

Stonewall Reading 1: Primary Source

Directions: Read the 1969 *New York Daily News* article and then answer all the questions in the **Green Boxes**.

Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad

The [*New York Daily News*](#), July 6, 1969

By JERRY LISKER

She sat there with her legs crossed, the lashes of her mascara-coated eyes beating like the wings of a hummingbird. She was angry. She was so upset she hadn't bothered to shave. A day old stubble was beginning to push through the pancake makeup. She was a he. A queen of Christopher Street.

Last weekend the queens had turned commandos and stood bra strap to bra strap against an invasion of the helmeted Tactical Patrol Force. The elite police squad had shut down one of their private gay clubs, the Stonewall Inn at 57 Christopher St., in the heart of a three-block homosexual community in Greenwich Village. Queen Power reared its bleached blonde head in revolt. New York City experienced its first homosexual riot. "We may have lost the battle, sweets, but the war is far from over," lisped an unofficial lady-in-waiting from the court of the Queens.

"We've had all we can take from the Gestapo," the spokesman, or spokeswoman, continued. "We're putting our foot down once and for all." The foot wore a spiked heel. According to reports, the Stonewall Inn, a two-story structure with a sand painted brick and opaque glass facade, was a mecca for the homosexual element in the village who wanted nothing but a private little place where they could congregate, drink, dance and do whatever little girls do when they get together.

The thick glass shut out the outside world of the street. Inside, the Stonewall bathed in wild, bright psychedelic lights, while the patrons writhed to the sounds of a juke box on a square dance floor surrounded by booths and tables. The bar did a good business and the waiters, or waitresses, were always kept busy, as they snaked their way around the dancing customers to the booths and tables. For nearly two years, peace and tranquility reigned supreme for the Alice in Wonderland clientele.

The Raid Last Friday

Last Friday the privacy of the Stonewall was invaded by police from the First Division. It was a raid. They had a warrant. After two years, police said they had been informed that liquor was being served on the premises. Since the Stonewall was without a license, the place was being closed. It was the law.



All hell broke loose when the police entered the Stonewall. The girls instinctively reached for each other. Others stood frozen, locked in an embrace of fear.

Only a handful of police were on hand for the initial landing in the homosexual beachhead. They ushered the patrons out onto Christopher Street, just off Sheridan Square. A crowd had formed in front of the Stonewall and the customers were greeted with cheers of encouragement from the gallery.

The whole proceeding took on the aura of a homosexual Academy Awards Night. The Queens pranced out to the street blowing kisses and waving to the crowd. A beauty of a specimen named Stella wailed uncontrollably while being led to the sidewalk in front of the Stonewall by a cop. She later confessed that she didn't protest the manhandling by the officer, it was just that her hair was in curlers and she was afraid her new beau might be in the crowd and spot her. She didn't want him to see her this way, she wept.

Queen Power

The crowd began to get out of hand, eye witnesses said. Then, without warning, Queen Power exploded with all the fury of a gay atomic bomb. Queens, princesses and ladies-in-waiting began hurling anything they could get their polished, manicured fingernails on. Bobby pins, compacts, curlers, lipstick tubes and other femme fatale missiles were flying in the direction of the cops. The war was on. The lilies of the valley had become carnivorous jungle plants.

Urged on by cries of "C'mon girls, lets go get'em," the defenders of Stonewall launched an attack. The cops called for assistance. To the rescue came the Tactical Patrol Force.

Flushed with the excitement of battle, a fellow called Gloria pranced around like Wonder Woman, while several Florence Nightingales administered first aid to the fallen warriors. There were some assorted scratches and bruises, but nothing serious was suffered by the honeys turned Madwoman of Chailot.

Official reports listed four injured policemen with 13 arrests. The War of the Roses lasted about 2 hours from about midnight to 2 a.m. There was a return bout Wednesday night.

Two veterans recently recalled the battle and issued a warning to the cops. "If they close up all the gay joints in this area, there is going to be all out war."

Bruce and Nan

Both said they were refugees from Indiana and had come to New York where they could live together happily ever after. They were in their early 20's. They preferred to be called by their married names, Bruce and Nan.

"I don't like your paper," Nan lisped matter-of-factly. "It's anti-fag and pro-cop."

"I'll bet you didn't see what they did to the Stonewall. Did the pigs tell you that they smashed everything in sight? Did you ask them why they stole money out of the cash register and then smashed it with a sledge hammer? Did you ask them why it took them two years to discover that the Stonewall didn't have a liquor license."

Bruce nodded in agreement and reached over for Nan's trembling hands.

"Calm down, doll," he said. "Your face is getting all flushed."

Nan wiped her face with a tissue.

"This would have to happen right before the wedding. The reception was going to be held at the Stonewall, too," Nan said, tossing her ashen-tinted hair over her shoulder.

"What wedding?," the bystander asked.

Nan frowned with a how-could-anybody-be-so-stupid look. "Eric and Jack's wedding, of course. They're finally tying the knot. I thought they'd never get together."

Meet Shirley

"We'll have to find another place, that's all there is to it," Bruce sighed. "But every time we start a place, the cops break it up sooner or later."

"They let us operate just as long as the payoff is regular," Nan said bitterly. "I believe they closed up the Stonewall because there was some trouble with the payoff to the cops. I think that's the real reason. It's a shame. It was such a lovely place. We never bothered anybody. Why couldn't they leave us alone?"

Shirley Evans, a neighbor with two children, agrees that the Stonewall was not a rowdy place and the persons who frequented the club were never troublesome. She lives at 45 Christopher St.

"Up until the night of the police raid there was never any trouble there," she said. "The homosexuals minded their own business and never bothered a soul. There were never any fights or hollering, or anything like that. They just wanted to be left alone. I don't know what they did inside, but that's their business. I was never in there myself. It was just awful when the police came. It was like a swarm of hornets attacking a bunch of butterflies."

A reporter visited the now closed Stonewall and it indeed looked like a cyclone had struck the premises. Police said there were over 200 people in the Stonewall when they entered with a warrant. The crowd outside was estimated at 500 to 1,000. According to police, the Stonewall had been under observation for some time. Being a private club, plain clothes men were refused entrance to the inside when they periodically tried to check the place. "They had the tightest security in the Village," a First Division officer said, "We could never get near the place without a warrant."

Police Talk

The men of the First Division were unable to find any humor in the situation, despite the comical overtones of the raid.

"They were throwing more than lace hankies," one inspector said. "I was almost decapitated by a slab of thick glass. It was thrown like a discus and just missed my throat by inches. The beer can didn't miss, though, "it hit me right above the temple." Police also believe the club was operated by Mafia connected owners. The police did confiscate the Stonewall's cash register as proceeds from an illegal operation. The receipts were counted and are on file at the division headquarters. The warrant was served and the establishment closed on the grounds it was an illegal membership club with no license, and no license to serve liquor. The police are sure of one thing. They haven't heard the last from the Girls of Christopher Street.

Questions:

 According to your source, what happened at Stonewall in 1969 (who was involved and who is responsible for it)?

 What is the audience and purpose of this source?

 What is the potential bias in this source? Whose voice is missing?

 Explain how audience, **or** purpose, **or** bias affects this document as a reliable source of evidence.

Thought Questions

-Why do you think this is considered to be such an important historical moment?

-How is your source related to Sources 2, 3, and 4? Compare and contrast their different perspectives.

Stonewall Reading 2: Primary Source

Directions: Read the interview and then answer all the questions in the **Green Boxes**.

Journalist Eric Marcus interviewed Sylvia Rivera in 1989, for “Making Gay History.” Published in [The Guardian](#), June 23, 2019.

About: The New York City LGBTQ activist and icon Sylvia Rivera discusses the Stonewall uprising, the clubs in Greenwich Village at the time, and the oppression faced by drag queens and Trans people. From a 1989 interview with journalist Eric Marcus for “Making Gay History.”

Eric Marcus: Up until 1969 you weren’t involved in gay rights or rights or any of that stuff.

Rey “Sylvia Lee” Rivera: Before gay rights, before the Stonewall, I was involved in the Black Liberation movement, the peace movement. I felt I had the time and I knew that I had to do something. My revolutionary blood was going back then. I was involved with that.



Marcus: How so?

Rivera: I did a lot of marches. I had to do something back then to show the world that there was a changing world. I got involved with a lot of the different things because I had to. I had so much anger.

Marcus: About what?

Rivera: About the world, the way it was. The way they were treating people. When the Stonewall happened. The Stonewall was fabulous. Actually it was the first time that I had been to friggin’ Stonewall. It was, like, a godsent thing. I just happened to be there when it all jumped off. I said, “Well, great, now it’s my time.” Here, I’m out there being a revolutionist for everybody else. I said now it’s time to do my thing for my own people.

Marcus: What happened that night? Did you normally go out with your friends to the bars?

Rivera: The Stonewall wasn't a bar for drag queens. Everybody keeps saying it was. Stonewall was not a bar for drag queens. There was one bar at that time in that era which was called the Washington Square Bar, Third Street and Broadway, where the hotel collapsed many, many years ago. That was the drag queen spot. If you were a drag queen, you could get into the Stonewall if they knew you. And there were only a certain number of drag queens that were allowed into the Stonewall at that time.

This is where I get into arguments with people. They say, "Oh, no, it was a drag queen bar, it was a black bar." No, Washington Square Bar was the drag queen bar. We had just come back in from Washington, my first lover and I. At that time we were passing bad paper around and making lots of money. We were passing forged checks. And I said, "Let's go to Stonewall." And when it happened, my friend was like, "Don't go off." And I said, "Why not? I have to go off. I have to be part of this." I said, "I have to. The feeling is here." It meant a lot and I was glad I was there.

Marcus: So you were at the bar doing what?

Rivera: I was drinking.

Marcus: What happened? Did the police come?

Rivera: The police came in. They came in to get their payoff as usual. They were the same people who always used to come into the Washington Square Bar too. You know, get their payoff. It was like, I don't know if it was the customers or it was the police. Everything just clicked.

Marcus: When you say clicked you have to describe to me what you mean by that. I wasn't there.



Trans icons Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera at the Christopher Street Liberation Day March, 1973. Both women were considered mothers among marginalized LGBTQ youth and dedicated their lives to social justice while navigating through mental and financial instabilities of their own.
Photo by Leonard Fink, Courtesy LGBT Community Center National History Archive

Rivera: Everybody like, “Why the [F-word] are we doing all this for?” The attitudes in people, and a lot of people at that time were so involved, like I said I was involved in different movements. The people at them bars, especially at the Stonewall, were involved in other movements. And everybody like, “All right, we got to do our thing. We’re gonna go for it.” When they ushered us out, they very nicely put you out the door. Then you’re standing across the street in Sheridan Square park. But why? Everybody’s looking at each other. “But why do we have to keep on constantly putting up with this?” And the nickels, the dimes, the pennies, and the quarters started flying.

Marcus: Why that? Why were people throwing change?

Rivera: The payoff. That was the payoff. “You already got, and here’s some more.” To be there was so beautiful. It was so exciting. It was like, “Wow, we’re doing it! We’re doing it!” We’re [F-ing] their nerves. They thought that they could come in and say, “All right, you get out,” and nothing was going to happen. They could put that padlock on the door and they knew damn well like everybody else knows that they would come in, raid a gay bar. Padlock the friggin’ door. As soon as the police were gone one way, the mafia was there cutting the door. They had a new register. They had more money and they had more booze. This is what we learned to live with at that time. We had to live with it until that day.

Marcus: Did you throw any pennies or dimes?

Rivera: I threw quarters, and pennies, and whatnot.

Marcus: How were you dressed that night?

Rivera: I wasn’t in full drag. I was dressed very pleasantly. I was wearing a woman’s suit. Bell bottoms were out then. I had made this fabulous suit at home and I was wearing that and I had the hair out.

Marcus: What color fabric?

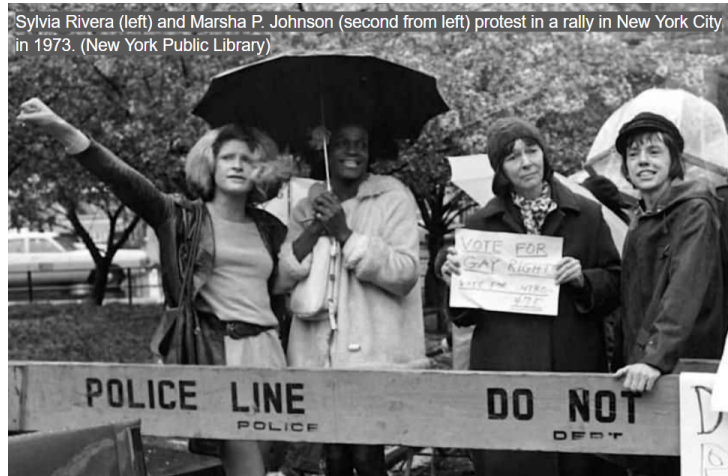
Rivera: It was a light beige. Something very summery. Lots of makeup and lots of hair.

Marcus: Did you have heels on?

Rivera: I was wearing boots. I don't know why I was wearing boots.

Marcus: What happened next?

Rivera: We're throwing the pennies and everything is going really fab. The cops locked themselves in the bar. It was getting vicious. There was Molotov cocktails coming in. I don't know where they got Molotov cocktails, but they were thrown through the door. The cops, they just panicked. Inspector Pine really panicked. Plus he had no backup. He did not expect any of the retaliation that the gay community gave him.



Marcus: Do you think that this happened in part because people were so angry for so long?

Rivera: People were very angry for so long. How long can you live in the closet? I listen to my brothers and sisters who are older than I am and I listen to their stories. I would never have made it. They would have killed me. Somebody would have killed me. I could never have survived the lives that my brothers and sisters from the 40s and 50s did. Because I have a mouth.

Marcus: Did you say anything that night out in front of the Stonewall?

Rivera: Oh, I was instigating certain things. But I knew we would get it. I got knocked around a bit by a couple of plain-clothes men. I didn't really get hurt. I was very careful that night, thank God. But I saw other people being hurt by the police. There was one drag queen, they brought her out, I don't know what she said, they just beat her into a bloody pulp. There was a couple of [lesbians] they took out and threw in a car. They got out the other side. It was inhumane, senseless bullshit.

Marcus: They treated you like animals.

Rivera: That's what we were called anyway. We were the lowest scum of the earth at that time.

Marcus: What were you trying to do? What were your hopes?

Rivera: Marsha [P Johnson] and I fought for the liberation of our people. We did a lot back then. We did sleep in the streets. Marsha and I had a building on Second Street, which we called STAR House. When we asked the community to help us [tears coming down face] there was nobody to help us. We were nothing. We were nothing! We were taking care of kids that were younger than us. Marsha and I were young and we were taking care of them. And GAA [a major LGBT activist organization in New York City, one of several Rivera participated in] had teachers and lawyers and all we asked was to help us teach our own so we could all become a little bit better. There was nobody there to help us. They left us hanging. There was only one person that came and help us. Bob Kohler was there. He helped paint. He helped us put wires together. We didn't know what the fuck we were doing. We took a slum building. We tried. We really did. We tried. Marsha and I and a few of the other older drag queens. We kept it going for about a year or two. We went out and made that money on the streets to keep these kids off the streets. We already went through it. We wanted to protect them. To show them that there was a better life. You can't throw people out on the street.



Questions:

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Thought Questions

-Why do you think this is considered to be such an important historical moment?

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Stonewall Reading 3: Secondary Source

Directions: Read the 2019 Rochester *CITY Magazine* article and then answer all the questions in the **Green Boxes**.

Black Pride: History and the Work Ahead

CITY Magazine, June 11, 2019
By REBECCA RAFFERTY

This past balmy Saturday night, Central Library's downtown, riverside Rundel Memorial Building -- with its Art Deco aesthetic -- was the backdrop of "Black Glamour: A Met Gala Affair." The event was a fundraiser for the Rochester Black Pride festival, and also an opportunity for community members to get gussied up, socialize and dance, and explore the "Stonewall: 50 Years Out" exhibit.



That exhibit, installed on the walls and in several display cases in the library's main hall, was curated by Rochester City Historian Christine Ridarsky and various community partners. It contains a wealth of material -- articles, photographs, and objects -- that tells the story of the Stonewall uprising and Rochester's own journey toward liberation. And it

also includes photographs of contemporary LGBTQ community members made by artist Adrian "Gatekeeper" Elim, paired with quotes from the subjects. The extensive display was named one of the best exhibits commemorating Stonewall by **The Guardian**.

Artist Thomas Warfield, one of the evening's emcees, underscored the significant history of Stonewall, and the way it informs the present.

"A lot of people like to say that Stonewall was the beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement," Warfield said. "Well it wasn't the beginning. But it was when our voice was heard. It wasn't that people were standing around with signs. No, it was a riot. Their voices had to be lifted a little higher, a little louder, for us to be here today. And it hasn't stopped. There's so much more to do, there's so much more that we have to do, each one of us. We can't really wait for somebody else or an organization to make a difference in the world we live in."

Though the wider LGBTQ community has made advancements toward liberation in the past several decades, visibility and safety remain dire issues for trans people and especially trans women of color.

"The trans community is always left out," said Gatekeeper, who is a lead organizer for Rochester Black Pride Collective. "And black and brown people are always missing from these narratives, especially when we talk about history, what Pride means and where resistance has come from, and how things actually get changed. It's not just people lobbying. It's protest, it's direct action, it's organizing on the community level."

For this reason, Rochester Black Pride Collective balances even its most celebratory parties with discussions of serious work.

Saturday evening, Gatekeeper announced that the Roc Black Pride Collective's trans group has created the Bernadine Casseus Scholarship -- named for the late local black



trans icon Mother Kiki -- for transgender high school students who enter a hospitality or culinary arts program.

Mother Kiki helped raise part of the community, Gatekeeper said. "And so that's part of why we wanted to have this here, with the Stonewall exhibit, and really elevate the trans community, particularly black trans women who are the most marginalized and the most attacked of our community. And they're the ones really doing the work when you think about any work, community work, you think black trans women."

Rochester Black Pride Collective also debuted the brand-new Rochester Black Pride flag at the event. Inspired by Philadelphia's Pride flag, this one also includes black and brown stripes as well as the Trans pastels; all of the colors are arranged in stacked chevrons with the text "FREE TO BE ME" in the top black triangle.

This year's theme for the Black Pride Festival is "retro," with a particular focus on 1980s aesthetics, music, and icons. The festival will be held in early September this year so it catches the college crowd; it was previously held in August.



Photo by Mateo Alexander
Luticha André Doucette



PHOTO BY MATEO ALEXANDER - Gatekeeper and Samekh Harris Reed at the "Black Glamour" event on Saturday night.

"We really wanted to start engaging the youth in a different way," Gatekeeper said. "So with Black Pride this year our focus is the youth -- providing spaces for them, allowing them to see they have the opportunity to do whatever they want to do and be whatever they want to be. I think there's power in seeing different generations of a community, and then you can kind of see a trajectory for yourself."

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Stonewall Reading 4: Secondary Source

Directions: Read the article and then answer all the questions in the **Green Boxes**.

[Library of Congress LGBTQIA+ Studies: A Resource Guide](#)

1969: The Stonewall Uprising Introduction

Author: The Stonewall Veterans Association

June 28, 1969 marks the beginning of the Stonewall Uprising, a series of events between police and LGBTQ+ protesters which stretched over six days. It was not the first time police raided a gay bar, and it was not the first time LGBTQ+ people fought back, but the events that would unfold over the next six days would fundamentally change the discourse surrounding LGBTQ+ activism in the United States. While Stonewall became well known due to the media coverage and the subsequent annual Pride traditions, it was a culmination of years of LGBTQ+ activism. Historians have noted that the shift in activism, if Stonewall truly represented one at all, was a shift primarily for white cisgender people, as people of color and gender non-conforming people never truly had the benefit of concealing their marginalized identities.

While the events of Stonewall are often referred to as "riots," Stonewall veterans have explicitly stated that they prefer the term Stonewall uprising or rebellion. The reference to these events as riots was initially used by police to justify their use of force.

"The rebellion (**it was never a 'riot'**) lasted five inconsecutive nights (**they were not 'riots'**)..."
-Stonewall Veterans' Association

It is important to note that there were a number of uprisings against police & state brutality, harassment and entrapment of the LGBT+ communities in the U.S. in the years before Stonewall. These events and the people involved have not received as much historical attention as Stonewall, but are just as central to understandings of U.S. LGBTQIA+ histories. Some of the pre-Stonewall uprisings included:

- Pepper Hill Club Raid, Baltimore, Maryland in 1955. Over 162 people arrested.
- Hazel's (Hazel's Inn), Sharp Park, California February 1956
- Coopers Do-Nut Raid, Los Angeles, California, 1959
- Black Nite Brawl, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 5, 1961
- Compton's Cafeteria Raid, San Francisco, California, 1966
- Black Cat Raid, Los Angeles, California, 1967

Questions:

 According to your source, what happened at Stonewall in 1969 (who was involved and what impact did it have)?

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