

# Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources

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*September 2019*



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## List of Acronyms

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union	LGBTQ	Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer
APA	American Psychiatric Association	LGBT-RAN	LGBT-Religious Archives Network
BWMT	Black and White Men Together	LSA	Lambda Student Alliance
CCW	Community Church of Washington	MCC	Metropolitan Community Church
CDC	Centers for Disease Control	MSW	Mattachine Society of Washington
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith	NCBLG	National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays
CHAP	Commission for Historical and Archival Preservation	NCBG	National Coalition of Black Gays
CPA	Captial Pride Alliance	NHL	National Historic Landmark
CSC	Civil Service Commission	NOW	National Organization for Women
DC/District	District of Columbia	NPS	National Park Service
DCOP	DC Office of Planning	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	PCP	pneumocystis earinii peneumonia
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation	RHP (DC)	Rainbow History Project (Digital Collections)
FMW	Friends Meeting of Washington	RPCC	Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention
GAA	Gay Activists Alliance	SGL	Soha Gakkai International-USA
GLAA	Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
GLF	Gay Liberation Front	SGL	Same gedner loving [couple]
GMVDC	Gay Men's Venereal Disease Clinic	SME	subject matter expert
GRID	Gay Related Immunodeficiency Diseases	SOI	Secretary of the Interior
GWA	Gay Women's Alternative	SOUP	Some of Us Press
GWOH	Gay Women's Open House	TPOCC	Trans People of Color Coalition
HPRB	Historic Preservation Review Board	UHU	Us Helping Us
HSL-DC	Homophile Social League of DC		
ILM	Invisible Light Ministries United Church of Christ	WWC	Whitman-Walker Health Clinic
IMCW	Insight Meditation Community of Washington	WWH	Whitman-Walker Health
KS	Kaposi sarcoma	YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States is in the midst of tremendous social change, and one of those changes is the national progressive, forward movement led by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) communities. The U.S. Supreme Court legalization of same-sex marriage on June 26, 2015 was a recent pinnacle moment that underscored some of the progress achieved since LGBTQ activists began organizing in the 1950s. These recent landmark achievements represent a decades long journey, from the legalized oppression of LGBTQ individuals to some levels of protection under the law.

The National Park Service (NPS), “America’s storyteller,” announced its LGBTQ Heritage Initiative in 2014 as a theme study, written and peer-reviewed by more than 30 subject matter experts (SMEs) and completed and released on National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2016.<sup>1</sup> Two of the 10 LGBTQ sites designated as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are in Washington, DC: the Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence and the Furies Collective House, which were listed in the NRHP on November 2, 2011, and May 2, 2016, respectively. The NPS LGBTQ Heritage Initiative is a focused effort to “tell the stories of all Americans.” This Historic Context Statement for Washington’s LGBTQ Resources (DC LGBTQ Study, Study), funded by an Underrepresented Community grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, is a direct response to the nationwide effort to broaden the historical narrative of the LGBTQ communities by documenting their history in Washington, DC (DC, District, District of Columbia). In 2014 the District of Columbia Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office (OP-HPO) received an NPS grant to complete this Study in solidarity with the NPS LGBTQ Heritage Initiative. Following similar undertakings by cities like San Francisco and New York, the District has shared and distinct contributions to add to this national narrative.

Washington, DC, the nation’s capital, is the ideal place to garner federal attention on issues that have escalated beyond the local and state level. The District has been the site of several critical organizing LGBTQ activist demonstrations. Several LGBTQ national organizations are headquartered in the District, including the Human Rights Campaign, the National LGBTQ Task Force, and the National Black Justice Coalition. DC-based activist groups and organizations, such as the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance, Khush DC, and the Rainbow History Project (RHP), organized locally within this national scope. Some DC groups began in other cities (e.g., the Mattachine Society founded in Los Angeles, National Coalition of Black Gays formed in Columbia, Maryland), whereas other are DC originals (e.g., The Furies Collective).

The OP-HPO LGBTQ Study echoes the sentiment of Frank Kameny, PhD, a DC-based activist who made immense national headway for LGBTQ civil rights in the 1960s, by striving to document “a community of people identical to other American citizens except for the objects of their affections.”<sup>2</sup> The District is a microcosm of national movements, local experiences, and international relations. It truly reflects that it is a community “at the center of dominant discourses around homosexuality, shaping and being shaped by national politics.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service [NPS], LGTBQ Theme Study Fact Sheet (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, October 2016a).

<sup>2</sup> Mark Meinke, Prologue: Why LGBTQ Sites Matter, in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, Megan E. Springate, ed. (Washington, DC: National Park Service [NPS], U.S. Department of the Interior, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lgbtqheritage/upload/lgbtqtheme-prologue.pdf>), 01-3.

<sup>3</sup> Brett Beemyn, *A Queer Capital: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Life in Washington, D.C., 1890-1955* (Iowa City: doctoral dissertation, Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1997), 2.

## Methodology

The DC LGBTQ Context Study was carried out in two phases. Phase I occurred in 2016, and its accomplishments included the following.

- The establishment of a foundational historical timeline for the context study
- Identification of major themes to organize the development and understanding of the context study
- Public scoping engagement with a subject matter expert (SME) panel to provide expertise on the themes and topics that shaped LGBTQ history in DC, to aid in the development of this context

The Phase I accomplishments provided the framework for this Phase II historic context statement. The context statement's purpose is not solely to provide the narrative of each contextual theme but also to identify significant DC citizens, places, and spaces associated with each of these themes. The LGBTQ context statement is similar to the NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form, which evaluates groups of related properties.<sup>4</sup> The historic context statement serves as a basis for identifying and evaluating resources associated with the seven themes listed in the sidebar. Chapter 2 introduces significant DC citizens, places, and spaces associated with the thematic development of LGBTQ history. The context examines a mainstream perspective of social, sexual, and gender ideas in American society challenged and broadened by LGBTQ people and groups.

This context relies heavily on two DC-specific dissertations: *A Queer Capital: A History of Gay Life in Washington, D.C.* (1997) by Brett Beemyn, and *Lesbian and Gay D.C.: Identity, Emotion, and Experience in Washington, D.C.'s Social and Activist Communities (1961-1986)* (2010) by

## CONTEXT THEMES

**Theme 1: Historical Background on Human Sexuality** mentions the colonial era's early national beliefs about human sexuality that included homophobia and strict gender conformity. Challenging these entrenched beliefs became a basis for future LGBTQ civil activism.

**Theme 2: Politics, Law, and the Quest for Civil Rights** explores the political and legal environment through the 1950s, which was one of oppression and persecution as well as the seeds of resistance.

**Theme 3: Activism and the Fight for Equal Rights** outlines the organizing of multiple LGBTQ activists and groups in D.C.

**Theme 4: Community Development : Social Spaces and Places** explains how marginalized LGBTQ groups internally split along racial, social, gender, and class lines found community in the District. This chapter explains the challenging endeavor of finding community safe havens within the District's social spaces and places.

**Theme 5: Arts and Expression** highlights several historical figures of national repute in the LGBTQ community, known for its rich heritage of expression within all realms of the arts and academia.

**Theme 6: Health Advocacy** tackles the controversial but evolving opinion of the medical community toward understanding homosexuality, the response to the AIDS epidemic, and early healthcare initiatives for the LGBTQ community.

**Theme 7: Religion and Spirituality** discusses the local places of worship and their roles in LGBTQ activism generally and AIDS activism specifically.

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<sup>4</sup> NPS, *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, DC: NPS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991, revised 1999, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb16b.pdf>).



Rebecca Dolinsky, now Rebecca Graham. The other citywide LGBTQ histories that proved useful in organizing this study include *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco* (March 2016) by Donna Graves and Shayne Watson, and the *Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City* (May 2018) led by Jay Shockley with assistance from Amanda Davis, Andrew Dolkart, and Ken Lustbader.

## Study Terminology

Susan Ferentinos, author of the NPS LGBTQ Heritage Study Chapter entitled “Interpreting LGBTQ Historic Sites,” states that “it is the modern label [LGBTQ], not the topic itself that is problematic...there is no one universally agreed upon lexicon to describe variant sexuality and gender expression, with preferences varying by generation, subculture, geographic region, and personal inclination.”<sup>5</sup> In the words of Dr. Frank Kameny, “LGBTQ communities reflect the heterogeneity of heterosexual society.”<sup>6</sup> Kameny “was an ardent advocate of using the word “gay” in all of its 1960s inclusiveness,” but the LGBTQ acronym has its own history, and early sexologists made the mistake of “collapsing into one category a range of sexual orientations that we would now distinguish as bisexuality, transgender, and/or same-sex sexuality.”<sup>7</sup> LGBTQ is a broad label that includes diverse individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. The “Q” of the acronym also has diverse meanings, and although it is most commonly known as “queer,” it can also refer to “questioning.”

The term transgender had been in occasional use since the 1970s; in the 1990s queer was becoming the term of choice for many young people. In the late 1990s, the acronym LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) came into use, as did LGBTQ, though “gay-and-lesbian” remained the most frequent descriptor, and was meant to be inclusive into the twenty-first century...with the growing visibility of transgender people and the increasing willingness of bisexuals to identify themselves, LGBT became a popular term by the second decade of the twenty-first century. Other groups demanding recognition, have stretched the acronym as far as LGBTQQIAAP (which also includes Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Allies and Pansexual).<sup>8</sup>

In DC in the 1960s, white homophile activists used *gay* as an umbrella term that encompassed men and women. In the 1970s an influx of new terms reflected the intersectional lives of queer individuals and groups. In the 1990s some individuals in queer black communities began using the term *same-gender-loving*. And current terms, e.g., *Latinx*, encompass the intersectionality of queer individuals even further.

Preparers of this study grappled with the most consistent way to discuss a very diverse group of people. Where the discussion refers to the diversity of sexual orientation, the study uses the term “LGBTQ” or “queer.” Where the discussion is in relation to a specific group they are appropriately identified (e.g., gay men, lesbian, bisexual).

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<sup>5</sup> Susan Ferentinos, Chapter 31: Interpreting LGBTG Historic Sites, In *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, Megan E. Springate, ed. (Washington, DC: NPS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2016), 31-7, 31-8.

<sup>6</sup> Meinke, Prologue, 01-5

<sup>7</sup> Meinke, Subject Matter Expert Feedback on Draft: Chapter 1 - Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources (email, September 20, 2018); Leisa Meyer and Helis Sikk, Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) History in the United States, in Megan Springer, ed., *LGBTQ American: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History* (Washington, DC: NPS, 2016), 03-13.

<sup>8</sup> Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015).

## Research Limitations of the Study

Certain historically underrepresented groups within the larger LGBTQ community (e.g., Native American, Latino, Asian, Jewish, Muslim, Pacific Islander, bisexual, transgender, queer, and youth) remain inadequately documented nationwide and within the District. “Excavating history,” as posed by Megan Springate, is a modern attempt to discover what it was like to be someone that lived in a historic era who left no clear accounts about their experience. “And the truth is, the historical record yields the most information on same-sex sexuality from an urban, middle-class, white, cis-gendered male perspective. Female perspectives and those of people of color remain elusive, coded or don’t exist at all.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore,

This is an extremely important consideration when approaching same-sex desire and sexual activity in the past. The historical agents being studied may have understood their feelings, identities, and behavior quite differently than we would understand those same circumstances in our own era. Thus historians need to evaluate source material within the context of the time in which it was created, rather than relying on their own (historically specific) assumptions of meaning. To take but the most obvious example: The concept of sexual orientation as a personal characteristic did not become firmly entrenched until the turn of the twentieth century. Same-sex sexual activity certainly existed before this, but in earlier eras the emphasis was on behavior, not psychology.<sup>10</sup>

For these reasons the majority of the DC LGBTQ Study focuses on black and white gay men and lesbians. Whenever possible, the bisexual, transgender, and Latinx perspectives of the District’s LGBTQ experience are included. This study cannot presume to fully reflect or represent the myriad groups of DC’s LGBTQ communities. Chapter 4 includes a recommendation for a grassroots oral history initiative to capture underrepresented histories that would expand the District’s LGBTQ history.

## Acknowledgements

This study originated through the vision of D.C. Office of Planning director Eric D. Shaw, and was sustained throughout by his steadfast enthusiasm. It was guided by OP-HPO staff Steve Callcott and Patsy Fletcher, and the local SMEs on LGBTQ history, Mark Meinke, Vincent Slatt, Monica Rhodes, Eric Gonzaba, and Derek Gray, who volunteered their time to assist with the was guided by OP-HPO staff Steve Callcott and Patsy Fletcher, and the local SMEs on LGBTQ history, Mark Meinke, Vincent Slatt, Monica Rhodes, Eric Gonzaba, and Derek Gray, who volunteered their time to assist with the content and identification of significant local sites. Mark Meinke is co-founder of the RHP and the Rainbow Heritage Network (RHN) and also author of the NPS LGBTQ America Theme Study Introduction chapter, “Why LGBTQ Historic Sites Matter.” Vincent Slatt is a board member of the RHP and a founding member of Capital Pride Alliance (CPA). Monica Rhodes is the former Director for Hands-On Preservation Experience Crew for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and currently sits on the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) in Baltimore City. Eric Gonzaba is a doctoral candidate in American history at George Mason University, specializing in LGBT and African-American nightlife since the 1970s. He is the creator of Wearing Gay History, an award-winning digital archive and museum that documents the global LGBT experience through T-shirts. Derek Gray serves as an archivist in the Special Collections Department of the District of Columbia Public Library, and his professional interests include researching and documenting the experience of underrepresented racial, ethnic, and sexual communities of Washington. Special

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<sup>9</sup> Megan Springate, ed., *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Washington, D.: NPS, 2016), 02-14.

<sup>10</sup> Ferentinos, pp. 31-5.

acknowledgement goes to Mark Meinke, whose first-person accounts, keen reviews, and in-depth knowledge of DC LGBTQ history proved critical to the development of this context.

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 1: Historical Background on Human Sexuality

The section introduces some of the earliest accounts of LGBTQ lives that emerged during the colonial era. It broaches the challenging topic of homophobia and the criticism of homosexuality as polarizing ends to a spectrum that only recent LGBTQ inclusivity and celebration can balance. It serves to demonstrate how normative social rules, often imbued with dehumanizing bigotry, were not only challenged but changed to create today's climate of broader queer acceptance and understanding.<sup>1</sup> When compared to the current climate, this section illustrates the extent American society has changed in its acceptance of LGBTQ lives.

#### **Eighteenth Century: Colonial Beliefs About Queer Identity<sup>2</sup>**

Two cultures collided on American soil with Europe's exploration of their New World. Although new to some, the United States was home to Native Americans whose lives were very different from European colonizers. Its acceptance of queer identity was one way in which the Native American culture challenged the European *status quo*. In 1528 accounts from Native American European captives in California and Illinois observed men living together.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, David Zeisberger (1721-1808), a Moravian missionary, had "encounters with Delaware, Mohican, and Iroquois Indians [who] introduced him to radically different gender perceptions and norms of sexual conduct than his own."<sup>4</sup>

Religion was a dominating factor in the rule of European society that framed the standards of morality, ethical behavior, and legislation that formalized the persecution of queer lives (see Theme 2). By virtue of its European roots, America became a patriarchal society heavily influenced by the religious beliefs of its colonizers, even if church and state were deliberately structured to operate autonomously. An LGBTQ person would have encountered homophobia, criminalization, and/or violence during this era.

European exploration in the seventeenth century led to active imperialism in the eighteenth century. Establishing a new citizenry boiled down to very simple dynamics: birth rates and population growth. Biology and religion dictated the social preference for a married heterosexual union that produced children. The continental United States is an impressive land mass, and high fertility rates became a focal point of colonization as a means to "inhabit" the land.<sup>5</sup> Homesteading was also hard work, and the larger the family, the more hands to tend the land, which led to generational wealth.

A "critical period in the development of traditional sexuality"<sup>6</sup> began during this time as Biblical standards attempted to "manage" humanity's flaws. The religious belief system that infiltrated legislation justified

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<sup>1</sup> In case of this context study, *status quo* references a common belief held by the majority a pejorative manner, i.e., highlighting normative social rules imbued with bigotry.

<sup>2</sup> In colonial times, *queer*, a term that encompasses the diversity of human sexuality, did not exist. It is used here and within the context at large with the understanding that queer identity has always been a part of the human experience but is only recently receiving due recognition.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas A. Foster, *Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same Sex-Sexuality in Early America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Foster, 32.

<sup>5</sup> John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Foster, 2.

the criminalization of homosexuality through the twentieth century (see Theme 2). As Jennifer Terry states,

For several centuries, official disapproval of homosexual acts stemmed primarily from Judeo-Christian religious doctrine upon which secular laws proscribing “offenses against nature” were based. Religion and law constituted the principal authoritative discourses through which homosexuality was understood.<sup>7</sup>

The consequences for queer sexuality were severe; the penalty for sodomy could be castration or even death. “In the European mind, the non-gender-normative and non-sexually-normative body—however defined...was the dangerous body, the less-than-human body, even the disposable body.”<sup>8</sup>

During a settlement period there is safety and security in numbers, which makes the community a stronghold. Namesake and reputation were critical to survival during this time in American history. Safeguarding the community reputation was important, and thus an illicit sexual encounters of any type could have huge ramifications.

Sexuality in early America was not as cordoned off into a realm of “private” behavior as it is today....In colonial America, troublemakers always ran the risk of being pushed out or worse....The entire economic system, of both credit and household economies of barter, was based on character and reputation. In an era before depersonalized credit scores, what one did with one’s self – male or female, elite or ordinary, could play a vital role in securing one’s livelihood and status in the community...It is within this context that a discussion of same-sex sexuality in early America must be situated.”<sup>9</sup>

## **Nineteenth Century: The Sex Talk?**

By the mid-nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution had begun to transform the American lifestyle. Material wealth was on the rise, as was intellectualism. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, European intellectuals, philosophers, and doctors like Friederich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and Carl Jung (1875-1961) would influence American intellectuals in their understanding of the human psyche, including sexuality. During this era the notion that sex serves more than just the utilitarian purpose of procreation emerged as well as the criticism of homosexuality (as that was the only understanding of queer identity at the time) as a flaw or illness that seeped into society. The mainstream (and limited) medical opinion about sexuality perpetuated the persecution of homosexuals into the twentieth century.

It would take hundreds of years for human sexuality to become a topic of public, albeit intellectual, discussion. Education became a means to broaden understanding. Anthropologists brought new understandings of culture to mainstream American society. In 1896, over 300 years after initial accounts of same-sex behavior in Native American cultures, Washington, DC hosted We’Wha, a “Zuni maiden” and leader who became a Zuni ambassador to the United States (Plate 2-1). Anthropologist Matilda Stevenson, who had met We’Wha in 1879, hosted his visit to Washington. At the time the extent of We’Wha’s *berdache* or “two-spirited” nature was not fully appreciated, for he was received as an intriguing female

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<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Terry, *American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 40.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Foster, 2-3.

because of his dress and skill with “women’s craft.”<sup>10</sup> In the Zuni tradition members who exhibited the two sexes as either a *Zuni Man-Woman* or *Woman-Man* “made them extraordinary in every aspect.”<sup>11</sup> Albeit gradual, discourse on human sexuality grew although these studies continued to postulate conflicting interpretations. Despite this incongruence, “...what was distinct about the twentieth century was a steadily increasing effort to identify, name, and categorize sexualities and genders” in relationship to the person, not the behavior.<sup>12</sup> This distinction led to incremental positive change that was met with extreme opposition, legislative backlash, but helped to spur gay rights activism.



PLATE 2-1: We’Wha, a Zuni Man-Woman Berdache, Weaving; Full-Length Portrait (Hillers)

## The Effects of Racial Segregation and Geography on LGBTQ Community Development

Several dynamics defined early America, but one of the most damaging was the institution of slavery, which contradicted the nation’s founding principles outlined in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. In general, various Biblical, scientific, and biological interpretations were used to justify slavery and the inequitable treatment and value of the enslaved. This bias operated *de jure* for nearly 400 years until the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865, which ended slavery on paper but continued it *de facto*.<sup>13</sup> The Reconstruction era, physical racial segregation, Jim Crow policies, and state politics systemized racism as an established protocol. The legacy of the slave trade remained in the District’s consciousness.

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<sup>10</sup> The term *two-spirited* was only coined in 1990 by the Indigenous Lesbian and Gay International Gathering to replace the anthropological term *berdache*. Colonial settlers and explorers used the term *berdache* to describe those observed as being anatomically of one sex but performing tasks that were equated with the other sex.

<sup>11</sup> Will Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-13.

<sup>13</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation signed on January 1, 1863, freed the enslaved. The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865, made the practice of slavery unconstitutional and punishable by law.

In 1906 Mary Church Terrell, a leading civil rights activist in the first half of the twentieth century, stated: “For fifteen years I have resided in Washington...when I first touched these shores it has been doing its level best ever since to make conditions for us intolerable.”<sup>14</sup> With the election of President Woodrow Wilson in 1912, segregation “became the official policy in all federal agencies—a practice that would continue for the next thirty years.”<sup>15</sup>

The District had more slaves than free blacks when it was established in 1790. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 1800 the ratio of “black free” to “black slave” was 4:21.<sup>16</sup> By 1860 this ratio had almost completely reversed as the District experienced the Great Migration of many African-Americans who relocated from the South to cities in the North, Midwest, and West beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Foreign immigrants came from abroad in record numbers during the same time, between 1880 and 1920. Regional epicenters like New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and the District became ideal places for newly freed blacks and burgeoning LGBTQ communities. It was a hushed fact that Lafayette Square in DC, which is adjacent to the White House, was a known cruising spot for gay men, both black and white. For example, in his published diaries,<sup>17</sup> “Jeb Alexander” (a pseudonym for a white gay man living in D.C.) described at length his cruising days at Lafayette Square during the early twentieth century. Lincoln Park near Capitol Hill was another popular cruising location.

Segregation nationally divided the white and black populations in virtually every community. Segregation is an additional social divide that affected African-American communities more so than whites because white communities set the *status quo*. This becomes an important distinction when exploring the history of African-American LGBTQ communities and the additional dynamics at play for queer people of color. Major challenges to the District’s segregation practices in the 1950s had polarizing effects on the District’s demographics. In 1950 the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of the D.C. Anti-Discrimination Laws, led by Mary Church Terrell, challenged the segregationist practices at Thompson’s Restaurant through nonviolent direct action.<sup>18</sup> Terrell, 86 years old at the time, helped lead pickets, boycotts, and sit-ins at no less than 99 restaurants by November 1950 in an effort to desegregate DC.<sup>19</sup> In 1953 the Supreme Court ruled against Thompson’s Restaurant, effectively ending segregation in the city;<sup>20</sup> however, the ruling began “white flight,” as white citizens fled from the urban center to the suburbs, which “drastically changed the demographics of the capital.”<sup>21</sup> Between 1950 and 1960, the black population in DC jumped from 18.9 percent to 53.9 percent of the total population, and the white population dropped from 19.4 percent to 45.2 percent.<sup>22</sup> These shifting demographics contributed to the separate worlds inhabited by DC’s black and white LGBTQ individuals, as their communities began to take shape in the 1950s and 1960s.

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<sup>14</sup> Beverly Washington Jones, *Quest for Equality: The Life and Writings of Mary Eliza Church Terrell, 1863-1954* (New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1990), 283 (edited).

<sup>15</sup> Ginny Beemyn, *A Queer Capital: A History of Gay Life in Washington, D.C.* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 49.

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Dolinsky, *Lesbian and Gay DC: identity, Emotion, and Experience in Washington, DDC’s Social and Activist Communities (1961-1986)* (Santa Cruz: Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California-Santa Cruz, 2010), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ina Russell, *Jeb and Dash: A Diary of a Gay Life, 1918-1945* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> The subsequent court case against the Thompson’s Restaurant was tried before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1953.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, 75.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, 84.

<sup>21</sup> G. Beemyn, 9.

<sup>22</sup> United States Bureau of the Census [U.S. Census], Table 23, District of Columbia - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1800 to 1990, in *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1790 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Population Division Working Paper No. 56, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002).

Where one lived had much to do with freedom of expression, especially for queer individuals.

The interlocking processes of urbanization and industrialization created a social context in which an autonomous personal life could develop. Affection, intimate relationships, and sexuality moved increasingly into the realm of individual choice, seemingly disconnected from how one organized the production of goods necessary for survival. In this setting, men and women who felt a strong erotic attraction to their own sex could begin to fashion from their feeling a personal identity and a way of life....Men and women had first of all to find their fellows. Largely invisible and still rudimentary, the gay subculture easily escaped detection. In the first decades of the twentieth century many, perhaps even most gay women and men undoubtedly spent the better part of their adulthood in relative or total isolation from their own kind.<sup>23</sup>

In rural areas and small urban and rural communities where “everybody knows everybody,” privacy is a luxury. Within white and black communities, a person who actively engaged in same-sex relationships and encounters could only do so in certain places without being caught and subjected to potentially life-threatening situations. For the black community, particularly those in elite circles, the “politics of respectability” (discussed in the next section) often meant that gay men had to travel to other cities to meet and co-mingle with each other so they could safeguard their individual reputations as well as that of the community. The early colonial dynamics of community protection and reputation persisted in black communities that struggled with the same dynamics of settling into a “new world” created by segregation. A shared experience between black and white queer communities was the stigma against queer sexuality that existed both sides of the racial divide.

### **Race and *Respectability Politics* in the Black Community**

The black community has experienced the longest history of racism in the country, which led to the establishment of semi-autonomous neighborhoods throughout the country. Underground LGBTQ communities in DC were white or black, furthering the District’s firmly established racial divide. Beemyn’s study provides great insight to this early history. Although geographically the pivot point between North and South, DC was and remains a “Southern” city largely because of these historical demographics, racial divisions, and its history with slavery. DC had the largest black population of “any major U.S. city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,”<sup>24</sup> and “separate but equal” segregation practices.

DC historical records focus mainly on white and black populations, particularly as the city was primarily black and white. As intended, racism and segregation in DC meant that LGBTQ individuals and groups socialized and organized separately; interracial relationships were antagonized. This is reflected in “Jeb Alexander’s” documented cruising practices in Lafayette Square. In his diary Alexander, a white gay man, used a racist epithet when describing a bench typically populated by black men who cruised the square.<sup>25</sup> All of Alexander’s sexual partners were also “seemingly white and Christian.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed, “racism in Washington...meant that white people, including individuals who were attracted to others of the same sex, rarely frequented establishments in black neighborhoods in the 1920s and 1930s.”<sup>27</sup> However, racial

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<sup>23</sup> D’Emilio, 11, 21.

<sup>24</sup> G. Beemyn, pp.2.

<sup>25</sup> G. Beemyn, 21.

<sup>26</sup> G. Beemyn, 20.

<sup>27</sup> G. Beemyn, 26.



segregation within the drag community was not as common at locales such as the Crystal Caverns and the Republic Gardens, which attracted mixed-race audiences.<sup>28</sup>

Jim Crow segregation governed inter-community relations between white and black populations throughout most of the country. Albeit emancipated, the black communities of America did not have free access to all of the benefits of white or immigrant citizenry. Jim Crow policies in Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware influenced the District. Under the Woodrow Wilson administration (1913-1921), “segregation became the official policy in all federal agencies—a practice that would continue for the next thirty years.”<sup>29</sup>

Washington, DC had one of the largest African-American populations in the country through the twentieth century and therefore held large sway over other black communities. “Such a nationwide social network radiating from the capital meant that its [African-American] bourgeoisie had a tremendous impact on Black middle-class attitudes and behavior beyond just Washington, D.C.”<sup>30</sup> But the African-American community was also divided within itself by class and color to such an extent that “the social breach between the masses and the classes of Negroes in Washington [was] more pronounced than in any other city.”<sup>31</sup>

Beemyn invokes the notion of respectability politics when discussing black LGBTQ individuals, particularly from elite social classes who “sought to distinguish” themselves<sup>32</sup> by using discretion in their sexual identities during the early twentieth century. For a person of color, the need to present a respectable front to white society was crucial in an era marked by racist stereotypes (e.g., blacks are lazy, uneducated, untrustworthy, sexually promiscuous). Any socializing for persons of color attracted to the same sex had to be remarkably guarded or abandoned altogether “for the greater good” of the community and “the people.” Long before many in the early homophile movement would seek to “win the good opinion of the public and the authorities by showing themselves to be discreet, dignified, virtuous and respectable,”<sup>33</sup> black LGBTQ individuals lived under this unspoken rule. For most individuals who bucked the *status quo*, issues of propriety, diplomacy, and tact tended to mitigate the backlash involved in doing so. *Respectability politics* existed within white communities when it involved inter-racial and/or inter-class relationships.

## Gender Expectations

### *Gender Norms for Men*

Masculinity continues to be gauged by a posture, tone of confidence, an outward portrayal of virility, and even a certain height. These subjective qualities vary by culture but in Western societies, effeminate men

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<sup>28</sup> Meinke, Re: DC LGBTQ History: Review Request (email to Kisa Hooks, Rebecca Graham, Steven Bedford, September 18, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> B. Beemyn, 52.

<sup>30</sup> B. Beemyn, 3.

<sup>31</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 164; Bert H. Thurber, *The Negro at the Nation's Capital, 1913-1921* (New Haven, CT: doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1973), 7; Kelly Miller, *Where Is the Negro's Heaven? Opportunity* 4 (December 1926):370-373, cited in B. Beemyn, 59.

<sup>32</sup> G. Beemyn, 48.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Sibalis, *Gay Liberation Comes to France: The Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR)*, in *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar, vol. 1*, Ian Collier, Helen Davies, and Julie Kalman, eds., (Melbourne: The George Rudé Society, 2005), 267.

were historically denigrated. Their demeanor could be excused under the guise of academia and/or an artistic profession. This bias still exists today but to a lesser extent. The historical norm was that men married women by a certain age, and those who remained single too long often came under scrutiny. For single men it was acceptable to room together in rooming houses versus an individual home or apartment.<sup>34</sup> A rooming house had a guardian, who acted as a chaperone and could curtail unacceptable behavior. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) became one of the best known rooming houses that also offered character-building social interactions in a respectable venue. However, the YMCA, "especially through the 1920s and 1930s, became a visible and internationally noted place for homosexual men to find one another for sex and socializing" (see Theme 4).<sup>35</sup>

For bisexual or gay men, it was common to marry women to preserve the outward appearance of the expected, traditional male role. There are mixed accounts about the gender orientation of Countee Cullen, a Harlem Renaissance poet, playwright, and novelist who attended Howard University. Cullen's father was a minister, but in Alain Locke, a Howard university professor who carefully guarded his homosexuality, Cullen found a relatable father-figure and mentor. Beemyn's thesis references Cullen's short-lived relationship with another student, Ralph Loeb, as well as other men.<sup>36</sup> However, Cullen ultimately married Yolanda DuBois, the daughter of W.E.B. DuBois. In doing so, Cullen had a father-in-law and minister father who were both vocal about their anti-homosexual positions, leaving Cullen to lead what was apparently a duplicitous life. Perhaps by today's standards he would have identified as bisexual. Mixed accounts such as these represent the quandary of "excavating history" mentioned in the Preface.

There are other historic accounts of powerful gay men who led homophobic agendas to safeguard their reputation, positions, and livelihood. The most notorious high-ranking federal "hunter" was J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for 48 years.<sup>37</sup> This history is further explored in Theme 3. To what extent we can infer the truth about Countee Cullen or Hoover is limited, as it appears neither of them left autobiographical accounts.

### *Gender Norms for Women*

Overall, women were subservient to men on both sides of the racial divide as dutiful housewives and homemakers. If they were visible in the marketplace, it was usually in partnership with a husband or other male family member. In terms of sexuality, it was understood that women were the objects of desire for men and as such could be treated in multiple ways, from loving soul-mate and quasi-equal to abused and battered. The concept of autonomous female sexuality and needs did not enter the collective consciousness until the 1920s, when the idea of intimate lesbian relationships between women was virtually inconceivable. Women were socialized to be emotional and demonstrative with their affections, but even those were subject to standards of propriety. Women's use of "flowery," romantic language between each other was linked to the stereotype of women as "emotional creatures," not sexual ones.<sup>38</sup> Unchaperoned women were expected to socialize in private but there was a different standard when it came to living situations.

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<sup>34</sup> B. Beemyn, 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> Bronski, 111.

<sup>36</sup> B. Beemyn, 67-71.

<sup>37</sup> Shannon Gilreath, *Sexual Politics: The Gay Person in America Today* (Akron: University of Akron Press, 2006), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-9.

For single women, age and class determined how their living situation would be publically viewed; public opinion could affect a women's reputation and therefore well-being. Single women of "marrying age" could live in a rooming house governed by a matron without drawing suspicion.<sup>39</sup> The same would not hold true for young, single women living together without a chaperone. Such women were seen as uncouth, unruly, harlots, or openly "other"—who still somehow managed to make a living without negative consequences. A widowed woman drew no suspicion if she lived with another woman, especially if she was a family member, another widow, or well-known community acquaintance. Similarly, for upper-class unwed women past traditional marrying age, this living situation was also deemed proper as it was assumed that genteel women would never do anything to jeopardize their social standing. Such same-sex living situations were seen as platonic, and if intimacy was involved, it was easily concealed within private homes. One such case in DC involves life companions Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill, who shared a residence for nearly 15 years at their home at **1256 Kearney Street, NW** in the Brookland neighborhood of DC (see inset below). Speculation remains over the nature of the relationship Slowe and Burrill shared. Historic correspondence between them does not allude to sexual intimacy rather a very close bond between platonic friends.

The two friends never publicly identified as lovers, and the true nature of their relationship is, to this day, open to interpretation. But one thing is clear: The two women quietly devoted their lives to one another long before the public acceptance of same-sex couples. And even after Howard University officials tried to force Slowe to move onto campus, she [Slowe] fought for her right to remain in her home — with Burrill.<sup>40</sup>

#### LUCY DIGGS SLOWE AND MARY BURRILL



Lucy Diggs Slow (1883-1937)  
(Malesky 2015)



Mary Burrill (1881-1946)  
(UBLEP n.d.)



The Brookland Home Shared by Lucy Diggs Slowe and Mary Burrill  
(Malesky 2015)

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<sup>39</sup> B. Beemyn, 35-36.

<sup>40</sup> Samantha Schmidt, This pioneering Howard dean lived with another woman in the 1930s. Were they lovers? *Washington Post*, March 26, 2019 ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/03/26/this-pioneering-howard-dean-lived-with-another-woman-s-were-they-lovers/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.57aa27745d03](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/03/26/this-pioneering-howard-dean-lived-with-another-woman-s-were-they-lovers/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.57aa27745d03)).

Shirley Thomas, Slowe's great-great niece, remarked, "'We know the reason she wasn't married,'" alluding to Slowe's relationship with Burrill. "But even now, the family doesn't discuss it. We tend to be old-school in thinking, but I respected her for that. She went her own route, she made her own journey."<sup>41</sup>

### *Cross-Gender Expressions*

Through much of history, gender fluidity has been inextricably tied to cross-dressing. The sensation We'Wha caused in the District was not just his formidable frame, at six feet tall, but the fact that his attire was remarkably feminine. Men who cross-dressed historically were usually associated with entertainment (i.e., the theater or the circus) and performed within a prescribed space for a specific period of time (Plate 2-2). In theater, before women were able to participate, men portrayed female characters. The term *drag* is believed to have begun in the theater as female-costumed men described the sensation of their skirts dragging behind them as they performed.<sup>42</sup> Cross-dressing beyond the sphere of performance was rare and risqué regardless of race or class. Prominent and popular drag performers appeared in both white and black theaters with regularity from the 1870s onward.<sup>43</sup> In DC the theatrics of drag were particularly demonstrated in black working-class neighborhoods in the 1930s, where drag shows for "presumably heterosexual" audiences allowed African-American female impersonators to perform—and even join the audience (i.e., outside of the bounds of their performances) while in drag.<sup>44</sup> From the 1890s through the 1940s, impersonators, male and female, were regular and popular entertainment in the District's theaters



PLATE 2-2: Rae Bourbon, Famous Female Impersonator of the 1940s and 1950s (Los Angeles Public Library, Herald Examiner Collection 1955)

and nightclubs. During the "pansy craze" of the 1920s and 1930s, DC was as significant a venue as New York or Chicago. One such event, the February 1934 Impersonators Ball, was held at the **Prince Hall Masonic Temple, 1000 U Street, NW** (see Theme 5).<sup>45</sup> Ray Bourbon, a well-known female impersonator

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<sup>41</sup> Schmidt.

<sup>42</sup> Bernadette Deron, From Shakespeare to the Stonewall: The History of Drag Through 33 Images (December 15, 2018, <https://allthatsinteresting.com/history-of-drag-queens>).

<sup>43</sup> Meinke, DC LGBTQ History Review Request.

<sup>44</sup> G. Beemyn, 16, 32.

<sup>45</sup> Meinke, SME Feedback on Draft: Chapter 1.

during the 1940s, also performed in the District's Redskin Lounge, formerly located at 1628 L Street, NW.<sup>46</sup>

Women had several and varied reasons for cross-dressing: employment, patriotism, entertainment, empowerment, and identity. There are several historical accounts of women dressing as men for military service and to secure employment. Thomas(ine) Hall (ca. 1603-1629), raised female in England, reportedly dressed as a man to serve in the wars in England and France like her brothers before coming to colonial



PLATE 2-3: Full-Length Portraits of Mary Edwards Walker Showing Her Progressive Dress Reform, (left) ca. 1910, (right) ca. 1865 (Library of Congress ca. 1912 [left]; M.J. Powers [right])

Virginia, where she worked as a male servant on a Virginia tobacco plantation.<sup>47</sup> Deborah Simpson fought in the Massachusetts army as Robert Shurtleff during the Revolutionary War.<sup>48</sup> In 1866 Cathay Williams, the first black woman to serve in the Army, as William Cathay, did so successfully for nearly two years before being discovered; she enlisted in the 38th U.S. Infantry, a precursor unit to the Buffalo Soldiers.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1912) was a pioneer as the first female army medical officer. Dr. Walker began to introduce dress reform while serving in the Civil War. Proper attire for women at that time was a full-skirted dress with petticoats that were a hindrance to medical treatment in a battlefield environment (Plate 2-3). She first donned modified bloomers, a style of loose pants that could be worn under a dress in lieu of petticoats, but she began to wear full men's gear, much to the chagrin and ridicule of some of her compatriots. Although she proved herself on the battlefield and received the Medal of Honor for her service, she would find no place as a female doctor in modern society. Dr. Walker became a champion for women's suffrage and dress reform by virtue of choosing

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<sup>46</sup> Before becoming the Redskin Lounge, 1628 L Street, NW was also the location for the Maystat and the Jewel Box. All three establishments were LGBTQ-friendly clubs that catered to mixed gay and lesbian clientele from the mid-1940s through the late 1950s (see Meinke, *Maystat/JewelBox/Redskin Lounge: 1628 L St. Northwest, Washington, DC, 2017*, <https://www.historypin.org/en/lgbtq-america/geo/38.907569,-77.037613,16/bounds/38.902426,-77.052987,38.912712,-77.022238/paging/1/pin/1079275/state/map>).

<sup>47</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-3/4.

<sup>48</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-5, 03-06.

<sup>49</sup> NPS, Cathay Williams (n.d., <https://www.nps.gov/people/cwilliams.htm>); Wounded Warrior Project, The Only Known Female Buffalo Soldier (n.d., <https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/Cathay-Williams-The-Only-Known-Female-Buffalo-Soldier>).

to wear full men's attire. Accustomed to the scorn she received, she proudly pinned her Medal of Honor to her suit lapel and was a walking political statement until the day of her passing. Dr. Walker became one of the namesakes of the Whitman-Walker Clinic, later Whitman-Walker Health, an active healthcare provider that still supports the LGBTQ community (see Theme 6).

Stormy DeLarverie, from the South, was similar to Gladys Bentley, an openly lesbian female performer from Harlem who was popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Stormy DeLarverie (1920-2014) was a tall, androgynous female of mixed-race heritage. Born and raised in New Orleans, her parents moved to California, where interracial relationships were better tolerated. When Stormy first began performing, she did so as a female, but Stormé became her lesbian male persona as host of the Jewel Box Revue, a traveling troupe of female impersonators originally formed in 1939 (Plate 2-4).<sup>50</sup> Stormé as a lesbian male impersonator hosting an all-male female impersonator troupe, was an ironic success. DeLarverie is also remembered as the catalyst protestor at the Stonewall riots in New York.

To a certain extent, freedom of choice began to enter into the equation when it came to women and clothing. As social standards changed, women's dresses became more revealing, and pants slowly gained acceptance. Modesty was still expected, although that would change somewhat during the Roaring Twenties. What was once considered "normal" dress changed, and utilitarian function began to take precedence, especially when women entered the work force during World War I and World War II. However, femininity became the new standard by which "normal" was measured. Women who styled themselves as mildly tomboyish to what would be labeled "butch" opened them to shameful ridicule by women and men who would target them by bullying, violence, and even sexual violation. Lesbians met the same harsh treatment and labeling as gay men.

### Defining LGBTQ Identities

"Community' is defined as much by who is excluded as who is included...the creation of a queer community—like the creation of any other community—is always also about



PLATE 2-4: Stormy (top) and Stormé (bottom) DeLarverie, the Lesbian Male Impersonator Host of the Jewel Box Revue from 1955 to 1969 (Courtesy of Lisa Cannistraci [top]; Anderson 2013 [bottom])

<sup>50</sup> Wayne Anderson, Gay History – The Jewel Box on Broadway (photo), *HuffPost* (April 8, 2013, updated December 6, 2017, <https://images.huffingtonpost.com/2013-04-08-JewelBoxBroadway.jpg>).

constructing boundaries—boundaries that operate within communities as well as between emergent and existing communities.”<sup>51</sup> The building of LGBTQ communities was a marginalized, covert effort on both sides of the white-black racial divide in DC. Gay men and lesbians used coded language, dress, and known cruising venues to meet others. As discussed in the next theme, these locations became targeted for policing and associated violence. From the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, openly gay individuals continued to be vilified by most of society. This was a result of not only America’s religious colonial roots but also the medical labeling of homosexuality as a disorder. Even in 1969, “kissing, holding hands, and cross-dressing could all justify a charge of indecency.”<sup>52</sup> Those of same-sex affiliation adopted “coded” dress and mannerisms for the sake of safety and reputation. Closeted suppression of queer identity was a necessary reality for the sake of safety and social acceptance. For the number of unnamed, unknown, queer individuals,

it is much harder to reconstruct the emotions and experiences of lesbians and homosexuals who lived in the half century before the Second World War. Subcultural institutions were still rare. Much of the information that does survive comes from the outside, from prejudiced observers, and records the stories of men and women in distress...Unaware of sexual alternatives, they found no encouragement for same-sex eroticism. Resources for naming their desires were meager. When information about homosexuality did surface, it rarely inspired self-esteem.<sup>53</sup>

A multitude of factors creates community. Religious bias, heteronormativity, homophobia, segregation, racism, demographics, and gender normativity all became barriers against the development of LGBTQ communities. These factors explain why LGBTQ communities were “closeted” for so long—because exposure meant rejection, persecution, oppression, violence, and retaliation.

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<sup>51</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-19.

<sup>52</sup> Foster, 12.

<sup>53</sup> D’Emilio, 20.

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 2: Politics and the Quest for Civil Rights

#### Oppression, Persecution, and the Criminalization of Homosexuality

The eighteenth-century criminalization of sodomy in the American colonies reverberated well into the twentieth-century United States. And although “prudence dictated that they [homosexuals] remain unobtrusive and leave behind as little incriminating evidence as possible,”<sup>1</sup> no other site highlights gay male activity more prominently in Washington, D.C. than historic Lafayette Park, now Lafayette Square.<sup>2</sup> Located directly across the street from the White House, Lafayette Square is a 7-acre public park with a well-documented history of gay men cruising<sup>3</sup> one another in the shadows of the executive branch. As far back as 1892, Georgetown University professor Dr. Irving Rosse documented the arrest of 18 individuals in the park who “were taken away in flagrante delicto. Both black and white were represented,” but the arrested individuals were reported as mostly black men.<sup>4</sup> Racial profiling and prejudice by the Washington and U.S. Park Police existed even in sodomy arrests, although District parks were also heavily cruised by white men. “Jeb Alexander,” the gay white man who wrote numerous diaries tracking his life in Washington from the early 1900s to the mid-1960s, extensively documented his cruising attempts and successes as well as the plainclothes entrapment that he experienced in Lafayette Park.<sup>5</sup> In 1923 Alexander wrote:

To Lafayette Square. That odious plain-clothes man, the Sneak, stopped just before he reached me, pretending to watch a speeding automobile. It was really to make me look up at him. And I did, not knowing it was he. To my horror, he *sat down beside me*. I felt dazed so nerve-wracked that my eyes blurred with moisture.<sup>6</sup>

Alexander’s diary entry highlights the fear of criminalization that gay men, both black and white, felt when cruising this and other District parks during this era. Classifying consensual acts and normal congregation as a crime began the derogatory connotation of homosexuality as a societal harm.

Homosexuality, already generally regarded by many as a sign of sickness and social degeneracy, came to be associated with reckless hedonism of the Roaring Twenties that many believed had plunged the nation into the Great Depression. Normative understandings of the proper sex roles for men and women had been called into question by social and economic transformations beginning around the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, the country was wrestling with conflicting ideas about the definition of “normal” social behavior and how to deal with non-conformists. This clash reverberated on many social

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<sup>1</sup> D’Emilio, 20.

<sup>2</sup> The Lafayette Square Historic District was listed in the NRHP and designated an NHL on August 29, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> *Cruising* was the coined term for consensual same-sex solicitation that included coded words, double entendres, gestures, and even dress to signal same-sex preference.

<sup>4</sup> Irving C. Rosse, Sexual Hypochondriasis and Perversion of the Genesic Instinct. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* (NY) 19 (whole series), 17 (new series) (11-November 1892):806, in Paula Martinac, Lafayette Park (LGBTQ History and Historic Sites, 2009, <https://queerestplaces.com/2009/01/13/lafayette-park/>); B. Beemyn, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Russell.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, 64, emphasis by Alexander.

<sup>7</sup> Terry, 268.



levels. For example, those of a higher class who married “below” their status were often shunned or disinherited. Interracial relationships were not only taboo but potentially dangerous; people were encouraged to marry one’s “own kind.” On the other hand, the women’s suffrage movement encouraged women to consider and even act upon a new spirit of independence embodied within the political movement. “At a time when men’s traditional economic and social roles were eroding,”<sup>8</sup> the seeds of women’s liberation and more open lesbianism emerged, and therefore women found in same-sex “situations” were not subject to the same criminalization as men...yet. The idea of female homosexuality, and even heterosexual female sexuality, remained something of a mystery; early studies on human sexuality focused on normative male practices. Nevertheless, the negative connotation of same-sex desire in men did not bode well for the same in women.

In DC male homosexuality was criminalized publicly through campaigns like the “War on the Sex Criminal” initiated under the J. Edgar Hoover era (1924-1972) at the FBI. The District was still under full control of the federal government at the time.<sup>9</sup> The move to dismiss both “communists and homosexuals from the federal government began in the State Department in 1947.”<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the harassment of gay men in well-known cruising areas continued. The “Pervert Elimination Campaign” of 1947 ensured that hundreds of men were arrested for cruising in D.C. and held “just long enough to fingerprint, photograph, and record [their] names and occupations,” so that they could be entered into a federally designated “pervert file.”<sup>11</sup> In 1948 the U.S. Congress passed the Miller Act, which:

...made sodomy punishable by up to twenty years in prison. It also mandated that anyone accused of sodomy (defined as either anal or oral sex) had to be examined by a psychiatric team.... If a man were picked up several times by the D.C. police for cruising in Lafayette Park, for instance, the psychiatric team could diagnose him to be a “sexual psychopath,” and he could be committed to the criminal ward of the District of Columbia’s St. Elizabeth’s psychiatric hospital<sup>12</sup>, even before being allowed his day in court. Under section 207 of the bill, he would remain there until the superintendent of St. Elizabeth’s “finds that he has sufficiently recovered.” The Senate Committee on the District of Columbia called the Miller Act a “humane and practical approach to the problem of persons unable to control their sexual emotions.”<sup>13</sup>

The Miller Act was signed into law just five months after the appearance of the highly publicized *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* by Alfred Kinsey, which documented a higher rate of same-sex behavior than was previously assumed.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, preceding the Miller Act, “lawmakers and the medical doctors who influenced them” tried to categorize homosexuals as a group that “must be controlled.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Terry, 273.

<sup>9</sup> Congress did not grant self-regulation rights to the District until the Home Rule Act of 1973, which would have a profound effect on LGBTQ rights.

<sup>10</sup> David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 21.

<sup>11</sup> B. Beemyn, 208-209; Johnson, 59.

<sup>12</sup> St. Elizabeths Hospital is discussed further in Theme 6.

<sup>13</sup> Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Alfred Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* was the first of two reports. The second, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, was published in 1953.

<sup>15</sup> Faderman, 5.

## NRHP HIGHLIGHT: D.C. WORKHOUSE AND REFORMATORY HISTORIC DISTRICT LORTON, FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA



1975 Photo of Reformatory Dormitories (Courtesy of Lorton Prison Stories Project)

The D.C. Workhouse and Reformatory, also known as the District of Columbia Correctional Facility Lorton Prison, was established 1910. It represents the Progressive-era penal reform popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Individual rehabilitation was promoted through “diminishment of harsh conditions and physically imposing containment barriers, encouragement of constructive social interaction, promotion of a work ethic, and access to vocational training.”<sup>16</sup> The 511-acre institution, organized in three divisions, contained a Workhouse, Reformatory, and Penitentiary campus, with the Workhouse reserved for those with lighter sentences and associated lesser crimes and the most freedom, and the Penitentiary considered the maximum-security area and the most restrictive. The district included agricultural fields and requisite support buildings to create a self-sustaining institution. Each division separately housed both genders. The penitentiary “could house 325 of those inmates deemed “intractable, overt homosexuals, inmates dangerous to the well-being of the staff and

general population, and severe disciplinary transfers from other institutions.”<sup>17</sup> During the 1960s many of the buildings were repurposed as the definition of punishable crimes changed and the number of inmates decreased.<sup>18</sup> Many of the Workhouse buildings were adaptively reused as alcohol rehabilitation centers, and 300 acres of the agricultural fields became a landfill. By the mid-twentieth century, the Progressive-era ideals and facilities of the institution were outdated and overcrowded. The National Capital Revitalization Act of 1997 caused the eventual closure of the prison in 2001; the Penitentiary closed in January followed by the Reformatory in November. The D.C. Workhouse and Reformatory Historic District became a Virginia landmark on December 7, 2005, and was listed in the NRHP on February 16, 2006. Mixed-use redevelopment of the site by Elm Street Development and Alexander Company provided much-needed housing, offices, and retail space.

<sup>16</sup> Adriane Fowler et. al., National Register Nomination, District of Columbia Workhouse and Reformatory (John Milner Associates, Inc. 2005), 7-1.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Hostetler Oakey, *Journey from the Gallows: Historical Evolution of the Penal Philosophies and Practices of the Nation's Capital*. (Woodbridge, VA: Mary Hostetler Oakey, 1993), 263, in Fowler et. al., 8-89.

<sup>18</sup> Fowler et. al., 8-94–8-95.

Once arrested for sex crimes, there were many forms of “rehabilitation” or “reform.” On one hand, isolation was seen as a form of discipline that would allow such men to “restrain their passions.” To the contrary, some prisons were so overcrowded that it enabled consensual sex and rape. One example of a local institution that practiced the Progressive Era penal reform that criminalized homosexuality was the D.C. Workhouse and Reformatory/Lorton Prison established in 1910 (see page 2-15). To exacerbate the issue, “the figure of the sexual psychopath became the focus of psychiatric authorities,”<sup>19</sup> and the legal framework for homosexual discrimination would soon be joined by a scientific framework. Terry suggests that the increased policing of homosexuality led to understanding it through a medical and scientific lens and “urged a rational, scientific approach to the problem.”<sup>20</sup> In

1952 the American Psychiatric Association classified homosexuality as a “sociopathic personality disturbance” in its first publication of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*.<sup>21</sup> “Whether seen as a sin, crime, or sickness, homosexuality stigmatized an individual.”<sup>22</sup>

The homophobia of the McCarthy era was cemented in 1950 when John Peurifoy, Deputy Undersecretary of State for Administration, revealed to the U.S. Congress that 91 homosexuals — identified as potential “security

risks” — were forced to resign from the State Department.<sup>23</sup> The McCarthyist designation of a “security risk” was code to indicate homosexuals, particularly those who were engaged in classified work. According to the McCarthyist argument, “scandalous behavior” of gay men and lesbians could leave them vulnerable to blackmail in relation to government secrets.<sup>24</sup> Peurifoy’s statement set off a systematic and intense campaign to ferret out homosexual employees in the federal government dubbed the “Lavender Scare,” just as the “Red Scare” aimed to remove any hints of communism during the same era. The first investigative hearing conducted as follow-up to Peurifoy’s statement was the Wherry-Hill investigation led by Senators Kenneth Wherry (R) and J. Lister Hill (D) (Plate 2-5). Among those providing testimony was Lt. Roy E. Blick, who oversaw the Vice Squad of the DC Metropolitan Police Department. Blick stated



PLATE 2-5: Senators Kenneth Wherry (pictured at left) and J. Lister Hill Conducting the First Congressional Investigation into Homosexuality in the Federal Workforce (U.S. Senate Historical Office, in Adkins 2016).

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<sup>19</sup> Terry, 273.

<sup>20</sup> Terry, 268, 271-272.

<sup>21</sup> Jack Drescher, Out of DSM: Depathologizing Homosexuality, *Behavioral Sciences* (Basel, Switzerland) 5(4-December 2015):565-75. 4, doi:10.3390/bs5040565.

<sup>22</sup> D’Emilio, 17-18.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson, 67, 109-110.

“confidently” that there were “about 5,000 homosexuals in D.C. and about 75 percent of them worked for the government.”<sup>25</sup>

Despite not finding “a single example of a homosexual citizen who had been blackmailed into revealing state secrets,” and Blick’s completely unfounded statistic, the investigative inquiry escalated to a national scale under the Hoey Committee investigation.<sup>26</sup> The final report by the Hoey Committee in 1950 claimed “that sex perverts in Government constitute security risks” and would be used as justification for future dismissals of homosexuals from the federal government, especially through Eisenhower’s 1953 Executive Order #10450 [Figure 2-1].<sup>27</sup> The 1953 Executive Order “banned gay men and lesbians from all jobs in the U.S. government” because of “suitability.”<sup>28</sup> With the Civil Service ban and the surveillance of gay cruising areas lasting well into the 1970s, McCarthyism had long-standing effects on D.C.’s gay and lesbian communities. Though it affected millions of individuals across the country, both gay and straight, federal employees and private-sector employees alike, the effects of the Lavender Scare were most acute in the gay and lesbian community of Washington, D.C. For nearly twenty-five years it was part of their daily experience. There was a community under siege.<sup>29</sup>

## **The District’s Gay Activism Roots in Civil Service Employment**

Unique to DC is its distinct federal workforce grounded in the political and military histories of the nation’s capital. Two phenomena played tremendous roles in defining the character of DC: government and war. With the transient nature of government jobs, the District has had a constant ebb and flow of residents. The federal work force tripled during World War I. After the post-World War I boom waned and the Great Depression hit, New Deal programs created a new set of federal agencies that caused a second surge in federal workers. The World War II mobilization effort brought another influx of single men and women into the District. Ironically, the gender separation mandated by military protocol reinforced a codified “way” to engage those interested in same-sex relationships or questioning encounters, which shaped gay and lesbian identities.<sup>30</sup> The rapid expansion of government in the early to mid-twentieth century created a work culture characterized by and responsible for segregation, and also massive persecution of gays and lesbians during the McCarthy era of the early 1950s.<sup>31</sup> The vast amount of civil service administrative jobs that became available allowed closeted gay men to work without much suspicion and also created a large female work culture. In this fluid environment a gay sub-culture developed during the 1930s and early 1940s.

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<sup>25</sup> Adkins, 19-20.

<sup>26</sup> Senator Clyde Hoey of North Carolina was given the job of heading the Investigations Subcommittee, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, which investigated homosexuals in the federal government in 1950. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Declassified Executive Sessions (Washington, DC: Ward & Paul Official Reporters, July 14, 19, 26, and September 8, 1950. Record Group 46, Records of the U.S. Senate, 1789-2015, Committee Papers, 1947-1952).

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, 114; U.S. Congress, Senate, Declassified Executive Sessions.

<sup>28</sup> Adkins.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, 149.

<sup>30</sup> B. Beemyn, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Dolinsky, 84-86.

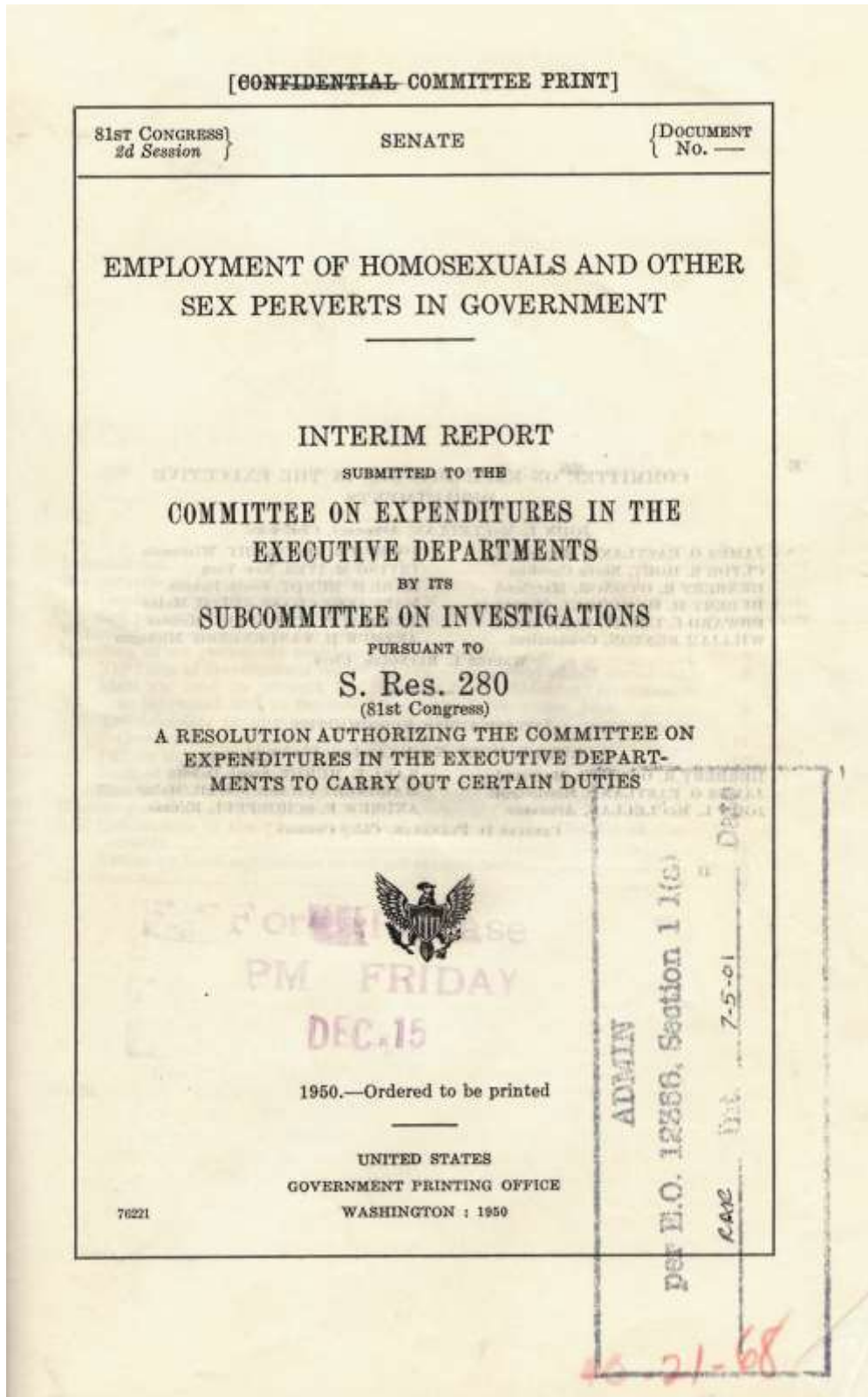


FIGURE 2-1: Hoey Committee Final Report Cover (Records of the U.S. Senate, RG 46 1950, in Adkins 2016)

The transformations induced by the war [World War II] also created possibilities for gay men and lesbians to create institutions that bolstered and protected their identities...the war years were crucial for thousands of LGBTQ to understand who they were and to be more certain than ever in their identities and collective interests.<sup>32</sup>

Kinsey's research in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* resulted in increased scientific considerations of homosexuality, which led to some medical definitions of homosexuality as aberrant. Nevertheless, this research also "catapulted early homophile organizing."<sup>33</sup> In the United States, homophobia had generally manifested in the cultural stereotyping, criminalization, and medicalization of gays and lesbians.<sup>34</sup> Kinsey's research, however, addressed all human sexuality more openly and had the additional effect of changing cultural shifts across the country. Some regions became more receptive than others to accepting homosexuality. In Los Angeles, for example, the first official homophile organization, the Mattachine Society, was founded in 1950. But Washington, DC remained much more socially conservative than Los Angeles, although the latter had its fair share of McCarthy witch hunts, especially in Hollywood. In DC the federal government's homophobic agenda created a cloud of fear that hovered over its gay and lesbian communities for decades; a true reprieve would not come until the 1970s. The federal work culture took a dramatic shift after World War II when the Lavender and Red Scares plagued the environment with suspicion about real or perceived homosexual and/or communist infractions. And yet, a critical mass of resistance and solidarity had begun that would usher in a period of activism after World War II.



PLATE 2-6: Franklin E. Kameny at work in the Army Map Service (Courtesy of MakingGayHistory.com)

Franklin E. Kameny joined the federal government when Executive Order #10450 was firmly in place. Having just received his PhD in astronomy from Harvard University, Kameny moved to Washington in 1956 to accept a research and teaching position at Georgetown University. The following summer, Kameny transferred to the Army Map Service (Plate 2-6; Inset pp. 2-20).

The Army Map Service enforced the government's Civil Service ban against the employment of homosexuals, however, and approximately six months after his hiring, Kameny was investigated and subsequently fired for homosexual conduct. Firmly believing in the civil right to employment by the federal government, Kameny appealed his dismissal with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). He ultimately lost his case "at the lowest level of the Court of Appeals."<sup>35</sup> After

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<sup>32</sup> Meyer and Sikk, 03-24.

<sup>33</sup> Amin Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 31.

<sup>34</sup> The full spectrum of human sexuality had not progressed to include bisexuality, transgender, or queer.

<sup>35</sup> Will O'Bryan, Gay is Good: How Frank Kameny changed the face of America, *Metro Weekly* (October 5, 2006):30-37.

## NRHP HIGHLIGHT: DR. FRANKLIN E. KAMENY

Considered by many “the father of gay activism,” Dr. Franklin E. Kameny was one of the leaders of activism in the gay civil rights movement of the 1960s, and was co-founder of the Mattachine Society in DC. From his home in Northwest Washington, Kameny fought for civil rights in federal employment, criminal law, and security clearance cases, and for removing homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, considered the “bible” of the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Kameny’s DC home was listed in the NRHP on November 2, 2011.



(1) Patsy Lynch; (2) (left) Kay Tobin Lahusen 1971, (right) U.S. Department of Labor; (3) Wong/Getty Images

pursuing other appellate possibilities in Congress and the White House, he decided to file a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court. Kameny’s ACLU attorney left him to his own devices, believing that the case would not be heard at the highest judicial level. By March 1961, when the Supreme Court did in fact turn down his case, Kameny had become firmly entrenched in the political struggle of the homosexual in the United States. Frank Kameny is an example of a resilient individual determined to realize the civil liberties and dignity due any man or woman regardless of their sexual orientation, political persuasion, gender, race, or religious preference. On November 15, 1961, Kameny and Jack Nichols,<sup>36</sup> a native Washingtonian, co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW), DC’s first gay activist group and a part of the larger Homophile movement. The formative meeting for MSW occurred on August 1, 1961, at the Hay-

<sup>36</sup> Nichols would later co-found the Mattachine Society of Florida with his partner Lige Clarke and Richard Inman. Jesse Monteagudo, Richard Inman: The Father of Florida’s Gay Community (Bilerico Project, 2009, [http://bilerico.lgbtqnation.com/2009/04/richard\\_inman\\_the\\_father\\_of\\_floridas\\_gay.php](http://bilerico.lgbtqnation.com/2009/04/richard_inman_the_father_of_floridas_gay.php)).

Adams Hotel. The undercover Metropolitan Police Department “attende” sent to infiltrate the meeting was asked to leave.<sup>37</sup>

## Challenging the Law: From Oppression to Protection

MSW had a broad agenda that centered on the civil liberties of homosexuals throughout the 1960s. Since the organization’s early momentum came out of Kameny’s fight for employment in the federal government, MSW focused on the Civil Service ban against homosexuals, the ban of homosexuals in the military, security clearances for homosexuals applying for government employment, anti-sodomy laws, psychiatry, and religion.

MSW is arguably best known as the first gay activist group in the United States to demonstrate for gay rights in the nation’s capital, ensuring the right to public assembly for homosexual citizens and setting a precedent for “patriotic dissent” in the Homophile movement.<sup>38</sup> Borrowing heavily from the nonviolent direct action of the civil rights movement, MSW members picketed across Washington throughout 1965. The group’s first picket was inspired by Fidel Castro’s announcement that homosexuals would be imprisoned in Cuban labor camps.<sup>39</sup> MSW saw this as an opportunity to win sympathy for their cause by drawing a parallel between Cuban and U.S. policies on homosexual criminalization and reformation practices. The organization also wanted to highlight the federal government’s refusal to meet with MSW members on issues affecting gays in the United States. Ten people representing MSW formed “the world’s first demonstration for gay rights” in front of the White House on April 17, 1965.<sup>40</sup> MSW co-founder Jack Nichols, under the pseudonym “Warren D. Adkins,” co-wrote an article about the picketing in *Eastern Mattachine Magazine*. The name of the article, “We’re On the Move Now...,” is a reference to a line in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech to fellow marchers in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. An excerpt of the article:

The demonstration sponsored by the Washington Society took place on April 17, and was directed primarily against the policies of the United States Government. It was the first demonstration in the nation’s capital by a homophile organization for the rights and liberties of homosexual citizens. With proper cooperation from the White House police and the metropolitan police of the District of Columbia, the Washington demonstration was accomplished by ten men and women who carried signs in an area directly in front of the White House. Hundreds of tourists, many with cameras, gazed in astonishment as the ten well-dressed people (none of whom fit the stereotype of homosexuals) carried their placards, some of which read: ‘15 Million U.S. Homosexuals Protest Federal Treatment’, ‘Cuba’s Government Persecutes Homosexuals: U.S. Government Beat Them To It’, We Want: Federal Employment, Honorable Discharges, Security Clearance’, ‘U.S., Cuba, Russia, United to Persecute Homosexuals’, and ‘U.S. Claims No Second Class Citizens: What About Homosexuals?’<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Meinke, DC LGBQ History: Review Request; David Bianco, Who is Frank Kameny, *Planet Out* (Brookhaven National Laboratory, NY: Frank Kameny–Astronomer, Activist, Organizer, accessed December 20, 1999, <https://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/globe/kameny.htm>).

<sup>38</sup> Simon Hall, The American Gay Rights Movement and Patriotic Protest, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19(3-September 2010): 541.

<sup>39</sup> Adkins and Livingstone, We’re on the Move Now..., *Eastern Mattachine Magazine* 10(5-June 1965):4-7.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Kuntzler, RE: Personal History: The Early Days in Washington, DC (email communication with Rebecca Graham, April 9, 2010, in Dolinsky 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Adkins and Livingstone.



Note the description of “well-dressed” protesters who did not “fit the stereotype of homosexuals.” MSW leadership explicitly wanted gays and lesbians to be viewed as employable by the federal government and therefore insisted on specific dress codes for the protesters, a form of respectability politics (Figure 2-2).<sup>42,43</sup> MSW avoided advance publicity of their first protest in front of the White House because the group “didn’t want to give the bureaucracy some chance to come up with some bureaucratic regulational excuse for preventing” them from picketing.<sup>44</sup> A reporter from the *Washington Afro-American*<sup>45</sup>, however, was on the scene, and quoted Kameny in a brief article: “Dr. Kameny said they were protesting the Federal government’s policy of ‘Down grading’ and ‘systematically excluding’ homosexuals from their rights of equal treatment.”<sup>46</sup> The first protest went off so well that the group followed with a second protest in front of the White House on May 29, 1965, this time with advanced publicity (Plate 2-7). Thirteen people picketed. The third, and final, protest, in front of the White House on October 23, 1965 with 45 picketers, was “by our standards, at that date...huge.”<sup>47</sup> MSW also picketed the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in June 1965, which led to a meeting with the CSC in September of the same year. Although the meeting did not yield an immediate shift in policy, seeds were planted. Another summer of 1965 picket of a federal government organization by MSW occurred at the Pentagon on July 31, 1965 (Plate 2-8).

In 1968 MSW representatives accompanied “a young man employed by the federal government for less than a year” to an interrogation by the CSC, where the commission accused the man of “perverted acts of a lascivious nature with various males over the years.” MSW successfully advocated on the man’s behalf, securing his employment in the federal government.<sup>48</sup> The same year, under the Johnson administration, the nation’s first hate crimes statues were signed into law under the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The 1968 statute made it a “crime to use, or threaten to use, force to willfully interfere with any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin and because the person is participating in a federally protected activity, such as public education, employment, jury service, travel, or the enjoyment of public accommodations, or helping another person to do so” (18 U.S. Code § 245, Federally protected activities (b)(2)). Although enacted primarily in response to the racial injustice exposed by the civil rights movement, interpretation broadened to include the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Hall, 545.

<sup>43</sup> Respectability politics arguably played a more pronounced role in LGBTQ black communities, regardless of locale. As mentioned in Theme 1, same-sex individuals in the black community dealt with homophobia within their own circles. They also had to fight racial discrimination.

<sup>44</sup> Kameny, personal interview with Rebecca Graham, August 8, in Dolinsky (2010).

<sup>45</sup> The *Washington Afro American*, still in existence, is the oldest African-American newspaper in the United States. It began publication in 1892.

<sup>46</sup> 10 oppose Gov’t on homosexuals. *Washington Afro-American*, April 20, 1965:18, accessed February 2019, [https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=qKUIAAAAIBAJ&sjid=r\\_QFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4429%2C2009785](https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=qKUIAAAAIBAJ&sjid=r_QFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4429%2C2009785).

<sup>47</sup> Frank Kameny, PhD, personal interview with Rebecca Graham, August 8, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Johnson, 206.

<sup>49</sup> The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 lends further federal protection against crimes based on gender, disability, actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (18 U.S.C. § 249).

THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

\*\*\*

COMMITTEE ON PICKETING AND OTHER LAWFUL DEMONSTRATIONS

\*\*\*\*\*

REGULATIONS FOR PICKETING

\*\*\*\*\*

PRECEPTS

Picketing is not an occasion for an assertion of personality, individuality, ego, rebellion, generalised non-conformity or anti-conformity. It is an occasion for an organized effort, by a group or a movement, as such, working in a calculated, coordinated fashion, to make its existence, message, and grievances known where they need to be known. Therefore the individual picketer serves, merely, to carry a sign or to increase the size of the demonstration; not he, but his sign should attract notice and attention.

People are much more likely to listen to, to examine, and hopefully, to accept new, controversial, unconventional, unorthodox, or unusual ideas and positions, if these are presented to them from sources bearing the symbols of acceptability, conventionality, and respectability, as arbitrary as those symbols may be. Good order, good appearance, and dignity of bearing are essential.

In order for a demonstration to be most effective, it must be well organized, and well disciplined. Signs must be well planned and carefully coordinated with each other and with the rationale for the demonstration.

The demonstration must have a well-defined purpose. The location of the demonstration must be clearly relevant to the purpose of the demonstration.

RULES

- A. Dress and appearance will be conservative and conventional.
  1. Men will wear suits, white shirts, ties; women will wear dresses.
  2. When outer clothing is required, overcoats, topcoats, raincoats will be worn, not jackets or other more casual, less formal outer wear.
  3. Picketers will be well-groomed; men will have recent haircuts and fresh shaves; the wearing of beards will be discouraged.
- B. Signs
  1. Legends on all signs must be approved in advance, through whatever coordinating machinery is set up for the purpose.
  2. Signs will be neatly and clearly lettered.
  3. Marchers will carry the signs assigned to them.
- C. Marching
  1. The order of the marchers and the signs will be established by those in charge of the demonstration. Signs will always be carried in the designated order.
  2. All inquiries will be referred to a previously designated spokesman or spokesmen.
  3. There will be no exchanges of remarks between picketers and passersby. Conversation and comments among the picketers will be kept to a minimum.
  4. Picketers will neither smoke nor take refreshment on the line.
  5. Picketers will leave the line only when absolutely necessary, as briefly as possible, and only a few at a time.

FIGURE 2-2: Picket Instructions (emphasis added) (Kameny ca. 1965)



PLATE 2-7: MSW Picketing the White House on May 29, 1965 (Bettmann Archive 1965/Getty Images)  
(Note: MSW co-founder Jack Nichols is first in line, preceding Dr. Kameny, who is second in line, immediately to the right of the policeman's elbow.)



PLATE 2-8: MSW Picket Group at the Pentagon on July 31, 1965 (Kay Tobin Lahusen 1965)

## The Establishment of LGBTQ Politics in the District

### *Frank Kameny's Run for Congress*

DC voting representation in Congress was first established during Reconstruction in 1871. But the federal government rescinded the right in 1874 in the midst of the rising white supremacy movement and the institutionalization of segregation. Nearly 100 years later in 1970, with the re-establishment of the District's congressional delegate position (although non-voting), journalist Alan Hoffard and MSW's Paul Kuntzler felt this was the perfect opportunity to give MSW some exposure.

Kuntzler called up MSW's Lilli Vincenz to see if she would participate in a "Kameny for Congress" campaign. Vincenz immediately agreed. With Kameny on board as an openly gay candidate and Kuntzler as his campaign manager, the next step was to gather the required 5,000 signatures from registered DC voters to secure Kameny's name on the ballot. Kuntzler and Vincenz worked tirelessly to achieve that goal. Signatures for candidates are often challenged in court, particularly when opposing groups hope to keep certain names off the ballot, and to ensure that the signature count was well over the required amount, Kuntzler brought members in by bus from New York's Gay Activists Alliance to help gather signatures. This did the trick—the campaign eventually garnered around 7,800 signatures, which put Kameny's name on the ballot. Kuntzler called this a "revolutionary moment"<sup>50</sup> (Meinke 2007b) as "the perception changed; people started thinking about the gay community. The politicians started thinking about the gay community. Gay people started thinking as a member of the community. That's what the Kameny campaign did."<sup>51</sup>

Running as an independent under the "Personal Freedom" platform, Kameny became an expert on all things related to the DC municipality. He pushed for "adequate food,

### FRANK KAMENY'S 1971 RUN FOR CONGRESS



Frank Kameny in Front of Capitol Hill (Kay Lahusen Tobin 1971a; Courtesy of the NYC Library Digital Collections)



Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings Photographed During Kameny's Campaign for Congress in 1971 (Kay Lahusen Tobin 1971b; Courtesy of the NYC Library Digital Collections)

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<sup>50</sup> Meinke, Resources for Research on the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC and Related Issues (Washington, DC: Rainbow History Project, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Kuntzler, personal interview with Rebecca Graham, December 17, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

housing, educational opportunity, and medical attention” for all U.S. citizens and also supported the civil rights for other marginalized groups. Part of Kameny’s platform called for:

1. an end to employment discrimination against homosexuals, women, blacks, and other minority groups in government and private industry;
2. respect, dignity, and security for all people regardless of sexual preference; and
3. an end to government snooping into our private lives.<sup>52</sup>

African-American civil rights activist and Democrat Walter Fauntroy<sup>53</sup> won the election on March 23, 1971. Kameny came in fourth place. It was never expected that he would win, but the campaign staff felt victorious because there was now an undeniably visible “gay voting bloc” in the District.<sup>54</sup> Kameny’s political campaign set a national precedent; he was the first openly gay man to run for a seat in Congress. Kameny’s campaign pre-dated the historic San Francisco campaigns of Harvey Milk, who in 1978 became the first openly gay man elected to public office. Amidst this climate of social change and gay activism, the District’s LGBTQ community established its own identity, and began to establish more local activist organizations and initiate local events.

### *Gay Activists Alliance*

The DC chapter of the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) organized a month after the end of Frank Kameny’s 1971 run for the non-voting Congressional delegate seat for DC (Plate 2-9). GAA exists today as the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA). When members of GAA in New York came down to DC to help secure enough signatures to put Frank Kameny’s name on the March 1971 ballot, campaign staffers found in them a model to continue their local-level political activism. GAA contributed to many local successes during the early years of the organization, including the following.

- the 1972 ban on “discrimination against gay and lesbian students, teachers, and public school staff;”
- the 1973 passage of Title 34—D.C.’s Human Rights Law, which “banned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation”; and
- the 1975 appointment of “a gay person to the D.C. Human Rights Commission”—that person being Frank Kameny.<sup>55</sup>

In 1975 the Civil Service ban against homosexual employees was lifted. After Congress enacted the District of Columbia Home Rule Act of 1973, the first official mayoral race in D.C. was held in 1974, as well as elections for the entire City Council. GAA president Cade Ware implored DC’s newly elected mayor, Walter Washington, to include gay representation on the Human Rights Commission. Kameny was the first openly gay person to serve in this capacity.

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Bonds, *Stonewall on the Potomac: Gay Political Activism in Washington, D.C., 1961-1973* (Harrisonburg, VA: James Madison University, Master’s thesis 455, 2006), 61-84.

<sup>53</sup> Fauntroy was DC’s non-voting delegate to Congress for 20 years.

<sup>54</sup> Meinke, *Resources for Research on the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC*.

<sup>55</sup> Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance [GLAA], 1971-2009: Thirty-eight Years of Fighting for Equal Rights (accessed November 2, 2009, <http://www.glaa.org/resources/timeline.shtml>).



PLATE 2-9: Members of Gay Activist Alliance. Note Barbara Gittings at bottom left. (Kay Tobin ca. 1970)

Plainclothes entrapment of gay men by DC police also ceased in 1975, after members of GAA described the discriminatory police practice in budgetary terms to the D.C. City Council. According to an undated GAA flyer on police entrapment, a D.C. Superior Court judge estimated “that each of these arrests costs the taxpayers \$18,000.”<sup>56</sup> When GAA described the costs of these arrests to the DC City Council, the Council members voted to cut the funding of the DC Police Department’s Prostitution, Perversion, and Obscenity Squad (part of their Morals Division). The Council then redirected the money to the Gay Men’s VD Clinic, which opened in 1973 and was the forerunner of the Whitman-Walker Clinic, the DC area’s health clinic for the LGBTQ community.<sup>57,58</sup>

### *LGBTQ Party Democratic Clubs*

In 1976 the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club (Stein Club) was “to become a channel for potential gay political power” in the DC metropolitan area. The Stein Club’s initial meetings were held at the Waay Off Broadway Theatre in Southeast Washington. The organization is still active and has vastly diversified its membership and scope, with a mission to serve as “a channel for the participation and involvement of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people in the Democratic Party and in other political activities” in the greater DC area.<sup>59</sup>

Melvin Boozer, a black gay male activist in DC, co-founded the Langston Hughes-Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club (Hughes-Roosevelt) with Colevia Carter and ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, among others, after serving as president of the Gay Activists Alliance from 1979 to 1981. The organization was founded in response to the “lack of racial diversity and absence of women” in the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, which was DC’s “leading gay political group.”<sup>60</sup> One of the founding members of Hughes-Roosevelt, Frank

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<sup>56</sup> Gay Activist Alliance [GAA], Police Entrapment Flyer (retrieved from the Rainbow History Project, May 13, 2007/September 2019, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/items/show/708>).

<sup>57</sup> GLAA, Thirty-eight Years of Fighting.

<sup>58</sup> The Whitman-Walter Clinic is discussed in Theme 6.

<sup>59</sup> Gertrude Stein Democratic Club Forms in Washington D.C., *The Washington Blade*, May 1976:2.

<sup>60</sup> Julian Williams, Gay Political Activists Form New Democratic Club, *The Washington Post*, June 18, 1982.

Zampatori (former treasurer of the Stein Club), reported that the Stein Club “did try to reach out to other groups, blacks and lesbians. But for whatever reason, Stein is not viewed as representative of the whole community or reputable.”<sup>61</sup> Colevia Carter stated that Hughes-Roosevelt “will emphasize the need to go beyond our gayness. Gay people in this city are more than just white and male and we are more than just gay. We are affected by problems with the schools, housing, employment....”<sup>62</sup>

### *D.C. Coalition of Black Gays*

In 1977, shortly after the founding of the Stein Club, ABilly Jones-Hennin arrived in Washington, DC with an extensive background in political activism (Plate 2-10). His parents were involved with the civil rights movement, and as a teenager in the 1950s he participated in lunch counter sit-ins. Jones-Hennin worked with the Black Panthers in Oakland, protested the Vietnam War, and politically organized as an undergraduate at Virginia State College following his stint in the U.S. Marine Corps after high school. As a black bisexual man, Jones-Hennin searched DC for a racially diverse gay organization during the late 1970s, to no avail. He attended GAA and Stein Club meetings, but “was not seeing any African Americans, and was feeling sort of discounted.”<sup>63</sup>



PLATE 2-10: ABilly S. Jones-Hennin (© Patsy Lynch 2007)

In the spring of 1978, Jones-Hennin placed ads in *The Washington Blade* and distributed flyers in bars, clubs, the DC gay bookstores Lambda Rising and Lammas Women’s Bookstore, looking to meet others who also wanted to start an organization for black gays (Figure 2-3).

Gilberto (Gil) Gerald talks about the initial meetings that took place as a result of Jones-Hennin’s ads:

I went to one of the meetings, and the meeting was on 16th Street as I recall in the Dupont Circle area. And it was interesting because what basically was being posited was a possibility...that we might actually organize as black LGBT in our own organization. And for the first time we were able to articulate something that we responded to, which was the whole idea that you could be both gay and black or LGBT and black at the same time—that they weren’t mutually exclusive or contradictory, all sorts of things because you didn’t have to choose one or the other, that you could embrace both things.<sup>64</sup>

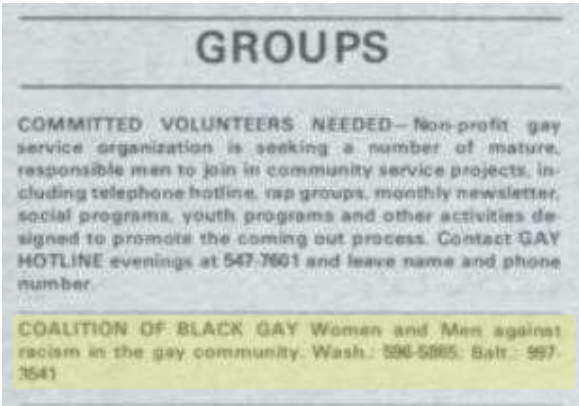
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<sup>61</sup> J. Williams.

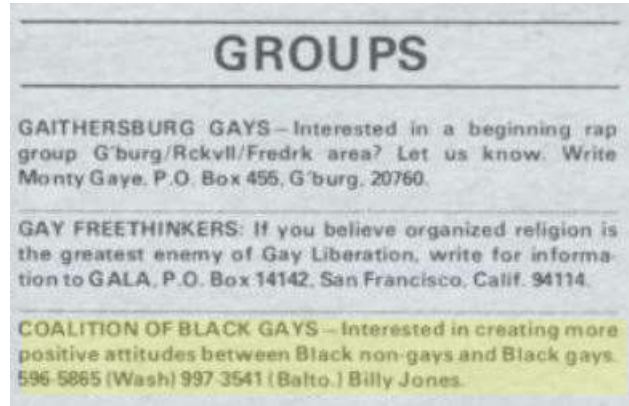
<sup>62</sup> J. Williams.

<sup>63</sup> ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, interview with Rebecca Graham, July 14, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Gil Gerald, interview with Rebecca Graham, May 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.



April 1978 ad, *The Washington Blade*



May 1978 ad, *The Washington Blade*

FIGURE 2-3: Abilly Jones-Hennin Ads in the Spring 1978 Editions of *The Washington Blade*

Jones-Hennin describes the formation of the DC Coalition of Black Gays (DC Coalition):

The idea was that we needed to focus on issues as they related to sexual orientation and our racial identity....And what I didn't feel the need to, was to push the integration aspect [in the mainstream gay activist groups] but to identify what the specific issues and needs were of the African American community and to welcome others who were not African American, other people of color as well as whites who were allies.<sup>65</sup>

To be clear, the DC Coalition did not form in reaction to the mainstream gay activist groups but to address the needs of the black gay community. Their local work included researching pertinent issues, developing and disseminating educational information, participating in community forums, engaging with government officials (both local and federal), and participating in programs that focused on black voters.

The DC Coalition publicly endorsed candidates during the DC mayoral elections of both 1978 and 1982. In 1978 they endorsed civil rights activist Sterling Tucker instead of Marion Barry—who won his first term as mayor of DC that year. Jones-Hennin stated that the Tucker endorsement “was an organizational and political strategy to gain recognition in the gay community. While neither candidate was bad on the issue of gay rights,... we felt that Tucker deserved gay support.”<sup>66</sup> Marion Barry was an ally to the gay community during the late 1970s and highly engaged with the “gay voting bloc” during his first campaign; this gay voting bloc was mostly represented by white gay males. As Barry stated in 1982 during his follow-up campaign for mayor,

I have heard some black gays say I cater too much to white gays, but I take it another way. Early on in my quest for political support, it was primarily the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, which is a predominately white organization, and the Gay Activists Alliance that came to me and said, “We want to be involved in your campaign because of what you have stood for on the Council.” I

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<sup>65</sup> Jones-Hennin, July 14, 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Sidney Brinkley, *Who's Who in Gay Politics*, *Blacklight* 4(401983):13 (Washington, DC: retrieved from the Historical Society of Washington DC: Rainbow History Project Archives).



wasn't out looking for support from just one segment of the population. The black gay community has not been as overtly active politically...."<sup>67</sup>

The reasons for the subtlety of the black gay community include fear of persecution, respectability politics at play within the black community, and even stigmatization within their own community, none of which fostered overt political activity. In the fall of 1978 after the local primary election, the DC Coalition met with Marion Barry and hosted a successful fundraiser during his follow-up mayoral campaign in 1982. The fundraiser, led by then-president Ray Melrose, was held at the Clubhouse, a member-based nightclub in Northwest DC that "provided the central focus of African-American gay D.C. social life."<sup>68</sup> Barry appointed two DC Coalition members to the city's Commission on Human Rights during his second term as mayor—Philip Pannell and Colevia Carter.

Black gay activists from other cities had started to contact members of the D.C. Coalition for help in setting up chapters in their own cities. Once chapters established in other cities, the National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG) officially formed in 1978.<sup>69</sup> In addition to Washington and Baltimore, chapters were located in Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, and Philadelphia, among other cities. Jones-Hennin became NCBG's first (unpaid) Executive Director. Both the DC Coalition and the NCBG shared the motto, "As proud of our gayness as we are of our blackness" (Figure 2-4). For the first time in the United States, black gays and lesbians had access to a national organization that defined their racial and sexual identities as both separate and intersecting concepts.



FIGURE 2-4: The National Coalitions of Black Gay Women and Men Ad (Courtesy of Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC)

By the end of 1980, the DC Coalition found itself reorganizing "after a year of dormancy"<sup>70</sup> to focus on continued racism, lack of visibility in DC, and low membership. The DC Coalition fought racism and sexism in the gay community and homophobia in the black community. Facing the continued reality that black gays and lesbians in DC

were not as visible as their white counterparts, they sought to build membership from a mere 14 to 200,<sup>71</sup> which included conferences at the Howard Inn, a location that would build community and local visibility.

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<sup>67</sup> Brinkley, An Interview with Marion Barry, *Blacklight* 3(6-1982):27 (Washington, DC: retrieved from the Historical Society of Washington DC, Rainbow History Project Archives).

<sup>68</sup> Meinke, The ClubHouse (retrieved August 5, 2009, Rainbow History Archives).

<sup>69</sup> The NCBG is discussed further in Theme 3 and has since been renamed the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays.

<sup>70</sup> Don Leavitt, D.C. Black Gay Group Revived, *The Washington Blade*, December 19, 1980:A-6.

<sup>71</sup> Leavitt.

The organization struggled to build a critical mass, and by 1990 it had dissolved, although several of its members went on to make lasting impacts within the District and other cities.

After the ban on gay and lesbian federal workers lifted in 1975, progress within the LGBTQ community continued into the 1980s. In 1983 the DC Commission on Human Rights was formed with Philip Pannell and Colevia Carter appointed as commissioners. In 1988 GAA President Lorri L. Jean was appointed as chairperson of the DC Domestic Partnership Commission to study the possibility of providing benefits to non-married partners of city employees. The city's anti-sodomy law was reformed in 1993 and fully repealed in 1995. Frank Kameny, who first fought DC's anti-sodomy law in Congressional testimony in 1963, said that it ultimately took "30 years, one month, four days, and approximately 11 hours" for the law to change.<sup>72</sup> He was "deeply involved" in the drafting of the repeal bill and testified in front of the DC City Council in 1993 to repeal the anti-sodomy law, finally bringing a decades-long battle to a close.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Kameny, personal interview with Rebecca Graham, August 8, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Kameny, Frank Kameny's 1993 Testimony on DC's Sodomy Law Reform Bill (Item mm2006085340, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mm2006085340/>).

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 3: Pride: Activism and the Fight for Equal Rights

#### The Homophile Movement in DC

##### *Mattachine Society of Washington*

As noted in Theme 2, the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) had a broad agenda that centered on the protection and “civil liberties” of homosexuals throughout the 1960s, including the Civil Service ban against homosexuals, the ban of homosexuals in the military, security clearances for homosexuals applying for government employment, protection against entrapment and arrest by MPD's Morals Division, anti-sodomy laws, psychiatry, and religion. A DC chapter of the Mattachine Society preceded MSW. Formed in 1956, the chapter was called the “Council for Repeal of Unjust Laws,” and its founder, Buell Dwight Huggins, worked in the federal government. The pursuit of “unjust laws” was too militant for the national Mattachine Society in Los Angeles. The DC-based chapter accepted the national organization's stance in “assisting the work of heterosexual professionals” and tracked the harassment and arrests of gay men in cruising areas in its newsletter. The chapter quietly ceased to function by the end of the 1950s.<sup>1</sup>

From its inception, members of MSW were mostly white gay men, with roughly one third of the group's membership consisting of white gay women in the later years.<sup>2</sup> MSW made efforts to recruit African-American members and distributed leaflets in black gay bars that described MSW with “You are welcome” as a prominent statement.<sup>3</sup> The lack of racial diversity of MSW is notable when considering that Washington's African-American population jumped from 53.9 percent in 1960 to 71.1 percent in 1970.<sup>4</sup> MSW lacked racial diversity for several reasons. Washington, DC is a Southern city with a racist history that includes the subjugation of African-Americans through the institution of slavery, deadly race riots, and Jim Crow-era segregation. By the time MSW was founded, the Civil Rights era was in full swing. Brutal racism against African-Americans and civil rights workers south of the Mason-Dixon line was front-page news. In this atmosphere the District's black gay activists found it impossible to ignore the issue of race. As David K. Johnson puts it, “African American gay men and lesbians were faced with much more overt forms of oppression for their race than for their more covert sexual orientation.”<sup>5</sup> The lack of racial diversity in MSW might also be traced to some of the organization's public rhetoric. In a news release dated August 28, 1962, the group proclaimed the following:

[Mattachine Society of Washington] feels that the homosexual, today, is where the Negro was in the 1920's, except that the Negro has had, at worst, the mere indifference of his government, and,

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, 172-173.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Tucker, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 3, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Kameny, personal interview with Rebecca Graham, August 8, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, 194.

at best, its active assistance, whereas the homosexual has always had to contend with the active hostility of his government.<sup>6</sup>

The 1962 MSW news release washes over the harsh history of race relations in the United States, the reality of decades of violence and oppression, and violent race riots incited by whites all over the country in the 1960s. The news release also effectively separated race from sexuality.

Although membership in MSW included “no restrictions as to race, religion, sex, or sexual preference or orientation” (MSW ca. 1966), DC’s black gays and lesbians in the 1960s found their gay identity at the intersection of race and gender. To compound the issue, they could not be as overtly visible as their white counterparts because of the respectability politics in play within the African-American community; also, most of the white activists in MSW were not from the area, making it easier to be visibly gay. In 1981 ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, co-founder of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, described the political and social atmosphere for DC’s black lesbian and gay communities during the 1950s and 1960s:

Looking for examples of Black Gay history in the Gay movement is no more rewarding than is the search elsewhere. Many of us think of the Gay liberation movement starting with the New York Stonewall rebellion of 1969, but if you ask Gay activists Dr. Franklin Kameny and Barbara Gittings [of Daughters of Bilitis] they will tell you that the “real” movement started with the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles in 1950 and the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco in 1955 (although there were some closeted and short lived groups before them such as the Chicago Society for Human Rights in 1924 and Knights of the Clock in Los Angeles in 1950). Kameny reveals that in the D.C. Mattachine Society some not so successful efforts were made to recruit Blacks into the organization by placing handbills in the Black Gay bars (then Cozy Corner and Nob Hill).

It is important to reflect upon the political and social atmosphere for both Blacks and Gays as the movements of each group advanced through the fifties, the sixties, and the seventies. Integration and racial equality were concepts just moving into legitimacy through federal, state, and municipal mandates of affirmative action programs, desegregation of schools, and fair housing programs. Racial prejudice and segregation was the law of the land, and as James Baldwin points out in his recent novel, *Just Above My Head*, Blacks and whites in the District of Columbia were every bit as separate and untrusting as were residents of Maryland and Virginia. And Gays were not trusting of one another because of fear of blackmail, loss of job, or rejection by family. So while Blacks were struggling to obtain jobs and status, Gays were struggling to maintain jobs and status. Because of the racist and homophobic atmosphere of the fifties and sixties, no one was trusting anyone for fear of losing everything or never being able to obtain anything. So is it any mystery why Blacks who could conceal their homosexuality would stay away from organizations like Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis who were being “overt” about their activities?<sup>7</sup>

At the time of MSW’s organizing, identity politics operated in separate (and sometimes separatist) terms. For example, in 1968, inspired by Stokely Carmichael’s phrase “Black is Beautiful,” Kameny created the slogan “Gay is Good” as a “psychological supportive device...to counter the brainwashing which a large

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<sup>6</sup> Mattachine Society of Washington (MWS), *The Homosexual Citizen* (The Early LGBT Movement in Washington, DC, 2006, accessed August 1966, <https://jstruge2.omeka.net/items/show/20>).

<sup>7</sup> ABilly Jones, A Look at Black Gay History, *Habari-Habari* 3(2-1981):4-5, 21.

group of people had been receiving” during this era.<sup>8</sup> And to increase gay and lesbian visibility, members of MSW often wore “Gay is Good” buttons in public spaces (Figure 2-5). Although the slogan did bring many gay activists together as a collective, the word *gay* could not encompass all of those involved in the increasingly diverse movement. Single-identity activism belied the intersectional reality of activists’ lives. Jones-Hennin’s description above underscores the impact of racial discrimination and segregation on DC’s African-American population. For black lesbians and gays in DC during the 1960s and 1970s, the oppression was compounded.

With regard to gender in the MSW organization, MSW’s Eva Freund wrote that:

Women were supposed to be:

1. feminine -- charming, lovely, heels and makeup
2. supportive -- take notes, make coffee, look like a lady on the picket line
3. be bright and articulate but not threatening [Freund 1971].



FIGURE 2-5: “Gay is Good” Slogan Examples.

(l) Gay is Good Button from the Kameny Papers Archives; (r) Dr. Kameny (center) marching with the Mattachine Society of Washington in the first Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade, New York City, 1970 (Kay Tobin Lahusen 1970)

This statement illuminates the organization’s stance on single-identity politics against the backdrop of the increasingly radicalized 1960s. Freund also remembers developing the kind of feminist consciousness that so many women in different activist spaces were experiencing at that time:

The women were saying to the men, “No we’re not just here to make coffee and to make life pleasant for you; we’re not here to take care of the mailings and whatever else. We’re here to participate in the decision-making process.” And, there was quite some brouhaha ... And, women here walked out of the organizations. Just said, “No, thank you” and walked out and left the men to figure out for themselves how to make all of this work [Freund 2006].

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<sup>8</sup> Kameny, *Lifestyles of the Non-Patient Homosexual* (transcripts from the APA panel, unpublished, from the personal collection of Dr. Lilli Vincenz),. 4.

## The Furies Collective<sup>9</sup>



PLATE 2-11: Residence of the Furies Collective, 219 11th Street, SE (Louis Berger 2019b)

Feminism and womanism, as movements, had a huge presence in Washington, DC, activist circles. In the early 1970s radical feminism was gaining traction in the women's movement, and lesbian separatists were pulling away from the movement entirely. In 1971 Washington, DC's Furies Collective was founded by "radical lesbian separatist feminists" who were "smashing monogamy"<sup>10</sup> while producing "some of the most powerful and insightful writing to be found anywhere in the [women's] movement" (Echols 1989:228). Founding women included Joan E. Biren, Sharon Deevey, Ginny Berson, Charlotte Bunch, and Rita Mae Brown. The Furies named themselves after "the 'angry ones,' the avengers of matricide" in Greek mythology, and members of the collective professed their own brand of anger. The collective was ideologically oriented, and its members referred to themselves as "radical lesbian separatist feminists."<sup>11</sup> The collective consisted of 12 white lesbian separatists who represented various class backgrounds, ages, and levels of educational attainment:

"We are a collective of twelve Lesbians living and working in Washington, D.C. We are rural and urban; from the Southwest, Midwest, South, and Northeast. Our ages range from 18 to 28. We are high school dropouts and Ph.D. candidates. We are lower class, middle and upper-middle class. We are white. Some of us have been Lesbians for twelve years, others for ten months. We are committed to ending all oppressions by attacking their roots—male supremacy."<sup>12</sup>

The intellectualizing of lesbian experiences within the collective<sup>13</sup> was most clearly represented in their newspaper, *The Furies*. The collective released 10 newspapers in total, from January 1972 to May-June 1973. The Furies featured Biren's photography and showcased Bunch's articles about the "second class status" of heterosexual women and the "primacy" of lesbianism. Part of what made the newspaper so relevant was the collective's insistence on embedding racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia within the oppressive systems of patriarchy and capitalism. The women would often write about economic class from the standpoint of their own upbringings, which challenged the internal cohesiveness of the collective. According to Biren, "power within the group was indicated in part by where each person fell on scales that calibrated age, class, and old gay/new gay status."<sup>14</sup> These internal power struggles led to

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<sup>9</sup> *The Furies* newspaper is discussed in Theme 5.

<sup>10</sup> Joan Biren, interview with Rebecca Graham, October 24, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Biren, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Ginny Berson, *The Furies*, *The Furies* 1(1-January 1972):1.

<sup>13</sup> Biren, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Biren, email interview with Rebecca Graham, May 4, 2010, in Dolinsky 2010.

the end of the collective about a year after its founding; however, the Furies Collective left an incredibly rich legacy with their newspapers that challenged patriarchal and capitalist systems through innovative, intellectual, impassioned ideas and practices. The residence where the Furies newspaper was designed, packed and distributed, **219 11th Street, SE**, was listed in the NRHP on May 2, 2016 (Plate 2-11).

### **National Organization for Women and the Sexuality Task Force**



Founded in 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) is currently the largest organization of feminist grassroots activists in the United States. Their purpose has always been to take action that promotes feminist ideals, leads societal change, eliminates discrimination, and achieves and protects the equal rights of all women. Early on it was evident that NOW activists used both traditional and nontraditional means to push for social change, and during the 1960s it fought to address the homophobia against lesbians as part of its Sexuality Task Force.<sup>15</sup>

Freund's feminist consciousness led her to DC-NOW, the local chapter of the national organization. The membership of DC-NOW was primarily middle-class white women and somewhat conservative in some respects, and found the effort of bringing about more diversity difficult. Freund helped start Capitol Hill-NOW, which organized with the intent to engage the large African-American population in the southeast quadrant of DC. Freund remembers that "we had just one or two black women who came to our meetings just because of where it was held."<sup>16</sup> Freund was president of Capitol Hill-NOW long enough to oversee a lawsuit filed against the County of Fairfax in Virginia for discriminatory employment practices.

The 1973 National NOW conference was held in DC. All of the "big guns," as Freund states, were at the conference: Barbara Love, Sidney Abbott, Del Martin, and Phyllis Lyon—four well-known lesbian feminists.<sup>17,18</sup> It was at this conference that the NOW membership and board voted to create the Sexuality Task Force, which focused on lesbians and bisexual women, as part of their agenda. The Sexuality Task Force was the organization's response to homophobia, initiated internally (and infamously) by Betty Friedan, who claimed in 1969 that lesbians were the "lavender menace" of NOW. The task force existed to "get lesbian *issues* dealt with, because there were lesbian issues outside of NOW that needed the NOW power structure and the NOW infrastructure to help them."<sup>19</sup>

The Sexuality Task Force was co-chaired by a lesbian and a non-lesbian. Freund, influenced by the 1973 national conference, proposed a Sexuality Task Force to the board of the DC-NOW; it was approved and she

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<sup>15</sup> National Organization for Women [NOW], Who We Are, National Organization for Women (n.d., accessed April 2019, <https://now.org/about/who-we-are/>).

<sup>16</sup> Eva Freund, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 20, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Freund, interview with Rebecca Graham, July 13, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Love and Abbott, most notable at the time for writing *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman: A Liberated View of Lesbianism*, had previously worked with Rita Mae Brown in New York City's Radicalesbians, before Brown moved to DC and co-founded The Furies.

<sup>19</sup> Freund, July 13, 2006.

became the first lesbian co-chair. According to Freund, the DC chapter did not find lesbians a threat *until* the implementation of the Sexuality Task Force. Freund describes the participants at the first meeting:

I let it be known that the new Sexuality Task Force would be meeting on some Sunday afternoon at my house in the Dupont Circle area and *anyone* who was interested was welcome to come and I think there were three lesbians who showed up terrified—that was the outest of their closet they had ever been except when they went to the bars.<sup>20</sup>

In 1977 Freund, not content with the direction of national NOW, left the organization. Freund wrote about lesbians in NOW in “...Nothing But a Bunch of Dykes!” A small excerpt follows:

Those inside the (Women’s) Movement were afraid that the label would make them inoperative, ineffective, and would mean the demise of the Movement. After all, “normal” women wouldn’t want to have anything to do with the Movement if it was nothing but a bunch of dykes...

...even though the lesbian is single, married, widowed, divorced, separated, with children, without children, relating to many women, relating to no women, aggressive and shy, strong and gentle, very feminine, very masculine, rich, poor and in-between—even though the lesbian is white, black, third world, young, old, living alone, living with a man, living with one woman, living with many women, college-educated and a high-school dropout, she is still a woman.<sup>21</sup>

The limits of gender identity were becoming increasingly blurred against the shifting discourse on sexuality. Freund’s description of diverse lesbian identities in the 1970s underscores the homophobic attitudes of many women’s liberationists during this era. Much like the homophile movement, which used “gay” to describe the movement’s central, static identity, the women’s liberation movement described “women” in similar, singular terms. As an active member of both MSW and NOW, Freund pushed against these limits in both the homophile movement and the women’s liberation movement.

### **The Committee for Open Gay Bars**

In fall of 1971, MSW’s Paul Kuntzler led the Committee for Open Gay Bars in response to blatant discrimination in DC’s new gay nightclub, Lost and Found. According to an early flyer describing the nightclub, Lost and Found described itself as “Your Bar.”<sup>22</sup> Just three short days after Lost and Found opened in October 1971, protesters started picketing against the establishment’s racist practices:

The confrontation came about as a result of the denial of admission of some members of the Gay Liberation Front because of lack of proper identification. It was also reported that some women were refused admittance because they were wearing levi’s. In the three days following the opening of the super bar, there were reports that whites were not being asked for identification.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Freund, December 20, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Freund, “...Nothing but a Bunch of Dykes!” (n.d., accessed September 2019, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/items/show/738>).

<sup>22</sup> Historical Society of Washington, DC [HSDC], Welcome. Lost and Found Classifieds (Rainbow History Project, October 1971, accessed June 13, 2009, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/l&f1071.pdf>).

<sup>23</sup> Gay Forum, New D.C. Bar is Picketed by Gays: Group Charges ‘Racial Bias,’ *Gay Forum* 1(2-November 15-30, 1971):1, 21. Retrieved from the HSDC, Rainbow History Project Archives (Folder 3).



Kuntzler approached one of the nightclub managers about the blatant discrimination, to no avail, and subsequently led the committee, which was “a coalition of local organizations”<sup>24</sup> that included MSW, Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), Gay Women’s Open House,<sup>25</sup> and the Gay Liberation Front-DC (GLF). Notably, the *Gay Blade* was a strong supporter of the Committee on Open Gay Bars.<sup>26</sup>

Activists protested the racist tactics and policies of Lost and Found—people picketed the club and shamed those entering the club on Saturday nights. In response the management team released a flyer in November 1971 with a picture of six picketers (five white men and one black man) with a caption under the picture proclaiming, “Oh Well, You Can’t Please Every One!!!” According to Mark Meinke, founder of DC’s Rainbow History Project, “Picketing and discussions with the owners carried on for several months before a compromise was reached on the club’s admission policies (which still excluded customers in drag).”<sup>27</sup>

## Gay Liberation Movement



PLATE 2-12: Former “GLF House,” 1620 S Street, NW  
(Louis Berger 2019n)

### *Gay Liberation Front-DC*

Even though DC lesbian and gay activist groups significantly increased during the 1970s, activist groups remained predominantly white and, for the Gay Liberation Front-DC (GLF-DC), predominantly male. GLF-DC was founded in June 1970, inspired by the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in New York, which was founded in the aftermath of the Stonewall rebellion in New York City. GLF-DC was a radical activist group that pursued a broad leftist political agenda in DC. Their first meeting took place on June 30, 1970, at the **Grace Episcopal Church, Georgetown.**

The initial invitation to form a Gay Liberation Front in DC was written by Mike Yarr, co-founder of GLF-DC, and printed in the June 9-June 19, 1970 edition of the *Quicksilver Times*, an underground newspaper in Washington, DC; a follow-up invitation was printed in the June 23-July 3, 1970 edition.<sup>28</sup> In the second invitation David Aiken, the other co-founder of GLF-DC, wrote:

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<sup>24</sup> Meinke, Lost and Found (accessed July 23, 2009, Rainbow History Project).

<sup>25</sup> The Gay Women’s Open House is discussed further in Theme 4.

<sup>26</sup> Meinke, Some thoughts on the outline ( email attachment, RE: Ch.3 Review: Pride/Activism: LGBTQ Historic Context Advisory Committee, to Kisa Hooks, Eric Gonzaba, Vincent Slatt, Derek Gray, Monica Rhodes, Steve Callcott, Patsy Fletcher, Steven Bedford, and Rebecca Graham, February 26, 2019).

<sup>27</sup> Meinke, Lost and Found.

<sup>28</sup> Mike Yarr, Sisters and Brothers, *Quicksilver Times*, June 9-19, 1970:2. Retrieved April 30, 2010, Rainbow History Project.

Laws must be changed, firings of gay people must be protested, overpriced gay bars must be boycotted and social events must be arranged where gay people as well as straight people can meet each other in a relaxed atmosphere. These are some of the things Gay Lib groups in other cities have done....It's especially important that gay women get together as well as gay men. There's already enough male chauvinism among heterosexuals; a gay movement shouldn't contribute to it by concerning itself only with male homosexuality. Women will almost certainly want to have their own separate rap sessions, but there's a lot that gay men and gay women can do together....Gay people are perhaps the last oppressed group to get themselves together. Blacks, Indians, Puerto Ricans, women – everybody's getting organized. It's time for gays to surface, join with their comrades (both gays and right-on straights) and fight repression in all forms.<sup>29</sup>

Weekly meetings of the new gay liberation group were temporarily held at the Grace Episcopal Church. In September 1970, the group later moved into the “**GLF House**” at **1620 S Street, NW** in the Dupont Circle Historic District, which is listed in both the DC Inventory and the NRHP (Plate 2-12). GLF-DC started two living collectives in the Dupont Circle area. Much of the organization's planning occurred at GLF House and the living collective became a sort of “community center.”<sup>30</sup> The Skyline collective,<sup>31</sup> formerly located at **1624 S Street, NW**, served as the alternate living collective from the GLF House that started in 1971.<sup>32</sup> Among the group's “purposes and methods” was “to establish a sense of community among gay people”<sup>33</sup> (Figure 2-6). And GLF-DC member Warren Blumenfeld recalls, “We didn't have elected officials, it was really a grassroots movement and we all really contributed to the success of the groups, the actions, the living situation.” For Blumenfeld, the larger gay liberation movement – including GLF-DC – was,

A liberation movement. Not just for gay people. Many of us saw the connections with oppression and capitalism; we saw capitalism as being the chief cause of the divisions amongst the races, amongst the classes, amongst men and women, amongst heterosexuals and homosexuals. So, we basically wanted to dismantle the capitalist structure that we felt was inherently oppressive.<sup>34</sup>

Members of GLF-DC established “*small consciousness-raising cells* designed to *communicate* personal problems and to make one aware of the oppressions on homosexuals coming from the straight society.” The group also formed several “glonks” (committees), including a political action glonk established “mainly due to an incident where two female members of GLF were discriminated against in a gay bar obviously due to the fact that they were female.”<sup>35</sup> MSW's Frank Kameny drafted a letter with the glonk “*to the gay bars in the D.C. area...urging them to discontinue discrimination against our own brothers and sisters of varying race, sex, and 'image.'*”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> David Aiken, *Gay Liberation Front Comes to DC*, *Quicksilver Times*, June 23-July 3, 1970:4.

<sup>30</sup> Warren Blumenfeld, interview with Rebecca Graham, April 30, 2010, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>31</sup> The Skyline Collective was named after Skyline Drive in Virginia, where some of the members of GLF-DC went on a retreat (Blumenfeld). The Skyline Collective members were the prime writers and editors of the Gay Liberation issue of *Motive* magazine, which provides a snapshot of gay liberation in the first years of the 1970s (see Meinke email, September 18, 2019).

<sup>32</sup> The first GLF House was feeling like “crash pad” to some of the members of the collective, which caused them to find a new, albeit nearby, location. Meinke, *The Gay Liberation Front-DC* (accessed November 12, 2007, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/glf.htm>).

<sup>33</sup> *Gay Liberation Front D.C. [GLF-DC], Temporary Fact Sheet for the Washington Gay Liberation Front* (August 5, 1970, Courtesy of the Rainbow History Project).

<sup>34</sup> Blumenfeld.

<sup>35</sup> GLF-DC, *Temporary Fact Sheet*.

<sup>36</sup> GLF-DC, *Temporary Fact Sheet*, emphasis in original.



FIGURE 2-6: A Flyer from the New York-based Gay Liberation Front that Was Distributed in Washington, D.C., 1970-1971 (GLF 1970, Courtesy of the D.C. Public Library Washington Star Collection)

Many attendees of GLF-DC's meetings, including Deacon Maccubbin, founder and owner of Lambda Rising,<sup>37</sup> brought their antiwar credentials to the group. GLF-DC channeled some of the strategies and energy from the antiwar generation and creatively used a radical tactic of the gay liberation movement—*zaps*, which were “militant, but non-violent, face-to-face confrontations” against oppressive or repressive institutions.<sup>38</sup> GLF-DC members participated in the May 1971 “zap” of the APA conference as well as the Gay May Day event (see Theme 2).<sup>39</sup>



FIGURE 2-7: Gay Pride 1972 Program. The two previous years, the community went to New York for the Stonewall anniversary. Now, DC would host its own events in several areas around the city (Rainbow

women do not speak out about their own particular kind of oppression.”<sup>40</sup> GLF-DC offered housing for “gay brothers” and arranged for food, legal aid, medical aid, and transportation, and held gay liberation workshops at American University during the RPCC.<sup>41</sup>

Members of GLF-DC organized the first Gay Pride Festival that occurred May 2-7, 1972 (Figure 2-7). Because of their active presence in DuPont Circle, GLF-DC members positively influenced the **Community Bookshop (2028 P Street, NW)**, which became an LGBTQ-friendly establishment in Dupont Circle and a host for festival events (see Theme 4). GLF-DC also supported the Black Panthers’ Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention (RPCC), which took place in Washington, DC in November 1970. The Black Panthers’ Huey P. Newton had written an open letter around that time to other men in the Black Panther Party about the gay liberation and women’s movements. In it Newton states, “I do not remember us ever constituting any value that said that a revolutionary must say offensive things towards homosexuals, or that a revolutionary should make sure that

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<sup>37</sup> Lambda Rising was one of the oldest gay bookstores in the United States. It closed its doors in early 2010.

<sup>38</sup> As described by Arthur Evans in an August 30, 1999, article written for *Gay Today*. Meinke, 1971: Zapping the APA Convention (accessed March 23, 2007, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/apazap.htm>).

<sup>39</sup> Meinke, email, September 18, 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Huey P. Newton, A Letter from Huey Newton to the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women’s Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements, 1970, in *Smash the Church, Smash the State! The Early Years of Gay Liberation*, T. Avicelli Mecca, ed. (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2009), 252254.

<sup>41</sup> GLF-DC, Revolutionary People’s Convention, *GLF Newsletter* 1(12-October 27, 1970):1, accessed April 30, 2010, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/DC12.pdf>.

Over the weekend of the RPCC, an incident Meinke recalls as “the closest Washington has seen to an equivalent of Stonewall” occurred.<sup>42</sup> Four gay male members of GLF “were refused service by the management” of the Zephyr, a bar-restaurant near American University. Gay liberation activists staying at the university were called in to support them and to protest the homophobic discrimination. Reportedly 50 people arrived *en masse* and subsequently zapped the restaurant by immersing themselves among the patrons of the “heterosexually-oriented” establishment. Zephyr management responded in fury, with security guards becoming violent with “two gay Blacks and a gay Puerto Rican,” leading to a “free-for-all” between the gay liberationists and workers at the restaurant.<sup>43</sup> Twelve gay men were arrested in the incident but eventually released on their own recognizance. Those arrested included GLFers from Chicago and Michigan who were not allowed to leave DC pending trial and consequently became residents of the GLF House.

The larger part of GLF-DC’s membership was made up of white men, but Blumenfeld remembers that GLF-DC was also “multiracial,” including black and Latino men in the group’s membership. Many members of GLF-DC were from working-class families and “some of them were street people thrown out by their families,” making the organization an important home for these young men.<sup>44</sup> GLF-DC had hoped for a diverse collective in their membership, including women, to counter the “male chauvinism among heterosexuals.”

GLF-DC member Nancy Tucker remembers that “the GLF meetings were sort of paralleling the growth and the strength of the women’s movement. And gradually the women fell away to the point where I was the only woman left.”<sup>45</sup> Second-wave feminism was going strong during the early 1970s, and some of the era’s feminist groups, like DC’s radical lesbian collective The Furies, were separatist in nature. But gender diversity efforts made by GLF-DC often fell short. Tucker recalls that men in GLF-DC “claimed to be distressed by this gender difference, gender disparity, but in fact it mattered very little to them.”<sup>46</sup> She finally had enough of the sexism that early founders of GLF-DC had hoped to avoid, and read a statement at her final meeting to a member audience of all gay men that would be published months later in the August/September 1971 edition of DOB’s *The Ladder* in an article titled, “Fuck You, ‘Brothers’! or Yet Another Woman Leaves The Gay Liberation Movement.”

GLF-DC was short-lived; the group collectively organized for no more than three years. Some of the members left to join the Gay Activists Alliance because, according to the October 6, 1970, *GLF Newsletter*, some members felt that GLF-DC was “involved in extraneous political issues.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the sustainability of GAA over GLF-DC may be partly a result of the alliance’s more mainstream, non-radical activism.

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<sup>42</sup> Meinke, The Gay Liberation Front-DC.

<sup>43</sup> GLF-DC, Free the Washington Twelve (n.d., accessed April 17, 2007, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/DC12.pdf>).

<sup>44</sup> Blumenfeld.

<sup>45</sup> Tucker.

<sup>46</sup> Tucker.

<sup>47</sup> GLF-DC, View Point: Rap, *GLF Newsletter* 1(9-October 6, 1970):1, accessed April 30, 2010, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/glf1.9.pdf>.

### *Gay Activists Alliance / Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance*

Washington, DC's Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) was founded in 1971 (Figure 2-8) and exists today as the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA). GAA was organized at the end of the "Kameny for Congress" campaign.

When members of GAA in New York (GAA/NY)<sup>48</sup> came down to DC to help secure enough signatures to place Frank Kameny's name on the March 1971 Congressional ballot, campaign staffers found in GAA/NY a model to continue their activism—at the level of local politics. A month after the close of the 1971 special election in DC, GAA formed in the city. MSW was winding down, and founding members of GAA decided not to give Frank Kameny any leadership roles in the newly formed group. Paul Kuntzler, founding member of GAA and Kameny's campaign manager, discusses this decision: "When we formed Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance—that was in the aftermath of the Kameny campaign. We decided [that] the movement had to go beyond Frank Kameny."<sup>49</sup>

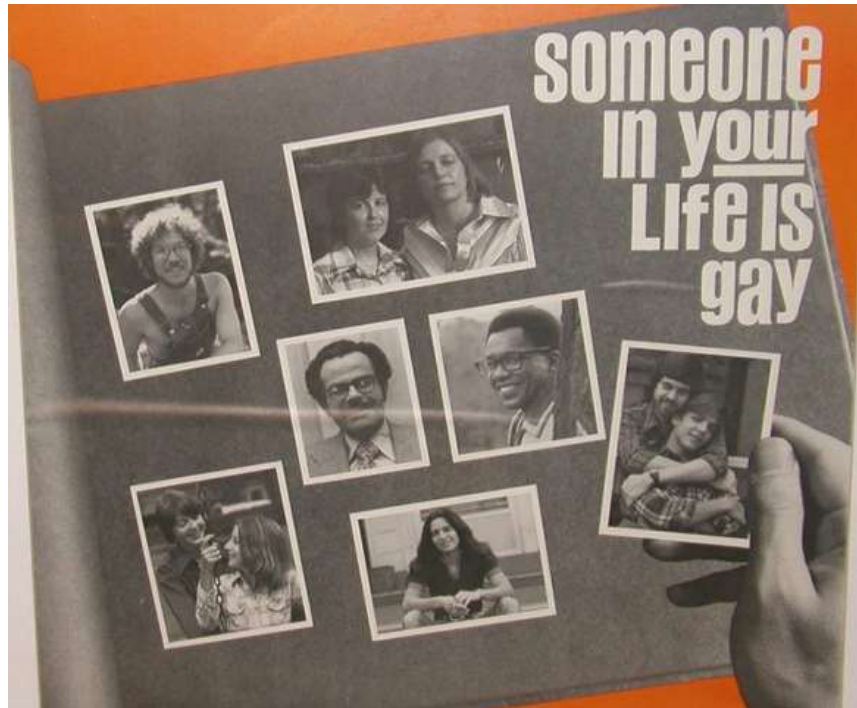


FIGURE 2-8: Gay Activist Alliance Brochure, ca. 1971 (Courtesy of the Capital Pride Alliance)

GAA contributed to many local successes during the early years of the organization, including the opposition of the American Psychiatric Association's anti-homosexuality stance in 1971 (see Theme 6) and the passage of Title 34, DC's Human Rights Law, in 1973.<sup>50</sup> Title 34 included provisions for the gay and lesbian community and the

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<sup>48</sup> GAA/NY was founded by former members of the New York's GLF. GLF pursued a broad leftist political agenda, and some of its members wanted instead to focus specifically on gay issues. See Carter, 233.

<sup>49</sup> Kuntzler, December 17, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> NOW's Sexuality Task Force and lesbian co-chair Eva Freund played a large role in supporting and passing Title 34, the DC Human Rights Act (see Meinke, email, September 18, 2019).



PLATE 2-13: Mel Boozer on the floor of the Democratic National Convention, New York City, August 13, 1980 (Photo by Lisa M. Keen, Washington Blade archive)

appointment of “a gay person to the DC Human Rights Commission” — that person being Frank Kameny — in 1975.<sup>51</sup> The group also successfully lobbied for gay and lesbian parents to have custody and visitation rights with their children in 1976.<sup>52</sup> Since the group decided to focus solely on local politics, one of GAA’s most well-known and consistent actions throughout the years has been to rate candidates in local elections, affirming gay participation in local government.

Like GLF-DC, activists in GAA hoped for a diverse membership. In 1972 GAA elected its first female president, Patricia Radomski, who was more of a figurehead than an actual participant.<sup>53</sup> Women continued to be underrepresented in GAA’s membership in the 1980s, but the organization elected its second woman president in 1986, Lorri Jean, who had “served as president of the board of

the Gay Activists Alliance Education Fund, GAA’s fundraising arm”<sup>54</sup> for the two previous years. Jean was willing to accept her new role in GAA under one condition: the group had to change its name from Gay Activists Alliance to Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance.

GAA also struggled over the years to bring people of color into its membership. One of the efforts that members of GAA made to change the group’s racial composition was to elect Melvin Boozer (Plate 2-13), a black gay male activist in DC, as its first two-term president in 1979. Even though Boozer stayed on as GAA’s president until 1981, his presidency did not diversify the organization.

Activists from the homophile era didn’t enjoy the large, collective movement that the gay liberationists did during the early 1970s. But at the time of MSW’s founding in the early 1960s, the McCarthy era was still very much present in the nation’s consciousness, making it difficult to organize gays and lesbians on a mass scale in the face of overt homophobia. In the late 1960s gays and lesbians needed a major event to create a critical mass, which the Stonewall riots in New York effectively accomplished. Frank Kameny describes the aftermath of the riots and the change it brought to gay movement politics:

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<sup>51</sup> Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington [GLAA], Howell describes history of DC Human Rights Act and gay community, in Remarks for the Celebration of International Human Rights Day, D.C. Commission on Human Rights, December 10, 2003 (accessed February 2019, <http://glaa.org/archive/2003/howelldchra1210.shtml>).

<sup>52</sup> GLAA, Thirty-eight Years of Fighting.

<sup>53</sup> Craig Howell, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 11, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Lou Chibbaro, Jr., GAA elects woman president, *The Washington Blade*, December 12, 1986: 3.

By the time Stonewall came, [the homophile movement] had grown for the whole country to the roughest of estimates, 50 or 60 gay organizations, which is still not much—everybody knew everybody who was active with the movement such as it was. What Stonewall did...was to convert what unsuccessfully strived to be a grassroots movement into an actual grassroots movement in very quick order. By a year later there were, to estimates, 1,500 gay groups. A second year after that, there were about 2,500 and people stopped counting.<sup>55</sup>

## Activism at the Intersections

### *National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays*

The National Coalition of Black Gays was founded as “a unified voice” to address the “systematic oppression of Black lesbians and Black gay men.”<sup>56,57</sup> Even though the organization was founded in 1978, it formally adopted bylaws and established a Board of Directors in 1980 in Philadelphia. The seven founding Board members were Rev. Delores Berry, Rev. Darlene Hines (now Rev. Darlene Garner), Jon Gee, Gil Gerald, ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, Louis Hughes, Jr., and Rev. Dr. Renee McCoy. Reverend Garner describes her experience as a founding board member of NCBG:

I just felt compelled to be a part of this, because the other, I would say, mainstream LGBT organizations were still living and working and organizing in such a way that failed to recognize that gay does not mean white and that lesbians are also gay. The manifestations of racism were quite common, and there was no other organization...consistently speaking to the particular needs and points of view of LGBT people of color and especially not of the black LGBT community.

From the beginning, we had a national agenda... one of the first activities that we did as a board was to meet with representatives from the White House to talk about the particular needs and issues of LGBT people of color....We also had an agenda to have impact upon the mainstream LGBT organizations at the time, to help them to stay mindful of their social location and to honor and respect those of us who had different social locations. So, we found ourselves calling people on their racism...<sup>58</sup>

The stated purposes in a 1980 draft of the organization's bylaws read:

- A. To actively work against racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism and other forms of unfair discrimination within the Black and lesbian and gay communities;
- B. To create positive attitudes between and among Black non-gays and Black gays;
- C. To improve the working and social relationships between and among Black lesbians and gay men;
- D. To raise the consciousness of Black lesbians and Black gay men on major local, national and international issues;
- E. To stimulate wholesome and soulful socio-political atmospheres for Black lesbians and Black gay men;

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<sup>55</sup> Kameny, August 8, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> National Coalition of Black Gays [NCBG], *Black & White Men Coming Out – Together, Habari-Habari* (November 1980):9-10.

<sup>57</sup> Toward the end of 1985, to be more inclusive, the National Coalition of Black Gays changed its name to National Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians.

<sup>58</sup> Rev. Darlene Garner, interview with Rebecca Graham, August 31, 2011, in Dolinsky 2010.



- F. To work cooperatively with other national and local gay and lesbian organizations the extent possible in the pursuit of gay and lesbian civil rights...[NCBG 1980b:1].<sup>59</sup>

NCBG's inclusiveness of "transpersons" in their bylaws also extended to the configuration of chapter Boards. One of the chapter representatives to the Board had to be a male and one a female. Furthermore, a third chapter representative could be elected only if one of the representatives was a transperson.<sup>60</sup>

NCBG was heavily involved with the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, held on October 14, 1979—a little over 10 years after the Stonewall riots (Figure 2-9; Plate 2-14). In June 1978 Harvey Milk urged gays and lesbians to organize a march on Washington for national rights. Activists across the country started grass-roots discussions in the fall of 1978, and national planning meetings subsequently took place in Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and Houston. Organizers pushed for gender and racial inclusiveness in both the planning stages and in the march itself, with mixed results.<sup>61</sup> For example, organizers debated the level of participation for transpersons and bisexuals, who were not yet treated as part of the community. Eventually, organizers "decided to have one speaker representing the interests of transpeople at the post-march rally."<sup>62</sup>



PLATE 2-14: National Coalition of Black Gays/DC Coalition Marching in the 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, October 1979 (Doug Barnes)

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<sup>59</sup> These stated purposes remained almost verbatim through at least the fall of 1986.

<sup>60</sup> NCBG, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Ghaziani, 44, 56-57.

<sup>62</sup> Ghaziani, 62-63.

# Catch the freedom train to Washington!

## *Pride in DC*

- 1972: First Gay Pride Celebration
- 1975: Annual Gay Pride Established
- 1991: First DC Black Pride
- 1997: First Youth Pride Day
- 1989: Deaf Pride
- 2000: DC Metropolitan Police Department's Gay & Lesbian Liaison Unit formed
- 2007: First Latinx Community Pride Festival
- 2007: First Trans Pride

## *National Marches on Washington*

- 1979: National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights
- 1987: Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights
- 1993: Third National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights
- 2000: Millennium March on Washington for Equality  
(Fourth National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights)
- 2009: National Equality March  
(Fifth National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights)
- 2017: First Equality March for Unity and Pride



**THE NATIONAL MARCH  
ON WASHINGTON  
FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS  
OCTOBER 14, 1979**

FIGURE 2-9: Capital Pride and Notable National LGBTQ Marches on Washington

As a young organization, NCBG took the helm in organizing the first National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference on the same weekend as the march.<sup>63</sup> Around 350 people attended the conference, including a representative from Mayor Marion Barry's office, held at Howard University's Harambee House Hotel on Georgia Avenue October 12-15, 1979.<sup>64</sup> NCBG's Valerie Papaya Mann promoted and publicized the conference. According to *Blacklight*, which was "the only D.C. periodical that focuses exclusively on the lifestyle and concerns of Washington's black lesbians and gay men" at the time,<sup>65</sup> the conference marked "the first time that Lesbian and Gay Asians, [American] Indians, Chicanos, Latins and Blacks will assemble as a unified body."<sup>66</sup>

The Third World Conference featured Audre Lorde as its keynote speaker, who also spoke at the national march's rally. The conference included sessions, workshops, and caucuses about racism, sexism, and ageism in various communities; interracial relationships; trans issues; health; religion; and issues relating to specific racial, ethnic, or cultural groups. On the morning of the national march, conference participants collectively and symbolically walked through Northwest DC from the Harambee House to the National Mall.

"This walk down Georgia Avenue was the first public demonstration by lesbians and gays in the heart of the African-American areas of the city."<sup>67</sup> New York City's Salsa Soul Sisters (an organization for Third World lesbians), who participated in the Third World Conference, were chosen to lead the national march and carry its main banner.<sup>68</sup>

NCBG held annual conferences and issued a newsletter, *Habari-Habari*,<sup>69</sup> which was also published as *Habari-Daftari*.<sup>70</sup> In 1986 Joseph Beam became editor of NCBLG's new publication *Black/Out*, which succeeded *Habari-Habari*.<sup>71</sup>

In the spring of 1983, Gil Gerald became Executive Director of NCBG and eventually the organization's first paid director with the help of the funds he raised. **Gerald's home at 601 Q Street, NW** became the operational center of NCBG while he headed the organization.<sup>72,73</sup> In early 1985 NCBG made a concerted effort to bring more women to the helm. To "correct a previous lack of gender parity," the organization elected more women than men to the national board, including Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde.<sup>74</sup> By the

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<sup>63</sup> NCBG followed up with a second and third conference in Chicago (1981) and Berkeley (1984), respectively.

<sup>64</sup> Jones-Hennin, July 14, 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Chasen Gaver, Blacklight Monthly Focuses on Black Gay Community, *The Washington Post*, December 3, 1981.

<sup>66</sup> Brinkley, Third World Gays to Meet, *Blacklight* 1(2-1979).

<sup>67</sup> Meinke, The March on Washington (retrieved from Rainbow History Project, August 5, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Ghaziani, 58.

<sup>69</sup> Habari-Habari is Swahili for "What's The News-What's The News?"

<sup>70</sup> Vincent Slatt, Rainbow History Project Saves Our Written Word, *Tagg Magazine* (May 25, 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Beam edited the volume *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, which featured writings by Gil Gerald and ABilly Jones-Hennin.

<sup>72</sup> Meinke, email, September 18, 2019.

<sup>73</sup> In the 1970s Gerald's home at 601 Q Street, NW was at the epicenter of local gay African-American organizing and politics. Gerald was one of the early and longest serving leaders of the NCBG. Between 1977 and 1985, his home functioned as a meeting center for the DC Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians, NCBG, and related organizations. Meetings and social events drew most of the leaders of the African-American gay and lesbian community.

<sup>74</sup> Gerald in Chibbaro, National Coalition of Black Gays' board meets, *The Washington Blade* (February 22, 1985):5.

end of 1985, the organization had changed its name to the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG) and held its first annual conference in St. Louis. St. Louis was selected as the location to increase outreach to potential members in the Midwest and the South. The organization declared its membership goal for the following year: to recruit 1,000 new members. During the conference NCBLG offered sessions and workshops on spirituality, AIDS, prisoners, the black family, building an autonomous black gay press, international concerns on several fronts, oral history, and electoral politics.<sup>75</sup> The following year, in 1986, NCBLG sponsored the nation's first conference on "AIDS in the Black Community" (further discussed in Theme 6).

Rev. Renee McCoy became the NCBLG's last Executive Director. McCoy founded the New York chapter of the NCBLG, the New York Coalition of Third World Lesbians and Gays.<sup>76</sup> The national office relocated to Detroit, McCoy's home town, where there was already a local chapter and direct support embedded in the community to ensure NCBLG's sustainability.<sup>77</sup>

The national organization existed into the late 1980s, leaving an incredible legacy both nationally and in DC. NCBLG challenged the 1970s gay liberationist discourse that continued to prioritize "gay" as the single identity of the mainstream movement. The organization helped transform the once singular and fixed concept of "gay" into a multiply inhabited, diverse identity that encapsulated race, gender, and class—simultaneously.

### *Black and White Men Together*

Jones-Hennin also co-founded the DC chapter of Black and White Men Together (DC-BWMT), a social organization with a political focus for black and white gay men who were involved in or interested in interracial relationships. Jones-Hennin was approached by Michael Smith, founder of the national BWMT, at the Third World Conference; Smith was intrigued that Jones-Hennin's partner, Christopher, was white.<sup>78</sup> The formation of DC-BWMT was announced in the November 1980 edition of *Habari-Habari*:

... a network of Black and White Men Together (BWMT) groups are being formed in major cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, D.C., and New York. Not only are the groups serving as social support groups but also as conscious raising sessions which address issues of racism, sexism, sexual preferences, and other issues men in inter-racial relationships internalize. The New York Chapter appears to be addressing more diverse issues and has had several prominent speakers since its inception—Betty Powell, Isaac Jackson, Audre Lorde, et al. NCBG's founder, Billy Jones and his lover, Christopher, will address the New York Chapter on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>79</sup>

Although some activists in the community found it "disturbing" that black male activists were involved with white men, Christopher Bates, one of the early founding members of the DC-BWMT, remembers that others had no qualms. He talks about BWMT's earliest interaction with members of the DC Coalition:

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<sup>75</sup> Jim Thomas, Black Gays hold national convention, *The Washington Blade* (December 6, 1985):1.

<sup>76</sup> LGBT Religious Archives Network [LGBT-RAN], *Biography: Rev. Dr. Renee McCoy—Oral History* (July 2017, <https://lgbtreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/renee-mccoy>).

<sup>77</sup> Jones-Hennin, personal communication with Rebecca Graham, May 17, 2010, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Jones-Hennin, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 19, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>79</sup> NCBG.

... we did a party at the Crispus Attucks museum... and I had been asked by a member of BWMT if I had invited members of the DC Black Gay and Lesbian Coalition and I said, "No, but I will" and I didn't think they would come because there was a lot of angst about mixing and doing stuff, but I won't forget that night. We were there, we were partying, the guy who was running the museum was an African American man who was very open and really about community and saw us as community even though he was a straight guy. And when Phil Pannell, Lawrence Washington, and Mickey Sainte-Andress showed up, they took the mic and said, "We [DC Coalition] watch this group [DC-BWMT] in town, we see that they're moving issues that we're interested in too and we'd love to partner with you to make some things happen in town and we've heard a lot of stuff about Chris Bates..." and I was chair [of DC-BWMT] at that time, and "We're gonna work together." ... that night was a turning point for me in DC; I felt more confident to do more things in the black community....<sup>80</sup>

Bates felt encouraged by his interaction with Pannell, Washington, and Sainte-Andress, all of whom were black gay men and members of the DC Coalition, and connected with them politically and socially. DC-BWMT and the DC Coalition actively worked against the racism in the gay nightclubs in DC during the 1980s (further discussed in Theme 4).

### *Sapphire Sapphos*

Toward the end of 1979, African-American lesbians in DC organized Sapphire Sapphos, a social and political organization. Although the group formed for all Third World lesbians in DC, the organization's membership was African-American. Annette Chi Hughes (Plate 2-15), a founding member, talks about this:

...we started off not wanting to be exclusively African American but our mission statement, if you will, was "Embracing All Third-World Sisters. Our Dreams, Our Endeavors, Our Struggles." So, the original intent was not for it to be exclusively African American but wanting all women of color who were gay, lesbian, to have a space to go.<sup>81</sup>

Sapphire Sapphos was named after "a strong, black woman figure, and of a precious gemstone. Sappho, of course...the Greek poet."<sup>82</sup> Members of the organization first met at La Zambra and in various homes of the organization's members.<sup>83</sup> Troi Graves, president of Sapphire Sapphos in 1980 and again in 1982, described the founding of the organization:



PLATE 2-15: Annette "Chi" Hughes (Courtesy of the Rainbow History Project Digital Collections)

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<sup>80</sup> Christopher Bates, interview with Rebecca Graham, November 20, 2007 (edited), in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>81</sup> Annette "Chi" Hughes, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 12, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Jim Marks, Of Gems and Nurturing Women, *The Washington Blade* (March 16, 1984):1, 13.

<sup>83</sup> La Zambra was a black gay bar that opened in 1970 in Northwest DC, two years after the 1968 riots that burned down most of the black gay and lesbian bar-restaurants in the city.

We came to the realization that we can't sit back and let other people speak for us. We had the feeling that the Gay rights movement was perceived as, first, white, and second, primarily male. We wanted to say, "hey, look, there's a whole lot of us out here." We want to have a piece of the pie, and we want to be part of the process of cutting up the pie [Marks 1984b].

As Graves points out, individuals in the mainstream white gay movement in DC were still describing gay identity in static terms into the late 1970s. While "devouring" books by Jonathan Katz and Audre Lorde in the mid- to late 1970s, Michelle Parkerson, a member of Sapphire Sapphos, started feeling a strong connection with the black lesbian community in DC. During interviews with Rebecca Graham, Parkerson reflected on the genesis of the organization:

And so, when I met this core group of women, it was like, wow—this will encourage me even more to belong, to discover all the aspects of what being a lesbian was all about and in particular what being a black lesbian was about in the city.<sup>84</sup>

Annette Chi Hughes, who had become president of the group in 1984, also discussed the organization:



PLATE 2-16: Colevia Carter (Courtesy of the Rainbow History Project Digital Collections.)

People ate politics for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so you were expected to have a political sophistication" in Washington, DC. Therefore, Sapphire Sapphos was founded in DC partly because "so many African American lesbians" lived in DC "who were political by design."<sup>85</sup>

Colevia Carter (Plate 2-16), also a member of Sapphire Sapphos, remembers a general vibrancy in black gay and lesbian communities at the time:

There was a meeting almost every night. If you're going to be involved politically, that means you're going to be involved with well, you know, Sapphire Sapphos, the DC Coalition, and Langston Hughes-Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club....<sup>86</sup>

Carlene Cheatam, who started working in the DC government under Marion Barry's administration in the 1970s, also joined Sapphire Sapphos. Cheatam spoke about politically organizing during the era as a black lesbian:

I started joining everything wanting to know how people felt, what they were about, what they wanted to do, what they wanted to be when they grew up and had gotten involved with the DC Coalition, Gertrude Stein, Langston Hughes Eleanor

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<sup>84</sup> Michelle Parkerson, interview with Rebecca Graham, February 26, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007.

<sup>86</sup> Carter.

Roosevelt Club....And then I decided that I really didn't want to deal with *all of it* anymore. Having a preference for black people, I really just decided to put my energies there....It was just a labor of love, I was around my people.<sup>87</sup>

Sapphire Sapphos was active until the mid-1980s. Hughes remembers the organization ending as a “matter of people’s interest taking on new areas.”<sup>88</sup> One of these new areas was the AIDS epidemic; both Hughes and Mann actively joined the fight against AIDS in DC (see Theme 6). Sapphire Sapphos bridged the political and social gap in the black lesbian community in DC during the 1980s. In essence, the organization metamorphosed into the Black Lesbian Support Group at the Whitman-Walker Clinic.<sup>89</sup> Many women from Sapphire Sapphos, including Mann, joined that group. In *Home Girls* Tania Abdulahad, who was president of the organization in 1982, stated:

Until Sapphire Sapphos got started there was no Black Lesbian feminist organization out there for Black Lesbians to plug into, so it's served a definite need. And as Chi Hughes puts it, “having a presence; being visible women of color at that point in time, in the early '80s, was a political statement. You know, just organizing under the umbrella of gay women is a political statement.”<sup>90</sup>

### *Student Organizations*

George Washington University (GWU) showed early support of several LGBTQ groups and events by supporting the GLF and the first Pride Parade and hosted the First Walker-Whitman Health Clinic-sponsored community AIDS Forum at Lisner Auditorium on April 4, 1983 (see Theme 6). Student groups were also organizing across DC. The Student Homophile Society organized the first gay dances and supported establishment of the Community Church (see Theme 7).<sup>91</sup>

In October 1979 Howard University students formed the Lambda Student Alliance (LSA), “the first openly LGBT organization at a historically black college or university.”<sup>92</sup> University administrators refused to intervene, however, when the Howard University Student Organization resisted formal recognition of the LSA.<sup>93</sup> Howard did not recognize LSA until March 1981, after members threatened to file a discrimination lawsuit. LSA’s “primary functions” were to “educate the Howard community about gays and to provide a support network for gay Howard students—many of whom may feel that they have nowhere else to turn.”<sup>94</sup> Annette Chi Hughes, one of the founding members of LSA during her university years and eventual member of both Sapphire Sapphos and the Black Lesbian Support Group, served as LSA co-chair. Hughes discussed the needs the group served for various gay and lesbian students across the campus:

It was difficult for a lot of us, because some folks came to the group because they wanted support. They didn't want to be activists; they just wanted to be with other gay people. We had some folks

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<sup>87</sup> Charlene Cheatam, interview with Rebecca Graham, November 28, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007.

<sup>89</sup> Valerie Papaya Mann, interview with Rebecca Graham, April 9, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Barbara Smith, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table – Women of Color Press, 1983).

<sup>91</sup> Meinke, email, September 18, 2019.

<sup>92</sup> G. Beemyn, 208.

<sup>93</sup> G. Beemyn, 209.

<sup>94</sup> Janet Cooke, Gays Coming Out on Campus, First Black Group at Howard, *The Washington Post*, April 24, 1980.

who came through under the guise of doing research on gay issues, and they didn't want to admit to being out but they would keep coming afterwards. And there were those of us who felt like it was time for black gay folks to have a presence and to organize.<sup>95</sup>

*Blacklight's* founder and editor, Sidney Brinkley, also a member of LSA, founded *Blacklight* in 1979, one of the first publications for African-American lesbians and gays in the United States.<sup>96</sup>

Around the same time, Georgetown University found itself in a similar predicament for refusing to recognize the formation of an LGBTQ student group, the Gay Rights Coalition. In 1980 Lorri Jean was the "chief plaintiff" in *Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown University Law Center v. Georgetown University*. Along with fellow students at Georgetown, Jean sued the University "for refusing to recognize our LGBT group because doing so allegedly violated Catholic doctrine." After nine years, the university "settled the case and permitted establishment of LGBT student groups at the Law Center and on the undergraduate campus."<sup>97</sup> Georgetown now has a school chapter of OUTlaw, a LGBTQ+ student affinity group for the Georgetown University Law Center. OUTlaw is a national LGBT student group which seeks to advance the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community; educate the law school community concerning gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender politics and culture; and provide the support necessary to attain these goals.<sup>98</sup>

Other student organizations include the American University Gay Community, Gay Alliance of Prince George's Community College, Gay Law Students, National Gay Student Center, Gay People's Alliance/George Washington University, and the Gay Student Alliance of University of Maryland at College Park. Although many are existing groups, their founders and level of impact to the larger LGBTQ community are unknown. A recommendation of the study is to research the impact these groups had within their universities and the District (see Theme 4).

### *Education as Activism*

The Rainbow History Project (RHP) and the Latino GLBT History Project are two notable local non-profits that are actively working to document the District's LGBTQ history. Mark Meinke, lead SME for the context, is a co-founder of the Rainbow History Project with Jose Gutierrez, the founder of the Latino GLBT History Project. Meinke spearheaded the RHP, noting the lack of LGBTQ history in the District. On November 4, 2000, Meinke met with Charles Rose, Bruce Pennington, Jose Gutierrez, and James Crutchfield, which led to the creation of the RHP.<sup>99</sup> Many RHP resources remain available online. The DC History Center acquired the physical archives of the RHP into the "Rainbow History Project Collection." Founded in April 2000 and incorporated in May 2007 by RHP co-founder Jose Gutierrez, the Latino GLBT History Project serves to "respond to the critical need to preserve Latinx LGBTQ History and promote tolerance and acceptance of the community by the public."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007.

<sup>96</sup> *Blacklight* website, 2019, <http://blacklightonline.com/index/html>; NPS, Fact Sheet.

<sup>97</sup> Lorri L. Jean, Dramatic Changes on Campus at Georgetown, *HuffPost*, May 11, 2012.

<sup>98</sup> The following university chapters of OUTlaw/Outlaw share similar organization descriptions and mission statements: [Georgetown Law](#), [Duke Law School](#), [Stanford Law School](#), [University of Miami School of Law](#), and the [New York University Law School](#).

<sup>99</sup> Rainbow History Project [RHP], About US (n.d., [https://www.rainbowhistory.org/?page\\_id=2](https://www.rainbowhistory.org/?page_id=2)). The meeting was at the CyberStop Cafe, formerly located at 1534 17th Street, NW.

<sup>100</sup> Latino GLBT History Project, Our Story (n.d., <https://www.latinoglbthistory.org/our-story>).



## Insight into the District's Latino LGBTQ Community

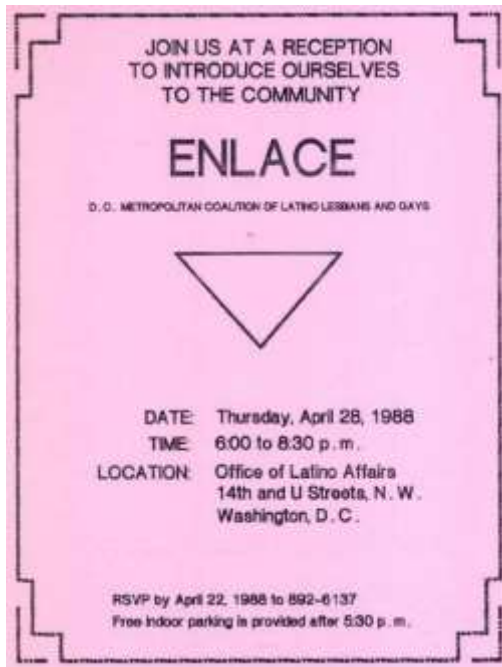


FIGURE 2-10: ENLACE Introductory Invitation. (courtesy of the Rainbow History Project Digital Archives)

On May 17, 2012, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia addressed the House of Representatives to recognize what was then the eve of the 6th Annual D.C. Latino Pride celebration, May 20-7, 2012:

The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area has had an identifiable GLBT Latino community since the early 1960s. However, the community remained largely invisible until 1987, after the first LGBT March on Washington, D.C. D.C. Latino Pride's parent organization, The Latino Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and

Transgender History Project, began in 2000. The organization grew out of a private archive kept since 1993 by its founder, José Gutierrez, who in turn organized the first D.C. Latino Pride in 2007.<sup>101</sup>

The 2012 Latino Pride theme "La Corona, La Plática, La Misa, and La Fiesta" correlated with four main events related to 'History, Celebration, Identity, and Diversity. José Guterrez, co-founder of the Rainbow History Project, is writing a book about the District's Latinx LGBTQ history, an endeavor that would serve to diversify the perspectives in the District's LGBTQ history.<sup>102</sup>

The D.C. Metropolitan Coalition of Latino Lesbians and Gays (ENLACE) is the first known Latinx LGBTQ group in the District that began the summer of 1987 following the 1987 National March on Washington. The group began in April 1988 and soon established itself within the LGBTQ community working with the DC Coalition, the Latin American Task Force, and the Whitman-Walker Clinic on several events (Figure 2-10). "The principal objectives of the organization are to work toward the abolishment of discrimination against Latino lesbians and gay men because of their ethnicity, sex or sexual orientation; to develop leadership ability among Latino lesbians and gay men; to promote Latino culture and heritage; and to build a strong political base for our community."<sup>103</sup> ENLACE became a political and social presence in the District educating its community about HIV/AIDS, created peer groups, and started HOLA GAY, a Spanish language hotline as a means of support. In their words, ENLACE is:

*Un grupo de apoyo para latinos gay ofrece la oportunidad para los que buscan discutir las preocupaciones que tenemos en comun incluyendo el SIDA, la familia, el auto-estima, las relaciones personales y la identidad gay. Juntos podemos trabajar para encontrar soluciones saludables con la asistencia de un moderador entrenado.*<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Norton, Eleanor Holmes (Representative of the District of Columbia), 6th Annual D.C. Latino Pride, Address to the House of Representatives (May 17, 2012, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-2012-05-17/pdf/CREC-2012-05-17-pt1-PgE839.pdf>).

<sup>102</sup> GLAA, Jose Gutierrez (n.d., <http://glaa.org/team/jose-gutierrez/>).

<sup>103</sup> D.C. Metropolitan Coalition of Latino Lesbians and Gays [ENLACE], ENLACE reception invitation (April 28, 1988, courtesy of the Rainbow History Project Digital Collections).

<sup>104</sup> English translation: A peer support group allows gay Latinos to come together to discuss common issues of AIDS/HIV, family relationships, identity and self-esteem. Together, with the help of trained facilitators, we can find healthy solutions.



## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 4: Community Development – Social Spaces and Places

The preceding themes outlined the hurdles of being a homosexual in DC through the mid-twentieth century. This theme begins to identify where DC's LGBTQ community found and created safe spaces and havens despite homophobia, racism, and policing. The history of racism and segregation in Washington, DC resulted in black and white LGBTQ individuals and groups socializing and organizing separately. Gender segregation also applied to many of the social outlets within the white community,<sup>1</sup> although it was less rigid within the black community, who had fewer options for social congregation. Nevertheless, LGBTQ individuals found each other throughout the District's neighborhoods, social outlets, businesses, and residences. Historically, the "finding" of social spaces began at dusk in the city's parks and social hubs that became active after working hours.

...[T]hese social spaces were strictly defined along class lines and often racially segregated. But, for both working- and middle-class men, African Americans and whites, the development of such sites, however restricted, was critical...to develop a network of like-minded friends, and perhaps a sense of belonging to a larger community.<sup>2</sup>

#### Cruising in Parks and Theaters

Cruising first occurred predominantly within unrestricted sites, like parks that initially were neither actively policed nor had posted hours. "Extensive parklands in downtown Washington [were] open to people of all races, classes, and ages, and outside of undercover police officers, only those interested in same gender loving (SGL) relationships were likely to linger there at night, nearly eliminating the possibility of hostile encounters with heterosexuals."<sup>3</sup> Jeb Alexander states in one of his accounts, "It was a lovely night to sit in the peaceful confines (outwardly peaceful, to those who don't know the passion and intrigue and mystery sheltered in those dim shades) of Lafayette Square."<sup>4</sup>

Lafayette Square was the main park cruising spot in DC beginning in 1885.<sup>5</sup> The Smithsonian grounds (the Mall), Lincoln Park in Capitol Hill, Franklin Park, Judiciary Square, and Farragut Square were other cruising sites, from the late nineteenth-century until heavy policing under the Pervert Elimination Campaign began in 1947. Moral reformers advocated for outdoor washrooms in U.S. cities to improve health conditions for the urban poor during the late nineteenth century. In DC, public comfort stations built in the main parks during this era became known as "tea rooms" that were incorporated into cruising practices. Interracial encounters were more common on park lands where segregation was not rigidly enforced. After policing increased, neighborhoods and other semi-private avenues supplanted the District parks as

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<sup>1</sup> Meinke, LGBTQ Ch. 4, RE: Review Request: LGBTQ Ch. 4 Spaces and Places, to Kisa Hooks (attachment to Email, April 5, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> B. Beemyn, 19, edited.

<sup>3</sup> B. Beemyn, 18.

<sup>4</sup> B. Beemyn, 20 (Jeb Alexander diary entry, September 14, 1922).

<sup>5</sup> The Lafayette Square Historic District was listed in the NRHP on August 29, 1970, became a National Historic Landmark on September 6, 1970, and was included in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites in 1973. Lafayette Park became an individually designated NHL on August 4, 2015. The significance statement for these nominations could be augmented to include the role it played in the policing of homosexuality through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



PLATE 2-17: Historical Photo of Keith's Theater (Muzzy 2005:98)

cruising sites. These included the Dupont Circle neighborhood; H Street NW in the vicinity of the Chicken Hut<sup>6</sup>; the block in Georgetown near the intersection of 31st Street, NW, and P Street, NW; Connecticut Avenue, NW in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s; and Lincoln Park on Capitol Hill beginning in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Vaudeville houses and movie theaters were also cruising locations. The Tenderloin District in DC, the three blocks of 9th Street north of Pennsylvania Avenue, was renowned during the 1920s for burlesque and vaudeville theaters with nearby cheap hotels. Jeb Alexander's accounts mention the Strand, Keith's (Plate 2-17), and the National Theater as frequented cruising places for gay white men. Shaw and U Streets, NW were popular cruising locations for gay black men because the Howard and Lincoln theaters were too visible within the black community to risk the consequences of being "outed."

## Residences, Rooming Houses, and Apartments

### *Residences*

Residences were the most private option for same-gender interactions and long-term relationships. Gender expectations and social class standards had a great impact on the ability of same-gender couples to live together without creating suspicion. As mentioned in Theme 1, Lucy Diggs Slowe and Mary Burrill, both educators, shared a home as fellow academics at 1256 Kearny Street, NE in Brookland (see Theme 1, page 2-8). Had they been single women living alone, they would have garnered more suspicion about the type and number of guests they entertained. Their relationship and living situation illustrate standards relating to how same gender women could live together in the 1930s and avoid any misgivings the nature of their relationship.

### *Rooming Houses, Apartments, and the "Y"*

Rooming houses provided affordable semi-private and private lodging for young men and women with minimal oversight. A certain level of decorum was expected, but same-gender relationships could be masked under the guise of friendship in a rooming house setting. Gender propriety standards preferred that single women live in rooming houses managed by a "house mother" or guardian, and therefore

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<sup>6</sup> The Chicken Hut was located at 1720 H Street, NW, within walking distance of the White House.

<sup>7</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019, edited.

relatively few single women sought apartments as a housing alternative until after World War II, when standards changed.

Those who rented apartments and were LGBTQ could control their own circumstances, live somewhat cocooned from public scrutiny, and safeguard a non-normative relationship. Regardless of sexual preference, however, single women who could afford to rent apartments (prior to World War II) were stigmatized as “fast” or “uncouth,” not progressive. On the other hand men of means who rented an apartment together were afforded an option that provided almost the same level of privacy and discretion as a single-family home. Similar to New York City, where apartments were identified as “significant early private spaces for some upper middle-class and professional gay men,”<sup>8</sup> the District, characterized by a transient population, had a plethora of apartment buildings that could have catered to the same demographic. The bachelor-flat style building, which was a type of residential hotel that developed in the late nineteenth century exclusively for men, can be seen in the District's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) buildings. The YMCA was by definition gender-specific, and afforded some privacy with the benefit of amenities and scenarios to intermingle. Although the organization also had a women's branch, housing women was not a significant part of its mission.

The first YMCA, at 1903 G Street near Lafayette Park (Plate 2-18), has been demolished. The G Street Y became notorious for cruising and was the scene of a 1964 arrest involving Walter Jenkins, trusted top aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson. In October 1964 the enforcement against illicit “tearoom” encounters by members of the Washington vice squad included a stakeout of the men's room in the G Street YMCA basement. Concealed behind the locked door of a shower room that was no longer in use, the vice squad spied through peepholes that afforded them a clear view of activities in the men's room. Walter Jenkins and Andy Choka, a Hungarian immigrant, were caught and charged with “disorderly conduct”



PLATE 2-18: Former YMCA on G Street (Y.M.C.A. n.d.)



PLATE 2-19: Historic “Colored Men's Branch” of the YMCA at 1816 12th Avenue (Mahon 1979)

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<sup>8</sup> George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban culture, and the Making of the Gay Male world, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), in Jay Shockley, *Preservation of LGBTQ Historic & Cultural Sites – A New York City Perspective*, in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, Megan E. Springate, ed. (Washington: National Park Foundation, 2016), 26-3–26-4.

and became notorious victims of the Metropolitan Police Department's vice squad crackdown on illicit "tearoom" sex.<sup>9</sup>

The extant Colored Men's Branch of the YMCA, at 1816 12th Street, NW (Plate 2-19), now the Thurgood Marshall Center, holds multiple historic designations (DC Inventory-April 29, 197; NRHP-October 3, 1983; National Historic Landmark-October 12, 1994; contributing resource to the Greater U Street Historic District of the DC Inventory-(January 11, 1999).

### **Clubs, Restaurants, and Bars**

Bars and nightclubs have been an important social outlet for queer communities at the national level, providing a means for lesbians and gays to meet one another in accessible public spaces. The ability for DC's lesbians and gays to meet publicly during the 1960s was crucial, and bars provided the best opportunities—particularly in a city where Joseph McCarthy's policies still wafted through the air. Countless lesbian and gay locals who worked for the federal government were still forced to remain deep in the closet until the government's ban on homosexual employees was lifted in 1975.

When mainstream gay nightclubs started opening up in DC during the 1970s, the racism and discrimination that dominated the scene underscored the restrictive atmosphere that already existed for black gays in the city. Even though the District's percentage of African-American residents had climbed to 71.1 by 1970, it was still a Southern city rooted in racism with a very recent history of racial segregation. Gender segregation also applied to many of the social outlets in the white community—lesbian bars did not usually welcome male or drag visitors, and gay male bars/clubs reciprocated by often excluding lesbians.<sup>10</sup> Gender segregation was less rigid in the African-American community because there were fewer options for safe congregation. For this reason house parties were essential to the growth of the black LGBTQ community in DC.

#### *Mainstream Segregated Gay DC) "Bar-Restaurants" in DC<sup>11</sup>*

One of the popular McCarthy-era bars was the Chicken Hut, a piano bar located around the corner from the White House (Plate 2-20). "The Hut" opened in 1948 and drew a primarily white male crowd. Three of the most prominent white gay male members of MSW—Frank Kameny, Paul Kuntzler, and Jack Nichols—frequented the Chicken Hut. The establishment featured Sunday afternoon dances for its gay male patrons during the winter of 1961-1962,<sup>12</sup> which were DC's "first public gay dances,"<sup>13</sup> and hosted drag shows around Halloween (the most opportune time for drag queens to be visible in DC at that time). Kuntzler remembers two other major mainstream gay male bars upon his arrival in Washington in

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<sup>9</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019; Bart Barnes, LBJ Aide Walter Jenkins Dies, *The Washington Post*, November 26, 1985; Smith, Laura. "When LBJ's closest aide was caught in a gay sex sting, the president caved – the first lady stood up, Walter Jenkins' case was a tragic but important advance, *Timeline* (September 28, 2017), in Appendix A.

<sup>10</sup> Meinke, April. 5, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> In theory, there were no any gay or lesbian *bars* in Washington, DC since the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board designated all "bars" in DC to be technically restaurants; hence the term "bar-restaurants." In fact, according to Meinke, "Until the mid-70s, it was illegal to stand and move with a drink. A server had to move a 'diner's' drink when he or she moved" (Places and Spaces: The Geography of Memory in DC's LGBT Community, Rainbow History Project, retrieved July 23, 2009). These restrictions illuminate the conservative atmosphere of Washington, DC.

<sup>12</sup> Meinke, Places & Spaces.

<sup>13</sup> Richard J. Rosendall, Rosendall gives short history of community-police relations to Amnesty International (2013) (accessed June 13, 2009, <http://www.glaa.org/archive/2003/rosendallmpdhistory1119.shtml>).

December 1961: the **Georgetown Grill on Wisconsin Avenue, NW**, and **Johnny's on 8th Street, SE**.<sup>14</sup> Another popular space that white gay men frequented during the 1960s was the **Derby Room Restaurant** formerly located at **1801 H Street, NW**. Opening in 1954, the Derby Room was located down the street from the Hut. Because Lafayette Square, a well-known gay male cruising spot, was right around the corner from the two bar-restaurants, white gay men laid public claim to this small part of downtown DC during the 1950s and 1960s. Against the backdrop of McCarthyism, these men were very cautious but did have spaces to socialize and cruise in, however heavily targeted these areas were by the DC police. As David K. Johnson points out,<sup>15</sup> however, "African American patrons were unwelcome [in the white gay social scene], even after the Supreme Court ordered restaurants in Washington to end segregation in 1953."<sup>16</sup> Two popular gay dance clubs that opened in the 1970s included the Pier 9, which opened in 1970 at 1824 Half Street, SW and the Lost and Found, which opened in 1971 at 56 L Street, SE.<sup>17,18</sup>

The history of McCarthy-era homophobia, racism, and racial segregation in DC made it difficult and unsafe



PLATE 2-20: A Night at the Chicken Hut  
(courtesy of Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC)

for black lesbians and gays to come out. Nonetheless, African-American lesbians and gays created spaces of their own during this era, mostly in the Columbia Heights neighborhood and around Howard University. One of the first to open, in 1949, was the Cozy Corner Bar & Grill at 708 Florida Avenue, NW. It was a popular hangout for Howard University students until it was destroyed by fire in April 1968 following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. The Kenyon Bar & Grill at 3119 Georgia Avenue, NW opened in

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<sup>14</sup> Kuntzler, Personal History.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, 165.

<sup>16</sup> *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co. Inc.* was a Supreme Court case (April 30-June 8, 1953) in which the verdict prohibited segregation in DC's restaurants and overturned the local District of Columbia Acts of 1872 and 1873. In spite of this ruling, segregation continued in the white-owned gay male bars in DC, particularly during the 1970s.

<sup>17</sup> Pier 9 was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS No. DC-886) in 2016 as a result of the SAH Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship, a jointly sponsored program by HABS and the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH). The HABS package is available online at <https://www.nps.gov/places/upload/Pier-9-1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Pier 9 was active into the early 1980s and the Lost and Found 2006.

1959 and was another popular venue for men and women. **Nob Hill Restaurant** at **1101 Kenyon Street, NW** (Figure 2-11; Plate 2-22) began as an upscale private club in 1953 for gay and bisexual black men in Columbia Heights.<sup>19</sup> By the mid-1980s it featured African-American gay male drag shows<sup>20</sup> and was “perhaps the oldest continuing Black gay institution in the country”<sup>21</sup> by the time it closed in 2004.<sup>22</sup> **Rosetta’s Golden Nugget Restaurant, 2504 14th Street, NW**, “popularly known as the Black Nugget,”<sup>23</sup> opened in 1964 for women, men, and the transgender community.



FIGURE 2-11: *Nob Hill Ad* (courtesy of *Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC*)

Although some of these bar-restaurants were inclusive, several of them were primarily for men. An exception was **Zombie’s Restaurant** at **5828 Georgia Avenue, NW**, which opened in 1956 and attracted a mixed clientele of black and white lesbians. Lesbian spaces truly got underway in the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly in Southeast DC, where three lesbian bars opened during this time period: **Rendezvous Restaurant & Bar, 410 10th Street, NW**, and **Jo-Anna’s, 430 8th Street, SE**, which both opened in 1968, and **Phase One, 525 8th Street, SE** (Plate 2-21), which opened in 1971. All three bars attracted a primarily white lesbian clientele. When Phase One closed in 2016, it had been the oldest continuously operating gay or lesbian bar in Washington, DC. Much of this area is now encompassed within the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District.<sup>24</sup>

African-American gays and lesbians had a viable social scene in Northwest DC near Howard University, but all of this changed with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. Fires erupted all over the city following King’s assassination. Many bar-restaurants burned down, and one of the city’s hardest hit areas was near Howard University. According to *The Washington Post*, arson caused the most damage in

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<sup>19</sup> B. Beemyn, 145.

<sup>20</sup> Randy Shulman, Top of the Hill: At 35, Nob Hill is Washington, DC’s oldest black gay bar. Robert Jones has owned it for the past 14 years. It’s a Perfect Match, *Metro Weekly*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> B. Beemyn, 1.

<sup>22</sup> The Wonderland Ballroom is located in the former location of Nob Hill on Kenyon Street, NW.

<sup>23</sup> Meinke, Places and Spaces.

<sup>24</sup> The Capitol Hill Historic District was listed in the DC Inventory effective June 19, 1973 (boundary increase effective January 20, 1976), and in the NRHP on August 27, 1976 (boundary increase effective April 21, 2002). The period of significance for its NRHP nomination was extended in 2003.



### **Phase One: 525 8th Street, SE**



PLATE 2-21: Former Façade of Phase One  
(Lisa Davidson in Bailey 2016a)

The building at 525 8th Street was constructed in 1896 by local architect Clement August Didden. By 1971, when Allen Carrol and his partner Chris Jansen opened Phase One, this area of southeast DC had been quined the “Gay Way” because of the number of LGBTQ establishments in the area. Pioneer LGBTQ establishments included Johnnie’s (500 8th Street, SE), Dobkin’s Grill (1104 8th Street, SE), and Mr. Henry’s (601 Pennsylvania Avenue). Contemporaneous additions to Gay Way included the Metropolitan Community Church (705 7th Street, SE) and Lammas Bookstore (713 8th Street, SE).

Phase One remained an enduring anchor of Capitol’s Hills queer nightlife scene and was one of the few women-centric spaces in the District to survive into the twenty-first century. By the time it closed in January 2016, the Phase had earned the distinction of being one of the oldest continuously operating lesbian bars in the

United States. As reported by the *Washington Business* area on Capitol Hill.<sup>25</sup> Phase One was recorded by the *Journal* in June 2019, the location is slated to become a Japanese restaurant in what is now the Barracks Row Historic American Buildings Survey as [HABS No. DC-883](#) in 2016.

### **Nob Hill: 1101 Kenyon Street, NW**



PLATE 2-22: Former Location of Nob Hill  
(Lisa Davidson in Bailey 2016c)

Nob Hill was a grounding establishment to what would be the epicenter of queer black nightlife in northwest DC when it opened ca. 1953. A distinct queer black nightlife scene developed north of downtown along upper 7th and 14th streets.<sup>26</sup> The Cozy Corner and Nob Hill became favored evening hangouts among gay students at nearby Howard University.<sup>27</sup> When Nob Hill closed in 2004, it had been the oldest continuously operating queer bar of color in the District. The Wonderland Ballroom now occupies the building and it remains an LGBTQ-friendly neighborhood bar. Nob Hill was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey as [HABS No. DC-882](#) in 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Rachel Cooper, *Redevelopment of St. Elizabeths Hospital in SE* <sup>27</sup> Rainbow History Project Digital Collection (RHPDC), *Gay DC Walking Tours, African Americans*, 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Kwame Holmes, *Chocolate in Rainbow City: The Dialectics of Black and Gay Community Formation Postwar Washington DC* (Urbana, IL: doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 2011).

## **The Clubhouse: 1296 Upshur Street, NW**



PLATE 2-23: The Clubhouse (Lisa Davidson in Bailey 2016b)

In 1975, several years into period of the racial discrimination in the mainstream gay nightclubs, the Clubhouse opened in Northwest DC as a private, member-based nightclub centered on the social lives of black gays and lesbians, although the owners welcomed a diverse clientele. As the African-American community's options expanded following the fires of 1968, more and more gay social clubs began welcoming patrons, especially the Clubhouse.<sup>28</sup> Its lineage stretched back to the house parties of the Metropolitan Capitalites and their bar, The 3rd World. Rainey Cheeks, the Clubhouse manager, said, "The ClubHouse opened because at that time, it was really hard for African Americans to go to the clubs. The clubs downtown—the Lost and Found, a few of the other clubs, you would be standing in line and they would just leave you in line....Or, they would

ask you for two, three IDs and it was crazy....So, the ClubHouse opened to give African Americans a place to go....<sup>29</sup> By the mid-1980s AIDS was starting to take a significant toll on the membership of the Clubhouse. The nightclub closed in 1990 because it could not sustain the impact of "declining membership (due in large part to AIDS), financial stresses, and competition."<sup>30</sup> The Clubhouse was incredibly important—it "opened battling racism"<sup>31</sup> and closed with a deep focus on activism and AIDS in the black gay community (see Theme 6). The Clubhouse helped fund the Third World Gays Conference and was a regular stop on the campaign trail for Marion Barry as he courted LGBTQ voters. Rainey Cheeks began hosting self-help and meditation sessions at the club for black gay men living with HIV/AIDS that were later incorporated as Us Helping Us, which remains one of the largest HIV/AIDS public health organizations in Washington, DC.

A final legacy of the Clubhouse was helping establish Memorial Day weekend as the most significant time on many queer African-Americans' celebratory calendars because of its success with its annual Children's Hour, which was historically held Memorial Day weekend. As Coleman states, "They [the City] knew all these people were coming to DC for that big Children's Hour weekend, so they decided, well let's continue that."<sup>32</sup> The Clubhouse was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey as [HABS No. DC-884](#) in 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks, DD, interview with Rebecca Graham, October 22, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Meinke, The ClubHouse: The Children's Hour (Rainbow History Project, accessed April 30, 2010, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/childrenshour.htm>).

<sup>31</sup> Rainey Cheeks.

<sup>32</sup> James Coleman, interview with Rebecca Graham, February 13, 2008, in Dolinsky 2010.

the city,<sup>33</sup> with a reported 851 fires erupting over three days.<sup>34</sup> Most of the black lesbian and gay bar-restaurants in Northwest DC did not survive the fires, creating a huge void for the African-American gay community in the city. With the founding of black social clubs in the late 1960s and early 1970s, black gays and lesbians could access a new kind of social scene.

### *DC's Black Social Clubs*

Social clubs were an alternative to the bar-restaurant scene for both blacks and whites, men and women. Washington's black social clubs created alternative spaces for black gays to come together and socialize with one another on their own terms. The black social clubs addressed in this section started forming in DC during the late 1960s but had a connection to private house parties that started back in the 1940s:

In the 40's, 50's and 60's, private house parties were very common, especially during the McCarthy era, and especially [for] persons maintaining government employment [who] did not want to take the risk of being seen in a gay or lesbian bar. Often women would be escorted to these house parties; however, once [inside the party] the women would be in one corner, room or floor and the [men] would be in another. When the party was over or both wanted to leave, they would do so as they came, as a male-female couple, giving the impression to anyone observing that they were a heterosexual couple.<sup>35</sup>

All of the social clubs used monikers that were not identifiably gay because the groups were private. DC's black social clubs were not political or activist groups; they were best known for house parties and annual galas. According to Otis (Buddy) Sutson, co-founder of a black social club called the Best of Washington, the social clubs started because black gays and lesbians "didn't have outlets ... of our own ... where we could party and meet friends and celebrate our lives."<sup>36</sup> The social clubs' membership was generally middle class, and the clubs' endeavors were often philanthropic as well as social. DC's black social clubs "also provided a private outlet for drag with drag fashion shows and entertainment."<sup>37</sup>

According to James (Juicy) Coleman, DC's "first African American GLBT social organization that anybody can... trace back on paper" was called The Group, which was primarily for black gay men and founded by Howard University students in 1968.<sup>38</sup> Coleman was former president and co-founder of The Group, which lasted into the early 1970s. Aside from The Group, other early social clubs included the Best of Washington (mentioned above), the Associates, Metropolitan Capitolites, and the Pinochle Club. The Metropolitan Capitolites expanded into their first bar, the 3rd World (formerly located at 221 Riggs Road, NE), because their parties grew too big for their houses (Figure 2-12). The Best of Washington and other social clubs frequently used **The Palm Ballroom, 4211 Georgia Avenue**, for events too large for houses or small clubs.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Willard Clopton, Curfew Imposed as Roving Bands Plunder and Burn, *The Washington Post*, April 6, 1968:A1.

<sup>34</sup> Willard Clopton and Robert G. Kaiser, Fires Dying Out, Arrests Decline, Curfew Continues, *The Washington Post*, April 8, 1968:A1, A9.

<sup>35</sup> Jones-Hennin, interview with Rebecca Graham, April 8, 2010, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Otis Buddy Sutson, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 8, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Meinke, Drag in DC (Rainbow History Project, accessed April 30, 2010 <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/drag.htm>).

<sup>38</sup> Coleman, February 13, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

The Associates, founded in 1971, was an elite club for black gay men that included lawyers, doctors, and professors. The club was discreet and established under social and philanthropic principles. The Best of Washington also formed in the early 1970s, and according to co-founder Bob Lomax, it wasn't just for gay men—women and transgender individuals were also a part of the social club's membership, and they also hosted events for lesbians only. Buddy Sutson addresses the gender inclusiveness of the social club: "We had always been co-ed. And since we didn't have a lot of [social] outlets ... we were much closer together and we needed one another."<sup>40</sup>

Sutson's comment underscores an important point: while white gays and lesbians were functioning somewhat separately from one another in DC, black gays and lesbians often pulled together. The Best of Washington was inclusive along gender and class lines, with members from varying backgrounds. One thing the Best of Washington had in common with The Associates was discretion; many of the members' families and church communities were within reach, and the local racism and homophobia persisted.

### *Racism in the Mainstream Gay Club Scene*

Carding—the system in which patrons are asked to present several forms of ID for admission to clubs—was as a tactic that several DC white gay nightclub owners used at the time to prevent African-Americans from patronizing their clubs. White male patrons did not experience this excessive carding. Popular gay nightclubs such as the Lost and Found and the Grand Central, both located in Southeast DC near Capitol Hill, were notorious for discriminating against not only blacks but also women and drag queens.<sup>41</sup> The Lost and Found, which was a gay-owned nightclub formerly located at 54 L Street, SE, opened in 1971 for gay men and was notorious for its carding. According to an early flyer, the nightclub ironically labeled itself "Your Bar." The Grand Central, which opened in 1974 and was also located in Southeast DC, was the subject of a racial discrimination complaint filed with the city's Human Rights Commission. The seven people who filed the complaint were awarded "\$5,500 in damages and legal fees" in 1977 when it was proven that "the establishment had refused to admit some blacks, required more identification of blacks than whites and charged some blacks admission while admitting whites free." Rather than pay the \$5,500, the Grand Central closed down in 1977.<sup>42</sup> Other gay nightclubs in DC during the 1970s discriminated against black gay men. Not only were the men carded, but workers at the door raised the clubs' entrance prices for the black patrons and blamed fire codes for the capacity level—while allowing white patrons to enter the club.



FIGURE 2-12: Ad for the 3rd World (courtesy of Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC)

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<sup>40</sup> Sutson.

<sup>41</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Meinke, Lost and Found.

In the early 1980s activists filed several complaints with the DC Commission on Human Rights against the nightclubs for discrimination. Members of DC's Black and White Men Together (BWMT) and the National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG) helped document discrimination by sending "test cases" into the nightclubs. ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, member of both BWMT and NCBLG, describes this:

We put test cases, where we would send a black-white team, but separately and so the white person would get in and then the black person would be told, "Oh, they're full" or "no one else can come in."<sup>43</sup>

In one of the BWMT complaints, filed through attorney James Mercer, gay nightclub Badlands settled and agreed to pay \$5,000. With the success of the complaints, two local lawyers, Mercer and Richard Haight, drafted an anti-carding bill that passed through the DC City Council in 1984.<sup>44</sup> The bill, which made it illegal for local nightclubs and bars to racially discriminate, brought an end to the racist carding practices in the mainstream gay nightclubs. Through BWMT and with the settlement money from the complaints, Mercer helped operate the Discrimination Response System, "a hotline for reporting incidents of alleged racial discrimination at Gay establishments"<sup>45</sup> that continued to operate through BWMT for approximately 10 years. Christopher Bates, chair of the DC chapter of BWMT, also helped siphon the settlement money through small grants to other BWMT chapters in several U.S. cities to fight similar discrimination in their local communities. Discrimination in the mainstream, white-owned gay nightclubs during the 1970s defied the 1973 Human Rights Act in DC (Title 34), which deemed illegal any discrimination against gays and lesbians in Washington, DC, and the discrimination also defied the 1953 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *District of Columbia v. John Thompson*, which made segregation illegal in DC.

## Drag Venues

The Hamilton Ball of New York and the local Impersonators Club were part of the Pansy Craze of the 1920s and early 1930s. **The Prince Hall Masonic Temple at 1000 U Street, NW** was to host what would become one of the most notorious drag balls in the District, but it never actually transpired. The Impersonators Club organized the Grand Ball for February 10, 1934, at the Masonic Temple, and although nearly 1,500 arrived to attend the event, District police banned the event.<sup>46</sup>

The **Krazy Kat Club, 3 Green Court**, was a downtown extension of the Pansy Craze; the **Green Lantern**, a gay male club, currently occupies the building. Much more central, in terms of performers including the Magnificent Louis Diggs, was the **Crystal (later Bohemian) Caverns, 2001 11th Street, NW**, which operated from the 1920s well into the 1940s. In the 1990s the location once again became a home for drag shows, particularly African-American.<sup>47</sup> **The Cairo at 1615 Q Street, NW** is a remarkable Romanesque-Moorish Revival building designed by Thomas Franklin Schneider in 1894. It was a popular venue for drag performances during the 1960s and 1970s hosted by notable local drag performer, Ken White, better

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<sup>43</sup> Jones-Hennin, July 14, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Chibbaro, Carding bill gets final OK, *The Washington Blade*, June 15, 1984:5.

<sup>45</sup> *The Washington Blade*, Inside the beltway: BWMT Files Complaint, July 1, 1983:7.

<sup>46</sup> B. Beemyn, 33-34.

<sup>47</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

## District Drag Venues



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(1) Mr. P's, 2147 P Street, NW; (2) The Cairo, 1615 Q Street, NW; (3) Green Lantern, 3 Green Court; (4) Crystal (later Bohemian) Caverns, 2001 11th Street, NW; (5) Prince Hall Masonic Temple, 1000 U Street, NW (Louis Berger photos, 2019)

known as "Black Pearl." **Mr. P's** at **2147 P Street, NW** was another drag venue that played a role in local drag culture for nearly 27 years; it opened in March 1976 and closed in 2003.

## Mainstream Social Organizations

### *Gay Women's Open House*

**GAY WOMEN'S OPEN HOUSE**

The Gay Women's Open House, which provides a protected social atmosphere where gay women can meet and discuss common concerns, has been held regularly since March 1971. We're now on Open House number 85 and have never missed a Wednesday! Below are some comments from women who have attended:

The Open House is a wonderful place to come to for those new to the "gay experience" or for those new to Washington. The atmosphere is one of warmth and welcome. It's a great point of departure. --Marcelle

I met quite a few people there, including my first gay roommate. --Cathy

Very warm place for lonely people. Like a second home. --Sharon

I can be the real me. --Dolores

Thirty-nine-year old married mother called Northern Virginia Hotline. Was referred not to a shrink but to the Open House. Most Wednesdays since I've enjoyed relaxing and talking, learning and growing in a warm, home atmosphere--and, yes, I met that special first lover there. --Lena

I like it because everybody is casual. You don't have to put on any airs. --Diane

New to gay world/life. Became acculturated via Open House: circle of friends--sociologically broadening; academically stimulating; professionally accomplished; psychologically stabilizing; trustworthy comradeship. --Amelia

Groovy! It's a good, cozy, relaxed atmosphere to meet other gay women and rap. Far out! --Val

Maybe I'll start an Open House in Pittsburgh. --Elizabeth

We just celebrated our first anniversary. We met at the Open House. --The happiest couple in the world: X and M

I can dig it. --Joanne

Lilli's is the only place I can go and have a guarantee that I'll meet gay women--and the bathroom works! --Carol K.

I'd like to see it more publicized. --Nancy T.

Intellectual, warm, good for people just coming out. --Elaine

Sappho say: Woman who come out on Tuesday, go to Lilli's on Wednesday. --Joyce

I met Alice there. --Gertrude Stein

**Wednesdays, 7:30 - 11:30 pm**  
**Call 671-3762 for address, directions**

**WOMEN ONLY**



FIGURE 2-13: Gay Women's Open House Ad (Courtesy of Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC); ca. 1970 Photograph of Lilli Vincenz

Dr. Lilli Vincenz began the Gay Women's Open House (GWOH) (Figure 2-13) the same month that Kameny ran for Congress, in March 1971. Because of her membership in MSW and her highly visible involvement in the campaign, Vincenz received a flood of phone calls from lesbians and questioning women who wanted to meet other women in DC, outside the bar scene. When Vincenz and her partner began meeting with these women, she quickly realized that the DC area did not have a relaxed, private space for newly out and questioning women to socialize in comfort. In fact, DC did not have any gay women's organization at the time.<sup>48</sup> The GWOH advertised in the *Gay Blade* (see Figure 2-13) as well as the *Quicksilver Times*.<sup>49</sup> Every Wednesday night, Vincenz opened her home in Arlington, Virginia, for GWOH gatherings.

<sup>48</sup> Lilli Vincenz, Letter to Foster Gunnison, Jr.: February 12, 1972 (from the personal collection of Dr. Lilli Vincenz, accessed at Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, July 23, 2009, <http://www.clga.ca/Material/PeriodicalsLGBT/inven/ooov/dir2.htm> ). Gunnison wrote *Gunnison's Guide to Gay Pride*, which was a directory of active gay and lesbian organizations in the United States, Canada, and Europe. It was published in 1973.

<sup>49</sup> The *Quicksilver Times* was an underground newspaper in Washington, DC.

In 1973 Vincenz further described the open house in an open invitation that same year:

Wednesday nights are not structured. There is no agenda or discussion topic, for it's an open house, not a meeting. The purpose is to provide companionship, and the atmosphere is friendly, not cruisy. It's a place where people meet people and where newcomers to gay life can relax in a protected social atmosphere.<sup>50</sup>

The open house attracted around 15 to 20 women on a weekly basis and “accommodated as many as 50” when local singer/songwriter Meg Christian performed. In addition to performances, the GWOH featured events such as poetry readings and regularly featured conversations that ranged in topics, such as “identity,” “trust,” “communication,” “grief,” “androgyny,” “falling in love,” “fear,” “advantages of being gay,” “happiness,” “coming out,” and “sexism.” The group inspired other open houses in DC and Maryland. The GWOH ran every Wednesday from March 1971 until January 1978, when it went monthly until it ended on January 31, 1979. Vincenz, who had earned a master's degree in clinical psychology, transitioned into private practice.<sup>51</sup>

### *Other Gay Social Groups*

The Homophile Social League and the Gay Women's Alternative were the two other mainstream DC social groups with a documented history. The Homophile Social League formed in 1968 by Rev. Paul Breton as a DC offshoot of the original group that formed in New York City (see Theme 7). The DC Homophile Social League sponsored dances, blood draws, and a Community Church at All Souls Unitarian Church that became the local Metropolitan Community Church in 1971.<sup>52</sup>

The Gay Women's Alternative (GWA) (1980-1993) was a nonprofit lesbian community organization that aimed at creating a common ground for socialization (Figure 2-14); it originally formed in New York. The GWA was designed to bring women of all ages and backgrounds together in a safe space to educate and enrich the cultural, intellectual, and social lives of lesbians of the Washington metropolitan area.<sup>53</sup> The DC

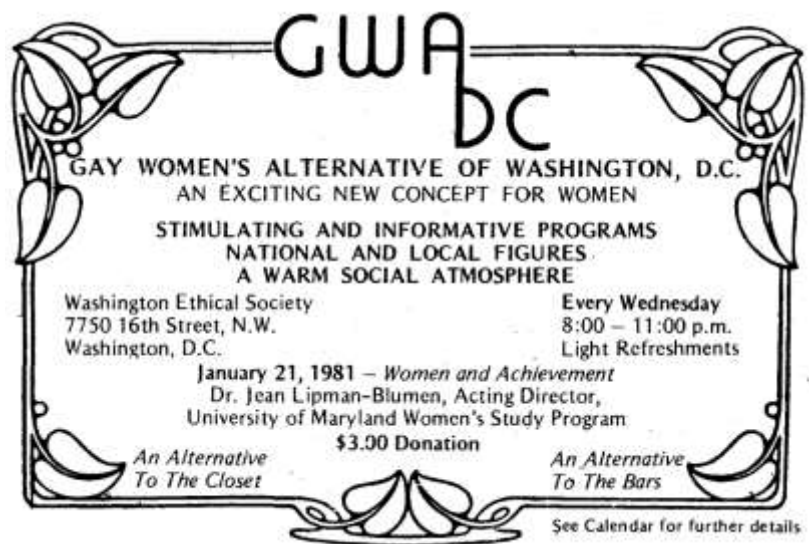


FIGURE 2-14: Gay Women's Alternative of Washington, D.C Ad  
(Courtesy of Preserving LGBT Sites in Metro DC)

<sup>50</sup> Vincenz, You Are Invited to a Gay Women's Open House (from the personal collection of Dr. Lilli Vincenz, January 11, 1973).

<sup>51</sup> In 1990 Lilli Vincenz received her PhD in human development and psychology and went on to co-found the Program for Creative Self Development with her partner Nancy Ruth Davis, which was “a holistic learning community to empower gay women and men and all gay-friendly people creatively, spiritually, and psychologically.” It lasted until 2004 (Meinke, Gay women's Open House, Rainbow History Project, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Meinke, LGBTQ Ch. 7 Religion & Spirituality (attachment to email, RE: Ch. 7 Outline: Review Request: Religion and Spirituality, to Kisa Hooks, July 26, 2019).

<sup>53</sup> Kelsey Brannan, The Gay Women's Alternative: An Alternative to the Bar, An Alternative to the Closet, *tag magazine*, September 26, 2012, accessed May 2019, <https://tagmagazine.com/gay-womens-alternative/>.



chapter of the organization met at the Washington Ethical Society near Silver Spring. Despite its accessible location and notable programming, the group struggled to reach women of color. According to Jeanette Paroly, former GWA Board Member,

it was the only place at the time where you could go, listen to something that was either fun or intelligent, something of interest, and then just hang out and socialize. I think it was necessary because there was no middle ground, and it involved older and younger women...women felt it was necessary because it was the only place they could go where there was a viable way to be social, could talk to each other, and it was a really nice comfortable way to meet others.<sup>54</sup>

Research into LGBTQ social groups revealed the need for more diverse histories (e.g., bisexual, transgender, Latinx) to enrich the discourse and history of the District's LGBTQ community.

### *Churches*

Even before the advent of the Metropolitan Community Churches started by the Homophile Social League, local churches provided social spaces for gay men and lesbians. Many of DC's churches have a long history of involvement in social movements and extended that to support for gay men and lesbians from the 1960s through the 1980s. Supportive houses of worship throughout the District have included Mt. Sinai Reform Synagogue, Georgetown Lutheran, First Congregational Church, St. Margaret's Episcopal churches, St. Mark's Episcopal churches, Grace Episcopal churches, Quakers (Friends Meeting of Washington), All Souls Unitarian Church, and the Arlington Unitarian Church. These congregations offered their spaces for dances and meetings, and later many of these faith communities provided space for coffeehouses, AIDS support, and LGBTQ religious services (see Theme 7).<sup>55</sup>

### **Gay-Owned and Gay-Friendly Businesses**

Mark Meinke, founder of the Rainbow History Project, compiled an extensive list of LGBTQ commercial sites throughout the District (see Appendix A). This list includes gay-owned and gay-friendly establishments that have operated within the District over the past 50 years. The attrition rate of gay-owned and gay-friendly business is alarming. This has limited research but also presents an opportunity for an economic study regarding the development of LGBTQ businesses in Washington, DC. The intent of this section is to mention some of the oldest LGBTQ establishment that still have extant buildings even if they are no longer in business. Their presence was important to the support of the District's LGBTQ community.

### *LGBTQ Bookstores*

"Before there was Lambda Rising, there was **Community Bookshop**."<sup>56</sup> Formerly located at **2028 P Street, NW**, in the Dupont Circle Historic District, the bookshop moved to the P Street location from Washington

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<sup>54</sup> Paroly in Brannan.

<sup>55</sup> Meinke, July 26, 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Meinke, DC Chronology (attachment to email, RE: Ch.5 Review Request Arts & Expression, to Kisa Hooks, Eric Gonzaba, Vincent Slatt, Derek Gray, Monica Rhodes, Steve Callcott, Steven Bedford, and Rebecca Graham, June 5, 2019).



PLATE 2-24: Former Location of the Community Bookshop, 2028 P Street, NW (Louis Berger 2019t)

Circle in the late 1960s (Plate 2-24).<sup>57</sup> The bookstore was known for hosting “Mass Transit” readings and performance art. Mass Transit, originally the name of the performances, changed to include the poetry and prose collection by members of the group.<sup>58</sup> Members of the GLF began lobbying the bookstore to stock queer magazines and books. The GLF House was on S Street, NW in Dupont Circle. By 1972 the bookstore was a good source of queer reading material. The GLF’s May 1972 Gay Pride celebration featured an evening of “Gay readings” at the bookstore. Community Bookshop closed in 1974. Later the same year, Lambda Rising became one of the leading LGBTQ bookstores in the nation.<sup>59</sup>

In 1973 Leslie Reeves and Judy Winsett opened **Lammas**, a women’s craft and jewelry store at **321 7th Street, SE**; this location is within the Capitol Hill Historic District. Lammas added books to their offerings, and in 1974 converted it into a bookstore selling women-centric, lesbian, and feminist titles. Mary Farmer, who became acquainted with Reeves and Winsett through their mutual association with the Furies, joined as the

store manager in 1974.<sup>60</sup> Farmer bought the store two years later, adding a second store 10 years later at **21st Street, NW**, in 1986.<sup>61</sup> Farmer owned Lammas for 17 years before selling it to Jane Troxell, Rosa Fennell, Marge Darling, and Susan Fletcher in 1993.<sup>62</sup> Lammas was not just a bookstore, it was a “de facto lesbian community center”<sup>63</sup> that featured readings and speakers, such as Adrienne Rich, Alice Walker, and Dorothy Allison.<sup>64</sup> Gay and lesbian bookstores of the era, in general, operated as “de facto” queer community centers before such community centers were established. Lammas, which eventually moved

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<sup>57</sup> The Dupont Circle Historic District was added to the DC Inventory on June 17, 1977, with effective expansions designated on January 4, 1985, and May 22, 2005, and listed in the NRHP on July 21, 1978, with effective boundary increases on February 6, 1985, and June 10, 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Meinke, June 5, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Meinke, Community Bookshop: 2028 P St NW, Washington, DC (2017, <https://www.historypin.org/en/lgbtq-america/geo/38.909414,-77.046126,17/bounds/38.906843,-77.053813,38.911985,-77.038439/paging/1/pin/1084651/state/map>).

<sup>60</sup> RHPDC, Gay DC Walking Tours: Women’s Tour (2004, <https://www.rainbowhistory.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/womensweb.pdf>).

<sup>61</sup> RHPDC, Women’s Tour.

<sup>62</sup> Meinke, Rainbow Historic Project Spreadsheet of LGBTQ Places (n.d.)

<sup>63</sup> Chibarro, Honoring home of D.C.’s Furies, *Washington Blade*, January 20, 2016.

<sup>64</sup> RHPDC, Women’s Tour.



FIGURE 2-15 (left): First Location of Lammas, 321 7th Street SE (Louis Berger photo, 2019) and Store Ad

to 17th Street NW, became “the only wall-to-wall women's/lesbian bookstore in the Washington area”<sup>65</sup> before permanently closing its doors in 2001.

Soon after the establishment of Lammas, in 1974 L. Page (Deacon) Maccubbin, opened **Lambda Rising** bookstore. Maccubbin was engaged in local activism with GLF-DC. The bookstore grew out of Earthworks, his tobacconist shop on 20th Street, NW, near Dupont Circle, which carried a few shelves of gay books.<sup>66</sup> Maccubbin, with one donor and his own investment, opened the first Lambda Rising next to Earthworks in 1974. In 1977 the bookstore moved to another Dupont Circle location, an 800-square-foot space on S Street, NW. In 1984 the bookstore moved to its longest-standing location, at **1625 Connecticut Avenue, NW**, in the heart of Dupont Circle and is within the Dupont Circle Historic District.<sup>67</sup>

The bookstore sold “rare first editions of turn-of-the-century gay literature, mystery, science fiction, religion and self-help books,” as well as “games, including gay variations of popular Monopoly and trivia games.”<sup>68</sup> In 1996 the *Washington Post* reported that Lambda Rising was “the nation’s largest chain of bookstores for gay men and lesbians, with more than 15,000 titles [and] four stores.”<sup>69</sup> At the chain’s height, Maccubbin owned five bookstores, including locations in Baltimore and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.<sup>70</sup> When Lambda Rising closed its doors as one of the oldest gay bookstores in the United States, upon Maccubbin’s retirement in early 2010, its collection included nearly 20,000 titles.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Eric Hoover, *Fading Places: The closing of a women’s haven leaves the lesbian community short on institutions*, *Washington City Paper*, October 13, 2000.

<sup>66</sup> Deacon Maccubbin, interview with Rebecca Graham, July 11, 2006, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>67</sup> *The Washington Post*, “Lambda Rising Bookstore Moves to Connecticut Ave,” December 10, 1984. As of September 2019, the former location of the Lambda Rising Bookstore is occupied by a bluemercury, a make-up, skincare, and spa establishment.

<sup>68</sup> *Washington Post*, Lambda Rising Bookstore.

<sup>69</sup> *The Washington Post*, Bookstore Chain Thrives by Helping Build Gay Culture, September 30, 1996.

<sup>70</sup> Rona Marech, After 24 years, Baltimore’s Lambda Rising bookstore is closing, *Baltimore Sun*, February 29, 2008.

<sup>71</sup> Amanda Hess, Lambda Rising Bookstore’s Closing May Open New Book, *Washington City Paper*, December 7, 2005.

### *Other Notable LGBTQ Businesses*

The **ENIK Alley Coffeehouse** played a tremendous role in the arts and expression of the District's LGBTQ community. It is discussed in Theme 5.



PLATE 2-25: Annie's Paramount Steakhouse Locations on 17th Street; from left, 1519 17th Street, NW (1948-1985) and 1609 17th Street NW (1985-present) (Louis Berger photos, 2019)

One of the earliest LGBTQ friendly establishments in the District is **Annie's Paramount Steakhouse** (Plate 2-25), which opened as Paramount Steakhouse in 1948. The restaurant is located within the Dupont Circle Historic District. Better known as Annie's, George Katinas began the family-owned restaurant and renamed it after his sister, Annie Kaylor, in the 1960s. Annie Kaylor joined the family business in the 1950s as a manager and worked there until her death in 2013. The restaurant moved from its first location at 1519 17th Street, NW to its current location at 1609 17th Street, NW in 1985. Annie's is a recent recipient of a 2019 America's Classics James Beard Award, not only for its generous offerings but also for the hospitality and inclusivity shown to the LGBTQ community.

In a time where queer spaces are disappearing from American cities and the political climate is once again hostile to LGBTQ people, it is imperative that we recognize, support, and celebrate community anchors like Annie's Paramount Steakhouse in Washington, D.C., which celebrated its 70th anniversary last year...One evening, we made the trek to Annie's. It was a long, narrow space with low lighting. Most of the clientele were men, laughing, drinking, flirting; all of the staff were women. I felt like I had arrived in a place that was all mine, where the air was fresh and clear, even through a cumulus of cigarette smoke. ... Soon after Paramount opened, it gained a reputation as a safe place for gay men, many of whom worked for the government and risked losing their jobs and going to jail if their sexuality were discovered. In an oft-recounted story from the restaurant's early days, Annie went up to two men holding hands under the table and told them they were welcome to hold hands above it...The clientele at Annie's has long reflected the wide spectrum of

diversity the LGBTQ community represents. ... More important than the fare at Annie's is its significance to Washington's gay history and its community.<sup>72</sup>

### *DC's Leather Community Businesses*

DC also has a local leather community and gay motorcycle clubs that are associated with local commercial establishments. One of the District's earliest establishment to cater to the leather community was Louis', a complex of bars on 9th Street near the FBI area, formerly located at 301-305 9th Street, NW. Louis' featured a different "personality" on each level, with The Hiway basement bar by the leather and motorcycle clientele. The Eagle has long been one of DC's institutions, surviving since 1972 as a prominent leather and Western bar with restaurant. Don Bruce owned the establishments until 1987; it had several locations: 904 9th Street, NW and 908 7th Street, NW (this location relocated and renamed to the DC Eagle at 639 New York Avenue NW). As of 2012, urban redevelopment of New York Avenue forced the DC Eagle's New York Avenue to relocate. In 2015 the DC Eagle incorporated a nightclub into its new Benning Road, NE location and is now one of the longest-running LGBTQ bars with over 40 years of operations.

Another leather and Levis establishment was the Eagle in Exile owned by Lou Ritz formerly t 950 9th Street, NW and 925 5th Street, NW. The Leather Rack, a leading leather clothing and supplies shop associated with the leather community had several locations: 1727 (1723) Connecticut Avenue, NW; 918 9th Street, NW; 904 9th Street, NW; and 908 7th Street, NW. Don Bruce opened the first Leather Rack in 1975 above the Eagle formerly located at 908 7th Street, NW. It became DC's leading leather club institution and supported Brother, Help Thyself, a charitable foundation. The Leather Rack's Connecticut Avenue shop operated through the early 2010s. In the early 2010s the Leather Rack changed ownership and renamed to Adam & Eve, a gay-owned LGBTQ-friendly leather business that caters to a broader audience.

### **District LGBTQ Neighborhoods**

The three neighborhoods of Capitol Hill, Dupont Circle, and Howard University/Georgia Avenue have had the longest history and greatest impact on the historical and continued development of the District's LGBTQ community. In general the LBGQTQ commercial districts include the following.<sup>73</sup>

- 17th Street, NW (in Adams Morgan)
- 8th Street, SE (on Capitol Hill)
- Half Street and O Street, SE
- Dupont Circle
- 9th Street, NW, up to H Street, NW

### *Adams Morgan*

Kalorama Road, NW, 18th Street, NW, and Columbia Road, NW are the major thoroughfares of the Adams Morgan neighborhood in Washington. LBGQTQ-friendly bars of the 1960s and 1970s included **El-Faro, 2409 (2411) 18th Street, NW; Fox Lounge, 3553 Mt Pleasant Street, NW; Dakota, 1777 Columbia Road, NW; Montana, 1777 Columbia Road; Morgan's Opera, either 1811 or 1777 Columbia Road, NW; and 1832**

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<sup>72</sup> David Hagedorn, ed., "Why Annie's Has a Place in My Heart: The 2019 America's Classics winner is a fixture of the Washington, D.C. LGBTQ community, *James Beard Foundation*, January 31, 2019.

<sup>73</sup> Meinke April 5, 2019, September 18, 2019.

**House, 1834 Columbia Road, NW.** More recently the neighborhood just north of Dupont Circle has become another LGBTQ enclave. Homophobic attacks were for a time rife in the Adams Morgan area against Latinx clubgoers at El-Faro.<sup>74</sup> The neighborhood remains an eclectic mix of residences, commercial businesses, restaurants, and bars.

### *Capitol Hill*

Capitol Hill in southeast DC has more than 50 years of gay history dating back to the 1950s. The area has long been a social and residential center for Washington, DC's gay and lesbian community (see No. 26, Figure 2-16, at end of section).<sup>75</sup> More remarkably, Capitol Hill has also been the center for innovative women's businesses, clubs, and communities; the "gay way" along and about 8th Street, SE was the epicenter of the neighborhood. **Johnnie's**, originally at **500 8th Street, SE**, and **Dobkin's Grill, 1104 8th Street, SE**, were among the pioneer LGBTQ-friendly institutions. The **Furies Collective, 219 11th Street, SE**, called this area home as well as the original **Lammas Bookstore, 321 7th Street SE**. The Metropolitan Community Church and St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where the GLF, GAA and the Homophile Social League held events, are on 705 7th Street, SE and 301 A Street SE, respectively. In the 1970s several gay bars, restaurants, and clubs opened, including **JoAnna's, 430 8th Street, SE**; **Phase One, 525 8th Street, SE**; and **Plus One, 529 8th Street, SE**.<sup>76</sup> Homophobic attacks plagued Capitol Hill in the vicinity of the Marine Barracks on 8th Street, SE, and for a time women had to be escorted into lesbian clubs (Joanna's, Phase One, etc.) on 8th Street to prevent attacks.<sup>77</sup>

The Capitol Hill neighborhood is part of the Capitol Hill Historic District, which is listed in the DC Inventory (November 8, 1964, expanded January 20, 1976) and the NRHP (August 27, 1976, expanded April 21, 2002).<sup>78</sup> The DC Inventory states that it is

[o]ne of the oldest and most architecturally diverse communities in the city (that) reflects the social diversity and economic growth of the early capital. It includes early residential development clustered near the Capitol and Navy Yard, and much late-19th and early-20th century housing for mostly middle-class workers. There is great variety of housing types, with elaborate ornamental pressed-brick structures adjacent to simple, unadorned frame buildings and small apartment houses. Many row houses were built either in long uninterrupted blocks or in small groups whose imaginative facades reflect the aspirations of the builders and residents. There are many fine commercial buildings, particularly along 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and notable religious and institutional structures. The predominant architectural styles include Federal, Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival. There are approximately 8,000 primary contributing buildings dating from circa 1791-1945.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

<sup>75</sup> RHPDC, Gay D.C. Walking Tours: Capitol Hill (2003, <https://www.rainbowhistory.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CapHill-web.pdf>), 1.

<sup>76</sup> RHPDC, Gay D.C. Walking Tours: Capitol Hill.

<sup>77</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

<sup>78</sup> According to the DC Inventory boundary description for the district, the Capitol Hill Historic District Roughly is roughly bounded by the Capitol precinct on the west, F Street, NE on the north, 13th and 14th Streets on the east, and the Southeast Freeway on the south, with an expansion area south of the Southeast Freeway bounded by 7th, M, 10th, and 11th streets, SE.

<sup>79</sup> District of Columbia, Inventory of Historic Places (Alphabetical Version) [DC Inventory], (September 30, 2009), 27.

### *Dupont Circle*

The DuPont Circle neighborhood and its namesake park have been a gay cruising spot since the late nineteenth century (see No. 13, Figure 2-12).<sup>80</sup> Deacon Maccubbin's shop **Earthworks, 1724 20th Street, NW**, was the first LGBTQA-identified commercial space in the neighborhood, and its first gay club was **Mr. P's, 2147 P Street, NW**, which opened in March 1976. Some of the most popular LGBTQ establishments in Dupont Circle are **Annie's Steakhouse, 1609 17th Street, NW**, **JRs, 1519 17th Street, NW**, and **Mr. Henry's, 2655 Connecticut Avenue, NW**.

The Dupont Circle neighborhood is part of the Dupont Circle Historic District, which is listed in the DC Inventory (June 17, 1977, expanded January 4, 1985, and May 22, 2005) and the NRHP (July 21, 1978, expanded February 6, 1985, and June 10, 2005). An enclave LGBTQ community (shops, businesses, and residences) grew up around it beginning in the 1970s; it is considered a historic LGBTQ Community, along the lines of The Castro in San Francisco and Greenwich Village in New York City. The Dupont Circle Metro Station is engraved with a quote by Walt Whitman. The Washington D.C. Pride Parade starts in the Dupont Circle Community on P Street and runs through the neighborhood, ending at 14th and S streets. According to the DC Inventory, the district is

among the city's most elegant historic residential neighborhoods, notable for superior examples of Victorian rowhouse architecture in Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque styles, as well as some of the city's finest turn-of-the-century mansions in Beaux Arts, Chateausque, Renaissance, and Georgian Revival styles; has served as the home of many prominent and affluent Washingtonians, as well as foreign legations; prominent local and national architects are represented; unusually rich and varied streetscapes, many along the diagonal L'Enfant avenues, with centerpiece at Dupont Circle. The district also includes fine examples of early apartments, 1920s commercial buildings along Connecticut Avenue, modest working-class dwellings, stables, and carriage houses; there are approximately 3100 buildings (that date) c. 1875-1931.<sup>81</sup>

### *Georgetown*

Georgetown's earliest associations with the LGBTQ community appear to be the block near the intersection of 31st Street, NW and P Street, NW, which was a popular cruising area. The neighborhood's strongest association with the LGBTQ community came during the activist and AIDS crisis period (see Chapter 2, Themes 3 and 6). Dr. Frank Kameny began his teaching career at Georgetown University. **Grace Episcopal Church at 1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW** hosted GLF's first meeting on June 30, 1970. In 1973 the **Georgetown Lutheran Church at 1556 Wisconsin Avenue, NW** hosted the Gay Men's Venereal Disease Clinic (organized by the GLF), the precursor to Walt Whitman Clinic. When Dignity/Washington was no longer allowed to hold services on Georgetown University's campus, the St. Margaret's Episcopal Church at **1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW** provided refuge and continues to be the location of their Sunday evening services. The commercial area of Wisconsin Avenue, NW has had several LGBTQ bar/clubs and restaurants, including the **Georgetown Grill, 1229 (1239) Wisconsin Avenue, NW**; **Mr. Henry's, 2655**

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<sup>80</sup> According to the DC Inventory boundary description for the district, the Dupont Circle Historic District is roughly bounded by Rhode Island Avenue and M and N streets on the south, Florida Avenue on the west, Swann Street on the north, and the Sixteenth Street HD on the east.

<sup>81</sup> DC Inventory, 45.

**Connecticut Avenue, NW; Barbary Coast, 2412 Wisconsin Avenue, NW; Court Jester, 2321 Wisconsin Avenue, NW; and Cy's, 2412 Wisconsin Avenue, NW.**

The Georgetown neighborhood is part of the Georgetown Historic District, which is listed in the DC Inventory (November 8, 1964), the NRHP (May 28, 1967) and as an NHL (May 28, 1967). The district is roughly bounded by Reservoir Road and Dumbarton Oaks Park on the north, Rock Creek Park on the east, the Potomac River on the south, and Glover-Archbold Parkway on the west. According to the DC Inventory, the district is a

remarkably intact example of a complete historic town; encompasses the area laid out as a port town in 1751 prior to the establishment of the District of Columbia, and later absorbed into the city of Washington; rich variety of residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings dating from all periods; includes many of city's oldest buildings; narrow grid streets establish intimate scale in contrast to L'Enfant city; wide range of houses from simple frame dwellings to spaciouly landscaped mansions recording all social levels of the community; architectural styles are also varied, including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Romanesque, and Classical Revival examples, as well as numerous vernacular structures; approximately 4000 primary buildings circa 1751-1950.<sup>82</sup>

*Howard University/Georgia Avenue*

Washington's social scene still shows the effects of decades of segregation (official and commercially inspired). In many ways Washington still has separate racial and ethnic social circles. Segregation, both legal and informal, made Washington a city of house parties and social clubs, especially for African-Americans. These traditional social outlets have in turn spawned community organizations, political groupings, and commercial clubs. Even after official segregation had ended, informal segregation was enforced by private clubs' carding policies.<sup>83</sup> Northwest DC, especially Howard University, Georgia Avenue, and their surrounding areas, was home to the District's African-American community (see No. 18, Figure 2-16).

The black LGBTQ community association in northwest DC has a history of more than 50 years. Two of the best-known early clubs, dating to the 1920s and 1930s, are the **Republic Gardens** and the **Crystal** (later **Bohemian**) **Caverns, U Street, NW**. The most notable and/or long-lasting African-American LGBTQ residences and establishments were in these areas. **Dr. Alain Locke (1326 R Street, NW), Richard Bruce Nugent (family home at 1231 T Street, NW), Georgia Douglas Johnson (1461 S Street, NW), Angeline Weld Grime (1415 Corcoran, NW) and Gil Gerald (601 Q Street, NW)** resided in northwest DC. Commercial and religious establishments integral to the District's black LGBTQ community included **Nob Hill, 1101 Kenyon Street, NW; the Clubhouse, 1296 Upshur Street, NW; ENIK Alley Coffeehouse, 816 Eye Street, NE; Faith Temple, 1313 New York Avenue, NW; and the Palm Ballroom, 4211 Georgia Avenue, NW.**

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<sup>82</sup> DC Inventory, 66.

<sup>83</sup> RHPDC, Gay D.C. Walking Tours: African Americans (2004, <https://www.rainbowhistory.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/africanamerican-web.pdf>).



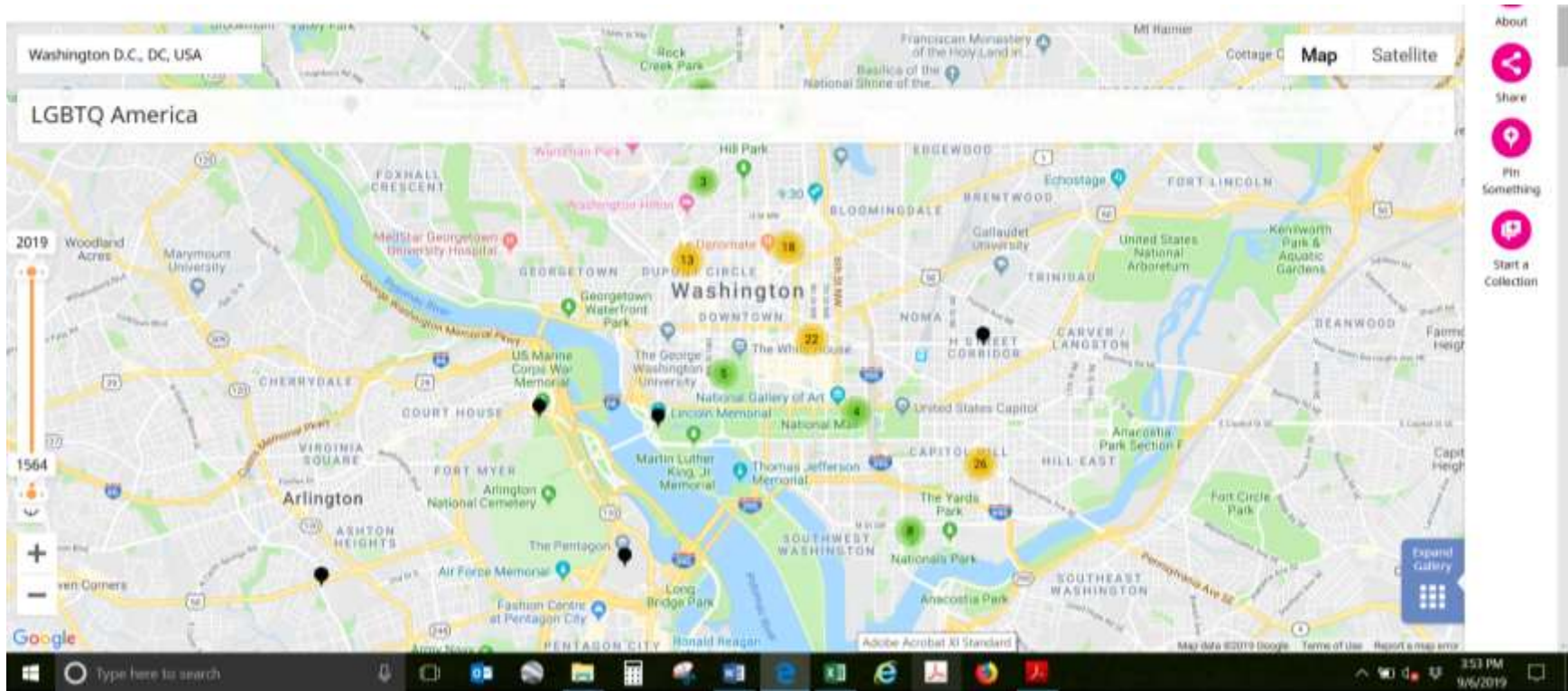


FIGURE 2-16. Screenshot of Historypins.org LGBTQ America Sites in the Washington, DC Metro Area. Note the yellow locations, where three of the four highest site numbers correspond with historic and/or continuing District LGBTQ neighborhoods.

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 5: Arts and Expression

From the origins of drag culture in theater to the literary canon, LGBTQ expressionism is vibrant and diverse. The breadth of the District's history of LGBTQ art and expression includes a late nineteenth-century history of drag, work of artists of all genres, activist publications, and the locations that provided stages, publication headquarters, and an artistic ambiance for the community.

The turn of the twentieth century marked a major shift in literary expression both within and outside the LGBTQ community. Those perspectives written from the outside unfortunately wielded incredible influence and often contributed to the misunderstanding of LGBTQ identities. Many of the earliest publications to influence America's discussion of LGBTQ identity originated in Europe. One of the first authors to discuss homosexuality was Havelock Ellis, a British physician, in his 1915 book, *Sexual Inversion*. Ellis's work challenged Victorian propriety by discussing sexuality in all its facets.<sup>1</sup> The same year in the United States, Emma Goldman's lecture series discussed homosexuality within her advocacy for freedom of expression, equity for women, and social reform.<sup>2</sup> African-American intellectuals and artists blossomed during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, Howard University professors and academics played a tremendous role in fostering the emergence of African-American LGBTQ talent during this era. And, when Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, first published in England in 1928, reached American shores, it added to the critical mass of LGBTQ expression from within the community that would eventually erode some stigmatized beliefs. The LGBTQ expression that began after World War II gave rise to political activism, strengthened community development and presence, and laid the foundation for a new era of national LGBTQ inclusion.

The most influential LGBTQ individuals emerged in an environment stricken with polarizing views about their identity and rights. Their contributions added clarity to a murky landscape and made a significant impact to LGBTQ community development at the national and local levels.

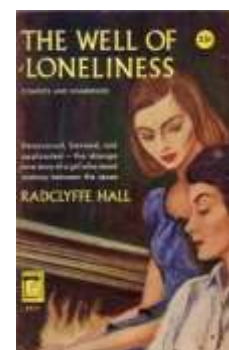
#### COVER ART FROM LITERARY WORKS BY LGBTQ ARTISTS



*Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman (1855; 1871 cover)



*FIRE!!* by Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, Aaron Douglas, Richard Bruce Nugent, Gwendolyn Bennett, John P. Davis (1926)



*The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall (1928; 1951 cover)

<sup>1</sup> Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present*. (New York: Alyson Books, 2006), 15-21.

<sup>2</sup> Tina Gianoulis, Goldman, Emma (1869-1940) (2004, [http://www.glbtcarchive.com/ssh/goldman\\_e\\_S.pdf](http://www.glbtcarchive.com/ssh/goldman_e_S.pdf)); New York LGBT Historic Sites Project (NYCLGBT HSP), 208 & 210 East 13th Street, Manhattan: Emma Goldman Residence & "Mother Earth" Office (n.d., <https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/emma-goldman-residence-mother-earth-office/>).

## Early Historical Figures

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) (Plate 2-26), the renowned American writer and poet, is one gay individual who had ties to the District. Whitman met his long-time companion Peter Doyle, an immigrant resident of Alexandria, Virginia, in 1865 while living in the District. He volunteered as a nurse in District hospitals and gained a deeper appreciation of life and a fuller understanding of human nature through caring for wounded soldiers. Whitman wrote in a letter: "These thousands, and tens and twenties of thousands of American young men, badly wounded...open a new world somehow to me, giving closer insights, new things, exploring deeper mines than any yet, showing our humanity".<sup>3</sup> When Whitman lived in DC from 1863 to 1873, he worked as a wartime nurse and federal clerk. and called several different boarding houses home (Figure #). His District years were prolific, writing *Drum-Taps* (1865), *Democratic Vistas* (1871), *Passage to India* (1871), and two editions of *Leaves of Grass* (1867 and 1871).<sup>4</sup>



PLATE 2-26: 1865 Photo of Walt Whitman and Peter Doyle (Rice 1895)

Most of the places he called home or worked are no longer extant. Walt Whitman's compassionate legacy made him a namesake of the Walker-Whitman Clinic, a staple health provider and advocacy institution for the District's LGBTQ community discussed in Theme 6.

FIGURE 2-17: Places Where Walt Whitman Lived and Worked (Roberts 2004)

- (1) 394 L St. N.
- (2) 456 6th St. W.
- (3) -502 Pennsylvania Ave.
- (4) 468 M St. N.
- (5) 364 13th St.
- (6) 472 M St. N.
- (7) 535 15th St. NW
- (8) Paymaster General's Office
- (9) Bureau of Indian Affairs
- (10) Dept. of Justice
- (11) Treasury Dept.
- (12) Armory Square Hospital



<sup>3</sup> Kim Roberts, Kim Roberts on Walt Whitman: Whitman in Washington (1863-1873)

(<http://washingtonart.com/beltway/whitman.html>),1.

<sup>4</sup> Kim Roberts on Walt Whitman; Roberts, A Map of Whitman's Washington Boarding Houses and Work Places. *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 22 (Summer 2004, No. 1):23-28, <https://doi.org/10.13008/2153-3695.1745>.

## Drag in the District<sup>5</sup>

Some of the country's earliest documented drag events occurred in the District; at least two are documented in 1885 and 1892.<sup>6</sup> Yet the drag community in New York City had the greatest draw and perhaps most historic local drag shows, including the "Annual Odd Fellows Ball," which became more popularly known as the "Hamilton Lodge Ball."<sup>7</sup> The ball attracted thousands nationwide.

By the 1930s drag in DC had developed into an informally accepted form of entertainment, but it still met resistance from local police. As mentioned in Theme 4, in 1934 the African-American drag ball sponsored by Impersonators Club was banned by police minutes before the event was due to begin; the crowd of nearly 1,500 who had gathered for the event was turned away.<sup>8</sup> The reaction of the black community documented in the local paper, *Washington Afro-American*, showed the backlash of "respectability politics" at play at that time:

It is quite another thing to tolerate a display of degeneracy in dance halls in order to attract the public. Yet these brethren or "sisters," unwanted in Washington, will be welcomed in New York where over a thousand of the neuter gender of both races will dance this week at the annual dance of the Hamilton Lodge. The pansy motto should be: "Young lady, go North."<sup>9</sup>

The two cities and their communities were situated close enough to influence each other but far enough apart to have their own autonomy, characteristics, and social norms. One of the more notable recent additions to the District's drag community was Waaay Off Broadway, formerly located at 55 K Street, SE. The gay community cabaret was created by the Lost and Found club but used largely by the Academy Awards of Washington drag organization and by visiting performers such as the Flirtations, Gotham, and Wayland Flowers and Madame between 1972 and 1978.<sup>10</sup>

Racial segregation affected the District's drag community more in regard to performance venues than performers. Venue managers often drew the racial line. Ken White, who performed drag as Black Pearl, provided opportunities for African-American drag queens to perform. White organized Potomac drag cruises and hosted drag balls at the Cairo Hotel and Palm Ballroom (see Theme 4). Until White, major hotels banned dressing in drag. But in 1968 he staged the Black Pearl International Awards at the Washington Hilton, which became the year's not-to-miss drag event.<sup>11</sup> Savvy business owners realized drag performances on both sides of the color line were entertaining and profitable events.

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<sup>5</sup> The [Rainbow History Project Drag Tour](#) features venues through the District that featured and continue to be vibrant venues for District Drag.

<sup>6</sup> B. Beemyn, 1, 32-33.

<sup>7</sup> Schomburg Center, The Hamilton Lodge Ball (1939) (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/16910cf0-7cf4-0133-46b1-00505686d14e>).

<sup>8</sup> B. Beemyn, 33.

<sup>9</sup> "Young Pansy, Go North," *Washington Afro-American*, April 17, 1934, in B. Beemyn 1997, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Meinke, attachment to email, June 5, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Cydney Grannan, A Brief History of Drag in the District, *The Koyo Nnamdi Show Blog* (June 28, 2019, <https://thekojonnamdishow.org/2019/06/28/brief-history-district-drag>).

### *The Washington Academy (1961-2015)*

The Washington Academy (Academy) is one of DC's longest-lived LGBTQ organizations.<sup>12</sup> Their artistic, political, and commercial influence was recognized by the Smithsonian's Archives Center at the National Museum of American History in 2018. A collection of photos, program books, newsletters, and organizational history will become part of the Smithsonian's Archives Center.<sup>13</sup> Alan Kress, who performed as Liz Taylor, made his first major addition to the drag community with the creation of the Oscars in the fall of 1961 (Plate 2-27, top). Drag performers and those aspiring to 'do drag' had no organized structure, no venues, and very little safety. In the repressive atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s, wearing drag was an invitation to scorn and physical danger.<sup>14</sup> Similar to the house parties created by the African-American LGBTQ community, private residences were a safe haven for drag performances and performers. To create safe space for drag performances and performers, Liz stated, "... I strived to mold an elite group of people whose social life would center around drag. By creating parties and activities I knew that I would always be surrounded by people wanting to attend them....I knew that some form of drag group was necessary. I had thought about it for a long time—and suddenly I found the answer one evening on television—the first time I saw an Awards show called the Oscars."<sup>15</sup> Kress incorporated the Academy in 1971 along with Carl Rizzi, who performed as Mame Dennis and served as its president until his death on February 23, 2015 (see Plate 2-27, bottom). Rizzi's journey to drag began at the Chicken Hut in the 1960s (see Theme 4). Kress and



PLATE 2-27: (top) Alan Kress aka Liz Taylor (Mark Meinke via *Historypins.org*); (bottom) Carl Rizzi aka Mame Dennis with Donna L. Gates aka Donn Vinton (*Rainbow History Project*)

Rizzi shared a love of drag but internal division arose regarding the membership, management, and development of the Academy. Rizzi helped diversify the Academy. When asked by Michele Martin, host

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<sup>12</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019; Chibarro, Smithsonian acquires Academy drag group's archives." *The Washington Blade*, March 14, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Chibarro 2018; Ryan P. Smith, These Newly Donated Artifacts Capture the Spirit of Washington, D.C. Drag: Mementos from the Academy of Washington drag organization add a valuable thread to the tapestry of American LGBTQ history (March 21, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> RHPDC.

<sup>15</sup> RHPDC.

of *Tell Me More* on National Public Radio News, how opening the doors to African-Americans was received, Rizzi said:

Quite well because there were a lot of people, African-Americans, who just wanted to be a part of what we were doing and I saw no reason why they couldn't any more than the gay girls are the men onstage, and it just all evolved that everyone got involved.<sup>16</sup>

The Academy broke racial and gender lines. According to Donna L. Gates, a female drag king who joined the Academy in 1972 (see Plate 2-27, bottom), "We had people of all ethnicities, women, men, straight, gay, bi, trans."<sup>17</sup> Under Rizzi's leadership, The Academy incorporated two major pageants, Miss Gaye Universe DC and Miss Gaye America DC, using proceeds and prizes to support local institutions and charities such as the former Whitman-Walker Clinic, Brother Help Thyself and Rainbow History Project. The Academy also provided support for members through the Helping Our Own People (HOOP) Awards during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>18</sup>

Members of the Academy's board, which donated the archival material to the history museum, announced in 2015 that the organization was disbanding after having the distinction of being DC's oldest continuously operating LGBT organization, with a 54-year history.<sup>19</sup> According to Bob Horton, chair of the Smithsonian's Archives Center, "The collection expands the breadth of the museum's entertainment and LGBT collections and adds another component to how these artifacts document history and experience."<sup>20</sup>

## Howard University Influencers

### *Dr. Alain Locke (1886-1954)*

Howard University, one of the preeminent historically black universities in the nation, nurtured several persons of significance who played critical roles to the early development of the LGBTQ community in the District. Howard academics, like Dr. Alain Locke, had wider influence within the Harlem Renaissance and the burgeoning African-American urban communities throughout the nation, such as in Boston and Atlanta.<sup>21</sup> Dr. Locke was a Harvard graduate who taught at Howard University from 1916 to 1953. Philosopher, aesthete, and professor, he was a critical influence on the development of the black, gay literary canon. He mentored several young black Harlem Renaissance era artists of renown, including Langston Hughes, Richard Bruce Nugent, Countee



PLATE 2-28: Dr. Alain Locke  
(courtesy of the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center/Howard University)

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<sup>16</sup> Carl Rizzi in transcript of Michel Martin, D.C. Drag Queens Discuss Starting Over, *Tell Me More*, NPR News, April 11, 2008, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93493471>.

<sup>17</sup> Grannan.

<sup>18</sup> John Riley, Remembering Mame Dennis, The community mourns a sudden loss, *Metro Weekly*, February 26, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Chibarro, Smithsonian acquires archives.

<sup>20</sup> Chibarro, Smithsonian acquires archives.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Locke's residence at 1326 R Street, NW, is in the DC Inventory of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory effective August 22, 1994 (expanded effective March 11, 2007) and the NRHP on November 9, 1994 (boundary increase May 15, 2007).

Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, Rudolph Fisher, and Jean Toomer.<sup>22</sup> The well-intentioned but short-lived *FIRE!!* started as a quarterly published by and including works by young black Harlem Renaissance artists Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, Aaron Douglas, Richard Bruce Nugent, Gwendolyn Bennett, and John P. Davis. Amid extreme controversy, its sole issue was published on October 31, 1926.<sup>23</sup> The issue was published during Dr. Locke's period of mentorship.



PLATE 2-29: Dean Lucy Slowe (Malesky 2015)

### *Lucy Slowe (1885-1937)*

Another Howard University figure, Dean Lucy Slowe, was a woman of many firsts. Slowe was the first African-American woman to win a national sports title, as champion of the American Tennis Association in 1917,<sup>24</sup> the first Dean of Women at Howard University, the first black woman to serve as Dean of Women at any American university, and a founding member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first sorority founded by African-American women.<sup>25</sup> Her friend and companion, Mary Burrill, was an English teacher and respected writer of the Harlem Renaissance era; they shared a home at 1256 Kearney Street, NE in the Brookland neighborhood (see Theme 1).



PLATE 2-30: Angelina Weld Grimké (Sutherland 2007)

### **African-American LGBTQ Artists and Supporters**

Some residences, like playwright Angelina Weld Grimké's home formerly located at 1415 Corcoran Street, NW, have been demolished. Angelina Weld Grimké (1880-1958) was one of the first African-American playwrights to have her works publicly performed. In 1902 she began writing during her teaching career as an English teacher in DC. She is best known for her play *Rachel*, which was performed by an all-black cast in March 1916.<sup>26</sup>

### *Langston Hughes (1920-1967)*

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<sup>22</sup> Adam Kirsch, Art and Activism: Rediscovering Alain Locke and the project of black self-realization, *Harvard Magazine* (March-April 2018).

<sup>23</sup> B. Beemyn, 62-66; POC Zine Project, *FIRE!! Devoted to Younger Negro Artists* (online publication of historic issue, 1926, [https://issuu.com/poczineproject/docs/poczp\\_fire\\_1926\\_readview](https://issuu.com/poczineproject/docs/poczp_fire_1926_readview)).

<sup>24</sup> The American Tennis Association, a separate entity from the United States Tennis Association (USTA), was founded in the District on November 30, 1916, in response to the USTA's policy of racial segregation. The Monumental Tennis Club of Baltimore and the Association Tennis Club of Washington, D.C., were two of the black tennis clubs to play a role in the formation of ATA. The Monumental Tennis Club hosted the first national championship held at Druid Hill Park in Baltimore. Lucy Slowe won the women's singles match its first year, according to the ATA (<https://www.yourata.org/history>); Sundiata Djata, *Blacks at the Net: Black Achievement in the History of Tennis, Volume One* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Maryland State Archives, Maryland Women's Hall of Fame: Lucy Diggs Slowe (1885-1937) (<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/slowe.html>); Schmidt.

<sup>26</sup> Sutherland.

A poet, novelist, playwright, essayist, and translator who wrote 16 books of poetry, 12 novels, short stories, and eight children's books, Hughes lived in the District between 1924 and 1925 as the personal assistant to historian Carter Woodson<sup>27</sup> before attending college at Lincoln University. He traveled often to Harlem, New York, where he became a prominent artist of the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>28</sup> The residence where he lived is within the Dupont Circle Historic District at 1749 S Street NW (Plate 2-31).<sup>29</sup>

### *Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872-1906)*

A poet laureate of immense highs and lows with an impactful, yet short-lived career, Dunbar gained notoriety for his poeticism in 1892 at the annual Western Association of Writers meeting in Dayton, Ohio, which led to further exposure at the 1893 World Columbia Exposition in Chicago and a tour in England. While in the District, Dunbar resided at 321 U Street NW (demolished).<sup>30</sup> Dunbar was a clerk for the Library of Congress from 1897-1898. He died from tuberculosis in his hometown of Dayton.<sup>31</sup>

### *Richard Bruce Nugent (1906-1987)*

A native Washingtonian, Nugent attended Dunbar High School where one of his early influencers was his English teacher, Angelina Weld Grimké. His family moved to New York after his father's death. Living in



PLATE 2-31: Langston Hughes Residence, 1749 S St, NW  
(Louis Berger photo, 2019)

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<sup>27</sup> Carter Woodson (1875-1950) is often referred to as "The Father of Black History" for the role he played in the advancement and documentation of black history. Woodson earned his PhD in history from Harvard University in 1912 after humble beginnings in New Canton, Virginia. He dedicated his life to the advancement of African-American history as a dean at Harvard (1920-1922) and West Virginia Collegiate Institute, through the publication of numerous history books, teaching, as an active member in several black organizations (NAACP, National Urban League, Friends of Negro Freedom), and co-founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. During his time in the District, he resided at 1538 Ninth Street NW (Dagbovie 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Marin Summers, Langston Hughes (1902-1967), *BlackPast* (<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/hughes-langston-1902-1967/>).

<sup>29</sup> The Dupont Circle Historic District was added to the DC Inventory on June 17, 1977, with effective expansions designated on January 4, 1985, and May 22, 2005, and listed in the NRHP on July 21, 1978, with effective boundary increases on February 6, 1985, and June 10, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> The current dwelling on this site, located in the LeDroit Park Historic District, was constructed in 1997.

<sup>31</sup> BlackPast, Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872-1906) (January 18, 2007, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/dunbar-paul-lawrence-1872-1906/>); Poetry Foundation, Paul Lawrence Dunbar: 1872-1906, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/paul-lawrence-dunbar>).





Photo 2-#: Richard Bruce Nugent Family Residence, PLATE 2-33: 1231 T Street, NW (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

New York on the brink of the Harlem Renaissance shaped his desire to become a writer. Nugent returned to DC to study, and through the “Saturday Nighters” at the home of Georgia Douglas Johnson, Nugent met Dr. Alain Locke and Langston Hughes. Despite his tremendous connections with the Harlem Renaissance and Howard University elite, it was his literary talent that secured his standing within the Harlem Renaissance and as an openly SGL man. His family home at 1231 T Street, NW (Plate 2-33) is within the Greater U Street Historic District, which was listed in the NRHP on December 31, 1998, and the DC Inventory effective January 11, 1999.

### *Georgia Douglas Johnson (1877-1966)*

Georgia Douglas Johnson was a poet, lyricist, playwright, and writer and one of the most prolific female poets of the Harlem Renaissance era. Although not LGBTQ, her support of the African-American LGBTQ community showed a complete disregard for “respectability politics.” The Johnson home was the site of the “Saturday Nighters,” a 1920s literary salon.<sup>32,33</sup> She became “one of the architects of Washington D.C.’s

version of the ‘New Negro Movement’.”<sup>34</sup> Well acquainted with Dr. Alain Locke, her Saturday soirées hosted black intellectuals and writers including W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, William Stanley Braithwaite, Jean Toomer, Angelina Weld Grimké, Countee Cullen, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Bruce Nugent, Wallace Thurman, and Jessie Fauset.<sup>35</sup>

## **District Arts and Expression**

DC’s literary expression often evolved independently of national trends. DC has been home to influential LGBTQ artists since the time of Walt Whitman and was at the head of the performance art and poetry scene from the beginning of the 1970s. The significant gay, lesbian, and bisexual presence in DC’s early 1970s performance scene involved such major figures as Lee Lally, Michael Lally, Tim Dlugos, Ed Cox, Terence Winch, and Doug Lang — anticipating other poetry and performance developments in other cities. In the 1980s Essex Hemphill, Wayson Jones, Chris Prince, Larry Duckett, Michelle Parkerson, Papaya Mann, Chi Hughes, and others associated with the ENIKAlley Coffeehouse and the *dc space* club created a second African-American renaissance.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019; Wilfred D. Claudia Samuels, Georgia Blanche Douglas Camp Johnson (1877-1966) (Blackpast, November 6, 2012, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/grimke-angelina-weld-1880-1958/>).

<sup>33</sup> The Georgia Douglas Johnson residence at 1326 R Street, NW, is in the DC Inventory of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Greater U Street Historic District.

<sup>34</sup> Samuels, Georgia Johnson.

<sup>35</sup> Samuels, Georgia Johnson.

<sup>36</sup> Meinke, April 5, 2019.

## LGBTQ Publications

### The Gay Blade/Washington Blade (established 1969)

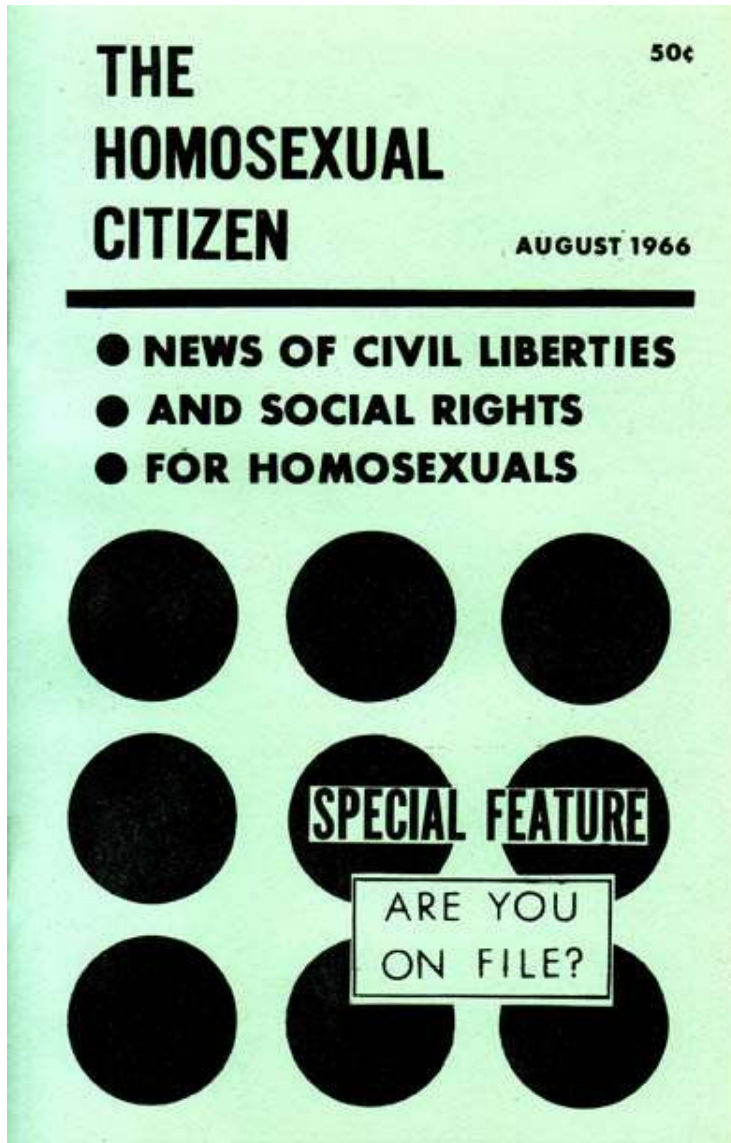


FIGURE 2-18: August 1966 Issue of The Homosexual Citizen (Mattachine Society of Washington)

*The Washington Blade* is Washington, DC's prominent LGBT newspaper of record and has been covering LGBTQ issues since 1969. Several publications led to the *Blade*. The first, *The Gazette*, was released in May 1963 and served as a newsletter for MSW members as well as the larger homophile community.<sup>37</sup> The *Blade's* second predecessor, *The Homosexual Citizen*, edited by Lilli Vincenz during the mid-1960s, had one section devoted to MSW and one devoted to the Mattachine Society of Florida (Figure 2-18).<sup>38</sup> Lilli Vincenz began *The Insider*, which, as the name suggests, was originally only for MSW members. This publication effectively served as a precursor to *The Gay Blade* as it became a resource for the larger community when Eva Freund took over as co-editor with Richard Schaeffers, another member of MSW, who distributed the newsletter in gay bars. In October 5, 1969, members of MSW first distributed *The Gay Blade*, which was "An Independent Publication Serving the Gay Community." The first issue of *The Gay Blade* was a one-page and one-sided newsletter mimeographed with the help of 15 or more people in the basement of two men who lived on Garfield Street, NW, near the Sheraton Park Hotel (Figure 2-19).<sup>39,40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Meinke, Resources for Research on the Mattachine Society of Washington.

<sup>38</sup> Meinke, Resources for Research on the Mattachine Society of Washington.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Schwartzman, The Washington Blade, Gay weekly Washington Blade closes, Storied 40-year-old paper among sister publications abruptly shuttered (November 17, 2009, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bootbearwdc/2971698398>).

<sup>40</sup> From the summer of 1969 to 1973, Nancy Tucker was the first editor and publisher of *The Gay Blade* with strong support from Bart Wenger. Pat Kolar, the second editor of the paper, changed the publication's name to *The Blade* (Meinke, September 18, 2019).

# The Gay Blade

October 1969

Vol. 1, No. 1

An Independent Publication Serving the Gay Community

## BLOOD DRIVE LAUNCHED

The need for blood is crucial. Do help! Members and supporters of Mattachine are participating in a Red Cross blood donor program.

Give blood in the name of Mattachine (this is kept confidential). You will help the homophile movement and will make yourself, your immediate relatives and dependents (even if not related!) eligible for free blood for one year.

Join other gays in their first group donation. We'll meet in the main lobby of the Red Cross building at E St. between 20th and 21st NW between 5 and 6 pm on Mon., Oct. 13. Gay Is Good buttons will be given to all who participate.

The Homosexual Research Assn., Suite 5, 1350 N. Highland Ave., Los Angeles 90028 is advertising their porno at reduced rates. Don't buy! Models in movies and pictures are covered head to toe in black leotards.

Warning to Du Pont Circle people: Cars seen too frequently in the Circle area are having their license numbers taken down; their owners later are being harassed and blackmailed.

Is the gov't running a security check on you? Being blackmailed? Need draft counseling? Call Franklin Kameny, president of the Mattachine Society of Washington at 363-3881 for help on these and other legal complications of being gay.

New to DC bookstores will be The Same Sex, published by the United Church of Christ and containing literate articles by and about homosexuals. Should be available the third week in Oct.

Discussion group on "The Homosexual and the Media" will be held in late Oct. Call 931-1272 for details.

Seriously looking for a roommate? Want a gay landlord? Call Gay Blade editors to register with the Blade's roommate referral service. Don't bother if you want to talk dirty. We won't listen. 234-0064 after 5 p.m.

Off-Broadway: "And Puppy Dog's Tails" is an amusing evening. Only one lament: "There's nudity -- but no passion!"

To contact the Gay Blade, call 270-2013 or 931-1272, 6-9 pm.

## GAY LIBERATION FRONT

After raids on the Stonewall bar and the usual police harassment, the NYC gay community has formed the Gay Liberation Front. First to feel its influence was the Village Voice. As the result of a picket, the Voice agreed to change its ad policy and allow the word "gay" to be used, thus permitting GLF and other homophile groups to advertise. "Come Out." GLF's house organ, will appear in early Oct.

HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT AND COLLEGES -- Franklin Kameny, DC Mattachine president, spoke at American U's Kay spiritual Center on Oct. 7 at the request of AU and Hillel. Topic was "The Homosexual Dilemma: What Every Heterosexual Should Know."

Also at AU: There's talk about having an all-college gay mixer dance in the DC area, similar to the one held last year at Columbia by its Student Homophile League.

SEE IF YOUR FAVORITE BAR CARRIES THE GAY BLADE. THE NEXT ISSUE WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO GET IT.

FIGURE 2-19: The First Issue of The Gay Blade, October 1969 (Rainbow History Project Archives)

## NRHP HIGHLIGHT: THE FURIES (1971-1973)



PLATE 2-34: *Furies Collective, Washington D.C., 1972. The Furies, packing and distributing the newspaper, at 219 11th Street SE, Washington, DC. Left to right: Ginny Berson, Susan Baker (not a Fury), Coletta Reid, Rita Mae Brown, Lee Schwing* (© Joan E. Biren 1972)

The forerunner to the Furies Collective was “Amazing Grace,” started by Joan E. Biren, Sharon Deevey, and women “recruits” from New York. In spite of months of planning and preparations, Amazing Grace lasted only one week owing to serious divisions along class lines. Sometime after the collapse of Amazing Grace, Biren, Deevey and Ginny Berson became part of a new collective with other lesbian feminists, including Charlotte Bunch and Rita Mae Brown, called “Those Women.” The phrase “those women” is a reference to the expression that straight women’s liberationists used in that era about lesbians. As Biren remembers, “in 1970 people didn’t say ‘lesbian’ out loud, they used a euphemism.”<sup>41</sup> Eventually, “Those Women” changed the name of their collective to “The Furies.”

In choosing lesbianism, the “woman-identified woman” actively worked against male supremacy.<sup>42</sup> The influence of “The Woman-Identified Woman”<sup>43</sup> was very visible in the *The Furies* newspaper. Part of what made the newspaper so relevant was the collective’s insistence to embed racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia within patriarchy and capitalism, with both oppressive systems treated as mutually constitutive. The residence where *The Furies* newspaper was designed and distributed, 219 11th Street, SE, was listed in the NRHP on May 2, 2016 (see Theme 3).

<sup>41</sup> Biren, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Berson.

<sup>43</sup> “The Woman-Identified Woman” was a position paper written by the Radicalesbians of New York City.

### *Blacklight Magazine (established 1979)*

*Blacklight*, which published an extensive overview of the AIDS epidemic in the city during 1983, was founded in 1979 by Sidney Brinkley, a student at Howard University, who edited the periodical and was also a member of Howard's Lambda Student Alliance. "One of the first publications for African American Lesbians and Gay men in the United States," *Blacklight* was a critical pillar for black queer communities upon its founding. Much like the African American queer activist groups of the era, *Blacklight* served as a space for queer black folks to engage in an intersectional manner, unlike many of the predominantly white or mainstream gay and lesbian spaces during that time. The periodical was supported by Brinkley's own funding, and then longer-term funding from anonymous donors. Brinkley's publication, which "came into being just after black gay political organizations came of age," fulfilled "a need for self-expression among black gays" in Washington, DC, nationally, and even internationally.<sup>44</sup> The early issues of *Blacklight* covered topics that ranged from identity within queer black communities to discrimination in the DC gay bars, activism, the arts, and local/national culture and politics. International stories in the periodical highlighted "Zimbabwe, 'The Middle East Crisis,' and gay life in London." Brinkley is still publishing *Blacklight* online, and the periodical celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2019.

### *MetroWeekly Magazine (established 1994)*

*MetroWeekly* is a more recent addition to the LGBTQ arts and social scene. It is one of the few publications to produce print editions. With over 45,000 readers throughout the D.C. Metro area, it "has been a central part of Washington, D.C.'s gay and lesbian community since May 1994, and is now the largest and longest-running LGBTQ publication and website in the region."<sup>45</sup> *MetroWeekly* boldly proclaims to be "Washington's LGBTQ Magazine" by providing a reliable community events calendar, nightlife guides, and coverage of the arts and entertainment scene.<sup>46</sup> Randy Shulman, editor and publisher of *MetroWeekly*, was acknowledged in *Washington Magazine's* list, "The Power 100" in Media, keeping company with the likes of CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer and John Fahey, the president and CEO of the National Graphic Society. According to a ca. 2009 accolade from the *Village Voice* magazine of New York, "After two decades under Shulman's leadership, the weekly magazine-style paper for Washington's gay community has grown into the nation's largest LGBTQ arts publication."<sup>47</sup>

### *The ENIKAlley Coffeehouse and the Black Gay Renaissance in DC*

The early-to-mid 1980s was an incredibly vibrant time for black gays and lesbians in DC. As described by Chi Hughes, co-founder of Howard University's gay and lesbian student organization Lambda Student Alliance and member of Sapphire Sapphos,

[Y]ou had the political organizations, the activist organizations, you had the art, you had the culture, you had all of that coming together in a way that wasn't in other cities simply because they didn't have the black presence.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gaver.

<sup>45</sup> *Metro Weekly*, About Us (n.d., <https://www.metroweekly.com/about/>).

<sup>46</sup> *Metro Weekly*, About Us.

<sup>47</sup> *Washington Life Magazine*, The Power 100 Media (May 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090628201054/http://www.washingtonlife.com/category/wl-lists/the-power-100>).

<sup>48</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007.

In fact, many have referred to this period as the black gay renaissance in DC, suggesting a parallel with the Harlem Renaissance when African- American gays and lesbians were at their most visible within the arts scene of New York City. In 1980s DC there was a similar out crowd that walked with a freedom even 1920s Harlem did not afford.

During the early to mid-1980s, African-American gays and lesbians could socialize in the early evening hours at the **ENIK Alley Coffeehouse**, also called The Coffeehouse, at **816 Eye Street, NE**. ENIK stood for Eighth, Ninth, I, and K, which were the four streets that enclosed the alleyway of the Coffeehouse. Located in the carriage house behind couple Gary Walker and Ray Melrose's row house in northeast DC, the Coffeehouse opened on New Year's Day 1982.<sup>49</sup> Melrose was the president of the DC Coalition at the time, and the DC Coalition's meetings were held at the Coffeehouse, making the space political, social, and artistic. The Coffeehouse was a vital space for local black lesbian, gay, and bisexual artists to "regularly rehearse and present their work."<sup>50</sup>



PLATE 2-35: ENIK Alley Coffeehouse at 816 Eye Street, NE (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

As a small, intimate space, it offered artists an ideal venue to debut some of their new work. DC Coalition member Papaya Mann, a member of Sapphire Sapphos who performed at the Coffeehouse as a poet, recalls, "we would just come together, jam, play music, sing, and create a community spirit out of that."<sup>51</sup> Michelle Parkerson, a filmmaker and former co-chair of NCBLG's board from 1985 to 1986, also performed at the Coffeehouse.<sup>52</sup> Parkerson (2008) remembers, "When Essex [Hemphill] and I would do shows like *Voicescapes*... we would rehearse there. We would have our first readings of the scripts or our first readings of the poetry (at the Coffeehouse)."<sup>53</sup> The poetry performance group Cinque that included members Larry Duckette, Essex Hemphill, and Wayson Jones also performed at the Coffeehouse. Chi Hughes replaced Jones and describes one of their performances in DC:

There were three gay men and then when one of the men dropped out, they decided that they wanted to have a different kind of energy in the group and invited me to join the group. It was named after...I don't know if you've seen the movie *Amistad*? The slave, in that movie, his name is Cinque. Cinque, it was another way to bring black gay culture to mainstream either by virtue of the work being so explicit about men loving men or women with women – that, as well as here you

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<sup>49</sup> Jim Marks, The Coffeehouse, *The Washington Blade*, January 6, 1984:1, 18.

<sup>50</sup> G. Beemyn, 211.

<sup>51</sup> Mann.

<sup>52</sup> Among other important works, Parkerson co-directed the documentary *A Litany For Survival: the Life and Work of Audre Lorde* (1995).

<sup>53</sup> "Voicescapes" was a poetry and music collaboration between Michelle Parkerson, Essex Hemphill, and Wayson Jones (National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, 1986).

had three black gay/lesbian folks on stage. And so, we performed all over the city and it was a great experience because it also bridged the male-female divided.<sup>54</sup>

The Coffeehouse explicitly reached out to women to breach the male-female divide, partly by offering the space as a meeting place for Sapphire Sapphos, DC's black lesbian political and social group. Joseph Beam's *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, first published in 1986, featured writings by NCBLG's Gil Gerald, ABilly S. Jones-Hennin, and Craig Harris, as well as **Essex Hemphill** and Beam himself. That same year, Beam became editor of NCBLG's new publication *Black/Out*.

Michelle Parkerson describes the nationalization and even internationalization of the local black lesbian and gay artistic scene in DC:

I think that [the black lesbian and gay art scene in DC] kind of took hold around [the release of] Joseph Beam's book, *In the Life*, which was a compilation of poetry, essays, and short stories that black gay men internationally had submitted to Joe and he had a major publisher for it. The book did extremely well; [it] helped circulate the DC black gay renaissance. It was, in a sense, parallel with ...black lesbian writers like Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde as well as Kitchen Table Press. Home Girls and other publications were, for black lesbians, a reflection and a compilation of international voices. We began to know sisters from Britain and South Africa and even some of our own work was in these anthologies. And I think *In the Life* did the same thing for black gay men.<sup>55</sup>

Within 10 years, AIDS-related complications would take the lives of Beam, Hemphill, and Ray Melrose, co-founder of the Coffeehouse. In 1988 Beam died of AIDS-related complications at the age of 33. Hemphill, who had self-published his first two poetry collections, *Earth Life* (1985) and *Conditions* (1986), helped Beam's mother Dorothy finish editing Beam's follow-up anthology, *Brother to Brother*, which was released in 1991. Hemphill's *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry*, published in 1992, won the American Library Association's Gay and Lesbian Book Award in Literature.<sup>56</sup> Hemphill died of AIDS-related complications in 1995 at the age of 38.

One year before Hemphill's passing, Ray Melrose died of AIDS-related complications at age 43. Papaya Mann (2008) talks about the excruciating impact of AIDS on the lesbian and gay artistic scene in DC in the 1980s and 1990s:

HIV had a huge impact on the LGBT community—a very troubling and devastating impact because we were all very young and very vulnerable and very in our prime, so to speak, of wanting to be creative. To be losing some of our most talented people... I believe that the HIV/AIDS epidemic severely impacted and



PLATE 2-36: Michelle Parkerson  
(courtesy of Pen America World Voices Festival)

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<sup>54</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007 (edited).

<sup>55</sup> Parkerson, February 26, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Mann.

crippled what I call the black gay Renaissance in DC. It basically shut us down ...it was very troubling because our social life was eclipsed and impacted by HIV. I started going to funerals regularly. It was just very devastating.<sup>57</sup>

The impact of AIDS was incredibly difficult for all gay and lesbian communities in DC, but for black gay and lesbian communities, which were highly visible and thriving on their own terms during this era, the effect was particularly jarring (see Theme 6).

**dc space** formerly located at **443 7th Street, NW** was a major performance space used by the straight and gay communities. Ray Melrose, manager of the Coffeehouse, also managed this space from 1977 to 1991. At dc space, Essex Hemphill, Michelle Parkerson, Garth Tate, Gideon Ferebee, Wayson Jones, and others continued the creation of new styles, media, and themes in GLBT music and literature. Melrose attracted many of the stars of the ENIKAlley Coffeehouse to the dc space and his other venues when the Coffeehouse began closing down around 1984.

### **Essex Hemphill (1957-1995)**

**Hemphill** performed often at The Coffeehouse, a rarity in that he was so brazenly *out* about his sexuality. His friends and colleagues regarded him as “untouchable” and a “genius.” Chi Hughes remembers “his genius and his willingness to be such an out individual—his work spoke to his experience as a black gay man and all the ups and downs of it and he wasn’t apologetic about it at all” (Hughes 2007). Michele Parkerson recalls being “just *knocked out* about his reading and his poetry, lots of his love poems and some of his short narrative pieces were out and some of mine were out. ...We did this immediate emotional and artistic embrace with each other...”<sup>58</sup>



PLATE 2-37: Essex Hemphill (courtesy of the Poetry Foundation)



## Other District Arts Performance Spaces

**Some of Us Press (SOUP)** formerly located at **4110 Emery Place, NW**, was a 1970s publishing collective that formerly operated from the home of Michael and Lee Lally. The “innocuous label “Some of Us” carefully avoids the suggestion of completion between these poets and others.<sup>59</sup> The pioneering publishing project gave print voice to such gay poets as Tim Dlugos, Terence Winch, Ed Cox, and Doug Lang who started out in the Mass Transit project at the Community Bookshop. SOUP was founded by Michael and Lee Lally, Terence Winch, and Ed Zahinser.<sup>60</sup> Kim Roberts eloquently reflects on the purpose of SOUP:

Some Of Us Press is emblematic of, and one of the best representations of, the Small Press Movement of the 1970s as a whole. The idea was radical: that the mainstream publishing industry was too conservative, and that writers whose voices would never be accepted by the big houses could bypass them entirely, and simply publish one another. The best of the small presses were experimental, flexible, and varied in their publications. SOUP, for example, published poets who were writing new work that was deeply personal, or pushed free verse to new places. Poems in the series were often political, anti-war, feminist, or openly gay. Some of the writers were immigrants or the children of immigrants, and writing about redefinitions of what it meant to be American. All are filled with an exuberant sense of possibility.<sup>61</sup>

The Lallys knew David Marcuse, the founder of the Community Bookstore in Dupont circle. Marcuse reserved an upstairs room in his home for meetings of all types. In 1971 Mass Transit, initiated by Michael Lally, began as a weekly poetry reading series in Marcuse's upstairs room.<sup>62</sup>



PLATE 2-38: Lee Lally, a co-founder of SOUP in Her Some of Us Press Home (Gossage). Former Location of SOUP Press, 4110 Emery Place, NW, (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

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<sup>57</sup> Mann.

<sup>58</sup> Michelle Parkerson, interview with Rebecca Graham, August 14, 2007, In Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019; William Niederkorn, SOUPing Up the Washington Poetry Scene, *The Washington Post*. June 27, 1973, reprinted in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly* 11(2-Spring 2010), <http://washingtonart.com/beltway/soup.html>).

<sup>60</sup> Michael Lally, Introduction to Some of Press Issue, *Beltway Quarterly* 17(1-Winter 2016):1, <http://www.beltwaypoetry.com/soup-introduction/>).

<sup>61</sup> Kim Roberts, Preface to the Some of Us Press Issue, *Beltway Quarterly* (17:1-Winter 2016, <http://www.beltwaypoetry.com/soup-preface/>).

<sup>62</sup> Lally.

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 6: Health Advocacy

#### Early Historical Medical “Treatment” of Homosexuality

Theme 1 of this context discussed the general historical overview of homosexuality within society. The religious precedent set by the colonial era vilified homosexuality. Within the judicial system, policing, threat of bodily harm, penal reform, and even death were the consequences of living an open, exposed, or merely suspected LGBTQ life. The categorization of homosexuality as an inherent wrong influenced the medical community and established the same baseline beliefs among medical professionals, including neurologists, sexologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, so that they often approached understanding LGBTQ preferences as a flaw that could be corrected through various means with proper study and diagnosis. Historically, the medical “treatments” for non-heterosexual preferences ranged from counseling and recommendations of abstinence to the more inhumane and severe, such as medical castration, lobotomies, and shock therapy.<sup>1</sup> The District has one such institution that applied the “sickness theory” to LGBTQ identities in the medical methods used to historically “treat” homosexuals: St. Elizabeths Hospital, constructed in 1852 (see following page).<sup>2</sup> In stark contrast, the care provided at the Whitman-Walker Clinic (now Whitman-Walker Health, discussed later in the theme) not only embraces LGBTQ identity but also administers programs specific to the needs of the LGBTQ community.

#### Medical Community Influence

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) first designated homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1952.<sup>3</sup> The MSW publicly refuted the APA’s designation of homosexuality as a disorder in the DSM in 1964. While members of the originating Mattachine Society in Los Angeles sought validation of their lifestyle from professionals, such as psychiatrists, who generally agreed that homosexuality was a type of disorder, conversely, MSW took a different stance and explicitly disagreed with and criticized professionals in the APA for labeling homosexuality a sickness. MSW sought no validation but rather changing a limited and bigoted belief system. At a speech delivered to the New York Mattachine Society in July 1964, Frank Kameny “galvanized” attendees as he publicly rejected the stance that homosexuality was a sickness,<sup>4</sup> saying, “until and unless valid positive evidence shows otherwise, homosexuality *per se* is neither a sickness, a defect, a disturbance, a neurosis, a psychosis, nor a malfunction of any sort.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Baughey-Gill, When Gay was not Okay with the APA: A Historical Overview of Homosexuality and its Status as a Mental Disorder *Occam’s Razor I* (Article 2) (Western CEDAR, 2011), 6-7; Miller, *Out of the Past*, 25; Terry, 40-73.

<sup>2</sup> The St. Elizabeths Hospital complex is listed in the DC Inventory within the Saint Elizabeths Historic District, which was listed in the NRHP on April 26, 1979, designated a National Historic Landmark on December 14 1990, and listed in the DC Inventory effective May 26, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Baughey-Gill, 6; Robert Paul Cabaj, MD, Working with LGBTQ Patients (n.d., <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/best-practice-highlights/working-with-lgbtq-patients>).

<sup>4</sup> D’Emilio, 164.

<sup>5</sup> Kameny, Our President Speaks, *Gazette II* (1-Spring 1964):4, 8.

## St. Elizabeths Hospital

2700 and 2701 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE, Washington, DC



St. Elizabeths Hospital Center Building, 1900 (courtesy of the NARA)



Lobotomy Tools, Occasionally Used Historically to "Treat" Homosexuality (History Daily n.d.)

St. Elizabeths Hospital was established in 1852 as the first federally funded psychiatric hospital to care for those with mental illness, especially former military. It was first named the Government Hospital for the Insane but renamed in 1916. During this era LGBTQ preferences were considered an illness that could subject individuals to medical treatment. At that time LGBTQ individuals were mistreated by the medical community; at that time what is now deemed inhumane, even borderline torture, was cutting-edge medical technology. LGBTQ patients "diagnosed" or voluntarily admitted to St. Elizabeths were administered a number of treatments, from clinical counseling to shock therapy with the belief that such procedures were helpful.

St. Elizabeths National Historic Landmark nomination notes the "primary resources housed at the National Archives pose a challenge in that they provide an uneven record of the hospital's operations. For some periods of the hospital's history, a topic has been well documented, while for other periods there may only be fragments, if anything at all, that address the same topic."<sup>6</sup> "Archive archivists" and current members of MSW<sup>7</sup> Charles Francis and Pate Felts researched many of the St Elizabeths files for forgotten LGBTQ history. Their review of records suggest that "hundreds, if not thousands, of LGBTQ Americans have stayed at St Elizabeth's since its opening in 1855."<sup>8</sup> Under the leadership of Benjamin Karpman, senior psychiatrist of

St. Elizabeths from the 1920s through the 1960s, it appears that electroshock therapy, lobotomies, and insulin-induced comas as well as psychoanalysis and aversion therapy were treatments for patients, LGBTQ patients included.<sup>9</sup> American writer Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and publisher H Lynn Womack (1923-1985) were high-profile figures incarcerated at St. Elizabeths. Womack convinced the judge to send him to St. Elizabeths because he would rather be "sick," according to the DSM, than subject to prison.<sup>10</sup>

St. Elizabeths is NHRP-listed (April 26, 1979), an NHL (December 14, 1990), and in the DC Inventory (May 26, 2005). The St. Elizabeths nomination could be augmented to include the role it played in LGBTQ history. The site was redeveloped to house multiple federal agencies in a Master Plan approved in January 2009.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Otto, *St. Elizabeths Hospital: A History* (Washington, DC: United States General Services Administration, 2013), i-ii.

<sup>7</sup> The Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) referred to here is the non-profit founded in 2011 named after the precursor group co-founded by Dr. Frank Kameny and Paul Kuntzler in 1950.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Giambrone, As the St. Elizabeths Hospital Campus is redeveloped into brand new neighborhoods, two independent scholars uncover the traumatic treatments LGBTQ people suffered there, *Washington City Paper* 38(22- June 1-7, 2018):9.

<sup>9</sup> Giambrone.

<sup>10</sup> Meinke, Lost and Found; James Walls, Ezra Pound's Stay at St. Elizabeths (May 1, 2014, <https://blogs.weta.org/boundarystones/2014/05/01/ezra-pounds-stay-st-elizabeths>).

<sup>11</sup> Cooper; General Services Administration [GSA], History of St. Elizabeths (n.d., <http://www.stelizabethsdevelopment.com/history.html>).

MSW's Kameny, Lilli Vincenz, and Jack Nichols initiated a carefully orchestrated campaign to "adopt an anti-sickness resolution in the organization, with quotes and letters from dozens of doctors in support of their position."<sup>12</sup> In February 1965 MSW released their resolution, which stated,

The Mattachine Society of Washington takes the position that in the absence of valid evidence to the contrary, homosexuality is not a sickness, disturbance, or other pathology in any sense, but is merely a preference, orientation, or propensity, on par with, and not different in kind from, heterosexuality.<sup>13</sup>

This MSW resolution countered the "shabby, shoddy, sloppy, sleazy pseudo-science" that dominated research behind the sickness theory (Kameny and Meinke 2006). As Kameny stated to Mark Meinke, founder of DC's Rainbow History Project, "In the absence of valid evidence to the contrary, what that [statement] did was to shift — to reverse — the burden of proof from us to the sickness theorists, to provide valid evidence" (personal communication, Franklin E. Kameny and Mark Meinke, July 8, 2006).

MSW's long-held stance against the "sickness theory" culminated in a panel at the APA's 79th Annual Convention held in what is now the Omni Shoreham Hotel at 2500 Calvert Street, NW in Washington, DC on May 6, 1971; the event took place May 3-7. Kent E. Robinson, MD of Sheppard Pratt Hospital in Towson, Maryland, moderated the panel, titled "Lifestyles of the Non-Patient Homosexual." The panelists included MSW's Frank Kameny, MSW's Lilli Vincenz, Larry Littlejohn (a San Francisco activist), Del Martin (co-founder of Daughters of Bilitis), and Jack Baker (a law student from the University of Minnesota).<sup>14</sup> Robinson opened the panel, emphasizing that the panelists "are not sick people; they don't regard themselves as such, and they would like to tell something about how they live as human beings, not as patients."<sup>15</sup> Lilli Vincenz said in her statement to the panel,

It is not a reaction against the opposite sex, it is simply that there is no magnetism there with the opposite sex, while there is a magnetism with the same sex, and as many people think, homosexuality is a result of a negative experience with the opposite sex. It is not so.<sup>16</sup>

Kameny also stated,

Now there's a tendency for minority groups to become the property of various of the appointed, or sometimes not appointed, arms and agencies of society. They are termed "sinful," then they become the property of the clergy; they are termed "criminal" and they become the property of the lawyer; they are termed "sick" and they become the property of the psychiatrist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> D'Emilio, 164.

<sup>13</sup> D'Emilio, 164.

<sup>14</sup> Jack Baker and his partner Mike McConnell were the first gay couple to apply for a marriage license in the United States (Hennepin County, Minnesota) and wed in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, on September 3, 1971.

<sup>15</sup> Kent E. Robinson, *Lifestyles of the Non-Patient Homosexual* (transcripts from the APA panel, May 6, 1971, from the personal collection of Dr. Lilli Vincenz), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Vincenz, *Lifestyles of the Non-Patient Homosexual* (transcripts from the APA panel, 1971, from the personal collection of Dr. Lilli Vincenz), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Kameny, *Lifestyles of the Non-Patient Homosexual*, 5.

Members of the recently formed Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), Gay Liberation Front-DC (GLF-DC), and MSW zapped<sup>18</sup> the APA's "ordination of new psychiatrists" attending the meeting<sup>19</sup> during the concluding convocation of the APA convention in the Regency ballroom.<sup>20</sup> There was no denying the righteous energy permeating the DC metropolitan area as the APA's meeting serendipitously occurred three days after the May Day protests in downtown DC on May 3, 1971.<sup>21</sup> GLF-DC's Warren Blumenfeld remembers "a number of us took over the stage and demanded that they change the DSM category of homosexuality as being a mental disorder."<sup>22</sup> Kameny also took the microphone and denounced the APA. The candor rattled members of the APA who were now face-to-face with the tactics of the burgeoning gay liberation movement. Kameny and his close friend, lesbian activist Barbara Gittings, continued the momentum at the APA convention the following year in Dallas, Texas; both served as representatives of the LGBTQ community on a panel entitled "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals? (A Dialogue)" (Plate 2-39). The APA voted to remove homosexuality from the DSM on December 15, 1973. Kuntzler, a member of the GAA who was the media liaison at the 1971 DC convention, called the APA's reversal on homosexuality



PLATE 2-39: Panel on "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals? A Dialogue" at May 1972 Conference of American Psychiatric Association in Dallas. From left: Barbara Gittings, Dr. Franklin Kameny, Dr. H. Anonymous, Dr. Judd Marmor (Kay Tobin Lahusen, Courtesy of the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Gay History Papers and Photographs Collection of the New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division)

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<sup>18</sup> See Theme 3. "Zapping" as described by Arthur Evans in an August 30, 1999, article written for *Gay Today* was "a militant, but non-violent, face-to-face confrontation against oppressive or repressive institutions" (Meinke, Zapping the APA Convention).

<sup>19</sup> Kameny, August 8, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> The May Day protests were a major direct-action demonstration against the Vietnam War in DC, during which nearly 12,000 people were arrested during May 1971.

<sup>22</sup> Blumenfeld.

“the most important achievement of the movement.”<sup>23</sup> Kameny, who attended the APA executive board meeting at the time of the vote, amusingly declared this moment a “mass cure,”<sup>24</sup> echoing national headlines like “Twenty Million Homosexuals Gain Instant Cure.”<sup>25</sup>

### A Shift: Gay Health Comes to the Forefront

Washington, DC gay and lesbian organization around health-related issues can be traced back to the very first issue of *The Gay Blade*, published in October 1969. The first issue included an announcement about a blood drive organized by MSW that was held at the Red Cross building located at the intersection of E Street, NW and 20th Street, NW (see Theme 5, page 2-86).<sup>26</sup> MSW and the Homophile Social League organized several blood drives to support the wider community.<sup>27</sup> Members of the GLF organized the Gay Men’s Venereal Disease Clinic (GMVDC) in 1970.<sup>28</sup> The GMVDC opened in 1973 “as an all-volunteer program of the Washington Free Clinic...[that] operated out of the basement of Georgetown Lutheran Church” located at 1556 Wisconsin Avenue, NW on Saturday mornings.<sup>29,30</sup> Tim Tomasi, a member of the GLF House and a physician, was a major force in creating the GMVDC.<sup>31</sup>

The Washington Free Clinic also offered women’s health nights from 1972 to 1975,<sup>32</sup> and in 1973 the Lesbian Health Services project formed from the clinic (Figure 2-20).<sup>33</sup> The GMVDC received appropriated funds from the DC City Council originally used for the DC Police Department’s Prostitution, Perversion, and Obscenity Squad.<sup>34</sup> The clinic

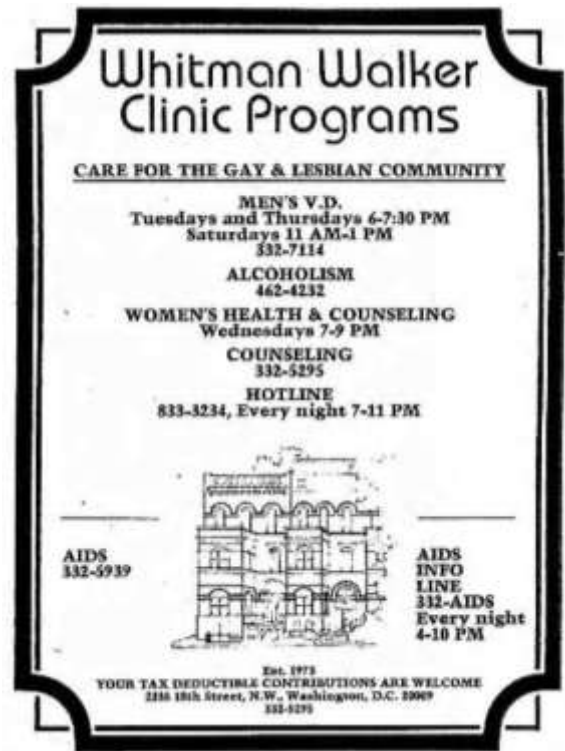


FIGURE 2-20: A WWC Ad in the April 6, 1984, Edition of The Washington Blade.

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<sup>23</sup> Kuntzler, December 17, 2006

<sup>24</sup> Kameny, August 8, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Eric Marcus, *Making Gay History: The Half-century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights* (New York: Perennial, 2002), in Baughey-Gill.

<sup>26</sup> Dale M. Brumfield, *Independent Press in D.C. and Virginia: An Underground History* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 87.

<sup>27</sup> Meinke, DC Chronology, attachment to email, June 5, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Meinke, DC Chronology, attachment to email, June 5, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Riley.

<sup>30</sup> Georgetown Lutheran Church is within the Georgetown Historic District, which was first established by the Old Georgetown Act of September 22, 1950. The district was listed in the DC Inventory on November 8, 1964, and as an NHL and in the NRHP on May 28, 1967. The NRHP period of significance was in 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Rainbow History Project Digital Collections Archive, n.d.

<sup>33</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Funds to the Prostitution, Perversion, and Obscenity Squad were terminated by the Council in 1975 after members of GAA described and quantified the squad’s discriminatory policing practices in budgetary language.



PLATE 2-40: Second Location of the WWC, 2335 18th Street, NW (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

offered free “comprehensive testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases for those who couldn’t afford such services.”<sup>35</sup> The clinic was also the forerunner of Whitman-Walker Clinic (WWC), the DC area’s expansive health clinic for the LGBTQ community.<sup>36</sup> WWC, renamed Whitman-Walker Health (WWH) in 2011, incorporated on January 1, 1978, as an amalgamation of the GMVDC, the Gay Men’s Counselling Collective, and the then-Lesbian Health Services (Meinke 2019b).<sup>37,38</sup> When WWC opened its first rented facility at **1606 17th Street, NW** in October 1978, it quickly became the city’s health clinic and was the major resource for AIDS information, counseling, and direct services when the crisis hit in the 1980s.<sup>39,40</sup> WWC later moved to **2335 18th Street, NW** (Plate 2-40), where it operated from 1980 to 1987.<sup>41</sup> WWH, a thriving medical institution in the District, has grown to include several locations and multiple programs that provide inclusive health care for the LGBTQ community.

### The AIDS Epidemic in DC

Toward the end of 1981, *The Washington Blade* started covering a national “outbreak of a rare cancer, Kaposi’s sarcoma, among sexually active Gay men.”<sup>42</sup> Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS) causes prominent lesions on the skin’s surface, and up to that point, KS was known as a fairly slow-growing cancer. But in 1981 this rare, hyper-visible cancer was moving quickly in the bodies of gay men.<sup>43</sup> As a result queer activists across the nation were alert for any available information even though it largely came through “federal disease experts.”<sup>44</sup> With a recent history of distrust of both the federal government and the

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<sup>35</sup> Rainbow History Project Digital Collections Archive, n.d.

<sup>36</sup> GLAA, Thirty-eight Years of Fighting.

<sup>37</sup> After a few years with the WWC, the Lesbian Health Services resumed independent operations.

<sup>38</sup> Whitman-Walker Clinic (and Whitman-Walker Health) is named after Walt Whitman, who cared for sick and wounded soldiers in DC hospitals during the Civil War and Mary Edwards Walker, who became the first woman surgeon in the U.S. Army in 1863 and a subsequent dress reformer (see Theme 5).

<sup>39</sup> WWC, Our History (Washington, DC: WWC, retrieved March 19, 2010, [http://www.wwc.org/about\\_wwc/history.html](http://www.wwc.org/about_wwc/history.html)); Whitman-Walker Health [WWH], Our History (Washington, DC: WWH, <https://www.whitman-walker.org/our-history>).

<sup>40</sup> This original location of the WWC is within the Dupont Circle Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory (designated June 17, 1977; expansions effective January 4, 1985, and May 22, 2005) and the NRHP (effective July 21, 1978; boundary increases February 6, 1985, and June 10, 2005) .

<sup>41</sup> This location is within the Washington Heights Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory on effective September 10, 2006, and in the NRHP on September 27, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Steve Martz, Marines, cancer are top 1981 stories, *The Washington Blade*, February 5, 1982:6.

<sup>43</sup> MedlinePlus, Kaposi’s Sarcoma (accessed March 17, 2010, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/kaposissarcoma.html>).

<sup>44</sup> Eric Lerner, ‘Gay cancer’ turns straight, *The Washington Blade*, March 5, 1982:A-5.

medical community,<sup>45</sup> gay communities were leery but had to work with both to understand the KS outbreak. *The Washington Blade* continued to focus on the impact of AIDS in the gay community, penning articles that addressed the “political implications” and “psychological turmoil” of AIDS and promoted education and awareness in local communities,<sup>46</sup> while others grappled with warnings about lifestyle and sexual practice.

In March 1982 the increased occurrence of both KS and pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP)<sup>47</sup> was officially linked to an immunosuppressive disease nationally responsible for the deaths of “at least 99 persons in the last seven months.”<sup>48</sup> Doctors also discovered the same immunosuppression in nine women and at least 23 heterosexual males.<sup>49</sup> In June 1982 a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study announced that sexual activity was *one way* to transmit the immunosuppressive disease. In July 1982 the CDC linked the disease to transmission by blood after finding it in three hemophiliacs. Research also revealed that some heterosexual men who contracted KS or PCP had used drugs intravenously. In spite of this clear evidence that the disease was not affecting just gay men, in May 1982 the CDC referenced the KS and PCP contractions as Gay Related Immunodeficiency Diseases (GRID).<sup>50</sup> Later in 1982, the CDC used the acronym AID, Acquired Immunodeficiency Diseases, but by August 1982 had officially settled on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, or AIDS. The CDC had changed the acronym, but the stigma associating AIDS with gay men had taken hold.

Rev. Larry Uhrig led the first community forum on HIV/AIDS, held by the MCC church at 945 G Street, NW, on December 9, 1982; nearly 200 attended.<sup>51</sup> In February 1983 the WWC announced the formation of a new division that focused solely on AIDS.<sup>52</sup> In April 1983 WWC hosted a forum on AIDS at George Washington University “designed to provide information about the disease, its symptoms, and consequences”<sup>53</sup> (see Whitman-Walker Clinic AIDS Forums, below). The forum “drew 1,200 people and included a panel with expert medical opinion, members of New York City’s Gay Men’s Health Crisis, and a person with AIDS.”<sup>54,55</sup> On September 28, 1983, WWC and the DC Coalition of Black Gays co-sponsored a forum that focused on AIDS for Black and Third World Gays at the Clubhouse. Like the February forum, panelists included medical experts and someone with a personal, first-hand account of the disease. Attendance was much lower, however, with 40 men and women in the audience. Slides of KS lesions were

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<sup>45</sup> This distrust stretched back to MSW’s fight for civil service employment, civil rights, and the fights against the APA’s definition of homosexuality as a sickness, and systemic racism.

<sup>46</sup> Brian McNaught, AIDS: When tragedy strikes, *The Washington Blade*, October 8, 1982:19.

<sup>47</sup> Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia is now known as pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia.

<sup>48</sup> Lerner.

<sup>49</sup> Lerner.

<sup>50</sup> Chibarro, Gay illnesses’ may be sexually transmitted, *The Washington Blade*, June 25, 1982:3.

<sup>51</sup> Meinke, September 18, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Marks, Whitman-Walker Clinic grows steadily, *The Washington Blade*, February 11, 1983:11.

<sup>53</sup> Lisa M. Keen, AIDS forum draws 1,200, *The Washington Blade*, April 8, 1983:1.

<sup>54</sup> Keen, April 8, 1983.

<sup>55</sup> New York City’s Gay Men’s Health Crisis was a forerunner to the organization, ACT UP, which founded in March 1987.



## WHITMAN-WALKER CLINIC AIDS FORUMS



FIGURE 2-21: 1983 Poster of WWC Aids Forum at Lisner Auditorium on the Campus of George Washington University



1983 ad for the WWC AIDS Forum held at the ClubHouse in the September 23, 1983, edition of The Washington Blade

depicted on a white person's skin at the forum, and audience members raised concerns "over whether information about the epidemic's impact on racial minorities is being adequately reported."<sup>56</sup> Wes Clark, an aide to Senator Edward Kennedy who attended the DC Coalition/WWC forum in Kennedy's stead, stated, "'the media does not portray [AIDS] victims as non-white,' even though, he said, the Centers for Disease Control report that a 'disproportionate number,' 40 percent, of people with AIDS are black."<sup>57</sup> In 1983 *Blacklight*, which, as noted in Theme 5, "came into being just after black gay political organizations came of age," published an extensive overview of the AIDS epidemic in DC. Commentary included hypothesized views that AIDS was linked to the federal government's plan to exterminate black people, citing the notorious Tuskegee experiments,<sup>58</sup> and suggesting that the government was placing the blame of AIDS on gay male "promiscuity" to "squeeze money from a Reagan-tight administration...."<sup>59</sup> These comments reflect the frustration of the African-American community regarding the federal government's continued negligence of the their community, even in their handling of the AIDS epidemic.






<sup>56</sup> Keen, First-of-a-kind AIDS forum for black Gays held at Clubhouse, *The Washington Blade*, September 30, 1983:17.

<sup>57</sup> Keen, September 30, 1983.

<sup>58</sup> Brother Ron, AIDS: A Government Conspiracy, *Blacklight* 4(3-1983):28.

<sup>59</sup> James S. Tinney, The Politics of AIDS, *Blacklight* 4(3-1993):28, retrieved from Historical Society of Washington DC, Rainbow History Project Archives.

A Decade of Key Events During the DC AIDS Crisis (1981-1991)	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1981</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NOVEMBER:</b> Formation of Capital Area Physician Association to advise and "assist in programs to educate Gay men about the latest situation and suggest ways of preventing the diseases."</li> </ul>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1982</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– DC AIDS Task Force organized</li> <li>– WWC creates AIDS Education Task Force</li> <li>– <b>OCTOBER:</b> First <i>Washington Blade</i> AIDS-related obituary</li> <li>– <b>December 9: 945 G Street, NW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First community forum on AIDS organized by Metropolitan Community Church at First Congregational</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1983</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>April 4: 730 21st Street, NW</b> <b>George Washington University, Lisner Auditorium</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First WCC-sponsored community AIDS Forum draws crowd of 1,200</li> </ul> </li> <li>– <b>June 19: Dupont Circle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First AIDS Walk and vigil organized by Hughes-Roosevelt Democratic Club</li> </ul> </li> <li>– <b>September 28: 1296 Upshur Avenue, NW</b> <b>The Clubhouse</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First AIDS Forum for Black and Third World Gays co-sponsored by WWC and the DC Coalition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1984</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Whitman-Walker Clinic: 1825 18th Street, NW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Opens AIDS Evaluation Unit, the first gay, community-based medical unit in the country devoted to the evaluation and diagnosis of AIDS symptoms. Fifty-five patients treated the first year; half had AIDS.</li> <li>– WWC creates AIDS Foundation to support indigent people living with AIDS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1985</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– WWC opens two Robert N. Schwartz Houses for people living with AIDS</li> </ul>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1986</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>JULY:</b> NCBLG organizes National Conference on AIDS in the Black Community; 400 from across the country attend and begin organization of the National Minority AIDS Council</li> <li>– Best Friends organizes to support African Americans living with AIDS financially, with support for social clubs</li> <li>– <b>3845 South Capitol Street, SW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Covenant Baptist begins AIDS support</li> </ul> </li> <li>– <b>717 8th Street, SE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Abundant Life Clinic organizes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>A Decade of Key Events During the DC AIDS Crisis (1981-1991)</b>	
	<b>1986</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>1436 U Street, NW</b></li> <li>– DC CARE Consortium organizes at the DC Convention Center</li> <li>– WWC begins what would become Whitman-Walker Legal Services with the help of lawyer Mauro Montoya</li> </ul>
<b>1987</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Salud</i> organizes to address AIDS in the Latinx communities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Damien Ministries</b> <b>2200 Rhode Island Avenue, NE</b></li> <li>– Organization forms to provide support and services for indigent people living with AIDS, largely in the African-American community</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>June 28:</b> WWC organizes its first AIDS Walk</li> <li>– Spectrum: AIDS Education to the Black Community organizes</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>October 11: National Mall</b></li> <li>– AIDS Memorial Quilt makes its first District appearance</li> </ul>	
	<b>1988</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Us Helping Us @ the Clubhouse</b> <b>1296 Upshur Avenue, NW</b></li> <li>– Created by Prem Deben and Bishop Rainey Cheeks incorporates to provide holistic AIDS/HIV treatment; group organizes at the Clubhouse</li> <li>– Oppression Under Target (OUT) organizes to protest AIDS policies</li> <li>– Inner City AIDS Network organized by the doctors at National Children's Medical Center to provide HIV/AIDS education</li> <li>– <b>400 Eye Street, SW</b></li> <li>– Rev. Carla Gorrell and Westminster Presbyterian Church organize a home-delivered food service for people living with AIDS, which incorporated as a nonprofit in 1989</li> </ul>
<b>1989</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– WWC opens the Stewart B. McKinney House, the first for families living with HIV</li> </ul>	<b>1990</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hola Gay Latinx hotline started by Enlace and Salud</li> <li>– <b>DECEMBER:</b> First National Conference on Women and AIDS</li> </ul>
<b>1991</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mautner Project established</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MAY: Howard University, Banneker Field<sup>60</sup></b></li> <li>– NW Welmore Cooke, Ted Kirkland, Ernest Hopkins of Best Friends organize DC's first Black Pride on Memorial Day weekend</li> <li>– <b>JUNE:</b> WWC opens the Bill Austin Day Treatment and Care Center, an outpatient care center for PWA</li> </ul>	<p><i>Meinke, June 5, 2019; Whitman-Walker Health n.d.                  Photo (p 2-102): Morris 1996                  Photo Credit (p. 2-103): National Institutes of Health</i></p>

<sup>60</sup> Banneker Field was listed in the DC Inventory effective December 18, 1985, and in the NRHP on April 28, 1986.

Throughout 1984, *The Washington Blade* ran countless articles describing the larger gay community's struggle to gain even a small amount of federal funding from the Reagan administration for AIDS research and organizations. Activists from national gay rights groups, such as the National Gay Task Force and Gay Rights National Lobby, lobbied heavily on Capitol Hill. In April 1984 *The Washington Blade* reported 52 cases of AIDS in the District of Columbia—51 of the cases were male, 50 were “Gay or bi,” 26 were white, the other 26 were black, and 19 had died from AIDS-related causes (Figure 2-22).<sup>61</sup> By the end of 1984, the number of AIDS cases in DC had more than doubled to 110.<sup>62</sup>

WWC continued to focus on AIDS, offering a “series of educational seminars called ‘Staying Well’” in the fall of 1984.<sup>63</sup> In the late spring of 1985, the WWC established the District's first alternative test site for HIV.<sup>64</sup> But in spite of its efforts, which included the aforementioned co-sponsored forum for Black and Third World Gays with the DC Coalition at the Clubhouse, the clinic was not effectively reaching DC's black gay populations.

Sapphire Sapphos member Annette Chi Hughes joined WWC's staff in August 1985, when the number of AIDS cases in DC hit 200.<sup>65</sup> Hughes was hired to oversee the WWC's work to educate the public about the AIDS epidemic and direct the minority outreach program to black and Latinx communities.<sup>66</sup> Hughes's work bridged two relatively separate communities in DC—communities of color and the WWC. As she recalls, AIDS “was perceived, even in DC during that time, as a white gay male disease.”<sup>67</sup>

Area AIDS statistics					
WASHINGTON, MARYLAND, VIRGINIA					
	District	Maryland	Virginia	Total	100%
Total Cases Reported*	52	50	41	143	100%
Of this total, the number who have died	19	29	17	65	45%
GENDER:	Male 51	44	39	134	94%
	Female 1	6	2	9	6%
RACE:	Black 26	20	9	55	38%
	White 26	28	30	84	59%
	Other 0	2	2	4	3%
AGE:	20-29 11	8	4	23	16%
	30-39 29	22	11	62	43%
	40-49 9	16	8	33	23%
	Over 50 3	4	1	8	6%
	Unknown 0	0	17	17	12%
RISK GROUP:	Gay or bi 50	32	n/a	82	57%
	IV drug users 1	8	n/a	9	6%
	Partner of bi male 1	0	n/a	1	1%
	Haitians 0	1	n/a	1	1%
	Hemophilic 0	1	n/a	1	1%
	Unknowns or undetermined 0	8	41	49	34%
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON					
	DC Proper	Md. Suburbs	Va. Suburbs	TOTAL	100%
Total Cases Reported*	52	15	25	90	100%
Of this total, the number who have died	19	8	11	37	41%
†Maryland suburbs include:		†Virginia suburbs include:			
Montgomery Co.	X	Arlington		12	
Prince Georges Co.	X	Fairfax		6	
Calvert Co.	X	Alexandria		5	
Charles Co.	X	Prince William		1	
Frederick Co.	X	Loudoun		1	
* District: statistics cover September 1980-April 16, 1984 and are provided by Charles Seigel, D.C. Department of Public Health.					
Maryland: statistics cover 1979-April 16, 1984 and are provided by Scott Stamford, AIDS Activity Coordinator, Maryland Department of Health					
Virginia: statistics cover 1982-April 24, 1984 and are provided by Dr. Martin Ceder, director, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, Virginia Department of Health.					
X—Md. officials do not supply correct or specific caseload. † n/a—statistics not available.					
© 1984 The Washington Blade					

FIGURE 2-22: Area AIDS Statistics Published in the April 27, 1984, edition of *The Washington Blade*

<sup>61</sup> Statistics provided by D.C. Department of Public Health, in *The Washington Blade*, 1984 AIDS Count, December 28:1984:7.

<sup>62</sup> *The Washington Blade*, AIDS Count.

<sup>63</sup> *The Washington Blade*, 'Staying Well' Seminar, October 12, 1984:3.

<sup>64</sup> *The Washington Blade*, Whitman-Walker opens D.C.'s first test site, May 31, 1985:1.

<sup>65</sup> *The Washington Blade*, AIDS close up: August 2, August 2, 1985:7.

<sup>66</sup> Rick Harding, Clinic hires Hughes as public education director, *The Washington Blade*, August 2, 1985: 6.

<sup>67</sup> Hughes, December 12, 2007.



PLATE 2-41: Ca. 1985 photograph of Bishop Rainey Cheeks (right) at Us Helping Us meeting at the Clubhouse (Muzzy2005:49)

Abilly S. Jones-Hennin, co-founder of NCBLG, worked at WWC as the Associate Director of the Sunnye Sherman AIDS Education and Prevention Service.<sup>68,69</sup> Jones-Hennin remembers that individuals in the black community “didn’t see our faces” in the images of the epidemic,<sup>70</sup> although case reports seemed disproportionately high within the black community.<sup>71</sup> In February 1986 *The Blade* reported “more than 300 people in Washington...had developed AIDS by the end of 1985,” with half of the cases African-American.<sup>72,73</sup> To ensure care for the African-American LGBTQ community in DC, Bishop Rainey Cheeks founded Us Helping Us (UHU) in 1985 (Plate 2-41). UHU, a nonprofit organization, was created to lessen “the impact of HIV/AIDS in the entire Black community.”<sup>74</sup> Cheeks is the current pastor of Inner Light Ministries in DC, and UHU still exists—working “tirelessly to achieve health equity for underserved and marginalized populations in the greater Washington, DC area.”<sup>75</sup> Jones-Hennin, Colevia Carter, Papaya Mann, the NCBLG, and the DC Coalition worked in HIV/AIDS outreach to underserved communities.<sup>76</sup>

One of the most monumental events related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was the blanketing of the National Mall with the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which first debuted on October 11, 1987 (Plate 2-42). Although conceived in San Francisco by gay rights activist Cleve Jones, arguably the most iconic displays of the quilt have been its appearances on the National Mall.<sup>77</sup> Jones’s first panel of the AIDS Quilt commemorated his friend Marvin Feldman. The inaugural display of the quilt in DC during the nation’s second National March on

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<sup>68</sup> Will O’Byran, Past and Present: ABilly S. Jones on Where We’ve Been and How We Got Here, *Metro Weekly*, October 18, 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Sunnye Sherman was a white heterosexual woman diagnosed with AIDS on October 13, 1983, while in her thirties. Sherman became actively involved in the AIDS education efforts of the gay-oriented WWC and served on the board of directors of the WWC’s AIDS Foundation (Keen 1986). Sherman also asked noted DC photographer and lesbian activist Patsy Lynch to document her progression with the disease. Having defied almost every stereotype of a person living with AIDS in the U.S. at the time, Sherman became a visible figure in the national fight against AIDS. She died of AIDS-related causes in August 1986. The first Executive Director of the Sunnye Sherman AIDS Education and Prevention Service was George Swales.

<sup>70</sup> Jones-Hennin, December 19, 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Harding, Black Gay leaders search for a new way to help the ailing, *The Washington Blade*, February 28, 1986:1.

<sup>72</sup> Harding, February 28, 1986.

<sup>73</sup> This report included only *diagnosed* and *reported* cases of HIV/AIDS.

<sup>74</sup> Us Helping Us [UHU], Mission Statement (accessed March 6, 2010, <http://www.uhupil.org/aboutus>).

<sup>75</sup> UHU, History (accessed August 2019, <https://www.ushelpingus.org/history>).

<sup>76</sup> Harding, Black leaders angry at DHS contract delay; want meeting, *The Washington Blade*, June 20, 1986:1; Harding, D.C. still negotiating on minority contract, *The Washington Blade*, July 4, 1986:3.

<sup>77</sup> The National Mall was listed in the DC Inventory effective November 8, 1964. and in the NRHP on October 15, 1966.

Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights included 1,920 panels spanning a little more than a football field and nearly a half a million viewers. The following year, the DC display of the quilt had grown to 8,288 panels, and by 1996 there were enough quilts to cover the National Mall. Deemed the “largest community art project in the world,” Washington, DC has been the only locale to display the AIDS Quilt in its entirety. The quilt now covers more than 1.3 million square feet, contains over 49,000 panels commemorating over 96,000 people internationally, and is stewarded by the NAMES Project Foundation based in Atlanta.<sup>78,79</sup>



PLATE 2-42: AIDS Memorial Quilt Blanketing the National Mall (National Institutes of Health n.d.)

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<sup>78</sup> Yasir Lateef, The AIDS Memorial Quilt–The Names Project (n.d., <https://www.aidsquilt.org/about/the-aids-memorial-quilt>); Names Project Foundation, The AIDS Memorial Quilt: History of the Quilt (2019, <https://www.aidsquilt.org/about/the-aids-memorial-quilt>).

<sup>79</sup> Lateef; NAMES Project Foundation.

## Chapter 2: DC LGBTQ History

### Theme 7: Religion and Spirituality

Dr. Frank Kameny noted in his petition to the Supreme Court that LGBTQ communities reflect the heterogeneity of heterosexual society.<sup>1</sup> The religious and spiritual needs and diverse beliefs within the LGBTQ community are no different from those of their fellow citizen, and thus the District's LGBTQ-friendly churches, ministries, and spiritual groups are diverse.

This context began with an overview of the oppression and persecution of lives that stemmed from religious colonial beliefs (see Themes 1 and 2). Although the LGBTQ community continues to face criticism from certain sects of organized religion, some of the religious community has evolved to accept, celebrate, and provide safe space for LGBTQ communities nationwide. The ordination of gay clergy, legalization of gay marriage, and the development of the LGBTQ acronym demonstrate the paradigm shift within American culture that includes sexual diversity as part of the human experience.

Bernard Schlager, Executive Director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry, "suggests that the widespread, if inaccurate, perception of religion firmly opposing gay rights is (also) shifting, 'It's come to the point that sometimes people today say it's more difficult to come out as a person of faith than it is to come out as LGBT religious circles'".<sup>2</sup>

The LGBTQ religious leaders and the various houses of worship and ministries mentioned in this chapter have supported and created welcoming spiritual places for the LGBTQ community (Figure 2-23). Many local churches opened their spaces for worship, spiritual support, and meetings during the gay rights movement, and health care clinics throughout the AIDS epidemic. A recommendation of this context is future study to supplement the insufficiency of reference material to quantify the impact of these LGBTQ leaders and their associated houses of worship and/or ministries. Many of the leaders died during the AIDS crisis, and the lives of more recent leaders are yet unfolding; nevertheless, this section serves to highlight those whose names and institutions have come to the forefront for the past and present roles they played and continue to play in the spiritual development of the LGBTQ community.

#### District Churches and Ministries

A religious gay rights movement began in the early 1960s, and several District Episcopal churches were supportive of LGBTQ activism from that time onward. Integrity/Washington was a local chapter of Integrity USA, a nonprofit founded by Dr. Louie Crew in 1974, as a national organization for gay and lesbian Episcopalians with support for the LGBTQ persons evident from at least the 1960s (Figure 2-24).<sup>3</sup> Part of their national mandate is "to be a leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the

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<sup>1</sup> Meinke, Prologue, Why LGBTQ Sites Matter, 01-5.

<sup>2</sup> Kaleem.

<sup>3</sup> LGBT Religious Archives Network (LGBT-RAN), *Dr. Louie Crew Clay* (February 6, 2003, <https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/profiles/louie-crew-clay>).



FIGURE 2-23: A List of LGBTQ-friendly District Churches Published in the Official Souvenir Program of the October 14, 1979, First National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (courtesy of the UNT Libraries Special Collections)

Episcopal Church and equal access to its rites.” The District chapter appears defunct; the closest active chapter is now in Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>4</sup>

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 301 A Street, SE**, supported the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) by providing them with a regular place to meet (Plate 2-43). In 1963 Jack Nichols, co-founder with Frank Kameny of the MSW in 1961, spearheaded the creation of the Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual as a committee of MSW (Figure 2-25).<sup>5,6</sup> The following year in San Francisco, two dozen Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopal, United Church of Christ clergy, and gay rights activists formed the Council on Religion and the Homosexual to educate religious communities on gay/lesbian issues as well as enlist religious leaders to advocate for homosexual concerns.<sup>7</sup> By 1968 Rev. Troy Perry had established the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Los Angeles, the first Christian church founded with an LGBTQ ministry.<sup>8</sup>

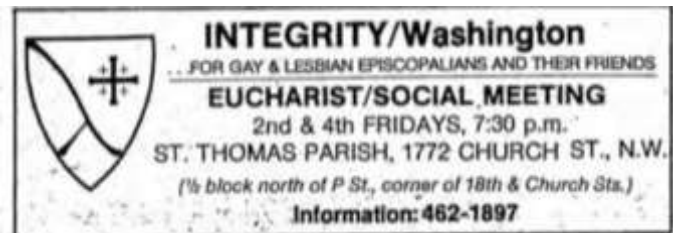


FIGURE 2-24: INTEGRITY/Washington ad in the March 23, 1984, edition of The Washington Blade

<sup>4</sup> Integrity USA, About Integrity (2015, <https://www.integrityusa.org/about-integrity>).

<sup>5</sup> Meinke, July 26, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> St. Mark's Episcopal Church is individually listed in the DC Inventory (effective November 8, 1964) and in the NRHP (May 8, 1973). The resource is also within the DC Capitol Hill Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory effective November 8, 1964 (boundary increase on January 20, 1976) and in the NRHP on August 27, 1976 (boundary increase April 21, 2002). The resource's NRHP period of significance was extended in 2003.

<sup>7</sup> LGBT-RAN, Exhibit: The Council on Religion and the Homosexual (n.d., accessed August 2019, <https://lgbtreligiousarchives.org/exhibits/crh/>).

<sup>8</sup> LGBT-RAN, *Biography: Reverend Paul Breton-Profile* (n.d.-1, accessed August 2019, <https://lgbtreligiousarchives.org/profiles/paul-breton>).



THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON  
POST OFFICE BOX 1032  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20013

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOMOSEXUALS MEET WITH CLERGY

\*\*\*\*\*

WASHINGTON AREA COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL FORMED

The second meeting, here in Washington and in the eastern part of the country, between representatives of the homosexual community and members of the clergy, took place on Monday, May 24, 1965.

Highlight of the three-hour meeting was the formal establishment, as a continuing organization, of The Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual. For the present, pending the adoption of a formal internal structure, the Council has two co-chairmen --- one, a distinguished local clergyman; the other, a member of the Mattachine Society of Washington.

Nine clergymen of the following denominations were present: Congregationalist, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Methodist, and Roman Catholic.

Among the areas in which the Council will work are:

- (1) To seek to remedy the alienation and estrangement which now exist between the individual homosexual and the religious community.
- (2) To explore the question of the role of the clergy in the homosexuals' fight for his civil liberties and his human rights, and in his effort to eliminate the adverse discrimination which he faces.

The May 24 meeting was devoted primarily to discussion of problems of the denial of civil liberties to homosexuals.

Another meeting of the Council is planned for June 25.

For additional information, contact:

FIGURE 2-25a: The Mattachine Society of Washington Press release announcing formation of the Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual (MSW 1965)

THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- I. It is the purpose of this committee to approach the clergy, the leaders, and the laity of all religious groups in the metropolitan area of Washington, D. C., in order:
- A. To effect the integration of the individual homosexual into the religious life of the community:
    1. By discussing with clergymen, religious leaders, and laity, singly and in groups, a clarification of the place and the role of the homosexual, as such, in the various religious congregations, leading to elimination of the rejection encountered by most homosexuals in most religious bodies.
    2. By establishing a referral service composed of knowledgeable clergymen, so that homosexuals, their parents, and their families, who desire assistance in regard to spiritual and religious problems involving homosexuality may be referred to an appropriate counselor.
    3. By acting as liaison, as may be needed, between the religious community and the homosexual community of the greater Washington area.
  - B. To enlist the moral support and the active assistance of religious groups in metropolitan Washington, in the homosexuals' struggle for civil liberties and for human and social rights, acting with the assurance that religion seeks to promote basic freedoms for every individual, as irrespective of sexual orientation as of religion and race.
  - C. To inform the clergy, the leaders, and the laity of all religious groups about homosexuals and homosexuality:
    1. By aiding religious groups and religious leaders in the obtaining of accurate information (traditionally difficult to secure) about homosexuals and homosexuality, and suggesting informative publications and recommending or furnishing qualified lecturers on the subject of homosexuality.
    2. By encouraging inter-religious discussion of homosexuality, and providing clergymen and religious leaders who believe that society should no longer ignore a social problem of vast dimensions, with legitimate opportunities for inter-group exchanges of opinion.
- II. It is not a purpose of this committee to promulgate any spiritual or theological doctrines, but instead to ask each religious body constructively to approach, in its own way, the social, spiritual, and religious problems which arise as a result of present discriminatory attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality.

FIGURE 2-25b: More of the Mattachine Society of Washington Press release announcing formation of the Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual (MSW 1965)

A year after MCC formed in Los Angeles, **Rev. J.E. Paul Breton** (Plate 2-44), a Roman Catholic priest in Washington, was advocating for the LGBTQ position, which took him well beyond the four walls of the church. Reverend Breton started the Homophile Social League in the District (HSL-DC), a year after MCC formed in Los Angeles. He was also involved in the Gay Liberation Front, supported Kameny's run for Congress, and was a founding member of the Gay Activist Alliance. Under the HSL-DC, Breton began the Community Church of Washington (CCW) in 1970, the District's first known LGBTQ worship group.<sup>9</sup> CCW initially worshiped at All Souls Unitarian Church, at 1500 Harvard Street NW, for approximately 18 months before moving to Breton's Capitol Hill home at 705 7th Street SE.<sup>10,11,12</sup>



PLATE 2-44: Rev. Paul Breton (photo from "Upstairs Inferno" by Camino Entertainment) (LGBTQ Religious Archives)

Kameny connected Breton with Rev. Edler Troy Perry in 1970;<sup>13</sup> theirs was a natural partnership as Reverend Breton requested that the CCW become a local church chapter of MCC. Reverend Perry supported Breton's request, and CCW was officially chartered as the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington D.C. (MCCDC) on May 11, 1971.<sup>14</sup> Like the former CCW, the congregation initially met at Breton's Capitol Hill home before moving to the First Congregational United Church of Christ at 945 G Street NW, which hosted MCCDC for over 10 years and continues to be supportive of the LGBTQ community. Rev. Breton pastored MCCDC through 1973 and eventually moved to serve and found other LGBTQ-welcoming congregations in California and Arizona.<sup>15</sup> MCCDC is currently located at 474 Ridge Street, NW.

Another local worship house that has been a haven for gay men and lesbians since the early 1970s is the Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW), a Quaker



Plate 2-43: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 301 A Street, SE (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

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<sup>9</sup> Meinke, July 26, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Meinke, July 26, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> All Souls Unitarian Church was individually listed in the DC Inventory effective November 8, 1964, and is located in the Meridian Hill Area. The Meridian Hill Area is not subject to the D.C. Historic Preservation Act; it was identified as a potential site for listing in the DC Inventory on November 8, 1964.

<sup>12</sup> Reverend Breton's 7th Street residence is located in the Capitol Hill Historic District. See footnote 8.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. Elder Troy Perry was the founder and moderator of the Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) in the Los Angeles area. On October 6, 1968, Rev. Perry, along with 12 like-minded people, met in his Huntington Park, California, living room for the first worship service of what would become the MCC. MCC claims to be the "world's first church group with a primary, positive ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender persons" (Metropolitan Community Churches [MCC], History of MCC (n.d., <https://www.mccchurch.org/overview/history-of-mcc/>)).

<sup>14</sup> MCC is now an international Christian church with locations across the globe.

<sup>15</sup> MCC-DC, Our History – MCCDC – Metropolitan Community Church of Washington DC (n.d., <https://mccdc.com/our-history/>).

worship house at 2111 Florida Avenue NW.<sup>16</sup> In the mid-1970s FMW provided space for the lesbian-led Rising Women's Coffeehouse at its Decatur Street building, and from 1987 to 2010, they hosted a weekly HIV/AIDS coffeehouse for those affected by HIV and AIDS. As early as the 1980s, FMW created a separate Meeting for those wishing to worship in the Quaker tradition with other LGBTQ people.

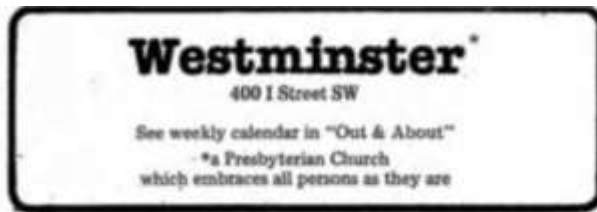


Figure 2-26: Westminster Presbyterian ad in the March 23, 1984 edition of The Washington Blade

Support of the LGBTQ community by **Westminster Presbyterian Church** (Westminster) (Figure 2-26) at **400 Eye Street, SW** has occurred as early as the 1960s. In their own words, "Westminster has fought for the full inclusion of and end of discrimination against the LGBTQ family. We do not just accept but celebrate the gifts God has given through our varied sexual orientations and gender understandings." In 1983 Westminster

Presbyterian became one of the first 13 Presbyterian congregations in the United States to form the More Light Network, a ministry to the LGBTQIA community.<sup>17,18</sup>

In 1969 DignityUSA began in Los Angeles, led by Augustinian priest and psychologist Father Patrick Nidorf, to support LGBTQ Catholics. The roots of Dignity/Washington, a local chapter of the now national DignityUSA, began in 1971 with a meeting of six people in the cafeteria of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at 400 Michigan Avenue, NE; Dignity/Washington became a chapter in 1972.<sup>19</sup>

Dignity/Washington first met at the Newman Center on the campus of George Washington University (GWU).<sup>20</sup> At that time, the chapter's mission statement proclaimed that persons of a homosexual orientation are fundamentally good, not sinful – a revolutionary concept at the time. The original members hoped that Dignity would foster self-acceptance among lesbian and gay Catholics, and provide them with a social and spiritual sense of community and belonging.<sup>21</sup>

Dignity/Washington did not meet with universal approval from Catholic leaders. On October 1, 1986, the Vatican issued the "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.<sup>22</sup> The letter denounced homosexuals as "intrinsically disordered," recalling the derogatory comments of the medical community mentioned in

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<sup>16</sup> The Friends Meeting House of Washington is individually listed in the DC Inventory (effective November 8, 1964) and in the NRHP (September 6, 1990). It is also within the DC Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory effective September 25, 1989, and in the NRHP October 30, 1989.

<sup>17</sup> Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC), Westminster's LGBTQIA Legacy (n.d., accessed August 2019, <https://www.westminsterdc.org/embracing-lgbtqia-.html>).

<sup>18</sup> Westminster Presbyterian has also been very supportive of the transgender community by providing space for meetings and hosting the first Transgender Pride events in 2010 (Meinke 2019c)

<sup>19</sup> DignityUSA, DignityUSA History (n.d., accessed August 2019, <https://www.dignityusa.org/history>); Dignity/Washington, History of Dignity/Washington (March 6, 2014, accessed August 2019, <http://www.dignitywashington.org/about/history/>).

<sup>20</sup> The Newman Center is currently located at 2210 F Street, NW, Washington, DC.

<sup>21</sup> Dignity/Washington.

<sup>22</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [CDF], Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons, given at Rome, October 1, 1986 (accessed August 2019, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19861001\\_homosexual-persons\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html)); Bruce Williams O.P., Homosexuality: The New Vatican Statement, *Theological Studies* 48(2-June 1, 1987).



FIGURE 2-27: Dignity/Washington ad in the March 23, 1984, edition of The Washington Blade

Theme 6, and would not allow gay organizations to use church property. By 1986 Dignity/Washington had outgrown its GWU campus location and was gathering in St. William's Chapel at Georgetown University (Figure 2-27), which is Catholic-affiliated. Georgetown officials notified Dignity/Washington that they would no longer be able to use St. William's Chapel following this

1986 Vatican directive. On June 22, 1987, the members of Dignity/Washington marched in full regalia from St. William's Chapel to **St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, 1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW**, in the DuPont Circle neighborhood (late 2-45), where it continues to hold its Sunday evening service.<sup>23,24,25</sup>

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s well-known observation that "the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning" unfortunately holds true in DC; however, the divide in DC's spiritual community is not solely about race. For religious services, people, regardless of sexual orientation, tend to seek the familiar. Both MCC and Dignity/Washington are mostly white congregations. Until the founding of Faith Temple, a mostly black, gay, Pentecostal church in 1982 by Rev. James S. Tinney, PhD, many of DC's black LGBTQ Christians worshipped quietly closeted. The black experience was fraught with enough challenges, which only compounded if one identified as LGBTQ and Christian; many Christians held the two identities at impassable odds.



PLATE 2-45: St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, 1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

When Neil Miller interviewed Reverend James Tinney, the founder of the black, gay, evangelical Faith Temple in Washington, D.C., he asked why it was important for black gay people to have their own church. Tinney said there were two reasons: "On one hand, black gays couldn't be open in black churches; on the other, they didn't feel comfortable in the Washington area's largely white MCC churches." It was not that other gay churches were racist but that black gay people needed to belong to something that was culturally familiar and specific to their backgrounds.<sup>26,27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Dignity/Washington.

<sup>24</sup> The administrative offices of Dignity/Washington, The Dignity Center, are located in the "Barracks Row" area of Capitol Hill.

<sup>25</sup> St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is in the Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District, which was listed in the DC Inventory effective September 25, 1989, and in the NRHP October 30, 1989.

<sup>26</sup> Gary David Comstock, *Unrepentant, Self-Affirming, Practicing: Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay People Within Organized Religion* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1996), 73.

<sup>27</sup> Neil Miller's *In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change* was published in 1989. Miller recounts his nationwide survey of the life gay Americans lead from those living in cities to rural farm and mining towns; some of his research dealt with gay leaders in organized religion.



PLATE 2-46: Dr. James S. Tinney  
(courtesy of the LGBTQ Religious

Reverend Tinney (Plates 2-46–2-48) was a charismatic leader and pastor of Faith Temple from 1982 to 1988.<sup>28</sup> Tinney became an ordained minister at the age of 18 after exhibiting an early passion and gift within the Pentecostal church. He moved to DC in 1973 where he completed his graduate degree in journalism from Howard University. A gifted writer, minister, and professor, Tinney was editor of *The Washington Afro-American* newspaper, a speechwriter for Rep. John Conyers of Michigan and Samuel C. Jackson, the undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Developing in the Nixon administration while a student at Howard. In 1976 he became an assistant professor of journalism at his alma mater after earning his doctorate in political science. Tinney hid his sexuality for a number of years after moving to DC; his first admission of homosexuality, to his wife, with whom he had two daughters, led to divorce and excommunication from his church.<sup>29</sup> A similar misfortune



PLATE 2-47: Calvary United Methodist Church, 1459  
Columbia Road, NW (Louis Berger photo, 2019)



PLATE 2-48: New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1313  
New York Avenue, NW (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

*Note: Rev. Tinney initially preached at Calvary United Methodist Church but when excommunicated for being gay, he began Faith Temple, which met at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.*

would occur a few years after he came out publicly in DC at the 1979 inaugural Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference. In 1982 he was publicly renounced by the Church of God in Christ, where he was the pastor, which led him to found Faith Temple, a nondenominational church that subsequently had a large black gay and lesbian congregation. Reverend Tinney died on June 12, 1988, from AIDS-related complications.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mary Lincer, Black, gay and Pentecostal: Howard's James Tinney will probably never pass, *The Washington Blade*, October 23, 1981; Meinke, July 26, 2019; *Washington Blade*, James Tinney, Faith Temple founder, dies, June 17, 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Lincer; *Washington Blade*, James Tinney.

<sup>30</sup> LGBT-RAN, Dr. James S. Tinney Profile (n.d.-4, accessed August 2019, <https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/profiles/james-s-tinney>); *Washington Blade*, James Tinney.



PLATE 2-49: Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks, DD with Ruth Ellis, the Oldest Out Lesbian at the Time of the Photo, Celebrating her 100th Birthday at the Black Pride Festival (photo by David Kosoko, courtesy of Clarence J. Fluker, in Muzzy 2005)

Bishop Kwabena Rainier (Rainey) Cheeks (Plate 2-49), who became an ordained minister in 1982, was the founding pastor of Inner Light Ministries in July 1993.<sup>31</sup> The ministry held its first services at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, the same church that hosted MCCDC for over 10 years. Inner Light Ministries now worships from the Anacostia Arts Center at 1231 Good Hope Road SE as “a Christian based ministry based in Liberation Theology and Social Justice [and] a proud African American community, working toward freedom of all people...regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation class or age.”<sup>32</sup> Themes # and # discussed Cheeks’ previous roles as the manager of The Clubhouse and founder of Us Helping Us prior to his ordination. Cheeks hosted self-help and meditation sessions for those with HIV/AIDS at the Clubhouse, which led to the founding of Us Helping Us to administer to the needs of the black LGBTQ community during the AIDS crisis. Bishop Cheeks was ordained from the National Spiritual Science Center in 1982 and received his Doctorate of Divinity from the St. Andrews Theological Seminary of London, England in 1999. The Rainbow History Project honored him as Community Pioneer. He has also received the Whitman Walker Community Service Award as well as the Episcopal Care and Response Community Service Award.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Recall from Theme 6 that Cheeks was the manager of The Clubhouse and founder of Us Helping Us. Cheeks hosted self-help and meditation sessions for those with HIV/AIDS at the Clubhouse, which led to the founding of UHU to administer to the needs of the black LGBTQ community during the AIDS crisis.

<sup>32</sup> Inner Light Ministries United Church of Christ [ILM], History of Inner Light (n.d.-1, accessed August 2019, <http://www.innerlightministries-dc.org/History-of-Inner-Light>).

<sup>33</sup> ILM, About The Bishop (n.d.-2, accessed August 2019, <http://www.innerlightministries-dc.org/About-The-Bishop>).

Bishop Cheeks is a prolific speaker, preacher, and healer, featured many times in *The Washington Blade*, *MetroWeekly*, and *The Washington Post*. Bishop Cheeks's history of AIDS advocacy continues. He has been a key note speaker for the Mon Valley AIDS Conference in Pennsylvania, AIDS Medicine and Miracles in Denver, and a panelist on the 2007 Congressional Black Caucus Conference on HIV/AIDS, chaired by Congresswomen Barbara Lee (California) and Donna Christensen (Virgin Islands).<sup>34</sup>

In 1975 Bet Mishpachah was founded in DC as the Metropolitan Community Temple *Mishpocheh*, with the help of MCC-DC. The synagogue hosted the first International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews just a year after it was founded, in 1976, and co-founded the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jews in 1980. The same year they hebraicized their name to *Bet Mishpachah*, meaning "Family House."<sup>35</sup> In 1997, after meeting in various rented spaces throughout DC, the synagogue found a permanent home in the **Edlavitch Jewish Community Center** at **1529 16th Street NW**.<sup>36</sup> Bet Mishpachah describes itself as "Washington's only egalitarian synagogue that embraces diverse sexual and gender identities founded by members of DCs LGBTQ+ community."<sup>37</sup>

Faisal Alam founded the Al-Fatiha Foundation in 1997 as "a national organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, and their friends. Their goal is to provide a safe space and a forum for LGBTQ Muslims to address issues of common concern, share individual experiences, and institutional resources."<sup>38</sup> The DC chapter of Al-Fatiha was established after the First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims held in Boston in October 1998 and was likely active until Al-Fatiha dissolved in 2011. In May 1999 Al-Fatiha hosted the First North American Conference for LGBTQ Muslims and Friends in New York. During that time now-Imam Daayiee Abdullah,

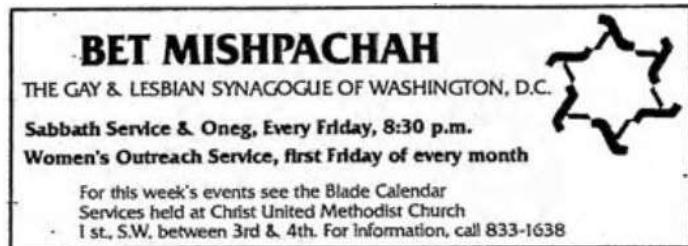


FIGURE 2-28: Bet Mishpachah ad in the March 23, 1984, edition of The Washington Blade



PLATE 2-50: Edlavitch Jewish Community Center, 1529 16th Street, NW, (Louis Berger photo, 2019)

<sup>34</sup> ILM, About the Bishop.

<sup>35</sup> The greater meaning of "Family House" embodied in the name *Bet Mishpachah* goes beyond immediate biological relationships to include community and shared traditions and values.

<sup>36</sup> Bet Mishpachah, About Us (n.d.-2, accessed August 2019, <https://www.betmish.org/about-us>).

<sup>37</sup> Bet Mishpachah, Home (n.d.-1, accessed August 2019, <https://www.betmish.org/>).

<sup>38</sup> Tegenwicht.org, Al-Fatiha Mission Statement (n.d., [http://www.tegenwicht.org/16\\_imams/al\\_fatiha\\_en.htm](http://www.tegenwicht.org/16_imams/al_fatiha_en.htm)).



the only openly gay imam in the United States, moved to the District in 1979 from San Francisco after helping coordinate the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. At the time of the conference for LGBTQ Muslims and Friends, Abdullah was in Saudi Arabia studying interpretations of the Quran, where he reached a positive interpretation of homosexuality in the Quran.<sup>39</sup> Abdullah shared this research with Alam, and upon his return from Saudi Arabia became a board member and religious adviser to the Al-Fatiha Foundation.<sup>40</sup> Abdullah teaches that homosexuality is misinterpreted from the original Arabic to the detriment of the LGBTQ community.<sup>41</sup> Now Imam Abdullah has become a prominent speaker on homosexuality. He founded Masjid el-Tawhid An-Nur Al-Isslaah (Mosque for Enlightenment and Reformation/Light of Reform Mosque), which is affiliated with the el-Tawhid Prayer circle of Toronto,



FIGURE 2-29: Imam Daayiee Abdullah, founder of the Light of Reform Mosque (Kuruvilla 2015) (logo at right, Daayiee's n.d.).

Canada, and the California-based organization Muslims for Progressive Values. Imam Abdullah's DC mosque is an intentionally inclusive, intrafaith-oriented community with mixed prayers, gender equality, and queer-friendly policies, to show the diversity of their model for progressive Muslim worship across the globe.<sup>42</sup> The mosque does not have a permanent location but holds weekly juma prayer services on Friday afternoons organized through meetup.com.

Buddhism is also active within the District's LGBTQ community. Several Buddhist LGBTQ groups have practiced in the District since the 1980s. Artist Andrew Hudson organized and led Mintwood Zendo, a worship group for Soho Zen Buddhist LGBTQ practitioners. For many years the group met at Hudson's Mintwood Street apartment in Adams Morgan, from 1984 to 2012. During its last years Mintwood Zendo

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<sup>39</sup> LGBT-RAN, *Imam Daayiee Abdullah—Oral history* (n.d.-3, accessed August 2019, <https://lgbtreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/daayiee-abdullah>).

<sup>40</sup> LGBT-RAN, *Imam Daayiee Abdullah*.

<sup>41</sup> LGBT-RAN, *Imam Daayiee Abdullah*.

<sup>42</sup> Chibarro, New LGBT-friendly mosque to host community meeting, *Washington Blade*, August 25, 2011 (accessed August 2019, <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2011/08/25/new-lgbt-friendly-mosque-to-host-community-meeting/>).

met at the Friends Meeting of Washington, a gay-friendly Quaker community since the 1970s (Meinke 2019c).<sup>43</sup> Other more recent and still active LGBTQ-inclusive Buddhist groups include the Insight Meditation Community of Washington (IMCW) and Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI). IMCW, which became a 501c3 in 1998, has Spiritual Friends (Kalyana Mitta) affinity groups for its LGBTQ practitioners. The mission of IMCW is to support the awakening of hearts and minds through the direct experience of the Buddhist path, and the integration and manifestation of wisdom and compassion in all aspects of life, for the benefit of all beings.<sup>44</sup> The DC chapter of SGI has neighborhood groups and discussion meetings open to all.<sup>45</sup> Both the IMCW and STI have District offices although the emphasis is on community gatherings, which occur in homes and community centers throughout the District and the greater metropolitan area.

## Nature-Based Religions

LGBTQ spirituality extends to nature-based religions. These sects often protect their privacy. In *A Witch's Memoir* Maya White Sparks recalled her involvement with the Lesbian Feminist Dianic Coven, which gathered in the Washington, DC area in the 1970s. The coven participated in "celebrations (rituals)" related to "the transformational energies of Nature's Wheel of the Year."<sup>46</sup> The revolutionary aspects of the coven included a collective defiance of patriarchy and hierarchy in favor of "equality and shared power," respect, and rotated roles.<sup>47</sup> The Furies' Joan E. Biren was also a member of the Lesbian Feminist Dianic Coven and a spiritual mother to Sparks.

Since 1979 there have been intermittent DC chapters of the Radical Faeries, a group that in the words of one of its founders, Donald Kilhefner, was rooted in allowing "liberation consciousness" to thrive.<sup>48</sup> Kilhefner and co-founder Harry Hay believed that the Radical Faeries:

would not only be political and social but would also address the emergence of gay-centered spirituality and consciousness. We did not want to hold the gathering at a conference center or university setting but instead out in nature, without the usual urban, heterosexual restraints, a place where gay men could have the maximum opportunity to be themselves. Hay called it "ripping off the ugly green frogskin of hetero-imitative behavior to reveal the beautiful Fairy Prince underneath." I saw it as an opportunity for gay men to deepen and broaden their understanding of what it truly means to be gay, thus seeding a revolution in gay consciousness. The gathering was conceived as a coming together of gay men only, at a time when lesbian separatism was in full swing and women were forming communes under the aegis of building a "lesbian nation." The gathering was set for the summer of 1979.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Meinke, July 26, 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Insight Medication Community of Washington [IMCW], About IMCW (n.d., accessed August 2019, <https://imcw.org/About/About-Us>).

<sup>45</sup> Meinke July 26, 2019; Soka Gakkai International-USA [SGI], About Us (n.d., accessed August 2019, <https://www.sgi-usa.org/about-us/>).

<sup>46</sup> Maya White Sparks, *A Witch's Memoir* (n.d., courtesy of Joan Biren).

<sup>47</sup> Sparks.

<sup>48</sup> According to Kilhefner, a Jungian psychologist based in Los Angeles: A liberation consciousness, in which one claims or takes one's freedom by any means necessary, was being slowly replaced by an emancipation consciousness, in which one petitions one's oppressor for freedom through guilt trips, fundraising, and legal reform. It was also clear that liberation consciousness and energy were being siphoned off by conventional Democratic politics and party hacks. Donald Kilhefner, *The Radical Faeries at Thirty (+one)*, *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, September 1, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Kilhefner.



In 1979 Hay and Kilhefner organized the first known Faerie confab of nearly 200 men at an ashram in the Sonoran desert east of Tucson, Arizona.<sup>50,51</sup> The Radical Faeries groups have evolved to encompass varying levels of activism woven through their predominantly nature-based forms of worship. According to the 2004 *MetroWeekly* online profile of the DC Radical Faeries, the most recent chapter, founded in 1997, had approximately 150 members who meet weekly to “promote an understanding of Earth-based religions and interfaith cooperation.”<sup>52</sup> Currently the group appears to organize and collaborate through the DC Radical Faeries Public Group on Facebook and/or Yahoo Groups and may have nearly 400 members.<sup>53</sup>

### Local Religious Institutions’ Role in LGBTQ Activism and the AIDS Epidemic

Local religious institutions played a major role during the AIDS epidemic in DC. As mentioned in Theme 6, in 1973 the Gay Men’s VD Clinic opened as a Saturday-morning all-volunteer program of the Washington Free Clinic in the basement of Georgetown Lutheran Church, 1556 Wisconsin Avenue, NW. The clinic offered free “comprehensive testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases for those who couldn’t afford such services”<sup>54</sup> and was a forerunner of Whitman-Walker Health, the DC area’s expansive health clinic for the LGBTQ community.<sup>55</sup>

As AIDS became a constant reality for all of Washington, DC’s LGBTQ communities, activists and other community members witnessed the deaths of too many of their partners and friends. Religious and spiritual leaders were no exception. Rev. Larry Uhrig was MCCDC’s lead pastor from 1977 to 1993. Toward the end of 1982, Rev. Uhrig addressed his uneasiness about the psychological effects of AIDS at an MCC forum on the disease, even as he led the church in its response to HIV/AIDS and developed its AIDS ministry, stating, “I’m concerned that deep levels of internalized self-oppression have allowed us to accept social judgment against us.” Uhrig also cautioned gays to be leery of the “spokespersons” who criticized their lifestyles.<sup>56</sup> Reverend Uhrig died from AIDS-related complications on December 28, 1983.

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<sup>50</sup> Kilhefner; *MetroWeekly* online, DC Radical Faeries, Capital Pride 2007: Community Partners (June 3, 2007, <https://www.metroweekly.com/2007/06/dc-radical-faeries/>).

<sup>51</sup> Harry Hay was a pioneer member of the first Mattachine Society, which organized in Los Angeles (Kilhefner; Meinke July 26, 2019; *MetroWeekly* online, June 3, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Chord Bezera, Radical Faeries: A Community Profile, *MetroWeekly* online (May 12, 2004, <https://www.metroweekly.com/2004/05/radical-faeries/>); *MetroWeekly* online, June 3, 2007

<sup>53</sup> The link to the DC Faeries website ([www.dcradfeys.org](http://www.dcradfeys.org)) noted in the 2004 and 2007 *MetroWeekly* articles that the DC Center for the LGBT Community, and the DC Mayor’s Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs were defunct as of the writing of this context. There is also a Yahoo! Public Groups with 405 members entitled “DC Radical Faerie Community news, events and items of interest” found at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/DCRadFeysCommunity/info>.

<sup>54</sup> Rainbow History Project Digital Collections Archive, Gay Men’s Venereal Disease Clinic, advertisement (n.d., <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/items/show/923>).

<sup>55</sup> GLAA, Thirty-eight Years of Fighting.

<sup>56</sup> Chibarro, Forum on AIDS draws 200 to MCC, *The Washington Blade*, December 17:1, 15.



Rev. Troy Perry, MCC's founder, remembers Uhrig "worked so hard to get that church built before he died."<sup>57</sup> Reverend Uhrig preached in the new location on Christmas Eve in 1993 but died before the end of the year.<sup>58</sup>

Rev. Elder Dr. Candace Shultis, who worked with Reverend Uhrig as the Associate Pastor for MCCDC, presided over countless funerals at MCCDC:

We did a lot of funerals, not just for our own people but for other people whose churches wouldn't conduct the funerals. There was only one funeral home in town at the time that was willing to even do an AIDS funeral... But it hit real hard and it was so quick and then it was just one after another after another after another after another and it was hard to grieve. After a couple of years in, I'd do a funeral and I'd see somebody and they'd say, "I really couldn't come because I already had three this week."

...We started a policy then to not charge for funerals or memorial services so our space is free....So, those early years were rough and there was a lot of grieving and then there was no grieving but just funeral after funeral. You just couldn't grieve, it was impossible to keep doing that, so people would stuff their feelings and then at the most crazy times it would just pop out all over the place... it was just a rough time. One of the reasons why I think there are so many women clergy in MCC is because the men died, so many of the men died, so the leadership began to be female, because we were the ones that were surviving.<sup>59</sup>

Reverend Shultis was elected the new pastor of MCCDC in 1995 and remained so until the end of 2007, when she moved to pastor the MCC in St. Petersburg, Florida. Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks also presided over many funerals. A particularly hard month for Bishop Cheeks was November 1984:



PLATE 2-51: Rev. Larry Uhrig, top (LGBT-RAN-5);  
Rev. Elder Dr. Candace Shultis, bottom (MCC n.d.-  
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<sup>57</sup> Rev. Elder Dr. Troy Perry, interview with Rebecca Graham, July 18, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>58</sup> MCC-DC; Rev. Elder Dr. Candace Shultis, interview with Rebecca Graham, December 19, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Shultis.

We had churches here that would not bury people had they died of AIDS so I was one of those ministers that they would call and I would do the service at the funeral home....And I'll never forget one year, that was I think '84, I said, "I cannot preach another funeral." I did 17 funerals in the month of November....Somebody calls me and says, "Rainey? So-and-so died." I said, "I can find somebody else to do it." He said, "The last thing they asked is that you preach it." I said, "Baby, I hear that. But, I'm not in condition." And he said, "He was your friend." ...So that month, that November—it was number 18.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Rainey Cheeks, Interview with Rebecca Graham, October 22, 2007, in Dolinsky 2010.

## Chapter 3: Guide to Determine, Evaluate, and Nominate Historic LGBTQ Properties

This chapter<sup>1,2</sup> provides a brief overview of the process to determine, evaluate, and nominate historic properties as potential candidates for historic designation. Three major acts of legislation made it possible to identify, protect, and preserve historic properties of significance to America heritage: The Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). These laws apply to federal recognition of historic sites that play an important role at the local, state, and/or national level. Local municipalities often have their own sets of laws that pertain to the identification and protection of historic properties, which are often more stricter than federal laws in their preservation practices. The Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978 (as amended) is the act authorized by the Council of the District of Columbia to provide protection for historic landmarks and historic districts in the District of Columbia (D.C. Official Code § 6-1101). In addition, the adoption of a new Title 10A, Historic Preservation, and Amendment of Title 10 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Planning and Development further developed the laws governing the preservation of historic properties within the District. When considering a historic property for nomination, it is important to determine if it falls within the jurisdiction of a municipality before proceeding, as local procedures may have to be followed in addition to federal procedures to nominate historic properties.

This chapter also provides an overview of the LGBTQ historic properties in the District identified during the context's development that appear to meet one or more of the criteria to potentially qualify for listing in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites (DC Inventory), the NRHP, and/or as an NHL. Most users of this context will be seeking to nominate a historic LGBTQ property to the NRHP and/or DC Inventory.<sup>3</sup> At least one property from each context theme is used as an example of how to apply the NPS evaluation criteria; however, in-depth research would be required to evaluate the significance of each identified historic property. This chapter references the NPS standards in defining and evaluating historic properties; most municipalities use the NPS methodology (or close derivatives) within their historic preservation practices.

### Evaluation Framework

The evaluation of a historic property for potential listing at the local, state, or national level is a process that determines the historic significance and integrity of a resource.

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<sup>1</sup> Organization of this chapter references "Chapter 3: Evaluation Framework" in Jay Shockley et. al, *Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in New York City* (New York: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, May 2018), 78-97; and "Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework" in Donna J. Graves and Shayne E. Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, October 2015), 324-355.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix A of the context includes an extensive list of DC LGBTQ sites compiled by the Rainbow History Project revised to associate each site with one of the context theme(s). Some of the locations on this list may also be suitable for inclusion in the DC Inventory or NRHP pending further study.

<sup>3</sup> In this instance the District of Columbia is equivalent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); the DC Inventory is the equivalent of the State Register of Historic Places.

### Step 1: Research the Property

Refer to the lists of the NRHP, DC Inventory, and/or NHL to see if the historic property is already listed. To search the NRHP, use the NPGallery Digital Asset Search tool. To search the DC Inventory, use the various search methods listed under Find a Property Listing in the Inventory. The NPS site keeps a List of NHLs by State online. To augment or revise a listed resource, consult the DCOP or NPS regional office for guidance. In the case of LGBTQ history, several listed sites could be revised to include the role they played in the development of LGBTQ communities and/or their association with LGBTQ persons of significance.

### Step 2: Determine the Type of Historic Property

According to the NPS, historic properties fall into five main categories: buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts.<sup>4</sup> When considering a historic property for nomination, first determine its resource type to establish which criteria are most applicable to its potential significance. The standard property types and functions listed in Table 3-1 are the most common but the list is not exhaustive.

TABLE 3-1: HISTORIC RESOURCE TYPES AND USES

FUNCTION/USE	PROPERTY TYPE
Domicile	Single or multi-family private residence, apartment building, hotel, boarding house
Commerce	Restaurant, retail business, nightclub, bookstore, bank, bath house, sex club, social club, office
Social	Nightclub, meeting hall, community center, clubhouse (may overlap with Domicile/Commerce/Recreation use)
Government	Political headquarters, municipal building, correctional facility, police station, fire house, post office
Education	School (primary and secondary), university, library
Religion	Church, synagogue, mosque, temple, ceremonial site, community center
Funerary	Cemetery (private or public), funeral home, burial site, crematorium, mausoleum
Recreation, Culture, Entertainment	Movie theater, performing arts theater, playhouse, museum, gallery, studio, park
Medical	Hospital, mental health facility, health clinic, medical research facility, nursing home, hospice center
Defense	Military base or facility (may overlap with Government use)
Landscape	Park, garden, plaza, social gathering place
Transportation	Metro system, bus, pedestrian or bike trail

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<sup>4</sup> National Park Service [NPS], Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, 1990, revised 1991, 1995, 1997, revised for Internet 1995; <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>), 4-5.

**Step 3: Determine the Evaluation Criteria that Apply to the Historic Property**

A property must meet one or more of four criteria related to historic events, people, design/construction, and information potential; these criteria aid in establishing historical significance (Table 3-2).<sup>5</sup> Table 3-2 also provides evaluation questions associated with each criterion to assist in the preparation or consideration of a historic resource for nomination. Subject the potential resource to the evaluation question(s). The strength of the response to each evaluation questions will help gauge if the resource in question has the integrity required to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP and/or DC Inventory. The degree to which an answer is “yes” correlates to its potential for listing at the local, state, and/or national level. At the end of the chapter, see the overview of District LGBTQ-affiliated historic properties identified during research that appear to have a strong “yes” to one or several of the evaluation questions. A resource to assist in this process is the National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

TABLE 3-2: NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

CRITERION	AREA	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION QUESTION
A	Events	The resource is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Is the resource associated with an event that made a significant contribution to the broad pattern(s) of national or local history?
B	Person(s)/ Group	The resource is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	Is the resource associated with the lives of persons significant in our past at a national, state, and/or local level?
C	Design (Architecture/ Engineering)	The resource (i) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; (ii) represents the work of a master; (iii) possesses high artistic values; or (iv) represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.	Does the resource embody the distinctive characteristics of type, period or method of construction? Does the site represent the work of a master or have high artistic value? Even though the individual components of the site may lack distinction, does the overall site represent a significant entity?
D	Information Potential	The resource may yield, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Is the resource associated with Native American LGBTQ history? Would evaluating the resource require the expertise of an archaeologist?

<sup>5</sup> NPS Criteria Considerations provide for exceptions when nominating resources. According to Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, p. 25, certain kinds of properties are not usually considered for listing in the NRHP: religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces and graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties achieving significance within the past 50 years. These properties can be eligible for listing, however, if they meet special requirements, called Criteria Considerations, in addition to meeting the regular requirements (that is, being eligible under one or more of the four criteria and possessing integrity).



TABLE 3-2 (continued)

<i>Criteria Considerations</i>			
A	Religious Property	A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.	Did/does the religious property play a significant role to the LGBTQ community?
C	Important Birthplace or Burial Site	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.	Was a known or discovered LGBTQ person(s) or significance born or buried here?
F	Commemorative Property	A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance.	Is the site of renown or discovered significance to an LGBTQ person, event, cause, demonstration, or tradition?
G	Age Exception	A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.	Is the site associated with an LGBTQ person(s), event(s), or site of significance that occurred less than 50 years ago?

The majority of LGBTQ historic properties are likely to be recommended as significant under Criterion A for association with an LGBTQ event or trend of significance or Criterion B for association with an LGBTQ person(s) or group(s) of significance. A historic LGBTQ property may be recommended under Criterion C if it possesses architectural or engineering design merit and/or was designed by an LGBTQ individual of significance.<sup>6</sup> The emergence of LGBTQ history is a relatively recent phenomenon, and therefore Criterion Consideration G may apply for properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years.

According to the NPS, to be considered for listing under Criterion A, “a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context”; and “mere association with historic events or trends is not enough, in and of itself, to qualify under Criterion A, the property's specific association must be considered important as well.”<sup>7</sup> Chapter 2 provides the historic context within which most potentially significant DC LGBTQ events occurred. Potentially significant events may be singular or they may be cumulative and represent a historic trend. Further research into all of the properties mentioned in this context is required to document their history for nomination.

According to the NPS, to be considered for listing under Criterion B, a property must be “associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented.” Persons “significant in our past” refers to individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The criterion is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate (rather than commemorate) a person's important achievements.<sup>8</sup> To determine the importance of an individual or group, search for quantifiable impact because of their activities. Also, attempt to quantify how long and in what capacity an individual or group was associated with a property. Further research

<sup>6</sup> No known LGBTQ architect or engineer of significance was identified during this study.

<sup>7</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 14.

into the individuals identified during the context is critical because, according to the NPS, “A property is not eligible under Criterion B if it is associated with an individual about whom no scholarly judgement can be made because either research has not revealed specific information about the person’s activities and their impact, or there is insufficient perspective to determine whether those activities or contributions were historically important.”<sup>9</sup>

NRHP Criteria Consideration G considers properties that have achieved significance “of exceptional importance” within the past 50 years. According to the NPS, “the phrase ‘exceptional importance’ does not require that the property be of national significance. It is a measure of a property’s importance within the appropriate historic context, whether the scale of that context is local, State, or national.”<sup>10</sup> The challenge in meeting Criterion G is the existence of “sufficient historical perspectives” in determining the property’s context that makes it of exceptional importance. Refer to the National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluation and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for specific guidance.

A historic property could be significant under one or more of the NPS criteria in one or more areas of significance (Table 3-3). The areas of significance relate to evaluating a historic property within its appropriate historic context, which means to frame it within its contemporaneous events and then analyze its impact. Chapter 2 provides the historic context for potentially significant LGBTQ sites organized by themes, and each theme correlates to an area of significance.

TALBE 3-3: NPS AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Agriculture	Engineering	Landscape Architecture
Architecture	Entertainment/Recreation	Law
Archaeology	Ethnic Heritage	Literature
– Prehistoric	– Asian	Maritime History
– Historic: Aboriginal	– Black	Military
– Historic: Non-aboriginal	– European	Performing Arts
Art	– Hispanic	Philosophy
Commerce	– Native American	Politics/Government
Communications	– Pacific Islander	Religion
Community Planning and Development	– Other	Science
Conservation	Exploration/Settlement	Social History
Economics	Health/Medicine	Transportation
Education	Industry	Other
	Invention	

<sup>9</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluation and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1973, revised 1990, 1996, 1998), 8.

#### *Step 4: Assess the Integrity of the Historic Property*

Once a property appears to meet one (or more) of the NRHP criteria, assess the integrity of the resource. Integrity refers the character, condition, and ability of a historic property to convey its historic significance. The seven aspects of integrity are defined by the NPS as follows,

1. **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
2. **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
3. **Setting** is the physical environment of a historic property.
4. **Materials** are 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.
5. **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
6. **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historical sense of a particular period of time.
7. **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.<sup>11</sup>

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 intact or visible 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 it is important. 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.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Step 5: Determine if the historic property warrants nomination.*

If the historic property presents a strong case for significance — i.e., it had a measurable impact under at least one of the NRHP criteria and possess high integrity — it may warrant a nomination. Nominating a historic resource is a methodical, sometimes lengthy, process that will require review by a local or state agency. The reviewing body will determine whether or not to accept the nomination.

#### *Step 6: Prepare and Submit a Nomination Report*

Once a historic property has been found to be significant and possess the integrity to convey its historical significance, this information is documented in a nomination report. To nominate a resource to the NRHP, follow the instructions in [How to Complete the National Register Registration Form](#) to complete the appropriate NPS form; consult with the SHPO before using these forms as they may have modified

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<sup>11</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44-45.

<sup>12</sup> Jay Shockley, Amanda Davis, Andrew Dolkart, Ken Lustbader, *Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City* (Prepared for the National Park Service and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*), 101.

versions of the NPS forms for use and/or additional guidance to provide before completing forms. Best practice is to coordinate with the property owner(s) of historic properties involved in any nomination. A resource can be listed in the NRHP based on local, state, and/or national significance. Inclusion in the NRHP does not automatically list a resource in a state or municipality register; however, if the State Historic Preservation Office(r) (SHPO)<sup>13</sup> recommends a resource for listing in the NRHP after review, the resource has a very high probability of meeting state or local criteria. A property listed in a state or local register is often subject to design guidelines that are meant to preserve the physical character of the resource; this applies if a resource is considered significant for its aesthetic merit. If needed, seek the advice of a SHPO reviewer for additional clarification related to preparing a nomination.

To nominate a resource to the DC Inventory, consult the [Application Materials and Instructions](#) and follow the [How to Apply for Listing in the DC Inventory](#) available on the DCOP website and/or contact the DCOP. The seven steps to prepare a resource for potential nomination to the DC Inventory are:

- Step 1: Consider the Designation Criteria
- Step 2: Consider Public Involvement
- Step 3: Conduct Research
- Step 4: Complete the Application
- Step 5: Submit the Application
- Step 6: Prepare for the Hearing
- Step 7: Present Your Case at the Hearing

Nomination of a historic property as an NHL must be coordinated through the NPS. Refer to the [Overview of the National Historic Landmark Nomination Process](#) and the [National Register Bulletin: How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations](#).

Guidance from a professional architectural historian or SME is recommended when undertaking a nomination as these professionals, who should meet the Professional Qualification Standards of the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation, are adept at applying the NPS criteria. Nevertheless, an SOI-qualified professional is not required to complete a nomination form. The author(s) of a nomination form need only have the time, research skills, and the ability to follow clear guidelines and prepare a concise, well-written report to complete a nomination form. Seek guidance from local resources such as the DCOP, local cultural resource management consulting firms<sup>14</sup>, and/or the DC Preservation League, a local preservation advocacy non-profit, for assistance. Local preservation groups and professionals may have the staff and/or resources to help complete a nomination form.

### *Step 7: Potential Landmarking*

Within the District, the DC SHPO is responsible for reviewing potential properties for listing in the NRHP in accordance with the NHPA of 1966 as well as Section 106 Reviews for government undertakings that

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<sup>13</sup> In the District of Columbia, the D.C. Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office is the equivalent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

<sup>14</sup> A fee may be required when soliciting guidance from a private consulting firm.

have the potential to affect NRHP-listed and/or eligible properties or sites. The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) is responsible for the designation of historic landmarks and districts to the DC Inventory according to the District's historic preservation law.<sup>15</sup> The NPS's National Park System Advisory Board is responsible for the review of historic landmarks and districts as NHLs. Historic property owner consent is required for nominations in almost every circumstance. Refer to the respective websites for specific instructions regarding property owner consent.

Upon review, a historic property will be determined eligible for listing, ineligible for listing, or returned with comment that there is insufficient information to make a determination. In the case of insufficient information, at times research limitations are insurmountable; conversely, additional research may rectify a nomination for potential re-review. Ineligible properties did not meet the burden of proof to substantiate historical significance; the review letter will explain why a nominated property was determined ineligible for listing. The review agency will also explain why a property was determined eligible.

Once a property is determined eligible for listing, there is a process to officially add it to its respective list. The Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C. makes the final determination for NRHP listing once the DC SHPO has recommended it as eligible. The HPRB follows regulations within the District's historic preservation laws to add an eligible historic site to the DC Inventory. The Secretary of the Interior makes the final NHL determination once the NPS Advisory Board has recommended it as eligible.

### **3.2 Recommended District LGBTQ Historic Properties**

Table 3-4 lists the District LGBTQ properties identified in this context that appear to be strong candidates for listing the NRHP, DC Inventory, and possibly as NHLs (Table #). Each subsection uses one property from each theme to demonstrate how to evaluate a historic property.

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<sup>15</sup> The HPRB was organized in 1983 under the authority established in the District's historic preservation law; it acts as the State Review Board for the District under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

TABLE 3-4: LIST OF HISTORIC DC LGBTQ PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED DURING CONTEXT RESEARCH

SITE NAME	ADDRESS	Associated NRHP Criterion	
		A Event	B Person(s)
<i>Theme 1: History and Belonging</i>			
Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill Residence	1256 Kearny St, NE	✓	✓
National Theater <sup>2,3</sup>	1321 Pennsylvania Ave, NW	✓	✓
<i>Theme 2: Politics, Law and the Quest for Civil Rights</i>			
Lafayette Park/Lafayette Square <sup>2,3</sup>	N: H Street, NW E: Madison Pl, NW S: Pennsylvania Ave W: Jackson Pl, NW	✓	
<i>Theme 3: Activism and the Fight for Equal Rights</i>			
Dr. Frank Kameny Residence <sup>2,3</sup>	5020 Cathedral Ave, NW	✓	✓
GLF House <sup>3</sup>	1620 S St, NW	✓	✓
ABilly Jones-Hennin Residence	603 Q St, NW		✓
Gil Gerald Residence/NCBG House	601 Q St, NW	✓	✓
<i>Theme 4: Community Development - Social Spaces and Places</i>			
DuPont Circle Neighborhood <sup>2,3</sup>	N/A	✓	✓
Colored Men's Branch of the YMCA <sup>1,2,3</sup>	1816 12th Ave		✓
Annie's Steakhouse <sup>3</sup>	1609 17th St, NW	✓	✓
Phase One <sup>3</sup>	525 8th St, SE	✓	✓
Nob Hill Restaurant	1101 Kenyon St, NW	✓	✓
The Clubhouse	1296 Upshur St, NW	✓	✓
<i>Theme 5: Arts and Expression</i>			
Walt Whitman District (extant resources)	(1) Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Patent Office (now the National Portrait Gallery) (2) Solicitor's Office of the Treasury Building		✓
Dr. Alain Locke Residence <sup>3</sup>	1326 R St, NW		✓
Langston Hughes Residence <sup>3</sup>	1749 S St, NW		✓
Richard Bruce Nugent Family Residence <sup>3</sup>	1231 T St, NW		✓
Paul Lawrence Dunbar Residence <sup>2,3</sup>	321 U St, NW		✓
Community Bookshop <sup>2,3</sup>	2028 P St, NW	✓	✓
Lambda Rising Bookstore <sup>2,3</sup>	1625 Connecticut Ave, NW	✓	✓
Lammas Women's Bookstore (original location) <sup>2,3</sup>	321 7th St, SE		✓
ENIKAlley Coffeehouse	816 Eye St, NE	✓	✓
Some of Us Press (SOUP)	4110 Emery Place	✓	✓
Essex Hemphill Residence	TBD		✓
<i>Theme 6: Health Advocacy</i>			
The Clubhouse	1296 Upshur Ave, NW	✓	✓
Banneker Field <sup>2,3</sup>	2500 Georgia Ave, NW	✓	✓
The National Mall <sup>2,3</sup>	Roughly bounded by: N: Constitution Ave E: Capitol Grounds S: Independence Ave W: 14th St	✓	✓

TABLE 3-4 (continued)

SITE NAME	ADDRESS	Associated NRHP Criterion	
		A Event	B Person(s)
Omni Shoreham Hotel	2500 Calvert St NW	✓	
St. Elizabeths Hospital <sup>1,2,3</sup>	2700 & 2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE	✓	
Georgetown Lutheran Church <sup>1,2,3</sup>	1556 Wisconsin Ave, NW	✓	✓
Whitman-Walker Clinic (1978) <sup>3</sup>	1606 17th St, NW	✓	✓
Whitman-Walker Clinic (1980-1987) <sup>3</sup>	2335 18th St, NW	✓	✓
Us Helping Us	819 L St, SE	✓	✓
<i>Theme 7: Religion and Spirituality</i>			
Friends Meeting of Washington <sup>2,3</sup>	2111 Florida Ave, NW	✓	✓
First Congregational United Church of Christ	945 G St, NW (historic location, new building)	✓	✓
St. Mark's Episcopal Church <sup>2,3</sup>	301 A St, SE	✓	✓
St. Margaret's Episcopal Church <sup>3</sup>	1830 Connecticut Ave, NW	✓	✓
All Souls Unitarian Church <sup>3</sup>	1500 Harvard St, NW	✓	✓
Rev. J.E. Paul Breton <sup>3</sup>	705 7th St, SE		✓

<sup>1</sup> This is an NHL whose historical association with LGBTQ events and/or people may warrant an update to its existing nomination.

<sup>2</sup> This is a NRHP-listed historic property or is within a NRHP-listed historic district whose historical association with LGBTQ events and/or people may warrant an update to its existing nomination.

<sup>3</sup> This historic property is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites on an individual basis or as part of historic district, whose historical association with LGBTQ events and/or people may warrant an update to its existing nomination.

### 3.2.1 Theme 1: History, Identity, and a Sense of Belonging

#### Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill Residence / 1256 Kearny Street, NE

Further research may confirm that the Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill Residence may be significant under Criterion A as representative of the housing trend in which same-sex couples disguised relationships to avoid federal and potentially life-threatening persecution. Their living situation also avoided the social ramifications of respectability politics, a precarious dynamic within the black community that could lead to ostracizing, loss of employment, and possibly require relocation to safeguard one's livelihood and reputation. The residence may also be significant under Criterion B for its association with Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill, African-American women scholars, whose association and contributions to the Howard University community and the Harlem Renaissance may prove to be significant.

- Areas of Significance: Social History, Education

### 3.2.2 Theme 2: Politics, Law, and the Quest for Civil Rights

#### Lafayette Square

Further research may confirm that the NRHP, NHL, and DC Inventory nominations for Lafayette Square could be updated for its potential significance under Criterion A for its association with several national and local trends: (i) the policing and criminalization of homosexuality within the District's parks, (ii) the social practice of gay men cruising one another in secluded areas of public parks, and (iii) the moral advocacy of outdoor washrooms in U.S. cities to improve health conditions for the urban poor during the late nineteenth century.

- Areas of Significance: Social History, Politics/Government

### 3.2.3 *Theme 3: Activism and the Fight for Equal Rights*

#### ABilly Jones-Hennin Residence / 603 Q Street, NW

Further research may confirm that the residence of ABilly Jones-Hennin may be significant under Criterion B for its association with ABilly Jones-Hennin. Jones's personal initiative to create change contributed to the development of the District's African-American LGBTQ community, which in turn spurred development of African-American LGBTQ communities nationwide. Jones-Hennin was a co-founder of the NCBGL, an activist and advocacy group that continues today as the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals, Inc. Jones-Hennin also co-founded the DC Chapter of BWMT.

- Areas of Significance: Social History; Politics/Government; Ethnic Heritage

### 3.2.4 *Theme 4: The Search for Community: Finding Social Spaces and Places*

#### Phase One / 525 8th Street, SE

Further research may confirm that the former location of the Phase One located at 525 8th Street, SE may be significant under Criterion A for its association with the national trend of the development of queer communities and neighborhoods and under Criterion B as one of the oldest continuously operating bars in the United States affiliated with the lesbian community. Phase One became a commercial hub within the "Gay Way" of southeast DC, an area that became queer-friendly by virtue of the number of LGBTQ establishments and residents. Phase One opened in 1970 and closed in 2016. This nearly 40-year span of serving the queer community is rare as the economic and social pressures specific to queer establishments often translated into relatively short business lifespans.<sup>16</sup>

- Areas of Significance: Social History, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Entertainment/Recreation

### 3.2.5 *Theme 5: Arts, Literature, and Academia: Avenues for Expression*

#### ENIKAlley Coffeehouse / 816 I Street, NE

Further research may confirm that the former location of the ENIKAlley Coffeehouse located at 816 I Street, NE may be significant under Criterion A as a social hub that played a key role in the community planning and development of the African-American LGBTQ community. The Coffeehouse may also be significant under Criterion B for its association with various African-American LGBTQ activists and artists, including filmmaker Michelle Parkerson, Essex Hemphill, Chi Hughes, Gil Gerard, and various local poetry troupes.

- Areas of Significance: Social History, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage

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<sup>16</sup> As of the writing of this context, the DC Preservation League is in preparing NRHP nominations for both Annie's Steakhouse and The Clubhouse.



### 3.2.6 Theme 6: Health Advocacy for the LGBTQ Community

#### Whitman-Walker Clinic / 1606 17th Street, NW

Further research may confirm that the first location of the Whitman-Walker Clinic, at 1606 17th Street, NW, may be significant under Criterion A for its association with the national trend of the development of queer communities and neighborhoods and under Criterion B for its association with Whitman-Walker Clinic, now Whitman-Walker Health. The predecessor to WWC, the all-volunteer Gay Men's VD Clinic (GMVDC) opened in 1973 as part of the Washington Free Clinic, housed in the basement of Georgetown Lutheran Church, evidence of a local LGBTQ initiative to meet a need of the local LGBTQ community. After the GMVDC became the WWC in 1978, it has established itself as the principal healthcare provider for the District's LGBTQ community.

- Areas of Significance: Health/Medicine, Community Planning and Development

#### Us Helping Us / Bishop Rainey Kwabena Cheeks / 819 L Street, SE

Further research may confirm that the property located at 819 L Street, SE may be significant at the local level under Criterion B for its association with Bishop Rainey Cheeks and the original location of UHU, founded in 1993. Bishop Cheeks's actions have had a measurable impact on the advancement of the African-American LGBTQ community through his activities at the Clubhouse during the AIDS crisis, the establishment of UHU and Inner Light Ministries. Bishop Cheeks has demonstrated nearly 40 years of sustained support within the District's LGBTQ community through health and spiritual advocacy and support. Properties such as his residence, The Clubhouse, and other resources identified through further research may be recommended for listing under Criterion B for their association with Bishop Rainey Cheeks. Nomination of a place of worship or residence associated with Bishop Rainey Cheeks would require further justification under Criterion Consideration G if it achieved significance within the last 50 years.

- Areas of Significance: Religion, Health/Medicine, Community Planning and Development, Entertainment/Recreation

### 3.2.7 Theme 7: Religion and Spirituality

#### Reverend Paul Breton Residence / 705 7th Street, SE

Further research may confirm that the residence located at 705 7th Street, SE may be significant at the local level under Criterion B for its association with Rev. Paul Breton. Reverend Breton's actions had a measurable impact on the early development and advancement of the District's LGBTQ community. He founded the District's Homophile Social League and the Community Church of Washington in 1970, which became the District's chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church, and was active in Frank Kameny's run for Congress. Reverend Breton's early advocacy laid the foundation for the social and religious development of the District's LGBTQ community, including some organizations that remain active and continue to support the community. Nomination of a place of worship or residence associated with Reverend Breton would require further justification under Criterion Consideration G if it achieved significance within the last 50 years.

- Areas of Significance: Religion, Health/Medicine, Community Planning and Development

## Chapter 4: Recommendations

### Future Research Opportunities

During the development of this context, several topics arose that warrant further research. The following groups, people, and events discovered during research played a more recent or less documented role in the history of the District's LGBTQ community and may warrant special attention in the NRHP under Criterion Consideration G if their contribution occurred within the past 50 years. A recommendation of this study is to use the following list of topics, groups, and/or people as a source for future dissertations, thesis studies, and/or oral history projects to broaden the depth of reference for the District's LGBTQ historic properties; they are grouped by Chapter 2 theme.

#### *Theme 3: Pride – Activism and the Fight for Equal Rights*

The District's LGBTQ history needs more transgender perspectives. The first Transgender Lobby Day occurred on October 2, 1995, the results of a collaborative effort among Trans People of Color Coalition (TPOCC), Trans Latina Coalition, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (now the National LGBTQ Task Force), PFLAG National, Black Transmen, Inc., Black Transwomen, Inc., and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE). In 2003 NCTE was founded "by transgender activists who recognized the urgent need for policy change to advance transgender equality. With a committed board of directors, a volunteer staff of one, and donated office space, we set out to accomplish what no one had yet done: provide a powerful transgender advocacy presence in Washington, D.C."<sup>1</sup> An organization such as NCTE could be an advocate not only to foster transgender activism but a safe place for histories to be shared. Historically, there was a local chapter of the National Gay Task Force, now the National LGBTQ Task Force, which formed in October 1973 in New York following the Stonewall riots. Founding members of the local chapter included Dr. Frank Kameny, Dr. Howard Brown, Martin Duberman, Barbara Gittings, Ron Gold, Nathalie Rockhill, and Bruce Voeller, who felt it was time to create change on a national level. Further research into this group's activity during the District's activist period would be beneficial (see Chapter 2, Theme 2).

#### *Theme 4: Community Development – Social Spaces and Places*

The Lambda Student Alliance of Howard University and the Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown have more documented history because of the legal battles each group endured and their activism within the District. The following student organizations were listed in several back issues of *The Washington Blade*. The extent of their measurable impact remains uncertain, however, as their presence at local activist and community events appears cursory. Further research into these groups, especially pioneer ones at their respective institutions, would fill a critical void within the District's LGBTQ history given the number of academic institutions that exist in the District.

- American University Gay Community
- Gay Alliance of Prince George's Community College
- Gay Law Students

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<sup>1</sup> NCTE, About Us (n.d., <https://transequality.org/about>).

- National Gay Student Center, Gay People's Alliance/George Washington University
- Gay Student Alliance of University of Maryland at College Park

### *Theme 5: Arts and Expression*

Mark Meinke noted many of the following people/groups as lead SME for the context, all of which may have potential significance under NPS Criterion A or B.<sup>2</sup> Further research would establish the “judgment that informs how their activity impacted development” and provide the “perspective to determine whether their activities or contributions were historically important”<sup>3</sup> (see Chapter 3).

- **Dr. Ronald Simmons:** Dr. Simmons received his PhD in communications from Howard University (Howard) in 1987 and taught there for 12 years. There he became acquainted with Sidney Brinkley and the *Blacklight* publication. While writing and photographing at Howard, he also helped lead Us Helping Us with Rainey Cheeks.
- **1970s Performance Artists:** Lee Lally, Michael Lally, Tim Dlugos, Ed Cox, Terence Winch, and Doug Lang.
- **1980s Performance Artists/Groups:** Wayson Jones, Chris Prince, Larry Duckett, Michelle Parkerson, Papaya Mann, and Chi Hughes. The performance groups *Cinque* and *Station to Station* included artists Essex Hemphill, Wayson Jones, Larry Duckett, and later Michelle Parkerson and Gideon Ferebee and Chasen Gavers, respectively.
- **Friends Radio:** Friends Radio was a project of several members of the GLF House that ran on WGBT and WPFW between 1973 and 1982. The program featured interviews, commentary, and music to a widely dispersed DC Metro area community. It appears that their impact reached beyond the local LGBTQ community.
- **Gay Blade office:** Research revealed that the original location where the first issues of the *Gay Blade* were mimeographed occurred in a property located on Garfield Street, NW. Nomination of this property may be significant under Criterion B for its association with the Mattachine Society of Washington's *Gay Blade*, which has evolved into *The Washington Blade*, or *The Blade*, “the oldest LGBT newspaper in the U.S. covering the latest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender news in Washington, DC and around the world.”<sup>4</sup>
- **Sisterspace and Books:** Formerly located at 1515 U Street, NW, this feminist bookstore primarily served the African-American LGBTQ community. Although it closed in 2015, the space was a woman-centric “African American women owned and operated book store specializing in books

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Meinke, Chapter Six (attachment to email to Kisa Hooks, Eric Gonzaba, Vincent Slatt, Derek Gray, Monica Rhodes, Steve Callcott, Steven Bedford, and Rebecca Graham, June 5, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, 1990, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Washington Blade*, About (n.d., <https://www.washingtonblade.com/contact-us/about/>).

by and about African American women.” Sisterspace also provided a performance space and frequent readings of interest to woman, especially the lesbian community.

- **Gay Fairfax:** Although not in Washington, DC, *Gay Fairfax* impacted the DC metro area as a pioneering television project broadcast between 1989 and 1994. The broadcast influenced other programming and spin-off successor television magazines. The Community Access Project at NOVA in Virginia produced and distributed the broadcast.

### *Theme 7: Religion and Spirituality*

Further research would establish how the following individuals/groups affected the development of the LGBTQ community and provide the perspective to determine whether their activities or contributions were historically important (see Chapter 3).<sup>5,6</sup>

- **Other Religious Leaders:** Rev. James S. Tinney had a significant social and religious impact on the development of the District’s African-American LGBTQ community and also contributed to the academic prestige of Howard University. Further research may confirm that historic properties, such as a former residence, may be significant for their associations with Reverend Tinney. Imam Daayiee Abdullah is a pioneer in his own right as the first openly gay Imam who leads a Muslim congregation in the District. Nomination of a place of worship, residence, or event site associated with Imam Abdullah would require further justification under Criterion Consideration G as it has achieved significance within the last 50 years.
- **Minority Spiritual Congregations:** Documented histories of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and nature-based congregations and ministries were limited. A recommendation is to develop the histories of these lesser-documented spiritual groups.
- **Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual:** This council was founded as a committee of MSW in 1963. According to Meinke, the committee operated for a short period from the MSW office on 1319 F Street, NW but later ran out of Frank Kameny’s home.<sup>7</sup> Further research would determine if this committee had affiliations with other national groups committed to forging supportive bonds between religious organizations and the LGBTQ community.

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<sup>5</sup> The Official Souvenir Program of the First National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights that occurred on October 14, 1979, listed other church groups that appear to be defunct local organizations, as research revealed no information about their activities in the District. The three church groups that do not appear to have an active District presence are Affirmation – United Methodists for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay Concerns, and Mormon Gays. Affirmation appears to be active in Illinois. The Brethren Council for Gay Concerns expanded to Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Interests in 2002. Although there is a Washington, DC office, the Mennonite Central Committee there does not appear to be an active LGBTQ interest group associated with this chapter. The largest Mormon Church in the DC metro area is located just north of the District in Kensington, Maryland.

<sup>6</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Meinke, LGBTQ Ch. 7 Religion & Spirituality (attachment to email to Kisa Hooks, July 26, 2019).

- **PTWs<sup>8</sup>: Lesbian Feminist Dianic Coven:** “A Witch’s Memoir” written by Maya White Sparks gives preliminary insight into the Lesbian Feminist Dianic Coven that began in the DC metro area in the 1970s. Although the memoir mentions group meetings that occurred in DC, it did not give specific locations and it appears that most of the nature-based rituals occurred in Virginia. Sparks acknowledges one of her spiritual mothers was Joan E. Biren, in addition to Alda Curtis, Aradia, Flo Hollis, Lenora Trussell, Morgan Gwenwald, and Toni Rees.<sup>9</sup>

## District LGBTQ Sites: Continued Partnership, Identification and Preservation

The District’s LGBTQ groups and events could benefit from continued partnerships. According to the District of Columbia Mayor’s Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs, there are approximately 118 LGBTQ organizations in the District. With such a wide canvas of groups, partnerships could increase communication, reduce duplicate programmatic efforts, make better use of non-profit resources, and better serve members of the LGBTQ community.

The RHP Spreadsheet of Historic LGBTQ Places and Spaces provided in Appendix A is the most exhaustive resource discovered during the development of this context that identifies historic District LGBTQ properties. Many of these sites are mapped in [A Timeline of LGBT Places and Spaces in D.C.](#) through DataLens DC and/or transferred to the LGBTQ America subtheme on [Historypins.org](#). A recommendation of this context is to continue the research associated with some of the lesser documented sites to see if they warrant possible historic designation and to continue the development of District sites on the Historypins.org website.

Several notable District LGBTQ sites were documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) as part of the [HABS-Society of Architectural Historians \(SAH\) Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship](#). The fellowship allows a graduate student to work on a HABS history project. Amber Bailey of Loyola University in Chicago was the 2016 Fellow and produced historical reports for several buildings related to LGBTQ nightlife in Washington. Project planning, coordination, and photography for the 2016 fellowship was conducted by Lisa P. Davidson, HABS historian and Chair of the HABS-SAH Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship Committee. The historic District LGBTQ properties recorded by HABS as a result of the 2016 HABS-SAH Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship include Nob Hill/1101 Kenyon Street, NW ([HABS No. DC-882](#)); Phase One/525 8th Street, SE ([HABS No. DC-883](#)); The Clubhouse/1296 Upshur Street, NW ([HABS No. DC-884](#)); Cinema Follies/37 L Street, SE ([HABS No. DC-885](#)); and Pier 9/1824 Half Street, SW ([HABS No. DC-886](#)).

The DC Preservation League (League) maintains a list of [Endangered Places](#). Beginning in 1996, the League annually announced a list of Most Endangered Places to draw attention to Washington, DC’s historically, culturally, and architecturally significant places that may be threatened with ill-advised alteration or demolition through neglect or abandonment.<sup>10</sup> Appendix A includes a list of LGBTQ sites compiled by Mark Meinke, the founder of the RHP, that includes many sites that could be considered endangered and should

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<sup>8</sup> PTW is a celebratory double-entendre acronym meaning “Pussy Tit Willows” named after the Azalea “Tit Willow” plant that resembles a woman’s anatomy.

<sup>9</sup> Sparks, A Witch’s Memoir (courtesy Jon Biren, n.d.).

<sup>10</sup> DC Preservation League, Endangered Places (n.d., <https://www.dcpreservation.org/endangered-places/>).

be included in the League's Endangered Places list. Many of the District's historic LGBTQ properties that have reached the 50-year benchmark have been demolished, severely altered, and/or their LGBTQ history is no longer associated with the property. This status is especially true for residences, businesses, restaurants, and bar/clubs. One issue is that many of the District's LGBTQ sites may be less than 50 years old but still warrant inclusion in the League's Endangered Places list.<sup>11</sup> A benefit of listing in an endangered places list is the public awareness it creates, which could encourage future preservation of historic properties.

### **Formal LGBTQ Tours and Publications**

Through a marketing campaign, the several LGBTQ walking tour resources that exist throughout the District could be combined and organized into a more visible, self-directed and/or guided tour. There are a plethora of tour groups and companies that service the District, and an LGBTQ-specific tour could be incorporated into their existing programs. For example, the content of the RHP self-guided walking tours could be incorporated with tours marketed by mainstream tour organizations such as [Destination DC](#) and [BigBus Washington DC](#) and become an official [DC Neighborhood Heritage Trail sponsored by Cultural Tourism DC](#).<sup>12</sup>

The DCOP website lists several [Community Heritage Publications](#). A similar effort could be initiated to create a "District LGBTQ Heritage Trail." The RHP LGBTQ tour content could be a source for its publication.

### **Oral History Project**

Many of the District's historic LGBTQ properties are threatened. LGBTQ residents have passed away and businesses have closed, been demolished, or reclaimed by new ownership as a result of gentrification and/or urban renewal. Many residents were lost during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and several businesses closed over the next 20 years.

A recommendation of this study is to mitigate this loss of history through an oral history project. Because the history of many historic LGBTQ properties has been forgotten, cataloged in historical archives, or lost, the goal of an oral history project would be to capture as many existing LGBTQ histories, especially those from underrepresented groups. Several existing sources could help spearhead this effort.

#### *DC Community Heritage Project*

In a 10-year partnership between the DCOP and [Humanities DC](#), the DC Community Heritage Project focuses on grassroots organization and youth participation to record local history. Through a DC Community Heritage Project Grant, members of the LGBTQ community may be able to harness the voices of local pioneers and elders involved in the LGBTQ experience that evolved from one of persecution and oppression to celebratory inclusion.

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to the explanation and guidance in Chapter 3 for evaluating properties that are less than 50 years old.

<sup>12</sup> The RHP self-guided tours cover the following LGBTQ topics in the District: [African-American](#), [Capitol Hill](#), [Drag](#), [Dupont Circle](#), [East Dupont](#), [South Capitol Street](#), [Walt Whitman in DC](#), and [The Women's Tour](#).

### *StoryCorps: LGBTQ "Stonewall Outloud" Initiative*

In June 2019, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York, StoryCorps began the *Stonewall Outloud* initiative to help preserve "the stories of LGBTQ elders before they are lost to history."<sup>13</sup> Using the [StoryCorps mobile app](#), District residents could contribute to this national conversation. The cost associated with this endeavor is negligible in comparison to the on-site booths that can also be arranged through StoryCorps. Should the latter solution be a consideration, partnerships among the over 100 LGBTQ organizations throughout the District could raise the funds to sponsor a StoryCorps booth in the District to spearhead an oral histories project.

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<sup>13</sup> StoryCorps, Stonewall Outloud (n.d., [https://storycorps.org/discover/outloud/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMII5mysr\\_24wIVFZSzCh33PAGSEAAAYASADEgKlnPD\\_BwE](https://storycorps.org/discover/outloud/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMII5mysr_24wIVFZSzCh33PAGSEAAAYASADEgKlnPD_BwE)).