Today in History - June 28

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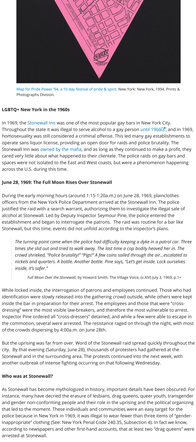
The Stonewall Uprising of 1969

June 28, 1969 marks the beginning of the Stonewall Uprising, a series of events between police and LGBTQ+ protesters that lasted over six days. It was not the first time police raided a gay bar, and it was not the first time LGBTQ+ people fought back, but the events that would unfold over the next six days would fundamentally change the nature of LGBTQ+ activism in the United States. We invite you to learn more about the Stonewall Uprising and LGBTQ+ history in general, through the rich and diverse collections at the Library of Congress.



Map for Pride Power '74, a 31-day festival of pride & spirit, New York, New York, 1974. Prints & Photographs Division.

LGBTQ+ New York in the 1960s

In 1969, the Stonewall Inn was one of the most popular gay bars in New York City. Throughout the state it was illegal to serve alcohol to a gay person until 1966[↗] and in 1969, homosexuality was still considered a criminal offense. This led many gay establishments to operate sans liquor license, providing an open door for raids and police brutality. The Stonewall Inn was owned by the mafia, and as long as they continued to make a profit, they cared very little about what happened to their clientele. The police raids on gay bars and spaces were not isolated to the East and West coasts, but were a phenomenon happening across the U.S. during this time.

June 28, 1969: The Full Moon Rises Over Stonewall

During the early morning hours (around 1:15-1:20am.) on June 28, 1969, plainclothes officers from the New York Police Department arrived at the Stonewall Inn. The police justified the raid with a search warrant, authorizing them to investigate the illegal sale of liquor, but it was clear that Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine, the police entered the establishment and began to interrogate the patrons. The raid was routine for a bar like Stonewall, but this time, events did not unfold according to the inspector's plans.

The turning point came when the police had difficulty keeping a dyke in a patrol car. Three times she slid out and tried to walk away. The last time a cop bodily heaved her in. The crowd shrieked. "Police brutality!" "Pigs!" A few coins sailed through the air…scattered in nickels and quarters. A bottle. Another bottle. Pine says, "Let's get inside. Lock ourselves inside. It's safer."

Full Moon Over the Stonewall, by Howard Smith. The Village Voice, (v.XIV),July 3, 1969, p.1.

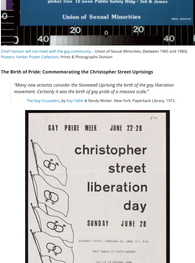
While locked inside, the interrogation of patrons and employees continued. Those who had identification were slowly released into the gathering crowd outside, while others were kept inside the bar in preparation for their arrest. The employees and those that were "cross-dressing" were the prime target for arrests, and therefore the most vulnerable to arrest. Inspector Pine ordered all "cross-dressers" detained, and while a few were able to escape in the confusion, others were beaten by the police. The crowd outside was large, and the mood of the crowds observing the raid was tense. June 28th.

But the uprising was far from over. Word of the Stonewall raid spread quickly throughout the city. By that evening (Saturday, June 28), thousands of protesters had gathered at the Stonewall and in the surrounding area. The protests continued into the next week, with another outbreak of intense fighting occurring on that following Wednesday.

Who was at Stonewall?

As Stonewall has become mythologized in history, important details have been obscured. For instance, many have declared the erasure of lesbians, drag queens, queer youth, transgender and gender non-conforming people and their role in the uprising and the political organizing that led to the moment. These individuals and communities were an every-target for the police because in New York in 1969, it was illegal to wear fewer than three items of "gender-inappropriate" clothing (See: New York Penal Code 240.35, Subsection 4). In fact we know, according to newspapers and other first-hand accounts, that at least two "drag queens" were arrested at Stonewall.

Considered to be one of the most accurate depictions of Stonewall, the article entitled "Queen Power!"[↗] described the centrality of drag queens to the events of Stonewall. One can find further accounts of the involvement of drag queens at Stonewall by reading Drag Magazine[↗], the official organ of the Queens Liberation Front, Lee Brewster[↗] in Rounded Drag Magazine and the Queens Liberation Front (QLF) in 1970, which worked in tandem to overturn New York laws outlawing cross-dressing.

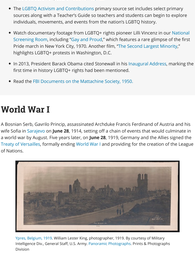


Chief Inspector will not meet with the gay community… Union of Sexual Minorities, [between 1965 and 1980]. Posters, Yankee Poster Collection, Prints & Photographs Division

The Birth of Pride: Commemorating the Christopher Street Uprisings

"Many new activists consider the Stonewall Uprising the birth of the gay liberation movement. Certainly it was the birth of gay pride of a massive scale."

The Gay Crusaders, by Kay Tobin & Randy Wicker. New York: Paperback Library, 1972.



Christopher Street Liberation Day, June 28 1970,[↗] Image courtesy of the Digital Public Library of America[↗]. An original is held in the Lilli Vincenz Papers, 1970-2013, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

The first Pride march was held on June 28 1970, the one year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. Primary sources provide detailed information about how this first Pride march was planned, and the reasons why activists felt so strongly that it should exist. To get planning underway, activists formed the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee. From the outset, the committee defined its aim of holding a massive march at the culmination of Gay Pride Week (June 22-28).

Thus, the very first U.S. Gay Pride Week and March, was meant to give the community a chance to gather together.

These events will be the culmination of Gay Pride Week (June 22-28), a week throughout which the East Coast gay organization will commemorate the "Christopher Street Uprisings" of last summer in which thousands of Homosexuals went to the streets to demonstrate against centuries of abuse, official betrayal of their human rights by virtually all agencies of society; from government, hostility to employment and Housing discrimination, Mafia control of Gay bars, and well-intentioned laws.

Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee Flier,[↗] University of Connecticut Digital Collections.

Since then, LGBTQ+ people have continued to gather together in June to march with Pride.

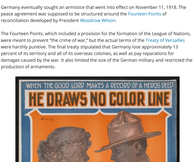
The Stonewall Inn has now been designated as a National Monument.

Learn More

- June 28, 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. To find Stonewall 50 and other LGBTQ+ events at the Library of Congress, visit loc.gov/lgbt.
- LGBTQ+ Student: A Resource Guide serves as an introduction into the excellent collection of LGBTQ+ resources available at the Library of Congress.
- The Library of Congress Blogs provide the opportunity for staff from the various divisions to share their personal voice through compelling stories and fascinating facts. Read a selection of posts on LGBTQ+ topics.
- The LGBTQ Activism and Contributions primary source set includes select primary sources along with a Teacher's Guide so teachers and students can begin to explore individuals, movements, and events from the nation's LGBTQ history.
- Watch documentary footage from LGBTQ+ rights pioneer Lilli Vincenz in our National Screening Room, including "Gay and Proud," which features a rare glimpse of the first Pride march in New York City. Another film, "The Second Largest Minority," highlights LGBTQ+ protests in Washington, D.C.
- In 2013, President Barack Obama cited Stonewall in his Inaugural Address, marking the first time in history LGBTQ+ rights had been mentioned.
- Read the PBS Documentary on the Mattachine Society, 1950.

World War I

A Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sofia in Sarajevo on **June 28**, 1914, setting off a chain of events that would culminate in a world war by August. Five years later, on **June 28**, 1919, Germany and the Allies signed the Treaty of Versailles, formally ending World War I and providing for the creation of the League of Nations.



Ypres, Belgium, 1919. William Lester King, photographer, 1919. By courtesy of Military Intelligence Div., General Staff, U.S. Army. Panoramic Photographs. Prints & Photographs Division

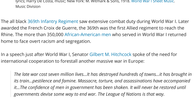
After the 1914 assassinations, an elaborate network of treaties among the nations of Europe led to a rapid escalation in the "Great War" between the Central Powers—including Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Allied nations of Britain, France, Italy, and Russia. On April 6, 1917, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies.

The Navy needs you! Don't read American history – make it! James Montgomery Flagg. The H.C. Miner Litho. Co. N.Y., 1917. Posters, World War I Posters. Prints & Photographs Division

In this selection from an American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940 interview, a veteran recalls his experiences in the First World War:

I spent some time in Paris. Stayed at the Hotel Continental there. I remember the Crystal Palace…the soldiers and girls promenaded on the main drag of each other. It was a great war—but not for the poor guys up front in the mud and blood.

"No Bombs Dropping." Thomas Richmond, interviewer. Montpelier, Vermont, ca. 1936-1939. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940. Manuscript Division



A Wrecked German Ammunition Train, Decorated by Shell Fire. Washington, D.C.: Schutz Group Photographers, [1918]. Panoramic Photographs. Prints & Photographs Division

Germany eventually sought an armistice that went into effect on November 11, 1918. The peace agreement was supposed to be structured around the Fourteen Points of reconciliation developed by President Woodrow Wilson.

The Fourteen Points, which included a provision for the formation of the League of Nations, were meant to prevent "the crime of war." But the actual terms of the Treaty of Versailles were far from peaceful. The treaty stipulated that Germany lose approximately 13 percent of its territory and all of its overseas colonies, as well as pay reparations for damages caused by the war. It also limited the size of the German military and restricted the production of armaments.

"When the Good Light Makes a Record of a Hero's Deed He Draws No Color Line." Ted Trainor, lyrics; Harry De Costa, music. New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1918. World War I Sheet Music. Music Division

The all-black 369th Infantry Regiment saw extensive combat duty during World War I. Later awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the 369th was the first Allied regiment to reach the Rhine. The more than 350,000 African-American men who served in World War I returned home to face racism and segregation.

In a speech just after World War I, Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock spoke of the need for international cooperation to forestall another massive war in Europe:

The late war cost seven million lives…It has destroyed hundreds of towns…it has brought in its train…pestilence and famine, sickness, misery, and unassumable have accompanied it…The confidence of men in government has been shaken. It will never be restored until governments show some way to end war. The League of Nations is that way.

League of Nations

Trouble with senators who oppose the League of Nations

(The trouble with senators who oppose the League of Nations) [sound recording] /Gilbert Hitchcock,

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League of Nations." Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock, New York: Nation's Forum, 1919. American Leaders Speak: Recordings from World War I. Motion Picture, Broadcasting & Recorded Sound Division

The U.S. Senate refused, however, to ratify a treaty that included a provision for membership in the League of Nations. Opponents to membership feared an international organization that would have the power to impose sanctions on its members in the interest of collective security. Led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles on November 19, 1919 and again on March 19, 1920. Thus, U.S. participation in the organization that Wilson had worked so hard to create was nullified.

Not until July 2, 1921, did Congress, by joint resolution, formally end U.S. participation in the Great War. Months later, the U.S. ratified separate treaties with Germany, Austria, and Hungary.

"We want our daddy dear back home (hello central give me France)." James M. Reilly, lyrics; Harry De Costa, music; New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1918. World War I Sheet Music. Music Division

For American children, the end of the war meant their fathers would be coming home. The lyrics of this sentimental song were clearly meant to tug the heartstrings of parents:

> *"Hello, Central, give me France,*
> *I want to talk to Daddy dear,*
> *Because I'd like to tell him while I got the chance,*
> *The stork brought a brand new baby here. Won't you say that its me*
> *And he'll answer, you'll see;*
> *So hurry, please, and get him on the phone,*
>
> *Hello, Central, give me France,*
> *'Cause we want our Daddy dear back home."*

Learn More

- Explore a comprehensive portal to the Library's extensive holdings on the subject of World War I (1914–1918). The portal is a one-stop destination page for digitized materials related to the war. The exhibition, Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I, includes a Timeline and videos that collectively examine how World War I affected the United States and changed the world.
- World War I: A Resource Guide compiles links to World War I resources throughout the Library of Congress Web site, including photographs, documents, newspapers, films, sheet music, and sound recordings.
- The Library's Veterans History Project collects the stories of those involved in our nation's wars. The collection is fortunate to include hundreds of stories from veterans of World War I. Experiencing War: World War I: The Great War includes a selection of those stories. To find more stories, search the project database and limit the results to World War I and other criteria of interest.
- Search the complete seventy-one-week run of the World War I edition of the newspaper The Stars and Stripes. Published in France by the United States Army from February 8, 1918, to June 13, 1919, the eight-page weekly featured news, poetry, cartoons, and sports coverage.
- Explore the collection Posters: World War I Posters to view approximately 1,900 posters created between 1914 and 1920.
- World War I Sheet Music contains over 14,000 pieces of sheet music relating to what ultimately became known as the First World War, with the greatest number coming from the years of the United States' active involvement (1917-1918) and the immediate postwar period.
- During the World War I era (1914-18), leading U.S. newspapers took advantage of a new printing technique called rotogravure that produced richly detailed, high quality illustrations. The online collection, Newspaper Pictorials: World War I Rotogravures, 1914 to 1919, includes the Sunday rotogravure sections of the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune*, as well as the book, *The War of the Nations: Portfolio in Rotogravure Etchings.* The images in this collection document events of World War I and popular American culture of that era.
- Search Chronicling America to find historic American newspaper articles related to World War I. In addition, the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room has created a series of topic guides to the newspapers included in Chronicling America, including guides on the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.
- Search the Panoramic Photographs collection on *World War* to retrieve hundreds of panoramic photos of battlefields and military life.
- Examine the Woodrow Wilson Papers to read manuscripts related to World War I. Highlights include Wilson's statement on the armistice ending World War I and his draft of the covenant for the League of Nations.
- Search on *World War* in American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940 to read more veterans' stories. This collection includes some 2,900 documents collected in twenty-four states.
- Search on *League of Nations* or *Wilson* in American Leaders Speak: Recordings from World War I to listen to and read speeches recorded at the time of the controversy over America's participation in the League. For example, hear Senator Warren G. Harding, state that "...the aspiring conscience of humankind must commit the nations of the earth to a new and better relationship."
- The John J. Pershing Papers contain the diaries, notebooks, and address books of John Joseph Pershing, U.S. army officer and commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I.

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