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# The Modern Gay & Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States

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The Modern Gay & Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States

by

Leigh J. Robinson

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education & Human Development of  
The College at Brockport, State University of New York,  
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## Abstract

Historians and classroom teachers have long avoided researching and teaching society about the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States. This research examines parts of the movement and is divided into three parts. The first part involves examining the national movement beginning in 1950 with the establishment of homophile organizations to the period of Gay Liberation in the 1970s. Second, the movement is studied in Rochester, New York through the examination of issues between 1971 and 1975 of the gay and lesbian publication *The Empty Closet*. Lastly, the information and discoveries made in the first two parts are used in part 3 to show how gay and lesbian history can be taught effectively in a high school social studies classroom using several teaching strategies.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists, educators, and students of the past, present, and future.

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Homophile Activism to Gay Liberation:

The Evolution of the Gay & Lesbian Movement in the United States, 1950–1980

## **Introduction**

The notion of a deeply rooted gay and lesbian past in the United States to many people in American society is seen as outlandish or unsupported. Many Americans have been taught and believe gay and lesbian history begins in the United States in the early 1980s with the emergence of the AIDS crisis. Initially homosexual men were blamed for the virus' existence. As the decade came to a close, an alarming number of homosexual men died from the virus. Many gay and lesbian Americans have been taught by the movement that gay and lesbian activism began in 1969 with the Stonewall Riots in New York City. Contrary to these teachings and beliefs held by many in American society there is a deeply rooted gay and lesbian history in the United States. Some scholarship exists detailing homosexual behavior in Native American society and during the colonial settlement of the eastern coast of North America. In regards to gay and lesbian activism some historians have suggested its beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century. Scholarship on gay and lesbian activism between 1950 and 1980 primarily begins to exist during the 1980s and increases dramatically at the turn of the twenty-first century. Initial research on the roots of gay and lesbian activism is broad with little depth on different facets of the movement. Research on the topic within the past two decades has become narrow in scope and deep in detail on various movement elements. Early scholarship disregards transgender activism while new scholarship describes its complicated relationship with the gay and lesbian movement. This historiography will examine the evolution of the modern gay and lesbian movement from 1950 with the beginning of homosexuals meeting and forming homophile organizations to 1980 with gay liberation in full force and before the AIDS crisis.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature

The historical scholarship before the twenty-first century contains some literature that is heavily relied upon by current historians' discussions on the roots of gay and lesbian activism. The book *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* written by a self-proclaimed homosexual man under the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory is described by historians as being the first publication in the modern United States advocating for homosexuals to understand themselves as a group and to organize. Cory during the preface of his book justifies his authority on homosexuality by telling the reader of his twenty five years as a homosexual.<sup>1</sup> He also informs the reader that his focus for the book is with male homosexuality and that the book is according to Cory, "a spiritual autobiography."<sup>2</sup> He also defends his use of publishing the book under a pseudonym. Cory describes one defense by writing, "I am convinced that, in the present cultural milieu in the United States, the pseudonymous or anonymous writer can be more outspoken..."<sup>3</sup> He also notes that if he used his real name the people in his experiences described in the book would be at risk and the book's open reception by the public would be affected in a negative way.<sup>4</sup> Cory's book has dual usage as a historical document. It can be used as a primary and secondary source. Throughout the book Cory describes his personal struggle or as he writes, "homosexual problem."<sup>5</sup> These accounts provide historians with information about the experience of being a homosexual man in U.S. society prior to 1950. The book can be used as a secondary source when Cory describes the gay historical past. These discussions in his book also demonstrate the beginning of research on the gay and lesbian past. Combining these two aspects

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Webster Cory, *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* (1951. Reprint, New York: Arno Press Inc., 1975), xii.

<sup>2</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, xiv.

of the book Cory sought to “shed some light on the homosexual problem.”<sup>6</sup> He further explains the purpose of his book by writing, “Alone, you cannot change the world, but the combined efforts of many will surely effect a beneficial change.”<sup>7</sup> Cory supports these aims by dividing his book into six parts with an appendix. The parts of the book are on homosexual sociology, psychology, patterns, culture, adjustments, and outlook. The part most applicable to this historiography is part one on sociology. Cory begins his discussion on the homosexual past in chapter two by informing his audience of the almost worldwide denunciation of homosexuality in today’s society.<sup>8</sup> From here Cory sets out to discuss the beginnings of homosexuality and how societies throughout the world have viewed this type of behavior. He begins with the settling of North America by Europeans. The Europeans who studied Native American tribes observed men wearing women’s clothing, men cleaning their homes like European women were expected to do, and men were seen occupying the role of a wife to other more men who were the tribes defenders.<sup>9</sup> Cory discusses other areas of the world where homosexuality has been observed. These places include the Malayan Islands, Hawaii, Australia, and Asia.<sup>10</sup> Cory notes China and Japan, “knew no punishment or public opprobrium for the homosexual until the influence of the West was felt...”<sup>11</sup> The discussion moves to Greek and Roman involvement in homosexual behavior. The Romans and Greeks developed according to Cory, “the first heritage of a literature in which the homosexual theme is acceptable and in fact is even dominant.”<sup>12</sup> This is significant because these cultures provide the first written record of homosexuality and its past. Cory brings the discussion to the condition of homosexuals in modern America by writing

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<sup>6</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 256.

<sup>7</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 265.

<sup>8</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 17.

about the discrimination faced by many homosexuals. Homosexuals could be fired, denied jobs and licensure, were blacklisted, and were discharged from the army.<sup>13</sup> Cory voices his discontent with homosexuals and their lack of activism by writing, “*They never fought back!*”<sup>14</sup> This type of discrimination is accepted by homosexuals because they would be saving themselves from being shown for who they are to the public.<sup>15</sup> Cory connects homosexual’s acceptance of discrimination to African American’s acceptance of discrimination because both have disrespect for themselves.<sup>16</sup> In Cory’s view, “the worst effect of discrimination has been to make the homosexuals doubt themselves and share in the general contempt for sexual inverts.”<sup>17</sup> These comments by Cory document the absence of visible homosexual activism up to 1950. Cory’s book is seen as the first call of American homosexuals to come together as a minority group and to fight against the discrimination they have experienced. Cory voices this call at the end of his book by writing, “I am confident that you, like so many others who are gay, will utilize the years ahead to good advantage...inspired by the knowledge that your temperament can make...this a better world.”<sup>18</sup> Cory’s book is useful to historians of gay activism because of its first hand voice of the environment of homosexual activism up to 1950 and as the first written source advocating for the emergence of a homosexual movement fighting against discrimination and inclusion in society.

Sixteen years after Cory’s book was published a group of scholars published an article titled “The Homophile Movement: Its Impact and Implications” in 1967. Since Cory’s book homosexuals in America began to organize and fight against discrimination. During the 1950s

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<sup>13</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Cory, *The Homosexual in America*, 266.

there were only a handful of organizations doing this work. The authors fail to provide the names of these organizations. The authors' purpose in writing this article is to dispel some of the misinformation concerning homosexuality and to describe the current impact and challenges faced by American homosexual organizations.<sup>19</sup> Their discussion begins with declaring homosexuals as real people even though most of society doubts this.<sup>20</sup> These authors justify this declaration by stating, "These homophile organizations have helped to bring out of hiding many homosexuals whose lives are definitely superior in every way, setting aside...sexual practices per se."<sup>21</sup> These scholars have also noted the extensive nature of the homophile organizations efforts to educate the public and their membership on homosexuality.<sup>22</sup> One of the challenges homophile organizations face according to the authors is homosexuality's classification as an illness. The rationale is according to Parlour et al., "because it does not serve the life instinct...it does not lead to the production of children..."<sup>23</sup> This challenge will have to be altered by homosexual organizations rather than by individual homosexuals.<sup>24</sup> The authors challenge the binary nature of sexuality that many in society hold regarding masculinity and femininity and heterosexuality and homosexuality. They believe, "pure forms are nonexistent."<sup>25</sup> The movement during the 1950s believed that presenting the homosexual in acceptable dress and manner or as Parlour et al. termed it, "homosexuals with character" would make their message more receptive to society.<sup>26</sup> Expanding on this tactic used by the homophile organizations Parlour et al. write,

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<sup>19</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement: Its Impact and Implications," *Journal of Religion and Health* 6, no. 3 (1967): 217.

<sup>20</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 217.

<sup>21</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 217.

<sup>22</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 218.

<sup>23</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 222.

<sup>24</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 227.

<sup>25</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 228.

<sup>26</sup> Parlour et al., "The Homophile Movement," 232.

“Perhaps... militance will be surpassed by wisdom and constructive constraint.”<sup>27</sup> Unknowingly to these scholars the movement would turn to militancy in the future to try and achieve their goals. The authors in their conclusion determine that society should learn more about homosexuality before accepting or rejecting these people in society.<sup>28</sup> This scholarly piece on the implications and challenges faced by homophile organization in American society is valuable in showing academia’s openness to the study of homosexuality, academia’s call for society to learn more about this sexual behavior, and how Cory’s call for homosexuals to organize was heard by homosexual men and women around the country. These scholars have established the first academic literature on the roots of the homosexual movement in the United States and further examination of the roots of the homosexual activism would not be undertaken until the early 1980s.

The first scholar to hear the call of Parlour et al. was Salvatore J. Licata when he published an article called “The Homosexual Rights Movements in the United States: A Traditionally Overlooked Area of American History” in 1980. The focus of Licata’s article is to outline the organizing of homosexuals for political and social motives in the United States and to demonstrate how the movement changed over time up to the 1970s.<sup>29</sup> Licata expands on Cory’s discussion of homosexual activism prior to 1950. The homosexual activism in England and Germany in the late nineteenth century must be acknowledged as the stimulus to homosexual activism in the United States.<sup>30</sup> Licata claims, “Since 1908, American homosexual rights efforts have developed rapidly, from isolated attempts...[to] a movement...”<sup>31</sup> Licata in his description

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<sup>27</sup> Parlour et al., “The Homophile Movement,” 232.

<sup>28</sup> Parlour et al., “The Homophile Movement,” 234.

<sup>29</sup> Salvatore J. Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement in the United States: A Traditionally Overlooked Area of American History,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1/2 (1980): 161.

<sup>30</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 162.

<sup>31</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 162.

of the movement has divided the movements history into eight time periods starting in 1908. The first time period is vast starting in 1908 and ending in 1945. In this section of his article Licata describes the beginning of homosexual activism. He claims the first time homosexuals tried to organize was in Chicago, Illinois during the 1920s.<sup>32</sup> A German American immigrant named Henry Gerber organized a group of homosexual men to form an organization called the Society for Human Rights (SHR).<sup>33</sup> The group's focus was to address Illinois statutes that related to homosexuality. The prime target was Illinois' sodomy law.<sup>34</sup> The group never had more than ten members and dissolved after all SHR officers were arrested after the group was exposed to police.<sup>35</sup> After losing his job and moving to New York City, Gerber would again participate in homosexual activism by joining the New York City Chapter of the Mattachine Society during the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> The second period of gay activism is between 1945 and 1950. Licata describes this time period as being, "characterized by a growing awareness that homosexual men and women constituted a distinct minority."<sup>37</sup> Many homosexuals in urban areas experienced harassment from police. This resulted in homosexuals forming groups to fight for their protection. In New York City after World War II a Quaker Emergency Committee was formed to help homosexual men arrested in public areas looking for sexual encounters.<sup>38</sup> The committee had forty members and help approximately fifteen thousand arrestees.<sup>39</sup> Cory's in his book where he demonstrates his awareness of his homosexuality and the need for homosexuals to organize belongs in this time frame. His 1951 book also sparks the nature of the third period. This period between 1950

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<sup>32</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 163.

<sup>33</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 163.

<sup>34</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 164.

<sup>35</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 164.

<sup>36</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 165.

<sup>37</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 165.

<sup>38</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 166.

<sup>39</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 166.

and 1952 is time spent talking about the homosexual and the nature of homosexuality. The Kinsey reports were released concluding that homosexuality was more prevalent in American society in both men and woman than previously thought.<sup>40</sup> During this time a group of homosexual men gathered to talk about the issues they faced. They eventually became the founders of the Mattachine Foundation (MF) which later was reorganized under the name Mattachine Society (MS).<sup>41</sup> Stage four in the movement was from 1952 to 1953. During this period homosexuals displayed their anger and frustration with society by protesting harassment and becoming involved in politics.<sup>42</sup> 1953 through 1960 marks the fifth period in homosexual activism. In these seven years the movement focused on keeping according to Licata, “as many homosexual people as possible informed and...educat[ing] the heterosexual public about homosexual men and women and their mistreatment.”<sup>43</sup> The movement even with its low membership grew to include a homosexual religion and inclusion of lesbians.<sup>44</sup> The lesbian organization called Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was formed in San Francisco on September 21, 1955 by four lesbian couples with Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin as the organization’s leaders.<sup>45</sup> Many lesbians joined DOB because of its focus on issues primarily relevant to female homosexuals such as child custody and visitation rights.<sup>46</sup> The 1950s saw the growth of the movement and an increase in the number of homosexual organizations. Unlike Parlour et al. Licata names homosexual organizations and provides examples of these organizations actions in fighting discrimination. The sixth period is between 1961 and 1969. Homosexual activism during this time changes drastically from education and dignified protests to militancy. Homosexual

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<sup>40</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 167.

<sup>41</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 168.

<sup>42</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 168.

<sup>43</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 170.

<sup>44</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 170.

<sup>45</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 171.

<sup>46</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 171.

organizers as Licata writes, “grew bolder, borrowing Negro civil-rights tactics of demonstration and protest to emphasize their conviction.”<sup>47</sup> Young homosexuals in the movement abandon the information tactic employed during the 1950s and embrace this new active tactic of demanding their civil rights.<sup>48</sup> Licata discusses organizations founded during this time, their actions, and their successes. These organizations include East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), Society for Individual Rights (SIR), Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH), and Personal Rights in Defense and Education (PRIDE).<sup>49</sup> Licata describes the sixties as a time of continued visibility for the homosexual community, however, few people including historians engaged in conversations about homosexuals or their activism.<sup>50</sup> Licata’s seventh stage is traditionally seen as the beginning of the gay and lesbian rights movement by many gay and lesbian Americans. This period begins in 1969 with the Stonewall Riots in New York City and lasts until 1973. After the riots the movement experienced another split between older participants and younger activists. The young activists rejected the words “homophile” and “homosexual” and choose to embrace the word “gay.”<sup>51</sup> The young gays were as Licata describes them, “poorer, and more antiestablishment than their homophile predecessors.”<sup>52</sup> The movement collaborated with the women’s, environment, and equality for third world people movements. Gay liberation also had a complicated relationship with the Black Power movement. Licata describes how Black Panther leader Huey Newton voiced support for the gay rights movement and how members of the Black Power movement used derogatory terms used against gays against their oppressors.<sup>53</sup> The eighth stage from 1973 to 1979 saw the movement use

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<sup>47</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 173.

<sup>48</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 173.

<sup>49</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 174.

<sup>50</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 177.

<sup>51</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 178.

<sup>52</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 179.

<sup>53</sup> Licata, “The Homosexual Rights Movement,” 179.



negotiation by gay activists, the election of the first gay politicians in America, and the end of homosexuality classified as an illness. Licata describes the Harvey Milk murder trial and gays' frustration with the lenient sentence given to the murder. He also voices his concerns about the 1980s for gay activists by writing, "The movement of the eighties has its work cut out for it, but it enters the decade with a history of solid achievement."<sup>54</sup> Licata concludes his article with a similar call given by Parlour et al. in calling on more examination of each of these stages of the history of gay and lesbian activism in America. Licata's article provides historian with a solid foundation when studying the history of gay activism.

In 1983 John D'Emilio published a book titled *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970*. D'Emilio at the time was an assistant professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. The book is cited in every type of academic work today on the subject of the roots of gay and lesbian activism in America. D'Emilio's book is treated by scholars as the unchallengeable truth about the movement's roots. In D'Emilio's book he studies the beginning of today's gay and lesbian movement. He challenges the belief held by many of today's gays and gay activists that the Stonewall Riots mark the start of the modern movement. He says the gay radicals in the 1970s decided to forget the activism prior to 1969 because it was unlike the militant activism they engaged in to seek their civil rights.<sup>55</sup> D'Emilio address this amnesia by the movement by writing, "The homophile movement deserves kinder treatment than it has received."<sup>56</sup> Much like Licata's article D'Emilio divides his book into four parts. Each of the parts describes a decade beginning with the 1940s and ending with the 1970s. D'Emilio, like Licata, focuses on the

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<sup>54</sup> Licata, "The Homosexual Rights Movement," 183.

<sup>55</sup> John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago, Illinois: The University Press of Chicago Press, 1983), 240.

<sup>56</sup> D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 240.

homophile organizations based in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and New York City. D'Emilio also argues without the homophile movement and the communication networks developed in the 1950s gay liberationist in the 1970s would not have been able to mobilize the gay community as quickly as they did.<sup>57</sup> His book provides for a deep understanding of the homophile moments of the 1950s and 1960s and proves that these activists deserve more recognition by today's movement.

Much of the focus of these scholars examination of the roots of gay activism has been on homosexual men and their corresponding organizations. One sociologist who wrote about the inclusion of female homosexuals in the homophile movement was Kristin G. Esterberg from the University of Missouri. The title of the article is "From Accommodation to Liberation: A Social Movement Analysis of Lesbians in the Homophile Movement" and was published in 1994. Esterberg uses competition theory as a way to understand the decrease in homophile organization membership from the 1950s to the 1970s and to explain how the movement changed during this period.<sup>58</sup> Esterberg uses the homophile organization DOB for lesbians to show how the group grew and eventually became irrelevant to lesbian liberationists. In her article she explains how during the 1950s and early 1960s homosexual females tried to show there were few differences between themselves and heterosexual women. Lesbians during the mid-1960s became militant in advocating for their civil rights and became close with male homosexual groups. At the end of the 1960s many lesbians joined the women's movement causing DOB to be seen as irrelevant to achieving the civil rights of lesbian liberationists.<sup>59</sup> For much of the 1950s and 1960s DOB was the most prominent lesbian activist group in America, however, as more women's groups formed

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<sup>57</sup> D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 241.

<sup>58</sup> Kristin G. Esterberg, "From Accommodation to Liberation: A Social Movement Analysis of Lesbians in the Homophile Movement," *Gender and Society* 8, no. 3 (1994): 426.

<sup>59</sup> Esterberg, "From Accommodation to Liberation," 426.

during the late 1960s the groups fought for members and resources.<sup>60</sup> DOB eventually disbanded its national organization in 1970 due to these challenges and because of its outdated tactic of education in fighting for civil rights.<sup>61</sup> Esterberg also notes how its publication call the *Ladder* lost its distinctive edge when it changed its focus from a solely lesbian readership to one including heterosexual women.<sup>62</sup> Esterberg's article relies mostly on secondary sources and sites the *Ladder* as its primary source base. Her secondary sources include numerous books including works by D'Emilio. Esterberg's article alters the historical treatment of the homophile movement by demonstrating the significant contribution of lesbians in the movement and their own struggle for inclusion in the homophile movement and society.

The literature published prior to the twenty-first century focuses on establishing the homosexual in society and showcases primarily the efforts of homosexual men in organizing and seeking their civil rights. Cory's book is the first publication in modern history to detail the homosexual and the history of homosexuality while including his own life experiences as a homosexual man during the 1930s and 1940s. His book calls for homosexuals to view themselves as a minority and encourages them to organize. A fault of Cory's is his lack of attention in his book to female homosexuality. He avoids the topic entirely. Parlour et al. in their article is the first to document and analyze the organization of and impact of homophile organizations formed in the 1950s. These scholars are to be praised for their ability to keep their personal beliefs out of the article and trying to learn more about homosexuality during a time when it was condemned. The authors fail however at providing names of and actions undertaken by homophile organizations. They also fail to discuss female homophile organizations. Licata's

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<sup>60</sup> Esterberg, "From Accommodation to Liberation," 439.

<sup>61</sup> Esterberg, "From Accommodation to Liberation," 436.

<sup>62</sup> Esterberg, "From Accommodation to Liberation," 439.

article greatly expands the knowledge of gay and lesbian activism roots. He provides a better understanding of how the movement in the United State began and an excellent outline of the phases of the movement between 1908 and 1979. His article provides details about homophile organizations including their names and activities, however, he provides no information about organizations in smaller cities or those located in the south or Midwest. Licata's article does include information about the DOB, but the information provided is only about the formation of the group and nothing more. D'Emilio's book does an excellent job at outlining the movement even more in depth. The book provides information about the different organizations formed, the people in the organizations, and more information about lesbian activism. D'Emilio also spends most of his time discussing homophile organizations located in big cities on the east and west coasts. Activism in the south and Midwest are not discussed. His book also relies heavily on primary sources such as interviews, organization documents, and organization publications. Esterberg's article assists in filling the void of discussion on female homosexual activism. The DOB is discussed heavily from the organization's rise in prominence to its eventual fall and dissolution. Esterberg also looks at the connection of lesbian activism with the women's movement. Esterberg does lesbian activism history a service by finally including it in the discussion of homophile activism, however, she does not discuss other lesbian groups. Her focus on DOB makes the organization appear to be the only group for lesbian women during the 1950s and 1960s when there were other similar groups advocating for lesbians. Scholarship on the beginning of gay and lesbian activism focuses on portraying the homosexual as a real person in American society and the formation of a primarily male homosexual movement with lesbians minimally important or involved. The scholarship is absent of discussion on smaller homophile organizations, activity of homophile organizations in the Southern and Midwestern United

States, and the organization of homosexual college students and homosexual religious activism. The scholarship published after the twenty-first century addresses many of these areas and helps to form a diversified and more complex picture of gay and lesbian activism history in the United States.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature**

Scholars in the twenty-first century approach the subject of the roots of gay and lesbian activism in a different manner than their predecessors. These historians are focused on the details of the movement's beginning. They examine homophile organizations and gay liberation groups more intently and separately, look at gay college activism, unearth gay and lesbian religious activism, and explain how the movement used American rhetoric to justify equality and civil rights. The discussion and picture of the roots of gay and lesbian activism between 1950 and 1970 today is much more complex and displays the many faces of the movement.

One article that parts from the rest on the beginning of the gay rights movement is "Hitting Below the Bible Belt: The Development of the Gay Rights Movement in Atlanta" by Arnold Fleischmann and Jason Hardman. This 2004 article differs because of its focus on the gay rights movement's beginning in Atlanta, Georgia starting in the 1950s. Almost all the literature leaves the American south out of the discussion on gay activism. Fleischmann and Hardman believe Atlanta was a prime place for the gay rights movement to form in the south because of its history with the civil rights movement.<sup>63</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s homosexuals gained publicity concerning the "Atlanta Public Library Perversion Case" of 1953, had at least five gay bars serving the community exclusively, and in 1965 the raiding of a Halloween celebration at a

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<sup>63</sup> Arnold Fleischmann and Jason Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt: The Development of the Gay Rights Movement in Atlanta," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, no. 4 (2004): 412.

gay bar with 97 people arrested.<sup>64</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman in their discussion of the 1970s provide more information about the movement than in their 1950s and 1960s discussion. The city experienced a growth in the number of gay organizations. The Atlanta Gay Liberation Front (AGLF) was founded in 1971, the Georgia State University Gay Liberation Front (GSU-GLF) was founded in 1973 with recognition from the college, and the Gay Rights Alliance (GRA) was founded in 1976.<sup>65</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman do not devote space to examining the actions of each of these organizations. With the increase of gay activism in the 1970s in Atlanta gay men and lesbians became an influential voting bloc in the city. They used this to their advantage and helped vote into office politicians who supported their efforts for civil rights.<sup>66</sup> In concluding their analysis of the gay rights movement's beginning in the south and Atlanta Fleischmann and Hardman write, "Atlanta's gay and lesbian movement looks, in many ways, like cities in other regions."<sup>67</sup> They acknowledge Atlanta became the home for the gay rights movement to develop in the South because of the cities liberal image and good economy, the significant voting bloc of gays in the city, the movement's ability to use the cities civil rights movement and history to expand the gay rights movement, and the decrease of religious opposition to the movement.<sup>68</sup> The source base for the article relies on books, court case documents, and the periodicals *Southern Voice* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The article gives a great depiction of the movement in Atlanta, however, it lacks the greater existence of the movement in the south. This would help further demonstrate how Atlanta became the city where the gay and lesbian movement developed and became increasingly visible. The scholars also left out how the

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<sup>64</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt," 413.

<sup>65</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt," 414.

<sup>66</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt," 420.

<sup>67</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt," 423.

<sup>68</sup> Fleischmann and Hardman, "Hitting Below the Bible Belt," 423.

organizations interacted with the larger organizations in California and New York. The discussion would also have benefited from specific attention to how lesbians in Atlanta helped develop gay activism in the city and the treatment they received from police. Fleischmann and Hardman have brought to the discussion of gay activism the beginning of the gay and lesbian movement in the south and its importance.

Another area with little historical analysis is the significance of gay bars, their owners, and the purpose they served for the gay and lesbian community. Christopher Agee in his 2006 article “Gayola: Police Professionalization and the politics of San Francisco’s Gay Bars, 1950–1968” discusses the role gay bars had in San Francisco and their role in obtaining better police treatment for gay and lesbian bar patrons. Agee focused on the gay and lesbian bars in San Francisco because this city was the site where homosexuals were released from the army and stayed to make the city their new home.<sup>69</sup> In 1950 there were approximately 34 gay and lesbian bars in the city.<sup>70</sup> With this many homosexual bars the police leadership as Agee writes, “provided the patrolmen with very little guidance on how to handle gay and lesbian bars.”<sup>71</sup> With this lack of direction and a police culture to not ask for assistance officers on the streets had three options available to them.<sup>72</sup> They could use state law, ignore the homosexual bars, or they could engage in extortion or as it was known in the city gayola.<sup>73</sup> Agee then documents the fight gay bars had with the police department and the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). In their struggle the bars come together to form the Tavern Guild where members looked for loopholes in law and policy, took pictures of undercover police and ABC agents, and funded

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<sup>69</sup> Christopher Agee, “Gayola: Police Professionalization and the Politics of San Francisco’s Gay Bars, 1950–1968,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 3 (2006): 466.

<sup>70</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 466.

<sup>71</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 468.

<sup>72</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 468.

<sup>73</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 472.

legal battles against anti-homosexual statutes.<sup>74</sup> Throughout this battle ABC shutdown many gay and lesbian bars, however, because of loopholes the bars that were closed could be reopened relatively fast.<sup>75</sup> The Tavern Guild became central to the movement in the city during the mid-1960s and helped elect politicians who supported ridding the police department of corruption and ill treatment of homosexuals and their bars.<sup>76</sup> Agee determines “San Francisco’s gay and lesbian bar owners used their street-level conflicts with the police to win unprecedented civic legitimacy.”<sup>77</sup> Agee’s source base consists mostly of periodicals and interviews with police who worked during this time period. He also relies on secondary sources, however, there are only a few. One criticism of his discussion on homosexual bars in San Francisco is the absence of or appearance of exclusion of owners of lesbian bars and lesbian patrons’ contributions to the fight. Agee either leaves them out of the discussion entirely or groups them in with owners of gay bars and patrons’ actions in the movement. Agee’s article provides insight into why police departments treated gay and lesbian bars so poorly and how bar owners fought for change.

David Reichard starts his examination of another facet of the gay and lesbian rights movement where Agee ends his in 1969. His 2010 article titled “‘We Can’t Hide and They Are Wrong’: The Society for Homosexual Freedom and the Struggle for Recognition at Sacramento State College, 1969–1971” studies one gay college students’ efforts in demanding their visibility on campus. Reichard explains his examination seeks to bring together two traditional historical ways of studying law where the legal ramifications of the court case brought by the students and faculty at Sacramento State College are linked with the gay liberation movement.<sup>78</sup> Gay and

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<sup>74</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 480.

<sup>75</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 479.

<sup>76</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 481.

<sup>77</sup> Agee, “Gayola,” 489.

<sup>78</sup> David A. Reichard, “‘We Can’t Hide and They Are Wrong’: The Society for Homosexual Freedom and the Struggle for Recognition at Sacramento State College, 1969–1971,” *Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 (2010): 633.



lesbian college activism is different from mainstream gay and lesbian activism because the larger and national organizations had trouble connecting with the college groups because many of the students were under the age of twenty one.<sup>79</sup> Reichard before looking at the Society for Homosexual Freedom's (SHF) case brought against the university puts the actions of the students in context with the feeling of other college students at the time. Students on college campus during the 1960s and early 1970s with their involvement in civil rights activism and the antiwar movement as Reichard writes, "focused on gaining greater freedom and self determination...[while also seeking] to eliminate archaic rules of behavior and decorum..."<sup>80</sup> A homosexual group at Sacramento State College was formed because of the formation of similar groups at other college in the area and with the supportive leadership of college faculty including psychology professor Martin Rogers.<sup>81</sup> The SHF after its establishment as a group applied for formal recognition from the college. The student government known as the Associated Students of Sacramento State College (ASSSC) after discussion recommended the group for recognition, however, the college President who had final say in which organizations were recognized denied the SHF's request.<sup>82</sup> Reichard proceeds with his examination of the court case and the SHF's ultimate victory. Interestingly, because of the greater struggle by students for freedom on campus the SHF's case was supported and lead by heterosexual student leaders and a straight lawyer took the case because of his conviction for free speech.<sup>83</sup> The victory set precedence and was useful in other cases where homosexual student organizations were requesting formal recognition on campus at public and private colleges. Reichard writes about the importance of the case for all

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<sup>79</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 630.

<sup>80</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 635.

<sup>81</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 640.

<sup>82</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 645.

<sup>83</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 652.

college students by saying, "...the SHF lawsuit was not as much about creating actual space for gay and lesbian students to be gay or lesbian, but more about promoting students' civil liberties on campus."<sup>84</sup> The lawsuit also helped homosexual students become more visible on campus.<sup>85</sup> Reichard's article is based on interviews, court documents, college documents, SHF meeting minutes, and periodicals. He also relies on some journals and provides additional resources in his notes. Reichard's examination of the SHF lawsuit provides historians studying this era with a fuller picture of how gay and lesbian college students created their own niche in the movement and how in one instance heterosexual individuals assisted in the movement.

Another scholar who looks at the relationship of the gay and lesbian movement with other categories of people in society is Kevin Mumford. In his article titled "The Trouble with Gay Rights: Race and the politics of Sexual Orientation in Philadelphia, 1969–1982" he studies the relationship of the Gay Liberation Movement and Race in obtaining rights in Philadelphia. Mumford before addressing the complexity of the relationship explains the importance of knowing the connections of Gay Liberation with the Black Power Movement and African Americans.<sup>86</sup> In 1972 Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) members Harry Langhorne and Marc Segal approached the city council asking that sexual orientation be added in the Fair Practices Ordinance.<sup>87</sup> Their request was denied because of African Americans invocation of religious arguments and the assertion that homosexuality was a white problem.<sup>88</sup> This is where addressing race became incremental in the passage of the bill. Mumford voices this need by stating, "addressing diversity within their [gay and lesbian] movement and building cross-racial

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<sup>84</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 674.

<sup>85</sup> Reichard, "We Can't Hide and They Are Wrong," 674.

<sup>86</sup> Kevin J. Mumford, "The Trouble with Gay Rights: Race and the Politics of Sexual Orientation in Philadelphia, 1969-1982," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 1 (2011): 56.

<sup>87</sup> Mumford, "The Trouble with Gay Rights," 56.

<sup>88</sup> Mumford, "The Trouble with Gay Rights," 59.

coalitions remained crucial to their success.”<sup>89</sup> The gay activist brought in black individuals to testify at the hearings. Brother Fitzgerald testified he was black and gay and other invoked connections between the civil rights movement and the struggle for gays and lesbians to obtain their rights.<sup>90</sup> In addressing race the bill was passed in 1982.<sup>91</sup> In Mumford’s conclusion he calls on more investigation of how race and sexuality affect one another because this would inform historians on another kind of power in the past.<sup>92</sup> Mumford uses a balanced combination of primary and secondary sources. His article provides further information about the connections between gays and lesbian and African Americans and the Black Power Movement.

The study of gay and lesbian activism at a local level is small, however, the literature on gay religious activism is even smaller. In 2008, Heather Rachelle White wrote an article on this subject called “Proclaiming Liberation: The Historical Roots of LGBT Religious Organizing, 1946–1976.” White argues with the emergence of gay and lesbian religious organizations created areas where faith and sexual orientation could be discussed and where religious traditions could be used by gay people.<sup>93</sup> The churches White examines are the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), Dignity, and the Church of Peter, James, and the Beloved Disciple. The churches had catholic and protestant foundations, however, the MCC combined as many religious backgrounds into their services to welcome all religious gays.<sup>94</sup> White attributes the success of MCC with its founder Troy Perry, the many articles in the periodical *The Los Angeles Advocate*, and with the many assistant pastors in MCC.<sup>95</sup> White also discusses Perry’s activism

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<sup>89</sup> Mumford, “The Trouble with Gay Rights,” 66.

<sup>90</sup> Mumford, “The Trouble with Gay Rights,” 65.

<sup>91</sup> Mumford, “The Trouble with Gay Rights,” 71.

<sup>92</sup> Mumford, “The Trouble with Gay Rights,” 72.

<sup>93</sup> Heather Rachelle White, “Proclaiming Liberation: The Historical Roots of LGBT Religious Organizing, 1946–1976,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 11, no. 4 (2008): 103.

<sup>94</sup> White, “Proclaiming Liberation,” 109.

<sup>95</sup> White, “Proclaiming Liberation,” 108.

involvement and the concerns of the MCC congregation. Describing this concern White writes, “Some church members feared the notoriety that the MCC might incur for public involvement in gay causes, and they preferred that the church stay out of the civic arena altogether.”<sup>96</sup> From these pioneering gay churches came more in the years to come including the formation of gay synagogues.<sup>97</sup> White’s sources include many periodicals, a couple of interviews, and some personal correspondence. She also sites some article and books including recommendations for further investigation. Her article provides a good analysis of the importance and beginning of gay churches and their activism, but many example of activism are from MCC. Also, she leaves out information about positive relationships with other traditional churches and any actions traditional churches took against gay churches. It would have also been insightful to include a discussion on how gay churches interacted with one another instead of treating them separately as White does in this article. White provides a good base for research on gay churches and their activism.

Melissa Wilcox expands the depth of the conversation on the MCC in her article titled “Of Markets and Missions: The Early History of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.” Wilcox argues that a combination of internal and external factors attributed to the church’s success and that by studying these factor and the time period of the church’s increased popularity historians can gain a better understanding of the church and how the church impacted social change.<sup>98</sup> In Wilcox’s article she refers to the MCC founded by Troy Perry by its later name of Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). Wilcox also notes how the group was founded on tradition and embraced new

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<sup>96</sup> White, “Proclaiming Liberation,” 109.

<sup>97</sup> White, “Proclaiming Liberation,” 115.

<sup>98</sup> Melissa M. Wilcox, “Of Markets and Missions: The Early History of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2001): 83.

American realities involving religious gays.<sup>99</sup> Wilcox writes about the church's success by saying, "the social and cultural milieu of the urban United States in the late 1960's influenced both the initial founding of the UFMCC and its growth and success."<sup>100</sup> Wilcox continues her discussion by outline the external and internal factors that helped the church's growth and how the church address women's needs. In her analysis of the church she provides little explanation of the group's continued success today and does not include the contributions of lesbians in the success of the church. White and Wilcox have laid the foundation for the discussion of gay religious activism. More historians need to research this element of gay and lesbian activism and its impacts on the movement.

One of the most known about events in gay and lesbian activism history are the Stonewall Riots in 1969. Two scholars who set out to combat the exaggeration of the event are Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Crago in their 2006 article "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth." These women argue the Stonewall Riots was not the first incident between gays and police to encourage political organizing and it was due to the nature of the Stonewall Riots that made it become memorialized and commemorated.<sup>101</sup> The Stonewall Riots were memorable according to Armstrong and Crago because it was, "dramatic, politically relevant,...[and] newsworthy."<sup>102</sup> In their study of other clashes between gays and police around the same time as the Stonewall Riots they determined four other events had the potential to become memorable. These include the New Year's Ball raid in January 1965 in San Francisco, the Compton's Cafeteria disturbance in August 1966 in San Francisco, the Black Cat raid in

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<sup>99</sup> Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 84.

<sup>100</sup> Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 88.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crago, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 5 (2006): 725.

<sup>102</sup> Armstrong and Crago, "Movements and Memory," 726.

January 1967 in Los Angeles, and the Snake Pit Bar raid in March 1970 in New York City.<sup>103</sup> Armstrong and Crago in their analysis of these four events conclude that these interactions did not have both high potential in commemoration and the ability to mobilize resources for commemoration. Only Stonewall had both.<sup>104</sup> Their argument as to why Stonewall became the marker of Gay Liberation is convincing and their analysis disproves Stonewall being the first and only event where gays and police clashed. Armstrong and Crago's focus on large cities for this article is justified, however, their discussion would have benefitted by including altercations between the two groups in smaller cities. This would help in disproving the notion that only large cities had these altercations. These women help contextualize the Stonewall Riots when other scholars have neglected to do so in their work on the event.

In the article "*Gay Power Circa 1970: Visual Strategies for Sexual Revolution*" written by Richard Meyer in 2006 Gay Liberation is examined, however, the focus is on the visuals tied to the movement. Meyer in the beginning of his article notes how the Stonewall Riots have little visual documentation even though lots of people were involved in the riots.<sup>105</sup> The only photographs were taken by photographer Fred W. McDarrah after the riots had ended during the cleanup of the Inn.<sup>106</sup> The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) had asked the public for any photographs, but none were submitted to them.<sup>107</sup> The organization wanted photographs because as Meyers writes, "The GLF understood the task of visual documentation not as by-product or aftereffect of its public actions but as a crucial component of them."<sup>108</sup> Meyer next looks at one of the most iconic pictures of the movement taken by a studio and fashion photographer named Peter Hujar

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<sup>103</sup> Armstrong and Crago, "Movements and Memory," 729.

<sup>104</sup> Armstrong and Crago, "Movements and Memory," 729.

<sup>105</sup> Richard Meyer, "*Gay Power Circa 1970: Visual Strategies for Sexual Revolution*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 12, no. 12 (2006): 441.

<sup>106</sup> Meyer, "*Gay Power Circa 1970*," 442.

<sup>107</sup> Meyer, "*Gay Power Circa 1970*," 442.

<sup>108</sup> Meyer, "*Gay Power Circa 1970*," 447.

in 1970.<sup>109</sup> The picture represented a change in demeanor in the image of gay activists and participants. The image shows young people dressed in everyday clothes including jeans, striped shirts, tie-dyed shirts while some are smiling and others are holding a fist above their head.<sup>110</sup> This change in physical dress from suits and dress worn by activists in the 1950s to casual dress in the early 1970s demonstrates how activists were according to Meyer, “sexually and socially free...”<sup>111</sup> The 1970s poster was used again after being redesigned by Su Negrin to include a Buddhist mandala with Let go” written four times in a circle in the background with the young people in the foreground.<sup>112</sup> This symbol along with the wording represented as Meyer writes, “gay liberation as a matter of both psychic and social change, of both freeing consciousness at an individual level (let go) and heightening collective visibility and political power (gay liberation).”<sup>113</sup> Meyer also looks at advertisements in *Gay Power* a liberation turned pornographic magazine. When the paper was still part of gay liberation reporting ads for the paper that included naked people always had the individuals’ faces covered to protect their identities.<sup>114</sup> The action represents how gay people still needed to protect themselves when it came to visuals available to the public. Meyer’s article helps in understanding how the movement including the GLF framed themselves in photographs and voices the importance of visuals in gay liberation and all types of movements. Armstrong, Crage, and Meyer’s articles veer from traditional historical analysis of gay liberation and by doing so help contextualize it within the culture of the 1970s.

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<sup>109</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 447.

<sup>110</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 448.

<sup>111</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 449.

<sup>112</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 452.

<sup>113</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 453.

<sup>114</sup> Meyer, “*Gay Power* Circa 1970,” 458.

In looking at the entire gay and lesbian movement once again British scholar Simon Hall published two articles looking at how the movement used American ideals and rhetoric to assist in legitimizing gays and their efforts. The first article published in 2010 is “The American Gay Rights Movement and Patriotic Protest.” In this article Hall argues that, “appeals to America’s ‘national creed’ as a strategy to exert political leverage occupied a position of central importance within the gay rights movement between 1950 and 1980.”<sup>115</sup> Hall is expressing how the movement linked itself with American ideals obtaining civil rights. Hall begins to support his argument by providing an example of a protest in July 1965 outside the Pentagon that had veterans from different branched of the army holding signs claiming homosexuals were second class citizens.<sup>116</sup> He also uses the annual reminder between 1965 and 1969 which took place on the fourth of July as another instance where protest used Americanism to their advantage.<sup>117</sup> A third link to activist made to America’s historical past was with the Stonewall Riots. According to Hall, “the Mattachine Society of New York put it in language that playfully evoked the spirit of the American Revolution, Stonewall was the ‘hairpin drop heard round the world.’”<sup>118</sup> A fourth example is Harvey Milk’s speech outside San Francisco city hall where he used the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, part of the Declaration of Independence, and part of the National Anthem to describe America and used this description to show how gays and lesbians in America would win in the fight for civil rights.<sup>119</sup> These connections made by gay activists helped to justify themselves, the movement, and gave them the ability to engage heterosexual Americans in a conversation about homosexuality.

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<sup>115</sup> Simon Hall, “The American Gay Rights Movement and Patriotic Protest,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (2010): 560.

<sup>116</sup> Hall, “The American Gay Rights Movement,” 542.

<sup>117</sup> Hall, “The American Gay Rights Movement,” 543.

<sup>118</sup> Hall, “The American Gay Rights Movement,” 546.

<sup>119</sup> Hall, “The American Gay Rights Movement,” 559.



Hall continues his analysis of how the gay and lesbian movement used Americanism in his 2013 article titled “Americanism, Un-Americanism, and the Gay Rights Movement.” Based off of his 2010 article Hall adds to his own discussion by talking about how un-Americanism was used in the movement. Hall provides more examples of how the movement used the rhetoric of Americanism. Activist John Lauritsen in his 1974 leaflet calling for the repeal of New York State’s sodomy law used Americanism by talking about the approaching bicentennial of America and the Declaration of Independence.<sup>120</sup> Americanism was also seen in the commemoration parades of the Stonewall Riots during the summer of America’s bicentennial. They invoked the vision of the Founding Fathers, had Betsy Ross in drag, had American flags from the present and past, and referred to the Liberty Bell.<sup>121</sup> Hall sums up the use of un-Americanism by the movement by writing, “gay rights activists appear to have been reluctant to characterize their opponents explicitly as ‘un-American’ during the 1960s and 1970s.”<sup>122</sup> He is clear to point out that the movement’s use of un-Americanism has become increasingly visible since the 1970s.<sup>123</sup> He also acknowledges why the movement has predominantly used Americanism rhetoric. According to Hall, “It enables activists to deploy language and symbols that resonate powerfully...and offers an opportunity to reach out and build support on the basis of shared values and ideals.”<sup>124</sup> Hall’s articles are pioneering works on the relationship between the gay rights movement and the utilization of American language and symbols. His research either neglects lesbian efforts connected to Americanism or groups them in with gay men’s usages. His argument would also benefit from additional examples from southern gay rights groups and from

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<sup>120</sup> Simon Hall, “Americanism, Un-Americanism, and the Gay Rights Movement,” *Journal of American Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1115.

<sup>121</sup> Hall, “Americanism, Un-Americanism,” 1116.

<sup>122</sup> Hall, “Americanism, Un-Americanism,” 1118.

<sup>123</sup> Hall, “Americanism, Un-Americanism,” 1118.

<sup>124</sup> Hall, “Americanism, Un-Americanism,” 1125.

groups in smaller cities besides relying on San Francisco, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Hall's article help expand the knowledge on gay activists' strategies in building the movement and fighting for civil rights.

Hall's big picture examination of one aspect of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement is also used by Marc Stein in his book *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* to take another look at the American movement as a whole between 1500 and 1990. Stein published his book in 2012 and is a professor of history and gender, sexuality, and women's studies at York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Stein argues in the book that the gay and lesbian movement needs to be reexamined. He believes this is needed because new scholarship has been published on the topic, it will result in the discovery of areas that need more research, would help to end stereotypes, and can help us to understand historical questions about the United States and its history.<sup>125</sup> Stein divides his book into six parts to devote space for discussion of certain time periods in the movement's history. These include discussion on activities before the movement, homophile activism, Gay Liberation, AIDS activism, and queer activism. In his examination of the movement he brings to light the need for scholars to treat bisexual, transsexual, and queer activism in a more distinct way from gay and lesbian activism.<sup>126</sup> These movements have connections with the gay and lesbian movement, but have different challenges and goals.<sup>127</sup> In Stein's treatment of the movement he assures us that the book seeks to as he writes, "highlight the many ways in which the movement, for better or for worse, has made the world in which we live."<sup>128</sup> He is also upfront in addressing his reliance on scholarship on large cities and the lack

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<sup>125</sup> Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

<sup>126</sup> Stein, *Rethinking*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> Stein, *Rethinking*, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Stein, *Rethinking*, 11.

of scholarship on other large cities and small towns.<sup>129</sup> Stein also in addressing criticism he might receive also asserts how many straight people made valuable contributions to the movement.<sup>130</sup> His book also contains a section where he lists mostly books and journal articles organized by topic for further reading on the movement. Stein's book is a valuable contribution to the discussion on gay and lesbian activism and how new scholarship needs to be combined with the pioneering scholarship published during the late twentieth century. The contributions of Stein and other twenty-first century scholars on the gay and lesbian movement has helped to broaden the scope of research outside traditional areas of study and has created a more solid understanding of activism in different areas of the country and the different facets of activism in the movement.

### **Conclusion**

The Gay and lesbian Civil Rights Movement has a long and deep activism history in the United States despite its falsely believed young age as a movement. The pioneering research done in the mid to late twentieth century helped the field emerge and set the foundation of the timeline of gay and lesbian activism history. The scholarship published in the twenty-first century relies heavily on this foundation. Scholars in the twentieth century had to prove homosexuals were a minority group, had to combat the belief by many scholars and gay and lesbian activists that the movement had a history before the Stonewall Riots, and studied the most well-known gay and lesbian organizations on the West and East coasts. Twenty-first century scholars used this foundation to study gay and lesbian student activism, religious activism, activism in the South and Mid-West, and how the movement used patriotism. These scholars have proven the movement does have a history before the 1969 Stonewall Riots and the

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<sup>129</sup> Stein, *Rethinking*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Stein, *Rethinking*, 12.

overwhelmingly need of more research on contributions and efforts of lesbians. They also show the need for more research of activism in other major cities around the country and in small communities outside of urban areas. These topics of study are sure to be researched as gay and lesbian studies continues to grow as a field of study. The conclusions gained from these endeavors will further help historians understand the beginnings of the movement and the implications they have had on American society throughout time.

Emptying the Closet:

The Gay Liberation Movement in Rochester, New York, 1971–1975

## **Introduction**

The history of the gay and lesbian movement in the United States between 1950 and 1980 has primarily focused on organizations located in large urban centers such as New York City, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and San Francisco. Scholars have presented, whether on purpose or incidentally, the falsehood that during this period of time the gay and lesbian liberation movement only existed in large cities. As a result the continued research on the beginning of the movement centers on these cities. I will argue that a robust gay and lesbian liberation movement existed in the medium size city of Rochester, New York starting in 1971 and will explain how the movement impacted the local community and state politics. This analysis will use publications of the gay liberation Rochester newspaper *The Empty Closet* between its inception in 1971 and 1975 as evidence of the development of a strong liberation movement in Rochester. I will also prove how the movement impacted the local community and New York State politics relating to gay and lesbian issues like how other larger gay and lesbian organizations did in other urban centers.

## **1971: The Beginning**

*The Empty Closet* was first published in January 1971 by the University of Rochester Gay Liberation Front (GLF) located on campus in Todd Union.<sup>131</sup> This group of students and Rochester residents described themselves as “an association of people studying the nature of gay oppression and the potential for liberation.”<sup>132</sup> All the organization’s meetings were open to the public and they believed human and civil rights for minority groups could not be achieved without coordinated and organized efforts.<sup>133</sup> The group also encouraged people to come out

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<sup>131</sup> *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 2.

<sup>132</sup> *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 2.

<sup>133</sup> *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 2.

publically.<sup>134</sup> This stance by the organization aligned with that of larger movements located in big cities during this time after the Stonewall Riots. Gay and lesbians leaders now believed that in order for homosexuals to gain rights they had to stop hiding or “passing” as straight and let the public know how big of a minority homosexuals really were in American society.

The first article in the publication, which is a reprint from the Rochester *Daily Planet*, is titled “Gay Power” by Bob Osborn. This man was one of the founding members of the University of Rochester GLF. In his column Bob enlightened the reader about the formation of the GLF in October 1970, its official recognition by the University as a student organization, and reported the size of the GLF’s membership to be approximately 100 to 200 people.<sup>135</sup> In addressing the formation of the group Bob wrote, “It [the group’s formation] is simply a response to the awakening needs of an extremely large oppressed group.”<sup>136</sup> He continued by putting the GLF in the context of the gay and lesbian liberation movement and other movements such as the civil rights movement and Communist movement. He envisioned a world where all minority movements worked together to create a world peacefully inhabited by all.<sup>137</sup> Osborn concluded his article by stating the atrocities committed against homosexuals and calling for the reader to join the GLF or another movement to change the world for the better.<sup>138</sup> His column reflects those written and voiced by many larger gay and lesbian organizations in larger cities in that they both called for homosexuals to realize the oppression they experience, for all to come out or publically state their homosexuality, and for them to join a gay liberation movement seeking change.

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<sup>134</sup> *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 2.

<sup>135</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay Power,” *Daily Planet*, December 21, 1970. Reprint in *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 3.

<sup>136</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay Power,” *Daily Planet*, December 21, 1970. Reprint in *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 3.

<sup>137</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay Power,” *Daily Planet*, December 21, 1970. Reprint in *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay Power,” *Daily Planet*, December 21, 1970. Reprint in *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 4.

In this first GLF publication the organization included news from another upstate New York Gay Liberation Front group in Cornell. The Cornell GLF as noted in the article is the second oldest student group in the country with its formation in 1968.<sup>139</sup> The group changed their name from Student Homophile League to Cornell GLF in September 1970.<sup>140</sup> This change is consistent with the change in the gay and lesbian movement in larger cities. After the Stonewall Riots in 1969 many gays believed the movement had to become more forceful in its efforts so many organizations went under a name change to show their shift in strategy. The Cornell group was well organized and stated how, “We are working politically to end the sexual discrimination found in laws, job hiring, and police harassment.”<sup>141</sup> The group also held discussions with various campus groups about Gay Liberation, held weekly meetings, had two well attended dances, and published their own newsletter.<sup>142</sup> The inclusion of this article in *The Empty Closet* demonstrates the organization had communication with other local Gay Liberation student groups. This is important because it proves small gay liberation organizations were not cut off from each other. They had established and maintained lines of communication between each other. This coordination mirrors that of larger organizations in big cities. This article is the first of many from other organizations around New York State to be included in *The Empty Closet*.

The remainder of the first publication and subsequent publications of *The Empty Closet* in 1971 can be categorized into two areas. These are articles on political news and activities and those on social engagements and literature. The half page article “A Manifesto” by Debbie Lestz echoes the call of national gay liberation leaders about the movement and its direction. She wrote, “We must all seek to change the unjust laws of this land until we can truly say that this

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<sup>139</sup> “The Cornell Gay Liberation Front,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 4.

<sup>140</sup> “The Cornell Gay Liberation Front,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 4.

<sup>141</sup> “The Cornell Gay Liberation Front,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 4.

<sup>142</sup> “The Cornell Gay Liberation Front,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 4.



country promises justice to all people of any distinction or sexual orientation.”<sup>143</sup> This statement demonstrates how the Rochester GLF is conveyed the message of national gay and lesbian liberation movements. She solidified this demonstration of solidarity by having wrote, “The time to pick up the gun will come. We must be ready. Gay liberation is a call to power!”<sup>144</sup> Debbie Lestz’s article reflected the strategy and language used by large gay organizations to encourage gays to organize and become active members in gay liberation groups.

Bob Osborn draws off of Debbie Lestz’s article and wrote about the struggle for gay liberation. In this extension of his first article in the publication he connected the movement to the black civil rights movement. He noted how there were two distinctions between the movements. These were that being and acting black was not a crime and blacks are unable to hide their minority status. Osborn noted how the church and state have codified homosexuality as a punishable crime and how gays were able to conceal their minority status.<sup>145</sup> He further explained how the movement needed to follow the example of the black civil rights movement and seek changes in laws and to go even farther by changing attitudes of those involved in gay liberation and those who are not.<sup>146</sup> Osborn wrote about how his vision of the world is like that of Martin Luther King, Jr. where it is, “a world in which the words ‘queer’ and ‘faggot’ have disappeared from the language along with other words of oppression...”<sup>147</sup> This article is evidence that not only national organizations like the Mattachine Society and the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) were mimicking the vision and political strategies employed by blacks, but smaller gay organizations were as well.

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<sup>143</sup> Debbie Lestz, “A Manifesto,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 6.

<sup>144</sup> Debbie Lestz, “A Manifesto,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 6.

<sup>145</sup> Bob Osborn, “Thoughts on Gay Liberation,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 10.

<sup>146</sup> Bob Osborn, “Thoughts on Gay Liberation,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 10.

<sup>147</sup> Bob Osborn, “Thoughts on Gay Liberation,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 10.

In the February-March 1971 publication the article “Gay People vs The State Ass.” Written by Bob Osborn illuminated the prominence of the involvement of Rochester’s GLF in New York State legislative affairs concerning gays. The organization was invited to speak in front of the State of New York Assembly Special Committee on Discrimination Against Homosexuals on January 7, 1971 in New York City.<sup>148</sup> The members of the committee included Stephen Solarz from Brooklyn and Tony Olivieri and Franz Leichter from Manhattan and the three Rochester GLF members who delivered the Rochester GLF statement in front of the committee were Bob Osborn, R.J. Alcala, and Marshall Goldman.<sup>149</sup> Osborn noted how many of the gay organizations present were from New York City. Besides the Rochester GLF there was one other upstate gay organization present which was the Albany area Gay Liberation Front of the Tri-Cities. The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier sent no representatives to the meeting, however, they did send a statement to the committee.<sup>150</sup> In the opening of the statement prepared by the Rochester GLF it states, “In this testimony we intend to point out the upstate and small city homosexuals, although silent for a long time, are oppressed by New York State laws at least as much as those of New York City.”<sup>151</sup> This statement clearly identifies the misconception that all gays and their civil rights organizations are located solely in New York City. If not for the presence of Rochester’s GLF there would have been no representation of gays west of Albany and focus of the committee would have been on New York City gays. In the article “Liberalization” Marshall Goldman recounted the events of the public hearing. He described

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<sup>148</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay People vs The State Ass.: ‘They’re Your Laws Not Mine,’” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay People vs The State Ass.: ‘They’re Your Laws Not Mine,’” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 7.

<sup>150</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay People vs The State Ass.: ‘They’re Your Laws Not Mine,’” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Bob Osborn, “Gay People vs The State Ass.: ‘They’re Your Laws Not Mine,’” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 7.

how the television network CBS was there to cover the hearing and how there was a New York Times reporter sitting next to him taking notes. He described the testimony given by various representatives of New York City gay organizations.<sup>152</sup> At the end of his article he made a keen observation about how their testimony differed from testimony given by other gay organizations. He noted how the Rochester GLF was the only group to have gone through New York State laws by statute identifying which ones were discriminatory against gays and delineating for each statute those that need revision or those that need to be elimination.<sup>153</sup> The participation by Rochester GLF members proves how dedicated the organization was to achieving gay rights and how their efforts were at par with national gay organizations in large urban centers.

Another notable political event for the Rochester GLF was their participation in the March on Albany on March 14, 1971. About 2,500 people attended the march which involved shouting slogans while marching from the State University at Albany campus to the capital building and in front of the capital building listening to speeches calling for the end of discrimination against gays in law and society.<sup>154</sup> In the article “On the March March” Patricia Evans reflected on the experience by having wrote, “I was quite surprised to find out that there were so many brothers and sisters in New York interested in their liberation...”<sup>155</sup> The event was poorly reported in the news, however, Evans acknowledged that this event was a good way for the gay and lesbian community to raise awareness of issues affecting gays to legislatures, but also to raise awareness within their own ranks.<sup>156</sup> She called for the continuation of sending letters to New York State political leaders and to newspapers and for those who were not already

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<sup>152</sup> Marshall Goldman, “Liberalization,” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 10.

<sup>153</sup> Marshall Goldman, “Liberalization,” *The Empty Closet*, February/March, 1971, 10.

<sup>154</sup> Patricia Evans, “On The March March,” *The Empty Closet*, April/May, 1971, 30.

<sup>155</sup> Patricia Evans, “On The March March,” *The Empty Closet*, April/May, 1971, 30.

<sup>156</sup> Patricia Evans, “On The March March,” *The Empty Closet*, April/May, 1971, 30.

doing so to come out and live their lives openly.<sup>157</sup> The participation of the Rochester GLF in the March on Albany is another example of how the organization is as politically active as large gay organizations.

During the first year of publication there were two local scandals involving gays. The first involved the Eastman School of Music (ESM). In the article “Eastman Zap” GLF members asserted that Dean of Students Flora Burton, “has for a number of years been using student ‘spies’ to discover which students engage in homosexual behavior...”<sup>158</sup> She was also accused of coercing students who allegedly were homosexual to sign confessions stating their gayness and threatened to expose them to their parents.<sup>159</sup> The Rochester GLF took action by writing letters to the editor of the publication *Campus-Times*. The issues with the letters were never circulated at ESM until the GLF undertook the effort. At the conclusion of the article, the organization called for people to come forward and provide testimony to the GLF to be used against Burton.<sup>160</sup> This article highlights the involvement of the GLF in community affairs affected the gay community and how coordinated the organization was in their efforts to address it.

The second local scandal involved a local business named the 24 Hour Stores of Rochester. In the July 27 issue under the heading title “Notices” the GLF alerts the community that the business had, “been sponsoring ads on WBBF which perpetuate the already overworked stereotype of the lisping ‘faggot.’”<sup>161</sup> The GLF called for a letter writing campaign and provided the address of the chain’s manager. By the next issue the GLF letter writing campaign was successful in having the ad taken off the air. In addition to the ad no longer being aired the GLF

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<sup>157</sup> Patricia Evans, “On The March March,” *The Empty Closet*, April/May, 1971, 30.

<sup>158</sup> “Eastman Zap,” *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 1.

<sup>159</sup> “Eastman Zap,” *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 1.

<sup>160</sup> “Eastman Zap,” *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 2.

<sup>161</sup> “Notices,” *The Empty Closet*, July 27, 1971, 2.

was invited to on the weekend radio show “Contact” and the manager agreed to carry *The Empty Closet* in his stores.<sup>162</sup> Jim Fishman commenting on the protest wrote, “we showed straight people that we will no longer sit back and let the straight media degrade and misrepresent gays...[and] through direct action, concrete results can be gained in our favor.”<sup>163</sup> This protest is another example of how the Rochester GLF has proven to be just as capable of an organization in fighting discrimination against gay people as other larger gay groups.

Throughout the first year of *The Empty Closet*’s publication issues included information on social events and personal literacy pieces. Survival of gay organizations both large and small depends on the balance of political engagements and social opportunities. The GLF provided several social opportunities throughout the year. One of the first was a Liberation Dance on December 5, 1970 in the Frederick Douglass Building at the University of Rochester.<sup>164</sup> Larry Fine and R.J. Alcala reported how much of success the dance was and how it brought about 200 people together consisting of people of all orientations and a mix of University of Rochester students, other college students, and people from the Rochester community.<sup>165</sup> Fine and Alcala did not mention any push back about having held the dance by the university or from Rochester police. This is quite unusual because organizations in large metropolitan centers consistently experienced harassment by the police at social events like this one.

One of the next big social events was held on May 16, 1971 at Genesee Valley Park in Rochester, New York for the first “Gay-In.”<sup>166</sup> This event was attended by approximately 300 people from Rochester and upstate New York where they had a picnic and played outdoor games

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<sup>162</sup> “‘Fag’ Ads Off, GLF On,” *The Empty Closet*, August 10, 1971, 1.

<sup>163</sup> Jim Fishman, “Comments,” *The Empty Closet*, August 10, 1971, 1.

<sup>164</sup> Larry Fine and R.J. Alcala, “Dance, Anyone?” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 8.

<sup>165</sup> Larry Fine and R.J. Alcala, “Dance, Anyone?” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1971, 8.

<sup>166</sup> “Gay Week,” *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 3.

such as volleyball and women's touch football.<sup>167</sup> The event was hailed a success. In the same issue Gay Pride Week celebrating the Stonewall Riots was announced with plans for a chartered bus to take people from Rochester to New York City for the June event.<sup>168</sup> In the next issue the GLF reported that about 20 Rochester people along with some Buffalo individuals marched under the Rochester banner in the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade.<sup>169</sup> The following month there was another dance called the July 4<sup>th</sup> Gay Liberation Dance at the University of Rochester. The dance was another success with chants proclaiming gay power and chants from black dance attendees proclaiming black power.<sup>170</sup> The end of the year consisted of potluck dinners once a month along with a gay festival in October to celebrate the one year anniversary of the Rochester GLF.<sup>171</sup> These social events serve as evidence of the ability of a small gay and lesbian organization to facilitate a sense of community and are a reflection of the types of social events coordinated by larger gay groups.

The first year *The Empty Closet* was published there were many changes to the format and time of publication. It was published once as a monthly, twice as a bimonthly publication, five times as a biweekly, and once as a seasonal publication. The content remained consistent with the publication's focus on political news, organization news, inclusion of poetry, and meeting dates. *The Empty Closet* issues of 1971 have shown how connected the Rochester GLF is to the larger gay liberation movement in the state and nation and have demonstrated how the GLF focused on similar political issues and hosted similar social events as other gay

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<sup>167</sup> "Gay Week," *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 3.

<sup>168</sup> "Gay Week," *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971, 3.

<sup>169</sup> "Notices," *The Empty Closet*, June 29, 1971, 2.

<sup>170</sup> "Dance," *The Empty Closet*, July 13, 1971, 2.

<sup>171</sup> "Potluck," *The Empty Closet*, August 10, 1971, 2.

organizations in large cities. Over the next couple of years as the GLF changed to address new and continued political issues and the social needs of its membership.

### **1972-1973: Expansion**

Over the next two years of the GLF's existence the organization changed to address new or increasing prominent issues such as passage of anti-gay legislation, laws affecting gays, and the relationship between police and gays. Throughout these challenges the organization managed to keep its membership socially connected through hosting more social events including dances, attending gay pride in New York City, and publishing another literary issue. The GLF became a critical organization to gays in the Rochester and western New York area similar to large gay liberation organization such as the Gay Activists Alliance was to New York City gays. *The Empty Closet's* layout became more formalized and consistent along with the debut of a new logo for the newsletter. In 1972 the GLF published six biweekly issues, seven monthly issues, and one literacy issue. The issues ranged in page length between two and ten pages. In 1973 the publication of *The Empty Closet* became more consistent with the publication of eleven monthly issues ranging from three to ten pages in length. The contents of the newsletter during these two years is evidence of the GLF's presence in the community and is a reflection of issues faced by larger gay liberation organizations.

The first issue of *The Empty Closet* in 1972 was published at the beginning of February. In this issue a report was given on a statewide conference of gay groups in Albany held on December 3-4, 1971. About 35 representatives of various gay liberation groups from around the state attended the conference with two representative from Rochester.<sup>172</sup> The group of representatives agreed on several areas of focus including the prevention of discrimination in

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<sup>172</sup> "Statewide Conference of Gay Groups Attended by Rochester GLF Reps," *The Empty Closet*, February 5, 1972, 2.

housing and employment, the repeal of the consensual sodomy laws, and the removal of laws that were used specifically target gays where there are no victims to the crime.<sup>173</sup> An agreement was also made to have members from the various organizations present come to Albany every Tuesday to lobby for the passage of these bills.<sup>174</sup>

The GLF continued to address discrimination back home with an incident involving a bank loan officer employed at Lincoln Rochester and a man applying for a business loan.<sup>175</sup> The loan officer called the man a “queer” and proclaimed that the loan would be denied because of the man’s homosexuality.<sup>176</sup> The GLF took action by contacting the bank’s Senior Vice President about the incident. Reassurances were given to the GLF stating discrimination was not acceptable at the bank and that sexual orientation was not a factor in the loan process.<sup>177</sup> The Senior Vice President also offered to meet with the GLF. This fast action by the GLF demonstrates how the organization can effectively address gay community concerns within the Rochester community like many large gay liberation groups did in populous urban centers.

As winter turned into spring the political activities and events addressing gay liberation issues began to become more numerous. The GLF Political/Legal Action Committee undertook revising the pamphlet published by the organization called “The Law and the Homosexual.” This pamphlet contained all the laws including those on the federal, state, and local levels that impacted gay individuals’ lives negatively.<sup>178</sup> The committee called for members of the community to educate themselves about the laws that were used to arrest them and to support State Assemblyman Passante’s bill, which was being introduced again, outlawing employers

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<sup>173</sup> “Statewide Conference of Gay Groups,” *The Empty Closet*, February 5, 1972, 2.

<sup>174</sup> “Statewide Conference of Gay Groups,” *The Empty Closet*, February 5, 1972, 2.

<sup>175</sup> “Bank Apologizes for Anti-Gay Incident,” *The Empty Closet*, March 18, 1972, 2.

<sup>176</sup> “Bank Apologizes for Anti-Gay Incident,” *The Empty Closet*, March 18, 1972, 2.

<sup>177</sup> “Bank Apologizes for Anti-Gay Incident,” *The Empty Closet*, March 18, 1972, 2.

<sup>178</sup> “GLF Issues Latest Version of Ancient Laws,” *The Empty Closet*, March 18, 1972, 2.



from discriminating against their gay workers by writing their state representatives.<sup>179</sup> *The Empty Closet* published the names and areas of representation of the five Rochester area state assembly members who voted against the bill during its first appearance of the floor for a vote.<sup>180</sup> The GLF expanded their efforts to raise support for the bill by having called on members to attend a rally in Albany on April 15. The purpose of the rally was to “show the State Legislature that Gays are united and serious about the passage of favorable legislation, and to urge passage of laws guaranteeing Gay human rights.<sup>181</sup> Over the next month the legislation did not come up for a vote, however, the other bills in favor of gay civil rights had been developed. The three additional bills included bill A-4108 repealing consensual sodomy laws, bill A-5634 banning housing discrimination based on sexual orientation, and bill A-4186 providing additional support to Assemblyman Passanthe’s bill A-3407 ending employment discrimination against gays.<sup>182</sup> Interestingly, the New York State Legislature during this time was able to quickly pass anti-gay legislation addressing the United States Supreme Court ruling stating loitering laws, which were used as justification to arrest gays, were unconstitutional due to their vague language.<sup>183</sup> In addition to having attended this rally in Albany GLF members attended a Gay Weekend Conference in Syracuse hosted by the Syracuse Gay Freedom League on April 7-9. *The Empty Closet* reported the attendance of the conference by eight Rochester GLF members and representation of new gay liberation groups at the conference.<sup>184</sup> The conference facilitated discussion on “gay lifestyles, organisation [sic], relations with police, political action, and many other topics.”<sup>185</sup> Measures were also taken by the organizations to help facilitate strong

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<sup>179</sup> “GLF Issues Latest Version of Ancient Laws,” *The Empty Closet*, March 18, 1972, 2.

<sup>180</sup> “Gay Civil Rights Bill to Be Voted On,” *The Empty Closet*, April 15, 1972, 2.

<sup>181</sup> “Gay Rally at State Capital,” *The Empty Closet*, April 15, 1972, 2.

<sup>182</sup> “Pro-Gay Legislation Before Assembly,” *The Empty Closet*, May 1, 1972, 2.

<sup>183</sup> “Pro-Gay Legislation Before Assembly,” *The Empty Closet*, May 1, 1972, 2.

<sup>184</sup> “Conference at Syracuse,” *The Empty Closet*, April 15, 1972, 2.

<sup>185</sup> “Conference at Syracuse,” *The Empty Closet*, April 15, 1972, 2.

communication between groups in the state.<sup>186</sup> Later in the year two GLF members Jim Olin and John Sable attend a meeting of the New York State Coalition of Gay Organizations (NYSCGO) in Buffalo, New York on June 10-11.<sup>187</sup> The main focus of the meeting was to decide if the coalition would endorse a presidential candidate. The NYSCGO ultimately decided not to endorse a candidate for running for the presidency because political leaders across the country would not discuss in public gay civil rights.<sup>188</sup> At the end of the summer in the August issue of the newsletter the GLF announced the creation of a legal defense fund to “encourage gays to challenge legal and illegal oppression of gays, and to ensure expert legal counsel for gay-related legal problems.”<sup>189</sup> The GLF paid for the first hour of legal advice and provided a lawyer sensitive to gay legal issues. The money for the establishment of this fund was obtained through a grant given by the United Methodist Fund for Reconciliation.<sup>190</sup> The political action the GLF participated in during the first three quarters of 1972 earned the organization of the distinction of being placed on the Secret Service’s watch list which sought to “prevent political assassinations.”<sup>191</sup> Other groups on the list include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Iranian Student’s Association, and the Quaker Action Group.<sup>192</sup> The political demonstrations and meetings GLF members participated in during 1972 demonstrates the organization’s increasing influence in the gay liberation movement in the city of Rochester and New York State. The group’s political engagements prove comparable to the vibrancy of the gay liberation organization activities in larger cities.

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<sup>186</sup> “Conference at Syracuse,” *The Empty Closet*, April 15, 1972, 2.

<sup>187</sup> “Gay Coalition Meets in Buffalo,” *The Empty Closet*, July, 1972, 2.

<sup>188</sup> “Gay Coalition Meets in Buffalo,” *The Empty Closet*, July, 1972, 2.

<sup>189</sup> “Legal Assistance Fund Established,” *The Empty Closet*, August, 1972, 2.

<sup>190</sup> “Legal Assistance Fund Established,” *The Empty Closet*, August, 1972, 2.

<sup>191</sup> “Secret Service Cruises GLF,” *The Empty Closet*, August, 1972, 2.

<sup>192</sup> “Secret Service Cruises GLF,” *The Empty Closet*, August, 1972, 2.

The social activities of the GLF also expanded during 1972. The Valentine's Day Dance reported a record 275 people in attendance having consisted of equal representation of college students and community residents.<sup>193</sup> The GLF announced the arrangement of the Brockport GLF's first dance in March to be held at the State University of New York at Brockport.<sup>194</sup> The GLF in June once again participated in the Christopher Street Gay Liberation March in New York City on June 25, 1972. Twenty five GLF members from Rochester attended the event.<sup>195</sup> The GLF reported the participation of at least 3,500 people in the march and the presence of transvestite and religious groups.<sup>196</sup> The event was reported in the New York Times and by major local television stations in New York City. Following this successful event two months later on August 26 was a gay rights march in Toronto, Canada. Eight Rochester gays along with an estimated 200 other individuals from the United States attended the march.<sup>197</sup> Bruce Jewell recounted the thrilling experience of receiving instructions on how to march, marching through Toronto's gay neighborhood, chanting in front of the Provincial Capital Building, and hearing speeches from well-known gay rights activists Madilaine Davis and New York City GAA President Rich Wandel.<sup>198</sup> Other social events held throughout the year included venereal disease clinics for members to get tested, GLF meetings with topic discussions on the election, furthering gay outreach, gender roles, and religion, coffeehouse meetings, and film screenings. *The Empty Closet* also published another literary issue during the summer with numerous poems and stories on coming out and experiences of gays and lesbians, a list of gay and lesbian books, and a calendar of events. The events the GLF hosted and attended during 1972 show how members

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<sup>193</sup> "Valentine's Dance Smash Hit," *The Empty Closet*, February 19, 1972, 2.

<sup>194</sup> "Brockport University GLF Dance," *The Empty Closet*, February 19, 1972, 2.

<sup>195</sup> "Area Gays March in New York City," *The Empty Closet*, July, 1972, 2.

<sup>196</sup> "Area Gays March in New York City," *The Empty Closet*, July, 1972, 2.

<sup>197</sup> "Notes from A March in Toronto," *The Empty Closet*, September, 1972, 2.

<sup>198</sup> "Notes from A March in Toronto," *The Empty Closet*, September, 1972, 2.

have become part of national and international networks of gay liberation organizations and how the organization was able to provide for the social needs of the gay liberation movement in Rochester.

The end of 1972 saw the achievement of many political and social actions by the gay liberation movement and the Rochester GLF. With the arrival of 1973 the movement and the organization achieved more political and social battles. On December 7, 1972 Monroe County Republican Chairman D W Cook met with three GLF members to talk about the assembly's 1973 agenda in regards to passage of pro-gay legislation.<sup>199</sup> The GLF members emphasized the organization's efforts would be focused on passage of bills legalizing consensual sodomy and protections for gays in the workplace. Chairman Cook expressed his concern about the difficulty of passing a job protections bill and told the members he would possibly support a consensual sodomy law if the language of the bill was to his liking.<sup>200</sup> A major scandal to arise during the end of 1972 was the discovery of the "homophile" maintained by the Rochester police by Democrat and Chronicle reporter Mandi Harris. The reporter discovered the list included "1,052 alleged homosexuals listed, 945 men and 107 women."<sup>201</sup> *The Empty Closet* described the information included on the list by having wrote, "The information in the file...includes the persons [sic] name, address, nature of the alleged offense, and, if a crime is involved, the nature of the approach."<sup>202</sup> The GLF reported the newspaper received only three letters expressing disapproval of the article and received many sympathetic or positive letters and phone calls.<sup>203</sup> The organization encouraged the community to send additional letters of support to the

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<sup>199</sup> "GLF Visits Republican Leader," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 4.

<sup>200</sup> "GLF Visits Republican Leader," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 4.

<sup>201</sup> "D&C Reporter Confirms 'Homofile,'" *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 2.

<sup>202</sup> "D&C Reporter Confirms 'Homofile,'" *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 2.

<sup>203</sup> "D&C Does Series on 'The Gays,'" *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 3.

newspaper. These two events at the end of 1972 provided energy to the local gay liberation movement in their political efforts for the upcoming 1973 year.

In February 1973 NYSCGO met in Albany to discuss distribution of a survey to all New York State jails about conditions and the quality of facilities for gay inmates.<sup>204</sup> Also at the meeting the women's Committee asked to hold their meetings at a different time to "permit more women to participate in other committees."<sup>205</sup> The group agreed to hold separate men's and women's meetings at the next NYSCGO meeting. This national phenomenon would impact the Rochester GLF. The women and lesbian members of the GLF formed a separate liberation group called the Gay Revolution of Women (GROW) and announced meetings would be held on a different day and time from GLF meetings.<sup>206</sup> This reorganization is reflective of the reorganization of gay liberation organizations in large cities during the same time. Lesbians felt their issues were not being address by the many gay organizations. They proceeded to either form their own community organizations or become members of women liberation groups that addressed their needs more directly. The Rochester GLF did not suffer from the breakaway of the women and lesbians in the organization. Both groups worked with one another in future political actions and social events. In the May issue of *The Empty Closet* news broke of another reorganization of the GLF. This time the group was splitting into two gay liberation organizations. The University of Rochester students would make up one group staying on campus and the members who were non students would make up the other group relocating to an off campus facility. Both groups agreed to work together in the future and the transition plans for the formation of the group relocating off campus were announced.<sup>207</sup> Many large gay liberation

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<sup>204</sup> John Sable, "Coalition of Gay Organizations Meets," *The Empty Closet*, March, 1973, 1.

<sup>205</sup> John Sable, "Coalition of Gay Organizations Meets," *The Empty Closet*, March, 1973, 4.

<sup>206</sup> "G.R.O.W. Lists March Meetings," *The Empty Closet*, March, 1973, 1.

<sup>207</sup> "Town Gays Relocate," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1973, 1.

organizations can and have handled reorganizations of the type because of their large membership, however, some have perished. The new gay liberation group that relocated to downtown Rochester transitioned well. Members were able to secure a space at 812 Brown Street for the organization's office, held elections, and selected the new name of the organization as the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV).<sup>208</sup> The name was selected as written in *The Empty Closet*, "to imply a wider service area than just the city of Rochester."<sup>209</sup> The GAGV also took control over the publishing of the newsletter *The Empty Closet*. On October 23, 1973 the GAGV held an open house to show the community the new office space and their renovations to it. Approximately eighty people attended the event.<sup>210</sup> The GAGV in the November issue of *The Empty Closet* published incidents of gay discrimination in Rochester. Some of these included a man being denied an apartment, two women denied insurance, and the firing of a man for being suspected of being gay.<sup>211</sup> The GAGV stated the many actions they could take on behalf of those discriminated against which included taking legal action, providing legal defense, organizing an action or zap, or setting up a meeting with the person or business who committed the discrimination to make known that discrimination would not be tolerated by the gay community.<sup>212</sup> An achievement in the relationship between the Rochester Police Department and the gay and lesbian community came in late October and early November. Ted Aldrich representing the GAGV was part of training sessions for new police officers designed to teach how to communicate and interact effectively with minority groups.<sup>213</sup> The political actions undertaken during 1973 demonstrate the conviction of the small gay liberation group to end

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<sup>208</sup> "Gay Alliance Describes new Office Location," *The Empty Closet*, June, 1973, 3.

<sup>209</sup> "Town Group Selects Name," *The Empty Closet*, June, 1973, 3.

<sup>210</sup> "Eighty Attend GAGV Open House at New Gay Center," *The Empty Closet*, October, 1973, 1.

<sup>211</sup> "Gay Discrimination: Alive and Well in Rochester," *The Empty Closet*, November, 1973, 1.

<sup>212</sup> "Gay Discrimination: Alive and Well in Rochester," *The Empty Closet*, November, 1973, 1.

<sup>213</sup> "Gays Represented in Police Academy Training Program," *The Empty Closet*, December, 1973, 6.

discrimination against gays and their ability to stay a cohesive functioning organization through reorganization of the group from the GLF to the GAGV.

The year of 1973 provided many opportunities for members of the GLF and then the GAGV to interact socially in the community. The organization held another Valentine's Day dance and new to the winter season was the addition of a planned outdoor activity as a group to Bristol Mountain to ski.<sup>214</sup> In February a gay radio show was announced to be broadcast on WCMF-FM 96.5. The show aired on Wednesday nights at midnight with the program name "Green Thursday" because gay people wore green socks on Thursday.<sup>215</sup> The weekly program was to include interviews, music, and news.<sup>216</sup> In June eighteen GAGV member attended Christopher Street week in New York City where they participated in a dance sponsored by the GAA and marched in the parade. The attendance for the event was approximately 20,000 people. The continued attendance of delegates from Rochester demonstrated the GAGV's dedication to the fight for gay rights and proved how the organization was intimately involved in the national gay liberation movement. Since the reorganization of the organization many of the social events moved from taking place on the University of Rochester campus to local bars catering to gays in the downtown area. These establishments included the Bachelor Forum, Jim's, the Red Carpet, the Bazaar Lounge, and the AM/PM Club. In the new social column in *The Empty Closet*, which first appeared in the December issue, titled Sheila's Talk of the Town Sheila described the local bar scene and the social gatherings of GAGV members.<sup>217</sup> The GAGV in 1973 proved once again the organization's ability to provide ample opportunities for its members to take part in social events comparable to those held by gay organizations in big cities. From the beginning of

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<sup>214</sup> "Happenings," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1973, 1.

<sup>215</sup> "Gay Radio Show Begins 14 Feb," *The Empty Closet*, February, 1973, 1.

<sup>216</sup> "Gay Radio Show Begins 14 Feb," *The Empty Closet*, February, 1973, 1.

<sup>217</sup> "Sheila's Talk of The Town," *The Empty Closet*, December, 1973, 3.

1972 to the end of 1973 the organization managed to solidify its role in Rochester and New York State gay liberation efforts and transform into two separate functioning organizations while engaging in political actions and social events comparable to large gay liberation organizations in densely populated communities.

### **1974-1975: Established**

The GAGV's publications of *The Empty Closet* during 1974 and 1975 demonstrated how the organization had become an established authority in the Rochester gay liberation community and their prominence in keeping the gay public informed about the issues facing Rochester, New York State, and the nation. The newspaper published eleven issues each year using a consistent format. The 1974 issues ranged from four to eleven pages of news, advertisements, and reprinted articles from other publications in the Rochester community. The newspaper became thicker with the 1975 issues. These issues ranged in page length from seven to fifteen pages. The GAGV in 1974 and 1975 continued to fight for political causes affecting gay people such as repealing the sodomy law and curtailing poor police behavior with gay people. It also continued to provide opportunities for gays to meet one another in public places to foster a sense of community. The undertaking of these efforts by the GAGV shows how valuable smaller gay organizations were to the gay liberation movement nationally and in smaller metropolitan areas such as Rochester.

The GAGV during 1974 and 1975 repeatedly reported on the activities of the NYSCGO and their involvement with the organization. The 1974 may issue reported on the coalition's effort to fund gay rights activities and provide funds for their political and lobbying efforts in the state capital.<sup>218</sup> The GAGV reported having pledged \$100 dollars of which \$50 had been paid.<sup>219</sup> In the same issue a report was given on the NYSCGO's conference in Syracuse where news

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<sup>218</sup> "NYSCGO Financial Situation," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 4.

<sup>219</sup> "NYSCGO Financial Situation," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 4.



came that GAGV member Patti Evans was to be involved with lobbying efforts by the organization.<sup>220</sup> She was selected because of her belief that “the future of gay rights lies in direct and open influence on legislators and institutions that affect them.”<sup>221</sup> After being chosen as the Coordinator for legislative lobbying for the NYSCGO she along with other activists developed surveys to distribute to legislators, clergy, and businesses who employ a great number of people asking them about their feelings toward gays. The surveys had been distributed to local coordinators across the state.<sup>222</sup> The next meeting of the NYSCGO took place on July 21 where four Rochester GAGV members were present. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the organization’s lobbying efforts, organize the employment of a full time lobbyist, and discussion of how to raise funds for the organization and for the employment of the lobbyist.<sup>223</sup> At the October meeting the announcement was made saying the NYSCGO had hired a part time lobbyist for the remainder of the year. This individual was Ted Aldrich. A Rochester openly gay GLF and GAGV member.<sup>224</sup> The purpose of the having Aldrich as a lobbyist in Albany was to ensure the “repeal of the sodomy section of the State Penal Code and to get an amendment to the State Human Rights Law which would extend it’s [sic] guarantee to matters of sexual orientation and affectional [sic] preference.”<sup>225</sup> Aldrich had already began to meet with gay groups across the state to encourage them to put pressure on their representatives. He also meet with groups who were not fighting for gay civil rights to learn about tactics these groups employed in their lobbying efforts. Aldrich made it known in *The Empty Closet* that the legislators will be informed of the large size of the minority group and their potential impact on elections.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> “Syracuse NYSCGO Meeting,” *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 4.

<sup>221</sup> “Rochestarian Selected to Coordinate Gay Lobbying,” *The Empty Closet*, June, 1974, 1.

<sup>222</sup> “Rochestarian Selected to Coordinate Gay Lobbying,” *The Empty Closet*, June, 1974, 1.

<sup>223</sup> “NYSCGO Legislative Tactics Workshop,” *The Empty Closet*, September, 1974, 1.

<sup>224</sup> “Aldrich Goes to Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, November, 1974, 1.

<sup>225</sup> “Aldrich Goes to Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, November, 1974, 1.

<sup>226</sup> “Aldrich Goes to Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, November, 1974, 1.

Through the remainder of 1974 and until the end of 1975 the coalition and the GAGV pressured the legislature to pass legislation that would allow for consensual sodomy, however, their efforts were not enough. The bill according to *The Empty Closet* “died late Monday night, June 30 1975.”<sup>227</sup> The sponsor of the bill William Passannante after recognizing during the roll call vote that the bill would not pass if allowed to proceed to a full vote had the vote ended and sent the bill back to committee.<sup>228</sup> This maneuver prevented the vote from being entered in the public record so that the legislators who voted yes on the bill would be protected from media and public scrutiny and would minimize the press coverage over the bill’s inability to become law.<sup>229</sup> The NYSCGO and the GAGV would continue to fight for the passage of the bill. This is one instance during 1974 and 1975 the organization was as influential as large gay liberation groups in gay political matters.

In the 1970s the GLF and then the GAGV fought to improve the relationship between the Rochester Police Department and the gay community. The 1974 and 1975 issues included more information on how the GAGV was working to improve community relations with Rochester police. The first publication of the newspaper in 1974 described how police arrested at least three people at the Monroe Theater.<sup>230</sup> The paper described the event by writing, “The plainsclothesman [sic] loitered in the restroom, making themselves appear available and interested....Once seated [in the theater], the officer would move in such a way as to make himself available for groping...”<sup>231</sup> The GAGV took action by contacting the theater manager. They talked to him about the incidences, received assurances that he called the police to

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<sup>227</sup> Kevin Scahill, “Sodomy Repeal Dies in Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1975, 1.

<sup>228</sup> Kevin Scahill, “Sodomy Repeal Dies in Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1975, 1.

<sup>229</sup> Kevin Scahill, “Sodomy Repeal Dies in Albany,” *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1975, 1.

<sup>230</sup> “Several Arrested at the Monroe Theater,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1974, 1.

<sup>231</sup> “Several Arrested at the Monroe Theater,” *The Empty Closet*, January, 1974, 1.

complain about gays, and got the manager to agree to put up a sign warning against loitering in the theater.<sup>232</sup> On April 21 the Gay Alliance arranged the first forum for members of the community to talk with the Rochester police.<sup>233</sup> The two members of the police department who spoke at the forum were Lt. Gordon Urlacher and Sgt. DiAngelo. The GAGV's goal in setting up this meeting was to "initiate a dialogue with the police in hopes of achieving some understanding on both sides."<sup>234</sup> Many of the questions presented to the officers revolved around arrests in parks and other areas where officers are perceived as using entrapment to arrest gays.<sup>235</sup> The conversation resulted in the GAGV focusing on future efforts to develop relationships with the vice squad and tactical units. They also were encouraged to take part in police training where officers could learn about the lives of gay people in the city.<sup>236</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc commenting on the meeting was cautiously optimistic about future improvements in the relationship between the Rochester police and the gay liberation community.<sup>237</sup> The following month GAGV President Michael Robertson met with Lt. Speranza, head of the Rochester Police Tactical Unit to discuss the arrests of gays and how this needs to end. The meeting was a good first step in establishing a relationship between the two organizations and as a sign of good will Lt. Speranza alerted Robertson that Highland Park would be under police surveillance soon.<sup>238</sup> The relation between the organizations remained unstable going into 1975 and in September Bob Osborn met with the Rochester Police Chief Thomas Hastings and the tactical squad commander Lt. Speranza. The discussion involved taking about the arrests and poor treatment of transsexuals by the police and

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<sup>232</sup> "Several Arrested at the Monroe Theater," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1974, 1.

<sup>233</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc, "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 1.

<sup>234</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc, "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 1.

<sup>235</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc, "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 1.

<sup>236</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc, "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 1.

<sup>237</sup> Wilfred LeBlanc, "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received," *The Empty Closet*, May, 1974, 1.

<sup>238</sup> "GAGV President Talks with Head of Police Tact. Unit," *The Empty Closet*, June, 1974, 1.

the arrest of seventeen gays in Durand-Eastman Park.<sup>239</sup> The conclusion of the meeting did not result in immediate changes, however, the GAGV stated it would continue to try to develop a better relationship with the police.<sup>240</sup> These two incidents demonstrated the ability of the GAGV to take political action comparable to those undertaken by larger gay rights groups for the betterment of gay people in a medium size city.

The Gay Alliance provided social opportunities during 1974 and 1975 that continued to facilitate a sense of community. The organization held a cabaret themed dance at the GAGV center in February<sup>241</sup> Members also took part in a Toronto weekend trip set up by the AM PM Club in Rochester in late January.<sup>242</sup> Many of the bars catering to gays in Rochester such as Jim's held parties throughout the year where members got together. Members of the Gay Alliance continued to attend gay pride in New York City. On June 30, 1974 several car loads of people left Rochester to attend the Christopher Street Liberation Day march. Over 43,000 people were reported as having participated in the event with previously absent groups becoming visible and groups who had little representation at last year's parade becoming bigger.<sup>243</sup> Some notable differences in participants from the 1973 celebration were the greater number of religious figures in attendance, the attendance of more college groups, and the presence of parents of gays.<sup>244</sup> In 1975 at the march another contingent of gay liberation people from Rochester marched in the parade. Recounting the experience of marching in the parade in *The Empty Closet* the attendee wrote, "An ice cube flies out of nowhere, bounces off my chest, shatters on the pavement. Five years ago it was beer bottles..."<sup>245</sup> This statement demonstrated how far the movement had come

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<sup>239</sup> "Rochester Gays Meet with Police Chief," *The Empty Closet*, October, 1975, 1.

<sup>240</sup> "Rochester Gays Meet with Police Chief," *The Empty Closet*, October, 1975, 9.

<sup>241</sup> "'Cabaret' Feb. Dance Theme," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1974, 1.

<sup>242</sup> "Toronto Weekend Tour," *The Empty Closet*, January, 1974, 1.

<sup>243</sup> "Gay Pride Week Parade to Central Park," *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1974, 1.

<sup>244</sup> "Gay Pride Week Parade to Central Park," *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1974, 1.

<sup>245</sup> "Rochester Gay Activists Visit the Big Apple," *The Empty Closet*, July/August, 1975, 10.

in reaching the gay liberation goal of full civil rights for gay people. The presence of the GAGV in the facilitation of social events similar to those held by gay liberation groups in larger cities was evidence of the organization's impact on the gay liberation movement in Rochester and its ability to use these relationships to advance gay liberation in the city and across the state.

### **Conclusion**

Since 1975 the Gay Alliance and *The Empty Closet* continued to advance the gay liberation movement in Rochester and New York State. Both organizations still exist today serving the many needs, including those that are political and social, of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community. *The Empty Closet's* December 2014 issue was 36 pages and contained articles on politics, news from around the state, country, and world, interviews, opinion and columnist pieces, cartoons, a page listing resources, and a community calendar. These organizations are missing in the historical account of the gay and lesbian movement between 1950 and 1980. Historians have traditionally focused on gay homophile and gay liberation organizations in large urban centers such as those located in New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. during this period of time in American history. This falsehood is dispelled when examining gay liberation activity shortly after the Stonewall Riots in the medium sized city of Rochester, New York. Using *The Empty Closet* publication by the Gay Liberation Front at the University of Rochester to understand the gay liberation movement in Rochester reveals how vibrant the movement was in the city. It also shows how their political actions including lobbying efforts, demonstrations, and petitions and social activities including dances, bar parties, and participation in gay pride in New York City were as robust as those planned and executed by larger gay organizations located in big urban centers.

The Beginning of the Modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States:

Teaching Strategies for Today's Classrooms

## **Introduction**

I'm just going to say it; gay. There. Phew. I said it. In today's classroom this word is used by middle and high school students as another word for stupid, someone who is super flamboyant, and as an insult. When students use other derogatory terms such as cripple, the N-word, and slut teachers immediately step in explaining how these words are inappropriate. This is not the case when it comes to the word gay when used in a derogatory manner. Today's educators are afraid to even say the word "gay" let alone address a student who uses it to bully. This inaction allows for the degradation and demoralization of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students.

As educators, especially social studies educators, we have a duty to make sure all our students have historical role models who communicate to students messages of belonging in our society and motivation to be the best person they can be; someone who changes society for the better. These examples have been provided in the curriculum for male, female, African American, and Hispanic students and others. However, the curriculum leaves out role models for and the history of LGBT students entirely. And why? Because of perceptions by parents, school leadership, teachers, and politicians that teaching lesbian and gay history is teaching gay sex. This is not true!

The following teaching strategies are evidence contrary to this belief. Gay sex is not discussed. The teaching strategy focuses on telling the story of the beginning of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States through primary and secondary sources, understanding the terminology necessary to have an intelligent and respectful discussion on the topic, and highlighting individuals in the movement who can serve as role models for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students.

The teaching strategies are meant to be used after the African American Civil Rights Movement, however, it does not have to be taught at this point. When these strategies are used after the African American Civil Rights Movement students are better able to make connections between the movements in terms of similarities and differences. The time frame given to use the teaching strategies is three forty-five minute class periods or two ninety minute blocks. The reason for providing a few teaching strategies instead of a group of several strategies is twofold. First, with all the curriculum requirements there is a minimal amount of time available for study of topics outside the mandated curriculum. These teaching strategies provide a quick way to incorporate additional topics without taking up too much time. Second, teaching about LGBT history is not mandated in almost the entire United States. As of 2015, the only state to have mandated teaching LGBT history is California in 2010. Many states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which in the social studies framework have a standard on teaching about Gay and Lesbian history, however, states who have adopted the CCSS have not mandated the topic to be taught in the classroom.

These strategies are meant for teachers who would like to teach LGBT history in their classrooms, but are unsure of how to do so. The strategies used are from the third edition of Doug Buehl's book *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. Buehl was a teacher for 33 years in the Madison Metropolitan School District in Madison, Wisconsin and today is a staff developer and adolescent literacy consultant. The strategies used include alphabet brainstorming, concept maps, and power notes. Teachers who decide to incorporate LGBT history in their classrooms on their own today using these strategies and others like them will be the ones who show society how teaching LGBT history can be taught successfully in the classroom and how



valuable it is to our students. It is my hope that in the near future every state in America will mandate teaching LGBT history in every classroom.

### **Time Frame**

Three 45-minute class periods or two 90-minute class blocks

### **New York State Learning Standards**

Standard 1 – History of the United States and New York

Standard 5 – Civics, Citizenship, and Government

### **New York State Common Core 9-12 Social Studies Framework**

11.10 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE/DOMESTIC ISSUES (1945 – present): Racial, gender, and socioeconomic inequalities were addressed by individuals, groups, and organizations. Varying political philosophies prompted debates over the role of the federal government in regulating the economy and providing a social safety net.

11.10b Individuals, diverse groups, and organizations have sought to bring about change in American society through a variety of methods.

- Students will trace the following efforts in terms of issues/goals, key individuals and groups, and successes/limitations:
  - Gay Rights and the LGBT movement (e.g., Stonewall Inn riots [1969], efforts for equal legal rights)
- Students will thoroughly investigate at least one of the efforts above.

### **New York State Common Core Social Studies Unifying Themes**

Theme 1 – Individual Development and Cultural Identity (ID)

Theme 3 – Time, Continuity, and Change (TCC)

Theme 5 – Development and Transformation of Social Structures (SOC)

Theme 6 – Power, Authority, and Governance (GOV)

Theme 7 – Civic Ideals and Practices (CIV)

### **National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Themes of Social Studies**

Theme 1 – Culture

Theme 2 – Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 4 – Individual Development and Identity

Theme 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6 – Power, Authority, and Governance

Theme 10 – Civic Ideals and Practices

### **Student Objectives**

1. Students will be able to define vocabulary relevant to the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States (Bloom’s Taxonomy – Knowledge Level).
2. Students will be able to name individuals who made contributions to the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States (Bloom’s Taxonomy – Knowledge Level).
3. Students will be able to summarize the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States (Bloom’s Taxonomy – Comprehension Level).
4. Students will be able to analyze primary and secondary source documents to formulate arguments about the movement and mission of gay and lesbian organizations and publications (Bloom’s Taxonomy – Analysis).
5. Students will be able to explain the role individuals and gay and lesbian publications played in the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement between 1950 and 1980 and today (2015) through making visual and/or written products (Role/Audience/Format/Topic [RAFT]) (Bloom’s Taxonomy – Evaluation).

### **Setting the Stage**

The modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States began according to most historians around 1950 with the founding of the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles, California. This homophile organization was founded by Harry Hay and sought to build a network of gay and lesbian people where they would educate themselves and society about homosexuality. The lesbian membership in the group felt that the society was mainly for men and in 1955 formed a separate organization for lesbians. The group was founded in San Francisco, California by the lesbian couple Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. This organization was called the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) and sought to continue educating its membership and advocating for issues specifically related to them such as child custody. America came to know

about the prevalence of homosexuality in society through the publishing of the Kinsey Reports by researcher Alfred Kinsey. The reports found that homosexuality was an acceptable sexual behavior among men and women. Groups opposed to homosexuality used the report to advocate that homosexuals were a threat to national security and thus should not be employed by the government.

Homophile groups during the 1950s and 1960s took part in consciousness raising to educate their members and protested in public places. Participants in protests dressed formally so that their morality would not be challenged and the focus would be on the issues. Through the 1950s and 1960s both organizations published newsletters for their membership and the public. The Mattachine Society published the *Mattachine Review* and the Daughters of Bilitis published *The Ladder*. Information included in the publications included current research on homosexuality, schedules of events, subscription information, and local and nation news related to gay and lesbian civil rights. Throughout this time there were clashes with police, however, none of these incidents led to national attention. In 1969 at the Stonewall Inn in New York City the movement came into the national spotlight when gays and lesbians clashed with police during a raid of the establishment. Many gay and lesbian activists point to this event as sparking the modern movement, however, this is not the case. Though this event did not spark the beginning of the movement it did move the movement forward and brought it to the attention of more Americans across the country.

In one smaller metro center in upstate New York, Rochester, students along with a faculty member founded the Rochester Gay Liberation Front at the University of Rochester in October 1970. This organization also educated its membership by publishing a newsletter beginning in 1971. The group did not believe in the methods of the homophile organizations of

the 1950s and 1960s, but identified with a shift in the movement after Stonewall called Gay Liberation. The group went to colleges educating people through speaking engagements, went to Albany to protest for civil rights, and communicated regularly with larger organizations in New York City. The Rochester Gay Liberation Front was the most active Gay Liberation organization in upstate New York and still exists today. The group's name is currently the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV) and it continues to publish *The Empty Closet*. The newspaper has expanded in size and continues to include similar information provided in its earliest issues such as local, state, and national news about the movement, a schedule of community events, and community resource information.

### **Procedure**

The following description is a suggested procedure for the administration of the following teaching strategies. When using these strategies in the classroom accommodations will be necessary in order to reach all students and to account for the limited resource of time. The worksheets and documents for these strategies follow this description. There are a total of 4 worksheets and 27 documents (labeled A to AA). The inclusion of 27 documents provides teachers with a bank of sources to teach about the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement. Some documents may need to be excluded due to the amount of time allotted for these strategies. The content covered through use of these teaching strategies is the beginning of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement between 1950 and 1980. The strategies will provide students the opportunity to connect with the current movement and others in 2015, however, the movement's history between 1980 and 2010 is not covered because the amount of time suggested for the following teaching strategies would need to be expanded over several additional class periods or blocks to effectively integrate this period of time of the movement. View the additional resources

section to find sources that would be helpful in beginning to learn about the movement between 1980 and 2010.

Prior to the start of class the worksheets should be placed near the classroom door so that when students enter the classroom they pick up the 3 worksheets and the packet of documents. Also, prior to beginning the teacher should have planned the grouping of students into groups of 3 or 4. When determining groups the teacher should be mindful of ability by placing a student who is struggling with content, a student who is doing a satisfactory job, and a student who is excelling in the same group. This allows for the students who understand the content or concept the opportunity to assist the other students in their group who are struggling to understand and allows them to cement their own understanding at the same time.

Once students have picked up the worksheets and document packet the teacher should instruct students to focus on worksheet 1 with the alphabet brainstorming activity. The teacher will then tell students they will be learning about the Modern Gay and Lesbian Movement in the United States and this teaching strategy is meant to gauge their prior knowledge on the topic. The teacher will then tell students when they have information that is relevant to the topic to place it in the box with the letter the information begins with. For example, if they know about the importance of Stonewall to the movement, then they would write the word Stonewall in the box with the letter "S." The teacher should give student approximately 3 to 5 minutes to fill in as much of the chart as they are able to. After students have been given this time the teacher will ask students to share the number of boxes they were able to fill in and some of the information they put in the boxes. This will allow the teacher the opportunity to assess students' prior knowledge and to make any adjustments needed to support their learning during their participation in the following strategies.

After the students have brainstormed, the teacher will instruct students to look at worksheet 2 containing vocabulary relevant to the discussion of the lesson. The instructor can either review key terms from the list or can ask students to explain some of the terms to the class. This part of the lesson is where the instructor tells the students that inappropriate use of the following terms will not be tolerated. They should also be told to have this list of terms out on their desks during the time spent on the movement so that if at any time they are not sure of how to use a word correctly they can refer to the list. This will facilitate an intelligent and respectful discussion of the movement in the classroom and hopefully beyond. The terms with an “\*” in front of the word should be discussed with the students before proceeding to the main teaching strategies.

The teacher will proceed by giving students a brief 3 to 5 minute big picture of the Modern Gay and Lesbian Movement in the United States either verbally or through a visual presentation (if done via Microsoft PowerPoint only use at most 2 slides). The students should be informed the movement began in 1950 (though there was activism activity prior to this) with the founding of the Mattachine Society in California. A few years after the formation of this organization another group was formed for lesbians called the Daughters of Bilitis. Inform students that the movement was primarily concentrated in big cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. though there was activism in smaller metro centers such as Rochester, New York with the formation of a branch of the gay organization called the Gay Liberation Front. The teacher will tell students they will be investigating these organizations of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s through primary and secondary documents with guiding questions in groups of 3 to 4 people. After the students examine the documents the teacher will use the teaching strategy called a Role/Audience/Format/Topic (RAFT). This strategy allows

students to be creative in the way they organize and present the information they gained from examining the documents. Each group will be told who they are, who they are addressing, the way they will be addressing their audience, and the parameters of their address. If the African American Civil Rights Movement has been taught teachers should encourage students to make connections to this movement and others like it in their RAFT. If time permits the teacher can have students present their RAFT and explain how they choose the documents they included, if and how they connected the documents to the African American Civil Rights Movement or other movements, and tell the class one piece of information they thought was significant to them by participating in this investigation. Students should be given most of the time allocated for this strategy for their investigation of the documents and development of their RAFT. After the presentations the teacher can choose between 2 closing strategies. The first option is the teacher can instruct students to take out worksheet 1 and in a different color pen or marker complete the A to Z chart. Using a different color will allow the teacher the ability to see what students knew prior to and after the use of the teaching strategies. The other option is the teacher can have students complete an exit slip (worksheet 4). The students will summarize the movement and decide if the movement has or has not made progress. Students will turn in worksheets 1, 3, and 4 and their RAFT.

### **Additional Resources**

The following is not a comprehensive list of resources on gay and lesbian history throughout time and around the world. The list is useful for individuals beginning research on the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement in the United States primarily between 1950 and 2015. Areas of research could focus on the movement prior to 1950, activism around the world, university gay and lesbian student organizations, the gay friendly church called the Metropolitan

Community Church, literary works and artwork by LGBT people, and the myth of Stonewall.

Please visit a local public library, university library, museum, or consult with a local LGBT community organization for assistance with identifying additional topics and resources.

## **BOOKS**

Beemyn, Genny. *A Queer Capital: A History of Gay Life in Washington, D.C.* New York: Routledge, 2015.

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Milk, directed by Gus Van Sant. San Francisco, CA: Focus Features, 2009. DVD.

On These Shoulders We Stand, directed by Glenne McElhinney. Los Angeles, CA: Impact Stories, 2009. DVD.

Shoulders To Stand On, directed by Kevin Indovino. Rochester, NY: Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, 2014. DVD.

## **PLACES**

GLBT History Museum 4127 18<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, California 94114.

Smithsonian National Museum of American History 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Stonewall Inn 53 Christopher Street, New York City, New York 10014.

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## Worksheets

### Worksheet 1 – Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement – Alphabet Brainstorming

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** To access your prior knowledge of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement before and after the lesson.

**Directions:** Please complete the following chart. In each box there is a letter of the alphabet. In each box match a piece of knowledge you have to a letter in the alphabet.

**Example:** I know a lot of movement activity in the U.S. started in the state of California. I would write “California (movement activity)” in the box with the letter C (This example cannot be included in your chart).

A	B	C	D	E
D	E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W
X	Y	Z		

Source: Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Newark, New Jersey: International Association, Inc., 2009, 57.

Worksheet 2 – Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement – Vocabulary Definitions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** To define key vocabulary terms relevant to intelligent discussion of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement.

**Directions:** Review the following list of important vocabulary used to discuss the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement. Refer to this list if during discussion you are not sure how to use one or more of these terms.

**\*Ally:** A person who does not identify with a group, but still advocates for that group's rights.

**\*Bisexual:** A person who is sexually attracted to men and women.

**\*Gay:** While most often associated with men, in its broadest meaning, this is a person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex.

**Gender Expression:** The part of a person's identity that is about expressing masculinity or femininity as influenced by society, culture and individual expectations.

**Gender Identity:** The part of a person's identity that is about their sense of self as male or female, neither or both.

**\*Heterosexual:** A man who is only sexually attracted to women or a woman who is only sexually attracted to men; also known as straight.

**\*Homophobia:** Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against LGBTQ people or people perceived to be LGBTQ. It may also be a fear of one's own same-sex attractions.

**\*Homosexual:** An outdated clinical term used to describe someone who is gay or lesbian. Many people dislike the term since it was used to denote a mental illness.

**\*Lesbian:** A woman who is sexually attracted to other women.

**LGBTQQIAA2SP:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Ally, Asexual, Two-Spirit, Pansexual

**Out of the Closet:** Living openly and honestly by not hiding one's sexual orientation or gender identity. The term is sometimes shortened to being "out."

**\*Queer:** A simple label to explain sexual orientations, gender identities and/or gender expressions that do not conform to societal expectations. Some people view this as a term of empowerment and others strongly dislike this term.

**Questioning:** A person who is unsure about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**\*Sexual Orientation:** The part of our identity related to whom we are sexually attracted. It can be broken into three distinct orientations: affectional, romantic and erotic.

**Trans\*:** An inclusive term that encourages people to remember all of the identities under the transgender umbrella, including: transsexual, crossdresser, genderqueer, genderfluid, two-spirit.

**\*Transgender:** In its broadest meaning, this umbrella term encompasses anyone whose self-identity, behavior or anatomy falls outside of societal gender norms and expectations.

**Transphobia:** Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against transgender people or people perceived to be transgender. It may also be a fear of one's own gender non-conformity.

**Transsexual:** A person whose gender identity is not congruent with their biological sex. These individuals may or may not pursue hormonal or surgical means to bring congruency to themselves. Some people dislike this term and prefer the terms: transgender, trans or trans\*.

**Two-Spirit:** A Native American term for LGBTQ individuals with dual or multiple genders. It can mean having both a masculine and a feminine spirit. It has different meanings in different communities.

Source: "A Glossary of Terms Associated with the LGBTQ Communities." Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV). Last updated February 2015. <http://www.gayalliance.org/images/stories/education/Glossary%20of%20Terms-updated%20Feb%202015.pdf>.

Worksheet 3 – Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement – Role/Audience/Format/Topic (RAFT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** To explain the role individuals and gay and lesbian publications played in the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement between 1950 and 2015 through making visual and/or written products.

**Directions:** You will be put into a group with 2 or 3 other students. This strategy involves you being assigned a role, audience, format, and topic relating to the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement. Also, **you are required to use/site at least 12 documents (A-AA).**

RAFT Options:

Option 1	<b>Role:</b> Tour Guide	<b>Audience:</b> Museum Patrons	<b>Format:</b> Script
	<b>Topic:</b> You are giving a tour in the Museum of GLBT History. Write a script for the tour guides to use that includes and highlights the significance of documents.		
Option 2	<b>Role:</b> Historian	<b>Audience:</b> Conference Attendees	<b>Format:</b> Speech
	<b>Topic:</b> You are giving a speech at a conference on taboo subjects in the field of history. Write a speech to prove the importance of studying the LGBT movement.		
Option 3	<b>Role:</b> Constituent	<b>Audience:</b> U.S. Senator	<b>Format:</b> Letter/Email
	<b>Topic:</b> You are a constituent of a U.S. Senator who proposes to cut funding to LGBT organizations across the country. Write a letter/email to the senator explaining the history of LGBT activism and the important work they do.		
Option 4	<b>Role:</b> Talk Show Host(s)	<b>Audience:</b> U.S. TV Public	<b>Format:</b> Talk Show
	<b>Topic:</b> You are the host of a best rated talk show. Develop a segment (written or acted out) where you highlight and/or interview people from the LGBT movement.		
Option 5	<b>Role:</b> U.S. Newspaper Journalist	<b>Audience:</b> British Public	<b>Format:</b> Article
	<b>Topic:</b> You are an American journalist and have been hired by the British newspaper <i>The Guardian</i> to write an article on the LGBT movement in the U.S.		
Option 6	<b>Role:</b> LGBT Activist	<b>Audience:</b> Public	<b>Format:</b> Kickstarter Campaign
	<b>Topic:</b> You are an LGBT activist who wants to make a documentary about the significance of the LGBT movement. Develop a Kickstarter campaign page explaining the importance of producing a documentary film of the movement.		
Option 7	<b>Role:</b> Cartoonist	<b>Audience:</b> U.S. Public	<b>Format:</b> Political Cartoon
	<b>Topic:</b> You have been hired by <i>The New York Times</i> to create 3 political cartoons on the LGBT movement. Develop these cartoons and provide an explanation of the cartoons.		
Another Option	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Audience:</b>	<b>Format:</b>
	<b>Topic:</b>		

Option Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Newark, New Jersey: International Association, Inc., 2009, 144.

Worksheet 4 – Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement – Exit Slip

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: To summarize key ideas about the modern Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Movement and to reflect on the movement’s progress or lack thereof.

Directions: Before leaving class, turn in this exit slip.

<b>Summation of the modern Gay and lesbian Civil Rights Movement (7-10 sentences)</b>	
<b>Has the movement made progress? Provide evidence for both sides. Afterward state your opinion and why.</b>	
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Your opinion:</b>          	

## Documents

### Document A

Source: Bronski, Michael. *A Queer History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2011, 177-179.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, homosexuality was far from being “unspoken,” as popular thinking has it; America was increasingly obsessed with it...

Key to this obsession was the publication of Alfred Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human male* in January 1948, permanently changing how Americans discussed sexuality. The Kinsey Report, as it was commonly known, was a detailed, scientific study of American male sexual activity. Kinsey...recruited a team of trained interviewers to gather data from twelve thousand men, then used the data from 5,300 of them to produce preliminary conclusion about male sexual behavior...Americans found Kinsey’s finding on homosexuality the most shocking. Not only were the findings initially unbelievable, they demanded to be acknowledged as scientific.

The Kinsey Report was a media sensation, joked about in popular songs, Broadway plays, and television shows. The mainstream press carefully, and accurately, extracted some remarkable statistics...10 percent of males were more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five; 4 percent of males were exclusively homosexual throughout their lives.

Five years later, in 1953, Kinsey released *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. This study received less attention, perhaps because Kinsey estimated that the incidence of homosexual behavior in women was half of what he found in men.

Americans now understood that homosexuals were everywhere, even if you could not see them.

Kinsey’s findings were vilified by clergy, conservative journalists, and traditional psychoanalysts. Although some Americans were outraged, most were fascinated...In the old way of thinking, the “invert” was immediately identifiable by his effeminate affect; but this new, hidden homosexual could be lurking anywhere, in any male. And he was a direct threat to heterosexuality. It was in this context that the homophile groups were founded.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. What were the Kinsey Reports and what were some findings?
2. How did Americans react and who criticized the findings?

## Document B

Source: Licata, Salvatore J. "The Homosexual Rights Movements in the United States A Traditionally Overlooked Area of American History." *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1/2 (1980): 161-189.

In the postwar years, two outside factors had a profound impact on the homosexual minority in North America. The first was the publication of the Kinsey reports, which analyzed human sexuality in North America more thoroughly than ever before. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) included two findings that surprised, even shocked, many: the extent of extramarital intercourse and the prevalence of homosexual activity. While conservatives and traditionalists attacked the findings, other were intrigued by their implications. The Kinsey reports gave a stamp of academic approval to homosexual acts, placing them in the realm of natural sexual response rather than among disturbing abnormalities.

Amidst this intellectual breath of fresh air came a heat wave of accusations and antihomosexual associations: McCarthyism. . . Patriotism and anticommunism became issues of public morality, dominating the American Consciousness and tyrannizing many independent thinkers and reformers. Deviation, whether sexual or political, was a cardinal sin.

By 1953, the State Department was credited with having fired 531 "Perverts, Security Risks." That same year President Dwight Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which excluded from government employment persons guilty of "sexual perversion." Homosexual Americans thus were classified as security risks. Not one political or pressure group protested these violations of civil liberties.

Caught between the contradictory messages of the Kinsey reports and McCarthyism, it is understandable that homosexual individuals sought out others with whom to discuss the paradox. Their meetings gave rise to the modern homosexual rights movement in America. . .

### Guiding Questions:

1. According to Licata, what was the importance of the Kinsey Reports to homosexuals in the United States?
2. What was the result of the Kinsey Reports?



## Document C

Source: Equality Forum, *Harry Hay*. 2009.

In 1950 Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society, an underground network for homosexuals. It was the first American gay organization.

Hay was born to American parents in England. His mother nurtured his creative side, teaching him piano and dance. Hay's father physically abused his "sissified" son.

In 1919, the family moved to Los Angeles. As Hay grew up, he became outraged by intolerance toward gays—especially from police who regularly entrapped, arrested and blackmailed homosexuals.

In the 1930s, Hay began working in Hollywood as an extra and a ghostwriter. He performed on stage with Will Geer, who became his lover and introduced him to the Communist Party.

Due to pervasive homophobia, Hay and his Mattachine Society colleagues took an oath of anonymity not to reveal member names. In 1953, the Mattachine Society rejected Hay for his communist beliefs. The Communist Party later expelled him as a "security risk."

### Guiding Questions:

1. Who was Harry Hay?
2. Why did Hay found the Mattachine Society?

## Document D

Source: Equality Forum, *Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon*. 2007.

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon founded the first lesbian organization in the United States and have fought for more than 50 years for the rights of lesbians and gays. On June 16, 2008, Martin and Lyon became the first gay couple to be legally married in California.

Martin and Lyon both earned degrees in journalism. While working as journalists in Seattle, the two became romantically involved. The couple relocated to San Francisco and moved in together on Valentine's Day 1953.

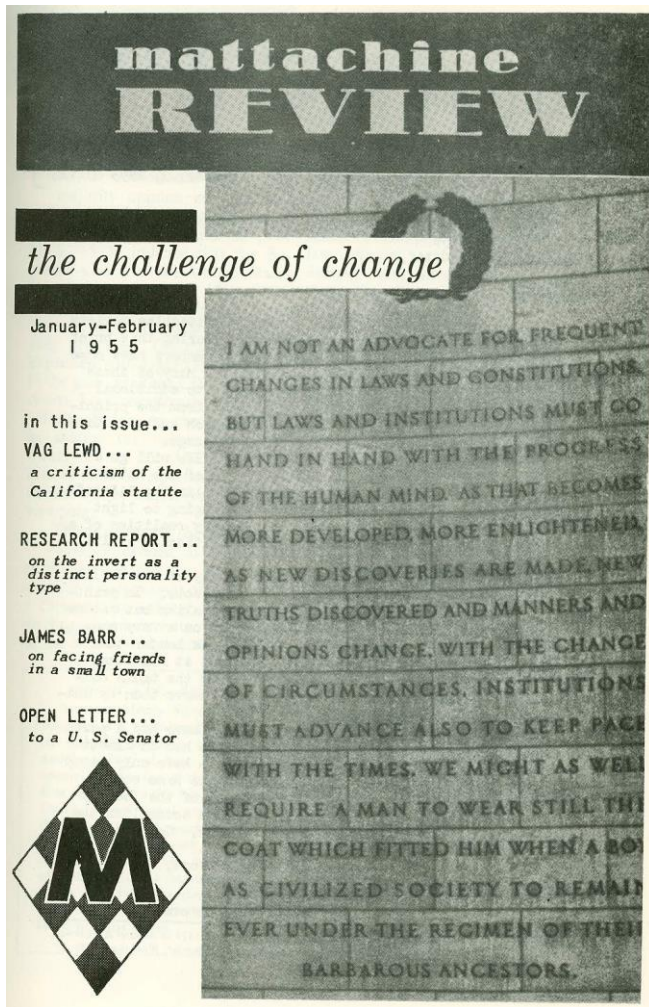
In 1955, finding it hard to develop a social network in San Francisco, Martin, Lyon and a small group of women founded the first lesbian organization, called the Daughters of Bilitis. The name was inspired by Pierre Louys's "Songs of Bilitis," a collection of poems celebrating lesbian sexuality.

Though it was intended to be a secret society, Martin and Lyon wanted to make the Daughters of Bilitis more visible. The group began publishing a monthly magazine, called *The Ladder*, which was the first-ever lesbian publication. As editors of the magazine, they capitalized the word "lesbian" every time it appeared.

### Guiding Questions:

1. Who were Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon?
2. Why did Martin and Lyon found the Daughters of Bilitis?

Source: *Mattachine Review*, January-February 1955, 1.



Source: Jefferson Memorial, Panel 4.

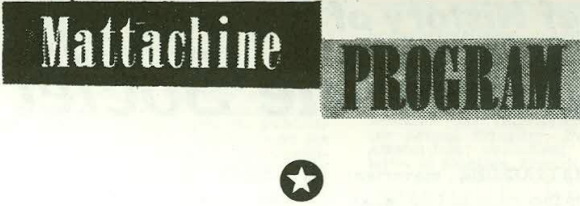
I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.

Guiding Questions:

1. Examine the picture. What is the picture of?
2. Why did the journal select this picture to appear on the first issue of the journal?

Document F

Source: "Mattachine Program." *Mattachine Review*,  
March-April 1955, 40.



**Mattachine** PROGRAM

★

1. Education through public discussion groups, forums, film programs, publications, etc., on the true aspects and conditions of human sexuality
2. Research through cooperation with established research organizations, foundations, universities, and public agencies and institutions seeking greater knowledge about human sexuality; and further, to make known the results of such research, wherever appropriate.
3. Social Action through cooperation with and assistance to individual authorities and public agencies, which, through democratic processes, advocate changes of law which recognize true conditions of human sex behavior, with a view to strong support of laws which forbid sex activity (a) in public; (b) between adults and minors, especially children; (c) involving use of force, violence or fraud, and (d) which spreads disease through indiscriminate contacts.
4. In General, to dispel false ideas about human sexuality and at the same time advocate adoption of a code of acceptable and responsible individual and group conduct; to aid and cooperate with therapy programs designed to provide all persons the right to due process and justice under the law, especially as regards sex offenses. In this connection, the Society will endeavor to expose those who commit extortion and blackmail. Finally, the Society will operate to prevent the above outlined conditions from continuing as a source of tragedy and unhappiness among people in this nation and elsewhere.
5. To Carry Out This Program, the Society will enlist the aid of others, professional and laymen, whose concern is to alleviate the conditions referred to above, and thus promote understanding, happiness and freedom for all.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the 5 aims of the Mattachine Society?
2. Which aim is the most important? Use the document to support your claim.

Source: "A Brief History of the Mattachine Society." *Mattachine Review*, March-April 1955, 39.

## A Brief History of the *Mattachine Society*

**T**HE MATTACHINE movement had its inception in 1950, when a group of three men, convinced that the time was right for such an idea, gathered several of their friends together at Los Angeles and inaugurated the first Discussion Group—the characteristic feature of what was to become, three years later, the present Mattachine Society.

In the meantime, the original group of three had grown to seven, and they filed for incorporation as a nonprofit research organization in the State of California as the Mattachine Foundation, Inc.

To carry on the work of the original discussion group, a secret society was instituted, headed by several of the original members of the foundation. The secrecy in the groups extended from top to bottom and, although intended as a measure of protection, it served only to handicap functions of various levels or "orders" as they were called.

It was the task of the lowest "order" to organize and sponsor discussion groups. Attendance at these group meetings was from 20 to 60 persons. They met in various homes or churches, generally every two weeks. Through these groups people were introduced to the movement, its aims and principles. The groups not only performed an educational and indoctrination role, but had the value of group therapy benefits as well. They helped dispel fear, suspicion and distrust among those present.

It was this "lowest" order too, that handled mailing committee functions, and gathered and forwarded to the

Foundation the donations collected at the discussion groups.

As the Mattachine movement grew it became apparent that a secret and non-democratic society was proving too great a hindrance. Difficulties in communicating from the lowest order and the Foundation arose. With an increasing number of persons attending discussion groups, an insistent sense of responsibility grew, and with it the demand for a democratic association.

In response to this, the head of the Foundation called a meeting to form a new organization. It met April 11, 1953. It created and adopted a new constitution under the name of the Mattachine Society.

It required a second such constitutional convention a month later to agree on the final form of the constitution, elect officers, pass resolutions, by-laws, and lay down initial policies.

It became apparent during this last session that the original founders of the movement had built better than they knew. For there emerged from the convention a Society designed to carry out all functions of the Foundation, which agreed to disband. Gone were the "secret" orders, the questions of who was behind it all, and the possibility of alternate motives. Established was an association of persons who knew and trusted the others within the group, and shared the zealous desire to alleviate a pressing social problem.

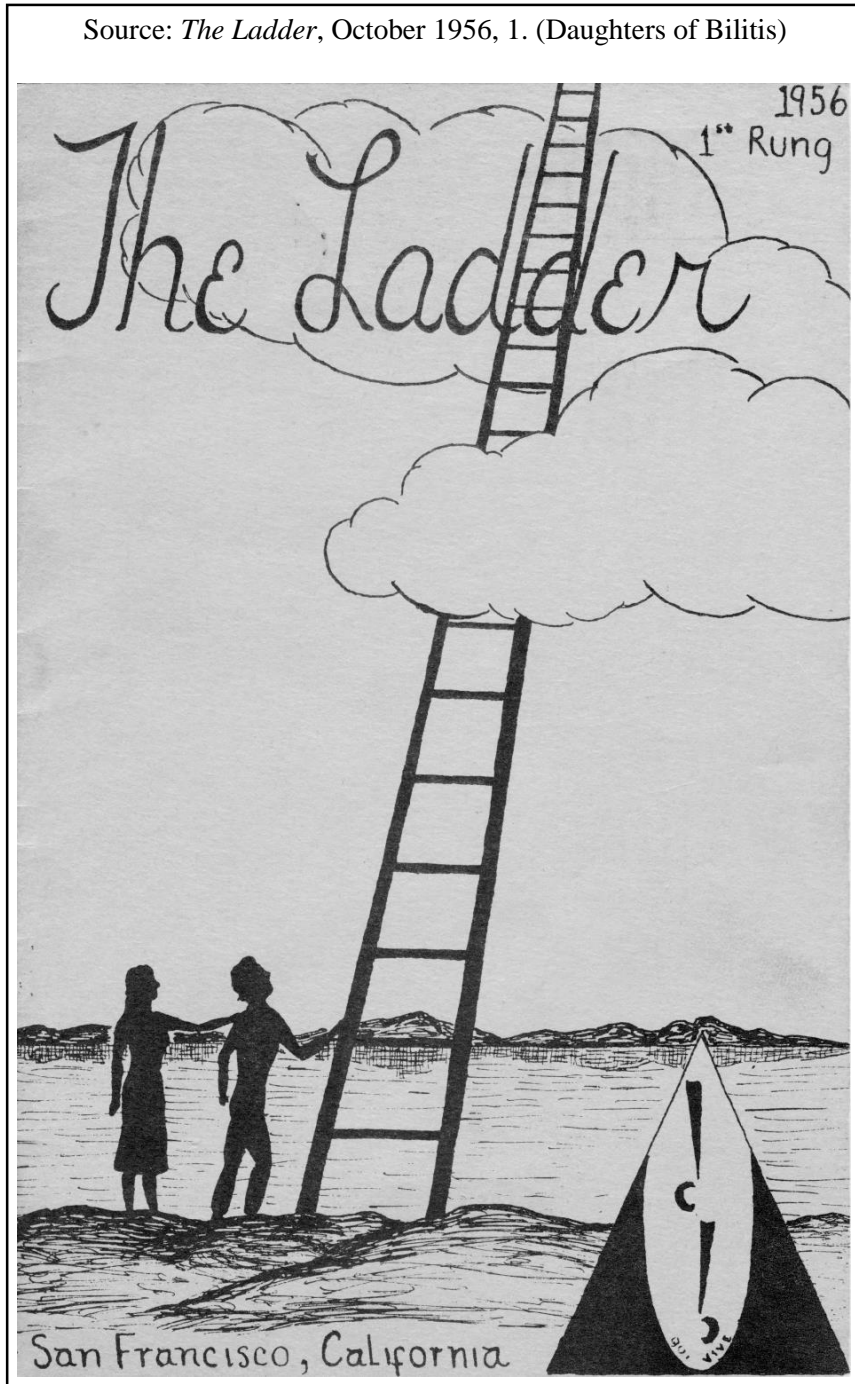
Less than a year after formation of the democratic society, final incorporation as a non-profit educational and research organization was granted by the State of California.

### Guiding Questions:

1. How did the Mattachine Society form?
2. Why did the organization create and adopt a new constitution in April 1953?

Document H

Source: *The Ladder*, October 1956, 1. (Daughters of Bilitis)




Guiding Questions:

1. Who published *The Ladder*?
2. Why was this the first cover of the publication?

Document I

Source: "Purpose of the Daughters of Bilitis." *The Ladder*, January 1959, 2.



**purpose of the**  
*Daughters of* **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING  
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- ① Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.
- ② Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.
- ③ Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the 4 purposes of the Daughters of Bilitis?
2. How do the purposes relate to the Mattachine Society's aims (Document F)?

## Document J

Source: Martin, Del and Phyllis Lyon. "Lesbian Liberation Begins." *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 19, no. 6 (2012): 19-22.

We are erroneously given credit as the founders of the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco in 1955. It wasn't even our idea. A young Filipina immigrant envisioned a club for lesbians here in the states that would give us an opportunity to meet and socialize (and especially to dance) outside of the gay bars that were frequently raided by the police. Meeting in each others' homes provided us with privacy and a sense of safety from the police and gawking tourists in the bars. Personally our motivation was simply to meet other lesbians. There were eight of us in the beginning: four couples, four blue-collar and four white-collar workers, two lesbian mothers, and two women of color.

This new secret club, which would later become the first national lesbian organization, was named the Daughters of Bilitis (pronounced Bil-E-tis) came from the *The Songs of Bilitis* by Pierre Louÿs, a long narrative love poem in which Bilitis was cast as a contemporary of Sappho on the Isle of Lesbos. Presumably lesbians would know what the name mean.

The Daughters began in a climate of fear, rejection, and oppression, the aftermath of Congressional hearings and witch hunts by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who was relentless in "exposing" Communists and homosexuals in government.

Plagued by people's fear of having their names on mailing or membership lists, DOB was constantly hampered in its outreach. Along with parties and discussion groups, the early days involved a great deal of peer counseling to help overcome the stigma of being branded illegal, immoral, and sick by society. After its first year, DOB had only fifteen members, although more attended parties and discussions.

In February 1957, the Daughters of Bilitis proudly announced that it had become a full-fledged non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of California. "It was a signal of our legality and our permanency as an organization," reported *The Ladder*.

### Guiding Questions:

1. Who founded the Daughters of Bilitis?
2. What kind of cultural environment did the organization form in?
3. What are some comparisons between the founding of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis?



## Document K

Source: "A Citizen's Rights in Case of Arrest." *Mattachine Review*, April 1956, 51.

### A CITIZEN'S RIGHTS IN CASE OF ARREST

*The application of principles of law is a two-way street. Laws are made for the protection of individuals and their property. Law enforcement agencies are charged with responsibility of arrest of persons who violate statutes enacted by the people for the general welfare and for other specific reasons. But the individual has definite rights under the law, which enforcement officers are forbidden to violate.*

*As a service to the public, the National Association for Sex Research, Inc., Hollywood, Calif., has prepared a folder listing the rights of a citizen in case of arrest. Included are 13 statements of information everyone should know:*

1. An officer cannot arrest you without a warrant unless you have committed a crime in his presence or he has reasonable grounds to believe you have committed a felony. (Calif. PC 836.)
2. If he has a warrant, ask to see it and read it carefully. If you are arrested without a warrant ask what the charge is.
3. You are not required to answer any questions. You may but do not have to give your name and address. If you are accused of a crime of which you are innocent, deny the charge. Go along but under protest. Do not resist physically.
4. Do not sign anything. Take the badge numbers of arresting officers.
5. If you are taken to jail, ask when you are booked what the charges are and whether they are misdemeanor or felony charges.
6. Insist on using a telephone to contact your lawyer or family or the number of the answering service on the reverse side of this card, leave your name and where you are held.
7. You have the right to be released on bail for most offenses. Have your attorney make the arrangements or ask for a bail bondsman.
8. After an arrest without a warrant, a person must, without unnecessary delay, be taken before the most accessible magistrate in the area where the arrest is made. The magistrate must hear the complaint and set bail. (Calif. PC 849.)
9. Report any instances of police brutality which you observe to your attorney.
10. If you do not have an attorney by the time you are brought before a judge to plead, ask for additional time to obtain an attorney; or if this is not possible, plead not guilty and ask for a trial by jury.
11. You are entitled to a written statement of the charges against you before you are required to enter a plea.
12. You are not required to testify against yourself in any trial or hearing. (Fifth Amendment, U.S. Constitution.)
13. If you are questioned by any law enforcement officer including the FBI, remember that you are not required to answer any questions concerning yourself or others.

(Fifth Amendment, U.S. Constitution)

### Guiding Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this document?
2. What other movement(s) published similar information?

Document L

Source: *The Ladder*, October 1965, 1.  
(Daughter of Bilitis)



Guiding Questions:

1. What are the people in the photo protesting?
2. Why are the individuals in formal attire?

Source: "Alleged Homosexuals Victims of Lawless Mass Arrests." *Mattachine Review*, March 1956, 5-6.

## Alleged Homosexuals Victims Of Lawless Mass Arrests

Seventy-five alleged homosexuals were arrested by 35 peace officers last month in a raid on Hazel's Inn, Sharp Park, San Mateo county, on February 19 and charged with vagrancy. After being fingerprinted and "mugged," the men were released on \$50 bail each.

Those arrested are scheduled to appear in court on March 1, although it is expected that many of them will forfeit bail. Precisely what their crimes are, except being alleged homosexuals, is obscure.

As far as can be ascertained, none of the patrons of the tavern were misbehaving or breaking any laws when the arrests occurred. The complaint seems to be that these men were making the tavern a "hang-out." Of course, there is no law against that, so long as their activity was lawful.

Newspaper reports declare that the raid was led by Sheriff Earl Whitmore. He shouldered his way through some 200 persons in the one large room, jumped up on the bar and shouted:

"This is a raid!"

Participating in the raid were Sheriff's deputies, Army military police, Alcoholic Beverage Control agents and Highway Patrolmen.

Patrons of the tavern, according to newspaper accounts, were ordered to line up in single file and pass before a group of officers at the rear door.

The report goes on to say that "Those recognized by undercover agents as having shown homosexual behavior were ordered to step to one side and they were loaded into a van parked outside." The others were released.

The Sheriff is quoted as saying, "The purpose of the raid was to make it very clear to these people that we won't put up with this sort of thing."

Whitmore said an attempt would be made to prosecute those operating the establishment for permitting dancing without a license and dancing on Sunday without a license (two separate offenses) and for possible violations of the liquor laws. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand what reasonable cause there was for arresting the patrons.

The raid is similar to one in North Richmond a couple of years ago. Only, in that case, the victims were a minority race—Negroes.

The ACLU is investigating the matter and the local staff counsel will appear on behalf of some of the alleged homosexuals at the court hearing.

In many respects, this West Coast raid parallels a similar action in Baltimore (and actions in other cities) recently. There, 162 persons were arrested and, according to later newspaper reports, police were scored by the bench for disregard of individual rights in their handling of law enforcement. The following item appeared in the Washington, D. C., Evening Star on November 25:

### Legislature Probe Of Mass Arrests In Baltimore Urged

BALTIMORE, Nov. 25 (AP).— Delegate Jerome Robinson, Democrat of Baltimore, will ask for an investigation of the tactics used in a police raid shortly after James Hepbron became police commissioner.

Mr. Robinson said yesterday he would demand that the Baltimore City delegation to the Gen-

eral Assembly look into the Pepper Hill Club raid last October 1 in which 162 persons—both club employes and patrons—were arrested.

Nearly all were acquitted of charges.

Such mass arrests were criticized two days ago by Circuit Judge James K. Cullen who censured the police department.

Police Commissioner Hepbron agreed with the judge and promised it would not happen again.

Mr. Hepbron said the department's policy against such wholesale arrests will be "reiterated, re-emphasized and, if necessary, re-enforced."

\* \* \*

### Guiding Questions:

1. What happened between the police and homosexuals?
2. What was the purpose according to the sheriff?
3. Were their consequences?

## Document N

Source: Jordan, Susan. The Gay Alliance: Highlights of Our History, Gay Alliance, last modified 2012. <http://www.gayalliance.org/about/history>.

On Oct. 3, 1970, two gay men waited anxiously in the University of Rochester's Todd Union for people to arrive for a talk by several guest speakers. They had no idea if anyone would show up, but that was not the only source of their anxiety. This was not going to be the usual kind of university event. The two men were U.R. students Bob Osborn and Larry Fine. The guest speakers were from Cornell University, Ithaca's chapter of the national Gay Liberation Front, and the Buffalo chapter of the national Mattachine Society. Yet, in spite of the fear surrounding press coverage and exposure in a totally homophobic society, around 100 people turned out for the first meeting of what was to become in 1973 the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley.

In 1970 the new group called itself the Rochester Gay Liberation Front, the Rochester chapter of a group that started in N.Y.C., at Cornell and at U. R. after the Stonewall Riots in 1969. The local group was formally recognized by the University of Rochester and given an on-campus office and a small operating budget. During the first year of the group's existence, around 200 men and women attended meetings and dances; the majority of them were non-students. Robert Crystal, another early organizer, who still lives in Rochester, notes that the GLF, a mostly-student organization, was founded at about the same time as the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) of N.Y.C. The two organizations contrasted strongly with the Mattachine Society, which came out of the '50s and, in Crystal's words, was "conservative"; its most left-leaning members were middle of the road. When they went on speaking engagements, Crystal said, "They behaved demurely and were presentable. The big criticism of Mattachine was that they were asking for the privileges of citizenship, while the GAA demanded civil rights."

In Crystal's opinion, it was Stonewall in 1969 that gave the impetus needed to get the already-existent gay rights movement out of the closet, onto the streets and into the media... Although not all RGLF members were socialists or radicals, they did share certain basic liberation goals, including "an end to all forms of social control of homosexuals; civil rights legislation to prevent housing and job discrimination; ... acceptance of lesbian and gay relationships; accurate portrayal in the mass media."

By 1972, the Gay Liberation Front had left the University of Rochester campus because most members were non-students.

### Guiding Questions:

1. What was the name of the organization that was founded and what city was the group formed in?
2. Who were the founders and what were the goals of the organization?
3. How are they similar and/or different from the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis?

## Document O

Source: Jordan, Susan. The Gay Alliance: Highlights of Our History, Gay Alliance, last modified 2012. <http://www.gayalliance.org/about/history>.

In February 1973, a group of lesbians within the GAGV decided to split off and form their own group, GROW (Gay Radical Organization for Women), which became the Lesbian Resource Center (LRC), active until the '90s.

Karen Hagberg, one of the women involved, comments, "It became pretty apparent that 'gay' meant 'male gay' in everybody's minds. The issues dealt with at GAGV meetings were...nothing relevant to women. Before feminist consciousness, nobody thought about these things. I did not have a feminist consciousness in those days. Then Violette Ducroix said to me after a meeting, 'None of this has anything to do with me. Why are we at this meeting?' Once the question was posed, I started thinking, what are we doing here? Another thing that's still true is that men have more money than women, so the movement becomes male-oriented."

The Daughters of Bilitis had split from the Mattachine Society for essentially the same reasons in 1955. With the new wave of feminist organizing in the early '70s, many lesbians felt impelled to work in women-only groups on consciousness raising and on issues like violence against women. Karen Hagberg was one of many Rochester lesbians who, in the mid-'70s and early '80s, along with bisexual and heterosexual women, published a newspaper, The New Women's Times/Feminist Review, and founded Rochester Women Against Violence Against Women (RWAVAW), which staged direct actions such as the 1977 protest against the film "Snuff," which purported to show the actual murder of a woman "in South America where life is cheap." RWAVAW also organized Take Back the Night marches (a national phenomenon which continues today on college campuses), did speaking engagements on violence against women, complete with a slide show on objectification of women in art...supported the founding of local services for battered women and rape victims; sponsored International Women's Day programs at the YWCA, and wheat-pasted feminist and Lesbian Pride posters, among many other activities.

### Guiding Questions:

1. What group formed from the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley?
2. Why did they found the separate organization?
3. This move mirrored what happened between what 2 other organizations?

Document P

Source: *The Empty Closet*, January 1971, 1.  
(Rochester Gay Liberation Front)

# The Empty Closet



Guiding Questions:

1. Who published this newsletter?
2. What is the cover image communicating?

## Document Q

Source: *The Empty Closet*, January 1971, 2.

*The ROCHESTER GAY LIBERATION FRONT is an association of people studying the nature of gay oppression and the potential for liberation. Meetings are open to all who believe that basic civil rights and human dignity for all minority groups come from organized effort.*

## Document R

Source: "History and Goals of Gay Alliance Outlined."  
*The Empty Closet*, September 1973, 2.

### HISTORY AND GOALS OF GAY ALLIANCE OUTLINED

**THE PAST.** The gay liberation movement began in New York City in 1969 when gays finally became outraged enough at the regular police harassment that they fought back. The Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village was the scene of the first gay peoples' rebellion. It was nurtured by that spirit in the late 60's which seemed to beckon oppressed peoples to stand tall.

The movement came to the Rochester area in October of 1970 when a student group was formed and funded at the University of Rochester.

The University of Rochester Gay Liberation Front attracted students and non-students from a wide surrounding area, and for several years, served as a focal point for gay rights activities in the region.

Early in 1973, it became evident that a city based organization was needed.

**NOW.** The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley was organized in July of 1973, and located in the Bull's Head area of West Main Street.

Its membership represents a wide variety of ages and lifestyles, but there is a common imperative among them to bring about a change in those attitudes which have led to the severe oppression of homosexuals in this society. It tries, therefore, to be both an activist and a service organization. Activist because the legal and political basis for our oppression must be attacked, and service because we want to nurture a new social environment which will foster a more positive self-image for gays, "Gay Pride".

The organization bespeaks its name. A cooperative alliance of many interest groups; political, legal, educational, and social. The new center provides a home base for these interests.

### Guiding Questions:

1. What were the goals of the Rochester Gay Liberation Front in 1971?
2. What are the goals of the Rochester Gay Liberation Front in "the past" and "now?"
3. Where was the Rochester Gay Liberation Front Founded?

Source: "Rochester Gay liberation Front Schedule." *The Empty Closet*,  
February-March 1971, 25.

## ROCHESTER GAY LIBERATION FRONT SCHEDULE

The Rochester Gay Liberation Front meets WEEKLY on Saturdays at 7:30 pm in Todd Union second floor on the University of Rochester river campus. Normally alternate weeks are given to outside speakers and discussion of topics of general interest, and alternate weeks to planning activities of interest to the Rochester gay community. Below is a partial list of special events. Call 275-6181 for up-to-date information on other talks, movies, dances, etc. to be scheduled.

OCTOBER 3: GAY LIBERATION--remarks on the gay liberation movement by members of Rochester, Ithaca, and Buffalo homophile groups.  
OCTOBER 17: MILITARY SERVICE & THE HOMOSEXUAL--talk on legal rights and remedies in Selective Service and military law.  
NOVEMBER 7: HOMOSEXUALS AND THE LAW--talk by a lawyer on municipal, state and federal statutes that pertain to the gay world, and on your rights if arrested. Discussion of repression and oppression in practice.  
NOVEMBER 21: WOMEN'S LIBERATION--talk and discussion of the general women's liberation movement locally and worldwide, and its relation to gay liberation.  
DECEMBER 5: GAY LIBERATION NOW--talk on the Movement by members of the New York City Gay Liberation Front. Public dance.  
DECEMBER 12: RAF SESSION--discussion of tactics, with special guest speakers from New York City Gay Activist Alliance.

### Guiding Questions:

1. What topics are included in the Rochester Gay Liberation Front schedule?
2. What other gay organizations did the Rochester Gay Liberation Front have contact with?



Source: "Consciousness Raising." *The Empty Closet*, April-May 1971, 10.

## **CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING**

If two heads are better than one, then six or eight must be at least thrice-blessed. On that premise Gay Liberation Front chapters throughout the country are experimenting with Consciousness-Raising groups in an effort to clear our members' mental cobwebs and strengthen our understanding of living "proud" and public.

Rochester's G.L.F. is joining the movement this month by forming several C-R groups. Anyone interested in aligning with a group, can phone in to the G.L.F. office (275-6181) and be added to the list. You'll be asked to commit yourself to attend at least three formation meetings, and then decide if C-R is for you or not. Once formed, groups will be closed to further membership. Newcomers desiring admittance will be brought together in fresh clusters.

Basically Consciousness-Raising involves getting to know five or seven other people on a deep enough level so that trust and sharing can develop. In the weekly or bi-weekly sessions, the groups will rap for a minimum of 90 minutes, and share insights, problems and challenges.

As each group develops, it will develop unique ways of meeting members' needs. Some may take the study session trek, doing suggested readings and then discussing their findings. Others may choose to discuss past and present experiences, and work towards guidelines for a better tomorrow. Some groups may abort shortly after formation, and free members to join new clusters or drop out of C-R entirely.

If any problems are uncovered in the course of C-R sessions that are beyond the power of the group to aid, troubled members will be referred to competent, understanding professional aid.

At this point, there seems to be strong sentiment for forming clusters on a gender base, with the gals in one group or two, and the guys in groups of their own. A proposal has been made that perhaps a group of sisters might meet with their brothers for a joint meeting every third session, and thereby widen insights and common understandings.

Should lovers be in the same group? Should clusters be made up of friends or strangers? How might groups share and gain insights with the outside community of straights and bi's? Where will groups meet? How social should they become? These and dozens of other questions remain to be worked out by each autonomous C-R group. The only thing certain at this point is that Consciousness-Raising has come to Rochester's G.L.F. Will you be part of it?

### Guiding Questions:

1. Explain "consciousness raising."
2. What is the main goal of consciousness raising?

Document U

Source: LeBlanc, Wilfred. "Police Reps Address GAGV Meeting; Well Received." *The Empty Closet*, May 1974, 1.

POLICE REPS ADDRESS GAGV MEETING; WELL RECEIVED  
LT, SGT DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF GAYS AND THE LAW COMMENTS ON POLICE TALK  
By Wilfred LeBlanc

Gay Alliance provided the first gay forum for the Rochester Police on April 21 when Lt. Gordon Urlacher and Sgt. DiAngelo spoke before a packed Gay Alliance meeting.

The guest speakers, both in command of unit A which covers the downtown area of Rochester during the night hours were invited through acting Police Commissioner Pellegrino.

The objective of this meeting was to initiate a dialogue with the police in hopes of achieving some understanding on both sides.

Lt. Urlacher emphasized his view that gays have a right to their lifestyle and added that most police officers have no interest in what goes on between consenting adults in private. The police become involved only where sexual activity (or solicitation for it) takes place in public.

Many of the questions put to the speakers centered on arrests in parks and other places particularly where entrapment was used.

They could not answer the charges of alleged entrapment procedures used by the arresting officers because those arrests were carried out by vice and tactical units under a different command.

He added that all such activity is carried out as a result of specific complaints lodged by the park department personell.

When asked why heterosexual couples making love in the parks were not hassled by police, Urlacher pointed out that as long as couples (straight or gay) were engaged in kissing and other restrained activity, the police would not be concerned because no law would be broken.

Urlacher lamented that gays show little interest in crimes of violence committed against gays by muggers posing as prostitutes. He added that gays who have been victimized by muggers rarely file a complaint with the police because they fear the exposure that results.

He suggested that gays who are victimized under those circumstances might feel more comfortable by reporting the incident through the Gay Alliance which might act as an intermediary with the police.

Private conversation with the guest speakers resulted in plans to broaden our contacts with the police to include the vice squad and tactical units. It was also suggested that G.A.G.V. offer to participate in the in-service training programs offered to police as a means of bettering the understanding the police have of the gay lifestyle.

Much discussion about police has warmed the air recently. This is partly due to the recent appearance of two representatives of the Rochester Police at Gay Alliance on April 21st but largely because of the large scale arrests that are being made in the parks this spring.

Some gays have expressed the opinion that the G.A.G.V. appearance by the police was a public relations ploy. That the seemingly cooperative and sometime sympathetic sentiments expressed by Lt. Urlacher at that meeting were not sincere. "He was just too nice"

Can you imagine a two hour meeting between two white, male, heterosexual cops and over 60 gays and not hear one offensive phrase used.

I tend to be a trusting soul though. I accept his views at face value. It occurred to me that heretere two policemen giving their personal opinions. They were not speaking for the whole police force.

My bet is that they have chosen to use a novel tactic. They have come to realize that the gay community is together and that they might do well to work through it's channels.

I was particularly encouraged by the offer they made to help open some doors in the police department in order that we can meet with others such as the vice and tactical units.

There is no guarantee that all this talking will result in a sudden shift in enforcement policy on the part of the police. Nor does it guarantee a change in the heads of some vice or tactical unit personell who seem to take personal delight in playing around rest rooms.

Other cities like Los Angeles have come much further in getting the police off their backs. They had much further to go though.

Here in Rochester while we are reaching out to communicate with religious educational and medical institutions, it makes sense to include the law enforcement agencies as well.

Wilfred LeBlanc

Guiding Questions:

1. What was the objective of the meeting?
2. What issues were discussed?
3. How did the author feel about the meeting?

## Document V

Source: "Legislature." *The Empty Closet*, June 15, 1971.

On May 26, Assemblyman Passanante's bill to prohibit discrimination in employment because of sexual orientation came up for a vote in the Albany legislature. It failed 61-85. Ernie Reaugh of the Tri-Cities Gay Liberation Front commented that the fact that it came to a vote at all and received a substantial number of votes is encouraging. This is the first time this potentially controversial subject has been introduced on the legislative level.

### Guiding Questions:

1. Assemblyman Passante's bill tried to address what issue?
2. Is this an issue that still exists today? Explain.

Source: *The Empty Closet*, February 2015. (Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley)

# The Empty Closet

LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL NEWS, INTERVIEWS, OPINION, ENTERTAINMENT, COLUMNISTS, EVENT CALENDARS, COMICS, & HEALTH RESOURCES  
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NUMBER 486      A PUBLICATION OF THE GAY ALLIANCE      FEBRUARY 2015

**Supreme Court will hear six marriage cases; ruling to come by June**

Following its decision last fall to effectively green light same-sex marriage in 11 states, the U.S. Supreme Court on Jan. 17 agreed to hear six consolidated marriage cases out of Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, and Kentucky this term, with a ruling potentially by June.

The Court's review will take place on a transformed legal landscape, with gay couples being able to marry in 36 states, covering two-thirds of the American people, and with nearly 60 federal and state courts having struck down discriminatory marriage bans in the past two years.

"The Supreme Court's decision today begins what we hope will be the last chapter in our campaign to win marriage nationwide - and it's time," said Evan Wolfson, president of

Freedom to Marry. "Freedom to Marry's national strategy has been to build a critical mass of marriage states and critical mass of support for ending marriage discrimination, and after a long journey and much debate, America is ready for the freedom to marry. But couples are still discriminated against in 34 states, and the patchwork of discrimination harms families and businesses throughout the country. We will keep working hard to underscore the urgency of the Supreme Court's bringing the country to national resolution, so that by June, all Americans share in the freedom to marry and our country stands on the right side of history."

"Virtually every court up until this point, including the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 10th Circuits

*Supreme continues page 67*



**Intersections workshop series highlights diverse perspectives in LGBTQ community**

*By Susan Jordan*

Recent studies of local poverty rates (Rochester is the most poverty-stricken city of its size in the country) and failures of education make it obvious that the "needs of the wider community" are urgent and members of the LGBTQ community have been slow to work on programming to explore the intersections of oppression that diverse people face in Rochester.

The Gay Alliance has championed social justice for over four decades. Its work has primarily focused on advancing equity and acceptance for the LGBTQ community, always factoring in that the needs of the wider Rochester community intersect with and directly impact the concerns of the Alliance's efforts. Hence the new program of Intersection workshops, starting Feb. 21.

The Intersection organizers, including Christopher Goodwin of the MOCHA Center, Sady Fischer, independent diversity consultant, activist Anne Trischer and Steven Jarose of the National Coalition Building Institute, hope to initiate conversations during the coming year about race, faith, LGBT identity, gender, family, poverty and privilege in an effort to mitigate the harm caused by racism, homophobia and poverty in our area.

"LGBT voices are largely missing from the community collaborations addressing race and poverty... mainly because of a bias-driven lack of welcome. It is time this changed," Anne Trischer said. "As a rising tide raises all boats, a mutual understanding of our neighbor's struggles as well as our own improves the chance that support and collaboration will coalesce into a more hopeful and equitable future for all."

"To do this work we are planning a year-long series of

differences... differences that we seldom talk about.

"In planning for the event, Christopher, Sady and I are learning a lot about one another. We appreciate and respect the unique perspectives each of us brings to the table in terms of age, race, gender, sexual orientation and life experience.

"I have found that the more people open to each other and learn from one another's personal stories, the more effective we'll be in creating a caring, diverse and thriving LGBTQ community. We'll also be better informed as we partner with the broader Rochester community to tackle issues of poverty, housing, employment and health care because we see them in a larger context.

"Opening up to people we don't know well can be challenging. But we can guarantee that participants can leave fan and speak truth to power at the same time.

"I've been the director of the Rochester chapter of NCBBI for the past 14 years. My work has led me to get to know diverse individuals and groups throughout the city and county and forge partnerships and relationships that endure. Leading an organization committed to ending oppression in all its forms, I learn something new every day.

*Intersections continues page 57*

**BISEXUAL/PANSEXUAL BASICS**



Bi/Pan poster... pages 18-19

**BISEXUAL/PANSEXUAL BASICS**



Bi/Pan poster... pages 18-19

**Pride at Work awards dinner to honor Tom Privitere for activism, leadership**

The Rochester Finger Lakes Chapter of Pride at Work (Pa/W) will host their triennial True Colors Award dinner on March 24 at the Diplomat.

They will be honoring the Federation of Social Workers (FSW) ILE-CWA 81381 for their critical assistance in establishing the Rochester Finger Lakes Pa/W chapter in 2007 and ongoing support for Pa/W and the advancement of rights for LGBTQ workers and their families.

The Pride at Work award will go to Thomas M. Privitere for 42 years of labor leadership and civil rights activism.

Tom has retired from the Public Employees Federation after 38 years as an organizer. Tom was part of the 1975 Gay March On Washington where then-SEU President John Stonery and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee hosted gay labor activists from the March to convene Pride at Work, now an AFL-CIO constituency group and a nationally respected LGBTQ and labor rights voice. Tom is a founding member of the Rochester chapter and has served as Vice President since they were chartered in 2007.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [www.prideatwork.org](http://www.prideatwork.org) or contact Bus Varrin at 585-426-0862. ■

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The Gay Alliance is publisher of *The Empty Closet*, New York State's oldest LGBTQ newspaper.

Guiding Questions:

1. Who published this newspaper and what is the date of publication?
2. Describe sections included in the newspaper.
3. What issues are highlighted on the cover?

## Document X

Source: *The Empty Closet*, March 2015, 31.

The Gay Alliance is a non-profit agency, dedicated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive environment where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) people are safe, thriving, and enjoying equal rights. We are a coalition of individuals and groups working to empower LGBTQ people to affirm their identities and create an atmosphere where the diversity can thrive both collectively and separately. We educate and advocate for civil rights for all and for the eradication of homophobia.

### Guiding Questions:

1. What are the current goals of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley?
2. Have they changed from their founding? Explain.

## Document Y

Source: *The Empty Closet*, April 2015, 6 & 11.

### **UCLA report: law enforcement routinely harasses LGBT people**

A new report released March 2 by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law documents ongoing and pervasive discrimination and harassment by law enforcement in the LGBT community, especially among LGBT people of color and transgender individuals.

To address such discrimination and to improve effective policing more generally

in the United States, President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing issued recommendations to build stronger and more collaborative relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Key findings from the Williams Institute report based on several national surveys include:

More than one-fifth (21 percent) of LGBT people who interacted with police reported encountering hostile attitudes from officers and 14 percent reported verbal assault by the police.

Nearly half (48 percent) of the LGBT violence survivors who interacted with police reported that they had experienced police misconduct, including unjustified arrest, use of excessive force and entrapment.

Two-thirds of Latina transgender women in Los Angeles County who interacted with police reported that they were verbally harassed by law enforcement, 21 percent report that they were physically assaulted by law enforcement, and 24 percent report that they were sexually assaulted by law enforcement.

Nearly half (46 percent) of transgender respondents in a national survey reported being uncomfortable seeking police assistance, 22 percent reported that they had been harassed by law enforcement because of bias, and six percent reported having been physically assaulted by an officer.

Williams Institute researchers also documented widespread and frequent incidents of misconduct toward LGBT people by law enforcement in all regions of the country, including many instances of severe physical and sexual abuse.

Such discrimination, harassment and abuse undermine effective policing by weakening community trust, reducing reporting of crimes by victims in the LGBT community, and challenging law enforcement's ability to effectively meet the needs of members of their communities.

The President's Task Force recommends that local law enforcement agencies (1) adopt and enforce policies prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression; (2) implement training for officers to improve interactions with the LGBT population; and (3) improve data collection on misconduct by officers against LGBT people. These recommendations are in line with the specific steps the Williams Institute report recommends to reduce such discrimination and improve effective policing.

### Guiding Questions:

1. Identify the article's assertion.
2. How does this connect to Documents K, M, and U?

Document Z

Source: "April." *The Empty Closet*, April 2015, 34.

**THURSDAY 9**

**Out and Equal NY Finger Lakes,** Second Thursday Networking Event, 5:30 pm, Centre City Place - hosted by Tavern 58 at Gibbs, 80 University Ave.

**SATURDAY 11**

**Queer Women of Color Film Festival** screenings. 7 pm, Doors open 6:30 Pm. The MOCHA Center, 189 Water St. Free. Sponsored by Unity Fellowship Church of Rochester and Queer Women Of Color Media Arts Project.

**FRIDAY 17**

**Day of Silence.** Youth 21 and under. Tilt Nightclub, 444 Central Ave. 4-7 pm.

**SATURDAY 18**

**SAGE community potluck and bingo game.** \$3 fee for bingo. Bring dish to pass. 5-8 pm, Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St.

**Pride @ Work, Gay Alliance Safe Zone training.** NYSUT building, 30 North Union St. \$25 with scholarships Available as needed. Please RSVP...

**SUNDAY 19**

**Big Gay Prom fundraiser.** 2 pm, 140 Alex Bar & Grill, hosted by Destiny Spice & Mercedes Sulay. Eggrolls and empanadas for sale. Suggested donation \$5.

**FRIDAY 24**

**LGBT Health and Healthcare Across the Generations.** URMCC conference on LGBT elder health. 7:30 Am-4:30 pm, with keynote speaker Harvey Makadon of Fenway. To register...

**MONDAY 27**

**Marriage Equality rally.** Federal Building, 5-6:30 pm. The day before the Supreme Court hears arguments on marriage equality. Rallies will be held across The country to urge the Court to make Marriage equality legal nationwide.

**SUNDAY 3**

**Shoulder To Stand On Documentary screening.** 2:30-4:30 pm, Penfield Library, 1985 Baird Rd. Free.

Guiding Questions:

1. What month and year are these events scheduled?
2. How do they compare to events in Document S?
3. Where do these events take place? Why is this significant?

Document AA

Source: The Supreme Court of the United States. *Questions Presented*, 15-556 Obergefell v. Hodges (Washington, DC, 2015), <http://www.supremecourt.gov/qp/14-00556qp.pdf>

**14-556 OBERGEFELL V. HODGES**

DECISION BELOW: 772 F.3d 388

LOWER COURT CASE NUMBER: 14-3057, 14-3464

**QUESTION PRESENTED:**

1. Whether Ohio's constitutional and statutory bans on recognition of marriages of same-sex couples validly entered in other jurisdictions violate the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

2. Whether Ohio's refusal to recognize a judgment of adoption of an Ohio-born child issued to a same-sex couple by the courts of a sister state violates the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

CONSOLIDATED WITH 14-562, 14-571 AND 14-574 AND LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: 1) DOES THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT REQUIRE A STATE TO LICENSE A MARRIAGE BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE OF THE SAME SEX? 2) DOES THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT REQUIRE A STATE TO RECOGNIZE A MARRIAGE BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE OF THE SAME SEX WHEN THEIR MARRIAGE WAS LAWFULLY LICENSED AND PERFORMED OUT-OF-STATE? A TOTAL OF NINETY MINUTES IS ALLOTTED FOR ORAL ARGUMENT ON QUESTION 1. A TOTAL OF ONE HOUR IS ALLOTTED FOR ORAL ARGUMENT ON QUESTION 2. THE PARTIES ARE LIMITED TO FILING BRIEFS ON THE MERITS AND PRESENTING ORAL ARGUMENT ON THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE PETITIONS.

CERT. GRANTED 1/16/2015

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Who published this document and when was it published?
2. What issue(s) does the case seek to solve?
3. Why is this significant?



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