

NOT A QUIET RIOT: STONEWALL AND THE CREATION OF LESBIAN, BISEXUAL,
GAY, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY THROUGH PUBLIC
HISTORY TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

The Stonewall Riot on June 28, 1969 marked the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement in the United States. After the riot, activists and organizations worked together in a militant manner more than in previous decades to gain Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender (LBGT) rights in the United States. Across the country, the LBGT community used Stonewall as a foundation to remind society about gay resistance and the need for equality.

As the LBGT community struggled for equal rights, they also sought to understand their past and identity. The social and political climate prior to Stonewall caused many to keep their sexuality inward and also prevented a written record or the creation of an identifiable LBGT past. Therefore, academics and nonacademic's worked to reveal a past largely hidden from history. They employed public history techniques to create archives and urban preservation projects to save their tangible past. The Lesbian Herstory Archives and George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World* identified projects that exceeded previous efforts to recognize and preserve the LBGT past.

These initiatives currently surpass accredited museums in the United States' consideration of LBGT history. Although since the 1970s museums moved to create a more representative portrayal of the American past, they still do not represent the LBGT past in their collection policies or exhibitions. Often, museum professionals could not include LBGT materials within the largely conservative and often homophobic political and social climates in the decades following Stonewall. Selective funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities often dictated what constituted moral and appropriate art and history.

This thesis identifies how contemporary museums are in a different position to incorporate LGBT history. Stonewall remains a significant part of equal rights memory and from that memory emerged unprecedented public history projects. Museum staff must work to understand their visitor population in order to better represent society in their interpretations of the past.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Mary Nappo, whose limitless support and encouragement has fostered my desire to succeed and have a positive outlook on life. I am forever grateful and humbled for your involvement in my life.

I also dedicate this thesis to my sister, Caroline Nappo and my brother, Vinnie Nappo, for challenging me to be the best person and student I can be, while providing much needed humor, support, and insight.

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INTRODUCTION—A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE STONEWALL RIOT AND ITS IMPACT ON LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, GAY, AND TRANSGENDER IDENTITY AND PUBLIC HISTORY

Restoring a Past Some Would Bury- *New York Times*, September 12, 1988
Senate Panel Passes Indian Museums Bill - *Washington Post*, April 14, 1988
Indian Group Wins Right To Old Skeletons- *Milwaukee Journal*, June 14, 1984
Good Reasons for the Holocaust Museum- *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1987
Reclaiming a Bit of its Past Culture, Tribe Celebrates Return of Totem Pole- *Chicago Tribune*, August 20, 1989
History Unchained Slaves' Quarters are Best Not Forgotten- *New York Times*, November 16, 1988
Exhibitions' Profile Make a Case for Rewriting History - *Chicago Tribune*, February 3, 1988

These headlines from the 1980s depict the efforts of museum professional's and historic site administrators to include previously marginalized histories, especially those of African Americans, American Indians, Jews, and women. Since the 1970s public historians worked to shift the United States' historical narrative from a primarily Euro-centric focus to one more inclusive of a diverse society. Colonial Williamsburg, along with many other historic places, employed a new generation of social historians and administrators who ushered in an era of historic interpretation in which previously marginalized voices became audible.¹ This emphasis allowed for an increase of minority groups' control of their material culture, more objective depictions in exhibitions, and the opportunity to tell their stories. Increasingly national attention has focused on all peoples' right to inclusion in the national narrative. The National Holocaust Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of African American Culture and History (opening 2015), and the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act illustrate public historians' and museums' concerted efforts to reflect a country of many races, religions, credos, and cultures. In a 2009 Congressional Testimony, secretary of

¹ Eric Gable and Richard Handler, *The New History of an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

the Smithsonian Dr. G. Wayne Clough expressed gratitude for Congress' support and spoke of the institution's new strategic plan, implementation of governance reform, facilities maintenance, revitalization and future plans. He also reiterated its capacity to tell the story of America and all its "hopes, struggles, triumphs, creativity, contradictions, and courage" and that in this new era, the Smithsonian needed to help the country and the world face the challenges of education, science, and national identity.² Clough's rhetoric reiterates the goals of museums and cultural institutions nationwide to develop collections, exhibitions, and mission statements to better serve a majority of the public through thought-provoking presentations.

As underrepresented pasts continue to gain better representation in museums, homosexuality remains only minimally included in the national narrative. Since the 1950s the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender (LBGT) community increased their visibility in U.S. culture through activist organizations and protest. Beginning with the Mattachine Society, formed by Harry Hay in 1950, whose members comprised the first recognized gay rights organization, proponents have worked for gay equality and visibility in American society. The Mattachine's published *ONE*, distributed flyers, and combated inequalities like entrapment during a period when police openly discriminated against and jailed homosexuals.³ Similarly in 1955 the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) formed as a social club to provide lesbian women a place to work together and socialize without inhibition.⁴ Despite the pioneering efforts of these groups, their accomplishments for the gay community remained minimal. Historian John D'Emillio argues that national political and social conditions which encouraged spying, entrapment, and home invasions of homosexuals by police, the Post Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation,

² Dr. G. Wayne Clough, "Smithsonian Institution Oversight," FDCH Congressional Testimony, December 10, 2009.

³ John D'Emillio, *Making Trouble Essays on Gay History, Politics and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 31-35.

⁴ Whitney Scott., review of *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Birth of the Lesbian Rights Movement*, by Marcia M. Gallo, *Booklist*, November 1, 2006.

and the American Psychiatric Association's definition of homosexual as a mental disease, as well as individuals' own internal feelings about their homosexuality suppressed their ability to forthrightly address gay rights in America. In response to the increase of gay sub-culture after World War II, the conservative right labeled homosexuals as "sexual perverts," President Dwight Eisenhower banned employment of gay men and women within the federal government and government contractors, and the military significantly purged gays from the ranks.⁵ Even as late as 1966, the policies of the National American Conference of Homophile Organizations' tactics for equal rights consisted of relatively passive petitioning for the redress of grievances and often young members still had not come to terms with their own sexuality. For historian Martin Duberman, members were not ready to insist that homosexuality was neither abnormal nor unnatural, which prevented them from rallying.⁶ As a result, gays generally lacked support outside of their own community. Moreover the homophobic climate in the U.S. inhibited homosexuals from outwardly understanding their sexual identity or place in society. The Stonewall Riot in 1969 served as a distinctive shift in the political and social status of gays in the U.S. Instead of passive advocates, gays increased their visibility through more militant organizations, protests and marches. Through revolutionary rhetoric and community building, activists insisted on a new focus for gay rights. Accordingly gay activists employed public history techniques to create a sense of identity and place in society previously denied to them.

A radical change in homosexual rights occurred in June 1969 at Greenwich Village's mafia run gay bar, The Stonewall Inn, when gay patrons rejected frequent police brutality and discrimination. At this time, bars were one of the few establishments that welcomed homosexuals and police often used improper liquor licenses as legal justification for bar raids at

⁵ D'Emillio, *Making Trouble*, 10.

⁶ Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 171.

places suspected of homosexual congregation. Overwhelmingly, gay patrons responded without significant incident. The events of June 28, 1969, now referred to as ‘Stonewall,’ preceded a three-day street riot, which many Americans associate with the inauguration of modern gay liberation. To this day, the events at the Stonewall Inn remain synonymous with gay resistance to oppression and are central in the iconography of lesbian and gay awareness.⁷ Gay Pride Marches and Parades held annually across the country continue to mark the event that both the gay and straight community associate with a distinct change from gay oppression and invisibility to gay liberation and visibility. Although historians challenge Stonewall as the beginning of gay liberation, its mnemonic capacity and the immediate actions taken by participants created an unprecedented moment of unification and visibility for the LGBT community. Historian David Carter, who has most extensively analyzed the moment’s historic impact in *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*, identified the existence of unique timing, social history, cultural change, local history and geography of the Stonewall raid as defining characteristics that separated it from previous gay establishment raids and disturbances. The bars’ location in the epicenter of a gay ghetto [Greenwich Village] allowed for many homosexuals to gather quickly and essentially control the streets.⁸ Activists like Marty Robinson, John O’Brien, Dick Leisch, and Madeline Cervantes decided after Stonewall to shift the demand for gay rights from the passive homophile action [like Mattachine and the DOB] to more radical actions, wherein a new commitment to gay rights formed.⁹ The combination of timing and immediate public response made Stonewall recognizable on a national level and resonant with the American public.

The memory of Stonewall has endured for over forty years and remains as a reminder of where homosexuals have been in the U.S and where they are going. Homosexuals worked to

⁷Duberman, *Stonewall*, xvii.

⁸David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 256.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 210-11.

create a previously impossible presence in society. Activists' infused their rhetoric with the necessity of a cohesive gay community and action. Craig Rodwell led the formation of the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee in November 1969. A letter written by the Christopher Street Liberation Day Umbrella Committee dated March 1, 1970, sent to "All Midwestern and Western Regional Homophile Organizations" asked them to "take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity for action and publicity and make of it a truly national reminder day."¹⁰ Rodwell solicited New York gay groups for representatives to help plan the celebration. In the end the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), the Mattachines, the DOB's, the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) and smaller groups joined for a "grass-roots project uncontaminated by any connection." On June 28, 1970 the New York gay community gathered with t-shirts, banners, and signs that read "HOMOSEXUAL IS NOT A FOUR-LETTER WORD," and performed chants like "Two, four, six, eight/ Gay is just as good as straight."¹¹ Groups participated in similar events across the country including Chicago and Los Angeles. The article "Gay Pride Week Huge Success!" printed in *Chicago Gay Liberation Newsletter*, stated "Sunday the 28th was notable across the nation for two reasons-a number of marches were held celebrating Gay Pride Week, and the news of them also penetrated the 'jock-strap' curtain to be fully reported in a number of newspapers." In New York City alone estimates ranged from 2,000 to 5,000 marchers and then as many as 20,000 men and women in a park afterwards.¹²

The marches grew after 1970 and today remain a nationwide event. The remarkable significance of pride marches and the memory of Stonewall illustrate what D'Emillio recognizes as the gay community's necessity to form on public spaces. For him "our survival and liberation

¹⁰ Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," *American Sociological Review* 71 no. 5 (October 2006): 740.

¹¹ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 270-278.

¹² Armstrong and Crage, "Movements and Memory," 741.

depended on our ability to defend and expand that terrain.”¹³ Homosexuals made their community visible after 1969 in whatever means were possible. They united through groups, newsletters, rallies, marches and forthrightly placed themselves in mainstream American society while seeking to intertwine themselves in the fabric of the country.

Stonewall propelled homosexuality into the American conversation and provided a visual symbol for gay rights. While historians and gay activists argue for its distinctiveness in comparison to other similar events (the 1965 Janus Sit-in in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the 1966 Compton’s Cafeteria Disturbance in San Francisco, California or a rally held after a violent raid at the Black Cat and New Faces in 1967 in Los Angeles, California) the social gains and recognition for gay rights immediately after Stonewall made it an important moment for American equal rights. For instance, sociologists Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage argue that a homosexual resistance in a small street riot outside Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966 was similar to Stonewall. However, response by local homophile groups indicated they did not view the event as newsworthy or politically relevant. Therefore, although one homophile publication included a short article about the incident, it was not mentioned in the mainstream press, police records or other public reports.¹⁴ While previous resistance to anti-homosexual actions existed, the lack of publicity and immediate use as a memorable event decreased the effects on equal rights. For many Americans, Stonewall clearly illustrated the gay community’s protest of the unfair and brutal treatment they received from police and marked the starting point of the gay rights movement in the U.S. Unlike earlier isolated protests in cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles, or groups like the DOB and the Mattachines, after 1969

¹³ D’Emillio, *Making Trouble*, 13.

¹⁴ Armstrong and Crage, “Movements and Memory,” 733.

Americans, gay and straight, joined together publicly to address the unequal treatment of homosexuals.

Gay activists have used the Stonewall Riots as a commemorative vehicle and also as an inspiration for the creation of a gay identity through understanding the past. The riots were a significant moment for the growth of public history in addition to a watershed moment for gay rights. Societal disregard of homosexuality before 1969 prevented LGBT people from experiencing a sense of community or existence in the national narrative. As recognized by David Lowenthal, the recognition of one's past aids in both national and communal understanding and legitimizes people in their own eyes.¹⁵ Public history in effect helps all peoples find their sense of self through seeking out, preserving and presenting the past. Activists worked to create archives, collections and preservation projects in response to the previous repression of homosexuality. Utilizing the radical rhetoric for community building and equality created after Stonewall, the LGBT community moved to establish an identity previously denied by society. These initiatives currently surpass accredited museums in the United States' consideration of LGBT history. The current lack of LGBT history in museums indicates how museums still falter as culturally inclusive institutions. For public historians to remain socially conscious they must remain cognizant of the constantly changing demographics in the U.S. To do so, public historians must build relationships with the ever-changing make-up of peoples, cultures, religions, and traditions in the country. Today, museum staff can use the pioneering efforts of the LGBT community to create a sense of identity after Stonewall as a model to move towards the incorporation of LGBT history in museum policies.

¹⁵ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 41.

Even with the strides made by homosexuals and the concurrent advancement of museum credos to embrace more inclusive histories, homosexuality today remains essentially absent from exhibitions at accredited museums. This lack of inclusion is attributable to the historical portrayal of homosexuality as a deviant societal behavior and its lack of historiography and presence in the academy prior to 1969. Before Stonewall American society disapproved of homosexuality. Historians of sexuality usually portray the mental health profession in the U.S. before the 1960s as a monolithic field that pathologized homosexual behavior describing it as a psychological disorder.¹⁶ It remained an illness in the American Psychiatric Diagnosis Manual until 1973; library shelves contained no mention of homosexuality, and gay history remained out of the history books until well into the 1980s. Alfred Kinsey's controversial *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* published in 1948 was the first study to analyze homosexuality as something other than abnormal behavior. He argued that moral grounds affect much of society's perceptions of homosexuality and that in fact it was not a psychological disorder.¹⁷ Historian John D'Emillio revealed in his article "Not a Simple Matter: Gay History and Gay Historians" how in the 1970s, when he started his dissertation, a history faculty member implied D'Emillio would ruin his career his career by studying homosexuality.

The transformation toward a more revolutionary rhetoric after Stonewall provided an ideal situation for activists and scholars to address the negative biases against homosexuality through increasing visibility in academia and society. Academic groups like the Gay Academic Union (1973) and the American Library Association's Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Equality (1970) formed in order to address prejudices against homosexuals as well as the absence of a gay

¹⁶ Howard Hsueh-Hao Chang, "Effecting Science, Affecting Medicine: Homosexuality, The Kinsey Reports, and the Contested Boundaries of Psychopathology in the United States, 1948-1965," *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences* 44 no. 4 (Fall 2008):301.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,309.

historiography. Through the GAU, D'Emillio, along with scholars Jonathan Katz, Martin Duberman, Bertha Harris, Karla Jay, and Barbara Gittings actively researched and wrote gay and lesbian scholarship that academia obviously lacked.¹⁸ The GAU statement of purpose opposed all forms of discrimination, against all women and gay people within academia, supported individual academics in coming out, promoted new approaches to the study of the gay experience, as well as the teaching of gay studies throughout the American educational system. Simultaneously, members wanted to foster self-awareness as individuals, and through applying professional skills become the agency for a critical examination of the gay experience that would challenge the generalizations that supported oppression.¹⁹

These academics, motivated by their communities' underrepresentation in history worked to create a sense of identity and presence through the creation of historical narratives. Because of their publications, research, conferences and discussions, homosexuality started to appear in the historical conversation in America. Katz's *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States*, published in 1976, was the first comprehensive history of homosexuality. *Gay American History* included four hundred years of homosexuality in the U.S., in which homosexuals were condemned to death by choking, burning, and drowning; they were executed, jailed, pilloried, fined, court-martialed, prostituted, fired, framed, blackmailed, disinherited, declared insane, driven to insanity, suicide, murder, and self-hate.²⁰ Katz began his analysis in 1566 with the first known case of a homosexual execution in the U.S. (a Frenchman by Spanish military authorities) and continues through the 1970s and 'resistance'. Katz began his research in

¹⁸ Lynn Witt, Sherry Thomas, and Eric Marcus eds., *Out in All Directions The Almanac of Gay and Lesbian America* (New York: Warner Books, 1995), 352.

¹⁹ The Rainbow History Project, "Resources on the Gay Academic Union," Rainbow History Project, <http://www.rainbowhistory.org/gau.htm> (accessed June 28, 2010).

²⁰ Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States* (New York: Crowell, 1976), 11.

1971 with the presumption that “Gay American History must exist” and briefly references Stonewall as the birth of “the recent Gay liberation movement.”²¹

Like Katz, other homosexuals recognized the lack of gay history and actively sought to research and create records about the LBGT past. Even with Stonewall’s mythic place in gay history, the historiography of the U.S. lacked reference or critical analysis of the event for many years. Academics seldom focused on gay and lesbian history in the decades following Stonewall which reduced the widespread publication of analyses on homosexuality. The preface to Duberman’s 1994 *Stonewall*, stated that twenty-five years after the event the actual story of the riot still was not completely told or well understood. His book unpacked the 1969 riots and grounded the “symbolic Stonewall in empirical reality” by “placing the events of 1969 in historical context.”²² In 2004 Carter’s *Stonewall* more thoroughly analyzed the riot to better understand the still unchronicled portions of the event as well as address what made Stonewall differ from other events. Duberman, D’Emillio, Carter, and Katz, as well as Lisa Duggan, and George Chauncey worked as forerunners of gay history, filling in the pages left blank due to discrimination and trepidation before 1969. As a result, the historiography of homosexuality in America continues to grow rich with analysis, content, and perspective. Stonewall remains in the historiography as a significant milestone in gay history and as an undeniable touchstone for modern gay liberation.

Academic concentration in LBGT studies mirrored the overall trend in the university to focus on marginalized pasts. Historians in particular acknowledge that around the 1970s academics increasingly focused their research on broader and deeper topics in order to do a history from below and address the untapped and unconventional sources of information to

²¹ Katz, *Gay American History*, 8, 337.

²² Duberman, *Stonewall*, xvii.

recreate the lives of the common person.²³ Scholars shifted their focus to women's, social, labor, and immigrant histories to transform a past that often reflected a majority white, male, straight, and prosperous society. Inspired by the social movements of the time, such as second-wave feminism, the civil rights movement, American Indian Movement, as well as the social unrest caused by events like Watergate and the Vietnam War, these scholars provided a much needed challenge to U.S. historiography. Museums emulated this shift toward inclusivity and transformed from closets of curiosity to institutions that sought more extensive and accurate interpretations of the past. Mike Wallace suggests that previous to this change, museum professionals eradicated exploitation, racism, sexism and class struggle from historical records, disregarded broad-based oppositional traditions and popular cultures, and rendered the majority of the population invisible as shapers of history. In doing so, they inhibited the capacity of visitors to imagine alternative social orders, past or future. Public historians and museum professionals reassessed the accepted history and the inclusion of social histories, like minorities, women and labor became more mainstreamed and reflected in museum interpretations.²⁴

Public history literature thoroughly chronicles the development of new histories about women, African Americans, and laborers. The essays in Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer Goodman's *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation* analyze how women seek to improve their representation at historic houses and museum settings and readdress their contributions to the historic landscape. Women today reject the privileging of the economic and political activity of wealthy white men.²⁵ Although much work still must be done, Dubrow

²³ Amy Henderson and Adrienne L. Kaeppler eds., *Exhibiting Dilemmas: Issues of Representation at the Smithsonian* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 9.

²⁴ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), xii.

²⁵ Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer Goodman's *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 2-3, 83.

indicates programs like the Women’s History Landmark Project and the Women’s History Education Initiative suggest positive change on the American landscape. Similarly in *The New History in an Old Museum*, Richard Handler and Eric Gable assess how the historical interpretations at Colonial Williamsburg became more socially inclusive starting in the 1970s. In response to an American desire for a more realistic interpretation, beyond the story of the elites and great men at Williamsburg, a decisive shift occurred to show the ‘dirtier’ side of the local narrative. The new interpretation continued to celebrate American identity and community, but was not silent about past injustices, such as slavery.²⁶ Lastly, the essays included in James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton’s *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* thoroughly analyze race and the persistent challenge to both academics and society to accurately incorporate it into the United States’ historical narrative. Many of the essays identify the slow process of coming to terms with institutions like slavery and racial prejudice in the United States. In his essay “The Last Great Taboo Subject: Exhibiting Slavery at the Library of Congress,” John Michael Vlach detailed the public suspicion and controversy encountered by his exhibit about plantation slavery entitled *Back of the Big House: The Cultural Landscape of the Plantation*. The exhibit received a range of response from the protest by African American employees at the Library of Congress venue, one saying “slavery was nothing to celebrate,” to praise for the exhibit giving a visitor “a sense of who I am and where I am from and the values of my culture.”²⁷ Focused approaches to topics of women and slavery demonstrate the concerted effort of the last three decades to change how the landscape and museums reflect the American past. Increasingly, public history settings represent true forums of knowledge and discussion.

²⁶ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History of an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 4.

²⁷ John Michael Vlach “The Last Great Taboo Subject: Exhibiting Slavery at the Library of Congress,” in *Slavery and Public History The Tough Stuff of American Memory* ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, 62, 67.

Visitors encounter their story, heritage, and backgrounds in public history settings like museums and historic sites.

Social and public historians increasingly note the lack of LGBT interpretations at museums. James H. Sanders III, whose research partially focuses on the roles of and intersections between race, class, gender and sexuality as embedded within and produced by cultural institutions, argues that heteronormativity currently drives exhibitions and programs at museums.²⁸ For Sanders, scholars like Hilde Hein, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill and Stephen Weil work to identify the museum as a changing social and cultural institution as well as critique museums' historic classist, elitist, nationalist, masculinist, racist and ableist productions. However, their assessments ignore how museums fail to address their complicity in the maintenance of heteronormativity. By not serving the entire community, museums do not equally distribute power and authority.²⁹ More recently gay activists and museum personnel brought attention to the responsibility of museums to actively incorporate LGBT history into their collection policies and interpretations. The Spring 2008 edition of *Museums and Social Issues* titled "Where is the Queer?" concisely addressed this evident disregard for homosexuality in professional museums. Co-editors John Fraser and Joe E. Heimlich hoped to extend the scope of minority inclusion in institutions and elevate the dialogue on the integration of sexual identity and museums to a more meaningful level.³⁰ The journal issue addressed the complexity of incorporating queer exhibitions and collections at museums. For Fraser and Heimlich, issues of sexual identity, homosexual ghettoization, homophobia, and the lack of gay material culture are

²⁸ Ohio State University, "OSU Profile," Ohio State University, <https://pro.osu.edu/profiles/sanders-iii.1/> (accessed September 2, 2010).

²⁹ James H. Sanders, "The Museum's Silent Performance," *Museums and Social Issues: A Journal of Reflective Discourse* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008): 17, 21.

³⁰ John Fraser and Joe E. Heimlich, "Where are We?," *Museums and Social Issues: A Journal of Reflective Discourse* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008): 9-10.

common problems for museums. However, the articles in “Where is the Queer?” help to outwardly rebuke the apparent accepted marginalization and aid institutions to augment their consideration of the gay past. Most directly, the issue argues for museums to better understand their audiences and changing societal demographics. Contributors acknowledge the possibility of offending members, visitors, funders and supporters through the incorporation of LGBT exhibitions and collections. However, by ignoring their visitors and changing notions of sexuality, museums perpetuate unequal power relationships. Museum professionals, therefore, must communicate with the LGBT community and work toward new research to create more objective and cohesive narratives. Particularly in the U.S., museums continue to turn a blind eye to the absence of gay related presentations. Robert Mills and Andrew Gorman-Murray identified successful bids at LGBT museums in England and Australia. Paul Gabriel revealed that simply wearing a badge with the words “Paul Gabriel, Exhibits Director, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society (GLBTHS) of San Francisco” at the American Association of Museums in the early 2000’s solicited negative remarks and uncomfortable interactions with participants. One man expressed concern of trustee loss and community support while the glares of others reminded him, “I was the *only* such professional to be walking around with that kind of overt designation.”³¹ The issue outlines successful exhibitions like *The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945* and the Gay Ohio History Initiative in the U.S. Overall, the journal as a whole identifies the apathy of American museums toward LGBT issues and the necessity to break down the barriers of heteronormative practices. Regardless of potential funding loss or visitor dilemmas, museum staff must actively redress museums’ purpose as preservers of the past and disseminators of knowledge.

³¹ Paul Gabriel, “Embracing Our Erotic Intelligence,” *Museums and Social Issues: A Journal of Reflective of Reflective Discourse* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008):55-57.

Museum literature currently identifies the necessity of a more professional attention to LGBT collections and presentation. Often many smaller collections formed after Stonewall cannot maintain the professional practices needed to ensure lasting collections, and their small size makes their content inaccessible for the public. At the same time, important infrastructure of the gay past, like traditional cruising spots or bathhouses increasingly fall victim to development and dilapidation. Public historians must now address the sustainability of many of these collections, public access, and the presentation of LGBT history. Many of these collections were formed in opposition to heterosexual institutions, collection policies, and prejudices. The gay community responded to pervasive homophobia with their own narrative and identity. Today there is limited collaboration between larger institutions and smaller gay focused archives. Museums must reach out to institutions to generate co-authority over LGBT collections. Through this collaboration museums and the smaller projects can share their resources and create more accessible interpretations.

The lack of scholarship regarding homosexuality and museums indicates museum staff's relative disregard of LGBT history. The secondary literature lacks thorough treatment of museums' integration of LGBT history in exhibitions and collections. The relative novelty of gay studies at the end of the 20th century as well as the lack of exhibitions to analyze added to this gap. Although scholars like Gail Lee Dubrow, Mike Wallace, and Steven Dubin briefly recognize the minimal LGBT interpretations in the context of public history, the literature generally neglects a methodical analysis of what influenced current U.S. LGBT museum policies or collections³². Homophobia, the prominent existence of conservative principles, fear of

³²Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensation* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), Gail Lee Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags: Improving the Preservation and Interpretation of Gay and Lesbian Heritage," in *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, eds. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns

revisionist histories, the availability of collections, privacy, and sexual identity, are all factors that affect the present state of LBGT in public history. Consequently, this analysis addresses how museums in the U.S. are positioned now to incorporate LBGT collections by utilizing the procedures of grassroots archive and history projects formed post-Stonewall. Admittedly, the complexities of the LBGT community cannot be fully addressed in an overview to refocus museums from a heteronormative interpretation to one more open to sexuality. As preservationist Will Fellows noted, contemporary gay identity does not translate easily across cultures or time periods and there is no cross-cultural uniformity in the understanding of concepts like sex, gender, sexuality, gender identity, and self-identity, all of which help define gay.³³ Therefore, the designation of terms like LBGT, gay, lesbian, or homosexual do not seek to alienate or overemphasize aspects of individual sexuality. Instead, this analysis intends to most simply help museums look beyond heteronormative collections and exhibitions.

Recent analysis of United Kingdom and Australian museums most clearly address the complexity of incorporating gay exhibits and collections to museums. Both the U.K. and Australia have multiple national LBGT museums and exhibitions that reference not only the difficulties of LBGT history incorporation but the feasibility of gay history in exhibitions. The analyses most often address the importance of collaboration with the LBGT community and the influence of LBGT collection policies. Darryl McIntyre, head of Public Programs for the Museum of London Group identified U.K. museums as relative wastelands for LBGT related materials until the start of 2000, but through collaboration with LBGT communities, concerted efforts to create LBGT collection policies and a dedication to true cultural inclusivity, museums

Hopkins University Press, 2003), and Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

³³ Will Fellows, *A Passion to Preserve Gay Men as Keepers of Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 13.

like the Museum of London are moving toward LGBT collections and exhibitions as a standard.³⁴ Andrew Gorman-Murray cited Museums Australia's special interest group the Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Museum Australia and its *Gay and Lesbian Policy Guidelines for Museum Programs and Practice* as integral in encouraging greater representation of Australia's queer communities in museums and galleries. Gorman-Murray continued addressing the necessity for museums to attend to distinct diversity within specific gay communities and regions in Australia. He ultimately outlines the importance of collaboration with the gay community and LGBT policies to guide institutions.³⁵ Similarly, Sharon Chalmers addressed the necessity of her communication with the gay community in order to create an 'interdiscursive contact zone' when curating the exhibit *Just Sensational! Queer Histories of Western Sydney* in 2001.³⁶ McIntyre, Gorman-Murray and Chalmers's work provide a basic instruction for U.S. museums to incorporate LGBT past into their institutions through communication and access.

A common theme in LGBT collection scholarship is the unique material culture that represents the gay past. Robert Mills identifies the nascent field of queer archeology and the complexity of even locating queerness in material culture. For Mills, there are issues of sexual representation, identity, or false unified narrative of LGBT history when narrating the gay past through objects.³⁷ Beyond the complexity of representation and the multifaceted nature of gay culture is how and what objects to use when interpreting the LGBT past. The development of gay and lesbian studies has partly been defined and in some ways limited by a need to reassess

³⁴ Darryl McIntyre, "What to Collect? Museums and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Collection," *The International Journal of Art and Design* 26 no. 1 (January 2007):49.

³⁵ Andrew Gorman-Murray, "So Where is the Queer?," *Museums and Social Issues* 3 no. 1(Spring 2008): 68-69.

³⁶ Sharon Chalmers "Lesbian and Gay Bodies in Queer Spaces," *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review* 3 no 2 2007: 135-136.

³⁷ Robert Mills, "History at Large Queer is Here? Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Histories and Public Culture," *History WorkShop Journal* 62: 260.

and evaluate both print information and primary data sources.³⁸ This boundary set by the availability of sources coupled with the taboo nature of homosexuality until the end of the twentieth century caused many people to throw away ephemera, journals, letters and pictures that might divulge a homosexual past. Moreover, many objects, like protest signs, buttons, community newsletters, flyers, or magazines either seemed easily disposable or their composition caused deterioration. Privacy issues and limited tangible evidence introduces new issues for public historians. Edward J. Philips, curator of *Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals*, Mimi Bowling, curator of *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall*, and Robert B. Marks Ridinger of Chicago's Leather Archives and Museum each identified the difficulty in determining and then locating initial collections. Each exhibition had unique challenges like the privacy of individuals, the utilization of public records, locating a frequently destroyed past and the necessity of creativity and awareness by professionals to interpret a once disregarded past.

Despite accredited museum collection polices and exhibitions' exclusion of LGBT culture or history, small independently run institutions collected and presented gay history after Stonewall to create an identifiable past. Historians and librarians like Katz, D'Emillio, Joan Nestle, Del Martin, and Gittings, with both personal and professional interest in gay history, worked to utilize the rhetoric of gay liberation and create validation of homosexuality. On a personal level, their efforts created something identifiable to connect with as a homosexual that society deprived from them before Stonewall. Through organizations such as the GAU and the ALA's Task Force on Gay Liberation, these activists and scholars filled in the pages left blank about the LGBT past and ensured fair access to unbiased gay books, magazine articles and

³⁸ Robert B. Marks Ridinger, "Things Visible and Invisible: The Leather Archives Museum," *Journal of Homosexuality* 3 no. 1: 1.

pamphlets.³⁹ Similarly, grassroots archivists created and preserved a tangible past through individual repositories and city projects defined the landscape in relation to gay history. The Lesbian Herstory Archive (1972) and Jim Kepner's personal collection started in 1942, reflected both personal and community interest in the gay past. The Mariposa Education and Research Foundation's decision to start a gay collection in 1978 also illustrated this proactive approach. They realized that without prompt action the unique materials of lesbian and gay culture would be lost. The foundation therefore collected material on social and political aspects of sexuality to create historical sources for future research and preservation.⁴⁰ Likewise, preservation efforts like the successful nomination of the Stonewall Inn to the National Register of Historic Places and the National Trust of Historic Preservation's group LGBT Pride and Preservation reveals a slow shift to include LGBT history on the landscape. The LHA and Jim Kepner's collection, still existent today, along with countless others and preservation efforts, contain remnants of a previously disregarded past that was saved by gay activist seeking identity and place after Stonewall.

As the relative novelty of queer studies diminishes and American society increasingly accepts homosexuality, the public and museum professionals acknowledge the noticeable lack of homosexuality in the national narrative. The homophobic and conservative climates in previous decades inhibited the funding and liberal interpretations of museums, but current circumstances allow for more accurate and tolerant displays at public institutions. The culture wars of the 1990s and the question of federal funding influenced institutions' ability to create exhibitions that went

³⁹ Cal Gough, "The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force of the American Library Association: A Chronicle of Activities, 1970-1995," in *Daring to Find Our Names The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 121.

⁴⁰ Brenda Marston, "Archivist, Activists, and Scholars: Creating a Queer History," In *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 138.

beyond the traditional and accepted narrative of American history. The incorporation of what conservatives called “left-wing and revisionist histories” in schools, the media, and museums alarmed politicians on the right who worked to limit funding of institutions that leaned too far left.⁴¹ The conservative climate of the decade compromised the principles of American museums, limiting the breadth of their interpretations.⁴² Analyses of the culture wars often reference Andres Serrano’s *Piss Christ* when explaining the conservative right’s influence on queer displays as well as the monitored environment in which institutions functioned.⁴³

Frequently outcries such as those by Reverend Donald Wildmon and Senator Jesse Helms about gay-related art served to reinforce the ideas that gay and lesbian history and culture belonged in the realm of sexuality and obscenity.⁴⁴ Controversies like the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum’s *Enola Gay* debacle identified this involvement of the government and community alike in controlling how museums interpret and present the past. Not surprisingly, museum staffers did not concentrate on even simply collecting LBGT history. Society’s deliberation on homosexuality as well as the purpose of cultural institutions throughout the last decade of the 20th century limited museums’ ability to incorporate LBGT history.

Chapter One analyzes how after Stonewall, professionals and non-professionals emerged with a focus of creating a homosexual historical record. Prior to Stonewall, history books did not include homosexuality and it was largely considered to be a psychological and deviant behavior. However, people like Barbara Gittings, Jonathan Katz, Martin Duberman, and John D’Emillio were inspired by the rhetoric and community building after Stonewall and worked to increase the

⁴¹ “Richard Jensen, “The Culture Wars, 1965-1995: A Historians Map,” *The Journal of Social History* mid-winter 1995: 21-22.

⁴² Gary B. Nash, “The History Wars of the 1990s” (paper presented at Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture in History, Greenville, North Carolina, November 1998).

⁴³ Mills, “Theorizing the Queer Museum,” 41

⁴⁴ Klaus Müller, “Invisible Visitors: Museums and the Gay and Lesbian Community,” *Museum News* (September/October 2001), under “Invisible Visitors: Museums and the Gay and Lesbian Community,” http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN_SO01_InvisibleVisitors.cfm (accessed February 2, 2010).

homosexual presence in professions like academia and libraries. Their efforts helped to create the first recorded past for the LBGT community. At the same time, homosexuals began smaller projects, like archives and private collections in response to the deficient record as well as to preserve their tangible past. The chapter looks at the formation of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in 1974 and Jim Kepner's collection started in 1942, and how these grassroots initiatives exemplified public history principles of documenting under-recorded and often marginalized histories. In later years the LBGT community focused on the urban landscape to identify homosexuality as part of the national narrative. Activists focused on preserving places like Stonewall that are iconic for gay history and provided community grassroots tours to provide LBGT interpretations of urban landscapes.

Chapter Two addresses how unlike the grassroots initiatives of the 1970s for preservation and collection, U.S. accredited museums today do not reflect the same dedication. Museum professionals could not include LBGT materials within the largely conservative and often homophobic political and social climates in the decades following Stonewall. Selective funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities often dictated what constituted moral and appropriate art. Similarly, controversies surrounding the National Air and Space Museum's *Enola Gay* exhibition or Robert Mapplethorpe's *The Perfect Moment* illustrate how outside sources influenced museum content. The fear of losing traditional American values exemplified during the culture wars, coupled with the relative novelty of homosexuality in mainstream academia and society resulted in congressional and societal control of museum content.

Chapter Three outlines how present-day museums are in a different position to incorporate LBGT history. Stonewall remains a significant part of equal rights memory and from

that memory emerged unprecedented public history projects. Today, museum staff must work to understand their visitor population in order to better realize how to equally represent society. Creating a dialogue with the gay community better enables museum staff to share authority of a past that museums have too long ignored.

Gay activists utilized public history techniques after Stonewall to create a sense of identity, but the current state of LBGT history in collections, archives, museums and history projects shows that outside political and social sources continues to influence museum collections, interpretations and exhibitions. Stonewall provided gay activists with a radical opportunity to move toward liberation and equality. Prior to 1969, the negative opinion of homosexuality prohibited a sense of identity or visible presence on the national landscape or historiography. Activists led in multiple ways from creating parades, community centers, and academic groups, to publications that brought the need for gay equality to the forefront. Just as academic activists like D'Emillio, Katz, and Duberman created a written history, archivists created identity through tangible history in response to previous decades of secrecy and degradation, and today provide the material culture that otherwise may have been lost. The lack of professional interest left LBGT material culture susceptible to loss. However, today, social and political climates allow for museums to fulfill their credos of collecting, preserving and presenting more inclusive histories. As public historians move forward in the twenty-first century, it is essential that the LBGT past is also considered. The scope of LBGT culture and history is admittedly complex with many facets of identity, sexuality, privacy, and community. This analysis by no means intends to conceptualize the entire LBGT community and its incorporation into museums as a whole. It seeks to encourage museums to draw on models provided by post-Stonewall activists who fought for the moment's centrality in history and

identity. Museums must move forward and address the homosexual past and culture in mission statements, collection policies, and outreach programs in order to fulfill the professions dedication to inclusivity.

CHAPTER I – THE STONEWALL RIOT AND THE GROWTH OF LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, GAY, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY IDENTITY THROUGH ARCHIVES AND URBAN SPACE

Stonewall and Modern Gay Liberation

Men in suits and conservatively-dressed women gathered for the first Annual Reminder, a homosexual rights demonstration at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1965. Comparable to other homophile actions in the mid sixties, the participants picketed in an orderly fashion holding signs that read “No society can be great without ALL its citizens” and “Homosexual Citizens Want equal treatment by their Government.”⁴⁵ Rarely did the participants in these demonstrations engage in disorderly conduct and often their actions went unrecognized by government officials and the majority of Americans. June 1969 marked a distinctive change in the visibility of resistance and the equal rights movement for gay men and lesbians in the U.S. Under the guise of liquor and vending enforcement, police commonly raided bars and suspected homosexual establishments during this period. However, in the early hours of June 29th the Stonewall Inn bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village became a place forever mythologized in American gay liberation history.

⁴⁵ NYPL Digital Gallery, “Frank Kameny in Picket,” New York Public Library, <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeysearchdetail.cfm?trg=1&strucID=1079419&imageID=1605730&total=58&num=0&word=frank&s=1¬word=&d=&c=&f=&k=0&lWord=1078770&lField=10&sScope=Source&sLevel=2&sLabel=Photographs%2520by%2520Kay%2520Tobin%2520Lahusen%2520and%2520others&imgs=20&pos=7&e=w> (accessed June 20, 2010).



Figure 1.1 Activist Frank Kameny and others protesting at the First Annual Reminder Day at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. July 4, 1965. *New York Public Library Digital Collection*

On a busy Friday evening Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine sought to conduct a routine premise search to seize liquor and vending at the mafia controlled Stonewall Inn bar. The raid did not end characteristically with patrons placidly retreating, but instead transvestites resisted the typical body search and some bar patrons refused to provide identification.⁴⁶ As the New York City police escorted drag queens out and into the awaiting paddy wagons, a crowd gathered outside. Rage increased. *Village Voice* writers Lucian Truscott and Howard Smith observed that as the cops brought the drag queens out, the crowd screamed “Pigs!” and “Faggot cops!” and started to throw pennies, dimes, and bottles. In response, Pine and his crew barricaded themselves inside the Stonewall.⁴⁷ The mob outside the bar continued to grow and remained there for the next three days, drawing mass attention to the Stonewall Inn and the plight of gay rights. The riot and organizing that followed inaugurated the modern gay liberation movement and today the events at the Stonewall Inn remain synonymous with gay resistance to oppression

⁴⁶ David Carter, *Stonewall The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 131, 140-141.

⁴⁷ Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 18.

and are central in the iconography of lesbian and gay awareness.⁴⁸ After Stonewall, Annual Pride Parades commemorated the event across the country. The parade allowed for a national collective memory, which helped many Americans to identify Stonewall with gay liberation. Sociologists Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crago argue the mnemonic capacity allowed by Stonewall added to the gay liberation movement already in progress in New York City in that activists recognized and seized the opportunity to create a commemorative vehicle through the Stonewall Riots and solidified the historic significance of June 29, 1969.⁴⁹

Historians researching sexuality, tend to challenge Stonewall as the beginning of gay liberation because the gay community organized for equality before 1969.⁵⁰ Other incidences of resistance revealed moments in the sixties when homosexuals actively responded to unfair and often violent treatment. However, the minimal documentation of the gay community's challenge to unequal and brutal treatment by society and police previous to the 1970s diminishes public awareness. Mainstream publications' disregard of homosexuality and its deviant portrayal until the 1970s limited the documentation of a majority of gay rights efforts. For instance at a Philadelphia restaurant in 1965 homosexuals instigated the "Janus Sit-ins" after servers denied them service on suspicion of homosexuality and in 1967 homosexuals rallied in Los Angeles in response to a violent New Year's Eve raid at the Black Cat and New Faces.⁵¹ Photographs of conservatively dressed men also documented orderly protests in large cities like Washington D.C, New York City and San Francisco to object to unfair government policies and police brutality. These demonstrations rarely went beyond the notice of bystanders and did not change

⁴⁸ Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), xvii.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M Crago, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," *American Sociological Review* 71 no. 5 (October 2006): 725.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 725.

⁵¹ Lynn Witt, Sherry Thomas, and Eric Marcus eds., *Out in All Directions The Almanac of Gay and Lesbian America* (New York: Warner Books, 1995), 208-210.

the status quo. Publications like *ONE*, distributed by the Mattachine Society and *The Ladder* by the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) documented an underground interest in gay and lesbian culture. Some publications like the *New York Times* did report the gay community's desire to end bar raids and associate freely in public, but most outlets classified and personified homosexuals as social deviants. While occurrences like the Janus Sit-ins and the rally in Los Angeles were central to the process of homosexuals' rejection of unfair treatment, the undeniable attention to homosexuality after Stonewall marked the event as a distinct vehicle for historic memory.

Previous to Stonewall the most recognized gay rights groups, the Mattachine Society and the DOB, encouraged equality in American society through education and publications. Historians like Martin Duberman, John D'Emillio, and David Carter identify the Mattachine and the DOB as active and well organized equal rights groups in the pre-Stonewall period, but argue that political conditions which encouraged spying, entrapment, and home invasions as well as personal, internal feelings about homosexuality suppressed individuals' willingness to openly combat unfair treatment.⁵² Public contempt limited the success of the groups' actions toward gaining homosexual civil rights. In the wake of Stonewall, inspired by Vietnam War protests, feminist, Native American, and civil rights movement, gay rights activists shifted to a more militant stance that garnered attention on a national scale. The new interest increased the number of gay rights groups in the U.S. from fifty in 1969 to 800 in 1973.⁵³ After June of 1969, the status of homosexuals in the U.S. decisively shifted from a barely visible polite minority to activist organizations publically demanding equal rights and awareness through publications, protests, parades and organizations.

⁵² John D'Emillio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 10.

⁵³ David Deitcher, *Over the Rainbow Lesbian and Gay Politics Since Stonewall* (London: Boxtree, 1995), 142.

The gay community did not proceed in unison after Stonewall, but a vocal faction seized the moment offered by the uprising and encouraged community organization and the establishment of gay identity. New York, Washington D.C., and San Francisco experienced a shift toward a more active stance in obtaining gay rights. Activists, including Craig Rodwell, Jim Fouratt, Marsha Shelley, and Sylvia Rivera, took to the streets in order to raise awareness of the mistreatment of homosexuals and used Stonewall as a symbol to gain support. Two days after Stonewall, Rodwell, a militant activist and owner of the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, distributed 1,000 flyers in New York City proclaiming, “The nights of Friday June 27 1969 and Saturday June 28 1969 will go down in history as the first time that thousands of Homosexual men and women went out into the streets to protest the intolerable situation which has existed in New York City for many years.”⁵⁴ Rodwell’s actions are recognized by scholars as essential to the presence the Stonewall riots had in publications and the gay community.

Rodwell’s desire to be part of an openly gay community demonstrates the presence of a new and positive depiction of homosexuality. Instead of a public portrayal of homosexuals as being sick or mentally unstable, announcements like Rodwell’s indicated a cohesive group. For example, most mainstream publications perpetuated the deviant depiction of gays when describing Stonewall. The *New York Times* headline “Hostile Crowd Dispersed Near Sheridan Square” sent the message gays were enemies of civilized society and the *New York Daily News* headline “Homo Nest Raided; Queen Bees are Stinging Mad” ridiculed activists. Even the alternative *Village Voice* described the events with phrases like “prancing,” “forces of faggotry,” “fag follies,” and “wrists were limp, hair was primped.”⁵⁵ Rodwell’s and others’ distinctive

⁵⁴ Armstrong and Crago, “Movements and Memory,” 738.

⁵⁵ Rodger Streitmatter, *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), 119.

public encouragement for unification energized the gay community to organize and visibly align themselves in order to take more direct action than their predecessors in Mattachine or the DOB.

The visible declaration of gay liberation in the streets evolved into meetings to determine how to maintain the momentum created by Stonewall and solidify a sense of identity within the gay community. On July 4th the New York Mattachine Society held a meeting with the intention of thwarting any planned radical demonstrations in response to Stonewall. However, that evening a decisive split occurred when those not interested in reformist policies left the meeting. Jim Fouratt, frustrated with conformist principles, disrupted the meeting and encouraged those present to be proud and even to use force to obtain respect. After he left, thirty-five or forty people followed Fouratt to Alternate University, a location home to various radical enterprises, to form a new gay organization.⁵⁶ Later that month a flier stating “Do You Think Homosexuals are Revolting? You bet your Sweet Ass We Are” invited homosexuals to attend a meeting at Alternate University on July 24th.⁵⁷ The participants formed the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), one of the most easily identifiable gay rights organizations active in the early seventies and one that worked to transform cultural norms and the social inequalities of minorities in the U.S. The GLF, along with other publications and organizations, transformed the language of gay equality to a more militant and direct rhetoric. This change encouraged a coalition among homosexuals to move forward in solidarity to create a resilient community and reject the heteronormative establishment.

Grassroots publications and word of mouth organizing contributed to the increased awareness and activity of the new stance of gay liberation. The ephemeral nature of many of the organizations and publications makes determining exact numbers impossible. Nonetheless, the

⁵⁶ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 211-212.

⁵⁷ Teal, *The Gay Militants*, 36.

passionate prose and revolutionary ideas inspired after Stonewall, either through mailings or postings, called the gay community to action.⁵⁸ The GLF published *Come Out!*, the first widely circulated publication of gay liberation. The first issue, published November 14, 1969 explained, “through mutual respect, action and education, Come Out hopes to unify both the homosexual community and other oppressed groups into a cohesive body of people who do not find the enemy in each other.”⁵⁹ The radical *Gay Sunshine*, published the poem “Revolution Means Community” written May 30, 1970; its creator inspired action through the lines “revolution means community, if we must have these by blood, then let me carry a knife, if not, let me walk naked. . . we shall win-dig it, revolution means community.”⁶⁰ Although at times the language was much more radical, insisting on matters like a separate gay nation and violence, others simply sought recognition for the gay community. The call for unified action signified a communal forging of ideas and a desire to create a more visible gay identity in order to work toward equality and understanding. As 1969 came to a close and the reality of Stonewall’s significance solidified, gays in the U.S. created a definitive foundation for the equal rights movement and organizations took various forms as people sought to realize their place in gay rights.

⁵⁸ Streitmatter, *Unspeakable*, 117.

⁵⁹ *Come Out! A Newspaper by and for the Gay Community*, 1 no 1, November 14, 1969: 1. http://www.outhistory.org/wiki/Come_Out_vol_1_no_1(accessed June 2, 2010).

⁶⁰“Revolution Means Community,” *Gay Sunshine*, issue 6, page 7.

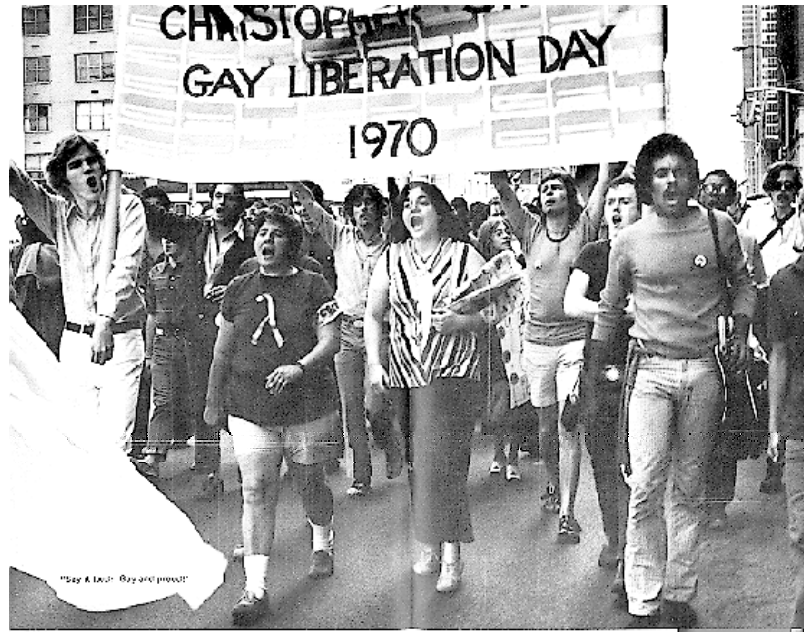


Figure 1.2 Gay activists march at the First Annual Christopher Street Liberation Day. Columbia University, *Stonewall and Beyond: Lesbian and Gay Culture*

Stonewall: A Foundation for LGBT History

Through some of these organizational efforts many homosexuals wanted to understand their identities and create a recorded homosexual past. Homosexuals lacked literature or historical context to clarify their gay roots and add to the growth of the gay community. In *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal claims that recognizing one's past aids in both national and communal understanding, and legitimizes a people in their own eyes. More specifically, the past is integral to a sense of identity, he writes "the sureness of 'I was' is a necessary component of the sureness of 'I am.'"⁶¹ The gay community similarly created an active and legitimate place in the nation's narrative. Initially groups like the Gay Academic Union (GAU) and the American Library Association's Task Force on Gay Liberation (GLTF) formed on a more formal and academic basis. Later, people outside of academia created smaller and more independent grassroots projects to preserve the homosexual past and better understand

⁶¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 41, 44.

their identity. The creation of academic organizations and history projects offered a permanent understanding of community and identity through history and place. Before Stonewall, the repressed existence of gays and negative public perception inhibited the creation of the written and unbiased analysis of homosexuality. In response to the repression academics interested in history and research started leftist academic organizations aimed at increasing the LGBT historical narrative as well as gaining access to gay texts.

Even after Stonewall historians, gay or straight, risked public condemnation through studying homosexuality and as a result, gays lacked readily available context to understand their identity and past. Gay and lesbian activists became writers before other historians were interested. Similarly gay archivists preserved homosexual material culture and ephemera before professional archives were interested. The actions taken by this new kind of ‘academic activist’ required acceptance in their professional lives and showed their desire to contribute to gay liberation through the incorporation of their research, collection skills and interests in creating a historical record of homosexuality. Similarly, archives and personal collections of the gay past flourished on a grassroots level in the decades following the Stonewall riots. Homosexuals realized their past lacked preservation and took responsibility to save tangible objects as well and explain gay history to better understand their own as well as communal identity.

Scholars and librarians, with both personal and professional interests in gay history, worked to utilize the rhetoric of gay liberation and validate homosexuality. Organizations such as the GAU (1971) and the GLTF (1970) formed to fill in the pages left blank about the LGBT past and ensure fair access to unbiased gay books, magazine articles and pamphlets.⁶² Gay academic activists Barbara Gittings, Martin Duberman, John D’Emillio, Jonathan Katz, Joan Nestle, and

⁶² Cal Gough, “The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force of the American Library Association: A Chronicle of Activities, 1970-1995,” in *Daring to Find Our Names The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Conneticut: Greenwood Press, 1998),121.

Del Martin brought awareness to gay rights through research and the publication of a previously clandestine narrative. Katz's *Gay American History*, published in 1976, provided the first comprehensive history of homosexuality in the U.S. and fostered a shift in homosexual self-regard from passive objects to active subjects in history.⁶³ Similarly, D'Emillio, a history graduate student at Columbia University in 1970 and co-founder of the GAU, forged new territory in the university with his gay-focused dissertation on the homophile-gay liberation movement in the U.S. These efforts provided an important base of information and access that academics and the public previously lacked because the invisibility of homosexuals and homophobia made their work inaccessible. The creation of the GAU and the GLTF also demonstrated the importance that the understanding of the homosexual past had on the gay community during the early stages of gay liberation.

The GAU, home to later scholars of homosexuality like Duberman and D'Emillio, fostered an environment in which academics felt comfortable at work and in their institutions.⁶⁴ Those involved in the ALA's Task Force for Gay Liberation also wanted librarians and archivists to work free of discrimination. As gay scholars sought to create a historic record and access to LBGT material, funding and institutional constraints limited the immediate influence of these efforts. For example contributors to *The Gay Academic* published in 1978 drew attention to gay scholars. They declared themselves as an "integral part of the academy, serving with distinction in the academy's most celebrated achievements as well as in its more mundane endeavors, certainly with no demonstrable monopoly on corruption, sexual, or otherwise." They stated that even though Stonewall provided much more opportunity for homosexuals, oppression

⁶³Deitcher, *Over the Rainbow*, 15, Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States* (New York: Crowell, 1976).

⁶⁴*The Universities and the Gay Experience A Conference Sponsored by the Women and Men of the Gay Academic Union* (Binghamton, NY: G A F Print Express, 1974).

continued.⁶⁵ Contributor Louis Crompton, a scholar of homosexuality, argued that previously the pursuit of the history of homosexuality was not possible due to the taboos that made it “unspeakable, unmentionable and not fit to be named in front of Christian men.” As a historian he sought to explore the history of homosexuality. Gittings, another contributor to *The Gay Academic* similarly identified her experience of utilizing library science and archives to strengthen gay identity and community after Stonewall. A member of the Library Task Force of Gay Liberation, Gittings further encouraged the cause of gay community identity through unbiased access and the importance of building archival collections.⁶⁶ Part of this compilation signified the usefulness of history, libraries and archives to gay liberation. Through understanding the past, and the historical context of homosexuals, Crompton theorized a greater understanding of homosexuality.⁶⁷ The lack of access to gay history inhibited homosexuals from equally pursuing their past. After Stonewall the LBGT professional community still encountered the challenge of creating a written and tangible record of their past. With homosexuality still stigmatized in U.S. society, mainstream institutions and funding projects did not support research or the collection of gay history. Throughout the seventies, activists demonstrated the importance of their homosexual identity and history and encouraged others to take a stake in their past.

Preserving the LBGT past took many different forms in its early stages. Although Katz, D’Emillio, and Duberman’s research and writing proved integral to contextualizing the history of homosexuality, libraries and archives actively sought to collect and preserve the tangible gay past as well as make gay literature publically accessible. The efforts of the GLTF most clearly exemplify the value of library and archival methods in the preservation of the gay past and

⁶⁵ Louie Crew ed., *The Gay Academic* (Palm Springs, CA: ETC Publications, 1978), xvii.

⁶⁶ Crew, *The Gay Academic*, xvii, 67, 108.

⁶⁷ Louis Crompton, “Gay Genocide: From Leviticus to Hitler,” in *The Gay Academic*, ed. Louie Crew (Palm Springs, CA: ETC Publications, 1978), 71.

creating a gay identity. Today called The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table it remains committed to serving the information needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered professional library community and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered information and access needs of individuals at large.⁶⁸ The GLTF was formed in 1970 by Janet Cooper and Israel Fishman after they discussed bringing a professional openness about homosexuality to the library field. The radical occurrences in New York City at the time and the Pride Parade inspired Fishman to action. Through the GLTF he wanted “. . . to emphasize that it was that shift in my consciousness- *that I would no longer be afraid*- that led me to bring about the birth of this Task Force, this miracle, this incredible tool/weapon for social change and liberation.”⁶⁹ The task force represented the first time homosexuals banded together in any professional association to advance the gay cause through their profession. For Gittings, an early member, it was a place for gay librarians excited by the Stonewall Rebellion and eager to change gay literature and gay people’s lives.⁷⁰

Academic and grassroots interest in LBGT history and preservation grew after 1969, but even in the early eighties as homosexuals actively pursued their identity and past, the professional archival community was just responding to the trend.⁷¹ This initial interest in LBGT history proved essential due to the concerted efforts to destroy gay records and associations. The New York Public Library’s (NYPL) acquisition of the papers of Howard Brown (the commissioner and founder of the now titled National Lesbian and Gay Task Force), symbolized

⁶⁸Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Roundtable, “Mission,” American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/index.cfm> (accessed July 8, 2010).

⁶⁹Israel David Fishman, “How the GLBTF Got Started,” in *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Librarians and their Advocates*, ed. Norman G. Kester (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Inc., Publishers, 1997), 88.

⁷⁰ Barbara Gittings, *Gays in Library Land: The Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the American Library Association: The First Sixteen Years* (Philadelphia: 1990), 1-2.

⁷¹ Brenda J. Marston, “Archivist, Activists, Scholars: Creating a Queer History,” in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History*, ed. James V. Carmichael (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 135.

the fundamental shift in policy to include LBGT history in the collection.⁷² This acquisition, a first for an institution of the NYPL's size, demonstrated a new dedication, beyond the typical heteronormative focus, to concentrate on and collect LBGT history. Even today, the NYPL's collections represent a great accomplishment in collection and preservation efforts of the LBGT past. Similar to the obstacles of funding and discrimination faced by academic historians, libraries and professional archives encountered issues of privacy and prejudice in regard to LBGT history. As a result, most collecting and preservation efforts fell on those with a more individual interest.

Archives: Preserving the LBGT Tangible Past

Activists' determination to understand and save the LBGT past undoubtedly contributed to the survival of gay material culture today. The taboo of homosexuality caused many people to hide or destroy their history or remnants of a homosexual past. For example, after Stonewall records still remained precarious because family members of deceased homosexuals often preferred to keep the sexuality of their kin a secret. Archivist James V. Carmichael recalled when working as a trust administrator at a bank in the early seventies the bank received an estate with a box of papers of a retired professor. The letters revealed a homosexual relationship, but to Carmichael's dismay, they were destroyed.⁷³ Even professional archives contributed to the suppression of information. In the late 1970s an anonymous note to Barbara Gittings revealed a binder of letters at the Minnesota Historical Society exchanged between Rose Elizabeth Cleveland, sister of President Grover Cleveland, and White House hostess Evangeline Marrs Simpson. The note indicated the letters "reveal a lesbian relationship between the two women"

⁷² Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman, *Becoming Visible An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1998), ix.

⁷³ James V. Carmichael Jr., "They Sure Got to Prove it to Me': Millennial Thoughts of Gay Archives, Gay Biography, and Gay Library History," *Libraries and Culture* 35 no. 1 (Winter 2000): 88-89.

and that they were not listed in the card catalogue.⁷⁴ In 1978 Jonathan Katz inquired about the rumored box. The MHS eventually responded: “an unlisted box of Rose Cleveland’s correspondence does indeed exist and had previously been closed to researchers until 1980. But due to current scholarly interest the restriction had been removed.”⁷⁵ Many in the LGBT community sensed a continual loss and denial of their culture that led them to save their tangible history.

Most often, grassroots archives and depositories that documented and preserved the LGBT past developed in homes and apartments. Encouraged by gay publications and organizations, untrained people in the LGBT movement collected and interpreted items to strengthen gay politics and build a sense of community. However, the volunteer nature of these groups was not longstanding and resulted in periodically short-lived displays and collections.⁷⁶ Despite the efforts to record the LGBT past, these collection and histories often fail to reach individuals without a specific interest in the LGBT past. Currently, academics and the LGBT community identify the need to categorize the vast, but often scattered locations of collections that sporadically formed in the last three decades. The most ample effort to outline LGBT past was the Lesbian and Gay Roundtable’s 1996 publication the *Lavender Legacies Guide*, the first formal and comprehensive guide to primary source materials for LGBT history. The guide functions as a directory for both academic and community researchers to access archives in the United States and Canada, as well as to ensure the preservation in order to facilitate the

⁷⁴ Judith Schwarz, “The Archivist’s Balancing Act: Helping Researchers While Protecting Individual Privacy,” *The Journal of American History* 79 no. 1 (June 1992): 183-184.

⁷⁵ OutHistory, “Rose Cleveland and Evangeline Marrs Simpson Whipple: 1889-1918.” http://www.outhistory.org/wiki/Rose_Cleveland_and_Evangeline_Marrs_Simpson_Whipple:_1889-1918 (accessed September 2, 2010).

⁷⁶ Lisa Duggan, “History’s Gay Ghetto: The Contradictions of Growth in Lesbian and Gay History,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 282.

continued study of the LGBT history and culture.⁷⁷ The general confinement of much of this history to particular repositories makes the collections inaccessible to the general public. The fifty-six archives included in the *Lavender Legacies Guide* recognized the often-unidentified efforts of progressive archivists in collecting LGBT history. The guide includes non-circulating repositories that range from community-based and state historical societies, to religious archives, college and university libraries and public libraries. Each repository had the option to summarize or itemize their collections and also had the opportunity to accept curatorial responsibility for additional materials. Many of the archives collected items common to their state or region, as well as experiences particular to homosexuals like AIDS or Pride Marches. For example, The Stonewall Library and Archives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, named in honor of the Stonewall Riots has the following information:

Information and Holdings: Printed material: 10,000 books (library and special collections) and approximately 1,400 serial titles. Other holdings/notes: There are approximately 75 cubic feet of processed archival collections and another 350 cubic feet of unprocessed materials, consisting of organizational records, personal papers, ephemera, periodicals, artifacts, photographs, and clipping files. There are also approximately 40 linear feet of vertical files. Holdings also include videotapes, audiocassettes, posters, artworks, photographs, film, rare books, pulp fiction collection, and other items.

Time periods/geographical regions documented: Southeast US (east of Houston, south of Washington) generally, and Florida/South Florida in particular, from the 1950s to the present.

Significant People/organizations/subjects documented: People: Mark Silber and Joel Starkey. Organizations: Dolphin Democratic Club, Sunshine Athletic Association, GLSEN and more; Anita Bryant campaign (1977-1978). The Southern Gay Archives collection documents gay and lesbian organizations and gay rights movement in the Southeastern US in the 1970s and 1980s, along with related issues of feminism, socialism, prisoners' rights, mental health rights, etc. Regional periodicals and bar rags chronicle gay and lesbian social life, particularly in South Florida. □

Collecting interests Published and archival materials in all formats relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture and history, with emphasis on materials relating to the Southeast (i.e. East of Houston, TX and south of Washington, D.C.)

⁷⁷Society of American Archivists, "Lavender Legacy Guide Introduction," Society of American Archivist' Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable, <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/lagar/guide/guideintro.html> (accessed January 24, 2010).

The free guide, now available online, identifies “responsive archives during a time of many deaths of early community activists, and our desire to participate in the effort to ensure preservation and access to the materials that document our contributions to society.”⁷⁸ The sheer size of the Stonewall Library and Archive illustrates both the vast collections of LGBT cultural and historical materials available to the public and its underutilization. The library and archive is a publicly accessible cultural and educational resource that preserves, interprets, and shares the heritage of the LGBT community.⁷⁹ However, its large and diverse content remained unidentified until 2007 when Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jim Naugle candidly opposed the library’s move to a city-owned building because it contained some hardcore pornography.⁸⁰ Beyond the collections, the Stonewall Library and archive also offers public events like film series and writer’s workshops, book discussions, and an online museum. Regardless of homophobic scrutiny, the archive and online museums continues to add to its impressive credentials, demonstrating the current potential for gay archives.

Although the sporadic and short-lived nature of grassroots archives and collections makes comprehensive documentation difficult, some that survive reflect the motivation and methodology of post-Stonewall community based collections. Activist Jim Kepner, born in 1923, started a personal collection of gay-related art and books. The invisibility of homosexuality before Stonewall encouraged him to seek out what it meant to be gay. Kepner started a collection in 1942 which grew to 20,000 books, a larger mass of periodicals, loose papers, art, and various memorabilia. For Kepner, his collection filled in the blank pages of homosexuality in the public

⁷⁸ Society of American Archivists’ Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable, “Lavender Legacy Guide Introduction,” Society of American Archivists, <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/lagar/guide/guideintro.html> (accessed February 5, 2010).

⁷⁹ Stonewall Library and Archives, “Stonewall’s Mission,” <http://www.stonewall-library.org/mission.html> (accessed November 2, 2010).

⁸⁰ Michael May, “Mayor Ought to Get His Mind Out of the Outhouse,” *Sun Sentinel*, June 10, 2007.

eye after the local libraries in San Francisco and Galveston, Texas failed to provide him adequate information. Over the decades the collection of the post 1940 gay community and photographs grew and Kepner made it available to anyone. In 1972 he officially opened the Western Gay Archives in his apartment and eventually the Gay Community Service Center provided a full-time employee and a Board of Directors. The archive also moved to a 21,500 square foot storefront. Kepner's dedication to the preservation and access of LBGT material culture often initially required his efforts to independently keep the archives open fifty to seventy hours a week, raise funds, prepare and mail newsletters, advertise and maintain the building and collection. The efforts proved advantageous when in 1994 the collection merged with the ONE, Inc. library. The combination of the two collections created the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, the largest lesbian and gay archival collection in the world.⁸¹

Kepner, involved in the early homophile movement, wanted to create some association to and understanding of his homosexual identity. Active in gay rights and the Mattachine before Stonewall, he contributed to *One Magazine* in part to add to the greater understanding of homosexuality. After Stonewall, the Western Gay Archives, later called The International Gay and Lesbian Archives: Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library became a location where people gathered to affirm their identity as homosexuals. Furthermore, Kepner's desire for literature helped him preserve a material culture collection, ensuring its accessibility to future generations. Upon Kepner's death, Katz regarded his collection as essential to helping "people who felt rootless and homeless, who were told they were aliens in their own country." Today, the content of the ONE Archive is heralded as providing scholars and the public with a glimpse into

⁸¹ Jim Kepner , "An Accidental Institution: How and Why a Gay and Lesbian Archives?," In *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library History* ed. James V. Carmichael (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1998), 178-179, 181.

the turbulent civil-rights struggle by gay men and lesbians through books, magazines, pamphlets, clippings, letters, photographs, recordings, films, videos, buttons and T-shirts.⁸²

In 1974 Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel founded the Lesbian Herstory Archive (LHA) in New York City. Today it remains a symbol of the collective interest in lesbian history. With the establishment of the archive they hoped to redress the monopoly on lesbian representation by colonizing mainstream interests and to create a multidimensional lesbian historical record, useful in tracing and advancing the political struggles of lesbians. Today, the LHA today contains 20,000 volumes, 12,000 pictures, 300 special collections, 1,600 periodical titles and 1,300 organizational and subject files.⁸³ Both former members of the GAU, Nestle's and Edel's dedication to collecting and preserving accentuated the importance and success of outlining a sense of self to the LBGT community. Located for the first thirteen years in a small apartment, the archive created a place for lesbians to congregate and preserve their material culture. Focused on lesbian identity, the LHA collection policy always revolved around the notion that community defines what is important in the preservation of their lives.⁸⁴ As a lesbian, Nestle noted she felt a personal responsibility to establish a grassroots lesbian archives project in order to save the rapidly disappearing world of lesbian culture. Although Nestle and Edel wanted to separate themselves from gay men, the collecting method illustrates ways of finding and saving the homosexual past. The first newsletter, dated 1975, stated that the LHA existed to gather and preserve records of lesbian lives and activities so that future generations would have ready access to materials relevant to the their lives. It also served to uncover and collect history previously

⁸² David W. Dunlap, "Jim Kepner, in 70's, Is Dead; Historian of Gay Rights Effort," *New York Times*, November 20, 1997.

⁸³ The Communications Consortium Media Center, "Mapping Women's Media Projects," November 2005.

⁸⁴ Maxine, Wolfe, "The Lesbian Herstory Archives," *S.A. Archives Journals* 20 (1998): 20.

denied by patriarchal historians.⁸⁵ Located in a building in Park Slope, Brooklyn, it is the largest collection of lesbian literature and memorabilia.⁸⁶



Figure 1.3 Joan Nestle’s apartment, home of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in the early 1980s. The archives moved in 1993 to Park Slope in Brooklyn in order to house the expanding collection. The Lesbian Herstory

The openness and sense of community made possible by Stonewall encouraged Nestle and Edel to create a collection about the lesbian past and culture to ensure that future generations had a source for understanding lesbian communities and history. Nestle reports that the

history and the growth of the archives [LHA] directly parallels my involvement with gay liberation and lesbian feminism. Just as my queer past was constructed by social judgments and culturally restrictive politics, my time of hope was hewn out of the glory of public possibilities. The early 1970s, so deeply influenced by the progressive movements of the ‘60s, was a time when some constructed a new social self.

She felt a sense of loss with the possibility of losing lesbian history to time and viewed collections as a form of alchemy, “the transformation of dirty jokes, limp wrists, a wetted pinky

⁸⁵ Joan Nestle, “The Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 34 no. 3: 227.

⁸⁶ Winnie McCroy, “Lesbian Herstory Turns 35”, *Edge*, February 5, 2009. <http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=&sc2=features&sc3=&id=85768> (accessed July 7, 2010).

drawn over the eyebrow into bodies loved, communities liberated.”⁸⁷ The initial years of the LHA were spent with Edel, Nestle, and volunteers spreading the word about the importance of an archive by taking samples of the archives to homes, churches, synagogues, and bars. Eventually for the survival of the collection, the LHA created a slide show as an organizing tool to help women with feelings of cultural deprivation and personal isolation. Nestle, in particular, stated she wanted the slide show to be viewed as a challenge to whatever complacency the audience derived from its respectable surroundings: she wanted to gather the voices, the images and the ideas that made them proud of the complexity of the lesbian experience.⁸⁸ This groundbreaking approach brought lesbian culture, a marginalized part of society, to the focal point of building identity and a tangible history through community.

The efforts of Kepner, the volunteers of the LHA, and other grassroots archives provided a clandestine community the opportunity to openly understand themselves and their past. For many, the secretive lifestyles and portrayal as degenerates before Stonewall limited their assurance as homosexuals and undercut the possibility of a cohesive community. Access to periodicals, photographs, literature, letters and diaries instilled a shared experience and authority previously unfeasible amongst homosexuals. David Thelen and Roy Rosenzweig learned during a national survey of Americans’ understanding of the past that gay respondents wanted to create a shared identity with others in their community. They felt their connection to a gay past was a vital resource for understanding who they were and whether they could make a difference in the world.⁸⁹ The archives provided a comfortable place for silenced lifestyles and helped to reveal the rich histories of homosexuality during the modern gay liberation. No longer controlled by

⁸⁷ Joan Nestle, *A Fragile Union New and Selected Writings* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1998), 61.

⁸⁸ Nestle, “The Will to Remember,” 228.

⁸⁹ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 119.

heteronormality, the LGBT community created separate institutions to address previously ignored narratives.

Many other smaller archives formed with motivations similar to Kepner, Nestle, and Edel, and used Stonewall as an inspiration. Commonly, local archives collected material related to annual area pride parades. For example, the aforementioned Stonewall Library and Archives began as the Stonewall Library in 1973. The collection, started by Mark Silber, Joel Starkey, and Mark Behar, and named in honor of the riot, evolved from a personal collection located in the Hollywood, Florida home of Silber to its current Fort Lauderdale location.⁹⁰ Similarly, Jean-Nickolaus Treter started the Jean-Nickolaus Treter Collection in GLBT Studies in Minneapolis, MN with friends after they organized the first Twin Cities commemoration of Stonewall in June 1972. Fearful of the disappearance of artifacts of gay history, Treter assembled anything he could about the LGBT past. Included in the 25,000 items are national pride guides as well as a GLBT Pride/Twin Cities collection that include corporate records (minutes, contracts and reports, newspaper and magazine publications, correspondence, flyers, materials regarding the planning of the annual Pride Celebration and a master set of Pride Guides (1972-2005)), videos, T-Shirts, Buttons, Pride souvenirs and posters as well as publications related to pride.⁹¹ The Stonewall Riots motivated people to collect the past and continues to inspire archives to maintain the preservation of LGBT history.

Preservation: A Place for LGBT History in Urban Space

Since Stonewall, homosexuals tenaciously worked to understand their past through creating a written record and collecting of material culture. As time passed and homosexuals

⁹⁰“Stonewall Library,” sun-sentinel.com, <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/topic/arts-culture/libraries-museums/stonewall-library-PLCUL000223.topic> (accessed August 6, 2010).

⁹¹ Treter Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, “GLBT Pride/Twin Cities collection,” University of Minnesota, <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/xml/scrbt011.xml> (accessed August 14, 2010).

established their visibility in society, the invisibility of LGBT culture in the narratives, structures, and spaces of their cities became evident. As a result, many homosexuals assumed the task of furthering the LGBT presence in the U.S. through community projects, preservation and creating a greater understanding of their personal place in the built environment. In *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* published in 1994, historian George Chauncey focused on pre-World War II America and the period's flourishing gay culture. Through analysis of New York City's built space, Chauncey wrote that much of gay men's presence had been erased entirely from popular memory and overlooked by professional historians.⁹² Chauncey's efforts were groundbreaking in that he clearly illustrated the lack of homosexual memory in the landscape. Similar to the influence of Katz's *Gay American History*, *Gay New York* not only served to continue the creation of a homosexual historical record, but also raised awareness of the under analyzed presence of gay men and women on the U.S. landscape. Starting in the nineties Chauncey noted a decline in prejudice and an equally dramatic increase in interest in gay culture outside the academy as well as an explosion of studying subaltern groups.⁹³ *Gay New York*, when published in 1994, was one of the first mass-published academic inquiries into gay territories. At the same time many others with both professional and non-professional interest focused on bringing the gay narrative out of the archive and onto the street.

In *The Power of Place Urban Landscapes as Public History*, Dolores Hayden argues that urban landscapes aid in constructing public memory. Understanding the historic uses of public spaces help communities to connect to the past. As with archives, the LGBT community attempted to create a sense of their own identity through identifying their place in the landscape.

⁹² George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Historian Paula Martinac explained the inspiration of her 1997 book *The Queerest Places: A National Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites* was partially because she loved historic sites, but as a gay person she felt they never taught her heritage. Even in the late nineties, she was horrified by gay acquaintances who were unaware of their collective history and hence identity.⁹⁴ Homosexuals increasingly utilized buildings, piers and parks to relate to LBGT culture and understand aspects of their lives generally marginalized. Robert Sember's article "In the Shadow of the Object: Sexual Memory and the AIDS Epidemic" recognized the imperativeness of preserving the intangible homosexual past through infrastructure. Sember explored the demolition of Manhattan's West Side piers which functioned as well-known gay public sex sites. Their destruction symbolized the disappearance and fragility of an important aspect of the gay community, especially in relation to the AIDS epidemic.⁹⁵ Although gay men's use of the piers did not reflect the structure's intended use, the piers represented a part of the gay past of secret congregation as well as the damage wrought by the AIDS epidemic in the gay community. Outside of a gay context, the pier might seem like an unimportant structure, but by considering its significance in a heteronormative way public historians ignore a significant part of the gay past within the built environment.

Similar to grassroots archives, it is impossible to identify all community projects produced by the end of the twentieth century. Widely distributed books like Martinac's, David Hurewitz's *Stepping Out, Nine Walks Through New York City's Gay and Lesbian Past*, *The Alyson Almanac: The Fact Book of the Lesbian and Gay Community* or Will Fellows' *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture* designated a professional and amateur contribution

⁹⁴Paula Martinac, *The Queerest Places: A National Guide to Gay and Lesbian History Sites* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), xi.

⁹⁵ Robert Sember, "In the Shadow of the Object: Sexual Memory and the AIDS Epidemic," *Space and Culture* 6 no. 3 (August 2003): 214, 216.

to the cause as well as showed how activist efforts shifted towards a more mainstream preservation effort. LGBT history community projects, tours, and preservation occur in both major cities and rural places and gay involvement in preservation is not a recent occurrence. Fellows thoroughly documents the involvement of gay men in saving buildings, smaller objects, documents, and family and community history in *A Passion to Preserve*. Through interview transcripts and autobiographical writings, Fellows created personal narratives to understand why gay men were compelled to preserve their history and their wide-ranging success from national projects, state initiatives, to the preservation of neighborhoods. Although largely obscured, he believes that gay men have been involved in the preservation of United States history since the founding of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁶ Recently National Trust for Historic Preservation president Richard Moe noted that in the United States the LGBT community has been at the forefront of historic preservation in countless cities, towns, and neighborhoods across the country.⁹⁷ Similar to archival efforts, as buildings dilapidate over time and cultural tolerance of homosexuality increases, the preservation of LGBT history in towns and on the streets is more noticeable.

Greenwich Village is frequently considered a notable area for gay history due to the presence of the Stonewall Inn. Since 1969 the LGBT community has utilized the location as a designation and destination for gay history. The first Pride Parade held on the anniversary of Stonewall marked the utilization and usefulness of Greenwich Village for gay celebration and historic memory. Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge attributed the popularity of the first pride celebration and its continued success to the highly commemorable nature and mnemonic

⁹⁶ Will Fellows, *A Passion to Preserve Gay Men as Keepers of Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 18.

⁹⁷“National Trust for Historic Preservation’s ‘Pride and Preservation’ Honors June-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Heritage Month,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, <http://www.preservationnation.org/about-us/press-center/press-releases/2009/national-trust-for-historic-9.html> (accessed August 30, 2010).

capacity of the Stonewall Rebellion through the construction of its significance by actors like Rodwell. The parade immediately meshed with the emotional needs and political goals of the gay movement and created a poignant impact. The popularity of the parade's annual occurrence made Stonewall common knowledge among the public and a popular carrier of the story.⁹⁸

Historian Kevin P. Murphy viewed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in 1994 as a time when a majority of homosexuals started to think about their stake in history. People, especially in regard to Stonewall, started to debate the usefulness of memory and ideas, and its legacy for the LGBT past. For Murphy, the notion of understanding places like Stonewall is essential to taking gay history outside of the academy and informing current debates about sexual identity and politics.⁹⁹ For example, society's depiction of Greenwich Village as "bohemian" but with no indication of gays or lesbians in the early 1990s motivated gay preservationist Ken Lustbader to use the built environment to convey the history of gay people. Later, he worked with REPOhistory, a group focused on the relationship of history to contemporary society, to place signs in the Village to mark places like the Stonewall Inn.¹⁰⁰

In New York City homosexuals coupled the annual Pride Parade and Gay Games with the anniversary of the start of the modern gay liberation. Paula Span, a *Washington Post* staff writer, compared Greenwich Village to a gay Mecca, the Ellis Island for generations of gay men and lesbians. The week of the Stonewall anniversary Span noted that a stream of pilgrims would visit Greenwich Village to look at the brick and stucco façade of the Stonewall Inn, visit homes of prominent lesbians, shop in The Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, and explore the rich gay

⁹⁸ Armstrong and Crago, "Movements and Memory," 737-743.

⁹⁹ Kevin Murphy, "Walking the Queer City," *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 195.

¹⁰⁰ Fellows, *A Passion to Preserve*, 62.

history all rooted in 1.5 square miles.¹⁰¹ A *New York Times* article titled “The Games Begin; Things to Do with a Gay Flavor” listed nearly ninety various cultural activities like photograph, manuscript, poster, and art exhibitions, visual history displays from gay publications like *The Advocate*, discussions of the contemporary gay and lesbian experience, plays, literary readings, and musical performances. More specific to public history, the article listed events such as the New York Public Library exhibition *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall*, Museum of the City of New York’s *Pride = Power: A Salute to the 25th Anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion*, “Queer Space,” which explored the gay and lesbian presence in urban space, tours entitled “Lesbian Greenwich Village,” “Gay Greenwich Village,” “Gay Harlem,” and “Greenwich Village Gay and Proud,” and a seminar called “25 Years After Stonewall: Looking Back, Moving Forward.”¹⁰² For many visitors, this openness and involvement signified a positive shift in the presence of homosexuals in New York City. The visibility of homosexual centered programs, tours, theatre and shows indicated that gay culture no longer had to cloister or ghettoize itself and finally was reaching greater levels of acceptance.

Murphy’s article, “Walking the Queer City” provided a general review of some of the New York City history tours in 1994 and pointed out how they utilized the urban landscape to celebrate Stonewall and homosexual identity. During the celebrations he argued that for a brief moment, homosexual history seemed omnipresent in lower Manhattan. Some of the projects took the form of historical exhibitions like a hardware store with a photo display on Stonewall. Murphy specifically analyzed three public history walking tours that coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary: *A Guide to Lesbian and Gay New York Historical Landmarks*, “Queer Old New York: A Historic Walking Tour Based on the book *Gay New York*” and “Walk on the Wild

¹⁰¹ Paula Span, “Greenwich Time; On the Stonewall Anniversary, a Gay Tour of Village History,” *Washington Post*, June 22, 1994.

¹⁰² “The Games Begin: Things to Do with a Gay Flavor,” *New York Times*, June 17, 1994.

Side,” all of which confirmed the Stonewall legacy and made claims about the present usefulness of public engagement with homosexual history.¹⁰³ Although Murphy found methodological and technical issues with the tours, he acknowledged walking tours as a useful way for public historians to involve an audience in the interpretation of LBGT history. They encouraged people to create their own understandings of urban gay culture and consider their own identities as both insiders and outsiders in contemporary urban culture. By doing so, Murphy stated, historians would further the rich tradition of broad engagement in gay history and invigorate productive discourses between academic and gay publics.¹⁰⁴

Throughout the 1994 celebratory events of the 25th Anniversary of Stonewall the projects reflected a realization that there is authority and historical importance in urban space. Individuals like Martinac, who connect with the past more easily, identified the lack of gay presence on the landscape. For her as well as for Hurewitz and Chauncey, creating a connection of history and identity to buildings, parks and various locations is necessary to truly understand the LBGT past. Since Stonewall, the LBGT community continues to grow and change dramatically, and has built an infrastructure where none existed before.¹⁰⁵ Gay community members interested in their past, whether it was in the form of the written word, material culture, or preservation, created a historical record from scratch since 1969. Through recognizing a previously marginalized past, the archivists, collectors, and researchers of LBGT history created a strong gay community and identity in the United States.

The Stonewall Inn represents to many the definitive symbol of gay pride and equal rights. Norman Tyler argues historic sites are an important way to remind society where it has been and

¹⁰³ Murphy, “Walking the Queer City,” 196.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁰⁵ The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Community Center, “History, The Center Story,” <http://www.gaycenter.org/about/history> (accessed August 15 2010).

where it is going by thoroughly addressing all aspects of U.S. history. Sites can be used as active places where history happened and address a more complete narrative. Therefore, instead of being viewed simply as a static structure, buildings can represent and interpret a significant part of history.¹⁰⁶ The Stonewall Inn as a structure, for example, symbolized for many activists the beginning of modern gay liberation. Four years after the Stonewall Riot, the Gay Activist Alliance voted to seek a historic landmark designation for the Stonewall Inn. The article “Stonewall ‘historic’” noted that the evening of June 28 1969, which was annually celebrated, is considered to be “the spark which converted the two decades old homophile movement into the boisterous student Gay Liberation Movement.”¹⁰⁷ This initiative proved unsuccessful, likely in part because of the prevalent social and political unrest surrounding homosexuality after Stonewall. However, historians and the gay community increasingly acknowledge the importance of professional preservation efforts to include gay history. For cultural geographer Moira Rachel Kenney, too long have designated landmarks reflected a distorted and incomplete picture found in the standard narrative. Often, depictions erase historical experiences, contributions and even the existence of women, ethnic communities of color, working people, and lesbian and gay men.¹⁰⁸ Until recently national preservation efforts toward LBGT sites have been minimal. The first notable official acknowledgment of the LBGT past was the U.S. Department of the Interior addition of the Stonewall Inn to the National Registry in 1999. For many the official recognition symbolized a way in which the gay community was reaching its power.¹⁰⁹ A *New York Times* article, “Stonewall, Then and Now” concluded the listing marked

¹⁰⁶ Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 15.

¹⁰⁷ “Stonewall, ‘Historic,’” *The Advocate*, August 15, 1973.

¹⁰⁸ Leonie Sandercock, “Introduction Framing Insurgent Historiographies for Planning” in *Making the Invisible Visible* ed. Leonie Sandercock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 22.

¹⁰⁹ Maria Hinojosa, “1969 Stonewall Gay Rights Uprising Remembered,” CNN, June 22, 1999 <http://www.cnn.com/US/9906/22/stonewall/>; Internet accessed, August 16, 2010.

“the gays rights movement’s evolution from a fringe activity to a well-organized effort with establishment affiliations and substantial political clout.”¹¹⁰ The nomination, sponsored by The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Architects and Designers, and primarily authored by Andrew Dolkart, asserted the national significance because of its association with events that outstandingly represent the struggle for gay civil rights in America.¹¹¹ It continued to summarize the significance of the 1969 event with a quote by Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society:

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

The narrative also included significant events for homosexual societal status such as the U.S. Postal Office recognition of Stonewall with a special stamp cancellation, a Keith Haring mural commissioned by New York City’s Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, and the lighting of the Empire State Building in Lavender in recognition of the Stonewall’s importance.¹¹²

The New York State Board of Historic Preservation unanimously approved the nomination on March 24, 1999. The nomination included letters of support from U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler, State Senator Eric Schneiderman, State Assembly member Deborah Glick, State Senator Thomas Duane, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Jennifer Raab, New York City Councilmember Christine Quinn and

¹¹⁰ Editorial Desk, “Stonewall Then and Now” *New York Times*, June 29, 1999.

¹¹¹ David Goldfarb, “Stonewall Gains Federal Recognition on its 30th Anniversary: First Gay/Lesbian Site to be Listed on National Register of Historic Sites,” Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, <http://www.gvshp.org/stonewall.htm> (accessed July 7, 2010).. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination Stonewall*.

¹¹² United States Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination*, David Carter, Andrew Scott Dolkart, Gale Harris and Jay Shockly, January 1999.

historians Martin Duberman, Fred Wasserman, and George Chauncey.¹¹³ According to commissioner of the State Office of Parks, Bernadette Castro, their office received no controversy in relation to the nomination and she received no letters in opposition. However, community disagreement with preservation and landmarks is not uncommon and the Stonewall Inn was no different. While some community members expressed their appreciation and support for such a historic event, others did not understand the incorporation of a gay site to the registry. A commentary in *The Washington Times* remarked the addition of Stonewall to the registry “denigrates traditional values while embracing lawlessness and hedonism.”¹¹⁴ In 1999 Stonewall’s introduction in the registry was a first for LBGT history. For artist David Dunlap, its inclusion reflected a growing trend to commemorate sites with unconventional architectural significance rich in cultural associations. The national recognition also demonstrated a significant and more tolerant stance toward homosexuality on the political landscape.¹¹⁵

Duberman’s assertion that Stonewall’s listing would “serve as to spur additional advances in tolerance,” was premature as other recognitions by national, state or local government of LBGT sites remain sparse.¹¹⁶ In 2005 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission placed a marker in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia to commemorate the LBGT protest held there from 1965 -1969. Later in 2007 the District of Columbia granted landmark status to gay rights pioneer Frank Kameny’s home. Martinac argued that the lack of recognition is not for lack of trying on the part of the LBGT community. The LBGT community unsuccessfully lobbied for national landmark status for several significant gay sites like Harvey

¹¹³ Goldfarb, “Stonewall Gains Federal Recognition on its 30th Anniversary.”

¹¹⁴ M.C. Agresti, “An Obscure Addition to the National Register of Historic Places,” *The Washington Times*, June 20, 1999.

¹¹⁵ David Dunlap “Stonewall, Gay Bar that Made History, is Made a Landmark” *New York Times*, June 26, 1999.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Milk's camera shop and the row house were Henry Gerber formed the Society for human rights in 1924.¹¹⁷

For decades the social, political, and cultural stigma associated with homosexuality inhibited professional preservationists and public historians from saving the gay historical landscape. Until the 1980s, professionals frowned upon studying homosexuality in the academy and homophobia frequently inhibited the display of LBGT history in public spaces. Moreover, the shame associated with homosexuality caused many people to destroy indications of their sexuality, causing much of this history to be lost. A desire to create a previously unacknowledged identity and historic narrative motivated activists. Radical historians, archivists, and preservationists instituted efforts in their communities to confront this hostility and homophobia after the Stonewall Riots. From archives like the LHA sustained voluntarily in apartments, to self-made street tours, LBGT history progressed to a legitimate and increasingly discussed presence in the field.

Continued Efforts for LBGT Archives and Preservation

There are signs of positive transformations in both the archival and preservation fields. On April 24, 2010 the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives a grant of \$272,086. According to available NEH records, the grant amount surpassed any previous contribution to a LBGT organization.¹¹⁸ The grant proved essential in timing because in December 2009 the ONE archive announced losing all

¹¹⁷ Paula Martinac, "The Queerest Places: The Challenges of Finding and Documenting Historic LGBT Sites," National Trust for Historic Preservation, <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/diversity/lgbt-heritage-in-preservation/queerest-places.html> (accessed February 8, 2010).

¹¹⁸ One National Gay and Lesbian Archive, "One National Gay and Lesbian Archives Receives Record-Breaking Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities," ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, http://www.onearchives.org/images/neh_pressrelease.pdf (accessed June 16, 2010).

professional staff due to budget restraints in April 2010.¹¹⁹ The most recent grant ensures technological upgrades, archival supplies and salaries and will make accessible over 600 linear feet of archival materials and about 500 digitized images.¹²⁰ The NEH grant is significant and indicates a necessary shift in focus to include LBGT history in the archival process. The grant not only guarantees the survival of essential LBGT archival material but also access to a seriously underrepresented groups' history.

Similarly, preservation efforts seek to make LBGT history more visible on the U.S. landscape. The National Trust for Historic Preservations' (NTHP) Office of Diversity Initiatives' mission is to engage America's diverse communities in preserving and sharing the stories and places that matter to them and illustrates a national focus on diversification and inclusion.¹²¹ The NTHP website includes information for LBGT Pride and Preservation. The links provide information to LBGT vacation planning, spotlights gay neighborhoods and sites, as well as information about LBGT gatherings. One link provides the "11 Significant LBGT Sites You May Never Have Heard Of," including the Annual Reminder Marker in Philadelphia, PA.; the Henry Gerber Home in Chicago, IL; the "America, The Beautiful" Plaque in Colorado Springs, CO; and the Harvey Milk Home and Castro Camera in San Francisco, CA. The sites represent a wide variety of LBGT sites and indicate the opportunity for better interpretation of the American landscape. For example, the "America, The Beautiful Plaque" does not specifically mention gay

¹¹⁹ One National Gay and Lesbian Archive, "Our Legacy," <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs096/1101105782734/archive/1102894392581.html#LETTER.BLOCK35> , (Accessed February 1, 2010).

¹²⁰ One National Gay and Lesbian Archive, "One National Gay and Lesbian Archives Receives Record Breaking Grant."

¹²¹ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Mission Statement, Definition and Vision for Diversity," <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/diversity/mission-definition-vision.html> (Accessed September 2, 2010).

history, but the composer, Katherine Lee Bates, was a lesbian.¹²² As James Loewen shows in *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*, the American landscape includes numerous inaccuracies in the historical narrative and fosters blatant omissions from that narrative.¹²³ The NTHP efforts succeed in their inclusion of the LBGT community in the national narrative, as well as with their praise of the LBGT community's commitment and influence in the preservation and revitalization of built space.

The incorporation of LBGT culture in urban spaces frequently remains static at a grassroots level and archival success similarly remains susceptible to their community based structure. Even today untrained individuals and the volunteer nature of the people involved with a majority of LBGT preservation and interpretation result in short-lived displays.¹²⁴ Most LBGT history archives and projects lack the funding needed to safely ensure their presence for future generations. As the collections age and the built environment disintegrates, professional intervention is essential. Stonewall provided a moment that the LBGT community seized to create a community and sense of identity through identifying a history through written record, tangible items and urban spaces. Activist and grassroots organizations encouraged by gay liberation's rhetoric for action, equality and community worked to instill a sense of identity by generating a historical record of a group formerly marginalized by American society.

¹²²National Trust for Historic Preservation, "'America, the Beautiful' Plaque," <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/diversity/lgbt-heritage-in-preservation/sites/america-the-beautiful.html> (Accessed September 2, 2010).

¹²³ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 15-24.

¹²⁴ Duggan, "History's Gay Ghetto," 282.

CHAPTER II – EVOLVING MUSEUM ROLES AND THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCES

Museums: The Transformation to More Representative Interpretations

Unlike grassroots organizations formed in the 1970s for preservation and collection, mainstream museums in the United States ignored LGBT history. As of 2010 there is not a single accredited museum committed to LGBT history and locating exhibits proves difficult. Two exhibits at the New York Public Library (NYPL) and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History during the Stonewall Riots' twenty-fifth and fortieth anniversaries are the most easily identifiable initiatives to present LGBT history and culture. These exhibits utilized the symbols of Stonewall for equal rights to celebrate a recognizable milestone in gay liberation. In 1994 the NYPL's groundbreaking exhibit *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall* chronicled the LGBT in a large-scale exhibition.¹²⁵ The exhibit contextualized gay history within the American past and used the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots as an opportunity to present LGBT history in a large public venue. Fifteen years later in 2009 the Smithsonian created its first display exclusively dedicated to gay history by marking the fortieth anniversary of Stonewall.¹²⁶ That same year, the NYPL also installed *1969: The Year of Gay Liberation* also to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riot. The exhibit traced the development of the gay rights movement from 1969 to the first pride parades of 1970. Although smaller than *Becoming Visible*, the NYPL similarly used the anniversary of Stonewall as an opportunity to display part of its LGBT collection. Beyond these temporary displays that used the common motivation of Stonewall's anniversary for the presentations, no accredited

¹²⁵ Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman, *Becoming Visible An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1998), x.

¹²⁶ Smithsonian, Around the Mall: Scenes and Sightings from the Smithsonian Museums and Beyond "Smithsonian Marks Anniversary of Stonewall Riots," <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemall/2009/06/smithsonian-marks-anniversary-of-stonewall-riots/> (accessed October 10, 2009).

institutions have created large-scale exhibitions of LGBT history. Even though after Stonewall public historians and mainstream museums implemented bottom up, inclusive histories beyond the customary Euro-centric interpretations, public funding and presentation limitations of the 1990s and the relative novelty of LGBT concentrations in academia throughout the 1980s, inhibited accredited institutions' ability to collect LGBT history or develop exhibitions.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Vietnam War, Watergate, second wave feminism, and gay rights created protests against the United States' social and political injustices. For some, the discontent manifested in protests against traditional historical interpretations which privileged the narratives of white, heterosexual, elite men. Similarly, public historians and museum professionals reassessed the accepted history and concentrated on museum interpretations which included social histories of minorities, women, and labor.¹²⁷ In a 1980 paper entitled "The History Behind, Within, and Outside the History Museum," historian Thomas Schlereth acknowledged the common American history narrative of prosperous white men and the necessity of increased sensitivity to the role gender and race played in the past in exhibitions. More specifically, he added the attention at the beginning of that decade needed to focus on the frontier, prairie existence, religion, and consumerism and go beyond typical interpretations.¹²⁸ After the 1970s museums and historic sites' interpretations evolved to represent more inclusive histories and shifted from the previous Anglo-American focus. As social historians advanced to leadership positions in museums they pluralized the museum and opened it for diverse people to be included in the American story.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), xii.

¹²⁸ Thomas Schlereth, "The History Behind, Within, Outside the History Museum," *Curator* 23 no 4 (December 1980): 261-262.

¹²⁹ Eric Gable and Richard Handler, "The Authority of Documents at Some American History Museums," *Journal of American History*, 81 (June 1994): 119.

The consideration of race, African Americans, and slavery in the national narrative became mainstream in the 1970s and for public historians represented a significant shift in interpretation. The essays included in James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton's *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* analyze race and the challenge to both academics and society to accurately incorporate slavery into the United States' historical narrative. Many of the essays identify the slow process of coming to terms with slavery and racial prejudice in the United States. At the same time influential scholars like John Blassingame, Eugene Genovese, and Eric Foner started to show considerable concern for making their views available to nonacademic audiences and utilized different avenues like the Smithsonian, Harpers Ferry, or Colonial Williamsburg to reach beyond academe.¹³⁰ Interest groups outside the academy also identified the potential and necessity of rethinking the narrative. Joseph Tilden Rhea identified minorities' efforts to address public memory and produce a more comprehensive American narrative. For Rhea, American society's devaluation of minority culture and identities demeaned groups and denied the value of their history. Motivated by the rhetoric of organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the American Indian Movement, minorities pushed for their inclusion in museums, historic sites, textbooks, and educational institutions.¹³¹ This shift marked a new period of public history in which public historians and popular writers sought to address uncomfortable topics previously absent from the national narrative as well as a desire to reach more people through more critical interpretations. Colonial Williamsburg's inclusion of slavery at the historic site demonstrated the changing academic and public mentality of interpretations about the American past. Anders Greenspan

¹³⁰ Gary Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 231.

¹³¹ Joseph Rhea Tilden, *Race, Pride and the American Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2-4.

identified the 1960s as an awakening to the Euro-centric interpretation of Colonial Williamsburg for both the public and the staff. Accusations of the inaccurate presentation of the eighteenth-century town provided motivation to create a new interpretation that included all people who resided in the town. By the 1970s, staff at Colonial Williamsburg shifted the site from being simply a historical attraction to a social history museum with the incorporation of African Americans and slavery, and created a more complete picture of eighteenth-century life in the Tidewater region of Virginia.¹³² Greenspan addressed that new ways of understanding the past accomplished a bottom up history in order to create a more representative narrative at Williamsburg. This shift in policy and dedication to inclusive interpretations illustrated the proactive efforts of public historians and museum professionals at the start of the 1970s to alter the heteronormative Euro-centric narrative. Nevertheless, during this noticeable change, professional public historians influenced by funding and homophobic undertones ignored the opportunity to include homosexuality in interpretations.

Eugene Goodheart explains this radical transformation of academic thought during the 1970s and 1980s as the transfer of sixties activists' ideologies into new theories and interpretations. Critiques informed by race, gender, and class generated a new energy at leading institutions like Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Duke; but not without a cost. By the 1980s intellectual intolerance and polarization produced opposition to these efforts.¹³³ Similarly, the transformation caused many Americans to feel uncertain about this new pluralist identity. In *One America Indivisible*, Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) from 1993 to 1997 recalled the 1960s as a period that deviated from traditional American ideals. According to Hackney, three decades later, American society had not reached an

¹³² Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg: The Restoration of Virginia's Eighteenth Century Capital* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 148.

¹³³ Eugene Goodheart, "Reflections on the Culture Wars," *Daedalus* 126 no. 4 (Fall 1997): 166.

agreement as to what the more inclusive America should look like, nor how to incorporate these changes into understanding themselves.¹³⁴ Often this uncertainty and disagreement among Americans most publically arose in cultural institutions where professionals challenged traditional values through art or the reexamination of the past. As a result, after the seventies the conservative right disdainfully reacted to changing understandings of the past and American tradition. They rejected the new emphasis that museum professionals had toward social inclusion. This often influenced the perception of the national narrative leading to a more thorough examination of the content and purpose of cultural institutions in subsequent decades. The fear of losing American traditions, coupled with homophobic undertones and the continued precariousness of queer studies in academia led museum staff to disregard institutional progress by discounting the LGBT past.

The Culture Wars: The Political Influence on Interpreting the American Past

Historian Robert M. Collins defined the culture wars in *Transforming America: Politics and Culture During the Reagan Years* as the fundamental struggle between two conceptions of moral authority and an ideological clash that peaked in 1990s. During the culture wars the right and left of American politics and society utilized the content of cultural institutions as examples of what constituted a politically correct and moral country. Many on the conservative right opposed abortion, and homosexual and women's rights, and feared the influence of leftist ideology from the sixties and seventies. The New Right responded to these fears by promoting extremely conservative values. For example, Anita Bryant's well-known 1977 "Save the Children" campaign against Miami's gay rights ordinance signaled an early public reaction to liberal policies and conservatives' commitment to maintaining traditional values, particularly

¹³⁴ Sheldon Hackney, *One America Indivisible: A National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity* (National Endowment for the Humanities: Washington D.C, 1997), 40.

toward homosexual rights.¹³⁵ Conservative beliefs in the 1980s embodied in New Right ideology, and the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in 1981, who supported foreign affairs and military strength over domestic policies, defined and permeated the views of the culture wars. Mike Wallace argues that Reagan sought to claim a historical pedigree for contemporary political right wing policies and to reconstruct the history dismantled by professional historians and popular protests in the sixties and seventies.¹³⁶ The conservative mentality of the New Right and the political power of the Reagan administration halted many of the radical gains of the previous decades and inhibited the liberal practices of fields like public history. Reagan-appointed staff members like William Bennett and Lynne Cheney limited funding for research on women, labor, racial groups, or other projects focusing on contentious parts of American history.¹³⁷ The new public history methodology started in the 1970s later lost support needed to prosper in the following decade. Fear of revisionist history, government suspicion, and censorship of humanities funding limited any unconventional presentations or analyses in the nation's museums.

Homosexuality was an ideological difference between liberals and conservatives during the culture wars. It became a talking point for the conflicting beliefs at the beginning of the nineties in the debate over vulnerable American principles. Since the Stonewall Riots in 1969, homosexuals experienced increased equality under the law and by the 1990s the presence of gay rights existed more visibly at a national level. Most commonly, homosexuals received significant recognition through state and city ordinances but also slowly nationwide with the removal of homosexuality as a mental disease from the American Psychiatric Association diagnostic manual

¹³⁵ Robert M. Collins, *Transforming America Politics and Culture in the Reagan Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 174.

¹³⁶ Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 250.

¹³⁷ Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: A.A. Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1997), 103.

in 1973, the Democratic National party endorsement of a homosexual rights political platform in 1980, and the 1990 Hate Crime Statistics Act. Even so, two decades after Stonewall, a majority of Americans still remained conflicted about homosexuality. A General Social Survey in 1992, at the pinnacle of the culture wars, revealed that seventy-one percent of [American] respondents felt sexual relations between two same sex adults as always wrong.¹³⁸ The Reagan administration's lackluster response to AIDS caused public concern and perpetuated the stigma of homosexuality as a deviant and immoral lifestyle. In 1986 the Supreme Court affirmed homosexuals' status in the U.S. in *Bowers v Hardwick* when Justice White's majority opinion asserted that the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment did not confer any fundamental right on homosexuals to engage in acts of consensual sodomy. Justice Burger continued in his concurrence of the ruling that the condemnation of homosexual conduct was deeply rooted in Judeo-Christian moral and ethical standards.¹³⁹ The limited U.S. legislative acknowledgment and general negative opinion of gay rights allowed American society to never fully contend with homosexuality. However, the increased visibility of LBGT culture and lifestyles in the 1990s challenged customary American values.

This philosophical split ultimately influenced the funding and exhibition opportunities of federally funded institutions. Conservative principles and moral opinions often determined the appropriateness of public presentations and inhibited professionals who sought more inclusive history in institutions like museums. Concern about funding and the suitability of historic interpretations and art consumed institutions' exhibitions throughout the late eighties and nineties. For example congressional and public critiques challenged the political correctness of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museums' (NASM) *Enola Gay* exhibit *The Last Act*:

¹³⁸ Paul R. Brewer, "The Shifting Foundations of Public Opinion about Gay Rights," *Cambridge Journals* 65 no. 4: 1208.

¹³⁹ *Bowers v Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986).

The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II as well as the institution's authority to create controversial presentations. Furthermore, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) withdrew the grants for performances by Holly Hughes, Karen Finley, John Fleck and Tim Miller (the NEA Four) and Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* due to the arts' explicit and sexual nature. Congress intervened to prevent the Smithsonian's original *Enola Gay* exhibition because of its "anti-American and revisionist" aspects and the four artists eventually sued NEA chairman John Frohnmayer for the unfair and prejudiced funding withdrawal. A large conservative influence in Congress coupled with attention brought by negative media allowed for the opposition's triumph. For historian Gary B. Nash, this conservative ideology and control compromised the credo of the Association of American Museums at the end of the century. For Nash, members of a pluralistic society needed the ability to contemplate, learn, and examine not only the evidence of what affirmed their values, but at times what challenged them.¹⁴⁰ The hostility of the right and its substantial influence in Congress led to the repudiation of anything considered revisionist, anti-American, or immoral, removing cultural institutions' abilities to provoke society to examine and think beyond their customary values. The public debates over funding, exhibition appropriateness and revisionist history highlighted the unstable environment museum professionals encountered at a time when they might have addressed the progressive tenet of the previous decades and concentrated on marginalized narratives like LGBT history.

The contention of the culture wars most publicly dealt with the funding choices of the NEA and the NEH. In 1965 liberal Democrats created the NEA and the NEH to counter the increased interest and funding of the sciences and engineering. The NEA did not seek to help the

¹⁴⁰ Gary B. Nash, "The History Wars of the 1990s" (paper presented at Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture in History, Greenville, North Carolina, November 1998).

poorest artists, but instead to look for the highest artistic talent as criteria.¹⁴¹ The NEH similarly was created to support exemplary work that advanced and disseminated knowledge in all disciplines of the humanities.¹⁴² The endowments experienced many transformations since their inception in 1965 and Republican Congressmen most frequently opposed their necessity to fund public art and humanities projects. However, even as late as the 1980s attempts to terminate the endowments failed because some conservatives' constituents identified them as essential to funding local theatres, museums, and symphonies.¹⁴³ In the 1990s the objections to perceived immoral or inappropriate presentations limited funds and grant recipients. That ultimately brought the public, cultural institution professionals and Congress into the debate over what represented suitable art forms as well as how to understand the past.

At this time the government, the media, and the public debated the purpose of cultural institutions, museums, historians, and artists, especially in relation to federal money. The conflict often stripped establishments of their freedom to create innovative, controversial, and insightful exhibitions and presentations as they had previously. The NEA and NEH funding did not impact all institutions, and museum staff certainly had the ability to collect and create exhibitions without government funding. However, the public discussion of federal funding defined a cultural trend. It reflected a fear of losing perceived American values; values that museums often critically reevaluated.

For LGBT history, the controversies caused a twofold impact. First, professionals contended with the growing suspicion of revisionist, leftist history, as well as a growing conservative base already concerned with an increase in left leaning policies, held homophobic

¹⁴¹ Richard Jensen, "The Culture Wars, 1965-1995: A Historians Map," *The Journal of Social History* mid-winter 1995: 17.

¹⁴² Institute of Museum Services, "Federal Support *For Our* Nation's Museums," 1993.

¹⁴³ Jensen, "The Culture Wars," 19.

views. The concern over the loss of American values carried into the censorship and opinion of public homosexual expression and art. Less than a decade before Americans did not need to consider discussing homosexuality, and even when it was discussed, it was portrayed as a promiscuous and unhealthy lifestyle. Including homosexual content in great American institutions like museums, therefore, would indicate a liberal shift towards public approval of homosexuality. Therefore, conservatives and other advocates for traditional American values monitored funding, dictated the content at places like museums and questioned supporting LGBT exhibitions. Even within institutions like museums, public historians personally contended with incorporating the relatively new understanding of homosexuality.

Secondly, the relative novelty of gay studies and professional collecting at the beginning of the 1990s necessitated substantial grants, funding, and support to create a base of secondary research and collections. LGBT history still lacked clear context as well as primary and secondary sources. This scarcity essentially limited museums ability to research and create potential exhibitions without outside support. Exhibit creators not only needed the sources to analyze the LGBT past for the purpose of exhibitions but also tangible objects to create interpretations. The taboo nature of homosexuality caused many people to throw away ephemera, journals, letters, and pictures that might divulge a homosexual past. The secrecy of gay sub-culture and homosexuals' desire to privatize their lifestyle resulted in the destruction of items like diaries and letters. Moreover, many objects, protest signs, buttons, community newsletters, flyers, or magazines either seemed easily disposable or their composition cause deterioration. Therefore, understanding the LGBT past not only required extensive dedication to new research, but also to collecting the material culture of a secretive past. The standard set by recipients of large federal grants in the last part of the twentieth century did not reflect a supportive position

for the inclusion LGBT topics in public history. This lack of research and material culture necessitated large monetary support to offset the overall neglect of the LGBT past throughout the last half of the twentieth century. Through funding museums could begin to contextualize and analyze the complexity of homosexuality into meaningful and informational collections. The situation on a fundamental level inhibited funding to support gay studies, ultimately inhibiting LGBT presentations and collections in museums.

The public debate and congressional influence over arts and humanities funding began in 1989 with Andres Serrano's work *Piss Christ*, which featured a crucifix emerged in urine. The response to Serrano's work, for which he received \$15,000 of NEA funds, indicated congressional and public influence in determining the morality and suitability of federally funded productions at the start of the 1990s. Those in opposition considered the piece to be offensive to religion: conservatives like Senator Jesse Helms called the piece "immoral trash" and columnist James J. Kilpatrick denounced artists' right to produce work with taxpayer money.¹⁴⁴ The heated debate thrust public money and cultural institutions into the forefront of public awareness and caused funding speculation in settings like museums. In light of Serrano's piece, Congress threatened to remove funding for five years from the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia for the institutions' "inappropriate" use of grant money for Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe's explicitly homoerotic work.¹⁴⁵ The final response to the debate was a Congressional appropriations bill passed in 1989 that required the NEH and NEA to "amend their procedures and guidelines" to more thoroughly inform the agencies' chairperson about sub grants.¹⁴⁶ Ultimately in essence,

¹⁴⁴ "Senator Helms and Trash Art," *The Philadelphia Press*, August 4, 1989.

¹⁴⁵ Barbara Gamarekian, "Senate Panel Asks Ban on Grants to 2 Arts Groups," *The New York Times*, July 26, 1989.

¹⁴⁶ William H. Honan, "Endowment Embattled Over Academic Freedom," *The New York Times*, December 17, 1989.

they tightened control over what could be funded, and therefore what could be created and publically displayed.



Figure 2.1 Andre Serrano's *Piss Christ*. The crucifix emerged in urine caused public outrage. People claimed the piece as immoral and raised questions of what type of art warranted public funding. *Arts and Opinion*, 3 no. 4, 2004.

After the decision, conservatives and liberals alike candidly discussed the appropriateness of funded works as well as what constituted freedom of expression and academic autonomy. Critics of the grant limitation expressed concerns over censorship. Ted Potter, director of the SCCA warned that cultural institutions should be chilled by the decision and that Congress punished his institution for “doing exactly what we are supposed to do: to see, think, and discuss critical issues of our culture and society.”¹⁴⁷ Robert W. Connor, director of the history, philosophy, and foreign languages’ National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina called the government involvement a bad dream in such an inflamed political climate.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, American painter Helen Frankenthaler, noted the lack of quality in Serrano’s work, but still expressed concern over censorship and noted the danger of smothering

¹⁴⁷ Gamarekian, “Senate Panel Asks Ban on Grants to 2 Arts Groups.”

¹⁴⁸ Honan, “Endowment Embattled Over Academic Freedom.”

artistic expression.¹⁴⁹ The media and political attention allowed people to feel an involvement in the displayed work and a sense of responsibility. This government and public concern for how to spend public monies indicated a monitored atmosphere for institutions dependent on grants. Undoubtedly affected by the accusatory and conservative rhetoric, museums cautiously considered interpretations and exhibitions as to not risk public reprimands. As the 1990s approached Congress set a morality precedent for cultural institutions when displaying exhibitions.

Concern about the increased visibility of homosexuality in the arts also surfaced in political and public arenas. Sociologist Steven C. Dubin rationalized the increased irritation in that before the Stonewall riot most visual art that depicted homosexuality was disguised in a manner that made it unidentifiable to the general public. However, after 1969 artists more openly expressed homosexuality in their work.¹⁵⁰ Gay artist Robert Mapplethorpe, known for his occasional homoerotic and sadomasochist photographs, fundamentally challenged conservative beliefs during the culture wars. During the same year as the Serrano controversy conservatives challenged funding for Mapplethorpe's exhibit *The Perfect Moment*. Led by Senator Jesse Helms, who believed "There's a big difference between the 'Merchant of Venice' and a photograph of two males of different races [in erotic poses] on a marble table," objectors argued Mapplethorpe's work promoted filth and degradation. For Pat Buchanan the new kulturkampf served to overturn tradition and create a pagan society.¹⁵¹ The Corcoran Gallery of Art cancelled *The Perfect Moment* in the summer of 1989 in light of the heated political climate in Washington

¹⁴⁹ Helen Frankenthaler, "Did We Spawn an Arts Monster?" *The New York Times*, July 17, 1989.

¹⁵⁰ Steven C. Dubin, "Gay Images and Social Construction" in *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies*, ed. Peter M. Nardi and Beth E. Schneider (New York: Routledge, 1998) 435-436.

¹⁵¹ Steven C. Dubin, "The Trials of Robert Mapplethorpe" in *Suspended: Censorship and Visual Arts License* ed. Elizabeth C. Childs (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997),369.

D.C. and the recent Serrano conflict.¹⁵² Much of the discussion surrounding Mapplethorpe had homophobic insinuations and associated him with his death from AIDS (in 1989), a disease still widely misunderstood at the time. Moreover, critics focused on eroticism and themes of homosexuality present in his work. Most often, reviews of his work focused on Mapplethorpe as a homosexual, (ergo deviant) artist, not an artist who happened to be homosexual. Helms, when discussing Mapplethorpe and his funding stated “he [Mapplethorpe] was an acknowledged homosexual. He’s dead now, but the homosexual theme goes throughout his work.” For Dubin, this censorship and attention overshadowed Mapplethorpe as an artist and short-circuited the public’s opportunity to draw independently informed decisions.¹⁵³ The critique of Mapplethorpe’s work went beyond congressional control of ‘moral art’ and demonstrated the pervasive presence of homophobia in the U.S.

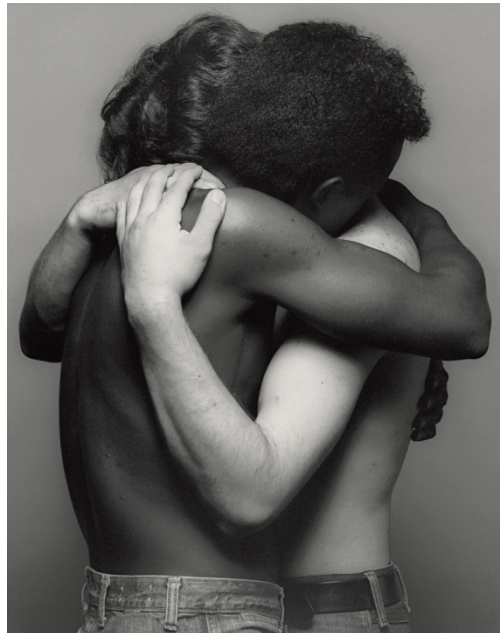


Figure 2.2 Robert Mapplethorpe’s *Embrace*. Critics of the artist called his “The Perfect Moment” exhibit immoral and homoerotic. www.phillipsdeputy.com

¹⁵² Ibid., 371.

¹⁵³ Ibid.,369.

Mapplethorpe's work later encountered greater controversy than simply that of congressmen's threats and critiques by op-ed journalists. The enduring tension that surrounded Mapplethorpe signified the present homophobic undertones in the United States as a whole. In 1990 Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) planned to exhibit *The Perfect Moment*. Shortly before the exhibit opening, police and citizen groups mobilized to prevent or censor the display. A grant from a local business and increased admission sponsored Mapplethorpe's exhibit at the CAC eliminating any public funding association.¹⁵⁴ Critics therefore could not use public funds as justification for censoring the exhibit. Instead they solely relied on the content of *The Perfect Moment*, which they viewed as immoral and inappropriate. When the CAC refused to limit the presentation, attorneys for the CAC filed a suit requesting the court decide if any part of *The Perfect Moment* was obscene. After the court dismissed the suit a grand jury indicted the CAC and director Dennis Barrie on misdemeanor obscenity charges. Ruth Mayer, director of Cincinnati's Taft museum speculated that it put "in jeopardy all of the arts institutions of the city who try to present new and experimental work." Few reviews remarked on the aesthetic quality of the photographs or the context of the whole show but instead focused on content or subject matter.¹⁵⁵ Artistic circles and even amateurs revered Mapplethorpe as a talented and progressive artist and previous responses to the same show went without such attention or controversy. To supporters, the dissenters either were people unfamiliar with contemporary work or those repelled by homosexuality.

A year later the NEA removed grants from the abovementioned NEA four, all lesbian or gay men, except Finley, for their overly explicit work that dealt with issues of sexuality. In 1990

¹⁵⁴ Steven V. Dubin, "Gay Images and Social Construction," In *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies A Reader* eds. Peter M. Nardi and Beth Schneider (London: Routledge, 1998), 452.

¹⁵⁵ E. Louis Lankford, "Artistic Freedom: Art World Paradox," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 24 no. 3(Autumn, 1990): 17,18.

without ever viewing the art in question, NEA chairman John Frohnmayer sought to remove funding from the work viewed as filth by some Americans. Republican politicians and fundamentalist preachers similarly attacked the work calling it indecent, obscene, and pornographic.¹⁵⁶ Frohnmayer stated he did not think “political realities” were “criteria in funding decisions.”¹⁵⁷ However, the artistic community questioned his motives when selecting artists for funding. One of the accused artists, Hughes, responded by calling the censorship by President George H. W. Bush and Frohnmayer an attempt to “appease the homophobic, misogynist and racist agenda of Senator Jesse Helms and company.”¹⁵⁸ She also felt that she lost the grants because her work “is chock full of good old feminist satire and, secondly, I am openly lesbian.”¹⁵⁹ Ultimately, the artists lost their fight in the Supreme Court case *Finley v NEA*. In his memoir, *Leaving Town Alive: Confessions of an Arts Warrior*, Frohnmayer later acknowledged much of the decision in the cases reflected political pressures applied by President Bush and therefore he used undue censorship.¹⁶⁰ The content of art often has a unique and personal interpretation to those who view it. People experience it differently and come to different conclusions about its meaning. However, the case of the NEA four identified the blatant politicization of federal funding and influential figureheads like Frohnmayer’s willingness to appease the right. Congress’ censorship of federally funded visual arts matured into censorship of intellectual thought at the start of the 1990s, making public history professionals and museums vulnerable to outside sources of approval of historical analysis and presentations.

¹⁵⁶ Richard Meyer, “Have You Heard the One About the Lesbian Who Goes to the Supreme Court?: Holly Hughes and the Case Against Censorship,” *Theatre Journal* 52 no. 4 (2000): 544.

¹⁵⁷ Kim Masters, “Art Chief Testifies on Funding Ban: May Set Up Local Panels To Rule on Obscenity,” *The Washington Post*, August 1, 1990.

¹⁵⁸ Holly Hughes and Richard Elovich, “Homophobia at the NEA,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1990.

¹⁵⁹ Barbara Gamarekian, “Art Endowment Reverses a Stand,” *New York Times*, January 5, 1991.

¹⁶⁰ Meyer, “Have You Heard the One,” 543, John Frohnmayer, *Leaving Town Alive: Confessions of an Arts Warrior* (Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1993).

The controversy surrounding the NASM's 1994 exhibition *The Last Act* illuminated the culture war's effect on history museums and federal funding. Creators of the exhibit meant to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and link the atomic bombings of the cities to the evolution of the strategic bombing campaign of the American 20th Bomber Command. The exhibit script illustrated that the decision to use the bomb was a result of a very complicated set of circumstances and relationships.¹⁶¹ The staffs' original concept was innovative to exhibit design in that it addressed a contemporary issue which encouraged people to think and feel differently about the conclusion of World War II. Overall the NASM presented an accurate and thoughtful history of the end of the war and for Mike Wallace, the museum staff largely presented an adequate interpretation of the complexities of the bombing decision and the controversies surrounding it. In fact, after a review by scholarly advisors the script was considered an impressive piece of work.¹⁶² However, the exhibit as planned never came to fruition as the Air Force Association, the American Legion, and politicians protested what, in their opinion, was a presentation of anti-American and revisionist history by the Smithsonian staff. The controversy progressed to open debate, and similar to the NEA funding of works by gay artists, Congress and the public raised the question of the appropriateness of public funding and historical interpretations.

As opposed to the NEA funding controversy, opponents of the Smithsonian most vehemently challenged what constituted accurate history. Challengers of *The Last Act* accused its creators of displaying a distorted and leftist history. Twenty-four congressmen sent the Smithsonian a letter calling the exhibit a "historically narrow, revisionist view" of American

¹⁶¹ Stanley Goldberg, "The Enola Gay Affair: What Evidence Counts When We Commemorate Historical Events?," *Osiris* 14 (1999): 182.

¹⁶² Wallace, *Mickey Mouse*, 276-277.

history.¹⁶³ Congress put the Smithsonian, the icon of the American museum, on trial to defend its professional interpretation of history and in September of 1994 unanimously passed a Senate Resolution which described the Enola Gay exhibit as “revisionist, unbalanced, and offensive.”¹⁶⁴ The Air Force Association’s president R.E. Smith, who lacked any formal historical or museum training, accused the Air and Space Museum of making an exhibit that was blatantly biased and severely lacking in balance and historical context.¹⁶⁵ Veterans and politicians clamored for the ability to dictate historical interpretations. Veterans denounced the interpretation as incorrect and too sensitive to the Japanese and dismissive to the Americans involved in the war. Moreover, politicians like Newt Gingrich used the controversy as a platform to further the conservative agenda by stating that politically correct exhibits reflected liberal, un-American values and principles. Opponents’ expectation of the final interpretation did not waiver or diverge from the traditionally accepted interpretations. As a result, the final exhibition was a static display that simply justified the Enola Gay’s mission.¹⁶⁶ Congress, the public, and media reactions to the exhibit script suggested a lack of trust toward museum professionals to implore their analytical and design skills to create thought-provoking exhibitions.

Overall, the Smithsonian’s considerable press and public awareness resulted in a shared uncertainty concerning the institution’s ability to accurately portray history. Gingrich and Vietnam War veteran John T. Correll addressed the exhibit content publically and portrayed the Smithsonian in a negative light. Countless articles and editorials in publications like the *Washington Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* provided their own understanding of the exhibit

¹⁶³ “Exhibit Plans On Hiroshima Stir a Debate,” *New York Times*, August 28, 1994.

¹⁶⁴ *Senate Resolution 257-Relating to the Enola Gay Exhibit*, 103rd Congress, 2nd sess., *Congressional Record*, 140, September 19, 1994, S12968.

¹⁶⁵ United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, *Smithsonian Institution:*

Management Guidelines for the Future, statement of R.E. Smith, 104th Cong., 1st sess., May 11, 1995.

¹⁶⁶ Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 281.

through inaccurate and malicious reviews.¹⁶⁷ Concerns focused on the exhibit's portrayal of the United States as the aggressor in the war and Japan as the victim. Important to all of this is that a majority of those who complained about the exhibit never read the 500 page script in its entirety and distorted the final product. For Martin Harwitt, museum director at the time of the controversy, the exhibition's cancellation transcended normal museum affairs with the national and international debate the intended display caused.¹⁶⁸ The threat of reduced funding and the manipulation of intended displays signified a precarious situation in the culture wars for history museums; crippling their function as institutions which provoke the public to think deeply about their understanding of the past. In the end Michael Heyman cancelled the exhibit, Harwitt resigned, and the Senate cut the Smithsonian's budget, which signaled the Senate's readiness to decide what exhibits proved appropriate for viewing by the American public.¹⁶⁹

Cultural institutions contended with conservative ideals, while the left remained quiet. This allowed for the threat of revisionist and immoral history to overshadow the importance of inclusive and progressive narratives, like the LBGT past. For Lynne V. Cheney, director of the NEH from 1986-1993 and an influential figure in the culture wars, museums, like many other cultural institutions "were in the business of debunking greatness, Western Society, and even history itself."¹⁷⁰ Although Cheney noted the necessity of addressing the roles of previously ignored parts of history like women and minorities, her contention toward museum exhibition and educational standards blatantly opposed any reinterpretation of the past. In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed "The End of History" she lambasted the new [education] National Standards for

¹⁶⁷ Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 278

¹⁶⁸ Martin Harwitt, *An Exhibit Denied: Lobbying the History of the Enola Gay* (New York: Copernicus/Springer-Veglag, 1996), vii.

¹⁶⁹ Nash, *History on Trial*, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Lynne V. Cheney, *Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense-And What We Can Do About it* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995),144.

United States History because they addressed the politically correct notion of how to rewrite the country's history. She concluded the authors of the standards "tend to save their unqualified admiration for people, places, and events that are politically correct" and that similar "celebratory prose is rare" when the standards address American history. Native American and African American groups' previous complaints of distortions and omissions caused, according to an anonymous member of the National Council for History Standards, a revisionist agenda and some individuals involved did not bother to conceal their great hatred for traditional history.¹⁷¹ Moreover, in the chapter "Museums, Moving Images, and False Memories" in her book *Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense-And What We Can Do About It* Cheney accused presentations at museums, including the Smithsonian's *Enola Gay* and *The West as America* as revisionist and with an incorrect depiction of the American past.¹⁷² Historian Gary Nash called Cheney and conservative talk radio host Rush Limbaugh's impression of the standards a product of a misguided effort or a widespread conspiracy. Alarming for Nash, the many people influenced by the initial interpretation by figures such as Cheney or Limbaugh, or conservative columnists like John Leo, Charles Krauthammer, and John Fonte never actually possessed a copy of the new standard for U.S. history classes. Instead, like the *Enola Gay* exhibit, right-wing accusations resonated louder and more influentially, and often the media and public debate exposed citizens to the "dishonesty" history museums.

The *Enola Gay* exhibit and the National History Standard's controversies illustrate the tense climate in which cultural institutions functioned during the 1990s. The reaction to the works of Andres Serrano and the NEA four asserted that outside authorities determined the appropriateness and morality of displays and could halt interpretations considered to be sexual or

¹⁷¹ Lynne V. Cheney, "The End of History," *Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 1994.

¹⁷² Cheney, *Telling the Truth*, 150-151.

anti-religious. Many times those involved in the controversies of the funding reacted to the suggestion of the presentation rather than the content. For example, Frohnmayer, who admittedly never saw the NEA four's artwork and Senators like Helms critiqued the homosexual and erotic nature of work but not necessarily the artistic message or significance. Likewise the politicians and veterans who critiqued the *Enola Gay* exhibit or Cheney's disapproval of the National Standards reflected more of a fear of changing and more progressive understandings of the past than the content itself. Cognizant of the implications of potential controversial or immoral exhibition decisions, professionals worked in trepidation to avoid the potential loss of federal and public support. The government directly influenced display content through censorship, which manipulated public perception and ultimately affected institutions ability to use federal money. Museum staff depended on this funding and aid for new research and acquisitions. Furthermore the government removed cultural institutions' ability to present thought provoking and unique interpretations of the past. Specific to museums, Congress' involvement with the *Enola Gay* exhibition indicated that institutions which presented historical interpretations that threatened the traditional understanding of the American past stood to lose legitimacy through public challenge of historical interpretations' accuracy and even the loss of funding.

Heroic Minority: LBGT History Exhibits

In the midst of debates over morality, appropriateness, funding, and what constituted accurate history, the NYPL celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Riot with *Becoming Visible* in 1994. The library, despite the rhetoric of Cheney, Helms, Frohnmayer, or Limbaugh valiantly presented *Becoming Visible* using the NYPL's International Gay Information Center Archives (IGIC) with minimal conflict. It was the first large scale gay history exhibition at a major institution. It consisted of four sections and led the visitor from the largely secretive

lives of homosexuals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, to the movement to correct the medical falsehoods of homosexuality, and then essentially to homosexuality as a lifestyle. The last section chronologically told the story of gay and lesbian resistance beginning with the pre-Stonewall era through the extensive expansion in the 1970s. It consisted mainly of photographs, documents and ephemera, specifically archival material like T-shirts, buttons, bar ads, magazine, LBGT literature, letters, diaries and legal documents.¹⁷³ The material culture created an emotionally complex picture, mixing exhilaration at progress made, anger about rights denied, and sorrow for the lives lost through AIDS.¹⁷⁴ In an exhibit review Lisa Duggan, remarked “it is hard to overstate the importance of this exhibition” and “it represented an impressively successful negotiation of the dilemmas and constraints inherent in its project.”¹⁷⁵

Its massive size in the premiere gallery on the NYPL’s first floor and avant-garde display of the gay past overwhelmed many visitors. Described by the *New York Times* as “heroically scaled” many tourists came to NYC for the sole purpose of viewing the exhibition. People from thirty-nine states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and thirty-six countries registered at the front in the first two months with acclaimed comments.¹⁷⁶ For the first time an exhibit reached a wide population and allowed visitors to experience a part of history generally left in archives or small collections. For visitor Jim Seavor, the exhibit facilitated the rediscovery of the large and diverse lesbigay community with the interactive exhibits and extensive coverage of lesbian and gay history.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ McGarry, *Becoming Visible*, x 192.

¹⁷⁴ Holland Cotter, “Gay Pride (and Anguish) Around the Galleries, *New York Times*, June 24, 1994.

¹⁷⁵ Lisa Duggan, “Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall,” *New York Public Library*, June 18-September 24, 1994.” *Radical History Review*, 62 (1994): 1989.

¹⁷⁶ Holland Cotter, “The Year in Arts: Art/1994; Images of 3 Worlds: Asians, Gay and Black,” *New York Times*, December 25.

¹⁷⁷ Jim Seavor, “Community Legacy of Stonewall,” *Providence Journal Bulletin Rhode Island*, June 27, 1994.

Although impressive in size and content the development of *Becoming Visible* did not transpire without hindrance from the NEH. According to curator Molly McGarry, the responses in preliminary peer reviews were “overwhelmingly enthusiastic.” Like the influential grassroots archives and preservation projects after Stonewall the success of *Becoming Visible* depended on community support. Only private sources, the Pinewood Foundation, the Stonewall Community Foundation Inc., as well as gifts from small foundations and individuals, provided funding for *Becoming Visible*. There were no public funds.¹⁷⁸ The museum applied for a \$30,000 planning grant from the NEH. The NEH denied the request due to a need for “more historical context” and concerns of it being “too celebratory.”¹⁷⁹ The progressive presentation and in-depth research associated with the exhibition triumphed with the support of the LBGT community and the NYPL in spite of the conservative atmosphere in which the exhibit was produced. The NYPL, which started an LBGT focus in the 1980s, understood early on the necessity to collect gay history with its reception of the IGIC Archive in 1988. Before then, the IGIC Archive, which succeeded the History Committee of the Gay Academic Alliance (GAA), operated as a community based repository.¹⁸⁰ The combination of the grass roots activism of GAA and the archival interest of the IGIC Archive, coupled with the institutional power of the NYPL allowed for such an unprecedented exhibition when politics and national culture still kept LBGT history marginalized and ostracized.

Political opinions moved to a more accepting stance of homosexuality in the 1990s. Homosexuals received recognition in a federal statute when President George H. W. Bush signed the Hate Crime Statistic Act in 1990. The White House also invited LBGT groups to a

¹⁷⁸ Duggan, “‘Becoming Visible,” 190.

¹⁷⁹ David W. Dunlap, “Libraries Gay Show Is an Eye-Opener, Even for Its Subjects,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1994.

¹⁸⁰ International Gay Information Center Archives, “History,” New York Public Library, <http://legacy.www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/igic.html#intl> (accessed September 4, 2010).

presidential signing ceremony for the first time. This event signified a basic, but nonetheless essential shift in gay acknowledgment in the U.S. For some, like conservative columnist Charles Colson, the White House acted carelessly because presidential recognition marked the possibility of future gay rights on a greater scale.¹⁸¹ Two years later gay rights received significant national awareness during the 1992 presidential campaign when incumbent President Bill Clinton focused on gay rights more than any previous campaign.¹⁸² Clinton's focus on homosexual rights and issues like AIDS made the conservative right more vocally address the supposed immorality of gays and lesbians. In the 1992 GOP National Convention speech Pat Buchanan, when sponsoring President George H. W. Bush's reelection called Clinton's agenda of homosexual rights, amongst other things as "not the kind of change America needs, it's not the change America wants, it's not the kind of change we can abide in a nation we still call God's country," after which the crowd responded with great approval.¹⁸³ These very public debates, augmented with a presidential candidate's support for gay rights in 1992, illustrated a historic political and cultural shift with regards to homosexuality. Homophobia was much more prevalent before the millennium and cultural and legislative precedent often encouraged it. The introduction of homosexual needs on such a political and national stage sharpened the viewpoints of the culture wars. Only six years after the country's highest law refused to provide homosexuals fundamental rights of privacy a political contender for the country's highest office addressed crowds about gay inequality.

Stonewall helped gay rights gain visibility in the United States, during the late eighties and early nineties increased positive recognition on a judicial and political level clashed with the

¹⁸¹ "Look Who's in the Rose Garden," *Christianity Today*, July 16, 1990.

¹⁸² "Gay and Lesbian Rights: Emerging Trends in Public Opinion and Voting Behavior" in *Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process*, 146-147.

¹⁸³ Pat Buchanan Culture War Speech Part 2, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pICypNXHKbg> (accessed May 15, 2010).

ideology of the conservative right. Public concerns with AIDS and gay lifestyles, as well as the increased attentiveness to homosexuality instituted a heightened societal concern on the right. This concern manifested itself in different aspects of society like religion, schools, education, and cultural institutions. As evident in the Rights' response to immoral and homosexual artwork, those in opposition to homosexuality protected their belief in what they defined as "family" American values, reflected in the debate and censorship of the NEA and NEH.

The cultural and political volatility of the late 1980s and 1990s, exemplified through the culture wars, curtailed museum professionals' abilities to incorporate LBGT interpretations and collections. The hostile response to more liberal positions toward homosexual rights, feminism, and abortion alarmed the conservative right of progressive ideologies and limited cultural institutions' ability to maintain the 1970s objectives concerning inclusive histories. Conservative politicians like Buchanan, Bush, Gingrich, and Cheney viewed the progress toward equality in the United States in the sixties and seventies as too radical and advocated for a return to the earlier status quo. The American public remained uncertain about homosexuality at the beginning of the nineties. Along with the public taboo of homosexuality, a lack of research base and funding further complicated professionals' ability to incorporate LBGT collections and exhibitions.

Queer studies remained relatively novel in academia until the 1980s. This, coupled with the controversial state of American politics and culture, profoundly impeded LBGT history's integration in to the public history field. As recently as the 1980s even academics considered gay studies a potential detriment to a historian's career and frequent lack of funding and institutional

support hindered extensive study.¹⁸⁴ Most often during this period of hostility those researching and writing LGBT worked outside of the university and therefore had a minimal influence within institutions like museums. Moreover issues of fear, isolation, caution about being pigeonholed, and an alienating ethic of professionalism which shuts its practitioners off from their own identity further impacted gay and lesbian public historians in the professional field.¹⁸⁵ The politics and speculation of homosexuality at the start of the 1990s did not promote any groundbreaking or public work for people in the LGBT community.

Although in the 1970s public historians concentrated on more bottom-up interpretations of American history, shifting political and cultural conditions following the Stonewall riots in 1969 inhibited mainstream museums professionals' ability to include LGBT history in collection policies and exhibitions. Conservative backlash to the radical ideologies of the sixties and seventies created a political effort to reintroduce more traditional American values. These endeavors, illustrated through the efforts of the New Right, politicians like Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich, and figures like Lynne Cheney eventually gained influence in Washington D.C. and limited the missions of government programs like the NEA and NEH. Such organizations affected not only the money available to cultural institutions like museums, but also public perception of homosexuals and their history. Historians and museum staffs' re-examination of traditional national histories alarmed the right, and notions of a cultural institution's incorporation of new presentations of the national narrative led to public skepticism of museums' integrity. Moreover, museum professionals lacked the resource base to create LGBT interpretations and displays. At the end of the twentieth century, as grassroots LGBT archives

¹⁸⁴ Lisa Duggan, "History's Gay Ghetto: The Contradictions of Growth in Lesbian and Gay History," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 282.

¹⁸⁵ John D'Emillio, "Not a Simple Matter: Gay History and Gay Historians," *Journal of American History* 76 no. 2 (September, 1989): 436-437.

and history flourished, national politics and the relative novelty of homosexuality's visibility in the U.S. caused accredited museums and their staff to ignore the profession's changing credos concerning the inclusion of marginalized peoples. As a result, LGBT collections, exhibits, and history remains largely absent from the national landscape.

CHAPTER III – BUILDING ON STONEWALL’S FOUNDATION: THE INCORPORATION OF LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, GAY, AND TRANSGENDER HISTORY IN U.S. MUSEUMS

Public, cultural, and political struggles over homosexuality diminished in the United States since the 1990s. Americans in general shifted toward a more accepting view of alternative lifestyles. This can be attributed to the increased public exposure to homosexuality through the initiatives of gay activists after Stonewall. Throughout the last two decades the American public encountered gay rights through the debates over “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” same-sex marriage, AIDS awareness, as well as the visibility of homosexuals in politics and television. A Gallup poll in 2008 indicated this change revealing forty-eight percent of Americans found homosexuality morally acceptable, up from forty percent in 2001.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, the culture wars’ attack on U.S. cultural institutions’ purpose generally subsided. Sheldon Hackney’s appointment to chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities and his nationwide initiative called “A National Conversation” worked to recognize the United States in a more pluralist, inclusive manner, a divisive shift from former chair Lynne Cheney’s vision of the country. In 1993 Hackney noted the country was torn apart by cynicism, insecurity, and alienation and that it was time to start thinking about “the things that hold us together.”¹⁸⁷ Although the function of federal funding for cultural projects remained a point of debate, critiques did not have the significant impacts as in the early nineties. Since the 1990s initiatives like the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, which created a more communicative and fair relationship with Native Americans, as well as the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. clearly demonstrated a national shift of museum priorities toward better

¹⁸⁶ Lydia Saad, “Americans Evenly Divided on Morality of Homosexuality: However, Majority Supports Legality and Acceptance of Gay Relationships,” Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/108115/Americans-Evenly-Divided-Morality-Homosexuality.aspx> (accessed March 4, 2010).

¹⁸⁷ Jacqueline Trescott, “Hackney, Can We Talk?,” *The Washington Post*, November 11, 1993.

communication with and cultural inclusion of minority groups. Also, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture is scheduled for a 2012 groundbreaking with an intended 2015 opening. These three initiatives each transpired from both positive and negative legislation and lobbying. For example, the push for an African American museum started in the 1980s but met resistance in Congress. Initially former Senator Jesse Helms argued that such a museum would lead every interest group to want a similar institution on or near the National Mall; however by 2001 many prominent conservatives like representative J.C. Watts and Senator Sam Brownback moved to support the cause.¹⁸⁸ Although originally challenged, through the representation of certain unpleasant parts of U.S. history on a large scale, or giving Native Americans the rights to their material culture, ultimately the nation's museums triumphed through an emphasis on collaboration and equal representation. The presence of more representative museums and inclusive history greatly progressed from the cautious and accusatory atmosphere of museums in the early 1990s.

Museums today are in a more favorable position to incorporate LBGT history into their collection policies and exhibitions. By doing so, these cultural institutions can take action toward inclusivity. This by no means indicates a necessity for every museum to change its central focuses to include LBGT history, but rather a change in the heteronormative status quo of accredited museums by gradually incorporating LBGT history. The subsequent information serves as primarily a reference for museums in the initial gathering of LBGT material culture and ephemera. Through the addition of LBGT history museums will continue to create more inclusive histories, as well as reach a more diverse visitor base. Furthermore, museums can function as media to educate the public on the homosexual past and gay individuals' involvement throughout U.S. history. This can be accomplished by:

¹⁸⁸ Melanie Eversly, "Black Culture Museum Moves Forward," *USA Today*, January 3, 2005.

- Understanding the background of twenty-first century visitors and their interests
- Reconsidering the interpretation of existent collections
- Creating a trusting relationship with the LBGT community
- Collaborating with existent archives

In the book *Museums, Society, Inequality* published in 2002, Richard Sandell identified the potential of museums and galleries to contribute to society by combating social inequality through presentations. Today there is a responsibility for them to do so. For Sandell, the social impact of the museum is linked to the creation of cultural identity or the engendering of a sense of belonging and the enhancement of social equity. Therefore museum staffs need to focus less on the *construction* within the museum and more on the processes of *reception* and the tangible impact of displays on audiences.¹⁸⁹ This notion distinguishes museums' unique role in the incorporation of LBGT collection. The estimated homosexual population in the United States in 2006 was 8.8 million, many of whom undoubtedly are frequent museum visitors.¹⁹⁰ With the incorporation of LBGT history, museums not only inform Americans about an increasingly visible minority in the country, but also support the interest and inclusion of more museum goers. As museum staff work toward inclusivity, they must focus on specialized visitor studies to better understand their LBGT constituency. After viewing The New York Public Library's *Becoming Visible*, homosexual visitor Dr. Allan L. Goldberg responded, "It made me feel that I had a place, a legitimate place, in the fabric of this country." Other visitors plainly conveyed the

¹⁸⁹ Richard Sandell ed. "Museums and the Combating of Social Inequality: Roles, Responsibilities and Resistance," in *Museums, Society, Inequality* ed. Richard Sandell (London: Routledge, 2002), 3.

¹⁹⁰ Gary J. Gates, "Same-Sex Couples and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Population: New Estimates from the American Community Survey," The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, UC Los Angeles, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8h08t0zf>

sense of being ennobled and enfranchised to see their own lives reflected in a chronicle of social, artistic and political change.¹⁹¹

For larger museums, audience research has emerged as an important mechanism for achieving community input while maintaining the current patterns of a museum's organizational control. Through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups, curators and educators gain insight on who is learning what in their institutions.¹⁹² For museum consultant Klaus Müller, although addressing gay and lesbian topics might lead to conflicts with other audiences, museum staff must understand that diversity means not just enrichment but also dealing with social conflict and mediation between potentially hostile groups.¹⁹³ Through the development of studies focused not only on the LBGT community, but the overall public's interest in homosexuality, museum staff can work to better serve the public and personnel as a whole. Studies might reveal a larger gay population than expected, or a greater interest in the LBGT past. By not proactively seeking out homosexuality as a topic, museum staff ignore the opportunity to address a greater constituency. For example, in 2004 Fath Ruffins, historian at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, attributed the increased importance of African American studies and historical studies topics in African American culture to a greater interest in African American culture and museums. This change for Ruffins came about because of a new audience. Removed from the civil rights struggle, the current generation feels far less personal shame over slavery and feels freer to express curiosity and feelings. Other observers agree and note it is not just a "black thing" but a national "hunger for new sites and new stories." Today, the African

¹⁹¹ David W. Dunlap, "Libraries Gay Show Is an Eye-Opener, Even for Its Subjects," *New York Times*, September 6, 1994.

¹⁹² Steven D. Lavine, "Audience, Ownership, and Authority: Designing Relations Between Museums and Communities," in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 139.

¹⁹³ Klaus Müller, "Invisible Visitors: Museums and the Gay and Lesbian Community," *Museum News* (September/October 2001), under "Invisible Visitors: Museums and the Gay and Lesbian Community," http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN_SO01_InvisibleVisitors.cfm (accessed February 2, 2010).

American scholarship is there to meet the new audience.¹⁹⁴ Museum professionals must similarly recognize that homosexuals are a portion of their visiting population and a part of U.S. history. Therefore, in trying to serve the public museum professionals need to recognize and serve all visitors.

Museums must also reassess the interpretation and general understanding of existent collections. By more broadly taking into consideration, for example, the sexuality of people already in exhibition interpretations (Willa Cather, Walt Whitman, or Cole Porter) as well as a more diverse perspective of already acquisitioned items, museum exhibits and collections do not at the outset have to change drastically. Museum staff can identify and analyze the rich homosexual history in the U.S. already represented by material culture. By doing so, presentations will create a dialogue concerning current political and cultural debates like same sex marriage or the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Informing the public about a marginalized demographic in a different context will promote tolerance in realizing homosexuality as a long-established lifestyle and validating homosexuals as part of the community. In turn, gay history museums no longer would approach gay history from a minority perspective, but rather in a way to help analyze and help understand society on a much broader, and less heteronormative way.¹⁹⁵

Collaborative work between the community and museum personnel proves essential in the creation of introspective collections, programs, and exhibitions. Primarily, institutions must ensure their work atmosphere fosters an environment in which homosexual staff feel

¹⁹⁴ Kendra Hamilton, "Telling THE Untold Story," *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 20 no. 26 (February 12, 2004), <http://0-web.ebscohost.com.uncclc.coast.uncwil.edu/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=104&sid=a503540e-8bc1-4467-a526-f28210284d2c%40sessionmgr114&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=f5h&AN=12332711> (accessed September 3, 2010).

¹⁹⁵ John Fraser and Joe E. Heimlich, "Where Are We?," *Museums and Social Issues* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008): 9.

comfortable. Paul Gabriel revealed that simply wearing a badge with the words “Paul Gabriel, Exhibits Director, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society (GLBTHS) of San Francisco” at the American Association of Museums in the early 2000’s solicited negative remarks and uncomfortable interactions with participants. People’s glares reminded him, “I was the *only* such professional to be walking around with that kind of overt designation.”¹⁹⁶

Museums can emulate the early efforts of groups like the Gay Academic Union to ensure that people within their institutions feel comfortable expressing their sexuality and experiences.

Creating a dialogue and trusting relationship with a constituency allows for the community to have stake in a museum’s work. Museum staff, then, better understand how to serve their visitors while providing empowerment to the public by allowing involvement in interpreting their past. Working with the LGBT community is essential as museums transition toward inclusivity. Primarily, through dialogue museum staff can create a more trusting relationship with the homosexual community. Museum professionals’, though, must consider many LGBT collections and projects to date formed in response to a suspicion of heterosexual society. For example, Joan Nestle identified that the creation of the Lesbian Herstory archive was largely in response to lesbians’ mistrust of the patriarchal system and mainstream institutions.¹⁹⁷ For those involved in the Herstory, the archive was a place to create unbiased interpretations of the past and congregate in a tolerant forum. Museums’ opportunities lie now in the acknowledgement of their previous disregard of homosexuality and their willingness to change that. Edward J. Phillips, curator of the traveling exhibition *Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945*, sensed an opportunity for a better relationship between museums and the gay

¹⁹⁶ Paul Gabriel, “Embracing Our Erotic Intelligence,” *Museums and Social Issues: A Journal of Reflective of Reflective Discourse* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008):55-57.

¹⁹⁷ Polly J Thistlethwaite, “Building ‘A home of Our Own’: The Construction of the Lesbian Herstory Archives,” in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbian Library History* ed. James V. Carmichael Jr. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 156.

community when developing the exhibit in 2000. Ultimately Phillips learned that the trustworthiness and the power of a museum to present reliable and authentic content. He realized the importance of understanding the audience; who is out there, what they seek, and that the LBGT community as well as their supporters, are all allies with museums and they all must work in conjunction to understand what each can do for other through the medium of a museum.¹⁹⁸ By building a relationship with the community, Phillips received an outpouring of support and excitement over the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit, which signaled an important desire to alter traditional museum presentations.

Museum staff must create relationships with the LBGT community. This can be achieved through numerous mediums, and depends on resources and the actual composition of the local LBGT community. They should get to know the targeted community by concerning themselves with discovering what elements define the community, how to go about gaining entry and earning trust in the community as well as how to get the members involved.¹⁹⁹ Similar to the Lesbian Herstory Archives' use of a slide show to educate lesbians on their history and the preservation of past, museum staff can utilize public forums, programs, and workshops to solicit the attention of the gay community.

Susan Chalmers, co-creator and researcher for an exhibition on lesbian and gay lives at the Liverpool Regional Museum in western Sydney, discovered the usefulness of engaging members of the community in research and development for an exhibition, *In-difference at the Edges*. Chalmers wanted to reach to the entire community beyond the "highly educated, Anglo-

¹⁹⁸ Edward J. Philips, "Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, The Curators View," *Museums and Social Issues: Where's the Queer*, 3 no. 1 (2008): 106.

¹⁹⁹ Lila Teresa Church, "Documenting African American Community Heritage: Archival Strategies and Practices in the United States" (PhD Diss, University of North Carolina, 2008), 37-38.

Australian, middle-class, ‘out there’ gay and lesbian stereotype” in order to ascertain the more routine or everyday lives of people. To do so she contacted community groups.

Visiting one of the first groups, the local Liverpool Lesbian Group, she sought to explain the exhibition as exploring the social history and diversity of lesbian and gay lives in western Sydney. The audience looked at Chalmers with blank faces that for her read, “What has this got to do with me?” The first interactions illustrated a breakdown in communication and intent. Those questioned did not understand the exhibition or the value of their participation. Chalmers, instead, needed to step into an interdiscursive contact zone, in which different knowledge bases sometimes uneasily interact with each other. Instead, she built contacts with a variety of groups, attended functions, meetings and tried to discover what participants would like to gain from the exhibit. Lastly, Chalmers reached out to the non-traditional museum goer. She wanted the group to not only know about this new type of exhibition, but also ensure their acceptance at the museum.²⁰⁰ Through this approach the Liverpool Regional Museum gained not only a multidisciplinary view of the lesbian and gay past, but also brought the LBGT community into the museum. In one exhibition, a previously marginalized group was brought first-hand into exhibition development as well as directly invited into the museum.

While building trust through acknowledging the significance of LBGT history, museum staff must also encourage homosexuals to understand that their history is important and worth saving. The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the State University of New York’s Graduate Center is working to encourage cutting-edge scholarship, organizing colloquia for examining and affirming LBGT lives, and is committed to maintaining a broad program of

²⁰⁰ Sharon Chalmers, “Lesbian and Gay Bodies in Queer Spaces” *Gay and Lesbian Psychology Review*, 3 no. 2 (2007): 134-135.

public events.²⁰¹ CLAGS offers informal workshops and seminars that provide a forum to discuss LGBT issues with programs such as “Creating LGBTQ History with outhistory.org,” which allows participants to contribute to sexuality history, learn more about MediaWiki software, and create an exhibit about the LGBTQ past.²⁰² These programs, offered to anyone, allow for the community to become a part of gay history through creative outlets and discourse. Past programs have helped older members of the LGBT community to understand their past as a contribution to history and something worth documenting. Lauren Gutterman, project coordinator of outhistory.org for CLAGS helped with a six week course, Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders. The course helped them better understand outhistory.org (a MediaWiki) and how to utilize it to save their personal collections by discussing their lives and material culture as homosexuals. Through discussion many individuals in older generations revealed they felt their lives were not important. Not being activist or outspoken made them interpret their past as insignificant.²⁰³ Through similar workshops, museum staff can engage the LGBT community in recognizing their own histories’ importance. At the same time, museum staff can better understand homosexual history and collections from a more interdisciplinary perspective.

Museums’ collaborative relationship with already formed LGBT collections and historical projects can allow staff to understand the methods of smaller organizations as well as provide specialized museum techniques. These organizations’ dedication, involvement and already existent collections can prove indispensable to museums. At the same time, museums with more access to resources and professional training can provide insight to the often volunteer based LGBT archive or project. Even today archives remain susceptible to funding shortages and

²⁰¹ Welcome to CLAGS.org!, “Our Mission,” The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/clags/index.shtml> (accessed September 3, 2010).

²⁰² Calendar Fall 2010, “Creating LGBTQ History with OutHistory.com,” Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/clags/calendar.shtml#sep9> (September 3, 2010).

²⁰³ Lauren Gutterman, interview by author, Wilmington, NC, February 3, 2010.

partnership ensures the longevity of limitedly funded archives staffed by volunteers. For example, prior to the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives' reception of an NEH grant in April 2010, the collection was at risk of losing its professional archival staff because organizational budgeting no longer supported a full-time staff due to the expense of proper archival procedures and staff salary.²⁰⁴ With the assistance, collections will receive more professional attention but their access to the general community will increase.

Wisconsin's Area Research Centers (ARC) archival network formed in the 1970s. Today the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin System and the Superior Public Library cooperate in its network of Area Research Centers located statewide to enhance access to historic records.²⁰⁵ During the development of the centers, archivist Timothy L. Ericson noted the positive results in increased resources like space and staffing, and community interest that allowed the ARC to save historical materials that otherwise might be destroyed. At the same time, local manuscript repositories permitted the availability of the archival collections to an unprecedented number of patrons. In the network, local centers present workshops and program that result in an important outreach because they create a continuing community relationship for the centers.²⁰⁶ Museums have an opportunity to align themselves in a similar manner to create local outreach as well as secure the longevity of collections. The ARC project identifies the occasional need to and success of combining resources in order to provide increased public access and archival security, that if left responsible to independent archives, might otherwise cease to exist.

²⁰⁴Bud Thomas, "Our Legacy," One National Gay and Lesbian Archive, <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs096/1101105782734/archive/1102894392581.html#LETTER.BLOCK35> (accessed February 2, 2010).

²⁰⁵ The Wisconsin Historic Society, "About the Area Research Center Network," <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/arcnet/about.asp> (accessed August 30, 2010).

²⁰⁶ Timothy L. Ericson, "Presence, Perspective, and Potential: A Conceptual Framework for Local Outreach," *The Midwestern Archivist* 6 no 2, 1982, 149, 153.

The Black Museum Movement started during the Civil Rights Movement represents a useful prototype of forging collections, communities and interpretations of a previously marginalized history. Fath Davis Ruffins identified private collections like those of Jesse B. Moreland and Arthur Schomburg as essential achievements of the early twentieth century in preservation of African American material culture.²⁰⁷ By the end of the twentieth century the number of African American museums and cultural centers had increased, and interest focused on accessibility and guaranteed preservation. To this end, a majority of the African American museums, like the National African American Museum and Cultural Center, collaborated with mainstream institutions for support. African Americans remain less reliant on mainstream museums and instead collaborate with other African American initiatives. The Network of African American Museums in Virginia, formed in 2007, supports six museums within a two-hour drive of one another. Their goal is to provide technical assistance to the museums in the areas of curation and historical documentation, exhibition preparation, and installation, collection management and care, fund-raising, and staff development in order to succeed with limited resources and budgets. Staff collaboration allows for the museums' sustainability by sharing resources, visitor and program information, and collections.²⁰⁸ Smaller institutions, like those in the Virginia Network that do not traditionally receive large amounts of funding, often rely on other museums to survive. As LGBT history moves toward a more mainstream involvement in museums, those involved must utilize the community and institutions with similar focuses and resources to further understand the public and utilize the collections they have as well as other institutions.

²⁰⁷Fath Davis Ruffins, "Mythos, Memory, and History: African American Preservation Efforts, 1820-1990," in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, eds. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 546.

²⁰⁸ Christina Draper, "Strategic Collaborations A "Hambone" for the 21st Century," abstract, *The International Review of African American Art*, 21no. 4 (2007): 34-38.

The partnership of various organizations with a LGBT focus can also assist in the dissemination of knowledge. To date, many of the LGBT archives and smaller- run museums remain relatively inaccessible to the general public. People not specifically seeking their location or who have interest in the subject matter might not know of the existence of places like the Stonewall Library and Archive in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, or the ONE Gay and Lesbian National Archive in California. Measures like increased advertising of archives, programs, and workshops, or even consistent and professional staffing allow the public to utilize the rich LGBT collections and histories housed across the United States. Awareness of existent collections and interpretations can allow people like Paula Martinac and Daniel Hurewitz who question the visibility of LGBT past, to finally see their history at institutions. The identity sought after by gays in the decades following Stonewall through grassroots and activists projects now can have a more mainstream influence and reach a broader population. Museum staff can aid homosexuals in the assertion of their identity as Americans through visibility and access to their community's history.

As museum professionals reach out to the archival community, they must also communicate with private collectors. Knowledge and understanding of the past has a profound impact upon contemporary social and political life, and often oral histories positively affect social and political change.²⁰⁹ Moreover, private collections can help to collect and present the past of ordinary citizens. In *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* Michael Frisch notes that allowing people to partake in their past and share their experience gives them authority, which is particularly beneficial to marginalized groups. Furthermore, private collections as well as the compilation of oral histories remain time sensitive issues for LGBT collections. For example, many of the personal collections in the possession of

²⁰⁹ Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson ed., *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 183.

homosexuals exist without the knowledge of their family and friends, but through a dialogue museum staff can acquire such items in confidence before their disposal. Acquaintances, even if not ashamed of a person's collection, might not recognize the significance of certain items. Homosexuality was under-documented until the 1970s, and even today limitations in funding, access, and prejudice reduces the historiography of homosexuality in the United States, as well as the availability of primary sources. Oral histories serve as a gateway to understanding under-documented parts of history. As the Stonewall generation ages and the gay community loses people to illness, the recollections and ephemera of a pioneering generation are vanishing. Through community outreach and helping homosexuals realize that their past's importance to the overall context of U.S. history, museum staff can ensure the preservation and future understanding of homosexual history.

Collections housed in individuals' attics and basements are at a much greater risk for destruction or loss than those in archives across the United States. Museum outreach and collection drives will promote the preservation of these items while contributing to a new LGBT collection. The number of people holding onto their collections in the U.S. is uncertain, but, the elements to which the objects are subjected in storage result in deterioration. Activist Frank Kameny had a floor to ceiling collection of papers and books in his home and an attic of more than 150 boxes, picket signs, and memorabilia that were recently preserved by the Kameny Papers Project at the Library of Congress. The archive today exceeds 50,000 documents and is considered a gold mine of gay history by the founder of the project, Charles Francis.²¹⁰ The finding aid includes varied aspects of Kameny's life, such as correspondence series that traces the evolution of the gay rights movement in the U.S., an organization series that includes

²¹⁰ Charles Francis, *Archive Activism: The Story Behind the Kameny Papers Project* to the LGBT Caucus of The Special Library Association, June 16, 2009.

conferences, education, research, social service, political, and community service, as well as student and youth groups. It also includes his legal battles after being fired by the federal government and the manifesto distributed after the 1973 decision by the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.²¹¹ The array of items in Kameny's collection alone helps to significantly educate the public and professionals on aspects of gay oppression and liberation.

Other homosexuals, without such a high profile as Kameny, collections might simply deteriorate and be disposed of without the proper encouragement. During the CLAGS course for elders, a male attendee was involved with off off Broadway queer theatre in the 1960s and saved the playbills and newspaper articles for productions in which he was involved. With help from CLAGS, he digitized and placed his collection on outhistory.org. Lauren Gutterman felt that many people over past decades hoarded collections and memorabilia about their past in terms of LBGT history, but were unable to archive anything. Outhistory gives these people a platform to better understand and share their collections.²¹² Much of the LBGT material culture from before World War II no longer exists, but public historians are in the unique position to save the remaining history by reaching out to the gay community.

Museum staff can develop programs to reach out to the LBGT community to educate them on their own collections, and the power of oral history and personal memories. In preparation for the 2015 opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African-American History and Culture, museum director Lonnie G. Bunch III started "Save Our African American Treasures: A National Collections Initiative of Discovery and Preservation." The most worrisome task for Bunch was building the collections for the new museum since only about

²¹¹Manuscript Reading Room, "Frank Kameny Papers," Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/kameny.html#ms009068_did_Colle_1 (accessed July 17, 2010).

²¹² Lauren Gutterman, interview by author, Wilmington, NC, February 3, 2010.

twenty percent of the entire Smithsonian collections would prove useful for the new museum. In response, with a grant from Bank of America, Smithsonian conservators, preservation experts and members of the local communities teach people about their own items as well as provide the opportunity for donations.²¹³ “Save Our African American Treasures” invites people to bring in items in order to learn how to conserve them and also have the opportunity to donate them. Thus far, the donation process proved successful. In Chicago, an individual brought in a rare white Pullman Company porter’s hat, part of the uniform worn by African American train attendants. The white colors signified the worker tended to prominent travelers on a private train car. Without such initiatives Bunch felt, “the tangible evidence of a critical component of American history will be lost.”²¹⁴

The “Save Our African American Treasures” campaign indicated national interest in preserving the underrepresented past. The well publicized events allowed people to understand part of their past and recognize the importance of their family history. For attendee Lynn Brown many African Americans did not think their past was worth anything because for so long, socially it was not, but now holding her ancestors past in her hands is invaluable.²¹⁵ Such initiatives provide minorities, who did not experience their history in mainstream presentations, the opportunity to preserve the indispensable parts of their history. Moreover, having those tangible pasts not only ensures the material cultures existence for future generations but also creates an identity and sense of self not previously allowed.

²¹³ *All Things Considered*, NPR, “African American Museum Begins To Take Shape,” January 9, 2010.

²¹⁴ Lauren Monson, “Museum Seeks to Document the African-American Experience,” America.gov, <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2010/January/20100127150943GLnesnoM9.864444e-02.html> (accessed August 30, 2010).

²¹⁵ Donna Walker, “Smithsonian to Launch ‘Save Our African- American Treasures’ Series,” The Griot, <http://www.thegriot.com/travel-and-leisure/smithsonian-to-launch-save-out-african-american-treasures-series.php> (accessed August 10, 2010).

As museum staffs create exhibitions on sexuality and as archives increase the accessibility to their collections, issues of privacy must be considered. Public opinion about homosexuality has become more positive since Stonewall in 1969, along with an increase in the number of out homosexuals, but the topic still remains sensitive. Therefore, while increasing the visibility of the LGBT community in the historical record is vital, museum staff, and archivists alike must take into consideration the privacy of donors and the utilization of their collections. Archivists must balance conflicting needs, concerns, and interest when preserving lesbian and gay history. Much of the material culture held in archives represents parts of people's deepest held secrets.²¹⁶ An interpretation is needed to balance presentations of a frequently ignored history while also respecting the rights of those who might not want to be publicly recognized. Curator Mimi Bowling identified unique privacy challenges in developing NYPL's *Becoming Visible*. Curators grappled with the use of mainly archival interpretation as well as understanding an individuals' right to privacy when utilizing public records, which were common objects used to represent gay activism.²¹⁷ Moreover, much of the interpretation of LGBT history is private in nature, like government records, police reports, and personal photographs. Bowling also recognized the library's role in addressing who speaks for the gay and lesbian community as well as the issue of homophobia, more prevalent in the 1990s than today.²¹⁸ The introduction of LGBT exhibitions and programs at museums necessitates that personnel focus on who specifically is portrayed and the exhibition took privacy into consideration.

Archives and museums acquire collections in various ways, from donations to acquisitions through institutional research. These institutions are in the unique position to

²¹⁶ Judith Schwarz, "The Archivist Balancing Act: Helping Researchers Whiles Protecting Individual Privacy" *The Journal of American History*, June 1992, 186.

²¹⁷ McGarry, *Becoming Visible*, x.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, x.

specifically explain in what way their donations can be used through the community outreach. Archivist and coordinator of the Lesbian Herstory Archive (LHA) Judith Schwartz detailed the importance of clear communication when receiving LBGT collections. Primarily by constructing policies that clearly protect privacy, archivists [and museums] can encourage donors to save and give revealing materials. At the LHA when a woman deposits her poems, letters, journals, artwork, clothing, those at the archive talk to her and ask her to write the accessibility proviso herself. By doing so, the donor controls how her materials will be used.²¹⁹ Although each institution likely has privacy policies in place it is important to remember the precarious position of homosexuals in the U.S. today. For example, in most states gays do not have job protection from discrimination. Therefore, people donate with caution. For LHA founder Joan Nestle, “to preserve is to give life, but in the very act of preservation, we can destroy life.”²²⁰

The Gay Ohio History Initiative (GOHI), formed in 2006, is a useful example of the integration of history and community through the curation and preservation of LBGT history. The purpose of the GOHI is to collect, archive, and curate the history and culture of the LBGT community in Ohio through a partnership with the Ohio Historical Society and *Outlook Weekly*.²²¹ The initiatives’ development outlines the usefulness of collaboration with larger historic establishments, the desire of the community to have LBGT in the public realm as well as the difficulties when working with LBGT history. The GOHI expanded from simply a collecting initiative to the addition of an exhibit committee to develop a traveling exhibit of LBGT materials and outreach programs.²²²

²¹⁹ Schwartz, “The Archivists Balancing Act,” 180, 187.

²²⁰ Schwartz, “The Archivists Balancing Act,” 188.

²²¹ “Gay Ohio Initiative Bylaws,” Gay Ohio History, <http://www.gohi.org/bylaws/> (accessed August 10, 2010).

²²² Stacia Kuceyeski, “Gay Ohio History Initiative as a Model for Collecting Institutions,” *Museums and Social Issues* 3 no. 1 (Spring 2008): 127.

The GOHI success indicates how communities participate in and benefit from the inclusion of LBGT history into mainstream and more accessible venues. Today, their collection ranges from a banner protesting “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”, a certificate on behalf of Faggots Ohio, photographs, flags, posters from Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Awareness week at Ohio State University, and T-shirts. The items, catalogued by the Ohio Historic Society, are housed at the Ohio State Museum and the Ohio State Library/Archive.²²³ Relevant to this analysis though, is the process and complications encountered during the beginning stages of the project. For Stacia Kuceyeski, project director of the Ohio Historical Society’s Outreach Projects department, the biggest challenges in the process of forming a LBGT collecting program focused mainly on funding, curatorial, identity, and personnel roles.²²⁴

Museum funding sources are a continuous problem. Museums rely on grants, taxes, and donations that provide the revenue for exhibit development, programs, preservation, and staff, and without outside support museums function with difficulty. The GOHI directly solicited community members for donations and offered donor events. They held a kickoff at the OHS and highlighted the various donors and collections. As the initiative grows it will look to grants and corporate support. However, initially the GOHI was directly funded through donations earmarked for the GOHI. Now, it has a three-pronged funding structure with an endowment fund, a curatorial fund, and an operating fund.

GOHI and OHS curators collaborated before they accepted any collections. Their specific plan focused on material from Central Ohio that documented Pride celebrations, as well as oral

²²³Ohio Historical Society, “Search the Catalogue-GOHI,” <http://web2.ohiohistory.org/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=124Q716H80057.157595&menu=search&aspect=subtab51&np=15&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=allsoc&ri=&term=&index=.CG&aspect=subtab51&term=&index=.CT&term=&index=.CA&term=&index=.CN&term=gohi&index=.CC&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=&x=12&y=6#focus/%20target=> (accessed August 10, 2010).

²²⁴Kuceyeski, “Gay Ohio History Initiative,” 127.

and video histories of the older generation with a special emphasis on documenting early trailblazers, discrimination, and personal lives. According to Kuceyeski, starting small and focused allowed the initiative to gauge interest and then assess workflow before branching out to the entire state. At the same time, it allowed a dialogue with the community and addressed immediate concerns before expanding. As of 2007 the GOHI had yet to receive any personal collections, but the expectation remains that communication between previous donors and the community will help them to obtain more items²²⁵

The GOHI collection plan dealt with a specific aspect of the Ohio community and therefore focused on a particular aspect of gay history. For preservationist Will Fellows, contemporary gay identity does not translate easily across cultures or time periods, and there is no cross-cultural uniformity in the understanding of concepts like sex, gender, sexuality, gender identity, and self-identity, all which help define gay.²²⁶ Museum professionals contacting the gay community for research and collection opportunities must consider the complexities as well as an enduring distrust of a majority population researching a minority group.

In *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museums Policies and Practices*, author Karen Coody Cooper outlined how tribal councils, members of the American Indian Movement, and the National Congress of American Indian initially actively sought autonomy from the paternalistic nature of the U.S. government through the repatriation of their material culture often housed at museums across the country. The unethical acquisition of their material culture and remains, as well as the inaccurate and culturally stereotyped interpretations in museums, incensed Native Americans. The majority-inspired interpretations of museums

²²⁵ Ibid., 128.

²²⁶ Will Fellows, *A Passion to Preserve*, 13.

perpetuated the long American Indian distrust of academic presentations' factualness.²²⁷ With the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), American museum staffs' overall reconsideration of their ethical responsibilities, and communication with the Native American community allowed a dialogue for repatriation and cultural representative exhibitions. For Dan Monroe, vice president of the American Association of Museums and chair of its Advocacy Committee in 1988, throughout negotiations it became clear, "to me and to, at first a comparatively small number of museums professionals that the ethical position museums had sought to defend was very questionable with respect, especially, to Native American human remains." That realization produced dialogue with representatives from the Native American community and eventually NAGPRA.²²⁸ By agreeing to look at a minority population through a different lens, museum professionals, as the majority, built a trusting relationship. This bridge led to an agreement to provide Native Americans the authority to work with museums in their presentation of their culture to the public. Prior to the opening of the National American Indian Museum, founding director Richard West reflected on how the Native communities' treatment "at the table of conversations about Native cultures and peoples as an authoritative voice with respect to their own past, present and future" contributed to an equitable relationship between the museum majority and the Native American minority.

Museums as institutions, are the majority outsider, and must reach out to the LGBT community to better understand their complexities. To avoid overgeneralization Kuceyski recommends that when starting collections, museums consider the complexity of the LGBT community and not start a collection of unconnected and broad objects that simply deal with

²²⁷ Karen Coody Cooper, *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2008), 18.

²²⁸ Lisa M. Sharamitaro, "Case Study A Association Involvement across the Policy Process: The American Association of Museums and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 31 no. 2 (2001): 129.

homosexuality. Museum staff must approach the LBGT community as critically as possible in order not to appear to patronizing; instead they must integrate and educate. For example, representing specific categorizations like erotica, drag costuming, or HIV/AIDS might alienate one aspect of the community and create a permanent barrier between homosexuals and museums. For Kuceyski, museum professionals are “outsiders” to the underrepresented community, and therefore must be validated as insiders. The GOHI responded to this potential problem by partnering with Outlook Media in order to ally with the LBGT community. The initiative also worked with individuals within the community to advise and instill faith in people that the OHS will treat their donations with respect.²²⁹ The GOHI understood that the ultimate success of their collections relied on community involvement and their confidence in the organization.

In analyzing how archivists at African American and White archives and museums document the history and culture of African American communities, Teresa Church discovered that gaining trust is a high priority. The reputations of archivists and their repositories, the archivist’s rapport with the community, and the support of influential people and advisory boards influenced what people donated. The African American community considered the racial identity of repositories, which often resulted in the advantage of African American archives in comparison to their white counterparts in collections.²³⁰ The GOHIs’ approach similarly understood that their developing program not only needed outreach to the LBGT community, but needed members of the community to demonstrate the GOHI as an ally.

Most simply Kuceyeski offers the following five points as recommendations when beginning a LBGT collection initiative:

²²⁹Kuceyeski, “Gay Ohio History Initiative,” 131,132.

²³⁰ Lila Teresa Church, “Documenting African American Community Heritage: Archival Strategies and Practices in the United States” 145.

1. Your environment: does your organization exist within a LBGT-friendly climate?
2. Resources: how is your organization going to support a LBGT collecting initiative financially? What staff will be involved in the initiative? Will this add an additional burden that they may resent?
3. Potential partners: it is important to have a trusted member of the LBGT community as a partnering organization. How will partnership function? Who has the final authority on decisions affecting the initiative?
4. Your collection: it is vital to create a collections policy before the collection process begins. The collections policy can be broad and may also be amended to accommodate growth. Who has the final authority on what is accepted into the collection? Initiative members? The curators? What happens if the institution does not want a donation, but the initiative members believe it's paramount?
5. Communication: the hallmark of any good collaborative program is communication. Either schedule monthly or bimonthly meetings with institution staff and initiative leaders to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The incorporation of LBGT collections and interpretations into museums cannot and will not be an immediate action. However, as Stonewall becomes more of a memory and gay activists of the period age, the collections and stories of the start of modern Gay Liberation remain in precarious conditions.

Museums' opportunities with LBGT history rest in two areas. One, institutions can network with already created archives. By doing so, museums alleviate smaller, grassroots archives from funding and staffing issues and increase the access and public visibility of the collections. Secondly, much of the ephemera and material culture from the second half of the

twentieth century remain intact. Therefore, with community outreach museum staff can work to save a history that otherwise will be lost with the death of owners or environmental deterioration. Additionally, museum staff can educate a community's visibility in the U.S. As citizens continue to debate LGBT equal rights, museums provide a medium in which people can learn about homosexuality as a long-standing part of the country's history, and the rich culture and histories of the LGBT community.

To date the public generally received previous exhibitions on LGBT history well and the presentations in museums educated the public on the hidden topic of homosexuality. Moreover, by introducing a much stigmatized and misunderstood lifestyle and culture, museum staff can create a discourse to further the visibility and rights of homosexuals in the U.S. The *Enola Gay* exhibit, Robert Mapplethorpe, Andres Serrano, and countless other presentations that challenged American ideals demonstrated that the American public does not always accept unconventional interpretations but museum professionals are responsible for challenging the public to think beyond their 'comfort zones' and experience new cultures, religions, art, lifestyles, and traditions. Varied responses to larger exhibits on LGBT history like the NYPL's *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall* (1994), *1969: The Year of Gay Liberation* (2009), as well as the Smithsonian's *Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945* revealed the positive place of LGBT exhibitions in creating a dialogue and tolerance amongst the public and exposed a narrative unfamiliar to many Americans.

There is a feasibility of producing LGBT exhibitions without extreme public outcry. Twenty-five years ago, *Becoming Visible* was the first large scale exhibit on homosexuality and forerunner of large-scale LGBT exhibitions. The museum stood as an emblem of gay pride in New York City with the massive banner with a pink triangle that read "*Becoming Visible The*

Legacy of Stonewall” on the steps of the NYPL. Curators Fred Wassermen and Molly McGuire encountered problems in what to display for a history that does not have much tangible evidence as well as how to ensure privacy of featured names and photographs. The exhibit received an unprecedented 17,258 visitors in the first week and then averaged about 1,000 visitors a week afterwards. Most comments left in the registry were enthusiastic. One visitor suggested it travel to Oregon where gay rights were endangered.²³¹ Although questions of funding and an overly celebratory prose challenged *Becoming Visible*’s validity, overall the encouraging responses and continued iconic accolades demonstrates not only the feasibility of displaying gay history, but also the social impacts. Jonathan Katz, who spoke about the exhibit in February of 2010, recalled fondly a wonderful exhibit that was momentous on the occasion of Stonewall’s anniversary.²³²

Representing homosexuality in a forum like a museum can familiarize people with an unfamiliar lifestyle, educate, and promote tolerance. Through seeing and understanding homosexuality on an expanded level, visitors can redress any preconceived notions, and learn something new. Jason Baumann, curator for the NYPL’s *1969: The Year of Gay Liberation* noted that the exhibition, in honor of the fortieth anniversary of Stonewall, attracted as much attention from heterosexual viewers as from gays and lesbians. Many of the heterosexual visitors were surprised at the sodomy and cohabitation laws in a place at the time. For Baumann understanding these laws helped straight people realize how their sexual freedoms could be affected.²³³ Candice Thompson, director of service center at William May LBGT Center, a non-profit organization that provides advocacy and support services commented in response to *The*

²³¹ David W. Dunlap, “Library’s Gay Show Is an Eye-Opener, Even for Its Subjects” *New York Times*, September 6, 1994.

²³² Jonathan Ned Katz, interview by author, Wilmington, NC, February 9, 2010.

²³³ Cory Stottlemyer, “New York Public Library Celebrates ‘Gay Liberation,’” *365 Gay*, <http://www.365gay.com/opinion/new-york-public-library-celebrates-gay-liberation/> (accessed June 25, 2010). <http://www.365gay.com/opinion/new-york-public-library-celebrates-gay-liberation/>

Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, “Education is so important. We’ve [homosexuals] been a silent minority. We are now able to look at our history, and reflect and understand it better.” For Thompson, displaying the traveling exhibit was an opportunity to educate people within the LGBT community and outside.²³⁴ LGBT presentations also serve as ways to continue with advancing equal rights. With the public debate over “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and gay marriage taking center stage, museums as forums of discussion and education can proactively educate the public on decisions which effect the very existence of countless Americans.

The success of grassroots archives and history projects in the years following Stonewall indicated the interest in and necessity to interpret gay history. Today, museums must join the effort in order to further LGBT equality in the U.S. In an article titled “NY Exhibit on Gay Rights Hits Amid Marriage Debate” Baumann stated, “It’s perfect timing. It’s topical. This is not a strategy by the library on marriage. But the library has taken a stand that this history is worth presenting. This is an issue all people need to know about.”²³⁵ A visitor named Amber to the NYPL’s *1969: A Year in Gay Liberation* encountered school children at the exhibition. When they saw it, he remarked being barraged with homophobic comments and overheard a boy wondering if the exhibit was “a joke.” For Amber the NYPL’s exhibit was great but noted that visitors should be prepared for intolerant responses.²³⁶ Michael Rowe, writer for the *Advocate* felt *1969* offered visitors young and old an opportunity to experience an often overlooked history. According to Rowe, “It offers a chance for a quieter contemplation of who we were and where we have come from, in the city where it all began. If owning the past is an essential step to claiming our own future as a people, then *1969: The Year of Gay Liberation* is an important mile

²³⁴ Olivia Biagi, “Exhibit Tells Story of Nazi Persecution of Gays,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov 29, 2009.

²³⁵ Daniel Trotta, “NY Exhibit on Gay Rights Hits Amid Marriage Debate,” Reuters, <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINTRE5504R720090601> (accessed September 4, 2010).

²³⁶ Stottlemeyer, “New York Public Library Celebrates ‘Gay Liberation’.”

marker on that road.”²³⁷ Although museums will encounter opposition with the open inclusion of homosexuality it is no different than the shift in focus to include African Americans, slavery, or Native Americans in exhibitions and the collaboration with outside communities in the museums development process. Responses to *Becoming Visible, 1969*, and *Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals* overwhelmingly indicated an enthusiasm and desire for LGBT presentation.

The Smithsonian’s small show outside the Archive Center in 2009 was the institution’s first step in presenting gay history and demonstrates the potential for new interpretations at museums. Although Franklin Robinson of the Smithsonian hoped through presenting their small gay collection which included advertising for the television show *Queer as Folk* and HIV/AIDS paraphernalia, “the exhibit will spur useful and conductive conversations for the people who view it.” However the small and difficult to find display disappointed some who viewed it. For example, Dan Vera remarked that “our [gay] history is a part of American history, and therefore should be included in the country’s [Smithsonian Institution] preeminent history museum after viewing the museum’s exhibit in 2009.”²³⁸

As social and political atmospheres become more tolerant of homosexuals, it is the public history field’s responsibility to directly address LGBT history and incorporate it into collection policies and interpretations. It no longer is a history and lifestyle only discussed in private circles, but forthrightly included in the national narrative. Public historians now must more directly focus on incorporating gays through initiatives like task forces and create a dialogue about LGBT peoples’ place in institutions. Under the heading “Diversity and Museums Selected [Internet] Links” the American Association of Museums states “the volume of sources attests to

²³⁷ Michael Rowe, “New York Public Library Goes Gay,” *The Advocate*, <http://www.advocate.com/printArticle.aspx?id=81025> (accessed June 4, 2009).

²³⁸ Around the Mall, “Smithsonian Marks Anniversary,” Smithsonian Institution, <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemall/2009/06/smithsonian-marks-anniversary-of-stonewall-riots/> (accessed November 14, 2009).

the fact that diversity is a critical issue for museums in the twenty-first century,” but only one link, which is now inactive, to Australia’s *Gay and Lesbian Policy Guidelines for Museum Programs and Practice* directly address homosexuality. Prominent organizations like AAM, which set the standards of American museums, must clearly present their stance on homosexuality and how to accurately portray this aspect of the U.S. past.

Smaller institutions nationwide need the tools to initiate a focus on LBGT history and culture. Unlike the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “Pride and Preservation” or the Society of American Archivists’ “Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable” straightforward and welcoming approach to the gay community, the AAM lacks any clear alignment. The likelihood of change is greatly reduced through the minimal attention to LBGT issues by established organizations like AAM’s. There must be a refocus on who the museum profession wants to reach in exhibits and the definition inclusive. By working to better understand their visitors through evaluations as well as creating relationships with the gay LBGT community, museum professionals and public historians can demonstrate their concern for the minority community.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the museum profession has evolved since the beginning of the twentieth century. Prior to the 1970s one opinion assumed that history was “past politics” and concentrated on topics like kings, ministers, battles, and treaties, while another, more modern, broader opinion, gave priority to social structure, class and societal stratification.²³⁹ Since the 1970s museum professionals decisively shifted their interpretations to be more culturally and socially representative. By the end of the twentieth century, museums across the United States reflected a nation of many races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, occupations, and ancestries. Colonial Williamsburg truthfully represented the presence of African Americans and slavery, Native Americans participated in the state of their material culture and burial remains, and women shifted from passive figures in American history to active and influential participants. These advancements did not occur without opposition by those who felt such topics represented unpleasant or marginal aspects of the past. Such unwanted narratives went against the grain of U.S. tradition and the myths long supported by the nation’s museums. Revisionist history frequent met opposition in the form of limited grant distribution, public protests, and censorship. Debacles like the suppression of the *Enola Gay* exhibit represented the conservative control that frequently dictated the content of presentations. Likewise, censorship of the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibitions demonstrated the homophobic undertones throughout the nineties that guaranteed a heteronormative influence at the nation’s accredited museums.

Despite accredited museums’ move toward inclusivity in their interpretations, homosexuality still remains an under-represented aspect of the national collections or exhibition interests. The American Association of Museums (AAM) diversity initiatives, at best, gives the

²³⁹ Rosmarie Beier-de Haan, “Re-Staging Histories and Identities,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 186.

appearance of providing institutional resources for those interested in including homosexuality within their exhibitions, collection policies, and support for the LBGT community. The AAM's apparent apathy toward homosexuality coupled with the noticeable lack of gay history in the national narrative disregards the efforts of museums and public historians to better understand and include taboo and controversial topics.

Prior to 1969 homosexuality's marginalization undoubtedly influenced museum staffs' ability to interpret it. In addition to the conservative congressional influence, homosexuality literally remained out of the history books until the 1980s. Modern gay liberation did not start until 1969, and until that year, a majority of homosexuals remained on the fringe of gay activism. Even well into the 1980s, academics entered fields of sexuality with trepidation. Jonathan Katz's groundbreaking publication of *Gay American History: Lesbian and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* in 1976 indicated a progress of homosexuals in the U.S. after the inauguration of modern gay liberation with the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

The events that unfolded in Greenwich Village started on June 28, 1969 inaugurated a visibility for homosexuality that was previously unprecedented. Police and legal government discrimination, as well as state and local ordinances prohibited many homosexuals from openly acknowledging their sexuality. Furthermore, the overall characterization of homosexuality as a deviant and psychological disorder caused many men and women to feel shame. After Stonewall, activists like Jim Fouratt, Craig Rodwell, Sylvia Rivera, and Marsha Shelley encouraged unification and raised awareness through flyers and meetings to start a forum to institute change for homosexuals in the U.S. Inspired by the events, the homosexual community unified to more forthrightly address the need for equal rights. These efforts often resulted in people working to

create a sense of identity previously denied in society. Activists utilized public history techniques in order to create and understand their identity and a recorded past.

The Gay Academic Union (GAU) and the American Library Association's Task Force on Gay Liberation formed in order to address the nonexistent homosexual historiography as well as ensure equality in their academic fields. Members like Barbara Gittings sought to create a sense of gay identity through her library and archival skills. Works like GAU member Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History* provided a written record for the gay community to connect to their past for the first time. Grassroots academic interest changed homosexuality from a lifestyle only mentioned as a perversion and disorder in library catalogues to a lifestyle accepted not just in bathhouses and bars, but in academic circles where people worked collaboratively to readdress homosexual history.

Many of these efforts occurred in the form of archival, history, and preservation projects. Notably, the Lesbian Herstory created by Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel in 1974 was formed in order to offset the rapid disappearance of lesbian history. Through engaging the lesbian community through slideshows and collecting drives, the Herstory worked to create an identity and a tangible lesbian past. Their efforts, similar to countless others, like Jim Kepner, helped to ensure the preservation of ephemera and material culture that otherwise risked discard or destruction due to its homosexual nature. Today, the *Lavender Legacy Guide* outlines fifty-six archives dedicated to the preservation of LBGT history and illustrates the success of initiatives that helped to create a gay identity while simultaneously saving the tangible past at the same time.

The LBGT community's interest in history projects and preservation efforts followed the same course. Gay history remained absent from the national narrative and landscape.

Preservation efforts initially neglected important structures to the gay past like the Stonewall Inn, former parks or piers critical to demonstrating the maltreatment of gays in the past. However, gay initiatives like the Stonewall Inn nomination for the National Register, or walking history tours inspired by the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall demonstrated an active presence of the LGBT community to ensure the preservation and interpretation of a marginalized past in urban space.

Activists' dedication to projects like the Herstory archive, the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, as well as the nomination for the Stonewall Inn allowed for the preservation of a past which was largely minimized at the projects' start. At the same time, such initiatives allowed for the LGBT community to unify, as one to understand their past, something not afforded prior to Stonewall. These projects provided Americans and public historians collections of ephemera and material culture that was disregarded in the decades following Stonewall.

Political and social conditions in the U.S. today are much more favorable for museums to incorporate LGBT collections and exhibitions. The exposure of a minimally understood past and lifestyle will stimulate public discourse and increase tolerance. Museums have successfully incorporated minority histories like African America, women, Native American, and labor into museums over the past forty years by the re-evaluation of the national narrative. This change allowed for people of many backgrounds to see themselves as part of U.S. history. Homosexuals, though, still remain largely outside the museum community. The reassessment of the public historian's goal to achieve broader, more diverse, and inclusive histories reveals the necessity to incorporate LGBT history into projects, collections, and exhibitions. Museum staff must work outside their institutional walls and connect with existent LGBT archives and historic projects as well as better understand the communities they serve.

Museum staff must actively engage existent archives as well as the LBGT community. The history projects created by activists after Stonewall resulted in successful archives that currently hold the majority of LBGT material culture and ephemera as well as walking tours that depict homosexuality in urban space. Museum professionals can network with these institutions in order to share resources like collections, and technology, as well as visitor and community information. Many archives today exist through volunteer and nonprofessional standards, causing a precarious nature of the storage of the collections, as well as irregular public access. Museum staff must also move forward to align themselves with the LBGT community. Many archives and history projects formed in response to the neglect by and distrust of the heterosexual establishment. Therefore, museum staff can reach out to the LBGT community to better understand the specific community composition and create a dialogue. Museum staff can give the LBGT community an equal contribution to preservation and exhibition of their past.

The broad recommendations for museums in the U.S. are not to take away from the complexity of the LBGT community. Even today issues of what it means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered evoke debate within and outside the LBGT community. However, there is a rich history exposed and saved after Stonewall in 1969. Public historians must consciously work to better understand gay organizations like the Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, and the Gay Liberation Front; early gay rights advocates like Harry Hay, Alfred Kinsey, Evelyn Hooker; gay gatherings like the Annual Reminder and Pride Prides; areas of homosexual congregation such as bathhouses, bars, parks and piers, and countless other parts of the LBGT past missing from the national narrative and landscape. More importantly, exhibitions must account for homosexuality as a part of the overall American past. Through the active consideration for the incorporation of LBGT history into the nation's museums, public historians

can move toward a more accurate interpretation of the past as well as continue to attain a broader, bottom up understanding of the nation's complex and diverse history.

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