A SPATIAL HISTORY OF LESBIAN BARS IN NEW YORK CITY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Science in Historic Preservation

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Columbia University
May 2019
Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the advice and support of many people. First, I would like to thank Andrew Dolkart, Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University GSAPP, for consulting with me about the topic and serving as advisor on the project for over a year. His pioneering work on LGBTQ historic preservation has been truly inspirational, and I had the pleasure of working with his terrific colleagues at the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project in the summer of 2018. Amanda Davis, also part of the Sites Project, has been a wonderful resource, even before agreeing to be a reader for this paper. Likewise, Gwen Shockey, who also wrote her thesis on lesbian bars in New York City, was an important early ally in the project and gave valuable feedback as a thesis reader.

Many people gave me vital research advice, providing me with useful and hard to find materials, pointing me towards revealing sources, and guiding me through rich archives. These people include Ken Lustbader and Jay Shockley of the NYC LGBT Historic Site Project, Caitlin McCarthy of The LGBT Community Center National History Archive, Saskia Scheffer and Deborah Edel (among others) of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, Jason Baumann and Cara Dellatte of the New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, Ken Cobb of the Municipal Archives, historian Michael Henry Adams, and Tom Miller of Daytonian in Manhattan.

My family and girlfriend provided me essential support while I was completing this project and my last year of graduate school. They have always allowed me to be myself –
something not everyone in the LGBTQ community can say. My aunt, Rondi Silva, and my mother, Marie-Louise Stegall deserve particular praise for editing drafts of this text.

Finally, I would like to give infinite thanks to those who shared their personal stories about lesbian bars and lesbian life with me. Those whom I interviewed include (in alphabetical order), Ann Bannon, Karla Jay, Kathy Wakeham, Lisa Cannistraci, Lisa Davis, Lisa Menichino, Martha Shelley, Preston Mardenborough, Sheila Frayne, Tammy Kopko, and Teresa King. These stories of the lesbian community are at the heart of this thesis and provide the lived experience that give it authenticity and vibrancy.
# Table of Contents

## Introduction .......................................................................................... 1
- Terminology .......................................................................................... 6
- Methodology and Literature Review .................................................... 9
  - An Uncharted History....................................................................... 9
  - Historic Preservation Documents: LGBTQ History is a Growing Sector of Our Field .......................................... 10
  - Books: Best for the Background, the Footnotes, and the Authors .......................................................... 12
  - Events, Conferences, Exhibits, and Films: Engaging the Public .......................................................... 16
  - “Non-Academic” Articles and Archive Projects: History by and for Lesbians ............................................... 19
  - Official Archives: Mining for Gold .................................................. 21
  - Interviews: The Missing Link ......................................................... 23

## Chapter 1: “Proto-Lesbian Bars,” 1910s-1940s ................................... 26
- Towards the Lesbian Bar ....................................................................... 26
- Turn of the Twentieth Century Ladies Bars and Restaurants .................. 27
- Women-Owned Tearooms in Greenwich Village, 1910s and 1920s .............. 30
- Lesbian Performers in the Harlem Renaissance .......................................... 36
- Lesbian Performers in Downtown Cabarets, 1930s to 1950s ..................... 42
- World War II: The Creation of a Lesbian Sub-Culture ................................ 45
- Chapter 1 Spatial Summary ................................................................. 46

## Chapter 2: 1950s-60s ........................................................................ 48
- The Mafia and the Butch/Femme Crowd ................................................ 48
- Swing Rendezvous, 1938-1965 .............................................................. 53
- Sea Colony, c.1950-c.1968 ..................................................................... 58
- Bagatelle, 1951-1959 ............................................................................ 62
- Pony Stable Inn, 1945-Jan 1970 ............................................................. 64
- Kooky’s, 1965-1973 ............................................................................. 67
- Gianni’s, 1966-1975 ............................................................................ 71
- Chapter 2 Spatial Summary ................................................................. 73
CHAPTER 3: 1970S-80S ........................................................... 74
Lesbian Feminists and the Gay Revolution................................. 74
Changing Lesbian Bar Culture.................................................... 80
Bonnie and Clyde’s, 1971-1982.................................................. 83
The Duchess/The Grove/Pandora’s Box, 1972-1990s.................. 87
Sahara, 1976-1979..................................................................... 93
Casa Maria/Silhouette/Ariel’s, 1975-1984................................. 99
Chapter 3 Spatial Summary...................................................... 101

CHAPTER 4: 1990S-2000S ....................................................... 103
The Lesbian Bar Heyday............................................................ 103
Clit Club, 1990-2002................................................................. 106
Cubby Hole, 1983-1990............................................................. 110
Crazy Nanny’s, 1991-2004........................................................ 111
Meow Mix, 1996-2004.............................................................. 114
Chapter 4 Spatial Summary...................................................... 118

CHAPTER 5: TODAY AND THE FUTURE ................................. 120
The Queer Generation............................................................... 120
Henrietta Hudson, 1991-Present.............................................. 123
Cubbyhole, 1994-Present.......................................................... 126
Ginger’s Bar, 2000-Present....................................................... 130
Bum Bum Bar, 1992-2019........................................................ 133
Chapter 5 Spatial Summary...................................................... 135

CONCLUSION ........................................................................ 137
Shedding Light on the Past While Looking to the Future .......... 137
Sharing and Continuing Lesbian Bar History.......................... 144
Broadening the Scope.............................................................. 150

APPENDICES ........................................................................ 152
Appendix 1: Bibliography........................................................ 152
Appendix 2: Working Database of Lesbian Nightlife Sites........... 157
INTRODUCTION

Lesbian and gay bars are much more than spaces for drinking and socializing (though this is important) – their very existence has been and continues to be a political act. From police raids of Mafia-run locations in the mid twentieth century, to the pivotal Stonewall Riots of June 1969 when patrons fought back, to organizing of Pride marches and other political actions starting in the 1970s, to the terrorist attack at Pulse in 2016, bars have been key public sites where LGBTQ history has unfolded. Lesbian bars, a rarer subset in the category of LGBTQ bars, are even more crucial, especially since there have always been fewer all-women’s than all-men’s spaces. Before the Stonewall Riots spurred the LGBTQ rights movement, lesbian bars were some of the only spaces where lesbians could gather and meet each other, although even there they were not always safe from harassment. Today, lesbian bars remain important epicenters of lesbian life and key sites for LGBTQ events.

A comprehensive written history of lesbian bars in New York City (or any city for that matter) does not exist. There is a strong desire, especially within the lesbian community, to document this history, which is mostly invisible except to those who lived it themselves, and there is an urgency to record it soon so the stories do not die with the women who can tell them. Because of the forced secrecy under which many of these places operated, information about lesbian bars in the twentieth century largely comes from people who personally experienced them. These women are getting older – these spaces need to be described and these stories need to be told now. This thesis aims to take a significant step toward writing this history, demonstrating its importance, and focusing on the spatial characteristics of lesbian bars, their evolution over time, and the important events that happened in them.
Walking through the streets of New York City, especially neighborhoods like Greenwich Village and Harlem, LGBTQ history is everywhere, but most people are not aware of it. For example, Greenwich Village is the only neighborhood in New York City that has continuously hosted a lesbian bar from the time that they became a business type in the 1930s until today. Queering architectural and urban history is important to expand traditional historical narratives and gain a broader understanding of preservation and our city. Given the paucity of visual documentation of early lesbian bars, the buildings that once housed them are even more powerful as evidence of LGBTQ history. My thesis aims to interpret more broadly and accurately the history of the city and particularly neighborhoods like Greenwich Village and Harlem that have a strong, but still largely undocumented, LGBTQ historical presence. This paper will add to the cannon of historic preservation scholarship by reinterpreting already recognized historic sites through a lesbian lens and identifying previously overlooked sites as important to lesbian, and therefore New York City, history.

Of the over 200 New York City lesbian bars and related spaces (sites of lesbian parties, lesbian restaurants, early lesbian-affiliated spaces) open between 1910 and 2019 that I have amassed in my database of sites (see Appendix 2), I have identified a few from each era with enough information for fuller description. The sites that I describe in the coming chapters were chosen because of the length of time they were open and the frequency of mention in various sources, because specific historical events happened there, or because they represent an archetype of a category of lesbian bar (categories such as time period, geographic location, spatial layout, affinity with a particular lesbian subgroup, etc.). Beginning in the early twentieth century when lesbian subcultures and therefore lesbian bars were created in New York City, the history described in this thesis continues through today. The three lesbian bars currently open
in New York City in 2019 (Cubbyhole, Ginger’s, and Henrietta Hudson) are a continuation of the legacy of previous spaces. Their existence is threatened from various causes, including gentrification and a changing lesbian culture, despite the crucial role they still play in our community.

This thesis will shine a light on a previously overlooked element of our built urban environment, describe the spaces themselves, and explain their vital role in shaping our culture and history. The chapters of this thesis move chronologically though timeframes organized for their similarity in lesbian bar characteristics. Chapter 1 traces the years from the 1910s to the 1940s, the period of first wave feminist spaces and lesbian-welcoming spaces, which I have dubbed “proto-lesbian bars” since they were foundational to the formation of lesbian subcultures and lesbian bars. The earliest lesbian bars, which seem to have appeared first in the 1930s in Greenwich Village, are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 documents the dingy and sordid, Mafia-run lesbian bars of the 1950s and 1960s, mostly in Greenwich Village, which were often raided by the police. Chapter 3 begins after the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 and traces how the LGBTQ rights movement of the 1970s and 1980s spurred many changes in lesbian bar culture. Some of these changes include the creation of more spaces in various neighborhoods and boroughs, the more deliberate design of these spaces, and, most importantly, the ownership of most of these bars by lesbians and the waning influence of the Mafia. Chapter 4 discusses the increasing number of bars and a proliferation of roaming lesbian parties at various locations throughout the 1990s and 2000s – the lesbian bar heyday. These spaces also became more welcoming, diverse, and sex-positive than previous decades. Chapter 5 ends with the decline of lesbian bars, which has left us with only three places still in operation in 2019. The conclusion outlines suggestions for continuing businesses that still exist,
commemorating and preserving places lost, and distributing information about this history to various audiences through permanent and event-based approaches.

There are more ephemeral physical phenomena that should be kept in mind throughout the social and visual descriptions in the thesis – experiential details that are important to how the bars felt and functioned, but which are even more difficult to document. For example, before New York City banned smoking in bars in 2002, most of these places would have been incredibly smoky, obscuring visibility and creating a strong smell (mixed with the smell that the current bars still have on busy nights of hot, sweaty bodies). While music is discussed throughout the thesis, it would have changed in volume and quality as sound systems and musical genres changed through the decades. Bars might also incorporate music in varying ways, and the experience of watching and dancing to live music or a DJ is very different than the experience of dancing to juke box music. The experience of being inebriated in one of these sites cannot adequately be described in a thesis of this nature. It would certainly have altered one’s experience of these sites – something pictures and verbal description could never adequately describe.

The main focus of this thesis is the spatial components of lesbian bars, how they looked and operated. These provide an important window into the lesbian cultures of each era; they are both a reflection of the state of lesbian culture, and they greatly influenced it. For example, the repressive, homophobic society of the 1950s and 1960s, when it was almost impossible to be “out,” forced lesbian bars underground and into the hands of criminals. The dark and heavily policed bars of that era also had an important effect on their patrons and deterred many who may have wanted to meet other lesbians, but not in those spaces or under those circumstances. The spaces specifically designed by lesbians for lesbians in the 1970s onward,
on the other hand, had a much more liberating affect, allowing lesbians to be themselves more freely; those spaces would not have been possible without the enormous strides forward to greater personal and political freedom that the lesbian community was taking along with other women and LGBTQ people in the 1970s. These shifts are what I aim to track in describing the sites that were once, or continue to be, lesbian bars.
Terminology

When discussing LGBTQ issues, explanation of terminology is important. The following explanations are indebted to readings I have done of similar discussions by scholars such as Judith Butler and Susan Stryker, among others. The choices I have made are also from my own experience of interacting with and researching various subgroups of the LGBTQ community of different generations, races, abilities, classes, etc., as well as my own experience as a relatively privileged white, able-bodied, cis-gender, queer, lesbian, woman from New York City in my 20s, recognizing that this is my bias while aiming to not further marginalize or denigrate other identities within the LGBTQ community that I do not share. While I sometimes discuss or use other terms as I go through the thesis, “LGBTQ” and “lesbian” are the ones I use most frequently, in their broadest definitions.

In this paper, I use “LGBTQ” (standing for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer) to indicate all marginalized sexual and gender identities – those not the “mainstream” straight or cisgender (those who present their gender in line with how they were assigned at birth and in line with how society expects).1 These identities were (and continue to be) discriminated against and even criminalized and have come together for community and activism in different ways over the past century; these identities by no means form a homogenous group, however, and the varied terminology used for the community and various subgroups reflects this. The “alphabet soup,” as the acronym is often called, has many variations, ranging from GLBT to

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LGBTQQIAA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Transgender/Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Agender, Asexual, and the plus standing for anyone else whose gender or sexual orientation is marginalized, but is not explicitly listed in the acronym). Not only do I find the addition of the extra letters cumbersome, but it also has a false sense of trying to include all identities, while admitting that this is not possible given the fluidity of identity and the individuality and complexity of each person. For me the “Q,” or “queer,” stands in for all the identities that the alphabet soup might not call out, but are still included in this group. Many who identify as “queer” also consider it to have an implicit political thrust behind it; being against the grain in a progressive, provocative, culture-changing way – something that the people in the histories I tell in this thesis have certainly been doing for a long time. The use of this term, however, is definitely a reflection of the context and generation in which I grew up (the “queer generation,” as I titled my last chapter). I am very aware that for many in different generations or different contexts, queer is still felt as an insult and not embraced as a desirable identity.

Many of the people and communities I describe in this paper would also not identify with other categories in the “soup,” even if that is how we might see them today. For example, if Jimmie, the owner of the Mad Hatter described in Chapter 1, were alive today, she might describe herself as “bisexual” given her relationships with both men and women, or even “trans” or “genderqueer” because of the way she played with clothing and gender presentation, but it is unclear if she identified with any of the terms for sexuality that existed in her time, and the term “genderqueer” had not been formulated yet. Rather than speculate about how various individuals might have identified or use the language of each era in each different chapter, which might be confusing, strange, or even offensive to a contemporary
reader (for example, “fairy” or “homosexual”), I have chosen the generally accepted term of today, and one that I use and many groups that I currently participate in use, LGBTQ.

“Lesbian” is a similarly contested and potentially anachronistic term. Other terms like “LBT” (leaving out the often male-identified term “gay”), “women-loving women,” “dyke,” or even the late nineteenth/early twentieth century term “romantic friends,” have been used to describe the population I intend to include in the category of “lesbian”: any woman who has romantic or physical attraction to other women, and particularly for my thesis, women like this who seek out similarly-inclined women, or even a community of them. Many people who currently identify as “queer” but meet in what would be traditionally called “lesbian” spaces, claim that “lesbian” leaves out bisexual women and trans people, who definitely have been historically (or even sometimes currently) shunned from the “lesbian” community.

Dyke, like queer (and numerous other terms) was reclaimed from an insult into a celebratory identity for many, although certainly not all, lesbians. Keeping in mind the various alternatives, the history of the term (which especially in the 1930s and 1940s was seen as just as insulting as “dyke”), and the historical erasure of certain subgroups in the use of the term, I have chosen to use “lesbian” as the main term in my thesis because it is more neutral than some other options and more understandable to a broader audience.
Methodology and Literature Review

An Uncharted History

Some efforts have been made to begin recording lesbian, and specifically lesbian bar history, but few efforts have resulted in published scholarly texts, and even these are rarely spatial and site-based histories. Given the paucity of scholarly secondary sources about my topic and given the forced secrecy of many of these spaces, gathering data from a variety of primary sources and less academic secondary sources is crucial. This literature review will therefore cover not only more traditional academic history books, but also autobiographies, self-published books, fiction, and other books not necessarily in the strict history category. I will also discuss secondary sources such as exhibitions, events, conferences, films, and non-academic articles, history projects, and archive projects.

The various primary sources that have been essential to my thesis are also important to mention, and I will attempt to explain how they have been used before and how I used them in my work, ending with the most important primary sources – oral histories. I hope that this section will serve as a roadmap for future researchers interested in this topic, so they will have an easier time accessing source material. All sources that I discuss in this section, as well as others that have been useful to my thesis can be found in my annotated bibliography, which is organized similarly to this section (see Appendix 1). I will go back to many of these sources, especially the non-book sources, in my conclusion, when I discuss how my thesis can take its place as a source of its own. I will start by positioning my research in the context of the growing LGBTQ movement within the historic preservation field.
**Historic Preservation Documents: LGBTQ History is a Growing Sector of Our Field**

Like the broader field of LGBTQ history, efforts to include LGBTQ history in the field of historic preservation started in the 1990s, but it has since grown and is finally now establishing itself more officially and permanently. While George Chauncey and Lillian Faderman were writing their gay and lesbian history tomes (discussed in the next section), some theses and grass-roots historic preservation projects were being started. Ken Lustbader wrote his pioneering *Landscape and Liberation: Preserving Gay and Lesbian History in Greenwich Village* for completion of his Historic Preservation degree at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP – the program for which this thesis is being written) in 1993. Chauncey’s book *Gay New York* would be published in 1994 (based on his earlier published Yale dissertation), but Lustbader was able to look at the unpublished manuscript while writing his thesis. Interestingly, 1993 is also the year the Lesbian Herstory Archives, which started as a community project of Joan Nestle and some of her friends, moved out of Nestle’s living room on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and into its permanent home in Park Slope, Brooklyn establishing it as one of the few publicly accessible, permanently housed LGBTQ archives in the country.² John Krawchuk, now executive director of the Historic House Trust, wrote his thesis *On Edge: The West Village Waterfront* at GSAPP in 1995, which involved LGBTQ history as well.

In 1994, while part of the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Architects + Designers (OLGAD), Ken Lustbader, along with Andrew Dolkart, Jay Shockley, and other preservationists created the nation’s first map for LGBTQ historic sites, focusing on Harlem, Midtown, and, of course, Greenwich Village. These three men continued this project, which was formalized in

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August 2015 with the founding of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project (where I was a research consultant in the summer of 2018). Amanda Davis joined the team in 2015 as Project Manager. The project was made possible because of a grant from the National Park Service to elucidate histories from “underrepresented community groups,” signaling a national recognition that these stories need to be told and in fact are overdue to be told in the cannon of historic preservation.

In 1992, Andrew Dolkart wrote the Guide to New York City Landmarks, the first New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) document to specifically call out sites for their LGBTQ significance. Jay Shockley and Gale Harris added LGBTQ history to historic preservation documents whenever they could in their work in the Research Department at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. When the South Village Historic District was designated in 2013, Shockley co-authored the designation report and contributed especially to the LGBTQ sections, which were very helpful for my initial research. Andrew Dolkart was the lead writer for the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Stonewall, which was the first place listed on the National Register for LGBTQ significance when it was designated in 1999. By the writing of this thesis, there are significantly more, due in large part to efforts like the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, though the twenty-one sites on the National Register that mention LGBTQ history are still a tiny fraction of the more than 93,500 total, and many only mention their LGBTQ connection very briefly.

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4 The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the department of New York City government that designates and regulates local historic individual landmarks, interior landmarks, and districts. Founded in 1965, it is one of the oldest and most powerful local landmarking regulatory body in the United States.
5 The National Register of Historic Places is the official national list of properties that the National Park Service (by way of local State Historic Preservation Offices) has deemed worthy of preservation. It is an honorific list and, while it comes with local and federal tax incentives for designated properties, it does not prevent properties from being demolished or altered the way local landmarking can.
In March 2018, the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project published the “Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City” with Jay Shockley as the main author for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. This document followed in the footsteps of San Francisco, which released the first of this type of publication in 2004. I was able to learn more about how San Francisco specifically addresses its LGBTQ heritage with methods such as Cultural Districts when I attended the Past/Forward National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in November 2018; the number of LGBTQ events at this conference (in addition to events for other minority groups) signals that our field is expanding nationally to make these histories more visible and mainstream. I know of at least three other Historic Preservation theses being written this year on LGBTQ topics around the country – another sign of the expanding field. The histories are generally regional at this point – the next step will be to come together and discuss LGBTQ historic preservation on a national scale. My project is a key component and will add to these regional and sub-histories.

Books: Best for the Background, the Footnotes, and the Authors

As mentioned, George Chauncey and Lillian Faderman are two of the most important writers on LGBTQ history and are particularly important to my thesis because Chauncey focuses on early New York and Faderman focuses on lesbian history. Their books *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* (Chauncey, 1994) and *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (Faderman, 1992) have been helpful in grounding my work in existing scholarship, setting up the context for the sites I am discussing, and leading me towards other sources in their footnotes. There are other LGBTQ history classics such as Martin Duberman’s *Stonewall* (1993)
that I have reviewed, but they are less linear, comprehensive, or related to my topic. This last book employs extensive oral histories as the basis for much of its information – I will discuss oral histories more in my interview section, but it is notable here that even the most official “academic” texts rely heavily on this method to gather stories about LGBTQ history. One particularly early history *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village, 1912-1940* (Judith Schwarz, 1986) was helpful to contextualize parts of my first chapter, which focuses on the earliest lesbian sites. Fiction and non-fiction writer Paula Martinac has written one of the few books currently in print about LGBTQ preservation, *The Queerest Places: A National Guide to Gay and Lesbian Historic Sites.* It was written in 1997, early in the movement towards LGBTQ inclusion in the field. Susan Fentinos’s book *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites,* published in 2014, is a more recent text that also focuses on this topic.

Biographies and autobiographies of people who experienced lesbian bars first-hand and wrote about their experiences have been some of my most useful sources. Karla Jay, Audre Lorde, Marijane Meaker, and Joan Nestle all describe their own and others’ interaction with lesbian bars in New York City, sometimes with detailed visual descriptions. Karla Jay was the only one of this group whom I was able to interview. Having women’s experience of these spaces in their own words was very helpful, and with Jay it was an excellent jumping off point for a highly focused and informative interview.

There are a few books I have identified that are written more from the perspective of queer theory rather than historic preservation, and so have fewer references to lesbian bars, nor are they New York specific. However, they are all spatially oriented and have been useful in grounding my thesis in the way queer theory has addressed space thus far. The titles include: Genny Beemyn’s *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories*
(1997), Christina B. Hanhardt’s *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (2013), and *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (1997) by various editors. I hope my thesis will connect to the intended audiences of these books, and so influence those who consider LGBTQ narratives significant, but may not understand the importance of site-based preservation as a way to amplify these narratives. Similarly, I hope my thesis will reinforce the relevance of LGBTQ narratives for those who already understand site-based preservation to be important.

I have also included Phillip Crawford’s self-published book *The Mafia and The Gays* (2015), which gives a decent overview of the Mafia’s involvement in running gay bars, especially in New York City. This is the only book I found exclusively on this topic, and it was important especially to the early chapters of my thesis. While Crawford does quote directly from other scholarly works, with author and title noted, his book does not have citations or an index, making it more difficult to mine for further sources than a traditionally published peer-reviewed book. C. Alexander Hortis’s *The Mob and the City: The Hidden History of How the Mafia Captured New York* was also useful in telling this part of the history, especially the few times he discusses the Mafia’s involvement with LGBTQ bars.

Kelly Hankin’s *The Girls in the Back Room: Looking at the Lesbian Bar* (2002) is the only book I have found with “lesbian bar” in the title, and it is included mainly for this, though the way she discusses the importance of lesbian bars in her introduction is similar to the way I discuss it in mine. It is a book of film criticism focusing mostly on depictions of lesbian bars in movies from the 1990s onwards, and was only minimally pertinent to my thesis. The book did provide context for Chapter 4 of this thesis (the 1990s-Aughts), a time period when lesbian culture became more mainstream. Hankin’s list in her introduction of other scholars who have
explored this topic was also helpful (though I already had many of these works in my bibliography).

Lisa E. Davis’s *Under the Mink* (2001) is included more for the author than for the content. I could also have included any of Ann Bannon’s lesbian pulp fiction from the 1950s for the same reason, though my interview with her gave me as much information as any of her books. Lisa Davis is a particularly good source on pre-1950s lesbian life in New York City (the setting for her book). Many of the characters in *Under the Mink* are based on Davis’s lesbian friends from the generation before her who are no longer alive to tell their own stories, so it is an important historical document in its own way. The book was a useful supplement to my interview with her, which parsed out the fact behind the fiction.

There are a few wonderfully helpful primary source guidebooks on my list: Petronius’s *New York Unexpurgated* (1966), John Francis Hunter’s *The Gay Insider, USA* (1972), and *Gaia’s Guides* (1975-1992). There are other LGBTQ and lesbian-specific guidebooks, such as the *Gayellow Pages* and *The Girls Guide: Your Own Guide to Gay Living International*, but the three listed above were most helpful to my thesis. Although the first two guidebooks that I list are less than ten years apart, they show the dramatic shift in the perception of LGBTQ life after Stonewall. The 1960s book tries to hide its pro-gay attitude under sensationalized descriptions and an obscure title, whereas the 1970s book takes itself more seriously, is far more frank about its pro-gay stance, and even tries to include diversity of race and class in its site selection. Neither have many lesbian bars, but the descriptions that are there are very valuable. *Gaia’s Guides* as well as some other lesbian-specific guidebooks that I found (mostly at The LGBT Community Center National History Archive) were extremely valuable. Although it was not a complete collection of every guide published, which would have given me more accurate
information (tracking down the missing volumes is a task for the next iteration of this research), the guides that I did have access to were important to confirming opening and end dates of certain bars, and offered descriptions of lesbian spaces of all kinds from this era. There were also a number of places I had not heard of before the guidebook listing, adding to my overall database. All the guidebooks were also very amusingly written, as they were reviews written for a popular audience, making them some of the most enjoyable sources to research.

Finally, leading to the next category, I have included one exhibition catalog: *Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York* (2016), by Donald Albrecht, curator at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY), which accompanied the museum’s exhibition that year of the same name. Unfortunately, most of the exhibitions, events, and films I discuss in the next section do not have accompanying publications or they would be included in my research. This one, however, has some wonderful images of gay nightlife in New York City – the ones from the lesbian club scene in the 1990s was very valuable to that chapter of my thesis. There were also large maps printed on the walls of the exhibition and, while they are not in this book, I was able to obtain them and cross-reference them with my existing spatial research.

**Events, Conferences, Exhibits, and Films: Engaging the Public**

Almost every major museum, at least in New York City, is planning exhibitions and events in 2019 for the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. Unfortunately they will be mostly too late to be incorporated into my thesis, although the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project was consulting in summer 2018 for the New-York Historical Society’s upcoming exhibition about LGBTQ activism and nightlife entitled “Letting Loose and Fighting Back: LGBTQ Nightlife Before and After Stonewall”; sitting in on these meetings was very informative for my project, and
some research from my project ended up being useful for the exhibition planning. There have been other exhibitions, events, and films before this year, however, that have been important opportunities for the public to engage with LGBTQ history. With a few exceptions, my list focuses on LGBTQ nightlife and of course lesbian bars specifically whenever possible. There have been many more conferences, exhibitions, events, and films that have a more general LGBTQ focus (as well as museums entirely devoted to LGBTQ art or history, such as the Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in SoHo and the GLBT History Museum in San Francisco), but generally the following are the ones that have been helpful to my research.

In addition to the MCNY exhibition “Gay Gotham,” described above, there have been other recent exhibitions that explore LGBTQ nightlife in New York City. “Nightlife As Activism Since 1980,” at La MaMa: La Galleria, September 18 – October 10, 2015, was a precursor to the larger exhibition that will open in late May 2019 at the New-York Historical Society, though it seemed more male-focused and was particularly about the AIDS crisis. The exhibition “Salsa Soul Sisters: Honoring Lesbians of Color with The Lesbian Herstory Archives,” at EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, May 9 – June 29, 2018, displayed material from the Lesbian Herstory Archives about the Black and Latina lesbian group, Salsa Soul Sisters, from the 1970s-90s. While bars were not a particular focus, many sites that were important to the group were mentioned, some of them bars. In my conclusion, I will discuss Macon Reed’s immersive installation, “Eulogy for the Dyke Bar” at the Wayfarers Gallery and at PULSE Contemporary Art Fair in 2015. Her exhibition, which was more in the realm of art than history, is potentially one to emulate as a future iteration of my project, rather than one that had unique archival material for me to pull from for research.
The final exhibition to mention is Gwen Shockey’s “Addresses,” at Amos Eno Gallery, November 2017. Shockey’s printmaking MFA thesis at Pratt Institute, which she completed in May 2017, was on the history of lesbian nightlife in New York City. While her approach has been a bit different than mine, her ongoing project based on her thesis has been the most valuable of any source so far. She photographs the current sites of where bars used to be, but, as an artist, does not conduct traditional historic preservation research, especially historical visual research, as I have done for my thesis. She has conducted many interviews (though again her focus in them is different than mine, telling more of people’s life stories than examining the spatial aspects of the bars they frequented) and has given me contacts of people to interview. Her website, titled Addresses Project, compiles much of the research and interviews she has done so far and has definitely been an important thesis source.6 Throughout the months of my research and writing, we shared findings and important revelations and met several times to discuss our progress.

In addition to the events related to the above exhibitions, there have been two recent notable events about New York City lesbian bar history. The first, “Clit Club Reactivated,” on July 30, 2015, at Participant Inc., commemorated and celebrated Clit Club, a “floating” queer party from the 1980s and 1990s (discussed in Chapter 4 of my thesis). I wish I had known about it at the time – it sounded like a very fun, immersive experience with lots of reminiscing, performances, and artifacts relating to the party’s history, but unfortunately, unlike the exhibitions above, there is very little remaining information about the event and its contents. From what I know of it, it may also be an interesting model for bringing some of my research to a wider public. "How Gay Girls Owned the Village from the 30s to the 90s - and How They Want

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(Some of) It Back," was a panel presented by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, March 29, 2018. I watched the recording of the event, which was useful to my research. Lisa Davis, whom I interviewed, was one of the presenters.

The documentaries about lesbian bars I found have been specific to one bar and are generally meant as commemorations to that place. Examples of this are Wanda Acosta and Karen B. Song’s Sundays at Café Tabac, The “Lexington Club Archival Project,” and Paris Poirier’s Last Call at Maud’s (only the first one is in New York). As Hankin’s Looking at the Lesbian Bar book shows, lesbian bars have also figured prominently in certain fictional films and TV series – interestingly, this book was written before the famous L Word series premiered in 2004. One film, Bar Girls (2002) takes place almost entirely in a lesbian bar. Like with the fiction books I mention, however, the contexts around these fictional depictions have been more useful to my research than the depictions themselves.

“Non-Academic” Articles and Archive Projects: History by and for Lesbians

As is evidenced by Gwen Shockey’s project, it is not just trained historians who are doing the work of preserving lesbian history. There are two other artists with mapping projects about preserving lesbian history: “A Blush in the Chest,” a map of Brooklyn’s queer waterfront by Sarah G. Sharp and “The Boy Mechanic,” by Kaucyila Brooke, documenting lesbian bars in San Diego and Los Angeles (with aspirations to expand to a global project). There is also a crowd-sourced project with global reach entitled “Queering the Map,” which encourages anyone to submit a place with a description of why it is queer and important to them.
One extremely valuable resource for me has been the blog *Lost Womyn’s Space*.\(^7\) Most entries consist of direct quotations from primary or reliable secondary sources and some have historical photographs. This is also a global project, though it seems to be authored by one person. Unfortunately the blog is completely anonymous – there is no identifying information about the author and comments on the posts are disabled – so contacting the author for an interview was impossible.

There are also many journalistic articles on lesbian bar history. More specifically, I have compiled a document of over thirty online articles about the global disappearance of lesbian bars, and I am sure there are many more in print. Each author has a theory about why the bars are closing, but it is undeniable that they are, and almost everyone in the lesbian community is upset about it. This trend is discussed in the last chapter of my thesis, which explains the current state of lesbian bars in New York City, and how the surviving bars promote themselves (online, in print, in person, etc.).

Leading into the next section, promotion of lesbian bars (and lamenting when one closes) has been going on at least since the national “coming out” in the 1970s. Even before then, promotional materials can be found, though usually with veiled allusions to a gay and/or lesbian connection, or with no explicit reference to gays and lesbians. Websites like “Club Planet” have been useful for places that existed after the start of the internet, but before social media. Lesbian publications like Go Magazine or earlier iterations, even going back as far as the first lesbian publication started in the 1950s, *The Ladder*, have been useful in my research, though only the more recent ones are digitized, making it difficult to search them. While some

publications had extensive bar listings, many, like *The Ladder*, did not mention bars at all or had an explicit anti-bar-culture stance.\(^8\)

**Official Archives: Mining for Gold**

Despite the relatively large number of archives devoted to LGBTQ history available to me in NYC, there is relatively little material relating to lesbian bar history and not all of it is very easy to find. The Lesbian Herstory Archives’ “bar files,” which seems like the logical place to start research on the history of lesbian bars in New York City, is not as helpful as its title seems to promise. It has no order whatsoever and the vast majority of the materials are flyers for roaming parties in the 1990s and 2000s, not full-time brick-and-mortar lesbian bars, which is the focus of my thesis. When I first asked if I could attempt to put the hundreds of pages worth of materials in some kind of order for them, they just said no. When I asked again at my second visit, they said no, but gave me a reason this time – they had all been digitized by the random folder they were currently in. It was wonderful news that they were digitized and even searchable! But this information was not publicized or even known by everyone that volunteers there — a result of being a volunteer, community-organized operation. I searched the online folders for bars that I had previously identified, and although incredibly time-consuming, did find some great material.

There are two other public LGBTQ archives in NYC: the Gay and Lesbian Collections & AIDS/HIV Collections at the New York Public Library (NYPL) and The LGBT Community Center National History Archive. The records at the NYPL are almost entirely about men (there is a lot from the AIDS crisis) and mostly about LGBTQ activism, with a few collections from non-activists

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8 Of the dozens of issues of *The Ladder* that I looked at, only one issue was dedicated to bars, and it was mostly in reference to legal discrimination against the LGBTQ population.
included. The photographs of Bettye Lane and Diana Davies in this collection were useful, some of them capturing images of lesbian bars. The International Gay Information Center files were useful for my research, especially the “Ephemera – Bars” folders, organized in alphabetical order by title, and so very easily searchable. The archive at the Center was recently taken over by a new archivist who is making strides to organize and digitize the collection, which, like the NYPL, has an activist focus and is organized mostly by person, organization, or document type. The best finds in this archive were the Gaia’s Guides discussed earlier.

Some general city archives have been useful when I have specific addresses that I have decided to investigate further. I pulled Department of Buildings records from the Municipal Archives for the older bars I was researching that have less visual information about them. Not many images have come out of this search (though the occasional floor plan has been a joy to find), but other information such as ownership and alteration records have been somewhat useful. The New York City Directories have also been useful in narrowing down exact opening and closing dates for certain bars.

Given my focus on spatial history, historical image research has been the most important and challenging for me. There are tax photos for sites open c. 1940 and in the 1980’s (though some are missing). Also, the Landmarks Preservation Commission documented the entire Greenwich Village neighborhood at the time of its Historic District designation c. 1965, and I found some images of bars from that time and place. The Lesbian Herstory Archives has a limited number of digitized photos of lesbian bars (the original physical photos that were in their collection have been lost). The MCNY and NYPL photo archives have sometimes been helpful. I have also found photos from in-depth Google searches (in as far flung places as a
college alumni magazine whose museum had just acquired a drawing of a bar I was researching).

Historical newspapers, especially *The Villager* and *The Village Voice*, have been helpful when searching in a particular time period for an address or name of a bar. Mostly listings of performances come up (especially at early places, not mentioning any LGBTQ connection), but some articles, especially since the 1970s, have more substantial articles about protests, neighbor complaints, or even listings from the bars themselves advertising lesbian events. Occasionally images accompany the articles, which is particularly useful.

**Interviews: The Missing Link**

Over the course of writing this thesis, I completed eight interviews with people who had personal memories of lesbian bars. I did not start this project with the intention of conducting oral histories – there are many projects devoted to LGBTQ, and even lesbian-specific oral history: Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony (a compilation of many different oral history projects), Eric Marcus’s Making Gay History Podcast, NYC Trans Oral History Project (housed at the NYPL), StoryCorps OutLoud, Gwen Shockey’s Addresses project, and the Audiovisual Collections at the Lesbian Herstory Archives are just a few of the very many projects I have come across. However, I found that talking to people who experienced the spaces I was researching was often the fastest and sometimes the only way of getting information about them, especially given the specific spatial questions I am asking.

My colleagues at the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project first encouraged me to talk to Lisa Davis, who has been a friend of the project and has done extensive research of her own, especially on sites important to lesbians at the beginning of the twentieth century. From her
and from Gwen Shockey I learned of others who had information about specific sites I was researching, and they in turn recommended I speak to others. Unlike the oral history projects listed above, I have a very specific lens through which I am conducting interviews – I want to know about lesbian bars in New York City, and especially how they looked and what happened there. This narrow focus is part of why I have kept my interviewee list small; I have picked or been directed to people who have generally already written about their experience with these spaces or who had a particular important connection with them (bartended there, lead a protest there, etc.). In further iterations of this project, expanding these interviews to incorporate a greater diversity of voices would be a priority.

Ann Bannon is the author of many 1950s lesbian pulp fiction books, and while she has been interviewed numerous times about her writing, I wanted to ask her about the research that went into the writing – her experience at lesbian bars in Greenwich Village in the 1950s. Similarly, Karla Jay was an important leader in the lesbian and women’s movements in the 1970s and wrote extensively about this in her memoir, but in my interview I asked her to elaborate on the few times she mentioned bars in her book and probed for stories of bars that did not enter into her writing; I was able to draw a fairly detailed floor plan of Kooky’s from her description, a technique I have used with other interviewees, such as Preston Mardenborough, who bartended at the Sea Colony. Karla Jay pointed me to Martha Shelley, also important to 1970s lesbian activism, since she led one of the protests at Kooky’s. Apparently that one “zap” was the only experience she had with bar culture, so it was a rather short interview, although useful to have the story in her own words. Jay also pointed me to Kathy Wakeham who was very active in both the activist and bar cultures of the 1970s onward – a rare combination, especially in the early days of the LGBTQ movement when many were trying to distance
themselves from what they saw as the ‘toxic’ bar culture. My interview with Wakeham greatly expanded my database of sites and provided me with visual descriptions of many sites that I could find nowhere else.

I was able to interview the owners of all three of New York City’s remaining lesbian bars. While they have been interviewed before, especially Lisa Cannistraci of Henrietta Hudson, hearing from her, Lisa Menichino of Cubbyhole, and Sheila Frayne of Ginger’s were important voices in my thesis, helping to tell a more complete story of how these bars function in today’s society.
CHAPTER 1: “PROTO-LESBIAN BARS,” 1910s-1940s

Towards the Lesbian Bar

For the purposes of my thesis, I am defining a “lesbian bar” as an establishment whose primary business is selling alcohol and whose primary clientele at all times, not just on select nights of the week, is lesbian. This definition seems implicitly shared by most of my sources, though none actually felt the need to define “lesbian bar” for themselves. By this definition, the first lesbian bars in New York City for which I found evidence opened in the 1930s, just before the start of World War II. To understand how these establishments were able to come into being, I will discuss “proto-lesbian bar” spaces, such as women’s bars and restaurants throughout the city at the turn of the twentieth century, women-owned (and lesbian-friendly) restaurants and tearooms in Greenwich Village in the 1910s and 1920s, jazz clubs featuring lesbian performers during the Harlem Renaissance, and cabaret clubs featuring lesbian performers on the Lower East Side and in Greenwich Village in the 1930s to 1950s. Out of these last two categories specifically, some of the earliest lesbian bars emerged.

In the early twentieth century, Harlem and Greenwich Village became gathering places for lesbians and the wider LGBTQ population. The relative social freedom and prosperity of the 1920s, and the concentration of artists and progressives in these neighborhoods in particular, allowed for the creation of LGBTQ-oriented nightlife. These places existed despite, or perhaps partly because of, prohibition, which forced all drinking establishments

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underground (often very literally) from 1920 to 1933. Many places hid their alcohol consumption behind the titles of “restaurant,” “tearoom,” or “club” (with legal performances), and some places, “speakeasies,” decided to hide from view entirely (again, often in the basement). After bars were made legal again for the rest of the population, many of these establishments that catered to an LGBTQ crowd remained underground. The many regulations aimed at suppressing homosexuality (cross-dressing laws, obscenity laws, and broadly interpreted laws against “disorderly conduct”) caused these places to run into problems with law enforcement. The police raids of LGBTQ bars in these decades, however, were less frequent than in the McCarthy Era (to be discussed in the next chapter).

In order to participate in this new LGBTQ public life, lesbians, as women, needed to be able to participate in public urban life in general. This chapter, therefore, begins with pre-prohibition women’s spaces, often closely linked with the first wave of feminism.

**Turn of the Twentieth Century Ladies Bars and Restaurants**

Women in late nineteenth century urban America began claiming more public space, mobility, and independence from men. The emergence of bicycles, department stores, women’s colleges, women’s boarding houses, and even women-only sections of public transit are a few examples. One type of space that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century was the women’s restaurant and bar. Despite women’s growing independence, many restaurants did not admit women, especially at lunch – the time for “business.” The presence of women at bars was even more frowned upon – if a woman was at a bar, she was assumed to
be a prostitute or a “loose” woman.¹⁰ Certain bars and restaurants evaded this scandal by creating “ladies entrances,” which went straight to the dining room and avoided the front bar room, which was still reserved for men.¹¹ Other establishments, such as the Café des Beaux Arts created an entire ladies section reserved exclusively for women (men were allowed only if accompanied by a woman – the opposite of most restaurants which only welcomed women with a male escort).

The Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar, located adjacent to the men’s bar on the first floor of 80 West 40th Street in Midtown (building still extant and individually landmarked), was open from 1911 to 1921, closing at the start of Prohibition.¹² A New York Times article from 1913 describes in detail the clientele – women of all ages, mostly fashionable middle- and upper-class (presumably white) society ladies, mostly drinking in groups (rather than alone as at men’s bars). The most popular time at the bar was in the afternoons after a matinee or shopping.¹³ Other than three photos showing fashionable men and women on art nouveau stools, there are no visual descriptions of the bar. The author of the Lost Womyn’s Space blog speculates – and I agree: “It’s difficult to believe that as a prototype for the lesbian bar of the future, the ladies


bar did not allow some women to find love for each other over their ‘forbidden fruit’ cocktails."

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14 "Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar," *Lost Womyn’s Space*. 

[Fig. 1] “Scenes in New York’s bar for women”, from October 12, 1913 *New York Times* article about Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar.

[Fig. 2] 80 West 40th Street, site of Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar, 2018. Photo by Amanda Davis. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.
Another notable type of women’s restaurant at this time was the suffragette restaurant, precursors to the second wave feminist restaurants and cafes in the 1970s. The first in the country, the “Suffrage Cafeteria,” was opened by socialite Alva Vanderbilt Belmont in 1912 at 13 East 41st Street (building demolished), just a couple blocks from the Café des Beaux Arts, and many others followed. These restaurants promoted the cause of women’s suffrage by supplying restaurant-goers with good, inexpensive food, served with literature about the cause. Although not lesbian in focus (and unlike the establishments in Greenwich Village not even tolerant of lesbians), they are early examples of women-owned public gathering spaces. Their activism paved the way for greater independence and rights for women, and therefore lesbians, in the future.

Women-Owned Tearooms in Greenwich Village, 1910s and 1920s

By the 1910s, Greenwich Village was becoming a bohemian and an LGBTQ epicenter. In contrast to the rest of New York where women were not even invited into most eating and drinking establishments, there were a number of female-owned businesses in the Village. Three that I will describe here had at least some openly lesbian clientele, and two of them were run by lesbians.

Polly’s was a restaurant at 137 MacDougal Street (building demolished) run by anarchist Polly Holladay, open 1913-1917 and popular with the feminist club “Heterodoxy.” Heterodoxy was a social group for “unorthodox women who did things and did them openly” started by Marie Jenney Howe. The club was quite a diverse and accepting group for the time.

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period – or for any time period, for that matter. There was a wider range of classes than the restaurants discussed above, a variety of styles of dress (from very fashionable to what would today be called “butch”), a spectrum of political views, and even a mix of races. Historian Judith Schwarz notes that there were Jewish and Irish immigrants in the group (often excluded from many “white” establishments at the time) and at least one African American member.\(^\text{17}\) It was also diverse in the sexual orientation of its members; Schwarz describes the personal lives of many of the members, in particular the lesbian relationships that were recognized and accepted by the rest of the group.\(^\text{18}\) In its early years, Heterodoxy met at Polly’s every other week.

Although Polly’s was a mixed space, frequented by progressive men and women of varying sexualities, and more of a restaurant than a bar, it is a very early example of a lesbian-accepting space, and, along with the suffragette restaurants, was a precursor to the women’s cafes of the second wave feminists. Unfortunately, the building is no longer extant. Despite efforts by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation to save it and National Register eligibility due in part to its history of housing Polly’s, New York University demolished the building in 2009 to expand its law school offices.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^\text{18}\) Schwarz, 84-93.
The Mad Hatter, the first tearoom in the Village, was located in the basement of 150 West 4th Street (building extant) from 1916 to c. 1930. Tearooms (also called tea rooms or tea houses) were a phenomenon that came about as an alternative to bars in response to the temperance movement, though many actually served alcohol as well as tea, especially during prohibition.\(^{20}\) It is unclear whether the Mad Hatter served tea, alcohol, or both. Like Polly’s, the Mad Hatter attracted a bohemian crowd (and a number of upper-class “slummers” who came to watch them). Eliza Helen Criswell, who went by “Jimmie,” had short hair, and wore sandals, artsy smocks, and tailored suits and ties for formal events – owned the establishment with her romantic partner Mathilda Spence for a number of years.\(^{21}\) As can be seen from the


photographs of Jimmie at the tearoom, the name and décor was a play on *Alice in Wonderland*, which of course has a very famous tea party as part of the story; “DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE” is written backwards over the door and murals over the fireplace depict characters from the book. Although the clients were not exclusively or even primarily lesbians, it was another early lesbian-friendly space and one of the earliest I have found owned by a woman very open about her homosexual relationships.

[Figs. 4 and 5] Eliza "Jimmie" Criswell at The Mad Hatter, a bohemian tearoom, which she owned with her romantic partner, c. 1916. For decades, Fig. 5 was mistakenly captioned "Portrait of a Boy in The Mad Hatter Tearoom." Photos by Jessie Tarbox Beals. Source: Museum of the City of New York.

[Fig. 6] 150 West 4th Street, site of The Mad Hatter tearoom (and later the Pony Stable Inn – see Chapter 2), 2018. Photo by author.
At 129 MacDougal Street (building extant and individually landmarked), just down the block from Polly’s, was Eve Adams’ Tearoom, run by lesbian Chawe Zlocsewer from 1925 in 1926, when it was shut down by the police. This tearoom definitely served alcohol and appealed to an “after-theater” crowd. There does not seem to be any visual documentation of this place, though there is a photograph that is cited to be Zlocsewer and another woman with her head on Zlocsewer’s shoulder. The dramatic story of the establishment is documented, however. Eve Adams was the gender-bending invented name of lesbian Polish Jewish émigré Chawe Zlocsewer. She posted a sign in the window of her establishment that read “Men are admitted but not welcome.” This is the earliest site I have found in New York City run by and meant explicitly for lesbians. When the police raided it in 1926, Kotchever was arrested on charges of obscenity for her short-story collection entitled Lesbian Love, which was among other books confiscated from the establishment during the raid, and on charges of disorderly conduct – a common catch-all term that police used throughout the twentieth century to arrest people suspected of being homosexual. She was deported and started a club in Paris, though tragically she was murdered in Auschwitz soon after.

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22 This is one of the only individual landmarks in my thesis — since the designation is written in 2004, it includes the lesbian history of the site: “129 MacDougal Street House,” (NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, June 8, 2004), http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/2150.pdf. Zlocsewer’s name is listed differently in different sources, such as Eva Kotchever and Eva Czlotcheber. The tearoom has also been labeled “Eve Addams’.” The forthcoming biography Eve Adams Living by historian Jonathan Ned Katz will hopefully shed more light on these names and her life. The names I use come from the research Katz has shared with the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project: “Eve Adams’ Tearoom,” NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/eve-addams-tearoom/.

23 Katz has doubts about this attribution. Again, we will learn more when he publishes his book.

[Fig. 7] Supposedly Chawe Zlocsewer (a.k.a. Eve Adams) with an unidentified woman, 1920s. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Lesbian Performers in the Harlem Renaissance

While Greenwich Village was developing its bohemian scene, Harlem was also developing as an LGBTQ haven. With the blossoming of African American artistic talent in Harlem from the 1910s to 1930s (labeled by historians the “Harlem Renaissance”) came a blossoming nightlife and a greater acceptance for “deviant” sexualities and gender representations, rivaling the progressive communities in the Village. While the first explicitly lesbian bars came towards the end of this era, as in the Village, there were a number of mixed spaces that paved the way for their creation.

A number of the jazz clubs of this era included lesbian performers. One of these was the Clam House on 133rd Street between Lenox Avenue (now Malcolm X Boulevard) and Seventh
Avenue (now Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard), at which both Ma Rainey and Gladys Bentley performed. Unfortunately the building is demolished, but most of the buildings on this block, which was known as “Jungle Alley” for its preponderance of nightclubs, are still intact. Ma Rainey sang songs with allusions to her lesbian tendencies, including “Prove It on Me,” which challenged the listener to catch her in a lesbian affair. Gladys Bentley is known for performing in a full tuxedo, an act which was grounds for arrest under anti-transvestism laws at the time. Although I have not found images of the Clam House, it is featured in a 1932 map of night clubs in Harlem, which advertises the place simply by writing “Gladys Bentley wears a tuxedo and highhat” – apparently the unusual outfit was an attraction in itself.

[Figs. 11, 12 and 13] Left, 146 West 133rd Street, supposed site of the Clam House. 1940s tax photo. Source: Municipal Archives. Middle, singer Ma Rainey. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Right, entertainer Gladys Bentley. Source: JD Doyle Archives.

25 Ulysses, “REMEMBER: Gladys Bentley & The Clam House,” Harlem + Bespoke blog, June 20, 2011, accessed March 31, 2019, http://harlembespoke.blogspot.com/2011/06/remember-gladys-bentley-clam-house.html; a comment on this article lists the establishment at 146 West 133rd Street, but I have not been able to confirm the address with any other sources, except that it was on “Jungle Alley.” If the site is 146 West 133rd Street, the building is no longer extant, however it may be another location on that block and most other buildings on the block that existed in that era are still extant.


27 Ibid.
While I could not track down all the stories of places highlighted in “A Map of Harlem Nights Spots Frequent by African American Lesbian in the 1930s and 1940s” found at the Lesbian Herstory Archives, I have been able to identify one spot on this map with slightly more specificity. The Wellsworth was located at 2120 Seventh Avenue at West 126th Street (building demolished). It had a gay male bar in the front (the main entrance on Seventh Avenue), but in an adjacent room entered from the “ladies entrance” left over from an earlier era (seen in the 1940s tax photo on 126th, the side street), there was a lesbian bar, frequented

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28 I searched in the African American newspapers of the time for many of these places and for terms such as “lesbian,” “homosexual,” “pervert,” and “deviant,” (what LGBTQ people were often labeled in that era), but found very little helpful information. In addition, this map was based on an article and accompanying map entitled “Memories” by Jeanne Flash Gray, published in a short-lived periodical entitled The Other Black Woman in 1983. While the LHA remake of the map is much easier to read, it seems that there was some inaccuracy in transcription – for example the “Audubon Ballroom” (building extant) is located at 165th and Broadway, not 155th and Amsterdam as it is on the LHA (unless the listing refers to a bar named after the Ballroom and not the performance venue itself). Neither of the maps list exact addresses, making researching the history of these sites more difficult. The site-based lesbian history of Harlem should be a subject of future research.
by black lesbians from the area.\textsuperscript{29} Likely starting in the 1930s and lasting into the 1950s, this bar was an alternative for these women who were often denied entry to or harassed at the growing number of Mafia-owned white, working-class lesbian bars in the Village.\textsuperscript{30} While pictures of the back room space that lesbians occupied could not be found, pictures of the front bar show doors in the back that possibly connected the spaces (see Figs. 20 and 21). Unfortunately, like many of the early lesbian spaces mentioned in this chapter and many historic LGBTQ sites in Harlem, the building containing the Wellsworth is no longer extant, having been demolished by the 1980s.

29 Martin B. Duberman, Stonewall, (New York: Dutton, 1993), 74-75; “Wellsworth,” Lost Womyn’s Space, December 25, 2012, accessed March 31, 2019, https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2012/12/wellsworth.html. The Lost Womyn’s Space entry on the Wellsworth mentions examples of this split space typology in other cities where the former “ladies entrance” or “ladies bar” becomes a lesbian bar in the 1950s. The front bar may have been a straight male bar – Michael Henry Adams was the only source I have found to speculate about the queerness of this front space.

30 This phenomenon will be discussed more in-depth in my 1950s-1960s chapter.
[Fig. 17] 2120 Seventh Avenue, showing Wellsworth Bar sign and what is likely the women’s entrance through the white door on the side street to the left. 1940s tax photo. Source: Municipal Archives.

[Figs. 18 and 19] Interior of Wellsworth Bar (front, men’s section), looking towards entrance, July 29, 1944. Source: NYPD records, Municipal Archives.
“Rent Parties” were a notable aspect of lesbian Harlem nightlife that started in the Harlem Renaissance and lasted into the 1980s. Avoiding the racism of the downtown lesbian bars and the homophobia of almost every other location in the city, these parties allowed lesbians of color to gather in their own homes. They were also much more inexpensive than the overpriced bars downtown and actually made money for the hosts. Rent parties, gatherings in private homes where hosts would hire musicians for entertainment and ask guests to contribute something as a way to pay their rent, were not unique to lesbians – they were a common tactic which also contributed to the popularity of jazz.31

Lesbian Performers in Downtown Cabarets, 1930s to 1950s

Heading back downtown, a series of bars (or “clubs”), starting in the 1930s, or possibly earlier, began featuring lesbian performers, and particularly gender-bending “drag” in their cabaret performances. These performances were meant to entertain a diverse audience – both members of the LGBTQ community who would understand the “in” jokes, as well as the straight audience come to ogle the “oddities.” These clubs were run by the Mafia, who had gotten into the club business during prohibition, but continued to operate most of the LGBTQ bars for the next four decades. They saw a lucrative market in risqué entertainment and the accompanying illegal sale of alcohol to homosexuals (discussed more in-depth in the next chapter).32 Two of these clubs were located on the Lower East Side: Club 181 (at 181 Second Avenue, building extant), open 1948 to 1953, and Club 82 (at 82 East 4th Street, building extant), open in the 1950s. Performers such as Buddy “Bubbles” Kent performed both in full tux and top hat, like Bentley uptown, but also in hyper-feminine lingerie.

[Figs. 23, 24, and 25] Buddy Kent in drag and in lingerie; an ad for Club 181; an image of the performers at Clubs 82. Source: Lisa Davis’s website, http://www.underthemink.com/ (including her captions).

32 For further discussion of this, see Phillip Crawford Jr., The Mafia and The Gays, 2015.
There were also clubs with similar floor shows in Greenwich Village, such as Moroccan Village at 23 West 8th Street (open 1940s, building extant), and the Howdy Club at 47 West 3rd Street (building demolished). The Howdy Club was different from the others, however, in that it catered especially to lesbians, making it one of the first stand-alone lesbian bars in New York City (not connected to a straight bar like the Wellsworth). Thanks to one online archival project, I have been able to find more images of the Howdy Club than many lesbian spaces of the time. Unfortunately, the author does not caption, date, or credit any of the photos, and, except for the photo showing “Howdy Review 47” on the awning, it was not easy to verify whether they were actually connected to the Howdy Club. One image definitely from the Howdy Club is of five women wearing sweatshirts with the letters “H” through “Y”, spelling out “Howdy”, the middle woman holding a football. This seems to be a football team based out of the bar, which is a precursor to sports teams (particularly softball) based out of later lesbian bars, extending the community of the bar beyond the building. However, both the Lesbian Herstory Archives and Lisa Davis identify this photos as the wait staff, so perhaps the football outfits were just for the photo. Unfortunately, like Polly’s, the Howdy Club building was demolished by NYU in the 1970s.

33 Lisa Davis, June 4, 2018, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.

34 Lisa Davis has a theory that 3rd Street, especially close to Sixth Avenue became a spot for lesbian bars because of its location in more open-minded Greenwich Village and its location under an elevated train, making it undesirable real estate, and therefore avoided by those without an explicit reason to go there – women seeking the company of other women – an act that most preferred to keep private in an era where homosexual tendencies could get you thrown in jail.

[Fig. 32] The Howdy Club waitresses and/or football team. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.
World War II: The Creation of a Lesbian Sub-Culture

The lesbian bars that began to be established in the 1930s and proliferated after World War II would not have been possible without these “proto-lesbian bar” spaces to pave the way. They would also not have been possible without World War II, which spurred the creation of a codified lesbian sub-culture with the military’s strict separation of genders. The war caused many women to travel away from home for the first time, exposing them to new ideas and allowing them a degree of freedom not possible for them at home. Although Howdy’s was open during the war, most of the bars that lesbians frequented during wartime were not exclusively for women. In fact, in an effort to discourage prostitution many cities explicitly prohibited women from drinking at a bar, tending a bar, or even from entering a tavern unescorted by a man, making a (legal) women-only bar impossible. While there were some all-male bars, most of the bars that were welcoming to the LGBTQ population in this era were mixed in gender, making them less obvious as LGBTQ spots than places where only gay men or only lesbians hung out. This discreetness was important for the GI’s who could be thrown out of the army if they were found to be “homosexual.”

Although gay men started occupying different neighborhoods than in previous decades (the new vice district in Times Square, for example), the bars lesbians frequented in this era were still found in the neighborhoods that were more welcoming before the war – Greenwich Village and Harlem. One Harlem bar, Lucky’s Rendezvous at the corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and 148th Street, for example, had opened in the 1920s in the height of the Harlem

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35 Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press: 1990), 113. I am in the process of finding out what laws New York City had in place during the war – based on my research thus far, they seem to have only enforced the rule about tending bar.
Renaissance, and continued to welcome a mixed clientele during the war; it was especially popular with black gay and lesbian GI’s. 36

Chapter 1 Spatial Summary

Proto-lesbian bar spaces of the 1910s to 1940s were located throughout the city, but Greenwich Village and Harlem were particular epicenters of lesbian life in this era. Some establishments were explicitly designed to be feminine (for example the art nouveau delicacy of the Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar), while others had a more whimsical, bohemian style (for example the Mad Hatter’s Alice in Wonderland theme). Some places were a women’s section within a predominantly male establishment (Café des Beaux Arts or Wellsworth), while others were stand-alone establishments. Many of these businesses were removed in elevation from the street (Mad Hatter in the basement, Polly’s on the second floor, Wellsworth through a back entrance), but in only a select group did this seem an attempt to hide their lesbian affiliation (the Wellsworth). For the non-nightclub spaces, windows were generally not blocked, as they were in following decades, and in at least one establishment, its lesbian tendencies were proudly displayed (Eve Adam’s sign “Men are admitted but not welcome” – though this place did get shut down soon after opening for being so obvious).

In the cabarets and speakeasies of Greenwich Village, Harlem, and the East Village (including the first known New York City lesbian bar, Howdy Club), the stage for floor shows, especially drag, were central to the club’s success. Tables around the stage were primary and

36 Bérubé, 116.
the dance floor for patrons was minimal. Going into the World War II era, these spaces were increasingly hidden and increasingly targeted by the police specifically for their LGBTQ clientele and performers. Some of these establishments were purposefully in undesirable locations of the neighborhood (Howdy Club under the elevated train, for example), not only because rent was cheaper there, but also because they were places avoided by those without an explicit reason to be there. While the early women-only and lesbian-welcoming spaces helped pave the way for the existence of lesbian bars, the policing of these newly formed exclusively lesbian spaces would only increase in the coming decades.
CHAPTER 2: 1950S-60S

The Mafia and the Butch/Femme Crowd

By the 1950s, a lesbian bar “scene” had emerged in Greenwich Village. As with the previous decades, almost all the LGBTQ bars in the 1950s and 1960s in Greenwich Village were owned and operated by the Mafia. The lesbian bars specifically (five or six at a time were operating through this era) were mostly patronized by white, working class women. The patrons subscribed very strictly to a “butch/femme” dynamic, where the “butch,” or more masculine-dressing of the pair, would take the “man’s” role in the relationship – buy drinks (even if it was with the femme’s money), lead in dancing (even if the femme was a better dancer), drive the car (even if it was the femme’s car), open doors etc. – and the “femme,” or more feminine-presenting of the pair, would take the “woman’s” role. The butch/femme lesbians called lesbians who did not dress and act by the rules “kiki” or “ky-ky” (rhyming with “eye-eye”). As black activist and writer Audre Lorde described, “For the regulars at the [Sea] Colony and the Swing we were Ky-Ky girls because we didn’t play roles.” Lorde had an extra layer of difficulty fitting in to Greenwich Village lesbian bar culture at the time because most people in the bars, staff and patrons alike, discriminated based on race, despite their own minority status as lesbians.

The lesbians who adhered to this culture regarded those who acted and dressed outside of butch and femme roles as suspicious, partly because undercover cops who did know such

37 Perhaps this class divide is because these bars were too seedy for wealthier women. Faderman and others also theorize that working class women had less of a reputation and income to lose if they were found at one of these places (though they were still extremely cautious).

“rules” were often trying to infiltrate the bars. In the post war McCarthy Era, the witch hunts that began with the attempt to weed out homosexuals from the army expanded to all government jobs. In any industry or profession in this time, if one was found to be LGBTQ, one could be fired. As part of this national anti-gay fervor, the State Liquor Authority of New York (SLA) gave New York City Police’s “Vice Squad” broad authority to raid gay bars as well as “entrap” people by stationing plainclothes policemen in gay bars. The police would arrest LGBTQ people on offenses ranging from “transvestism” to “disorderly conduct.”39 Audre Lorde wrote of her reluctance to speak with anyone she did not know at a lesbian bar at the time for fear of coming across a plainclothes policewoman: “There were always rumors of plainclothes women circulating among us, looking for gay girls with fewer than three pieces of female attire. That was enough to get you arrested for transvestism, which was illegal.”40

Because of this policy, the butches were especially a target of police brutality; specifically, the “three article” rule to which Lorde refers stated that you could be arrested for wearing fewer than three articles of clothing that were traditionally associated with the gender you were assigned at birth.41 Raids on gay bars were frequent throughout the 1950s and 1960s, but were particularly violent, often sexually violent, at lesbian bars, especially for butch women; according to Joan Nestle the police would say things like, “So, you think you’re a man, let’s see what you got in your pants,” and then proceed to put their hand down the woman’s

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40 Lorde, 187.

41 Although many of my sources cite this “three pieces of clothing” rule, including many of my interviewees, I have not found evidence of this particular law – the above document mentions anti-cross dressing laws, but not the three piece rule.

\footnotemark[43] Joan Nestle, “Women’s House of Detention, 1931-1974,” \textit{Out History: Historical Musings}, 2008, accessed March 31, 2019, http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/historical-musings/womens-house-of-detention.} Although some LGBTQ bars were shut down for selling drinks to homosexuals and encouraging “disorderly conduct” such as same-sex dancing, most survived the SLA rules by paying off the cops. In fact, the raids were often theatrical – giving the appearance of ‘cracking down of vice’ while actually profiting from it just like the Mafia (usually the crooked cops collected the payoff money during the raid, which was often prepared by the Mafia owner for them in advance). Depending on how corrupt and homophobic the police on duty happened to be and depending on who was running for office (often raids increased during elections to show how ‘tough on vice’ politicians were), raids could be very frequent, without warning, violent, and result in many arrests, or they could have very little impact with plenty of advance notice and almost no police harassment, just a police payoff. Women arrested in bar raids were sent to the Women’s House of Detention on Greenwich Avenue between West 10th Street and Christopher Street (demolished), which Joan Nestle, author and co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, said was sardonically referred to among the bar patrons as the “Country Club” because of the frequency with which many patrons were sent there, especially on the weekends.
Newly formed lesbian media, such as lesbian pulp fiction from authors like Ann Bannon, helped to bring the idea of lesbianism to a wider audience and dispel negative stereotypes about lesbians propagated by the mass media, psychologists, and government at the time.44 These books also painted the big cities, such as New York, as gay havens, especially in neighborhoods such as Greenwich Village. The Greenwich Village lesbian bars were hidden and according to Ann Bannon one had to already know where these places were or have a guide when first arriving to the city. Bannon, for example, followed her friend Marijane Meaker, on her first visit to the lesbian bars, otherwise she would have had no way of knowing where to go.45 The bars usually featured a dance floor and a juke box, almost always in the “the back”

45 Bannon.
away from the view of the street or the tourist who might wander into the front bar area by accident. There was often a cover charge, the drinks were almost always overpriced, and the ambiance and décor was unattractive. Despite all of this, these places were crucial to the formation of lesbian subculture, and for many patrons, they were the only spaces where it was possible to meet lesbians and interact with them in public. Bars were certainly the only gathering places for lesbians in these decades outside of individual women’s homes. Lorde describes the importance of lesbian bars in mid-twentieth century America: “What we both needed was the atmosphere of other lesbians, and in 1954, gay bars were the only meeting places we knew.”

The possibility of lesbians meeting on different terms was beginning to change on a very small scale in this period with the formation of the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco in 1955, the first lesbian rights organization in the country. The New York City chapter was founded in 1958 by Barbara Gittings and Marion Glass. Their publication, *The Ladder* spread these ideas to a wider audience, but their readership was still much smaller than more sensational media such as lesbian pulp fiction. Many bar goers even if they did know about this group were not interested in joining because they were afraid membership in such a group might out them. Many bar goers also did not believe that LGBTQ activism was important or had the potential to be effective. Despite their small membership, the Daughters of Bilitis and similar pioneering groups focused on LGBTQ rights, such as the Mattachine Society, were crucial to laying the groundwork for the broader LGBTQ rights movement that began in the 1970s.

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46 Lorde, 187.
Though there were others, the Mafia-run Greenwich Village bars discussed in this chapter are the Swing Rendezvous (open 1938-1965), the Sea Colony (open 1950-c.1968, possibly the most popular of the era, and certainly the biggest), the Bagatelle (open 1951-1959), and the Pony Stable Inn (open 1945-1970). Gianni’s (open 1966-1975) and Kooky’s (open 1965-1973) were transitional sites, both because of their locations in the growing LGBTQ neighborhood of Chelsea, just north of Greenwich Village, and because they lasted into the 1970s and had to contend with the changing LGBTQ community of that decade, to be discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

**Swing Rendezvous, 1938-1965**

*117 MacDougal Street, Greenwich Village, building extant, in South Village Historic District*

The Swing Rendezvous, also known later as the Swing Lounge, or simply the Swing, was located on MacDougal Street between Minetta Lane and West Third Street. It opened in 1938 and closed in 1965.\(^{48}\) It seems to have begun as a jazz club and transitioned into a lesbian bar by at least the 1950s.\(^{49}\) In addition to having a lively bar area and small dance floor (common for most lesbian bars of the era), it also offered performances, at least in its first decade of existence. Among the performers were jazz musicians such as pianist George Hunter in 1943 and the Harry Dial Orchestra in 1946, and in 1951, burlesque performer Winnie Garrett.\(^{50}\)

\(^{48}\) New York City Directories (1938-1965).

\(^{49}\) It is unclear exactly when, why, or how this transition happened or if there were lesbian clients before the 1950s and jazz performances after the 1950s; this ambiguity is common when researching this type of hidden history.

Harry Dial even wrote a song called Swing Rendezvous, inspired by the club, which was recorded live at his performance in the club on August 27, 1946.

[Fig. 34] Harry Dial (drums), Shirley Clay (trumpet), Henry Moon Jones (clarinet), and Earres Prince (piano) performing at the Swing Rendezvous, 1946. Source: Yvan Fournier.

Despite the performances, the bar was far from fancy and by the 1950s, when Ann Bannon and Audre Lorde patronized the bar, it attracted a mostly white, working-class lesbian crowd, like most other lesbian bars in the neighborhood. According to author Kevin Cook, “The Swing had a long wooden bar scored with more initials than a grade-school desk, vinyl platters playing on the PA, multicolored scrims shading the lightbulbs overhead, women of all shapes and sizes crowding the dance floor.”

Among the women who met here were Kitty Genovese and her girlfriend Mary Ann Zielonko. Zielonko recalled that Genovese’s dancing skills attracted people’s attention. Soon after they met, they moved in together at an apartment building in Queens. In 1964, a year after they first drank and danced at the Swing Rendezvous on March 13, 1963, Genovese was brutally murdered near their home, a crime that was sensationalized by the media as a symbol of bystander apathy.\textsuperscript{52}

Although there are a relatively large number of images depicting the exterior of the Swing Rendezvous (possibly because of its early fame as a jazz club), the only images of the interior do not give much of a sense of what it was like. Interestingly, one of these images features renowned poet Dylan Thomas – it is unclear why he was in a lesbian bar. Unlike the

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
mixed audience show clubs such as the Club 82, lesbian bars such as the Swing Rendezvous usually did not attract celebrities.

[Fig. 37] Writer Dylan Thomas and friend at Swing Rendezvous, 1950-53. Source: Dylan Thomas: The Pubs, by Jeff Towns.


Although it is unclear if live performances were held at the Swing in the 1960s, a document from the New York City Department of Licenses from 1963 shows they had a license to do so, as well as to have a dance floor. It also shows that the name had changed from Swing Rendezvous to Swing Lounge by that time. Even though the Mafia ran this businesses and engaged in illegal activity such as selling bootlegged alcohol, serving “known homosexuals,” and paying off police, this document shows they still ran some parts of the business legally, like
applying for permits. More information could not be found about Joseph Robilotto, the stated license holder.

[Fig. 40] The City of New York Department of Licenses request for information form, stating that “117 Village Corp. is licensed to operate a cabaret under the trade name of Swing Lounge,” with Joseph Robilotto as the “sole officer and stockholder,” dated April 16, 1963. Source: New York City Department of Buildings records at Municipal Archives.
Sea Colony, c.1950-c.1968
48-52 Eighth Avenue, Greenwich Village, building extant, in Greenwich Village Historic District

Originally opened as a restaurant c. 1950, the Sea Colony had become a lesbian hangout by 1955, when Ann Bannon first visited with friend and Village guide Marijane Meaker, a fellow author of lesbian-themed fiction. A review of the restaurant from the same year mentioned “a recently added party room that handles 75 persons.” The review did not mention that the new room had become a destination for women dancing together, an act that could get someone put in jail throughout the bar’s existence in the 1950s and 1960s. It is unclear when exactly the bar stopped selling food and became a full-time lesbian bar. It is possible that it went through a transition period where it was a mixed restaurant earlier in the evening, and became a lesbian bar later at night (a phenomenon that happened elsewhere). It is also possible that within the year the restaurant transitioned into a lesbian bar. Preston Mardenborough, a male bartender at the Sea Colony in the 1960s, recalled that by this time

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53 Bannon.
there was certainly no food served, and every night of the week the bar was reserved only for lesbians (and select friends of the Mafia owners). Mardenborough also recalls that the butch/femme dynamic at this bar even extended to where patrons typically congregated: in the front room, the back end of the bar was where the “butches” usually sat and the front was where the “femmes” sat, both gossiping about the other group.55

In its time as a full-time lesbian bar, the Sea Colony had three main spaces. The first space, where the main entrance at 52 Eighth Avenue was located (currently Art Bar), had the bar’s only functioning door, and the only uncovered windows in the establishment. In this room, the bar was on the left and small tables were on the right as one walked in; two single-stall bathrooms were beyond the bar, as was the no-longer-in-use kitchen.56 Nestle, who frequented the Sea Colony and has written extensively about it, recalled that only one woman was allowed in the bathroom at a time, a rule that was implemented by the Mafia “because they thought we were so sexually depraved, if two of us went in we’d probably make love, and that could bring the vice squad.”57 In compliance with this rule, she noted, “Every night, a short, handsome, butch woman with toilet paper wrapped around her hand, had a job to allot us toilet paper…. This butch woman would stand at the front of the line and we each got two wraps of toilet paper.”58

The second room (50 Eighth Avenue), the former main dining room for the restaurant, was accessible through the rear of the main bar and provided table service. The “back room” (48 Eighth Avenue) was accessible through this center space and was where the illegal dancing

55 Preston Mardenborough, June 4, 2018, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
56 Ibid.
58 Ibid
took place. Mardenborough recalled that when the police raided the bar, which usually happened weekly, a button would be pressed that turned on a red light in the “back room.” Then, he said, “Everything would freeze and people would run to their tables and just sit like they’re having drinks.”

Despite the frequent raids, the Sea Colony remained one of the most important lesbian bars of the era. One former regular said of her experience at the Sea Colony (her punctuation), “my first bar in the city was in the sixties at THE SEA COLONY………..its like you are in a movie as your mind opens a lens into the past…….. everyone slow danced on the floor..lights were dim….. And Maria was the bar maid/butch…who everyone wanted….she was ALL THAT!!!!…..”

![Fig. 43] The Sea Colony, 52, 50, and 48 Eighth Avenue (left to right), 1964. Photo by John Barrington Bayley. Source: Landmarks Preservation Commission.

59 Mardenborough.
[Fig. 44] Approximate Sea Colony floor plan, drawn by author in conversation with Sea Colony bartender Preston Mardenborough, 2018.

[Fig. 45] 48-52 Eighth Avenue, site of Sea Colony, 2018. Photo by author.
Bagatelle, 1951-1959
86 University Place, Washington Square, building extant, no landmark designation

In the 1930s, Barney Gallant, a “lifelong bachelor” (likely gay), ran a lively restaurant at 86 University Place, beginning the LGBTQ history of this site.62 “Danny’s Bagatelle” opened at this location on Friday, December 28, 1951, and had a similar atmosphere to Gallant’s establishment with a floor show for at least the first six months of the restaurant’s existence.63 It soon became a lesbian hangout, however, dropping the “Danny’s” from its name, closing the second-floor banquet space, and transforming the back candle-lit dining room into a dance floor.

[Fig. 46 and 47] Left: Jon Murray Anderson and Barney Gallant, restaurant owner at 86 University Place in the 1930s, 1920s-30s. Photo by Nickolas Muray. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Right: 86 University Place, site of Barney Gallant’s at time of photo an later lesbian bar Bagatelle. 1940s tax photo. Source: Municipal Archives.


The Bagatelle, or “the Bag,” remained one of the most popular lesbian bars in Greenwich Village throughout the 1950s. Ann Bannon, whose favorite village lesbian bar was the Bag, explained that a police raid at this bar was likely imminent if one had not happened within the last month. “The first thing you wanted to know when you walked in was ‘when was your last raid?’”64 The small (24’ x 98’) first floor that the Bagatelle occupied was split up into two main spaces – a bar in the front, and what Audre Lorde described as a “postage-stamp”-sized dance floor in the back.65 Much like at the Sea Colony, a red light would go on when the police arrived for a raid and everyone would stop dancing in the hopes of not being arrested.

Lorde describes particular racial discrimination at the Bag; she was always carded at the door, though her white friends never were: “It was the most popular gay-girl’s bar in the Village, but . . . the bouncer was always asking me for my ID to prove I was twenty-one. . . . ‘You can never tell with Colored people.’”66 Lorde also described the mixed relationship the patrons had with the Mafia bouncers, who were meant to protect them, but often were a threat in themselves. Lorde remembers, “I walked down those three little steps into the Bagatelle on a
weekend night in 1956. There was an inner door, guarded by a male bouncer, ostensibly to keep out the straight male intruders come to gawk at the “lezzies,” but in reality to keep out those women deemed ‘undesirable.’ All too frequently, undesirable meant Black.”67 The Bagatelle closed in 1959 and was replaced by Dardanelles Armenian Restaurant.68


**Pony Stable Inn, 1945-Jan 1970**

150 West 4th Street, Greenwich Village, building extant69, in South Village Historic District

Beginning in 1945, the ground floor space of 150 West 4th Street was the location of the Pony Stable Inn, also known as the Pony Bar, or the Pony. The Mad Hatter tearoom occupied this site’s basement in previous decades (discussed in Chapter 1).70 None of the sources I found

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67 Lorde, 220.
68 New York City Directories (1951-1958); Eugene P. Lambinus, “Table Topics,” The Villager, December 31, 1959.
69 For present day photo of 150 West 4th Street, see Fig. 6 in description of Mad Hatter from Chapter 1.
70 New York City Directories (1945-1970).
mentioned dancing, perhaps because of the small size of the establishment, although there may have been a small dance floor as at the Bagatelle. The façade was shaped like two stirrups with windows in the holes on either side of the main entrance, in keeping with the bar’s name. As with the other bars in this chapter, it had an awning and even a large neon sign announcing its presence to the street, but no evidence of its lesbian clientele. The door was recessed from the façade, making the entrance more private. At least by the time Audre Lorde visited in the 1950s, the advertising for “steaks” on the sign was false – the Pony was exclusively a “cocktail lounge” as the rest of the sign advertised.

[Fig. 51] Pony Stable Inn on far right, looking east down West 4th Street, c. 1950s. Photo by John Barrington Bayley. Source: Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The establishment was split in two sections – the bar was to the left as one walked in, then there was a step down to the back section. In the very back of the Pony was the kitchen that was not in use during its time as a lesbian bar. There were two bathrooms (labeled
“men’s” and “ladies” in the floor plan, but likely both “ladies” in the lesbian bar). They were both on the right side as one walked in, tucked beneath the stairs to the second story, which was accessed from a separate entrance on the street. One bathroom was accessible from the first room and the second from the lower room, which would have made them more difficult to police than in other establishments, though it is likely they were still monitored.

![Fig. 52] Floor plan of existing conditions (of Pony Stable Inn) and proposed alterations (for use as a new establishment, “Kamehachi Restaurant”) form Alteration Permit No. 1097-70, 1970. Drawing by Sidney Daub, Gerald M. Daub, Registered Architects. Source: New York City Department of Buildings records at Municipal Archives.

Lee Zevy (who would later co-found Identity House NYC) described her first visit to the Pony Stable Inn with a few more experienced friends, “Nobody talked to anybody because everybody was deeply, deeply in the closet, even at the bar.” However, Zevy also describes the elation she felt just setting foot in the Pony Stable Inn, her first-ever experience in a lesbian bar: “We walk into this bar and twenty women turn around and start staring, and I was like, ‘Oh

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my God, I think I just went to heaven!’ Best feeling, and terrifying.”72 The Pony Stable Inn closed in January 1970, several months after the Stonewall Riots, avoiding the immense changes to the lesbian community in the coming decade.73

Kooky’s, 1965-1973

149 West 14th Street, Chelsea, building extant, no landmark designation

Kooky’s Cocktail Lounge, better known as Kooky’s (pronounced “cookies”), was a Mafia-owned lesbian bar open from 1965 to 1973.74 Even though a female-operated bar at that time was unusual, Kooky (last name unknown) was not particularly welcoming to lesbian patrons. She enforced a door cover-charge policy ($3 – a large financial burden at that time) and had a lot of control over the imposing bouncers; rather than protect the patrons, which was supposedly their job, they would often bully them.75 Lesbian feminist author Karla Jay described Kooky’s memorable style: “Her hair was shellacked into a large golden beehive that suggested that she had last set, teased, and sprayed her hair in the 1950s and then left it permanently in place.”76

Kathy Wakeham remembered that patrons would sneak their glasses into the bathroom and fill it with water to avoid buying more overpriced drinks. As at Gianni’s and other bars, a bouncer stationed at the front of the long bathroom line handed out small allotments of toilet paper and made sure patrons went in one by one. A small dance floor in the main space was

72 Ibid.
73 New York City Department of Buildings, alteration permit no. 1097-70, 1970; New York City Directories (1945-1970).
74 New York City Directories (1965-1973).
75 Karla Jay, June 28, 2018, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
surrounded by tables.\textsuperscript{77} The back door, which led to a back yard and adjacent alley, was chained off because Kooky feared patrons would try to sneak out without paying; because of this, patrons could also not escape in a police raid or a fire, a fact that Karla Jay said was anxiety-producing for the patrons.\textsuperscript{78}

![Kooky's floor plan (approximate)](image)

\textsuperscript{77} Kathy Wakeham, July 12, 2018, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.

\textsuperscript{78} Jay.
physically thrown out of Kooky’s for handing out dance flyers, which Kooky was worried would hurt her business. On April 3, 1970, the night of the dance, a group of large men came to Alternate U claiming to be police officers and started to bully some of the women. Jay and others suspected that they were in fact Kooky’s bouncers who had intended to intimidate them so that they would not hold another dance. 79

Sometime after the GLF women’s dance, a drunk straight man punched a female patron (supposedly for dancing with a woman) and the management at Kooky’s did nothing about it. Martha Shelley, leading a GLF group of men and women, staged a “zap” at the bar in response. They refused to buy drinks and took up the whole dance floor, dancing in a circle holding hands. When one of the bouncers asked if she knew who he was, attempting to intimidate her, Shelley replied, “I don’t care who you are! We are the Gay Liberation Front!” 80

In August 1971, women from GLF, the Gay Activists Alliance, and the Daughters of Bilitis picketed in front of Kooky’s to protest its exploitative policies. According to Arthur Bell, reporter for The Village Voice, who wrote an article about the protest for the paper, “They accused Kooky’s of watering down and over-pricing their drinks, of insulting their customers, of refusing service to lesbians who work for gay liberation, of physically threatening customers, and of being a syndicate-operated bar.” 81 This and other protests against Mafia-run bars, most notably the Stonewall Riots, marked an era of change. “Movement women” (those involved in activist groups), bar patrons, and some women who could be categorized as both, knew that the less than ideal conditions of Mafia-run bars needed to be addressed and finally could be.

79 Jay.
80 Martha Shelley, July 9, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
81 Arthur Bell, “To Haven or Haven Not?,” The Village Voice, August 26, 1971. “ Syndicate-operated” meant Mafia-run, which of course it was.
[Figs. 54 and 55] Protesters outside Kooky's bar in a picket organized by women from the Gay Liberation Front, Gay Activists Alliance, and Daughters of Bilitis, August 30, 1971. Photos by Bettyle Lane. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.

[Fig. 56] 149 West 14th Street, site of Kooky's, 2017. Photo by Christopher D. Brazee. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.
Gianni’s, 1966-1975

53 West 19th Street, Chelsea, building extant, in Ladies’ Mile Historic District

As the Mafia-affiliated owners were closing the Sea Colony in Greenwich Village, they were opening Gianni’s, a lesbian bar in nearby Chelsea, which operated from 1966 to 1975.82 Gianni’s first drew the butch/femme, white working-class crowd that characterized the Sea Colony and other Mafia-run lesbian bars of the time. However, it became more diverse and welcoming in the post-Stonewall era of the early 1970s, most likely explaining why it was able to survive six years after the Stonewall Riots of 1969.

Like most gay bars at the time, Gianni’s hid its identity. The front windows were painted black, there were no signs on the door, and the most illicit activity – dancing as same-sex couples – was reserved for the back room. As at earlier lesbian bars, there was a bouncer at the door to “protect” the patrons, but also to intimidate them by pressuring them to buy drinks when they first came in. Another bouncer stood outside the bathrooms to ration out toilet paper and to make sure women went in one at a time, just as they had done at the Sea Colony.83

Unlike at earlier lesbian bars, however, there was a slightly friendlier atmosphere at Gianni’s that got more open as the community around the bar changed. There was a free Sunday brunch every week, a tradition that continued at other lesbian bars through the 1980s. They also employed mostly lesbian bartenders who were more connected to the community than those at similar bars in the 1950s and 1960s. Even the patrons themselves became more welcoming. At least by the 1970s, according to Kathy Wakeham, an activist in the Gay Liberation Front and a bar regular (a rare combination), the women who patronized Gianni’s

82 New York City Directories (1966-1986).
83 Jay.
mostly had given up butch/femme roles and talked to whomever they pleased. It does not seem that there were any major spatial or ownership changes to the bar in this transition – it was mostly a political and social change.

[Figs. 57 and 58] Left, Gianni’s floor plan (approximate). Drawn by author in conversation with Kathy Wakeham, GLF member and bar regular, 2018. Right, 53 West 19th Street, sit of Gianni’s, and subsequent lesbian bars (Casa Maria, Silhouette, and Ariel’s, discussed in Chapter 3), 2017. Photo by Christopher D. Brazee. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.

84 Wakeham.
Chapter 2 Spatial Summary

Although there was lingering lesbian nightlife in Harlem and the Lower East Side in the 1950s, almost all of the lesbian bars of the 1950s and 1960s were in Greenwich Village. While some started off with a working kitchen and a well-used stage, by the time the places became frequented by lesbians, these offerings seemed to vanish. Because the Mafia was more interested in making money than making lesbian-friendly space, the bars were mostly small (with the exception of the Sea Colony), dingy, and undecorated. The juke box, small dance floor, and drinks served at a bar or small tables were the only entertainments offered. Although many places had large neon signs announcing their names to the street, there would be no way for an outsider to guess at the establishment’s lesbian focus (the names had nothing to do with women or lesbians). Almost all windows and doors were blocked, barring an outsider from seeing in, and a bouncer at the door ensured only the “right people” entered. The police surveillance of these places was so frequent that almost all of them had a built-in spatial component to warn patrons when police were near – the red light on the dance floor. The nearby Women’s House of Detention was so frequented by bar patrons who had been arrested that it became an extension of lesbian bar culture. In the decades or even just the few years after the Stonewall Riots of 1969, this culture would change dramatically, however, and the Mafia would have to learn to adapt their establishments or get out of the business.
CHAPTER 3: 1970s-80s

Lesbian Feminists and the Gay Revolution

Although LGBTQ activism was certainly not invented in the 1970s, it gained significant momentum after the Stonewall Riots of June 1969. Second wave feminism, also known as the women’s liberation movement, was making significant strides in this decade. Lesbians, at the intersection of both these movements, were particularly politically active. Of course not all lesbians were “movement women” as they were called, and in fact many lesbians, especially those who grew up going to the bars in the previous decades, did not feel the movements included them, either because of class, race, or gender identity, or because they did not think the movement was necessary. Many movement women in turn thought women who went to the bars, especially the older Mafia-owned bars, were unenlightened and backward in an era when one could finally convene openly with other lesbians at so many other new venues, such as headquarters of activist groups, feminist restaurants and bookstores, or yearly conferences and music festivals. There were key moments, however, when the groups intersected, and the decade saw many entrepreneurial lesbians work to open bars for their own communities – an effort that only strengthened in the next three decades.

85 One woman I interviewed, Teresa King, for example, felt this way. She did not understand the next generation’s desire to be so vocal when being herself quietly for so many years had worked fine for her.
Although there were many LGBTQ activist groups and feminist groups forming in the 1970s, lesbians were often marginalized within these groups, and lesbians of color even more so. The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) formed shortly after the Stonewall Riots, and had its headquarters at Alternate U. at 69 West 14th Street, but its leadership and dances attracted far more men than women. It was only when Karla Jay was briefly in a position of power at GLF that the first women’s dance was hosted (see the entry on Kooky’s in Chapter 2). The Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), which was formed a few months later than GLF and met at a former firehouse at 99 Wooster Street, had similar problems. Stonewall served a somewhat mixed

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cliente, including “street kids” and trans women, but it was mostly gay male. Nevertheless, the Stonewall Riots set an important precedent for the entire LGBTQ community for standing up to both the police and the Mafia. Addressing discriminatory police harassment was one of the central aims of LGBTQ activism in the 1970s, including feminist lesbians.

[Fig. 60] Street fair outside the GAA Firehouse, June 1971. Photo by John Lauritsen. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.

Betty Friedan, lauded as one of the founders of the Women’s Movement, famously referred to lesbians in the organization she founded, the National Organization for Women, as the “lavender menace,” seeing them as a threat to the mainstream appeal for which she was aiming.88 In response to this label and other efforts to suppress lesbian voices in the organization and the movement in general, a group of lesbians stood en mass in the audience.

of the Second Congress to Unite Women on May 1, 1970, revealing t-shirts that read

“LAVENDER MENACE.” After this “zap” (a common protest tactic used by many of the activist groups at this time), the organization became more accepting, and Betty Friedan even appeared at a lesbian bar later in the 1970s.\(^8\)

Lesbians formed their own political groups, avoiding the sexism of the LGBTQ activist groups, and the homophobia of the feminist groups. They also created their own spaces. In addition to the bars, they opened cafés and restaurants, such as Mother Courage (reminiscent of the first wave feminist restaurants discussed in Chapter 1), bookstores, and sex shops. They organized music festivals and lesbian communes, mostly in rural areas, meant to be indepen-

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dent from what they saw as the evils of heterosexist, capitalist mainstream society. Lesbian publications flourished at this time, reaching a far broader audience than the editors of the one previous lesbian publication, *The Ladder,* could have dreamed of in previous decades. Although the groups, spaces, and publications made some efforts at racial inclusivity, and they certainly were not nearly as explicitly racist as the Mafia lesbian bars of the previous era, lesbians of color and the trans community were still marginalized. Many chose to form their own subgroups such as Salsa Soul Sisters (founded in 1974), which came out of GAA’s Black Lesbian Caucus, and Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), started by Stonewall veterans Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson (founded 1970).

[Fig. 62] Puffing over a woman’s symbol cake are, from left, Mother Courage’s manager Joyce Vinson, owners Jill Ward and Dolores Alexander and co-manager Rosemary Gaffney, June 2, 1975. Source: https://gvshp.org/blog/2017/03/16/mother-courage-serving-feminism-and-food/.

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90 Faderman; *Gaia’s Guides.*

[Fig. 63] “Michfest,” also known as Michigan Womyn’s Festival, 1977. Photo by Joan E. Biren. Source: https://www.feministcurrent.com/2016/08/16/found-women-reflecting-womens-space-michfest/.

[Fig. 64] Salsa Soul Sisters Pamphlet, 1970s. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives
Changing Lesbian Bar Culture

In this climate of further openness and activism, lesbian bars flourished, many now run by lesbians without Mafia ties. Throughout the 1970s, there were as many as ten lesbian bars at a time (though many did not last long). They were no longer confined to the havens of Greenwich Village and Harlem; Midtown Manhattan and even the outer boroughs began to host lesbian bars, as well. Even nearby areas such as Long Island, which no longer have lesbian bars today, had some in the 1970s. There were enough bars in 1977 to host “Women’s Bar Awards” at Bonnie and Clyde’s.

[Fig. 65] Advertisement for Women’s Bar Awards in 1977 issue of Northern LIB Magazine. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.

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92 This was the number listed in the 1978 Gaia’s Guide.
93 None of the outer-borough bars have enough information for full entries.
Lesbian bars began offering more than a place to sit, drink, and dance to jukebox music, perhaps responding to the growing market and looking to distinguish themselves from increased competition. They began offering live music or cabaret shows, reminiscent of the pre-World War II places. Many hired DJ’s, a relatively new profession, which went along with the new label for the larger bars as “discos.” Some offered food, especially free Sunday brunch, and some offered games, such as darts, pinball, or pool which, like the jukebox from the previous era, became a staple of lesbian bars after the 1970s. Some of the bars and clubs were elaborately designed, often with lesbians in mind (e.g. women’s art at Sahara), and sometimes around a theme (e.g. “the desert” at Sahara). Many of the elaborately designed clubs were very large with up to three stories of dancing. Unlike the gay male clubs of this size in this era, however, these spaces were apparently unsustainable and were short lived (a year or less). Quite a few lesbian bars, both large and small, disappeared with little surviving information beyond sketchy listings in guidebooks and a few advertisements.94

This era also saw the emergence of a new lesbian nightlife genre, the roaming party. Promoters, such as Leslie Cohen, who got their start in brick and mortar lesbian bars, began hosting weekly or monthly lesbian parties at gay male or straight bars and clubs. In fact, many of these parties were advertised through the name recognition of the promoters or the DJs, an unthinkable practice in previous decades when no one wanted to be publicly identified as gay. While filling a three-story nightclub every night of the week might not have been possible for the lesbian community, large, lavishly designed spaces such as Paradise Garage (84 King Street, recently demolished) or the Saint (105 Second Avenue, building extant) could be filled with

94 Gaia’s Guides.
women for occasional special parties such as “Shescape.” Even the famous Continental Baths (230 West 74th Street) had women’s nights for a brief time in the 1970s, although they were apparently not popular enough to continue for very long. There were also a number of afterhours places, many of which had opened in the Mafia era but now became more mixed and open (though still hidden from the authorities, since they were technically illegal), for those who wanted to party after the bars legally had to close at 4 am.

Another dramatic change from the previous era was the ease of finding the bars. Beginning in the 1970s, organizations such as the Gay and Lesbian Switchboards were set up to answer calls from the LGBTQ community asking everything from where to find LGBTQ friendly healthcare to where to find LGBTQ spaces, such as bars. Although gay and lesbian guidebooks had begun in the 1960s, in that decade they were often coded, seeming to revile the places where “degenerates” congregated, but in fact giving LGBTQ people information about which places were for them. In the 1970s, however, the guidebooks were open and explicit about their intentions and there were enough of them that they could specialize; Gaia’s Guide, for example, was a worldwide lesbian guidebook begun in the 1970s and continuing into the 1990s. LGBTQ publications would also often have local listings and the bars could take out ads in both types of media for a larger presence. Bars also did their own advertising through mailing lists and handing out flyers – something unheard-of in the previous secretive decades. People, at least in New York City, were less afraid to talk to each other about these spaces. Lisa Cohen,

95 Wakeham.
96 1979 Gaia’s Guide. This seems to me a precursor to the sex positive parties of the 1990s to be discussed in the next chapter.
97 Wakeham.
99 These constitute the majority of the Lesbian Herstory Archives “Bar Files,” though most of their materials are from the 1990s and early 200s when this practice vastly increased.
who later co-owned Sahara, for example, first found out about Kooky’s by asking a waiter whom she assumed was gay.\textsuperscript{100} Even the names of bars became more explicit. While lesbian bar names were never as sexual as some of the gay male spaces (Ramrod, Mineshaft, The Glory Hole), names like “The Lib” (referring to the women’s liberation movement), “Kitten Klub,” or “The Duchess” hinted at their all-female clientele.\textsuperscript{101}

Highlighted in detail in this chapter are the bars and clubs that were open the longest and were the most popular, and therefore about which there is more information. Despite the changing social and political climate, bars in this era still faced discrimination and an inability to sustain themselves financially in the face of gentrification and legal pressures. While a few lasted ten or more years, these were the exceptions, and when they did close, it was almost always involuntary.

**Bonnie and Clyde’s, 1971-1982\textsuperscript{102}**

*82 West 3\textsuperscript{rd} Street, Greenwich Village, building extant, in South Village Historic District*

Bonnie and Clyde’s (named after the famous crime duo) was one of the first and longest-running lesbian-run lesbian bars post-Stonewall. It began around 1971 when the previous business that occupied the second floor at 82 West 3\textsuperscript{rd} Street, Tenth of Always, closed. Tenth of Always was a Mafia-run mostly gay male after hours “juice bar” where Andy Warhol met trans muse Candy Darling. When it opened, Bonnie and Clyde’s stood apart from


\textsuperscript{101} The names become even more explicit in the 1990s with places like “Meow Mix,” “Cattyshack,” and “Clit Club.”

\textsuperscript{102} The start date is from a poster shown at the end of the entry and the end date is from and article by Fran Greenfield in Womannews from 1982.
other lesbian bars (Gianni’s and Kooky’s) not only because it was run by a lesbian, Elaine Romagnoli, but also because it diversified its offerings, operating for most of its ten years with a disco on the bottom floor and a restaurant upstairs, often referred to as “Bonnie’s.”\footnote{Many, including people Gwen Shockey has interviewed, believe the Mafia still owned the bar when it became Bonnie and Clyde’s, but Romagnoli never admitted this when asked, and certainly they had a less strong hand in running the operation than they had in the lesbian bars of previous decades.} It is also the first lesbian bar in New York City that had a pool table – now a staple of many lesbian bars. Like some of the original lesbian bars, it offered entertainment, usually in the form of live music by lesbian musicians.\footnote{1977 \textit{Northern LIB Magazine}; Lesbian Herstory Archives Bar Files.} The restaurant was entered through a separate door, to the right of the property, creating a separation between women going to the restaurant and women going to the club, which as Kathy Wakeham describes was mostly along class and later racial lines – the restaurant was out of the price range of most working class Black and Latina lesbians, who mainly patronized the lower level club.

Bonnie and Clyde’s was also distinct from the Mafia bars in that it attracted women of color, especially to the downstairs disco. It also attracted more “movement women” than...
previous bars, likely because it was run by a lesbian.105 Like the bars of previous decades, many patrons still fit into a butch/femme dynamic, but it was not as proscriptive as before. It was a very popular place, mentioned in all the LGBTQ guidebooks of the day – *Gaia’s Guide* always gave it four stars, the highest possible rating, indicating that it was a real club (not just a chill bar) serving over 90% women. The listing in *Northern LIB Magazine* in 1977 described it thus: “The oldest women’s bar in New York City, and loaded with them! A very partying place, it draws the N.Y.U. college crowd.” It said of the restaurant specifically, “Moderate priced continental menu available in attractive upstairs restaurant over Bonnie & Clyde’s.”106

Physically, however, it was only slightly more open than previous spots. The only windows were a small rectangle on the front door and a larger plate glass one on the second floor – looking into the restaurant, not the dancing space. The entrance was stepped down from the street, like many previous bars, offering an extra distance from the general public. The façade of the two floors that the business occupied were painted bright red, however, certainly attracting attention on the street. The multicolored lettering of the sign that stuck out perpendicularly to the façade also was very eye-catching, although it is unlikely that it was created with the LGBTQ rainbow in mind, because it was only in 1978 that artist Gilbert Baker first created the flag.

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105 Kathy Wakeham, among others, discussed this bar’s demographics.
106 *1977 Northern LIB Magazine*. 
Despite its popularity, Bonnie and Clyde’s was not profitable enough to survive past ten years. When her lease expired in 1981, owner Elaine Romagnoli decided not to renew. In a letter to her patrons she wrote, “We hope to be able to re-locate and serve you all again,” which she in fact was able to do within the next few years in the form of Cubbyhole at 438 Hudson Street (see Chapter 4).^{107}

[Fig. 70] Letter from owner Elaine Romagnoli about the closing of Bonnie and Clyde’s, January 8, 1981. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.
[Fig. 71] Bonnie and Clyde’s commemorative poster. Source: Gwen Shockey.

[Fig. 72 ad 73] 82 West 3rd Street, site of Bonnie and Clyde’s, left 2016, right 2018. Left, photo by Christopher D. Brazee. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project. Right, photo by author.

The Duchess/The Grove/Pandora’s Box, 1972-1990s

70 Grove Street, Greenwich Village, building extant, in Greenwich Village Historic District

Between 1972 and the early 1990s, 70 Grove Street hosted a lesbian bar in its ground floor storefront. From 1972 until 1982, the Duchess (labeled Duchess Club on the awning)

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108 Dates from Gwen Shockey.
109 Also listed as 101 Seventh Avenue South, especially in descriptions after its closure.
occupied the space. The 1977 *Northern LIB Magazine* listing described the bar as, “A friendly and relaxed atmosphere, popular with ‘movement’ women.”\(^{110}\) Similarly, *Gaia’s Guide 1978* remarked the Duchess had a “relaxed Feminist atmosphere.”\(^{111}\) A small space, the Duchess did not offer as many attractions as Bonnie and Clyde’s or Sahara (discussed next); a jukebox near the entrance was the only entertainment, providing music for the small dance floor, reminiscent of the earlier era of lesbian bars.

[Fig. 74 and 75] Exterior of “Duchess Club” and “Duchess Café.” Although the Lesbian Herstory Archives dates both as “1980s,” I believe the top image is 1970s and the second picture is later, since the renovations match the conditions when the bar became The Grove in the 1980s. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.

\(^{110}\) 1977 *Northern LIB Magazine*.

\(^{111}\) 1978 *Gaia’s Guide*. 
According to Kathy Wakeham, the bathrooms were downstairs, and unlike at previous Mafia-run bars, they were not monitored and patrons could use as much toilet paper as they wanted.\(^{112}\) Although as Karla Jay remembers, “you could count on the toilets overflowing at midnight.”\(^{113}\) Wakeham described the crowd as mixed in class and race. Like some other lesbian bars of the time, they offered a Sunday buffet and table service. Alison Bechdel, cartoonist, and author of the graphic memoir *Fun Home*, had this to say about the Duchess:

In 1981, I moved to New York. There was a lot of routine anti-gay hostility on the street. Even in Sheridan Square on a weekend night you’d get hassled for holding hands. But then you’d step past the bouncer at the Duchess, and you were home free. The bar had its own perils — no one ever paid the slightest attention to me there — but it afforded me the space to just be, with my guard down, and that was salvational.\(^{114}\)

By 1980, however, the Duchess was running into legal trouble for not serving alcohol to men, which resulted in the revoking of their liquor license for “discrimination.” The bar fought this action. Their efforts were supported by protests in front of City Hall as well as in front of the bar itself (Fig. 76). This legal battle came to a head on the evening of September 8\(^{th}\) 1982 when the bartender and bouncer were arrested for selling liquor in what was now an unlicensed bar by two undercover police officers from the “NYC Morals Division” — the 1980’s version of the Vice Squad that enforced homophobic SLA regulations in previous decades.\(^{115}\) Although the laws being invoked were different and no patrons were arrested, many claimed the revoking of the Duchess’s liquor license to be just as politically targeted against the LGBTQ

\(^{112}\) Wakeham.
\(^{113}\) Jay.
community as the raids of the 1950s and 1960s. Despite the rumors that New York City mayor Ed Koch was gay himself (or maybe partly in reaction to these rumors), he ran a campaign to crack down on “vice” in the city, which involved special targeting of LGBTQ establishments (especially sites of public gay male sex).\textsuperscript{116} It is ironic that the “anti-discrimination” law for which the Duchess’s license was revoked was one many movement women who patronized the bar had actively supported in an earlier era. Fran Greenfield of \textit{Womannews} explained the justification for the Duchess’s discrimination as opposed to misogynistic discrimination, against which the law was meant to protect: “On one side there are privileged and powerful groups who use their clubs to keep ‘social undesirables’ clearly on the outside. On the other side there are the people denied privilege and power who rely on their own clubs as a haven in an otherwise hostile world.”\textsuperscript{117}

[Fig. 76] Protest outside the Duchess in response to the SLA revoking their liquor license, 1980-1982. Photo by Bettye Lane. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.


\textsuperscript{117} Greenfield.
After an unsuccessful attempt to continue the space as a lesbian “juice bar” without liquor and a brief hiatus (at least from entries in *Gaia’s Guides*), just after 1983, The Grove Café opened at the same location with much the same atmosphere as the previous bar.\(^{118}\) By 1989, the name changed again to Duchess II, and then again in 1990 to The Grove Club, and finally in 1992 to Pandora’s Box.\(^{119}\) The 1990/91 *Gaia’s Guide* lists The Grove Club (known as “The Grove”) as, “One of the most famous women’s bars in the entire world, known as one hang-out where you can still have a good feminist conversation,” and repeats the exact same entry in the 1991/92 edition with the name changed to Pandora’s Box. It is unclear who owned the bar through these name changes or why the names changed.

[Fig. 77] Exterior of The Grove, 1980s. Source: Lesbian Herstory Archives.

By 1992 the bar was again running into legal trouble, but this time from neighborhood residents. After just over a year of lodging complaints to city government and local police (who were just the decade before quite eager to shut down this establishment), local residents met

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\(^{118}\) 1983 *Gaia’s Guide* handwritten notes.

\(^{119}\) *Gaia’s Guides.*
with police and city officials on September 1993 about their concerns, which were mostly about bar fights and noise. In fact, by that time Pandora’s Box owed over $23,000 in fines for noise violations. Cynthia Russo, who managed the club at the time, claimed “residents dislike the club because many of the patrons are lesbians and because most are black or Hispanic.” It seems Pandora’s Box closed shortly after this, ending the over twenty-year long lesbian legacy of 70 Grove Street.

[Fig. 78] New York Times article explaining the neighborhood complaints about Pandora’s Box, including an image of the exterior of the bar, September 12, 1993. Source: The New York Times.

[Fig. 79] 70 Grove Street, site of Duchess, The Grove, and Pandora’s Box, 2017. Photo by Gwen Shockey. Source: https://addressesproject.com/.


121 A further description of the interior of the Duchess from my follow up interview with Kathy Wakeham will be in the next draft.
Sahara, 1976-1979

1234 Second Avenue, Upper East Side, building demolished

Sahara was another popular lesbian-owned bar in the 1970s, distinguished especially for its explicitly feminist mission, displayed both in its design and programming. The four lesbians who co-owned the bar were Leslie Cohen, Michelle Florea, Linda Goldfarb, and Barbara Russo. Although it claimed to be the first women-owned lesbian bar, it was preceded by a few years by Bonnie and Clyde’s and The Duchess (not to mention the other lesbian-run establishments discussed in previous chapters that were not specifically lesbian bars, but were spaces for lesbians, such as The Mad Hatter and Eve Addams’ Tearoom). Although Sahara cannot rightfully claim title of first lesbian-owned lesbian bar, it was pioneering in its focus on elevating lesbians in the public eye and designing a specialized space specifically for lesbians. Leslie Cohen said of the Sahara, “I wanted to open a women’s club that was going to change the whole viewpoint of what it was to be a lesbian and how cool they were and how they were the leading forces in art, music, politics and so many other things. I wanted to see a club created by women for women.”

[Figs. 80 and 81] The owners of Sahara and their friends and a flyer announcing the club’s opening, 1970s. Source: Leslie Cohen.

122 Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
Paralleling the experience of Karla Jay when she organized a dance at the Gay Liberation Front, the Mafia was not very pleased about their new competition. A Mafia thug once came by demanding to be let in (apparently with a lady friend he was trying to impress); Michelle Florea said that he was welcome to come in for one drink on the house, but then he had to leave, since no men were usually allowed.\textsuperscript{123} Thankfully, this was the only encounter – a sign of the Mafia’s waning influence. Sahara also fortunately avoided trouble with the State Liquor Authority (SLA). It is possible the SLA was not aware of the Sahara, despite its fame in some circles and that is the reason it was spared. As Cohen said, “We never told the State Liquor Authority that we were a lesbian club; we just said we were a club.”\textsuperscript{124}

The crowd Sahara attracted was mostly white, upper-middle class, “blazer dykes,” as Kathy Wakeham described them. A precursor to the “lipstick lesbians” of the 1990’s, most of Sahara’s patrons did not subscribe to butch/femme dynamics and many were “movement” women who actively avoided those categories, which they perceived as confining and heteronormative.\textsuperscript{125} Although they did not state an intended type of lesbian audience in their discussion of the aim of the bar, the college-educated owners who were connected to the art world likely attracted this crowd because of the way they ran the bar and the kinds of events they hosted, as well as how they designed the space. As Cohen observed, “Everyone who was involved in the Gay Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement came to the club to show their support in the ‘70s.”\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123} Stories of Sahara, accessed March 31, 2019, http://www.storiesofsahara.com/. These interviews were meant for a documentary about the bar that never seems to have materialized.

\textsuperscript{124} Cohen, in interview with Shockey.

\textsuperscript{125} Wakeham.

\textsuperscript{126} Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
Like Bonnie and Clyde’s, Sahara offered much more to the lesbian patrons than the previous Mafia bare-bones joints. In addition to the jukebox, there were DJ’s, a relatively new profession that took off in the disco generation of the 1970s.\textsuperscript{127} Sharon White was the house DJ for most of the club’s lifetime, but many other women DJs got their start there as well. They also had a pinball machine, which along with the jukebox was loaned by Paramount Vending, and very soon paid for itself.\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Gaia’s Guide} described Sahara as a “showbar disco,” the “disco” referring to most dance clubs at the time, but especially those that played disco music, and the “showbar” referring to the performances that Sahara hosted.\textsuperscript{129} Every Thursday night Sahara presented live music, the only night of the week when men were allowed in. The owners even advertised these events in \textit{The Village Voice} – as Cohen explains, “I didn’t want this to be a hidden club, I wanted us to be out loud and proud.”\textsuperscript{130} Many popular musicians of the day performed at Sahara, especially those affiliated with the women’s movement. Patti Smith was one of these performers as well as Pat Benatar, who performed multiple times. Sahara also hosted benefits and fundraisers for political causes – one of the earliest examples of a lesbian bar actively participating in politics (a practice that is fairly commonplace today); leaders of the feminist movement such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem (after they realized lesbians were not the enemy) were in attendance for some of these.

\textsuperscript{127} It is unclear if the label of “disco” in the guidebooks meant that the places played disco music.

\textsuperscript{128} Cohen, in interview with Shockey. This seems to be a popular asset to bars in the 80’s and is not replicated in lesbian bars in other eras, unlike the pool table.


\textsuperscript{130} Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
In addition to the performing artists, Sahara displayed work by visual artists, who often positioned their work as part of the feminist movement. They had a rotating collection curated by Leslie Cohen who was connected to the art world through her work at *Artforum* magazine and the New York Cultural Center (now the site for the Museum of Art and Design).

[Fig. 85 and 86] Announcements about visual art and clothes displayed at Sahara, 1970s. Source: Leslie Cohen
The art was part of the elegant atmosphere the club owners created. Like Bonnie and Clyde’s, Sahara had two stories, much bigger than previous (or current) lesbian bars, though small enough to sustain beyond a year. Cohen describes the layout of the club with the cocktail lounge on the ground floor and the dance floor upstairs, showing the thought the owners put into details such as furniture.

There were Italian sectionals on the right – it was very minimal – with enormous pieces of art on the wall. On the left was a bar and then we had tables with director’s chairs around them and fan chairs with a stage in front… You’d walk up the hallway and all along the hallway was art and photographs by women and then you’d open a door and you’d be in the disco. We had platform seating around the back and lights and a disco booth where Sharon White and Ellen Bogen played.¹³¹

As can be seen in photos of a fundraiser (Fig. 84), they even had a piano on the downstairs stage – definitely not a feature of bars of the previous decades. *Gaia’s Guide* described the downstairs as “an intimate private bar” and said of Sahara in general “It’s about as highly recommended as you can get.”¹³² 1977 *Northern LIB Magazine* described Sahara as a “lavish “East Side” bar and disco, with class cruising downstairs and dancing up.”¹³³ Even the street presence was curated. In addition to the large awning with “Sahara” written in the club’s signature font, the front window on the first floor was filled with layers of colored sand and cacti, in reference to the club’s name. This may also have been to partially obstruct the window from the street. Despite the mass “coming out” of the 1970s, many women still did not want to be seen in a lesbian bar for fear of losing their job or reputation. Like Bonnie and Clyde’s, the front door was solid with only a small window. Although the media was interested in the pioneering bar, the owners did not let them take photos in the bar when customers were there.

¹³¹ Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
¹³³ 1977 *Northern LIB Magazine*. 
to protect their privacy – instead footage for an NBC documentary on “homosexuals” was shot when the bar was closed.\textsuperscript{134}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{sahara_bar_grand_opening}
\caption{Left, Leslie Cohen preparing the bar for its grand opening; right, exterior of the Sahara, showing sand in the window, 1970s. Source: Leslie Cohen.}
\end{figure}

Unfortunately, after just over three years, Sahara closed, falling victim to development pressure and people who did not wish to see the club continue. Shortly after the club owners inquired with the landlord about buying the building, he stopped accepting their rent payments and when the owners arrived to open the club on Christmas Eve 1979, they could not because there was a padlock the club door.\textsuperscript{135} Though they were able eventually to get the art out of the club, it turned out a real-estate developer had bought the building to tear it down and build the high-rise that is currently there. Although Sahara’s owners fought the eviction in court, they did not have enough money to win the fight.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{134} Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
\textsuperscript{135} Stories of Sahara.
\textsuperscript{136} Cohen, in interview with Shockey.
Leslie Cohen’s legacy, at least, continued after Sahara. She and her partner Beth were the model for the female couple in George Segal’s *Gay Liberation Monument* in Christopher Park, which they posed for just two weeks before Sahara closed. Cohen and co-owner Michelle Florea also began hosting lesbian parties at gay male and straight clubs, eventually known as Shescape, one of the first lesbian party series, a model that became increasingly popular in the following decades. Cohen continued to be a promoter for many years after the Sahara closed.

[Figs. 89 and 90] Left, Gay Liberation Monument at Christopher Park for which Leslie Cohen and her partner modeled. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Right, flyer for Leslie Cohen’s first roaming lesbian party, which she co-hosted with fellow Sahara owner Michelle Florea. Source: Leslie Cohen.

**Casa Maria/Silhouette/Ariel’s, 1975-1984**

53 West 19th Street, Chelsea, building extant, in Ladies’ Mile Historic District

After Gianni’s closed in 1975, it was succeeded by three other lesbian bars, Casa Maria, Silhouette, and Ariel’s. According to Kathy Wakeham, the interior of the bar did not change much in its various iterations. *Gaia’s Guide* always listed Casa Maria with four stars, the highest possible rating, though they labeled it a “cocktail lounge” rather than a disco. The 1977

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137 For present day photo of 53 West 19th Street, see Fig. 58 in entry on Gianni’s in Chapter 2.
139 *Gaia’s Guides*. 
listing in Northern LIB Magazine also had high praise for the bar: “A cozy cabaret and bar with live entertainment on weekends. A fun type place to talk and enjoy. Young and older, but not for the disco set. $2 music charge and worth it! Host: Maria.” Little information exists about Silhouette, and as with the series of bars after The Duchess, it is unclear who owned Casa Maria and Silhouette and why they turned over so quickly.

In 1980, a lesbian couple, Bettie and Marna (last names unknown), opened the fourth lesbian bar at this location, Ariel’s, which was in business until 1984. Like other more open lesbian-owned bars of the era, it had a large awning with its name out front announcing its presence, and it hosted numerous fundraisers for LGBT community organizations. They also continued Gianni’s friendly practice of free Sunday brunches. The doors were solid with just two small windows, continuing the privacy of previous lesbian bars. In 1984, in a similar situation to Sahara in 1979, the landlord of Ariel’s decided he no longer wanted a bar in the space. The owners tried to appeal, but in an announcement they made to their patrons about the lawsuit, “The court ruled that we may stay provided we do not have ‘music’ after 11pm. Not even, apparently, a jukebox.” The jukebox had been a staple of most lesbian bars since the 1950s (and continues to be today). Ariel’s closed soon after this court decision, ending the two-decade lesbian occupancy of 53 West 19th Street.

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140 1977 Northern LIB Magazine.
142 Wakeham.
Chapter 3 Spatial Summary

The 1970s and 1980s saw a proliferation of lesbian bars throughout the city in neighborhoods such as the Upper East Side and Chelsea, but also in the outer boroughs (though Greenwich Village remained a center of lesbian life). With most places owned and operated by lesbians, the spaces were designed for lesbians – a drastic change from the previous two
decades. Some places (e.g. Sahara) even showcased lesbian art and design in the club as a way of bolstering lesbian pride. Given the options lesbians now had to meet in other locations, the bars began to diversify their offerings, catering to changing tastes and an increasing patron base – lesbians were much more comfortable being out than previous decades and lesbians who were out felt more comfortable going to the lesbian-owned places than they would have going to the seedy, dangerous Mafia locations. Although they catered to a wider, more racially and economically diverse crowd than the mostly white, working-class bars of the 1950s and 1960s, the bars of the 1970s and 1980s were often spatially segregated by race and class. This was both on a neighborhood level (the Upper East Side bars were mostly white upper/middle class) and sometimes on the level of the establishment itself (for example Bonnie’s restaurant upstairs was mostly white middle class, while the nightclub Bonnie and Clyde’s on the first floor was mostly working-class women of color).

Some of the bar names began to reflect a mostly women (if not mostly lesbian) clientele (The Duchess, The Lib), but even if they were generally known to be lesbian bars and even published in guidebooks, their presence on the street was still mostly private. Few places had large windows, and even the few times when windows were not fully covered, they looked into places that were not the dance floor (Sahara’s first floor lounge or Bonnie and Clyde’s second floor restaurant). The final urban phenomenon that developed towards the end of this era – the roaming lesbian party – expanded immensely in the following decades, as did the number of lesbian bars and their “outness.” These roaming parties allowed lesbians to occupy, if just for a night, some of the large, elaborately designed gay male clubs that were particularly popular in this era.
CHAPTER 4: 1990s-2000s

The Lesbian Bar Heyday

From the research I have been able to amass thus far, it seems that there were more lesbian bars in business in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century than at any other time in American history. This was likely for a few reasons. Activism in the previous decades had made being ‘out’ and convening in public spaces much safer and more accepted. Additionally, feminist lesbian activism specifically had called for spaces dedicated to women. Lesbians of the 1990s also reacted to the anti-bar sentiments of many “movement women” in the previous generation, with a party-positive and sex-positive attitude that helped fuel more lesbian bars than ever before. Finally, American cities at this time were perceived as safer than in the previous decades, when they were characterized by white flight and sometimes violent revolutionary movements. Cities were not yet so gentrified, however, that the LGBTQ community was priced out, though this was beginning to happen. Opening a business was not as prohibitively expensive as it is now (mostly because of the high rents that accompany gentrification) and a wider range of lesbians could afford to live near these bars and had extra money to spend.

Lesbian bars became so prevalent that they even became part of mainstream popular culture, the Los Angeles-based TV show *The L Word* being the most popular example. Meow Mix’s appearance in the 1997 movie *Chasing Amy* is another famous example (discussed in more detail in that site’s entry). This paralleled a broader acceptance of the LGBTQ community in America generally, and in particular a proliferation of lesbian themes in industries such as
fashion, known as “lesbian chic.” While this representation and acceptance was certainly a step forward from previous decades, and many lesbians found it empowering, the representation tended to be reductive and posed for a straight male viewer. Many lesbians protested this kind of representation and argued that other industries that displayed lesbianism, such as porn, were exploitative and should be stopped.


[Fig. 96] A rare not sexualized and multiracial add featuring lesbian subject matter, entitled “Blanket” for United Colors of Bennetton, Fall/Winter 1990. Photo by Oliviero Toscani.144

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The bars of the 1990’s and early 2000s are better documented than those of previous decades. Since they all advertised themselves, people were less afraid to take pictures of them and in them. Many of the ones that closed still have a web presence (old yelp reviews, listing on web guides, etc.). The three lesbian bars that remain open today, as well as one that just closed in December 2018, all started in this era and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Lesbian bars also expanded into even more neighborhoods than the previous two decades. While Greenwich Village remained an LGBTQ center, LGBTQ nightlife also expanded to the East Village and the Meatpacking District (this was a particularly popular neighborhood for gay male cruising, though there were some lesbian spots as well). There were also some outer-borough neighborhoods that became popular with lesbians. Park Slope in Brooklyn became known as “Dyke Slope” in this era because of the number of lesbians who lived there before the area gentrified. In the early 2000s, Woodside in Queens had enough Latina lesbians to support two lesbian bars, Bum Bum Bar and Chueca, (Bum Bum Bar lasting until December 2018). The outer boroughs also began having their own annual Pride celebrations, and both of these bars participated in Queens’ Pride parades. Chueca, meaning “not straight,” was owned by a Latina lesbian and was open from 2005 to 2009 at 69-04 Woodside Avenue. A listing in New York Magazine describes the interior: “The few small tables and stiff chairs keep the dark-haired, midriff-sporting patrons on their feet, where they’d probably be anyway, writhing to salsa and reggaeton on the mis-matched tiled floor or shooting pool beneath an aptly Sapphic etching of two nudes embracing.”

Clit Club, 1990-2002

432 West 14th Street (among other sites), Meatpacking District, building extant, in Gansevoort Market Historic District

While roaming parties had started with institutions like Shescape in the 1980s, the 1990s and early 2000s saw an explosion of these types of parties and greater varieties in their offerings. Shescape, which continued into the early 2000s, was started by Leslie Cohen of Sahara (discussed in the previous chapter) and was best known for its Pride parties. Other lesbian parties, such as W.O.W., Her/She Bar, S.O.S., and She-Bang, to name just a few, usually happened weekly, though many also threw special events for various holidays. Many, like Shescape, were also advertised through the name recognition of certain promoters. They would draw a crowd because of their ability to throw a good party, not because of the particular place where each of the parties took place. Clit Club, the boldly named lesbian party that lasted from 1990 until 2002, is the only roaming party discussed in detail in this thesis.
because it had such an impact on lesbian life in New York City in the 1990s. It had as much impact, if not more, as many of the bars did, and unlike some of the others the location contributed to its popularity.

Although the Clit Club party seems to have moved a few times, it was held for many years on Friday nights at a warehouse in the Meatpacking District (432 West 14th Street).\textsuperscript{147} While there are few interior photographs that show much of the space itself, there are a fair number of photographs of the party-goers. These show a diversity in age, race, costume, gender presentations, and a sexual freedom that rivaled their male counterparts – a radical departure from the more conservative and political previous decades. The diversity, though more common in this era than in previous lesbian bars, was also likely encouraged by the two founders of Clit Club, Jocelyn Taylor (aka Jaguar Mary) and Julie Tolentino, a performance artist and AIDS activist, both people of color.\textsuperscript{148}


\textsuperscript{147} This was before that neighborhood became the gentrified center of expensive nightclubs and high fashion that it is today, though a bit after its era as one of the most popular gay male cruising spots in the city.

While the AIDS crisis was slowing some of the gay male cruising in the 1990s, lesbian sexuality seemed to be increasingly radical. This was reflected in the more explicitly sexual names of the parties and clubs, the types of parties offered (there were some parties explicitly advertised as sex or S/M parties), and in the overtly sexual advertising that many of these places, including Clit Club, employed. *Gaia’s Guide* described in their 1991/92 listing: “Jocelyn & Julie’s Alternate Friday Night’s at 8pm – ‘Go Go Girls & Lesbo Erotica Videos’ ... so says their ad.” What was seen by many lesbians in the 1970s and 1980s (and still some in the 1990s onward) as exploitative, many lesbians in the 1990s embraced as part of their power (a trend also reflected in the broader culture with pop icons like Madonna embracing their sexuality as powerful and feminist).


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149 The AIDS crisis and its impact on the LGBTQ community is a topic too vast for the purview of this thesis. There are many accounts of the impact of the disease on the lesbian community specifically, both as those afflicted themselves and as caregivers for their gay male friends.


151 This tension between sexuality as exploitation or as power is also reflected in arguments within the feminist and lesbian communities about sex work and porn. This debate is often credited as starting with the controversial and divisive 1982 Barnard Sex Conference. For further discussion of this, see Rachel Corbman, “The Scholars and the Feminists: The Barnard Sex Conference and the History of the Institutionalization of Feminism,” *Feminist Formations*, Vol. 27, Issue 3, Winter 2015, 49-80.

[Fig. 104] 432 West 14th Street, most frequent site of Clit Club party, 2017. Photo by Gwen Shockey. Source: https://addressesproject.com/.
Cubby Hole\textsuperscript{152}, 1983-1990

438 Hudson Street, Greenwich Village, building extant\textsuperscript{153}, in Greenwich Village Historic District

Elaine Romagnoli, who owned lesbian bar Bonnie and Clyde’s from 1971 to 1982 (discussed in Chapter 3), opened Cubby Hole at 438 Hudson Street, on the corner of Morton Street, shortly after Bonnie and Clyde’s closed. 438 Hudson Street today houses one of the last remaining lesbian bars, Henrietta Hudson (to be discussed in Chapter 5), though when Cubby Hole was at this address in the 1980s, it took up just a small fraction of the space that Henrietta’s currently occupies. The door of Cubby Hole (which is still the main entrance of Henrietta Hudson today) entered into the middle of the space, with the bar on the right and the mingling area on the left (too small to be called a dance floor, though people did dance there).

Starting in at least 1989, there was a video screen which played music videos and provided music to the bar – a new attraction for that era, though now a staple in lesbian bars.\textsuperscript{154} The bar was dark with no decoration to speak of, and even smokier than other bars of the time given its small size. The 1983 \textit{Gaia’s Guide} mentions a dart board, though this seems a bit dangerous in such a small space. The space was tiny, approximately 12’x30’ (360 square feet), living up to its title.

When the bar closed the name was transferred to a new, equally tiny lesbian bar on West 12\textsuperscript{th} and West 4\textsuperscript{th} Streets, which is still in business (discussed in Chapter 5).\textsuperscript{155} One of Cubby Hole’s most popular bartenders, Dee, originally worked at the Mafia-owned Gianni’s.\textsuperscript{156}

Another notable figure who worked at Cubby Hole and then at Henrietta Hudson as a security

\textsuperscript{152} “Cubby Hole” (two words), the bar open in the 1980s at 438 Hudson Street, discussed here, is not to be confused with the currently open lesbian bar “Cubbyhole” (one word), located at 281 West 12\textsuperscript{th} Street, to be discussed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{153} For a present day photo of 438 Hudson Street, see Fig. 121 in the Henrietta Hudson entry in Chapter 5.


\textsuperscript{155} Lisa Cannistraci, March 28, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.

\textsuperscript{156} Wakeham.
guard was Stormé DeLarverie. Before these jobs, DeLarverie had a long career as a male impersonator in the Jewel Box Review. Lisa Cannistraci, who now owns Henrietta Hudson, also bartended at Cubby Hole starting in March 1985. When Elaine Romagnoli closed Cubby Hole in 1990 and moved on to her third venture, Crazy Nanny’s, Cannistraci followed her for just under a year before reopening 438 Hudson Street as the much expanded Henrietta Hudson. The name “Cubbyhole” (one word) was adopted at that time for a new lesbian bar opening at 281 West 12th Street (discussed in Chapter 5).


**Crazy Nanny’s, 1991-2004**

*21 Seventh Avenue South, Greenwich Village, building extant, in South Village Historic District*

Crazy Nanny’s, open from 1991 to 2004, was located in the ground and second floors at 21 Seventh Avenue, at the corner of Leroy Street (just a block away from where Cubby Hole had been at 438 Hudson Street). There was a bar on each floor, a pool table on the first floor, and

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dancing on the second floor. In addition to the bigger space and pool table, Crazy Nanny’s also added to what Romagnoli was able to offer at Cubby Hole by broadened drink options (they served cappuccinos) and having a much larger video screen. Gaia’s Guide describes the space as “brightly designed,” perhaps referring to its lavender exterior; neither Lisa Cannistraci nor Kathy Wakeham remember much distinctive interior decoration.158 Club Planet, an online bar guide (beginning to replace the hard-cover guidebooks) said of Crazy Nanny’s, “Friendly and lively, as well as casual and fashionable…. It is like a lesbian fun park, trivia night, karaoke nights, and drag queen performances and of course DJ’s.”159

The bar advertised that it was “100% women owned & 100% women managed,” but the definition of “women” in the 1990s lesbian community was beginning to expand to also include trans women.160 Crazy Nanny’s was explicit about this inclusion, advertising itself as “a place for women, biological or otherwise.”161 Unlike the earlier lesbian bars, they also were more welcoming to the broader LGBTQ community, especially for fundraisers and special events – one event claims that it is “an evening of Cacophony for Fags, Dykes & others.”162 The crowd was also racially diverse.163 With the larger space, owner Elaine Romagnoli was able to host fundraisers and performances. These ranged from live music, theater, and movie screenings, to benefits to combat AIDS and other causes.

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161 Flyer from Lesbian Herstory Archives.
162 Flyer from New York Public Library, International Gay Information Center Ephemera – Bars.
163 Wakeham.

Meow Mix, 1996-2004

269 East Houston Street, East Village, building extant, “Calendared”\textsuperscript{164}

Meow Mix, open from 1996 to 2004, was located at 269 East Houston Street at the corner of Suffolk Street in the East Village. The owner, Brooke Webster, had made a name for herself as a party promoter, and so already had a following. She also managed the lesbian band “Tribe 8,” which likely explains Meow Mix’s emphasis on live music – Webster brought in many up-and-coming bands to the club, especially all-women’s groups. Meow Mix’s biggest claim to fame, however, was its use as a filming location for the 1997 film \textit{Chasing Amy}. Ironically, (like many famous lesbian characters of the 1990s) Amy, who starts out as a lesbian gets “turned” by the male “hero.” There are some surviving photographs of performances at the club showing

\textsuperscript{164} This means that a building has been nominated to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for designation and that the LPC is planning is planning to hold a public hearing to determine its status.
the sex-positive, exuberant quality of Meow Mix, continuing the tradition started at lesbian bars in the 1970s of promoting lesbian performers, but with a 1990s flair. The outside did not necessarily try to hide what was going on inside – there were large windows on both sides of the corner (though they were partially covered in posters) and two doors located on either side of the corner. However, there was also not the gay pageantry that accompanied some of the other gay bars at the time or today – no rainbow flags or permanent signs with women on them.

Webster blamed its closing on “flooding, city harassment, and a shift in the neighborhood demographics.”\textsuperscript{165} The changing neighborhood demographics was code here for gentrification. Gentrification was causing many small businesses to close in the city starting in the 1990’s. It continues to be a threat to small businesses today, especially in neighborhoods such as the East Village that have managed to maintain a modicum of affordability. The “city harassment” is perhaps more surprising in an era where being openly lesbian, at least in a supposedly progressive place like New York City, was no longer supposed to be dangerous. As the example of Pandora’s Box discussed in the last chapter shows, however, it was not uncommon. A year later, owner Brooke Webster moved on to her next endeavor, Cattyshack, a three-story club in Park Slope, which was open until 2009.


[Fig. 120] 269 East Houston Street, site of Meow Mix, 2017. Photo by Gwen Shockey. Source: https://addressesproject.com/.
Chapter 4 Spatial Summary

In the 1990s and early 2000s, lesbian bars proliferated even further, occupying neighborhoods such as Park Slope in Brooklyn, Woodside in Queens, the Meatpacking District in Manhattan, and of course Greenwich Village. Two of these – Woodside and Park Slope (or “Dyke Slope”) – were lesbian specific enclaves, rather than part of a larger LGBTQ presence in the neighborhood (as in the Meatpacking District and Greenwich Village), and Woodside was even more particular in that it was a center for Latina lesbians. To my knowledge, this is the only time period where lesbians had particular neighborhoods that were known more for them than for any other LGBTQ sub-group. Roaming lesbian parties were especially dominant in this era, though some of them, rather than being at a different place each time, were held weekly at one spot (like Clit Club on Fridays in the Meatpacking District). These parties and full time lesbian bars advertised themselves and became even more prominent to a wider audience than the bars in the previous decades. The names, usually in large letters posted on the building, reflected this further openness and the greater sex-positivity of this era (Clit Club, Meow Mix, DT Fat Cat). The diversity of offerings began in the 1970s and 1980s continued in this era, sometimes including a stage for live music (though women’s music had evolved). The diversity of patrons also became more integrated, often with advertising that was explicitly trans and women of color inclusive. Despite this even further openness, windows were still often very small or covered, and the dance floor was not visible from the street. There was a variety of square footages as well as level of décor. For example, DT Fat Cat was small and mostly painted black, while Cattyshack in Dyke Slope was three stories and very carefully designed. One major change in the way these spaces were advertised and experienced was the advent of the
internet – a new LGBTQ “space,” where LGBTQ people could easily search and find these places, and even begin to share pictures of the sites and connect with other LGBTQ people online in addition to in person.
CHAPTER 5: TODAY AND THE FUTURE

The Queer Generation

Since the early 2000’s there has been a sharp decline in the number of lesbian bars around the country. There are many theories for this – in fact, I have read around thirty articles on the subject, and there are likely many more.\textsuperscript{166} Amin Ghaziani has even written a book entitled There Goes the Gayborhood? (2014) on the subject of declining LGBTQ neighborhoods in America, touching on many of the themes the articles discuss. Being out in most big cities is now even easier than it was in the early 2000’s, so much so that being openly gay in straight bars, or even finding other LGBTQ people in straight spaces is more accepted and common.\textsuperscript{167} Previously it was very difficult to find lesbian community other than at bars or, starting in the 1970s, at other lesbian and LGBTQ-specific spaces. This has changed with social media, dating apps, and the broader internet, which are also key connectors of the community. Cyber connections are especially helpful for people not yet ready or able to come out in person or for those who do not have access to LGBTQ-friendly places. There are also more queer spaces that are not bars than there used to be, such as purpose-built LGBTQ centers. These offer a variety of activities and opportunities to meet others in person without the consumption of alcohol.

An argument that many also put forward for the closure of lesbian bars is the way the younger generations of LGBTQ people identify themselves and approach queer spaces and


\textsuperscript{167} There has been an upswing in anti LGBTQ violence since the start of Trump’s presidential administration in 2016, however, proving that our struggle is far from over.
queer activism. The term “queer” sums up much of this – many young women who are interested in other women identify as queer rather than lesbian. Further, many decide to no longer identify as women at all, but express identity at various places on the gender spectrum. This makes “women only” establishments or parties not places they would seek out, though all the current lesbian bars in New York City at least say that they are welcoming of trans people. Another key factor is the gentrification of many gay neighborhoods in American cities. With a declining patron base, who already make less than their male counterparts, and increasing rents, which means less disposable income for patrons and higher prices in the bars, many long-standing lesbian bars could not afford to stay open. In fact, during the writing of this thesis, one of the few remaining lesbian bars in New York City, Bum Bum Bar, closed its doors.

Although there are only three existing brick and mortar lesbian bars in New York City (Henrietta Hudson, Cubbyhole, and Ginger’s Bar), there are lesbian parties at gay male or straight bars throughout the city in nearly as much abundance as there were in the 1990s and early 2000s, a more feasible and economically advantageous option to permanent establishments. The main difference between these parties and the ones from previous decades are the way they are advertised. While some still place ads in papers, post flyers, and give out pamphlets in person, the vast majority of advertising is done online through social media. Even when promoters promote in person, they encourage potential partygoers to follow social media accounts or buy tickets online rather than take a flyer. The parties happen all over the city, though most are in neighborhoods with already thriving nightlife. Many take place in neighborhoods where LGBTQ communities currently live, such as Bushwick. There are some weekly parties (Mister at the Woods in Williamsburg on Wednesdays, Stonewall’s Lesbo-a-Gogo on their second floor on Fridays, Hot Rabbit alternating Fridays at DROM in the East
Village and Saturdays at Lot 45 in Bushwick), some monthly parties (PAT at Union Pool in Williamsburg, Queer Abstract at Star Bar in Bushwick, Queer Girl on the Q Line at Erv’s in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Submit, an S/M party in Park Slope), and some parties that happen every few months (Spice NYC, HER parties - connected to the dating app, Papi Juice, Dyke Bar Takeover, all at various changing locations), and still more parties hosted by promoters or DJs that have their own following, such as JD Samson or DJ Andro. Many of these parties advertise themselves as "queer" or "open to all," but are mostly women. There are also “hangouts” that would not necessarily qualify as parties, such as Babetown, which hosts queer dinners at people’s houses, the Lez… series by Girl Social, which hosts game nights, ice-skating, pool parties, and other activity-based gatherings, lesbian-centered comedy nights, and infinite "meet-ups" for any activity you could imagine.

The three remaining lesbian bars are generally even more open to the street than bars in previous decades, with public indicators of their LGBTQ clientele, such as rainbow flags. These three places, as well as one that just closed, are described below. As with previous chapters, the entries proceed chronologically, except for the bar that just closed, Bum Bum Bar, which ends the chapter to begin the discussion of why the remaining bars need protection and how lost bars can be remembered.
Henrietta Hudson, 1991-Present

*438 Hudson Street, Greenwich Village, building extant, in Greenwich Village Historic District*

Henrietta Hudson or “Henrietta’s” is in Greenwich Village at the corner of Hudson Street and Morton Street, in the location that housed the original Cubby Hole. Although Greenwich Village is fully gentrified and very few lesbians live in the neighborhood anymore, it is still a center of LGBTQ life. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center is in this neighborhood at 208 West 13th Street and there are still many LGBTQ bars and other businesses in the area. Henrietta Hudson is the only one of the three bars that identifies itself firmly as a lesbian bar in its description and promotion, the others opting for more general “LGBTQ inclusive” terminology. Henrietta’s is also the most well-known and popular of the three. Opened in 1991, it is the longest standing lesbian bar in the city. Owner Lisa Cannistraci, who started as a bartender at the old Cubby Hole, has managed to keep the bar alive for so many years by changing with the times and keeping a close eye on finances.\(^{168}\) The name is a play on Henry Hudson, for whom the street and the river that is just a few blocks away was named. Although it is in an ‘accepting’ neighborhood, the plate glass windows are usually covered by blinds on the inside. Its neon sign, with an old-fashioned cartoon of a smiling woman in a triangle (a subtle, but widely used symbol of the LGBTQ community), makes its presence as a women’s space known to the street, as does the tongue-in-cheek tag line “bar and girl” printed on the awning. A rainbow “RESIST” sign next to the door is another cue.

There are three rooms: entering through the main entrance closest to the corner, there is a bar on the right, bathrooms and coat check on the back wall, a DJ booth in the back left corner, and seating around what becomes a dance floor on Fridays and Saturdays. Sometimes a small stage is brought in for performances in the front left corner of this room. The next room, sometimes separated by curtains during special events, has a pool table (usually two dollars in quarters, free on Sundays and Mondays, closed during peak dancing times on Fridays and Saturdays). The last room, furthest north, has a second smaller bar and some seating and only opens for special events or when it gets busy on weekend nights. Beyond the distinctive display above the main bar, which consists of a female mannequin decorated for the season, the decor is curated by a gay man, Cole Magy, who lives across the street and who changes wall
art based on the season. It often includes images of classic pinup girls (though pinup boys are also often part of the display, despite the explicit advertising of Henrietta’s as a lesbian bar, not a mixed LGBTQ bar). Disco balls, multicolored flashing lights (on dancing nights), and a backlit bar give Henrietta’s the feeling of a club, not just a bar (or as much of a permanent club as lesbians have in New York City). Because of this club atmosphere, Henrietta’s charges a cover (usually $10) on Fridays and Saturdays after 10pm and for special nights like New Year’s Eve, Halloween, and Pride.

[Fig. 122] Henrietta’s first room with performer dancing on the bar. Source: Henrietta Hudson’s website.

The owner, Cannistraci, is very involved in LGBTQ activism, and this is reflected in the way she runs the bar. For example, Henrietta’s put up signs in its window supporting Christine Quinn for her 2013 mayoral campaign and organized busses to take marchers from the bar to the Women’s March in Washington D.C. on January 21, 2017. The bar also hosts fundraisers for various LGBTQ causes.

169 Lisa Cannistraci, March 28, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
Cubbyhole, 1994-Present

281 West 12th Street, Greenwich Village, building extant, in Greenwich Village Historic District

Cubbyhole is also in Greenwich Village, at the corner of 12th Street and West 4th Street. The previous bar at this location, DT’s Fat Cat (1987-1993), was explicitly lesbian and was run by Tanya Saunders and Debbie Fierro. It was very dark – the walls were painted black – and despite the tiny size of the space there was a piano in the back for live performances. Shortly after Debbie Fierro left in 1993 to start Rubyfruit, a new lesbian bar nearby, Tanya Saunders reopened 281 West 12th Street in 1994 as Cubbyhole. The name was taken from the recently closed lesbian bar at the site where Henrietta’s is now located (discussed in the last chapter), though it was combined into one word. Former Cubby Hole owner Elaine Romagnoli, who had recently opened a new place, Crazy Nanny’s, gave her blessing for the adoption of the name and was even mentioned on the poster announcing the opening.170 Like with the old Cubby Hole, the new Cubbyhole is very small, making the name apt.

170 Lisa Menichino, March 23, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
Although it is widely considered a lesbian bar, even from the opening Cubbyhole was advertised as welcoming to a broader audience (“serving the gay and lesbian community”). While the majority of patrons today remain lesbians, the bar describes itself as “New York’s Neighborhood Fusion Bar: Lesbian, gay, and straight friendly since 1994.” According to Lisa Menichino, who has owned the bar since Tanya Saunders passed away in April 2018, the reasoning behind Saunders decision to not call it an exclusively lesbian bar was, "It could be primarily lesbian, but she wanted everyone to feel welcome." Although it was more a moral than economic decision to open the bar to a wider community, Menichino says the welcoming atmosphere is part of why Cubbyhole has survived so long. She states, "To rely on [lesbians] from a business point of view is risky," since they often stop coming to bars after they pair up

172 Menichino.
and because they do not bring in enough consistent capital themselves to sustain a business.

She also notes the need for the lesbian bar has changed. She says, as has been stated previously in my thesis, "The bar was really the only place you could go to meet everything — friends, lovers...." According to Menichino, the bar today is more of a gathering place for friends, a meet-up location for a date found online, a party venue, or any number of other causes that require human interaction, but, in Menichino’s opinion, no longer require the exclusivity of a lesbian space. Similarly, the fact that Greenwich Village was historically an LGBTQ enclave, she argues, used to be much more important to the location of lesbian bars, but now it just happens to be where Cubbyhole resides. Patrons come from everywhere (and most LGBTQ patrons do not live in the neighborhood).

A much smaller space than Henrietta’s, there is no dance floor at Cubbyhole, and in fact before the repeal of the 1926 cabaret law in 2017, there were signs all over the bar letting patrons know that dancing there was illegal (not that the signs stopped them). A jukebox in the back provides music. The bar is cash only and they manage to keep their prices very low — another reason, besides the welcoming attitude, why the bar is packed most nights. Two large plate glass windows painted with flowers offer views into the bar from two sides, but the side street location adds a degree of privacy. After the windowed area, the bar extends down the left wall with the bathrooms facing it on the right (creating quite a traffic jam on busy nights). There is a small windowless (and so more private) seating area in the back. The most distinctive feature of Cubbyhole is its ceiling, every inch covered with hanging ornaments,

173 Ibid
174 Tuesdays were famous for years for their two dollar margaritas, which just increased in April 2019 to a whopping three dollars. While they may not be the highest quality margaritas in New York, the price is incredible in a city where mixed drinks at dive bars are usually close to ten dollars and where spending upwards of $20 for a mixed drink is not unheard of.
which change with the seasons and holidays. Regular patrons will often bring back ornaments from holidays to hang in a special area above the bar. In a cheerier update to DT’s Fat Cat’s black walls, Saunders commissioned murals by “David from Texas” depicting Grecian figures sporting sunglasses, and another friend, Virginia, to paint animal figures around the bar (Saunders was a particular lover of animals).  

[Fig. 126] Exterior of Cubbyhole, 2019. Photo by author.

[Fig. 127 and 128] Interior of Cubbyhole, 2019. Photos by author.

175 Menichino.
Ginger’s Bar, 2000-Present

363 Fifth Avenue, Park Slope, building extant, no landmark designation

Ginger’s is at the corner of 5th Street and Fifth Avenue in Park Slope, Brooklyn. It is not a particularly LGBTQ neighborhood now, but in the 1990s and early 2000s when Ginger’s was founded, it was known as “Dyke Slope” because of the number of lesbians living there. While the exuberant decoration outside, which often includes a gay pride flag with the double woman symbol, clearly proclaims it as a gay space and even a lesbian-specific space, Ginger’s Facebook page claims that it is “Brooklyn’s neighborhood pub for all the peeps, 365 gay days a year.”\(^{176}\) Like Cubbyhole, it avoids the title that others have bestowed upon it as a “lesbian” bar. Their plate glass windows, also like Cubbyhole, are not covered, giving a view into the front room, which is dominated by the bar. There is a second room with a pool table not visible from the street, as well as an enclosed back yard, which if included in the square footage count makes this the largest of the three current lesbian bars. When owner Sheila Frayne took over the space (from what was previously a straight bar), she overhauled almost everything, revealing wonderful historic elements like the wooden bar and the metal coffered ceiling.\(^{177}\) The back yard, which was full of trash when Frayne took over, is now one of the most important draws for the bar, especially in the summer. There is a jukebox in the bar room, which provides music for dancing on Friday and Saturday nights or during special events, although unlike Henrietta’s, the pool table is rarely put away. The interior of Ginger’s is characterized by kitschy antiques, many of which have a Ginger or Irish theme – the owner, Sheila Frayne is a ginger and Irish. Many of these items, including items that once belonged to a church, were donated to the

\(^{176}\) “Ginger’s Bar,” Facebook Business Page, accessed March 31, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/pg/Gingersbar/about/?ref=page_internal; this used to be the description on their website too before the site went down in 2018 (one more expense gone?).

\(^{177}\) Sheila Frayne, April 19, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
Frayne by bar regulars. Celebrity and show posters dominate the walls of the pool room, including a large poster of nude Madonna. The bathrooms are particularly distinctive, covered with stickers, news clippings, and posters that have either explicit or implied LGBTQ content (everything from the cover of *GO Magazine*, to reproductions of historical paintings of two women embracing).


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178 Tammy Kopko, April 18, 2019, personal interview with Gwendolyn Stegall.
Although the bar sometimes has special events, such as a free buffet for St. Patrick’s Day, these events are always open to all, unlike at Henrietta’s, and even at their busiest during Brooklyn Pride, Ginger’s never charges a cover. One of the ways Ginger’s supplements its income is giving over its pool table to mixed (though mostly straight male) pool tournaments. Like Cubbyhole, they are cash only, and there is an ATM in the pool room. The crowd is generally mixed in age, gender, and race, though the crowd tends to run a little older than at the other two lesbian bars.
Bum Bum Bar, 1992-2019

6314 Roosevelt Avenue, Woodside, building extant, no landmark designation

Bum Bum Bar (pronounced boom boom), which, like Henrietta’s, billed itself as a lesbian club, catered particularly to Latina lesbians, many of whom used to live in Woodside before the neighborhood began gentrifying. Unlike the three remaining lesbian bars, there was usually no indication from the outside that the inside was a space for the LGBTQ population or lesbians in particular. There was a very large black sign on upper part of the façade that read “BUM BUM BAR” in simple white lettering, but unless one knew what that meant (Brazilian slang for a woman’s backside) and its context, one might not suspect the space to be for lesbians. Below the sign was a faux-stone clad façade with two opaque doors, which were shuttered during the day, and a very small gated window, covered from the inside. Privacy was clearly still a priority for this bar, though there were sometimes gay flags hung outside. Like Henrietta’s, Bum Bum Bar’s main attraction was its dance floor, which had flashing colored lights, and usually Latin music. The space was one large room with the bar to the right, tables set up in the front and back, and the dance floor in the middle. Like the remaining lesbian bars and many that came before, supporting the wider LGBTQ community was part of the bar’s mission; it hosted fundraisers and was one of the supporters of the first Queens Pride Parade in 1993.179 Despite their extensive advertising in both English and Spanish showing a hyped party place, the bar was rarely full and business had not been doing well for a while before it closed. Although it is unclear exactly why it closed and the owners never released a statement about the closing and could not be reached for comment, it was likely financial, due to rising costs and waning

cliente. Unlike the other remaining bars, it was not as accessible from the rest of the city and was not close to other nightlife.

[Fig. 135] Exterior of Bum Bum Bar, 2016. Photo by Christopher D. Brazee. Source: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.

Chapter 5 Spatial Summary

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, lesbian bars saw a sharp decline in New York City, although because it had a larger population of lesbians than most cities and the highest population in general of any city in the United States, it managed to maintain three lesbian bars while most American cities now have none. In 2019, two of the ones left are in Greenwich Village and the third is in Park Slope (with a fourth closed in Woodside in 2018, making the end of that era as a lesbian enclave). Even in these two neighborhoods, however, most lesbians no longer can afford the rent – they just travel there for the bars – a significant change from earlier eras. Bum Bum Bar in Woodside, which closed in December 2018, was reminiscent of an earlier era of lesbian bar with an ambiguous name (for those not in the know), an extremely closed-off façade, and a location under an elevated train (although unlike 3rd Street in the 1930s, Roosevelt Avenue is an important commercial corridor in Woodside, so perhaps the location was less about hiding and more about convenience).

The three remaining lesbian bars are more open than ever about their lesbian clientele – for example Henrietta’s tag line “bar and girl” is printed proudly on their awning, and a lesbian specific pride flag often hangs outside of Ginger’s. (Even Bum Bum Bar hung rainbow flags outside during Pride.) All three places are owned by lesbians and the décor for all of them is kitschy and comfortable/familiar (e.g. Henrietta’s rotating posters, Cubbyhole’s ceiling, and Ginger’s collection of memorabilia). The varied offerings of previous decades persist in these places, likely contributing to their ability to survive and remain open while other places have closed. While none are as big as the three story places of earlier eras, and Cubbyhole is tiny, Henrietta’s and Ginger’s are big enough to have various activities in multiple rooms (e.g. pool in
one room and karaoke in another). The LGBTQ “space” of the internet has also ballooned since the 1990s, spurred particularly by social media, enabling bar patrons to easily interact with each other outside of the bar and allowing the bars more opportunities to advertise themselves and interact with their customers. Despite this interaction between physical and cyber spaces, many fear the internet has supplanted the need for physical lesbian meeting spots.
CONCLUSION

Shedding Light on the Past While Looking to the Future

The recent closure of Bum Bum Bar shows that even longtime lesbian institutions in New York are not invincible to the troubles facing lesbian bars. Sustaining the three lesbian bars still in business is important; permanent, physical, lesbian spaces are still crucial resources for New York City, the country, and the world, since so many of these types of spaces have been lost worldwide recently. These spaces also serve as a legacy to help discuss the history of lesbian bars that have come before. In the last pages of this thesis, I lay out suggestions for how to support these businesses, how to recognize places that were lost, and how to disseminate this history to a broader audience than the readers of this thesis.

One potential part of the solution to help existing lesbian bars stay open could be the formation of a legacy business program similar to the one found in San Francisco.180 Qualifying businesses that have been in existence for over twenty years (which all three New York City bars have) and prove the importance of their role in the history and culture of a neighborhood or community are eligible for funding, advertising, and other measures that help ensure their longevity in the face of development pressure. The businesses are listed in the “Legacy Business Registry” on the San Francisco Planning Department’s website, an important step in their official recognition. Businesses on the registry are eligible for an annual grant of $500 per employee, and an annual $4.50 per square foot grant is available to property owners who extend 10 year leases to Legacy Business tenants. Annual grants are capped at $50,000 per

Legacy Business and $22,500 for building owners.¹⁸¹ This type of program would not only help lesbian bars, but also other long-term small businesses that are struggling to stay open with New York’s ever increasing rents.

Cultural Heritage Districts, another San Francisco preservation technique, expands from the individual businesses to entire neighborhoods, offering funds and special privileges to neighborhoods that prove a particular historical or current affinity to marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ community.¹⁸² The San Francisco Planning Department website offers this description of Cultural Districts:

While they have physical boundaries, the districts are primarily identified by the activities that occur within them, including commerce, services, arts, events, and social practices. While a cultural heritage district does not currently hold any regulatory controls, the recognition has spurred community efforts facilitated by the Planning Department and the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development to develop strategies for sustaining the living culture of these places.¹⁸³

In fact two of San Francisco’s five current cultural districts are LGBTQ-centered, one for trans history (Compton’s Transgender Cultural District) and one for leather and broader LGBTQ history (Leather and LGBTQ Cultural District), both fitting into San Francisco’s “LGBTQ+ Cultural Heritage Strategy,” a model which New York City could also emulate.¹⁸⁴ The seeds of Compton’s Transgender Cultural District, named for the Compton’s Cafeteria Riot of 1966, started in response to activism against a large development in the neighborhood that threatened not only to destroy historic fabric important to transgender history, but also price out longtime trans residents who generally cannot afford to live anywhere else in what is now

¹⁸³ Ibid.
an extremely gentrified city.\textsuperscript{185} While the activists were not able to stop the development, they were able get money from the developer to help establish a community center and the new cultural district. Although there may not be one neighborhood that embodies lesbian history in New York City as much as the Tenderloin encompasses trans history in San Francisco, neighborhoods with strong historical and current LGBTQ ties, such as Harlem, Greenwich Village, or Park Slope, could qualify for such a designation and amplify their LGBTQ history through their remaining LGBTQ businesses, communities, and events.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map}
\caption{Map of Cultural Heritage Districts in San Francisco, 2018. Source: handout at the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s \textit{Past/Forward} conference in San Francisco.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{185} For more information on the Compton’s Cafeteria Riot of 1966, one of the most important pieces of pre-Stonewall LGBTQ activism, see Susan Stryker’s 2005 documentary, \textit{Screaming Queens}. For further reading on the formation of Compton’s Transgender Cultural District, see this article: Raquel Willis, “Black Trans Women Created the World’s First Trans Cultural District,” \textit{Out Magazine}, February 18, 2019, https://www.out.com/out-exclusives/2019/2/18/black-trans-women-created-worlds-first-trans-cultural-district.
As for the lesbian bars that no longer exist, preservation of their history should take many forms. As stated in the introduction, this is a hidden history and any efforts at uncovering it for the current lesbian community and the broader public is beneficial. While documenting the spaces, the stories that took place in them, and what physical remnants exist from their histories is the first step (what I have begun to do in this thesis), disseminating this information and preserving what is left is also important. One start is to give a copy of this thesis to everyone who participated in its creation, especially those whom I interviewed and the archivists at New York City’s various LGBTQ archives. I have also already received requests for copies of the thesis from friends and fellow researchers at different institutions and will send it to anyone else interested in reading it. Reading a thesis, however, is not the only or optimal form of preservation and dissemination of history. The NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project uses many approaches to disseminating the LGBTQ site-based history they uncover, and there are other projects that take just one of their approaches and focus in depth on that. Some of these approaches may be appropriate for my project, and certainly the information I have gathered could help inform these other projects.

One effort that is so far exclusive to the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project in New York City, as the sole organization devoted to LGBTQ Historic Preservation, is the nominating of sites to the National Register for LGBTQ cultural significance and amending existing National Register designations to reflect LGBTQ history. Although it has not been a focus of the Sites Project so far, similar techniques could be used to designate and reinterpret existing local landmarks as well. So far in my research, I am not convinced that any one historic lesbian bar is on the level of the Stonewall Inn in terms of impacting the LGBTQ community and New York City history at large and so at this time, there is not a site that I would recommend for individual local
landmarking, which requires a high degree of significance and architectural integrity and comes with many regulations and restrictions. Many of the sites I have described in my thesis are already in historic districts and so are physically protected from destruction or alteration without permission from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). An option to permanently recognize these properties (those in the Greenwich Village Historic District and Ladies’ Mile Historic District, for example, neither of whose designation reports mention LGBTQ history) would be to amend those designations to reflect the LGBTQ and particularly lesbian history of those neighborhoods. An option for properties near existing LPC Historic Districts would be to expand the existing districts to include these properties, allowing for additional LGBTQ historical interpretation in the expansion’s designation report. For example the lesbian-frequented nightclubs along Jungle Alley on 133rd Street could be incorporated into the Central Harlem – West 130th-132nd Streets Historic District, which ends just one block south on 132nd Street; the designation report for this district only mentions LGBTQ history in a footnote – there is significant room for elaboration given Harlem’s rich LGBTQ history.¹⁸⁶

Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places may be an option for certain sites of particular significance that still have a great deal of physical integrity. Sites whose significance may also intersect with stories of other marginalized groups would especially benefit from such distinction and be more likely to be considered for designation. It is also more likely that the current owners of these sites would agree to a non-binding but beneficial

National Register listing than to a local landmark listing, which comes with more restriction. Sites that had particular longevity as lesbian bars and enough information for a full nomination would also be better for this type of acknowledgement. Below, I have pulled out a few potential candidates for National Register listing.

150 West 4th Street, which housed the Mad Hatter and the Pony Stable Inn, is in the South Village Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2013, so its physical presence is less threatened. It might benefit, however, from the extra distinction of an individual National Register listing. Having two establishments of LGBTQ significance at this location strengthens the argument for individual interpretation. The Mad Hatter is also a very early lesbian-owned site, even earlier than the building that housed Eve Adams’ Tearoom, which is individually landmarked and mentions its LGBTQ history in its designation report. Opened in 1916, the Mad Hatter also has significance as Greenwich Village’s first tearoom, a type of business that became very popular in the neighborhood and heavily contributed to its bohemian character in that era. Decades later the same building was home to the Pony Stable Inn, significant as one of the few lesbian bars of the era and as a spot frequented by famous writer and activist Audre Lorde. It is also significant as one of the few lesbian bars open when the Stonewall Riots took place in 1969. It physically looks quite different than it did when the Mad Hatter and Pony Stable Inn were there, however, so proving physical integrity, a National Register requirement, might prove difficult. The only remnant visible from the street of the basement where the Mad Hatter was is a small staircase and the distinctive stable-inspired

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187 Technically owner consent is not necessary for landmark designation in New York City, but the LPC is very reluctant to designate properties without owner consent. Owner consent is necessary in New York State before the State Historic Preservation Office will hold a public hearing for a National Register nomination, and the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project has run into problems with this on more than one occasion, unfortunately sometimes because the owner does not want their property associated with LGBTQ history, despite the potential tax breaks that come with a National Register listing.
entrance of the Pony Stable Inn has been replaced by a banal glass storefront and neon signage for the current occupant, a diner.

149 West 14th Street, which housed Kooky’s from 1965 to 1973, could be a National Register candidate for its significance as a site of LGBTQ activism; it is one of the first bars that the LGBTQ rights movement chose to protest for its abusive practices. It was also open in an important transition from the Mafia-owned spots that thrived in the closeted era to the post-Stonewall coming out. In fact, the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project has already submitted a survey form to the New York State Historic Preservation Office as part of their National Park Service grant to complete a thematic survey of significant LGBTQ properties; this form, alerting the Preservation Office to the site’s significance, is a helpful step towards a National Register nomination.

Gianni’s, at 53 West 19th Street, open from 1966 to 1975 also shares the distinction of being open at the time of the Stonewall Riots. Unlike the two other Mafia-run lesbian bars that were open at that time, the Pony Stable Inn and Kooky’s, Gianni’s was able to adapt itself to the changing times, which is likely why it lasted longer than the other two even while lesbian-owned places were beginning to open. This distinction adds to the significance of this site and therefore its potential for National Register listing. Like 150 West 4th Street, 53 West 19th Street is already in a LPC-designated district, the Ladies Mile Historic District, so it is at least partly protected.

Given the importance but lack of physical integrity of many of these sites, a broader suggestion may be that the National Register should loosen its physical integrity requirements for sites of marginalized histories. Part of why these histories are missing from the larger narratives told by what is listed on the National Register is that most marginalized histories did
not take place in big, beautifully preserved sites. Histories of LGBTQ people, people of color, working class people, and other marginalized groups generally do not happen in “architecturally significant” buildings, but rather in storefronts or in “vernacular” buildings. Storefronts in New York City, the location of the vast majority of the sites in this thesis, are particularly vulnerable to change, even in Historic Districts where the upper floors of building facades are more protected from change. Neighborhoods like Harlem, which have been historically connected to black populations, have been particularly neglected by preservation designations. Many of the sites that housed important black and LGBTQ history were demolished or greatly altered in the era of urban renewal and are now at risk because of gentrification.\footnote{Examples from my thesis of demolished sites in Harlem include the Wellsworth and the Clam House – see Chapter 1.} The National Register’s requirement that a site’s significance be at least fifty years old also prevents important LGBTQ history associated with the LGBTQ rights movement from being recognized. Sites that represent lesbian-run enterprise made possible by the LGBTQ rights movement, such as The Duchess and Bonnie and Clyde’s, for example, are not eligible for National Register listing, unless their significance can be proven to be high enough that the National Register would consider waiving their fifty year rule as they did when Stonewall was nominated.

**Sharing and Continuing Lesbian Bar History**

Beyond the plaques that might accompany a National Register listing, plaques or other markings on the street or building would be a useful physical remembrance of a site, explaining its significance to passersby who might not otherwise know this history. This technique would also be useful for sites where the original building that housed the bar has been demolished,
and are therefore ineligible for landmarking. The artist collective REPOhistory made an early attempt at revealing hidden LGBTQ history through this technique for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall in 1994. The project, titled “Queer Spaces,” put up nine pink triangle signs at sites significant to LGBTQ history, including one outside Bonnie and Clyde’s.\(^{189}\)

![REPOhistory’s sign commemorating Bonnie and Clyde’s, 1990s. Photo by Jim Costanzo. Source: Queers in Space, page 367.](image)

Walking tours, a technique employed by the NYC LGBT Historic Site Project, are also an effective way to connect a broader public to hidden histories, bringing people to the physical places where LGBTQ history took place – a powerful experience that cannot be recreated virtually. There are other projects that focus exclusively on LGBTQ history walking tours, such

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as Christopher Street Tours.\textsuperscript{190} Dyke Bar Walking Tour focuses exclusively on lesbian bar history; it is hosted by Queer Visibility Collective, who also host Dyke Bar Takeover, a lesbian party that happens at various straight or gay male bars every few months.\textsuperscript{191} Rather than replicating these walking tours, I plan on sharing my research with the organizers to enhance the sites covered and accuracy of the tours.

Partnering with an app like Urban Archive, I could also curate a virtual walking tour or scavenger hunt based solely on my research. The geo-located map shows the user historical images and a description of the place the user is in front of. Unlike walking tours, which are limited in number of people and usually not free, the Urban Archive app is free and more widely distributable. The NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project has successfully partnered with them before. The Sites Project has also partnered with those who are striving to incorporate LGBTQ history into school curriculums, distributing this information to a young audience; I also hope to further this effort by sharing my research with the Sites Project. It can be very empowering for young LGBTQ people to know about LGBTQ history; normalizing LGBTQ experiences by teaching LGBTQ history in required curricula can also broaden the perspective of straight and cis students, potentially lowering rates of homophobic bullying, among other good outcomes.

The main form the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project takes is a website, which includes an interactive map of the city with site entries that explain why that place was important to LGBTQ history.\textsuperscript{192} Some of the sites in this thesis are already on the site from my work with them during the summer of 2018, but the rest could definitely be filled in with the information I have gathered since then. Although there are other mapping and website projects, the most

\textsuperscript{190} Christopher Street Tours, accessed March 31, 2019, https://christopherstreett.wixsite.com/website.
\textsuperscript{192} NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, accessed March 31, 2019, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/.
relevant to my thesis other than NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project is Gwen Shockey’s Addresses Project, which maps sites of lesbian nightlife along with an extended quotation about the site and her photographs of what the site looks like today.\textsuperscript{193} She has also been adding transcripts of the interviews that she has done, making them primary voices in the project. The sites I have identified for this thesis could become a third map website, marrying the historical research focus of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project with the lesbian bar focus of Shockey’s site, and adding the element of time, making it clear when each bar was open.

Both Shockey and the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project use social media to discuss their projects, which could also be an option for my project. There are many social media projects devoted specifically to lesbian history, and even more devoted to more general LGBTQ history, but few are site-based like Addresses and NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project. It is certainly a way to reach a wider community including those who may not live in New York City and provides the opportunity to highlight certain stories at certain times (commemorating a particular protest or an LGBTQ person’s birthday, for example).

Perhaps my research could be republished in another, expanded form. Gwen Shockey is publishing a book soon incorporating her photography and her interviews with women about their experience of lesbian bars. There is certainly enough research to expand this thesis into a book, which could perhaps reach more readers and be more in-depth than the thesis could.

Another way this history is reaching the LGBTQ community and a wider audience is through exhibitions, events, and film. Almost every museum in New York City is hosting an exhibition and related programming for the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in June 2019. Through my work at the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project in summer 2018, some of my

research was incorporated in the New-York Historical Society’s exhibition, “Letting Loose and Fighting Back: LGBTQ Nightlife Before and After Stonewall.” Gwen Shockey also advised on this exhibition. Gwen Shockey’s 2017 exhibit of her photography and research, as well as related programming at Amos Eno Gallery was instrumental in sharing her project and introducing it to an audience beyond those familiar with her thesis, which she had just recently completed on the subject.

Artist Macon Reed made an immersive installation, “Eulogy for the Dyke Bar” at the Wayfarers Gallery and then again at PULSE Contemporary Art Fair in 2015. The installation consisted of a cardboard bar, which actually served drinks for events, cardboard pool table, darts board, and jukebox, and archival material about former lesbian bars framed on the wall. Accompanying the exhibit was programming that allowed older lesbians to share their memories of former places and the general public to engage with the space on various levels. Programming included performances by LGBTQ artists, podcast listening sessions, DJ happy hours, trivia nights, and panel discussions.¹⁹⁴


There have been numerous projects around the country aimed at commemorating a lesbian bar or party that had a strong impact on their communities. Many are in the form of documentary films, such as *Last Call at Maud’s*, which focuses on the longstanding San Francisco lesbian bar.

There are two film projects about New York lesbian bars that I know of, neither of which has yet to materialize into a full-length documentary, likely because of a lack of resources: one about Sundays at Café Tabac, a weekly party in the 1990s hosted by Wanda Acosta, and one about the 1970s bar Sahara. Clit Club Reactivated, was an event that took place in 2015 commemorating the beloved lesbian party of the 1990s, reviving the lesbian nightlife history through an in-person experience rather than a documentary.

While I am not an artist or a filmmaker, perhaps there are opportunities for expanding my research into an event or exhibition with the tools that I do possess and by collaborating with others. The floor plans that I drew with my interviewees, for example, could be expanded upon, perhaps drawing sections, elevations, or details from visual descriptions for sites that have little other visual documentation. For sites with more detail known about them, perhaps other techniques such as 3D modeling, renderings, virtual reality, or physical models could give the viewer a more immersive idea about what the space used to look like. Perhaps an event using my research could take the form of a collaboration with Dyke Bar Takeover, creating queer and lesbian parties at sites that used to be lesbian bars. This would be especially possible at sites that are still bars, just no longer lesbian bars, such as Art Bar, which is at the site where the Sea Colony once was. It may also be interesting and more provocative to re-inhabit spaces that are no longer bars, such as Dogma, the dog daycare business where Crazy Nanny’s used to

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be, or even the dry cleaners in the new building at 1234 Second Avenue where Sahara once stood.

These efforts described range in permanence from locally landmarking a building (supposedly preserving the site from destruction and certainly monitoring any possible future physical changes to the building’s exterior) to social media posts, which may reach a wider audience but are fleeting. Permanently preserving site and recognizing their history in more ephemeral event-based ways are both important. If a building is locally landmarked or on the National Register, but few people know about its history, the impact of the designation is less powerful. Conversely, if a building is recognized within the community for its LGBTQ significance and then gets demolished or drastically altered, a crucial part of remembering its history is lost. Best to have both and integrate both. In an effort towards integrating these approaches, ephemeral events should be more permanently documented (exhibitions can produce catalogs, walking tours can be filmed with consent of the participants), and more permanently recognized sites should be engaged with programming to bring their importance to a wider audience (e.g. a Dyke Bar Takeover in a former lesbian bar that is landmarked).

**Broadening the Scope**

Stonewall 50 has augmented the national conversation about LGBTQ history. Although there are some LGBTQ history books that have a national or even international scope and the National Park Service’s LGBTQ Heritage Theme Study has begun to combine regional histories into a larger narrative, there is definitely more work to be done on discussing LGBTQ heritage across the country and the world. An important step for me in broadening my perspective on
LGBTQ history and preservation was planning and attending *Stonewall 50: Defining LGBTQ Site Preservation*, a day-long symposium at Columbia GSAPP on April 6, 2019. Hearing how people who care about LGBTQ history are documenting and preserving stories and places significant to the LGBTQ community all over the country and the world was very inspiring, and, like the National Trust *Past/Forward* conference that I attended in November 2018, provided me with potential models to look to when doing this kind of work in New York City.

In the effort to broaden the scope of my research to a national level, it would be wonderful to collaborate with researchers doing similar projects around the country. For example, Ty Ginter, who is writing their Historic Preservation thesis on lesbian life in Washington D.C., has already expressed interest in combining our projects in the future. We have discussed creating a nationwide map of historic lesbian bars, an effort others have attempted before, but not successfully completed to our knowledge. Amending the National Park theme study to reflect these sites may be another direction to direct our efforts. This study is used as reference for preservation advocacy groups and regulatory agencies, so including lesbian bar history in this document would be one way to disseminate our research to these groups. The LGBTQ history of most places is even more underexplored and less researched than in New York City and Washington D.C., and even in New York City, there are many more discoveries to be made. My project is aimed at recovering lost or under-recognized history, and visualizing and specializing it. It is work that is not finite or limited and it is work I hope to pursue further.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bibliography

Books:


Horn, Sandy, Gaia’s Guide. 1975-1978

From the incomplete set of copies at the LGBT Community Center National History Archive, this is what I can tell about the publishing: 1975-1978, self-published in San Francisco, CA; 1983-1992 “distributed” by Berkley CA: Bookpeople, South Bend, IN: The Distributors, and East Haven, CT: Inland Book Company.


Historic Preservation Documents:


Academic articles/Theses:

Krawchuk, John T. *On edge: the West Village waterfront*, 1995. [For completion of MSHP at GSAPP]


Shockey, Gwen. *A Record Of An Exhibition Of Multimedia Installation, Sculpture And Performance Entitled Sites Of Love And Fascination With A Corollary Statement*, 2017. [For completion of MFA at Pratt]

Taylor, Tatum. *Concealed Certainty and Undeniable Conjecture: Interpreting Marginalized Heritage*, 2012. [For completion of MSHP at GSAPP]


Documentaries/Films:


Past Events/Conferences/Exhibits (in chronological order):


“Clit Club Reactivated,” Event at Participant Inc commemorating and celebrating Clit Club, a “floating” queer party from the 1980’s and 1990’s, July 30, 2015.


“Nightlife As Activism Since 1980,” Exhibition at La MaMa, La Galleria, September 18 – October 10, 2015, http://lamama.org/activism/.


“Past/Forward 2018: San Francisco,” National Trust for Historic Preservation annual conference, which included a number of LGBTQ events this year, where I learned specifically how San Francisco is addressing its LGBTQ heritage, November 13-16, 2018, https://savingplaces.org/conference#.XBh_iVxKhPY.

The exhibitions and events in 2019 for the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots are not included in this list.

Websites:
All accessed May 2019 unless otherwise noted.


**Journalistic articles:**

Historical newspapers, especially The Villager and The Village Voice


There are over 30 online articles that I have found about the disappearance of lesbian bars; this article is the most representative of them.

**Institutions/organizations/archives:**

Websites accessed May 2019


Appendix 2: Working Database of Lesbian Nightlife Sites

This is a snapshot of my working database at the time of publication. Please excuse any inaccuracies. Eventually this document will become a periodically updated, publically accessible database online.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar Name</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Decade(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Building Extant?</th>
<th>Landmark Protection?</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Primary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bagatelle (The Bag)</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>86 University Place</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; <a href="https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/the-bagatelle/">https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/the-bagatelle/</a></td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubhouse (AVA)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td></td>
<td>700 East 9th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; Party affiliated with Hot Rabbit</td>
<td>Wanida Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2i's (WOW Wednesdays)</td>
<td>1990s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>248 West 14th Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party every Wednesday/flyer presented by Dyke TV; Fun City Tattoo, W.O.W. Bar NYC, Paper Doll Mega zine; Debbie was maybe the founder, who later started the S.O.S. lesbian party series</td>
<td>LMA Bar Files - green star (1st folder, not digitized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Floor</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 West 27th Street</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Madison Square North Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian night</td>
<td>&quot;Women only, Fri and Sat from 10pm&quot; so straight bar rest of time?? 4 stars in Gaia's Guide</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaa's Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admiral Bar</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lenox Avenue and 132nd Street</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Central Harlem West – 130-132nd Street Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Whitehead's</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 139th and 140th Street on St. Nicholas Avenue</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alley, The</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>740 3rd Avenue</td>
<td>Queens?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Various - see entry</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>pre-1970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10th West 126th Street, between Fredrick Douglas Boulevard and Morningside Avenue</td>
<td>West Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files: Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no address)</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo Bar; J. Bar</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 7th Ave and Fredrick Douglas Boulevard on West 126th Street</td>
<td>West Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariel's</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>53 West 19th Street</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ladies' Mile Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar, Site of Gianni's, Silhouette, and Gay Maria</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Ballroom</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1930s and 40s</td>
<td>3940 Broadway (at West 165th Street)</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Performance Venue</td>
<td>Performance Venue presumably had lesbian performers</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagatelle [AVA]</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td></td>
<td>700 East 9th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; Party affiliated with Hot Rabbit</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 West 20th Street</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ladies' Mile Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party on Wednesday nights; Site of Silverado in 1990s, which hosted S.O.S.</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 Club</td>
<td>1970s-1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>220 West Houston Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>After hours club (lesbian)</td>
<td>Lesbian party; After hours club</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaa's Guide; Gwen Shocky lists (2 as 1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Floor</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22 West 27th Street</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Madison Square North Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian night</td>
<td>&quot;Women only, Fri and Sat from 10pm&quot; so straight bar rest of time?? 4 stars in Gaia's Guide</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaa's Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barefoot Boogie</td>
<td>434 6th Avenue, 4th floor (9th and 10th Streets)</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian kid-friendly party; &quot;Smoke-free alcohol-free dance every Saturday night in the Village. $4.00 &amp; children under 12 get in free.&quot;</td>
<td>1990/91 and 1993/92 Gaia's Guide and LGBTQ Center Archive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Apple</td>
<td>235 E 10th St</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>Gay bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Jack</td>
<td>434 6th Avenue, 4th floor (9th and 10th Streets)</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files-Bars; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blind Charlie's</td>
<td>1110th Street, between Fift Avenue and Madison Avenue</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; &quot;Top floor railroad apartment of Blind Charlie's!&quot;; Gray's spot was &quot;by the window where I could see everyone who came in&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Apple</td>
<td>235 E 10th St</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Thursday night lesbian bar and café; still in business; but no lesbian parties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Limelight (Body and Soul and Shescap)</td>
<td>606 6th Avenue</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Individual landmark</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Girl party; Body and Soul and Shescap were lesbian parties that happened at Limelight, a usually mixed/straight.</td>
<td>Gwen Shockey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemia (Cafe Bohemia)</td>
<td>15 Barrow Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Intermittently a lesbian bar/jazz club</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Room</td>
<td>86 East 4th Street 2nd Avenue</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>East Village / Lower East Side Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Sunday night lesbian party at gay bar; bar still running, lesbian parties no longer running</td>
<td>Gwen Shockey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bon Soir</td>
<td>8th Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>Mixed gay bar; mentioned in Duberman's &quot;Yvonne&quot; section p. 40</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie and Clyde's</td>
<td>82 West 3rd Street</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>South Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; in LHA letter from Jan 10 1981 by bar owner Elaine Romagnoli informing that after 10 years in business the bar is closing and the lease is ending, the last night open was January 11, 1981 <a href="https://www.nycpublicsites.org/site/ten-th">https://www.nycpublicsites.org/site/ten-th</a> of-always-bonnie-clyde/; so why does Gwen have 1982 as end date??; LHA postcard in green star folder, dated 1978 from Tade O. in Deb's handwriting</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowhere Bar (Bordello)</td>
<td>322 E 14th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party no longer running, gay bar still there</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>86 Mills Ave</td>
<td>Arrochar</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar and restaurant; after this was Abracadabra and the Sandcastle - listed in 1989 as having lesbian nights</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaia's Guide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawnies Bar (formerly Juicy, WOW Bar NYC Sunday party)</td>
<td>149 Avenue A</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; &quot;Greese&quot; every Sunday</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddah Bar</td>
<td>150 Varick Street</td>
<td>Soho</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; mostly catering to Latinas; closed in the writing of this thesis various - see entry</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly's (S.O.S.)</td>
<td>20 West 39th Street</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Butterfly's description: Lesbian lap dance club called Suey on Saturdays (also at Silverados); Debbie formerly of WOW Bar NYC flyer</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cactus Club</td>
<td>162 East 10th Street</td>
<td>Lower East Side</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian dance classes</td>
<td>Line Dancing studio? Pink flyer (1993)</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Café des Beaux Arts Ladies Bar | 1911   | 1921   | 1910s-1920s   | 80 West 40th Street | Midtown West     | Manhattan     | Yes              | Individual landmark | Women's bar    | Women's bar at a time when women were not allowed in most bars; not specifically lesbian (though I argue a "proto-lesbian bar"
| Carlton Terrace          | 1930s  |        | 1940s         | Columbus between 104th and 105th Streets | Upper West Side | Manhattan     | Yes              | None              | Lesbian bar    | Map of Harlem Night Spots Featured by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From "The Other Black Woman"         |                                                                                     |
|                          |        |        |               |                    |                 |               |                  |                  |                |                                                                 |                                                                                     |
| Carwash                  | Unknown| Unknown|               |                    |                 |               | Unknown          | Unknown           | Lesbian bar    | Gwen Shockey                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| Casa Maria               | 1975   | 1977   | 1970s         | 53 West 19th Street | Chelsea         | Manhattan     | Yes              | Ladies' Mile Historic District | Lesbian bar     | Lesbian Bar; Site of Gianni's, Silhouette, and Annie's, [https://www.nypl.org/sites/2011/05/05/cafe-des-beaux-arts-ladies-bar.html](https://www.nypl.org/sites/2011/05/05/cafe-des-beaux-arts-ladies-bar.html) |
|                          |        |        |               |                    |                 |               |                  |                  |                |                                                                 |                                                                                     |
| Chez Pat's               | Pre-1970s |       |               | Volney Hotel, 23 East 74th Street | Upper East Side | Manhattan     | Yes              | Upper East Side Historic District | Lesbian bar    | "The Volney Residences is a co-op in this 16 story building. It was converted from a residence hotel in 1985 to a co-op. The hotel was built in the 1920's and was home to notables like Dorothy Parker. The façade is limestone with a canopied awning and a landscape walkway." [https://streeteasy.com/building/oral-history-archive/sharee-nash](https://streeteasy.com/building/oral-history-archive/sharee-nash) |
| Chueca                   | 2005   | 2009   | 2000s         | 69-04 Woodside Avenue | Woodside        | Queens        | Yes              | None              | Lesbian bar    | Lesbian bar, catering to a mostly Latina crowd; great photos on Lost Womyn's Space post | [https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2012/06/chueca-bar.html](https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2012/06/chueca-bar.html) |
| Church Le Femme          | 1970s  |        |               | 108 West 43rd Street | Midtown West     | Manhattan     | Demolished       | N/A               | Lesbian Bar    | Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre-1970 with general dates but no addresses) |
|                          |        |        |               |                    |                 |               |                  |                  |                |                                                                 |                                                                                     |
| Cinnamon's               | 1930   | 1930s  |               | 130 West 20th Street | Harlem           | Manhattan     | Demolished       | N/A               | Unknown        | "Cinnamon's first... anniversary party... featuring... Sharon Redf, bar. "3013" | Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre-1970 with general dates but no addresses) |
|                          |        |        |               |                    |                 |               |                  |                  |                |                                                                 |                                                                                     |
| Clam House, The          | 1920s  |        | 1930s         | 133rd between Lenox and 7th Ave | Harlem           | Manhattan     | If 146, no Lafayette Theatre Historic District - "eligible" | Mixed club       | mixed night club; Ma Rainey, an out, married, black lesbian in show business was featured here. She played at the most fashionable clubs in Harlem. She wore a tweed and men's clothing and wrote risqué melodies to popular melodies; Duberman mentions Gladys Bently singing there too (p. 41) | Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre-1970 with general dates but no addresses) |
|                          |        |        |               |                    |                 |               |                  |                  |                |                                                                 |                                                                                     |
| Uit Club                 | 1990   | 2002   | 1990s-2000s   | 432 West 14th Street | Meatpacking District | Manhattan    | Yes              | Gansevoort Market Historic District | Lesbian party   | Lesbian roaming party; in guide: "******* unclear when it was a which address                                                                 | [https://streeteasy.com/building/oral-history-archive/sharee-nash](https://streeteasy.com/building/oral-history-archive/sharee-nash) |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar Name</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Decade(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Landmark</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Primary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cit Club / Mother / Jackie 60</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1990s-2000s</td>
<td>859-877 Washington Street</td>
<td>Meatpacking District</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Market Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>raucous nightlife began flourishing in Meatpacking District in 1970s; this site was active in the 1990s for all three businesses; emphasize first real lesbian dance space as opposed to earlier ones available primarily for men; “vanguard of lesbian culture, art, sex, performances. One proprietor was by artist Jule Tolentino. She could be interviewed about the history”. <a href="mailto:laranillo@gmail.com">laranillo@gmail.com</a>, via Google form</td>
<td>NYC LGBT Historic Sites Master List; LPC HD DR; LGBT NYC Chapter, p11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club 181</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1940s-1950s</td>
<td>181 2nd Ave</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Individual landmark</td>
<td>Mixed club</td>
<td>Club Mixed with drag performance; pics <a href="http://www.underthemink.com">www.underthemink.com</a></td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Berlin</td>
<td>opened 1995</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>125th Street</td>
<td>1 West 125th Street</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>gay- welcoming club, previously home to a Harlem Renaissance Club</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files; “In Search of Homo Harlem: The Queer Issue” Article by Kai Wright 6-27-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>700 East 9th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie's Inn</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Mixed club</td>
<td>gay and lesbian friendly bar/club; Duberman p. 41</td>
<td><a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=grapevine&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=grapevine&amp;f=false</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane Club, (The Shescape)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td>408 Amsterdam Avenue at 80th Street</td>
<td>Upper West Side</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Shescape party location</td>
<td>Gwen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Inn</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td>46-19 30th Avenue</td>
<td>Astoria</td>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>First Lesbian bar in Queens</td>
<td>LHA Bar Files - listing in 1977 LB magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubbyhole</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Today</td>
<td>1990s-2010s</td>
<td>281 West 12th Street</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwich Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; was DT Fat Cat before</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalloway, The</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>525 Broome Street</td>
<td>SoHo</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>South Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td><a href="https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2015/03/the%E2%80%90dalloway.html">https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2015/03/the‐dalloway.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin's</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td>214 West 4th Street</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>gay/lesbian supportive bar; this address is the site of Stewart's Cafeteria in 1930s, definitely not Harlem</td>
<td>Lesbian bar Subject Files: African Ancestral Lesbians- History, Dinah Publication March 1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deja Vu</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>1990s-1990s</td>
<td>149 West 14th Street</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar where Kooky's used to be</td>
<td>Unknown guidebook from LHA - listed as later iteration of Kooky's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disco Loft Party</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
<td>341 West 38th Street</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Garment Center Historic District /National Register only</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>lesbian bar; 4 stars; &quot;private club&quot;</td>
<td>1989, 90/91, 91/92 Gaia’s Guide (LGBTQ Center Archive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discotheque (Shescape)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>27 West 19th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ladies’ Mile Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Shescape party location</td>
<td>Gwen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT's Fat Cat</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
<td>281 West 12th Street (at West 4th St)</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>lesbian bar; Tanya Saunders, former owner of current Cubbyhole until her passing in 2018, owned this at the same location with Debbie Fierrero before Fierrero left to open Rubyfrukt and 281 W 12 became Cubbyhole</td>
<td>1989, 90/91, 91/92 Gaia’s Guide (LGBTQ Center Archive); interview with Cubbyhole owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar, The</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Side Houston Street</td>
<td>SoHo</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Under</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 East 18th Street</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>&quot;Women only Sunday&quot;, 4 start</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaia’s Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duchess, The</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1970s-1980s</td>
<td>70 Grove Street; 101 7th Avenue South</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>The Grove was at this location intermittently between Duchess, became Pandora's in 1991</td>
<td>Gaia’s Guides, among other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duchess II</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>70 Grove Street; 101 7th Avenue South</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwch Village Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>The Grove was at this location intermittently between Duchess, became Pandora's in 1991</td>
<td>Gaia’s Guide 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dug Out</td>
<td>1930s-1940s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>Gay bar; according to Duberman p. 42, it was a mixed bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files Bars; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>1930s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>432 Lafayette Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Individual landmark</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Thursday night lesbian party</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E&amp;J's Rendezvous</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31st Street between Lenox and fifth avenue</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mixed club</td>
<td>Club; gay welcome</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files; &quot;In Search of Homo Harlem: The Queer Issue&quot; Article by Kay Wright 6-27-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enie's</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MacDougal Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; Lisa Davis thought it might be between Sullivan and Thomson streets...</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enie's Restaurant/Three Ring Circus</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1940s-1962</td>
<td>78 West 3rd Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>South Village Historic District</td>
<td>Mixed bar</td>
<td>Straight club that also attracted working class lesbians; same as Enie's above??</td>
<td><a href="https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2015/02/enies%E2%80%90restaurantthree%E2%80%90ring%E2%80%90circus.html">https://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2015/02/enies‐restaurantthree‐ring‐circus.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escultita</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1960s-2010s</td>
<td>120 5th Street</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>Lesbian and gay bar and drag club</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve Adams' Tearoom</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>129 MacDougal Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Individual landmark</td>
<td>Lesbian tearoom</td>
<td>After theater club/tearoom run by a lesbian - shut down for selling &quot;obscene&quot; books</td>
<td>Eve Adams' Tearoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxy, The (Fem 2 Fem)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1970s-2000s</td>
<td>513 West 11th Street</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Club that hosted a girl party</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Pot, The</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corner of Gay and Christopher street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Greenwhich Village Historic District</td>
<td>Mixed club</td>
<td>speak easy</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files; The Village Voice, July 1, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxy Lady</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>232 Park Avenue</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; maybe Park Avenue South? 232 Park Avenue doesn't exist anymore...</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses); same address as &quot;La Chatte&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbo's</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50's somewhere</td>
<td>Midtown</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian bar (secret room)</td>
<td>looked like a straight restaurant, but Casanova secret lesbian bar</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine's</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1960s-1970s</td>
<td>53 West 19th Street</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ladies' Mile Historic District</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; 3 other lesbian bars, Casa Maria, Silhouette, and Arlel's followed at this spot; <a href="https://www.nyctightspots.org/site/garbo&amp;nb">https://www.nyctightspots.org/site/garbo&amp;nb</a></td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger's Bar</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Today</td>
<td></td>
<td>2000s-2010s</td>
<td>515 5th Avenue</td>
<td>Park Slope</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar (though calls itself a mixed bar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlsroom</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>310 Rivington Street</td>
<td>Lower East Side</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goddess, The</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 East 22nd Street</td>
<td>Gramercy Park</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broadway between 157th and 158th Street</td>
<td>Sugar Hill</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; unclear if any of Grapevines are related</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Fulfilled by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>off of 7th Ave</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Gay bar (mixed)</td>
<td>Gay bar; &quot;an inter racial, upscale bar, just off Seventh Avenue, that had dancing and catered to both men and women...&quot;</td>
<td>Unrelated if any of Grapevines are related</td>
<td>Various - see entry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine, The</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>8th Street and 2nd Avenue</td>
<td>NoHo</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; unclear if any of Grapevines are related</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry’s Back East</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
<td>126-10 Queens Boulevard (corner 83rd Ave)</td>
<td>Kew Gardens</td>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian nights; &quot;<strong>&quot;</strong>&quot;**&quot; Tel. (718)261-8484. Tuesdays is Women’s Night - floor shows, etc. 'the entertainment showplace of Queens&quot;; &quot;dates need justification.</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her Bar</td>
<td>1990s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>129 West 28th Street at 7th Avenue</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian dance party; Cynthia Russo; every Friday; co-presented some parties with WOW Bar NYC.</td>
<td>Gaia’s Guides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hers and Hers</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; site of first Cubbyhole in 1980s.</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilltop</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Around 155th Street and Frederick Douglas Boulevard</td>
<td>Sugar Hill</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollings Nightclub (W.O.W. Bar NYC parties)</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1950s-1990s</td>
<td>665 West 23rd Street</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian parties; in 1996, there was a weekly Wednesday party here called &quot;Boomerang&quot; and 1990x WOW Bar White Party (UHA green star folder); dates are for bar - lesbian nights were probably only in the 1990s.</td>
<td>Owen Shockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rabbit at Boots and Saddle</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>100A 7th Avenue South</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; started in 2005; currently at DROM; see also Heather’s Bar, Nowhere Bar, Monster, Boots and Saddle</td>
<td><a href="https://www.hotrabbit.com/about/">https://www.hotrabbit.com/about/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rabbit at Drom</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>85 Avenue A</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; started in 2005; currently at DROM; see also Heather’s Bar, Nowhere Bar, Monster, Boots and Saddle</td>
<td><a href="https://www.hotrabbit.com/about/">https://www.hotrabbit.com/about/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rabbit at Heather’s Bar</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>506 East 13th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; started in 2005; currently at DROM; see also Heather’s Bar, Nowhere Bar, Monster, Boots and Saddle</td>
<td>Owen Shockey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rabbit at Monster</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>80 Grove Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; started in 2005; currently at DROM; see also Heather’s Bar, Nowhere Bar, Monster, Boots and Saddle</td>
<td>Owen Shockey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rabbit at Nowhere Bar</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>322 East 14th Street</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian party</td>
<td>Lesbian party; started in 2005; currently at DROM; see also Heather’s Bar, Monster, Boots and Saddle</td>
<td>Owen Shockey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howdy Club</td>
<td>1930s to 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47 West 3rd Street</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Mixed club with primarily lesbian clientele - maybe first lesbian bar in nyc?; pic at <a href="http://www.underthekinkem.com">www.underthekinkem.com</a>; torn down to create NYU's library; Lisa theory about elevated train applies to this place;</td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Palace 57</td>
<td>1977-1985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57 West 57th Street</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gay club; according to Kathy Wakeham, Hoscapec had girl parties there</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/Ice-Palace-57-1379582025683451/about/?ref=page_internal">https://www.facebook.com/pg/Ice-Palace-57-1379582025683451/about/?ref=page_internal</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulgence at Casa La Femme</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150 Wooster Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Bowery</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Party;</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>775 Washington Street, New York, NY,</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Party;</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kelly's</td>
<td>1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>181 Sullivan Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>mixed club with drag show</td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie’s Lounge</td>
<td>Early 1990s to Early 2000s</td>
<td>2004 East 58th Street, and later</td>
<td>2005 East 53rd Street</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category**: Lesbian bar, Lesbian party, Lesbian dance party, Lesbian Bar; Mixed club with drag show.

**Notes**: Various - see entry.

**Primary Source**: Gaia’s Guides, among other sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar Name</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Decade(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Building Extant?</th>
<th>Landmark Protection?</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Primary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly's</td>
<td>1970s-1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46 Bedford Street (NE corner); some other addresses too - see doc</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; owned by a lesbian; pool and piano bar; Kathy met Storme there</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham and Gaia’s Guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitten Klub</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>277 Bleecker Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar (aka Kitten Club); flyer in LHA green star folder; hors d’oeuvres! Drinks: $1.25; “Opening Special June 12 &amp; 23 – All Drinks $1” 242-2228</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Glitter at Liquids</td>
<td>1996 to 1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>266 East 10th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kooky's Cocktail Lounge</td>
<td>1965-1973</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>149 West 14th Street</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay Insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitten Klub</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>277 Bleecker Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay Insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Bar</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broadway between West 145th and West 146th Street</td>
<td>Hamilton Heights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From “The Other Black Woman”</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Chute</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>332 Park Avenue</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Femme/Nitelife</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85 Washington Place</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Palma</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>170 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, NY</td>
<td>Fort Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catered to lesbians of color?</td>
<td>1973 Gayellow Pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Cunard’s</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>143rd Street between Lenox Avenue and Seventh Avenue</td>
<td>Striver’s Row</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From “The Other Black Woman”</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurel, The</td>
<td>Pre-1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Van Dam Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village/Soho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee’s Martha Gras</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400 West 14th Street</td>
<td>Meatpacking District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drag club start by Lee Brewster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lenny’s Hideaway</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West 4th?</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Bar; mentioned p. 40 in Duberman: <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=J74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar%26%2323%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar%2320%20lesbian%20bar%21%23%20Famous%20for%20free%20Chinese%20food%20on%20Sunday%20afternoons%2C%20p%2042">https://books.google.com/books?id=J74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar%26%2323%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar%2320%20lesbian%20bar%21%23%20Famous%20for%20free%20Chinese%20food%20on%20Sunday%20afternoons%2C%20p%2042</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leopard Safari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl party at a gay bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbo-a-go-go at the Stonewall Inn</td>
<td>Early 2000s to Present</td>
<td></td>
<td>53 Christopher Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl party at a gay bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leb, The</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>630 E 40th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenues)</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; “blazer dyke bar” says Karla Lay about a bar in East 70’s - same place?</td>
<td>Karla Lay and Kathy Wakeham; entry in Gay Insider, p. 513</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Hall</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>208 Richmond Ave</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar (“75% women”)</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaia’s Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limelight</td>
<td>1983-2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>656-662 Avenue of the Americas (Sixth Avenue)</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>two girl parties, Body and Soul and Shesscape, happened at Limelight, a mostly straight club in an old church; <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Limelight">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Limelight</a></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Club, The</td>
<td>1940s to 1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis' Luncheon</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>116 MacDougal Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay friendly bar/music spot; never listed in directories; later El Café, supposedly a lesbian bar</td>
<td>George Chauncey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis's Restaurant</td>
<td>mid 1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West 49th Street (between 5th and 6th Avenue)</td>
<td>Midtown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant; Louis then opened Jewel Restaurant (West 48th between 5th and 6th Avenue) both were for “faries and lady lovers”</td>
<td>Lesbian Heritage Archives Subject Files; The Village Voice, July 1, 1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Cage, The</td>
<td>1969-1970 (approx)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Street near 6th Avenue</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After hours club, requiring membership card, with blue lights</td>
<td>Kathy Wokeham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover Girl</td>
<td>1930s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28 East 23rd Street at Madison Avenue</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’s</td>
<td>1930s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MacDougal Street, New York Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; possibly short for Louis’s Luncheon? Mentioned in article by Patricia Highsmith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucky’s</td>
<td>Pre-1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harlem Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; same as Lucky’s Rendezvous?</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucky’s Rendezvous</td>
<td>1920s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and 148th Street</td>
<td>Harlem Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay bar/open mic venue with non-gay &quot;luminaries - from Pearl Bailey to Lena Horne&quot;</td>
<td>In Search of Homo Harlem: The Queer Issue Article by Kai Wright 6-27-2000 (LHA); also mentioned in <a href="http://booksearchcentral.proquest.com/lib/columbia/detail.action?docID=405905">http://booksearchcentral.proquest.com/lib/columbia/detail.action?docID=405905</a>, WWIibook a. 116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu Belle’s</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harlem Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay and lesbian friendly bar/club; Duberman p. 41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MacDougal’s Tavern</td>
<td>1930s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West 3rd Street and MacDougal Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dayroom run for a while by a woman-loving woman; <a href="https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/mad-hatter-pony-stable-in/">https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/mad-hatter-pony-stable-in/</a></td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad Hatter</td>
<td>1916-1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150 West 4th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison Mansion, The</td>
<td>1930s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29 East 32nd Street between Madison and Park Avenues</td>
<td>Midtown East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Magic Night Tea Dances at Sanctuary’s</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41 West 8th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequentated by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s. From &quot;The Other Black Woman,&quot; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahogany</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between Seventh and Lenox between 131 and 132nd Street</td>
<td>Street's Row</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Angela's</td>
<td>1950s-1960s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7th Avenue, Manhattan</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; 1964 Police raid of &quot;Mary Angelick's&quot; mentioned in Sea Colony entry in Hurewitz</td>
<td>Lesbian Heritage Archives Subject Files; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Joan Nestle, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Archer’s</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>146th Street between Frederick Douglas Boulevard and Seventh Avenue</td>
<td>Sugar Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayfair</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Hyett Street</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; 3 starts in Gas’s Guide; no other description or phone number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy Mix</td>
<td>1994 to 2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>269 East Houston, New York, NY</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; great surviving photos and testimonials, owned by same woman who owned Catty Shack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mister at The Woods</td>
<td>2012 to Present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48 South 4th Street, Brooklyn, NY</td>
<td>Bushwick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gay party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona's</td>
<td>1949-1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>135 West 3rd Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars. Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moxy (Lebopalooza '95)</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>179 Varick Street</td>
<td>SoHo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LHA Bar Files - green star (1st folder, not digitized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Morris Park</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East side of Marcus Garvey Park, between 122nd and 124th Street, Either on Madison Avenue or Park Avenue</td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelis</td>
<td>Early 2000s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>140 West 14th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On Lenox Avenue, between 145th and 146th Street</td>
<td>Striver's Row</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Cafe</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe Tabac, No Day Like Sunday at</td>
<td>1993 to 1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>232 East 9th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian weekly party by Wanda Acosta and Sharee Nash, photo from Acosta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora's Box</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70 Grove Street; 101 7th Avenue South</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; mostly black and Hispanic clientele; Same site at the Grove and the Duchess</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2012/08/pandoras-box-west-village.html">http://lostwomynspace.blogspot.com/2012/08/pandoras-box-west-village.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradise Garage</td>
<td>1977 to 1987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84 King Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Club [mostly gay black men]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.nyglbtsites.org/site/paradise-garage/">https://www.nyglbtsites.org/site/paradise-garage/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul and Joe's</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9th Street Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>speak easy; later moved to 19th street in Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files; The Village Voice, July 1, 1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula's</td>
<td>1970s-1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34 Greenwich Avenue, New York</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Lesbian bar; owned by a lesbian, mostly working class; big awning out front; Gaia's Guides calls it a restaurant (though mostly women)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham; Gaia's Guides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pechees and Cream/Pechees</td>
<td>1970s-1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1201 Lexington Avenue; 408 East 48th St (1983); 314 East 72nd St (after 1983)</td>
<td>Upper East Side</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; also restaurant in 1983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970s bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses); Gaia's guides (addresses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peppermint Lounge, The</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100 Fifth Avenue (Corner of 15th St)</td>
<td>Gramercy Park</td>
<td>Listed under &quot;REA DANCE&quot;; formerly called Electric Circus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaia's Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Garden</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>455 Second Avenue</td>
<td>Kips Bay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; flyer for restaurant and bar's 31st anniversary, thanksgiving party</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure at Bar d'O</td>
<td>1995 to 2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34 Downing Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polly's</td>
<td>1913 to 1917</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>137 MacDougal Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant run by anarchist Polly Holladay that became a hangout for lesbians; Heterodoxy Club (feminist club) regularly met there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portofino</td>
<td>1959 to 1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206 Thompson Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>SoHo</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Friday night lesbian party; lesbian-friendly restaurant; <a href="http://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/portofino/">http://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/portofino/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride Dances</td>
<td>1970s-present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Pride Dance; first dances in Holy Apostles, to mid 1970's; 1971?? in prince street loft in NYU Loeb Center late 1970's; hugel; at LaGuardia 1980's</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincetown Inn, The</td>
<td>1930's?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MacDougal and Bleaker</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mixed gay bar</td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincetown Landing</td>
<td>1940s-1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bleeker and Thompson</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>Lesbian bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Manor</td>
<td>1930s-1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mixed bar, contemporary to Snookie's and the Dug-out (Duberman p. 41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puta Scandalosa at Mother</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>432 West 14th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-Lounge</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>220 West 19th Street at 7th Avenue</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday night lesbian party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 138th and 137th Street on 7th Avenue</td>
<td>Hamilton Heights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Women&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythms</td>
<td>1989-1991 (maybe more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6826 New Utrecht Avenue</td>
<td>Bensonhurst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; 3 stars Tel. 236-9779, no other info; not in 1991/92 guide...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronnie's Roost</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2130 Broadway (basement of Hotel Beacon)</td>
<td>Upper West Side</td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>listed with 4 stars - highly recommended, 90% lesbian, club with dance floor; &quot;Quadrophonic music and good looks&quot;</td>
<td>1977 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubyfruit</td>
<td>1994 to 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>531 Hudson Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian bar; started by Debbie Fierro when she left DT's Fat Cat; <a href="https://www.b%E9%9D%92%E5%B0%91%E5%B9%B4.org/site/3rubyfruit.html">https://www.b青少年.org/site/3rubyfruit.html</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahara, The</td>
<td>1976 to 1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1234 2nd Avenue</td>
<td>Upper East Side</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian-owned lesbian bar (one of the first!); known for hosting lesbian music artists; flyer in LHA green star folder</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, 1970's bars, Source: Georgia Brooks, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint, The</td>
<td>1980 to 1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>233 East 6th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>East Village</td>
<td>Gay men's club; Shescape parties there sometimes (Kathy Wakeham)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandcastle (formerly Abracadabra)</td>
<td>1989-91 (maybe more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86 Mills Ave</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian night; &quot;****&quot;; after detailed directions, &quot;Politically incorrect women's entertainment nights. Say 'hi' from GAIA anyway.&quot;; site of &quot;Brazil&quot; lesbian bar in 1983</td>
<td>1989 and 90/91 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savage</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>208 West 23rd Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; 1990s became Twin, S.O.S. held there</td>
<td>Lesbian History Archives Subject Files; flyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Colony</td>
<td>1955-1968 (dates approx; restaurant opened 1950)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48-52 8th Avenue, New York, NY</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; <a href="https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/the-sea-colony/">https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/the-sea-colony/</a></td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>222 West 23rd Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; flyer for restaurant and bar's 31st anniversary, thanksgiving party</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, Source: Barbara Bradley, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table includes information about various lesbian bars and their characteristics, including their opening and closing dates, locations, neighborhoods, boroughs, building extant status, landmark protection, category, notes, and primary sources. The data is sourced from various resources, including the Lesbian History Project of New York, Gaia's Guide, LGBTQ Center Archives, and the Lesbian Herstory Subject Files.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar Name</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Decade(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Building Extant?</th>
<th>Landmark Protection?</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Primary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She-Bang at 40 Below</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40 West 8th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Washington Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl party; flyer for 1997 New Year's Eve party; every Saturday, started by Tina and Caroline of WOW Bar NYC</td>
<td>[<a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shescape</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roaming girl party by mailing list; dances at Limelight, The Saint, Ice Palace, The underground, somewhere at union square, downstairs?</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoo Groove at Sticky!</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>386 West Broadway, New York, NY</td>
<td>Soho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showstopper at BLVD</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>599 Bowery, New York, NY</td>
<td>Bowery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverados (S.O.S.)</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 West 20th Street</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Queen's description: Lesbian lap dance club called Soxy on Saturdays (also at Butterfly's); Debbie formerly of WOW Bar NYC; Also site of &quot;2020&quot; weekly Wednesday party in 1980s</td>
<td>[<a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin-Tight at Tribal Lounge (and then Now Bar)</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22 7th Avenue South, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party; also site of weekly Wednesday party &quot;WOW Bar Lounge&quot; with Caroline of WOW Bar NYC and Sharee of Tabac &amp; BarGy.</td>
<td>Wanda Acosta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snookie's</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 140 and 141 on Amsterdam Avenue</td>
<td>West Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar; Duberman calls this a mixed bar (and &quot;Snooky's&quot;) [<a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false</a>]</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s - From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars, 1989, 90, 91, and 93/92 Gaia's Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectrum</td>
<td>1991-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>602 64th Street (at 8th Ave), &quot;Bay Bridge&quot;</td>
<td>Sunset Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Good gay/lesbian mix. Closed Monday &amp; Tuesday/ Wednesday, free /Thursday, free &amp; 2-4-1 drinks /Friday, m/f strip/Saturday, record ***stars / Sunday, variety show &amp; free 9-10pm **</td>
<td>1991/92 Gaia's Guide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square, The</td>
<td>1969-1970 (aprox)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broadway and West 3rd Street (maybe Bleaker??)</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After hours club</td>
<td>Kathy Wakeham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset Boulevard</td>
<td>1949-52 (maybe more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13201 Queens Boulevard</td>
<td>Forest Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian nightlife; &quot;**&quot;; Tel. 830-9191; no more info</td>
<td>[<a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lpg=PT74&amp;dq=%22Page%20Three%22%20lesbian%20bar&amp;pg=PT74#v=onepage&amp;q=lesbian%20bar&amp;f=false</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Sensations II</td>
<td>1980s-90s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6322 20th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY</td>
<td>Bensonhurst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; at LH4; grand opening flyer from Dec 1 1983</td>
<td>Lesbian Herstory Archives Subject Files-Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This N' That</td>
<td>2008 to 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>108 North 6th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Bushwick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drag bar</td>
<td>LGBTQ Center Archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stack's Cafe</td>
<td>1930s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274 7th Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar; 1930s</td>
<td>Winter 1983 Gaia's Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Decade(s)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Building Extant?</td>
<td>Landmark Protection?</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Primary Source</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambourines</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>110 West 43rd St</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian club</td>
<td>1979 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tegrity</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22nd Street between Broadway and</td>
<td>Flatiron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian club</td>
<td>1977 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toby's</td>
<td>pre-1970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Park Avenue South</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gay bar</td>
<td>Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-</td>
<td>Lesbian History Archives Subject Files; Lesbian History Project of New York's list of lesbian and gay bars, pre-1970s bars; Source: Harriet Lane, List made in February 1981 (also has list of bars pre 1970 with general dates but no addresses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toby's</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West 155th Street and St. Nicholas Place</td>
<td>Sugar Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toby's</td>
<td>1930s and 40s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Avenue and 121st Street</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toby's</td>
<td>1930s and 40s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 126th and 127th on Lenox Avenue</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toby's Hideout, Purple Manor</td>
<td>1930s and 40s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>between 126th and 128th Street on Park Avenue or Lexington Avenue</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground, The</td>
<td>1980 to 1989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>860 Broadway</td>
<td>Gramercy Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Club, Shescap had parties here (Kathy Wakeham)</td>
<td>Club, Shescap had parties here (Kathy Wakeham)</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Buren's</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>349 West 46th Street</td>
<td>Midtown West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian bar Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; jazz club rest of the week; &quot;membership card essential&quot;</td>
<td>Lesbian bar Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; jazz club rest of the week; &quot;membership card essential&quot;</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault, The</td>
<td>1991-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28 8th Avenue</td>
<td>Meatpacking District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian party; &quot;*****&quot;; &quot;Tel. 593-3144. Note: Fridays, 7-11pm - Women only.&quot;</td>
<td>lesbian party; &quot;*****&quot;; &quot;Tel. 593-3144. Note: Fridays, 7-11pm - Women only.&quot;</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viscaya</td>
<td>2003 to 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>191 7th Avenue, New York, NY</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday night lesbian party</td>
<td>Sunday night lesbian party</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays at Metropolitan</td>
<td>Early 2000s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>559 Lorimer Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Bushwick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl party at a gay bar</td>
<td>Girl party at a gay bar</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Inn</td>
<td>1930?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West 3rd Street</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
<td>Lisa Davis</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellsworth [Tavern inc.]</td>
<td>1930s-1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7th Ave and 126th Street; Duberman says &quot;just behind Apollo Theater&quot;; 3120 Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd (formerly 7th Ave) (from blurry 1940 directory and tax photo)</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>lesbian bar; Gray mentions &quot;after hours at Wells&quot;; straight bar on one side, side entrance to black lesbian bar: <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lp">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lp</a>... &amp;f=false; <a href="https://lostwomynsspac.blogspot.com/2012/12/wellsworth.html/">https://lostwomynsspac.blogspot.com/2012/12/wellsworth.html/</a>; 1940s tax photo - 2120 7th ave, block 1932, lot 20</td>
<td>lesbian bar; Gray mentions &quot;after hours at Wells&quot;; straight bar on one side, side entrance to black lesbian bar: <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lp">https://books.google.com/books?id=j74GwY2WnekC&amp;lp</a>... &amp;f=false; <a href="https://lostwomynsspac.blogspot.com/2012/12/wellsworth.html/">https://lostwomynsspac.blogspot.com/2012/12/wellsworth.html/</a>; 1940s tax photo - 2120 7th ave, block 1932, lot 20</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Wednesdays at Tracks</td>
<td>1985 to Early 1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>331 West 19th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl party</td>
<td>Girl party</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TaMills at Cafe Melville</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>110 Barrow Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>West Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambezie Bar</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between Frederick Douglas Boulevard and Seventh Avenue on 132nd Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Striver's Row</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zodiac</td>
<td>1960s-1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Far West Side</td>
<td>Greenwich Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After hours club, mostly lesbians (first question you asked someone at a lesbian bar in those days was,&quot;what's our sign?&quot;)</td>
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<td>1930 Gaia's Guide (LGBTQ Center Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zodiac Club</td>
<td>1930s and 1940s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Avenue between 126th and 127th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian Bar</td>
<td>Map of Harlem Night Spots Frequented by African American Lesbians in the 1930s and 1940s; From &quot;The Other Black Woman&quot;</td>
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