woman picketing against government homophobia at U.S. Federal Building, 450 Golden Gate Avenue (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

This period in American history proved detrimental to LGBTQ communities, not just because of the number gay men and lesbians fired from government jobs and discharged from military service, but also because it reinforced an image of queer people as dangers to society. This was exacerbated in 1953 when President Eisenhower, in one of his first acts as president, issued Executive Order 10450, effectively banning what were dubbed sexual perverts from government employment.

STATE AND LOCAL LAWS AND POLITICS

William Eskridge defines California's policing of queers in the 1940s and 1950s as an antihomosexual *kulturkampf*, an organized campaign to "domesticate or erase a minority."⁶³³ After World War II, Eskridge says, "American political leaders engaged in an ambitious campaign of demonizing and purging homosexuals from public life." California's campaign, the most damaging in American history, was led by Governor Earl Warren. Warren began his political career in California as the state's attorney general (1939–1943), and then served as governor from 1943 to 1953. During his tenure, Warren not only waged war against homosexuals, but also oversaw the detention and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Warren advocated for what he called a decent society and attacked anything that fell outside of it. As attorney general and governor, Warren oversaw sweeping changes to California's sodomy laws and punishments for sex crimes, essentially allowing for a conviction for homosexual acts to result in life in prison.⁶³⁴ Warren's influence led to an uptick of sex-crime arrests in San Francisco in the mid-1950s.⁶³⁵

Another critical weapon in the policing of queers came in the 1950s when California's alcohol control legislation underwent a radical change. Up until that point, the State Board of Equalization, the state tax agency, oversaw liquor control in California, which made policing of local bars difficult. In 1955 the situation changed with the creation of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC). The ABC immediately "declared war on homosexual bars in San Francisco" and went to work policing queers.⁶³⁶ The effect was devastating to gay and lesbian bar owners. "After the establishment of the ABC," explains historian Christopher Lowen Agee, "San Francisco's homosexual bars could expect to hold their liquor licenses for no more than two years."⁶³⁷ Charlotte Coleman said her bars were consistently monitored by undercover ABC officers looking for morals violations: a man wearing silver slippers; a bartender who dabbed perfume behind the ears of customers; a man who put his arm around another man. Coleman said ABC harassment was common and she was called to the ABC office at the Ferry Building many times.⁶³⁸ In 1961 alone, the ABC closed 24 bars in San Francisco, a number of which were closed based on charges related to homosexuality.⁶³⁹ ABC agents also aggressively policed LGBTQ citizens. Armed with guns and generally homophobic attitudes, ABC agents were "much more serious—and sinister"—according to Nan Alamilla Boyd—than agents of the Board of Equalization and local police.⁶⁴⁰

The ABC's policing efforts were bolstered by the election of George Christopher as mayor of San Francisco in 1955. Christopher campaigned against the previous administration that he accused of being soft on crime. He appointed anti-graft crusader Frank Ahern as chief of police, and the

633 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 88.

634 *Ibid.*, 88-91.

635 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 92.

636 Ernest Lenn, "State Fights Bar Hangouts of Deviates," c. May 25, 1955, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 136.

637 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 86.

638 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Paul Gabriel, 1997.

639 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 105.

640 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 136. See also Hal Call, interviewed by Dennis Saxman, August 30, 1995, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

two of them and the ABC created the infrastructure to crackdown on queer spaces. In 1959, when Christopher was up for reelection, his opponent Russ Wolden accused him and Ahern of being soft on homosexuals and allowing San Francisco to become the “national headquarters” for homosexuals. This was the first time in American history that homosexuality was introduced as a wedge issue in a major election.⁶⁴¹ Wolden’s campaign backfired when local journalists and civic leaders attacked him for advertising San Francisco as a homosexual mecca, thereby “giving the city a bad name.”⁶⁴² Wolden lost by a landslide and George Christopher was reelected.

BLACK CAT CAFÉ AND STOUMEN V. REILLY

During World War II, as part of the military’s effort to control the huge population of servicemembers stationed in the Bay Area, the Black Cat Café was placed on the infamous off-limits list of the Military Police and Shore Patrol. Jim Duggins remembers a sign tacked next to the entrance that said, “Off Limits to Military Personnel.”⁶⁴³ Clyde Evans recalls a military officer stationed at the door.⁶⁴⁴

The Black Cat’s legal troubles began in 1949 when the State Board of Equalization pulled its liquor license, citing Sol Stoumen for operating a “disorderly house for purposes injurious to public morals” where “persons of known homosexual tendencies patronized said premises and used said premises as a meeting place.”⁶⁴⁵ The Board of Equalization’s focus on the Black Cat in 1949 had little to do with the bar being a homosexual hangout. It was an act of revenge against Sol Stoumen after he refused to sign a closed-shop agreement with the local culinary worker’s union.⁶⁴⁶ To retaliate, the labor group convinced George Reilly, San Francisco’s district representative on the Board of Equalization, to find a way to pull the Black Cat’s liquor license. “Thus, by way of a local labor dispute, the state Board of Equalization entered the new territory of homosexual repression,” writes historian Christopher Lowen Agee.⁶⁴⁷

The Board of Equalization’s process for revoking liquor licenses “operated almost wholly outside the regular justice system,” notes Agee.⁶⁴⁸ The board employed its own prosecutors, hearing officers, and supervisors—it was almost impossible for a bar owner to appeal a revocation. Against all odds, Stoumen and his attorney Morris Lowenthal appealed the Black Cat’s license revocation, taking the case to the Supreme Court of California. To the shock of almost everyone, the court decided unanimously to reinstate Stoumen’s liquor license in August 1951, announcing, “mere proof of patronage by homosexuals’ was insufficient cause for a license revocation.”⁶⁴⁹ The Supreme Court decision in *Stoumen v. Reilly* essentially legalized gay and lesbian bars in California—the first state in the country to do so, and at the peak of McCarthyism and Earl Warren’s antihomosexual policy making.⁶⁵⁰

After the 1951 decision in *Stoumen v. Reilly* established that serving alcohol to “known homosexuals” was not illegal—although homosexual acts still were banned—policing queer spaces became more difficult, and there was a brief period of reduced harassment. Thanks to *Stoumen*,

641 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 90.

642 Ibid.

643 Jim Duggins, interview with self, June 30, 1995, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

644 Clyde Evans, interviewed by Phil Miller, 1997-1998.

645 *Stoumen v. Reilly*, 37 Cal.2d 713, <http://scocal.stanford.edu/opinion/stoumen-v-reilly-29515>.

646 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 84.

647 Ibid., 85.

648 Ibid.

649 Ibid.

650 Ibid.

queer people could legally assemble in bars, but “any behavior that signified homosexual status could be construed as an illegal act.”⁶⁵¹ These illegal acts included touching and nonnormative gender attire or mannerisms. The protections afforded by *Stoumen* were reduced in 1955 when the California State Legislature amended the California Business and Professions Code Section 24200(e) to allow the state liquor authority to investigate “resorts for sex perverts.”⁶⁵² As a result, policing of queer spaces increased again, but this time the authorities relied on sinister methods such as entrapment and scare tactics. Undercover agents seduced patrons, and the chief of police urged officers to park police cars outside of bars as a deterrent. Beginning in 1956, undercover ABC agents began conducting surveillance at the Black Cat Café, hoping to catch patrons “looking for lewd and indecent acts” so they could pull *Stoumen*’s liquor license under the new state statute.⁶⁵³ *Stoumen* lost his liquor license again and continued to fight the charges. In 1963, after a nearly 15-year battle, the Black Cat’s final appeal to the California Supreme Court was denied.

Sol *Stoumen*, a married man with five children, spent over \$35,000 in legal fees fighting to save the Black Cat. “Sure,” *Stoumen* said, “we have quite a few [allegedly gay patrons], but I don’t know if they’re really homosexuals, and it’s none of my business as long as they behave.”⁶⁵⁴ He called the policing of his bar a “witch hunt.”⁶⁵⁵ “I know [LGBTQ civil rights is] an unpopular cause,” he said. “The Black Cat has been a symbol of a fight that has benefitted the gay people to a degree. That’s why [the state and local police] want to knock us out.”⁶⁵⁶

MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

During the height of antigay policing in San Francisco, the city’s most popular newspapers, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, vied for attention. Both had an enormous influence on how San Franciscans viewed queer people in the city. And in turn, San Francisco residents influenced how queer spaces were policed. At the peak of his reign, William Randolph Hearst owned 28 American newspapers, including the *San Francisco Examiner*. “Hearst’s papers,” Jill Lepore writes, “were all alike: hot-blooded, with leggy headlines. Page 1 was supposed to make a reader blurt out, ‘Gee whiz!’ Page 2: ‘Holy Moses!’ Page 3: ‘God Almighty!’”⁶⁵⁷ These eye-catching headlines persisted when Hearst died and William Randolph Hearst Jr. became head of the newspaper in 1951. After a significant 1954 raid on Tommy’s Place (described in detail in a later section of this chapter), the *San Francisco Examiner* covered the case closely, printing enormous sensationalized headlines spreading across the entire front page above the fold: “SCHOOL-GIRLS’ VICE, DOPE REVEALED IN S.F. BAR RAID,” and “TEEN-AGE GIRLS TELL OF S.F. ‘SCHOOL FOR VICE.’”⁶⁵⁸ One *Examiner* article reported a “marked influx recently of homosexuals” in San Francisco.⁶⁵⁹ Another article warned that homosexuals “prey upon the unfortunate weaknesses of others. They prey upon teen-agers.”⁶⁶⁰ A particularly blunt editorial in the *Examiner* in 1954 read:

[T]here must be sustained action by the police and the district attorney to stop the influx of homosexuals. Too many taverns cater to them openly. Only police action can drive them out

651 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 137.

652 Bérubé, “The First Stonewall,” *San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Program*.

653 Quoted in *Ibid.*

654 “Black Cat’ Hangs on to its last Life,” *San Francisco Chronicle*.

655 *Ibid.*

656 *Ibid.*

657 Jill Lepore, “Bad News,” *The New Yorker*, January 20, 2014.

658 Grace Miller Scrapbook, Grace Miller Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

659 “Police Jail, Warn Sex Deviates in Full Scale Drive,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 27, 1954, 1. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

660 “Police Jail, Warn Sex Deviates in Full Scale Drive,” *San Francisco Examiner*, “Raids Continue on S.F. Sex Deviates,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 28, 1954, 1. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 93.

of the city. It is to be hoped that the courts here will finally recognize this problem for what it is and before the situation so deteriorates that San Francisco finds itself as the complete haven for undesirables.⁶⁶¹

A San Francisco Police Department officer was later quoted as saying: "The press gives the public what they want to read ... but I think they have exploited it in this area beyond the actual danger that it is."⁶⁶²

Paul C. Smith was the executive editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1937 to 1951. A life-long bachelor whom many believed to be gay (or asexual), Smith was 26 when he took charge of the newspaper and was known as the "Boy Wonder." He was a local celebrity, a "genial host, a bon vivant" who threw lavish parties at his Spanish Colonial Revival flat at 343 Greenwich on Telegraph Hill.⁶⁶³ Smith called his apartment "the sort of happy establishment women invariably envy a bachelor." Smith was fired from the *Chronicle* in 1951 and Scott Newhall took over as executive editor. In the mid-1950s, the *Chronicle's* circulation was half that of the *San Francisco Examiner*. Under Newhall's lead, the *Chronicle's* circulation soared thanks to his "nineteenth century-style" no-holds-barred editorials and now-famous columns by journalists Herb Caen and Abigail van Buren (Dear Abby).⁶⁶⁴ Newhall's obituary in the *New York Times* claimed that he had "transformed the *Chronicle* from a sedate daily into a paper that aggressively pursued stories."⁶⁶⁵ Ten years after Newhall's arrival, circulation increased by 400,000, making the *Chronicle* the city's most popular newspaper. Like Hearst's *Examiner*, the *Chronicle's* coverage of gays and lesbians under Newhall's reign was cruel and relentless.

BAR RAIDS AND POLICE HARASSMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO

Sex-related arrests increased after 1935 when, as William Eskridge describes, early-20th-century enforcement efforts were regularized, popularized, and modernized after cities throughout the United States instituted police vice or morals squads.⁶⁶⁶ Vice squad officers worked full time investigating and making arrests for sex and drug crimes. After 1946, according to Eskridge, vice squads "increasingly focused on homosexuals." Indeed, sodomy arrests in San Francisco tripled in the period between 1946 and 1970.⁶⁶⁷ Because LGBTQ people were forced to be discreet about their sexuality, vice squads made concerted efforts to catch them in the act, relying upon the following methods:

1. Police stakeouts of homosexual hangouts, which was the best way to obtain evidence of oral sex and indecent exposure;
2. Decoy or sting operations, whereby an undercover officer would loiter in a homosexual cruising area, attracting sexual solicitations from other men; and
3. Police raids of homosexual spaces, which netted large numbers of socializing homosexuals and charged them with disorderly conduct, cross-dressing, and other minor offenses.⁶⁶⁸

661 "Needed: A Cleanup," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 28, 1954, 12. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 281.

662 United States Congress, Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency*, September and October 1954 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), 261. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 96.

663 Richard Reinhardt, "What Was a Newspaper?," http://www.chilit.org/Papers%20by%20author/Reinhardt%20--%20What_Was_a_Newspaper.htm.

664 Stephanie Stassel, "Flamboyant Newspaper Editor Scott Newhall, 78," *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1992.

665 Wolfgang Saxon, "Scott Newhall, 78, Newspaper Editor in San Francisco," *The New York Times*, October 28, 1992.

666 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 96.

667 *Ibid.*, 85, 96.

668 *Ibid.*

Bar Raids in the 1950s

In the summer of 1954 the *San Francisco Examiner* published an editorial “demand[ing] that police move in to clean up San Francisco’s ‘unwholesome’ condition,” a condition “marked by the increase of homosexuals in the parks, public gathering places and certain taverns in the city. It is a bad situation.... Even worse, these deviates multiply by recruiting teenagers.”⁶⁶⁹ Chief of Police Michael Gaffey responded by embarking on a campaign to “clean the homosexuals from streets, the public [rest]rooms and the parks where their actions have become intolerably offensive.”⁶⁷⁰ In June 1954 police scoured bars and public spaces throughout San Francisco and made thirteen arrests, including men searching for sex in Union Square.⁶⁷¹ In July 1954 the San Francisco Police Department and the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board (AFDCB) conducted surveillance and periodic raids of five clubs in the Tenderloin frequented by queers: the Crystal Bowl (1032 Market Street, extant); Lena’s Burger Basket (1747 Post Street, demolished); 1228 Club (1228 Sutter Street, extant); Kip’s Bar (70 Eddy Street, status unknown); and the Rocket Club (236 Leavenworth Street, extant).⁶⁷² All of the clubs were added to the military’s off-limits list.

Raid on Tommy’s Place and 12 Adler Place

In June 1952 lesbian entrepreneur Tommy Vasu opened two bars in a building at 529 Broadway and 12 Adler Place (both extant). The entrance to Tommy’s Place was on Broadway, while the downstairs bar at 12 Adler was accessed off of Columbus Avenue. The two bars were connected by a mezzanine and stair. Even though Vasu had her name on one of the bars, she wasn’t the owner. Her girlfriend Jeanne Sullivan owned 94% of the liquor license, and bartenders Grace Miller and Joyce Van de Veer owned the rest.⁶⁷³

Tommy’s Place and 12 Adler Place were the only bars in the San Francisco in the early 1950s that were owned by lesbians and had lesbian bartenders. Because of this, the bar became a lesbian hot spot, but it also drew the attention of policing agencies. Tommy’s Place was put on the military’s off-limits list in 1953 after being cited for “undesirable conditions which adversely affect the health and welfare of service personnel.”⁶⁷⁴ In early 1954, Tommy’s Place and 12 Adler Place came under even more scrutiny when parents of two teenage girls complained to police that their daughters were frequenting a gay bar and getting high on drugs obtained from older women.⁶⁷⁵ The San Francisco Police Department began a months-long investigation into the so-called vice academy, interviewing a dozen young women ranging in age from 14 to 18.

One of the first consequences of the investigation was the arrest of a 51-year-old African American man named Jesse Winston. The young women said that Winston was a regular at Tommy’s and 12 Adler Place and had invited them back to his Telegraph Hill apartment for parties. Winston, a carpenter at the time, was accused of plying the teenagers with liquor and marijuana, and introducing them to “a philosophy of rebellion against moral standards.”⁶⁷⁶ Newspapers called

669 “Needed: A Cleanup,” *San Francisco Examiner*. Quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 93.

670 “Police Jail, Warn Sex Deviates in Full Scale Drive.” Quoted in *Ibid.*

671 “Raids Continue on Sex S.F. Sex Deviates,” *San Francisco Examiner*. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 135.

672 *Ibid.*, 93.

673 Grace Miller kept a scrapbook of newspaper articles covering her arrest and trial. It is housed in the Gay and Lesbian Center collection at the San Francisco Public Library. “Liquor License Hearing Ends,” newspaper unknown, March 2, 1955, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

674 “Bar Faces Crackdown in Dope, Sex Ring,” newspaper unknown, date unknown, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

675 “Police Close 2 Bars Here,” newspaper unknown, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

676 “Arrested,” *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.



North Beach Dope Academy
**Two Women Bar Owners,
Male Habitué Are Arrested**



TOP LEFT: Lesbian bar owner and entrepreneur Tommy Vasu at right (From *Wide Open Town*, 2003)
TOP RIGHT: Interior of Tommy's Place at 529 Broadway Street (SFPL)
LOWER LEFT: Lesbian bartenders Grace Miller and Joyce Van de Veer after their arrest in 1954 (SFPL)
LOWER RIGHT: Former home of 12 Adler Place (Photo by Shayne Watson)

him the "'dean of girls' at the vice academy."⁶⁷⁷ When questioned about his interest in the young women, Winston said his main interest was in selling marijuana. A newspaper reported that he left the girls' "sordid education in other fields [lesbianism]" to the older women in the academy.⁶⁷⁸ Winston was sentenced to five years at San Quentin.

Also revealed in the investigations, the teenagers explained that they were part of a butch-fem circle of about a dozen young women who hung out at Tommy's and 12 Adler Place. Police officers said the teenagers recruited other classmates to join them at the bars, and some "began wearing mannish clothing" and called themselves "butches" and "femmes."⁶⁷⁹ The teenagers claimed they were able to purchase marijuana and Benzedrine tablets at the bars. They told police that they were "accosted by older women in the bar, and sometimes by men," and that the women's room was popular for "abnormal sex practices" between women.⁶⁸⁰

On September 8, 1954, at 9:00 p.m., police officers raided Tommy's and 12 Adler Place. They carried warrants for Grace Miller and Joyce Van de Veer, the two women listed on the liquor license. Two teenage girls accompanied the officers so that they could identify the women accused of contributing to their delinquency. Up to 30 customers were told to leave and police searched both bars. While in the restroom at 12 Adler Place, police claimed to have found a heroin kit, which many believe was planted as a way to ensure arrests.⁶⁸¹ Bartenders Miller and Van de Veer were arrested. The next morning, photographs of the two women leaving jail appeared in the newspaper under the headline "Arrested." Their ages and home addresses were included in nearly every article written about them. Newspapers described Tommy's Place and 12 Adler Place as a "sex 'thrill' spot," a "'college' of dope and perverted vice for teen-age high school girls," a "'gay' spot among the artistic set," and a "rendezvous for teen-age girls" and "arty" patrons.⁶⁸²

After a long and very public legal battle, the jury found no evidence of Van de Veer supplying minors with narcotics or introducing them to older lesbians, and she was acquitted. Miller was found guilty on two of three counts of contributing to the delinquency of minors by selling alcohol. She served six months in the county jail.

Members of the public, particular the city's Parent Teacher Associations, were outraged by the acquittal and urged the police and State Board of Equalization to cite Tommy's for being a "hangout for sex deviates" and revoke the bars' liquor license.⁶⁸³ A statement from one of the PTAs read, "All establishments which contemplate making a profit out of the demoralization of our children must be made to realize that the Board of Equalization will not permit these infamous activities."⁶⁸⁴ Concerned parents and members of over forty PTA organizations packed the State Board of Equalization meeting in December 1954 to urge the members to revoke the license. They heard testimony from a 17-year-old girl who admitted to being served beer at Tommy's since she was 13

677 "Bar Faces Ban in Probe of Teen-Girls' Vice," newspaper unknown, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

678 "'School for Vice and Narcotics' Described by Teen-Age Girls," newspaper unknown, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

679 "Arrested," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

680 "Raid Reveals Schoolgirls' Vice, Dope," newspaper unknown, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

681 "Arrested," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*. See also Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 83.

682 Various newspaper articles in Grace Miller's scrapbook, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

683 "PTA Joins Police Move to Close Thrill Bar," newspaper unknown, December 4, 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

684 *Ibid.*

(the bar had only been open two years). She also admitted to being served alcohol at other gay and lesbian bars, including Mona's Candle Light and Ann's 440 Club. A vice president of the PTA was quoted saying, "As a mother, to me the child's story was sickening. To think that a child, at 12 [sic], could be induced to frequent these kinds of places and find it exciting. I have no daughters, but if this youngster were my child I would just die of shame."⁶⁸⁵ Newspapers described the teenage witnesses as "pretty" or "bobby soxers," while Joyce Van de Veer, Grace Miller, and Jeanne Sullivan were described as "short-haired."⁶⁸⁶

Sullivan, Van de Veer, and Miller eventually gave up on the fight to retain the liquor license at Tommy's and it was transferred to the owner of the building, Frank Guidera, who changed the name of Tommy's Place to Frank's.⁶⁸⁷

The media attention surrounding the raid on Tommy's and 12 Adler Place created extreme pressure on the authorities from the public, with policing of queer spaces in San Francisco intensified as a consequence. According to William Eskridge, these "panic scenarios" were common throughout the United States at the time, "where one incident triggered a wave of media and political attention, resulting in a frenzy of homosexual arrests, detentions, and harassment by police."⁶⁸⁸ Two days after the raid, Police Chief Michael Gaffey ordered a citywide search for places where young women could be "exposed to sexual deviates," namely North Beach and the primarily African American Fillmore District. "We must stop this type of thing before it goes too far," he said.⁶⁸⁹ "This particular case is one of the most aggravated to come to our attention in some time. It is a shocking thing, and will not be tolerated." Police raided bars throughout the city in 1955, including gay restaurant Gordon's (840 Sansome Street) where the bartender was arrested for selling drinks to a 20-year-old man with a fake ID. The young man also was arrested.⁶⁹⁰

Other Significant Bar Raids

One of the next significant raids on a queer space was the raid on Kelly's Alamo Club at 800 Fulton Street (not extant) on September 21, 1956. The San Francisco Police Department, calling Kelly's a "house of ill repute," arrested 36 patrons, mostly lesbians. All but four of those arrested pleaded guilty and were sentenced to ten days in the city jail. It was common for gay men and lesbians to plead guilty "to avoid additional notoriety," according to John D'Emilio.⁶⁹¹ The raid at Kelly's caught the attention of the newly formed lesbian-rights organization, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). In their newsletter *The Ladder*, DOB said the women arrested in the raid "plead guilty not because they [had] committed a crime...but because they [were] made to feel guilty about being a homosexual."⁶⁹² The raid on Kelly's prompted *The Ladder* to publish an article titled "What to Do in Case of Arrest."⁶⁹³ The article urged lesbian readers: "DON'T PLEAD GUILTY...call your attorney; don't volunteer information—in fact, don't talk to anyone about anything."⁶⁹⁴ The article also

685 "Bar License Hearing Shocked by Her Sordid Story," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 16, 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

686 Various newspaper, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

687 "2 Girls Tell Visits to Tommy's Place," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 2, 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

688 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 87.

689 "Gaffey Orders 'Teen Vice Quiz,'" *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, September 10, 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

690 "New Arrests in Bar Drive," newspaper unknown, September 1954, Grace Miller Papers, San Francisco Public Library. See also Boyd, *Wide Open Town*.

691 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 15.

692 Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman* (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1972), 215.

693 Daughters of Bilitis, "San Francisco Police Raid Reveals Lack of Knowledge of Citizen's Rights," *Ladder* 1 (1956).

694 Daughters of Bilitis, "Citizen's Rights," *Ladder* 1 (1956).

included 13 ways a woman could assert her rights in case of arrest. The DOB's vociferous response to the raid on Kelly's Alamo Club marked a turning point for San Francisco's queer communities: gay men and lesbians who had suffered harassment for decades now had the organizational and legal support to fight back against institutionalized oppression.

The largest gay bar raid in San Francisco history occurred in August 1961 at a late-night coffee house called the Tay-Bush Inn at 900 Bush Street at the corner of Taylor Street (not extant). Over 100 people, mostly women, were arrested for disorderly conduct and taken to jail.⁶⁹⁵ The Tay-Bush Inn raid was significant not only for the number of patrons arrested, but also because "it generated a great deal of attention from the press and, thus, continued to engage San Francisco's mayor, lawmakers, police department, and citizens in a dialogue about homosexuality," writes Nan Alamilla Boyd.⁶⁹⁶ The media coverage of the Tay-Bush raid, unlike previous raids, was somewhat sympathetic toward the men and women arrested, and prompted questions about the rights of gay men and lesbians to congregate in public. "[J]ournalists began to use the Tay-Bush raid as a forum for discussing and criticizing [Mayor George Christopher's] law-and-order policies."⁶⁹⁷ This marked a turn in San Francisco's perception of gay and lesbian spaces, as "the press seemed much more concerned with the problem of police corruption and harassment than the specter of homosexuality."⁶⁹⁸ Charges were dropped for all but two of the individuals arrested; the judge presiding over the trial criticized how the police handled the incident, yet Mayor Christopher still called the raid "justified."⁶⁹⁹

Police Harassment

William Eskridge estimates that throughout the United States, "tens of thousands of gay people had some manner of frightening encounter with the police each year during the half-generation after World War II."⁷⁰⁰ From the 1930s through the 1960s, police also detained further tens of thousands of homosexual men and women without arresting them. Eskridge suggests that harassment, detention, and brutality "were more common than arrests for sodomy or solicitation."⁷⁰¹ Lesbians, especially butch lesbians, were particularly vulnerable to bullying by male officers during detainment, and rape committed by officers on the women was not uncommon. The harassment during detention was often demeaning, as gay rights pioneer Hal Call testifies: "[T]he police department in those days [would] haul in a bunch of fags and load the jail up with them, and then make fun of them all night long while they ... call[ed] them cocksucker and queer and all those names."⁷⁰²

CONSEQUENCES OF POLICING AND HARASSMENT ON THE COMMUNITY

Punishment

Throughout California history, punishment for sex crimes was harsh. In 1909, the California Legislature passed a law mandating that anyone convicted of two or more sexual offenses and also showing evidence of being a "moral or sexual pervert" would be sterilized.⁷⁰³ Over the next 20 years, California sterilized almost 7,000 homosexuals and prostitutes—and even more when the

695 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 97.

696 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 213.

697 *Ibid.*, 214.

698 *Ibid.*, 215.

699 Klages, "When the Bar Was the Only Place in Town," 4.

700 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 99.

701 *Ibid.*

702 Hal Call, interviewed by Dennis Saxman, 1995.

703 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 55.

law was expanded to include men and women in state hospitals being treated for “perversion.”⁷⁰⁴ From 1921 on, a sodomy arrest could result in a prison term of up to ten years, while a man or woman convicted of consensual oral copulation could be imprisoned for up to 15 years.⁷⁰⁵ When San Quentin opened in 1854, it housed many people arrested for sex crimes in San Francisco. When Alcatraz became a federal prison in the 1930s, some of the first prisoners were soldiers who had been convicted on sodomy charges.

The next wave of major revisions to California’s punishments for sex laws was in the 1940s, during Earl Warren’s antihomosexual campaign (1939-1953). In 1945, the state’s sexual psychopath law, which said a person convicted of sex offenses against children could be committed indefinitely to a state mental hospital, was modified to exclude the limitations to crimes against children. This meant that men and women convicted of consensual adult homosexual sex could be sent to mental hospitals if a doctor’s testimony revealed that they were so-called inverts. In 1949, Earl Warren’s administration expanded the law to allow sexual psychopaths to be detained indefinitely.

Under Warren’s leadership, California enacted harsh punishments for sodomy, including a life sentence after multiple convictions.⁷⁰⁶ The state also added oral sex and loitering around public toilets to the list of crimes that triggered harsher sentences after multiple convictions. In 1947, the California legislature passed a law requiring sex offenders to register with local police, which meant that even those who were arrested for consensual homosexual acts were registered as sex offenders. Earl Warren expanded sex registration requirements to include men and women convicted of lewd vagrancy, which William Eskridge, in his history, terms a “crime with an infinitely elastic definition.”⁷⁰⁷ Many San Franciscans convicted of sex crimes were sent to San Quentin where they experienced severe harassment. Administrators at San Quentin equated homosexuality with criminality—a stance confirmed by former superintendent Clinton Duffy who believed that “all convicts are potential homosexuals. And most homosexuals are potential convicts.”⁷⁰⁸ Novelist Malcolm Braley described the treatment of gay men at San Quentin in the 1950s:

At the time I was threatened with their lot... the life of the homosexual prisoner was even drearier than main liners. They were strictly segregated ... by themselves in the Old Spanish Prison, the first block constructed on the site, without toilets or running water, and they were marched everywhere, isolated in a strutting and giggling squad, and the only work to which they were assigned was the prison laundry.⁷⁰⁹

In 1953, a gay man caught having sex at the Embarcadero YMCA was arrested, charged with sodomy, and received a sentence of three to five years in prison.⁷¹⁰ Harsh sentencing for sex crimes continued through the decades. According to one source, in as late as 1971, 110 San Francisco men were sentenced to 15 years to life for sodomy or oral copulation.⁷¹¹

Perhaps the most disturbing and damaging chapter of Earl Warren’s anti-homosexual campaign was in the mid-1950s, when he ordered the opening of a thousand-bed treatment facility at Atascadero State Hospital north of Santa Barbara. Approximately 60% of the population at

704 Ibid.

705 Eskridge and Ferejohn, *A Republic of Statutes*, 353.

706 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 88-91.

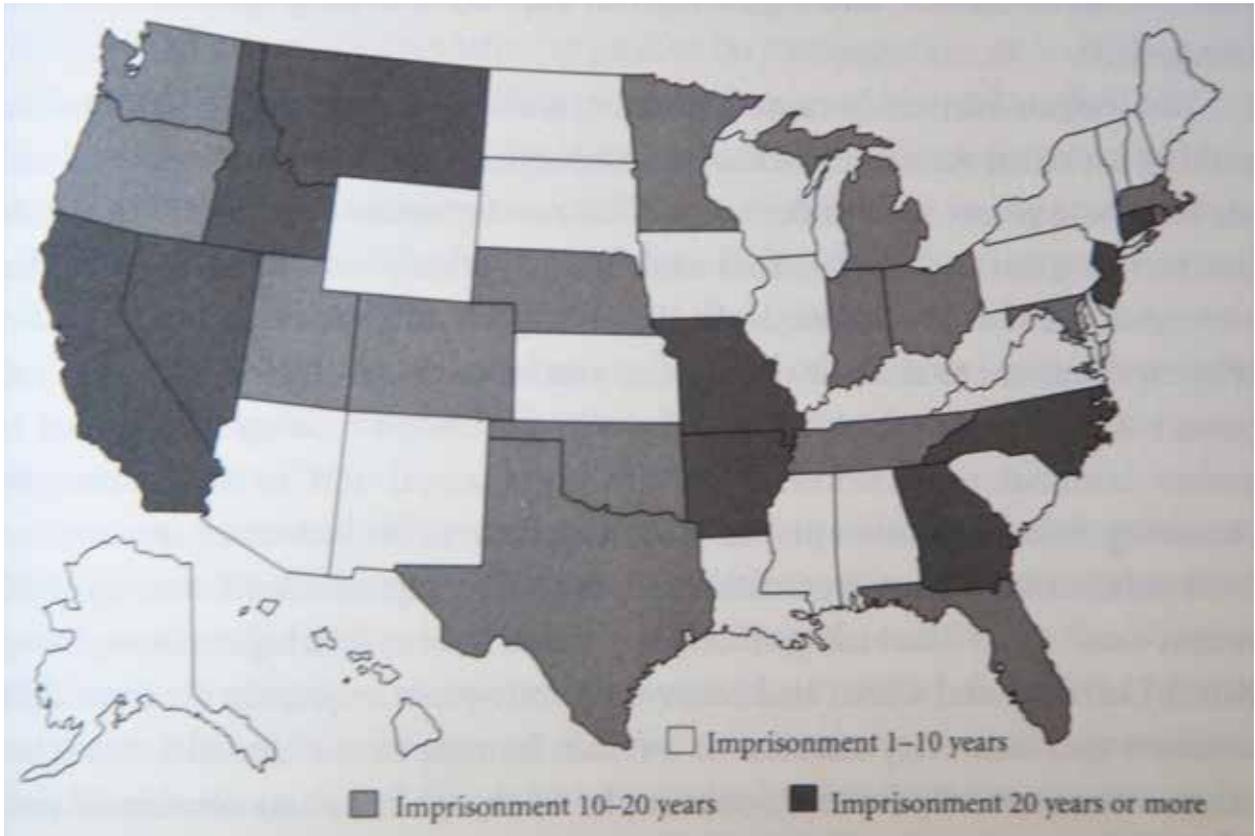
707 Ibid., 93.

708 Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (University of Chicago press, Chicago and London, 2008), 88.

709 Ibid., 85.

710 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 174.

711 Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982), 62.



Maximum penalties for consensual sodomy in the U.S. in 1951 (*Dishonorable Passions*, 2009)

Atascadero were sex offenders, including men and women convicted of consensual adult same-sex activities. Inmates underwent horrific experimental therapies, including lobotomies, electroconvulsive and pharmacological shock therapy, and castration.⁷¹² Gay patients who were accused of deviation while incarcerated were subjected to aversion therapy, including the use of succinylcholine, a muscle-relaxing drug that produced a feeling of suffocation.⁷¹³

Exposure and Lost Jobs

One of the worst consequences of policing and bar raids was the possibility of losing one's job. Following arrests, newspapers commonly printed names, addresses, and job titles in the paper the following morning. Reba Hudson said, "If [we] had any kind of a job at all, and it became known that [we] were lesbian, well that was just the end of [our] life ... end of [our] job."⁷¹⁴ Under California law, people who were convicted of engaging in immoral conduct (including sodomy and oral sex) could not teach in public schools.⁷¹⁵ The law was strengthened in the 1950s under Governor Warren when it became a requirement for police departments to notify school districts when a teacher was arrested for a sex crime. Also in the 1950s, the state legislature directed the board of education to deny teaching certificates to anyone convicted of a sex-related offense, including the catchall vagrancy and consensual adult homosexual sex. Gay rights pioneer José Sarria attended San José State University in the 1950s with the hope of becoming a teacher, but he dropped out after an arrest for sexual solicitation prevented him from receiving teaching credentials. Another San Francisco victim was a sixth-grade teacher named Lloyd E. McMurray, who in 1956 was convicted of a felony for oral sex in the men's room at Aquatic Park. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that McMurray was stripped of his teaching credentials.⁷¹⁶ Similar to education, many other professional licensing organizations in California required that men and women convicted of "gross immorality" have their licenses revoked. These included doctors, dentists, pharmacists, embalmers, and guardians.⁷¹⁷

As discussed earlier, from the late 1940s through the 1950s, gay men and lesbians working in civil service positions could be deprived of their jobs with or without arrests or convictions. Lesbian bar proprietor Charlotte Coleman was discharged from her post at the Internal Revenue Service after being caught going into gay bars that were under surveillance by policing agencies. World War II veteran, astronomer, and future gay rights pioneer Frank Kameny visited San Francisco in 1956 to attend the American Astronomical Society conference. When he was in a bus station restroom, he had a sexual experience with another man. Police officers who were staking out the restroom behind a two-way mirror arrested Kameny and charged him with lewd conduct. A year later, while working for the Army Map Service, the Civil Service Commission found out about Kameny's arrest and discharged him.⁷¹⁸

Psychological Effects of Harassment and Violence

Members of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco who risked venturing into queer public spaces or participating in queer activities faced the possibility of incarceration or hospitalization, ostracism from friends and family, or financial calamity resulting from careers destroyed. The

712 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 96.

713 Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy*, 218. See also Daniel Winunwe Rivers, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, and Their Children in the United States Since World War II* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 23.

714 Reba Hudson, interviewed by Roberta (last name not given), 1992.

715 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 103.

716 *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 13, 1957.

717 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 104.

718 David W. Dunlap, "Franklin Kameny, Gay Rights Pioneer, Dies at 86," *The New York Times*, October 12, 2011.

threat of homophobic violence was equally terrifying. Those who experienced, witnessed, or simply heard about bar raids or violence against queers were deeply scarred by those experiences and understandably cautious. Community historian Betty Boreen described her experience in a bar raid in the 1940s or 1950s as traumatic, and every time she went into a bar after the raid she instinctively searched for the exits:

[W]hen you see the door open, it's sort of a reflex ... whenever I am in a gay bar, I will usually look at whoever walks in. It doesn't matter if they are male or female, white, black, pink with purple polka dots. I will look to see who they are and what they are up to. Because I do not feel safe in this society ... [And] if [one's sexuality were to be revealed], God knows what kind of price you would have to pay...you never came out in the daylight. It would be after dark and you would always look around on the street to see if anybody was out there that might possibly know mom and dad, or whatever.⁷¹⁹

Jim Kepner, who later founded the National Gay Archives in Los Angeles, witnessed an early police raid at the Black Cat Café in 1943:

Just as I approached, several police thundered into the place. I retreated across the street and watched them haul out about 15 of my brothers – though some of them might have been sisters for all I could tell at first glance. The police were damned rough about it, but except for some of the bolder queens, who gave the cops some sass and a little real physical resistance, most went along like sheep to the slaughter ... almost as if they felt they had a punishment coming to them.⁷²⁰

Peruvian immigrant Jorge (Gina) Huerte arrived in San Francisco in 1959 and worked as an international freight broker. She recalls many instances of police harassment, especially bar raids at the Gaslight (1144 Pine Street, not extant) in the early 1960s. Huerte said a red light would go off in the bar, alerting patrons of a raid. She and her friends would try to protect themselves by “butching it up,” creating distance between each other, and changing the conversation to nonqueer topics.⁷²¹

In addition to harassment in bars, violence against queers carried out by police or homophobic citizens was common. Author Samuel Steward, who spent two summers in San Francisco in 1953 and 1954, found the gay bar scene in San Francisco violent and unpredictable, noting that “black eyes, rolling, beating, and (to a large extent) blackmail” were well-known hazards.⁷²² Historian Christopher Lowen Agee says lesbian bars were even more vulnerable because San Francisco police had a policy of disengagement. When male locals and tourists “intruded on lesbian bars seeking to inflict terror and violence,” the police “made little effort to address this abuse.”⁷²³

Outside of bars, violence and harassment on the streets was equally brutal. Popular cruising and hustling areas were particularly dangerous, according to historian George Chauncey. “Men faced there the threat of arrest or harassment from the police and from anti-gay vigilantes. The police regularly dispatched plainclothes officers to the most popular cruising areas, and the results of their surveillance could be devastating.”⁷²⁴ For butch lesbians wearing masculine clothes in public, the harassment was often worse because they were easy to spot. Roberta Bobba and a friend recalled

719 Betty Boreen, interviewed by David S. Olson, 2002, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

720 Quoted in Bérubé, “The First Stonewall,” *San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Program*.

721 Jorge (Gina) Huerte, interviewed by Shayne Watson, May 17, 2014, *Our Stories Workshop for LGBT Elders in San Francisco*.

722 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 196.

723 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 79.

724 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 184.

being harassed by police multiple times on Broadway in North Beach because they looked “very dykey” and “made no effort to look girlish.”⁷²⁵

For many LGBTQ people, the dread of harassment or punishment, compounded by the overall public disdain for nonnormative sexuality, resulted in an extremely negative sense of self. Betty Boreen thought of herself and her contemporaries as “lepers.” She said that even if she “felt pretty good” about herself, she “still had [it] in the back of [her] mind that society says I’m wrong.”⁷²⁶ As a result, she was “constantly looking for validation.”⁷²⁷ For lesbians, notes feminist author Jill Johnston, self-loathing reached a peak in the 1950s when there was “no lesbian identity except a criminal one.”⁷²⁸ The psychological damage extended to men as well. When Samuel Steward was refused a room at the Golden Gate YMCA at 387 Golden Gate Avenue (extant) because he was on the YMCA’s list of known homosexuals, he noted his reaction in his journal:

Baffled, bewildered, and feeling somewhat as if I had leprosy, I went out into the street ... This kind of thing carries a shock with it. I felt (with the usual h[omosexual]-guilt complex) that something had been found out about me ... I went around the corner to the YMCA hotel for men and women on [351] Turk Street, only to discover I had been blacklisted at that place [too].⁷²⁹

Steward said it took him 24 hours to get over the shock of the experience, describing his “shell [as] paperthin.”⁷³⁰

Effect on Bar Owners

Owners of San Francisco gay and lesbian bars, many of whom were heterosexual, also were affected by policing and bar raids. As Nan Alamilla Boyd explains, bar owners “invested their own money into the bar, managed the business themselves, and frequently tended bar,” so a lot was at stake if a liquor license were revoked.⁷³¹ After approximately three complaints, a liquor license could be pulled and the bar could be forced to close. Once a bar owner’s name was associated with a closed bar, it was nearly impossible to open a new business. To get around this, multiple owners would form a corporation and keep their names off the business license. One oral history narrator explained, “the police were always on [a bar owner’s] case one way or another. You had to make money fast because you couldn’t expect to be in business for more than a couple of years, and most of that time was spent in litigation.”⁷³² To avoid arrests in their bars, owners created what Boyd calls spatial defenses: requiring patrons to use the back entrance, covering windows, darkening the bar’s interior, locating the dance floor in the rear, and hiring hostesses to watch the entrance.⁷³³ Bar owners also protected their bars and their patrons by “watch[ing] the behavior of their clientele, both to exert control over the bar’s character and to protect patrons from entrapment and arrest.”⁷³⁴ Because a symbiotic relationship between bar owners and patrons was necessary in order to keep a place afloat, heterosexual bar owners and LGBTQ people became unlikely allies. And to a certain extent, bar owners went out of their way to protect their clientele, a point illustrated by community

725 Roberta Bobba, interviewed by Joanne Castillo, 1981.

726 Betty Boreen, interviewed by David S. Olson, 2002.

727 Ibid.

728 Jill Johnston, *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 58.

729 Quoted in Spring, *Secret Historian*, 193-194.

730 Quoted in Ibid.

731 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 126.

732 Robert, “Down Memory Lane, *OurStories*.

733 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 127.

734 Ibid., 126.

historian Pat Bond: “[T]hey wouldn’t let anyone hurt you or try to make you. A man trying to [hurt or hook up with] a lesbian would be thrown out.”⁷³⁵

QUEERS FIGHT BACK

Vallerga v. Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

An important 1959 court decision, *Vallerga v. Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control*, established that Section 24200(e) of the California Business and Professional Code was unconstitutional. As described in an earlier section of this chapter, Section 24200(e) was enacted in 1955 as a way to reduce the impact of *Stoumen v. Reilly*; it stated that a bar’s liquor license could be revoked if the bar catered to “sexual perverts.” *Vallerga v. ABC* “reestablished that the presence of homosexuals in a bar did not automatically imply the presence of sexual perverts.”⁷³⁶ The decision meant that bar owners could cater to homosexuals as long as they were “well-behaved,” and it “allowed homosexuals in San Francisco a modicum of political entitlement and a momentary respite from ABC pressure and police harassment.”⁷³⁷

Gayola Scandal

Up to the 1960s, San Francisco’s policing agencies had a long history of demanding payoffs from establishments engaging in illegal activities.⁷³⁸ Police regulated homosexuality by demanding payoffs from gay-bar owners—especially in the downtown, lower Market, and Embarcadero areas where “overt homosexual activity or other crimes, like drug use or gambling” were prevalent.⁷³⁹ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, San Francisco Mayor Elmer Robinson oversaw an administration that “demanded graft collection,” which essentially meant that homosexual bars not only stayed in operation, but also “proliferated.”⁷⁴⁰ When *Stoumen v. Reilly* legalized gay and lesbian bars (but not homosexual activity) in 1951, it was no longer illegal to serve alcohol to homosexuals, so owners of gay bars could choose to refuse bribes. But, as historian Christopher Lowen Agee notes, “bar owners who refused payoff demands made themselves more susceptible to other forms of police harassment.”⁷⁴¹ Thus, in many cases, paying off police was the path of least resistance.

In 1960, on the heels of the *Vallerga* decision, which provided gay-bar owners a small amount of relief and confidence, a highly political and publicized controversy that later became known as the Gayola Scandal unfolded. San Francisco was in the middle of a recession in 1960, so paying off police became especially difficult for gay-bar owners.⁷⁴² Early in the year, William “Uncle Billy” Morrell, owner of the 585 Club (585 Post Street, extant) since 1952, decided to fight back. Morrell was part of tightly knit network of gay-bar owners throughout the city. He tapped into his network and invited a group of gay-bar owners, including Sol Stoumen from the Black Cat Café, to meet at the 585 Club and devise a plan to “blow the whistle” on police payoffs.⁷⁴³ The group then arranged a sit-down with Chief of Police Thomas Cahill and an ABC administrator, during which the bar owners accused two police officers of extortion—the first time in American history that gay-bar owners challenged the payola system. Chief Cahill, who “harbored little sympathy for the bar owners,” had little choice but to act on the charges because he was under the thumb of Mayor

735 Pat Bond, interviewed by Allan Bérubé, 1981. Quoted in *Ibid.*

736 *Ibid.*, 206.

737 *Ibid.*, 207.

738 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 80.

739 *Ibid.*, 81.

740 *Ibid.*, 82.

741 *Ibid.*, 80.

742 *Ibid.*, 91.

743 Bob Ross quoted in *Ibid.*, 92.



TOP: Former location of the 585 Club at 585 Post Street, a gay bar owned by William Morrell, the first gay bar owner to fight back against police bribery, which sparked the Gayola Scandal (Photo by Katherine Petrin)



LEFT: The former storefront of the Suzy-Q bar at 1741 Polk Street, founding place of the Tavern Guild, the first LGBTQ business association in the U.S. (Photo by Shayne Watson)

George Christopher, who had recently won reelection on a clean-government ticket.⁷⁴⁴ “Mayor Christopher and Chief Cahill understood that they could use high-profile prosecutions to maintain downtown leaders’ perception that they were committed to clean government,” Christopher Lowen Agee explains.⁷⁴⁵

Beginning in February 1960, Chief Cahill began a sting investigation to trap officers demanding payola. The first officer netted was a San Francisco Police sergeant who was caught leaving The Handlebar (1438 California Street, extant) with \$120 in marked bills. Soon after, two more officers were suspended for taking payoffs from the 585 Club and the Have One (895 Bush Street, extant). In May 1960, after the ABC joined the investigation, an ABC officer was caught leaving the Castaway (90 Market Street, not extant) with \$150 in marked bills. Even more arrests were made in association with bribes taken from Jack’s Waterfront Hangout (111 Embarcadero, not extant), a bar owned by a gay man named Edward George Bauman that featured walls covered with paintings of nude men.⁷⁴⁶

Five of the eight San Francisco Police officers accused of extortion were indicted by a grand jury. The sergeant caught with marked bills from The Handlebar received a one-year sentence. The rest of the officers went to trial in July 1960. Four of them received not-guilty verdicts.⁷⁴⁷ One of the ABC officers caught in the sting received a misdemeanor and three years of probation.

Despite the lenient, or complete lack of, sentencing assigned to the officers charged with demanding payola from gay-bar owners, the Gayola Scandal resulted in sweeping changes to San Francisco’s political and legal landscape, including the end of “organized, large-scale payoff networks.”⁷⁴⁸ Furthermore, press coverage of the Gayola trial, which historian Nan Alamilla Boyd calls “a month-long media frenzy,” showed a distinct change in the way that journalists, and the public, perceived homosexuals in the 1960s. Similar to the media response to the Tay-Bush raid, journalists were sympathetic to the gay-bar owners and even “ridiculed the demeanor of the accused police officers.”⁷⁴⁹ Boyd notes that it was during the Gayola Scandal that journalists started using the term “gay bar” rather than “resorts for sex perverts.”⁷⁵⁰

The Gayola Scandal victory was short-lived. The ABC, “furious over the charges leveled against [its agents],” immediately prosecuted 15 gay-bar cases. By the end of 1961, ABC had closed 24 of the city’s homosexual bars, including all of the bars associated with the Gayola Scandal. In 1963, the Black Cat Café closed permanently as part of the ABC’s antihomosexual campaign.⁷⁵¹ Still, in 1962, in the midst of the nearly constant bar closures, approximately 25 gay and lesbian bars operated in San Francisco—and they were ready for a fight. “The owners of the new gay and lesbian establishments ... were far more likely to resist license revocations” because many of the new owners were gay or lesbian themselves.⁷⁵² Many of the owners “remained dedicated to the bottom line,” but also “viewed their bars as more than business ventures. They often saw the community-building potential in their establishments and thus displayed a greater tenacity in their conflicts with law enforcement. These individual acts of persistence hindered the ABC’s drive.”⁷⁵³

744 Ibid.

745 Bob Ross quoted in *Ibid.*, 93.

746 Ibid.

747 *Ibid.*, 95.

748 *Ibid.*, 97.

749 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 208.

750 *Ibid.*, 209.

751 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 99.

752 *Ibid.*, 101.

753 *Ibid.*, 101.



Guests entering a Tavern Guild Beaux Arts Ball at California Hall, 625 Polk Street
(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

Tavern Guild

In 1962, gay bar proprietors and employees organized the Tavern Guild of San Francisco, regarded as the first gay business association in the U.S. Guild members met at a gay bar on Polk Street called the Suzy-Q (1741 Polk Street, extant), and elected Suzy-Q bartender Phil Doganiero as president.⁷⁵⁴ The Tavern Guild, which maintained a large budget derived from membership dues and fundraising events, retained lawyers and bail bondsmen for use by “anyone arrested in or near a gay bar.”⁷⁵⁵ The Guild formed a powerful network that allowed bar owners to coordinate resistance to police and ABC harassment and bar raids. Members established a telephone network to alert bars about police and ABC activity, and the Guild financed the publication of the Pocket Lawyer, a small guide with information on what to do in case of arrest.⁷⁵⁶ The Guild was also politically active, organizing voter registration drives in the bars. “The very existence of the guild,” writes historian John D’Emilio, “was a statement that gay bars were a legitimate form of business enterprise that deserved freedom from arbitrary harassment.”⁷⁵⁷ In addition to providing legal and political services, the Tavern Guild donated money to San Francisco’s homophile organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union, Youth for Service, the United Farm Workers, and the civil rights movement.⁷⁵⁸

Tavern Guild members met regularly at gay and lesbian bars throughout San Francisco. Social activities sponsored by the Tavern Guild included annual picnics and the Beaux Arts Ball. First hosted in 1963, the Beaux Arts ball was an annual drag gala held every Halloween until 1970; it “became the centerpiece for the drag community,” and the event at which the city’s Empress was elected.⁷⁵⁹

Gay bar proprietor and Tavern Guild founding member Charlotte Coleman said the Tavern Guild “was a great thing in the end because it got the government—the ABC and the police department—to leave us alone a little bit because we showed some strength.”⁷⁶⁰ Rikki Streicher, a Tavern Guild member through the 1970s, said, “The Tavern Guild was probably singly the reason why bars achieved a success politically. Because a buck is the bottom line at all times. And the bars had commanded an enormous amount of money in terms of the city. So when they began to invite politicians to their meetings, the politicians realized that here’s an organized group and that, number one, they have money and, number two, they have votes.”⁷⁶¹

V. HOMOPHILE MOVEMENTS (1950S TO 1960S)

PRECURSORS TO THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENTS

The first documented gay-liberation organization in the world was the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, founded in Germany in 1897 by Magnus Hirschfeld and colleagues. Proponents of the “third sex” theory, the organization published the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Annual for Intermediate Sexual Types). Hirschfeld and his colleagues believed homosexuality was congenital

754 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 223.

755 D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 189.

756 *Ibid.*

757 *Ibid.*

758 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 225.

759 *Ibid.*

760 Charlotte Coleman, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 226.

761 Rikki Streicher, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, 1992. Quoted in *Ibid.*

and fought to end the legal and social persecution of homosexuals.⁷⁶² The first American gay rights organization was the short-lived Society for Human Rights, founded in 1924 by German-American Henry Gerber in Chicago and shut down by the police a few months later.

Outside of early collective organizing, efforts by individuals to advocate for or defend the rights of queer people were equally important and influential. One of those early advocates was anarchist writer, speaker, and organizer Emma Goldman. Goldman toured the U.S around the turn of the 20th century, giving lectures on many political topics, including anarchism, women's suffrage, prisons, and birth control. Her views on rights for homosexuals were radical at the time. She was known as a "free love" advocate and spoke openly about her support of both homosexuality and polyamory. She wrote to Magnus Hirschfeld, describing her views on nonnormative sexuality: "It is a tragedy, I feel, that people of a different sexual type are caught in a world which shows so little understanding for homosexuals, is so crassly indifferent to the various gradations and variations of gender and their great significance in life."⁷⁶³ In the summer of 1899, Goldman lectured in San Francisco at the Turk Street Temple (117 Turk Street, not extant). Among many other topics, she spoke about the New Woman and "sex problems." She returned to the city in 1915 to give a lecture titled "The Intermediate Sex: A Discussion of Homosexuality" at the Scottish Rite Hall, 1320 Van Ness (extant).⁷⁶⁴ Magnus Hirschfeld called her an "American freedom fighter" and wrote that she was "the first and only woman, indeed the first and only American, to take up the defense of homosexual love before the general public."⁷⁶⁵

Two other early advocates of gay rights were Emma Goldman's compatriot Alexander Berkman and Edith Ellis, wife of sexologist Havelock Ellis. Berkman gave a speech in San Francisco in 1915 titled "Homosexuality and Sex Life in Prison" —and he lived with Goldman in San Francisco in 1916–1917, joining her in editing an anarchist journal, *The Blast*, at their apartment at 569 Dolores Street (extant). Edith Ellis spoke positively about homosexuality during a lecture tour in the U.S in 1915.⁷⁶⁶

BARS AS ROOTS OF QUEER ACTIVISM

While some historians mark the homophile movements in the 1950s as the foundation for gay rights organizing of the 1960s–1970s, others, such as historians John D'Emilio and Nan Alamilla Boyd, argue that the seeds of gay liberation movements in the United States were planted decades before in the queer bars. "Homophile activism built upon and complemented the groundswell created by queer bar culture in San Francisco," Boyd says.⁷⁶⁷ The "politics of everyday life" in queer bars and nightclubs "were every bit as important as the politics of organized social movement activism," and these spaces "contributed significantly to the form and function of a resistant queer social movement."⁷⁶⁸ As documented in the previous chapter, Boyd presents evidence showing how post-Prohibition bar culture fostered prepolitical activism, and, quoting historians Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis, "social acts of resistance that haven't yet crystalized into political

762 Magnus Hirschfeld visited San Francisco in 1931 while on a worldwide tour. He stayed at the St. Francis Hotel and visited Albion Hall at 141-143 Albion Street. Albion Hall, which was known as Equality Hall at the time, was owned by a German fraternal organization, the Workman's Educational Association. It was later home to Gay Games founder Dr. Tom Waddell. See Ralf Dose, "Magnus Hirschfeld: Testament. Heft II" (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag, 2013), 92, note 154. See also Hubert Kennedy, "German Gay Activist Visits San Francisco – In 1931," <http://hubertkennedy.angelfire.com/Four.pdf>.

763 Katz, *Gay American History*, 378-379.

764 Terence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States 1895-1917* (Berkeley & London: AK Press, 2008).

765 Katz, *Gay American History*, 377-378.

766 *Ibid.*, 359-366.

767 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 147.

768 *Ibid.*, 242.

institutions.”⁷⁶⁹ In other words, in the pre-homophile period, the simple act of going to bars and forming communities within those spaces was a powerful form of social resistance in its own right. “Isolated men and women do not create, almost overnight, a mass movement premised upon a shared identity,” says John D’Emilio.⁷⁷⁰ Queer bars “were seedbeds for a collective consciousness that might one day flower politically.”⁷⁷¹

HOMOPHILE ORGANIZING IN SAN FRANCISCO

The homophile groups that organized in the United States in the 1950s were a radical first step for gay and lesbian rights movements. “[A]t a time when heterosexual Americans appeared virtually unanimous in their disapproval, if not condemnation of same-sex eroticism,” writes John D’Emilio, the homophile organizations “open[ed] a debate on the topic” and “rupture[d] the consensus that shaped social attitudes toward homosexuality and society’s treatment of gay people.”⁷⁷² By publishing newsletters and organizing national conferences, homophile organizations educated gay and lesbian people and the public about what it meant to be gay or lesbian in mid-20th century America, and by doing so they made small steps toward achieving fundamental rights as citizens.

Lesbians had even more reason to coalesce and organize in the 1950s because of the restrictions placed on their gender. As John D’Emilio describes, all women—straight and lesbian— were expected to conform to certain narrow cultural molds of sexuality, femininity, and work. Living as a lesbian during this period “demanded a much sharper break from traditional expectations of ‘proper’ womanhood.”⁷⁷³ Like their gay male counterparts, lesbians were condemned by religious organizations, the police, and the medical profession, but because of their gender they suffered even more “antihomosexual opprobrium” than men.⁷⁷⁴ Lorraine Hansberry, lesbian author of *A Raisin in the Sun*, referred to lesbians as “twice oppressed,” which required them to become “twice militant.”⁷⁷⁵

Mattachine Society

The Mattachine Foundation

The Mattachine Foundation (later renamed Mattachine Society) was founded in November 1950 when Harry Hay and a group of four men met at Hay’s house in the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. Harry Hay was born in England in 1912, but grew up in southern California. He knew he was gay when he was young and had sexual experiences with men early in his life. Some of the earliest members of the Mattachine Foundation, including Hay, were members of the Communist Party. Hay had become involved in party activities in the 1930s and had participated in San Francisco’s 1934 General Strike. He defined the latter experience as the beginning of his radical activism. At an initial Mattachine meeting in 1950, Hay brought together a handful of friends and acquaintances to whom he presented a proposal that outlined a framework for the nation’s

769 Boyd notes that Kennedy and Davis borrow the term “prepolitical” from Eric Hobsbawm. *Ibid.*, 11. See Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 390, n. 3. See also E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965).

770 D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 2.

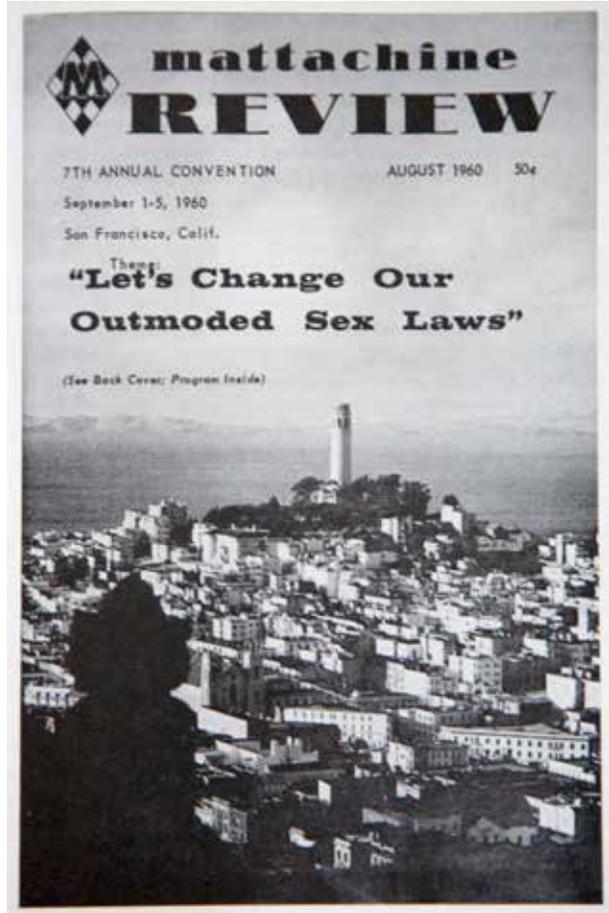
771 *Ibid.*, 33.

772 *Ibid.*, 3.

773 *Ibid.*, 93.

774 *Ibid.*

775 John Schwartz, “A Concealed Voice Rings Loud and Clear,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 2013.



Mattachine Society's newsletter, *Mattachine Review*, 1956 and 1960 (Contacts Desired, 2006)

homophile movement, with “the heroic objective of liberating one of our largest minorities from... social persecution.”⁷⁷⁶ The group of men continued meeting periodically for several months and eventually formed the Mattachine Foundation, the first homophile organization in the U.S.

Some of the primary goals of the Mattachine Foundation included trying to instill in members a “group consciousness free of the negative attitudes that gay men and women typically internalized.”⁷⁷⁷ The founders “attempted to transform the shame of being gay into a pride of belonging to a minority.”⁷⁷⁸ As D’Emilio describes it, the Mattachine Foundation viewed homosexuals as a minority group unaware of its existence—in Marxist terms, a class “in itself” as opposed to a class “for itself” that would act collectively in its own interest. Understanding the importance of the distinction, the Mattachine Foundation hoped to “forge a unified movement of homosexuals ready to fight against their oppression.”⁷⁷⁹ Geraldine Jackson—some of the early supporters were women—said that being a member made her feel “like [she] had a mission in the world,” and that she and other members were “doing something terribly worthwhile for our people.”⁷⁸⁰ The founders also were interested in understanding the roots of gay oppression and sought to analyze homosexuals as human beings by “scrutinizing their own lives.”⁷⁸¹ At their regular meetings, the Mattachine members shared stories about experiences such as coming out, going to gay bars and cruising, and surviving loneliness as isolated gay men and lesbians. “With the help of the Mattachine Society,” writes historian Martin Meeker, “numerous [homosexual men] moved from an isolated and pathologized identity to a new identity supported by a sense of community.”⁷⁸²

By 1953, the Mattachine Foundation had grown throughout Southern California and had an estimated membership of 2,000. Northern California member Gerry Brissette had established chapters in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. Brissette told the Mattachine founders that gay men and lesbians in the Bay Area “flock to us in hordes, hungry, anxious, eager to DO something, SAY something, get started.”⁷⁸³ Unlike the chapters in Southern California that consisted predominantly of men, the early chapters in the Bay Area had a substantial number of lesbians.

Reorganization

In May 1953 at a Mattachine convention in southern California, a schism formed over the direction of the organization between the politically radical founding members, including Harry Hay, and the more conservative newer members. This resulted in the founders relinquishing their leadership and eventually cutting their ties to the Mattachine Foundation. The new leaders reorganized almost all aspects of the organization, including changing the name to the Mattachine Society and revising the primary mission statement. “Under its new officers, the Mattachine Society shifted its focus from mobilizing a gay constituency to assisting the work of professionals” who were studying

776 D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 10.

777 *Ibid.*, 58.

778 *Ibid.*

779 *Ibid.*, 65-66.

780 *Ibid.*, 69.

781 *Ibid.*, 65.

782 Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 76.

783 Quoted in D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 72.



LEFT: The Williams Building at 693 Mission Street, national headquarters of the Mattachine Society beginning in 1954 (Historic American Buildings Survey)

BOTTOM LEFT: Handout from the first Mattachine Society national convention, held in San Francisco in 1954 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Site of first Mattachine Society convention, 1830 Sutter Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)



“sex variation problems.”⁷⁸⁴ Los Angeles member Kenneth Burns explained the reasons behind the change:

We didn’t have much confidence at that time. We felt we had to work through people ... who could better present what [homosexuality] was all about – better than ourselves ... [We made] a definite decision that by working through research projects and people in education and religion that we would get acceptance.⁷⁸⁵

Hal Call, future leader of the Mattachine Society in San Francisco, added that members decided to align with researchers and others “to give ourselves credibility. To be just an organization of upstart gays, we would have been shattered and ridiculed and put down.”⁷⁸⁶

The reorganization of Mattachine resulted in an initial loss of membership, including almost all of the lesbians, and a reduction in the number of chapters. In early 1954, under the leadership of Hal Call and Don Lucas, Mattachine’s San Francisco branch moved into offices in the Williams Building at 693 Mission Street (extant). In 1957, the San Francisco office was recognized as the Mattachine national headquarters.⁷⁸⁷ Hal Call moved from Chicago to San Francisco in 1952 after being arrested on a morals charge and losing his job. He was a member of the Mattachine’s first discussion group in San Francisco. Martin Meeker says: “Upon assuming a leadership role in 1953, Call became one of the first American homosexuals to proclaim his sexuality publicly while fighting for homosexual civil rights.”⁷⁸⁸

Organizational Activities and Services

Hal Call and his colleagues dedicated themselves to working with professionals who supported the promotion of social understanding for homosexuals. “To that end, Call built productive relationships with sexologist Alfred Kinsey (helping him to find homosexual subjects for his research) and psychologist Evelyn Hooker as well as with assorted lawyers, clergy, politicians, journalists, medical doctors, sociologists, business owners, and law enforcement personnel.”⁷⁸⁹

In October 1954, Hal Call and Don Lucas, along with five others, opened the country’s first gay press, the Pan-Graphic Press. Pan-Graphic Press was located in the Mattachine offices at 693 Mission Street. Hal Call worked at the press full time. The Mattachine Society’s official newsletter became the *Mattachine Review*, first printed by Pan-Graphic Press in February 1955.⁷⁹⁰ In 1957 Pan-Graphic Press started printing Call’s *Dorian Book Service Quarterly*, a journal and mail order catalog where people could distribute and purchase homosexual-themed books—only the second provider of its kind in the country following the Cory Book Service in New York.⁷⁹¹ Pan-Graphic Press also printed *Town Talk*, one of the first free gay newspapers in the country to contain advertising and be distributed in gay bars; the press also brought out a string of short nonfiction and fiction books and booklets, making it one of the first gay small presses in the U.S. The Mattachine office in San Francisco, notes historian Martin Meeker, “became the command center for the society’s growing public relations activities.”⁷⁹²

784 Ibid., 81.

785 Quoted in Ibid., 83.

786 Ibid.

787 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 53.

788 Martin Meeker, *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History in America*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004).

789 Ibid.

790 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 52.

791 Ibid., 54.

792 Ibid., 52.

The Mattachine Society further spread its message by hosting national conventions for the various chapters and sister organizations. The first Mattachine Society Convention was held May 15–16, 1954, at the American Friends Service Committee Center at 1830 Sutter Street (extant).⁷⁹³ Titled “Evolution, not Revolution,” the convention featured panel discussions, including one by Dr. Bernice Engle, a researcher at UCSF’s Langley Porter Clinic (described in detail in “LGBTQ Medicine”), and a banquet at the Three Little Swiss Restaurant at 530 Broadway.⁷⁹⁴ The conference concluded with “many organizational problems solved, policies adopted, projects planned, and officers elected.”⁷⁹⁵ The Mattachine Society hosted four other conventions in San Francisco through the early 1960s.

The Mattachine Society also provided various support services to the homosexual community in San Francisco, and welcomed visitors to its offices at 693 Mission Street. Meeker notes that beginning in the late 1950s—after the organization gained national notoriety in the media—the society began receiving letters, calls, and visits that were “desperate and urgent.”⁷⁹⁶

As early as 1958, the headquarters offices in San Francisco were beginning to experience the onslaught of requests that would thrust the organization’s communications strategy into a whole new realm.... The leaders of the Mattachine Society soon had to contend with thousands of individuals newly introduced into the networks, virtual orphans in the gay world.... These homosexuals clamored for information, contacting the resource that was most easily accessible.⁷⁹⁷

The *Mattachine Review* reported “some 300 cases of individuals seeking various types of social service assistance ... legal, psychiatric, religious and employment assistance.”⁷⁹⁸ The society also provided assistance for homosexuals released from prison or mental institutions who had been incarcerated because of their sexuality, as well as for victims of bar raids. Hal Call recalls his experience helping the more than 100 patrons arrested at the Tay-Bush Inn:

[A] hundred and some people were arrested and I went down to the Hall of Justice and spent the rest of the night arranging bail for those people who were arrested. And called attorneys and we were giving them the names of attorneys that they could call because they were going to have to appear in court and answer charges and they needed to be represented by attorneys that had as much understanding of this subject as ... was possible, and who would do the best job of defending them. Well, those charges were dismissed in almost a wholesale manner by the court, because this was just a slap happy activity by the San Francisco Police Department.⁷⁹⁹

The Mattachine Society under Hal Call also offered financial support and printing services to José Sarria during his historic 1961 run for San Francisco city supervisor.⁸⁰⁰

793 1830 Sutter Street was built as the Japantown YWCA by first generation Japanese immigrant women in 1932. The building was designed by architect Julia Morgan and came under the umbrella of the American Friends Service Committee during World War II. See Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull, “Historic Context Statement, Japantown, San Francisco, California” (2011).

794 Annual Meetings, First, 1954, Box 3/1, Donald S. Lucas Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

795 San Francisco Mattachine Newsletter, June 25, 1954, Number 13, Wide Open Town History Project records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

796 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 70.

797 *Ibid.*, 70.

798 *Ibid.*

799 Hal Call, interviewed by Dennis Saxman, 1995.

800 Meeker, *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History in America*.

End of the Mattachine Society

In the mid-1960s, the Mattachine Society began to disintegrate. By 1967, the headquarters had moved from the Williams Building to 348 Ellis Street (not extant), the location of Adonis Books, one of the first gay bookstores in the United States, opened by Hal Call in 1966. Growing competition from other homophile and gay rights organizations was taking membership away from Mattachine. Don Lucas left the organization. Martin Meeker says, "It was around this time that the society really ceased to function as an activist, social service, and publishing organization."⁸⁰¹

Daughters of Bilitis

The Founders

In 1955, a young Filipina lesbian named Rosalie "Rose" Bamberger came up with the idea for a social club for lesbians in San Francisco. Bamberger and her partner, Rosemary Sliepan, both worked at brush-manufacturing companies and lived together at 53 Venus Street (extant) in the Bayview neighborhood. Through a friend, Bamberger and Sliepan were introduced to another lesbian couple, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who shared an interest in meeting other lesbians in a setting outside of the bars.

Dorothy "Del" Martin was born in San Francisco in 1921. After a year of studying journalism at UC Berkeley, Martin transferred to San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University) where she was managing editor of the student newspaper the *Golden Gater*. While working at the paper, she met and married Jack Martin. The two had a baby and Del Martin was forced to drop out of school to become a full-time mother. A few years later, she fell in love with a female neighbor and filed for divorce. In 1949, Martin moved to Seattle, where she worked as an editor at *Daily Construction Reports*.

Phyllis Lyon was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1924. Her family later moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. Lyon graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in journalism. After working for the *Chico Enterprise*, Lyon moved to Seattle, where she found a job at the *Pacific Builder and Engineer*.

Lyon and Martin met while working in the same building in Seattle and the two became lovers. In 1953, Lyon moved back to San Francisco, living on the ground floor of the four-unit building at 685 Castro Street (extant). Martin moved in on Valentine's Day 1953. Early in their relationship, Lyon and Martin tried meeting other lesbians at bars, including Mona's Candle Light, the Black Cat, and Tommy's Place. The two women became friendly with the gay male bartender at Tommy's Place, Jerry, and his partner, Rikki, a female impersonator. For a brief period, the four of them operated the dining room at the rear of Tommy's Place, with Phyllis Lyon and Rikki waiting tables.⁸⁰² Lyon and Martin purchased a house at 651 Duncan Street (extant) in 1955. Their only requirement was a "house with a view."⁸⁰³

Founding the Daughters of Bilitis

On September 21, 1955, four female couples gathered in San Francisco to lay the framework for founding the nation's first lesbian-rights organization. The women were Rose Bamberger and her partner, Rosemary Sliepan; Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon; Noni Frey and her Latina partner, Mary (last name unknown); and Marcia Foster and her partner, June (last name unknown). The founders decided to call the organization the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), a coded reference to lesbianism inspired by *The Songs of Bilitis*, a book of poems about lesbian love by 19th century French poet

801 Ibid.

802 David Mixner and Dennis Bailey, *Brave Journeys: Profiles in Gay and Lesbian Courage* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000).

803 Phyllis Lyon, personal communication with Shayne Watson, August 25, 2011.



The residence at 53 Venus Street (blue door) is the first known meeting site of the Daughters of Bilitis. It was the home of DOB cofounders Rose Bamberger and her partner, Rosemary Sliepan, in 1955. (Photo by Shayne Watson)

Pierre Louÿs. At a follow-up meeting on October 5, Bamberger and Sliepan hosted the Daughters at their home in the Bayview.⁸⁰⁴ At that gathering, the group elected the organization's first leaders: Del Martin as president, Noni Frey as vice president, Phyllis Lyon as secretary, Rosemary Sliepen as treasurer, and Marcia Foster as trustee.⁸⁰⁵

DOB was initially conceived as a social group for lesbians. Rose Bamberger loved to dance, and because lesbians could be arrested for dancing in bars in the 1950s, the founders wanted to create a space where lesbians could meet without risk. The founders wanted "a club for Lesbians... to meet and socialize outside of the gay bars" where they could find "privacy not only from the watchful eye of the police, but from gaping tourists in the bars."⁸⁰⁶ The founders also wanted to use the organization as a forum for educating lesbians about homosexuality and promoting social acceptance. The eight women met at Marcia Foster and June's home on October 19, 1955, and discussed goals for the organization, establishing four primary objectives:

- 1.) Education of the variant [DOB's preferred term for homosexual];
- 2.) Education of the public;
- 3.) Participation in research projects; and
- 4.) Investigation of the California Penal Code.⁸⁰⁷

Historian Marcia Gallo credits Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon for shaping the DOB's objectives from the outset, especially the group's focus on reaching and educating the individual lesbian. The founders "knew instinctively that, without support to develop the self-confidence necessary to advocate for one's rights, no social change would be possible for lesbians," writes Gallo.⁸⁰⁸ The DOB was equally emphatic about educating the public about homosexuality, and felt that contributing to medical and sociological research projects would produce data that could change public perceptions about lesbians and gay men. This approach "reflected the members' beliefs that a conscious, carefully constructed program of discussion, information, and outreach to sympathetic professionals would best advance the nascent movement for gay and lesbian rights."⁸⁰⁹

Similar to the Mattachine Society, the DOB thought they could change public perceptions by conforming to gender-normative self-presentation, encouraging members to adopt a "mode of dress and behavior acceptable to society" — a position that prompted heated debates about cross-dressing and butch styles.⁸¹⁰ As for the DOB's fourth objective to investigate the California Penal Code, Phyllis Lyon said, "We wanted to change the sex laws that made people felons. We thought that there would come a time, hopefully, when there wouldn't be any laws against our sexuality and we'd be accepted as people by the outside community."⁸¹¹

When the DOB's mission changed from a purely social group to an organization more focused on advocacy, it created a rift among the founding members. Rose Bamberger and Rosemary Sliepan

804 Personal communication between Marcia Gallo and Shayne Watson, September-October 2014. Dr. Gallo said, "[I]t is not clear exactly where the very first gathering of the founders of DOB took place on September 21, 1955," but the follow-up meeting occurred at 53 Venus Street.

805 Marcia M. Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006), 5.

806 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 219.

807 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 11.

808 *Ibid.*, 17.

809 *Ibid.*, 13.

810 *Ibid.*, 24.

811 *Ibid.*, 16.

left the DOB in January 1956 to form a lesbian social sorority. Marcia Foster, Noni Frey, and June left a while later. Two other women joined the DOB early on, including Barbara Deming, one of the five cosigners of the Articles of Incorporation, and Helen “Sandy” Sandoz, who became a longtime and very active DOB member. The remaining members of DOB, especially Lyon and Martin, began collaborating with the Mattachine Society and the Los Angeles homophile group ONE Inc. In January 1956, Lyon, Martin, and a few other DOB women attended ONE’s Midwinter Institute in Los Angeles, one of the largest homophile conferences held to that time. In April 1956, DOB held its first public event, a forum at the California Hall at 625 Polk Street (extant, S.F. Landmark No. 174) on problems faced by gay men and lesbians, co-sponsored by the Mattachine Society.

Publishing The Ladder

The DOB’s first national headquarters was on the third floor of the Williams Building at 693 Mission Street, a small office they shared with the Mattachine Society beginning around 1956.⁸¹² Martin and Lyon described the set up: “A member donated a desk [and] ... we bought a used typewriter and filing cabinet ... We were in business.”⁸¹³ In the summer of 1956, as part of an “all-out [publicity] push,” the DOB published a newsletter called *The Ladder*.⁸¹⁴ DOB leaders and members used *The Ladder* to reach and educate individual lesbians. They “consciously aimed the magazine at ‘the lonely isolated lesbians away from the big cities,’” according to John D’Emilio.⁸¹⁵ They wanted *The Ladder* to help “end the perceived isolation among lesbians like themselves,” adds historian Martin Meeker.⁸¹⁶

The first issue of *The Ladder* was published in October 1956 using the Mattachine Society’s mimeograph machine. Phyllis Lyon, using the pseudonym “Ann Ferguson,” was the editor. Del Martin’s “staunchly feminist orientation” came out in the first newsletter:

It took women with foresight and determination to attain this heritage which is now ours.... Nothing was ever accomplished by hiding in a dark corner. Why not discard the hermitage for the heritage that awaits any red-blooded American woman who dares to claim it?

What will be the lot of the future Lesbian? Fear? Scorn? This need not be—IF lethargy is supplanted by an energized constructive program, if cowardice gives way to the solidarity of a cooperative front, if the ‘let Georgia do it’ attitude is replaced by the realization of individual responsibility in thwarting the evils of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and bigotry.⁸¹⁷

Over 200 copies of the first edition of *The Ladder* were distributed. The next three issues were printed after hours by Helen Sandoz on the printing machine at Macy’s Union Square where she worked. Later, the DOB had *The Ladder* printed at other presses, including Pan-Graphic Press.⁸¹⁸

In addition to editorials by DOB leaders and members, *The Ladder* featured organizational reports, schedules of upcoming events, fiction and poetry, nonfiction essays, and international news. Martin Meeker argues that “[e]ven without a physical space for lesbians to meet and exchange information, the DOB and *The Ladder* provided a conceptual space for lesbians” throughout the world to find

812 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 11. Quoted in Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 86.

813 Ibid.

814 Ibid.

815 D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 104.

816 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 86.

817 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 31.

818 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 89.



Copies of DOB newsletter, *The Ladder*, from 1957, 1965, and 1966. Note the addition of “A Lesbian Review” on the middle cover. (Courtesy Shayne Watson)

information and camaraderie.⁸¹⁹ *The Ladder* also enticed lesbians living elsewhere to move to San Francisco after reading descriptions of activities in the city. Meeker cites an example of a woman from Southern California who learned about San Francisco as a lesbian mecca by reading about it in *The Ladder* and expressed a desire to move north. "Learning that something was happening in San Francisco quite apart from her own experience led this lesbian to yearn for more, for an experience she had up to that point only imagined."⁸²⁰

The Ladder went through a series of notable changes over the years. In 1960, the DOB started a Book and Record Service, organized through *The Ladder*, that allowed women throughout the country to order gay-themed books that were otherwise difficult or risky to obtain. DOB shipped the material and asked for a small handling charge. In 1964, "A Lesbian Review" was added to the title, "marking the first time the word 'lesbian' was used as part of an ongoing magazine title."⁸²¹ In November 1964, *The Ladder* featured the first full-face photo of a lesbian on the cover, an Indonesian woman named Ger van Braam who became a member of DOB to feel less isolated.⁸²² In 1968, Barbara Grier, who had been contributing to *The Ladder* since 1957, became editor. Grier wanted to turn *The Ladder* into "the *Atlantic Monthly* of Lesbian thought."⁸²³ *The Ladder* was no longer published and distributed from San Francisco beginning in 1970. "DOB was falling apart," Grier said, and "we wanted *The Ladder* to survive."⁸²⁴ It was "divorced from DOB" in 1970 and became "an independent lesbian-feminist publication, according to Barbara Grier."⁸²⁵

Biennial Conventions

On May 27-30, 1960, the DOB hosted its first biennial convention, "A Look at the Lesbian," at the Hotel Whitcomb at 1231 Market Street (extant).⁸²⁶ It was the first large-scale public gathering of lesbians in the country and drew over 200 registrants. The schedule included speakers and panel discussions, including one moderated by Dr. Bernice Engle of the Langley Porter Clinic at UCSF Medical Center. At a banquet, Lisa Ben, now famous for authoring *Vice Versa*, the nation's first magazine for lesbians, in 1947, entertained guests with "gay folk songs."⁸²⁷ The Homosexual Detail of the San Francisco Police Department showed up to make sure women were not cross-dressing, and officers attended a panel discussion gay bars. On Sunday, conference attendees were invited to a women-only dinner at Charlotte Coleman's bar, The Front.⁸²⁸ The conference was a memorable experience for attendees. DOB member Helen Sandoz said that by Sunday night, "the feelings of euphoria overwhelmed [our] exhaustion.... Those of us who attended will never forget the excitement, the living proof of our worth."⁸²⁹ The DOB's first convention generated lots of local media attention and surprisingly little negative reaction. It was through public events like conventions that the DOB, argues Marcia Gallo, "carefully at first and then with increasing candor ... slowly lifted the veil of secrecy that surrounded lesbians' daily lives in mid-20th-century America."⁸³⁰

819 Ibid., 90.

820 Ibid.

821 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 95.

822 Ibid., 94.

823 Ibid., 146.

824 Ibid., 161.

825 Ibid., 198.

826 1st National Convention (1960) - San Francisco, Box 7, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Cited in Watson, *Preserving the Tangible Remains of San Francisco's Lesbian Community in North Beach*, 89.

827 Ibid.

828 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 62.

829 Ibid., 66.

830 Ibid., xxi.



The Hotel Whitcomb at 1231 Market Street, site of the first DOB national convention in 1960. It was the largest public gathering of lesbians in the country up to that date. (Photo by Shayne Watson)

DOB returned to San Francisco for its fourth annual convention on August 19-21, 1966, at the Jack Tar Hotel at 1101 Van Ness Avenue (later renamed the Cathedral Hill hotel, which was demolished in 2014). Titled, “San Francisco and Its Homophile Community – A Merging Social Conscience,” the 1966 convention was “a historic occasion,” as the convention guide noted, because the event brought together “representatives from City Hall and the police department” and “members of the homophile community and allied civic organizations” for a discussion.⁸³¹ The following week, DOB cosponsored the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) on August 25–28 at the Bellevue Hotel at 501 Geary Street (extant) with other San Francisco homophile groups, the Mattachine Society, Council on Religion and the Homosexual, Tavern Guild, Society for Individual Rights, and Guy Strait and Associates. The DOB convention and the NACHO events were called “Ten Days in August” and included discussions, training, and “parties, dances, a musical-variety show, and gay bar tours.”⁸³²

Research Projects

One of the primary objectives of the DOB was to participate in research projects. Beginning in 1957, the DOB formed a relationship with San Francisco psychiatrist Dr. Blanche Baker after meeting her at ONE’s Midwinter Institute in 1957. In the 1950s, Dr. Baker was one of a small handful of professionals “pushing ... for the recognition of gay people as healthy and whole by the medical establishment.”⁸³³ When Dr. Baker died in 1960, the DOB established a scholarship in her name. Early DOB member and activist Florence Jaffy (also known as Florence Conrad) was a research director for DOB and oversaw many of DOB’s research projects with doctors in the late 1950s and early 1960s. According to Lyon and Martin, “She carefully screened researchers who approached DOB, to check their credentials, hypotheses and biases. She was determined that it was possible to refute negative psychological theories about Lesbians and homosexuality.”⁸³⁴ Jaffy believed research projects were a critical step toward progress for lesbians because “valid scientific studies were necessary and important tools in dismantling prejudice and discrimination against homosexuals,” and that data could change public opinion.⁸³⁵ In 1966, Jaffy worked with Dr. Joel Fort of San Francisco’s National Sex and Drug Forum on a study titled, “Attitudes of Mental Health Professionals Toward Homosexuality and Its Treatment.” Over 160 therapists in the Bay Area were included in the survey, which asked about both treatment and the therapists’ opinions about homosexuality.⁸³⁶

Social Side of DOB

In addition to major efforts like publishing the newsletter and hosting national conventions, the DOB in San Francisco hosted many social activities, including “gab ‘n’ java” discussion groups (renamed rap sessions in the 1970s); picnics; and sports events, including bowling at the Sports Center at 30th and Mission Streets. Perhaps one of the most important social activities hosted by DOB, and in line with the organization’s original mission, was the private parties held at the home of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon on Duncan Street, including many holiday parties. Lyon said the Daughters socialized in her home’s living room and on the grass in the backyard, and women danced together in the dining room.⁸³⁷ The main façade of the Lyon/Martin house was punctuated by an enormous picture window overlooking the city, which prompted some women to fear that

831 “DOB Puts San Francisco on the Spot,” *The Ladder: A Lesbian Review* (August 1966).

832 *Ibid.*

833 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 84.

834 *Ibid.*, 45.

835 *Ibid.*, 46.

836 *Ibid.*, 133.

837 Phyllis Lyon, personal communication with Shayne Watson, August 25, 2011.

neighbors would see them dancing together in the house.⁸³⁸ DOB member Lois Beebe recalled that she “got to meet a lot of different people” at DOB parties. “There was singles there and there was couples there and a lot of times there was theme ones like Valentine’s Day and New Year’s Eve and Halloween.”⁸³⁹ When member Barbara Gittings attended a DOB event in 1956, she remarked, “There were about a dozen women in the room and I thought—wow! All these lesbians together in one place! I had never seen anything like it.”⁸⁴⁰

Growth and Membership

The DOB was never a huge organization in terms of membership. The founders attributed this to lesbians’ reticence about joining a public organization, and feeling that “they had everything to lose from identification with a gay group,” according to John D’Emilio.⁸⁴¹ Sten Russell, one of the DOB’s most active leaders, described the organization as a “revolving door” for women in need. “They joined the group, put their lives in order, acquired pride and self-respect, and then ‘graduated.’”⁸⁴² Internal conflicts about organizational priorities, class, race, and gender conformity also contributed to low numbers of members. For example, “The Daughters looked askance at both bar life and the butch lesbian,” which ostracized a wide strata of women.⁸⁴³ Nonetheless, DOB was able to maintain enough of a membership that local chapters formed in cities throughout the country beginning in 1958. By the mid-1970s, there were chapters in 20 cities throughout the U.S.

The DOB was a predominantly white and middle-class organization, but women of color were part of leadership and membership throughout the organization’s history. The 1956 articles of incorporation made sure to state that the DOB welcomed all women, “regardless of race, color, or creed.”⁸⁴⁴ African American member Billye Talmadge said, “Unlike many other groups in the 1950s, there were no color bars in DOB.... There were not just African-Americans, but Asians, Latinas.... The driving force was that we were gay women.”⁸⁴⁵ Pat “Dubby” Walker, a blind, African American woman, became president of the San Francisco DOB chapter in 1960.⁸⁴⁶ Walker said, “I didn’t think about being black that much, until it was brought up. I think that [my] being blind was more of an issue.”⁸⁴⁷ At the time, Walker said only one other black woman was a member of the San Francisco chapter, Cleo “Glenn” Bonner. Bonner was elected as DOB’s national president from 1963 to 1966, the first African American lesbian to lead a nationwide gay or lesbian rights organization.⁸⁴⁸ “Bonner’s assumption of the leadership of the Daughters,” according to Marcia Gallo, “can be viewed as an organizational statement in favor of the larger issues of racial as well as sexual equality.”⁸⁴⁹

Political Activism

Some DOB leaders and members adopted a more direct, militant political stance in the mid-1960s as they participated in public demonstrations throughout the country. Marcia Gallo explains, “‘Changing Society’ was becoming more of a priority for many Daughters ... than the old goal of

838 Ibid.

839 Lois Beebe, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, April 7, 1992, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

840 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 12.

841 D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 106.

842 Ibid.

843 Ibid.

844 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, xxii.

845 Ibid.

846 Ibid., 58.

847 Ibid., 59.

848 Ibid., xxii.

849 Ibid., 91.

‘changing the variant.’”⁸⁵⁰ When the Mattachine Society and other homophile organizations began demonstrating on the East Coast in 1964, *The Ladder* reported: “Now there seems to be a militancy about the new groups and new leaders. There’s a different mood.”⁸⁵¹ On September 26, 1965, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, along with 30 others, including José Sarria, picketed in front of Grace Cathedral (1100 California Street, extant) to protest the Episcopal Diocese “sharply curtail[ing]” the responsibilities of Rev. Canon Robert W. Cromey.⁸⁵² Cromey, an ardent member of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, was punished by the church for his support of gay and lesbian rights.

These public demonstrations marked a distinct change in the DOB as an organization, as “the Daughters in the second half of the [1960s] transformed themselves from female homophiles into lesbian rights activists.”⁸⁵³ Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon began to move away from DOB in the mid-1960s when they became more active in organizations like The Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) and Citizens Alert (discussed later in this section). In 1966, Martin wrote to DOB leadership: “Phyllis and I find ourselves moving in a direction that no longer encompasses DOB ... This is an era of change, and both [CRH and Citizens Alert] represent action and change. We wish to be helpful to you, but cannot see our way clear to continued involvement with the S.F. chapter. We would prefer to remain inactive members.”⁸⁵⁴

End of the DOB and Legacy of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon

By the late 1960s, DOB was the only homophile organization in the country with local chapters and a strong national governing group. This reflected a nationwide trend wherein gay and lesbian organizing focused “on local activism rather than national organizing.”⁸⁵⁵ By the end of the 1970s, homophile organizing had been replaced by more activist and militant gay liberation movements. One consequence of this larger trend was the end of San Francisco’s DOB chapter, which closed in 1978.

Roberta Achtenberg, a former San Francisco supervisor and former assistant secretary of Housing and Urban Development, said, “Phyllis and Del are even better than their reputation. As younger women came up behind them, they were so encouraging and so helpful and so desirous of us to be everything that the times would allow us to be—times which, by the way, they helped to create. Everything that was possible for us was because of the battles they fought. They won them for us.”⁸⁵⁶

850 *Ibid.*, 124.

851 *Ibid.*, 112.

852 *Ibid.*, 114.

853 *Ibid.*, 120.

854 *Ibid.*, 125.

855 *Ibid.*, 139.

856 Mixner and Bailey, *Brave Journeys: Profiles in Gay and Lesbian Courage*.



Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon in their Duncan Street living room (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

League for Civil Education

The League for Civil Education (LCE) was first conceived by Guy Strait and José Sarria in March 1961 at Sarria's bar, Talk of the Town at 90 Market Street (demolished to make way for the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Embarcadero Center).⁸⁵⁷ The organization had a few goals that included political mobilization and improving the gay community's relationship with the San Francisco Police Department. LCE had discussions with the police about harassment at gay bars, police entrapment, and public sex.⁸⁵⁸ Another LCE objective was to convince queer people to register to vote, which would give the community more power as a voting bloc. Strait and Sarria set out to register new voters at gay bars across San Francisco. They urged community members to get involved in politics, using "language that went beyond the assimilative goals of the early homophile movements," according to Nan Alamilla Boyd. Strait and Sarria wrote:

The League is for your protection. Your support is necessary. If you expect to have others do the things that need being done such as [the] election of public officials who are not bigots, stopping entrapment, discreet handling of blackmail threats, employment of attorneys to fight civil rights cases, the securing of a list of competent, reasonably priced legal counsel and so forth you are going to be very disappointed when you need help.⁸⁵⁹

LCE was instrumental in José Sarria's campaign for city supervisor in 1961. "Strait and Sarria worked together to promote Sarria's candidacy as a kind of test balloon of queer electoral strength," writes Boyd.⁸⁶⁰ Sarria left LCE in March 1962.

Like the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis, LCE published a newsletter. Guy Strait eventually transformed the newsletter from a one-page bulletin into a biweekly magazine called *LCE News* that featured community gossip, local events, and warnings about police-raid hot spots around San Francisco.⁸⁶¹ The first newsletter of its kind in the city, "Strait's journal featured useful instructions on how to avoid police entrapment and what to do in case of arrest."⁸⁶² The newsletter, which was distributed in gay bars throughout the city, "constituted the first sustained attempt to bring the [homophile] movement into the world of the gay bar," according to John D'Emilio.⁸⁶³ "By the spring of 1962 its circulation in San Francisco alone exceeded the nationwide figures of *ONE*, the *Ladder*, and the *Mattachine Review*—7,000 copies came off the presses." The newsletter featured paid advertisements, including three by mayoral candidates in 1963. LCE dissolved as an organization in 1964, after which the publication continued commercially, changing names a few times and eventually becoming *The Citizen News* before ceasing publication in 1967. It was published at the Strait and Associates office at 226 Embarcadero (not extant).

Society for Individual Rights

The Society for Individual Rights, which eventually became the largest homophile organization in the country, was formed in San Francisco in September 1964. The founders—Bill Plath, William Beardemphl, Jim Foster, and Mark Forrester—met in the basement of a residential building at 529

857 "League for Civil Education," José Sarria Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

858 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 221.

859 "Bulletin," League for Civil Education, April 15, 1961, José Sarria Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Quoted in *Ibid.*

860 *Ibid.*

861 *Ibid.*

862 *Ibid.*

863 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 189.

Clayton Street (extant) for the months leading up to SIR's founding.⁸⁶⁴ SIR was started during the period when gay and lesbian activism was becoming more militant, which was reflected in the organization's statement of policy: "We find ourselves scorned, our rights as persons and citizens before the law imperiled, our individuality suppressed by a hostile social order, and our spirit forced to accept a guilt unwarranted by the circumstances of our existence."⁸⁶⁵ The founders, aware of the Mattachine Society's shortcomings, including "near-dictatorial control," wanted SIR to be a democratic organization that would include "all expressions of the homosexual community."⁸⁶⁶

SIR's concept of a homosexual community was novel at the time, and community formation became a critical component of the organization's mission. SIR became very popular with gay men in San Francisco for its social events, according to John D'Emilio: "It held dances, parties, brunches, and drag entertainment. It sponsored bridge clubs, bowling leagues, outings in the country, meditation groups, and art classes."⁸⁶⁷ SIR also operated the Sirporium, a thrift shop at 515 Hayes Street (extant) in Hayes Valley that sold items collected from members; SIR used the proceeds to fund community events. In April 1966, SIR opened a community center—the first gay community center in the country—on the second floor of the building at 83 Sixth Street (extant). Nan Alamilla Boyd describes the space: "[T]he center boasted office space, a boardroom, library, kitchen, and a public assembly area large enough to hold 500 people."⁸⁶⁸ SIR was proud of its community center, writing "The Center itself will become a symbol of our unity and will show that we not only desire but are able to function effectively and responsibly in the larger community."⁸⁶⁹

One of the reasons SIR was so successful, argues D'Emilio, is that, unlike its predecessor homophile organizations, SIR acknowledged the importance of gay bars and formed a strong connection to the gay bar community. SIR was actively involved with the Tavern Guild and held many of its fund-raising events in gay bars throughout San Francisco. SIR and the Tavern Guild worked together to educate the community about legal rights and resisting police harassment and entrapment. Many gay men arrested for frequenting gay bars or public sex were assisted by SIR-funded attorneys. SIR also worked with gay bars to post information about sexually transmitted diseases, one of the organization's major campaigns in the 1960s. "By not forcing patrons to make a choice between the [homophile] movement or the bars," writes D'Emilio, "SIR was managing both to increase the strength of the movement in San Francisco and to stimulate a deepening of political consciousness in the bar milieu."⁸⁷⁰

SIR began publishing a magazine called *Vector* in 1964. Other services offered by SIR were job referrals, legal aid, financial advice, and health and wellness. SIR worked with San Francisco's City Health Clinic to promote a campaign called "Clinic 33." The Health Clinic provided screening for venereal disease. Community historian Jim Kirkman recalled that many gay men took advantage of the services at 33 Hunt Street in the 1960s.

After more than a decade of serving the Bay Area's LGBTQ community, SIR was disbanded in the late 1970s. Similar to the closing of San Francisco's DOB chapter in 1978, SIR was replaced by more militant and activist gay liberation groups.

864 "Society for Individual Rights," José Sarria Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

865 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 190.

866 Ibid.

867 Ibid.

868 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 230.

869 Letter to members from the SIR Board of Directors, March 17, 1966, José Sarria Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Quoted in Ibid.

870 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 191-192.



Former home of SIR Community Center at 83 Sixth Street, the first gay community center in the country
(Photo by Shayne Watson)

The Council on Religion and the Homosexual

By the early 1960s, as historian John D'Emilio describes, the Tenderloin had become home to the "castoffs of American society—the poor and the aged, alcoholics and addicts, prostitutes, petty criminals and male hustlers."⁸⁷¹ Glide Memorial Methodist Church was the heart of the Tenderloin and had a long history of working for progressive social causes. The church, along with its progressive clergymen, was part of a national movement among the nation's religious organizations to focus on social justice. "Social concerns dominated the country's ministry in a way that they had not since the 1930s," writes D'Emilio. "Among black and younger clergy in particular, service to God and to the church increasingly meant active engagement in the world. In San Francisco, where homosexuality had achieved a greater visibility than elsewhere, it was perhaps natural that a portion of this social concern would be spent on behalf of the gay rights cause."⁸⁷²

In 1962, the Glide Foundation, which oversaw the church's healthy endowment, hired clergymen to staff and operate the Glide Urban Center (330 Ellis Street, extant), a pioneering community organizing center that operated out of Glide Memorial Church. Glide first hired Reverend Lewis Durham, who then hired Reverend Ted McIlvenna. (The Glide Foundation also hired Reverends A. Cecil Williams and Don Kuhn.) McIlvenna was tapped to oversee a young-adult program focused on the Tenderloin's growing population of homeless youth.⁸⁷³ Soon after arriving at Glide, McIlvenna discovered that many of the program's youth were young gay men "driven to street hustling by the hostility and ostracism of their parents and peers."⁸⁷⁴ Because McIlvenna was heterosexual and unfamiliar with gay issues, he consulted with the Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, Society for Individual Rights, and the Tavern Guild to understand more about gay and lesbian communities. McIlvenna's "crash course on society's treatment of gay men and women," as D'Emilio calls it, resulted in the minister's sudden awareness of "an entire population with real grievances against the church."⁸⁷⁵ Almost immediately, McIlvenna became an advocate for gay and lesbian causes.

In late May 1964, Ted McIlvenna, with sponsorship from the Glide Urban Center, organized a three-day conference attended by twenty Protestant clergymen and over a dozen members of the homophile movement, including representatives from the Daughters of Bilitis, the Mattachine Society, SIR, the Tavern Guild, and *Citizens News*.⁸⁷⁶ One of the first events was a tour of San Francisco's queer hotspots, such as gay bars, drag shows, private parties, and homophile meetings.⁸⁷⁷ That was followed by a two-day retreat at the Ralston L. White Memorial Retreat on Mount Tamalpais above Mill Valley.⁸⁷⁸ For many of the ministers in attendance, the "face-to-face confrontation" with the homophile activists was "the first time they had ever knowingly talked with a homosexual or a lesbian."⁸⁷⁹ Del Martin wrote of the retreat: "San Francisco was the setting for the historic birth of the United Nations in 1945. And again, in 1964, San Francisco provided the setting for the re-birth of Christian fellowship in the United States to include all human beings regardless of sexual proclivity."⁸⁸⁰

871 Ibid.

872 Ibid.

873 Roxanna Thayer Sweet, *Political and Social Action in Homophile Organizations* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 118. Cited in Ibid.

874 Ibid.

875 Ibid., 192-193.

876 Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco*, 103.

877 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 193.

878 The retreat center, which was originally a residence designed by Willis Polk, had been donated from the original owner to the Northern California Conference of Congregational Churches (now United Church of Christ). Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 105.

879 D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 193.

880 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 106.

After the retreat, homophile activists and religious leaders in San Francisco continued to meet until December 1964 when the Council on Religion and the Homosexual was formed—the first organization in the U.S. to have “homosexual” in the title. The CRH was incorporated six months later. “Working with open-minded members of the clergy was a historic shift for gay activists,” writes historian Marcia Gallo, “and [homophile] leaders recognized that without Glide Memorial Methodist Church, none of the organizing of religious leaders would have been possible.”⁸⁸¹ Glide Memorial Church’s involvement in homophile activism was extraordinary in the mid-1960s. The church and the Glide Urban Center became “centers for urban activism, racial and social justice organizing, and progressive politics in San Francisco for the next two decades.”⁸⁸² Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin called Glide “the most unusual Methodist Church in the country.”⁸⁸³

One of the key events in LGBTQ history in San Francisco occurred in 1965 and involved the CRH. San Francisco’s major homophile groups and clergy joined together to cosponsor the New Years Mardi Gras Ball at California Hall (625 Polk Street) on January 1, 1965, to raise funds for and celebrate the newly incorporated CRH. To ensure the success of this event, members of the CRH negotiated with the San Francisco police and city officials to prevent harassment. In spite of the preparations, as guests began to arrive at the event dozens of police officers appeared on the street with klieg lights and cameras and periodically entered the hall on the pretense of making safety inspections. Ignoring the police presence, more than 500 people—including a number of clergymen and their wives—entered the event. The party continued past midnight, at which point the San Francisco police arrested six attendees, including attorneys Evander Smith and Herbert Donaldson, who had been retained in anticipation of such harassment.

In a remarkable turn of events, Marshall Krause, an ACLU attorney, agreed to defend those arrested at California Hall and organized a press conference on January 2, 1965. Ministers involved with CRH spoke out against police harassment, marking one of the first times in U.S. history that religious leaders spoke publicly about gay rights.⁸⁸⁴ The ministers’ outrage and their call to end police harassment of homosexuals provoked unprecedented public support and a mobilization by homophile groups and leaders to fight against police oppression. The sudden surge of activity following the California Hall incident often referred to as San Francisco’s “Stonewall,” thrust the newly formed CRH into the spotlight. Homophile activist Phyllis Lyon remarked, “[It was] our very first step into some kind of connectedness with the rest of the city.”⁸⁸⁵ Mayor Shelley urged the police to appoint a liaison to the LGBTQ community; they selected Sergeant Elliott Blackstone. Phyllis Lyon said it was “the first time we had any contact with city government. We’d tried over the years. We’d gone to talk and they wouldn’t talk. We sent them letters, they didn’t answer. All of a sudden we had Elliott Blackstone for police community relations and he was our key. That made us suddenly a persona, the gay community was something here in the city.”⁸⁸⁶

CRH’s influence continued to grow after the California Hall incident, with protests, publications such as Del Martin’s *The Church and the Homosexual*, and a series of symposia held at the CRH offices at 330 Ellis Street.⁸⁸⁷ In June 1965, CRH published a report called “A Brief of Injustices: An

881 Ibid., 109.

882 Ibid.

883 Ibid.

884 Ibid., 108.

885 Ibid.

886 Phyllis Lyon, interviewed by Paris Poirier. Featured in *Last Call at Maud’s*, Documentary, directed by Paris Poirier, produced by Karen Kiss and Paris Poirier (San Francisco, 1993).

887 Another attorney Elliot Leighton, backup to Donaldson and Smith, along with Nancy May, who was taking tickets at the front door, were arrested for obstructing the police. Two guests in the hall, Konrad Osterreich and Jon Borset (names as reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*) were arrested for “disorderly conduct.”



LEFT: Invitation to the CRH's 1965 Mardis Gras Ball benefit at California Hall (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM LEFT: California Hall at 625 Polk Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Patrons being harassed by police as they enter the Mardi Gras Ball (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)



Indictment of Our Society in Its Treatment of the Homosexual.” It presented a “clear and strong affirmation of lesbian and gay people, the first of its kind from a group of religious leaders.”⁸⁸⁸ The brief delineated ten ways in which LGBTQ people were denied rights, and it concluded with a “call for self-definition, dignity, and justice for homosexuals.”⁸⁸⁹ Also in 1965, CRH organized a Candidates’ Night, to which local politicians were invited to participate in a town-hall-style community meeting. The politicians were asked questions about “police misconduct and other issues of concern to gay and gay-friendly constituencies.”⁸⁹⁰ According to historian Marcia Gallo, this Candidates’ Night is significant as “the first time that ‘the gay vote’ was courted in San Francisco. “[I]t began a pattern of well-organized electoral activity among lesbians, gay men, and their allies that continues to this day.”⁸⁹¹

The Council on Religion and the Homosexual continued to operate through the 1970s.



ACLU and CRH press conference on January 2, 1965, about police harassment at the CRH Mardi Gras Ball. Rev. Cecil Williams, pastor at Glide Memorial Church, is second from left. Rev. Ted McIlvenna, co-founder of CRH, is at far right. (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

888 Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 108.

889 *Ibid.*

890 *Ibid.*, 109.

891 *Ibid.*

VI. EVOLUTION OF LGBTQ ENCLAVES AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW NEIGHBORHOODS (1960S TO 1980S)⁸⁹²

Social, political, and cultural changes associated with LGBTQ migration, organizing and activism in San Francisco from the 1960s through the 1980s led to the emergence of new queer neighborhoods and changes to existing enclaves. There were six neighborhoods that were welcoming to LGBTQ communities during this period, each of which had distinctive profiles:

- North Beach
- The Tenderloin
- Polk Street
- South of Market
- Haight-Ashbury
- The Castro
- Mission-Valencia

The history of gay men in the Castro has dominated much discussion of such enclaves in San Francisco (and the nation) because, as historian Josh Sides notes in his study of the city, it took “spatial congregation to a new level” as “the first true gay neighborhood in the United States.”⁸⁹³ Yet there were a variety of thriving gay male neighborhoods in the city during this period, summed up by local columnist Marcus Hernandez, who coined names for three of them: Polk Street was “Valley of the Queens,” Folsom was “Valley of the Kings,” and Castro was “Valley of the Dolls.”⁸⁹⁴ As Sides described in his book *Erotic City*, “At no time in the history of the world had as many openly gay men claimed as much urban terrain as they did in San Francisco during the 1960s and 1970s.”⁸⁹⁵

In the Mission-Valencia neighborhood, women created what has been described as the most concentrated lesbian enclave in the U.S. And transgender people actively organized to make the Tenderloin a place that recognized their desires and needs. Yet, no neighborhood was completely homogenous in its identity; gay men and bisexual women had a longstanding presence in the Mission-Valencia neighborhood, and the Tenderloin was important to gay and lesbian San Franciscans. And many significant LGBTQ events, organizations and businesses were not confined to these visible neighborhoods. Queer groups used available spaces throughout the city for meetings, performances, and social and recreational events and claimed public spaces for celebration and protest.

892 Beginning in the 1960s, the number of sites associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco expands exponentially. For many of the historic properties mentioned in this and the following sections, the authors consulted the San Francisco Property Information Map and Google Streetview to make a preliminary determination of whether or not the properties are intact. When possible, notation is included as to whether a building or site survives (extant) or not. However, a more intensive survey is needed to confirm the presence of these potential resources.

893 Josh Sides, *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 116.

894 Gayle Rubin, “The Miracle Mile: South of Market and Gay Male Leather, 1962-1997” in James Brook, Chris Carlsson and Nancy Peters eds., *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 258.

895 Sides, *Erotic City*, 102.

The following sections describe the evolution of existing LGBTQ enclaves in San Francisco from the 1960s to 1980s, and the development of new LGBTQ neighborhoods throughout the city. The neighborhood descriptions include examples of unique or significant LGBTQ establishments located in the various queer enclaves; the examples are not intended to be all-inclusive.

THE TENDERLOIN

When the Red-Light Abatement Act closed brothels throughout California in 1914, prostitution moved to the streets. The Tenderloin became a headquarters for San Francisco's sex trade, as straight, gay and transgender prostitutes worked the streets and taverns in the Tenderloin and on Market Street between the Tenderloin and the waterfront.⁸⁹⁶ Along with North Beach, the Tenderloin became one of the city's earliest queer enclaves. The concentration of multi-story residential hotels constructed in the first decades after the 1906 earthquake and fire helped create a dense neighborhood that served many working-class and lower-income residents. In addition to affordable housing, the large number of queer bars, nightclubs, bathhouses, theaters, and bookstores located in the Tenderloin from the early 20th century through the 1990s helped sustain a lasting LGBTQ presence in the neighborhood.

During the 1960s, longstanding queer gathering places such as the Old Crow at 962 Market Street (which was known for excluding women) and the Club Turkish Baths at 132 Turk Street were joined by new businesses such as the Gilded Cage (126 Ellis Street) and the Trapp (722 Eddy Street).

Opened c. 1961 on the border between the Tenderloin and Union Square, the Gilded Cage was one of San Francisco's premier drag nightclubs in the 1960s, featuring popular performers such as Rio Dante, Lori Shannon, and Charles Pierce. The Cage had an after-hours club with a separate entrance on Fifth Street (now Cyril Magnin Street). San Francisco native Ron Williams visited the Gilded Cage from 1963 to 1965 as a young man just out of his teens and described a long, narrow front room with a mirrored wall on the right and a bar on the left, with stools "occupied by older men: over 30, was older." At the end of the bar was a small performance space with a grand piano; behind that was "another spacious lounge area with small round cocktail tables and a makeshift theatrical stage, surrounded with black velvet drapery, stapled along the top."⁸⁹⁷ At The Gilded Cage, Williams, along with many others, delighted in performances by Charles Pierce, who had a swing installed in order to perform Janette Macdonald's famous song from the film *San Francisco*. "He pulled back on the swing and out over the audience with the blinking lights and flowered ropes, as his dress swept off all the tables below of any cocktails glasses that weren't being held onto. He received an uproarious standing ovation, hoots and whistles."⁸⁹⁸

The Trapp, which opened c. 1965, drew a very different crowd. Guides from the 1970s described the Trapp as drawing a "tougher Tenderloin crowd" and that the bar was "not for the faint hearted but busy, busy, busy." In addition to drag queens and hustlers, the Trapp welcomed young and old and drew many African American patrons. The building was demolished in the early 1980s by the Redevelopment Agency.⁸⁹⁹

In the 1960s, the Tenderloin saw an influx of socially and economically marginalized people who had been forced out of areas in San Francisco that had been targeted for redevelopment, especially the Western Addition and South of Market areas. The combination of the increased and very mixed

896 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 39.

897 Ron Williams, *San Francisco's Native "Sissy" Son* (San Francisco: 2013), 73-75.

898 *Ibid.*, 73-75.

899 Notes from various guides cited in The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.



The El Rosa Hotel at 166 Turk Street, one of the few residential hotels in San Francisco to offer housing to transgender women beginning in the 1960s (Photo by Katherine Petrin)

population, along with the Tenderloin's already high number of low-income residents living in single-room-occupancy hotels or on the streets, led to neighborhood activists organizing for financial and social assistance. Glide Memorial Church was a center for Tenderloin organizing. Rev. Edward Hansen describes their work as supporting Tenderloin residents to speak in a united voice to the powers that be. "We knew that finally the people of the Tenderloin, of the central city, had to be empowered to have their own voice. And so we were getting them together..."⁹⁰⁰ Glide Memorial, along with gay and transgender activists, social workers, and residents organized to "remap the definition of minority groups" in San Francisco in order to access new federal War on Poverty funds for the Tenderloin. They argued that definitions of disadvantaged minorities needed to go beyond race and ethnicity to support residents of the Tenderloin who were disadvantaged by poverty, sexual orientation, and gender identity.⁹⁰¹

In 1966, a group of young gay men and transgender women took direct action during the Compton's Cafeteria riot, which "resulted in lasting institutional change" notes Susan Stryker (explained in more detail below).⁹⁰² Part of a local chain, the Compton's Cafeteria at 101 Taylor Street (extant) at the corner of Turk and Taylor Streets in the heart of the Tenderloin was considered a relatively safe space for transgender women, who often scraped together a living by working as street prostitutes. Cheap residential hotels in the neighborhood were among the very few places that would rent rooms to them. Transgender activist Felicia "Flames" Elizondo found her first San Francisco home near Compton's in the El Rosa Hotel (166 Turk Street extant), where a transgender clerk named Amanda "let us take tricks up to the room for five dollars."⁹⁰³ Elizondo says, "Golden Gate, Mason, Geary and Hyde Streets were the blocks where we felt comfortable." Tamara Ching, another long-time transgender activist, says the Tenderloin was the easiest place for transgender women to engage in sex work "because everyone knew what was what, the customers knew who we were, what we were."⁹⁰⁴

The Gilded Cage closed in 1970 and the Trapp in 1981. The Bulldog Baths closed in 1984 during the height of the AIDS epidemic, another common thread in this neighborhood's history.⁹⁰⁵ Yet the Tenderloin has continued to be home to many LGBTQ people, who live alongside more recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and the Middle East, in large part due to controls that have maintained the neighborhood's residential hotel housing stock.⁹⁰⁶ The neighborhood is also still home some of the city's longest-running LGBTQ gathering places including Aunt Charlie's Lounge (133 Turk Street) and the Tea Room Theater (145 Eddy Street), which has screened explicit films and showcased live dancers since the 1970s.⁹⁰⁷

900 Rev. Edward Hansen in the documentary film, *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2005).

901 Martin Meeker, "The Queerly Disadvantaged and the Making of San Francisco's War on Poverty, 1964-67," *Pacific Historical Review* v. 81, n 1 (February 2012), 21.

902 Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008), 64. Earlier transgender protests have been documented in Los Angeles (Cooper's Donuts in 1959) and Philadelphia (Dewey's in 1965).

903 Felicia Flames Elizondo, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014. Elizondo also mentioned hotels named Camelot, King Edwards, and 111 Mason as places transgender women lived.

904 Tamara Ching, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 10, 2014.

905 When the Bulldog closed in 1984, several gay historians rescued the panels that made up this mural. These ten panels have been stored for years by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Most recently they were installed at the gay men's sex club Eros on upper Market Street according to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

906 Tenderloin Housing Clinic "History," <http://www.thclinic.org/1990s.php> accessed September 3, 2014.

907 Aunt Charlie's opened in 1989, following a gay bar at the same address called Queen Mary's Pub, which opened in 1979.

POLK STREET

In the mid-1950s, Polk Street was featured as a place to be visited in Mattachine Society convention bar guides. During the 1960s, the street's gay footprint moved north from where it began near Civic Center and California Hall, and its economic and demographic profile moved beyond the old vice-district nightlife model. Retail businesses opened that targeted gay consumers, thanks in part to the emergence of commercial gay publications that advertised to target a gay market. In 1961, a gay couple opened Town Squire clothing store at 1318 Polk Street, and the next year Randall Wallace and his partner opened Gramophone Records (1538 Polk Street). Wallace recalls that soon "the [gay] bars began. Slowly people began to open more things that were gay oriented. It just began to multiply, and it was the place to be on the weekends and the weeknights."⁹⁰⁸ Polk Street thus emerged as San Francisco's first modern gay neighborhood.

At the same time, the long-established practice of cruising on the street and in bars remained a favorite pastime for many men in the Polk. The Cloud Seven bar at 2360 Polk Street, which turned gay in 1962, offered sex for hire in a novel way. An interviewee for the Polk Street History Project describes the bar's numbered tables and lip-shaped phones during the late 1960s: "The johns were at the tables, and the hustlers were all up on the bar," he said. "And the people at the table would call the bar and say, 'I'd like to talk to the third guy from the end,' and say, 'I'm over at table seven.' So the guy goes to table seven and they have a few quick words and out they go."⁹⁰⁹

Polk Street gay bars provided a foundation for the establishment of the Tavern Guild of San Francisco, the first gay business association in the country. The organization's first president, Phil Doganiero, bartended at Polk Street's Suzy-Q bar.⁹¹⁰ By the mid-1970s, the Tavern Guild President was Wayne Friday, who bartended at the New Bell Saloon (1203 Polk Street). One patron described it as a political hub. "Straight politicians would come into that bar, and that was their first overture to the gay community," he said. "They would have a drink with Wayne and meet people in the gay community, and it was kind of like a white politician in New York, going into Harlem for the first time."⁹¹¹

Although Polk Street is on the western edge of the Tenderloin, it drew a range of gay men including a more affluent group of older men, many of whom worked in the Financial District.⁹¹² It was never as commercially or residentially concentrated as the Castro became, but Polk Street boasted a lively gay business corridor with bars, baths and gay-owned shops.⁹¹³ In 1971, the gay magazine *California Scene* described it as the "gayest street in San Francisco" with florist, clothing and gift shops, a record store, a bookshop and an art framing business, along with bars and nightclubs.⁹¹⁴ Gay-owned hotels included in the magazine's coverage reflect the neighborhood's position as a gay tourist destination.

908 Joey Plaster, "Mom and Pop to 'Gay Mecca,'" Polk Street History Project, accessed August 31, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/gay-economic-engine/mom-and-pop-to-gay-mecca>.

909 Joey Plaster, "Commercialized Sex and Economic Uplift," Polk Street History Project, accessed August 30, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/gay-economic-engine/commercialized-sex>.

910 Joey Plaster, "The Tavern Guild and the Imperial Court," Polk Street History Project, accessed August 31, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/gay-economic-engine/tavern-guild-imperial-court>.

911 Joey Plaster, "Economic Power to Political Power," Polk Street History Project, accessed August 30, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/gay-economic-engine/economic-to-political-power>.

912 Sides, *Erotic City*, 103.

913 Rubin, "The Miracle Mile," 253.

914 Sides, *Erotic City*, 103.



TOP LEFT: The Grubstake diner at 1525 Pine Street, one of the longest-running businesses in the Polk District catering to LGBTQ communities (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

TOP RIGHT: Advertisement for the Town Squire at 1318 Polk Street, one of the first gay-owned businesses on Polk Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

LEFT: The Cinch at 1723 Polk Street, the longest-running gay bar on Polk Street and one of the longest-running gay bars in San Francisco (Photo by Shayne Watson)

As the Castro grew in vitality during the 1970s, and as Market Street, which had been a center for sex work, was disrupted for BART construction, Polk Street became home to increasing numbers of young male hustlers and transgender women.⁹¹⁵ Transgender woman Regina McQueen recalled Polk Street in the mid-1970s:

You could walk down Polk Street, and the whole street would be full of prostitutes. One side would be men standing there posing, luscious little creatures—oh! And on the other side of the street would be women dressed in evening gowns with feather boas and big hair and lots of make-up. And the next night, some of the boys would be over there on the other side of the street, in femme drag, and vice versa.⁹¹⁶

Historian Joey Plaster notes that Polk Street in the following decades was “a home, refuge, and family for queer runaway and homeless youth, often fleeing abusive or unwelcome homes; immigrants, primarily from Asia and Latin America; and, increasingly in the 1990s, lower-income transgendered women and seniors.”⁹¹⁷

SOUTH OF MARKET

South of Market in the 1960s was a mix of large industrial sites, junkyards, vacant buildings and lots, and cramped residential districts left over from the post-1906 earthquake era. The demographic was largely working class and included a thriving Filipino American community and many artists. A large part of the population was single men who were living in the neighborhood’s single-room-occupancy hotels, many of whom were living on low incomes or retired. Because of the mostly low-income population, along with a high number of bars and seedy entertainment venues, City officials viewed South of Market as a “skid row” that needed to be cleaned up. Redevelopment Agency Executive Director Justin Herman saw South of Market as an untapped financial asset: “The land is too valuable to let poor people park on it,” he stated.⁹¹⁸ The Redevelopment Agency tapped South of Market as part of a citywide redevelopment scheme and proceeded with land acquisition, including eminent domain and resident eviction processes. In 1969, community members tried to prevent redevelopment by forming the Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment, which filed a series of lawsuits that delayed and reshaped the City’s planned redevelopment schemes.⁹¹⁹

When the fate of South of Market was in limbo “during the period of political and legal wrangling” over redevelopment, San Francisco’s gay male community took advantage of the area’s cheap rents and vacant buildings—and the fact that large parts of the neighborhood were empty at night—and established the city’s first leather community.⁹²⁰ “The relative lack of other nocturnal activity provided a kind of privacy, and urban nightlife that was stigmatized or considered disreputable could flourish,” historian Gayle Rubin writes.⁹²¹

One of the city’s first leather bars, the Tool Box at 399 Fourth Street (not extant) opened in 1962 and became a magnet for local and out-of-town leathermen. The bar and its enormous mural by gay

915 Joey Plaster, “A Study of Transitions,” Polk Street History Project, accessed August 30, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/essay/study-of-transitions>.

916 Regina McQueen quoted in Sides, *Erotic City*, 104.

917 Joey Plaster, “Introduction,” Polk Street History Project, accessed August 30, 2014, <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/polk-street/lives-in-transition/introduction>.

918 Rubin, “The Miracle Mile,” 249.

919 *Ibid.*, 250.

920 *Ibid.*, 250-51.

921 *Ibid.*

artist Chuck Arnett were featured in a two-page spread in *Life* magazine in a groundbreaking 1964 article, "Homosexuality in America" — believed to be the first time a photograph of a gay bar with its patrons visible appeared in the national mass media in the United States.⁹²² A second leather bar, FeBe's at 1501 Folsom Street, opened in 1966. FeBe's became famous for featuring a statue by gay artist Mike Caffee that transformed Michelangelo's David into a shirtless man in motorcycle garb; the *FeBe's Man* (or *Leather David*) sculpture was reproduced and distributed internationally.⁹²³ When FeBe's replaced the Tool Box as the most prominent leather bar, it helped to make Folsom Street the anchor of the leather scene. By the late 1970s, the Mr. SF Leather contest was being held there; that in turn became the International Mr. Leather competition. Titleholders were expected to use their distinction to further charitable and political work needed on behalf of their community.

South of Market expanded quickly as a sexual center for gay men and acquired new nicknames such as The Miracle Mile and Valley of the Kings. In 1970, there were nearly twenty gay bars and bathhouses, leather and non-leather, in the neighborhood; by 1980, the introduction of discos and the expansion of gay bars and bathhouses brought the total close to forty.⁹²⁴

One interesting bar in the South of Market area was a themed bar called the Bootcamp, which opened at 1010 Bryant Street (extant) in 1971. Like many of the gay establishments in the South of Market area, the Bootcamp was housed in a former Victorian residence, dimly lit with blacked-out windows. The first floor was made up of larger rooms, including a covered backyard; upstairs bedrooms had been converted into theme rooms.⁹²⁵ In 1978, the Bootcamp converted to a private sex club. San Jose State student Tom Drew spent many long weekends at the Bootcamp sex club and recalls that patrons brought their own alcohol: "I remember weekends when I went there on Friday night and didn't leave until Sunday afternoon, when I drove home, literally did not leave the Bootcamp."⁹²⁶ Marcus Hernandez was one of the Bootcamp's first managers; in 1972 he began writing a regular column devoted to leather information and gossip for the *Bay Area Reporter* under the name Mr. Marcus.⁹²⁷

One of the most popular restaurants in the South of Market area was Hamburger Mary's (a play on the longstanding slang term "Mary" used for gay men). Described as a "gay-friendly truck stop," Hamburger Mary's opened at 1582 Folsom Street (extant) in 1972. By the time it closed 30 years later, the tiny storefront eatery had grown to include a bar and spread into four adjacent storefronts at the corner of 12th and Folsom Streets. Hamburger Mary's had also become a small chain adding locations across the U.S.⁹²⁸

In the 1970s, redevelopment and large-scale demolition in the South of Market area began to have an effect on the leather community, as many of the area's bars and sex clubs were forced to relocate. According to historian Gayle Rubin, during the height of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s,

922 *Ibid.*, 256.

923 *Ibid.*, 256-57.

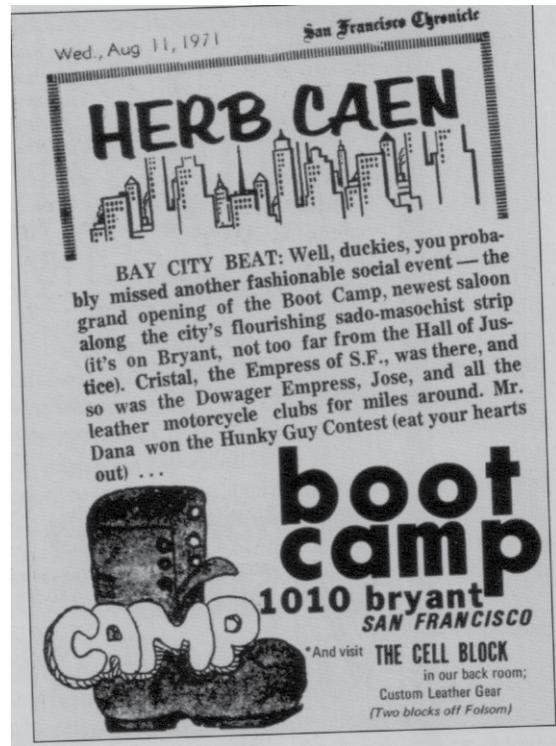
924 Sides, *Erotic City*, 105. Sides described the South of Market gay scene as more gender- and racially-segregated than earlier gay areas such as the Tenderloin. See page 107.

925 Eric Rofes, "A Walking Tour of South of Market in the 1970s: San Francisco, California" (2005), 6-8, accessed June 14, 2014, http://www.ericrofes.com/speaking/soma_tours.php.

926 *Ibid.*

927 "Leather History Timeline," Leather Archives and Museum, accessed 2014, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050308053012/http://www.leatherarchives.org/exhibits/deblase/timeline2.htm>.

928 Ken Garcia, "Hamburger Mary's Will Be Missed," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 6, 2001), accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/Hamburger-Mary-s-Will-Be-Missed-Folsom-Street-2945558.php>. The owners granted licensing agreements to Hamburger Mary's franchisees after 1988 and Hamburger Mary's became a small, national chain according to "Mary's Memoirs," accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/2012/06/lordy-lordy-look-whos-40/>.



TOP: South of Market night scene, c. 1970s (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM LEFT: Former home of the Boot Camp at 1010 Bryant Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Ad for the Boot Camp (From *Gay and Lesbian San Francisco*, 2006)

the leather community and its inherent ties to gay sex became “prominent among the ideological scapegoats for AIDS fear, panic, and loathing.”⁹²⁹ When bathhouses and sex clubs were forced to close, it had a substantive impact on South of Market’s sex-based leather economy and further weakened the community, though it managed to survive through the 1990s—and a tiny handful of leather-related establishments remain in business in South of Market today.

HAIGHT-ASHBURY

From the 1950s through the 1980s, the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood received many refugees pushed out of other San Francisco neighborhoods by urban renewal projects, as well as new migrants attracted to the city’s reputation as a center for counterculture. The neighborhood’s cheap rents and central location drew new residents who created a multiracial neighborhood of hippies, old-timers, gays and lesbians, and African Americans who relocated from the Western Addition.

The D’Oak Room (350 Divisadero, extant), which opened in 1961, was one of the first gay bars in the area known as the Lower Haight. The D’Oak Room was owned by Bill Plath, who later co-founded the Tavern Guild and the Society for Individual Rights.⁹³⁰ Community member Jimmy Owens recalls the D’Oak as a bar that “came and went in a flash.”⁹³¹ Romeo’s at 1605 Haight Street, which served a more lesbian clientele, also opened in 1961 and is remembered as a “small, dirty, sleaze bar” by one woman who found her first female lover there.⁹³² By 1965, there was a small cluster of gay and lesbian bars in or near the neighborhood, including the Golden Cask (1725 Haight Street, extant), Maud’s (937 Cole Street, extant), and Bradley’s Corner (900 Cole Street, extant).

The neighborhood also was home to a movie house targeting gay cinema-goers. In 1964, new owners purchased the Haight-Ashbury Theatre (1702 Haight Street, not extant) and described their business as the first “gay theater” in the country; they screened artistic films and campy movies such as the 1953 transgender drama *Glen or Glenda* and hosted the Mr. San Francisco physique and drag contests.⁹³³ Harassed by neighborhood protesters who formed a picket line and by local youth and the police, the theater lasted only one month.⁹³⁴

Within just a few years of the gay theater’s closure, the hippie ethos of free love and sexual exploration made the Haight-Ashbury a welcoming neighborhood for many gay and lesbian migrants. In 1967, Dr. David E. Smith opened the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic at 558 Clayton Street (extant), offering substance abuse and medical services to young people drawn by the “summer of love,” including gay men and lesbians. The principles of nonjudgmental care, provided by Free Clinic volunteers in consultation with professionals, became a national model. Several members of the Society for Individual Rights lived in the building on Clayton Street and enlisted their associates to support the clinic.⁹³⁵

The Haight-Ashbury in the 1970s and 1980s also had numerous gay-owned retail businesses and restaurants that advertised in the gay press and were listed in gay directories. Those

929 Rubin, “The Miracle Mile: South of Market and Gay Male Leather, 1962-1997,” 260.

930 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

931 Jimmy Owens, interviewed by Donna Graves, February 10, 2014.

932 Kay Wiley quoted in Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 160.

933 Denne Petittclere, “The Haight is Transformed: A Special Theater for Special People,” *San Francisco Chronicle* July 28, 1964: 30. Sides, *Erotic City*, 66.

934 “7 Teenagers Arrested at the Haight” August 11, 1964, “Another Arrest at The Haight Theater” August 11, 1965 and “Sordid End to ‘Gay Haight Theater’” August 19, 1964, clippings in Wide Open Town Collection, Box 1, folder “Media Haight Theater 1964,” Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

935 Sides, *Erotic City*, 73.



TOP LEFT: Building that housed the Golden Cask at 1725 Haight Street, one of the earliest gay businesses in the neighborhood (Photo by Shayne Watson)

TOP RIGHT: The former home of the Mnasidika boutique at 1510 Haight Street, owned by bisexual woman and girlfriend of Janis Joplin, Peggy Caserta (Photo by Shayne Watson)

BOTTOM LEFT: Maudies gathered in front of lesbian bar Maud's at 937 Cole Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Rikki Streicher, lesbian businesswoman and owner of Maud's (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

establishments also marked the neighborhood as a very gay-friendly area and helped attract gay residents. One example of an important LGBTQ business in the Haight-Ashbury area is Mnasidika clothing boutique, which was housed in the storefront at 1510 Haight Street (extant) from 1965 to 1968. (Mnasidika appears in ancient Greek poetry as an object of poet Sappho's affection.)⁹³⁶ Mnasidika was owned by an openly bisexual woman named Peggy Caserta. Caserta had a long-term relationship with Kim Chappell, a former lover of Joan Baez. Mnasidika was reportedly the first "hip" clothing store in the neighborhood and was highly instrumental in the development of Haight-Ashbury as a hippie enclave. In 1966, Peggy Caserta became the primary female love interest of Janis Joplin, and the two remained lovers until Joplin's death in 1970. Joplin was a regular at Mnasidika and purchased clothes at the boutique.

While the visible lesbian and gay culture of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood dwindled after the 1960s, Maud's (937 Cole Street) remained open until 1989. Owned by lesbian businesswoman Rikki Streicher, it was the longest-running lesbian bar in San Francisco. Longtime manager Susan Fahey said that Maud's opened in the "twilight of the closeted days and the beginning of the hippies."⁹³⁷

Streicher, who stated, "I've always felt that bars were the most honest, open, free place that women could go," founded Maud's with a "no labels" policy, welcoming women who did not fit the butch/fem dress and manners code preferred by some other lesbian bars.⁹³⁸ Yet bar employees and patrons still faced restrictions. One 1969 visitor from Kansas City described her disappointment that dancing and mixed drinks were prohibited at Maud's and that an "uptight atmosphere seemed to prevail as to what you could or couldn't do in the establishment."⁹³⁹ Until 1973, California law prevented women from serving alcohol, so early bartenders at Maud's had to be men.

Known far beyond San Francisco, Maud's was as popular as it was long-lived. Historian Nan Alamilla Boyd describes it "as a central gathering spot for a new and counter-cultural generation of lesbians for over twenty years."⁹⁴⁰ Long-time patrons, known as "Maudies," created community through celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and other events together. Streicher was an enthusiastic supporter of lesbian and gay sports, and Maud's softball team was one of the most active in the lesbian and gay leagues. Just before the bar closed in 1989, Streicher recalled, "I've always stayed open 365 days of the year because I thought... 'if they can go to [this place] the rest of the [year] it better be here on Christmas for them. And it always was."⁹⁴¹

Trax Bar at 1437 Haight Street (extant) is the longest-running queer bar in the neighborhood and the only remnant of the Haight's history as a pre-Castro LGBTQ enclave. The space that houses Trax has been queer since the early 1970s when it was a gay bar called the Question Mark.⁹⁴² Other long-standing LGBTQ institutions in the neighborhood were the Park Bowl at 1855 Haight Street (extant), a bowling alley popular with gay and lesbian leagues from the 1960s until the 1990s; and

936 In 1894, Belgian writer Pierre Louis published *Songs of Bilitis*, which he authored himself but presented as a translation of ancient Greek poems written by Bilitis, a member of Sapphos' lesbian community. The book focuses on the rivalry between Sappho and Bilitis and their fight for the attention of Mnasidika. *Songs of Bilitis* was the inspiration for the naming of the Daughters of Bilitis. See Terry Castle, *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 566-569. Mnasidika is also the name of a poem in lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow's *On a Gray Thread* (1923).

937 Heather Cassell, "Maud's and Amelia's Made Space for Women," *Bay Area Reporter* November 3, 2010, accessed August 5, 2014, <http://www.bartabsf.com/2010/11/barchive-come-as-you-are/>.

938 Ibid.

939 "The San Francisco Scene — 1969-1970," *San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* v.2 n.2 (December 1986): 6.

940 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 238.

941 Rikki Streicher in *Last Call at Maud's* (1993).

942 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database

the famous I-Beam gay disco club, which opened at 1748 Haight Street (not extant) in the late 1970s and stayed in operation through the 1990s.⁹⁴³

THE CASTRO

Originally known as Eureka Valley, the area later called the Castro was a predominately Irish-Catholic community that many knew as the parish of Most Holy Redeemer Church. The GI Bill gave service members returning from World War II access to home mortgages, which expanded demand for new houses in the suburbs. During the 1950s and 1960s, families began to leave Eureka Valley's Victorian houses for new homes in the Sunset District, areas south of San Francisco, Marin County, and the East Bay.⁹⁴⁴

In 1963, the Missouri Mule (2348 Market Street) became the first gay bar in the Castro. The tavern had been operating as a straight watering hole under the same name for over a decade. John Burgoa took over in 1963 and ran the bar until 1973. A "campy" singer named Vivacious Vivian accompanied herself on honky-tonk piano as "all order of gay men gathered round."⁹⁴⁵ Soon after, a large variety of gay-oriented and or gay-owned businesses opened in the neighborhood. Some of the earliest bars were the I-Do-No (address unknown), the Honey Bucket (4146 18th Street), and The Mistake (3988 18th Street). Early restaurants included The Metro (3897 18th Street) and Burke's Corner House (2100 Market Street). One of the first gay-oriented clothing stores was Valet Men's Wear (564 Castro Street), and the first dry cleaners was Toni's (270 Noe Street).

By 1970, the Castro began to draw new energy away from Polk Street and Haight-Ashbury. "Polk Street area was tired. Castro was fresh and vibrant," remembered early resident Sam Crocker.⁹⁴⁶ Judd Zeibell, another resident, recalled that people moved from Haight-Ashbury to the Castro "where rents were cheaper. The Castro started filling up with people and sexual freedom all day and all night. Gay men, especially."⁹⁴⁷ Run-down Victorians were restored by new residents who shopped for paint, hammers, and other tools and supplies at Cliff's Variety Store (479 Castro Street, extant).

By the mid-1970s, the Castro was the cultural, economic, and political center for gay San Francisco. Gay rights activist Cleve Jones remembers the Castro around the time of his arrival in 1973: "There was just this electricity, this knowledge that we were all refugees from other places and we'd come here to build something that was new."⁹⁴⁸ Even more bars, restaurants, and shops tailored to and run by gay men had opened on and around Castro Street.⁹⁴⁹ The Twin Peaks Tavern (401 Castro Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 264), situated since 1935 at a prominent location near Market Street, was purchased in 1972 by two lesbians, Mary Ellen Cunha and Peggy Forster. The women transformed the bar by installing large, plate-glass windows, creating what many locals have described as the first known gay bar in the U.S. to feature such a visible space where patrons could

943 Ibid.

944 Donal Godfrey, *Gays and Grays: The Story of the Gay Community at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church* (Lanham Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007), 5-7.

945 Polk's San Francisco City Directories, 1951-1972. Mike Hippler, *Bay Area Reporter* June 28, 1984, quoted in The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

946 Sam Crocker quoted in San Francisco Planning Department, *Twin Peaks Tavern Draft Landmark Designation Report*, 2012, 10.

947 Judd Zeibell quoted in Ibid.

948 Sides, *Erotic City*, 107.

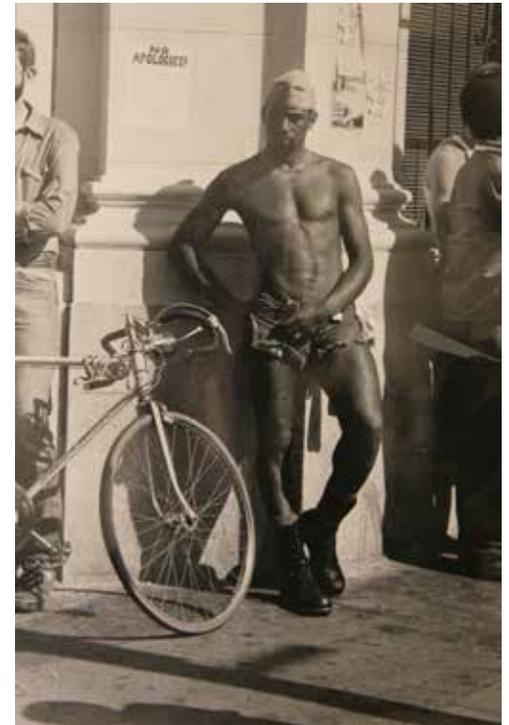
949 The Castro District added services common to other communities, but with a new gay identity; Andy's Doughnuts (460 Castro Street) provided an all-night gathering spot; Dave Valentine Graphic Service (556 Castro) provided printing; a gay realtor, a gay health club, gay florists, and a gay laundromat... The maternity shop became The All American Boy (463 Castro Street). Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.



LEFT: The Missouri Mule at 2348 Market Street, the first gay bar in the Castro

BOTTOM: 1970s scenes of the Castro

(All courtesy GLBT Historical Society)



be seen from the street.⁹⁵⁰ “It became a symbol, if imperfect, of a liberated, visible lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community,” according to Don Romesburg.⁹⁵¹ Yet its visibility relied on patrons’ propriety as they followed Cunha and Forster’s house rule against patrons touching or kissing.⁹⁵²

Two other popular Castro bars were the Midnight Sun (506 Castro Street, extant), a cruising bar that opened in the mid-1970s, and Toad Hall (482 Castro Street, extant), in operation from 1971 to 1978. What made Midnight Sun unique was an elaborate film, video, and sound system that showed old movies, popular and vintage television shows, cartoons, and music videos on several screens. Knowing of its popularity, police looking to harass gay drivers stopped them and asked if they were “going down to the Midnight Sun,” according to journalist Randy Shilts. If the man showed recognition of the bar name, he received a ticket.⁹⁵³ A 1977 bar guide describes Midnight Sun patrons as: “Heads and blacks frequent, although no element dominates.”⁹⁵⁴ Midnight Sun moved to a new location in fall 1981 (4067 18th Street) and is still in operation.

Toad Hall was the first gay bar to jettison a jukebox and adopt music mix tapes and was “the first to offer a clean, well-decorated space in a hip atmosphere.”⁹⁵⁵ Toad Hall is credited with attracting many gay men to the Castro and “setting the standard for what makes a good gay bar.”⁹⁵⁶ Like the Midnight Sun, its popularity drew police attention. According to Randy Shilts, growing confrontations between gay men and police in the Castro peaked in the early morning hours of Labor Day 1974, “when police attacked gay men outside Toad Hall and knocked down and beat dozens of gay men; 14 were taken to jail for ‘obstructing a sidewalk.’”

The Castro was not exclusively a gay-male enclave in the 1970s. In 1974, the Full Moon Coffeehouse opened at 4416 18th Street (extant). Collectively owned by a group of lesbian women, it was the first explicitly women-only establishment in San Francisco. Activist Carol Seajay recalls that “it was a dyke thing to do everything ourselves,” so collective members installed new floors and plumbing for the coffeehouse.⁹⁵⁷ Until it closed in 1977, the Full Moon served food, hosted poetry readings, and organized performances by newly popular women’s musicians such as Chris Williamson and Meg Christian. Increasing numbers of women showed they could start and run businesses by themselves with help from the Women’s Skills Center (51 Waller Street), which taught women vocational skills such as laying tile, building shelves, and printing flyers.⁹⁵⁸

The establishment of the Castro Street Fair in 1974, the relocation of gay Halloween festivities from Polk Street and North Beach to the Castro in 1976, and the revival of the Castro Theatre (429 Castro Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 100) as a repertory house catering to camp-attuned audiences, all further solidified the neighborhood’s gay identity. The 1970s also saw rents for residential and commercial properties escalate, driving out many lower-income gay and lesbian denizens. In spring of 1980, Muni opened an underground metro station at the corner of Market and Castro

950 San Francisco Planning Department, *Twin Peaks Tavern Draft Landmark Designation Report*, 4.

951 Don Romesburg, “The Glass Coffin,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* v. 14, n. 2 (2013): 164-65. *Twin Peaks Tavern Draft Landmark Designation Report*, 15.

952 Romesburg, “The Glass Coffin,” 15.

953 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 92.

954 *California Hotline*, 1977, in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

955 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro*, 92.

956 Katie Szymanski and Willie Walker, “Walk This Way: A Walking Tour of the Castro,” in Winston Leyland ed., *Out in the Castro: Desire, Promise, Activism* (San Francisco: Leyland Publications, 2002), 343.

957 Carol Seajay, “An Old Wives’ Tale,” in Katherine V. Forrest and Jim Van Buskirk eds., *Love, Castro Street; Reflections of San Francisco* (New York: Alyson Books, 2007), 78.

958 *Ibid.*

Streets, increasing the integration of the neighborhood into San Francisco's economic and cultural landscape. As the decade progressed, the Castro solidified as a magnet for gay tourism, in part through promotion by the Golden Gate Business Association (described in detail in "Building Gay Communities").⁹⁵⁹

While gay bars and commercial establishments were clustered together in specific neighborhoods of many major urban areas in the United States throughout the 20th century, the Castro took this spatial congregation to a new level, extending the model that had first emerged on Polk Street. The Castro became a gay neighborhood, not simply an area frequented for commercial and sexual purposes.⁹⁶⁰ Nonprofit organizations and commercial establishments catering to predominantly gay men—such as bookstores, restaurants, florists, barbers, gay newspapers, hardware stores, and clothing shops—helped form the Castro's identity as a gay residential, cultural and social center.⁹⁶¹

MISSION DISTRICT AND VALENCIA CORRIDOR

The Mission District, of which Valencia Street is a major corridor, underwent a post-World War II population transition similar to that of the adjacent Eureka Valley neighborhood. White families, many of German, Scandinavian, and Italian ancestry, moved out for newer homes in other San Francisco neighborhoods and the suburbs. They were replaced by students, artists, and others who appreciated the neighborhood's affordable, older building stock. Immigrants from Mexico and Central America joined an existing Latino community that dated back to the 1930s. By 1970, Latinos represented 40 percent of the overall neighborhood population. Yet the Latino proportion of the Mission's western area, including the Valencia Corridor, declined in the 1960s and 1970s as increasing numbers of young, middle-class people moved in, including lesbians and gays.⁹⁶²

The Mission District holds an important role in LGBTQ history as one of the most vital and visible lesbian neighborhoods in the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s, but it was never a predominantly lesbian neighborhood. The Mission was always home to LGBTQ Latinos and businesses catering specifically to those communities. The Mission was also home to a population of gay men who had been living and socializing in the neighborhood from at least the 1960s. The Fickle Fox at 842 Valencia Street (extant) was one of the city's most popular restaurants. Nude go-go dancers performed at the Gaslight at 645-647 Valencia Street (threatened with demolition) and Hans Off at 199 Valencia Street in the 1960s and early 1970s.⁹⁶³ Even more gay men moved to the Mission District when the Castro became expensive and increasingly exclusive—including many who identified with broader activist causes with which lesbians were involved. However, beginning in the late 1970s, as historian Eric Garber points out, anti-gay violence in the Mission led to a decline in white gay male socializing in the neighborhood.⁹⁶⁴

The first lesbian bar in the neighborhood, the Ebbtide at 853 Valencia Street (extant), opened c. 1966. Lesbians started moving in greater numbers to the Mission District and had formed a visible community in the mid-1970s. By that time, the population of the Mission District had declined and the area's large apartment buildings and residential flats were cheaper to rent. The neighborhood

959 Nan Alamilla Boyd, "San Francisco's Castro District: From Gay Liberation to Tourist Destination," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* v. 9, no. 2 (2011): 228-239, cited in Don Romesburg, "Presenting the Queer Past: A Case for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History Museum," *Queering Archives Special Double Issue in Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 131-144.

960 Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950 to 1994* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2002), 113.

961 Sides, *Erotic City*, 102.

962 San Francisco Planning Department, "City Within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District" (2007): 86-87, 92.

963 Eric Garber, "Valencia's First Gay Bars," *San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society* v.5 n. 1 (Fall 1989): 5-6.

964 *Ibid.*, 6.

became a magnet for women with low-paying jobs who needed to pool funds and share space in order to live in San Francisco.⁹⁶⁵ The Mission's proximity to the gay Castro District made it even more attractive for lesbians. "The boys were all moving into the Castro, but the Mission was what most dykes could afford," recalls activist Carol Seajay.⁹⁶⁶

Lesbians who moved into the neighborhood experienced relatively little hostility from existing straight and Latino residents. Historian Josh Sides attributes this to the fact that, unlike many gay men, most lesbians did not own homes during this period—so there was little fear of lesbians pushing out existing owners. Also, many women saw themselves as part of a larger struggle for social change that included ethnic and racial minorities, and people with fewer resources—so the new lesbian residents became part of the neighborhood's existing activist fabric.⁹⁶⁷ The lesbian community coalesced and grew quickly in the Mission District. Carol Seajay tells of her arrival in San Francisco in 1973: "I found a room in a lesbian household in the Mission, a job on a women's job board, signed up for a class called 'Lesbianism, socialism and feminism' at the Liberation School, and went to women's events of one kind or another almost every night."⁹⁶⁸

One of the earliest lesbian organizations in the neighborhood was the Women's Press Collective, launched from a Valencia Street storefront in 1971 using a \$500 grant from Glide Memorial Church. In a pre-Internet age, bookstores and presses were precious community resources. Women's publications spoke for and to lesbians in dense urban neighborhoods and to those isolated in suburban and rural settings. The Women's Press Collective published work by lesbian poets including Judy Grahn, Willyce Kim, and Pat Parker. It moved to A Woman's Place Bookstore in Oakland soon after its founding.⁹⁶⁹

Another early lesbian-owned and -oriented business in the Mission District was Old Wives Tales at 532 Valencia Street (extant), a women's bookstore opened by Carol Seajay and Paula Wallace in 1976. The pair funded the venture with a loan from the Feminist Federal Credit Union at 944 Market Street #616 (extant), the first financial institution in San Francisco to be owned by women. Seajay and Wallace chose the Mission District for their bookstore because they wanted it located in an area "accessible to women of color, to women traveling by public transit, and to Dykes and feminists."⁹⁷⁰ Old Wives Tales moved to a larger space at 1009 Valencia Street (extant) in 1981. The business became collectively owned and organized a broad variety of programs. The store flyer for July 1981, for instance, lists a reading of work-in-progress by Judy Grahn, an event focused on the history of Angel Island, new poetry read by Chinese American feminists, historian Allan Bérubé's slide lecture "Lesbian Masquerade: Some Lesbians in Early San Francisco Who Passed as Men," and a film about women's white-water rafting.⁹⁷¹ Old Wives Tales became the longest-running lesbian feminist bookstore in San Francisco. It closed in 1995.

965 Sides, *Erotic City*, 116.

966 Seajay, "An Old Wives' Tale," 85.

967 Sides, *Erotic City*, 117.

968 Forrest and Van Buskirk, *Love, Castro Street*, 77.

969 Judy Grahn, *A Simple Revolution: The Making of an Activist Poet* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books 2012), 140, 145. Research for this report has not uncovered the exact address on Valencia Street. Outside of the Mission, The Women's Press Project began in 1974 as a project of the Women's Skills Center; the press ran first as a collective and later as a business until 1987, but it continued its mission of teaching women printing trades and printing political and feminist projects. It is listed in the "San Francisco Survival Manual," c. 1975 at 51 Waller Street. The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database lists the Women's Press at 2680 21st Street in 1982 and 50 Otis Street in 1986.

970 Seajay, "An Old Wives' Tale," 85. Address for Feminist Federal Credit Union is from Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

971 Old Wives' Tales July 1981 calendar in Old Wives Tales file, Ephemera Business Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.



LEFT: Flyer for opening of Amelia's at 647 Valencia Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

ABOVE: Announcement for Sofia's at 527 Valencia Street, San Francisco's first Latina lesbian bar (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BELOW: Drag performer at Esta Noche at 3079 16th Street (Courtesy USC Digital Library)



By the late 1970s and early 1980s, many other lesbian businesses had opened on the Valencia Corridor, the nickname for the area along or around Valencia Street between 18th and 23rd Streets. Artemis Cafe opened at 1199 Valencia Street (extant) in 1977. Owner Sarah Lewenstein opened Artemis as a women-only space to provide “an alternative to the bars.” Places such as Artemis, which fielded its own softball team and hosted numerous benefits for women’s issues, served as community hubs as much as business establishments. Artemis also was one of several places across San Francisco that featured women’s music events.⁹⁷²

Amelia’s, a bar owned by lesbian businesswoman Rikki Streicher, opened at 645-647 Valencia (threatened with demolition) in 1978. Amelia’s featured dancing and hosted community events in its second floor space. Amelia’s differed from Streicher’s first lesbian bar, Maud’s, because it offered dancing in a second floor space that was also used for community gatherings. Fundraisers hosted by Amelia’s supported a broad range of community issues, such as the Gay Games, the AIDS/ARC Vigil, the Women’s Blood Drive Mobile, and African American lesbian candidate Pat Norman’s 1986 campaign for the Board of Supervisors.⁹⁷³ Amelia’s “was a place to come and get dressed up, not any old bar. [It] became a place to be seen and be proud,” said Joan Crittenden, one of the nightclub’s original managers, who also worked at Maud’s.⁹⁷⁴ Amelia’s was “less cliquy” than Maud’s, according to patron Evie Blackwood, and drew a more interracial crowd.⁹⁷⁵ Amelia’s also fielded teams in the lesbian softball league and sent a team to the 1988 Gay World Series in Dallas.⁹⁷⁶ Page Hodel got her start as an important Bay Area DJ and dance club organizer at Amelia’s. Hodel liked to “throw huge parties” and rented an empty storefront for her birthday party one year that drew 600 people. “The next morning I got a call from...Amelia’s,” Hodel said. “The owner said, ‘I don’t know what you are doing over there, but we were empty all night. How about you come here and play your records?’” Hodel’s ongoing nights at Amelia’s were so popular the bar reportedly had to hire a bouncer to keep the crowds within fire code limits.⁹⁷⁷

Other lesbian-owned or -oriented spaces open in the neighborhood in the early 1980s were Oseito, San Francisco’s first bathhouse for women, opened in the ground floor of a Victorian at 953-955 Valencia Street in 1981; Garbo’s, a salon at 696 Valencia Street; Lyon-Martin Health Services, a medical clinic at 2480 Mission Street; and a lesbian-run crafts shop called Womencrafts West at 1007 Valencia Street. Modern Times Bookstore moved from its original space in the Castro (3800 17th Street) to the Mission District (888 Valencia Street, extant) in 1981. Although its primary identity was as a center for leftist politics, the Modern Times collective included many gay men and lesbians as members, and it supported lesbian-feminist writers and causes.

In addition to catering to LGBTQ residents through commercial businesses, the Mission District became a queer cultural and community center. This was celebrated beginning in 1977 when the first Women’s Street Fair took place along Valencia Street, the heart of the lesbian community in the Mission District. And by 1979, The Women’s Building at 3543 18th Street (extant, S.F. Landmark No. 178) had opened as the first women-owned and women-operated community center in the U.S.⁹⁷⁸ (See “Organizing” for more on The Women’s Building.)

972 “Artemis Adopts Open-Door Policy,” *Noe Valley Voice*, v. V n. 6 (August 1981): 1. By 1981, rising operating costs led Lewenstein to open the café to men.

973 Amelia’s file, Ephemera Businesses Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

974 Mary Midgett described meeting other African American lesbians for the first time at Amelia’s. Heather Cassell, “Maud’s and Amelia’s Made Space for Women,” *Bay Area Reporter*, August 5, 2014 <http://www.bartabsf.com/2010/11/barchive-come-as-you-are/>.

975 Evie Blackwood, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 18, 2014.

976 Deb Trapani, interviewed by Donna Graves at Maud’s Reunion, June 26, 2013.

977 Meredith May, “Pioneer Female DJ Page Hodel Has Marched to Her Own Beat,” *San Francisco Chronicle* March 22, 2014.

978 “History of The Women’s Building,” accessed November 15, 2013, [http://www.womensbuilding.org/The Women’s Building/index.php/about-us/history](http://www.womensbuilding.org/The%20Women’s%20Building/index.php/about-us/history).

In addition to founding and patronizing the many women's spaces in the Mission District, lesbians formed a cohesive commercial, cultural and residential lesbian enclave—prompting historian John D'Emilio to write in 1981, "San Francisco is one of the very few cities where lesbians are residentially concentrated enough to be visible."⁹⁷⁹

EVOLUTION AND DECLINE OF BAR-BASED COMMUNITIES, 1960 TO 1980S

Bars continued to be an important social space and economic component of LGBTQ life throughout the 1960s to 1980s. As queer people gained a more secure purchase on public life through organizing and activism and through changes in laws and police practices, the number of bars and nightclubs that catered to them proliferated. The increasing quantity and variety of gay bars offered a major attraction to tourists and residents.

Owners and patrons of bars and nightclubs created spaces that reflected a variety of sexual interests and stylistic choices. In the 1960s, go-go dancers performed at clubs like the Capri (1326 Grant Street) in North Beach and drag queens performed at the Frolic Room (141 Mason Street) and the Gilded Cage (126 Ellis Street) in the Tenderloin. Drag performances were the rage beginning in the 1970s. Long-time drag performer Vicki Marlene recalls that drag was so popular in the 1970s that "every little bar wanted to put a show in, everything from black drag, biker drag, Western drag."⁹⁸⁰ Drag king shows featuring women impersonating men were sometimes held at lesbian bars such as the Ebbtide (853 Valencia Street) in the Mission District in the 1960s and later at A Little More (702 15th Street, extant) in the South of Market area.⁹⁸¹ During the 1970s, gay hippies hung out at the Eagle Creek Saloon (1884 Market Street, extant), the Rainbow Cattle Company (199 Valencia Street), and the Stud (1535 Folsom Street, extant).⁹⁸²

By the mid-1970s, the gay disco dance scene was thriving in San Francisco at such establishments as the Trocadero Transfer (520 Fourth Street, extant), the End-Up (401 Sixth Street, extant) in the South of Market area, Buzzby's (1436 Polk Street), and the Mind Shaft (2140 Market Street, extant), which had an elevated gazebo in the middle of the dance floor.⁹⁸³ Allan Bérubé describes the euphoria of dancing at the Mind Shaft:

Those moments when you smoke a joint, and there'd be all these lights and fans in this wonderful disco music, where you felt this beat that really united you, I had this kind of spiritual moment revision where I said, "this is what it could be like." You could see what it could be like, and be inside it, and feel it, if we were totally free.⁹⁸⁴

During the same period, bars became sites of intense discrimination within queer communities, as lesbians, queer people of color, and transgender individuals were often not welcome in mainstream gay bars. Many bars weeded out unwanted customers by demanding multiple forms of identification. Transgender women and queers of color were especially vulnerable. Randy Burns,

979 D'Emilio, "Gay Politics, Gay Community," 75.

980 Vicki Marlene in documentary film, *Forever's Gonna Start Tonight*, Michelle Lawler director (2009).

981 Garber, "Valencia's First Gay Bars," 5-6. A Little More folder, Business Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

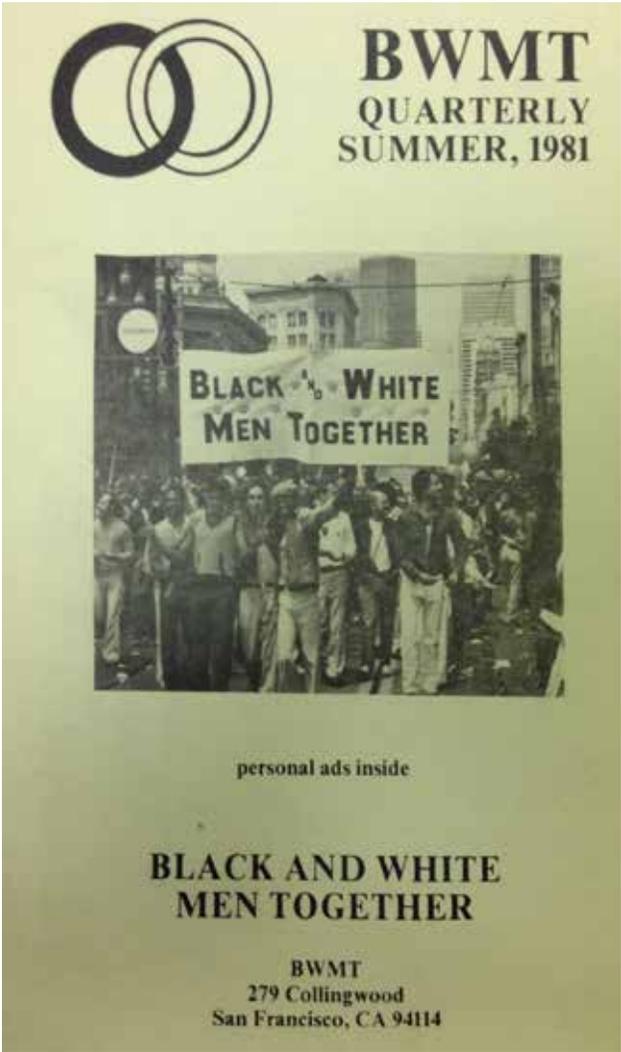
982 Garber, "Valencia's First Gay Bars," 5-6.

983 The space that housed the Mind Shaft from 1972 to 1977 was occupied by a succession of dance clubs in the following years that, except for a brief period, continued to cater to LGBT clientele. These dance clubs included Alfie's, the Prism, 2140 Market, the Industrial Dance Company, High Chaparral, and the Corral. Similarly, 177 Townsend Street was the home of a succession of dance halls beginning around 1989 named Club Townsend, Skirts, Thunderdome, Pleasuredome, and Club Universe. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

984 Joshua Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester: The Legend, The Music, The 70s in San Francisco* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2005), 110.



LEFT: Anti-Racism Protest on Castro Street, 1980



RIGHT: Black and White Men Together newsletter, 1981
(Both courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

co-founder of Gay American Indians, recalled that Castro area bars rejected Bureau of Indian Affairs tribal enrollment cards as ID, so he and his friends generally frequented a few welcoming bars in the Tenderloin and South of Market. In time they realized that gaining entry as a large group after GAI meetings opened previously closed doors: "They weren't going to card a group of fifteen to twenty people," he recalled.⁹⁸⁵ Bart Casimir, an African American gay man was harassed at the Midnight Sun: "People couldn't figure out what ethnicity I was, but some of the gay bars figured it out and the Midnight Sun bartenders wouldn't serve me."⁹⁸⁶ In 1980, Randy Kikukawa and the short-lived Gay Asian Information Network organized a protest after being discriminated against at a gay bar called Castro Station (456 Castro Street, extant). The protest was a "test case with lots of press on hand. It was about putting all gay establishments on notice, not just Castro Station."⁹⁸⁷

The gay liberation organization Black and White Men Together conducted a survey of racism in gay bars in New York and San Francisco and determined that "gay bars in San Francisco are highly segregated in terms of employment and patronage."⁹⁸⁸ Michael J. Smith describes San Francisco's gay bar scene in the early 1980s:

Everything is neatly segregated and commercialized. It's like a supermarket. Black and White men interested in each other meet at The Pendulum [4146 18th Street, extant] or The Ambush [1351 Harrison Street, extant]. Blacks interested in Black scooted Different Strokes [1550 Polk Street]. Latins? Esta Noche [3079 16th Street, extant]. Asians? The End-up [401 Sixth Street, extant]. There's an assigned place for everybody and everything. If none of it fits your requirements, you don't exist. If you make the mistake of going where you don't fit in, you're studiously ignored.⁹⁸⁹

Racial discrimination continued through the 1990s. In 1990, activists picketed Midnight Sun after charges of racism and sexism toward patrons were made public.⁹⁹⁰ Discrimination within the lesbian community was mixed. African American lesbian activist Gwen Craig recalls, "you never heard of any discrimination on the basis of color in women's bars."⁹⁹¹ However, community historian Julie Gonzales remembers being turned away from a small lesbian bar on Ocean Avenue in the Sunset district because a woman in her group was African American.⁹⁹²

Despite the many cases of discrimination within the queer communities in the 1960s to 1980s, a number of gay and lesbian bars were known for welcoming a mixed clientele or known for catering to queers of color. The Trapp (72 Eddy Street) in the Tenderloin was patronized by "Blacks, whites, old guys and young ones, hustlers and liberated gays."⁹⁹³ Leonarda's (16 Leland Avenue) in Visitacion Valley and the Highlander (395 Vermont Street) on Potrero Hill were welcoming to African American lesbians.⁹⁹⁴ A dance club called A Little More (702 15th Street) was popular with

985 Randy Burns, interviewed by Donna Graves, January 4, 2016. Burns recalled that GAI members would frequent a circuit of Tenderloin bars including Peter Pan's (33 Mason Street), the Landmark (45 Turk Street), the Ram's Head (117 Taylor Street), Queen Mary's (133 Turk Street) and the Blue and Gold (136 Turk Street).

986 Bart Casimir, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 5, 2014.

987 Randy Kikukawa, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014.

988 "Black and White Men Charge Ghetto Racism," *The Advocate* May 1982: 19.

989 Michael J. Smith ed., *Black Men/White Men: A Gay Anthology* (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1983), 60.

990 Midnight Sun file, Businesses Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

991 Gwen Craig in *Last Call at Maud's* (1993).

992 Julie Gonzales, interviewed by Donna Graves at Maud's Reunion, June 29, 2013. Research for this report has not established the name and address of this bar.

993 1976 Spartacus Gay Guide quoted in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database

994 Sharon Tracy, interviewed by Nan Alamilla Boyd, October 9, 1991, Wide Open Town Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

African American, Latina, and Asian/Pacific Islander lesbians.⁹⁹⁵ Colors, a roving dance party organized by and for lesbians of color, was held at several San Francisco locations, including Amelia's, the American Indian Center (225 Valencia Street, extant), and Scooter's/Raggs (22 Fourth Street).⁹⁹⁶ Clementina's/Baybrick Inn (1118 Folsom Street), in South of Market, was very welcoming to lesbians of color.

The drinking and casual sex associated with bars became less appealing for many during the 1980s due to the emergence of AIDS and a greater recognition of the negative impacts of alcoholism. Lesbian and gay chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous and other recovery groups formed as early as the 1960s; one account traces the origins of a local gay chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to a 1968 meeting at an Episcopal church. In the following decade, a growing number of churches began housing gay and lesbian AA chapters, reportedly due to the influence of clergy affiliated with the homophile organization Council on Religion and the Homosexual.⁹⁹⁷ San Francisco writer Jean Swallow published *Out From Under*, the first book by and about lesbians recovering from substance abuse, in 1983.⁹⁹⁸ In 1976, the first annual gay and lesbian AA conference, Living Sober, was held at San Francisco State University's Student Union (1650 Holloway Ave, extant). By the late 1980s, the annual Living Sober conferences were drawing several thousand people and had moved to the Civic Center auditorium (99 Grove Street, extant).⁹⁹⁹ As a response to the growing number of LGBTQ people seeking alternatives to bars, non-alcoholic social establishments opened in the 1980s, including Artemis Café on Valencia Street and The Castro Country Club (4058 18th Street, extant), which was founded as a "clean and sober gathering place" in 1983 and is still in operation.¹⁰⁰⁰

VII. GAY LIBERATION, PRIDE, AND POLITICS (1960S TO 1990S)

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualizing gay rights, and organizing for them, evolved and became more complex in the 1960s to the 1980s. Homophile activists had worked on the premise that rights would be gained by arguing that sexual behavior was a private matter and only one small part of their identity; in all other ways they were the same as straight people—and should therefore be equal to them. Gay liberationists believed that incorporating homosexuality into public behavior and discussion of identity was important and could transform society in coalition with other progressive movements. Historian Elizabeth Armstrong notes the shift from liberation to gay pride as the beginnings of the "gay identity movement" that focused on freedom of individual expression.¹⁰⁰¹

Both gay liberation and gay pride or gay identity movements assumed the central importance of coming out publicly as gay or lesbian. "Coming out of the closet was incorporated into the basic assumptions of what it meant to be gay," write historians John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman. Coming out also meant "the adoption of an identity in which the erotic played a central role. Sexuality became emblematic of the person, not as an imposed medical label connoting deviance,

995 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

996 *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent*, v. 1 n.2 (March 1989): 2. *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v.1 n.7 (August 1989):18. *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent*, v.2 n.3 (June 1990): 22.

997 Audrey Borden, *The History of Gay People in Alcoholics Anonymous: From the Beginning* (Routledge, 2007), 133-34, 137. The church is described as on Fell Street, most likely the Church of Advent of Christ the King at 261 Fell Street. The narrator states that a chapter made up of gays and lesbians began meeting at 330 Grove Street in late 1968.

998 San Francisco Public Library James Hormel Center blog, <http://queerestlibraryever.blogspot.com/2014/07/a-bit-about-abbott.html>.

999 Western Roundup Living Sober webpage, accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.livingsober.org/archives.html>. *Bay Area Career Women Newsletter* April May 1988, 6.

1000 Castro Country Club website, accessed January 15, 2015, http://castrocountryclub.org/site/?page_id=55.

1001 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 3.

but as a form of self-affirmation. No longer merely something you did in bed, sex served to define a mode of living, both private and public, that encompassed a wide range of activities and relationships.”¹⁰⁰²

FROM HOMOPHILES TO GAY LIBERATION

Homophiles in the Streets

Homophile organizers began to employ more assertive tactics in the 1960s that reflected those of other protest movements. San Francisco homophile groups organized one of their first public protests on Armed Forces Day in May 1966 at the plaza in front of the Federal Building (450 Golden Gate Avenue, extant) to protest the exclusion and dishonorable discharge of homosexuals from military service. The Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis, the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, and the Society for Individual Rights notified the San Francisco Police Department of their plans and distributed more than 20,000 leaflets to promote and explain the protest. The gathering drew more than 40 protestors and several hundred onlookers—the largest gay rights demonstration up to this point in San Francisco.¹⁰⁰³ The crowd listened to speakers such as Glide Memorial Church’s Rev. Cecil Williams, who announced, “There is a homosexual revolution here and across the land.” The protest received extensive local print and television coverage, as well as articles in *The New York Times* and *Newsweek*.¹⁰⁰⁴ Later that year, the same group of organizations cooperated to protest cancellation of a homophile booth they had proposed for the California State Fair in Sacramento. In September 1967, homophile groups again came together to lodge a complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission, asking for a separate listing under “homophile” in the Yellow Pages; this request was not granted until 1971.¹⁰⁰⁵

In 1966, the Society for Individual Rights established what is commonly described as the nation’s first gay community center at 83 Sixth Street (SIR is described in detail in *Homophile Movements: 1950s to 1960s*).¹⁰⁰⁶ By the late 1960s, the organization had 900 members, had created an educational program on sexually transmitted diseases, sponsored candidate nights, and ran the Sirporium, a second-hand clothing store in Hayes Valley.¹⁰⁰⁷ Yet as historians Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk explain, within a few years, SIR’s campaign to methodically win gay rights was overshadowed by more militant gay liberation groups. These new groups enlisted a younger generation and drew from “student unrest, the tactics of the civil rights struggle and black militancy, labor organizing, social critiques rooted in the antiwar movement, the second wave of feminism, and Marxist political analysis....”¹⁰⁰⁸ They also parted from the assimilationist stance of earlier gay rights groups by, as historian George Chauncey describes, “publicly affirming, celebrating, and even cultivating homosexual difference.”¹⁰⁰⁹

The Beginnings of Gay Liberation

Historian Elizabeth Armstrong describes the birth of gay liberation as the encounter between homophile organizing and the New Left, and its peak as the years 1969 to 1971. Armstrong

1002 John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012, third edition), 323.

1003 Sides, *Erotic City*, 88.

1004 Ibid.

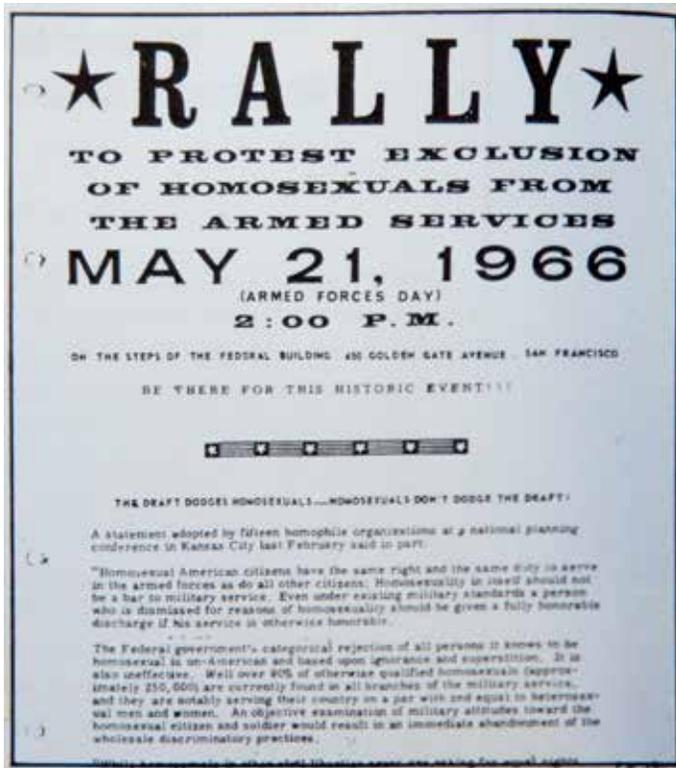
1005 Mark Thompson, ed., *Long Road to Freedom: The Advocate History of The Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 5.

1006 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 46.

1007 Salvatore J. Licata and Robert P. Petersen, *Historical Perspectives on Homosexuality* (New York: Haworth Press, 1981), 174.

1008 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 53.

1009 George Chauncey, *Why Marriage?: The History Shaping Today’s Debate over Gay Equality* (Basic Books, 2004), 29.



LEFT: Flyer announcing Armed Forces Day Protest at the Federal Building in San Francisco, 1966 (From *Coming Out Under Fire*, 1994)

RIGHT: Del Martin speaking at the rally (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

delineates the “redistributive politics” of more radical gay groups who saw their fate linked to other oppressed groups and viewed sexual liberation “as merely one aspect of a broader social transformation.”¹⁰¹⁰ Bay Area activist Carl Wittman’s “A Gay Manifesto,” published in 1970, was an influential and widely distributed declaration of these views. Wittman describes San Francisco as “a refugee camp for homosexuals. We have fled here from every part of the nation, and like refugees elsewhere, we came not because it is so great here, but because it was so bad where they are.”¹⁰¹¹ Wittman decried the “gay ghetto[s]” created by gay bars, and called for recognizing male chauvinism and racism among gay men, as well as recognition of the different experiences and perspectives of lesbians, bisexuals, drag queens, and others.

Wittman’s points were echoed by the keynote speaker at the August 1970 National Gay Liberation Front Student Conference held at the SIR Community Center. San Francisco militant Charles P. Thorpe told fellow students:

Gay liberation has been made up mostly of young gays, because, as in the rest of society, it is young gays, as it is young blacks or young white radicals, it is the young that are aware and aware is synonymous with desperate. That means a new culture, a new society, and a new education. This has scared the don’t-rock-the-boat older gays.¹⁰¹²

The Gay Liberation Book, a pioneering anthology published by San Francisco-based *Ramparts* in 1973, added that “gay liberation is a radical movement that advocates a radical change in society—its social structures, power structures, its racism and sexual dogmas. We have a commitment not just to homosexual liberation but to total human liberation.”¹⁰¹³

Younger gay people started shifting the terms and tactics of the movement for gay rights, although sometimes their campaigns were supported by older members of SIR and the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Protests by Vanguard (described in the next section), CRH, and Compton’s Cafeteria patrons illustrated a new era of gay radicalism that preceded the now far better-known events at New York’s Stonewall Inn of June 1969, which were followed by the founding of the Gay Liberation Front there. As Elizabeth Armstrong and others note, Stonewall did not catalyze the gay liberation movement in San Francisco, “which had been underway for at least two months, perhaps considerably longer. The events surrounding the Stonewall Inn raid were barely acknowledged in San Francisco’s homosexual press in 1969.”¹⁰¹⁴ However, with San Francisco’s first gay rights march in June 1970, which ran down Polk Street from Aquatic Park to City Hall, locals recalled the Stonewall Riots. The next day, the city’s first “gay-in” was held at Speedway Meadows in Golden Gate Park.¹⁰¹⁵

The following paragraphs describe some of the most active gay liberation organizations in San Francisco, but the list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Further research on early gay liberation organizations and their activities in San Francisco is warranted; as Armstrong writes, “many gay liberation organizations [were] ephemeral, short-lived, and hard to document.”¹⁰¹⁶

1010 Armstrong *Forging Gay Identities*, 2.

1011 Carl Wittman, “A Gay Manifesto” in Karla Jay and Allen Young, eds., *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation* (New York: Douglas Book Corp, 1972), 332-42.

1012 Charles Thorp (sic), “Identity, Leadership and Violence” in *Out of the Closets*, 352. SIR center is identified as location in finding aid for Liberation Front’s papers.

1013 Tommi Aviccoli Mecca, ed., *Smash the Church, Smash the State! The Early Years of Gay Liberation* (City Lights Books, San Francisco 2009), xi.

1014 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 62.

1015 The “Human Be-in” at Golden Gate Park of January 1967 presumably inspired the “Gay-in” gathering.

1016 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 20, 56, 79.

Vanguard

Although only active from 1966 to 1969, the San Francisco organization Vanguard is described by several historians as prefiguring subsequent stages of the gay rights movement.¹⁰¹⁷ Organized by Tenderloin youth, Vanguard drew in young gay men, hustlers and “hair fairies” (men who acted and dressed in a manner drawing on a mix of current feminine and masculine styles). The organization soon came under the umbrella of Glide Memorial Church’s outreach to Tenderloin youth, which recognized that young gay residents faced overwhelming challenges despite the safety in numbers and cheap hotel rooms the neighborhood offered.¹⁰¹⁸ As Vanguard member Joel Roberts remembers, the price of coming out for many young people was being “disinherited.... You no longer had any family. So, in a way, the street was the only place to go. There was no place and middle-class gays were in the closet, they weren’t going to help us. We were really on our own.”¹⁰¹⁹

With additional support from the Society for Individual Rights and Daughters of Bilitis, Vanguard members organized dances and holiday dinners and self-published a journal filled with art, poetry, advice, and political analysis of larger events such as the Vietnam War and of their own situation in San Francisco.¹⁰²⁰ “We of the Central City are going to have to start fighting...exploitation by slum landlords, gouging store owners, drug dealers, and men who patronize young hustlers but won’t hire them for work.”¹⁰²¹ Vanguard member Adrian Ravarou later recalled “many of the street people felt that they had nothing to lose, so why not stand up for their rights?”¹⁰²²

In the fall of 1966, Vanguard organized a “sweep-in” to remove litter from the Meat Rack, a section of Market Street where “drug addicts, pill heads, teenage hustlers, lesbians and homosexuals” made their homes, but who were “often the object of police harassment.”¹⁰²³ Using brooms lent by the City, about forty youth swept the blocks between Powell and Turk Streets. “We’re considered trash by the rest of society,” Vanguard’s president Jean-Paul Marat stated, “and we wanted to show the rest of society that we want to work and can work.”¹⁰²⁴

Vanguard representatives’ experience at a planning meeting of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations illustrated the difference in generational perspectives. Reporting “this conference was a waste of time and money,” Vanguard’s writer notes, however, that “Vanguard made quite an impression on the other delegates,” whose organizations reportedly planned to publish feature articles on the youth group.¹⁰²⁵

Committee for Homosexual Freedom

While listening to Martin Luther King Jr. speak about the civil rights movement on a radio broadcast in early 1969, Leo Laurence had an epiphany: “If I replace the word ‘black’ with the

1017 Licata and Peterson, *Historical Perspectives on Homosexuality*, 175.

1018 Adrian Ravarou, a young adult co-founder of Vanguard, stated that the organization’s first meetings were held at the El Rosa Hotel on Turk Street. Personal communication between Adrian Ravarou and Donna Graves, November 8, 2015.

1019 Oral Histories of the original Vanguard members were conducted by Joey Plaster as part of the public history project Vanguard Revisited in 2010, <http://vanguardrevisited.blogspot.com>, accessed September 8, 2014.

1020 Vanguard’s first issue lists resources including Missions for meals, a barber college for free hair cuts and SF Suicide Prevention *Vanguard* vol. 1 (1966): 8.

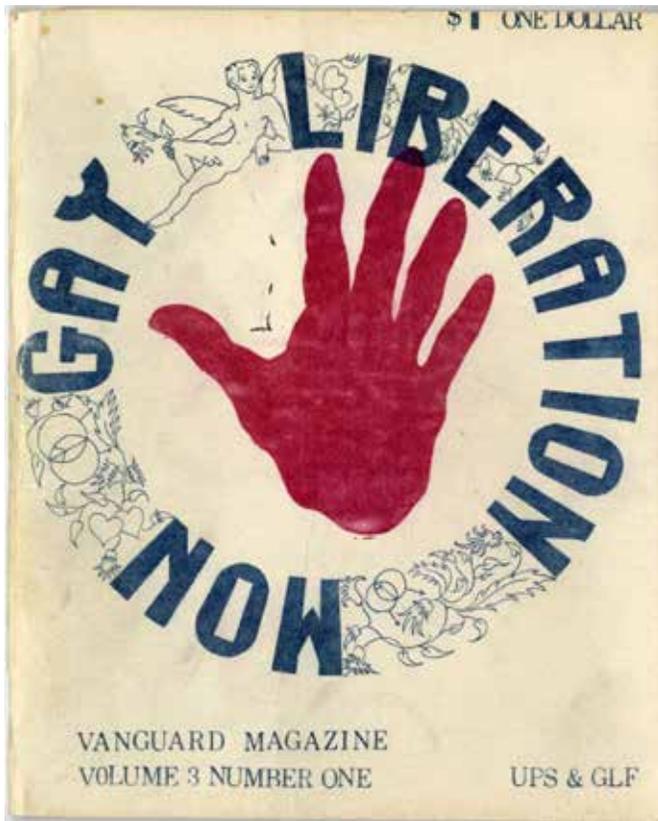
1021 Jean-Paul Marat, “Exploitation,” *Vanguard* vol. 1, no. 1 (1966): 3. Mailing address listed as 330 Ellis Street, Glide Memorial Church. By vol. 1, no.7, the address for subscriptions is listed as 203 Clayton Street.

1022 Oral histories from Vanguard Revisited <http://vanguardrevisited.blogspot.com>, accessed September 8, 2014.

1023 “Sweep-in,” *Vanguard* vol. 1, no 2, (October 1966): 4. The article says that the “sweep-in” was covered by local news and picked up by AP and UPI.

1024 Marat, “Exploitation,” 3.

1025 “National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations,” *Vanguard* vol. 1, no.2, (1966):10. Article says the event was held at Bellvue Hotel (501 Geary Street).



LEFT: First copy of Vanguard Magazine, 1966 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BELOW: 1966 Vanguard "sweep-in" on Market Street (Courtesy Tenderloin Museum)



word 'gay,' we would have a gay revolution."¹⁰²⁶ Laurence soon helped to found the Committee for Homosexual Freedom in 1969; based on its ideology and tactics, many historians identify the group as the first gay liberation organization in the U.S. Laurence, had been recently elected editor of the SIR-published magazine, *Vector*. Frustrated by what he perceived as the slow pace of change by homophile organizations, he wrote a scathing editorial titled "Gay Revolution" in the April 1969 issue of *Vector*:

Homosexual organizations on the West Coast are doing very little to spark the homosexual revolution of '69. Timid leaders with enormous ego trips, middle-class bigotry and racism, and too many middle-aged uptight conservatives are hurting almost every major homosexual organization on the West Coast and probably throughout the nation.¹⁰²⁷

The *Berkeley Barb* ran a similar piece by Laurence, accompanied, without permission, by a photograph of Laurence and his lover, Gayle Whittington, in a shirtless embrace. Whittington's employer, the States Steamship Lines in San Francisco, fired him almost immediately. Whittington and Laurence formed the new Committee for Homosexual Freedom, which sprang into action. The organization was headquartered in an office at 148 Leavenworth Street (extant) in the Tenderloin.¹⁰²⁸ Historian Josh Sides notes that, "unlike the Armed Forces Day protesters, who had picketed on a weekend, the CHF began daily picketing at lunch time for maximum visibility" at the Steamship Lines offices (320 California Street, not extant) in the Financial District. The ongoing protest was successful in drawing more participants and media attention, and Whittington later attributed the protest's success to the fact that CHF "accept[ed] everyone," including the drag queens and "gender fuckers"--groups discouraged by older organizations such as SIR.¹⁰²⁹

Bay Area Gay Liberation

Although some historians suggest that the flowering of gay liberation was over by the early 1970s, San Francisco's Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL), 1975 to 1978, continued a radical agenda for gay rights. BAGL's goals were "based on a multi-issue critique of capitalism and the state" according to historian Christina Hanhardt.¹⁰³⁰ Organizational meetings were held at the SIR Center and at the Gay Community Centers that developed in San Francisco at 32 Page Street (extant) and later at 330 Grove Street (not extant).¹⁰³¹ BAGL activities included a protest supporting the Gay Teachers Coalition; another against police repression of White Panthers on Polk Street; and another at the Club Baths (201 Eighth Street) against the practice of turning away customers who were effeminate, elderly or African American. Equally committed to women's issues, BAGL hosted lectures about Rosie the Riveter and women's history, and a film screening and discussion on "rape culture." Within a year, BAGL split into two factions, Hanhardt reports, with the Progressive Caucus continuing to align themselves with other progressive social movements, including farmworkers,

1026 Sides, *Erotic City*, 92.

1027 Ibid.

1028 CHF address from Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

1029 According to Sides, CHF expanded "the traditional locale of homophile politics in San Francisco by holding meetings at Cabaret, a club located at 260 Valencia in the Mission district." Josh Sides, *Erotic City*, 93-95.

1030 Christina B. Hanhardt, "Butterflies, Whistles and Fists: Gay Safe Streets Patrols and the New Gay Ghetto, 1976-1981," *Radical History Review* (Winter 2008): 65.

1031 Bay Area Gay Liberation file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Christina B. Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2013), 98.

labor unions, housing rights and Chilean resistance.¹⁰³² The other group, Gay Action, focused more on making San Francisco's streets safe for queer people.¹⁰³³

New Social Support Networks

"By the mid-1970s," writes historian John D'Emilio, "San Francisco had become, in comparison with the rest of the country, a liberated zone for lesbians and gay men. It had the largest number and widest variety of organizations and institutions."¹⁰³⁴ A *San Francisco Survival Manual* published about 1975 illustrates the city's extensive LGBTQ social support network and the number of newcomers taking advantage of it. Produced by Page Street Survival House, SIR, and *Vector*, the manual announced its purpose:

Many times as part of our lifestyle we pick up and relocate ourselves, often with just the clothes on our backs to a new place and a new beginning.... Most of the organizations listed are operated by volunteer workers who care about people and try to make things a little easier for you, the newcomer, and to supply a readily available access of information that may prove valuable to you, the residents of San Francisco and the Bay Area.¹⁰³⁵

Examples of organizations listed in the *Survival Manual* include the Helping Hands Center (225 Turk Street) and the Page Street Survival House (934 Page Street), a source for drug help, free clothes, legal help, and a "crash pad." The Society for Individual Rights and Neighborhood Legal Assistance (532 Natoma Street) offered support for problems with the military or the draft.

A section in the manual titled "Women's Survival" lists the Women's Skill Center (51 Waller Street) as a place to learn mechanics, art, music, carpentry, self-defense, and more. Six sources are listed under counseling, including the Center for Special Problems, the Tenderloin Clinic (200 Golden Gate Avenue), and Women for Women (4220 California Street). The Women's Switchboard is listed (without address) for rap groups, legal aid, babysitters, rentals, doctors, and other activities, adding, "Call us with any kind of problem; will try to help." Under legal matters, the Bay Area Women's Jail Coalition (558 Capp Street) and Women's Litigation Unit of San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance (1095 Market Street) offered counsel on sexual discrimination, lesbian mothers' defense, and custody issues.¹⁰³⁶

1032 Hanhardt, "Butterflies, Whistles and Fists," 65. Randy Alfred, "Resurgence of Militant Activism," *The Advocate*, January 14, 1976 says BAGL founded in January 1975. BAGL Newsletters in the collection of The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society end in late 1978.

1033 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 98.

1034 John D'Emilio, "Gay Politics, Gay Community," in John D'Emilio, ed., *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 87.

1035 "San Francisco Survival Manual" c. 1975, Gay Health Project Papers, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

1036 Ibid.



LEFT: Protest at State Steamship Lines offices, 320 California Street, May 1969 (Courtesy Gale Chester Whittington)



RIGHT: Flyer for BAGL party at the 32 Page Street Gay Community Center (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

ORGANIZING

Organizing for Health

Homophile Organizations

As part of their civil rights agenda, homophile organizations sought to overturn persistent views of homosexuality as pathological in the medical and psychiatric fields. The first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Mental Disorders*, published in 1952, included homosexuality among the sociopathic personality disturbances. Prominent San Francisco physician Tom Waddell recalled that his medical training taught homosexuality “as a perversion, as something grossly abnormal.... There was a profound ignorance of gay people. Doctors saw them as perverts who in turn had an STD.... They were no longer clean.”¹⁰³⁷

Homophile activists and their allies campaigned to raise understanding of gay men and lesbians among medical doctors and mental health professionals. Glide Memorial Church’s Rev. Edward Hansen led a group of psychiatrists and psychologists from the Langley Porter Clinic and San Francisco General Hospital on a tour through the Tenderloin in the mid-1960s to discuss anti-homosexual discrimination.¹⁰³⁸ Challenges such as these from homophile activists and their sympathizers led to the 1968 reclassification of homosexuality by the American Psychiatric Association to rank it with other “nonpsychotic mental disorders” such as fetishism, pedophilia, transvestism, sadism and masochism.¹⁰³⁹

That year, San Francisco hosted the annual meeting of the American Medical Association, which included a speech given by Charles Socarides, author of *The Overt Homosexual*. Socarides described homosexuality as “a dread dysfunction, malignant in character, which has risen to epidemic proportions” and offered a proposal for the establishment of a network of government-sponsored “sexual rehabilitation centers.”¹⁰⁴⁰ Gay and lesbian activists, already having distributed thousands of leaflets to participants as they arrived, called a press conference to rebut Socarides’ theories. The Council on Religion and the Homosexual joined members of the Daughters of Bilitis and Society for Individual Rights in this effort; their position was featured prominently in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner*.¹⁰⁴¹ Two years later gay rights activists disrupted panels on homosexuality at the annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association, held in San Francisco at the Civic Auditorium (99 Grove Street).¹⁰⁴² In 1973, the Board of the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from its official list of mental diseases.¹⁰⁴³

Early Community Health and Clinics

Even as the battle for gay rights was being waged with national medical and psychiatric organizations, local perspectives on mental health and homosexuality were being transformed. Sponsored by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the Center for Special Problems (2107 Van Ness Avenue, extant) was opened by Dr. Joel Fort in 1965. The center was a direct result of the work of homophile activists and the rising tide of homosexual and transgender militancy

1037 Waddell is quoted in Frank M. Robinson, “Castro Street, Is that Great Street” in Leyland, ed., *Out in the Castro*, 49.

1038 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 42.

1039 Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry*, 39-40.

1040 Edward Alwood, *Straight News: Gays, Lesbians, and the News Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 75. Location for the Meeting of the American Medical Association was not identified in the course of this research.

1041 Ibid.

1042 One protestor describes meeting with a small group of gay lib activists to disrupt the American Psychiatric Association meeting at “a Civic Center convention hall.” Mark Freeman, “Coming Out as a Reluctant Activist in a Gay Maoist Cell who Mostly Just Wanted to Get Laid,” in Avicelli Mecca, ed., *Smash the Church, Smash the State!*, 88.

1043 Although it would be fair to say this was not without controversy among the directors and membership as described by Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (Princeton University Press, 1987), *passim*.

in the Tenderloin; it was developed to “provide outpatient treatment, education and research on a number of major (and growing) social and health problems,” including alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and so-called sexual deviants.¹⁰⁴⁴ While its name implied a pathological approach to addressing homosexuality, the center was an important progressive force for homosexual, bisexual and transgender integration into mainstream society; it reportedly hired the first openly gay city employee.¹⁰⁴⁵ Later, the center created the Sexual Minority Youth Service, a drop-in employment center to help Tenderloin gay, bisexual, and transgender youth find jobs outside the sex industry.¹⁰⁴⁶

Dr. Fort was terminated from the Center for Special Problems after just a few years for being what he characterized as “too independent,” but the center continued to operate for several decades. In 1967, Fort opened a private nonprofit clinic called Fort Help at 169 Eleventh Street (extant).

In 1975, the San Francisco Department of Public Health opened a Gay Health Project clinic at 250 Fourth Street (threatened with demolition) in the South of Market area, using funding from a one-year federal grant. The mission was to educate San Francisco’s gay community more effectively about sexually transmitted diseases, which were becoming endemic. Staffed by openly gay men, the project offered educational materials and referrals for specialized care and conducted STD testing at the clinic and various bathhouses.¹⁰⁴⁷

Pat Norman was the first openly gay or lesbian employee of the San Francisco Department of Public Health and later became its first formal liaison to the gay and lesbian community. In 1978, she helped initiate a mandated training workshop titled “Gay Male, Lesbian and Bisexual Lifestyles” for 400 City employees; the training was conducted by staff from the National Sex Forum (540 Powell Street, extant). According to homophile activists Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, African American, Latino and Asian American social workers and therapists, “who had thought homosexuality was only a white or Anglo phenomenon, had to face and respond to lesbians and gay men of their own race and national origin.”¹⁰⁴⁸

By 1979, the San Francisco Department of Public Health also ran the Tenderloin Clinic at 251 Hyde Street (extant), which provided services to gay San Franciscans and was staffed by openly gay employees as well as others “trained and prepared to relate to gays simply as people.”¹⁰⁴⁹ The Tenderloin Clinic was one of five programs run by Urban Mental Health, a private mental health organization offering housing, treatment, and outreach. After receiving pressure from a coalition of gay psychiatric professionals and consumers known as the Daffodil Alliance, the Department of Public Health increased the size and scope of the Tenderloin Clinic to encompass six psychiatrists, a psychologist, two social workers, eight counselors, and one psychiatric technician. The *Tenderloin Times* reported that “volunteers, students and interns bring the total staffing for the program to more than 30.”¹⁰⁵⁰

Gay Community Clinics

Historian Catherine Batza’s work on the development of gay health clinics during the 1970s notes that these institutions grew “directly out of the radicalism of the 1960s, a national discussion on

1044 San Francisco Department of Public Health Weekly Bulletin May 23, 1966. Appendix to Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, “Joel Fort, M.D.: Public Health Pioneer, Criminologist, Reformer, Ethicist and Humanitarian,” (1997).

1045 The employee is described but not named in “Joel Fort, M.D.: Public Health Pioneer, Criminologist, Reformer, Ethicist and Humanitarian,” 47-48.

1046 Sides, *Erotic City*, 100.

1047 Gay Health Project file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1048 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 319.

1049 “The Tenderloin Clinic,” *Tenderloin Times* v. 3. n. 2 (April 1979): 2.

1050 Ibid.

healthcare and medical authority, and efforts by the state ... to provide health care services to underserved communities....”¹⁰⁵¹

Operation Concern began in 1973 as a gay counseling program at Pacific Medical Center (2323 Sacramento Street) to address the “compelling need for mental health service where gays could seek help in a comfortable and understanding atmosphere.”¹⁰⁵² Around 700 people attended a benefit for Operation Concern held at California Hall on Polk Street in July 1973, testifying to the amount of community enthusiasm for issues related to LGBTQ mental health support. By the late 1970s, the organization ran mental health programs, services for LGBTQ people and their families, and a clinical intern-training program. A drop-in program for lesbians and gays with chronic illnesses was founded in the mid-1980s at 1853 Market Street.¹⁰⁵³

Recognizing the isolation that many older gays and lesbians experienced, Operation Concern launched a program dubbed Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders (GLOE) in 1982. GLOE sponsored an Older Men’s Rap Group meeting every other Thursday afternoon at 711 Eddy Street in the Tenderloin. About twenty men gathered to discuss current events and social life. They also planned field trips to places like the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the San Francisco Zoo. “The reason why so many people come to our session,” said program coordinator Elaine Porter, “is because there is no other place older gay men can come for socialization. They are an invisible group who don’t hang out in singles bars.”¹⁰⁵⁴

Eighteenth Street Services, which provided substance abuse counseling for gays and lesbians, opened in 1976; in 1995, it merged with Operation Concern, with the combined operation renamed New Leaf.¹⁰⁵⁵ The organization disbanded in 2010.

A 1979 study of lesbian health needs by lesbian medical professionals revealed that they were far less likely to access medical care than straight women. In response, San Francisco General Hospital held a clinic once a week for lesbians, which was immediately oversubscribed. In 1980, a nonprofit clinic for lesbians began operating in the evenings out of a Department of Public Health facility in the Castro. Named in honor of activists Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, the Lyon-Martin Health Services moved to its own medical building in the Mission, and in 1991 to 1748 Market Street (extant).¹⁰⁵⁶

Organizing Among People of Color

By the late 1970s, many of San Francisco’s LGBTQ residents did not find themselves reflected in the white gay-male identity that had developed in the Castro. Coming out, the prerequisite for creating a visibly gay culture and neighborhood, did not hold the same significance for everyone, and particularly not for many LGBTQ people of color. An African American resident of San Francisco recalled that coming out was a difficult decision because she “didn’t want to be pigeon-holed,” but even more importantly because of concerns about safety and self-preservation. “As an African American woman, sole bread winner, I had a lot to lose.”¹⁰⁵⁷ While gay activists had come to view privacy about sexual identity as psychologically unhealthy and inauthentic by the 1970s, many

1051 Catherine P. Batza, *Before AIDS: Gay and Lesbian Community Health Activism in the 1970s*, Diss., University of Illinois Chicago, 2011, xi.

1052 Operation Concern brochure, Gay Health Project Papers file, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1053 *Tenderloin Times* v. 9. no. 4 (April/May 1985): 2.

1054 “Older Men’s Rap Group,” *Tenderloin Times* vol. 9 no. 4 (April/May 1985): 2.

1055 “New Leaf: Services For Our Community Closes after 35 Years,” accessed August 24, 2010 http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=221x164389.

1056 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 322. 1982 Polk’s San Francisco city directory lists Center at 2252 Fillmore Street.

1057 Marilyn H., interviewed by Shayne Watson at Open House, San Francisco, May 17, 2014.

LGBTQ people of color did not identify with the highly individualistic foundation of coming out.¹⁰⁵⁸ For them, losing ties to family and community networks was often considered too great a cost, as they faced additional barriers to employment and housing due to racism. Race and class were unavoidable dimensions to the identities of LGBTQ people of color, who often held low-paying jobs that did not allow them to survive independent of kin networks. Instead, they tried to balance their sexuality with their identities as members of families and ethnic/racial/immigrant communities where open declarations of homosexuality were often unwelcome.

In an essay from the early 1980s, *Racism from a Black Perspective*, Thom Beam notes the following:

[I]t's easy to see why San Francisco's called the gay mecca, but it's not a mecca for gay Blacks. Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago and New York ... have larger and more politically aware Black communities. I say that, because I'm Black first and gay second.¹⁰⁵⁹

LGBTQ people of color often felt they could not break with lifelong social and familial ties in their communities of origin. Gisele Pohan, a Japanese–Indonesian American lesbian who worked at Artemis Café on Valencia Street, felt that white lesbian feminists did not welcome conversations about family, but that an Asian-American feminist group she met with were open to those kinds of discussion. She described many of the women she knew in the feminist movement as cut off from their family: “I did not meet many people who were excited about getting together with their cousins, were celebrating the holidays. They were developing their own little networks. I already had mine. I did not need to reinvent the wheel.”¹⁰⁶⁰

Bay Area Gay Liberation: The Third World Caucus and Third World Gay Coalition

Gay liberation organizations like BAGL were often eager to address class, race, and gender as well as homosexual issues.¹⁰⁶¹ Around 1975, a number of BAGL members formed a Third World Caucus open to Latino, African American, Native American, and Asian American gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals:

We feel that, as nonwhite gays, we have special needs and concerns that are not being met by existing (mostly white) organizations. We are getting together to deal with racism in the gay community and anti-gay prejudices in our own communities.... We will also be sponsoring events for our members including: dances, parties, political events, education projects, etc.¹⁰⁶²

Another organization, the Third World Gay Coalition, was based at Berkeley's Pacific Growth Center but was active during the mid-1970s in San Francisco, fostering conversations among diverse people about homophobia, racism and “gay gentrification.”¹⁰⁶³

1058 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 33. Activists began to view privacy about sexual identity as inauthentic and “psychologically unhealthy” in the late 60s.

1059 Smith, ed., *Black Men/White Men: A Gay Anthology*, 57.

1060 Trinity Ordoña, *Coming in Out Together: An Ethnographic History of the Asian and Pacific Islander Queer Women's and Transgendered People's Movement of San Francisco*, Diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2000, 131.

1061 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 56.

1062 Flyer for 3rd World Gay Caucus, dated 1975 in BAGL file, Groups Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1063 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 131-133.

African American Organizing

Black Gay Caucus

In July 1976, the Gay Community Center (32 Page Street) hosted a Black Gay Conference.¹⁰⁶⁴ A few months later, a Black Gay Caucus started meeting biweekly at the center. *Lesbian Tide* described the group as “perhaps the first Bay Area organization to address the social, cultural and political concerns of black gays, both young and older alike.” The Social-Cultural Committee of the caucus announced that it would sponsor dances, rap groups, poetry recitals, drama productions, and symposiums.¹⁰⁶⁵

African American Lesbian Organizing

Singer Gwen Avery remembers how difficult it was to find other black lesbians to connect with in the Bay Area in the mid-1970s: “By 1974 I had worked my way into these white women-run establishments,” she recalled, where she met a handful of other African American lesbian artists including poet Pat Parker and singer Linda Tillery.¹⁰⁶⁶ “We would be the only few Black women who would come out to each other’s gigs. We were it! I’m just saying how it hurt and how scary it was not to see any Black women.” Activist Mary Midgett, who moved to the Bay Area in the mid-1970s, recalls “there were no African American lesbians in San Francisco.”¹⁰⁶⁷ She eventually found the popular Valencia Street lesbian bar Amelia’s, where she “hooked up with the black community.”

The first conference of African American lesbians, “Becoming Visible,” was organized in 1980 at The Women’s Building. (More information on organizing among lesbians of color appears under the heading “Lesbian Organizing.”)

Black and White Men Together

One of the longest-lasting gay groups focused on race began in 1980 as Black and White Men Together (BWMT). Founder Michael Smith described BWMT’s origins as “an intuitive decision. I stood on the corner of Castro and 18th, looked around at all those bars, and thought to myself, ‘There’s got to be a better way.’ So I ran an ad in *The Advocate*, and that’s where it began.”¹⁰⁶⁸ Long-time African American activist Bart Casimir remembers that at the 1980 Gay Freedom Day parade in San Francisco, a kiss planted on his lips and a flyer thrust into his hands by leader Reggie Williams invited him to the first BWMT meeting.¹⁰⁶⁹ The gathering was held at Smith’s home at 279 Collinwood Street (extant) in the Castro, which became the group’s longtime base.

BWMT’s mission was to provide a social, consciousness-raising, and support group for gay men interested in interracial relationships. An informal newsletter led to formation of BWMT groups in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, and New York. One year later Smith reported that there were thirty groups, and BWMT held its first convention in San Francisco.¹⁰⁷⁰ The organization invited people to join them for a party at First Unitarian Church (1187 Franklin Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 40) after the 1981 Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day parade, proclaiming that everyone is welcome,

1064 Flyer for Black Gay Conference, 32 Page Street file, Groups Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1065 “Black Gays Reach Out,” *Lesbian Tide* v. 6, no. 5 (March/April 1977): 20.

1066 “An interview with ‘Sugar Mama,’” *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v. 2, no. 6.

1067 Heather Cassell, “Black Lesbians Recall their Sapphic History,” *Bay Area Reporter*, December 7, 2009.

1068 Smith, *Black Men/White Men: A Gay Anthology*, 192.

1069 Bart Casimir, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 5, 2014.

1070 Black and White Men Together file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Research for this report did not uncover the location for the conference.

“especially men and women interested in interracial relationships” and “announcing the formation of a women’s inter-racial social/support group.”¹⁰⁷¹

In addition to supporting interracial relationships, BWMT worked to bring awareness of racism within the gay community. In 1982 and 1983, the organization surveyed employment practices in gay bars and found pervasive discrimination against people of color. BWMT met with the gay business groups Tavern Guild and Golden Gate Business Association and formed a Task Force on Racism in the Lesbian/Gay Community that drew more than fifty people to its first meeting. In November 1983, the Task Force testified before the San Francisco Human Rights Commission on racial discrimination in employment and admission to bars; continued pressure from BWMT and others led the city to pass an ordinance banning the requirement of multiple forms of identification that had been used to turn away people of color from gay bars.¹⁰⁷²

Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays

Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays was an “association of Black gay men and lesbians who [met] regularly for social and educational activities and to address...common concerns as Black people, lesbians and gays.”¹⁰⁷³ The earliest dates for the organization are not clear, yet a letter from May 1988 to the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays states that the San Francisco group had “voted to be reinstated as a chapter of NCBLG.” An organizational kickoff event was held May 16, 1988, at the Western Addition Cultural Center (762 Fulton Street, extant). Minutes from an early meeting in 1988 noted, “It was agreed that additional outreach to our East Bay brothers and sisters was needed if the chapter is to really be successful. This means meetings will have to be scheduled over there too.”¹⁰⁷⁴ San Francisco meetings were held at members’ homes, including those of prominent AIDS activist Reggie Williams (630 Fillmore Street, extant) and Mary Midgett (437 Webster Street, extant).¹⁰⁷⁵ Midgett’s home was also opened for a 1988 holiday party and Thanksgiving dinner and open house—important gatherings for people who could not always join their biological families for these events.¹⁰⁷⁶

Latino Organizing

The Gay Latino Alliance (GALA) was founded in 1975, with approximately fifty men and women attending its second meeting at the SIR Center. The first appearance of GALA at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day parade was the following year.¹⁰⁷⁷ GALA, which had an office at the Gay Community Center (32 Page Street), allowed queer Latinos to connect their social, cultural, and political identities through organizing around local and international political causes. Horacio Roque Ramirez’s study of GALA illustrates the development of one of the first queer Latino organizations in the United States, as well as the geographic reach of such groups. Ramirez writes that without explicitly gay and Latino spaces to meet, GALA’s early founders “typically visited and met one another in homes, bars, and clubs in San Jose and San Francisco, but in the bars and

1071 Ibid. The organization continued to be a gay male group.

1072 Don Romesburg, “Racism and Reaction in the Castro—A Brief, Incomplete History,” 2004. Originally written for IsBadlandsBad.com, https://www.academia.edu/9677965/Racism_and_Reaction_in_the_Castro_A_Brief_Incomplete_History.

1073 Minutes from Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays meetings in National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays Bay Area file, Groups Ephemera, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1074 Ibid.

1075 National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays Bay Area file, Ephemera Groups. A Press release from NCBLG headquarters in June 1986 says it is a network of 3,000 people with chapters in SF, New Orleans, Washington DC and Minneapolis.

1076 1988 Fall Calendar Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays, John Teamer Collection, Carton 1, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1077 Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “That’s My Place!”: Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco’s Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* v. 12, no. 2 (2003): 237.



TOP: Activists, including Reggie Williams (at left) conducting a survey of Black gay men on 18th Street in the Castro (Photo by Rink, from *Out in the Castro*)

BOTTOM: Announcement for Gay American Indians (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

in the clubs they were outnumbered by predominantly white crowds.”¹⁰⁷⁸ They also faced, as did other gay people of color, practices meant to prevent their entry into gay bars, such as demands for multiple forms of identification.

GALA organized popular benefit dances that featured live salsa bands at sites such as Amelia’s (645-647 Valencia Street), the American Indian Center (225 Valencia Street), and the Gay Community Center on Page Street. Showing their continued connection to the Latino community at large, GALA organized benefits for nongay institutions such as the Mission Neighborhood Adult Center and the offices of a local newspaper, *El Tecolote*.¹⁰⁷⁹ The core of GALA’s philosophy was “not to alienate our selves from our families and community but to help them come to understand our gayness in a Latino context.”¹⁰⁸⁰ LGBTQ Latinos were active in many cultural and political organizations, which is explored in greater detail in the Latina/o Historic Context Statement for San Francisco.

Gay American Indian Organizing

Randy Burns (Paiute) and Barbara Cameron (Lakota Sioux) founded Gay American Indians (GAI) in San Francisco in 1975; it was the first reported organization for queer Native Americans in the U.S. The group was initiated by a handful of participants in the American Indian Art Workshop at the American Indian Center on Valencia Street. Burns recalled that, initially, the Center refused to post the group’s flyers, so the first meeting was held at the Twin Peaks Tavern. Meetings continued to be held at Burns’ home (135 Buena Vista East), Cameron’s residence (618 Clayton Street), and the Gay Community Center at 32 Page Street.¹⁰⁸¹ Within one year the group numbered about 30 members from approximately 20 tribes.¹⁰⁸² By the early 1980s, a teepee GAI erected in Civic Center during Pride weekend was a popular outreach tool, and the organization had a booth at the annual American Indian Street Fair.¹⁰⁸³ As Burns writes:

We’ve gone a long way in challenging double oppression and ending the isolation of gay Indians.... GAI has become an extended family for gay Indians—not only those of us who live in the San Francisco Bay Area, but for many family and friends who regularly visit from other areas, as well.¹⁰⁸⁴

GAI’s programs included referral services, cultural and educational projects, and active involvement with local and national networks of Native American organizations and agencies. GAI prepared articles of incorporation in 1983 with offices at Pride Center (890 Hayes Street), where they hosted dances and special events honoring American Indian women.¹⁰⁸⁵ By 1985, GAI had released a call for contributions to its groundbreaking anthology *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* edited by Will Roscoe, published in 1988.¹⁰⁸⁶ In the early 1990s, GAI was continuing

1078 Ramirez, “That’s My Place,” 228.

1079 GALA file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Ramirez, “That’s My Place,” 241-243.

1080 *Coming Up!* (February 1982): 4. Cited in Ramirez, “That’s My Place,” 250-51.

1081 Randy Burns, interviewed by Donna Graves, January 4, 2016. Burns states that he lived at the Buena Vista Street address from 1977-1999.

1082 Lilian Faderman et al., *Great Events from History: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Events* (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2006), 285.

1083 Randy Burns, interviewed by Donna Graves, January 4, 2016.

1084 Gay American Indians, *Living the Spirit: a Gay American Indian Anthology* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 3-4.

1085 Gay American Indians file, Groups Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1086 Gay American Indians, *Living the Spirit*.

to advocate for issues related to health, employment, education, substance abuse, and housing for Native Americans.¹⁰⁸⁷

Asian/Pacific Islander American Organizing

Gay Asian Support Group

Asian/Pacific Islander Americans (APIA) have been described as the last major ethnic and racial group to form gay and lesbian organizations in the Bay Area.¹⁰⁸⁸ As a radical 20-year old living in San Francisco in the 1970s, Canyon Sam says it was difficult to meet other Asian American lesbians. “They were from the generation shaped by WWII and anti-Asian discrimination. Very conservative, don’t rock the boat.”¹⁰⁸⁹ Gay Asian Support Group appears to be the first formal APIA organization for LGBTQ people. Beginning sometime in 1977, GASG held bimonthly meetings at the Gay Community Center on Page Street “to rap, socialize, do outreach work, get into politics, develop ourselves more, make new friends and/or develop relationships.”¹⁰⁹⁰ The group also organized disco dances at the Gay Community Center at 32 Page Street with music provided by gay bars the End Up (401 Sixth Street) and N’Touch (1548 Polk Street), a disco bar that drew a substantial Asian American clientele during the 1970s.¹⁰⁹¹ The limited documentation for GASG indicates that it was a primarily gay male organization, but activist and transgender woman Tamara Ching also was very involved. Ching authored a letter to the Coalition for Human Rights to inform them about GASG, describing it as “not just a gay group supporting Asians, we are gay Asians supporting ourselves. In the Gay Community as in the straight Asian Community, we are not accepted. We had to band and work together in striving for our equal rights and opportunities in *both* communities.”¹⁰⁹²

Association of Lesbian and Gay Asians

The next formal group in San Francisco was Association of Lesbian and Gay Asians, founded in 1981 following several nights of protest at the N’Touch on Polk Street, which had suddenly instituted a requirement that APIA patrons show three forms of ID.¹⁰⁹³ ALGA published a monthly newsletter, held general meetings at the Metropolitan Community Church (150 Eureka Street, threatened with demolition) with guest speakers, and organized social and cultural activities.¹⁰⁹⁴ ALGA was active until sometime in 1986, when it held a black tie benefit for San Francisco AIDS Foundation at the recently reopened and once-again APIA friendly N’Touch.

Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, Asian Pacific Sisters, and Trikone

ALGA was followed by Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (founded 1988) and Asian Pacific Sisters (founded 1989).¹⁰⁹⁵ Both organizations drew members from around the Bay Area, published

1087 1993 Letter in Gay American Indians file shows 1347 Divisadero Street letterhead. This address was a PO box used by Will Roscoe after GAI lost their offices at the Pride Center. A letter in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Archive dated March 1993 from founder Randy Burns to Mayor Frank Jordan.

1088 Ordoña, *Coming Out Together*, 19.

1089 Canyon Sam, interviewed by Donna Graves, November 14, 2013. Sam remembers being part of an informal group of Asian American lesbians formed a consciousness-raising group that met at private homes c. 1977.

1090 Gay Asian Support Group (GASP) Newsletter, September 22, 1977 in The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletters.

1091 Ibid.

1092 Letter from GASP to Human Rights Coalition dated September 29, 1977 in Gay Asian Support Group Newsletter file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. The address for the Human Rights Coalition is at the Gay Community Center at 330 Grove Street.

1093 Bill Matsumoto untitled account of ALGA origins and anti-Asian discrimination at gay bars in ALGA Newsletter January 1986. ALGA file, Groups Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1094 Brochure for ALGA and AIGA Newsletter January 1986 in ALGA file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1095 David L. Eng and Alice Y. Hom, eds., *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 2.

newsletters, and held events at gay spaces and at community-based businesses such as Chinatown restaurants.¹⁰⁹⁶ GAPA and APS collaborated on hosting candidate nights, and on a campaign protesting Lambda Legal Defense Fund's choice to feature the play *Miss Saigon* as a fundraiser.

An organization for LGBTQ South Asians, Trikon (later Trikone), was formed by Arving Kumar and Suvir Arvind in 1986 to connect gay South Asians in the U.S. and internationally, and to combat invisibility for gay South Asians.¹⁰⁹⁷ Trikone quickly changed its mission to be for "gay and lesbian South Asians," but it continued to be a primarily male organization, recalls Dipti Ghosh, saying that in 1993, she was only the second woman to join the board. Ghosh states that, because her focus was coalition building, she chose to join Trikone when she moved to the Bay Area to help make the organization's leadership more equal, and to increase understand of the economic differences between men and women.¹⁰⁹⁸

By the early 1990s, Trikone, GAPA, and Asian Pacifica Sisters were cohosting events such as a monthly Asian Social Hour at Josie's Cabaret (3583 16th Street) and Gay Pride week dances at The Box.¹⁰⁹⁹ The Box and Club Q, roving dance clubs organized by pioneering lesbian DJ Page Hodel, were particularly important for creating multiracial LGBTQ social events in the late 1980s and 1990s. Hodel played hip-hop as well as disco for lesbians at Club Q, which opened in 1987, and most often appeared at Club Universe (177 Townsend Street), and at The Box, drawing hundreds of gays and lesbians to a monthly dance at the Kennel Club (628 Divisadero Street).¹¹⁰⁰

Lesbian Organizing

The vitality and reach of feminist activism, organizing, and writing in the U.S. profoundly shaped discussions about gender in the 1970s and 1980s. Many lesbians began to see the gay liberation movement as reproducing oppressive patterns that privileged men's voices and issues.

While they recognized that heterosexual women dominated aspects of the feminist movement, for many lesbians their identity as lesbians and as feminists became inextricably intertwined. Some associated with a more radical political stance within feminism, while others began to perceive society in terms of cultural feminism, which valorized traits viewed as essential to women's natures, including collectivism, egalitarianism, nurturance, and pacifism. Historian Lillian Faderman writes: "There were probably more lesbians in America during the 1970s than any other time in history, because radical feminism had helped redefine lesbianism to make it almost a categorical imperative for all women truly interested in the welfare and progress of other women."¹¹⁰¹ Separatism—avoiding all involvement with and resemblance to men—became a guiding political tenet for some lesbians, although not one that many women followed rigidly.

In the 1960s, lesbian activist Del Martin wrote a manifesto titled *If That's All There Is* that voiced the objections of lesbians who had felt sidelined or condescended to. Published in the October 1970 issue of *Vector*, the essay stated the long-time activist's new perspective bluntly: "I've been forced to the realization that I have no brothers in the homophile movement ... Fifteen years of masochism

1096 According to Vincent Crisostomo, GAPA held meetings at MCC Church. Vincent Crisostomo, interviewed by Donna Graves, April 18, 2014. Asian Pacifica Sister's meetings appear to have taken place at members' homes. Association of Lesbian and Gay Asians (ALGA) and Asian Pacifica Sisters files, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1097 *Trikon Newsletter*, January 1986, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletters Collection.

1098 Dipti Ghosh, interviewed by Donna Graves, April 7, 2014.

1099 Trikone Calendar, Decemeber 1993, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletter Collection.

1100 Page Hodel, electronic communication with Donna Graves, July 20, 2014.

1101 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 207.

is enough.”¹¹⁰² Martin expanded on this observation in *Lesbian/Woman*, coauthored with her partner Phyllis Lyon in 1972. One of their landmark accomplishments, the volume was originally produced by the publications arm of Glide Memorial Church. *Lesbian/Woman* was unique and influential for describing lesbian lives in a confident, comprehensive, and knowledgeable way. It was quickly picked up by a national publisher, Bantam Books, and went through two more editions before the end of the year.¹¹⁰³

Many lesbians resided in collective, feminist households that aimed to live the phrase “the personal is political” on a daily basis. Judy Grahn writes about the importance of these households in creating a “powerful economic, social, political and familial network.”¹¹⁰⁴ Photographer and activist Lenn Keller recalls the “dyke house collectives” scattered around San Francisco in the 1970s and notes that “each had their own personalities and the dramas going on.” (Like other black lesbians who made their way to California during that time, Keller quickly found her home in Oakland after making brief stops in Santa Cruz and San Francisco.)¹¹⁰⁵

Historians such as Faderman argue that as lesbian-feminist culture developed, some women “believed that they had discovered not just a path but the *only* path ... [Meaning] that one adhered to the various doctrines regarding dress; money; sexual behavior; language use; class, race, food, and ecology consciousness; political activities; and so forth.”¹¹⁰⁶ One of the most wounding conflicts arising out of this period of what was also called political correctness was a polarizing debate known as the feminist sex wars. Rigid theories about universal male oppression meant that bisexual women were suspect; and transgender women were deemed by some to be “by definition, violators of women.”¹¹⁰⁷ Activist, musician, and transgender woman Beth Elliott was ejected in the early 1970s from the San Francisco chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, for which she had served as vice president; her presence at the West Coast Lesbian Feminist Conference at UCLA drew protests from members of the crowd including group from San Francisco who called themselves the “Gutter Dykes,” as well as a vitriolic harangue by the keynote speaker, author Robin Morgan.¹¹⁰⁸

The goal of diversity had an increasingly broad reach in the lesbian feminist community in the 1970s and 1980s, replacing for the most part the urge toward conformity of the first wave of lesbian feminism. Separatism was no longer high on the agenda; AIDS, parenting, and intersectional analysis of the effects of race and class were topics of concern. In addition, consciousness about challenges that disabled or overweight lesbians and lesbian mothers faced shaped public events and organizations. By 1990, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin wrote that attitudes toward butch/fem couples, seen as captives to patriarchal role-playing by some 1970s lesbian feminists, had changed: “Today the butch/femme persona is strong and healthy.”¹¹⁰⁹

Lesbian Liberation Organizations and Institutions

Gay Women’s Liberation

San Francisco’s first lesbian liberation organization was founded sometime around 1969. In her

1102 Sides, *Erotic City*, 114.

1103 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*.

1104 Grahn, *A Simple Revolution*, 167. Although stereotypes painted lesbians as lacking humor, a comedy about four lesbians sharing an apartment titled “Dolores Street” played at Theatre Rhino, *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v. 2, no. 3 (May/June 1990): 23.

1105 Cassell, “Black Lesbians Recall Their Sapphic History.”

1106 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 230.

1107 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 102.

1108 Ibid. and Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 190-191.

1109 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 313.

autobiography, *A Simple Revolution*, poet Judy Grahn describes forming the “Gay Women’s Liberation” group in San Francisco with other Bay Area lesbians. Grahn and others had attended a gay rights conference that year at UC Berkeley and shared dissatisfaction with the lack of discussion about women’s issues. According to Grahn, the group’s regular meetings drew up to sixty women to the Lexington Street flat that Grahn shared with artist Wendy Cadden in the Mission District.¹¹¹⁰

San Francisco Women’s Centers

The San Francisco Women’s Centers (SFWC) was founded in the early 1970s to serve as an incubator for a broad range of women’s rights organizations and projects. In 1973, the SFWC moved with the newly formed San Francisco Women’s Switchboard into shared offices at 63 Brady Street (extant) near Market and Gough Streets. In addition to phone lines where switchboard volunteers counseled callers or directed them to resources closer to their location, the office housed a resource library and a meeting room for women’s organizations.¹¹¹¹ One of the first major projects SFWC took on was forming a credit union to increase women’s economic power. The SFWC worked in partnership with the Daughters of Bilitis, Black Women Organized for Action, and the Golden Gate Chapter of the National Organization for Women. The resulting Bay Area Feminist Federal Credit Union (944 Market Street, Suite 616, extant), active from 1975 to 1979, solved the SFWC’s problem of finding a landlord who would rent to “a bunch of women” by providing backing.¹¹¹²

Sally Gearhart, then a San Francisco State University professor of speech communication, suggested in 1976 that SFWC organize a Conference on Violence Against Women. SFWC had already sponsored La Casa de las Madres, a battered women’s shelter. That same year, early SFWC board member Del Martin published *Battered Wives*, the first book on the subject of domestic violence in the U.S.¹¹¹³ The conference organizers’ stance was that only women and girls would be admitted, prompting SFSU to pull its sponsorship within weeks of the event. The ensuing scramble for a site resulted in moving the program to Grace Cathedral (1100 California Street, extant) and Cogswell College (600 Stockton Street, extant), a trade school a few blocks away; in spite of the last-minute relocation, 1,300 people attended the groundbreaking conference.¹¹¹⁴

The Women’s Building

Although not an exclusively lesbian organization, The Women’s Building of San Francisco (3543 18th Street, extant) is one of the anchors of the history of women, feminists, lesbians, and queer and progressive groups more generally in San Francisco. By 1977, SFWC had outgrown its space on Brady Street, and in 1978 a core group of women began looking into purchasing a building. Sushawn Robb’s *Mothering the Movement* details the complexities of organizing support and resources for this ambitious undertaking—including endless meetings. A sympathetic realtor pointed the women towards the Dovre Hall. The hall was a former meeting place of the Sons of Norway, built in the Mission District in 1910 as a Turnverein (German gymnastics society) hall, which no longer housed organizations, just a ground-floor bar. Negotiations moved forward, and The Women’s Building opened in the fall of 1979.¹¹¹⁵

1110 Grahn, *A Simple Revolution*, 117-119. Research for this report did not uncover the exact address for this apartment.

1111 Sushawn Robb, *Mothering the Movement: The Story of the San Francisco Women’s Building* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2012), 11-12. The SF Women’s Switchboard is listed at 620 Sutter Street in a list of gay organizations compiled by the Gay Activists Alliance in early 1973. According to Robb, core members of both organizations were mostly lesbian.

1112 *Ibid.*, 17-19.

1113 *Ibid.*, 27.

1114 *Ibid.*, 28-29.

1115 *Ibid.*, 47-48. Among the fundraisers for the building were a feminist film series at SFSU and the Roxie Theatre, and “Mile-a-Thons” at Golden Gate Park that involved over one hundred organizations that split proceeds with the Building Fund.



The Women's Building at 3543 18th Street. (Photo by Jumilla/Flickr)

The number and range of events and meetings important to LGBTQ history held at The Women's Building is significant; examples appear throughout this report. In addition to providing space for community gatherings and performances, another important service the institution provided was fiscal sponsorship for multiple projects. Many organizations initially supported by The Women's Building went on to form their own nonprofits, such as Lesbian Visual Artists, the San Francisco Network for Battered Lesbian and Bisexual Women, Older Lesbian Organizing Committee, and Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center.¹¹¹⁶

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

As the community of openly lesbian women who had been coming out since the early years of the Daughters of Bilitis reached midlife and beyond, individuals and groups in San Francisco began to raise issues of concern to older women. At the 1988 San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Freedom Day parade, a group of older lesbians chanted, "2, 4, 6, 8, how do you know your grandma's straight?"¹¹¹⁷ The following year, SFSU was the location for the second West Coast Conference of Old Lesbians, which inspired the founding of the national organization Old Lesbians Organizing for Change.¹¹¹⁸

Organizing Among Lesbians of Color

As has been mentioned here, many people of color viewed the women's movement as primarily for white, middle-class women. Lesbians of color stood in complex relation to both the women's movement and gay and lesbian rights organizations. Bay Area lesbian writers Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa helped shape discussion of these issues with an influential 1981 anthology they edited, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. The Latina, African American, Asian American, and Native American writers represented in the book—many of them from San Francisco—challenged claims of sisterhood made by white feminists and explored the links between race, class, feminism, and sexuality.¹¹¹⁹

The book found an enthusiastic audience, and a second edition was published in 1983. Moraga's foreword describes the feminism illustrated in the book as a "political necessity."¹¹²⁰ Contributions from lesbians of color explain that they did not have the privilege that white lesbians did to prioritize their sexual orientation over other aspects of their identity. Native American poet and Mission District resident Chrystos (Menominee) writes, "I felt so much stricture and censorship from lesbians / I was supposed to be a carpenter to prove I was a real dyke / My differences were sloughed over / None of them came to a pow wow or an AIM fundraiser to see about me / I felt the women's movement utterly drained."¹¹²¹ Anzaldúa writes, "We are the queer groups, the people that don't belong anywhere, not in the dominant world nor completely within our respective cultures."¹¹²²

During the late 1970s and 1980s, lesbians of color formed numerous political, social, and cultural organizations and publications to create a new sense of belonging. The Women's Building was the

1116 Ibid., 315-317.

1117 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 277-78.

1118 Ordoña, *Coming Out Together*, 328. Ordoña states that in 1991 three Bay Area Asian lesbians formed Oasis Older Asian Sisters in Solidarity.

1119 Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1981).

1120 Ibid.

1121 Chrystos, "I Don't Understand Those Who Have Turned Away From Me," in *Ibid.*, 69.

1122 *Ibid.*, 209.

site for three conferences for lesbians of color, held in 1986, 1987, and 1988.¹¹²³ The first conference inspired the formation of Bay Area Lesbians of Color and the Nia Collective, reportedly the only African American lesbian organization in Northern California at that time.¹¹²⁴ African American lesbians were the focus for *Onyx* and later *Ache*, periodicals that included interviews, event calendars, poetry, and thought pieces on a variety of topics.¹¹²⁵ Latina lesbians founded *Mujerio*, active from 1988 to 1992, and in the early 1990s *Ellas en Acción*, a group for lesbian and bisexual Latinas that met at The Women's Building.¹¹²⁶ According to Trinity Ordoña, the first public event for Asian American lesbians was organized in 1983 at the Swedish American Hall (2174 Market Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 267), with the purpose of forming an ongoing group.¹¹²⁷ Asian Pacific Sisters formed in 1989, and Shamakami, a group for South Asian lesbians, started the following year.¹¹²⁸

By the 1980s, lesbians, and especially lesbians of color, were making their homes outside of San Francisco. In 1989, *Ache* announced a meeting at the Western Addition home of one of its founders for a new women's center specifically for women of color to be located "in the East Bay, where a high percentage of women of color reside."¹¹²⁹ Many of the organizations described previously held events and retreats in the East Bay, Marin and Sonoma Counties, and Santa Cruz. But San Francisco was still a magnet for lesbians of color. Bay Area Lesbians of Color and members of Lesbian Agenda for Action organized an influential conference that focused on race, gender, and sexual orientation in 1989: "Dynamics of Color," was held at Mission High School (3750 18th Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 255), while a concurrent exhibition of work focusing on race and racism by lesbian visual artists was mounted at Sargent Johnson Gallery in the Western Addition Cultural Center (762 Fulton Street, extant).¹¹³⁰

Transgender Organizing

Throughout history, many men and women struggled to find and express their identities within the artificially constructed gender and sexual binaries of male/masculine and female/feminine. Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, as more people began to study and understand the concept of transgender identities, perceptions about and language defining transgender men and women began to change. The concept of a transgender identity was not formed in the popular imagination until the early 1950s when the American Christine Jorgensen travelled to Denmark for what was referred to as sex reassignment surgery; media coverage of her transition from male to female made

1123 The first conference emerged from a ten-week support group for lesbians of color at The Women's Building in 1986. See Ordoña, *Coming in Out Together*, 206, 227. Robb, *Mothering the Movement*, 249-50.

1124 Profile of Mary Midgett by OpenHouse, <http://openhouse-sf.org/mary-midgett/>. See also Heather Cassell, "Black lesbians recall their Sapphic history."

1125 *Onyx* began in San Francisco as *Black Lesbian Newsletter* in 1982 and became *Onyx* the following year; at some point it moved to Berkeley according to the blog for the James C. Hormel Center at San Francisco Public Library, <http://queerestlibraryever.blogspot.com>. *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v. 1, no. 3 (April 1989) says *Ache* was distributed in San Francisco at Old Wives Tales, The Women's Building, and SF State Women's Center.

1126 Latina/o LGBT History Brief Timeline: 1955-2013, prepared by Letitia Gomez, <http://www.latinolgbtqhistory.org/lgbtq-latino-timeline>. *Mujerio* was formed in 1989 according to Juana Maria Rodriguez, *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (New York and London: New York University press, 2003), 42.

1127 Ordoña, *Coming in Out Together*, 148.

1128 Rakesh Ratti, ed., *A Lotus of Another Color: And Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience* (Boston, Alyson Publications, 1993), 303.

1129 *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v.1 no. 8 (Sept. 1989): 9. The founders of the idea for a new center were named as Suzanne Lovest and Annette Martin, at whose home the organizing meeting was held.

1130 Dynamics of Color was organized by BALOC and a group of white lesbians, some of whom were members of Lesbian Agenda for Action, according to Robb, *Mothering the Movement*, 250.

Jorgensen an international sensation.¹¹³¹ Publicity about Jorgensen's surgery, her willingness to speak publicly, and a film made later about her life were significant sources of inspiration for many transgender people who felt they were alone in their situation.¹¹³²

For decades, drag queens and transgender men and women were highly discriminated against, even within the larger queer communities. They were turned away from many gay bars where bar owners were trying to cultivate a more "respectable" clientele—or a clientele deemed more acceptable to society. Drag queens and transgender people had very little support from homophile organizations, which often drew a hard line between themselves and anyone who fell outside of the gay/lesbian binary. In San Francisco, transgender men were largely invisible, and transgender women were welcome only to a limited degree in the Tenderloin, where many of them lived in cheap SRO hotels and made a living as sex workers on the streets. Tenderloin resident Amanda St. Jaymes recounts, "Most of the transsexuals were prostitutes because they didn't have jobs. There was no way to get jobs then."¹¹³³

The San Francisco Police Department during this period could be particularly vicious to transgender women, who were often arrested in the Tenderloin on charges of obstructing the sidewalk or prostitution when simply going about their daily lives. They were held in the men's jail, where they were especially vulnerable to violence and rape. Amanda St. Jaymes recalls that police harassed and arrested people for female impersonation because their hair was a bit too long or because they were wearing lipstick or "blouses that buttoned on the wrong side."¹¹³⁴ Violators would be humiliated by a strip search at the police station and would endure lengthy stays in solitary confinement if they refused to have their head shaved.

In general, transgender women in the Tenderloin routinely faced violence and even murder that drew no sympathy or action from the rest of society. As transgender activist Felicia Elizondo notes, "It was dangerous dressing up like a girl and still having men's parts there."¹¹³⁵ She recalls being attacked and raped at knifepoint at a popular bar, The Shed (2275 Market Street), but not bothering to call the police because she knew they would not take her statement seriously.

Compton's Cafeteria Riot

Susan Stryker's pioneering work on the Compton's Cafeteria Riot documents transgender women in the Tenderloin participating in one of a series of early incidents of militant resistance against police harassment; a smaller, but similar "riot" occurred in 1959 at Cooper's Doughnuts in Los Angeles.¹¹³⁶ The riot took place over several days in August 1966—three years before the more well-known Stonewall riots in New York.

Gene Compton's Cafeteria (101 Taylor Street, extant), part of a local restaurant chain, was a favorite late-night spot for transgender women, young male hustlers, and others who lived and worked in the Tenderloin in the early 1960s. A brightly lit, inexpensive restaurant that was open 24 hours a day, Compton's was one of the few places where transgender women could feel safe socializing. Members of the Tenderloin youth group Vanguard also gathered at Compton's, bringing a more assertive attitude that annoyed management, who began asking police to remove some patrons.

1131 Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 98.

1132 Ibid., 15. Felicia Flames Elizondo, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014.

1133 Amanda St. Jaymes in documentary film, *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2005).

1134 Ibid.

1135 Felicia Flames Elizondo, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014.

1136 Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 1.



TOP: Former Compton's Cafeteria at Turk and Taylor Streets (Photo by Donna Graves)
BOTTOM: The Center for Special Problems was opened at 2107 Van Ness Avenue in 1965 (Photo by Shayne Watson)

In July 1966, a few dozen Vanguard youth organized a picket line in front of Compton's to protest "physical and verbal abuse by the management and the Pinkerton Special Officers assigned there."¹¹³⁷

In August 1966, a police attempt to evict transgender women from the cafeteria inspired patrons to rebel, rather than submit as they had previously. Transgender women and drag queens threw crockery and turned over tables as they fought with police, shattering the restaurant's plate-glass windows in the process. An angry crowd gathered, and police called in backup, but the night ended with a police car wrecked and a corner newsstand set on fire. Many went to jail, but "there was a lot of joy after it happened" according to Amanda St. Jaymes. The next night a picket line with placards appeared at Compton's and again, shattered glass littered the sidewalk. Although the event did not receive press coverage at the time, Stryker notes that the Compton's Cafeteria Riot demonstrated a growing assertiveness and community consciousness among some transgender people and represented what Stryker describes as "the transgender community's debut on the stage of American political history."¹¹³⁸

Transgender Community Services and Support Networks

Rev. Edward Hansen of Glide Memorial Church recalls that, despite not having a context to understand transgender people, he approached "[his] encounters with them... just as [he] would with anybody. You know, here is another child of God—[who needs] someone to listen to, talk to, and without any judgment..."¹¹³⁹ Hansen's work with Glide's night ministry and Vanguard actively tried to include young transgender women who lived and worked in the Tenderloin.

In late 1966, San Francisco police sergeant Elliot Blackstone became a vocal advocate for transgender rights from within his post as the department's first liaison to the gay and lesbian communities. Blackstone helped coordinate efforts by transgender people and allies and connected them with growing community services. Blackstone educated police in San Francisco and helped convince the department not to arrest transgender women for wearing female clothing and using women's restrooms.¹¹⁴⁰

Center for Special Problems

As mentioned in an earlier section, in 1965 the San Francisco Department of Public Health established the Center for Special Problems (2107 Van Ness Avenue, extant). Led by Dr. Joel Fort and activist and transgender woman Wendy Kohler, the Center supported transgender people with discussion groups, mental health counseling, and hormone prescriptions. Dr. Harry Benjamin, a prominent figure in early treatment of transgender people, was brought in to consult and to train staff.¹¹⁴¹ The center also produced ID cards signed by a public health doctor that matched a transgender person's gender identity. State issued IDs could not be amended, so these seemingly innocuous forms were critical to changing transgender individuals' lives by allowing them to obtain bank accounts and housing and to submit job applications.¹¹⁴² The Center for Special Problems worked with Conversion Our Goal (described below) to connect transgender women to War on

1137 Both protests received media coverage. The Compton's picket received television coverage by local ABC news. "Young Homos Picket Compton's Restaurant" *Cruise News & World Report* v. 2, no. 8 (August 1966): 1, http://auralstories.blogspot.com/2013/07/vanguard-revisited-online-exhibit_1.html.

1138 Susan Stryker in *Screaming Queens*. The film states that Compton's started closing at midnight after the riot, and patronage decreased. It closed in 1972 and was replaced by a porn shop.

1139 Rev. Edward Hansen in *Screaming Queens*.

1140 Members of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California, "MTF Transgender Activism in the Tenderloin" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* v. 4, no. 2 (1988): 349-372, passim.

1141 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 230.

1142 Sides, *Erotic City*, 100.

Poverty-funded training programs. Amanda St. Jaymes took classes through the Neighborhood Youth Corps, leading to a clerk-typist job.¹¹⁴³ After Dr. Fort left the Center for Special Problems, his Fort Help practice (169 Eleventh Street) hired a transgender psychologist to help others with “gender identity problems.”¹¹⁴⁴

Helping Hands Center (225 Turk Street), another Tenderloin-based organization, also offered counseling to transgender men and women. The Center’s director, Rev. Ray Broshears, worked with drag queens and transgender individuals to protest police sweeps and housing evictions in the early 1970s.¹¹⁴⁵

This growing network of support for transgender men and women was reinforced by broader cultural shifts represented by youthful questioning of rigid gender norms. Activist Tamara Ching recalls: “One good thing about the 1960s was the hippies came. They gave everyone permission to grow our hair and be flamboyant. It took police pressure off us. Thank God for the hippies, they took a lot of heat off of us.”¹¹⁴⁶

Transgender Organizations

Conversion Our Goal (sometimes referred to as Change Our Goal), formed in 1967 by a group of transgender women, is described as “probably the first formal organization of self-defined transsexuals in the world.”¹¹⁴⁷ For approximately two years, COG met twice monthly at Glide Memorial Church, offering mutual support to its members and calling publicly for freedom from police harassment, legal rights to medical care for transition, job opportunities, and fair housing.¹¹⁴⁸

The National Transsexual Counseling Unit was founded in 1968 by COG veteran Wendy Kohler and supported by the transgender philanthropist Reed Erickson’s Erickson Education Foundation. Less politically focused than COG, NTCU was renamed the Transsexual Counseling Service after a few years; Kohler hosted a bimonthly radio program and organized a seminar at Glide on transgender issues. For six years, the organization provided street outreach and counseling locally and mailed educational materials to people around the world.¹¹⁴⁹

Another significant Bay Area transgender group, Educational TV Channel, began holding monthly social events in 1983. They soon expanded their activities and began publishing a newsletter and organizing a resource library. More important, ETVC moved from holding events in the homes and backyards of members to meeting in public spaces such as Chez Mollet (527 Bryant Street, extant) and Kimo’s (1351 Polk Street, extant) to reinforce transgender visibility.¹¹⁵⁰

AIDS and Transgender People

Scholars of transgender history depict the 1980s as a time of dwindling public resources for transgender services and a dramatically increased need for AIDS services; fewer resources were devoted to transgender people who engaged in sex work or shared needles for injection drugs

1143 Amanda St. Jaymes in *Screaming Queens*.

1144 David Perlman, “A Nice Place to Get Help,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 1970.

1145 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 235.

1146 Tamara Ching comments at “Trans in the Tenderloin” panel discussion at GLBT History Museum, March 6, 2014.

1147 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 230.

1148 Ibid.

1149 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 79-81. Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 231. Meyerowitz states that NCTU was in the same building as Mattachine Society and DOB. DOB is listed at 3470 Mission in 1966 and at 1005 Market Street in 1975 in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database

1150 Transgender San Francisco, “History,” accessed May 2, 2014, <http://tgsf.org/history/>. Addresses are from Polk’s San Francisco City Directories. Chez Mollet is listed without an address in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

or hormones. In the early years of the epidemic, most AIDS funding substantially neglected marginalized populations in the Tenderloin. In 1985, a group of activists founded the Tenderloin AIDS Network, which operated on shoestring funds out of a storefront. In 1989, monies from the San Francisco Department of Public Health allowed the newly renamed Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center to move to 187 Golden Gate Avenue, where it served transgender people among its client pool. According to activist Tamara Ching, the first AIDS project specifically for transgender people began in 1993 as collaboration between the Asian AIDS Project and the GAPA Community HIV Project.¹¹⁵¹ Stryker describes this program as “part of a larger trend to fund HIV education and prevention efforts in communities of colors, based on the assumption that these were ‘vulnerable populations’ that became infection vectors for society at large.”¹¹⁵² Other HIV/AIDS programs dedicated to transgender people of color that started at roughly the same time as GAPA included Proyecto Contra SIDA por Vida and Brothers Network. (The impact of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco is discussed in more detail below).

Organizing for Transgender Men

Organizations for transgender men began later than those for transgender women. The most prominent voice among transgender men was Lou Sullivan, who moved to San Francisco in 1975 for sex-reassignment surgery. Stanford’s program rejected Sullivan because he identified as a female-to-male (FTM), but he found other doctors who helped him transition, a process he documented in great detail as a tool for mentoring other transgender men.¹¹⁵³ Sullivan became a counselor at the Erickson Foundation–funded Janus Information Facility and participated in Golden Gate Girls/Guys (681 Ellis Street, extant), one of the first transgender organizations that catered to transgender men. In 1980, Sullivan began living full-time as a gay man and published a groundbreaking booklet, *Information for the Female-to-Male Cross-Dresser and Transsexual*. In 1986, Sullivan founded the first FTM educational and support organization in the United States and in 1987 established its newsletter. The organization was renamed FTM International in 1994 in recognition of the group’s scope, and the local chapter was named after Lou Sullivan, who had died of AIDS in 1991.¹¹⁵⁴ The year before, he published *From Female to Male: The Life of Jack Bee Garland*, a pioneering biography about a biologically female person who chose to dress and live as a man 19th-century San Francisco. In 1995, the first FTM conference of the Americas was held at The Women’s Building.¹¹⁵⁵

In the 1960s, feminists, gay liberationists and others began to argue that masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality, and homosexuality were artificial categories created by a sexist and homophobic society, and that a fluid approach to sexuality should be the new norm. By the mid-1990s, the anti-heteronormative debates had inspired a group calling themselves Transgender Nation (a subset of Queer Nation, an activist group described more fully in the section titled *San Francisco’s AIDS Epidemic: 1981 to 1990s*), which met with lesbian, gay, and bisexual groups in San Francisco, demanding publicly that they include transgender people.¹¹⁵⁶ San Francisco’s Human Rights Commission worked with transgender activists in 1993 and 1994 to develop a report documenting

1151 Tamara Ching described the TARC as offering a transgender support group five days a week. Tamara Ching, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 10, 2014.

1152 Susan Stryker, electronic communication with Donna Graves, November 17, 2014.

1153 Megan Rohrer, “Man-i-Fest: FTM Mentorship in San Francisco from 1976-2009,” accessed May 2, 2014, <http://www.outhistory.org/exhibits/show/man-i-fest/letters-privacy-ethics>.

1154 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 9.

1155 *Ibid.*, 144.

1156 *Ibid.*, 135-36.

human rights abuses experienced by transgender people, which led to the passage of the City's landmark transgender antidiscrimination ordinance in 1995.¹¹⁵⁷

Bisexual Organizing

Introduction

As gender norms increasingly were upended in the U.S. during the 1960s, awareness of bisexual identity increased. During the 1960s and 1970s, bisexual activists began to organize for greater visibility and acceptance. They had to battle against the views of many straight, gay, and lesbian people who regarded their identity as suspect or unresolved. Like transgender men and women, bisexuals during this period and beyond had to fight against being marginalized or ostracized not only by the dominant culture, but also by most gay and lesbian groups.

Bisexual Center

Longtime San Franciscan Marguerite "Maggi" Rubenstein is widely regarded as a pioneer for bisexual visibility, rights, and education. She first came out publicly as a bisexual while working as a staff member at the Center for Special Problems and subsequently was a founder in 1972 of the San Francisco Sex Information switchboard, a resource where callers could find answers to sexual questions that emphasized an inclusive and positive attitude toward diverse expressions of sexuality, including bisexuality.

Along with approximately twenty other people, Rubenstein went on to found the Bisexual Center in 1976, the first specifically bisexual organization in the U.S. "We decided ... it was going to be a bisexual center, but it wasn't going to limit itself to supporting bisexual rights only. It was going to support lesbian and gay rights, and all peoples' rights," she recalls.¹¹⁵⁸ The center, which operated first out of offices at 544 Market Street (extant) and later from the home of cofounder David Lourea (1757 Hayes Street, extant), offered counseling and support services to Bay Area bisexuals and published a newsletter, the *Bi Monthly*, from 1976 to 1984.¹¹⁵⁹

BiPol

In her book *Bisexual Spaces*, Clare Hemmings describes the 1983 founding of the first bisexual political organization, BiPol (584 Castro Street, extant), as reflecting a shift in bisexual organizing away from the "revolutionary power of liberatory (bi) sexuality, and toward a more focused identity politics."¹¹⁶⁰ Viewing themselves as "the political arm of the community," with an explicitly feminist agenda, BiPol sought to increase bisexual visibility and to challenge stereotypes about bisexuality.¹¹⁶¹ In 1984, the organization registered officially at the Democratic National Convention and nominated member Lani Ka'ahumanu as a vice presidential candidate. She was not awarded the fifteen minutes of time on the convention floor they were aiming for, in which Ka'ahumanu had planned to speak about lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights and to demand more support for AIDS research. The National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights that a number of community organizations planned to coincide with the convention excluded bisexuals, but BiPol successfully organized a rally outside the Moscone Center where the convention was taking place, reportedly the first-ever such public demonstration for bisexual rights.¹¹⁶²

1157 Ibid., 141-142.

1158 Clare Hemmings, *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 156.

1159 The first Bi Center meetings were held at Rubenstein's home, which Lani Ka'ahumanu said was at 46 Stillings. Lani Ka'ahumanu, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 17, 2014.

1160 Hemmings, *Bisexual Spaces*, 158.

1161 "An Introduction to the San Francisco Bay Area Bi Community and the Bay Area Bisexual Network (BABN)" by Lani Ka'ahumanu and Melissa White (with minor edits in 2012 by Martin Rawlings-Fein), <http://www.bayareabisexualnetwork.org/about-babn.html>.

1162 Bi Conic Flashpoints exhibit text, GLBT History Museum, San Francisco.

Out of solidarity with gay men, who were hit particularly hard by the AIDS epidemic, and to push back against scapegoating of bisexuals, BiPol leaders were active in AIDS demonstrations and education; the group organized one of the first public demonstrations focusing on AIDS issues in summer 1983 outside the Haitian Consulate in San Francisco.¹¹⁶³ Activist Maggi Rubenstein also was a founder of Mobilization Against AIDS in 1984, an early AIDS advocacy organization established in San Francisco. David Lourea campaigned to get the San Francisco Department of Public Health to identify bisexuals as a demographic category in the department's AIDS statistics, and with others brought safer-sex classes to local universities and colleges, bathhouses, and other public sex sites. As male founders of bisexual organizations perished from AIDS in the mid-1980s to early 1990s, leadership became predominately female.

Facing cultural exclusion and social persecution, many Bay Area bisexual activists turned to humor as a political tactic. Bisexual contingents for the Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parades featured members dressed as "Princess Bi" and "Mayor Bi-anne Feinstein," and BiPol members organized a "sexual healing" in Union Square for right-wing activist Jerry Falwell when he visited San Francisco for the 1984 Democratic Convention.¹¹⁶⁴

In June 1990, BiPol organized the first national bisexual conference, an event that was understood as a "key moment in the development of bisexual identity and community," according to Clare Hemmings.¹¹⁶⁵ Lani Ka'ahumanu remembers that conference organizers lived and met in an area around Noe, Valencia, 18th and 20th Streets, a "bisexual neighborhood situated perfectly" between the gay enclave in the Castro and lesbian enclave in the Valencia Corridor.¹¹⁶⁶ The conference took place at Mission High School, drawing nearly 450 people from twenty states and five countries.¹¹⁶⁷ A writer for the *San Francisco Bay Times* noted the following about the gathering:

One of the most positive and promising aspects of the conference was its overwhelmingly feminist character. ... There was an overriding sentiment that one of the best things about the bisexual movement was that it inherently challenges traditional attitudes about sex roles and relations between men and women.¹¹⁶⁸

The Bisexual Conference coincided with the Sixth International Conference on AIDS, which was held at Moscone Center during the last week of June 1990; the epidemic was a central theme for those gathered at the Bisexual Conference, as well as ethnic and racial diversity.¹¹⁶⁹ To reach a more diverse audience, conference press and registration materials were distributed in English and Spanish, a People of Color Caucus was formed, and a benefit dance organized with LGBTQ organizations of color was held at The Women's Building.¹¹⁷⁰ The organizations Binet USA and 3x3 Bisexual People of Color grew from the Bisexual Conference.¹¹⁷¹

Bay Area Bisexual Network and Bi-Friendly

In 1987, the Bay Area Bisexual Network (2404 California Street, extant) was formed to continue the educational purposes of the Bisexual Center; it coordinated a speaker's bureau, a newsletter, retreats, and monthly cultural and educational forums. Under the leadership of Karla Rossi,

1163 Lorraine Hutchins and Lani Ka'ahumanu, eds., *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out* (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 1991), 362.

1164 Lani Ka'ahumanu, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 17, 2014.

1165 Hemmings, *Bisexual Spaces*, 145.

1166 Lani Ka'ahumanu, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 17, 2014.

1167 Hemmings, *Bisexual*, 166, states that the majority of conference participants came from California.

1168 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 315.

1169 Hemmings, *Bisexual Spaces*, 165.

1170 *Ibid.*, 170, and BiConic Flashpoints exhibit text, GLBT History Museum.

1171 BiConic Flashpoints exhibit text, GLBT History Museum.



First National Bisexual Conference, June 1990, Mission High School at 3750 18th Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BABN's newsletter transitioned into a literary and topical magazine in 1991 titled *Anything That Moves: Beyond the Myths of Bisexuality*.¹¹⁷² Another group, Bi-Friendly, was formed in 1988 to offer opportunities for bisexual people to connect socially outside of political gatherings and bars.¹¹⁷³ Weekly meetings were organized at cafes and restaurants around the Castro. People who came through town would use the group's network to meet up, and within a year Bi-Friendly chapters were formed in Oakland, San Jose, and the North Bay.¹¹⁷⁴

Intersex Organizing

Until very recently, doctors usually excluded a child born "of indeterminate sex" (and often their parents) from decision-making about how the child's gender would be assigned.¹¹⁷⁵ Victorian medical providers assigned a "true sex" based on analysis of gonads. By the 1950s, the physician was regarded as arbiter of the person's "optimum sex," based on a notion of mutable gender identity that could include a number of factors and exclude the child's genetic sex. In any case, whatever medical procedures were done when the child was small were invariably kept secret from the individual, and sometimes even from their parents.¹¹⁷⁶

Intersex Society of North America

San Francisco's international reputation as a place that challenged gender norms also drew an individual who would found the first intersex rights organization. Cheryl Chase, who had been designated male at birth, was later raised as a girl after doctors changed their decision and performed surgery on her. Her discovery as an adult of these childhood manipulations of her gender identity led Chase to move to San Francisco and form the Intersex Society of North America in 1993. Chase compares her experience to genital mutilation practiced on girls in some African cultures but states, "The difference is that women in Africa experience genital mutilation as a shared experience with everyone around them, and they would feel freakish if they didn't have it. We are isolated by this experience and made to feel like freaks because we did have it."¹¹⁷⁷ In its early years, the ISNA operated out of Chase's home in the Twin Peaks neighborhood, and early meetings were held at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (1523 Franklin Street, extant), where Chase was a student.¹¹⁷⁸ Within a few years, the organization was providing peer support to approximately 400 people around the world, educating medical providers about treating people with ambiguous genitalia, and providing education about intersexuality to the general public.¹¹⁷⁹

Student Organizing

Gay Students Union at SFSU

From November 1968 to March 1969, students at San Francisco State University (SFSU, then known as San Francisco State College) organized the longest student strike in U.S. academic history. Students charged the administration with racism and authoritarian behavior and demanded more

1172 A 2002 letter from Bay Area Bisexual Network lists the office at 1800 Market Street, and says that *Anything That Moves* was celebrating its tenth year in 2001. "Anything That Moves" file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1173 Lani Ka'ahumanu, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 17, 2014.

1174 Ibid.

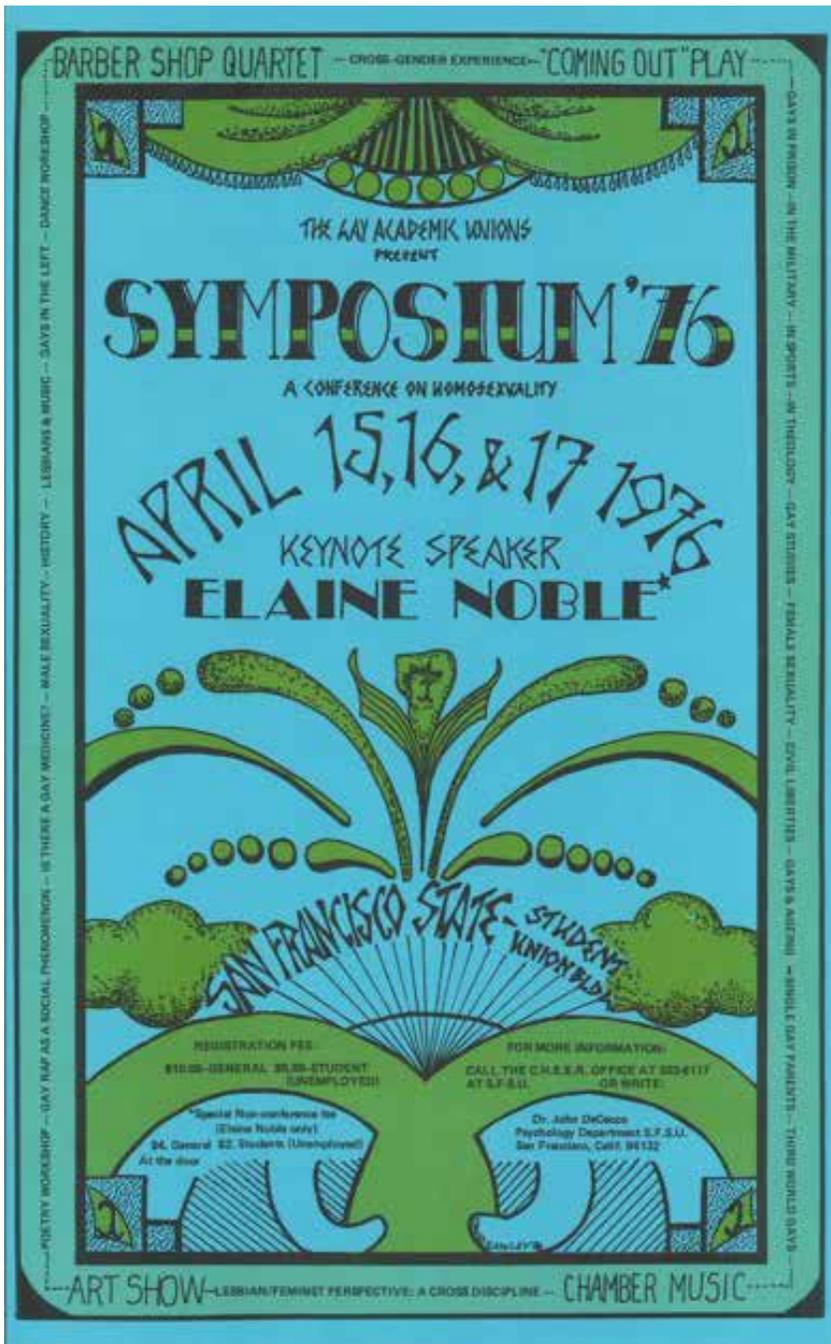
1175 Gerald N. Callahan, *Between XX and XY: Intersexuality and the Myth of Two Sexes* (Chicago Review Press, 2009), 7.

1176 Ibid., 118.

1177 Natalie Angier, "Intersexual healing," *New York Times*, February 4, 1996, accessed July 23, 2014 <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/04/weekinreview/ideas-trends-intersexual-healing-an-anomaly-finds-a-group.html>.

1178 Bo Laurent (formerly Cheryl Chase), electronic communication with Donna Graves, July 23, 2014.

1179 Cheryl Chase, "Surgical Progress is Not the Answer to Intersexuality," in Alice Domurat Dreger, ed., *Intersex in the Age of Ethics*, 47. Stryker, *Transgender History*, 138. ISNA closed in 2006 and turned its mission over to Accord Alliance, <http://www.isna.org>.



Flyer for Gay Students Symposium at San Francisco State University, 1976 (Courtesy John Blackburn)

sensitive and transparent communication, especially regarding minority groups' criticism that higher education ignored both their needs as students and academic topics that reflected their experiences.¹¹⁸⁰ Gay students and faculty were inspired by the strike and the increasingly active gay liberation movement in San Francisco, prompting them to seek change on campus for themselves.

A Gay Students Union formed at SFSU in 1974. John Blackburn recalls that their offices opened on the second floor of the new Student Union building alongside those of African American and Asian American student groups. In 1976, the Gay Student Union and faculty members organized the first Conference of Gay Academic Unions of California, which was formed after several SFSU students attended a gathering called Gaythink at Long Beach State University.¹¹⁸¹ The three-day conference at SFSU featured a remarkably rich and diverse set of panel topics and was held at the Student Union building, which organizers "tried to transform...from stone into people, ideas, experience, [and] beauty...."¹¹⁸² The program describes the conference's 300 contributors as "women as well as men, public officials as well as private citizens, and individuals of many different ethnic and social backgrounds. Many of them are leaders in community organizations, scholarship, the professions and the arts. They represent a wide range of sexual and affectional preference."¹¹⁸³ The conference drew national participation, including keynote speakers Congresswoman Elaine Noble, an openly lesbian woman from Massachusetts; Alan Bell from the Kinsey Institute in Indiana; and California Assemblyman Willie Brown.¹¹⁸⁴

Youth Leadership and Activism

The San Francisco Board of Education established a Lesbian/Gay Resource Center for students in 1990.¹¹⁸⁵ That same year, SFSU was the location for a 1990 summer program created by Cleve Jones and Luke Adams "to train the next generation of gay and lesbian activists." One hundred young people, ages 18-30 — half of them men, half women, with equal distribution of white students and students of color — from all over the United States attended the month-long session at San Francisco State University.¹¹⁸⁶ Class topics included lesbian and gay history, philosophy, and psychology; confronting homophobia; AIDS; and lesbian health issues.¹¹⁸⁷

An ad hoc Committee for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth formed by Donna Keiki Ozawa and Beth Kivel organized its inaugural event in October 1988, a dance attended by approximately 40 queer youth at The Women's Building. Initial meetings were held at the Center for Special Problems and the group, which took the name LYRIC in 1989, set up office space at Operation Concern. Leaders of other youth advocacy groups helped LYRIC's founders in developing an organizational structure and mission to support "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth, their families, and allies of all races, classes, genders, and abilities." In 1991, LYRIC received support from the City of San Francisco to develop educational programs about sexuality, gender,

1180 Helene Whitson, "Introductory Essay," The San Francisco State College Strike Collection, <http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/essay.html>.

1181 This was the first gay students conference on any campus in the United States according to Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 74. But the conference program says that the Gay Academic Union began in 1973 and had held three prior conferences. "Symposium '76; April 15-17, San Francisco State University," conference program from collection of John Blackburn.

1182 "Symposium '76; April 15-17, San Francisco State University."

1183 Ibid.

1184 John Blackburn, interviewed by Donna Graves, December 21, 2013. *Patchwork, Newsletter of the California Association of Gay Student Organizations*, v. 1, no. 5 (May 1976), from the collection of John Blackburn.

1185 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 329.

1186 Cleve Jones and Jeff Dawson, *Stitching a Revolution: The Making of an Activist* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2000), 207.

1187 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 391.

homophobia, and transphobia. After operating briefly at The Women’s Building, LYRIC moved to its current home at 127 Collingwood Street in the Castro in 1993.¹¹⁸⁸

Organizing to Fight Anti-LGBTQ Violence

Historian Christina B. Hanhardt calls being the object of violence a “structuring feature in the lives of many who lived outside dominant heterosexuality in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.”¹¹⁸⁹ Being attacked in the home, on the streets, or in jails and prisons was especially common for women and men who “refused gender norms or those who lacked the privileges that came with wealth or whiteness,” Hanhardt notes.¹¹⁹⁰

LGBTQ San Franciscans formed organizations to fight anti-LGBTQ violence because protection from the police department could not be expected; in fact the police themselves were often perpetrators of violence. Leaders at Glide Memorial Church and homophile activists such as Del Martin organized a citywide police watchdog program, Citizens Alert, in the mid-1960s. Supported financially by the Tavern Guild, Citizens Alert hoped to reform the police department and offered advice and referrals to all who were socially marginalized and targets of violence — across race, sexual orientation, and other categories.¹¹⁹¹

Carl Wittman’s influential and widely distributed “Gay Manifesto,” published in 1970, calls physical attacks by police on San Francisco residents an important aspect of the oppression of queer people.¹¹⁹² Christina Hanhardt credits political strategies developed by LGBTQ activists in San Francisco and New York with demonstrating the nexus between LGBTQ visibility and anti-LGBTQ violence, as well as the importance of documenting anti-LGBTQ acts. These groups laid the foundation for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the federal Hate Crimes Statistic Act, introduced to Congress in 1985 and finally passed in 1990. The act is considered the first federal statute to explicitly acknowledge and counter the persecution of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.¹¹⁹³ (The first federal legislation to provide civil rights protection to transgender people was not passed until 2009.) Police violence against LGBTQ people in San Francisco was not eradicated, however. One of the most notable incidents was the notorious Castro Sweep Police Riot of 1989 when approximately half the officers on duty on a Friday evening closed down several blocks of Castro Street and beat up peaceful participants in an AIDS protest, as well as passersby.¹¹⁹⁴

Early LGBTQ Anti-Violence Organizations in San Francisco

Lavender Panthers

In 1973, Rev. Ray Broshears, founder of the Gay Activists Alliance (225 Turk Street, not extant), formed the Lavender Panthers to protect gay and transgender residents of the Tenderloin and

1188 LYRIC History, accessed February 13, 2015, <http://lyric.org/history/>. Lesbian activist/artist Karla Rosales remembers that, prior to LYRIC, Huckleberry House provided a supportive space for lesbian and gay youth. Initiated by Glide Memorial Church and the San Francisco Foundation in 1967, Huckleberry House was developed to provide services for runaway teens converging on San Francisco, especially the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood. Huckleberry House operated a shelter for runaways at 1 Broderick Street and Cole Street Youth Clinic at the corner of Cole and Haight Street. “Huckleberry Youth Programs: Our History,” accessed June 12, 2015, <http://www.huckleberryyouth.org/History.htm>.

1189 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 38.

1190 *Ibid.*

1191 *Ibid.*, 67.

1192 *Ibid.*, 87.

1193 *Ibid.*, 162-163.

1194 Gerard Koskovich, “Remembering a Police Riot: The Castro Sweep of October 6, 1989” in *Out in the Castro*.

Central City.¹¹⁹⁵ Broshears' confrontational style, which included arming members with sawed-off pool cues and shotguns, led to extensive media coverage, including articles in *Time* and *Rolling Stone* magazines and in newspapers as far away as Texas.¹¹⁹⁶

Butterfly Brigade

In 1974, two years after the Lavender Panthers disbanded, the Richard Heakin Memorial Butterfly Brigade, which operated out of the Gay Community Center at 330 Grove Street, was formed in response to the vitriolic antigay proclamations of Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign (discussed in more detail under the heading "Politics") and to the slaying of Richard Heakin, a 21-year-old gay man killed in Tucson, Arizona by teenagers who received probation for their crime.¹¹⁹⁷ Members of the brigade included journalist Randy Alfred; activists Hank Wilson and Ron Lanza; and Ali Marrero, one of the few women and people of color in the brigade. Weekend patrols started at Castro and 18th Streets; monitors armed with whistles and walkie-talkies were ready to draw attention to and stop anti-gay actions around the neighborhood. Like the Lavender Panthers, the Butterfly Brigade ended after about one year, but Wilson estimated that over 30,000 whistles continued to be distributed for an ongoing campaign to both welcome and warn new gay arrivals to San Francisco.¹¹⁹⁸

Community United Against Violence

The assassination of San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk at City Hall on November 27, 1978, was not an isolated occurrence; it was perceived by many as "merely the most high-profile act of violence in an era that was marked by shocking violence against ...homosexuals."¹¹⁹⁹ After the assassinations of Milk and Mayor George Moscone, Community United Against Violence (CUAV) was formed to protect gay residents of the Castro and promote overall community safety. CUAV created a speakers bureau whose members spoke about homophobia in schools, collected statistics on antigay violence, and pressured the San Francisco Police Department to record antigay incidents.¹²⁰⁰ The organization also developed surveys, reports, statistics, and analyses of hate crimes against the LGBTQ communities.¹²⁰¹ In 1981, the City and County of San Francisco contracted with CUAV to provide supportive services for victims of hate crimes and to develop a safety-monitoring program for large public events such as the annual Freedom Day parade, Halloween on Castro Street, the Gay Games (described in more detail below), and the Folsom Street Fair.

Lesbians Against Police Violence

While lesbians had been less victimized by antigay violence (though they were subjected to ongoing violence that women have always faced), two 1979 attacks by San Francisco police officers on patrons in lesbian bars inspired women to organize around this issue. In the first incident, a group of rowdy drunk men, including several off-duty San Francisco police officers, were denied entry to Peg's Place (4737 Geary Street), a Richmond District lesbian bar. The men burst into the bar, reportedly yelling, "Let's get the dykes!" The doorwoman was put in a chokehold, and the

1195 An undated flyer for Gay Activists Alliance lists Lavender Panthers as among the activities at the Helping Hands Center, 225 Turk Street. Gay Activists Alliance (Gay Liberation Alliance) folder, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1196 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 93, 98.

1197 "Richard J. 'Dickie' Heakin Jr. Collection," Tucson LGBTQ Museum, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://tucsongaymuseum.org/richardheakincollection.htm>.

1198 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 100. An illustration of a Butterfly Brigade card on page 102 shows that it was located at 330 Grove Street and a flyer reproduced on page 103 shows that a public meeting was held at the Collingwood Recreation Center.

1199 Sides, *Erotic City*, 7.

1200 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 158. Organizational History, Finding Aid for CUAV, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1201 Organizational History, Finding Aid for CUAV, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

bartender was beaten so badly with a pool cue that she spent ten days in the hospital.¹²⁰² In the second incident, two women leaving the Valencia Street bar Amelia's were beaten by police, strip-searched, charged with disorderly conduct, and detained in jail overnight.¹²⁰³

In response to these incidents, a meeting at The Women's Building drew over 100 women who created a new organization, Lesbians Against Police Violence (LAPV). LAPV members saw their own vulnerability as connected to that of low-income people and people of color, especially in the Mission District they shared. For two years, LAPV produced cartoons, skits, and street performances that pointed out the selective nature of police violence.¹²⁰⁴ LAPV brought 250 members and allies to a women's professional basketball league "banner day" game at Civic Auditorium (99 Grove Street). They unfurled a huge banner announcing LESBIANS AGAINST POLICE VIOLENCE. When auditorium security could not get them to remove the sign, the San Francisco police were called. Reportedly, the police declined after saying, "You want *us* to take down a banner that says 'Lesbians Against Police Violence'? You've got to be kidding!"¹²⁰⁵

Family Rights and Marriage

LGBTQ experience and history are deeply related to questions about family identity and the formation of intimate kinship. For most queer people, even today, relationships to members of their family of origin and their families of choice present complicated emotional, social, and legal issues. Until relatively recently, medical and legal perspectives on marriage and parenthood limited many possibilities for LGBTQ people. Growing up in San Francisco, activist Del Martin recalls, even women who understood their lesbian identity felt great pressure to marry a man and have children. "That was the thing you're supposed to do—to get married and have kids."¹²⁰⁶

When homosexuality was defined as criminal and pathological, gay men and lesbians who had married and were parents before the 1970s usually chose to live double lives or otherwise hide their full identities. The consequences of revealing that they were gay or lesbian were usually swift and severely negative. The central issues that gay fathers and lesbian mothers faced included loss of custody and visitation rights with their children from marriages to members of the opposite sex. Historian Daniel Rivers says that California was one of the "early and frequent battlegrounds between gay and lesbian parents, their ex-spouses, and sometimes other family members, along with political, legal, and religious advocates on either side."¹²⁰⁷ Judges in custody cases often based their decisions on the premise that gay men and lesbians might molest their children, and that their children would suffer from social stigma. Even when lesbian or gay parents were granted custody, they could be required to sign affidavits agreeing that their homosexual partners would never be around their children, or that they would stop engaging in any gay rights activism.¹²⁰⁸

Homophile Organizations and Family Rights

In 1956, the Daughters of Bilitis held the first known discussion groups on lesbian motherhood; they were titled "Raising Children in a 'Deviant' Relationship."¹²⁰⁹ Daughters of Bilitis founder Del Martin, who had lost custody of her daughter to her ex-husband, was among the homophile activists who drafted a "Homosexual Bill of Rights" in 1961 that included the right to have children

1202 Sides, *Erotic City*, 165.

1203 Finding Aid to Meg Barnett and Lesbians Against Police Violence Records, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1204 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 117, 130.

1205 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 394.

1206 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 16.

1207 *Ibid.*, 56.

1208 *Ibid.*, 61.

1209 *Ibid.*, 49.

and the right to retain custody of them.¹²¹⁰ In partnership with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, the Daughters of Bilitis organized the first public discussion on parenting for both gay men and lesbians at Glide Memorial Church in 1966. Gay male organizations in San Francisco in the early 1960s were apparently less focused on parental issues; the Mattachine Society supported “legal recognition of permanent homosexual relations,” but claimed that adoption of children by gay couples should not occur until it was established that their living situation would not cause a child to become homosexual. The Society for Individual Rights said that questions of marriage and parenthood should be deferred until sexual conduct between men was decriminalized.¹²¹¹

Lesbian Mothers Union

Women in the San Francisco Bay Area formed the first lesbian-mother activist group in 1971, the Lesbian Mothers Union (LMU). Pat Norman, Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, and others founded the LMU after attending a lesbian-feminist conference in Los Angeles where their concerns as mothers were dismissed. The LMU organized discussion groups and social events and provided childcare at lesbian-feminist gatherings. Pat Norman, who became the San Francisco Department of Public Health’s first liaison to the gay and lesbian communities, recalls that LMU took:

[R]esponsibility for teaching people who had any say in our lives. Social workers, judges, doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists. We actually went to schools, we went to high schools, we went anywhere there were people that we could talk to, to explain not only homosexuality and gay rights, but also lesbian mothers and lesbian mothers’ rights. And children of lesbian mothers as well.¹²¹²

The LMU and other organizations also raised funds to help women with legal defense of their parental rights.

The custody case in 1977 of a San Francisco woman named Jean Jullion received national attention and raised visibility for lesbian mothers. Jullion had moved to San Francisco and come out the previous year during a separation from her husband — prompting her husband to sue for custody of their children. Jill Lippitt, a partner at the Feminist Law Offices (1197 Valencia Street, extant), helped Jullion create a defense committee that included about twenty-five women.¹²¹³ The committee sought support from numerous Bay Area progressive individuals and organizations, ranging from Harvey Milk to the Black Panthers to Bay Area Women Against Rape, but ultimately Julian lost custody of her older son because the judge would not place an adolescent with a lesbian parent.¹²¹⁴

Gay Father Organizing

Gay men had an even more difficult time gaining custody of their children from previous heterosexual relationships and usually lost any rights to contact if they came out. Even for those who held on to custody, the path was not smooth. Author Alysia Abbott describes being raised in San Francisco by her openly gay father, poet and literary organizer Steve Abbott, after her mother died in a car accident: “It wasn’t easy being a single gay father in the 1970s. There were no books on

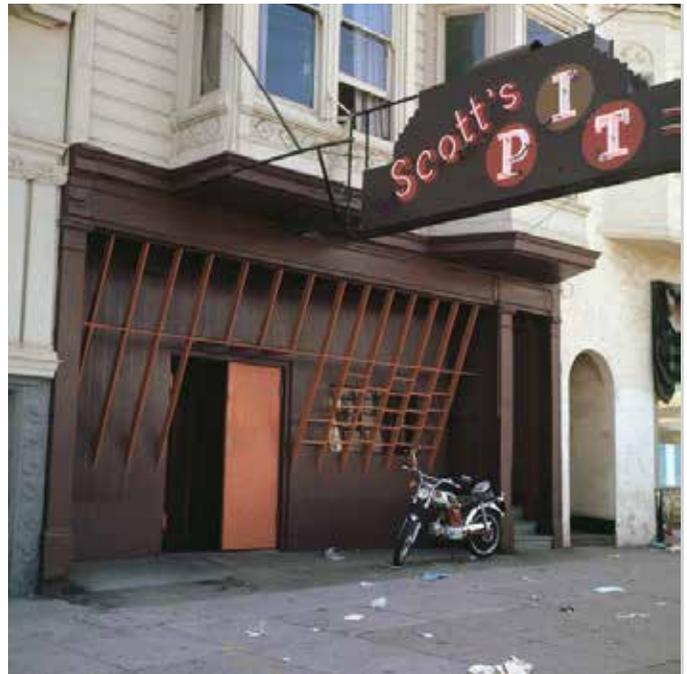
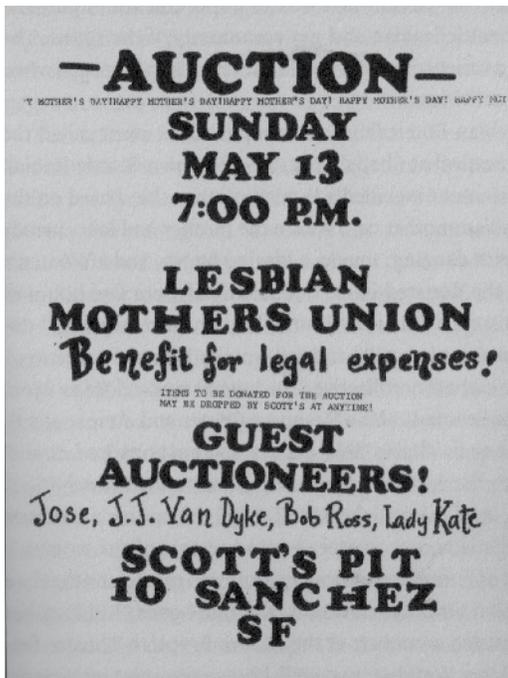
1210 Ibid., 47.

1211 Ibid., 48.

1212 Ibid., 237.

1213 The Feminist Law Offices of Jill Lippitt and Judy Baer were located at 1197 Valencia Street in the mid-1970s. Valencia Street map in Businesses Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1214 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 66, 91.



LEFT: Flyer for Lesbian Mothers Union benefit, date unknown
RIGHT: Scott's Pit at 10 Sanchez Street, pre-2002
(Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

gay parenting, no listservs, as there would be decades later. There were no models. For better or for worse, my father was making up the rules as he went along.”¹²¹⁵

In 1975, the San Francisco-based magazine *Gay Sunshine* published a groundbreaking article titled “A Faggot Father Speaks Out.” Later that year a group of fathers found each other at the Gay Freedom Day parade and went on to form San Francisco Bay Area Gay Fathers. Among the organization’s founding members was Bill Jones (owner of the Sutro Bathhouse, described in “Development of Sex-Based Communities”), who was reportedly the first single gay man (although closeted at the time) to adopt a child in the U.S. Jones recalls that the sympathetic social worker in charge of the adoption took a “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach to his identity.¹²¹⁶ The San Francisco Bay Area Gay Father’s membership, which included about 40 fathers by the end of its first year, transitioned quickly from an initial focus on radical gender politics to organizing assistance around custody and visitation. Jones remembers the monthly meetings held in members’ homes ballooning in 1977, when the larger mobilization of gays and lesbians against Anita Bryant’s “Save Our Children” campaign took hold.¹²¹⁷ Records indicate that the group met at the Haight Senior Center (1360 Waller Street, extant), the First Congregational Church (491 Post Street, extant), and St. Francis Lutheran Church (152 Church Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 39) in the early 1980s.¹²¹⁸ By 1984, the group had created a Gay Fathers’ Crisis Fund, and one of their members spoke about fathers’ rights at a gay rights rally outside the 1984 Democratic National Convention, which was held at the Moscone Center. Within a few years, however, the group began declining because a large percentage of members suffered and died of AIDS; historian Daniel Rivers estimates that AIDS killed anywhere from 70 to 90 percent of members of gay fathers’ groups in Los Angeles and San Francisco.¹²¹⁹

Lesbian Rights Project/National Center for Lesbian Rights

San Francisco attorney Donna Hitchens formed the Lesbian Rights Project in 1977 as a program of Equal Rights Advocates, a San Francisco women’s organization. In 1982, the LRP published the *Lesbian Mother Litigation Manual*, providing a critical tool for lawyers fighting lesbian custody cases across the United States.¹²²⁰ By the early 1980s, the LRP was operating out of an office at 1370 Mission Street (extant) and was helping women with issues regarding donor insemination, parental rights, and employment. The women’s health movement of the 1960s and 1970s, combined with advances in medical and popular understanding of fertility and insemination, led to a fundamental shift in the nature of gay, and especially lesbian, parenthood. According to Daniel Rivers, by the mid-1970s informal lesbian insemination networks were active in selected areas of the U.S. and were especially prominent in the Bay Area.¹²²¹ The number of inquiries to the LRP about donor insemination climbed steeply during the 1980s, and in 1983, LRP published *Lesbians Choosing Motherhood: Legal Implications in Donor Insemination*.¹²²²

In 1988, the LRP became independent from Equal Rights Advocates and was renamed the National Center for Lesbian Rights to reflect its broader geographic reach. Among the issues it pioneered in this period was adoption by gay and lesbian parents. In 1986, the NCLR successfully supported San

1215 Alysia Abbott, *Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2013), 94.

1216 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 181. Bill Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 30, 2014.

1217 Bill Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 30, 2014. Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 120-21.

1218 SF Bay Area Gay Fathers Newsletters 1982-1985, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletters Collection.

1219 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 134-35.

1220 *Ibid.*, 109.

1221 *Ibid.*, 169. The Oakland Feminist Women’s Health Center established a sperm bank in 1986 that served women throughout Northern California. Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 179

1222 Lesbian Rights Project Newsletter, v.1. no. 1 (n.d.), Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletter Collection.

Franciscans Becky Smith and Annie Afleck, who became the first lesbian or gay couple in the U.S. to jointly adopt. In 1987, NCLR founder Donna Hitchens and her partner Nancy Davis were the first couple to successfully petition in Family Court in a second-parent adoption case, in which one partner adopts the birth child of the other.

The emergence of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s reinforced a shift toward domestic and relational rights that gay and lesbian parents already had been struggling with. As the epidemic took its toll, LRP/NCRL began representing gay men in cases related to child custody and access to family leave to care for a dying lover.¹²²³ In 1989, the New York-based National Gay and Lesbian Task Force partnered with NCLR to launch the Lesbian and Gay Families Project, which focused on gay and lesbian parenting rights, with work on domestic partnership, employment and insurance benefits, and the rights for lesbians and gay men to be involved in medical and legal decisions about their partners.¹²²⁴

NCLR also supported lesbian and gay issues on immigration, military service, and employment discrimination, but partnership, custody, adoption, and reproductive rights made up the majority of the work. According to a 1992 NCLR annual report, these topics increased in the preceding five years from just under 65 percent of their work to over 75 percent.¹²²⁵

Domestic Partnerships and Marriage

Among Western nations, the U.S. legal system draws the sharpest line between the rights of married and unmarried people; many benefits associated with marital status in the U.S., such as access to coverage under a partner's health insurance, have no association with marriage in other countries. During the 1960s and 1970s, the gay liberation and feminist movements sought to challenge the fundamental role marriage and gender played in society and individual lives. The New Right backlash against these movements focused on family as the battleground for American values. During the 1980s, gay and lesbian advocates continued to argue for a more inclusive definition of family but also strengthened efforts to gain access to rights and benefits associated with traditional marriage.¹²²⁶

Historian George Chauncey asserts that “profound changes wrought in lesbian and gay life in the 1980s and 1990s by the AIDS crisis and the boom in lesbian and gay parenting” helped propel the debate over, and quest for, marriage rights.¹²²⁷ From 1982 to 1990, San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt and others worked to pass local legislation supporting domestic partnerships, giving same-sex couples some of the municipal protections and benefits that straight married partners enjoyed; in 1990, the legislation finally passed.¹²²⁸ The following year more than 275 couples registered their relationships on Valentine's Day in San Francisco City Hall, where an interdenominational religious ceremony was held on the outside steps and the newly registered partners filed in procession down the ornate interior staircase to the rotunda floor.¹²²⁹

1223 Lesbian Rights Project Newsletter, v. 2 no. 1 (November 1985). Lesbian Rights Project Newsletter, v. 3 no. 1 (Fall 1987). Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Newsletter Collection.

1224 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 196.

1225 National Center for Lesbian Rights, “15th Anniversary Report,” National Center for Lesbian Rights file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1226 Nancy D. Polikoff, *Beyond (Straight and Gay Marriage): Valuing All Families Under the Law* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), passim.

1227 Chauncey, *Why Marriage?*, 3.

1228 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 405.

1229 *Ibid.*, 407.

GAY PRIDE IN THE STREETS: PARADES AND STREET FAIRS

LGBTQ Freedom and Pride Parades

Pride parades have become significant events in most North American cities and in many European, Asian, and South American cities as well. Typically held in conjunction with other gay pride events, often in June, pride parades offer a visible collective “coming out,” and opportunities for local LGBTQ communities to advocate for legal and social change. As Elizabeth Armstrong describes them, pride parades are “an annual celebration of the organizational infrastructure that grounds the life of San Francisco’s lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community.”¹²³⁰ The San Francisco parade has become a major tourist attraction and one of the largest annual celebrations of its type in the country.

The first San Francisco parade was formed by a small group that marched down Polk Street from Aquatic Park to City Hall in June 1970; it was one of a handful of events held in a few cities to commemorate the Stonewall Riots that happened in New York the previous year.¹²³¹ Gay liberationists gathered the next day for a “gay-in” in Golden Gate Park.¹²³² The following year, a parade titled Christopher Street West—in reference to the main street in the gay section of New York’s Greenwich Village—drew 50,000 onlookers who watched dozens of floats and 4,000 marchers go from Pine and Polk Streets to City Hall.¹²³³ Rev. Ray Broshears, one of the parade organizers, led a chant against Mayor Alioto for not proclaiming the day as Gay Pride Day.¹²³⁴ The national magazine *The Advocate* described the parade participants:

[A]most every specter of the gay community was pulled together in the parade, including every San Francisco Gay organization except the Daughters of Bilitis, the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, and the Gay Sunshine Collective, some of whose members participated as individuals. Drag queens, gay businesses, entertainers, religious groups, prison groups, gay organizations, reigning “royalty,” leather men, radicals, street people, conservatives, lesbians, and “hunky guys” were all represented in parade contingents.¹²³⁵

In 1973, two events competed for participants: a Gay Freedom Day parade and a Festival of Gay Liberation, which took place at the Civic Center. Later that year, a nonprofit organization known as Pride Foundation was formed, in part to prevent future conflicts. Several thousand people gathered for a post-parade celebration in Golden Gate Park’s Marx Meadow.¹²³⁶ The 1975 parade featured Empress Doris, a member of San Francisco’s Imperial Court, who led the parade while riding on an elephant, as well as a larger number of women and gay professionals, according to historian Greg Pennington. Bay Area Gay Liberation was the largest contingent.¹²³⁷ In 1977, the parade began a route up Market Street from downtown to City Hall, and in 1982 added a celebration in Civic Center Plaza.¹²³⁸

1230 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 1.

1231 Sides, *Erotic City*, 96.

1232 *Ibid.*, 135.

1233 Greg L. Pennington, “Mirrors of Our Community: A History of the Gay Parades in San Francisco,” *San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* v.1 no. 4 (June 1986): 4.

1234 Pennington, “Mirrors of Our Community,” 4.

1235 Attendance is from Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 67. *The Advocate* July 19, 1972 cited in Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 108.

1236 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 67.

1237 Pennington, “Mirrors of Our Community,” 4.

1238 SF Pride, “History of Pride 1977,” accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.sfpride.org/heritage/1977.html>.



TOP: Parade on Polk Street, 1976 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)
BOTTOM: Gay Pride Parade on Market Street, 1982 (Photo by Greg Day, courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

From 1988 to 1992, the route began in the Castro District, with the traditional endpoint in Civic Center Plaza.¹²³⁹ In 1993, the route returned to Market Street but began at Civic Center and ended at the Embarcadero, as a means to avoid major construction projects.¹²⁴⁰ The parade's current route west from lower Market Street to around Eighth Street began in the late 1990s.

Inspired by antigay backlash, the parades of 1977 and 1978 drew record numbers—200,000 and 350,000 respectively. Gay Freedom Day became the biggest parade in San Francisco. Randy Shilts called the 1978 parade “the signal event of the gay emergence in San Francisco during the late 1970s,” and speculated that it may have been the largest single political gathering in San Francisco, and perhaps in the country, in the 1970s.¹²⁴¹ The record turnout was in large part due to organizing against the growing national antigay activism of the New Right. Harvey Milk spoke at the rally at City Hall at the end of the parade: “I want to recruit you. I want to recruit you for the fight to preserve your democracy from the John Briggses and Anita Bryants who are trying to constitutionalize bigotry.”¹²⁴² For that same parade, a group of artists created a rainbow flag based on a design by artist Gilbert Baker. The flag was fabricated at the Pride Center (330 Grove Street); according to Baker, the colors of the hand-dyed fabrics were symbolic: hot pink for sexuality; red for life; orange for healing; yellow for sun; green for serenity with nature; turquoise for art; indigo for harmony; violet for spirit.¹²⁴³ In subsequent years, the rainbow flag gradually came to be recognized and used internationally as a symbol for LGBTQ pride.

As historian Elizabeth Armstrong documents, the annual parades reflect the “cultural elaboration of gay life in San Francisco” as well as gay commercial and political development.¹²⁴⁴ Bars could afford to build elaborate floats, thus enlivening the events. Given its importance as a tourist attraction and economic engine, the parade began receiving funding from the City of San Francisco in 1978.¹²⁴⁵

In 1977, a small group of lesbians informally rode motorcycles at the head of the parade; in 1980, a male parade organizer tried to push the bikes out of the lead, according to community historian Glenne McElhinney.¹²⁴⁶ That year, a group of lesbians criticized Gay Freedom Day as a male-dominated event and requested that women not participate. Others aired critiques about relative absence of people of color and people with disabilities. In February 1981, the event unified under the new name International Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day. The Freedom Day parade added bisexual and transgender to its official name in 1994.¹²⁴⁷ In 1995, it became the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride Celebration.¹²⁴⁸

Women and transgender organizers in San Francisco eventually decided not only to participate in the LGBT Pride event, but also to launch separate marches during Pride weekend to celebrate together and bring visibility to their own communities and concerns. In June 1993, the first San Francisco Dyke March was held on the Saturday evening before the annual LGBT Pride parade. In contrast to the increasingly elaborate and commercial LGBT Pride parade, the Dyke March was

1239 SF Pride, “History of Pride 1988,” accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.sfpride.org/heritage/1988.html>.

1240 SF Pride, “History of Pride 1993,” accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.sfpride.org/heritage/1993.html>.

1241 Shilts quoted in Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 129.

1242 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 70.

1243 Glenne McElhinney shared her research on the Rainbow Flag and its initial production by a group of artists. Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 70.

1244 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 119.

1245 SF Pride, “History of Pride 1978,” accessed June 12, 2014 <http://www.sfpride.org/heritage/1978.html>.

1246 Glenne McElhinney in “Dykes on Bikes Exhibit Tour,” 2008 video, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ3alostOhQ>.

1247 Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 146, 184.

1248 SF Pride, “History of Pride 1995,” accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.sfpride.org/heritage/1995.html>.

a militant, participatory, informal walk from Dolores Park in the Mission District to Castro and Market Streets. The city's first Dyke March was attended by 10,000 people; in 1994 attendance more than doubled to 25,000.¹²⁴⁹ Transgender community members followed with a march of their own on the Friday of Pride weekend starting in 2004; the procession takes marchers from a rally in Dolores Park to Turk and Taylor Streets in the Tenderloin, the former site of Compton's Cafeteria.¹²⁵⁰

Street Fairs and Festivals¹²⁵¹

Castro Street Fair

The Castro Village Association, organized in 1974 by Harvey Milk and others to better represent gay business interests in the increasingly gay Castro, began hosting an annual Street Fair in 1975. The first event drew 5,000 participants. In 1977, fairgoers could try their hand at dunking Harvey Milk in a water tank erected in front of Castro Camera, a stunt to raise money against the Briggs Initiative.¹²⁵²

South of Market Street Fairs

The Folsom Street Fair was started in 1984 by a group of local activists led by lesbian Kathleen Connell and gay Filipino American Michael Valerio. They wanted to demonstrate that the neighborhood—which had been significantly disrupted by demolition undertaken by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency but was still home to populations of immigrants, elders, gay men, and others—was not simply an empty shell waiting for urban renewal. Working with several community groups, they organized Megahood, the first Folsom Street Fair, which drew 30,000 people to an area from Seventh to Twelfth to Streets, between Howard and Harrison, with Folsom Street at the center. Connell and Valerio had been inspired by how Harvey Milk had used the Castro Street Fair as a platform to mobilize and organize diverse LGBTQ constituencies. The first fair included local crafts and a dance stage run by the emerging lesbian DJ Page Hodel.

The inaugural SoMa fair drew approximately 30,000 people and raised almost \$20,000 for charity; attendance reportedly doubled each year for many years, expanding the fair to Division Street and other side streets. It also rapidly became more than just a local event, drawing people from across the U.S. and eventually from all over the world. What had began as a neighborhood empowerment event soon evolved into a leather, sadomasochist, and kink fair. A smaller leather fair called Up Your Alley was first held in 1985. In 1990, it merged with the Folsom Street Fair and the two fairs became known as the South of Market Merchants' and Individuals Lifestyle Events (SMMILE). Although not exclusively leather-focused, the SMMILE events continue as "occasions[s] for the leather community to come out in force and in full dress."¹²⁵³

By the mid 1990s, organizers of the major LGBTQ street fairs realized that they needed to coordinate scheduling of their events to maximize attendance and save the energy of the many volunteer organizers. For this reason, San Francisco LGBT Pride events are held on the last

1249 Elizabeth Gail Currans, *Performing Gender, Enacting Community: Women, Whiteness and Belief in Contemporary Public Demonstrations*, Diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2007, 53.

1250 "A History Of Gay Freedom Day, Dyke March, And Trans March," *SFist*, accessed January 12, 2015, http://sfist.com/2013/06/28/reminder_trans_march_today_dyke_mar.php.

1251 A Valencia Street Fair was organized for some time in the 1980s. Only a single poster associated with the fair (1983) was found during the course of this research.

1252 Matthew Bajko, "Castro Fair Marks 40 Years," *Bay Area Reporter*, October 3-9, 2013.

1253 Rubin, "The Miracle Mile," 268. The Up Your Alley Fair began on Ringgold Alley and changed its name to Dore Alley Fair in 1986 when it moved to Dore Alley.

weekend in June, Up Your Alley on the last Sunday in July, Folsom Street Fair on the last Sunday in September, and Castro Street Fair on the first Sunday in October.¹²⁵⁴

POLITICS

LGBTQ struggles for equal rights were fought using community-based street politics along with more formal mainstream politics. The Council on Religion and the Homosexual may have provided the first link between mainstream politicians and homophile activists in San Francisco. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin remembered an explicitly political impetus for reaching out to clergy to form the CRH. Politicians such as Congressman Phillip Burton had advised them that they would need religious leaders behind them in order to change laws related to sexuality. The CRH organized the first-ever candidate night with a homosexual audience in the summer of 1965 at Glide Memorial Church.¹²⁵⁵

Increasing geographic concentration and visibility of gay men and lesbians in San Francisco through the 1970s meant that opportunities for achieving local power through electoral politics grew. Candidate nights sponsored by gay and lesbian organizations became common and virtually required for those who were seeking local office from all but the conservative end of the spectrum. Community member David Harrell recalled that the Society for Individual Rights formed a political committee that organized candidate nights for hopeful campaigners who were “willing to come and speak to a gay group ... I’ll vote for them It had a real impact Here are these guys [who] had the nerve to show up and be proud of it They could have gotten ... a lot of flack from other organizations if they knew they had done it.”¹²⁵⁶ SIR had become the largest gay group in the nation by 1967, with a membership of more than 1,200, reinforcing the fact that gay people could be a potent political constituency.¹²⁵⁷

Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club

In 1971, Jim Foster, cofounder of the Society for Individual Rights, activist lawyer Rick Stokes, and David Goodstein, owner of *The Advocate* (which had moved from Los Angeles to the Bay Area), formed San Francisco’s Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club, the first registered gay Democratic Party organization in the nation. Foster and his colleagues wanted a forum that would focus more gay-movement energy on electoral politics.¹²⁵⁸ Meetings took place at the SIR Center (330 Grove Street), the Eureka Valley Recreation Center (100 Collingwood Street, extant), and a rotating set of gay bars and restaurants.¹²⁵⁹ Club members canvassed door-to-door, raising “Dollars for Democrats” and reaching out to Democratic Party elected officials in local, state, and national offices. The club showed its value to Democratic officials in 1972, when members raised funds and secured a disproportionate number of signatures at gay bars to ensure that Senator George McGovern would appear as a presidential candidate on the California primary ballot.¹²⁶⁰ Returning

1254 Kathleen Connell and Paul Gabriel, “The Power of Broken Hearts: The Origin and Evolution of the Folsom Street Fair.” This article is provided with the permission of authors Kathleen Connell and Paul Gabriel for the GLBT Historical Society, all rights reserved. Folsom Street Events, accessed May 4, 2014, <http://folsomstreetfair.org/heritage/>.

1255 Interview with Lyon and Martin in “The Council on Religion and the Homosexual,” LGBT Religious Archive Networks <http://www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/CRH/Room.aspx?RID=2&CID=7>. Location of meeting from *Before Stonewall*.

1256 David Harrell, interviewed by Terence Kissack, July 2, 2000, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1257 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 50.

1258 John-Manuel Andriote, *Victory Deferred: How AIDS Changed Gay Life In America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 9.

1259 Alice Reports: Newsletter for the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Alice Reports newsletters for the mid-1970s show meetings and events at the 527 Club (527 Bryant Street), Jackson’s Restaurant, Sutter’s Mill, and the Corner Grocery Bar.

1260 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 63.

the favor, the Democratic Party allowed Jim Foster and Madeline Davis to speak at their convention in Miami, the first openly gay and lesbian speakers to address a national party convention. In his televised speech, Foster proposed a gay rights plank for the party platform, proclaiming, “We do not come to you pleading your understanding or begging your tolerance. We come to you affirming our pride in our life-style, affirming the validity to seek and maintain meaningful emotional relationships and affirming our right to participate in the life of this country on an equal basis with every citizen.”¹²⁶¹ Foster was able to focus his time increasingly on Toklas Club activities after he began to draw a salary as executive director of the newly formed Whitman-Radclyffe Foundation in 1971. The foundation was bankrolled by David Goodstein, a financial professional and lawyer whose termination from a San Francisco bank inspired his activism and philanthropy related to gay rights.¹²⁶²

By 1972, Foster and the Toklas Club had built an especially close relationship with San Francisco Supervisor Dianne Feinstein.¹²⁶³ Foster had been encouraging Feinstein to amend San Francisco’s nondiscrimination law to add the words “sex and sexual orientation” since 1969. In 1972, with urging from the Toklas Club, Feinstein successfully introduced the ordinance prohibiting city contractors from discriminating against gays and lesbians.¹²⁶⁴ Feinstein ally and Toklas Club vice president Jo Daly was active in local, statewide, and national Democratic politics. She was appointed a staff member of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission in 1975, reportedly the first government official anywhere whose salaried job was to serve the gay community.¹²⁶⁵ She went on to be named the first openly gay member of the San Francisco Police Commission, serving from 1979 to 1986, then was appointed as the first openly lesbian woman appointed to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, serving from 1980 to 1986.

Labor organizer Sal Rosselli became President of the Toklas Club in 1984, the year after representatives from a number of unions came together to create the San Francisco Lesbian-Gay Labor Alliance (LGLA). The organization aimed to address employment issues faced by gay and lesbian workers and to increase awareness of class issues and unions among gay men and lesbians.¹²⁶⁶

A.B. 437 Campaign

One of the most important statewide political campaigns for San Francisco activists was passage of A.B. 437, which repealed state laws related to sodomy and other sexual acts that for over 100 years had been used to harass and imprison LGBTQ people. On June 20, 1971, members of San Francisco’s Metropolitan Community Church congregation marched from Lake Merritt in Oakland to the state capitol in Sacramento for a statewide A.B. 437 rally.¹²⁶⁷ The Toklas Club worked closely with the legislation’s author, San Francisco Assemblymember Willie Brown, to prepare and pass the bill. Brown’s early years as an attorney, which included defending closeted gay and lesbian teachers

1261 Ibid., 64.

1262 Dudley Cleninden and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 248. Goodstein purchased *The Advocate*, the only national gay magazine, in late 1974 and moved it to the Bay Area until c. 1982. The Whitman-Radclyffe Foundation is listed at 2131 Union Street in a 1976 newsletter of the Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club.

1263 “The History of the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club, San Francisco, 1971-2004,” accessed September 10, 2014, <http://www.outhistory.org/exhibits/show/alice-b-toklas-lgbt-democratic>.

1264 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 64.

1265 Sabin Russel, “Jo Day, 51, First Lesbian on S.F. Police Panel,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1997, accessed June 14, 2014, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Jo-Daly-51-First-Lesbian-on-S-F-Police-Panel-2803150.php>.

1266 Tina Gianoulas, “Organized Labor,” (2008) *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture*, accessed June 13, 2015.

1267 MCC San Francisco, “MCCSF Timeline,” accessed February 22, 2014, <http://mccsf.org/timeline/> accessed.

whose employment was threatened, had sensitized him to discrimination against homosexuals. His assembly district included many gay and lesbian constituents, and he had participated in a SIR candidate night in 1968.¹²⁶⁸ SIR had engaged a young Latino activist, George Raya, as the first full-time lobbyist in Sacramento to work on the bill. Rick Stokes' lobbying also secured many endorsements, including some from law enforcement organizations.¹²⁶⁹ In May 1975, State Senator George Moscone and Assemblymember Willie Brown led an effort to repeal California's sodomy law in both houses of the legislature. It was soon signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown Jr.¹²⁷⁰

Harvey Milk

Experiencing explosive growth and activism in the 1970s, the gay community also saw the development of internal differences regarding political goals. As historian John D'Emilio recounts:

For some gay men liberation meant freedom from harassment; for radical lesbians that meant overthrowing the patriarchy. Bay Area Gay Liberation participated in anti-imperialist coalitions while members of the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club sought to climb within the Democratic Party hierarchy.... Sexual orientation created a kind of unity, but other aspects of identity brought to the surface conflicting needs and interests.¹²⁷¹

Harvey Milk's rise as an activist and gay community organizer highlighted the growing fissure between the reform politics of groups like the Society for Individual Rights and the Toklas Club and a more confrontational approach that in some ways carried the left-coalition social-movement positions of gay liberation into the field of electoral politics.

Milk, a former Wall Street investment researcher and theater producer, moved to San Francisco in 1973 and opened a small camera shop at 573 Castro Street; he lived upstairs with his lover, Scott Smith, at 575 Castro Street (extant, S.F. Landmark No. 227). That same year, Milk decided to run for a seat on the Board of Supervisors on a broadly progressive platform and approached Jim Foster for an endorsement. Foster declined, setting up a dynamic that reinforced tensions between the more accommodationist strategists Foster represented and the growing faction of supporters of Milk, who believed "you're never given power, you have to take it."¹²⁷² As journalist Randy Shilts relates, "Harvey's angry outbursts at Foster and the gay moderates only solidified their opposition to him. The gay Alice Toklas Democratic club did not even come near endorsing him.... Drag queens, however, did not share the moderates' disdain of Harvey. They had no investment in respectability. José Sarria proudly put his name at the top of Milk's endorsement list."¹²⁷³

Milk lost the election for supervisor, but discovered another forum for creating change and getting votes by joining the new Castro Village Association, a merchant's group that harnessed the increasing economic clout of business owners who were a key part of the Castro neighborhood's transformation. Milk saw that one way to gain power was through economic power—and he tested the idea through a partnership with organized labor. Howard Wallace, one of the founders of Bay Area Gay Liberation, was instrumental in connecting Milk and the gay community with the Teamsters union-led boycott against distributors of Coors beer in 1973.¹²⁷⁴ Milk and Bob Ross,

1268 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 195.

1269 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 105. "George Raya," accessed June 12, 2014, <http://gayinsacramento.com/raya01.htm>.

1270 Sides, *Erotic City*, 115.

1271 D'Emilio, "Gay Politics, Gay Community," 87.

1272 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 75.

1273 *Ibid.*

1274 Tim Redmond, "Howard Wallace, LGBT Icon, Dies at 76," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, November 15, 2012, accessed June 15, 2015, <http://www.sfbg.com/politics/2012/11/15/howard-wallace-lgbt-icon-dies-76>.



Harvey Milk celebrating his election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 1977 (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

publisher of a local gay weekly, the *Bay Area Reporter*, enlisted gay bar owners and patrons in a successful campaign.¹²⁷⁵ Labor historian Miriam Frank writes that the “gaycott” did not transform the cultures of the Castro or the Teamsters, but it “did become the talk of the San Francisco labor scene, inspiring curiosity and respect.”¹²⁷⁶ Milk’s speechwriter, Frank Robinson, recalled that endorsements for Milk by the Electrical Workers, the Fireman’s Union, and the Union Labor Party followed.¹²⁷⁷ The gay-labor alliance created during the Coors boycott continued in the 1978 campaign against the Briggs Initiative (described under the heading “Briggs Initiative: Proposition 6”).

Milk continued to run for office with a growing cadre of volunteer supporters from his Castro Street storefront: He ran unsuccessfully a second time for supervisor in 1975 and then for State Assembly in 1976. Mainstream Democratic leaders and their moderate gay followers did not support Milk in either race, and even went so far as to bring in Massachusetts Rep. Elaine Noble, the first openly gay member of the United States Congress, to stump for his opponent, Art Agnos.¹²⁷⁸ Although Milk lost, the fall election of 1976 also featured a proposal to shift from citywide election of supervisors to district election, which would permit candidates to run with less downtown funding and more neighborhood support; the initiative passed with support from an alliance of union, gay, and neighborhood activists.

In 1977, Milk ran for the board again, and in November, he was elected as the first openly gay person to win public office in California. Heralding a different era of San Francisco politics, Harvey Milk was part of a newly diverse board along with Carol Ruth Silver, a single mother; Gordon Lau, a Chinese American; and Ella Hill Hutch, an African American woman. Milk introduced successful legislation that expanded gay rights, including protection from being fired because of one’s sexual orientation. But Milk’s political vision was not solely focused on gay rights. He forged a productive bond between the Chinese-American and gay Democratic clubs in the city, argued against major redevelopment projects that evicted longtime neighborhood residents, and received much attention for his “pooper scooper” law that required dog owners to clean up after their pets in public parks and on the street.¹²⁷⁹ *Bay Area Reporter* publisher Bob Ross relates how Milk took a “dog for a walk through Duboce Park and purposely left a mess, then brought all the news crews up there. He knew exactly where that mess was, and stepped in it while he was talking to reporters. You can’t make a better point than that.”¹²⁸⁰

San Francisco Gay Democratic Club

Activists formed a new Democratic Club in 1976 as an alternative to the Toklas Club. Joining Milk in forming the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club were a number of the city’s activists, including Harry Britt, Dick Pabich, Jim Rivaldo, and Chris Perry, the first president of the organization. The club’s organizing principles state:

No decisions which affect our lives should be made without the gay voice being heard. We want our fair share of city services.... openly gay people appointed and elected to city offices.... the schools of San Francisco to provide full exposure to and positive appreciation of gay lifestyles. We are asking no more than we deserve: We will not settle for less.¹²⁸¹

1275 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 82-83.

1276 Miriam Frank, *Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 79.

1277 Frank Robinson, “Castro Street, That Great Street,” *Out in the Castro*, 55.

1278 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 125.

1279 Robinson, “Castro Street, That Great Street,” 64-65.

1280 Katie Szymanski, “Bob Ross: 30 Years of *Bay Area Reporter*,” in *Out in the Castro*, 109.

1281 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 150.

Anita Bryant and the Save Our Children Campaign

As the gay movement for political and economic rights became more prominent, public opinion in parts of the country seemed to be moving in favor of gay rights. By 1977, nineteen states had legalized sexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex, forty cities had gay rights ordinances, and nearly thirty states were considering such legislation. When Anita Bryant, a singer and spokesperson for Florida orange juice, rallied a Save Our Children campaign to overturn the recently passed gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida, San Franciscans such as Jim Foster and Hank Wilson sprang to action. Foster went to Miami to help local gay activists and to coordinate a national boycott of Florida orange juice. Wilson took six months off his job and traveled to Miami, where he gathered homophobic campaign ads to create a cautionary display back on Castro Street. "I would stand back and watch people watch the displays. Our people could not believe what was being said about us. That generated cash."¹²⁸² Wilson later recalled the campaign as "an opportunity for us. For the first time, the word was out. Talk shows were talking about homosexuality. There were more articles written about homosexuals and all the cumulative history up to that point."¹²⁸³

Dade County voted to repeal its gay rights ordinance; in response, on June 7, 1977, San Franciscans protested on what became known as Orange Tuesday. A crowd of San Franciscans chanting "we are your children" began marching from the Castro, stopping at Most Holy Redeemer Church, the Catholic Church at 110 Diamond Street (extant), just over two blocks from the intersection of Castro and 18th Streets, to shout, "Two, four, six, eight, separate the church and state." Harvey Milk, who had been asked by the police to help prevent a riot, led the crowd down Market Street to Union Square, where a crowd of over 3,000 people gathered. "This is the power of the gay community. Anita's going to create a national gay force," said Milk. A photo of Milk with the bullhorn made the next day's front page of the *San Francisco Examiner*. For the rest of the week, angry crowds marched through San Francisco's streets.¹²⁸⁴

A gay and lesbian political action organization, The Coalition for Human Rights, formed in June 1977 with the stated goal "We must all work together to prevent an anti-gay backlash from overwhelming us. Effective legislation will guarantee us what the majority of people take for granted: the right to live as we wish and to pursue our livelihoods without fear." The Coalition, which held meetings at 330 Grove and New College, worked to bring the issue of anti-gay violence to the mainstream media, organized activists to press Vice President Walter Mondale to support gay rights legislation at a San Francisco rally, and blanketed that year's Gay Freedom Day Parade with placards.¹²⁸⁵

Briggs Initiative: Proposition 6

In June 1977, two weeks after the Dade County election, John Briggs, a member of the California state senate from Orange County, announced from the steps of San Francisco's City Hall a campaign to qualify a state ballot initiative that would remove all gay teachers from California's public classrooms.¹²⁸⁶ The following week, a gay man named Robert Hillsborough was stabbed to death outside of Whiz Burger (700 South Van Ness Avenue, extant), a restaurant in the Mission

1282 Benjamin H. Shepherd, *White Nights and Ascending Shadows: An Oral History of the San Francisco Aids Epidemic* (London: Cassell, 1997), 32.

1283 Ibid.

1284 *San Francisco Examiner*, June 8, 1977, 1. See also Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 159-160.

1285 Coalition for Human Rights brochure, Paula Lichtenberg Papers, GLBT Historical Society.

1286 Sides, *Erotic City*, 155.

District. The four young men who attacked him yelled, “Faggot, faggot, faggot.”¹²⁸⁷ Responding to the incident, many local gay men and lesbians who had not been activists became political overnight. A few days later, the annual Gay Freedom Day events drew a quarter-million people, in part in reaction to the virulent antigay backlash represented by Bryant, Briggs, and others.

Proposition 6, as the initiative promoted by Briggs was named, was part of a growing conservative movement that targeted women’s rights, including abortion and other reproductive rights, as well as the rights of gay men and lesbians. Supported by a growing number of fundamentalist Christians, the movement argued that liberated women and homosexuals were dangerous threats to what the conservatives dubbed traditional family values.¹²⁸⁸ Antigay organizers supporting Proposition 6 gathered enough signatures to qualify the initiative for the 1978 ballot. Efforts by gay and lesbian people and their supporters to defeat the measure were “the most far-reaching and sustained gay organizing campaign in history,” according to historian John D’Emilio.¹²⁸⁹ An intense amount of this energy came from San Francisco. Several groups working against Proposition 6 were formed in the city, with different leaders and different strategies. The statewide Concerned Voters of California, led by Jim Foster and David Goodstein, worked at the upper level of organized politics and favored a general civil-liberties argument against Briggs’ proposal. Gay men and lesbians who wanted to organize more explicitly against homophobia joined the Bay Area Coalition Against the Briggs Initiative (BACABI), with headquarters at 2049 Market Street (extant).¹²⁹⁰ San Franciscans Against Prop. 6, formed by Harvey Milk and his allies, focused on defeating the measure locally through voter registration and precinct work.¹²⁹¹ Inspired by the Briggs Initiative, a gay/straight group of San Francisco Republican Party members formed in August 1977 as Concerned Republicans for Individual Rights (CRIR). Later renamed the Log Cabin Club of San Francisco/CRIR, this was the first Republican LGBTQ group in the U.S.¹²⁹²

Amber Hollibaugh, who worked full time for the California Outreach Group, another anti-Prop 6 organization, spent a significant portion of her time traveling around Northern California speaking in small towns and rural areas. In an interview from 1979, she recalls the opportunities these forums presented to open minds and foster discussion about homosexuality in churches and union halls, where she addressed audiences using arguments such as the following:

There are gay people in this room, in your union, that you will never know are gay. You have to deal with the homosexual issue whether you know it or not because people you work with are homosexuals whether they’re out to you or not. I have to come and speak because the people that are actually gay in your union can’t be here, can’t be acknowledged as gay people. What does that mean, not to be able to acknowledge the primary things in

1287 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 163. Sides wrote that Hillsborough lived in an apartment at 19th and Lexington (page 153) but an exact address did not turn up in research for this study.

1288 Eskridge, *Dishonorable Passions*, 203-209.

1289 D’Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 89.

1290 According to Paula Lichtenberg, BACABI evolved from the Coalition for Human Rights, which formed around June 1977. Paula Lichtenberg, personal communication with Donna Graves, August 20, 2015. Lichtenberg recalled that CHR and BACABI began at 330 Grove Street, then BACABI moved to the Market Street address sometime in Spring or Sumer of 1978 and that “an apartment building was opened next door at 2051 Market Street and for a few months at the end of the campaign we rented an apartment there, where we had some office space.” Paula Lichtenberg, electronic communication with Donna Graves, February 24, 2014.

1291 Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 221. Personal communication between Donna Graves and Paula Lichtenberg, October 16, 2015.

1292 “History,” Log Cabin Republicans of San Francisco, accessed February 1, 2016, <http://www.sflgocabin.org>. According to long-time Log Cabin member, Christopher Bowman, early meetings were held in private homes, at the Metropolitan Community Church, and at the financial district bars Trinity Place (25 Trinity Place) and Sutter’s Mill (various locations). Communication from Bowman to Norman Larson shared with San Francisco Planning Department, October 21, 2015.



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Poster for a Briggs Initiative event (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

your life? What would it mean to you not to be able to acknowledge your children, your primary relationships, your parents?¹²⁹³

As Hollibaugh points out, “The way Briggs wrote the initiative meant it forced people to examine it who otherwise might not have been sympathetic.”¹²⁹⁴ Proposition 6 was different from earlier antigay ballot measures in that it was directed not only against gay people, but also would have mandated the investigation and dismissal of any school employee who engaged in “advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting of private or public homosexual activity directed at, or likely to come to the attention of school children and/or other employees.” BACABI and others organized numerous lectures, teach-ins, debates and rallies, and distributed cards that said, “You may not realize it but you just spoke with a gay person.”¹²⁹⁵ BACABI cochair Paula Lichtenberg recalled that KQED, the San Francisco public television station, broadcast a debate between Briggs, Milk, and San Francisco State professor and lesbian activist Sally Gearhart on stations around California: “We had a big viewing at Mission High School. Harvey and Sally walked triumphantly into the auditorium afterwards.”¹²⁹⁶ Although months before the vote, polls had not been encouraging, closer to the election more and more organizations, newspapers, and elected leaders including former California Governor Ronald Reagan and President Jimmy Carter went on record against the initiative; it ended up losing by a large margin. Anti-Prop 6 organizations came together for a jubilant victory party on Market Street that included inspiring speeches by Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone.¹²⁹⁷

Following the Briggs Initiative, Milk’s role as a favored media voice placed him at the forefront of the gay movement in California. The many televised debates about Proposition 6 had created a statewide profile for him as the “chief gay wheeler-dealer” with state and national politicians, notes Randy Shilts.¹²⁹⁸ In San Francisco, Milk was no longer perceived as “the Gay Supervisor,” but was known as a champion of many progressive causes, giving him a constituency beyond his own district.¹²⁹⁹ During his almost 11 months in office, Milk submitted a landmark gay-rights ordinance to the Board of Supervisors. The measure—which addressed anti-gay discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations—was passed by the board and signed into law by Mayor Moscone. The single dissenting vote was cast by Supervisor Dan White, a former San Francisco police officer and firefighter.¹³⁰⁰

George Moscone and Harvey Milk Assassinations

In 1975, George Moscone, a liberal California state senator who co-sponsored A.B. 437, was elected mayor of San Francisco by a narrow majority of 3,000 votes, a margin of victory that he credited to gay supporters. In thanks, Moscone selected several gay and lesbian leaders for political appointments; lesbian activists Jo Daly and Phyllis Lyon joined the Human Rights Commission; Del Martin was appointed to the Commission on the Status of Women; and Harvey Milk was chosen for the Board of Permit Appeals, an appointment Moscone later reversed, replacing Milk with Rick Stokes.

1293 “Interview with Amber Hollibaugh,” *Socialist Review* v. 9 no. 3 (May-June 1979).

1294 Ibid.

1295 Paula Lichtenberg, interviewed by Donna Graves, February 21, 2014.

1296 Ibid.

1297 Ibid. Lichtenberg believes the party was held in the former site of The Shed at 2275 Market Street. Personal communication between Donna Graves and Paula Lichtenberg, October 16, 2015.

1298 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 253.

1299 Ibid.

1300 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 166.

On the morning of November 27, 1978, Dan White, who had recently resigned his seat as city supervisor and then asked the mayor to reappoint him, sneaked into City Hall through a basement window, carrying a hidden handgun. He met with Moscone, who told him he would not be reappointed; White then shot Moscone to death. He proceeded to seek out Milk, following him into his office and killed him. That night, a mourning crowd numbering in the tens of thousands silently marched down Market Street from the Castro to City Hall carrying candles. Joan Baez sang, and Cleve Jones recited words from a song by Meg Christian and Holly Near: “Can we be like drops of water falling on the stone/Splashing, breaking, dispersing in air/Weaker than the stone by far but be aware/ That as time goes by the rock will wear away/ And the water comes again.” Many marchers placed their candles at the base of the 1927 statue of Abraham Lincoln on the east side of City Hall.¹³⁰¹ Milk speechwriter Frank Robinson recalls, “In the morning, you couldn’t see the statue at all, only a small mountain of candle wax.”¹³⁰² In the week that followed, memorial services for Milk and Moscone were held in City Hall and special services for Milk took place at numerous sites, including Temple Emanu-El (2 Lake Street) in Presidio Heights, the first time an openly gay rabbi officiated there; the San Francisco Opera House (301 Van Ness Avenue); San Francisco State University; and The Women’s Building. The following Tuesday the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club voted unanimously to rename itself the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club.¹³⁰³

White Night Riot

On May 21, 1979, six months after the assassinations of Harvey Milk and George Moscone, White was convicted on two counts of manslaughter, rather than first-degree murder. That night, thousands of furious protesters marched down Market Street from the Castro to Civic Center, overwhelming the San Francisco Police, shattering windows at City Hall, and setting police cars on fire. In response, two-dozen police officers descended on the Castro, smashing passersby with billy clubs and attacking those seeking safety in the Elephant Walk Bar (500 Castro Street, extant). Cleve Jones tells of running back to his nearby apartment after seeing the first sweep of police.¹³⁰⁴ “I had a telephone tree. I knew people in at least every other building on those several blocks. My roommate and I would call each of these 50 people. That would get the phone tree started...each of these 50 people had 10 people that they would call.”¹³⁰⁵ Heeding the alarm, a crowd gathered shouting “Go home, go home” to the police, who finally disbanded after Police Chief Charles Gain ordered them to stand down.¹³⁰⁶

The following morning an emergency meeting was held at City Hall where leaders from the Harvey Milk Democratic Club made clear that they would not apologize for the community’s response to the verdict. They would also proceed with a party to celebrate what would have been Milk’s 49th birthday that had already been planned for the Castro that evening. Hundreds of volunteers enlisted by Jones’ phone tree and other community connections met at the auditorium of Douglass Elementary School (4235 19th Street, extant) in the Castro for training as safety officers and monitors. Not trusting the police response, Jones recalls that legal observers and hidden infirmaries were set up in nearby apartments and shops and in the parking lot behind the Castro Theatre.¹³⁰⁷

1301 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 280.

1302 Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester*, 151.

1303 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 283. Professor Robert Cherny pointed out the memorial service at San Francisco State; long-time member of Sha’ar Zahav, Robert Tat, remembered the service at The Women’s Building.

1304 Address from Jones and Dawson, *Stitching a Revolution*, 75

1305 Shepherd, *White Nights and Ascending Shadows*, 48-50.

1306 Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 333.

1307 Jones and Dawson, *Stitching a Revolution*, 70-71. The school has been renamed Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy.



TOP: Candlelight march from the Castro to City Hall after the assassination of Harvey Milk, November 1978

BOTTOM: Crowd marching from the Castro to City Hall at the beginning of the White Night Riot, May 1979

(Both photographs by Donald Eckert)

Ultimately, an estimated 20,000 people celebrated their own power and Milk's legacy as disco diva Sylvester, who had sung at Milk's birthday party the previous year, entertained the crowd with his hit "You Make Me Feel Mighty Real."¹³⁰⁸ Speaking to the crowd, San Francisco State professor Sally Gearhart said, "There is no way that I will apologize for what happened last night.... Unless we display our ungovernable rage and injustice, we won't get heard."¹³⁰⁹

Consolidating Political Influence

Historian John D'Emilio describes the last half of the 1970s as a "rapid coming-of-age of gays as a political force in San Francisco."¹³¹⁰ A panel titled "Gays in Politics" at the first gay students conference held at San Francisco State University discussed politics both within and outside of the gay community. The panel was chaired by Jo Daly, chair of the Gay Caucus of the California Democratic Council, and included Jim Foster, also on the California Democratic Council; Harvey Milk, then-candidate for State Assembly; Phyllis Lyon, member of the Day Advisory Committee to the Human Rights Commission; George Raya, a registered lobbyist in Sacramento; and Massachusetts congresswoman Elaine Noble, the first gay or lesbian person elected to national office in the United States.¹³¹¹

In 1975, the San Francisco Unified School Board approved a nondiscrimination policy drafted by the Gay Teachers Coalition, whose founders included activists and teachers Hank Wilson and Tom Ammiano.¹³¹² Ammiano, a teacher at Buena Vista School in the Mission neighborhood, remembers, "Through the efforts of many teacher friends, both straight and gay, we organized a protest outside the school district before the meeting of the Board of Education at the District Office" at 170 Fell Street.¹³¹³ The board postponed the vote but a sympathetic front-page article in the *San Francisco Examiner* and more organizing led to a packed boardroom on June 17, 1975. "The board voted 7 to 0, unanimous in our favor," Ammiano proudly recalls.¹³¹⁴

After Harvey Milk's death, California Governor Jerry Brown Jr. named lesbian activist Del Martin to the California Commission on Crime Control and Violence Prevention, and Cleve Jones became the first openly gay staff person in the California State Legislature after Assemblymember Art Agnos hired him as a consultant.¹³¹⁵

In 1980, CBS television aired a show nationally about the San Francisco mayoral race titled "Gay Power, Gay Politics." Rather than a serious examination of the expanded political landscape, the TV special was a prurient expose centered on sadomasochism. "There is a consequence to the homosexual lifestyle here. Traditional values are under attack," intoned producer-reporter George Crile. Mayor Dianne Feinstein compared the show to "doing a documentary on Italians and only showing the Mafia."¹³¹⁶ *Sentinel* reporter Randy Alfred, concerned that the show would influence less discerning Americans, filed a detailed complaint with the National News Council, an advisory board that monitored mainstream news coverage. The council ultimately agreed with the *Sentinel* on some aspects, specifically that "justification cannot be found for the degree of attention CBS

1308 Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester*, 135, 181.

1309 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 182.

1310 D'Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 88.

1311 "Program for Symposium '76 April 15-17, San Francisco State University."

1312 Hank Wilson described forming the Gay Teachers Alliance after meeting Tom Ammiano at a Bay Area Gay Liberation meeting. Shepherd, *White Nights and Ascending Shadows*, 28.

1313 Tom Ammiano, "My Adventures as a Gay Teacher," in Mecca, *Smash the Church*, 41.

1314 Ibid.

1315 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 190. Shepherd, *White Nights and Ascending Shadows*, 58.

1316 Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good*, 449.

gave to sadomasochism.”¹³¹⁷ CBS News acknowledged its errors on the air in October 1981; “never before had gay activists managed to win an official apology from a major news organization,” notes journalism professor Edward Alwood.

Despite the CBS attack on their political influence, gay men and lesbians in San Francisco continued to make incremental progress in local and statewide appointments and elections. Highlights of the accomplishments include the following: Mary Morgan became the first openly lesbian judge in the country in 1981 when California Governor Jerry Brown Jr. appointed her to a Municipal Court judgeship in San Francisco; Harry Britt, who replaced Harvey Milk after his assassination, served on the Board of Supervisors from 1979 to 1990; the last two years he was president of the board; A “Lavender Sweep” in 1990 elected openly lesbian lawyer Donna Hitchens as a Superior Court judge and two lesbians to the Board of Supervisors: Roberta Achtenberg and Carole Migden¹³¹⁸; Tom Ammiano was elected to the San Francisco School Board in 1990 with the most votes of any candidate; and in November 1990, San Francisco voters passed Proposition K, which established a municipal registry for domestic partnerships including same-sex couples.¹³¹⁹

GAY RIGHTS AND THE MILITARY

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military continued to view homosexuality as a moral defect meriting discharge (although earlier justifications on the basis of the security threat posed by blackmail lost strength as more people came out of the closet). This made gay men one of the few groups of young males who were theoretically ineligible for the draft. Because so many young people supported the peace movement, many of the numerous antiwar groups in the Bay Area counseled even straight young men to proclaim their homosexuality as a way of avoiding military service. At the same time, of course, there were gay people who wanted to serve despite the military’s ban.¹³²⁰

Leonard Matlovich

Enforcement of the ban on gays became strict again only after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Air Force Sergeant Leonard Matlovich was discharged for proclaiming his homosexuality after three tours of duty in Vietnam, for which he received an Air Force Commendation Medal, a Bronze Star, and a Purple Heart. Born in 1943 in Savannah, Georgia, Matlovich grew up in a religious, conservative family. His final assignment in the Air Force was to teach race relations courses, which helped him to apply lessons of inclusion and equality to his own status as a gay man.¹³²¹

After a protracted court battle over his discharge, the Air Force settled Matlovich’s case without acknowledging that there was anything wrong with the ban on gay people serving in the military. In the meantime, Matlovich’s cause drew national attention. In September 1975, Matlovich appeared in uniform on the cover of *Time* magazine with the headline “I Am a Homosexual: The Quest for Acceptance”; it was one of the first times an openly gay person appeared on the cover of a national newsmagazine in the United States.

1317 Alwood, *Straight News*, 189.

1318 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 417.

1319 Ibid.

1320 “Vietnam” text for Out Ranks, exhibit materials, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, accessed October 12, 2014, <http://Gay.Lesbian.Bisexual.Transgenderhistory.org/OutRanksWeb/Vietnam/Vietnam.htm>.

1321 Leonard P. Matlovich Jr., *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Culture*, http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/matlovich_lp.html.

Matlovich moved to San Francisco in 1978, the same year that NBC broadcast *Sgt. Matlovich vs. the Air Force*, one of the first feature stories about gay rights to air on national television. He was active in gay rights issues, including the struggle against Anita Bryant's Save Our Children campaign and California's Briggs Initiative. Matlovich lived briefly on the Russian River, where he ran a restaurant, but returned to San Francisco in 1984. In 1986, he announced his HIV diagnosis on the national television show *Good Morning America* and devoted his remaining years to AIDS activism.¹³²² Matlovich died in 1988 and is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C., under a stone with two pink triangles and the inscription "When I was in the military they gave me a medal for killing two men—and a discharge for loving one." A memorial plaque with the same inscription has been installed near the entrance of the San Francisco apartment building at the northeast corner of 18th and Castro Streets (extant) where Matlovich lived.¹³²³

Alexander Hamilton American Legion Post

The Alexander Hamilton Post 448 of the American Legion was founded in 1984 by gay rights activist Dr. Paul D. Hardman. Hardman had advertised for other eligible gay and lesbian veterans to join him in establishing a new post of the American Legion; the city's previous posts operated out of the War Memorial Veterans Building (401 Van Ness Avenue, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 84) in San Francisco's Civic Center. In 1921, the War Memorial Trust was established to administer the building for the benefit of San Francisco's military veterans.¹³²⁴

The name for the only gay and lesbian group affiliated with the American Legion was chosen to recognize Revolutionary-era leader Alexander Hamilton, whose letters have been interpreted as indicating he was homosexual.¹³²⁵ Hardman's goal was to secure respect and acceptance for gay and lesbian veterans. However, some of the existing posts in the largely conservative American Legion attempted to block official organization of the new post.

Despite their resistance, San Francisco's nondiscrimination ordinances prevailed because the War Memorial Veterans Building is City-owned; a charter for the Alexander Hamilton Post 448 was granted in October 1985. Even after winning their charter, the Hamilton Post continued to face opposition from older posts regarding space in the Veterans Building. In 1987, Post 448 took legal action to secure their right to space at the Veterans Building.

The post formed a color guard for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1986 Gay Games, and every year the post marches in the LGBT Pride parade and the city's Veteran's Day parade. The post also led a contingent of veterans in the 1987 and 1993 National Marches on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Rights.¹³²⁶ Post 448 includes veterans serving up to the Gulf Wars. Although the membership has predominately consisted of gay men, former Sgt. Diana Vasquez joined because other Legion groups were too "male-dominated." "Alexander Hamilton accepts women. It's a younger post. They want to move for change," Vasquez noted.¹³²⁷

1322 Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good*, 561.

1323 Regina Marler, "He Told Before 'Don't Ask,'" *The Advocate*, March 3, 2009, accessed October 10, 2014, http://www.leonardmatlovich.com/images/He_Told.pdf.

1324 Kevin Davis, "Gay Legion Post Marks 20 Years," *Bay Area Reporter*, August 11, 2005.

1325 "Our History," Alexander Hamilton Post 448 American Legion, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://www.post448.org/history.htm>. The Post offices and meeting site are now in other locations, but the Post newsletter from November 2007 lists 401 Van Ness Avenue as location for the office and monthly meetings.

1326 "Our History" Alexander Hamilton Post 448.

1327 Gary Libman, "These Gay Ex-Soldiers Reject the Traditional Organizations for Veterans or Homosexuals," *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1993.

VIII. BUILDING LGBTQ COMMUNITIES (1960S TO 1990S)

GAY PRESS

In addition to providing a forum for breaking the silence about gay and lesbian lives, homophile-era publications of the 1950s such as the Mattachine Society's *Mattachine Review* and the Daughters of Bilitis' *The Ladder* offered much-needed information about legal and moral questions that caused anxiety in people's day-to-day lives, such as the legal limits of police entrapment and how much information an arrested person was required to give a police officer. The *Mattachine Review* included discussions of employment issues faced by gay men and offered strategies for how to avoid job discrimination.¹³²⁸ Publishers had to self-fund their work because it was difficult to find advertisers.¹³²⁹ Periodicals associated with homophile groups were in decline by the late 1960s. For instance, the *Mattachine Review* ended in 1967, and *The Ladder* ceased publication in 1972.

In the years after these publications' demise, publications in San Francisco emerged as voices of liberation and reflections of the growing economic and political power of increasingly visible LGBTQ communities.

Examples of LGBTQ Periodicals in San Francisco

Early Gay Media

The Society for Individual Rights founded *Vector* in 1964. Historian John D'Emilio observes: "Rather than denigrate the gay bar culture as *Mattachine Review* and *The Ladder* had done in the 1950s, *Vector* embraced the culture and celebrated its ability to equalize persons of diverse social strata." *Vector* placed news about the bars on its front page, listed the names and addresses of the dozens of gay bars in cities around the country, and made sure copies of each issue were available in every bar in San Francisco.¹³³⁰ The publication highlighted and legitimized gay social activities such as picnics, theater productions, and drag shows.¹³³¹ But it, at times, presented a hostile attitude toward drag queens, unless they were on stage. A 1974 essay proclaims: "it is time to retire the image of gay-person-as-drag-queen in favor of an image of the homosexual as 'an ordinary guy.' It would make good sense if drag stayed out of the spotlight."¹³³²

Guy Strait, who had been active in the homophile organization League for Civil Education began publishing *Cruise News & World Report* in 1965. Historian Nan Alamilla Boyd describes Strait's newspapers as "the first of their kind" in combining social items and commentary on gay and lesbian bar-based cultures.¹³³³ Distributed in gay bars and gay-friendly businesses, Strait's papers also provided a connection between gay and lesbian commercial establishments and queer patrons.

Gay Liberation Press

New publications established to provide a forum for debate about gay liberation were more inclusive of drag queens and transgender people. Charles Thorpe began editing the short-lived *San Francisco Gay Free Press* in 1970 and hired writer Angela Douglas, whose stories provided the gay liberation press with a rare transgender voice. When she was arrested for cross-dressing, the *Gay Free Press* blanketed its front page with a two-inch-high headline: "Free Angela Douglas!"¹³³⁴ The

1328 Rodger Streimatter, *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), 42.

1329 Ibid., 49.

1330 Ibid., 72.

1331 Ibid., 64.

1332 Ibid., 199.

1333 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 223.

1334 Streimatter, *Unspeakable*, 133, 141.

radical tabloid's pages frequently used terms such as "gay genocide" and ran drawings of bullets exploding in the faces of police officers. Thorpe argued that lesbians and gays in the U.S. would achieve equality only by wrenching it forcibly from straight society. The publication closed down by the end of 1971.¹³³⁵

Another gay liberation periodical, *Gay Sunshine: A Journal of Gay Liberation*, was published in Berkeley by a collective of gay men starting in 1970. The debut issue featured an interview with Huey P. Newton, one of the few Black leaders who expressed sympathy for the struggles of gay men and lesbians.¹³³⁶ *Gay Sunshine* moved to San Francisco within a year under the leadership of Winston Leyland, who called it a "quarterly male gay lib tabloid of activism, literature and culture... with a small national circulation."¹³³⁷ Under Leyland, *Gay Sunshine* shifted toward more literary concerns, running interviews with prominent gay writers such as William Burroughs, Jean Genet, Allen Ginsberg, Christopher Isherwood, Gore Vidal, and Tennessee Williams.¹³³⁸

Other Gay Periodicals

Drummer Magazine (1971–1999) moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco in 1977 and brought a focus on the leather community to the gay press. Published by Alternate Publishing Company, the magazine was for "masculine-identified gay men," according to editor from 1977 to 1979, Jack Fritscher. *Drummer* began at 1730 Divisadero Street but in 1980 moved to a building in the South of Market neighborhood (15 Harriet Street, extant), which housed the "boy-lesque" *Stars Magazine*.¹³³⁹

A paper called the *San Francisco Bay Times* became the first newspaper in the city to be jointly published by both gay men and lesbians in 1978. In 1979, the *Times* evolved into a popular monthly (later biweekly) events calendar called *Coming Up!* (847 Valencia Street), then changed its name back to the *San Francisco Bay Times* in 1988.¹³⁴⁰ The *Bay Times* continues to publish as of early 2016.

Bay Area Weeklies

Two long-running commercially published gay weeklies were launched in San Francisco in the first half of the 1970s. The *Bay Area Reporter* was founded in 1971, and the *San Francisco Sentinel* (500 Hayes Street, extant) started up three years later. Both weeklies combined cultural reporting and news with pages of ads that created the first commercially successful gay periodicals in San Francisco. The *Sentinel* went through several changes of leadership, including founder Charles Morris and Bill Beardemphl, and had an on-and-off relationship with pioneering gay reporter Randy Alfred. The paper stopped publication as a weekly in 1995.

Bay Area Reporter and Bob Ross

The *Bay Area Reporter* is reportedly the oldest LGBTQ weekly in continuous publication in the U.S.¹³⁴¹ It was founded by Bob Ross and Phil Bentley in 1971 as a way to provide more comprehensive information for and about the gay community. Known informally as the *BAR*, the paper was distributed at bars because, according to Ross, "that's where people got their

1335 Ibid., 370.

1336 Ibid., 126.

1337 Winston Leyland, "Introduction," in Winston Leyland, ed., *Out in the Castro* (San Francisco: Leyland Publications, 2002), 12.

1338 Charles Kirtley, "The Pioneering Role of Winston Leyland in Gay Publishing," Spring 1988, accessed June 12, 2014, http://www.leylandpublications.com/article_leyland.html.

1339 Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer Magazine*, 2013, <http://www.jackfritscher.com/>. Fritscher says Embry bought the Harriet Street building in 1980 and that *Drummer's* office was at 1730 Divisadero Street.

1340 Tom Zoellner, "Roland Schembari -- Co-Founder of S.F. Bay Times," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 24, 2000. 288 7th Street is address for SFBT in 1990s from The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

1341 "About the B.A.R.," *Bay Area Reporter*, accessed June 7, 2014, <http://www.ebar.com/about/>.

knowledge.”¹³⁴² Full-page ads for bars ran on its front cover, and the paper carried a column of bar-related news inside. The *BAR* also ran articles on politics, civil rights, and the arts.¹³⁴³

The New Right backlash of the late 1970s and early 1980s inspired a new level of professionalism in the gay press. George Mendenhall, former *Vector* editor who became news editor of the *BAR* in the late 1970s, remembers, “The gay press had matured. We took journalism a lot more serious than in the beginning of the decade. We had to. Marching in the streets wasn’t going to get us liberated. The battlefield was the ballot box—and that called for a new kind of gay journalism.”¹³⁴⁴ The *BAR* and *The Sentinel* ran copious coverage of campaigns that lesbians and gays mounted against Proposition 6 and other New Right assaults, as well as articles about antigay violence and community efforts to curb it.¹³⁴⁵

By the early 1980s, the *BAR* (1528 15th Street, extant) and the *Sentinel* were examples of gay newspapers that could turn a profit by combining community news with abundant ads for gay bars, nightclubs, and bathhouses.¹³⁴⁶ The papers drew criticism in the early years of the AIDS epidemic for weak coverage of the epidemic; opponents charged them with sacrificing their readers’ health to ad revenue from bathhouses and other commercial sex establishments. But within a few years, the papers were covering the impact of AIDS on local lives, as well as advances in research and treatment. From December 1981 to August 1984, the *Sentinel* featured the “Gay Cancer Journal” by Bobbi Campbell, known as San Francisco’s “KS [Kaposi’s Sarcoma] Poster Boy”; the column juxtaposed research findings with reports on the funerals of Campbell’s friends.¹³⁴⁷ In 1989, the *BAR* devoted eight full pages to over 600 images of people who had died of AIDS.¹³⁴⁸ The *BAR* and other gay periodicals also played an important role in the increasingly important crusade to raise funds for AIDS.¹³⁴⁹ In August 1998, the *BAR* made national news when it reported that it had received no obituaries for the week, the first time that had happened since the AIDS epidemic began.

Bob Ross, who remained the publisher of the *BAR* until his death in 2003, was an influential figure in San Francisco LGBTQ history. A cofounder of the Tavern Guild, Ross raised money and provided support for numerous pro-gay politicians. He held frequent political and professional events at his home at the corner of 20th and Castro Streets (4200 20th Street, extant). Ross was instrumental in helping Harvey Milk win election and was one of four names on Milk’s short list to replace him if he died in office along with Frank Robinson, Anne Kronenberg, and Harry Britt. Mayor Dianne Feinstein reportedly vetoed Ross because he had recently been elected the first Emperor of the Imperial Court—a yearlong role bestowed by election of court members. Yet, after the riot that erupted in the wake of the Dan White verdict, Feinstein turned to Ross and others to undertake a joint investigation into the police response.¹³⁵⁰ Ross served on the board of the Gay Games and cofounded the LGBTQ mental health organization Operation Concern. He also served for many years on the Golden Gate Bridge District Board and on the board of trustees of the San Francisco Ballet, illustrating the reach that some prominent gay leaders achieved into the halls of power.¹³⁵¹

1342 Szymanski, “Bob Ross: 30 Years of *Bay Area Reporter*,” 107.

1343 Streimatter, *Unspeakable*, 191, 208.

1344 *Ibid.*, 219.

1345 *Ibid.*, 239. The *BAR* and *Sentinel* published photos of gay people who had disappeared, a precursor to the images of missing children that would appear on America’s milk cartons a decade later.

1346 Cynthia Laird of the *Bay Area Reporter* shared the paper’s following addresses: 1550 Howard Street, in 1980; 1528 15th Street in 1982-1988; 395 9th Street, 1989-mid-2013; 225 Bush Street #1700, 2013-14; 44 Gough Street #204, July 2014-present.

1347 Streimatter, *Unspeakable*, 263-264

1348 Nanette Asimov, “Bob Ross—Pioneering Gay Journalist and Activist,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 2003.

1349 Streimatter, *Unspeakable*, 266.

1350 *Ibid.*, 225.

1351 Asimov, “Bob Ross.”

LGBTQ Coverage in the Mainstream Press

As gay and lesbian media grew in numbers and increased their already central role in sustaining LGBTQ communities and identities, mainstream media coverage of gay communities expanded as well. Historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman argue that a crucial factor was “the collapse in the 1960s of strictures against the portrayal of sexual matters, [which] gave the media license to turn its attention to homosexuality.”¹³⁵² Between 1964 and 1970, national magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, *Esquire*, and *Time* ran extensively illustrated feature articles that introduced their audiences to “homosexual subculture” and reinforced San Francisco’s image as a gay mecca.¹³⁵³

San Francisco Chronicle and San Francisco Examiner

As described in earlier sections of this report, San Francisco’s local papers before the 1960s often treated LGBTQ people and events with derision or scorn, if they mentioned them at all. In the 1960s, queer activists found this pattern increasingly unacceptable. In October 1969, the *San Francisco Examiner* ran an article full of stereotypes about gay men, lesbians, and transgender people that inspired a protest organized by Committee for Homosexual Freedom, the Gay Liberation Front, and Society for Individual Rights. When one of the *Examiner*’s staff dumped printing ink out a window onto the peaceful demonstrators, they used it to leave handprints and scrawl, “Gay is Good” and “Fuck the Examiner” on the walls of the *Examiner* offices at 860 Howard Street (not extant). Society for Individual Rights President Larry Littlejohn recalls:

At that point, the tactical squad arrived—not to get the employees who dumped the ink, but to arrest the demonstrators who are victims. The police could’ve surrounded the *Examiner* building... but no, they went after the gays.... The police came racing in with their clubs swinging, knocking people to the ground. It was unbelievable.¹³⁵⁴

Police response led to a battle with protestors known as the “Friday of the Purple Hand,” with another demonstration the next day at City Hall.¹³⁵⁵ The protest against the *Examiner* gave San Francisco’s local media a wake-up call that they needed to take the increasingly vocal LGBTQ communities into account.

Both the *San Francisco Examiner*, the city’s afternoon daily, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the morning daily, expanded their perspective on the roles of gays and lesbians in San Francisco life in the 1970s. In 1978, the *Examiner* published one of the earliest in-depth examinations of gay life ever carried by a major American newspaper; titled “Gays and the City,” it ran for 13 weeks. The series covered various facets of gay life—politics, religion, sexuality, social life, employment, and more.¹³⁵⁶ In 1981, the *Chronicle* hired openly gay reporter Randy Shilts, who had been a freelance reporter for KQED and on staff at a national gay magazine, *The Advocate*. As the first reporter hired to cover the gay community full time at a mainstream daily newspaper, Shilts was uniquely positioned to bring the AIDS crisis to a broader public. His 1987 book *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* was described by Frank Robinson as “the loudest cry of protest from a gay man at what the national government was doing to its own citizens,” but drew the ire of many gays who found his calls for bathhouse closure anathema.¹³⁵⁷

1352 D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 319.

1353 Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, passim.

1354 Littlejohn quoted in Tommi Avicola Mecca, “Sometimes You Work With the Democrats, and Sometimes You Riot,” in Chris Carlsson and LisaRuth Elliot, *Ten Years that Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-1978* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011), 186.

1355 Alwood, *Straight News*, 93. Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 54.

1356 Alwood, *Straight News*, 173.

1357 Jennifer Warren and Richard C. Paddock, “Randy Shilts, Chronicler of AIDS Epidemic, Dies at 42,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1994.

GAYS AND LESBIANS IN BUSINESS

Although San Francisco was widely acknowledged to be a more open place for gays and lesbians to live in by the early 1970s, it was still difficult for most people to be out at work. A sympathetic researcher from the Kinsey-founded Institute for Sexual Research estimated that 60 percent of homosexuals he sought to interview in San Francisco in 1970 were in the closet. "I talked with a woman for 20 minutes this afternoon. She's a professional and she has a number of professional people who would like to sign up [for the interview], but they're afraid to."¹³⁵⁸

Activist Larry Littlejohn mentions the "front marriages" that many gay men, especially those in white-collar jobs, arranged to meet employers' expectations during the period. "Most large companies aren't going to take a person into a management position if he doesn't have the right kind of social life...and that means a wife. So a lot of people get married to a lesbian or heterosexual woman who knows you're gay."¹³⁵⁹

Even gay men who founded their own small businesses in the Castro to circumvent these restrictions found that they were unwelcome in the local business group, the Eureka Valley Merchants Association. In 1973, when the association tried to block a business license for two gay men who were seeking to open an antiques store, Harvey Milk organized gay small-business owners to create a competing organization, the Castro Village Association. The next year, the CVA organized the first Castro Street Fair, which drew 5,000 people to the neighborhood and brought a flood of dollars into local cash registers. Even the old-time business owners came to see that the merchants group had harnessed the increasing economic clout of gay business owners who were a key part of the neighborhood's transformation.¹³⁶⁰

Although the Tavern Guild and many Castro-area businesses joined the Teamster's union anti-Coors campaign, many employers could be resistant to organizing among their own workers. Efforts by Hotel Employees and Retail Employees Local 2, which formed a gay and lesbian caucus in the late 1970s, to represent workers at the Patio/Bakery café (531 Castro Street, extant), the popular bar and restaurant Church Street Station (2100 Market Street, threatened with demolition) and the York Hotel (940 Sutter Street, extant), were all quashed in 1979-1980.¹³⁶¹

Golden Gate Business Association

Known as the first LGBTQ chamber of commerce, the Golden Gate Business Association was founded in 1974 under the leadership of president Rick Stokes. By the early 1980s, it had offices in the Financial District in the Russ Building (235 Montgomery Street, extant). By 1980, the Golden Gate Business Association had 500 members, including nineteen lawyers, thirteen contractors, twelve realtors, eleven printing firms, six hair salons, four savings and loan associations, and three antique shops.¹³⁶² Corporate members included Union Bank and Holiday Inn.¹³⁶³ Six years later, President Arthur Lazere stated in *San Francisco Magazine* that the organization's goal was to visibly build "bridges to the straight community," as opposed to previous generations of gay business owners who hid their identities. The people building those bridges described by Lazere were overwhelmingly male; less than 10 percent of the GGBA members were women in 1980.

1358 Tom Maurer quoted in John Burks and Geoffrey Link, "The Gay Mecca: But San Francisco is Still No Utopia for Homosexuals," *San Francisco* v. 12 no. 4 (April 1970): 30.

1359 Larry Littlejohn quoted in Burks and Link, "The Gay Mecca: But San Francisco is Still No Utopia for Homosexuals," 31.

1360 Cleninden Nagoumey, *Out for Good*, 338-339.

1361 Frank, *Out in the Union*, 143. More research on LGBTQ union caucuses and the places they met and organized should be conducted.

1362 Joe Flower, "Gays in Business: The Prejudice and the Power," *San Francisco Magazine* (September 1980): 44.

1363 Guide to the Golden Gate Business Association records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Lawyer Donna Hitchens estimated for *San Francisco Magazine* that the Bay Area held 5,000 lesbian professionals, yet the reporter found that few were ready to be out, and the article noted only a very small handful of “social organizations of lesbian professionals.”¹³⁶⁴ As one anonymous woman told the reporter, “Who needs the risk? It is hard enough for a woman to be successful in the business world without the added burden of the prejudices people have against homosexuals.”¹³⁶⁵

Lesbian Financial Institutions and Business Groups

Understanding the difficulties businesswomen faced, lesbians founded two separate financial institutions in San Francisco. In 1975, as mentioned earlier, the San Francisco Women’s Centers, the Daughters of Bilitis, Black Women Organized for Action, and the Golden Gate Chapter of the National Organization for Women had formed the Bay Area Feminist Federal Credit Union, which operated at 944 Market Street until 1979.¹³⁶⁶ In 1977, the *Noe Valley Voice* announced that a second women-run financial institution was to open at Sacramento and Battery Streets. Lesbian businesswoman Charlotte Coleman was profiled as the board director’s chair and a founding member of the First Women’s Savings and Loan Association, one of the few of its kind in the nation. Coleman, longtime owner of several gay bars including The Front, the Golden Cask, and the Mint, said she had been encouraged to initiate the women’s bank by then-Board of Supervisors candidate Carol Ruth Silver, but no records of the institution have yet been located.¹³⁶⁷

An organization that brought together lesbian professionals was founded in 1982: San Francisco Bay Area Career Women aimed to “empower lesbians to achieve their full promise and potential” with programs on real estate transactions, estate planning, and travel. Up to 2,000 women reportedly attended the group’s occasional dances.¹³⁶⁸ By 1988, BACW had an estimated 1,200 members, who were sometimes referred to as “Dykes on Spikes” — a reference to the high heels favored by many members. Activists Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon wrote in 1991 that BACW’s president and many of the organization’s members had been inspired to come out in the previous few years; “having an organization the size of BACW gives lesbians more visibility and political clout.”¹³⁶⁹ Around that time, BACW members participated alongside Fortune 500 leaders in a symposium on the region’s economic future, a reflection of their growing stature.¹³⁷⁰

Atlas Savings and Loan

Charlotte Coleman, who had also been active in the Society of Individual Rights, Operation Concern, and the Tavern Guild, became involved a few years later in Atlas Savings and Loan, which is often described as the first financial institution established by a partnership of gays and lesbians in the United States.¹³⁷¹ Coleman was one of two women on a 10-person board chaired by John Schmidt. Atlas incorporated in 1979 and opened for business in late 1981. A May 1981 press release from the savings and loan announced that shares had been purchased by over 2,000 people, three-quarters of whom lived in San Francisco.¹³⁷² The main office at 1967 Market Street (extant)

1364 Flower, “Gays in Business,” 44.

1365 Ibid.

1366 Robb, *Mothering the Movement*, 17. The Market Street address is from The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database.

1367 “Local Ms. Applies Dollars and Sense to Women’s Savings and Loan,” *Noe Valley Voice* v. 1 no. 4 (August 1977): 3. Not listed in the 1978 San Francisco City Directory under First or Women, but Charlotte Coleman is listed at “The Trapp,” which was located at 72 Eddy Street.

1368 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 100.

1369 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 399.

1370 Ibid.

1371 Flower, “Gays in Business,” 45.

1372 Atlas Savings & Loan Press Release of May 1981, in IRA Empire Savings file, Gay Tennis & Gay Softball Materials Carton 1, Gay Games Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

was expanded in 1982 with a branch midway between 18th and Market Streets on Castro Street (444 Castro Street). By 1983, Atlas reportedly had 12,000 depositors with total capitalization of \$85 million and \$830,000 in profit. But the expansion, which included loans to large real estate projects in Southern California, had dire costs, and Atlas reportedly lost more than \$2 million in 1984.¹³⁷³ Two years later, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board deemed Atlas Savings and Loan insolvent; Empire Savings, a national bank, took over the institution in 1986.¹³⁷⁴



Atlas Savings and Loan, 1967 Market Street (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

1373 Lloyd Watson, "Gay S&L Expects More Losses in '85," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 29, 1985.

1374 Letter from Federal Home Loan Bank Board, IRA Empire Savings file, Gay Tennis & Gay Softball Materials Carton 1, Gay Games Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

EXPANSION OF SEX-BASED COMMUNITIES

One of the basic tenets of 1960s counterculture was the concept of sexual liberation, which was supported by the birth control pill and increasing acceptance of public nudity and of sex outside marriage. New attitudes about sexuality were not confined to hippies but were spread throughout consumer culture from large-circulation magazines such as *Playboy* to advertisements that used sexual imagery to glamorize products. Sexual liberation manifested in many dimensions in San Francisco. Historian Josh Sides' *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* situates the city at the epicenter of national changes in attitudes about sexuality during the post-war period: "San Francisco's street-level battles over prostitution, pornography, homosexuality, nudism, transgenderism, 'social diseases,' AIDS, and marriage have prefigured the nation's for almost half a century."¹³⁷⁵ Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people were often at the forefront of these struggles.

The boundaries between hippie-era sexual freedom and gay and lesbian liberation were becoming ever more blurry. The hippie culture of the 1960s, which challenged conventions and authority in everything from unisex haircuts and clothes to preaching free love, made homosexuality appear less outrageous and abnormal to many young people, according to historian Lillian Faderman.¹³⁷⁶

The combination of sexual liberation, sex radicalism, and public sex was most developed in San Francisco's gay male culture, which created a large network of spaces, some commercial and some not, for sexual activities. By the mid-1970s, according to Sides, the city had "geographically distinct gay male neighborhoods, which were beginning to reflect the diversities in class, style, and sexual behavior among residents."¹³⁷⁷

By the late 1980s, the spirit of sexual freedom that emerged two decades earlier was overwhelmed by the AIDS epidemic, which led to the closure of San Francisco's gay bathhouses and other changes in the city's sexual culture. Author and sex activist Patrick Califia was among those who mourned the changes: "It seems that the only way we can legitimately talk about our sexuality is under the rubric of death and disease. We can't celebrate, defend or describe queer pleasure even though it was the quest for pleasure that made so many of us HIV-positive."¹³⁷⁸

Sex Groups and Networks

Beginning in the 1960s, LGBTQ people organized groups, networks, and new institutions that supported sexually liberated San Francisco. One of the first sex organizations to form was the San Francisco chapter of the Sexual Freedom League, begun in 1965 at a café called the Blue Unicorn (1927 Hayes Street, extant) near the Golden Gate Park Panhandle with discussions like "How to Be Queer and Like It" and "Sex and Civil Rights."¹³⁷⁹ In 1969, SFL's founder, Jefferson Poland, went on to initiate the Psychedelic Venus Church, which organized dances and orgies that welcomed gays and straights.¹³⁸⁰

In 1968, Glide Memorial Church founded the San Francisco Sex Information switchboard and the National Sex Forum (540 Powell Street, extant), both of which sought to dispel misinformation

1375 Sides, *Erotic City*, 6.

1376 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 204.

1377 Sides, *Erotic City*, 102.

1378 Pat Califia, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2000), xxiv.

1379 Sides, *Erotic City*, 71. See also Andrea Sharon Dworkin, "Bisexual Histories in San Francisco in the 1970s and Early 1980s," *Journal of Bisexuality* v. 1, no. 1 (2001): 93.

1380 Sides, *Erotic City*, 71.

about sex, including damaging myths about gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender men and women. In 1976, the Sex Forum evolved into the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (1523 Franklin Street, extant).¹³⁸¹ The institute, which included Phyllis Lyon and bisexual activist Maggi Rubenstein on its faculty, was the first institution of higher education in the U.S. to grant advanced degrees in sexology.

Leather Culture

Sociologist and leather historian Gayle Rubin defines “leather” as a “distinctive subgroup of male homosexuals ... organized around sexual activities and erotic semiotics that distinguish it from the larger gay male population.”¹³⁸² Leather communities began to form in the 1940s as a revolt against the common perception that gay men were effeminate. Masculine men, especially motorcyclists who wore leather, “began to carve out alternative gay social spaces.”¹³⁸³ Bars that catered to the leather community were a stark contrast to the “fuzzy sweater” bars of the 1950s, such as Gordon’s in North Beach, described in an earlier section. Gay bikers formed gay motorcycle clubs, first the Satyrs in Los Angeles in 1954, and later the Warlocks and California Motor Club in San Francisco in the 1960s.

The leather community, as Rubin describes it, had subcommunities devoted to specific types of sexual practices, including sadomasochism (S/M), bondage and discipline, and fetishism. Sex clubs devoted to alternative sexual practices appeared in San Francisco in the 1960s. The first leather bar in San Francisco was the Why Not at 518 Ellis Street in the Tenderloin, opened by Tony Tavarossi in 1962. The Why Not closed within a few months. The first leather bar in the South of Market area was the Tool Box at 399 Fourth Street at Harrison, opened in 1962. Later that year, a typical piece by *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen noted that “some of young fellers” at the Tool Box “wear an ‘S’ or ‘M’ on their shirt pockets to indicate ‘Sadist’ or ‘Masochist.’”¹³⁸⁴ The Tool Box closed in 1971, and that same year the building was demolished as part of a redevelopment project. Although men were the most numerous and visible leather demographic, Pat Califia described Scott’s (10 Sanchez Street, extant) as a “lesbian leather bar” that provided “a haven for role-playing dykes, punk dykes, black lesbians, and lesbians in leather.”¹³⁸⁵

One of the more popular public spaces for sex in the South of Market area was Ringold Street, discretely tucked away in the middle of the block bounded by Folsom and Harrison and Eighth and Ninth Streets. Community historian Philip Rossetti describes the scene in the 1970s:

[Ringold Street] was popular for years for sex late at night for the leather boys—in doorways, under stairs, dark corners. Many hard core denizens of Folsom Street in the seventies and maybe later drove there in vans all tricked out for sex with curtains in the windows, a mattress, and all the necessary accoutrements for dragging men into it from all the bars up and down the street.¹³⁸⁶

1381 Martin, *Finding Aid*, p. 40, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1382 Rubin, “The Miracle Mile,” 253.

1383 *Ibid.*, 254.

1384 Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 3, 1964. Quoted in Rubin, “The Miracle Mile,” 255.

1385 Samois, eds., *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1987), 279.

1386 Philip Rossetti, interviewed by Shayne Watson, August 7, 2014.

LGBTQ Sadomasochism Groups

Public discussion or displays of sadomasochism were initially shunned by many in the LGBTQ communities as offensive or as behavior that would reinforce the worst fears of straight society. In 1978, a contingent of S/M practitioners were booed at the Gay Freedom Day parade, yet within a few years there was a local S/M scene with clubs and publications. Gay male leather and S/M erotica produced in San Francisco included the magazines *Drummer* and *Bound & Gagged*. During the 1980s, sex radicalism became a more common topic for some people within and outside of LGBTQ communities. In the 1991 edition of *Lesbian/Woman*, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon wrote that “lesbian sadomasochism is a disturbing subject for some. In the Gay 90s, however, S/M has joined with the discussion/debate over butch/femme and lesbians ‘sleeping’ with men.”¹³⁸⁷

Gay, Bisexual, and Lesbian S/M Culture

San Francisco’s S/M community expanded during the sexually liberated 1970s. Legendary among private S/M sex clubs was the Catacombs (3343 21st Street, extant), which opened in 1975 in the basement of an Edwardian residence. Property-owner Steve McEachern transformed the rooms into a space for sexual pleasure and boundary pushing that historian Gayle Rubin has called “A Temple of the Butthole.”¹³⁸⁸ Catacombs parties continued until the original space closed upon McEachern’s death in 1981; the club subsequently operated out of spaces on Larkin Street, then on Shotwell Street.¹³⁸⁹

In 1973, Cynthia Slater, a bisexual woman, and her male partner, Larry Olson, founded San Francisco’s first S/M club, the Society of Janus.¹³⁹⁰ The following year they began publishing a newsletter titled *Growing Pains*. Cynthia Slater and Susan Thorsen rented the Catacombs for the first mixed-gender, mixed-orientation S/M sex party.¹³⁹¹ To draw more women, they also created a short-lived group called Cardeus, with meetings held in member’s homes.¹³⁹²

San Francisco’s unique sexual culture attracted international attention during this period. In 1975, for instance, French philosopher Michel Foucault spent a portion of the year teaching at the UC Berkeley, and was excited by the liberated gay sexuality he found in San Francisco, especially in the bathhouses. He became particularly fascinated by “limit-experiences” such as S/M. He published the first volume of his influential study *The History of Sexuality* in 1976 and continued to visit San Francisco regularly through 1983.¹³⁹³

In 1978, Gayle Rubin and Pat (now Patrick) Califia founded Samois, the San Francisco Bay Area’s first lesbian-feminist S/M group.¹³⁹⁴ In 1979, the group produced a pamphlet, “What Color is Your Handkerchief,” adapting a hanky-code popular with local gay men so that women could identify other women’s sexual preferences by handkerchief color. For example, an olive-colored

1387 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 311.

1388 Gayle Rubin, “The Catacombs: A Temple of the Butthole,” in *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 224-240. A detailed description of the layout and activities at the Catacombs is found in Jack Fritscher’s “The Catacombs: Fistfucking in a Handball Place” first published in *Drummer* Issue 23 (1978) as found in *San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer Magazine*, at www.JackFritscher.com.

1389 “Leather History Timeline,” accessed June 12, 2014, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050308053012/http://www.leatherarchives.org/exhibits/deblase/timeline2.htm>.

1390 Sides, *Erotic City*, 119.

1391 “Leather History Timeline.”

1392 “History of Our Leather Women’s Group in San Francisco,” The Exiles, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://theexiles.org/history-new/>.

1393 “Leather History Timeline.”

1394 Samois, *Coming to Power*, 249-251. Califia went on to become a prominent voice in public conversations about sexuality, public sex, gender, prostitution, and the anti-pornography movement through her articles and an advice column in *The Advocate* and books.

handkerchief in the back left pocket meant that the woman was interested in military-themed sex.¹³⁹⁵ Some bookstores refused to carry the pamphlet and other literature produced by Samois for women interested in S/M.

By the late 1970s, San Francisco was home to organizations that would take the sex wars public. In 1978, the two-year-old organization Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media hosted the first national feminist conference on pornography. WAVPM and others employed analyses that argued that pornography and S/M practices were reflections of patriarchy and were counter to true feminism and lesbianism.¹³⁹⁶ According to Gayle Rubin and Patrick Califia, Samois asked repeatedly to meet for dialogue with WAVPM, which had offices in The Women's Building. When Samois was not included in a forum on women and pornography organized by WAVPM, they requested rental space for a public event to present their own views at The Women's Building, which led to lengthy, tense, and unsatisfying communications between the two groups.¹³⁹⁷

In 1981, Samois published the book *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M*, launched with a book party at the Valencia Street bar Amelia's.¹³⁹⁸ The book sold out quickly, and a second edition by Alyson Publications was printed. The onslaught of attention from media and interested readers and the labor it took to respond reportedly created strains with Samois that led to its dissolution in 1983.¹³⁹⁹

By the mid-1980s, attitudes toward S/M were less hostile; Stormy Leather (855 Page Street, extant) was doing a booming business selling leather products made specifically for lesbian S/M.¹⁴⁰⁰ In 1984, a successor organization to Samois was founded with the name Outcasts. Around eighty women responded to an advertisement and met at Valencia Rose Café on Valencia Street to discuss what a new lesbian S/M group should look like and ultimately concluded that the group should welcome everyone, including "faggot-identified dykes, bisexuals, transsexuals and other weirdos and perverts."¹⁴⁰¹ Outcasts organized Butch Fashion Shows and Dyke Daddy Contests and published a newsletter, *Lunatic Fringe*, until the organization closed in 1997.

Sex Shops, Theaters, and Sex Clubs

Beginning in the 1930s, historians John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman report, U.S. courts began narrowing the definition of obscenity so that, by the 1960s "forthright presentation of sexual matters in literature and other media" faced few legal barriers.¹⁴⁰² A series of court decisions and changes in police practices during the 1960 and 1970s gradually legalized the commercial display and sale of explicit representations of straight and gay sex in magazines, stage revues, and porn films shown in theaters. Beginning in the early 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court began a series of rulings that made prosecution of obscenity more difficult. In 1962, the court decided in *MANual Enterprises v. J. Edward Day* that publishing and distributing physique magazines was legal. In its 1973 ruling *Miller v. California*, the court defined obscenity as a violation of the community standards in the location where it is viewed.¹⁴⁰³ San Francisco became the "Smut Capitol of the World" as hardcore porn and

1395 Sex Clubs, General, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Ephemera Collection.

1396 Robb, *Mothering the Movement*, 153-156.

1397 Samois, *Coming to Power*, 255-258, 280.

1398 *Ibid.*, 278.

1399 "History of Our Leather Women's Group in San Francisco."

1400 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 255.

1401 Gayle Rubin. "The Outcasts: A Social History," in *The Second Coming – A Leatherdyke Reader*, edited by Pat Califia and Robin Sweeney (Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications, 1996). "History of Our Leather Women's Group in San Francisco."

1402 D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 277.

1403 Sides, *Erotic City*, 57.

live sex shows proliferated; most of these were geared to straight-male consumers, but gay porn was becoming an important social and economic phenomena.¹⁴⁰⁴

In reaction to these changes, local, regional, and national campaigns were mounted to halt public sexual expression and representation. By 1971, Dianne Feinstein was telling her gay supporters “porno movie houses and bookstores and smut papers are making it harder for the gay community to become part of the accepted mainstream of America.”¹⁴⁰⁵ But many Americans, including many gay men, saw these expressions as part of a valuable social transformation. Jeffrey Escoffier claims that “the sexual revolution would never have taken place if it weren’t for the struggles over pornography and obscenity. Those gave us the right to make explicit sexual speech and to express our sexual feelings and also to talk about it in a frank, blunt way.”¹⁴⁰⁶

Bookstores and Sex Paraphernalia

Adonis Books at 348 Ellis Street (not extant) was one of the first gay bookstores in the country and the first place in San Francisco to sell beefcake magazines, nude photographs, and hardcore gay porn on 8mm film. Opening in the Tenderloin in March 1965, the store was founded by Bob Damron, Jack Trollop, Jack Tennyson, and Hal Call (one of the leaders of the Mattachine Society).¹⁴⁰⁷ Soon after opening the Adonis, Hal Call and his partners started screening pornographic films and gay peep shows to private audiences. Call’s bookstore, which he called a “gay supermarket,” was very successful—a fact he attributed in part to less intrusion from the police: “Many of the photographs [we sell in 1970] we would not have dared sell even a year ago.”¹⁴⁰⁸

In 1971, an erotic bookseller, the Jaguar (4052 18th Street, extant), opened in the Castro and soon became known as the “Quick Stop of casual sex.” A small fee granted patrons access to the rest of the building, which was furnished with bunk beds, and featured a maze for sexual pursuit and a disco floor “rarely used for dancing.”¹⁴⁰⁹

In addition, four shops catering to leathermen opened in 1979 alone: Taylor of San Francisco (1225 Folsom Street) and Mr. S Leather (277 7th Street) were established in the South of Market area; Leather Forever (1702 Washington Street) and Leatherworld (735 Larkin Street) opened in the Polk District.¹⁴¹⁰ Commercial sites that catered to lesbian sexuality were small in number compared to gay men’s. They included Good Vibrations (3416 22nd Street, extant), described as one of the first women-oriented sex toy stores in the country. In 1977, Joani Blank opened the store near the growing lesbian corridor on Valencia Street.¹⁴¹¹ Blank had authored several books, including *My Playbook for Women About Sex*, and her shop included a museum display of historic vibrators.¹⁴¹² Advocating for women’s, and more specifically, lesbian, sexual empowerment took place everywhere from stores like Good Vibrations to political meetings aimed at defeating the 1978 Briggs Initiative. Anti-Briggs activist Amber Hollibaugh says that her presentations throughout

1404 Excerpts from documentary film, *Smut Capital of America*, Michael Stabile director (2011) <http://vimeo.com/15163640>.

1405 Sides, *Erotic City*, 144.

1406 Jeffrey Escoffier in *Smut Capital of America* (2011).

1407 Jeffrey Escoffier, *Bigger than Life: The History of Gay Porn Cinema from Beefcake to Hardcore* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2009), 120.

1408 Burks and Link, “The Gay Mecca,” 30.

1409 Sides, *Erotic City*, 110.

1410 “Leather History Timeline.”

1411 Sides, *Erotic City*, 122. Eve’s Garden in New York City has been described as the “nation’s first feminist sex-toy store” in Hallie Lieberman, “If You Mold It, They Will Come,” *Bitch* (Summer 2015): 21.

1412 “She’s Givin’ Out Good Vibrations,” *Noe Valley Voice* v. 1, no. 3 (July 1977): 5

California during the campaign would include “what it means to be a sexual outlaw. I used that visual image to talk about what it meant to be female and try to discover my own sexuality in a society that refused to acknowledge me as having rights of my own as a sexual person.”¹⁴¹³

Theaters, Strip Clubs and Other Public Sex Performance Spaces

Around 1970, Hal Call opened the Circle J Theater at 369 Ellis Street (extant) to screen pornography and host group masturbation sessions for gay men. When asked why he opened the Circle J, Hall replied, “Well I believed in sex and I believed in gay sex and we were trying to achieve the freedom to have it and all that, and I said well god dammit, let’s have some.”¹⁴¹⁴ The Circle J was immediately popular: “We had anywhere up to fifty, sixty, seventy-five people a day visiting that, and most of them jacking off.” The Circle J stayed opened through the AIDS epidemic because, as Call noted, “We’ve hardly lost anybody to AIDS, because you don’t get AIDS from jacking off.”¹⁴¹⁵

From 1970 until c. 1983, lesbian activist Arlene Elster screened sexually explicit films at the Sutter Cinema (355-363 Sutter Street, extant) in a second floor theater space. The business drew attention from politicians, in part for its proximity to Union Square, and Elster was arrested on obscenity charges fourteen times.¹⁴¹⁶

Bars sometimes gave lesbians access to public sexual representation. According to Lillian Faderman, lesbian bars in San Francisco hosted some of the first public lesbian strip shows in the 1970s, which were organized by women for political as well as erotic purposes. Faderman quotes one stripper who performed but also booked shows with diverse female body types: “I pray to the goddess before I go out on stage to help me do it right.”¹⁴¹⁷ A 1989 advertisement for the stripping skills of “Dancing Lady,” claimed she has danced locally at Amelia’s, A Little More, and the Bay Brick Inn.¹⁴¹⁸

One of the most notable gay public sex establishments in the 1990s was the 848 Community Arts Space at 848 Divisadero Street (extant), known as 848, which opened in fall of 1991 as an arts venue that organized and welcomed sex events as, in part, a means to address healing around AIDS. One of 848’s founders, Bay Area dancer and performance artist Keith Hennessy, remembers that “at 848 we bragged that anything could happen. For \$100 a night we handed the keys to the space to almost anyone.” Numerous queer and sex radical events were held at 848, including sex education events, participatory sexual art performances, sex parties and sexual performances by Body Electric, Queen of Heaven, Radical Faeries, Black Leather Wings, and Annie Sprinkle.¹⁴¹⁹

Pornographic Film Production

San Francisco also was home to some of the earliest commercial gay pornography film production in the U.S. Falcon Studios was opened in 1972 by Charles “Chuck” Holmes, initially as a production and mail-order distribution business for 8mm films. Falcon was reportedly one of the first to move

1413 “Interview with Amber Hollibaugh,” *Socialist Review* v. 9 no. 3 (May-June 1979).

1414 Hal Call, interviewed by Dennis Saxman, August 30, 1995, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society*.

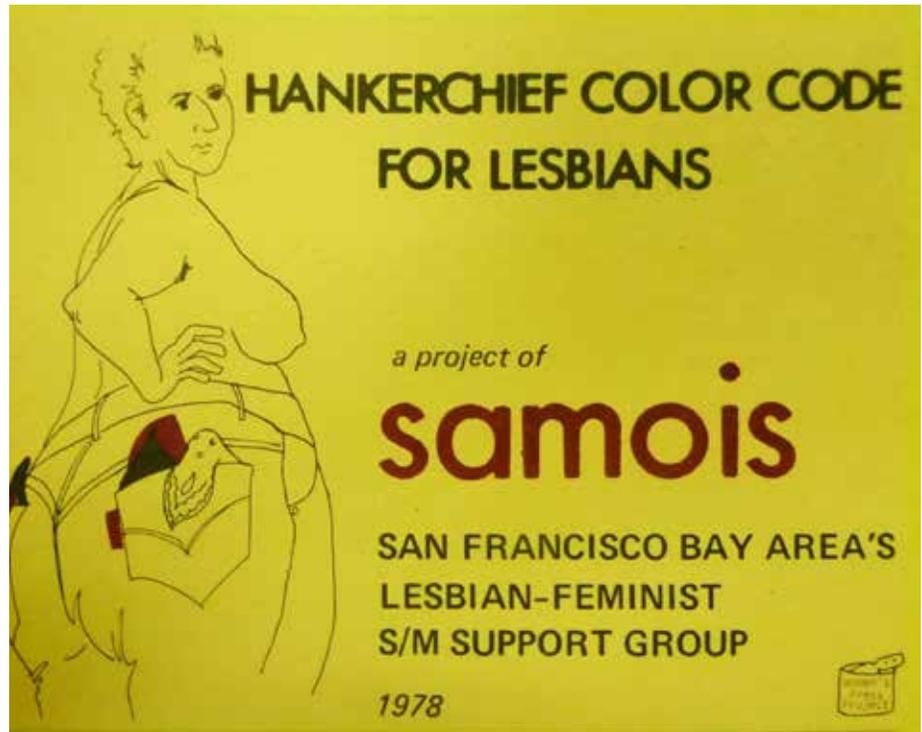
1415 The Circle J closed in 2005. Zay Szymanski, “Historic Circle J Club Closing,” *Bay Area Reporter*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=375>.

1416 Arlene Elster Papers, *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society* cited in Christopher VerPlanck, Draft Historic Resource Report on 355-363 Sutter Street, February 2015.

1417 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 257. Faderman cites interviews but no published sources for bar names.

1418 *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent* v. 1 no. 11 (Dec 1989): 30.

1419 Tessa Wills, “848 Community Space: Performance and Sex in 1990s San Francisco,” Republished with permission at <http://tessawills.com/848-performance-sex-1990s-san-francisco-keith-hennessy/>. Originally published in George, Doran, Hargreaves, Martin, Shaw, Thom and Wills, Tessa eds. *Dance Theatre Journal* v. 25 no. 2 (2013).



TOP LEFT: Leather man in South of Market area, c. 1970s
 TOP RIGHT: Business card for a BD/SM club on at 2570 Ocean Avenue
 BOTTOM LEFT: Advertisement (censored) for the Catacombs at 3343 21st Street
 BOTTOM RIGHT: Booklet for the lesbian S/M group, Samois
 (All courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

into the home-video arena, which expanded the industry enormously. Falcon specialized in using models who presented a certain type: “idealized...blonde California surfer,” according to one account. The well-groomed, healthy image became even more important as the AIDS epidemic affected gay men’s sexual behavior and their perceptions of their own and other gay men’s bodies. John Rothenberg, a later president of Falcon, remembered Holmes lecturing to students at San Francisco State’s “Sexual Variations” course.¹⁴²⁰

Many lesbian and straight women during the 1970s through 1990s found pornography of little interest or downright offensive. Three lesbian sex films nonetheless were produced during the 1970s by the National Sex Forum in San Francisco; Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon describe them in their 1991 edition of *Lesbian/Woman* as “distributed nationally but only to professionals for use in sex education or therapy.”¹⁴²¹ In 1984, the new lesbian pornography magazine *On Our Backs* (526 Castro Street, extant) described its purpose as encouraging “sexual freedom, respect and empowerment for lesbians.”¹⁴²² Two of the founders created a video company in the mid-1980s, named Satow Private Pleasures. By the late 1980s, Satow Media was the world’s largest producer of lesbian pornography, and their lesbian erotica event at the Castro Theatre featuring Susie Bright was a huge hit.¹⁴²³

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

LGBTQ people have always participated in the full range of religious organizations in the U.S., but their inclusion almost always was premised on hiding their sexual orientation and non-normative gender identities. Glide Memorial Church’s pioneering role in the 1960s has already been described in this report. In 1972, the Bay Area’s Golden Gate Association of the United Church of Christ became the site of Rev. William Johnson’s ordination, the first openly gay man to be ordained in a mainstream denomination in the U.S. This event was part of a new era in which LGBTQ people developed lesbian and gay ministries within established churches and founded new religious homes for themselves.¹⁴²⁴

Some San Francisco churches paid a price for becoming more inclusive. Rev. Jim Lowder of the Dolores Street Baptist Church (15th and Dolores Streets, not extant) was fired from his part-time post at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in 1985 for making sympathetic statements about gay church members on a television show, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America expelled the pastor of St. Francis Lutheran Church (152 Church Street, extant) for ordaining three openly gay clergy in the mid-1980s.¹⁴²⁵ In 1990, two Lutheran churches in San Francisco—First United Lutheran at 1031 Franklin Street and St. Francis—again came under fire from the ECLA.¹⁴²⁶ St. Francis extended pastoral calls to Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart, a lesbian couple. First United called Jeff Johnson, a gay man. All three were controversial picks because homosexuality was prohibited among pastors. Zillhart, Frost, and Johnson were ordained at a ceremony on January 20, 1990, at St.

1420 Wyatt Buchanan, “Hub of All That’s Hot,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 23, 2007. Lord Martine, “Studios President Gives Us the Dirt on Dirty Movies,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 28, 2002. Holmes went on to become an important philanthropist, giving \$1 million toward the San Francisco LGBT Community Center.

1421 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 309.

1422 Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 258.

1423 Sides, *Erotic City*, 219.

1424 Jeffrey S. Siker, ed., *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994), 151.

1425 Gary Klein, “Former Mill Valley Seminary President Dies,” *Marin Independent Journal*, December 2, 2008, accessed January 3, 2015, http://www.marinij.com/millvalley/ci_11122004. Rev. Jim Mitulski “The Castro is a Sacred Place,” in Winston Leyland, ed., *Out in the Castro: Desire, Promise, Activism* (San Francisco: Leyland Publications, 2002), 220.

1426 Justin Berton, “2 S.F. Lutheran Churches Win Fight for Gay Pastors,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 12, 2011, accessed December 31, 2014, <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/2-S-F-Lutheran-churches-win-fight-for-gay-pastors-2475517.php>.

Paulus Lutheran Church (1541 Polk Street, extant), an ELCA congregation. Soon after, the ELCA suspended St. Francis and First United for “willfully disregarding criteria for recognition as ELCA congregations by failing to call pastoral leadership in accordance with church call procedures.”¹⁴²⁷ The congregations were expelled from the ELCA December 31, 1995.

There are exceptions to the many LGBTQ people who have felt great prejudice and stigma within predominantly heterosexual churches. Long-time San Francisco resident Joseph Warren recalls growing up gender fluid in the 1960s in the predominately African American neighborhood of Ocean View and finding camaraderie and a measure of acceptance at his Catholic school, St. Michael’s (32 Broad Street, extant), where “some days I would go as a girl, and some days as a boy.”¹⁴²⁸ Warren also recalled participating in the choir of the Baptist Church nearby, where youth singers were “gay, straight and bi and the adults knew it.”

LGBTQ Churches and Congregations in San Francisco

Metropolitan Community Church

San Francisco’s Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) began in 1970, two years after Rev. Troy Perry began the groundbreaking Protestant Christian church for lesbians and gays in his Los Angeles living room. Howard Wells conducted San Francisco’s first MCC meeting in Jackson’s Bar and Grill (118 Jones Street), and the first public service took place at California Hall on Polk Street.¹⁴²⁹ During the early 1970s, the church’s services and meetings were held in a variety of locations including weekend services at Mission United Presbyterian Church (23rd Street at Capp Street) and at the Society for Individual Rights Community Center, and weeknight services at the parsonage and social hall of a church at 1076 Guerrero Street. In June 1973, an arson fire caused extensive damage to the Guerrero Street building, which MCC had been renting on a monthly basis.¹⁴³⁰ Within a few months, the congregation began a fund drive to purchase a building that “would not only house the church sanctuary but include a library, offices and meeting rooms to be made available to other homophile organizations.”¹⁴³¹ Community fundraisers featured José Sarria and other entertainers and were sponsored by individuals such as Bob Ross, president of the Tavern Guild, who chaired benefit auctions at various gay bars throughout the city.¹⁴³²

By 1980, the nomadic congregation had 100 members and was finally able to locate a permanent home at 150 Eureka Street (threatened with demolition) in the Castro, “one of the first gay-owned public properties in the city” according to long-time pastor Jim Mitulski.¹⁴³³ The turn-of-the-century building had been an independent Pentecostal church; MCC purchased it for \$250,000. Churches such as MCC offered important meeting spaces for gay men and lesbians who looked for places to connect beyond the bar scene.¹⁴³⁴ MCC started new ministry programs focused on gay bars and bathhouses and began a program at Atascadero State Hospital and Prison, where individuals convicted of sex crimes often were incarcerated.¹⁴³⁵ Rev. Jim Mitulski, MCC pastor from 1985

1427 Kimberly Rae Connor, personal communication with Shayne Watson.

1428 Joseph Warren, interviewed by Donna Graves at OpenHouse, May 17, 2014.

1429 Metropolitan Community Church, “MCCSF Timeline,” accessed February 22, 2014, <http://mccsf.org/timeline/>.

1430 Letter to “All members and Friends of Metropolitan Community Church,” September 9, 1973, in MCC Building Drive 8/1/73-12/73 folder, Barry Shands Papers, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. The letter describes an earlier fire destroying their Church Center in a “skid row” location on Sixth Street.

1431 “Metropolitan Community Church Announces Fund Drive,” September 18, 1973 Press Release in MCC Building Fund Drive 8/1/73-12/73 folder, Bond Shands Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

1432 Ibid.

1433 Mitulski, *Out in the Castro*, 225.

1434 Wendy Cadge, “Reconciling Congregations Bridging Gay and Straight Communities,” in Scott Thumma and Edward R. Gray, eds., *Gay Religion* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005), 38.

1435 The effort to minister in prisons led to a lawsuit establishing that MCC was a bona fide religion under federal laws. “MCCSF Timeline.”

to 2000, led the congregation as a progressive center for liberation theology, social justice, and civil rights both in the broader community and in the larger MCC church. By the mid-1980s, the congregation had grown to approximately 500 members, as gay people sought solace in the face of suffering caused by AIDS.¹⁴³⁶ During the peak of the HIV/AIDS crisis, before effective treatments were available, the church regularly held three or four funerals on each day of the weekend.¹⁴³⁷

Jewish Congregations

A San Francisco organization founded around 1973, Chutzpah (later known as Achvah), was reportedly the first gay Jewish group on the West Coast.¹⁴³⁸

In 1977, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav was formed but faced several challenges including finding a regular place to meet, unwillingness of local publishers to accept advertisement for their public services, and initial lack of acceptance from other local Jewish organizations. For a time, however, members joined regular Friday services at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (3200 California Street), which furthered their outreach.¹⁴³⁹ Robert Tat, one of Sha'ar Zahav's founding members, recalls that members organized a Jewish memorial service for Harvey Milk at the newly purchased Women's Building on the Friday night after his assassination in 1978.¹⁴⁴⁰ By the early 1980s, Sha'ar Zahav had raised funds to purchase a former Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at 220 Danvers Street (extant). Tat recalls moving into "a home of our own" as a profoundly important experience. Irene Ogus, who was active in church fundraising, says the congregation grew so fast that the new 120-seat sanctuary quickly became too small. "For big celebrations we used to use the alley space at the side of the building."¹⁴⁴¹ In 1998, Sha'ar Zahav left the Danvers Street site for a more spacious former funeral home at 290 Dolores Street (extant) at the corner of 16th Street.¹⁴⁴²

Gay and Lesbian Buddhist Groups

Beat poet Allen Ginsberg and other gay men and lesbians were among the early newcomers introduced to Zen Buddhism at Sokoji Temple (1881 Bush Street, extant) in San Francisco's Japantown. The San Francisco Zen Center (300 Page Street), which evolved out of that meeting between "East" and "West," became a major Buddhist institution in the Bay Area, but was perceived as "overwhelmingly straight" by some gays and lesbians, who created other sanghas (congregations). One account traces the formal beginnings of the relationship between LGBTQ people and Buddhism in San Francisco to an April 1980 meeting in the basement of the Metropolitan Community Church, where about fifty gay men gathered to discuss what it meant to be both Buddhist and gay.¹⁴⁴³ They continued to meet as the Gay Buddhist Fellowship and the following year purchased their gathering place at 57 Hartford Street (extant) in the Castro, forming

1436 Christopher Heredia, "Compassion of the Castro," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 2000, accessed October 18, 2014, <http://www.sfgate.com/health/article/Compassion-of-the-Castro-The-Rev-Jim-Mitulski-3236381.php>.

1437 "MCC San Francisco: From a Nomadic Tribe to Our Castro Home," accessed February 22, 2014 <http://mccsf.org/history>.

1438 Description for Steve Ginsberg Papers at Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. "Sexing the City" lists Achvah Chutzpah at 279 Ney Street from 1972-1989, p. 9.

1439 Jonathan Silverman, "Joy and Sadness Mark Sha'ar Zahav's 25th Anniversary," *Jweekly.com*, June 7, 2002, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/17938/joy-and-sadness-mark-sha-ar-zahav-s-25th-anniversary/>.

1440 Robert Tat, interviewed by Donna Graves, October 18, 2013.

1441 Dana Perrigan, "Gay Jewish Lesbian Group Outgrows and Sells Former Mormon Church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 29, 2007.

1442 Perrigan, "Gay Jewish Lesbian Group." Jim Mitulski recalls the building as former home of the "previously gay-owned and operated California Funeral Service, ironically the business through which many AIDS funerals were funneled." "The Castro is a Sacred Place" in *Out in the Castro*, 221. No additional information was found on this business. Another Jewish gay synagogue Ahav Shalom was formed in the mid-1980s and was listed as sharing space with MCC in the 1988 Pacific Bell Telephone Book.

1443 Wendy Cadge, "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Buddhist Practitioners," in Scott Thumma and Edward R. Gray, eds., *Gay Religion* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005).



Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

the Hartford Street Zen Center.¹⁴⁴⁴ Lesbian and bisexual women founded the Buddhist group Dharma Sisters sometime in the early 1990s.¹⁴⁴⁵

The Parsonage

While some LGBTQ people founded new churches as spiritual homes, others worked to change the perspectives of existing congregations to be more inclusive and welcoming. In 1972, gay priests Bernard Duncan Meyes and John Williams sought to build on the work of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual within the Episcopalian Church. Surprised at the San Francisco bishop's positive response, they leased a 19th-century cottage in the Castro with the purpose of supporting what Meyes described as "gay churchpeople." The Parsonage, as it became known, was located behind Heath Realtors at 555 Castro Street (extant) and leased under generous terms by its owners.¹⁴⁴⁶ Later, the Parsonage became home to Shanti's weekly AIDS support group in 1982.¹⁴⁴⁷

Bethany United Methodist Church

In 1984, Bethany United Methodist Church (1270 Sanchez Street), located on the edge of the Castro District, became a "reconciling congregation" that welcomed all, regardless of their sexual orientation. According to one of Bethany's pastors, some of the church's gay members appreciated Bethany because they "are really clear that they don't want this to be another Metropolitan Community Church. They don't want this to be an all-gay church."¹⁴⁴⁸ By 1984, Bethany had become involved with AIDS work.

Noe Valley Ministry

AIDS spurred a number of congregations to begin consciously addressing gay members and to face homophobia within and outside the church. When a member of the congregation of Noe Valley Ministry (1021 Sanchez Street, extant) became ill, the church became active in AIDS education, and in October 1987, it sponsored a series of public events on the medical, political, and spiritual aspects of AIDS titled "Gays and Straights Together."¹⁴⁴⁹

Most Holy Redeemer

Most Holy Redeemer (110 Diamond Street, extant), the Catholic Church in the Castro, had initially resisted the neighborhood's changing demographics as mostly white, working-class families gave way to increasing numbers of gay men. In 1983, a handful of gay church members began an Outreach Committee to other gay Catholics and set up a booth at the Castro Street Fair. Two years later, the *San Francisco Examiner* described the growth of common ground among congregants at Most Holy Redeemer: "It was mostly older people and younger gay men who—because of AIDS—were facing the same fears of disease and death."¹⁴⁵⁰ Sister Clea Harold, who helped lead Most Holy Redeemer's active ministry to people with AIDS in the 1980s, worked with the church's

1444 Issan Dorsey was the founder and leader of Hartford Street Zen Center until he died of AIDS at Maitri Hospice in 1990. Dorsey began in 1950s San Francisco as a hustler and drag queen whose close friends included the owners of venerable queer bars, the Beige Room and Ann's 440 Club. David Schneider, *Street Zen: The Life and Work of Issan Dorsey*, 128. The building at 57 Hartford Street had been formerly the Dharmadathu Center, where Paperback Traffic owner Steve Lowell was a senior student according to Steve Peskind, "AIDS and the Castro, June 1981-June 1983: A Personal Account," in *Out in the Castro*, 142.

1445 Roger Corless, "Coming Out in the Sangha: Queer Community in American Buddhism," in Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka, eds., *The Faces of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley: 1998), 262-63.

1446 Bernard Duncan Mayes, *Escaping God's Closet: The Revelations of a Queer Priest* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 223-224. Herth Real Estate was located at 555 Castro Street.

1447 Peskind, *Out in the Castro*, 152.

1448 Cadge, "Reconciling Congregations: Bridging Gay and Straight Communities," in *Gay Religion*, 36-38.

1449 "More Light on AIDS," *Noe Valley Voice* v. X no. 8 (Oct. 1986): 1.

1450 Donal Godfrey, *Gays and Grays: The Story of the Gay Community at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church* (Lanham Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007), 35.

Gay and Lesbian Outreach Committee to host a social hour and dinner with Archbishop Quinn in 1984.¹⁴⁵¹ Despite what some saw as a sign that the organized church was opening to gay Catholics, Most Holy Redeemer continued to occupy a difficult, and often strained, position as it tried to balance the needs of gay parishioners with antigay policies of the Vatican and archdiocese.

Dignity

Dignity, the gay Catholic Caucus, began meeting in 1973 in St. Peter's Church (1200 Florida Street, extant) in the Mission District. Members of the group held Mass there every Sunday until 1984, when standing-room-only crowds prompted them to move to a larger space at St. Boniface Church (133 Golden Gate Avenue, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 172) in the Tenderloin.¹⁴⁵² Dignity held Christmas liturgy at the Castro Theatre in 1987. The following year, Archbishop John R. Quinn forbade Dignity from meeting anywhere on Catholic Church property, and they moved to Dolores Street Baptist Church (208 Dolores Street).¹⁴⁵³ When that building burned down in 1993, the Metropolitan Community Church offered them meeting space.¹⁴⁵⁴

City of Refuge

Another pioneering congregation that had its start in the Castro was the City of Refuge Community Church, begun around 1992 by Rev. Yvette Flounder and a group from the Love Center in Oakland. They began in a rented building on 14th Street as an Independent Pentecostal Church with an "intentionally Afrocentric church aimed at lesbian and gay people of color." In later years, the church met in North Beach, downtown, and then finally settled in their own building at 1025 Howard Street (extant).¹⁴⁵⁵

Nontraditional Religious and Spiritual Organizations

LGBTQ San Franciscans have been active participants in various movements to critique existing spiritual traditions and to create new ones. Longtime educator and activist Sally Gearhart presented one of the first lesbian-feminist critiques of organized religion in an address she gave at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union in 1972 titled "The Lesbian and God-the-Father or, All the Church Needs Is a Good Lay—On Its Side."¹⁴⁵⁶ Although Gearhart was active in the Council on Religion and the Homosexual in those years, she made it clear that the organized church and the goals of lesbian feminists were directly contradictory: "Women who are being reborn these days do not want a man to step down from the pulpit so that a woman can step into it. They would do away with the pulpit altogether...."¹⁴⁵⁷

Rather than rejecting religion outright, other lesbian feminists proposed a new spirituality for women that drew from understanding of paganism and goddess histories. Many were inspired by Mary Daly's groundbreaking 1973 book *Beyond God the Father* and by the work of Bay Area feminist Z Budapest. San Francisco-based poet Judy Grahn's work from the 1970s and 1980s also contributed

1451 Most Holy Redeemer had an active AIDS ministry under Sister Clea Harold, *Gays and Grays*, 34. Other Catholic social service organizations responding to AIDS included Kairos House for care providers and Peter Claver Community for previously homeless adults living with disabling HIV or AIDS. Opened in 1985, the program was one of the earliest attempts by any organization to serve those sick and dying from HIV/AIDS, *Gays and Grays*, 96-98.

1452 *Bridges Newsletter*, May 1984. Dignity/San Francisco Bay Area "Bridges" 1979-1984 folder, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1453 "Where do we go from here?," *Bridges Newsletter*, December 1988. Dignity/San Francisco Bay Area "Bridges" 1979-1984 folder, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1454 Godfrey, *Gays and Grays*, 8, 43.

1455 Mitulski, *Out in the Castro*, 221. This research did not uncover the 14th Street address for City of Refuge.

1456 Profile of Dr. Sally Miller Gearhart, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=29>. Gearhart was co-chair of CRH during the mid-1970s.

1457 Sally Gearhart, "A Lesbian Looks at God the Father," 3, accessed July 8, 2014, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/Sampler/View.aspx?ID=LAG&Page=3>.

to new perspectives on the relationships between gender, patriarchy, and spirituality. By the 1990s, Grahn was teaching courses in the Bay Area on the goddess movement.¹⁴⁵⁸

Another neopaganist thread runs through gay men's history in San Francisco. In the fall of 1975, gay activist Arthur Evans, recently relocated from New York, formed a pagan-inspired spiritual group called the Faery Circle in his apartment at 604 Ashbury Street (extant) near the corner of Haight Street. The group combined countercultural consciousness, gay sensibility, and ceremonial playfulness.¹⁴⁵⁹ Evans published his research on early queer spirituality in 1978 as *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*.¹⁴⁶⁰

Radical Faeries, a movement founded in 1979 by gay rights pioneer Harry Hay and others to redefine gay consciousness through spirituality, also took hold in the Bay Area. Although Faerie sanctuaries and gatherings have been in rural locations, San Franciscans have been active participants. Writer N.A. Diaman recalls attending "several radical faerie gatherings before becoming involved in the Billy Club... This is a social support network for gay and bisexual men living in the country. There are now a lot of Billys living in the Bay Area, and I look forward to monthly potlucks in San Francisco."¹⁴⁶¹ In addition to providing support for gay men with AIDS in rural California, the Billys realized by the early 1990s that they filled a need for gay men from urban areas "who were feeling isolated as well. What was happening at these [rural Billy] gatherings was a different nurturing than was available in all the city venues."¹⁴⁶²

MCC leader Jim Mitulski remembers metaphysical congregations "seeking spirituality, free from the traditional faith, which were seen as hopelessly poisoned by homophobia," forming in the Castro during the late 1980s. These included the California Miracles Center on Market Street and the Radiant Light Ministry, which was "more overtly gay," according to Mitulski, and drew large numbers to celebration services at the Swedish American Hall (2174 Market Street).¹⁴⁶³

LGBTQ EDUCATION

Lavender University

In March 1974, a group of gay professors in San Francisco launched a pioneering lesbian and gay free university known as Lavender University (or Lavender U) (121 Leavenworth Street, extant) to develop classes and interest groups for gays and lesbians.¹⁴⁶⁴ Classes over the next two years included body work and gestalt, intimacy and sexuality, a married men's support group, a G40-Plus Club, self defense through martial arts, beginning gay dance, enjoying collective living, and support in coping with the gay mecca.¹⁴⁶⁵

Queer Studies and Research at San Francisco State University

Several San Francisco State University faculty members began in 1968 to teach courses in human sexuality, which expanded throughout the 1970s in number and in the departments where courses

1458 Judy Grahn, accessed July 8, 2014, <http://www.sofia.edu/content/judy-grahn>. MCC's first worship service focused on the 'feminine divine' – called "One of Many Names" – was held on September 12, 1990. "MCCSF Timeline," accessed July 8, 2014, <http://mccsf.org/timeline/>.

1459 Evans, a founder of Gay Activists Alliance in New York, continued his activism and research in San Francisco for the rest of his life. Cynthia Laird, "Gay Pioneer Arthur Evans Dies," *Bay Area Reporter*, September 15, 2011.

1460 Arthur Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* (Boston: Fag Rag Books, 1978).

1461 N.A. Diaman, "Living in The Castro: a Gay Writer Reminisces," *Out in the Castro*, 103.

1462 Ron Vonscoyk, "Beginnings: A Billy Story," accessed July 8, 2014, <http://thebillys.org/whoweaare/#origins>.

1463 Mitulski, *Out in the Castro*, 221-222.

1464 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 99.

1465 Synopsis of March/April 1975 and July/August 1976 course offerings from Tyler and Brad's Index to Early Gay Publications & Periodicals, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.tyleralpern.com/indexstoregionalg.html>.

were taught. Dr. Lois Flynn began teaching a social sciences course in 1972 called “Homosexuality as a Social Issue,” thus bringing discussion of lesbianism, male homosexuality, and the gay rights movement into the classroom.¹⁴⁶⁶ By 1978, a group of faculty began developing an interdisciplinary minor, which was approved in 1980 as the Human Sexuality Studies Program. In 1975, psychology professors John DeCecco and Michael Shively founded the Center for Homosexual Education, Evaluation and Research, which was designed to be an academic institute where scholars from various disciplines could conduct research into the historical, cultural, and social dimensions of homosexuality. It became the Center for Research and Education in Sexuality in 1981 to reflect broader studies including bisexuality and heterosexuality. DeCecco was a leading voice of this academic movement at SFSU and across the nation; in 1977, he assumed the post of editor of the *Journal of Homosexuality*, which he held for over three decades.¹⁴⁶⁷

San Francisco City College also started offering courses on homosexuality in the early 1970s. In 1972, the college offered a course in gay literature, reportedly the first of its kind. Jack Collins established the Department of Gay and Lesbian Studies at the college, also in 1972, and reportedly the first in the U.S.¹⁴⁶⁸ A Gay Student Alliance was formed at City College by 1976.

ARTS

Art by LGBTQ people became more visible, and visibly queer, from the 1970s into the 1990s. Along with New York, San Francisco nurtured particularly thriving communities of LGBTQ artists in all media. This section details a small sampling of the LGBTQ artists, art events, and art spaces in San Francisco during these decades.

Theater

All-male theater underwent a renaissance in 1960s San Francisco and became increasingly campy as the years passed. Susan Sontag’s influential 1964 essay “Notes on Camp” brought the cultural connotations of the word to mainstream readers: “The essence of camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.”¹⁴⁶⁹ In 1966, a San Francisco gay male social club, The Coits, mounted an all-male version of *The Women* at the Society for Individual Rights community center on Sixth Street. The cast built a stage at the facility, which later hosted all-male productions of “frothy book musicals” such as *The Boyfriend*, *Hello Dolly*, and *Mame*. Drag performances became highlights for events organized by local gay motorcycle clubs, the Tavern Guild, and the Society for Individual Rights, which produced original music revues called the Sirlebrity Capades. Drag theater companies such as Camptown Players, Yonkers Production Company, and City Players mounted productions throughout San Francisco in spaces such as California Hall on Polk Street, Russian Hall (2450 Sutter Street, extant), Village Theatre, Bimbo’s 365 Club (1025 Columbus Avenue, extant), Japan Center Theatre (1881 Post Street, extant), and Dovre Hall (3543 18th Street, now The Women’s Building). Popular female impersonators such as Michelle, Nancy, Mavis, and Charles Pierce headlined performances and drew enthusiastic crowds.¹⁴⁷⁰

In the following decade, the extravagant high camp review *Beach Blanket Babylon* brought mixed-gender drag to mainstream audiences when it opened at Savoy Tivoli (1434 Grant Avenue,

1466 Martin and Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman*, 332.

1467 “Guide to the John Paul De Cecco Papers, 1923-1999,” (2002) The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1468 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 74.

1469 Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” 1964, accessed May 5, 2014, <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Sontag-NotesOnCamp-1964.html>.

1470 Joe Campanella and Dick Bumpus, “The Rise, Fall and Resurrection of All-Male Theatre” undated clipping (c. 1980) in General, Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

extant) starting in 1974. Created by closeted gay impresario Steve Silver with original dialogue by Armistead Maupin, the show spoofed politics and pop culture. It moved to the 400-seat Club Fugazi at 678 Green Street in 1975. Still on stage as of 2015, it is reportedly the nation's longest-running musical review, drawing locals and tourists alike.¹⁴⁷¹

The Cockettes and the Angels of Light

Another significant San Francisco performance group of the late 1960s and early 1970s was The Cockettes, a gender-bending theater troupe whose members described themselves as mostly “gay, but exploring.” They staged regular theatrical extravaganzas at the Pagoda Palace Theatre (1741 Powell Street, not extant) that garnered an avid cult following. The Cockettes began in San Francisco on New Year’s Eve 1969, and lasted for a little more than two years. They represented a new approach to drag performance shaped by hippie culture and the younger generation of gay activists. One member, Richard “Scrumby” Koldewyn, recalls in the 2002 documentary film *The Cockettes*, “I began to feel that I was performing gay liberation through my art at that point.” Member Sweet Pam Tent says their approach “wasn’t just a drag show. It was a hippie sideshow.”¹⁴⁷² Allen Ginsberg referred to Cockettes’ productions as “part of a large-scale spiritual liberation movement and reclamation of self from the homogenization of the military state.”¹⁴⁷³ For a period, members lived in a communal household at 946 Haight Street.

Cockettes’ shows featured irreverent—and barely rehearsed—parodies of Hollywood musicals by stoned performers; the productions had titles such as *Pearls Over Shanghai*, *Gone With the Showboat to Oklahoma*, and *Tinsel Tarts in a Hot Coma*. Thrift shopping at Goodwill and St. Vincent De Paul stores was a “beloved ritual” for the Cockettes, who were known for wearing their elaborate, handmade regalia onstage and off.¹⁴⁷⁴ As the Cockettes gained renown, their performances drew a broad audience from San Francisco socialites to writer Truman Capote, critic Rex Reed, the film director John Waters and drag star Divine, who returned to San Francisco in 1973 to perform in the Cockettes’ production *Journey to the Center of Uranus*.¹⁴⁷⁵

In 1971, an ideological rift led to the formation of a splinter group, the Angels of Light, which was dedicated to free performances and was active throughout the 1970s. Sylvester, Divine, and Allen Ginsberg performed with them at various times. The Angels continued to perform at the Pagoda Palace Theatre and lived and worked together in a communal house on Oak Street in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood until the early 1980s.¹⁴⁷⁶

Gay Men’s Theatre

The San Francisco Gay Men’s Theatre Collective was formed in 1976 and in the following year staged *Crimes Against Nature: A Play by Faggots About Survival*, a collectively authored piece about gay identity and homophobia at Gumption Theater (1563 Page Street, extant). “Widely regarded as one of the seminal gay theater productions, *Crimes* played for nearly two years—here, in Santa Cruz, Toronto and New York,” according to *San Francisco Examiner* theater critic Robert Hurwitt.¹⁴⁷⁷

1471 Glenn Rifkin, “Steve Silver, 51, Creator of Revue That Captivated San Francisco” *New York Times*, June 14, 1995.

1472 Sweet Pam in *The Cockettes*, directed by Bill Weber and David Weissman, GranDelusion Production (2002).

1473 Joshua Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester: The Legend, The Music, The 70s in San Francisco* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 54.

1474 *The Cockettes* (2002).

1475 Ibid. See also Bernard Jay, *Not Simply Divine: Benath the Makeup, Above the Heels, and Behind the Scenes with a Cult Superstar* (Simon & Schuster, 1993), 33.

1476 Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Handmade Genders: Queer Costuming in San Francisco circa 1970,” in Elyssa Autherr and Adam Lerner, eds., *West of Center: Art and the counterculture experiments in America, 1965-1977* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 81. Research for this report has not uncovered the exact address on Oak Street.

1477 Robert Hurwitt, “Crimes Against Nature Shows Gay Issues of 1977,” *San Francisco Examiner*, September 19, 1997.

Theatre Rhinoceros

Theatre Rhinoceros, founded by Larry Baugniet and Allan B. Estes Jr. in August 1977, is described as the world's oldest continuously producing professional queer theater. Early productions included *The West Street Gang* by Doric Wilson, staged in South of Market leather bar The Black and Blue (198 Eighth Street), and Estes' *Gayhem: A Happening*, a performance installation that took place in eight rooms at the 330 Grove Street Gay Community Center.¹⁴⁷⁸ The productions were reportedly so successful that they provided the impetus for a move to Theatre Rhinoceros' first home in the Goodman Building (1117 Geary Boulevard, extant). In 1981, the theater group moved to the Mission District's Redstone Labor Temple Building (2926-2948 16th Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 238), where it remained until 2009, when rent increases forced the Theatre Rhinoceros to become an itinerant troupe producing in temporary spaces.¹⁴⁷⁹

Numerous San Francisco playwrights premiered work at Theatre Rhinoceros, including C.D. Arnold, Cal Youmans, Philip Real, and Dan Curzon. *San Francisco Bay Guardian* critic Robert Chesley's first one-act play, *Hell, I Love You* was produced at Theatre Rhinoceros in 1980, as was his 1984 play *Night Sweat*, the first full-length play about AIDS.¹⁴⁸⁰ That same year, Theatre Rhino commissioned and produced the ground-breaking *The AIDS Show: Artists Involved with Death and Survival*. Lesbian writers who performed or produced plays at Theatre Rhino included Pat Bond, Jane Chambers, and Adele Prandini.¹⁴⁸¹ In 1989, Theatre Rhinoceros mounted Kate Bornstein's *Hidden: A Gender*, "one of the earliest plays written and performed from a trans perspective," according to its author.¹⁴⁸²

Lesbian Theater

San Francisco was home to several lesbian theater groups in the 1970s–1980s. Lilith, a theater collective founded in 1974, used feminist consciousness-raising sessions as a creative starting point for performance. Lilith toured California and parts of Europe; its performances, workshops, and benefits were held in prisons and mental health centers as well as Intersection for the Arts, an arts venue in North Beach, and Mission District venues such as the Valencia Rose Café, and The Women's Building, where their offices were located.¹⁴⁸³ Performers included comedienne Marga Gomez, Joan Holden (San Francisco Mime Troupe), Cynthia Moore (Blake Street Hawkeyes), comedienne Paula Poundstone, and Rhodessa Jones.¹⁴⁸⁴

Another troupe, the Mothertongue Feminist Theater Collective, was founded in 1976 to use theater as a way to promote deeper understanding of women's concerns including gender roles, lesbianism, body issues, motherhood, and spirituality. Within ten years, the collective had seventy-five members. Fat Lip Reader's Theater, founded in 1982, specialized in fat-positive

1478 John Fisher, "Theatre Rhinoceros History," accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.theatrerhino.org/history>. See also "Stage Left: A Story of Theater in San Francisco," accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/embed/17614/9600784965/#vars!panel=183856!>.

1479 Richard Dodds, "Itinerant Rhinoceros: Theatre Rhino Moves From Its Mission District Digs," *Bay Area Reporter*, July 30, 2009, accessed January 3, 2015, http://ebar.com/arts/art_article.php?sec=theatre&article=540.

1480 Finding Aid to Robert Chesley Papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1481 Fisher, "Theatre Rhinoceros History."

1482 Kate Bornstein blog, accessed March 12, 2014, http://katebornstein.typepad.com/kate_bornsteins_blog/2008/09/gender-outlaws.html.

1483 Renee Koury, "Who Says Feminists Have No Sense of Humor," *Noe Valley Voice* v. IV, no. 9 (November 1980): 12. Intersection for the Arts was based in North Beach until 1985, when it moved into 766 Valencia Street when Valencia Rose Café closed according to former Intersection director Roberto Bedoya, quoted in Steve Winn, "The Art of Relocating/Part Three," *San Francisco Chronicle* June 15, 2005, accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.sfgate.com/performance/article/THE-ART-OF-RELOCATING-Part-Three-1985-95-2627614.php>.

1484 "Stage Left: A Story of Theater in San Francisco," accessed February 7, 2015, <http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/embed/17614/9600784965/#vars!panel=183856!>.

performances.¹⁴⁸⁵ Wry Crips Disabled Women's Theatre, formed in 1985, was based in San Francisco and the East Bay and performed poetry and short theater pieces that reflected the experiences of women with various disabilities and sexual orientations.¹⁴⁸⁶

Other Theater Events and Venues

San Francisco was an important stop on tours of prominent queer performers. Ephemera in the collection of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society from various dates in the 1970s and 1980s record performances such as Vincent Price's one-man show *Diversions and Delights* about Oscar Wilde at the Marines Memorial Theatre (609 Sutter Street, extant); Lily Tomlin at the Curran Theatre (445 Geary Street, extant), the Palace of Fine Arts (3301 Lyon Street, extant) and the Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell Street, extant); Whoopi Goldberg performing her one-woman show about Moms Mabley as a benefit performance for The Women's Building at the Victoria Theater (2961 16th Street, extant); Quentin Crisp at Marines Memorial Theatre; and Charles Busch at Valencia Rose Café.¹⁴⁸⁷

Ron Lanza and Hank Wilson, pioneer activists in gay liberation organizations, owned and operated the groundbreaking queer performance venue, Valencia Rose Café; Lanza later opened Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint. These establishments have been credited with keeping "performing arts alive ... through the worst years of AIDS and political artpophobia."¹⁴⁸⁸ Valencia Rose Café (766 Valencia Street, extant) opened in a former mortuary in January 1982 and is commonly described as the first gay comedy club in the U.S. In 1984, journalist Randy Shilts wrote: "With gays eager to find nonsexual social alternatives in the face of the AIDS epidemic, audiences have grown substantially in recent months. About 300 customers now crowd to the three venues or shows at the Valencia Rose on a typical weekend night."¹⁴⁸⁹ Valencia Rose helped launch many performing careers including those of Tom Ammiano, Whoopi Goldberg, Marga Gomez, Doug Holclaw, Lea de Laria, Monica Palacio, and Margaret Cho. The venue also hosted queer musicians such as Gwen Avery, Blackberri, and Avotcja.

In addition to a place to gather and laugh, Valencia Rose served as an important community center. Theater artist Dirk Alphin described the building as featuring wide hallways and ramps, making it one of the first performance spaces to be accessible to people with physical disabilities.¹⁴⁹⁰ Historian Allan Bérubé and performer Pat Bond presented "Marching to a Different Drummer," and in 1984, the café hosted "Gay and Lesbian Pioneers," a groundbreaking series of presentations on queer history.¹⁴⁹¹ The cafe also provided space for numerous community organizations, "encouraging political rallies and other kinds of organizing to take place there, as well as hosting educational evenings on spirituality or holistic living."¹⁴⁹²

1485 Elana Dykewoman, "Fat Liberation," in Bonnie Zimmerman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Lesbian Histories and Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 291.

1486 Pamela Kay Walker, *Moving Over the Edge: Artists With Disabilities Take the Leap* (Michael Horton Media, 2005), 100-103.

1487 Dance, Performance, Art 1930-1989 file, Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1488 Marke B. quoted in Tim Redmond, "Ron Lanza, Queer Impresario, Dies at 78," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, April 12, 2013.

1489 Randy Shilts, "Datebook," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 1984. Quoted in Ed Karvoski, ed., *A Funny Time to be Gay* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 30.

1490 Cynthia Laird, "Gay Club owner Ron Lanza Dies," *Bay Area Reporter*, April 18, 2013. Alphin served as a manager of Valencia Rose and was later involved with establishing and running Josie's Juice Joint. Dirk Alphin, personal communication with Donna Graves and Shayne Watson, October 15, 2015.

1491 Undated flyer for "Marching to a Different Drummer" in Valencia Rose file, Business Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Guide to Donald Montwill Papers, Group 1 – Records of Valencia Rose, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1492 Guide to Donald Montwill Papers, Group 1 – Records of Valencia Rose, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.



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TOP & LEFT: Posters for various LGBTQ art shows and performances (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

ABOVE: Former home of Theater Rhinoceros and GLBT Historical Society Archives, 2926-2948 16th Street, 1997 (Courtesy FoundSF)

Valencia Rose closed in 1985, but three years later, Ron Lanza and others opened Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint in the Castro (3583 16th Street, extant). Like Valencia Rose, Josie's was a community institution that mixed politics with humor, hosting plays, comedy acts, and many benefits and political meetings until it closed in 1999.¹⁴⁹³

Writing, Bookstores, and Publishing

Creative Writing

Creative writing, especially poetry, was an important component of LGBTQ arts in San Francisco. The breadth and number of writers is remarkable; the following is a sampling of some of their activities.

Bay Area poets Richard Taggett and Paul Mariah founded *ManRoot* poetry magazine and ManRoot Press in San Francisco in 1969.¹⁴⁹⁴ ManRoot Press took its name from a word Walt Whitman coined in his poem "I Sing the Body Electric." The first issue of *ManRoot* featured work by poets enrolled in a workshop sponsored by the Society for Individual Rights and taught by gay poet Robert Duncan.¹⁴⁹⁵ ManRoot Press published a dozen issues of the journal and thirty monographs including work by important Bay Area poets such as Jack Spicer, James Broughton, Robert Peters, and Thom Gunn.¹⁴⁹⁶

ManRoot was just one of a growing number of new venues for queer writing including publishers, distributors, and reading spaces. Poet Judy Grahn and others established the Women's Press Collective in 1969 (discussed in an earlier section) that opened a path for lesbian poets. Grahn describes the 1960s and 1970s as a time when Bay Area poets would "read anywhere for any number of righteous causes."¹⁴⁹⁷ In 1973, she participated in a benefit reading at Glide Memorial Church for the Council on Religion and the Homosexual that included Harold Norse, Richard Taggett, Paul Mariah, Jim Mitchell, Elsa Gidlow, Alta, and Pat Parker.

LGBTQ writers of color organized and created work that drew increasing attention in the 1970s and 1980s. Poetry ran throughout lesbian feminist culture; in 1976, Pat Parker and Judy Grahn were recorded by Olivia Records for the spoken-word album *Where Would I Be Without You? The Poetry of Pat Parker and Judy Grahn*. Parker was among the lesbian poets who contributed to the Women's Press Collective; she also helped found Gente, an organization for Bay Area lesbians of color. In 1979, Olivia Records sponsored a tour by a group of African American poets and musicians including Parker, Linda Tillery, Mary Watkins, and Gwen Avery as the Varied Voices of Black Women.¹⁴⁹⁸ Asian American writers Nellie Wong, Canyon Sam, Kitty Tsui, Genny Lim, Nancy Hom, and Merle Woo formed a predominately lesbian poetry and performance collective called Unbound Feet that was active in the 1970s and early 1980s and "gathered a strong following in the Asian-American community and among lesbians and radical gay men."¹⁴⁹⁹ In 1985, Francisco X. Alarcón, Juan Pablo Gutierrez, and Rodrigo Reyes formed a writing collective, Las Cuarto Espinas,

1493 Finding Aid to Ron Lanza Collection of Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint Records, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1494 For a 1974 reading at the Coffee Gallery (1353 Grant Avenue) Mariah described himself as "ex-convict, gnostic spiritualist, ex-mental health workers, former president of council of religion and the homosexual, one of the coordinators for the new Kinsey study... former secretary to Kay Boyle and Robert Duncan..." Paul Mariah "Profile," July 3, 1974 in Paul Mariah 1 of 2, Biography Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1495 Text from exhibit "Hymns to Hermes: The Poetics of James Broughton" at San Francisco Public Library, 2013.

1496 Stephen Schwartz, "Paul Mariah Obituary," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 25, 1996.

1497 Grahn, *A Simple Revolution*, 68.

1498 *Ibid.*, 198, 259.

1499 Ordoña, *Coming in Out Together*, 134-135.

and published *Ya Vas Carnal* the first out gay literary work published and distributed inside the American Latino literary circuit.¹⁵⁰⁰

Tales of the City

Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* is probably the most widely known queer fiction produced and set in San Francisco. Maupin began writing a daily serial for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in May 1976, "pumping out 800 words a day, five days a week," the writer recalls,¹⁵⁰¹ adding that the "plotting emerged from my own skipping, stumbling life as a just-out gay man in San Francisco, that veritable asparagus garden of carnal delights."¹⁵⁰² The serial centers on a fictional wooded urban enclave, Barbary Lane, inspired by Macondray Lane on San Francisco's Russian Hill.

Tales of the City, which was so popular that people xeroxed copies of the daily installments and mailed them to friends around the country, included current events, real-life figures, and a diverse cast of fictional characters including gay men and a transgender woman. Maupin describes working in the *Chronicle* office (901 Mission Street, extant) as offering:

[A] treasure trove of material, since my desk was adjacent to that of the society editor. (It was there I learned of a local hostess, a well-to-do lady with liberal intentions and a comically earnest air, who had thrown a luncheon at her penthouse "to rap about rape.")... Sometimes, when the panic overwhelmed me, I would flee the building entirely and walk two blocks to a plywood-cubicked sex club, where cheap daytime rates referred to as "The Businessman's Special" offered a moment or two of welcome mindlessness. After one such escape from my never-ending story, I was called unexpectedly to the editor's office where, 10 minutes into our discussion, I discovered a big pink glob of bubble gum stuck to the knee of my Levi's 501s.¹⁵⁰³

Tales of the City was first published as a novel by Harper & Row in 1978; four sequels appeared in subsequent years. By 1991, *Tales of the City* had reportedly sold over 600,000 copies in the U.S. alone, and three years later, a miniseries titled *Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City* ran on PBS (after premiering in the U.K.).¹⁵⁰⁴

Queer Science Fiction

A genre that features heavily in queer Bay Area writing is science fiction. Visual artist Nayland Blake notes, "the lesbian and gay fascination with science fiction and the alien life is part of the desire for a third term, neither male nor female."¹⁵⁰⁵ The first gay and lesbian science fiction group, the Urania Science Fiction Club, was founded in 1980 by Jerrold Jacks to support discussion of lesbian, gay, and alternate sexuality in science fiction and fantasy.¹⁵⁰⁶ The previous year, activist and San Francisco State professor Sally Gearhart had published a lesbian feminist science fiction utopian

1500 Juan Felipe Herrera, "Historical Essay: Chicano Gay Poets" on FoundSF, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Chicano_Gay_Poets.

1501 Paula Martinac, "The Real Barbary Lane," *The Queerest Places: A Guide to LGBT Historic Sites*, accessed September 2, 2014, <http://queerestplaces.com/2009/07/22/the-real-barbary-lane/>. Fittingly, Maupin based the setting on Macondray Lane, which had played a role in the city's 19th-century bohemian life when Ina Coolbrith hosted salons there.

1502 John Mullian, "Armistead Maupin on how he wrote his *Tales of the City*," *The Guardian*, February 14, 2014, accessed September 2, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/14/armistead-maupin-ales-of-the-city-guardian-book-club>.

1503 Ibid.

1504 Edmund White, "Out of the Closet, Onto the Bookshelf," *New York Times*, June 16, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/09/14/reviews/24032.html>. "Armistead Maupin—Tales Timeline," accessed September 2, 2014, <http://www.armisteadmaupin.com/TalesTimeline.html>.

1505 Nayland Blake, Lawrence Rinder, Amy Scholder, eds., *In a Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, Queer Practice* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995), 34-35.

1506 Finding Aid to Jerrold "Jerry" Jacks papers, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

novel *The Wonderground*, about a matriarchal female society in which the “Hell Women” had escaped the misogyny rampant in cities.¹⁵⁰⁷ Another contributor to the genre was Frank Robinson, speechwriter and advisor to Harvey Milk, who wrote science fiction from the 1950s to 1990s, including the Lambda Literary Award-winner *The Dark Beyond the Stars*.¹⁵⁰⁸ And the first major book-length bibliography of queer science fiction and related genres was produced in 1983 by two San Francisco writers: Eric Garber and Lynn Paleo’s *Uranian Worlds: A Guide to Alternative Sexuality in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror*.

Queer Bookstores

The Walt Whitman Bookstore has been described as one of San Francisco’s first gay literary bookstores and as the first gay antiquarian bookstore in the U.S. Founded in 1978 by Charles Gilman, it moved from its first location at 1415 Sutter Street to a new location at 2319 Market Street (extant) in the Castro in 1982, where it remained in operation until Gilman’s death in 1987. In its Castro location, the store offered new, used, and antiquarian books, as well as exhibitions and frequent author events that featured such writers as Armistead Maupin and Samuel Steward.¹⁵⁰⁹

In the early 1970s, Paperback Traffic (558 Castro Street, extant) also served the interests of LGBTQ readers and ran a poetry series featuring gay writers such as Tede Matthews, Thom Gunn, and Robert Gluck.¹⁵¹⁰ Matthews, a gender-bending artist and activist, had performed with Angels of Light and had worked with groups supporting liberation struggles in Chile and Nicaragua. He was also a member of Modern Times, a collectively owned bookstore that became an institution in the Bay Area’s progressive and LGBTQ communities.¹⁵¹¹ Modern Times opened at 3800 17th Street in 1971 as a “movement” bookstore, committed to the relationships between readers, writers, and social change.¹⁵¹² In 1980, Modern Times moved to 968 Valencia Street (extant) near another collectively owned feminist bookstore, Old Wives Tales (mentioned in an earlier section). “At that time,” Modern Time’s website states, “writers, artists, and queers from all over were moving to the Mission, attracted by cheap rent, to take up residency next to already thriving Latina/o cultural spaces and movements, including Galeria de la Raza and the Mission Cultural Center.”¹⁵¹³ In 1991, the shop relocated to a larger space at 888 Valencia Street (extant) where it remained until moving to 24th Street in 2011.

For many Castro residents and visitors, the opening of A Different Light Bookstore at 489 Castro Street (extant) in fall of 1987 represented the promise of cultural renewal in the midst of the AIDS crisis. San Francisco was the third in a small chain of stores opened under the A Different Light name, which referred to a popular science fiction novel by Bay Area lesbian author Elizabeth A. Lynn.¹⁵¹⁴ Store manager Richard Labonte’s remembrance, “A Different Bookstore, a Different Time,” recalls that “the burnout of the middle decade was being replaced by an activist phase” that

1507 Rivers, *Radical Relations*, 166.

1508 Paul Vitello, “Frank M. Robinson Dies at 87; Author and Advisor to Harvey Milk,” *New York Times*, July 4, 2014.

1509 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database. Gerard Koskovich, “The ‘Modest Collection’ of Bud Flounders: How 5,400 Gay Novels Came to Stanford,” *Imprint: Journal of the Associates of the Stanford University Library* 24:1 (fall 2005): 24–32 (citation pages 27f).

1510 Paperback Traffic moved to Polk Street within a short span of time according to The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database. Juan Felipe Herrera from “Chicano Gay Poets,” FoundSF, accessed March 13, 2014, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Chicano_Gay_Poets.

1511 Ibid.

1512 Modern Times History, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://moderntimesbookstore.com/about/history/>.

1513 Ibid.

1514 A Different Light opened in Los Angeles’ Silverlake neighborhood in 1979 and in Greenwich Village in 1983. Christopher Heredia, “Gay Bookstore Founder to Lead a Different Life,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 8, 2000: 1. The association with Elizabeth Lynn’s novel is found at “Elizabeth A Lynn: A New Spring,” accessed June 5, 2014 <http://www.locusmag.com/1997/Issues/10/Lynn.html>.

shaped activities at A Different Light.¹⁵¹⁵ AIDS and queer activist groups such as ACT/UP, Queer Nation, and Boy with Arms Akimbo used A Different Light as a mail-drop and community and educational space. Artist Jerome Caja designed window displays that infuriated “Catholics, straights, fussy homosexuals and even the police.”¹⁵¹⁶ A Different Light scheduled as many as twenty events a month featuring author readings, book signings, and launch parties, gay and lesbian writing series, open mics, art exhibits, dance performances, play readings, and sketch classes. The upstairs storeroom and office was the site for writing workshops conducted by queer poet and playwright Kenny Fries and novelists Bo Huston and Dorothy Allison.

OutWrite Literary Conferences

A Different Light also hosted planning meetings that led up to OutWrite 1990, the first-ever national lesbian and gay literary conference. The event was organized over a series of weeks by over a dozen queer writers, including Jeffrey Escoffier, Dorothy Allison, Bo Huston, Kevin Killian, Lew Ellingham, Amy Scholder, and D.L. Alvarez.¹⁵¹⁷ Held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel (1101 Van Ness Avenue, demolished) in March 1990 and again in June 1991, OutWrite was sponsored by *Out/Look*, a San Francisco lesbian and gay magazine.¹⁵¹⁸ Novelist Edmund White reported in the *New York Times* after attending the 1991 OutWrite conference: “[A]long with some 1,800 lesbians and gay men... I met gay Japanese-American writers, gay Pueblo Indians, gay black writers, and heard a whole panel devoted to gay Jews. There were panels conducted by writers recovering from addiction, by authors with disabilities, by Latin American authors, by Chicanos and Chicanas, and of course by those with AIDS.”¹⁵¹⁹ Keynote speakers at OutWrite 1991 included playwright Edward Albee, feminist author Kate Millett, Native American writer Paula Gunn Allen, and gay novelist John Rechy.¹⁵²⁰

The OutWrite gatherings had at least one local predecessor: A decade earlier a discussion between two gay poets, Steve Abbott and Bruce Boone, had sparked a two-day conference at Noe Valley Ministry (1021 Sanchez Street) in February 1981. *Left/Write* brought activist writers together to face the growing conservative tenor of the new decade. Panels included “The Political Impact of Lesbian and Gay Writing,” “Criticism as a Political Tool,” and “Radical Asian-American Writing.”¹⁵²¹

Publishers

A number of Bay Area publishers supported this flowering of queer writing. Castro neighborhood-based Small Press Traffic, formed in 1974 to support experimental writers, writers of color, and queer writers, held a gay writers group and offered workshops by gay poets such as Robert Gluck.¹⁵²² Two San Francisco-based publishers of particular importance are Gay Sunshine/Leyland Press and Aunt Lute Books. Winston Leyland took over *Gay Sunshine Journal* in 1971 and moved it from Berkeley to San Francisco; in 1975, he added Gay Sunshine Press, which published gay literature and nonfiction as a nonprofit organization. He formed Leyland Publications in 1985 to

1515 Richard Labonte, “A Different Bookstore, a Different Time,” *Out in the Castro*, 162.

1516 *Ibid.*, 163.

1517 *Ibid.*, 162.

1518 “Albee a Keynoter For Gay Writers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1991: E3.

1519 White, “Out of the Closet, Onto the Bookshelf.”

1520 “Albee a Keynoter For Gay Writers.”

1521 Abott, *Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father*, 116-117. Abbot describes the home she shared with her father at 545 Ashbury Street during the 1980s as a gathering place for writers, filmmakers and other artists.

1522 *Ibid.*, 116, 148-149. Small Press Traffic began out of a backroom rented from Paperback Traffic on Castro Street, then moved to an apartment at 24th and Church Streets, “History,” accessed February 5, 2015, <http://smallpresstraffic.org/about/history>.

produce gay erotica and translations of works by gay writers from Japan and Latin America.¹⁵²³ According to several sources, Leyland ran the press from his various homes in the Castro.¹⁵²⁴

In 1986, Aunt Lute Books moved from Iowa—home to several lesbian and feminist publishers—to San Francisco; the enterprise was led by Barb Wieser and Joan Pinkvoss, who believed that “neither mainstream publishing nor the feminist movement of that time was promoting the voices of lesbians, especially lesbians and women of color.”¹⁵²⁵ They partnered with the small lesbian press Spinsters Ink and did business under the name Spinsters/Aunt Lute. Aunt Lute Foundation (2180 Bryant Street, extant) became a separate nonprofit with the intention of creating a culturally diverse collective to address the lack of presses run by women of color. Many of Aunt Lute’s publications are acknowledged as important contributors to lesbian studies and gender studies, including titles such as Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderland/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) and Audre Lorde’s *The Cancer Journals* (1980).

Film

Poet James Broughton was one of the first openly gay individuals to explore film as a creative medium. His 1946 short *The Potted Plant* is credited with helping to launch American experimental filmmaking in the post–World War II years. He later taught film and ritual at San Francisco State and the San Francisco Art Institute. His 1968 film *The Bed* combined mythological imagery, experimental visuals, nudity, and humor. Broughton describes the film, which reportedly ran for a year in a local theater: “I wanted to use a bed as a stage for the variety of acts of the human comedy. My theme: ‘All the world’s a bed, and men and women merely dreamers.’”¹⁵²⁶

In 1977, a San Francisco-based collective created the first feature-length documentary about gay and lesbian identity, *Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives*, which premiered at the Castro Theatre.¹⁵²⁷ The Mariposa Film Group included Peter Adair; his sister, Nancy; Andrew Brown; Rob Epstein; Lucy Massie Phenix; and Veronica Selver. *Word Is Out*, which was also published as a book from New Glide Publications in San Francisco, presented 26 individuals telling their stories to the camera, from everyday people to well-known figures such as gay rights pioneer Harry Hay; poet Elsa Gidlow; World War II veteran and performer Pat Bond; San Francisco State professor Sally Gearhart; political leader Rick Stokes; and journalist George Mendenhall. In 1981, San Francisco Gay Teachers held a benefit party at 766 Valencia Street to purchase *Word Is Out* for the school district; in addition to the film, the party featured the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the Choral Majority, and master of ceremonies Tom Ammiano.¹⁵²⁸

Word Is Out was broadcast nationally on PBS and reached a wide audience, instantly becoming a highly influential film. “The silence of gay people on the screen has been broken,” reported film critic Vito Russo after the film’s release. Janet Cole, who worked on the film, reported that the filmmakers received thousands of letters from viewers: “People who were alone and hopeless in Idaho, Utah and Kansas for the first time saw realistic and positive images of gay people on

1523 Charles Kirtley, “Let the Sunshine In: The Pioneering Role of Winston Leyland in Gay Publishing,” originally in *Lesbian and Gay New York* Spring 1998, accessed May 27, 2014, http://www.leylandpublications.com/article_leyland.html.

1524 City directories show that he lived in several places in the Castro but by 1982 had moved to 327 Texas Street, where he resided until at least the late 1980s. Communications with Leyland Press-published authors Gerard Koskovich and Tommi Avicola Mecca.

1525 “About Us: Aunt Lute Press,” accessed June 8, 2014, <http://auntlute.com/about>.

1526 Exhibit text from “Hymns to Hermes: The Poetics of James Broughton,” San Francisco Public Library, 2013. David Lample, “Sissy Makes Good,” *Bay Area Reporter*, June 13, 2013.

1527 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*. The 1978 San Francisco City Directory does not list Mariposa Films, but Peter Adair, movie/films is listed at 2051 3rd Street.

1528 Flyer in Performance file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

screen," she said.¹⁵²⁹ "[T]he film had a huge impact when it was released and became an icon of the emerging gay rights movement of the 1970s," according to the *New York Times*.¹⁵³⁰ The youngest member of the Mariposa group, Rob Epstein, went on to direct two Academy Award-winning documentaries about LGBTQ life in San Francisco, *The Times of Harvey Milk* (1984) and *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* (1989).¹⁵³¹

LGBTQ Film Festivals

Bern Boyle reminisces about organizing what may be the first gay film series "around 1976" at the UC Extension building's theater on 55 Laguna Street (not extant). Suspecting that a right wing-inspired backlash led the theater to balk at continuing to rent to him, Boyle then moved the series to Gay Community Centers at 32 Page Street and 330 Grove Street.¹⁵³² The first formal gay film festival in the U.S. was organized at 32 Page Street in 1977.¹⁵³³ Filmmaker Marc Heustis recalls:

Years ago, we were a group of queer, subversive self-promoting gold diggers who got together and decided to put on a film show. Those first years were cost-free packed houses, with movies projected on a hanging bedsheet. It was Harvey Milk's camera store where we developed our films, and our 'counter girl' was 19-year-old Dan [Nicoletta].¹⁵³⁴

Frameline, the nonprofit sponsor of what is now the annual San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival, was created in 1981 to support distribution, promotion, funding, and exhibition of LGBTQ film and video.¹⁵³⁵ That same year, the Castro Theatre became the primary venue for the festival's growing presentation of films by and about LGBTQ people.

Music

LGBTQ Bands and Choruses

In 1978, San Franciscans formed the first openly gay marching band in the world, the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps, led by transplanted Kansan John Sims. At that year's Gay Freedom Day parade, they "stepped out of the closet and into a tableau of Americana" as they swung onto Market Street playing "California, Here I Come," which became one of their trademark tunes.¹⁵³⁶

The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus was also organized in 1978. Bob Rufo recalled seeing a flyer reading, "Gay Chorus Forming," on a Castro Street telephone pole in fall of 1978. One month after their first rehearsal, the chorus sang at the candlelight vigil held at City Hall the night Harvey Milk was murdered. In 1981, the chorus went on a national tour and filed a successful lawsuit against the University of San Francisco, after the archbishop canceled the space rental for a scheduled concert

1529 David W. Dunlap, "Peter Adair, 53, Director, Dies; Made Films With Gay Themes," *New York Times*, June 30, 1996, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/06/30/us/peter-adair-53-director-dies-made-films-with-gay-themes.html>.

1530 Dunlap, "Peter Adair, 53, Director, Dies; Made Films With Gay Themes."

1531 *Common Threads* was produced by Telling Stories, a San Francisco-based production company formed in 1987 by Epstein with Jeffrey Friedman.

1532 "Documents in Contemporary History: A Conversation with Bern Boyle, Artist," May 15, 1989, *Gay and Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter*, v. 4 no. 4 (Summer 1989). Boyle states that he'd heard there was "some kind of gay film festival in the '60's" but never saw documentation.

1533 The film festival was so popular, it was reprised at 330 Grove one month later according to Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 71.

1534 Roger Rose, "Frameline," *Cinesource*, July 2, 2008, accessed May 14, 2014, http://cinesourcemagazine.com/index.php?/site/comments/the_edge_of_heaven/#.U8VteRanH6o.

1535 "25th Anniversary of the International Lesbian/Gay Film Festival" in *Out in the Castro* (2002) 326. Frameline, "About," accessed May 14, 2014, <http://www.frameline.org/about>.

1536 Heidi Beeler, "About Jon Sims," Jon Sims Endowment Fund, accessed June 7, 2014, <http://www.jsef.org/about-jon-sims>.

at St. Ignatius Church.¹⁵³⁷ The chorus grew in size and quality throughout the 1980s. In 1988, the San Francisco Opera recognized the stature of the group by inviting them to sing in performances of *Parsifal* and *The Flying Dutchman* at the War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Avenue, extant).

Another choral group, the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Chorus, was formed in 1980 and participated that year in a Gay Musical Celebration at Grace Cathedral and the annual Gay Freedom Day parade. A quartet of lesbians and gay men who prized humor founded yet another group, the San Francisco-based Choral Majority (964 Valencia Street, extant), that performed and recorded songs that parodied Christian religious music and the New Right. Their hymnal, printed by the Women's Press Project, included such ditties as "The Old Closet Door," "Amazing Gays," and "Were you there when they murdered Harvey Milk?"¹⁵³⁸ An additional gay choral group, the Golden Gate Men's Chorus, was founded in 1982.

Inspired by examples such as these, other LGBTQ choruses formed, and an international movement began. San Francisco hosted regional and national conferences of gay and lesbian choruses at the Nourse Auditorium (275 Hayes Street, extant) and Mission High School in the 1980s.¹⁵³⁹ San Franciscans were instrumental in the founding of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) in 1981.¹⁵⁴⁰

The AIDS epidemic took a toll on San Francisco gay choruses in the 1980s. By 1988, AIDS had killed 35 members of the Gay Men's Chorus, which recognized the epidemic by commissioning works of music that described the impact of AIDS in the lives of LGBTQ people.¹⁵⁴¹ The choruses also provided a network of care for members who were sick. Randy Kikukawa, who has sung with Golden Gate Men's Chorus since it was founded in 1982, says "choruses provided an important support system during the AIDS crisis. They were a safe place to socialize and gave support to those who were ill. We were constantly performing at memorial services."¹⁵⁴²

Women's Music

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Bay Area was a center for women's music, a central tool for lesbian cultural expression.¹⁵⁴³ Women's music is described as having "a subliminal power to inspire and change women's lives, values, consciousness [and] has become one of life's daily necessities in feminist households and communities around the country."¹⁵⁴⁴ One of the first places to showcase women's music in San Francisco was the lesbian bar Wild Side West (720 Broadway) where singers such as Chris Williamson and Ronni Blakely performed.¹⁵⁴⁵ While the center of the Bay Area women's music scene was Olivia Records in Oakland, women could hear lesbian singers at San Francisco cafes, theaters, concert halls, bookstores, house parties, community centers, and churches throughout the city. Although a folk music sound characterized most women's music, other genres were popular in the Bay Area. African American blues singer Gwen Avery was a fixture at lesbian

1537 Text from San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus exhibit at The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Museum, 2014.

1538 Queer Music Heritage, "Choral Majority," accessed April 12, 2014, <http://queermusicheritage.com/dec2001cm2.html>.

1539 GALA Gay and Lesbian Performing Arts Groups folder, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1540 The Lesbian/Gay Chorus of San Francisco, "History," accessed June 7, 2014, <http://lgcsf.org/history>.

1541 Jane Gross, "In Face of AIDS, a Chorus Stands Taller," *New York Times*, May 14, 1988.

1542 Randy Kikukawa, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014.

1543 Blake, Rinder and Scholder, *In a Different Light*, 22.

1544 Kirsten Grimsted, "Sounds That Are Already There," *Lesbian Tide* (March 1976): 16, accessed June 7, 2014, <http://queermusicheritage.com/lesbiantide2.html>.

1545 In 1977, bar owners Nancy White and Patricia Ramseyer moved the bar to 424 Cortland Street in Bernal Heights and renamed it Wild Side West. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society Sites Database and Michael Flanagan, "Wild Side West, A Refuge in Bernal Heights," *Bay Area Reporter*, January 30, 2014.

community events—performing sounds from her “grandmother’s juke joint” and bringing a more formal style of clothing to the women’s music stage. “I dressed differently. I would wear satin suits and platform shoes with an afro with neckties and beautiful silk shirts. [Others] were wearing plaid shirts and blue jeans.”¹⁵⁴⁶

From 1982 to 1987, the Bay Brick Inn (1190 Folsom Street, extant) was a popular South of Market lesbian guest house, club and bar. Also known as the Clementina’s Baybrick Inn, the cabaret-style venue was managed by Lauren Hewitt, who booked comedy acts and singers such as Linda Tillery and Bonnie Hayes.¹⁵⁴⁷

Disco and Sylvester

The most popular form of music associated with LGBTQ communities in the 1970s and 1980s is disco, and the queen of the genre was San Francisco’s Sylvester. Born in 1947, Sylvester (Sylvester James Jr.) grew up in a church-loving family in South Los Angeles; by his teens, he was part of an informal group of African American drag queens. For his high school graduation photo, Sylvester, then known as Dooni, wore a blue chiffon prom dress and a beehive hairdo. After visiting San Francisco in 1970, Sylvester realized, “I could be any kind of person at all, and no one cared. Los Angeles is a role city, but San Francisco is free.” He told his sister, “San Francisco is where I can do what I’m here to do.”¹⁵⁴⁸ Sylvester moved to the city in 1970 and was invited to join the Cockettes in their Haight Street commune as well as in their performances, where he added his own tongue-in-cheek version of soul. Sylvester soon was performing at venues including the Rickshaw Lounge (37 Ross Alley, extant) in Chinatown with pianist Peter Mintun, another refugee from the Cockettes. By early 1972, Sylvester and his Hot Band were playing at clubs including The Shed (2275 Market Street), the Keystone (68 4th Street, extant), Bimbo’s 365 Club (1025 Columbus Avenue, extant), and the Boarding House (960 Bush Street, not extant), where he saw Bette Midler perform. In 1972, rock music impresario Bill Graham booked Sylvester as the opening act for David Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust stop at Winterland Ballroom (1725 Steiner Street, not extant).¹⁵⁴⁹

In 1977, Sylvester recorded his first album with Bay Area-based Fantasy Records, where “a conscious effort was made to normalize him” by erasing his drag queen identity in publicity materials.¹⁵⁵⁰ Although he had one major hit and was played widely in dance clubs, Sylvester’s records did not take off nationally. Despite the growing dominance of the Castro’s hyper-masculine clone ideal, which Sylvester flouted with his glitter and platform shoes, and the national backlash against disco, Sylvester remained a beloved figure in San Francisco. As divisions grew among LGBTQ communities, Sylvester described his shows as “Equal Opportunity Queen.”¹⁵⁵¹ He performed frequently at the Elephant Walk (500 Castro Street, extant) with his backup singers Two Tons of Fun. In March 1979, he was one of the first pop acts to do a solo show at the War Memorial Opera House. Sylvester sang his hit single “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)” at the May 22, 1979, Castro Street party in honor of the late Harvey Milk’s birthday, held the evening after the White Night Riot.¹⁵⁵²

1546 Tim Dillinger, “Blues and Gospel singer Gwen Avery dies at 71,” *Soul Tracks*, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.soultracks.com/story-gwen-avery-dies>.

1547 Finding Aid to the Bay Brick Inn records, 1982-1987, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1548 Gamson, *The Fabulous Sylvester*, 4, 31, 43.

1549 *Ibid.*, 62, 89-92.

1550 *Ibid.*, 124.

1551 *Ibid.*, 222.

1552 *Ibid.*, 131, 169, 181.

Sylvester performed at the opening of the Castro Street Muni Station in May 1980. By late 1989, Sylvester was suffering from AIDS, and the 15th annual Castro Street Fair was dedicated as a “Tribute to Sylvester.” Although he was too weak to leave his nearby apartment, he was serenaded by 70,000 people who filled the streets that day chanting, “We love you, Sylvester!”¹⁵⁵³

Visual Arts

The number and variety of LGBTQ people who have been active in the visual arts in San Francisco is substantial. The photographic record of LGBTQ lives from the 1960s to today was created by talented artists such as Cathy Cade, H. Lenn Keller, Greg Day, Daniel Nicoletta, Rick Gerharter, Rink, and Jane Philomen Cleland. The list of artists, curators, and exhibits that could be described in this section is long and important, but only a few examples will be described here. (A discussion of visual arts related to the AIDS epidemic is in a later section of this report.)

One of the early queer art venues in San Francisco was called the Hula Palace, a gay communal household at 598 Castro Street (extant). Periodically, the residents would empty their flat and transform the space into an art salon exhibiting work by a variety of individual artists, often centered on a theme. Poet-activist Tede Matthews recalls the Hula Palace as a space that combined art with activism:

We would do an evening of political culture there. They weren’t that political, but they would invite the Ho Chi Minh crowd. So, we did an event for the political prisoners of Chile, the whole coup thing... and we started Gay Solidarity with Chilean Resistance, which was the first solidarity group right after the coup.¹⁵⁵⁴

Writer N.A. Diaman mentions that one of the Hula Palace organizers, Lee Mentley, volunteered to be the representative of the Eureka Valley Artists Coalition and eventually opened an art exhibition space at the Gay Community Center at 330 Grove Street.¹⁵⁵⁵ 330 Grove had an active visual and performing arts component in its few years of operation until it was demolished by its owner, the Redevelopment Agency.

Another arts space also threatened by redevelopment, the Goodman Building (1117 Geary Boulevard, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 71), hosted several important LGBTQ arts events.¹⁵⁵⁶ In 1980 and 1981, a collective of “progressive queer cultural workers” calling themselves Mainstream Exiles organized a gay and lesbian cultural festival there that included a month-long exhibit by queer painters, photographers, and sculptors. As exiles from the mainstream art world, the Mainstream Exiles also felt that “the only gay culture being recognized was the marching band, cabaret and so on.” Tede Matthews described the Exiles’ purpose as using the arts to take a “strong stand against culture and politics that are sexist, racist, ageist or imperialist, or which support the class structure.”¹⁵⁵⁷ The cultural festivals included music, theater, and readings by Bay Area lesbian and gay poets at the Goodman Building and in Oakland at a popular lesbian bar, Ollie’s (4130 Telegraph Avenue).

1553 Ibid., 260. Jewelle Gomez, “Mighty Real,” in *Out in the Castro*, 261

1554 Juan Felipe Herrera, “Chicano Gay Poets,” FoundSF, accessed March 13, 2014, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Chicano_Gay_Poets.

1555 N.A. Diaman, “Living in The Castro: a Gay Writer Reminisces,” *Out in the Castro*, 102.

1556 The Goodman Building provided a low-cost haven for artists to create and show their work. When the Redevelopment Agency threatened to demolish the building they worked with the owner to designate the building as a landmark and ultimately protect it. Martha Senger, “The Goodman Building: I was There...,” Found SF, accessed January 28, 2014, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Goodman_Building.

1557 “Exiled Artists Expose Queer Culture,” *Coming Up!*, June 1981.



Disco artist Sylvester performing with LZ Love in the Castro in the early 1980s. Note the Star Pharmacy at upper left, discussed in a later section titled "San Francisco and the AIDS Epidemic" (*The Austin Chronicle*)

Lesbians in the Visual Arts (870 Market Street, extant) was founded in 1990 in response to a 1989 exhibition in San Francisco, "The Dynamics of Color: Lesbian Artists Respond to Racism." Held at the Sargent Johnson Gallery in the Western Addition Cultural Center (762 Fulton Street), the show was organized in conjunction with a major conference of the same name described in an earlier section of this report. The goal of Lesbians in the Visual Arts was to promote and support lesbian artists through a slide registry depicting members' work and promotion of lesbian arts events and exhibitions. According to founder L.A. "Happy" Hyder, the organization also sought to visually demonstrate the lesbian community's vital, thinking, and active part in the civil rights struggle.¹⁵⁵⁸

Starting in the 1970s, increasing numbers of queer artists began to see their work as a way to reinforce aspects of identity and to build community. Shanghai-born artist Freddie Niem's home on Collingwood Street in the Castro became Shanghai-West, an art studio and a community center for queer Asian Americans. Niem notes that "there were very few Asian faces on the street. I wanted to make a place that was comfortable for Asians." The first Asian-themed quilt for the Names Project AIDS memorial quilt was produced at Niem's home, as well as a balloon dragon float for "the very first time the Chinese New Year parade in San Francisco invited gay Asians in 1993."¹⁵⁵⁹

San Francisco-based African American queer artist Nayland Blake curated two important local group shows that surveyed queer arts in the first half of the 1990s. In 1991, he organized "Situation: Perspectives on Work by Lesbian and Gay Artists" at New Langton Arts (1246 Folsom Street, extant), a show that included over 30 young artists. In 1995, he collaborated with curator Lawrence Rinder to organize a major exhibition at the Berkeley Art Museum titled "In a Different Light" that "explored the resonance of gay and lesbian experience in twentieth-century arts." The multigenerational exhibit was especially inspired by the works of artists in San Francisco, where:

there is a palpable sense of community: visual artists, playwrights, poets, performance artists, filmmakers, and video artists present their work together in a variety of nonprofit venues and small commercial galleries, work that is itself often interdisciplinary and collaborative... These artists live in a generally hostile social climate, amid the constant threat of "gay bashings," proscriptive legislative initiatives, and surrounded by the tragedy of AIDS. Remarkably, they not only persist in making art, but do so in a spirit of humor, generosity, and flamboyance.¹⁵⁶⁰

Kiki Gallery (493 14th Street) exemplified this perspective. Opened by impresario Rick Jacobsen in 1993 as a place to showcase queer contemporary visual art and performance, the space shared a back patio with noted lesbian cafe and performance space Red Dora's Bearded Lady Café and Truckstop at 485 14th Street (extant).¹⁵⁶¹ Kiki Gallery offered a small space for younger queer artists who were not shown in San Francisco's blue-chip galleries. Describing the gallery, writer Kevin Killian notes, "If it was a clubhouse, Kiki was the clubhouse for the poor boys, and the rich boys were hanging around [high-end galleries] Fraenkel or Berggruen or Anglim."¹⁵⁶² During its three years of operation, Kiki hosted art exhibits, readings, and performances on subjects as far ranging as scatology, AIDS humor, and recreational drug use. Among the featured artists and performers

1558 Tee A. Corinne, "The Dynamics of Color and LVA: Lesbians in the Visual Arts," *Women Artists of the American West*, accessed January 28, 2014, <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/corinne/Essay4.htm>.

1559 Tim Kingston, "Freddie Niem's Shanghai-West: Asian Harbor from the Castro's White Storm," in *Out in the Castro*, 234-235.

1560 Lawrence Rinder, "Introduction," *In a Different Light*, 1-2.

1561 Liz Wing, "Kiki: Exhibitions and Bits," *Stretcher: Visual Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond*, accessed August 16, 2014, http://www.stretcher.org/features/kiki_exhibitions_bits/.

1562 Kevin Killian, "Kevin Killian presents.... Kiki Gallery: A Year or Two of Crazy Art Making," July 5, 2008, accessed June 18, 2014, <http://denniscooper-theweaklings.blogspot.com/2008/07/kevin-killian-presents-kiki-gallery.html?zx=4809e726eec252dd>.

were Joan Jett Blakk, D.L. Alvarez, Nayland Blake, Jerome Caja, Catherine Opie, and Vincent Fecteau.¹⁵⁶³

A queer arts space known as 848 Community Arts Space (848 Divisadero Street, extant) was one of the first venues to present work by transgender artists, including a 1994 photo exhibition by Loren Cameron, "Our Vision, Our Voices: Transsexual Portraits and Nudes." Keith Hennessey, 848 founder, recounts that:

Cameron dedicated several years to documenting his own and other trans people's bodies and lives. When no other gallery in San Francisco would present the work, Cameron came to 848 and self-produced the exhibit, buying the track lighting that shifted 848 from an empty room with good intentions to an actual gallery.¹⁵⁶⁴

The opening featured readings and performances by trans writer and activist Kate Bornstein and leading trans advocate Jamison Green of FTM International, as well as transgender community historian Susan Stryker.¹⁵⁶⁵

A number of people active in the LGBTQ arts community formed an organization to support queer arts and artists in San Francisco in 1993 and to create a unified voice in lobbying for support from the City. Several members had recently served on the Mayor's Cultural Affairs Task Force including photographer Carol Stuart, arts consultant Jeff Jones, artist Rudy Lemcke, and Theater Rhinoceros assistant artistic director Pam Peniston. Adrienne Fuzee, a cofounder of Lesbians in the Visual Arts and one of the first openly queer African American curators in the U.S., recalls, "Seeing that historic attempts to establish a cultural center for the gay community often succumbed to poorly planned strategies or simply the winds of political change, organizers took the longer but perhaps more established route of long range planning."¹⁵⁶⁶

Along with Fuzee, photographer Greg Day, painter Lenore Chinn, filmmaker Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva, photographer Freddie Niem, and performance artist Blackberri formed the first board of directors of the San Francisco Center for Lesbian Gay Bi and Transgender Art and Culture. In the early years, the organization was largely an ad hoc lobbying force that worked to change the city's arts policies to better support artists outside of large, mainstream cultural institutions such as the opera and symphony. It developed relationships with local arts activists through townhall meetings and surveys and supported a series of arts events through shared technical assistance, publicity, and grant-writing workshops.¹⁵⁶⁷ The organization is now the Queer Cultural Center (762 Fulton Street); it documents, commissions, and presents queer artists, promotes the development of culturally diverse queer arts organizations, and organizes the annual National Queer Arts Festival in San Francisco.¹⁵⁶⁸

1563 Wing, "Kiki: Exhibitions and Bits."

1564 "848 Community Space: Performance and Sex in 1990s San Francisco, Keith Hennessey in Dialogue with Tessa Wills," *Dance Theatre Journal* v. 25 no. 2 (2013). Republished online, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://tessawills.com/848-performance-sex-1990s-san-francisco-keith-hennessey/>.

1565 Ibid. Communication between Susan Stryker and Donna Graves, November 17, 2014.

1566 Adrienne Fuzee, "The Birth of Qcc, The Center for Lesbian Gay Bi Transgender Art & Culture," 2001, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/MainMenu/About.html#history>.

1567 Ibid.

1568 Qcc Mission Statement, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/MainMenu/About.html#aboutqcc>.

SPORTS

Sports teams for gay and lesbian athletes first appeared in the 1960s. As a new arena for socializing and a refuge from the often hypermasculine attitudes and homophobia of many organized sports, these teams became an important social and community-building focus for many gay men and lesbians. According to journalist Jim Provenzano, “Bowling maintains the honor of being one of the first—if not the first—sports that brought Bay Area lesbians and gay men together in recreational leagues.”¹⁵⁶⁹ Bowling teams played at Park Bowl (1855 Haight Street, extant) in the upper Haight, Japantown Bowl (1600 Webster Street, not extant), and at the Sports Center at 30th and Mission Streets. Another early organized sporting activity was a running club affiliated with the short-lived Lavender University in 1974. It offered group jogging that started at the Golden Gate Park windmills. In 1978, the group evolved into San Francisco Frontrunners, which has inspired chapters around the world and is still running.¹⁵⁷⁰

Gay Softball League

The most organized and popular sport for gays and lesbians was softball. Bar-owner Rikki Streicher later recalled that softball games began in the early 1960s on Sunday afternoons out of a bar in Sausalito named the Bridgeway. Within a few years a cluster of San Francisco bars, including the Capri, the Golden Cask, and Bradley’s fielded teams.¹⁵⁷¹ The San Francisco Gay Softball League dates its inception to 1973, when a men’s softball game at a Tavern Guild picnic inspired a tournament and then formation of what was then called the Community Softball League. According to one source, managers of City recreational fields initially resisted allowing gay softball teams access until Mayor George Moscone and State Senator Willie Brown intervened. Games were then held at softball diamonds in parks throughout the city.¹⁵⁷²

In 1974, the tradition of an annual game between a gay all-star softball team and the San Francisco Police Department softball league team was established. The police chief reportedly threw out the ceremonial first ball (painted pink with silver glitter), and the Sutter’s Mill (a gay bar) softball team hosted 200 people at an awards banquet following the game, which featured a drag performance. Provenzano remarks, “The resounding 9-4 victory [of the gay team] in 1974 began a watershed moment, proving that not only did ‘the gays’ deserve respect as people, but as athletes.”¹⁵⁷³ The following year’s game against the police was held at Potrero Hill Playground on August 9, 1975.¹⁵⁷⁴ The game was followed by a “Meet the Champs” champagne party at the Pendulum (4146 18th Street), a gay bar that hosted a softball team like many other gay bars. Other events associated with the game included police-sponsored transportation for a “BarStorm” of gay bars to fundraise for league-related events. The 1975 gay softball season ended with a party at Sailor’s Union Hall (450 Harrison Street, extant).

By 1977, the Community Softball League included four divisions of sixteen teams.¹⁵⁷⁵ In addition to providing camaraderie, the league and its members raised funds for charities such as Meals on

1569 Jim Provenzano, text from *The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Museum exhibit Sporting Life*, 2005.

1570 San Francisco Frontrunners, “History,” accessed June 21, 2014, <http://www.sffr.org/history>. Provenzano, *Sporting Life*, 2005.

1571 Rikki Streicher, “And Then There Was Softball,” in *Maud’s, The First Twenty Years: 1966-1986*, 34, Wide Open Town Collection, Box 8, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1572 “The Gay Community Softball League,” Uncle Donald’s Castro Street, accessed June 22, 2014, <http://www.thecastro.net/street/softball/softballpage.html>.

1573 Provenzano, *Sporting Life*, 2005.

1574 Police Game Committee Meeting Minutes, August 4, 1975, Gay Games Collection, Box 2, Community Softball League files, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1575 CSL Committee Meetings 1975-75, Gay Games Collection, Box 2, Community Softball League files, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.



LEFT: Kokpit Bar pitcher at a Community Softball League game, James P. Lang Field at Gough Street and Golden Gate Avenue (Courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

BOTTOM: Maud's softball team, c. 1970s (Courtesy Mary Sager)



Wheels and Guide Dogs for the Blind. League teams also participated in a Memorial Day Tricycle Race, a charity event organized by Charlotte Coleman's gay bar, The Mint (1942 Market Street, extant), in which two-person teams careened through the Civic Center and the Castro, stopping at gay bars along the way and ending at The Mint.¹⁵⁷⁶

Lesbian Teams

Softball was a key social activity for many lesbians and a way to connect to the broader lesbian community. Maud's patron Joann Shirley remembers that before there was a well-publicized lesbian bar scene, "People would get into town and say, 'Where do the girls play softball?'"¹⁵⁷⁷ Sociologist Evelyn Blackwood, who lived in San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s, recalls,

The first generation of lesbian ballplayers in the Bay Area played in the Bay Area Women's Softball League, which started in 1966 and lasted until the early 1980s! Rikki helped found that league, and each team was from a women's bar. All the women's bars had a team at different times, including Maud's, Kelly's, Scott's, Peg's, A Little More, Amelia's, Driftwood, Jubilee and Ollie's.¹⁵⁷⁸

By the mid-1980s, teams competed in San Francisco's Parks and Recreation League as well as the gay and lesbian leagues. Player Wendy Gershow recalls that "for the first couple years, we played against the men because there was only one women's team. By the third year, we had four. After that we boosted it, promoting it, and got the league up to 12 women's teams."¹⁵⁷⁹ Players recalled a loose approach to building women's teams: Julie Gonzales remembered two gay men playing for Amelia's, and Gershow says that straight women played alongside lesbians on a number of teams.¹⁵⁸⁰

Lesbian teams played slow-pitch and fast-pitch ball in baseball diamonds across the city, including James Rolph Jr. Field on Potrero Hill, Rossi Field in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, and James P. Lang Field at Golden Gate Avenue and Gough Street. Deb Trapini recounts managing Amelia's team but playing on the team for Wild Side West because "Maud's and Amelia's were too competitive."¹⁵⁸¹ Despite the competition, players and spectators gathered together after each game at the winning team's bar.

One of the Bay Area women's softball teams called Gente was formed by an independent group of over twenty lesbians of color from San Francisco and the East Bay. Gente's purpose was to provide an opportunity for African American, Latina, and Asian American lesbians to form a community that they were not finding in the predominantly white bar teams.¹⁵⁸² By the mid-1980s, San Francisco also hosted Asian American lesbian basketball and softball teams through the city league, according to player Canyon Sam, who notes that the teams helped "unite Asian American lesbians,

1576 Folder "Mint Tricycle Race, CSL Benefit," The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Gay Games Collection, Box 2. See also <http://thecastro.net/street/tracepage/tracepage.html>.

1577 Joann Shirley *Last Call at Maud's* (1993).

1578 Evelyn Blackwood, electronic communication with Donna Graves, September 8, 2014. Jubilee and Ollie's were East Bay bars.

1579 Jim Provenzano, "Outfield of Dreams," *Bay Area Reporter*, June 22, 2006, accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.ebar.com/pride/article.php?sec=pride&article=18>. Records of the Women's Softball league were not found; by 1977, the Bay Area Women's Softball League fielded ten teams from San Francisco and the East Bay; these figures come from the LA-based newspaper, *Lesbian Tide*, July 1974, 6.

1580 Julie Gonzales, electronic communication with Donna Graves, September 6, 2014. See also Jim Provenzano, "Outfield of Dreams," *Bay Area Reporter*, June 22, 2006, accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.ebar.com/pride/article.php?sec=pride&article=18>.

1581 Evelyn Blackwood, Deb Trapini and Linda Parios, interviewed by Donna Graves at Maud's Reunion, June 26, 2013.

1582 "We Have to Be Our Own Spark: An Interview With 'Gente' Third-World Lesbian Softball Team," *Lesbian Tide*, July 1974.

many of whom were not political or were in closet, and didn't want to call themselves lesbians or dykes."¹⁵⁸³

Other Sports

Gay basketball teams date back to charity games organized by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in the early 1980s. A group of former college players, including former pro baseball player Glenn Burke, formed a team that played in the first Gay Games (described in detail later in this section). In the summer of 1987, the men's team played against a lesbian team in "The Battle of the Sexes" at the Eureka Valley Gym and raised \$800 for the AIDS Emergency Fund.¹⁵⁸⁴

In the 1980s and 1990s, many other gay and lesbian sports clubs were established, including the San Francisco Track and Field Club, the Golden Gate Wrestling Club, and San Francisco Tsunami Aquatics. In 1986, Gay and Lesbian Sierrans, a hiking and conservation club, was formed, the first LGBTQ club sponsored by the Sierra Club.¹⁵⁸⁵ In 1996, the field at the City-owned Eureka Valley Recreation Center at 100 Collingwood Street was named for Rikki Streicher in honor of her contributions to women's sports and to LGBTQ athletics.¹⁵⁸⁶

Gay Games

1982 marked a watershed year for gay and lesbian athletics, with San Francisco hosting the first Gay Games (initially called the Gay Olympics) from August 28th to September 5th. Physician and former Olympic decathlete Dr. Tom Waddell had initiated the idea of a Gay Olympics, and in the summer of 1981, he drove around the country with Eric Wilkinson and Roger Taub to see if the notion appealed to other gay men and lesbians. When it became clear that there was enthusiasm for the venture, Waddell organized planning meetings at his home at 141–143 Albion Street (extant).¹⁵⁸⁷

As part of the organizing of the first Gay Games, Rikki Streicher, Sara Lewenstein, and Paul Mart, along with Waddell, Wilkinson, and Taub, established San Francisco Arts and Athletics Inc. to raise funds and organize events. With offices in the Castro (597 Castro Street) and dozens of volunteers, the scope of the Gay Games grew to include concerts and exhibitions, in addition to the athletic competitions.

The first Gay Games was held at Kezar Stadium (670 Kezar Drive, extant) near Golden Gate Park. According to Gay Games veteran Paul Mart, Sara Lewenstein recruited dozens of lesbians to repair crumbling portions of the stadium: "She had 40-50 dykes out there pouring cement, stealing lumber back from people who owed us. Instead of paying the bills, she got people to donate \$100 checks. That was the way we had to do it!"¹⁵⁸⁸

1583 Canyon Sam, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 6, 2014. Sam said the basketball team was named "Firebirds" and the softball team "Tom's Girls."

1584 Provenzano, *Sporting Life*, 2005.

1585 San Francisco Bay Chapter of Gay and Lesbian Sierrans, accessed August 8, 2014, <http://www.glsihikes.org>.

1586 Rachel Gordon, "Castro Park May Honor Lesbian Activist," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 16, 1996, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Castro-park-may-honor-lesbian-activist-3119319.php>.

1587 Waddell and his partner Charles Deaton had received national attention when they were featured in *People* magazine's "Couples" section in October 1976, an early depiction of gay partnership in a national publication. Tom Waddell and Dick Schaap, *Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 124. Their Albion Street home was a former German American. *Arbeiterbildungsverein* (Workers' Educational Society), a German socialist group that offered English classes and, of course, beer and the signing of *Lieder*. This building was called Equality Hall and was used by a variety of radical groups in the 1930s. Among those who met there was the caucus within the longshoremen's union that included Harry Bridges, Henry Schmidt, and several other future leaders of the SF longshore local; they called it Albion Hall.

1588 Jim Provenzano, "Our Pioneers," *Bay Area Reporter*, August 18, 2005, accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.ebar.com/columns/column.php?sec=sports&id=3>.

The Gay Games started with a ceremonial procession of gay and lesbian runners carrying a torch from New York's Stonewall Inn to Kezar Stadium, arriving on August 28th. Tina Turner performed at the opening ceremony, with novelist and activist Rita Mae Brown serving as MC. During the following week, 1,300 athletes from around the world competed before an estimated crowd of 10,000.¹⁵⁸⁹

The months leading up to the Gay Games had been shadowed by demands from the United States Olympic Committee that the events not use the word Olympics. Just days before the games began, the USOC obtained a federal court order restraining the local group from using the word; they were forced to scratch Olympics off thousands of posters, flags, banners, and tickets.¹⁵⁹⁰ Thus the Gay Olympics became the Gay Games. Overcoming the controversy, the Gay Games were a huge success, and plans began almost immediately for Gay Games II, again to be held in San Francisco. Despite the assault of AIDS in the intervening years, more than twice as many competitors participated in 1984. After the opening procession, Waddell addressed over 3,500 athletes from seventeen nations in his remarks: "With these Games and the Procession of the Arts, we hereby serve notice that we are fully vested citizens of the world, with a thriving and bona fide culture, and that we are worthy of the respect and esteem of all other citizens of this world."¹⁵⁹¹

That same year, the USOC filed a lawsuit demanding that San Francisco Arts and Athletics Inc. and Tom Waddell pay its legal fees, and the U.S. District Court ruled in their favor, freezing Waddell's assets and placing a lien on his home. In 1987, Waddell, Gay Games Board member Rikki Streicher, and attorney Mary Dunlap traveled to Washington, D.C., for a hearing at the U.S. Supreme Court, which narrowly ruled in favor of the USOC. In the face of negative publicity and pressure from elected officials, the USOC removed the lien on Waddell's home just two weeks before he died of AIDS on July 11, 1987.¹⁵⁹²

LGBTQ HISTORY

Early LGBTQ History Organizations and Events

Influenced by the queer liberation movements and new social histories that told American history "from the bottom up," pioneers of LGBTQ history began to emerge during the 1970s. Bay Area feminist Max Dashu founded the Suppressed Histories Archive in 1970 and by the middle of the decade was presenting slide lectures on international women's history at Full Moon Coffeehouse and The Women's Building.¹⁵⁹³ In January 1977, the Gay Community Center at 330 Grove Street hosted a talk by historian Jonathan Ned Katz based on his groundbreaking book *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.*¹⁵⁹⁴

A small group of Oakland-based women began the West Coast Lesbian Collections in 1981, an archives with the aim to acquire "anything a lesbian ever touched." The WCLC's mission was to create an archives "not just for scholars and historians, though it is open to them. It is a community archives, based on community and social history, and dedicated to preserving the details of our lives."¹⁵⁹⁵ The Golden Gate Business Association gave \$1,000 to the WCLC to pilot a membership

1589 Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, 161.

1590 Ibid., 158.

1591 Ibid., 195.

1592 Ibid., 210-224.

1593 <http://www.suppressedhistories.net/aboutmax.html>.

1594 Flyer for Katz lecture in 330 Grove folder, Groups Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1595 "West Coast Lesbians Collections Builds Our Community Scrapbook," *Bay Area Career Women Newsletter* (October-November 1983): 1.



Former home of Tom Waddell, 141-143 Albion Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

program in 1983, but three years later the struggling archives moved to Los Angeles.¹⁵⁹⁶ The WCLC, which included material from a number of important San Francisco organizations and individuals and is now the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives in West Hollywood and the associated collection housed at the UCLA Center for the Study of Women.¹⁵⁹⁷

San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project

Community historian and activist Allan Bérubé moved to the Bay Area in 1973 and began to search for documentation of gay and lesbian histories in local libraries and archives. His first slide lecture, “Lesbian Masquerade,” was presented at The Women’s Building in 1979 as a benefit for the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project, a private study group that he had helped to found the year before. Five years later, Bérubé’s article, “The History of Gay Bathhouses,” was printed in the San Francisco newspaper *Coming Up!* and submitted as a brief to the California Supreme Court, which was considering legal issues around bathhouse closure in response to the AIDS epidemic. As described in detail in the section titled “Development of Sex-Based Communities,” Bérubé’s history describes bathhouses as spaces with multiple meanings for gay men that went beyond sex to support important political and social ties. The book *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism* (2008) describes the article as:

a unique historical document not only in its content, but in its very existence. [I]t represents a specific effort by historian/activist to intervene in public policy during a time of intensified anti-gay repression. By documenting the development of gay bathhouses into essential community institutions, Bérubé constructs an alternative legal argument for allowing them to remain open.¹⁵⁹⁸

Among the other founding members of the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project were Estelle Freedman, Gayle Rubin, Jeffrey Escoffier, Amber Hollibaugh, Eric Garber, Lynn Fonfa, Bertie Yusba, Joanne Castillo, Robert Epstein, Frances Reid, Elizabeth Stevens, John D’Emilio, and William “Willie” Walker.¹⁵⁹⁹

Gay and Lesbian/Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

The idea of creating a historical society to document and share gay and lesbian history in San Francisco is attributed to Willie Walker, who remembers, “It just seemed really clear that if anyone was going to try and collect and preserve queer history that we were going to have to do it ourselves.”¹⁶⁰⁰ The formation of LGBTQ archives in the U.S., which largely began with the gay liberation movement in the 1970s and picked up speed in the 1980s, was directly shaped by the AIDS epidemic. The imperative to remember the lives, challenges, and accomplishments of those who were dying so young and so rapidly gave urgency to the idea of a place to collect gay history and catalyzed the formation of a number of queer archives.¹⁶⁰¹

This was personal for individuals such as Bérubé and Walker (a nurse on an AIDS ward), both of whom were members of the Forget-Me-Nots, an affinity group for men whose lovers had died of

1596 Ibid.

1597 Kathleen A. McHugh, Brenda Johnson-Grau, and Ben Rapahel Sher, *The June L. Mazer Archives: Making Invisible Histories Visible* (UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2014), 11.

1598 Dangerous Bedfellows, eds., *Policing Public Sex* (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 185.

1599 Boyd, *Bodies of Evidence*, 18.

1600 Willie Walker interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2003, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Walker describes two other nascent collections forming in SF, the Harvey Milk Archives and the collection of Greg Pennington.

1601 Diane Kiyo Wakimoto, *Queer Community Archives in California Since 1950*, Diss., Queensland University of Technology, 2012, 93.

AIDS.¹⁶⁰² Walker recalls that “from early on we wanted to get the papers of people that were dying of AIDS because we had a clear sense that these were people whose voices were gonna be erased, and they had important things to say and teach to future generations.”¹⁶⁰³

A public meeting was held in March 1985 at the Commission Room of the San Francisco Public Library in the Civic Center (200 Larkin Street; now the Asian Art Museum), to discuss founding the organization, which was named the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society. Walker remembers that among the people who responded to the notice were members of the group Gay American Indians.¹⁶⁰⁴ After polling attendees, the organization’s goals included creating an archives and library, conducting oral history projects, and supporting research.¹⁶⁰⁵ The decision to be a historical society, and not just an archives, reflected the founders’ “aim to have a community space that could accommodate and foster the many diverse interests represented by the community members.”¹⁶⁰⁶ Within three years, the organization successfully petitioned Mayor Art Agnos to proclaim June as Lesbian and Gay History Month.¹⁶⁰⁷

Walker, who enrolled at UC Berkeley in a master’s program in library science, housed the archives initially in his apartment (3823 17th Street, extant); for several years, meetings and additional archival collections were spread among other members’ homes and rented storage space. In 1990, the archives moved to a space in the basement of the Redstone Labor Temple Building (2940 16th Street), which offered space for public meetings, and room to actively collect further more periodicals, personal papers, and organizational records.¹⁶⁰⁸ The same year, the organization changed its name to the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California to reflect the broader regional scope of its collections. Bisexual activist Maggi Rubenstein and the transgender executive director of the Historical Society, Susan Stryker, led efforts to make the organization’s name more inclusive; in 1999 it became the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society.¹⁶⁰⁹

Women historians and activists were involved from the organization’s beginning, and one of the first major organizational collections the society gathered was the records of the Daughters of Bilitis. Early newsletters indicate that society members were actively seeking oral histories and archival materials from people of color and women. Yet, in a recent review of the archives, board member and curator Amy Sueyoshi found that less than one-third of the collection covered women’s history and less than 5 percent reflected Asian American Pacific Islander queer communities.¹⁶¹⁰ Still, the Historical Society has remained committed to its ambitious goals and to ensuring that members of all LGBTQ communities have access to their historical materials through the growing archive and the organization’s GLBT History Museum, which opened in the Castro District in 2011.

1602 Slideshow by Estelle Freedman and John D’Emilio, GLBT History Museum, July 7, 2011, accessed August 8, 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kucy_Z9Pnfo&list=UU5bo70dFJUnw8Yh9pelZTBQ.

1603 Willie Walker, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2003.

1604 Ibid.

1605 Wakimoto, *Queer Community Archives in California Since 1950*, 95

1606 Ibid.

1607 “Mayor Proclaims Lesbian & Gay History Month,” *San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society Newsletter* v. 4 no. 4 (Summer 1989).

1608 Wakimoto, *Queer Community Archives in California Since 1950*, 99. Walker stated that the early years of collecting focused on replaceable periodicals because he lived in a wooden Victorian home that was not appropriate for long term preservation. Willie Walker, interviewed by Terence Kissack, 2003.

1609 Gerard Koskovich, “Displaying the Queer Past: Purposes, Public, and Possibilities at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History Museum,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* v. 1, no. 2 (2014): 64.

1610 Don Romesburg, “Presenting the Queer Past: A Case for GLBT History Museum,” *Queering Archives Special Double Issue in Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014): 131-144.

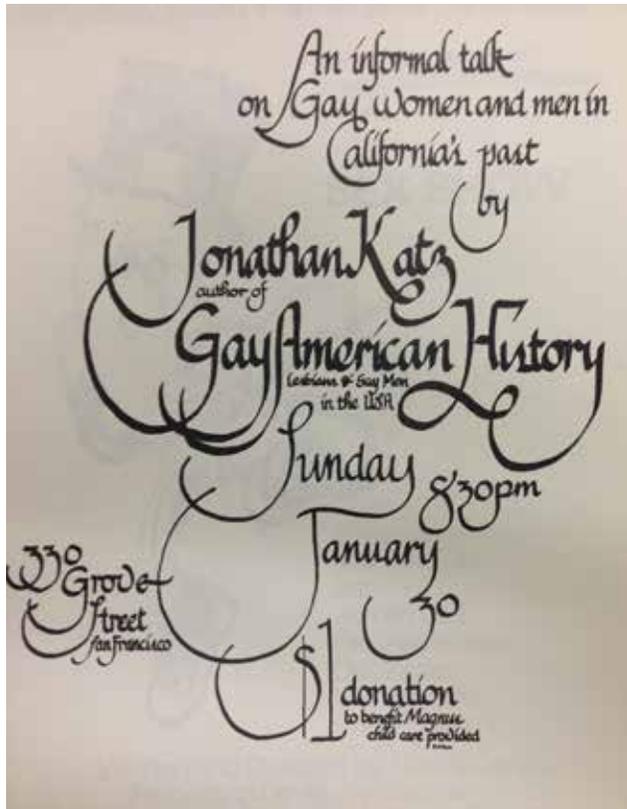
The connection between documenting LGBTQ history and supporting social change was central to the work of Bay Area–based independent scholars and academic historians, especially before academia recognized queer scholarship as a legitimate pursuit. The 1988 book *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, written by Stanford professor and San Francisco resident Estelle Freedman and coauthor John D’Emilio, was noted by the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark ruling that struck down sodomy laws nationwide. Allan Bérubé’s 1990 book *Coming Out Under Fire*, which documents the World War II experiences of gay men and lesbians in the military, influenced the 1990s debate on President Bill Clinton’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and was the basis for an award-winning 1994 documentary film of the same name.

The Historical Society began an ambitious oral history project in 1992, founded by historian Nan Alamilla Boyd, which ultimately encompassed over 500 interviews recorded to “capture the stories and real voices of community members past and present.” The 1990s also saw the initiation of the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library’s Main Library (100 Larkin Street), which opened in 1996. The library was funded by and named for Hormel, who helped found the LGBT civil rights organization Human Rights Campaign in 1981. Hormel was appointed to the United Nations delegation as the first openly gay ambassador (to Luxembourg) by President Bill Clinton. He purchased a residence at 181 Buena Vista Avenue East (extant) in 1986, where he lived for over twenty-five years.¹⁶¹¹ Over the next several years, the Historical Society and SFPL negotiated an agreement that deposited a number of the society’s most heavily used collections with the library, with the overarching purpose of ensuring the broadest possible access to queer history.

As a community-based archives, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society continues to make critical contributions to scholarship and public memory. Historian Gerard Koskovich, a founding member of the institution, has summarized the importance of queer archives and libraries such as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society: They are part of “a wider strategy of promoting equal rights, social respect and cultural space for LGBT people” and play important roles “in community organizing; in supporting queer studies in the academy; and in the creation of books, articles, films, exhibitions and other cultural products.”¹⁶¹²

1611 Page & Turnbull, “181 Buena Vista Avenue East, San Francisco: Historic Resource Evaluation,” March 2013.

1612 Gerard Koskovich, “Libraries and Archives,” in John C. Hawley, ed., *LGBTQ America Today: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2008), vol. 2, 684–692.



LEFT: Flyer for Gay American History lecture at Gay Community Center, 330 Grove Street

BOTTOM LEFT: Willie Walker, credited for idea of a GLBT Historical Society

BOTTOM RIGHT: Early GLBT Historical Society historians and board members Eric Garber, Greg Pennington, and Paula Lichtenberg, 1989

(All courtesy GLBT Historical Society)



IX. LGBTQ MEDICINE (1940S TO 1970S)

LANGLEY PORTER CLINIC

San Francisco became an important center for the study of gender and sexuality in the 1940s and 1950s through the work of the Langley Porter Clinic (401 Parnassus Avenue; later the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, extant). The UCSF Medical School and the California Department of Institutions, which oversaw the state's psychiatric hospitals, founded the clinic in 1941 as a joint venture. In March 1943, it opened its doors as a center for treatment, research, and teaching, with the goal of creating California's first "psychiatric institute where several specialties in medicine, especially neurology and neurosurgery, would collaborate in a true multi-discipline approach to mental illness."¹⁶¹³ The clinic's founding director and psychiatry department chair, Dr. Karl Bowman, had taught psychiatry at New York University and then was clinical director of psychiatry at Bellevue Medical Center in New York City.

During World War II, Bowman conducted research on gay men held in the psychiatric ward of the U.S. Naval Hospital on Treasure Island after their sexuality had been discovered while in uniform.¹⁶¹⁴ In 1949, Bowman led a comprehensive statewide investigation into "sex crimes and sex deviants," initiated and funded by the California State Legislature. The resulting reports, coauthored by Bowman and UCSF research associate Bernice Engle, represented a newly liberalized attitude meant to shape future legislation and therapeutic recommendations. The authors argued that relying on imprisonment for sex offenders without psychiatric treatment merely worsened their problems and the potential threat they posed to the society. Their report suggested that the State should reform and standardize legislation regarding sex offenses and recommended that laws criminalizing sex between consenting adults should be repealed, a suggestion particularly important for LGBTQ Californians. Bowman and Engle recommended legal reforms to ensure the right to privacy and to eliminate police entrapment and other violations of the First and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.¹⁶¹⁵

However, the California "sex deviants" study still presented gay men, lesbians, and transgender individuals as psychologically and morally—if not criminally—problematic. Bowman writes, "Most exhibitionists, homosexuals and peepers may fit into the class of psychopaths and yet be socially harmless individuals."¹⁶¹⁶ Bowman and Engle's 1953 article, "The Problem of Homosexuality," described the use of therapeutic castration in European countries without making a distinction between consensual or coercive homosexual acts.¹⁶¹⁷ Bowman and Engle believed that current approaches such as aversion therapy could be useful for suppressing homosexuality through techniques that punished erotic responses to homosexual stimuli and rewarded responses to heterosexual images.¹⁶¹⁸ Electroshock, drug-induced shock treatments, and even lobotomy were used on homosexual patients in state hospitals, private psychiatric clinics, and prisons from the 1940s through the 1960s.¹⁶¹⁹

1613 Mariana Robinson, *The Coming of Age of the Langley Porter Clinic: The Reorganization of a Mental Health Institute* (Inter-University Case Program; Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1962), 2-3. Bowman's tenure ended in 1956. (See page 8.)

1614 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 41-42.

1615 Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 326.

1616 Karl Bowman and Bernice Engle, "Review of Scientific Literature on Sexual Deviation: A Review of Recent Medicolegal Opinion Regarding Sex Laws," *California Sexual Deviation Research* (January 1953): 109.

1617 Katz, *Gay American History*, 182.

1618 Terry, *An American Obsession*, 325.

1619 *Ibid.*, 470. Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 218.



Langley Porter Clinic, 1941 (*The Coming of Age of the Langley Porter Clinic*, 1962)

KINSEY, HOOKER, BAKER

Starting in the 1950s, homophile organizations and a handful of medical professionals worked to transform the relationship between psychiatry and homosexuality. Dr. Bowman's work, as incomplete as it appears in hindsight, helped to shift the perception of LGBTQ people from a criminal to a psychological one. Bowman was part of a network of researchers and practitioners including Alfred Kinsey, Evelyn Hooker, Thomas Szasz, and others, whose work called into question long-held beliefs about the pathology of same-sex relationships. Kinsey's research on the sexual behavior of American men and women (published in 1948 and 1953 respectively) showed that homosexual behavior was far more common than had been understood and was therefore not psychologically abnormal.¹⁶²⁰ In 1954, with funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, UCLA psychologist Evelyn Hooker expanded on this observation, starting her groundbreaking work comparing the psychological adjustment of homosexual and heterosexual men. Inspired by her friendship with gay novelist Christopher Isherwood and her personal relations with some of her gay male students (which included a trip to San Francisco's Finocchio's), Hooker's findings demonstrated that it was impossible to distinguish homosexual and non-homosexual men by looking at results of standard tests of mental health.¹⁶²¹ Historian Nan Alamilla Boyd writes, "The research of reputable scientists like Alfred Kinsey and Evelyn Hooker bolstered homophile confidence and fueled the belief that scientific research would pave the way for homosexual integration."¹⁶²²

Former surgeon turned psychiatrist Blanche M. Baker treated straight and gay clients in San Francisco in the 1950s and 1960s. She wrote to one of her critics that she practiced "the art of healing by being a kind, friendly, motherly sort of doctor who preaches self-acceptance and even enjoys the companionship of 'dirty' homosexuals."¹⁶²³ In 1955, Dr. Baker gave an address titled "A Psychiatric Evaluation of Homosexuality; Causative Factors and Therapeutic Suggestions," at homophile organization ONE Inc.'s first Midwinter Institute in Los Angeles. This gathering was reportedly the first forum in North America that was organized by homosexuals, for homosexuals, and focused on the scientific, philosophical, legal, and social questions pertaining to their lives. In 1957, Dr. Baker defended the homosexual male lifestyle in the introduction to Helen P. Branson's book *Gay Bar*, published by the homophile Pan-Graphic Press in San Francisco:

Homosexuals are human beings, too. They are interesting, real, unusual, creative, beauty-loving people, if one can get behind the mask of camping pretense and sham so many of them feel compelled to wear to protect their sensitive souls from the condemnation and hate leveled at them by a hostile, prejudiced and uncomprehending society.¹⁶²⁴

Beginning in January 1959, Dr. Baker began writing a regular advice column, "Toward Understanding," in the Los Angeles-based homophile monthly *ONE Magazine*; the column was cut short by her death the following year.¹⁶²⁵ In 1965, the ONE Library in Los Angeles was named after Blanche M. Baker.¹⁶²⁶

1620 Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry*, 44.

1621 Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 187-188.

1622 Ibid., 189.

1623 Will Fellows and Helen Branson, *Gay Bar: The Fabulous True Story of a Daring Woman and her Boys in the 1950s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2010) 1. San Francisco City Directory for 1959 lists her office at 150 Delta Street.

1624 Blanche M. Baker, "Introduction," in Helen P. Branson, *Gay Bar* (San Francisco: Pan-Graphic Press, 1957), 7.

1625 Kyle Morgan, "Dr. Blanche Baker and ONE Inc.," One Archives at USC, accessed August 27, 2014, <http://one.usc.edu/dr-blanche-baker-and-one-inc/>.

1626 "Blanche M. Baker Memorial Library," Online Tagent: Homosexual Information Center, accessed August 27, 2014, http://tangentgroup.org/mediawiki/index.php/Blanche_M._Baker_Memorial_Library.

ADVANCEMENTS IN TRANSGENDER MEDICINE AND RESEARCH

Transgender Medical Research and Procedures

According to historian Susan Stryker's *Transgender History*, in the mid-20th century, San Francisco became the nexus for transgender people and others who "produce[d] long-lasting organizations and provide[d] the base for social movement."¹⁶²⁷ Dr. Karl Bowman of UCSF's Langley Porter Clinic and internationally renowned sex researcher Alfred Kinsey advised California State Attorney general Edward G. (Pat) Brown Sr. on an important 1949 legal case that made genital modification a criminal offense in California, curtailing transgender access to medical procedures in the U.S. for a number of years. The case, which involved a patient of Dr. Harry Benjamin (more on Benjamin in a later section), could be interpreted as making doctors vulnerable to prosecution for performing genital modifications such as castration and penectomy (removal of testicles or penis).¹⁶²⁸

One of Karl Bowman's key collaborators was Louise Lawrence, who had been living full-time as a transgender woman since 1942. Lawrence lectured on transgender topics at UCSF and created an expansive international network of transgender people, some of whom stayed with her at her home at 11 Buena Vista Terrace (extant).

Susan Stryker describes Lawrence's residence as a "waystation for transgender people from across the country who sought access to medical procedures in California."¹⁶²⁹ Lawrence's diary from 1944 records an early case of a female-to-male transgender person who had convinced doctors at the Langley Porter Clinic to perform a double mastectomy.¹⁶³⁰ Lawrence's carefully compiled information about transgender people supported medical research and treatment by the most prominent doctors dealing with transgender issues, including Alfred Kinsey, Karl Bowman, and Harry Benjamin.¹⁶³¹

Dr. Harry Benjamin was a German-born, New York-based endocrinologist who had been friends with the pre-World War II German homosexual- and transgender-emancipation pioneer Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. Benjamin popularized the term transsexual and publicly defended homosexual rights and the rights of such individuals to medical support rather than psychiatric "cures."¹⁶³² New York-based Benjamin kept a medical office in San Francisco (450 Sutter Street, extant) during summers from the 1930s to the 1970s.¹⁶³³ Transgender activist Felicia Elizondo was inspired by Christine Jorgensen, who underwent a sex reassignment operation in Denmark in 1952. After seeing the film *The Christine Jorgensen Story* (1970), Elizondo said to herself, "That's what I want to do. How I'm going to get there I don't know."¹⁶³⁴ Elizondo had already been receiving hormone treatment from Benjamin. Benjamin continued his advocacy for transgender people when he published his influential book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, in 1966.

1627 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 41.

1628 Ibid., 44-45.

1629 Ibid., 44.

1630 Records indicate that three Male-to-Female surgeries were performed at UCSF between 1954 and 1964. Members of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California, "MTF Transgender Activism in the Tenderloin," *GLQ* 4:2 (1988): 369.

1631 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 44.

1632 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 144. Susan Stryker, "Dr. Harry Benjamin," GLBTQ.com, http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/benjamin_h.html.

1633 Benjamin organized Magnus Hirschfeld's tour of the United States in 1930. Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 44.

1634 Felicia Flames Elizondo, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014.



Former home of transgender activist Louise Lawrence, 11 Buena Vista Avenue East (Photo by Shayne Watson)

Expanding Medical Services

As transgender activists became radically more vocal about their rights, an increasing number took advantage of expanded opportunities in medical services that allowed them to transition toward their chosen gender identity. University-based clinics began performing sex reassignment surgery in the 1960s. Bay Area transgender individuals could seek care at Stanford University's sex reassignment clinic after it opened in 1968 under the direction of Donald Laub, a plastic surgeon.¹⁶³⁵ These university programs helped codify procedures and protocols into guidelines for treating transgender people, and from the 1970s to the 1980s, a number of private doctors discovered that sex change surgery was a profitable component of medical practice.¹⁶³⁶ According to those guidelines, anyone seeking gender reassignment had to first spend months in psychotherapy and hormone therapy, then live socially as a member of the desired gender for a year, and finally undergo a psychiatric evaluation that included proving they would be exclusively heterosexual after transition. Only when all these requirements had been fulfilled could sex reassignment procedures go forward.¹⁶³⁷ This level of medical oversight of an individual's gender identity was painful for many, and the months of various treatments were expensive and, by the early 1970, excluded for coverage by insurance plans. Transgender activist Tamara Ching recalls seeing a San Francisco doctor in the late 1970s: "A lot of girls were going to him because he'd give you a scrip for hormones" without having to undergo psychotherapy, which saved costs and potential humiliation. Although Ching described the doctor's office as dirty and his level of professionalism as quite low, the other options were "black-market drugs or going to Tijuana."¹⁶³⁸

Facial-Feminization and -Masculinization Surgery

San Francisco-based plastic surgeon Dr. Douglas Ousterhout helped pioneer facial-feminization surgery for transgender women. After 25 years as head surgeon at the Center for Craniofacial Anomalies at UCSF, where he specialized in treating children born with severe skull deformities, Ousterhout developed techniques to change the shape of a skull.¹⁶³⁹ In the c. late 1970s, Ousterhout performed his first facial-feminization surgeries (FFS) at the California Pacific Medical Center, Davies Campus on Castro Street. By 2006, he had performed over 900 procedures. As of 2016, Dr. Ousterhout is still in practice. A majority of Dr. Ousterhout's patients have been transgender women, but he has also performed facial-masculinization surgery (FMS).

FFS/FMS procedures can take 10-13 hours, are very invasive, and the recovery is painful. Patients' faces can be bandaged for days and sutured, swollen, and bruised for months. Because of this, coupled with the fact that most patients travel to San Francisco from out of state or country for the procedures, local hotels are a crucial part of the recovery process. After leaving the hospital, patients are expected to remain in San Francisco for a week (or sometimes weeks) to recover under the care of Dr. Ousterhout's staff. One place in particular has been a sanctuary for those who have been treated at Davies: the gay-owned Inn on Castro, a 1905 Edwardian bed and breakfast that opened at 321 Castro Street c. 1977.¹⁶⁴⁰ The Inn on Castro, owned by Jan de Gier since 1984, is

1635 Stanford News Service, "Transsexuals Talk About Stanford's Role in their Complex Lives," May 2, 2000, accessed July 29, 2014, <http://news.stanford.edu/pr/00/sexchange53.html>.

1636 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 276.

1637 Stryker, *Transgender History*, 111.

1638 Tamara Ching, interviewed by Donna Graves. Ching recalled that other doctors who treated transgender women were in the same building. Meyerowitz describes a Dr. Ronald Brown whose practice in SF and LA offered "cut-rate surgery to MTF (and at least one FTM)," Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 271.

1639 Edward Guthman, "Facing Facts," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 26, 2006, accessed January 19, 2016, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Facing-facts-2519481.php#photo-2665600>.

1640 Jan de Gier and Fredrick Schermer, interviewed by Shayne Watson, January 20, 2016.

located a few blocks from the hospital. Dr. Ousterhout's nursing staff contracted with de Gier in the mid-1990s to provide apartments with kitchenettes to FFS/FMS patients and their caregivers. The first FMS patient to recover at the Inn on Castro was transgender artist and activist Kate Bornstein.¹⁶⁴¹

FFS and FMS procedures are radical and controversial, but the results can be life changing for transgender men and women—especially for those who want/need the surgery to integrate socially. “I [had] one patient who [wanted] the surgery so badly,” Ousterhout told the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2006. “She’s in a coal-mining town somewhere in Kentucky and she says, ‘I don’t dare dress as a female where anybody can see me. Literally, I’ll be killed.’ And she’s probably right.”¹⁶⁴²

X. SAN FRANCISCO AND THE AIDS EPIDEMIC (1981 TO 1990S)

The AIDS epidemic is among the most significant events to shape the LGBTQ history of the 20th and 21st centuries. The social, psychological, and financial costs are stunning, and the epidemic has wrought enormous changes in medical research, healthcare delivery, and gay culture. By killing a significant number of gay and bisexual men and transgender women, the disease underscored major issues associated with homophobia and discrimination, medical research, and the provision of healthcare in the U.S. It also brought to the fore the ability of communities to rally in the face of discrimination and death. The San Francisco model of HIV/AIDS care, which utilized medical facilities and community-based organizations to mobilize compassionate and respectful treatment, became a global standard.

EARLY MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles were the first American cities to face the AIDS crisis. Young men began exhibiting unusual and severe illnesses and symptoms in 1981; a pathologist at UCSF identified the first diagnosis of Kaposi's Sarcoma in April of that year.¹⁶⁴³ Two months later, the Centers for Disease Control released an alarming report describing *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia and Kaposi's Sarcoma in a handful of gay and bisexual men. In response, the San Francisco Department of Public Health contacted local physicians and hospitals to identify any suspicious recent diagnoses among gay men; they discovered nine cases from the previous year of gay or bisexual men whose symptoms or deaths appeared to be related to an as-yet unidentified new disease.¹⁶⁴⁴

Within a few weeks of the CDC's announcement, clinicians, public health officials, and other medical professionals in San Francisco realized the potential tsunami. The San Francisco DPH, headquartered at 101 Grove Street (extant), quickly established a system for reporting and registering cases; the reporting network grew over the years to include major hospitals and private clinics.¹⁶⁴⁵ By August 1981, Marcus Conant, a dermatologist at UCSF who had treated early cases of Kaposi's Sarcoma, and oncologist Dr. Paul Volberding had established a specialty clinic called the Kaposi's Sarcoma/Opportunistic Infections Clinic at UCSF.¹⁶⁴⁶ Doctors across Northern California began to send their patients to the new clinic.¹⁶⁴⁷

1641 Ibid.

1642 Guthman, “Facing Facts.”

1643 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 60.

1644 Cochrane, *When AIDS Began*, 55.

1645 Sides, *Erotic City*, 177.

1646 Cochrane, *When AIDS Began*, 85.

1647 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 91.

Though they had little concrete information, Conant and Volberding visited gay political groups in fall of 1981 to inform them about the deadly new condition, which many were referring to as “gay cancer.” By December of that year, eighteen San Francisco residents had been diagnosed with the disease, and four had died.¹⁶⁴⁸ The same month, the *San Francisco Sentinel* published an article in which Bobbi Campbell became the first Kaposi’s Sarcoma patient to publicly declare his illness. A registered nurse and a patient of Dr. Conant, Campbell was frustrated by the lack of coverage the new disease received in local gay papers. Declaring himself the “KS Poster Boy,” Campbell convinced Star Pharmacy (498 Castro Street, extant), a drugstore in the heart of the Castro, to allow him to put up posters in their storefront windows warning neighborhood denizens about the gay cancer.¹⁶⁴⁹ Campbell began writing a regular column on living with the condition for the *Sentinel* and in 1983, soon after the disease was labeled Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), cofounded a group that became People with AIDS, the first organization in the world by and for those living with HIV/AIDS.¹⁶⁵⁰

The range of symptoms and opportunistic infections that were appearing in previously healthy young men mystified medical professionals and terrified the gay community. Theories about the source and transmission vectors of the burgeoning epidemic were heatedly contested. The San Francisco DPH had already been closely monitoring sexually transmitted infections that spread among gay men.¹⁶⁵¹ Well before the identification of AIDS, Dr. Selma Dritz, the assistant director for disease control at the San Francisco DPH, warned physicians that previous studies showed that “too much is being transmitted” among gay men who represented an estimated three-quarters of the patients at the department’s venereal disease clinic.¹⁶⁵² Some theorized that plentiful sex and recreational drug use, aspects of the so-called “gay lifestyle” that were favorite targets of mainstream media, overloaded gay men’s immune systems and left them victim to a plethora of opportunistic infections.¹⁶⁵³ Gay physicians, including members of Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, which had 350 members in 1982, found themselves in a conflicted position. On the one hand, they wanted to serve the gay community and its commitment to sexual liberation; on the other, some expressed concern about the consequences of suspected risky behaviors. In 1983, BAPHR cosponsored a symposium, “The Physician and the AIDS Crisis,” at the San Francisco Medical Society Auditorium (250 Masonic Avenue) with the UCSF Department of Psychiatry and the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights.¹⁶⁵⁴

AIDS HYSTERIA AND DISCRIMINATION

Increasing fear of the disease shaped broader responses in the city. AIDS hysteria and the discrimination that followed it meant gay men’s housing and employment were jeopardized. Job loss could compound their predicament by removing access to health insurance.¹⁶⁵⁵ Journalist Carol Pogash reports that by the middle of 1982, enough doctors at UCSF were anxious about having

1648 Ibid., 100.

1649 Ibid., 10 -108.

1650 Campbell was instrumental in coining the term “Person With Aids” rather than AIDS victim at the Denver AIDS Forum held in June 1983. Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 170-71. Ephemera in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society indicates that People with AIDS-SF had an office at 519 Castro Street and held meetings in the San Francisco AIDS Foundation Conference Room at 333 Valencia Street (1988) and at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center 100 Collingwood (1995). People with AIDS file, Groups Ephemera Collection.

1651 DPH had undertaken intensive surveillance of gay men’s health in the 1970s, and in 1979 recruited nearly 7,000 “high risk” homosexuals to participate in a hepatitis B cohort study and vaccine trial. Dritz’s quote is from 1980, Cochrane, *When AIDS Began*, 55.

1652 Sides, *Erotic City*, 176.

1653 Stephen Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 48.

1654 Ibid., 54. Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 55. Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. A 1984 safe sex card lists the organization at 54 Tenth Street.

1655 Streitmatter, *Unspeakable*, 262.

patients with a deadly, unknown disease in their waiting and exam rooms, that the clinic begun by Drs. Conant and Volberding was moved to San Francisco General Hospital, UCSF's associated public teaching hospital.¹⁶⁵⁶ Dr. Mervyn Silverman, the City's director of public health, remembers the pervasive fear in San Francisco: "Policemen driving down the streets of the Castro District wearing surgical masks, nurses refusing to care for AIDS patients [and] a bus driver refusing to touch a transfer that was handed to him by a possibly gay male."¹⁶⁵⁷ Some funeral homes denied care for the bodies of AIDS patients; the Neptune Society and Sullivan's Funeral Home in the Castro (2254 Market Street, extant but threatened) were reportedly a few of the first to offer services to those felled by AIDS.¹⁶⁵⁸ In the early months of the disease, the only regular support services offered to those who were suffering from the disease were held at the Kaposi's clinic at UCSF and a weekly support group started by Bobbi Campbell and a grief counselor from the Shanti Project, held in a lounge at California Pacific Medical Center, Davies Campus, and in patients' homes.¹⁶⁵⁹

ESTABLISHMENT OF SF AIDS FOUNDATION

By September 1982, the disease had been named AIDS by the CDC, but the handful of scientists and community advocates focused on the growing epidemic battled apathy from elected officials, the scientific establishment, and most gay leaders. Dr. Marcus Conant approached activist Cleve Jones in 1982 about creating an organization that could mobilize the gay community to address the threat and pressure the government for additional funds. The resulting Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation (later renamed the San Francisco AIDS Foundation) initially operated from folding tables covered with flyers and leaflets at the corner of 18th and Castro Streets. Within a few months, it opened the first agency specifically addressing the new disease at 520 Castro Street (extant), where Jones recalled that, even though initially unlisted, their phone immediately rang off the hook with calls for help and information.¹⁶⁶⁰ The organization sponsored a community forum on AIDS in September 1982 at Everett Middle School—the first public event, according to Jones, dedicated to discussing the epidemic.¹⁶⁶¹ In October 1983, the KS/AIDS Foundation offices received national attention when a Florida hospital flew a critically ill AIDS patient to San Francisco and had him dumped at the organization's front door.¹⁶⁶²

BATHHOUSE BATTLES

Members of the gay community were working quickly to inform their compatriots about the risks associated with sexual activities and the possibly related effects of amyl nitrate poppers—but with no cause yet identified for the disease, the medical science regarding risk reduction remained unclear. In 1982, psychologists and other gay health professionals developed the nation's first safe

1656 Carol Pogash, *As Real as it Gets: The Life of a Hospital at the Center of the AIDS Epidemic* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1992), 14.

1657 Christopher Dishman, "The San Francisco Bathhouse Battles of 1984: Civil Liberties, AIDS Risk, and Shift in Public Health Policy," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 44 (2003): 77.

1658 "San Francisco Funeral Home Could Close Soon Following Big Rig Crash," May 15, 2014, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2014/05/15/san-francisco-funeral-home-could-close-soon-following-big-rig-crash/>. SF general AIDS nurse Diane Jones recalled that the Neptune Society was "always helpful" and that Pacific Internment Mortuary on Folsom Street gave free and discounted burial services to patients who died. Diane Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, July 17, 2014.

1659 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 123. Steve Peskind recalls the early meetings at Davies Medical Center, "AIDS and the Castro," *Out in the Castro*, 146-47. Peskind says the weekly support group grew and moved to the KS Foundation offices on Castro and later a large room at MCC (page 148).

1660 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 161. The initial address of 520 Castro Street is from "The View From Here: Cleve Jones and Dr. Marcus Conant," San Francisco AIDS Foundation, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.sfaf.org/hiv-info/hot-topics/from-the-experts/the-view-from-here-cleve-jones-marcus-conant-2011.html>.

1661 Jones with Dawson, *Stitching a Revolution*, 91-93.

1662 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 240.

sex guidelines for gay men that shaped messages from BAPHR and KS/Aids Foundation.¹⁶⁶³ Sexual health promotion had long been a theme for the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (now joined by KS poster boy Bobbi Campbell as Sister Florence Nightmare); they worked with medical experts to create and distribute a sex-positive, humorous educational pamphlet titled “Play Fair!” in 1982. According to the organization’s “Sistory,” the pamphlet went into a second printing within a few months, “paid for in part by sex party benefits and the sale of ashes from the burned-down Barracks Bath House” on Folsom Street.¹⁶⁶⁴

The role of gay bathhouses and sex clubs in supposedly facilitating the transmission of AIDS and in supporting safer sex practices led to a pitched battle between members of the gay community, gay business owners, and public officials. By 1984, San Francisco’s rate of infection was the highest per capita in the nation. Gay men were estimated to make up about 95 percent of AIDS cases in the city, and transmission through gay sex was a focus for public health debate. As the most visible, concentrated space for male sexual encounters, bathhouses came under intense scrutiny, with some advocating for their closure as a step toward community survival and others arguing that it was a fallacy to conflate location with risk of infection. Closure advocates saw an evil alliance between gay newspapers, which did a relatively poor job covering AIDS in the early years, and the bathhouses that were a primary source of advertising revenue.¹⁶⁶⁵ Closure opponents said that bathhouses were a crucial location for education about safer sex, especially for men who had sex with men but were not actively engaged with the out gay community.

Members of the gay community, doctors, public health workers, and others debated their concerns over public health, privacy rights and civil liberties for over a year; in the meantime, nearly a third of the city’s twenty bathhouses had closed, primarily because business was down as a result of patrons’ fear of contracting AIDS.¹⁶⁶⁶ The City of San Francisco ordered bathhouses to close in October 1984. One bathhouse, the 21st Street Baths (3244 21st Street, not extant), refused to comply but ultimately gave in and closed in 1987 when threatened with a lawsuit by the City. It was the last licensed gay bathhouse in the city.¹⁶⁶⁷ The San Francisco DPH focused on developing a comprehensive education program with specific cautions about high-risk sexual behavior. The campaign, which became a national model, included billboards, ads in gay newspapers, and broadcast public service announcements. The CDC reported in 1984 that of nine cities surveyed, only San Francisco had the needed partnerships between community AIDS organizations and public health officials to develop effective prevention programs.¹⁶⁶⁸

SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL AND THE “SAN FRANCISCO MODEL” OF HIV/AIDS CARE

In response to exploding numbers of patients and increased fear about them being treated in conventional medical units, San Francisco General Hospital’s (1001 Potrero Avenue) Ward 5B opened in July 1983—the first dedicated inpatient AIDS ward in the world. Eleven nurses and two unit clerks volunteered to work under Cliff Morrison, the first nurse manager, who helped steer

1663 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 127-128.

1664 Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, “Sistory,” accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.thesisters.org/sistory>.

1665 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 76.

1666 *Ibid.*, 78. By Spring 1984, The Cauldron, Cornholes, Liberty Baths, Sutro Baths, and Bulldog Baths all closed according to Streitmatter, *Unspeakable*, 257.

1667 “14 San Francisco Sex Clubs Told to Close to Curb AIDS,” *New York Times*, October 10, 1984, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/10/us/14-san-francisco-sex-clubs-told-to-close-to-curb-aids.html>. See also Johnny Miller, “Last Gay Bathhouse in S.F. Shuts Down Over AIDS,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 10, 1984, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Last-gay-bathhouse-in-S-F-shut-down-over-AIDS-3549850.php>.

1668 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 499.

an innovative program of integrated treatment, care, and support services for patients, partners, friends, and family members. In addition to medical care, Ward 5B emphasized mental health support and respect for gay relationships, allowing patients to designate a significant other to be involved in medical decisions and to visit without restricted hours.¹⁶⁶⁹

Medical staff were joined by counselors from the Shanti Project (described later in more detail below), social workers, chaplains, and an increasing number of volunteers.¹⁶⁷⁰ In January 1986, the ward moved from its twelve-bed unit to the twenty-bed Ward 5A. According to one account, “At the height of the epidemic (late 80s–early 90s), there were often as many patients with AIDS off of 5A as there were patients on the ward, all waiting for available beds.”¹⁶⁷¹ Women, especially lesbians, were a critical part of AIDS care at San Francisco General Hospital and in other settings. Although lesbians and gay men had established separate neighborhoods and cultures during the 1970s, the rise of AIDS drew many lesbians into action in part because, as journalist John-Manuel Andriote writes, they “understood the connection between personal health, the power dynamics of healthcare, and one’s position in society.”¹⁶⁷² Cliff Morrison remarked that, even when gay men hesitated to volunteer at the AIDS ward, “our sisters really stepped to the forefront and said to hell with everybody else, we’ll do what we have to do.”¹⁶⁷³

Working in an unusually interdisciplinary clinic, doctors and nurses at San Francisco General Hospital experimented with new treatments as their patients suffered from increasing complications, generally leading to great suffering and death.¹⁶⁷⁴ In her book *As Real as It Gets: The Life of a Hospital at the Center of the AIDS Epidemic*, journalist Carol Pogash writes that it is hard to overstate the importance of San Francisco General Hospital to the history of AIDS care and research:

General was the first hospital to have an inpatient HIV ward [in Wards 5A and 5B], the first to have an outpatient HIV clinic [in Ward 86], the first institution outside the federal government to investigate the sexual behavior that might spread the disease, and the first to realize that the old way that hospitals cared for patients needed to be changed if the institution was going to be able to cope with this horrible new disease.¹⁶⁷⁵

Staff designed special programs to share their experience with doctors from around the world; later San Francisco General Hospital nurse Cliff Morrison brought the San Francisco model of care to other hospitals across the U.S. through an eleven-city program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.¹⁶⁷⁶

1669 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 116. Pogash describes AIDS treatment at SF General starting in the seven-story main building constructed in the 1970s and moving to an older brick structure late in 1982. Pogash, *As Real As It Gets*, 21. More research is needed to establish the exact locations and dates for the AIDS wards.

1670 Finding Aid to AIDS Ward 5A/5B San Francisco Public Library, 6-7.

1671 *Ibid.*, 6.

1672 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 41.

1673 *Ibid.*, 117.

1674 Pogash, *As Real As It Gets*, 16. See also Helen M. Miramontes, R.N., M.S., F.A.A.N., “Introduction,” in *The Aids Epidemic in San Francisco: The Response of The Nursing Profession* v. III (1999), <http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt2t1nb1sc;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=d0e139&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d0e139&brand=calisphere>.

1675 Pogash, *As Real As It Gets*, ix-x. Although not recorded as a center for research, Davies Medical Center (also known as Franklin Hospital) at Castro and Duboce Streets treated many gay men with AIDS.

1676 Pogash, *As Real As It Gets*, 60.



The building at San Francisco General Hospital that housed the world's first dedicated inpatient AIDS ward, 1001 Potrero Avenue (Photo by Shayne Watson)

LAGUNA HONDA AIDS UNIT

In early 1990, an AIDS unit opened at San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital (extant) to provide long-term care (as opposed to the acute care provided at San Francisco General Hospital) to people with AIDS who did not have resources elsewhere. Founding physician Grace Damman says that caregivers worked to balance the understanding that their patients, who were primarily poor people of color, many of whom had been IV drug users, were terminally ill but also living what was left of their lives at Laguna Honda. Damman said that some patients stayed in the hospital up to two years; before effective antiretroviral medications changed the prognosis for people with AIDS in the mid-1990s, Laguna Honda physicians signed over 1,000 death certificates.¹⁶⁷⁷

SAN FRANCISCO AIDS RESEARCH

In addition to pioneering patient care, San Francisco was the location for a number of important studies of AIDS prevention and treatment. A consortium that included UC Berkeley, UCSF, and state and local public health departments conducted the San Francisco Men's Health Study, which comprised over 1,000 single men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four; it ran from 1984 through 1992.¹⁶⁷⁸ After the Food and Drug Administration approved a screening test for HIV in 1985, San Francisco's Irwin Memorial Blood Bank (270 Masonic Avenue, extant) was the first to use it.¹⁶⁷⁹ The same year, a coalition of San Francisco researchers and doctors with AIDS practices initiated the County Community Consortium, which facilitated dissemination of new treatment information and evolved into a strategy for community-based drug trials.¹⁶⁸⁰ Their study of aerosolized pentamidine as a prophylactic treatment for pneumocystis pneumonia led to FDA approval in 1989—the first time that the federal agency solely relied on community-based research to approve a drug.¹⁶⁸¹ Similar community-based studies by Dr. Paul Volberding helped establish in 1989 that azidothymidine (AZT), an antiretroviral drug, had the ability to delay onset of AIDS in people who were infected with the virus but not yet symptomatic.¹⁶⁸²

One of San Francisco General Hospital's studies emblemized the struggle between traditionally cautious medical professionals and public agencies, and AIDS activists who wanted "drugs in bodies" as quickly as possible. In 1989, San Francisco General Hospital ran an FDA-sanctioned trial of Trichosanthin or Compound Q, a drug used for cancer and abortions in China, which killed cells infected with HIV in test tube experiments. While the hospital worked in a traditional fashion for a Phase I experimental drug trial—steadily increasing doses to monitor efficacy and side effects—activists were furious that a promising drug was not being more widely tested and observed that patients were taking the drug on their own. The San Francisco organization Project Inform worked with private doctors in San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles to administer the drug in a trial of approximately seventy AIDS patients without authorization by the FDA.¹⁶⁸³ Project Inform's founder, Martin Delaney, argued that they faced a situation "that has been typical throughout the AIDS epidemic, in that patients are gearing up for large-scale importation and distribution and use

1677 Diane Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, July 16, 2014. Grace Damman, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 18, 2014. Damman shared that Laguna Honda has the only remaining HIV unit in the U.S.

1678 Study participants donated laboratory samples and underwent physical exams and intensive interviews at six-month intervals to gather evidence regarding their sexual behavior, nutrition, drug use, etc. See Cochrane, *When AIDS Began*, 37.

1679 Pogash, *As Real As It Gets*, 26.

1680 Epstein, *Impure Science*, 216.

1681 *Ibid.*, 218.

1682 *Ibid.*, 237.

1683 Gina Kolata "Private Study of AIDS Drug: Praise and Warning," *New York Times*, September 20, 1989.

of this drug because it appears to be so promising.”¹⁶⁸⁴ Jesse Dobson, a member of the AIDS activist organization ACT UP/San Francisco (described in more detail below), argued to one reporter that he did not need federal regulators to decide for him what risks he could and could not take with his life: “I’m scared, but I’m willing to throw away the three or four years I have left for a chance at 30 or 40.”¹⁶⁸⁵ Ultimately the FDA authorized Project Inform’s study, but neither their research nor that at San Francisco General Hospital showed lasting benefit from Compound Q.¹⁶⁸⁶

COMMUNITY AIDS ORGANIZATIONS

Large public agencies such as San Francisco General Hospital and the San Francisco Department of Health played major roles in the AIDS crisis, and the City of San Francisco was the very first to allocate municipal funds to the AIDS crisis, in part because leadership could not see it as an abstraction: Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Dr. Mervyn Silverman, and members of the Board of Supervisors all personally knew gay people.¹⁶⁸⁷ Yet as historians Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk point out, “The San Francisco model relied largely on volunteer labor and charitable giving because public funds simply were not made available.”¹⁶⁸⁸ Many, if not most, gay men with AIDS in San Francisco were estranged or at least distanced from their biological families, so other sources of informal care were required. Chosen family members, friends, and community volunteers stepped up to fill the gap. At least as important as elected officials and public agencies was the role of community-based organizations and individuals who cared for the sick, researched treatment options, raised funds, and pressured government agencies to do more. The plethora of organizations that grew in response to the AIDS epidemic is an index of the scale of the emergency and the capacity of various communities, especially LGBTQ individuals, to heed the call. Because these organizations usually formed as small, grassroots efforts and evolved with the crisis, their space needs and locations shifted over time. This report includes addresses found in association with organizations, but careful tracking of when and where each organization moved merits further research.

Even in the center of the maelstrom, people realized how remarkable this response was. In 1987, UCSF began an AIDS History Project based on collections created by nurse Willie Walker that included information from twenty-six different community-based AIDS organizations—just a fraction of those that had formed to fight the epidemic.¹⁶⁸⁹ Among the most renowned AIDS programs in San Francisco was the Shanti Project, a nonprofit social services agency founded in 1974 that relocated from Berkeley to focus on AIDS. With the promise of City support, Shanti moved to the Pride Center at 330 Grove Street in October 1982. The first large Shanti volunteer training was held there the next month.¹⁶⁹⁰ By 1983, Shanti’s newsletter listed 890 Hayes Street (extant), Pride Center’s new location, as its address.¹⁶⁹¹ In addition to grief and support groups, Shanti developed a Buddy Program of volunteers who cleaned, shopped, and cooked for people who were ill. Shanti also started the first housing program for people with AIDS under contract from San Francisco DPH. The organization leased houses and apartments, furnished them using

1684 *Frontline: The Age of AIDS*, “The Trial of Compound Q,” accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/docs/compoundq.html>.

1685 Kolata, “Trial of Experimental AIDS Drug To Be Continued, With Revisions.”

1686 Project Inform held a public meeting to share their findings at The Women’s Building and later at the 6th International AIDS Conference at Moscone Center. Pogash, *As Real as It Gets*, 229-231.

1687 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 84.

1688 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 93.

1689 Finding Aid to the AIDS Community-Based Organizations Records, 1989-1993, San Francisco Public Library, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt009nc872/>.

1690 Peskind, “AIDS and the Castro,” in *Out in the Castro*, 151-52.

1691 *Eclipse: The Shanti Project Newsletter* (Fall 1983): 2.

donations, and rented them to young sick men who were not welcome in traditional nursing homes. San Francisco AIDS Foundation also provided short-term emergency and longer-term low cost housing for people with AIDS.¹⁶⁹² A City program to provide supportive services to residents of existing single-room-occupancy hotels was established but in at least some cases, could not ensure the owners provided appropriate care for people with AIDS.¹⁶⁹³

AMBASSADOR HOTEL

One of the most important residential sites associated with the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco is the Ambassador Hotel at 55 Mason Street (extant) in the Tenderloin. The hotel accepted all comers, including drug users and acutely sick people who would had been screened out by other programs.¹⁶⁹⁴ The 150-unit Ambassador was one of a handful of residential hotel buildings managed by gay activists Hank Wilson and Ron Lanza and was run by Wilson and Tom Calvanese “with an all-queer staff: drag queens, pre-op and post-op transsexuals, dykes and fags, queers of all colors.” As residents of the hotel began to suffer from HIV/AIDS, Wilson enlisted a nurse who provided care at the Ambassador during off hours from his full-time nursing job.¹⁶⁹⁵ Eventually one-third of the Ambassador’s residents were HIV-positive or had full-blown AIDS, and an entire floor of the hotel was set up as a hospice for those dying of the disease.¹⁶⁹⁶ Volunteers from San Francisco Network Ministries, Project Open Hand, the Visiting Nurses Association, Lutheran Social Services, and others contributed to the Ambassador’s pioneering harm-reduction model for caring for people with AIDS and substance addictions.¹⁶⁹⁷ The Ambassador’s location in the Tenderloin helped situate the providers to address AIDS as it spread beyond gay men; the hotel also was home to the Association of Women’s AIDS Research and Education (A.W.A.R.E.), which ran educational programs and studied AIDS risk among women.¹⁶⁹⁸

AIDS HOSPICES AND OTHER SERVICES

While the majority of people with AIDS (PWA, the term of choice for those with the disease as it foregrounded the person and avoided the term “victim”) died in the care of lovers and friends, some San Francisco organizations pioneered the field of organized end-of-life AIDS care. In 1987, the defunct convent of Most Holy Redeemer Church in the Castro became Coming Home Hospice (115 Diamond Street, extant), reportedly the first AIDS hospice in the nation, and was followed a short time later by Maitri Hospice (59 Hartford Street, extant), started by the Hartford Street Zen Center, which purchased the building next door to the center to serve people with AIDS.¹⁶⁹⁹ Because PWAs had limited access to social services, a broad array of organizations was founded to attend to their needs. The KS/AIDS Foundation began a food bank to supply groceries to low-income people

1692 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 107. The City responded to the problem of people being forced from their homes and jobs, by passing an AIDS Discrimination Ordinance in 1985. Sides, *Erotic City*, 196-97.

1693 Karen Koenig, “Folsom St. Hotel: Final Haven for AIDS Patients?,” *The Tenderloin Times* v. 11 no. 7 (n.d.): 1. The newspaper describes unsanitary conditions exacerbated by the manager’s fear of contacting AIDS from residents.

1694 Shanti screened and would not accept people with substance abuse problems according to Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 107.

1695 “Hank Wilson—Teresa of the Tenderloin,” *Central City Extra*, December 2008, accessed March 3, 2014
<http://studycenter.org/centralcityextra/2008/12/hank-wilson—teresa-of-the-tenderloin/>.

1696 “Life and Death at the Ambassador Hotel,” 1994. See also Bob Ostertag, “The City of San Francisco Loses Its Own Saint Henry,” *HuffPost Healthy Living*, November 11, 2008, accessed March 4, 2014,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-ostertag/the-city-of-saint-francis_b_143131.html.

1697 “Hank Wilson—Teresa of the Tenderloin.” Wilson helped found the Tenderloin AIDS Network which became the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center in 1990.

1698 Dennis Conkin, “Fight Against AIDS Comes to the Tenderloin,” *The Tenderloin Times* v. 9 no. 7 (Aug. 1985): 1-6.

1699 Godfrey, *Gays and Grays*, 89. The Hartford Street Zen Center purchased 61 Hartford Street in 1988. See *Street Zen: The Life and Work of Issan Dorsey* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 174-175.

with AIDS and organized its first Thanksgiving dinner at Valencia Rose Café in 1983.¹⁷⁰⁰ In 1985, Project Open Hand began delivering meals to people too weak or impoverished to shop and cook for themselves, but who were not old enough to qualify for Meals on Wheels. Founder Ruth Brinker convinced Trinity Episcopal Church (1668 Bush Street, extant, S.F. Landmark No. 65) to open its kitchen, and within two years, 450 volunteers were delivering two hot meals per day to hundreds of clients.¹⁷⁰¹ Even cats and dogs received loving care: Pets Are Wonderful Support was formed in 1986 to provide food, daily walks, grooming, and veterinary care for pets of PWAs.¹⁷⁰²

Fundraising events to support these and other AIDS programs became a daily feature of San Francisco life. Major productions included the annual AIDS Dance-a-thon, a multihour event, and the San Francisco AIDS Walk through Golden Gate Park; both were initiated in 1987 and went on to raise millions of dollars for numerous AIDS organizations.¹⁷⁰³ In 1989, leaders from San Francisco art and business communities launched Art Against AIDS with a press conference luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel (950 Mason Street, extant) and a subsequent fundraising cocktail party hosted by Elizabeth Taylor.¹⁷⁰⁴ These large and grand fundraisers drew press coverage, but bars, churches, and other social spaces across the city also hosted countless events where resources were raised to support AIDS organizations or the costs of one person's treatment.

ACTIVISM

As the numbers of the dead grew with no cure on the horizon, many San Franciscans turned their anger and frustration into direct action protests and civil disobedience. They focused their fury and despair on fighting the powers that prevented appropriate resources for medical research and patient care. In his book *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism and the Politics of Knowledge*, sociologist Stephen Epstein describes AIDS activism as “the first social movement in the United States to accomplish the large-scale conversion of disease ‘victims’ into activist-experts.”¹⁷⁰⁵

AIDS Candlelight Vigil and Mobilization Against AIDS

KS Poster Boy Bobbi Campbell, Ambassador Hotel manager Hank Wilson, and others organized one of the first public demonstrations as an AIDS Candlelight March from the Castro to Civic Center on May 2, 1983, behind the banner “Fighting for Our Lives.” As Wilson recalled, “It was the first time that we put the call out to the community to support people with AIDS and again we didn’t know if people would come. The parade was totally controlled by people with AIDS. We put up signs everywhere.... I remember yelling at a guy that owned a gay bookstore because he wouldn’t let us post a sign about the candlelight march. I disrupted his store and he changed his mind.”¹⁷⁰⁶ Under Mobilization Against AIDS, this event grew to become an annual, international vigil of protest and commemoration. Established in 1984, Mobilization’s mission was to fight attacks on the civil rights of PWAs and to advocate for increased public funding, access to treatment, better processes for drug trials and approval, and lower drug costs. In 1985, the organization’s activities included circulating a national petition calling for the government to adopt a “moon launch mentality” that would bring all necessary resources to bear in overcoming AIDS; leafletting about

1700 Cary Norsworthy, former SF AIDS Food Bank Coordinator, electronic communication with Donna Graves, June 24, 2014.

1701 Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 108.

1702 “Our History and PAWS History Timeline,” accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.pawssf.org/>. Beginning in 1988, PAWS operated out of the basement of Bethany Methodist Church.

1703 *Shanti Newsletter* Feb-Mar-April 1992. Organizational address is 525 Howard Street 1992, event was held at Festival Pavilion Fort Mason. See <http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/aids-walk-sf-marks-20th-year/Content?oid=2159261>. See also <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/we-were-here/timeline.html>.

1704 Will Snyder, “Art Against AIDS Launches Campaign,” *Bay Area Reporter*, April 13, 1989, 14.

1705 Epstein, *Impure Science*, 8.

1706 Shephard, *White Nights and Ascending Shadows*, 73.



"Fighting for our Lives" candlelight march from the Castro to City Hall, 1983. The march was the first public demonstration organized by people with AIDS. (From PBS. com)

civil liberties issues raised by HIV testing; calling for an investigation of the treatment of prisoners with AIDS; holding a chapter meeting at the Swedish American Hall (2174 Market Street, extant); and supporting candlelight vigils in forty cities as well as a candlelight memorial for Rock Hudson, the actor whose death from AIDS drew attention from many Americans for the first time.¹⁷⁰⁷

Project Inform and Other Treatment Education Groups

San Francisco-based Project Inform, whose newsletter became a must-read for activists, researchers, and doctors, is one important example of AIDS grassroots activism and citizen science.¹⁷⁰⁸ Founded in 1985 by Martin Delaney and therapist Joseph Brewer, Project Inform helped create an army of lay experts by translating highly technical knowledge about prevention, treatments, and antibody testing into comprehensible language. The organization provided a key voice in arguing that clinical trials were not just scientific experiments but means of access to potentially life-saving drugs and that PWAs should be involved in developing experimental treatment plans. In addition to its newsletter, Project Inform organized town-hall meetings at sites such as the Metropolitan Community Church and The Women's Building; it also created a telephone hotline that answered more than 100,000 calls annually from their office.¹⁷⁰⁹ While Project Inform and other organizations such as San Francisco-based AIDs Treatment News focused on experiments and advances within conventional medicine, some groups cohered out of skepticism of medical models and the pharmaceutical industry. Among these was the early self-help group the AIDS Healing Alliance (1986–1989) that distributed information about alternative therapies and potential cures for AIDS.¹⁷¹⁰

As people with AIDS took a more active role in their own care, some turned to buyer's clubs such as San Francisco's Healing Alternatives Foundation, founded in April 1987 to increase access to treatment information and products, including pharmaceuticals that had not yet been approved by the FDA. The organization's activities were based on the belief that HIV/AIDS could be a treatable, chronic disease that required early preventive measures, along with aggressive, accessible, and affordable treatment of opportunistic infections.¹⁷¹¹ One example was the Guerilla Clinic in San Francisco, an informal, underground group of AIDS activists who obtained unapproved, experimental drugs (mostly from Mexico) and distributed them at cost upon request to PWAs.¹⁷¹²

AIDS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Anger fueled by the mounting numbers of people who were sick or dead, discrimination against people with AIDS, and hostility toward gay men on the streets and in the media led to militant action by AIDS activists in San Francisco and in other cities across the U.S. starting in the mid-1980s.

ARC/AIDS Vigil

Several protesters with ARC (AIDS Related Complex) and AIDS, in what has been described as the first use of civil disobedience against the AIDS epidemic anywhere in the world, chained

1707 Mobilization Against AIDS brochure, 1986. Mobilization Against AIDS file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Other ephemera in this collection indicate that the first meeting of MOB was held at 647-A Castro Street, and by 1986 offices were located at 2120 Market Street, Suite 106.

1708 Epstein, *Impure Science*, 23.

1709 Flyer, Project Inform File, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. The undated flyer states that Town Meetings were held first and last Wednesdays of the month at MCC Church 150 Eureka Street. Other materials in the file show PI at 25 Taylor Street 1987 (Golden Gate Theatre Bldg.), 347 Dolores Street 1988-1990, 1965 Market Street in 1992.

1710 Finding Aid for AIDS Healing Alliance, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1711 Finding Aid to the Healing Alternatives Foundation Records, 1986-1994. UCSF Special Collections <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt9489r2wk/>.

1712 Register of the Guerrilla Clinic Records, (1985-1990), UCSF Special Collections, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf8b69p2zc/>.

themselves to the doors of the federal building housing the regional office of Health and Human Services at 50 United Nations Plaza (extant) on October 27, 1985.¹⁷¹³ Protesters demanding that the U.S. government increase funding for research, care, and social services continued blocking the doors for weeks, then established the ARC/AIDS Vigil, an encampment that occupied a lawn in United Nations Plaza in front of the building twenty-four hours a day. For ten long years, the vigil in such a prominent public space gave visibility to people with AIDS, provided special outreach to the many homeless in the area, and held the fact of the disease before the eyes of daily passersby, including those who worked for City and federal government.¹⁷¹⁴ The vigil finally ended when the tents were flattened during a massive storm in 1995, just as effective antiretroviral treatments were becoming available.¹⁷¹⁵

ACT UP

A group of San Franciscans calling themselves Citizens for Medical Justice organized a series of demonstrations in 1986 protesting the price of AZT at the Bay Area offices of pharmaceutical giant Burroughs Wellcome. In 1987, the group renamed itself the AIDS Action Pledge, which changed names again in 1988, becoming ACT UP/San Francisco, to adopt the successful branding of the Aids Coalition to Unleash Power that had been founded in New York City the year before.¹⁷¹⁶ The San Francisco group, whose meetings were initially held at the Metropolitan Community Church and subsequently The Women's Building,¹⁷¹⁷ used tactics that "included marching without permits, halting traffic, blocking buildings, occupying government and corporate offices, shouting down speeches, and staging die-ins."¹⁷¹⁸ On January 31, 1989, Stop AIDS Now or Else (SANOE), largely made up of ACT-UP/SF members, dramatized their cause by staging the only sit-in ever organized on the Golden Gate Bridge.

In June 1990, the Sixth International Conference on AIDS took place at the Moscone Center in San Francisco; it was sponsored by UCSF, the City and County of San Francisco, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, the World Health Organization, and the International AIDS Society. Despite a boycott sparked by the U.S. government's refusal to grant visas to people who were HIV positive, the conference drew approximately 11,000 doctors, scientists, journalists, and increasingly enraged gay activists.¹⁷¹⁹ The conference coincided with the city's annual Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day, which brought tens of thousands of people to San Francisco, many of whom joined marches and protests. Years of AIDS community organizing had created a new set of insider/outsider relationships at the conference. While leaders of some community-based AIDS organizations mingled or presented inside the convention center, others protested outside calling for changes in immigration policy, better access to drug treatments, more money for research, and other improvements to the domestic fight against AIDS.

1713 Libby Ingalls, "AIDS/ARC Vigil 1985-1995," Found SF, accessed March 22, 2014, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=AIDS/ARC_Vigil_1985-1995.

1714 Sides, *Erotic City*, 192.

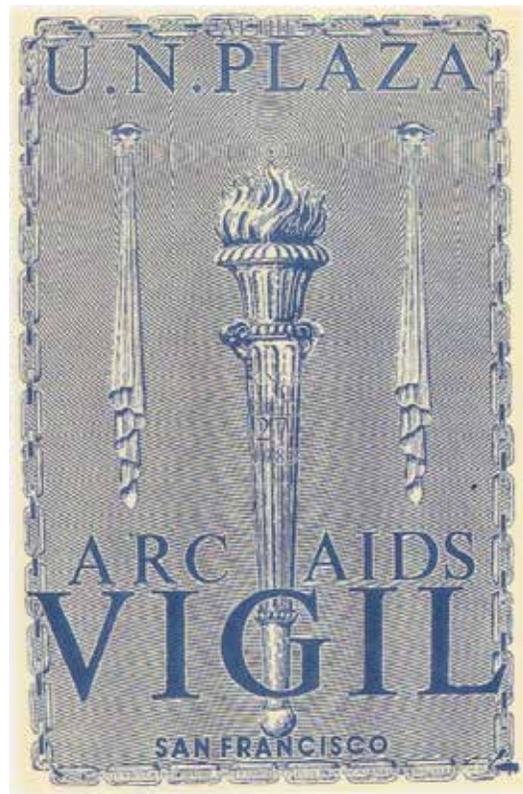
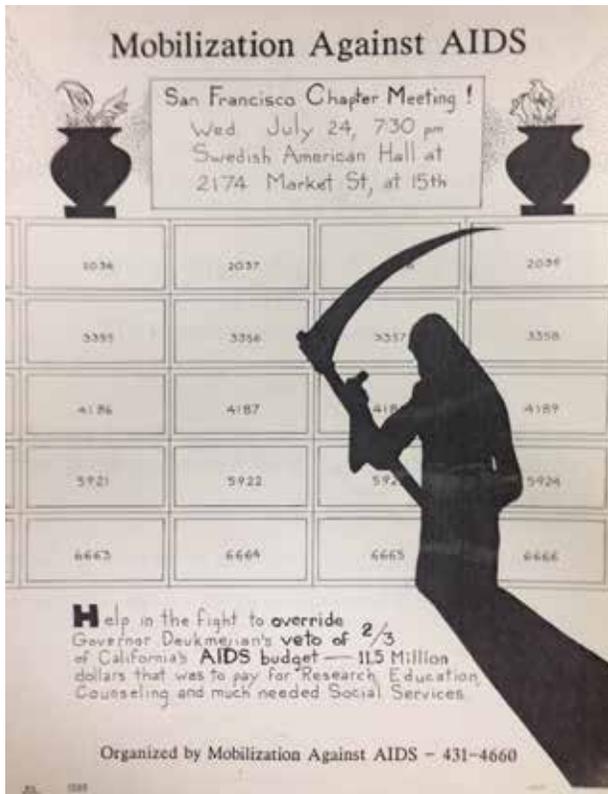
1715 Ingalls, "AIDS/ARC Vigil 1985-1995."

1716 Epstein, *Impure Science*, 219.

1717 Gerard Koskovich, personal communication with Donna Graves, June 20, 2014. Joshua Gamson describes ACT UP SF as membership of over 700 with an average of 50 participating in meetings in 1988-89. See Joshua Gamson, "Silence, Death and the Invisible Enemy: AIDS Activism and Social Movement 'Newness,'" *Social Problems* v. 36 (1 October 1989): 352, <http://repository.usfca.edu>.

1718 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Museum, "Life & Death in Black & White: AIDS Direct Action in San Francisco, 1985-1990," curated by Gerard Koskovich, Don Romesburg and Amy Sueyoshi; exhibition texts.

1719 Finding Aid to the Sixth International Conference on AIDS Records, 1988-1990, UCSF Special Collections, <http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1q2nc9z9/>.



TOP LEFT: Mobilization Against AIDS Calendar, 1985
 TOP RIGHT: ARC/AIDS Vigil flyer designed by Ron Henggeler
 BOTTOM: ARC/AIDS Vigil, 50 U.N. Plaza
 (All courtesy GLBT Historical Society)

One of the most visible groups was ACT UP/SF, which hosted hundreds of activists from around the country and organized protests that drew worldwide media attention. Among their efforts to underscore a message that the San Francisco model of AIDS care was crumbling, ACT-UP collaborated with Queerline Tours to organize a protest excursion during the conference titled “SF AIDS Model: A Tour of the Ruins” pointing out the continued inadequacy of a strategy they argued was built to serve “white middle-class gay men living in the Castro” and its failure to address the needs of other people affected by the disease who did not fit that profile.¹⁷²⁰ The protest included a die-in where dozens of activists blocked the intersection of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue. In addition, the militants invaded the conference itself at the closing session in the main hall at Moscone Center, with hundreds of activists shouting down the keynote speech by Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan. Although ACT UP itself was a predominately white, middle-class organization, some of its members argued for a more thorough examination of the inequality of the U.S. healthcare system and with the medical field’s racism, sexism, and homophobia that stemmed from U.S. society as a whole.¹⁷²¹

AIDS ORGANIZING BY AND FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

Of the 1,061 reported AIDS cases in San Francisco in early 1985, 98 percent were gay men and just over 11 percent were identified as involving African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and other nonwhites.¹⁷²² In cities such as New York, the profile for people with AIDS was more complex, including larger numbers of male and female intravenous drug users and hemophiliacs and a higher percentage of people of color. San Francisco health officials acknowledged that cases of AIDS in communities of color in the city were probably undercounted and growing.¹⁷²³ From the mid-1980s on, a number of HIV/AIDS organizations were formed by LGBTQ people of color to advocate on their own behalf. Much of the focus of early AIDS organizations was on the Castro, a neighborhood that was predominately white and relatively wealthy. Queer people of color argued that they needed to develop services within their communities that were not being met by the more mainstream organizations such as the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and Shanti Project.

One of the very first national conferences on AIDS and people of color was organized by the San Francisco-based Third World Advisory Task Force in April 1986 at the UCSF Medical Center. Founded in 1985, the task force was a primarily gay organization that described itself as “an advisory group to service providers addressing AIDS prevention, education, and delivery of direct services to Third World communities in the Bay Area.”¹⁷²⁴ (Third World was a term in popular use to signify alliances with people of color internationally.) Five months after the conference, UCSF was awarded a major grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to create a multidisciplinary AIDS Research Center. A cadre of African American and Latino public health activists had insisted that their concerns be incorporated into the federal grant application

1720 Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 92.

1721 Gamson, “Silence, Death and the Invisible Enemy,” 352. Epstein, *Impure Science* 291. In fact, after its success at the 1990 AIDS Conference ACT-UP/SF grew then split acrimoniously into two chapters. Epstein describes ACT-UP/SF as mostly HIV-positive gay white men whose basic goal was “drugs into bodies” while ACT-UP Golden Gate was committed to a more inclusive membership and broader set of goals.

1722 *Eclipse: The Shanti Newsletter* (Spring 1985): 4.

1723 The DPH had only recently started to count Latino AIDS cases separately. See Tim Kingston, “The First Six Months: Latino AIDS Project Grapples with the Epidemic,” *Coming Up*, September 1987 in George Raya Papers, folder 1, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1724 Brochure for “Western Regional Conference: AIDS and Ethnic Minorities, April 25-27, 1986,” in National Task Force on AIDS Prevention file, Ephemera Groups, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Cathy J. Cohen states that this was one of two early conferences dedicated to AIDS and people of color. See Cathy J. Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago and London, the University of Chicago Press, 1999), 97.



ACT UP die-in on Market Street during the Sixth International Conference on AIDS in 1990
(Courtesy ONE Archives)

alongside those of white doctors, statisticians, epidemiologists, sociologists, and psychologists. By the end of the year, the new Multicultural Inquiry and Research on AIDS had set up shop in a clinic at the Bayview Hunters Point Foundation (3801 3rd Street).¹⁷²⁵

African American AIDS Organizing

In 1985, San Francisco members of Black and White Men Together formed an AIDS Task Force to support “people of all color who are HIV positive,” the first BWMT chapter to work on AIDS prevention and education.¹⁷²⁶ The organization evolved into the nonprofit Bay Area Health Support and Education Services, which served the larger region from offices in San Francisco and Oakland. The Black Coalition on AIDS began in 1986 as a group of gay and straight men and women who “responded to the urgent needs of the African American community that was being devastated by HIV/AIDS.”¹⁷²⁷ BCA provided education and advocacy services along with case management, needle exchange and street outreach, youth services, transgender services, HIV testing, and overall health and wellness programs and services from an office and clinic housed in the Bayview Hunters Point Foundation (3801 3rd Street). In response to increasing HIV/AIDS-related homelessness, BCA obtained its first contract from the San Francisco Department of Public Health in 1991 to provide HIV/AIDS services in Bayview Hunters Point in a fourteen-bed facility.¹⁷²⁸

Latino AIDS Organizing

Conversations about the impact of AIDS in the Latino community also began in 1985, when a group of activists met to discuss the lack of culturally and linguistically relevant AIDS programs. With funding from the State and fiscal sponsorship provided by longtime Mission-based community organization Instituto Familiar de la Raza, activists created the Latino Community AIDS Education and Prevention Project (also known as Latino AIDS Project or LAP). LAP organized public and confidential meetings at homes, churches, workplaces, and other locations to educate San Francisco’s diverse Latino population about AIDS. Mission District sites along 16th Street were used as backdrops for a bilingual AIDS prevention video *Ojos Que No Ven* (Eyes That Don’t See).¹⁷²⁹

A handful of LAP staff and other gay Latino activists went on to found (Comunidad Unida en Respuesta al AIDS/SIDA, Community United in Response to AIDS/SIDA) in 1987 as a more gay-, bisexual-, and lesbian-focused health education program. CURAS hosted its first annual PRISMA Award ceremonies in 1987 at the Victoria Theatre (2961 16th Street, extant), showcasing artists and activists from the queer Latino and allied communities as a way “to honor people and to have

1725 Jacob Levenson, *The Secret Epidemic: The Story of AIDS and Black America* (New York, Pantheon Books, 2004), 50. Dr. Mindy Fullilove, who directed MIRA’s ethnographic and epidemiological study of AIDS in Bayview Hunters Point, was the one of the few witnesses to bring the situation of black and other minority gay men to a congressional hearing in 1987 “The AIDS Crisis in Two American Cities,” in Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*, 328.

1726 BAHSES/BWMT/MACT brochure, n.d. in BWMT (MACT) General file, Groups Ephemera Collection, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1727 According to long-time BCA staffer, Bart Casimir, the organization began with offices at Bayview Hunters Point Foundation, moved for a few years in the late 1980s to 333 Valencia Street and then to 1042 Divisadero. Bart Casimir, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 5, 2014.

1728 Black Coalition on AIDS, “History of BLCA,” <http://www.bcoa.org/history.html>. Bart Casimir recalled the Kirkland Street location for the facility, Casimir, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 5, 2014.

1729 Instituto Familiar de la Raza “AIDS and the Latino Community: testimony to the Presidential Commission on HIV Epidemic,” in George Raya Papers, folder 1, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society. Marcos E. Rodriguez, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 2, 2014.



Former location of CURAS, 347 Dolores Street (Photo by Shayne Watson)

something positive to share in midst of sadness” according to Marcos E. Rodriguez.¹⁷³⁰ Rodriguez co-founded CURAS alongside Rodrigo Reyes, Juan Pablo Gutierrez, Luis de la Garza and Diane Felix.¹⁷³¹ A subsequent Latino AIDS organization, Proyecto Contra SIDA Por Vida, incorporated the arts and artists as a central strategy toward addressing AIDS not as an isolated disease, but by building a “healthy community of Latina and Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in San Francisco capable of resisting HIV and other diseases through creativity, strength and faith.”¹⁷³²

Asian American AIDS Organizing

Asian American Recovery Services began the first program in 1987 to address the needs of Asian/Pacific Islander Americans with AIDS through their Asian AIDS Project, which went on to create programs serving transgender APIs.¹⁷³³ In 1988, the Filipino Task Force on AIDs began offering HIV/AIDS-related services.¹⁷³⁴ The following year, Gay Asian-Pacific Alliance Community HIV Project was organized to create a social, political, and support organization of gay and bisexual men of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. Providing services in Cambodian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and French, as well as English, GCHP was the first organization in the country to provide a broad spectrum of culturally appropriate direct services for Asians and Pacific Islanders living with AIDS and HIV.¹⁷³⁵

Native American AIDS Organizing

In 1985, Gay American Indians went on record opposing the federal Department of Health and Human Service’s proposal to transfer \$10 million from Indian Health Services to AIDS research, arguing that Native American health programs across the country were being starved of funds.¹⁷³⁶ Gay American Indians established the Indian AIDS Project in 1987 after one of their members committed suicide following and AIDS diagnosis. The project had two goals: offering comprehensive, culturally sensitive AIDS education, and providing services to Native Americans who had the disease.¹⁷³⁷ In the epidemic’s early years, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control did not collect data on Native Americans who were instead combined under other racial/ethnic categories, so securing funding and support for targeted programs was especially difficult.¹⁷³⁸ Indian AIDS Project secured its first funding from the city Department of Public Health to train culturally sensitive

1730 Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “Memory and Mourning: Living Oral History with Queer Latinos and Latinas in San Francisco,” in *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 168. According to Marcos Rodriguez, CURAS operated from a ground floor office at the historic Notre Dame School building at 347 Dolores Street (extant). Its PRISMA Awards ran from 1987-1991. The Victoria also hosted an AIDS benefit by The Words Project for AIDS featuring Jewelle Gomez, Essex Hemphill and June Jordan, *Ache: A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent*, v. 1 no .9 (October 1989).

1731 Personal communication between Donna Graves and Marcos Rodriguez, November 4, 2015.

1732 KOKUA Partners brochure, n.d. John Teamer Collection, carton 1, AIDS Organization file, The GLBT Historical Society. See also Juana Maria Rodriguez, *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (New York: New York University Press, 2003). Proyecto’s offices were initially at 18th and Dolores and later 16th and Mission according to Juana Maria Rodriguez. P. 49, 51. A flyer dated 1994 shows Proyecto’s address as 3690 18th Street, National Task Force on AIDS Prevention folder in Groups Ephemera Collection, GLBT Historical Society.

1733 Asian and Pacific Wellness Center History, accessed April 4, 2014, <http://www.apowellness.org/history.html>.

1734 Finding Aid for Filipino Task Force on AIDS, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

1735 Finding Aid to the GAPA Community HIV Project (CGHP) Papers, 1989-1995. According to former GCHP staff member, Daniel Bao, AAP was more geared toward serving Asian immigrants and GCHP toward serving gay and bisexual Asian Americans. Daniel Bao, interviewed by Donna Graves, 6 March 2014. Asian AIDS Project and GCHP merged to become the API Wellness Project in 1996.

1736 Randy Burns, letter to editor, *San Francisco Examiner*, September 19, 1985.

1737 “Project Overview: Indian AIDS Project,” n.d. Courtesy of Randy Burns, Gay American Indians Special Archives.

1738 Randy Burns, “Indian AIDS Project: American Indians Neglected,” *Bay Area Reporter*, March 31, 1988. Faderman et al., *Great Events from History*, 285.

trainers. The project name changed from Indian AIDS Project to American Indian AIDS Institute and later Native American AIDS Project but continued to be located at 333 Valencia Street. As the epidemic went on, GAI pushed to ensure its members were represented in HIV/AIDS research. Some members also brought AIDS awareness and education back to their reservations. On the occasion of their 35th anniversary in 2010, GAI described the significance of these visits, “We believed it was important for us to have Indians addressing this issue to the reservations, we felt it would be better received if presented by an Indian, because approach was important.”¹⁷³⁹

National Task Force on AIDS Prevention

Reggie Williams, longtime San Francisco BWMT member and African American activist, became one of the most prominent leaders in the international movement to address AIDS among gay men of color. Williams was founding director of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, which began in 1988 with early funding from the CDC and which became the largest prevention and advocacy organization for gay and bisexual men of color. NTFAP worked to bring the AIDS education and prevention programs developed by BMWT and BAHSES, with whom it shared offices on Church Street.¹⁷⁴⁰ In 1988, Williams enlisted leaders from CURAS, the American Indian AIDS Institute, GCHIP, and GAPA to create the San Francisco Gay Men of Color Consortium to talk “about our communities, and what was not happening through the mainstream health delivery system and community organizations for gay men of color.” According to Williams, one of the consortium’s most successful programs was EACH (Early Advocacy and Care of HIV), which developed peer treatment support that gave HIV positive people access to medical, legal, and social services, as well as alternative treatments and clinical trials—a model that was used by other cities across the U.S.¹⁷⁴¹

The 1990 Ryan White CARE (Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency) Act created the largest federal outlay for services to people in cities and states hit hardest by the AIDS epidemic. Modeled on San Francisco General Hospital’s program, which had been taken nationwide by Cliff Morrison and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the CARE Act provided funds for prevention, education, and treatment.¹⁷⁴² Some accounts state that San Francisco benefited from the CARE Act far more than any other city in the country. One estimate determined that for every \$1,100 spent on a person with AIDS in cities such as Pittsburgh or Cincinnati, individuals in San Francisco received \$6,000 of care.¹⁷⁴³ Tremendous efforts had been made by San Franciscans to mobilize community

1739 Randy Burns, interviewed by Donna Graves, January 4, 2016. Program for “Gay American Indians 35th Year Anniversary: Living Legacy” 2010. Courtesy of Randy Burns, Gay American Indians Special Archives.

1740 In 1992 NTFAP received its own non-profit status and direct ties between it and BAHSES began to unravel. BAHSES eventually closed in early 1994. NTFAP moved from Church Street to offices at 944 Market Street and in 1994 moved to a larger suite at 973 Market. “NTFAP Organizational History,” accessed April 28, 2014 <https://sites.google.com/site/reggiwilliamsexhibit/ntfap>.

1741 Reggie Williams, “San Francisco Gay Men of Color Consortium,” 1996, accessed April 28, 2014, <https://sites.google.com/site/reggiwilliamsexhibit/80s/consortium>. The other founding members were Douglas Yaranon, Steve Lew, Phill Tingley, and Rodrigo Reyes.

1742 Joel Gardner, “The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 1974-2002,” accessed March 18, 2014, <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/web-assets/2006/01/the-robert-wood-johnson-foundation>.

1743 Cochrane, *When AIDS Began*, 156.

and media support for passage of the CARE Act. Pat Christen, policy director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, likened the disease to a natural disaster at a congressional field hearing held in San Francisco:

AIDS should be considered no less a natural disaster than any of these other tragedies... In the same way that we spread the cost of the drought, flood or earthquake over the whole population to assist those regions hardest hit by such anticipated disasters, we must also spread the cost of AIDS over the entire nation.¹⁷⁴⁴

Ryan White CARE funding supported the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention and a variety of AIDS service providers to collaborate on the Center for Positive Care, which opened in October 1991 at 3180 Folsom Street. The center was designed to provide multicultural, multilingual outreach, intake assessment, case management, education, and psychosocial support to people who had AIDS or were HIV positive.¹⁷⁴⁵ Yet some needs remained unmet. Diane Jones, a long-time AIDS nurse at San Francisco General Hospital, says that the “\$42 million that poured into San Francisco” from the act was mostly granted to organizations that excluded many of her patients who did not meet requirements such as being six months clean and sober. Jones described her mission as cochair of the Ryan White Planning Council in the mid-1990s as “wrestling money away from the big organizations” to support housing, primary care, mental health care, and case management services for those who were at highest risk.¹⁷⁴⁶

ARTS AND AIDS

As a city with robust artistic communities, San Francisco became a hub for creative expression in all media that communicated aspects of the AIDS crisis. Exhibits too numerous to catalog were hung everywhere from blue chip galleries to community art spaces and coffee shops. Among the most unconventional was “Remains of the Day” at the non-profit arts space Southern Exposure (3030 20th Street, extant). The 1992 exhibit featured paintings by Jerome Caja and Charles Sexton, a pair of HIV-positive artists and friends who were dead by the time their work was exhibited. Caja’s works incorporated Sexton’s ashes into reliquary-like works that fulfilled a pact the friends had made, that the “loser” would incorporate the others ashes into works of art.¹⁷⁴⁷

Activists artists also brought their messages to the streets; the anonymous collective known as Boy/Girl with Arms Akimbo (active 1989-1992), peppered San Francisco with posters, stickers, and protest signs during the Sixth International AIDS conference. Their “Safe/Unsafe” street-poster series used the visual language of safer sex literature to condemn homophobic religious and political figures by juxtaposing “unsafe” images of individuals such as antigay U.S. Senator Jesse Helms with “safe” images showing sexual activities that did not transmit HIV.¹⁷⁴⁸ The nonprofit organization Visual Aid was founded in 1989 by a group of San Francisco artists, collectors, and art dealers to help preserve, present, and promote the work of Bay Area professional artists living with

1744 Hearing Before the Task Force on Human Resources of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, January 16 and 17, 1990, San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC; 1990: 41 cited in <http://hab.hrsa.gov/livinghistory/legislation/enactment-2.htm> (accessed March 25, 2014). As policy director for SF AIDS Foundation, Christen was involved with crafting the legislation. See *Victory Deferred*, 232

1745 UCSF Press Release. “Center for Positive Care Officially Open With Ceremony, Oct. 18,” October 15, 1991, accessed March 25, 2014.

1746 Diane Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, July 16, 2014.

1747 “Jerome Caja,” GLBTQ.com, accessed February 14, 2014, http://www.glbtq.com/arts/caja_jerome.html.

1748 Boy/Girl with Arms Akimbo was active in San Francisco from 1989-1992. See <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/QIY/BoywArms.html> (accessed June 1, 2014).

HIV/AIDS. Underground publications such as the black-humor zine *Diseased Pariah News* (1990–1999) and films such as Marlon Riggs' *No Regret* (Reggie Williams was one of the HIV-positive men depicted) explored social, political, and emotional aspects of life with AIDS.

Theater was among the first of the popular art forms to address AIDS. In 1984, San Francisco playwright (and *Bay Guardian* theater critic) Robert Chesley wrote *Night Sweat*, the first full-length drama to deal with the disease.¹⁷⁴⁹ The same year, Theatre Rhinoceros's founder Allan B. Estes died from AIDS, and the troupe premiered *The AIDS Show: Artists Involved with Death and Survival*, a ground-breaking work coauthored by twenty San Francisco Bay Area artists and produced in Theatre Rhinoceros' basement space on 16th Street. The play, which ran for two years and toured nationally, was the subject of a 1986 PBS documentary directed by San Francisco filmmakers Rob Epstein and Peter Adair.¹⁷⁵⁰ Internationally renowned artworks centered on the epidemic also have roots in San Francisco: avant-garde musician Diamanda Galas began her epic oratorio *Plague Mass* while living in San Francisco during the mid-1980s; and the first part of Tony Kushner's award-winning play *Angels in America* premiered in May 1991 by the Eureka Theatre Company (215 Jackson Street, extant).¹⁷⁵¹

The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt and The AIDS Memorial Grove

San Francisco is the birthplace of two of the nation's most visible and enduring memorials to AIDS: the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt and the National AIDS Memorial Grove (extant) in Golden Gate Park. Longtime San Francisco gay rights activist Cleve Jones conceived the quilt in November 1985. While planning the annual memorial march honoring Harvey Milk and George Moscone, Jones learned that over 1,000 San Franciscans had been lost to AIDS. He asked each of his fellow marchers to write the names of friends and loved ones who had died of AIDS on placards. At the end of the march, Jones and others taped the placards to the walls of 50 United Nations Plaza, where the regional office of the Department of Health and Human Services was located. The collection of names looked like a patchwork quilt to Jones, inspiring him to team with Mike Smith and several others in 1987 to formally organize the NAMES Project Foundation, which envisioned creating a massive memorial quilt as a political organizing tool and an expression of worldwide grief.¹⁷⁵²

From a storefront at 2362 Market Street (extant, S.F. Landmark No. 241), the NAMES Project rallied volunteers to work on donated sewing machines to create three-by-six-foot quilt panels commemorating individuals who had died of AIDS; the project also accepted a growing flood of panels contributed from across the country. First shown as forty panels at the 1987 Lesbian & Gay Freedom events in San Francisco, the quilt had grown to nearly 2,000 panels when it was displayed four months later on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., during the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Half a million people visited the quilt that weekend. In the subsequent four-month, twenty-city tour, the quilt became a tool to illustrate the devastating impact

1749 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 260. *Night Sweat* opened in New York in 1984 and was followed by long runs in Los Angeles and San Francisco theaters.

1750 Theatre Rhinoceros History.

1751 Jim Provenzano, "Diva for the dead: Diamanda Galas brings 'Defixiones' to Yerba Buena Center," *Bay Area Reporter*, October 12, 2006. Paul Attinello describes Galas as "probably the most important figure in music about AIDS." See Paul Attinello, "Music and AIDS," GLBTQ.com, http://www.glbtq.com/arts/music_aids.html. Eureka's web site, as part of its history, says: "In the early 1980s, the company moved into a building in the Inner Mission."

1752 Jonathan Pearlman, Landmark Nomination for NAMES Project Building/Jose Theatre, San Francisco, 2.

of AIDS and to humanize its victims.¹⁷⁵³ Literary and religious scholar, Kimberly Rae Connor, describes the quilt as at once “magnificently gaudy and bold,” and “and as one of history’s most powerful works of political art and creative, indeed, spiritual vision.”¹⁷⁵⁴ Until 2001, when the AIDS Memorial Quilt moved to Atlanta, 2362 Market Street was a pilgrimage site for people from all over the nation and the world “to deliver a panel made by friends back home or to come together to meet, perhaps for the first time, to make a panel for a cherished friend, child or partner.”¹⁷⁵⁵

In 1988, another group of friends who were facing their own diagnoses or the loss of loved ones to AIDS began discussing the creation of a public memorial garden in San Francisco to the victims of the epidemic. “It was an idea born out of desperation,” recalled Alice Russell-Shapiro, one of the project’s founders. “We all felt the need for a place where people could find solace, solidarity, and hope—and the sense of renewal that is inspired by nature.”¹⁷⁵⁶ The following year, the newly formed Grove Steering Committee began discussions with San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, and by 1990 had chosen the de Laveaga Dell in Golden Gate Park. The site had been derelict for nearly a decade, but committee members saw their efforts to lovingly revive the 7.5 acres as a metaphor for resilience and the power of community. They also believed that the memorial should be in the most prominent and most well used of the city’s open spaces. A team of architects, landscape architects, and designers volunteered hundreds of hours to create the memorial landscape plan. September 19, 1991, marked the physical birth of the AIDS Memorial Grove with the first of the monthly volunteer workdays that have brought together diverse Bay Area residents affected by the pandemic. In 1994, the City of San Francisco signed a 99-year lease with The AIDS Memorial Grove, and two years later it was designated the only national AIDS memorial authorized by Congress and the president.¹⁷⁵⁷ A quatrain by poet Thom Gunn, author of the 1992 book of poetry about his companions suffering with AIDS, *The Man with Night Sweats*, encircles an area of the grove titled the Circle of Friends.¹⁷⁵⁸ Since its founding, the grove has been the site for countless memorial services for individuals lost to AIDS.

The NAMES Project Quilt and the AIDS Memorial Grove were efforts undertaken by San Franciscans to memorialize those who had died and to educate people about the devastation wrought by the AIDS pandemic. In 1994, AIDS became the leading cause of death for all Americans ages 25 to 44. That same year, San Francisco AIDS educator Pedro Zamora brought the reality of the epidemic to mass popular culture as a gay man living with AIDS on MTV’s television show *The Real World*, which was filmed at 953 Lombard Street.¹⁷⁵⁹ Zamora died at age 22 on November 11, 1994.

1753 The NAMES Quilt was nominated by Representative Nancy Pelosi for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, the same year that San Francisco filmmaker Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman won an Academy Award for the documentary film, *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* (San Francisco: Telling Pictures Films).

1754 Kimberly Rae Connor, “A Common Geography of the Mind: Creating Sacred Space in the Autobiographical Writings of Paul Monette and the NAMES Project,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* v. 68, no. 1 (March 2000): 60, 50.

1755 Pearlman, Landmark Nomination for NAMES Project Building, 11.

1756 Rudy Bruner Foundation, “National AIDS Memorial Grove, 1999 Silver Medal Winner,” page 71, accessed May 12, 2014, http://www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/pdfs/1999/03_NationalGrove.pdf.

1757 Ibid., 70.

1758 An article published one year after Gunn’s death describes his purchase of a house on “upper Cole” in 1971 and the decades Gunn lived there. No listing was found in San Francisco City Directories. Edward Guthmann, “A Poet’s Life/Part Two: As Friends Died of AIDS, Gunn Stayed Healthy __ Until His Need to Play Hard Finally Killed Him,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 26, 2005, accessed February 2, 2015, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/A-POET-S-LIFE-PART-TWO-As-friends-died-of-2638955.php>.

1759 Wikipedia, “The Real World San Francisco,” accessed August 8, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Real_World:_San_Francisco. *The Real World* was filmed at 949-953 Lombard Street in Russian Hill.



TOP LEFT: NAMES Project Visitor Center Coordinator Kimberly Rae Connor and her son, Gabriel, at the NAMES Project founding site at 2362 Market Street, 1990s (Courtesy Kimberly Rae Connor)

TOP RIGHT: Portion of the AIDS Quilt and NAMES Project volunteers at a San Francisco Giants game, 2000 (Courtesy Kimberly Rae Connor)

BOTTOM: The NAMES Project/AIDS Quilt inaugural display in Washington, DC, October 11, 1987 (Photo by Tom Alleman, courtesy Shayne Watson)

CHANGING AIDS

Between 1986 and 1996, AIDS cases among San Francisco women, heterosexuals, and IV-drug users increased rapidly. Meanwhile, AIDS cases among gay and bisexual men dropped from 1,679 to 688, most likely reflecting the success of efforts to reduce transmission by promoting safer sex. Starting in the mid-1990s, highly active antiretroviral therapy and combination drug therapies transformed HIV/AIDS from a horrifying death sentence to a relatively manageable chronic disease for those with adequate resources. AIDS dropped as a leading cause of death for young, white male Americans, yet the epidemic continued to grow in communities of color and among transgender people.¹⁷⁶⁰ The *San Francisco Weekly* warned in 1997 that “as the pandemic continues this shift away from gay men who can afford the new treatments, and as AIDS promises to become for them a chronic condition rather than a fatal disease, what’s occurring is nothing less than a fracturing of S.F.’s AIDS coalition, in its best moments the uniting of straight and gay, white and people of color, toward a common and urgent purpose. Born in San Francisco, it now may die here, too.”¹⁷⁶¹

POLITICS AND AIDS

The 1980s and 1990s saw significant steps forward for LGBTQ people in organized politics but also a contraction of political focus as the AIDS epidemic became a crisis. *Advocate* writer and sex radical Patrick Califia notes:

The gay movement has been transformed from a broad-based attempt to address several issues (sodomy laws, anti-gay discrimination, homophobia and religious institutions, military which-hunts, porn laws, police crackdowns on public sex, registration of so-called “sex offenders,” the age of consent, child custody, etc.) to a crusade for a cure. Our agenda has pretty much shrunk to one item.¹⁷⁶²

San Francisco AIDS leaders fought for more resources for research, support, and treatment. The political power LGBTQ people had accrued meant that the response to the epidemic was faster and more generous than in any other city. Journalist Randy Shilts reports that by mid-1983, the more than \$3 million San Francisco had spent on AIDS “exceeded the funds released to the entire country by the National Institutes of Health for extramural AIDS research.”¹⁷⁶³ Longtime activist Bill Kraus, who served as a legislative aid to U.S. representatives Philip and Sala Burton, crafted the first legislation that brought federal funds for AIDS research..¹⁷⁶⁴ Mobilization Against AIDS and other San Francisco groups worked tirelessly against statewide measures that targeted gay people and people with HIV, such as initiatives to quarantine people with AIDS, to impose forced HIV testing, and to bar people with HIV from certain jobs, most of which were defeated at the polls.¹⁷⁶⁵

1760 AIDS.gov, “A Timeline of AIDS,” <http://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/aids-timeline/>.

1761 George Cothran, “The AIDS Civil War,” *SF Weekly*, February 19, 1997, accessed November 12, 2014, <http://www.sfweekly.com/1997-02-19/news/the-aids-civil-war/2/>.

1762 Califia, *Public Sex*, xxiii.

1763 Shilts, quoted in Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities*, 157.

1764 Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, 187.

1765 Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom*, 292, 311.

CHAPTER 3.

METHODOLOGY



NOVEMBER 2013 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP BY RANDOLPH JONSSON

I. PROJECT TEAM AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco is the result of a successful collaboration among many organizations and individuals. Shayne Watson and Donna Graves served as codirectors and coauthors, overseeing all administrative aspects of the project, conducting research and outreach, and producing the written report. The GLBT Historical Society was fiscal sponsor, enthusiastic partner, and curator of one of the world's renowned archives for LGBTQ history — an invaluable source of information for this project.

Graves and Watson were guided and supported by an extraordinarily talented and diverse advisory committee. Dr. Nan Alamilla Boyd, professor of women and gender studies at San Francisco State University, served as academic reviewer. Katherine Petrin, architectural historian and preservation planner, served as preservation peer reviewer. Other advisory committee members are Tamara Ching, transgender activist; Dr. Kimberly Rae Connor, University of San Francisco; Dr. Gail Dubrow, University of Minnesota; Gerard Koskovich, independent scholar; Alan Martinez, AIA, architect and former member, San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission; Glenne McElhinney, community historian; Dr. Don Romesburg, Sonoma State University; Jody Stock, historic preservation consultant; Dr. Susan Stryker, University of Arizona; and Dr. Amy Sueyoshi, San Francisco State University.

II. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

GENERAL OUTREACH EFFORTS

The community outreach and engagement plan for this LGBTQ Historic Context Statement consisted of multiple strategies to announce the project to diverse LGBTQ communities in San Francisco and to enlist their assistance in providing stories, ideas, and material for the context statement. General outreach and engagement efforts included the following:

- Establishment of a project email address for community members to contact the project team (sflgbthistory@gmail.com).
- Collaboration with the San Francisco Planning Department staff to develop content for a project page on the city's website (<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3673>).
- Production of an informational project brochure distributed at public events and at the GLBT Historical Society and Museum.
- Postings about research findings on the Preserving LGBT Historic Sites in California Facebook page ([facebook.com/PreservingLGBTHistory](https://www.facebook.com/PreservingLGBTHistory)).
- Multiple interviews in national and local newspapers and other media to engage with the public about the project.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

The first community workshop for the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement was held on November 14, 2013, at The Women's Building in the Mission District. It was cosponsored by the GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco Heritage, and The Women's Building. Approximately sixty community members enthusiastically shared their memories in small working-group breakouts.

Volunteers facilitated the working groups and took notes. Watson and Graves incorporated stories from the workshop into the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement.

A second community workshop was held on May 17, 2014, at the LGBT Community Center on Market Street. Called “Our Stories Too,” this workshop had two purposes: to capture information about sites important to elders in underdocumented communities, including people of color and people who identify as bisexual or transgender; and to foster intergenerational dialogue with youth from the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) summer internship program. With assistance from LYRIC youth and Arcus Endowment intern Kurt Schumacher from the University of California, Berkeley, Graves and Watson conducted individual interviews with elders about places in San Francisco that are an important part of their histories. In addition, Archive Productions video-recorded place-based memories from elders and LYRIC youth. More than thirty LGBTQ elders and youth attended this event.

A final community meeting was held at the GLBT History Museum in November 16, 2014, to share research findings.

Watson and Graves conducted community outreach at various events, meetings, and conferences throughout the duration of the project, including Maud’s Annual Reunion (June 2013 and June 2014); National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Indiana (October 2013); San Francisco Primetimers (November 2013); Merchants of Castro /Upper Market (December 2013); California Preservation Foundation Conference at Asilomar (April 2014); Senior Center Without Walls (June and October 2014 and March 2015); Shaping San Francisco (October 2014); a California Preservation Foundation workshop on historic context statements at the Presidio of San Francisco (October 2014); and a second California Preservation Foundation workshop on context statements and surveys (November 5, 2015).

With the national oral history organization StoryCorps, Graves and Watson facilitated oral history interviews with community historians to capture stories about LGBTQ experience in San Francisco. The interviews are available to the public through the Library of Congress. They were also used to develop content for “California Pride: Mapping LBTQ Histories,” a crowd-sourced online map developed by Watson and Graves with Historypin. Many of the historic properties mentioned in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement, as well as the City of Los Angeles’ LGBT historic context statement (*SurveyLA: LGBT Historic Context Statement*), are featured on the California Pride map. The map also includes stories about LGBTQ experience in California that have been shared by community historians across the state.

III. RESEARCH

This LGBTQ Historic Context Statement benefits from a rich collection of existing scholarship on LGBTQ history in San Francisco, including:

- *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (1983) by John D’Emilio
- *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (1996) by Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk

- *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (2003) by Nan Alamilla Boyd
- *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (2006) by Martin Meeker

For primary source material, Watson and Graves conducted research at various brick-and-mortar and digital archives over the course of the project, including the GLBT Historical Society; the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center (San Francisco Public Library); the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives Digital Collection; the San Francisco History Center (San Francisco Public Library); the California Ephemera Project; and the California Digital Newspaper Collection.

IV. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Graves and Watson conducted oral history interviews with numerous community members and used transcripts from over twenty-five existing interviews in the GLBT Historical Society's oral history collection. These oral history interview subjects—some long deceased—served as extraordinarily important guides for navigating this complex history, and their stories are woven throughout the historic contexts. The following is a list of oral history interviews conducted by the project team and used as part of this study:

- John Blackburn, interviewed by Donna Graves, December 21, 2013
- Bart Casimir, interviewed by Donna Graves, August 5, 2014
- Tamara Ching, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 10, 2014
- Luis de la Garza, interviewed by Donna Graves, May 17 and 27, 2014
- Jasmine Gee, interviewed by Donna Graves, May 17, 2014
- Jan de Gier, interviewed by Shayne Watson, January 20, 2016
- Felicia Elizondo, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014
- Roma Guy, interviewed by Donna Graves, November 10, 2013
- Jorge (Gina) Huerte, interviewed by Shayne Watson, May 17, 2014
- Bill Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 30, 2014
- Diane Jones, interviewed by Donna Graves, July 16, 2014
- Lani Ka'ahumanu, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 17, 2014
- Randy Kikukawa, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 15, 2014
- Marilyn H., interviewed by Shayne Watson, May 17, 2014
- Paula Lichtenberg, interviewed by Donna Graves, February 21, 2014
- Phyllis Lyon, interviewed by Shayne Watson, August 25, 2011
- Jimmy Owens, interviewed by Donna Graves, February 10, 2014
- Margo Rila, interviewed by Shayne Watson, May 17, 2014
- Marcos E. Rodriguez, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 4, 2014 and May 17, 2014
- Karla Rosales, interviewed by Donna Graves, June 18, 2014
- Philip Rossetti, interviewed by Shayne Watson, August 7, 2014
- Canyon Sam, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 6, 2014

- Fredrick Schermer, interviewed by Shayne Watson, January 20, 2016
- Robert Tat, interviewed by Donna Graves, October 18, 2013
- Lisbet Tellefsen, interviewed by Donna Graves, March 11, 2014

CHAPTER 4.

HOW-TO-GUIDE FOR PRESERVING LGBTQ HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of San Francisco Planning Department defines historic preservation as “a strategy for conserving significant elements of the built environment in order to maintain a tangible physical connection to the past.”¹⁷⁶⁶ One way to ensure that important places in San Francisco are conserved is by landmarking individual properties or groups of properties in historic districts. Another way is to thoroughly evaluate properties as part of an environmental review process to ensure that important properties are not substantively altered in substantial ways or demolished without process. (Note: Properties can be buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, or objects.)

Evaluating a property as a potential landmark and evaluating a property as part of environmental review both require essentially the same three steps: understanding the property within a larger historic context, assessing whether or not the property is significant within the historic context, and determining if the property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. This chapter presents a general overview for navigating those three steps, with the goal of helping community members not familiar with historic preservation to better understand the evaluation process. The building at 710 Montgomery Street that housed the Black Cat Café from 1933 to 1963 is used in examples of how to complete each step. This chapter concludes with general information on how to pursue landmarking of LGBTQ properties in San Francisco.

The how-to guide does not cover every detail of steps required for the evaluation or landmarking processes. For detailed guidance on the Planning Department’s landmark and historic district designation process, see the Application for Historic Landmark Designation on the Planning Department website. For guidance on the Planning Department’s environmental review process, see the Environmental Planning section of the Planning Department website.

II. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO EVALUATION

STEP 1: DEVELOP HISTORIC CONTEXT

The first step in any evaluation process is to understand the importance of a property within a larger historic context. Historic context is essentially historical background on a theme—in this case, LGBTQ history in San Francisco. In order to judge if a property is historically significant, it is critical to understand how the property fits into a larger picture, or historic context. The historic context will also establish a period of significance—a specific date range during which significant events occurred, or during which important individuals or organizations were active. Historic contexts related to LGBTQ history in San Francisco were developed as part of this report and are presented in Chapter 2: LGBTQ History. The historic contexts are also listed in Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework.

Example of How to Place an LGBTQ Site in San Francisco within a Historic Context

The building that housed the Black Cat Café at 710 Montgomery Street is described in detail in two historic contexts in this report: “Early Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco – 19th Century to 1960s” and “Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities – 1933 to 1960s.” Therefore, the building at 710 Montgomery is potentially significant for its contributions to history within those two themes.

1766 San Francisco Planning Department, “Historic Preservation,” <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1825>.

Further Guidance

For detailed guidance on developing and applying historic contexts, see *National Register Bulletin 16a: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* and *National Register Bulletin 16b: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*.

STEP 2: DETERMINE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF A PROPERTY

The next step in the evaluation process is to determine if the property is significant. Words such as “historic” and “significant” have very specific meanings in historic preservation. Just because a building is old does not mean it is historic or significant. If a property is determined to be significant within its historic context, it means that the property rises to a higher level of importance relative to other similar properties within the same context.¹⁷⁶⁷

In order for a property to be determined significant, it must meet at least one of four criteria. The California Office of Historic Preservation uses California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) criteria to evaluate significance. The California Register criteria are modeled on criteria used for National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The table below defines both the California Register and National Register criteria for evaluating significance.

Most properties determined significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco will be significant under Criterion A/1 (events) and Criterion B/2 (people), the two criteria assigned to properties that relate to social and cultural aspects of history. Properties found significant under Criterion C/3 would be important for their architecture, design, or construction—or individuals who were responsible for design or construction; examples could include homes designed by a pioneering lesbian architect or a sculpture designed by an influential gay artist. Criterion D/4 is reserved for archaeological properties; properties found significant under this criterion would be sites where Native Americans were known to live or are buried, or at sites where LGBTQ-related buildings have been demolished or lost to earthquakes or fire.

National Register	California Register	Criterion Definition
Criterion A	Criterion 1	Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
Criterion B	Criterion 2	Properties associated with the lives of significant persons
Criterion C	Criterion 3	Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
Criterion D	Criterion 4	Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory

The National Register provides additional criteria for properties that for various reasons would not ordinarily qualify for listing in the National Register (e.g., cemeteries, birthplaces, and structures that have been reconstructed or moved, and places associated with the recent past). Known as “criteria considerations,” these additional criteria allow properties to qualify for landmarking if they fall under certain categories. The criteria consideration categories that would apply to LGBTQ

¹⁷⁶⁷ The California Environmental Quality Act, which provides regulations for historic preservation in California, defines significant properties as historical resources.

history in San Francisco are listed in the following table. Criteria and criteria considerations that are applicable under each of the nine historic contexts/themes presented in this report are listed in Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework.

National Register Criteria Consideration	Definition
A	A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance
C	A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life
F	A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance
G	A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance

Example of How to Apply Criteria to an LGBTQ Site in San Francisco

The building that housed the Black Cat Café at 710 Montgomery Street is significant under multiple criteria and themes. Within the theme of “Early Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco – 19th Century to 1960s,” the Black Cat Café is significant under Criterion A/1 for its role in the early development of bar-based LGBTQ communities in San Francisco. Additionally, under the same theme, the Black Cat Café is significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with gay rights pioneer José Sarria; in 1961, Sarria used the Black Cat as campaign headquarters when he ran for San Francisco city supervisor—the first openly gay person in the country to run for public office. Within the theme of “Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities – 1933 to 1960s,” the Black Cat Café is significant under Criterion A/1 for the role it played in *Stoumen v. Reilly*, a court case in 1951 that essentially legalized gay and lesbian bars in California.

For other examples of how to apply significance criteria, see Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework.

Further Guidance

For detailed guidance on determining significance and applying significance criteria, see *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

STEP 3: EVALUATE INTEGRITY OF A PROPERTY

After determining the significance of a property within a historic context, the third step in the evaluation process is to assess the historic integrity of the property. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, both physically and in intangible ways. For example, if a building is determined to be significant under Criterion C/3 as the sole surviving building designed by a famous architect, but it was remodeled over time so that the original design is unrecognizable as the architect’s work, the building’s integrity has been compromised. When evaluating integrity, it is important to understand the difference between integrity and condition. A 100-year-old building with deteriorating walls and a leaky roof would be in poor condition, but it could have excellent integrity if the original walls and roof are intact.

There are seven aspects of historic integrity that must be evaluated: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity, a property should possess several or most of the aspects. Not all aspects of integrity are important to all properties—it depends on the historic context and the criterion or criteria under which the property is significant.

There are two important steps to evaluating the integrity of a property: 1.) Determine which physical features must be present for a property to be able to convey its significance; and 2.) determine if those essential physical features are visible or intact enough for the property to represent its significance. For the first step, it is important to understand why the property is significant—in other words, under which historic contexts is it important. Is it significant for its architecture (Criterion C/3)? Or, in the case of most places significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco, is it important for social or cultural histories (Criteria A/1 and B/2)?

For properties that are significant for social or cultural histories, the important aspects of integrity that need to be present are generally location, design, feeling, and association.

- **Location:** the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event took place.
- **Design:** the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. (Note: for properties significant to LGBTQ history, only the very basic features of a property are important, such as original form, and window and door configuration, with exceptions such as storefront reconfiguration. Integrity of style is not important, as styles can be updated over time.)
- **Feeling:** the quality that a historic property has in evoking the aesthetic or historic sense of a past period of time.
- **Association:** the direct link between a property and the event or person for which the property is significant.

The aspects of integrity that are generally less important for social or cultural histories are setting, materials, and workmanship.

- **Setting:** the physical environment of a historic property that illustrates the character of the place.
- **Materials:** the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- **Workmanship:** the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history.

Example of How to Evaluate Integrity of an LGBTQ Site in San Francisco

As determined in the previous examples, the Black Cat Café at 710 Montgomery Street is significant under Criterion A/1 and B/2. Because the Black Cat's significance derives from its association with historic events and people (i.e., social and cultural history), the important aspects of integrity that need to be present are location, design, setting, feeling, and association.

One test to apply when evaluating integrity of a historic property is to assess if someone who was

familiar with the property when it was important within its historic context would recognize it if they visited today. In the case of the Black Cat, the building is still in its original location, so that aspect remains recognizable and intact; and the main façade's original composition and many of the original materials are intact, so integrity of design is good. As for integrity of association and feeling, two aspects that require enough intact physical material so that the building would be easily recognizable to someone who visited the Black Cat in the 1950s, the overall façade of the building has undergone very few changes and is recognizable—so integrity of association and feeling remain intact. Thus, the building at 710 Montgomery Street retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance and easily passes the test.

Further Guidance

For detailed information on the nuances of evaluating the integrity of properties significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework. For additional guidance on assessing integrity, see *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (section VIII)*.

FINAL STEP: LANDMARKING

Anyone can pursue landmarking for a property in California. There are several options for official landmark designation in San Francisco. A property can be designated as a local (San Francisco) landmark. A property can be listed in the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places. A property can be designated as a National Historic Landmark, one of the highest honors to bestow on a historic property in the U.S. At the international level, a property can be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Or a property can maintain multiple designations (e.g., properties in California that are listed in the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register).

The San Francisco, California, and federal programs for landmarking or registering properties vary in the procedures required for nomination. A general overview of the steps required for all three programs follows. Designation as a San Francisco landmark offers a property the most protection from significant alteration or demolition. Registering properties at the California and federal levels can make owners eligible for tax credit and grant programs.

San Francisco City Landmarks

The City of San Francisco maintains a list of designated Local Landmarks and Historic Districts determined to be an important part of the City's historical and architectural heritage. The process for nominating a property as a Local Landmark or a group of properties as a Historic District is overseen by the San Francisco Planning Department. Anyone can nominate a property for designation as a Local Landmark by completing the Application for Historic Landmark Designation and submitting it to the Planning Department for review. Final nominations are reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. Property owners must be notified about the nominations before they are approved. Specific directions for nominating a property can be found on the Planning Department website.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is California's list of the state's significant historical and archaeological resources. The process for nominating a property for inclusion in the California Register is overseen by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Nominations are reviewed by OHP staff. Final nominations are reviewed and approved by the State

Historic Resources Commission. Properties cannot be listed in the California Register if a property owner objects to the nomination. Specific directions for nominating a property can be found on the OHP website.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's list of properties determined to be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service. National Register nominations are reviewed by OHP staff. Final nominations are reviewed and approved by the State Historic Resources Commission and then sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer for nomination to the National Register. The Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C., makes the final determination for listing. Properties cannot be listed in the National Register if a property owner objects to the nomination. Specific directions for nominating a property can be found on the OHP website.

National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks are historic properties that have been determined to possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting United States heritage. The NHL Program is administered by the National Park Service. NHL nominations are reviewed by NPS staff and are designated by the Secretary of the Interior. Properties cannot be designated as NHLs if a property owner objects to the nomination. Specific directions for the NHL nomination process can be found on the NPS NHL website.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a branch of the United Nations dedicated to international collaboration through education, science, and culture. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee maintains a list of World Heritage Sites. World Heritage Sites are places of international cultural or natural significance. As of July 2015, there are 1031 World Heritage Sites. Only countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention, pledging to protect their natural and cultural heritage, can nominate properties to be considered for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List. Current criteria for nomination to the World Heritage List present nearly insurmountable barriers for this level of recognition. According to the National Park Service, World Heritage Sites in the U.S. "must be either federal property, such as national parks, or sites already designated as national historic landmarks or national natural landmarks. Properties not owned by the federal government are nominated only if their owners wish to do so and pledge to protect their property in perpetuity."¹⁷⁶⁸ Directions for the UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination process can be found on the UNESCO website.

1768 National Park Service, "World Heritage Sites," <http://www.nps.gov/oia/topics/worldheritage/worldheritage.htm> accessed 14 August 2015.



The former home of the Black Cat Cafe at 710 Montgomery Street is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributor to the Jackson Square Historic District. This building is an example of an LGBTQ historic property that is eligible for individual listing in the National Register and eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark (Photo by Shayne Watson)

CHAPTER 5.
EVALUATION
FRAMEWORK

I. PROPERTY TYPES AND FUNCTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH LGBTQ HISTORY IN SAN FRANCISCO

LGBTQ history in San Francisco is represented in all of the standard property types: buildings, structures, landscapes, sites, objects, and historic districts. Each of those types of properties can be categorized by function or use. For example, buildings can be categorized as residences, schools, or funeral homes; they are all buildings, but their functions and spatial organizations are very different. The following is a list of common functions or uses found in property types associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco.

Function or Use	Common Subcategories
Domestic	Private residence, apartment building, hotel
Commercial	Restaurant, saloon, bar, nightclub; retail store (e.g., bookstore, department store); financial institution, bank; professional office (e.g., architectural studio); bathhouse, sex club
Social	Meeting hall, community center, clubhouse; political headquarters
Governmental	Municipal building (e.g., City Hall or courthouse); correctional facility, police station, firehouse; post office
Educational	University or college, school, library
Religious	Church, temple, synagogue, ceremonial site
Funerary	Cemetery, burial site; funeral home, crematorium
Recreational	Movie theater, playhouse; museum, gallery, artist's studio; park, picnic area
Cultural	Cultural event, fair, parade; commemorative marker, statue, monument; work of art, mural
Industrial	Television station, telephone company; newspaper, publisher, publishing plant; porn studio or porn distribution
Health and Medicine	Hospital, mental hospital, health clinic, medical office, pharmacy; medical research facility; nursing home, hospice
Defense	Military base or facility
Landscape	Park, garden, plaza; street furniture or object
Transportation	Rail-related (e.g., Muni or BART station, train, line); road-related (e.g., street, bridge, parking lot/garage); pedestrian-related (e.g., walkway, trail)
Legacy Business	Legacy Businesses are "establishments [that] have achieved longevity of 40 years or more, possess distinctive architecture or interior design, and contribute to a sense of history in the surrounding neighborhood."

All property types apply to the nine themes presented in Chapter 2 of this report, but only certain functions or uses will be applicable under each theme. The tables in the following section list functions and uses applicable under each theme.

II. FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING LGBTQ PROPERTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

The nine tables on the following pages can be used by San Francisco Planning Department staff, preservation professionals, and community members for guidance on evaluating properties related to LGBTQ history in San Francisco. The tables are organized by the nine historic themes presented in Chapter 2: LGBTQ History. Each table contains the following information: summary of significance for the theme; common property functions that are representative of the theme; period of significance; applicable California Register and National Register criteria, along with examples of properties potentially significant under each of the criteria; and eligibility requirements, which provide nuanced guidance on how to evaluate significance of certain property functions under a particular theme.

The following tables are meant to provide a framework for understanding how potential historic resources relate to themes presented in LGBTQ Historic Context Statement. In cases where a potential resource is one of many similar property types throughout San Francisco (e.g., gay bars), a historic resource assessment should entail nuanced analysis and judgment. For example, evaluating a building that housed an LGBTQ bar during the 1970s will require taking into account the importance of bars as gathering places for queer people, but also the fact that one's experience in bars was shaped by such variables as gender identity, race, and class. Therefore, preserving one bar would not reflect the complexity of LGBTQ lives from that era. Furthermore, given that bars that welcomed women, people of color, and those who identified as bisexual or transgender were far outnumbered by bars catering to white, gay men, assessments of potential resources that reflect these marginalized communities should be conducted with their relative scarcity in mind.

Theme 1: Early Influences on LGBTQ Identities and Communities (19th Century to 1950s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Early Influences on LGBTQ Identities and Communities” are significant for an association with: 19th and early 20th century medical theories and literature relating to understanding LGBTQ gender, sexuality, and homosocial and homosexual relationships; early sex laws and policing, including 19th and 20th century vagrancy and sodomy laws; the Gold Rush period and its influence on nonnormative sexual activity and gender presentation; cross-gender entertainment and identities; Progressive Era women’s reform movements; and bohemianism, including arts and literature. Sites associated with Native American two-spirits would be significant under this theme. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Early Influences on LGBTQ Identities and Communities” may be comprised of the following functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Funerary, Recreational, Cultural, Industrial, Health Care, Defense, Landscape, and Transportation. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance | 19th Century to 1950s

National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The commercial building at 574 Pacific Avenue is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with 19 th century cross-gender entertainment. The building housed a dancehall called The Dash in 1908 and is the only known extant example of a Barbary Coast establishment that featured female impersonators and homosexual sex for sale.
Criterion B/2	The landscape of Ocean Beach is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with bohemian lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow, author of the first published book of lesbian poetry in the U.S. Gidlow said she wrote some of her “best poems” at Ocean Beach.
Criterion C/3	The domestic building at 1037-39 Broadway is potentially significant under Criterion C/3 for its association with groundbreaking lesbian architect Emily Williams. The Broadway residence was the San Francisco home of Williams and her lifelong romantic partner, metal artist Lillian Palmer.
Criterion D/4	Archaeological sites associated with Native Americans in San Francisco are potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for their potential to reveal information about two-spirit people among the Ohlone.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme.

Consideration C	Because so many of the sites associated with this theme pre-date the 1906 earthquake and are not extant, Criteria Consideration C could be applicable for birthplaces of historical figures if there are no other extant properties associated with the person's life.
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Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in early influences on LGBTQ identities and communities in San Francisco during the period of significance. Properties associated with this theme are relatively rare, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, an individual's residence can be potentially significant.

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 2: Early Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco (Early 20th Century to 1960s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Early Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco” are significant for an association with: development of bar-based communities in San Francisco’s bars, restaurants, and night-clubs; development of sex-based cultures and communities in bathhouses and public spaces throughout the city; and community development in private residences and at private parties. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Early Development of LGBTQ Communities in San Francisco” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Recreational, Cultural, Defense, Landscape, Transportation, and Legacy Business. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance | Early 20th century to 1960s

National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The residential hotel at 166 Turk Street is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with development of sex-based cultures and communities in San Francisco. The El Rosa Hotel, as it was called in the 1960s, was one of the only residential hotels in San Francisco to provide housing for transgender sex workers.
Criterion B/2	The commercial building at 710 Montgomery Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with gay rights pioneer José Julio Sarria. From 1933 to 1963, the building housed the Black Cat Café, where Sarria became famous for his drag performances. Sarria used the Black Cat as headquarters for his historic campaign for city supervisor in 1961.
Criterion C/3	The murals at the building that housed the Paper Doll at 524 Union Street were reportedly created by North Beach artists including Emmy Lou Packard. If extant, the murals are potentially significant under Criterion C/3 for association with the development of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco.
Criterion D/4	Subsurface material at 299 Broadway is potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for its potential to reveal information about Tommy’s 299 Club, a lesbian bar located on the site from 1948 to 1952. Tommy’s was the first lesbian bar in San Francisco owned by an openly lesbian woman, Tommy Vasu.

Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in the early development of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco during the period of significance. Properties associated with this theme are relatively rare, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, an individual's residence can be potentially significant.

Landscapes and open spaces could be significant under this theme for their association with development of sex-based culture and communities in San Francisco (i.e., sites of cruising, hustling, and sex in public).

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 3: Policing and Harassment of LGBTQ Communities (1933 to 1960s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Policing and Harassment of LG-BTQ Communities” are significant for an association with: bar raids and policing (including military policing during World War II); federal, state, and local anti-homosexual laws and politics; significant court cases and legal battles; and early efforts by the LGBTQ communities to fight back against oppression. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Policing and Harassment of LG-BTQ Communities” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Recreational, Cultural, Health Care, Defense, Landscape, and Transportation. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance | 1930s to 1960s

Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The social hall at 625 Polk Street known as California Hall is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual’s New Year’s Eve Mardi Gras fundraiser in 1965, one of the worst cases of homophobic police harassment in the city’s history.
Criterion B/2	The commercial building at 585 Post Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for an association with William Morrell, owner of the 585 Club, a gay bar at the site from 1952 until 1961. Morrell is significant as the first gay-bar owner to take a stand against police demanding payoffs in exchange for not harassing gay bars. Morrell’s historic fight against the police resulted in what is now known as the Gayola Scandal.
Criterion C/3	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Criterion D/4	Subsurface material at 900 Bush Street is potentially significant for its potential to reveal information about the Tay-Bush Inn, a gay bar located at the site in the early 1960s. The largest gay bar raid in San Francisco’s history happened at the Tay-Bush in 1961. Over 100 people, mostly lesbians, were arrested.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme. One example is Glide Memorial Church, which was instrumental in the founding of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual and played a significant role in the fight against police oppression after the California Hall New Year’s Day raid in 1965.

Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in policing and harassment of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco during the period of significance. Properties associated with this theme are relatively rare, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, an individual's residence can be potentially significant.

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 4: Homophile Movements (1950s to 1960s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Homophile Movements” are significant for an association with the development of homophile organizations in San Francisco, such as the Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis, the League for Civil Education, the Society for Individual Rights, and the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Homophile Movements” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Recreational, Cultural, Industrial, Health Care, Defense, Landscape, and Transportation. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance | 1950s to 1960s

Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The social hall at 83 Sixth Street is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with the development of homophile organizations in San Francisco. The hall was the headquarters and community center for the Society for Individual Rights from 1966 through the 1970s. It was the first gay community center in the country.
Criterion B/2	The residence at 651 Duncan Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 as the longtime home of gay rights pioneers and co-founders of the Daughters of Bilitis, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin.
Criterion C/3	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Criterion D/4	Subsurface material at 117 Turk Street is potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for its potential to reveal information about the Turk Street Temple. In the summer of 1899, Emma Goldman, an early advocate for gay rights, lectured at the Turk Street Temple while on a lecture tour of the U.S.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme. One example is Glide Memorial Church, which was instrumental in the founding of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual.

Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in Homophile movements in San Francisco during the period of significance. Properties associated with this theme are relatively rare, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, an individual's residence can be potentially significant.

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 5: Evolution of LGBTQ Enclaves and Development of New Neighborhoods (1960s to 1980s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Evolution of LGBTQ Enclaves and Development of New Neighborhoods” are significant for an association with the transformation and growth of existing LGBTQ enclaves, such as North Beach and the Tenderloin, and the development of new LGBTQ neighborhoods, like Polk Street, Haight-Ashbury, South of Market, Mission-Valencia, and the Castro. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Evolution of LGBTQ Enclaves and Development of New Neighborhoods” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Educational, Religious, Funerary, Recreational, Cultural, Health Care, Landscape, Transportation, and Legacy Business. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance	1960s to 1980s
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Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The commercial building at 2111 Polk Street is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with the development of Polk Street as an LGBTQ enclave in the 1960s. In the mid-1960s, the building housed a bar called the Jumpin’ Frog, which in 1964 was featured in a highly influential <i>Life Magazine</i> article that called San Francisco the “Gay Capital of America.” The article was one of a handful of factors that contributed to Polk Street’s rise as a gay enclave.
Criterion B/2	The commercial building at 937 Cole Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with Rikki Streicher, one of San Francisco’s most influential and successful lesbian businesswomen. The building was home to Maud’s, Rikki’s first lesbian bar in the city, from the 1960s to 1980s.
Criterion C/3	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Criterion D/4	Subsurface material at 399 4 th Street is potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for its potential to reveal information about the Tool Box, the leather bar that was on the site from the early 1960s to 1971 when it was demolished. The Tool Box was one of San Francisco’s earliest and most popular leather bars. In 1964, it was featured in a highly influential <i>Life Magazine</i> article that called San Francisco the “Gay Capital of America.”
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme.

Consideration G	Neighborhoods such as the Mission-Valencia and the Castro developed in the 1970s and 1980s, so Criteria Consideration G would be applicable for sites associated with exceptionally important events or individuals related to LGBTQ enclaves that developed within the past fifty years.
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Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in the evolution of LGBTQ enclaves and development of new neighborhoods in San Francisco during the period of significance. Within this theme, there are multiple examples of certain property types. Using bars as an example, sites that would rise to exceptional significance would be places such as the Elephant Walk, a Castro neighborhood bar where an important battle with San Francisco police took place.

Properties with significance to LGBTQ history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations (for more on this see Notes on Integrity). Therefore, short-tenure should not be a factor weighing against significance when evaluating a particular property under this theme. One example of an exceptionally important short-lived bar is the Why Not, San Francisco’s first leather bar, which operated for a few months in 1962 at 518 Ellis Street.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, an individual’s residence can be potentially significant. As an example of evaluating significance of a residence associated with an individual, several residences in San Francisco are associated with lesbian businesswoman Rikki Streicher, but the places of business associated with her (e.g., lesbian bars Maud’s and Amelia’s) would be the obvious properties associated with her significance.

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 6: Gay Liberation, Pride, and Politics (1960s to 1990s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Gay Liberation, Pride, and Politics” are significant for an association with: gay rights and gay liberation movements beginning in the 1960s; gay pride; community power gained through LGBTQ politics and politicians; homophobic violence against LGBTQ people; and resistance to oppression. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Gay Liberation, Pride, and Politics” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Recreational, Cultural, Industrial, Health Care, Defense, Landscape, Transportation, and Legacy Business. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance | 1960s to 1990s

Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	Market Street from the Embarcadero to the Castro is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 as the walking route for exceptionally important LGBTQ pride events, such as the annual Gay Pride parade beginning in 1977; and exceptionally important vigils and marches, such as the candlelight vigil from the Castro to Civic Center the night of Harvey Milk and George Moscone’s assassinations in 1978; and the White Night Riot march from the Castro to Civic Center in 1979 after assassin Dan White avoided a first-degree murder charge.
Criterion B/2	The mixed-use building at 573-575 Castro Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 as the residence, workplace and campaign office of gay civil rights leader Harvey Milk. From 1973-1978 the property’s first floor housed Milk’s Castro Camera shop and was the center for his four campaigns for public office, including his 1978 victory in an election for San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Milk lived in the upstairs flat at 573 Castro from 1975-1978. The building may be exceptionally significant for its association with Milk’s rise to local and national prominence as a leader of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement.
Criterion C/3	The former Bulldog Baths at 132 Turk Street had elaborate murals by gay artists, including M. Brooks Jones. Now in the collection of the GLBT Historical Society, the murals are potentially significant under Criterion C/3 for their association with development of LGBTQ communities in San Francisco.

Criterion D/4	Subsurface material under 330 Grove Street is potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for its potential to reveal information about the Gay Community Center that occupied the former photo processing building from approximately 1968-1975. 330 Grove was used as a multi-faceted community center providing meeting and exhibition space, as well as a venue for performing arts that included LGBTQ people. The building was leased from the Redevelopment Agency by a series of community groups, which bought the building in the mid-1960s. It was demolished in 1981 to make way for the Performing Arts Garage.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme, such as the Metropolitan Community Church at 150 Eureka Street.
Consideration G	Criteria Consideration G would be applicable for properties associated with exceptionally important events or individuals who achieved significance within the past fifty years.
Eligibility Requirements	
<p>Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in gay liberation, pride, and politics in San Francisco during the period of significance. Within this theme there are multiple examples of certain property types.</p> <p>Properties with significance to LGBTQ history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations (for more on this see Notes on Integrity). Therefore, short-tenure should not be a factor weighing against significance when evaluating a particular property under this theme.</p> <p>When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events.</p> <p>Landscapes and open space are particularly important under this theme because of their role as setting for exceptionally significant protest marches and parades.</p> <p>Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.</p>	

Theme 7: Building LGBTQ Communities (1960s to 1990s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “Building LGBTQ Communities” are significant for an association with development of a broad definition of community: social interaction; sports; entertainment; commerce; sex; religion and spirituality; education; and history. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “Building LGBTQ Communities” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Recreational, Cultural, Industrial, Health Care, Landscape, Transportation, and Legacy Business. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance	1960s to 1990s
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Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The social building at 3543 18 th Street is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with events that took place at The Women’s Building. Originally constructed as a hall for German and then Norwegian communities of San Francisco, the structure was repurposed in 1979 as The Women’s Building. Since then it has been an anchor of the histories of women, feminists, people of color, lesbians, and queer and progressive groups more generally in San Francisco. The Women’s Building, which was created by a predominately lesbian group, may be exceptionally important as one of the very few surviving centers for women created during the 1970s and second-wave feminism.
Criterion B/2	The residential building at 141–143 Albion Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with Gay Games founder Dr. Tom Waddell from 1975 to his death in 1987. Waddell and his partner Charles Deaton had received national attention when they were featured in <i>People</i> magazine’s “Couples” section in October 1976, an early depiction of gay partnership in a national publication. By 1981, Waddell, a former Olympic decathlete began hosting meetings at his home that initiated the 1982 Gay Games (originally called the Gay Olympics). The Gay Games challenged stereotypes about gays and lesbians and have continued as an international event. Waddell’s life was also notable for his decision, with lesbian athlete and businesswoman Sara Lewenstein, to become parents to a daughter born in 1983, when such co-parenting arrangements were highly unusual.
Criterion C/3	Works by LGBTQ architects or designers could be significant under Criterion C/3 under this theme if they are determined to be of exceptional significance.

Criterion D/4	If the building that once housed exceptionally significant lesbian bar Amelia's at 645-647 Valencia Street is demolished, subsurface material is potentially significant under Criterion D/4 for its potential to reveal information about the lesbian community in the Mission District.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme.
Consideration G	Criteria Consideration G would be applicable for properties associated with exceptionally important events or individuals who achieved significance within the past fifty years.
Eligibility Requirements	
<p>Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in building LGBTQ communities in San Francisco during the period of significance. Within this theme there are multiple examples of certain property types, such as bars. Compared to bars for white gay men, there were relatively few that served as gathering places for people of color, lesbians, and people who identified as bisexual and transgender. Therefore, this aspect of rarity should be considered when evaluating properties for potential significance.</p> <p>Properties with significance to LGBTQ history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations (for more on this see Notes on Integrity). Therefore, short-tenure should not be a factor weighing against significance when evaluating a particular property under this theme.</p> <p>When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, a residence can be potentially significant. For example, if no other sites associated with pioneering historian Allan Bérubé are extant, the home he purchased in the Castro District with monies from his MacArthur Genius grant would be potentially significant.</p> <p>Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.</p>	

Theme 8: LGBTQ Medicine (1940s to 1970s)

Significance

Historic properties representing the theme of “LGBTQ Medicine” are significant for an association with: events related to LGBTQ medicine and health; and progress in medicine, especially in the area of transgender medicine and health. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “LGBTQ Medicine” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Cultural, Industrial, and Health Care. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance	1940s to 1970s
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Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The medical building at 401 Parnassus Avenue is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with the Langley Porter Clinic (later the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute), which helped to make San Francisco an important center for the study of gender and sexuality. The clinic’s founding director, Dr. Karl Bowman, collaborated on a number of studies on homosexuality in the 1950s and 1960s, including “The Problem of Homosexuality.” Beginning in the 1940s, Bowman and his colleague Louise Lawrence made Langley Porter an international hub for research and medical care for transgender people.
Criterion B/2	The office building at 450 Sutter Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with Dr. Harry Benjamin, a groundbreaking endocrinologist and influential advocate of both medical treatment and social respect for transgender people. New York-based Benjamin kept a medical office in San Francisco during the summers from the 1930s to the 1970s. Benjamin popularized the term transsexual and publicly defended homosexual rights and the rights of transgender people to medical support rather than psychiatric “cures.” Benjamin published his influential book, <i>The Transsexual Phenomenon</i> , in 1966.
Criterion C/3	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Criterion D/4	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme.
Consideration G	Criteria Consideration G would be applicable for properties associated with exceptionally important events or individuals who achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Eligibility Requirements

Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in the evolution of LGBTQ medicine in San Francisco during the period of significance. Many associated properties are medical facilities that are required to change over time to meet more stringent codes, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.

Properties with significance to LGBTQ history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations (for more on this see Notes on Integrity). Therefore, short-tenure should not be a factor weighing against significance when evaluating a particular property under this theme.

When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, their residence can be potentially significant.

Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

Theme 9: San Francisco’s AIDS Epidemic (1981 to 1990s)

Significance and Associated Property Types

Historic properties representing the theme of “San Francisco’s AIDS Epidemic” are significant for an association with the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco. See Chapter 2: LGBTQ History for historic contexts related to this theme.

Historic properties representing the theme of “San Francisco’s AIDS Epidemic” may be comprised of the following property functions: Domestic, Commercial, Social, Governmental, Educational, Religious, Funerary, Recreational, Cultural, Health Care, and Landscape. For a full list of property functions associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, see the table at the beginning of this section.

Period of Significance	1981 to 1990s
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Applicable National Register and California Register Criteria for Evaluating Significance

Criteria	Example
Criterion A/1	The entrance to 50 United Nations Plaza is potentially significant under Criterion A/1 for its association with the AIDS/ARC Vigil. On October 27, 1985, several protesters with AIDS chained themselves to the doors of the federal building housing the regional office of Health and Human Services in what has been described as the first use of civil disobedience against the AIDS epidemic anywhere in the world. Protesters demanded that the U.S government increase funding for research, care and social services. The AIDS/ARC Vigil became a round-the-clock encampment that lasted ten years and brought powerful visibility to people with AIDS due to the vigil’s prominent location.
Criterion B/2	The Ambassador Hotel at 55 Mason Street is potentially significant under Criterion B/2 for its association with prominent gay rights and AIDS activist Hank Wilson. As residents of the 150-unit hotel began to suffer from HIV/AIDS, Wilson, who lived in and ran the Ambassador, enlisted individuals and organizations to care for these patients. Together they pioneered a new harm-reduction model for caring for people with AIDS and substance addictions who often did not meet criteria for services by other AIDS organizations. Eventually one third of the Ambassador’s residents were HIV-positive or had full-blown AIDS, and an entire floor of the hotel was set up as a hospice for those dying of the disease. Wilson, along with others, organized one of the first public AIDS demonstrations as a Candlelight March from the Castro to Civic Center on May 2, 1983, behind the banner “Fighting for Our Lives.”
Criterion C/3	The “Life of Christ” triptych altarpiece in Grace Cathedral’s Interfaith AIDS Memorial Chapel was artist Keith Haring’s last artwork completed just weeks before his death from AIDS. This artwork is potentially exceptionally significant under Criterion C/3 for its association with important gay artist Keith Haring.

Criterion D/4	Potentially applicable but no examples surfaced during research.
Consideration A	Criteria Consideration A could be applicable for religious sites of historical importance that are associated with this theme.
Consideration F	Criteria Consideration F would be applicable for properties that are primarily commemorative in intent—if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance. The National AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park is an example.
Consideration G	Criteria Consideration G would be applicable for properties associated with exceptionally important events or individuals who achieved significance within the past fifty years.
Eligibility Requirements	
<p>Properties significant under this theme must be directly associated with an event, individual, organization, or institution that played an important role in the San Francisco AIDS epidemic during the period of significance.</p> <p>Within this theme there are multiple examples of certain property types, such as storefronts and offices that provided space for AIDS organizations and service providers. In these cases, special consideration should be given to properties associated with exceptionally significant organizations and individuals, and those associated with underrepresented LGBTQ groups.</p> <p>Many associated properties are medical facilities that are required to change over time to meet more stringent codes, and therefore consideration should be given to lowering requirements for integrity.</p> <p>Properties with significance to LGBTQ history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations (for more on this see Notes on Integrity). Therefore, short-tenure should not be a factor weighing against significance when evaluating a particular property under this theme.</p> <p>When evaluating a residence associated with an individual significant under this theme, the property must have been their primary place of residence during their productive life or site of an important event or series of events. If there are no other properties that can be tied to an important individual, their residence can be potentially significant.</p> <p>Important Note: For all property types under this theme, special consideration should be given to places associated with particularly underrepresented communities including people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.</p>	

III. NOTES ON INTEGRITY¹⁷⁶⁹

When a resource is determined to be potentially eligible for listing in the California Register or National Register, its historic integrity must be evaluated. The National Park Service defines historic integrity as the “ability of a property to convey its significance,” or more broadly as “the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic or prehistoric period.”¹⁷⁷⁰ As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the National Register defines the seven primary aspects of integrity as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.¹⁷⁷¹

Evaluating integrity is similar for both the California Register and the National Register, although the state standards provide more flexibility in assessing degrees of integrity. Properties that may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.¹⁷⁷² This flexibility is particularly important for evaluating sites associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco. Historians such as Judith Wellman and Raymond Rast have described how existing applications of integrity standards favor aesthetic values and physical characteristics dating to the property’s period of significance.¹⁷⁷³ This can prevent full consideration of properties whose significance stems from cultural practices, specific historic events, or broad patterns of events, especially those of marginalized communities such as LGBTQ people.

Because so many aspects of LGBTQ history were intentionally buried or hidden, the luxuries of physical visibility and longevity-in-place were not available until relatively recently. Even as LGBTQ history became more public, properties with significance to this history in San Francisco often had relatively brief periods of association with relevant events, individuals, and organizations. Events important to LGBTQ political, social, and cultural history often took place in spaces owned by others that were made available on a one-time or short-term basis. LGBTQ rights organizations of the 1950 to 1980s were often run on shoestring budgets; groups usually operated out of buildings they did not own, and they moved frequently to reduce rental costs or to remain hidden.

Ray Rast argues that the very premise that resources can and should always convey their significance through their physical fabric is flawed.¹⁷⁷⁴ Very few sites important to LGBTQ history in San Francisco will express their historic associations solely through their physical fabric, so integrity of design, workmanship, and materials are not generally critical when evaluating a property. Instead, the important aspects of integrity for most LGBTQ resources are location, feeling, and association. Location contributes an important aspect of a resource’s physical record of events and patterns; where sites associated with LGBTQ history took place can reveal important information. Feeling is a relatively subjective criterion based on the property’s ability to express a sense of its

1769 Donna Graves and Shayne Watson are grateful to UC Berkeley Ph.D. candidate Elaine Brown Stiles for her insight and contributions to this section. With support from UC Berkeley’s Arcus Foundation Endowment, Stiles wrote a white paper on integrity titled, “Integrity Considerations in Evaluating LGBTQ Historic Sites.”

1770 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington D.C.: 2002), 44.

1771 Ibid.

1772 California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #6, California Register and National Register: A Comparison* (Sacramento, CA: 2004).

1773 Judith Wellman, “The Underground Railroad and the National Register of Historic Places: Historical Importance vs. Architectural Integrity,” *The Public Historian* (February 2002), 11-29. See also Raymond W. Rast, “A Matter of Alignment: Methods to Match the Goals of the Preservation Movement,” *Forum Journal* 28, (Spring 2014), 13-22.

1774 Rast, “A Matter of Alignment,” *Forum Journal*.

period of significance. Association is the connection between a property and the historic patterns, events, and people related to it. In evaluating LGBTQ sites, it is important to recognize that associational qualities are not usually conveyed by the resource itself, but by scholarly and popular historical narratives, oral histories, photographs, continued use, interpretive projects (including plaques), and other means that connect the property to its significance.

Many civic or religious buildings associated with LGBTQ history in San Francisco, such as San Francisco City Hall or Glide Memorial Church, have been well preserved and demonstrate all seven aspects of integrity outlined by the National Register guidelines. However, few places associated with this history have received official recognition or designation; of San Francisco's hundreds of landmarked resources, only a small handful were designated for their LGBTQ associations. Lack of this type of recognition and protection has been among the factors that have led to alteration, and even loss, of many historic buildings. In his book *Place, Race and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (2009), historian and preservationist Ned Kaufman argues that protecting historic resources that survive, even without high integrity, is crucial to preserving the diverse histories that make up American heritage.¹⁷⁷⁵

Evaluating Integrity of Physical Spaces

Integrity evaluations of properties significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco should be handled on a case-by-case basis, but there are a few things to keep in mind for all evaluations. Many properties significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco have undergone extensive changes in ownership and tenants over the years. Building styles and functions often change over time. Commercial storefronts are commonly reconfigured. Because of this, properties significant to LGBTQ history may present substantial exterior and interior alterations—but exterior and interior alterations alone should not disqualify a property for eligibility. Most properties significant to LGBTQ history in San Francisco are eligible for their associations with important people, organizations, events or patterns of events, or cultural or social traditions. The aspects of integrity important for such properties are location, association, and feeling. Aspects that are less critical are design, setting, materials, and workmanship. It is also worth noting that standard historic preservation guidance acknowledges that material alterations or changes to a property “may themselves have historical, cultural, or architectural significance.”¹⁷⁷⁶

Evaluating Integrity of Landscapes and Open Spaces

When evaluating the integrity of landscapes and open spaces, the most important aspects of integrity are location, association, setting, and feeling. An open space may maintain historic associations through the retention of certain features, such as a wooded area used for cruising. Also important to the integrity of open spaces is the aspect of materials, which in some cases may be somewhat impermanent if they include elements of vegetation. See *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), passim.

¹⁷⁷⁶ California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #7, How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources* (Sacramento, CA: 2001), 11.

Evaluating Integrity of Rare Property Functions

When evaluators face questions of a rare property function and its integrity, comparative analysis of extant properties associated with the relevant contexts should be conducted to determine the level of integrity needed for designation. A building that represent one of the last remaining examples of a post-Prohibition bar, for example, would justify a lower threshold for integrity when evaluating eligibility for National and California Registers.

CHAPTER 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTING AND INTERPRETING LGBTQ HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

I. INTRODUCTION

The Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco is not intended to be an all-inclusive history of San Francisco's LGBTQ communities. It was developed to serve as a first step in documenting the historic properties associated with the events, people, and organizations that define this important history. The following recommendations are intended to inform decision-makers and community members about possible next steps to protect and interpret LGBTQ historic properties in San Francisco.

II. CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY, DOCUMENT, AND DESIGNATE LGBTQ HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

COMPLETE A HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY OF LGBTQ SITES IN SAN FRANCISCO

A historic resources survey (survey) is the act of identifying and gathering data on a community's cultural and resources. Surveys include a first phase of documenting potential historic properties in the field, and a second phase of creating an inventory in which the survey data can be organized. The final phase is evaluation of the surveyed properties, which includes determining whether the properties meet the criteria of historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance.

The authors of this report recommend funding a citywide LGBTQ cultural heritage survey that would result in a comprehensive list of properties with important ties to San Francisco's LGBTQ communities. A survey would record and evaluate in detail historic properties identified in this context statement, locate additional LGBTQ historic properties, and create the framework for landmarking at the local, state, and national levels.

If a citywide survey cannot be undertaken, smaller neighborhood-based surveys should be evaluated as time or funding allows. Priority neighborhoods include the Mission-Valencia and South of Market areas where new development threatens many potential historic resources. Neighborhood surveys would also aid in the development of district boundaries for landmarking purposes and for the development of Special Use and Community Benefit Districts.

DESIGNATE CITY, STATE, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LANDMARKS

It is time that San Francisco's essential place in queer history receives appropriate national and even international recognition. Sites such as the Black Cat Café, the home of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, Compton's Cafeteria, Castro Camera/Harvey Milk Residence, The Women's Building, and The NAMES Project building are among the most obvious local sites that appear eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or even as National Historic Landmarks. More sites should be evaluated for their eligibility to these rosters, and support for developing nominations should be assembled so that San Francisco is accurately represented in federal landmark registers. A case could also be made that San Francisco is of international importance as a place for queer cultural expression and political organizing, and a long-standing beacon of possibility for LGBTQ people.

Based on the results of the citywide LGBTQ cultural heritage survey proposed above, as well as the recommendations contained within the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement, the City, in conjunction with community stakeholders, could pursue the registration of properties associated with San Francisco's LGBTQ communities as local landmarks or landmark districts, as well as listing in the

National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there are only three City Landmarks designated for significant associations with LGBTQ San Francisco:

- Harvey Milk Residence/Castro Camera 573-575 Castro Street
- NAMES Project/AIDS Quilt Founding Site 2362 Market Street
- Twin Peaks Tavern 401 Castro Street

There are no properties listed in the National Register in San Francisco that were nominated for their association with LGBTQ culture or history. The following is a list of properties identified in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement that may be eligible for City Landmark, California Register, or National Register status.¹⁷⁷⁷

- AIDS Foundation 520 Castro Street
- 585 Club 585 Post Street
- Ambassador Hotel 55 Mason Street
- Atlas Savings and Loan 1967 Market Street
- Baker Street Scandal Site 2531-2533 Baker Street
- Beige Room 831 Broadway
- Bisexual Center 544 Market Street
- Castro Rock Steam Baths 582 Castro Street
- Center for Special Problems 2107 Van Ness Avenue
- Clarkson Crane Residence 34 Joice Street
- Club Fugazi 678 Green Street
- Coming Home Hospice 115 Diamond Street
- Compton's Cafeteria 101 Taylor Street
- Daughters of Bilitis Founding Site 53 Venus Street
- El Rosa Hotel 166 Turk Street
- Embarcadero YMCA 169 Steuart Street
- Emily Williams/Lillian Palmer Residence 1037-1039 Broadway
- Finocchio's 506 Broadway
- Full Moon Coffeehouse 4416 18th Street
- Gay Community Center 32 Page Street
- Glide Memorial Church 330 Ellis Street
- Gordon's 840 Sansome Street
- Hotel Whitcomb 1231 Market Street

¹⁷⁷⁷ This list excludes properties that have been previously designated as San Francisco Landmarks or as contributors to San Francisco Historic Districts but for non-LGBTQ significance. The list includes properties that are listed in the National Register or as contributors to National Register Historic Districts but not listed as San Francisco Landmarks or as contributors to San Francisco Historic Districts. For a list of properties significant to LGBTQ that have been designated at the local level for non-LGBTQ reasons, see section below titled "Expand Significance for Existing San Francisco Landmarks and Historic Districts."

- Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality 1523 Franklin Street
- Jack’s Turkish Baths 1143 Post Street
- Japantown YWCA 1830 Sutter Street
- King Ubu/Six Gallery 3119 Fillmore Street
- Langley Porter Clinic 401 Parnassus Avenue
- Lesbian Rights Project 1370 Mission Street
- Maud’s 937 Cole Street
- Metropolitan Community Church 150 Eureka Street
- Missouri Mule 2348 Market Street
- Mona’s 440 Club 440 Broadway
- Nob Hill Cinema & Arcade 729 Bush Street
- Office of Harry Benjamin, M.D. 450 Sutter Street
- Old Crow 962 Market Street
- Paper Doll 524 Union Street
- Phyllis Lyon/Del Martin Home 651 Duncan Street
- Pride Center 890 Hayes Street
- Queen Mary’s Pub/Aunt Charlie’s 133 Turk Street
- Robert Duncan/Jess Residence 3267 20th Street
- San Francisco General Hospital 1001 Potrero Avenue
- San Francisco Turkish Baths 229 Ellis Street
- Scottish Rite Hall 1320 Van Ness Avenue
- Sha’ar Zahav 220 Danvers Street
- Silver Rail 974 Market Street
- S.I.R. Community Center 83 Sixth Street
- Sultan Turkish Baths 624 Post Street
- Suzy-Q 1741 Polk Street
- The Gangway 841 Larkin Street
- Tom Waddell Residence 141-143 Albion Street
- Tommy’s Place/12 Adler Place 529 Broadway
- Valencia Rose Café 766 Valencia Street

This list is not meant to be all-inclusive. It is intended to serve as a sampling of the types of properties that are eligible for local, state, or national designation. If a property mentioned in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement is not listed above, it does not mean that it is ineligible for landmarking. Any property mentioned in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement should be considered potentially significant to LGBTQ history.

Potential landmarks included in the list above would require further research and integrity analyses to determine whether they qualify for local landmark status. If a property qualifies for

landmark status, it would be necessary to obtain the permission of the religious congregations to nominate any of the churches. Furthermore, the City could decide not to proceed with nominating non-religious properties if their property owners object to the nomination.

DESIGNATE LGBTQ HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The LGBTQ Historic Context Statement deepens the understanding of the four areas identified as potential historic districts in San Francisco's first LGBTQ historic context statement, "Sexing the City: The Development of Sexual Identity Based Subcultures in San Francisco, 1933-1979" (2004): North Beach, Tenderloin, Polk Gulch, and Castro. Each of these neighborhoods holds clusters of extant resources that should be more carefully documented to determine the boundaries and periods of significance for each potential district. "Sexing the City" also pointed to concentrations of LGBTQ historic sites in the South of Market area and the Mission District. It is recommended that these neighborhoods receive similar attention, particularly for their associations with San Francisco's historic leather community, queer Latinos, and the concentration of lesbian cultural, political, and social spaces along the Valencia Street corridor.

Consideration should be given to the development of thematic historic districts to allow for the possibility of documenting resources that are related thematically but not located within contiguous districts. An example of this would be a citywide lesbian historic district that includes resources from the 1930s to 1950s in North Beach and sites related to the lesbian community in the Mission District and Haight-Ashbury area in the 1960s to 1990s. A second example is a discontinuous citywide historic district of sites associated with transgender history from the 1940s to the 1990s.

Designation of historic districts requires intensive research to determine historic district boundaries and periods of significance. LGBTQ historic districts, in addition to and including the areas mentioned above, may be identified as a result of future surveys and research.

EXPAND SIGNIFICANCE FOR EXISTING SAN FRANCISCO LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Information in this report can guide efforts to expand statements of significance in existing San Francisco Landmark and Historic District designations. A significant number of places noted in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement are already designated San Francisco Landmarks or are contributors to San Francisco Historic Districts. Examples of locally designated properties that are significant to LGBTQ history include the following:

- Abner-Phelps House 1111 Oak Street
- ARC/AIDS Vigil Site 50 United Nations Plaza
- Bisexual Center 544 Market Street
- Black Cat Café 710 Montgomery Street
- California Hall 625 Polk Street
- Castro Theatre 479 Castro Street
- First Unitarian Church 1187 Franklin Street
- Goodman Building 1117 Geary Boulevard
- Mission High School 3750 18th Street
- Mona's Barrel House 140 Columbus Avenue
- Osento 953-955 Valencia Street

- Redstone Labor Temple 2926-2948 16th Street
- St. Boniface Church 133 Golden Gate Avenue
- St. Francis Lutheran Church 152 Church Street
- Swedish American Hall 2174 Market Street
- The Dash 574 Pacific Avenue
- The Women’s Building 3543 18th Street
- Trinity Episcopal Church 1668 Bush Street
- War Memorial Veterans Building 401 Van Ness Avenue
- Williams Building 693 Mission Street

Revising documentation of existing landmarks and historic districts will create a more accurate record of San Francisco’s history while acknowledging the multiple layers of history embedded in much of the city’s historic built and natural environments.

CONSIDER AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Shayne Watson and Donna Graves developed an extensive community outreach and engagement program and conducted targeted research to ensure that the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement represents the diverse histories of all LGBTQ communities. However, the scope of the project and the gaps in existing archives meant that some communities were very difficult to document. Graves and Watson recommend further original research on and documentation of properties associated with LGBTQ people of color, lesbians, and people who identify as transgender or bisexual.

III. DEVELOP PROGRAMS FOR INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

CREATE A HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROGRAM AND INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS

In instances where a historic property associated with an important person, event, or institution is gone, the City could install a historical plaque to provide information about the history of the site. If the space is available, especially for more important properties, a larger interpretive display could be installed. Either way, the plaque or display ought to have text and images that provide a valuable and instructive experience.

Documentation, and even landmark designation, of places important to LGBTQ communities whose histories have not been given pride of place is only part of the work necessary to raise these histories in public memory. Developing powerful and sustained ways to make the histories of those sites available and relevant to people today is just as crucial. Even best efforts to steward historic sites can be incomplete if their stories are inaccurately conveyed or not told at all. The premise that physical structures can tell their own stories is embedded in the National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs, which suggest that buildings and other properties that meet high standards of integrity can “speak” to present-day visitors. Yet, the reality is that historic places cannot communicate their historic significance without interpretation or educational programs that inform the visitor.

Most of the sites documented in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement are often modest, vernacular buildings whose physical shells do not communicate the power and value of their history. Many people who pass by the commercial building at 440 Broadway will never know about the extraordinary history of Mona’s 440 Club. Even high-style buildings like the Beaux Arts 50 UN

Plaza are hiding critical histories such as the AIDS/ARC vigil held there for ten years in the 1980s and 1990s. As historian Dolores Hayden writes in her book *The Power of Place: Public Landscapes as Urban History* (1997):

The places of everyday urban life are, by their nature, mundane, ordinary, and constantly reused, and their social and political meanings are often not obvious.... It takes a great deal of research, community involvement and inventive signing and mapping to bring these meanings out—as well as restoration—to bring these social meanings forward. But this process can lead from urban landscape history into community-based urban preservation, as understanding the past encourages residents to frame their ideas about the present and future.¹⁷⁷⁸

Historic site interpretation can take myriad forms. The promise of new technologies as a means to recover, recall, and share histories is still unfolding. New social media including Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr can share information broadly and allow for crowd-sourcing history, and can be an important way to engage youth in preservation. As an outgrowth of the LGBTQ Historic context statement, Donna Graves and Shayne Watson developed “California Pride: Mapping LGBTQ Histories” (<https://www.historypin.org/project/469-california-pride/>), a crowd-sourced web project that invites community members to share their own memories and research in building a fuller understanding of the California’s queer historic places.

Familiar strategies of plaques and walking/driving tours can also be expanded to include interpretive artworks, performances, and film showings. Interpretive and educational projects are especially useful to mark sites where historic resources no longer stand or places important to the recent past that might not qualify for traditional landmark designation.¹⁷⁷⁹ Permanent or temporary interpretation and art projects have been shown to be powerful ways to recall histories that have been erased. Examples include the reconstruction of historic slave quarters at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, and the Pop-Up Museum of Queer History, which has organized temporary exhibits and events in New York City, Philadelphia, and Bloomington, Indiana. In circumstances where historic fabric is no longer extant and the historic meaning of a site is known to have extraordinary salience, the San Francisco Planning Department and the San Francisco Arts Commission might undertake an inter-agency project to use art to convey the resonance of a place.

In cases where preservation of a building or site is not feasible, interpretation and educational projects may serve as mitigations for demolition. To take a hypothetical example, if the site of the important leather bar Fe-Be’s at 1501 Folsom Street were to be approved for a demolition permit, mitigation could include organizing a community memory-gathering event to collect stories and material associated with the bar. Assessing whether aspects of the bar’s physical fabric should be preserved on site or donated elsewhere would be an important step.

CREATE EDUCATIONAL TOURS

Many of the properties listed in the previous sections are clustered geographically or thematically. In neighborhoods that have many LGBTQ historic sites—such as North Beach, the Tenderloin, Polk Street, Mission-Valencia, Haight, and Castro—walking or vehicular tours would provide valuable educational opportunities. For example, a walking tour of North Beach could include aspects of San

1778 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 227, 59.

1779 The California Office of Historic Preservation defines site as “the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing building, structure, or object.”

Francisco's LGBTQ history such as the development of transgender culture through cross-gender entertainment; or the beginning of institutionalized harassment of queer communities through oppressive laws and bar raids. Likewise, a tour illustrating the history of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco could span most of the city.

Sample AIDS Epidemic Tour

- 498 Castro Street: Former location of Star Pharmacy where handmade flyers warning of a new disease were posted in 1981.
- 520 Castro Street: Former location of advocacy organization founded in 1982, the Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Educational Foundation, which was renamed San Francisco AIDS Foundation.
- Castro Street to Civic Center Via Market Street: Route of initial AIDS Candlelight Memorial March (1983), one of the first public demonstrations about AIDS.
- 101 Grove Street: San Francisco Department of Public Health headquarters, which coordinated City response to AIDS.
- 55 Mason Street: Ambassador Hotel, residential hotel for people with AIDS. Pioneered "harm reduction" approach.
- 115 Diamond Street: Former location of Coming Home Hospice, reportedly the first AIDS hospice in U.S. Created in former convent of Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church.
- 890 Hayes Street: Building held offices and meetings of Shanti Project, a non-profit agency that provided services to people with AIDS and trained volunteers to support them.
- 1668 Bush Street, Trinity Episcopal Church: Former location of Project Open Hand, which delivered meals to people with AIDS.
- 380 Third Street, Former Bayview Hunters Point Foundation: Offices/clinic of Multicultural Inquiry & Research on AIDS (MIRA), which brought public health activists of color into the AIDS medical arena in 1985 and the Black Coalition on AIDS, an education and advocacy organization founded in 1986.
- 347 Dolores Street: Former office of CURAS (Comunidad Respuesta a la SIDA/Community in Response to AIDS), which provided health education from and to LGBT Latinos.
- 50 U.N. Plaza: Site of ARC/AIDS Vigil (1985-1995), described as the first use of civil disobedience to demand that the U.S. government increase funding for AIDS research and services.
- 150 Eureka Street, Metropolitan Community Church: Location of meetings of Project Inform (founded 1985), which created an army of lay experts by translating highly technical knowledge into comprehensible language, and ACT-UP, which used civil disobedience tactics to draw attention to the AIDS crisis.
- 2926-2948 16th Street, Redstone Labor Temple: Location of Theatre Rhinoceros 1984 production of *The AIDS Show, Artists Involved with Death and Survival*, a ground-breaking work coauthored by twenty San Francisco Bay Area artists.

- 747 Howard Street, Moscone Convention Center: Site of 6th International AIDS Conference (1990) drew medical professionals, scientists and activists from around the world and drew major protests. Also the location of a display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in 1987.
- Golden Gate Park, de Laveaga Dell: AIDS Memorial Grove, a public memorial garden initiated in 1988. In 1996, it was designated as a National Memorial, the only AIDS-related site in the county honored as a National Memorial by Congress.
- 2362 Market Street: Former location of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt (1987), which invited everyday people to create quilt squares for people who died of AIDS.

FUND YOUTH CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Youth engagement is an essential part of maintaining cultural memory and transmitting traditional knowledge and skills from generation to generation. San Francisco Unified School District recently introduced the first LGBT studies course at Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts. The LGBTQ Historic Context Statement can provide a foundation for similar curricula and studies and research projects undertaken by students and teachers.¹⁷⁸⁰ One example could be youth-led walking tour programs, such as the “Alleyway Tours” program developed by the Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) in 2001 as part of its Adopt-An-Alleyway” initiative. Youth participants conduct archival research and oral history interviews and develop a tour route, script, and training manual. The “Alleyway Tour” program demonstrates the potential links between heritage tourism and community empowerment, particularly among youth.

IV. SUPPORT EXISTING AND NEW STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE HISTORIC LGBTQ PROPERTIES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND CULTURE

The following strategies continue to be or could be implemented by City agencies, such as the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Planning Department. They also include tools that would need to be implemented by the community itself, via new or existing non-profit organizations or other means.

HONOR INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND LEGACY BUSINESSES

In 2013, San Francisco Heritage, the city’s main preservation advocacy group, launched a pioneering educational program called the Legacy Project. The Legacy Project is a registry of important, long-time businesses whose retention is important to the preservation of San Francisco’s culture and history. Places of business that provide goods and services create some of the critical elements in any social or cultural community. The Legacy program identified 100 establishments that are at least forty years old, “possess distinctive architecture or interior design, and/or contribute to a sense of history in the surrounding neighborhood.”¹⁷⁸¹ This campaign already includes a number of LGBTQ businesses such as the Bernal Heights bar, Wild Side West, the Gangway Bar in the Tenderloin, and the Castro neighborhood restaurant Café Flore. In recent years, several factors, including a dramatic rise in commercial rents, have led to the closure of long-

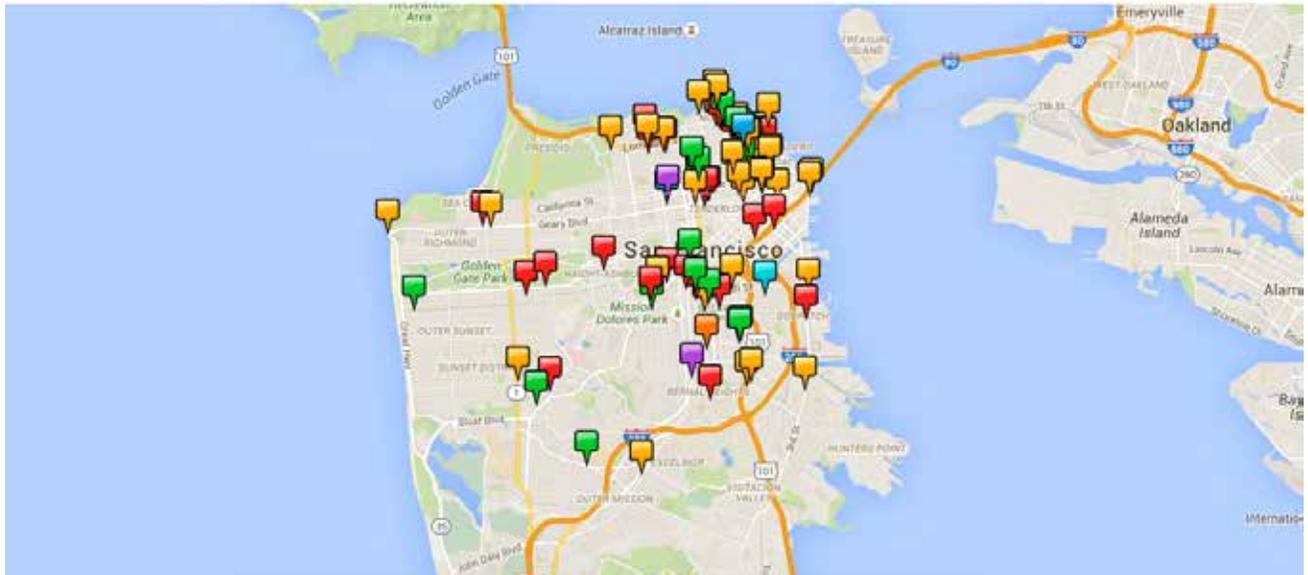
1780 Laura Dudnick, “Curriculum Completed for First-Ever LGBT Studies Course at SF Public High School,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 21, 2015 <http://www.sfexaminer.com/curriculum-completed-for-first-ever-lgbt-studies-course-at-sf-public-high-school/>.

1781 San Francisco Heritage, “San Francisco’s Legacy Bars and Restaurants,” <http://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/>.

San Francisco's Legacy Bars and Restaurants

Learn More About the Legacy Project

- Bar
- Cafe
- Restaurant
- Restaurant & Bar
- Brewery
- Confectionery
- Bakery



Map of San Francisco Heritage's Legacy Bars and Restaurants (Courtesy SF Heritage)

standing queer institutions, such as Latino drag bar Esta Noche (3079 16th Street) and the city’s last full-time lesbian bar, the Lexington Club (3464 19th Street).

In 2014, San Francisco Heritage published a report “Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History” that developed a framework for advocates and planners to work together to identify and protect “social heritage” resources.¹⁷⁸² San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors recently created a related program to create a “Legacy Business Registry” comprised of bars, restaurants, retail stores, arts, and performance spaces, and businesses engaged in production, distribution, and repair that have been located in San Francisco for at least thirty years and have contributed to the history and identity of a neighborhood or community. While a registry simply identifies important heritage businesses, the legislation tasks the Small Business Commission with recommending programs to aid in their retention that might include public education and commendation initiatives, technical assistance for business operations and property acquisition, and financial incentives such as a rebate of the City’s transfer tax.¹⁷⁸³ A ballot measure slated for the Fall 2015 San Francisco election proposes creation of a Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund to support some of these strategies.

It is recommended that more LGBTQ businesses be added to this program to gain heightened exposure through Heritage’s Legacy program and the City’s Legacy Business Registry—especially as a way to stave off closure of important queer places that cannot compete with rents as they escalate in San Francisco’s hyper-speculative real estate market.

CREATE LGBTQ HERITAGE CORRIDOR SPECIAL USE DISTRICTS

The intent of a Special Use District is to help protect cultural character by requiring Planning Commission approval for many retail uses in the neighborhood. SUDs can protect cultural character of a specific community by requiring conditional use authorizations from the Planning Commission for changes in use or the merger of existing uses. To receive this conditional use authorization, the Planning Commission has to determine that the land use is compatible with the cultural and historic integrity, neighborhood character, development pattern, and design aesthetic of the neighborhood. A Japantown Special Use District was established in 2006 and covers the area between Fillmore Street, Bush Street, Laguna Street, and Geary Boulevard. One key component of that project was the development of a Social Heritage Inventory, which lists the important intangible aspects of the neighborhood’s culture such as family businesses, cultural events, and musical traditions.

The strategies explored in Japantown have inspired other attempts to pursue the idea of cultural preservation through city planning.¹⁷⁸⁴ At the outset of the Western South of Market (SOMA) Community Plan process, representatives of the area’s long-standing Filipino and LGBTQ communities worked with a citizens’ task force and City planners to propose a pair of “Social Heritage Districts” aimed at protecting their legacies. The proposed LGBTQ Social Heritage SUD would establish a Citizens Advisory Committee to guide the Planning Department on support for LGBTQ businesses, preservation of cultural heritage assets, and leverage of Community Benefit Agreements.¹⁷⁸⁵ This approach could also be applied to LGBTQ cultural heritage assets in other

1782 San Francisco Heritage, “Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets,” (2014) <http://www.sfheritage.org/cultural-heritage/>.

1783 San Francisco Board of Supervisors, “Legacy Business Registry,” <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=3519861&GUID=7F9A3D13-2959-4CC5-A836-CA5C63BE42D1>.

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neighborhoods, such as the Castro, Mission, and Tenderloin. LGBTQ Cultural Heritage Corridor SUDs would help to ensure that the community has a voice in ensuring that businesses located within an established district reflect the neighborhood's culture and history and enhance the viability of the individual businesses.

MARKET SIGNIFICANT LGBTQ SITES AND NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH SF TRAVEL

San Francisco Travel Association (SFTravel) is a non-profit whose mission is to “enhance the local economy by marketing San Francisco and the Bay Area as the premier destination for conventions, meetings, events and leisure travel.” It functions as the City's convention and visitors bureau, aggressively marketing and selling San Francisco to attract visitors. About half of SFTravel's funding is public money generated from the City's assessment on gross hotel room revenue. Most of the rest comes from the private sector in the form of membership dues, advertising, e-commerce and program revenues. SFTravel provides visitors with the information they need for an enjoyable and productive visit, including where to stay, eat, and shop, how to get around, and what to do (e.g., arts, culture, and nightlife). San Francisco Travel membership provides admission to events, market briefings, outlook forums and partner business exchanges, listings online and in publications, and access to the convention calendar.

SFTravel's marketing materials, website, and partnerships can be used to emphasize the social heritage of any cultural heritage corridors, such as Broadway in North Beach and Castro Street in the Castro, and other visitor attractions. This can help increase business and turnout at cultural performances, events, and festivals, and, thereby, support the affiliated organizations and institutions. This process can help these corridors to better capture some of the billions of dollars spent annually by tourists in San Francisco.

IMPLEMENT INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Invest in Neighborhoods (IIN) is a new program of the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The purpose of IIN is to foster job creation and economic development in neighborhood commercial districts through strategic and coordinated deployment of existing City programs across multiple departments. These programs offer a variety of tools focused on neighborhood revitalization and business assistance that could assist with the preservation of social heritage in LGBTQ cultural heritage corridors.

Benefits: Invest in Neighborhoods can provide a range of benefits, including:

- Design and development assistance that could be targeted to specific businesses and buildings (e.g., compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) and/or be provided to the neighborhood in general (e.g., graffiti abatement)
- Loans/grants/financial assistance services that could be targeted to businesses, organizations, and institutions, including the SF Shines: Façade and Tenant Improvement Grant.
- Marketing services, business recruitment, and programming and activation services that could be targeted to specific business, properties, and for cultural activities and events, and that could be used to market LGBTQ neighborhood businesses and events to other San Franciscans.

- Technical assistance that can help businesses, organizations, and cultural events navigate the City's permit system
- Organizational support services that could be targeted to specific organizations, including those that are involved with traditional arts, crafts, and practices
- Having a single point of contact within City government that can help support all cultural preservation and enhancement efforts

V. CONTINUE TO OFFER INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVING LGBTQ HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There are a number of incentives currently in place that could help to support and promote the cultural heritage of LGBTQ communities and economic sustainability of LGBTQ-owned businesses in San Francisco. The following is a list of some of the incentives that are implemented by the City of San Francisco, State of California, and National Park Service.

LANDMARK DESIGNATION UNDER ARTICLE 10 OF THE PLANNING CODE

Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code contains lists of individual buildings and districts considered historically, architecturally, or socially significant, either individually or as a contributor to a landmark district. Buildings listed under Article 10 receive specialized review and protection by the City of San Francisco. As a benefit, the buildings' owners are eligible for economic incentives to help keep their properties economically viable.

MILLS ACT FOR DESIGNATED HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Mills Act is one of the best preservation incentives available to private property owners to help rehabilitate, restore and maintain their historic buildings. Enacted by the State of California in 1976 and adopted by the City of San Francisco in 1996, the Mills Act allows the City to enter into a contract with owners of privately owned historic properties to ensure the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and long-term maintenance of the property. In exchange, the property owner receives a reduction in property taxes for the life of the contract.

CALIFORNIA HISTORIC BUILDING CODE (CHBC)

The renovation of historic buildings is often difficult when older buildings must meet the standards of modern building codes (including Uniform Building Code, City Building Code, Fire Code, Plumbing Code) whose regulations are designed for contemporary construction technologies. Application of the CHBC can provide creative solutions to achieve the health, safety and welfare requirements for these historic buildings. The measures permitted by the CHBC are more sensitive to the historic conditions of a building than standard building codes. The CHBC allows flexibility in meeting building code requirements for rehabilitated structures. Generally, building owners can enjoy substantial cost savings when rehabilitating an historic structure by using the CHBC. The Department of Building Inspection applies the CHBC, including determining which buildings are eligible.

FEDERAL REHABILITATION TAX INCENTIVES

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. There are two levels of tax incentives: 20% and 10%. The 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The 20% credit is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence. The 10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use.

ENCOURAGE FAÇADE EASEMENTS FOR DESIGNATED HISTORIC PROPERTIES

One of the oldest strategies for historic preservation is a historic preservation façade easement. An easement ensures the preservation of a property's significant architectural and essential features while allowing the owner to continue to occupy and use the property subject to the provisions of the easement. A preservation easement is created by deed and is typically donated or sold to a public or private preservation organization. Either the City or a qualified preservation group, such as San Francisco Architectural Heritage can hold title to the easement, which allows the property owner a one-time tax deduction and the holder has the right to review any changes to features covered by the easement.

CHAPTER 7.

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Community historians at the November 2013 workshop sharing memories of LGBTQ sites in San Francisco that are important to their history (Photos by Randolph Jonsson)

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