

LGBT ACTIVISM



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the causes of a key moment in the LGBT rights movement, the Stonewall Riots, and develop an understanding of what happened.
- Find out about the role of young people in the Stonewall Riots and what motivated them to be involved.
- Examine and assess the role of the police, government, and protestors during the Stonewall Riots.
- Discover the history of Pride parades, and engage with ongoing debates about what form they should take to best serve young people.



How the Stonewall Riots Sparked a Movement | History



Film Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9wdMJmuBIA



The Stonewall Riots were a week of protests and fights between LGBT people and the police in New York, which began on June 28th, 1969.

At the time, being gay or a lesbian was illegal and punishable by fines and jail time in the USA. Dressing in 'gender inappropriate' clothing was also a crime, putting trans people in particular risk. They were visible targets for the police.

It was illegal to serve to LGBT customers at bars, so a series of bars run by criminal gangs emerged to cater for the community.

Many of these bribed the police to stay open. Some of them blackmailed their customers, threatening to expose them to their bosses, families, and friends if they did not pay the owners.



The Stonewall Inn, a mafia-run bar, was raided at 1AM on June 28th. Normally the police would arrest staff in these raids, but this time they tried to arrest customers, and treated them very roughly.

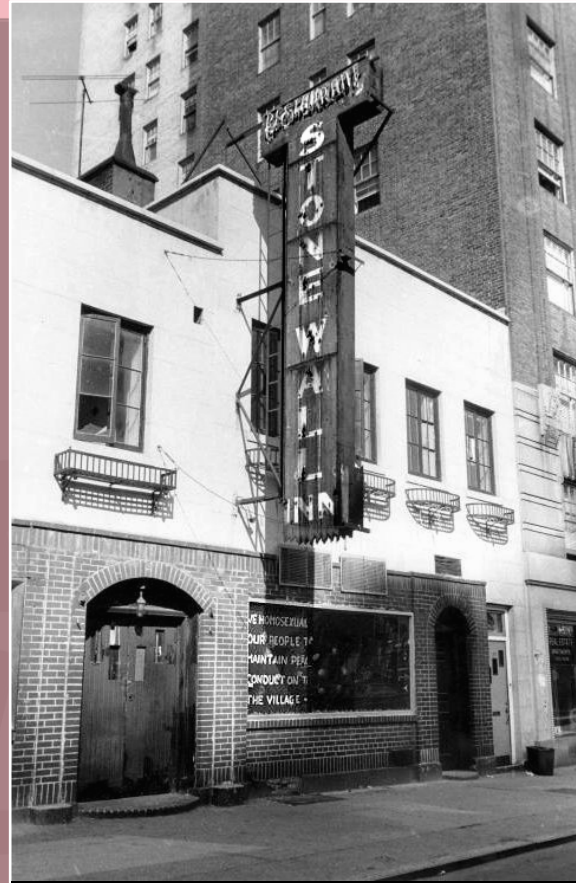
A large crowd of mainly-young LGBT people gathered outside. Many were people of colour, and a large number were trans people and drag queens.

They tried to stop the arrests, and ended up fighting with the police. Riots began, and continued for the next 7 days. Many important gay rights groups were founded after the event.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If the Stonewall Inn was open without an alcohol license, was it fair for the police to raid it?
- Why might the author of source 1 think that the elections had something to do with the raid?
- Why do you think the police raided the Stonewall Inn on June 28th?
- Was it right of the crowd to fight the police? Why / Why not?



Diana Davies, New York Public Library



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Joseph Ambrosini/The New York Daily News

- Why was the crowd at the Stonewall riot so young?
- Why might older members of the LGBT community have been less likely to take part?
- Why were LGBT youth more likely to be homeless?
- What risks came with being LGBT and homeless?



In 1970, one year after the Stonewall Riots, LGBT activists in major cities across the USA organised demonstrations to celebrate its anniversary, and to carry on its tradition.

In the USA, being openly gay was still illegal, and treated as a mental illness or criminal offence. At these events people risked a lot to declare that they were proud of who they were, and they wanted to be treated fairly.

These events were known as 'Christopher Street Liberation Day' marches, to commemorate the street where the Stonewall Riots took place.



The first annual march in New York, 1970 (Diana Davies / New York Public Library)

In time, many of these protests became known as 'Gay Pride' marches, and started happening in countries across the world. The first Pride march in the UK took place in London, 1972.

Gay pride marches have become major annual events in many large cities. Some combine parades with music festivals and big parties, and have become major tourist events as well as a celebration of LGBT identities.

Manchester Pride started as a jumble sale and picnic to raise money for LGBT charities, and has now become a weekend-long event with a parade and music festival.



www.facebook.com/ManchesterPride/photos/a.394007492865/10156113840257866

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Are pride marches still a protest?
Or have they become something else?
- Do you think Pride events should be free to attend?
Why / Why not?
- What kind of Pride events do you think would be
useful for young people today?



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