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Never Silent: Development of Gay Activism in the Cold War Midwest

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NEVER SILENT:

DEVELOPMENT OF GAY ACTIVISM IN THE COLD WAR MIDWEST

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Abstract

Though not typically seen as a burgeoning environment for gay life, the Midwest nevertheless has a rich history of queer culture. Focusing on gay activism during the Cold War era, this thesis discusses the rise and influence of homophile organizations in the Midwest. Homophile organizations and the movement's ideals of accommodation and integration played an integral role in the activism coming out of World War II. The homophile movement, though, did not wane with the development of the more radical gay liberation movement. Instead, the homophile movement in the Midwest evolved and played its own part alongside radical activists. Historically, scholarship has focused on the coasts as the center of gay life, but this leaves out the experience of the less densely populated Midwest. Further, scholarship has put Stonewall at the beginning of gay activism, however, this ignores the activism that came before Stonewall. Although World War II and the Cold War period altered public perception of what it meant to be gay, homophile organizations in the Midwest reveal an activist continuity that adapted to the times by shedding secrecy surrounding homophile organizations, embracing the influence of radical militancy, while continuing to espouse homophile ideals in light of both disease and conservative pushback. Major primary sources used include news articles from publications throughout the Midwest, collections from the Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, and a variety of secondary sources. With conservative pushback once again on the rise, queer activists must look to the past to understand not only where the pushback is coming from but to examine the path forward to a more inclusive future.

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Introduction

Two Worlds: Queer Scholarship in the Contemporary United States

In the summer of 1970, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents convened to continue the discussion about a course on homosexuality to be offered on the Lincoln campus that fall. The course, "Proseminar in Homophile Studies," was a collaborative, interdisciplinary course between the departments of English, Anthropology, and Sociology that made the front page of the *Lincoln Journal Star*. The coordinator was Dr. Louis Crompton. Crompton also served as the national chairman of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations and as the president of the Lincoln-Omaha Council on Religion and the Homosexual. The other instructors were Professor James Cole, director of the clinical training program in psychology, and Dr. Louis Martin, a psychiatrist in the mental health division of the University Health Service. A number of specialists from other fields would also assist.[1]

Regent Dick Herman of Omaha raised questions about the course and Crompton's role in it. Herman inquired why the English department was included, except for it allowing Crompton to be an instructor. Further, Herman brought the issue of objectivity into the discussion. Herman stated, "I don't think a man can teach the course objectively when he maintains that homosexuality is a natural phenomenon." Yet, according to the syllabus, the course would teach "undergraduates, graduate students, and students in professional programs preparing to work as lawyers, police, psychiatrists, social workers,

[1] Milan Wall, "After Two Executive Sessions…Regents To Continue Discussion About Course on Homosexuality," *Lincoln Star* (10 July 1970), pg. 1.

doctors, clergy, etc., to look at homosexuality from the point of view of a variety of disciplines." This exposure would help to actually provide objectivity. The course's "aim is to see the homosexual not simply as a textbook or clinical case but as a member of a minority group and as a citizen in the American society." It also mentioned that the course would deal with attitudes toward homosexuality rather than focus on cures. Herman objected to how the course was laid out, instead preferring a focus on looking for cures.[2] Herman represented the attitude of many people in the United States in both previous and future decades that resisted homosexuals from coming out of the closet and living ordinary lives in mainstream society. They advocated for a "cure." Homophile groups like the Lincoln-Omaha Council on Religion and the Homosexual, in contrast, actively fought for homosexuals to be included in society on equal terms as others.

As the controversy over the course in Lincoln suggests, the study of queer history is a relatively new field. Gay people did not emerge as a coherent political group in mainstream society until the latter portion of the twentieth century. That is not to say homosexual people were not present or active in the history of the United States before this. As this thesis argues, the homophile movement in the Cold War era was significant not only on the coasts, but in the Midwest, as well. Their activism led to successful integration, including the development of course curricula like that in Lincoln. The homophile movement continued to play a role well after the impact of the more radical gay rights movement. Instead, the two movements collaborated in the Midwest to address

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[2] Milan Wall, "After Two Executive Sessions…Regents To Continue Discussion About Course on Homosexuality," *Lincoln Star* (10 July 1970), pg. 1.

the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. This thesis argues for continuity in homophile activism before and after the rise of gay liberation in the Midwest. Today, the scholarship on the gay experience is rich and stretches far beyond the counterculture movements that originated in the 1960s. From military policy to liberation studies to the AIDS crisis, many historians have tackled the question of what it meant to be gay in the Cold War period.

Traditionally, the scholarship on gay rights activism focused on Stonewall as a major turning point in the advancement of gay rights. Stonewall is popularly viewed as the launching point of the gay rights movement. The Stonewall Riots were a series of violent protests that began on June 28, 1969, centering around the gay bar, the Stonewall Inn. David Carter in his 2004 book *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution,* focuses on the Stonewall Riots and the activism they spurred in the United States. Carter paints a grim picture of homosexual life before Stonewall and discounts the gay political movement prior to Stonewall as being of modest means. For Carter, Stonewall was an inspiring event for homosexuals across the country and around the world. Briefly looking at the efforts of the Mattachine Society on the west coast, Carter argued the homophile movement lost its vision of political activism. It was not until 1969 that the movement gained steam and held political authority in a way different from that of the homophile generation. Carter holds that the events surrounding Stonewall were unique and required the specific time, geography, and location of Stonewall for the riots to come to fruition and create the uprising of gay power that followed. The position of Stonewall within New York City, according to Carter, contributed to the success of the

riots, as well. He states, "only in a very large city were there gay activists with the specialized skills to take on leadership roles to help shape and direct the event so that it could realize its potential."[3] Carter also pulls in the influence of the New Left and the anti-war movement on the riots, notably when looking at events outside New York City (ex. San Francisco and Washington, D.C.). Finally, Carter's characterization of the rebellion is that most of the rioters were Caucasian, few were Latino, and most were effeminate, but almost none were transgender; he attributes the Stonewall Riots to the young, homeless homosexuals.

While much has focused on Stonewall, other scholarship has challenged this 1960s periodization of gay rights activism, showing how much happened before 1969. *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990* by Eric Marcus (1992) shows that the struggle for gay rights did not begin with Stonewall. Marcus critiques the emphasis of Stonewall in academic work, and challenges historians who put the gay and mainstream press at the beginning of gay activism. While he states that doing so is a necessary misconception that offers the benefit of a clean starting point and demarcation – before Stonewall and after Stonewall – he argues that by investing so much importance in the event, academics have elevated Stonewall to mythic status. Stonewall as a turning point diminishes what came before and attempts to tie everything that came after to a single point of origin. In *Making History*, Stonewall takes a place as *part* of the struggle for gay rights in the United States rather than the origin of the

[3] David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 2004), pg. 257.

activism. Structuring his book from 1945 to 1990, Marcus examines gay life through oral histories since World War II looking at the experiences of war, the homophile movement, the rise of leftist and radically militant activism, and the impact of AIDS and antigay backlash. Marcus includes voices of high-profile leaders to forgotten contributors to the effort, and while acknowledging his text is not a comprehensive history of the postwar struggle for gay and lesbian rights, it does provide an important national study cross-section of the movement.[4]

George Chauncey also challenges Stonewall as a turning point. In his *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (1994), the development of the gay world in New York City pre-World War II decades is brought to the forefront. In prewar New York, effeminacy was the deciding factor in defining homosexuality, not sexual desire. Hetero-homosexual binary distinctions did not emerge until after the 1940s, though masculinity still divided the gay world along fairy, queer, and trade archetypes. Chauncey challenges the myths of isolation, invisibility, and internalization of gay life by showing this occurred with the postwar developments and not as much in the prewar history of the gay world in New York City. Chauncey also differs from other historians by looking at working-class men in African American, Irish, and Italian immigrant neighborhoods instead of elite, white middle-class persons as sources.[5]

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[4] Eric Marcus, *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990* (HarperPerennial: New York, 1992).
[5] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (Basic Books: New York, 1994).

The Stonewall periodization of queer history is also challenged by studies of military policy and the impact of war on gay rights. The military has been a definitive source of homophobia and exclusion since the 1940s. Marq Schuling, in "An Invading Army of Rockettes: How US Military Policy on Homosexuality and the Voyeurism of the Vietnam War Era Shaped the Gay Rights Movement, 1956-1969" (2018), argues that the military's secret work on the Crittenden report, which found that there was no factual reason that homosexuals posed a national security risk, helped to shape an official gay identity and that the Vietnam draft was an event that forced men to confront their own sexuality. For those that did not serve, military policy served as a source of protest even before Stonewall. He further suggests that the reporting on homosexuality during wartime changed the baseline of normalcy, altering public perception of homosexuality. Schuling's work focuses on events happening before Stonewall that shaped the gay rights movement.[6]

The politicization of homosexuality gave rise to two different generations of queer individuals. One generation arose after the end of World War II and the Korean War that created homophile organizations focused on transnational linkages and integration into society.[7] The characteristics between liberal accommodation and radical liberation have been outlined by Kristin G. Esterberg in "From Accommodation to Liberation: A Social Movement Analysis of Lesbians in the Homophile Movement"

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[6] Marq Schuling, "An Invading Army of Rockettes: How US Military Policy on Homosexuality and the Voyeurism of the Vietnam War Era Shaped the Gay Rights Movement, 1956-1969," University of Puget Sound, Theses, 2018.
[7] David S. Churchill, "Transnational and Homophile Political Culture in the Postwar Decades," *GLQ* 15, no. 1 (2009).

(1994). Esterberg argues that, unlike ethnic groups, lesbian and gay identity is not typically passed on to children. Using competition theories of collective action, Esterberg follows the history of activity within the Daughters of Bilitis. She suggests that competition theory can explain the decline of the homophile accommodationist movement at the end of the 1960s that gave way to liberation movements. Moreover, Esterberg argues that the success of militant homophile groups and radical gay rights activists in the 1970s was due to the willingness to separate queerness from heterosexuals.[8] Whereas homophile groups wanted to integrate with and find a place within heterosexual society, radical liberation groups were content with creating their own spaces.

The military was not alone in deciding the fate of homosexuals in both the military and civilian spheres. Written in 1962 before Stonewall's influence, Robert E. L. Masters' *The Homosexual Revolution* revolves around sexual politics, focusing on the role of homophile organizations in gay activism after World War II. He states that the "homosexual problem," referring to the discrimination they faced, had become a topic of conversation on all levels of American society. He argues homosexual activism against this discrimination, heightened in the Cold War, had been a quiet revolution, though busy and far-reaching. While hinting toward a potential future with a dramatic uprising (i.e. Stonewall), Masters credits homophile groups with advancements made without general recognition by the public. He also credits the work of sexologists and psychoanalysts in

[8] Kristin G. Esterberg, "From Accomodation to Liberation: A Social Movement Analysis of Lesbians in the Homophile Movement," *Gender & Society* 8, no. 3 (1994).

bringing about early change toward the acceptance of homosexuality. Masters provides an outside-in, journalistic view on the presence of gay activism, that while troubled at times, remains an important early consideration of the changing views on homosexuality and homophile organizations.[9]

Psychiatry also played an intimate role in the defining of military policy and public perception. Written in 1999, Jennifer Terry's *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine and Homosexuality in Modern Society* explores the medical model of homosexuality. Other historians, such as Jonathan Ned Katz, Jeffrey Weeks, and George Chauncey have also written on this topic. Terry argues that homosexuality in the twentieth century acquired a "symbolic centrality in American culture" and obsessive national interest.[10] She follows European psychiatrists' findings that Americans either followed or reacted to. Three patterns of views emerge in her text: Naturalists, Psychogenists, and Degenerationists. Terry argues that the state unleashed an array of infrastructure to police homosexuality. The political problem of homosexuality in the twentieth century inevitably influenced military policy.[11]

One way gay and lesbian individuals came together as a community during the 1950s and 1960s was through homophile publications. Craig Loftin examines this relationship in *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America* from 2012.

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[9] Robert E. L. Masters, *The Homosexual Revolution: A Challenging Expose of the Social and Political Directions of a Minority Group* (Julian Press, Inc.: New York, 1962).
[10] Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pg. 1.
[11] Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

Letters to ONE magazine, an early gay publication in the United States, are the focus of this book. The letters provide insight into the thoughts and feelings of these individuals and reveal issues such as job discrimination, police harassment, and persecution in churches and the military. Loftin finds that gay men and lesbians met bigotry with resilience. Loftin looks at the military, family life, and marriage and how dissonant forces in these areas proved challenging for gay men and lesbians to navigate in the postwar period. This book is an analysis of letters from 1953 to 1965. Though not necessarily representative of all Americans, the letters provide a glimpse into the collective mentality of the homosexual community across the country. Loftin counters the narrative that only a "brave few" were active in the homophile movement during this time and instead explores the vast network of people who shared discontent and wanted change.[12]

Also written and edited by Craig Loftin in 2012 was *Letters to ONE: Gay and Lesbian Voices from the 1950s and 1960s.* The letters included in this text are from a similar period and were written to the editors of *ONE*. Although some may have been edited and published, most of Loftin's letters had not been published in any form. ONE, Inc., was founded in 1952 when several Mattachine members broke off because they desired a monthly magazine that would mobilize the homosexual community better than Mattachine's secretive organizing strategies. Loftin holds that this grass-roots effort is often overlooked in academic scholarship and is bringing to light the efforts of these people. The text contains letters from twenty-five states and the District of Columbia

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[12] Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012).

including several Midwestern states. Loftin found that the letters were not depressing and despairing despite the challenges the men and women faced. Loftin examines four events – World War II, the Kinsey Reports, cold war national security hysteria, and the black civil rights movements – as creating the context for the widespread growth of a civil rights impulse among the homosexual community.[13]

An account of gay history during the Cold War era comes with Eric Cervini's *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. The United States of America.*Written in 2020, Cervini looks at the persecution homosexuals suffered for sexual deviation under the Lavender Scare after World War II. For Cervini, homosexual pride emerged slowly from secrecy and shame out of the 1950s tearoom. The book follows Frank Kameny, a leader in the gay rights and homophile movements, and examines the relevant context around him including medical classification and Washington politics. The focus on individual identities gives life to the narrative but limits the author's connection outside of the person's realm of influence. However, looking at a founding voice of the gay rights movement like in *Deviant's War* is pertinent to the understanding of this field.[14] His focus on Kameny shows the continuity between homophile organizations and radical activism.

Recent developments have led scholars to look at gossip to connect to sexuality with political history, especially in the Cold War era. Claire Bond Potter looks at gossip

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[13] Craig M. Loftin, *Letters to ONE: Gay and Lesbian Voices from the 1950s and 1960s* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012).
[14] Eric Cervini, *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. The United States of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).

relating to J. Edgar Hoover in "Queer Hoover: Sex, Lies, and Political History" (2006). In this article, Potter finds that while Susan Rosenstiel made a fantastic story about Hoover, it was likely gossip created to seek fame and fortune. Nevertheless, this gossip used as a source was a source of a new homophobia. It is through work like this that activists have rewrote prevailing scholarship. Christopher M. Elias in his 2021 book *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* follows gossip and rumor on homosexuality, masculinity, and power. Elias explores the connection between communists as sworn American enemies to homosexuals, "deviant fellow travelers who were inherently subversive."[15] *Gossip Men* examines how gender, sexuality, gossip and national surveillance intersect between 1885 and 1954, with a particular focus on the period 1945-1954. Because of this growing surveillance state masculinity, homosexuality became a diagnosis of perversion but also became a risk of exposing oneself to blackmail and therefore undermining the nation's moral fabric.[16] Like Terry in *An American* Obsession, Elias finds homosexuality became an obsessive national interest. Elias was interested in two forms of gossip: distilled malice and positive rumor. The question that arises is whether homophile organizations and their publications can be considered gossip magazines. Constructing a gay identity was important to these groups and fits into the category of positive rumor – project positivity in light of

[15] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 2.
[16] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 6.

negativity. Elias shows how gossip was used to tear down homosexuals and demonize them. Why cannot the same be said about the reverse?

Scholarship has also challenged the East Coast centrism of gay activism history and instead looking at the west coast and San Francisco. Here, the defining impact on gay rights activism was the Vietnam War rather than Stonewall. Margaret Cruikshank takes an insider view of the gay rights movement in her book *The Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement* (1992). Having participated herself since 1974, Cruikshank has mainly observed the movement in San Francisco which she regards as the center of the gay rights movement in the United States, which challenges the east-coast centrism of other scholarship. She attributes the proliferation of understanding that gay rights are a major social and political issue in the United States in the 1990s to the growth of the gay liberation movement and AIDS. Cruikshank claims that, while sexual practices are clearly a private matter, they became politicized when groups and institutions tried to stamp them out. The movement has validity as a radical movement because the sexual identity is a condemned minority identity and great numbers of people are involved in coming out. Though attributing that most gay people believe that Stonewall was the starting point for the gay rights movement, she finds that Stonewall would not have had the mobilizing effect had pioneering advocates not worked from 1950 to 1969 to lay the groundwork. Cruikshank also takes the position that 1990 marked a turning point for gay and lesbian liberation because of the impact events had on the dominant culture.[17]

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[17] Margaret Cruikshank, *The Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement* (Routledge: New York, 1992).

As a result of increased scrutiny during wartime, homosexuality became a politicized topic in American politics. Justin David Suran in his article "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam" (2001) enters the discourse by placing gay men and women into the broader context of 1960s radicalism. In doing so, he connects the Vietnam War/anti-war experience with Gay Liberation. Suran argues that the Vietnam War experience was central to the emergence of the Gay Liberation movement in the United States. As a result of this connection, Suran helps explain why gay Americans emerged as an identity-affirming community and interest group after 1969. Suran suggests that other historians have missed the Vietnam War's unique relevance to homosexual men.[18]

Will Fellows' *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (1998) also decenters the coasts and looks at the lives of gay men that grew up in the rural Midwest. While most moved to an urban setting upon aging up, a handful returned to the farm life. The majority feared they would not be accepted in the rural areas from which they came. However, fitting into the rural community was seen as more important than living openly as a gay man.[19] The social isolation of farm life was both a hindrance and helpful in coming to recognize being different from others at a young age.[20] For Fellows' study, many did not comprehend what being gay was until going off to college because there

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[18] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001).
[19] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pg. 7.
[20] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pg. 15.

was no real knowledge of the gay experience in the rural setting.[21] Access to information about sex was limited and Fellows finds that many interviewees did not make a particular effort to obtain information about homosexuality or, if one did make an effort, they came up short.[22] Further, most of the information available before 1970 was unfavorable.

Stewart Van Cleve also seeks to decenter the urban coasts so prominent in queer scholarship. In his book *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota* (2012), he argues for a broader, regional queer history. Van Cleve suggests doing so is important because local LGBT communities have been maligned, mispresented, or ignored and the queer experience has been oversimplified as licentious and drunken.[23] Van Cleve also decenters gay bars as sites of sexual expression and community building. He adds to the historiography a new symbolic turning point in the national struggle for gay and lesbian rights – that of pieing Anita Bryant in Des Moines.[24] The pieing occurred during an October 14, 1977, press conference in Des Moines, Iowa, when Bryant was being questioned about her national crusade against homosexuals. Gay rights activist Tom Higgins threw the pie which prompted Bryant to pray for his salvation after suggesting "at least it was a fruit pie" in reference to the slur of gay people being "fruity." Bryant's core campaign was based on homosexual deviance and how it was evil so gay people did

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[21] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).
[22] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pg. 18.
[23] Stewart Van Cleve, *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pg. 2.
[24] Stewart Van Cleve, *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pg. 84.

not deserve rights. The act can serve as a turning point for gay activism because it was an instance of fighting to turn the rhetoric back in favor, or at least indifference, of homosexuals.

St. Sukie de la Croix takes an even more specific look at decentering the coasts in queer history by focusing on Chicago prior to Stonewall in his book *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (2012). De la Croix finds that gay men and lesbians were fighting for gay rights in Chicago long before the events of Stonewall. Viewing homosexuals as a minority group, de la Croix suggests that homosexuals were among the first Americans who did not necessarily come through Ellis Island as a cohesive group.[25] War, however, provided a unique opportunity for a gay community to flourish in Chicago. He argues that organized crime in cities controlled vice during World War II and, therefore, controlled the gay bars. Payoffs to police and politicians, however, ensured "business as usual" for these establishments.[26] His research also uncovered how during the Cold War, Republicans discovered outing homosexuals as a means of power, whereas prior to World War II, sexual improprieties were largely ignored.[27] The first homophile organizations that arose in this period following World War II operated under secrecy. However, this secrecy began to change and evolve. De la Croix also argues, though, that the homophile movement lost steam with Stonewall, with emphasis shifting

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[25] St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pg. 6.
[26] St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pg. 161.
[27] St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pg. 170.

from a 'softly-softly approach to the young radical in-your-face confrontational zaps of the Gay Liberation Front."[28] The role of homophile organizations should not be discounted, however, as many groups like Mattachine Midwest served a vital role post-Stonewall.

Locating queer culture in a region not traditionally associated with homosexual life can be difficult. Siobhan Somerville's "Locating Queer Culture in the Big Ten," however, offers a sense of queer culture in the Midwest by utilizing her own campus as the site of primary research. She looks to *Odd Girl Out* set at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as countering dominant histories of sexuality in which lesbian, gay and queer culture emerged in major urban centers not in Midwestern college towns. She argues that universities played a generative role in the postwar history of sexuality and queer culture in the United States. Somerville's work also embodies queer critique in that it is cautious of focusing on the hierarchy of straight/gay identities and looks at the ways in which power tends to gather around sexual norms.[29]

Moreover, in Nicholas Syrett's "Mobility, Circulation, and Correspondence: Queer White Men in the Midcentury Midwest" (2014), the possibilities of queer men in the Midwest at midcentury are explored. While the sample is not indicative of all queer Midwesterners, characteristics shared amongst queer people are visible. The low population density of the Midwest created an environment, not necessarily unique to the

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[28] St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pg. 272.
[29] Siobhan Somerville, "Locating Queer Culture in the Big Ten," *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* 6, no. 3 (Winter 2013).

region, but nevertheless important to its development. While queer communities existed in many smaller cities of the Midwest including Columbus, Omaha, and Des Moines, Syrett argues that discretion was necessary in negotiating queer identities and connections in these places. Men travelled to meet a network of other queer men to maintain this discretion that was necessary in their small towns and villages. Syrett also counters the linear trend from rural to urban in queer historiography favoring rather a circular model where they moved from one point to another and then back to the point of origin.[30]

Furthermore, Timothy Stewart-Winter, in his 2015 book *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics,* looks at how the gay liberation movement in Chicago had more economic diversity among participants than in New York and San Francisco. Stewart-Winter also demonstrates that continuity existed between gay liberationism and gay politics in the postwar era. Moreover, he looks at urban liberation movements through an intersectional lens, examining how identity and privilege shape activism.[31] In contrast to *Farm Boys,* Stewart-Winter looks at the great gay migration following World War II where gay individuals from the rural and suburban areas traded their renown for urban anonymity and community.[32] He argues the rise of the gay movement was shaped by liberal faith in civil liberties, though mobilization was weaker in Chicago than in New

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[30] Nicholas Syrett, "Mobility, Circulation, and Correspondence: Queer White Men in the Midcentury Midwest," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 20, no. 1-2 (2014).
[31] Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).
[32] Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pg. 1.

York or San Francisco. Even so, Stewart-Winter suggests Chicago is more representative of the dozens of other regional magnets for gay migration like Atlanta, Seattle, Boston, and Dallas.[33] Stewart-Winter also decenters the federal government in American life post-New Deal and instead focuses on grassroots organizations. He discounts the rural experience, however, arguing that gay politics, until recently, was urban politics.[34]

Max Turner Monegan explores the urban experience in the Midwest. In "A Different Kind of Community: Queerness and Urban Ambiguity in Northeast Ohio, 1945-1980" (2019), he examines the constructions of queerness in an urban setting. Looking at Cleveland and Akron, Monegan argues the barriers that existed in rural spaces that prevented communication that exists in urban areas.[35] Like Stewart-Winter, he discounts the rural experience.

Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies (2016) edited by Gray, Johnson, and Gilley brings the focus of queer studies to the countryside. This collection of sixteen essays is united by the frustration of the dominant urban framework in queer studies. Departing from the urban context allows the authors to challenge what is considered to represent the queer community at large.[36]

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[33] Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pg. 3-4.
[34] Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pg. 11.
[35] Max Turner Monegan, "A Different Kind of Community: Queerness and Urban Ambiguity in Northeast Ohio, 1945-1980," ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019.
[36] Mary L. Gray, Colin R. Johnson, and Brian J. Gilley, *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies* (New York: NYU Press, 2016).

The 4-H Harvest: Sexuality and the State in Rural America (2016) by Gabriel Rosenberg looks to the agrarian center of the United States as the basis of his study on sexuality. Examining the origins and development of 4-H, Rosenberg embeds the federal government in the center of modern agrarian life. The 4-H program provided the government a conduit to family farms and conditioned youth to partner with government programs. Through the Department of Agriculture and extension service, along with scientists, home economists, and social welfare reformers, the government sought to modernize farms, combat perceived rural degeneracy, and strengthen the nation through healthy farm families. In doing so, the government became a cultural and scientific figurehead in rural America. Clubs became sites of heterosexual socialization as the organization's patriotism created a division between healthy, white, American bodies and those that were not so. Throughout the Midwest, this would fuel rhetoric and beliefs against homosexuals.[37]

Whether rural or urban, the creation of a new gay identity and formation following the Gay Liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s positioned the community to face the HIV/AIDS crisis head on. When HIV/AIDS became prominent in the United States, this opened new doors for historians to investigate the daily lives of queer people. For example, Gregory M. Herek and Beverly Greene show how AIDS changed the lives of thousands of individuals in 1980 with their book *AIDS, Identity, and Community: The HIV Epidemic and Lesbians and Gay Men* published in 1995. Herek's

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[37] Gabriel N. Rosenberg, *The 4-H Harvest: Sexuality and the State in Rural America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

and Greene's focus on collecting oral histories of those in the gay community that had survived the AIDS era in the 1980s provides a look at how the disease shifted perspectives. The two discovered that the epidemic altered life for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who had come out before the onset of the disease. This demographic witnessed the dramatic changes brought about by AIDS to their community. Those coming out in the early 1980s, however, have only known gay, lesbian, and bisexual life against the veil of AIDS and HIV. Coming out in the 1980s, the gay experience was always marked by death and disease.[38]

While documenting the horrors of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, more recent scholarship from Perry N. Halkitis, in his 2014 book *The AIDS Generation: Stories of Survival and Resilience,* is taking a more uplifting tone toward the disease in light of new medicine. Halkitis expands the scholarship around HIV to improve the visibility of those affected and shows how there is more than one story of AIDS. AIDS happened to the gay community; this cannot be argued otherwise. Halkitis explores how AIDS affected three generations of gay men. However, Halkitis does not challenge AIDS as being a primarily gay disease nor acknowledge the experience of lesbians.[39]

The focus of AIDS historical scholarship, in general, has often lacked a gendered dimension, specifically ignoring the experience of lesbians in the course and treatment of the disease. That being said, some scholars have taken an intersectional look at AIDS and

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[38] Gregory M. Herek and Beverly Greene, *AIDS, Identity, and Community: The HIV Epidemic and Lesbians and Gay Men* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995).
[39] Perry N. Halkitis, *The AIDS Generation: Stories of Survival and Resilience* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

gender. For example, Jennifer Brier's work in "'I'm Still Surviving": Oral Histories of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago" from 2018 brings in a consideration of gender. Brier challenges the white gay man trope of the AIDS epidemic in historical scholarship. Brier finds that women were not acknowledged as victims of HIV/AIDS until the mid-2000s. She argues that it was likely that men and women, queer or straight, were likely sick but avoided seeking treatment due to fear of discrimination or dismissal. Examining how AIDS crosses the gender barrier is important to rediscovering the stories of those who have been lost to this disease.[40]

Building on this emerging scholarship, this thesis argues for the continuity of gay rights activism from post-World War II through the 1980s in the Midwest. Although World War II and the Cold War period altered public perception of what it meant to be gay, homophile organizations in the Midwest reveal an activist continuity that adapted to the times by shedding secrecy surrounding homophile organizations, embracing the influence of radical militancy, while continuing to espouse homophile ideals in light of both disease and conservative pushback. This work challenges both the Stonewall thesis and the east/west coast focus in previous scholarship. Further, it argues for continuity in homophile activism from post-World War II through to the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and for decentering the coasts by examining the Midwest.

In the Midwest, homophile organizations in urban centers influenced the rural setting in creating a political identity through such things as a discovered minority

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[40] Jennifer Brier, ""I'm Still Surviving": Oral Histories of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago," *Oral History Review* 45, no. 1 (2018).

affiliation, evolving public outreach goals, and remaining in rural areas. By examining the homophile movement's accommodation in the context of the Cold War, this thesis revises the understanding of what it meant to be gay during this period in the Midwest. While 1950s conformists argue that homosexuals were persecuted and pushed to the shadows for the sake of fighting Communism, a more accurate representation is that the queer community was thriving under pressure, battling for its place in society. This thesis will examine the role of homophile organizations in this more rural, Midwestern context. Was it a lack of publication or instead because of a personally held view of homosexuality that restricted access in a time it was defined as an illness? Fellows' findings support the latter statement in that the rural view of public homosexuality was generally disapproving.[41] Additionally, was it Stonewall or another event that caused the information available to become more favorable after 1970? This thesis will also expand beyond the gay bar as the primary source of community building and instead look at the role and influence of homophile organizations and their publications to better understand activism. This paper is similar to Van Cleve in that solidification of distinct identities developed through activism.[42]

Scholarship has focused on the homophile movement which emerged in the United States following World War II. This trend in the scholarship also shows how much was happening prior to Stonewall. The homophile movement, in addition, has been

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[41] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pg. 20-21.
[42] Stewart Van Cleve, *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pg. 10.

identified separately from post-Stonewall radical political movements by both time periodization and style of activism. While post-Stonewall activism was distinctively radically liberationist, the homophile movement embodied liberal activism, accommodation, and integration. The radical liberationists pushed for social change through activism, while the liberal accommodationists sought equality through legal and electoral means.

Chapter One focuses on the post-war impact in the Midwest. During World War II and the Korean War, gay men were excluded from military service. Anti-sodomy laws were common, but no specific provision barred homosexuals from service until 1942. During the war, the new profession of military psychiatrists helped shape military policy, and by extension societal expectations, to exclude homosexuals whether before entering service or after being outed while in service to the United States. Psychiatry would play a large role in the perception of homosexuality during the early Cold War. The element of masculinity also influenced the gay rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s with prominent men such as Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin and Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska leading the charge against homosexuals in the federal government. This chapter explores this phenomenon of exclusion of gay men by society. This exclusion created a gay identity of fighting for inclusion and integration, giving rise to homophile organizations in the Midwest such as the Mattachine Midwest. Sources include Mattachine Midwest records, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, and the Chicago Gay Alliance Collection, all located at the Gerber/Hart Library in Chicago; various newspaper articles; and selected secondary sources.

Ideologies started to change following the mid-twentieth century. While the early Cold War era is traditionally seen as quite hostile to homosexuals given McCarthy-era accusations, life for gay men and lesbians was much more complicated. Chapter Two contends that by the 1960s, despite external pressures, the homophile movement did not end in the Midwest with Stonewall and instead evolved. During the Vietnam War, men could no longer easily claim a medical exemption for homosexuality. Once in, the best option to leave was being discharged over death and losing out on veterans' benefits. To be able to claim a medical exemption required a much higher burden of proof during the Vietnam era. However, an issue for homophile groups was still military integration. There were also changes to the psychiatric field that lead up to the 1973 decision where the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. An approach where the integrationist and liberationist models overlap is in running for office in the 1970s as an openly gay person. The 1970s also would see a repeal of many sodomy laws in the Midwest. These changes reflected greater societal acceptance, but conservative pushback was also present from leaders like Phyllis Schlafly. Sources for this chapter include collections from the Mattachine Midwest Records, Gary Nepon Collection, Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, from Gerber/Hart, and selected news articles.

Coming out of the Vietnam War era, gay rights activists were posed with new challenges. One of these news challenges was the introduction of the HIV virus that causes AIDS in the 1980s. Chapter Three explores this history in the Midwest. Due to a

lack of government leadership, gay rights groups like homophile organizations had to step in to assist with the crisis where the government was not. While society labeled AIDS as the "gay disease," homophile groups and integrationist politics collaborated with the gay liberation movement in the Midwest to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. During this time, religion played a conflicting role with some clergy in support of the homosexual community but with most falling in line with the Moral Majority and New Conservative Right. Again, gay activists would run for office in the 1980s, focusing on gay issues and the AIDS epidemic. In the Midwest, the crisis served, in part, to mobilize the gay vote. Sources for chapter three include collections from Edward Fleming, Ron Sable, M.D., Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force, David Bell, Mary Mack, Howard Brown Health Center, and David Ostrow from the Gerber/Hart Library, and selected news articles and secondary sources.

Three terms used throughout this thesis are important to the understanding of gay rights during this period in the United States. First, radical liberationists were part of a social and political movement – known as gay liberation – which began in the late 1960s that called for radical direct action and to counter societal shame around homosexuality with gay pride. Secondly, liberal accommodationists/integrationists, or the homophile movement, called for a place within mainstream society by operating within the existing legal framework and reached people through publications like newsletters. While generally considered two separate movements, with one ending as the other began, this thesis argues that the liberal accommodationists did not disappear after Stonewall and instead remained an integral piece of gay rights in the Midwest. Finally, this work is

centered in the Midwest. Similar to other historians, such as Jon Lauck, this thesis defines the scope of the Midwest as Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Lauck finds this region to be populist in nature, rooted in community, and opposing to the characteristics of the East or South.[43] The borders of the Midwest are often fluid and full of complexity. Rather than identifying a subset of the Midwest, this thesis looks more broadly at the region of the Midwest. Without diminishing the complexity that does exist in the Midwest, this thesis is showing how the urban commercial centers influenced rural areas that had less activism. In this way, the Midwest has a considerable distinctiveness that can separate it as an area of queer study. This region carries similar values, beliefs, and cultures. Soil also is an important resource in the Midwest so the region is often defined by its agricultural roots. Commercial cities dot the region with a patchwork of small towns and farming communities in between. While the Midwest has a mix of urban and rural centers, other regions that include New York and San Francisco that queer research is predominately focused on are visibly more urban in nature. Being queer during this period was a challenge and being queer in a small town or farm was even more challenging than being in a city. The culture and values of the Midwest make it a distinctive place of study. Therefore, despite being more conservative compared to the urban coasts, the Midwest and gay activism are nevertheless connected in this history of gay rights.

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[43] Jon Lauck, *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013).

Chapter One

On the Horizon: The Rise of Homophile Organizations Following World War II

Homosexuality has existed throughout history, but until more recently the topic was obscured and pushed aside with documentation being limited or difficult to find. This is not to say homosexual life was not flourishing and unique before gay rights became more mainstream. Take George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940,* and his work identifying a brilliant culture of homosexual men in New York City prior to World War II. While World War II would serve as an important phase for the gay rights movement, community formation did not start or end there. Much happened within the gay community before and after World War II. When the war was over and gay men and women returned home or stayed in large cities, they took the opportunity to organize in a more political sense. Facing new challenges created by the early Cold War, homophile organizations were able to navigate a political and social field to shed a great deal of their original secrecy to embody gay activism leading up to the 1960s and 1970s through public meetings, publications, and collaboration.

Psychiatry and Homosexuality

With the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, major changes came to the American political and social landscape. Given the presence of homophobia and sodomy laws, psychiatry came to play an increasingly important role in constructing the perception of what it meant to be gay. The field of psychiatry discovered, for

example, that the custodial asylum or institution could have a therapeutic function beginning in the mid to late seventeenth century, with the term 'psychiatry' first being used in 1808 by a professor of medicine in Germany.[1] Asylums rapidly expanded with the Industrial Revolution as families had no desire to tolerate their mentally ill family members. The first president of the American Psychiatric Association (founded as the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane) was Samuel B. Woodward who served from 1844-1848. It was not until more recently, however, that the psychiatric community had a uniform nomenclature of disease to address these problems. While in the 1920s large teaching centers used their own system of nomenclature, these efforts would only serve the needs of the home institution, therefore creating chaos within the collaboration.[2] Psychiatric professionals, however, claimed to be ahead of general medicine on statistics and nomenclature. In fact, it was in May 1917 that the American Medico-psychological Association (now known as the Committee on Statistics of the American Psychiatric Association) formulated a plan for uniform statistics in hospitals for mental diseases and adopted it for practice.[3] The Standard Nomenclature of Disease became the preferred system in the field.

By the end of World War II, three nomenclatures were in use in the United States – the Standard, Armed Forces, and Veterans Administration – plus modifications at

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[1] John Cookson, "Core Psychiatry (Third Edition)," 2012, *Science Direct*, Date Accessed August 29, 2022. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/history-of-psychiatry

[2] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM*-I (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), pg. v.

[3] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM*-I (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), pg. v.

institutions across the country.[4] This gave rise to a desire for a single, approved nomenclature in the United States for the field of psychiatry. The Committee on Statistics for the American Psychiatric Association found a high percentage of practicing psychiatrists felt a change was needed in classification, especially in regard to personality disorders and transient reactions to special stress.[5] This was further bolstered by the founding of the National Institute for Mental Health by Congress in 1946.

This desire for change resulted in the American Psychiatric Association's first iteration of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The DSM-I was first published in 1952 under the Chairman of the Committee on Nomenclature and Statistics, George N. Raines, M.D., and became one of the most important advancements in treating and diagnosing mental disorders. However, as Moriyama, Loy, and Robb-Smith pointed out in 2011, "most disease nomenclatures of the past have included only recommended or acceptable terminology."[6] The DSM, in contrast, became prescriptive. Placing homosexuality in the DSM was a deliberate choice that complicates the understanding of what it meant to be gay following World War II. The DSM-I has two mentions of homosexuality. The first is used as an example of an "episode of acute anxiety occurring in a homosexual" explaining a symptomatic clinical picture that could potentially be diagnosed as a psychoneurotic disorder. The second reference includes

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[4] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM*-I (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), pg. vii.
[5] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM*-I (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), pg. viii.
[6] Iwao M. Moriyama, Ruth M. Loy, Alastair H.T. Robb-Smith, "History of the Statistical Classification of Diseases and Causes of Death," Harry M. Rosenberg and Donna L. Hoyert, eds. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2011.

homosexuality under the subcategory 000-x63 Sexual Deviation for the broader 000-x60 Sociopathic Personality Disorder.[7] This was the beginning of mental illness being used as a criterion for shaping homosexuality.

After a little more than a decade, the American Psychiatric Association revised its statistical manual in 1968. In this rendition, the DSM-II intensified its connection between mental illness and homosexuality. Rather than just a mention as in the DSM-I, Sexual Deviation became its own disorder under the broader category labeled as "Personality Disorders and Certain Other Non-Psychotic Mental Disorders." In the DSM-II, sexual deviation is described as the following:

> This category is for individuals whose sexual interests are directed primarily toward objects other than people of the opposite sex, toward sexual acts not usually associated with coitus, or toward coitus performed under bizarre circumstances as in necrophilia, pedophilia, sexual sadism, and fetishism. Even though many find their practices distasteful, they remain unable to substitute normal sexual behavior for them. This diagnosis is not appropriate for individuals who perform deviant sexual acts because normal sexual objects-988 are not available to them.[8]

The DSM-II, therefore, explicitly outlines homosexuality as a sexual deviation. Although not considered psychotic, it was viewed as a mental disorder.

There was not, however, consensus between all psychiatrists on the topic of homosexuality. The two most popular books on the topic of human sexuality were *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) by Alfred C. Kinsey, a professor of zoology at Indiana University. Kinsey studied human

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[7] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-I* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), pg. 38.
[8] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-II* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1968), pg. 44.

sexuality as a biological phenomenon and presented evidence as a scientist without the influence of moral bias and contemporary taboos. Kinsey's objective stand on the issue of sexual behavior in the United States was unique to other psychiatric researchers. He stated that he had no bias because subjectivity was "not part of the scientific method and, indeed, scientists have no special capacities for making such [moral] evaluations." [9] He applies a taxonomic approach to the study of sexual behavior, observing humans as a biologist would observe a group of animals. Here, the goal was to name, describe, and classify species objectively rather than applying bias and prejudice to one's findings. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) was based on 5,300 white males, though the total histories collected represent children to the elderly, every social class, and several racial groups, but these categories were not large enough to generalize conclusions. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* was based on 5,940 white females. Further, Kinsey and his team reached men from every state in the Union (not including Alaska and Hawaii as those were not states until after the volume was published). A higher concentration of participants came from the northeast portion of the country, but high amounts of respondents also came from the eastern Midwest states like Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan. Though some data was limited, Kinsey planned to publish additional volumes on females, sexual factors in marital adjustment, legal aspects of sex behavior, the heterosexual-homosexual balance, sexual adjustments in institutional populations, prostitution, and sex education as more information became available.

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[9] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 5.

Kinsey also points out two earlier sex studies in the Midwest focusing on the human male of those by G. V. Ramsey (1943) and K. M. Peterson (1938).

Kinsey's report on human sexuality in the male gave rise to interesting findings in rural versus urban men. In a rural-urban comparison, Kinsey found that the specific data seem to suggest that something about city life encourages homosexuality, adding to the theory that homosexuality is the product of an effete and over-organized urban civilization.[10] Among the data, farm boys were, on average, less likely to have orgasm affected by contacts with other males. Kinsey found that urbanization led to the development of a more organized group activity that creates more opportunities for sex that is unknown to rural areas. Cities have taverns, clubs, restaurants, and bathhouses that cater to and attract gay men. Because these places do not exist on the farm, Kinsey suggests that this accounts for the lower rate of homosexuality among farm boys. However, Kinsey also found that in the most isolated rural regions of the country, homosexuality tended to rise again. He contributed this to the boy on an isolated farm only having his brothers, neighboring boys, visiting male cousins, or that "somewhat older farm hand" as companions. The moral codes of the rural community may also limit male and female interaction. These things combined are what Kinsey attributes to the homosexuality seen in the most isolated regions.[11]

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[10] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 455.
[11] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 457.

Will Fellows notes this same phenomenon in *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest*. Men were often socially isolated on the farm, only interacting with a set group of individuals. Fellows holds that some men felt homosexual orientation was due, in part, to a lack of affectionate attention from their father or other males and found that public homosexuality was generally disapproved of as the community wanted "men to act like men" and keep sexuality a private matter.[12] This attitude would help shape the opinions on gay rights even in urban areas. In total, Kinsey found the sexual outlet derived from homosexual contact was 6.3 percent of the total number of orgasms among males.[13] Further, Kinsey generalizes that thirty-seven percent of the total male population has at least some overt homosexual experience between adolescence and old age.[14] This led him to place human sexuality on a rating scale, ranging from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual).[15] He attributed the social significance of his study to both the Jewish and Christian churches considering homosexuality to be abnormal and immoral and therefore it was more difficult to find factual data – and objective reviews of the data on homosexuality – regarding homosexuals in Western Europe and the United States. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* also provides an explanation of masculinity in the post-war period. In contrast to the images of

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[12] Will Fellows, *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pg. 19-21.
[13] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 610.
[14] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 650.
[15] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 638.

masculinity and manhood found in *Gossip Men* with men like McCarthy and Hoover, Kinsey notes that it was commonly believed that the homosexual male was quite the opposite, being rarely physically robust, uncoordinated, or delicate, and not strong in their physical expression.[16] This is a stereotype based in homophobia and sexism, however. Kinsey concludes that the homosexual has been a part of the human species and its development since the dawn of human history.

While Alfred Kinsey's two books known as the Kinsey Reports can be cited as well-known examples of the lack of consensus within the psychiatric field on homosexuality, they were not the only research being done. Another important psychiatric researcher on the topic of homosexuality was Evelyn Hooker. Hooker found that few clinicians had examined homosexuals who neither came for psychological help nor were found in mental hospitals, prisons, or military barracks.[17] Hooker's goal was to study overt homosexual individuals paired with heterosexual individuals as a control group.

In her study titled "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual," Hooker found that there is no single pattern of homosexual adjustment.[18] Homosexuality is, as a result, determined by numerous factors and some gay persons may simply be quite ordinary. Hooker even posits that some individuals may be quite superior individuals,

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[16] Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Indiana University Press, 1948), pg. 637.
[17] Evelyn Hooker, "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual," *Journal of Projective Techniques* 21, no 1 (1957), pg. 18.
[18] Evelyn Hooker, "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual," *Journal of Projective Techniques* 21, no 1 (1957), pg. 29.

devoid of pathology and functioning at a superior level than that of their heterosexual counterparts.[19] In reference to the question of homosexuality as a symptom of pathology, Hooker states that "all we need is a single case in which the answer is negative." Her study shows many negative cases of pathology, proving her point of the normality of gay individuals. The research produced an argument against the inclusion of homosexuality in psychiatric nomenclature manuals such as the DSM. Hooker, however, provided her results provisionally and refrained from using her work for a cause. Her study, though, came at a time when she had to battle to be recognized in the field of psychiatry, both for being a woman and as someone who favorably viewed and studied homosexuals.

Psychological Belief and War

During the mid-twentieth century, most psychiatrists were firm in their anti-homosexual stance. This opened the door for homosexuals to be discriminated against in other parts of life. One of these areas that intertwined with psychiatry was in the armed forces during and after World War II. Military psychiatrists' opinions influenced the armed forces during the war in two ways. In one way, psychiatry intensified the discrimination of homosexuals in both civilian and military life and, in another, set the stage for the persistence of a homophobic nomenclature discussed previously. Similarly, as Rhonda Evans states, "Psychiatric leaders involved in establishing the guidelines would push for treatment of homosexuality as a mental illness, rather than as a crime that

[19] Evelyn Hooker, "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual," *Journal of Projective Techniques* 21, no 1 (1957), pg. 29.

demanded imprisonment."[20] While homosexuals increasingly became viewed less as criminals, they were still viewed as mentally ill and deviant. World War II, on the other hand, presented unique new problems for homosexual men and women.

By the end of conscription for World War II, slightly more than 10,000,000 men were inducted into the United States military after registering for the draft; the year with the highest number of inductees was 1943 with 3,323,970 men.[21] It is unknown exactly how many of the soldiers who served were queer, but the military officially rejected between 4,000 to 5,000 men for homosexuality during the screening process.[22] However, it was not until 1943 that the first regulation addressing homosexuality came from the military; this regulation asserted that homosexuals should be discharged for a medical problem.[23] During World War I and the interwar period, however, the Articles of War listed sodomy as a court-martiable offense, and those who engaged in sodomy were discharged administratively under a "Section VIII" discharge for unsuitability.[24] For those that continued into the military during World War II, the new norm became hiding their sexuality for fear that discovery would lead to what became known as a blue

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[20] Rhonda Evans, "U.S. Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military (University of California at Santa Barbara), pg. 10.
[21] "Induction Statistics," *Selective Service System,* Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/induction-statistics/
[22] Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pg. 34.
[23] Bob Puhala, "New Rules, Old Fears – Homosexuality and Military," *Chicago Tribune* (28 September 1981), pg. 50.
[24] Rhonda Evans, "US Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, *University of California Santa Barbara*, pg. 8. Date Accessed May 20, 2022 https://www.palmcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/evans1.pdf

discharge, named for the blue paper of the discharge form. A blue discharge was neither honorable nor dishonorable, but it often came with less than desirable results, including loss of G.I. benefits and being outed to friends, families, and employees back home. During World War II, the army itself issued 55,728 blue discharges.[25] Between 9,000 and 10,000 of these discharges went to homosexuals. After World War II, the armed forces discharged between 2,000 to 5,000 men and women for suspected homosexuality from 1950 to 1965.[26]

This environment of homophobia was widespread and went well beyond the military. No better example of this discrimination can be found than in the writings of Dr. George W. Crane. Dr. Crane wrote daily columns for the Hopkins Syndicate titled "Test Your Horse Sense" and "The Worry Clinic" that appeared in over 200 newspapers.[27] Dr. Crane had an estimated 50,000,000 readers.[28] While Chicago-based, Dr. Crane reached readers across the country including readership in the more rural Midwestern landscape. Dr. Crane's columns were published in large newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Detroit Free Press,* but also in the likes of smaller, and more rural, papers like the *Lincoln Journal Star,* the *Quad-City Times*, and the *Muncie Evening Press*. His writings, therefore, impacted homosexual men that did not have the community their urban

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[25] Frank Eleazer, "Pension Bill Debated for Three Hours," *Vidette-Messenger of Porter County* (22 March 1949), pg. 1.
[26] William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003* (New York: Viking Adult, 2008).
[27] "Dr. George Crane Will Be Speaker," *The Hancock Democrat* (24 July 1952), pg. 2.
[28] Loxley Nichols, "Keeping Up with Dr. Crane," *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin* 20 (1991), pg. 22.

counterparts would have had. Dr. Crane also had a Ph.D. in psychology and taught psychology at both Northwestern University and George Washington University.

Dr. Crane's column "The Worry Clinic" is especially important to this discussion of societal homophobia. This column devoted two days per week to topics concerning love and marriage, and sexuality often was a focus of these writings. Dr. Crane's expositions on homosexuality were conservative and aligned with the prevailing trends in his psychiatric field. Crane, in one such column, states that "Homosexuals are not born that way!" implying they are made, not born. "They could all be transformed into heterosexuals, IF the motivation and will power were adequate," he wrote.[29] Gay men and women being exposed to this rhetoric internalized homophobia, especially when they were removed from other homosexual persons with experience living openly.

Mattachine in the Midwest

Not all written publications were negative toward homosexuality in the postwar period, however. Other publications viewed homosexuality positively and were even geared specifically toward the homosexual experience in the United States. The postwar period gave rise to the beginnings of homophile organizations in the Midwest. While traditional scholarship focuses on the Mattachine Societies of Los Angeles and New York, there were other homophile organizations that arose in the central United States. The Midwest played home to the United States' first gay emancipation organization, the

[29] Dr. George Crane, "Homosexuals Made, Not Born," *The Dispatch* (28 February 1953), pg. 6.

Society for Human Rights. Founded by Henry Gerber in 1924, it would be another three decades, however, before an organized group would rise from its ashes.[30] The phoenix to rise from the foundation laid by the Society for Human Rights were the Mattachine societies that emerged as significant organizers for the gay community.

The original Mattachine Society (originally Mattachine Foundation) was founded in the early 1950s in Los Angeles by Harry Hay and impacted the homophile movement. The term homophile was first used abroad to denounce the implications of sexual pathology found with the word homosexual and instead emphasize love and emotions.[31] The Mattachine Foundation began as an organization operating in secret. The leadership, or "fifth order" was anonymous so that even members of the group did not know each other's names.[32] Many consider the definition of a mattachine to be medieval troupes of men who traveled between villages, taking up social justice issues in their works.[33] From 1951 to 1953, membership flourished, but the secretive order attracted calls that the group was a Communist front organization. This resulted in a reorganization of the group into the new Mattachine Society in 1954 creating a more public organization with area councils and chapters. The early homophile movement was not restricted to Los Angeles

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[30] Victor Salvo, "The Society for Human Rights," *The Legacy Project*, Date Accessed November 17, 2022. https://legacyprojectchicago.org/milestone/society-human-rights
[31] Reidar Kjær, "Look to Norway? Gay Issues and Mental Health Across the Atlantic Ocean," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy* 7:1-2 (October 21, 2008), pg. 58.
[32] "The Mattachine Society," LGBTQIA+ Studies: A Resource Guide, *Library of Congress,* Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://guides.loc.gov/lgbtq-studies/before-stonewall/mattachine#s-lib-ctab-23440398-2
[33] Will Roscoe, "Mattachine: Radical Roots of the Gay Movement," *FoundSF*, Date Accessed August 29, 2022. https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Mattachine:_Radical_Roots_of_the_Gay_Movement

and San Francisco, though, as the first Mattachine Society founded outside California was in the city of Chicago. The national *Mattachine Review* in 1955 listed three chapters in Chicago operating under the umbrella group Chicago Area Council of the Mattachine Society. The Chicago Area Council struggled against the legal framework of Illinois. While the Council published newsletters, their publication had been suspended pending a determination of an Illinois law preventing non-profit organizations from selling certain classes of published material; publication resumed by April 1955 after winning their case.[34] This group did not last, however, and was listed as inactive in 1958. The second rendition of Chicago Mattachine ceased operations in 1962.[35] In total, Chicago Mattachine's run lasted from 1954-1957 and 1959-1962.[36]

Nonetheless, this was not the end of the homophile movement in the Midwest. Another Mattachine Society-like group was incorporated on December 10, 1965, under the name Mattachine Midwest. Similar to the Mattachine Society chapters, Mattachine Midwest was devoted to fostering a connection between society and the homophile community, promoting legal and economic equality, and providing active social programs. It was clearly more public from the beginning compared to the old organizations. Mattachine Midwest describes its own definition of a mattachine as a half

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[34] San Francisco Area Council, "Mattachine Newsletter," 23rd Issue (April 1955), Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/sfbagals/SF_Mattachine_Newletter/1955_MN_No23_April.pdf

[35] St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pg. 269.

[36] William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection Online Exhibit, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.gerberhart.org/william-b-kelley-chen-k-ooi-collection/

mask worn at parties or masquerades. It was chosen as a symbol of the Mattachine groups because of the need to be hidden when the movement first started and remains the symbol of Mattachine Midwest because of the number of gay people who are still unable to publicly come out.[37] Mattachine Midwest had committees on topics like Health Education, Rights, and Religious Concerns to address a well-rounded approach to homosexual life. Mattachine Midwest held monthly public meetings and published its own newsletter.[38]

There were also a number of homophile organizations present in the Midwest besides Mattachine Midwest. These included Central Ohio Mattachine Society, Cincinnati Homophile League, Cincinnati Mattachine Society, Dayton Mattachine Society, Toledo Mattachine Society, Youngston Mattachine Society, Personal Rights Organization of Ohio, and Canton Mattachine Society, all of Ohio; One of Detroit in Michigan; One of Chicago and Society Advocating Mutual Equality (SAME) in Illinois; Lincoln-Omaha Council on Religion and the Homosexual in Nebraska; Phoenix Society for Individual Freedom and Homophile Underground Action Committee (HUAC) in Kansas City.[39] Like Mattachine Midwest, many of these organizations published newsletters including *The Phoenix: Midwest Homophile Voice* and *The Challenger*.

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[37] Mattachine Midwest Brochure, no date, Box 2, File "Membership Brochures/Membership Cards, Edward Fleming Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[38] Introduction Letter, Box 1, File 24 Promotional Brochure, Mattachine Midwest Records Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[39] "Before Stonewall: The Homophile Movement," *Library of Congress*, Date Accessed 10/9/2022 https://guides.loc.gov/lgbtq-studies/before-stonewall#s-lib-ctab-22776025-0

Mattachine Midwest, like other early homophile organizations, had a set legal framework under which to operate. For Mattachine Midwest, this was "to set by any *lawful* means to improve the legal, social, and economic status of homosexuals."[40] While facing a radical topic, later homophile groups like Mattachine Midwest took a strictly liberal approach to answering the social question of homosexuality. The group's statement of purpose was outlined in June of 1966 and includes language addressing the general public and the homosexual individual. Mattachine Midwest's goal was to inform and enlighten the public, eliminate harmful prejudice, achieve equality under the law and of opportunity, but also to help homosexuals accept themselves for who they are as human beings.[41]

These later homophile organizations in the Midwest also operated with less secrecy than the Mattachine Foundation did. While Mattachine Midwest's leadership and membership utilized pseudonyms to protect their identity out of fear of being outed and fired from their jobs, they held public meetings, had a mail-order publication, and interacted with government and police. Elsewhere, PrOhio – Toledo, for example, publicly worked alongside the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to fight for change.[42] Further west, Kansas City's first gay organization, the Phoenix Society for Individual Freedom, founded March 13, 1966, held a meeting with the police and the

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[40] Statement of Purpose, Box 1, File 24 Promotional Brochure, Mattachine Midwest Records Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[41] Statement of Purpose, Box 1, File 24 Promotional Brochure, Mattachine Midwest Records Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[42] PrOhio – Toledo, Box 1, File 24 Promotional Brochure, Mattachine Midwest Records Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

director of liquor control. This meeting was the first time the homosexual community was officially recognized in Kansas City as a minority group.[43] Though recognizing the tremendous step forward this was for the gay community, the Phoenix Society cautions "the homosexual community in the greater Kansas City area to be alert and aware, both individually and collectively, of its responsibility to society. If we are to expect the respect due us we in turn are going to have to act responsibly in all areas of endeavor."[44] This shows that these homophile groups sat strictly within a liberal lens. Despite being radical in nature, homophile organizations were not about upsetting the established structure of society, rather they were searching for their own place within it. The Phoenix Society was also committed to working to unite local and national gay rights organizations.

Subversion in the Ranks

There were many reasons for homophile organizations to hold on to a level of secrecy, however, during the 1950s and 1960s. Much of this caution was due to the government linking communism and homosexuality together. Homosexuals were targeted by men like Senator Joseph McCarthy in his campaign against communism during the Red Scare. McCarthy created an image of manliness that excluded homosexual men. McCarthy himself remained a bachelor during his early career and

[43] Notice about Police Meeting, Box 1, File Phoenix Society Police Meeting, Chicago Gay Alliance Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[44] Notice about Police Meeting, Box 1, File Phoenix Society Police Meeting, Chicago Gay Alliance Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

played this off as him being too busy with other pursuits to concern himself with women. This, nevertheless, opened him up to accusations of being a homosexual himself.[45] Correspondence from 1942 reveals McCarthy's desire to define masculinity and manhood through analytical abilities, athleticism, physicality, and "guts."[46] However, his social class and his being from rural Wisconsin separated him from political allies like J. Edgar Hoover who also crafted his masculinity and manhood in Washington to hold power. What McCarthy's working class and upbringing in a modest background did do was position him to counter rural homosexuals. Predisposed to relate to the "common man," McCarthy separated himself from "subversive" homosexuals by linking them to communism. In the mind of anticommunists, homosexuals could be blackmailed by the Soviet Union therefore causing a national security risk should they infiltrate the government or other high-level positions. McCarthy's masculinity worked well as a vehicle for voters in the Midwest, too, as he was the "epitome of heartland manhood and self-sufficient bachelorhood."[47] Masculinity was so important to McCarthy that his own wedding was an orchestrated show. The wedding in 1953 was star-studded and politically diverse, demonstrating "how McCarthy had successfully married politics and celebrity," though there were also calls his wedding was to silence talk of his sexual proclivities with

[45] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 87.
[46] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 87.
[47] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 99.

other men.[48] This vehicle of masculinity worked because of the social changes occurring due to shifting gender norms that were a concern to many conservative voters.[49] While much of the shifting gender norms concerned women working after the end of World War II, homosexual men and women undoubtedly played a role in this concern of conservatives as they continued to assert rights after the end of McCarthyism.

McCarthy was not alone in targeting homosexuals during the early Cold War years. The perceived belief at the time that political subversion and sexual subversion were inherently tied led to the anti-homosexual purges of civilian federal workers and discrimination of homosexuals across the country. While McCarthy is often the first to come to mind as a force behind this discrimination, he was not a lone actor. Kenneth Wherry, a Republican Senator from Nebraska from 1943 to his death in 1951, joined the effort to rid the federal government of homosexuals. While McCarthy suffered from rumors of himself being a homosexual, Wherry did not face the same accusations. Wherry first pushed for investigations into Communist sympathy in the State Department in 1946 and matched the legislative efforts of Senator Karl Mundt (R-SD) and Congressman Richard Nixon (R-CA) to essentially outlaw the American Communist Party in 1948.[50] His inquiries would evolve into the homophobia going into 1950.

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[48] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 161-162.
[49] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 98.
[50] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 120.

Prior to World War II, homosexuality was not linked to national security. An example of this is the 1919 Newport scandal in which some sailors were still considered heterosexual and escaped punishment because of their masculine, insertive role in sex, but those allowing themselves to be penetrated violated the gender-role social construction of the time.[51] This standard would change by 1950 after which both partners in a homosexual relationship were considered mentally unstable, subversive, and deviant. The State Department received the brunt of homophobic actions compared to other federal agencies. Here, Ivy League, "East Coast Establishment" diplomats proved an easy target for the Midwestern, blue-collar, masculine images created by McCarthy and Wherry. Wherry's "conflation of cowardice, homosexuality, and treason covered anyone left of the Right, especially those who also worked for the State Department."[52] Wherry's evidence of holes within the system strengthened his argument of the force of homosexuality as a political weapon to be wielded. After pressing the Civil Service Commission for answers on whether suspected homosexuals could be "re-hired," Wherry published a short report on Commissioner Harry Mitchell's finding that thirteen of ninety-one cases of accused homosexuals since 1947 had regained employment. Wherry demanded a full-scale Senate inquiry – a potential politicized witch hunt comparable to

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[51] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 121.

[52] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 123.

McCarthy's.[53] Attempts in Congress to redirect these inquiries to instead finding suspected communists were unsuccessful. The outstanding part of this report was that Wherry had supposed proof that homosexuals and communism were actually linked. He asserted that Hitler had a list of homosexuals around the world that the Soviets now had access to, and he claimed Communists could use the list to blackmail homosexuals in establishing a new regime.[54] Despite Wherry's claims of success, no American has been proven to have given up state secrets because of blackmail over homosexuality. The only two traitors to have possible connections with homosexuality were a pair of American mathematicians with the National Security Agency who defected to Russia in 1960.[55] Given both McCarthy's anti-communism and Wherry's anti-homosexual attacks, the public reacted with concern on the homosexual issue. An estimated 7,000 to 10,000 real or suspected homosexuals lost their civil service jobs during the 1950s, and homosexuality remained a cause for separation until 1994.[56] This aftermath spilled over into the civilian realm. Homosexuals were demonized by the public and effeminacy was a sign of weakness. This homophobic "Lavender Scare" also became internationalized by

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[53] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 125.
[54] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 126.
[55] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 127.
[56] Randolph W. Baxter, "'Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and The Homophobic Side of McCarthyism," *Nebraska* History 84 (2003), pg. 128.

men like McCarthy and Wherry. As historian Christopher Elias finds, the Eisenhower Administration, moreover, tried to purge the United Nations of homosexual employees and pressured allies into eliminating gay men and women from their own governments.[57]

There was also political discourse that revolved around one being hard or soft. A person was soft if they thought the danger from domestic Communists was small, while one was hard if they saw no distinction between international and domestic Communists.[58] In general, the 1950s politics was a reduction of political positions to dualistic images. A crucial piece to this duality was Arthur Schlesinger's "vital center" where political ideology was oriented on a circle with Communism/Fascism at the bottom and the "vital center" at the top. In addition, homosexuality sat directly opposite Schlesinger's "vital center."[59] As Cuordileone states, "The vital center emerges in the book as the home not only of a reinvigorated liberalism, whose leaders demonstrate the 'restoration of a radical nerve,' but also of a secure and restored American masculinity."[60] To be secure as an American meant to be within the vital center, as being too far in either direction would return one to weakness, femininity, homosexuality, and totalitarianism. Yet, despite the effort to masculinize the liberal center, it did not prevent

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[57] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 169.
[58] K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000), pg. 515.
[59] K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000), pg. 519.
[60] K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000), pg. 520.

liberals from being charged with softness. In much of right-wing rhetoric, the liberal was "feminine in principle, effeminate in embodiment, and emasculating in effect."[61] However, this fear of perceived homosexuality was not the root cause of anticommunism, but it did serve as a source of anxiety and fear that gave right-wing anticommunist leaders something to unite their followers around and persecute homosexuals. The dichotomy of hard versus soft is exemplified by the 1952 Presidential Election with Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. Stevenson had all the attributes the right-wing suspected of communists; they saw him as effeminate and potentially unpatriotic. Stevenson was attacked for his "fruity voice" and giggling about anticommunism, for example, and was also labeled as a sex deviate by Hoover's FBI.[62] The men opposing Stevenson would go to great lengths to perpetuate the myth of masculinity and target perceived homosexuals in this age of anxiety.

One of the ways Midwest and other homophile organizations united to work against these attacks, was through the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, or NACHO. This organization was modeled after the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO). The first NACHO organizational meeting was held in Kansas City, MO, in February 1966.[63] The organizers agreed to meet again that same

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[61] K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000), pg. 522.
[62] K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000), pg. 539-540.
[63] "Homosexuals Seek Place in Society," *The Kansas City Star* (25 August 1969), pg. 3.

year on August 25-27 in San Francisco.[64] Missouri's central location was a key factor in its being held in Kansas City for the first time. NACHO was an umbrella group for a collection of homophile organizations across the country, and its structure demonstrates the desire to maintain organizational independence. NACHO originally had representatives from fifteen organizations meet in 1966.[65] The first meeting in Kansas City and the subsequent meeting in San Francisco laid the foundation for a robust organization in the years following its founding.

The next notable meeting of NACHO occurred in 1968 in Chicago. The 1968 conference was scheduled to occur August 12-17, just a couple of weeks from the planned 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC) also being held in Chicago. Concern arose from within the homophile movement on holding it so close to the DNC. In one letter, Frank Kameny, President of the Mattachine Society of Washington, wrote to Mattachine Midwest, the Daughters of Bilitis, and Shirley Willer, a feminist and activist from Chicago who became the president of the Daughters of Bilitis in the 1950s, expressing concern over the closeness of the two conventions. One concern was that Chicago was becoming a "madhouse" and that any publicity NACHO received would be buried by talk of the DNC. He wanted an earlier date for the conference rather than a later date that then would be competing with the national election.[66] The date for the 1968 conference was not changed despite such calls to the contrary.

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[64] "Homosexual is Group Subject," *The Kansas City Times* (21 February 1966), pg. 10.
[65] "Homosexual is Group Subject," *The Kansas City Times* (21 February 1966), pg. 10.
[66] Letter to Organizers, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. Date Accessed April 1, 2022.

During this meeting, members took many important guiding steps forward. For one, the meeting resulted in an adoption of a Homosexual Bill of Rights as well as outlining areas for immediate reform. The Homosexual Bill of Rights contained the following points:

1. Private, consensual sex acts between persons over the age of consent shall not be offenses.
2. Solicitation for any sex act shall not be an offense except upon the filing of a complaint by an aggrieved party, not a police officer or agent.
3. A person's sexual orientation or practice shall not be a factor in the granting or renewing of federal security clearances, visas or the granting of citizenship.
4. Service in and discharge from the armed forces and eligibility for veterans' benefits shall be without reference to homosexuality.
5. A person's sexual orientation or practice shall not affect his eligibility for employment with federal, state or local governments or with private employers.[67]

This Bill of Rights focuses on a person's right to live freely and without judgement or bias from outside actors. In this case, the focus was on the police, the Veterans Administration, and employers. This platform sets the stage for individual organizations to have an organized approach to their activism at home. It is also during this meeting that NACHO adopted its popular slogan or motto "Gay is Good," which was proposed by Frank Kameny and seconded by Barbara Gittings.[68]

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https://www.gerberhart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/National-Homophile-Conference-Letter-Feb-1968.pdf

[67] NACHO Minutes 1968 page 4, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.gerberhart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/North-American-Conference-of-Homophile-Orgs-Minutes-August-1968.pdf

[68] NACHO Minutes 1968 page 8, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.gerberhart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/North-American-Conference-of-Homophile-Orgs-Minutes-August-1968.pdf

Kameny additionally moved during the meeting that "the homosexual in our pluralistic society has the moral right to be a homosexual. Being a homosexual, he has the moral right to live his homosexuality and to be so and to do so free of arrogant and insolent pressures to convert to the prevailing heterosexuality, and free of penalty, disability or disadvantage of any kind, public or private, official or unofficial for his non-conformity."[69] He compares this moral right to that of a practicing Catholic or Jew in a pluralistic society. Kameny's motion passed.

NACHO would meet again for its penultimate convention in 1969. This convention was originally slated for Houston.[70] However, the fifth annual meeting was moved back to Kansas City at the Hotel Bellerive.[71] It is also important to note that NACHO was not focused exclusively on the homosexual male. While the Daughters of Bilitis had withdrawn their membership prior to the 1969 meeting because of concerns over the lack of focus on lesbian issues, some groups had both male and female membership and topics during the 1969 meeting included a discussion on lesbianism.[72] Furthermore, NACHO had grown considerably since 1966, now being composed of about fifty organizations on a nationwide basis.[73] By 1970, though, the movement was

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[69] NACHO Minutes 1968 page 9, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.gerberhart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/North-American-Conference-of-Homophile-Orgs-Minutes-August-1968.pdf

[70] NACHO Minutes 1968 page 4, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. Date Accessed April 1, 2022. https://www.gerberhart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/North-American-Conference-of-Homophile-Orgs-Minutes-August-1968.pdf

[71] "Homosexuals Seek Place in Society," *The Kansas City Star* (25 August 1969), pg. 3.

[72] "Homosexuals Seek Place in Society," *The Kansas City Star* (25 August 1969), pg. 3.

[73] "Homosexuals Seek Place in Society," *The Kansas City Star* (25 August 1969), pg. 3.

losing cohesion in relation to the new Gay Liberation momentum following the Stonewall Riot of 1969. This culminated in a head-on battle between more radical activists and the homophile movement at the annual meeting held in San Francisco that year. This final NACHO conference is often seen as the end of the homophile movement in the United States.

This homophile movement, however, did not end. Gay liberal activism persisted in the United States. This is especially true within the Midwest. Despite societal restrictions and homophobia present in the military, among psychiatrists, and larger society, homophile organizations were able to shed a great deal of secrecy to embody a new approach to gay activism leading up to 1970 through public meetings, publications, and collaboration. This positioned groups like Mattachine Midwest to succeed despite pressure from more radical Gay Liberation groups and to continue the homophile movement into the next decade. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the liberal approach embodied by the homophile movement was not lost at the 1970 NACHO meeting and, instead, remained strong well into the 1970s.

Chapter Two

Ideology Evolution: Changes to Midwestern Homophile Accommodation Approaching Stonewall

The 1960s has long been seen as the last great era for the homophile movement in the United States. By the time the events surrounding Stonewall came in 1969, the more radical gay liberation movement was beginning to flourish and grow into the next stage of gay rights. However, at least in the Midwest, homophile organizations remained relevant in many aspects of gay life in the 1970s. While social forces were present that threatened the homophile movement's longevity, its ability to evolve, adjust and collaborate with gay liberation created new forms of integrationist politics that remained relevant throughout the 1970s. The Vietnam War, changes to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, and electoral politics all impacted the homophile movement and provided new avenues for continued integrational activism.

When discussing the gay rights movement, one cannot dismiss the context in which the most visible activism arose. Nevertheless, this visible activism of radical protest was not the only form of activism influenced by the context of the 1970s. Homophile movements still existed in the Midwest by 1970 and remained influential going into the 1980s. The environment within which these two groups of activists operated was highly influenced by two distinct events. The Vietnam War was at its peak at the turn of the decade and anti-war demonstrations followed suit. This anti-war attitude laid claim to a new form of activism that paved the path for Gay Liberation, among other liberation movements. The other event was the redefinition of homosexuality when the

American Psychiatric Association altered the language of the DSM-II for the seventh printing, removing homosexuality *per se* and replacing it with Sexual Orientation Disturbance in December 1973.[1] The change meant that a homosexual who was content with his or her sexual orientation could be free of a psychiatric disorder. "Homosexuals went to bed sick, and the next day we were instantly cured!" one recounted of the APA's change to the DSM.[2] Only a person who was in conflict with his or her sexual orientation would be classified with a psychiatric disorder. Combined, these two events had lasting effects on gay activism.

A New Generation of Battles

The Vietnam War was a troubling experience for the nation and had a variety of meanings for different groups of people. For example, women did not have to experience the threat of the draft as men did, immediately creating two groups. These groups can further be divided into men who were drafted and those who drew a later number in the draft lottery; straight men and gay men who served; and college-age youth who attended school rather than go to war like their working class and African American counterparts. Important implications can be drawn from analyzing these groups.

There is much to be said about draft resistance and the Vietnam War as it relates to homosexuals. Justin David Suran stands out by writing about this relationship in 2001.

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[1] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-II Revision* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1973).
[2] John Scagliotti, Janey Baus, and Dan Hunt, *After Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (First Run Features, 1999).

Since World War II, he points out, homophile groups had sought to secure a homosexual's right to discreetly serve in uniform.[3] The Vietnam War and the draft, however, placed homosexual men in a conundrum, forcing them to either reveal their sexual orientation to avoid being drafted or conceal their sexuality in order to serve in the military. Suran decenters the East Coast focus on Gay Liberation and instead looks to the influence of Civil Rights Movement. He shows, like this narrative, that gay activism was already an integral part of the 1950s and 1960s activism with the homophile movement rather than simply a culmination of Stonewall in New York. He argues that the homophile groups were still important to the new generation of young gay men as they "found themselves turning for advice, ironically, to the same organizations fighting to secure a homosexual's right to be drafted."[4] Suran's work on the Vietnam War's influence on gay rights complicates the understanding of being gay during this period further adding to this historiography on pre-Stonewall activism.

At the 1966 meeting of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, delegates agreed to place the right to military service at the top of their agenda and created a plan to hold patriotic demonstrations which also highlighted discrimination across the country on Armed Forces Day.[5] The connection between

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[3] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 453.
[4] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 459.
[5] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg.458.

military service and citizenship was a driving factor in their decision despite there being disagreements on the proposal. As Suran states, "Affirming one's homosexuality, they believed, should not interfere with one's ability to participate in the public culture of the nation or its dominant institutions."[6] While Suran finds this event weakened the foundation of the homophile movement and its ideals going forward, Midwestern homophile organizations not only remained but were relevant in future gay rights activities. He also states that Gay Liberationists on both coasts "broke with homophile liberalism by adopting a strong public stance on an issue other than civil rights for homosexuals and by making radical declarations on behalf of all gay men."[7]

While the East Coast had Stonewall and the West Coast had anti-war organizing and the Compton Cafeteria Riot, the Midwest was not host to either of these phenomena. The Midwest was nevertheless influenced by the fact that many simply were not activists but still found ways to connect with each other. For example, subscribers to the journal *The Ladder* would pass along copies to other women they knew; this was often the only connection lesbians had to others like themselves.[8] Paperback titles also became popular again in the late 1950s and 1960s such as with Ann Bannon's *Odd Girl Out* (1957) which is set at the University of Illinois. Such basics mirrored the popularity of homophile

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[6] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 459.
[7] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 474.
[8] Greta Schiller, John Scagliotti, and Robert Rosenberg, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (First Run Features, 1985).

publications, serving as the first exposure to a broader culture for gay men and lesbians.[9] Publications became a place for twentieth-century gays and lesbians to affirm and validate their identities. One study has examined access to and the presence of gay and lesbian content in rural Midwestern public libraries in the pre-Stonewall era. Pulp fiction in the 1950s helped gay and lesbian titles gain greater visibility and acceptance, but it was not until after Stonewall that these titles gained widespread visibility in American culture.[10] Within these titles, gay men and lesbians saw themselves in the stories. While not all depicted homosexuals in a positive light, these books were nevertheless a connection to the community and their identity. This connection within publications was especially the case in rural areas where people had less opportunities to connect with others compared with their urban counterparts. However, once obtained, written works offered a path to self-discovery not only because they could be consumed in private, but because they functioned as platforms for discussion.[11]

This study of queer pulp fiction examined five rural communities: Lexington, Michigan; Morris, Illinois; Rhinelander, Wisconsin; Osage, Iowa; and Sauk Centre, Minnesota. The libraries in these communities purchased sixty-two titles from the researcher's 450-item checklist, though all purchases may not have been deliberate choices. It was invisibility of the material rather than reviewers' warnings that kept these

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[9] Greta Schiller, John Scagliotti, and Robert Rosenberg, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (First Run Features, 1985).
[10] Joanne E. Passet, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Gay and Lesbian Books in Midwestern Public Libraries, 1900-1969," *Library Trends* 60, no. 4 (Spring 2012), pg. 750.
[11] Joanne E. Passet, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Gay and Lesbian Books in Midwestern Public Libraries, 1900-1969," *Library Trends* 60, no. 4 (Spring 2012), pg. 750.

titles out of libraries.[12] While this is a small portion of the available material being published in the pre-Stonewall era, it still shows that at least some homosexual content was not only present, but available to gay men and lesbians in the rural Midwest that connected them to the broader movements in the cities. Paperbacks alone, though, would have left readers under-represented. Still, "hidden in plain sight, these works and the messages they contained helped the rural Midwesterners who did find them define and redefine what it meant to be gay in American culture."[13] Homophile publications and their organizations, therefore, played an additionally important role in the formation of gay rights activism in the Midwest moving out of the 1950s.

During the Vietnam War, draftees were directly asked if they ever had or had now homosexual tendencies during the pre-induction screening. If checked "yes," he would be disqualified from service and faced discrimination for being gay, losing his prospects for employment. If a gay man selected "no," he violated federal law and risked a fine and imprisonment if he was found to by lying. Checking "no" was not always a better option. Gay men covertly serving in Vietnam risked death but also the possibility of being outed in an anti-homosexual purge. Being separated from the military for being a homosexual was, at least, humiliating and, at worst, life-altering as he now faced discrimination after being forced out of the closet.[14]

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[12] Joanne E. Passet, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Gay and Lesbian Books in Midwestern Public Libraries, 1900-1969," *Library Trends* 60, no. 4 (Spring 2012), pg. 758.
[13] Joanne E. Passet, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Gay and Lesbian Books in Midwestern Public Libraries, 1900-1969," *Library Trends* 60, no. 4 (Spring 2012), pg. 762.
[14] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 460.

It was likewise challenging to claim the draft exemption for being gay during the Vietnam War. If a man checked "yes" he became instantly ineligible for civil service jobs, and since draft boards were locally staffed, making this declaration also meant coming out to family, friends and neighbors.[15] The burden of proof increased, as well, with heterosexual men attempting to dodge the draft by claiming to be homosexual by adopting stereotypical mannerisms they felt would persuade military doctors.[16] Some historians on the Vietnam War have acknowledged heterosexual inductees avoiding the draft in this way, but it is a passing mention. Michael Foley's *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* finds that Charles Fischer's examination of client records of the Boston Draft Resistance Group (BDRG) showed forty percent of men tried to fail their physicals, thirty percent applied for conscientious objector status, three to four percent simply refused induction or left the country, and the remaining twenty-six percent are unclear but "many, no doubt, attempted to fail the mental examinations, acted crazy, or claimed to be homosexual."[17] Efforts to tighten control increased, in March 1968, the Stanford Anti-Draft Union stated one must have a

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[15] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 460.

[16] Natalie Shibley, "Psychiatry and Homosexuality Draft Exemptions During the Vietnam War," *Nursing Clio* (August 4, 2020). Date Accessed May 19, 2022 https://nursingclio.org/2020/08/04/psychiatry-and-homosexuality-draft-exemptions-during-the-vietnam-war/

[17] Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2003). ProQuest Ebook Central http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unklibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=413280

record of homosexuality through evidence like arrest records, letters from doctors, or letters from psychiatrists in order to be deferred from the draft.[18]

An additional problem surrounding this draft debate was the military's inability to provide a clear definition of a homosexual. Some gay men challenged receiving a 1-A classification (available for military service) altogether. For example, Bob McIvery was drafted in the Vietnam War with a 1-A classification but checked the "homosexual tendencies" box on his pre-induction medical forms. He also stated verbally that he was gay. Ignoring this claim of homosexuality, the draft board classified him as 1-A and he was ordered to report for induction in 1970. McIvery was later charged with failing to report and was arrested. McIvery challenged this arrest on the basis that the induction order was invalid.[19] How could the military ban homosexuals and yet require them to report for induction at the same time? Was "homosexual tendencies" not an agreed upon definition for draft exemption? This stemmed down to the prevarications of local induction officials being concerned about fraud and filling draft quotas. Though some gay men, like McIvery, actively sought a 4-F classification (Registrant not qualified for military service), the decision was left up to the local officials. Although many felt the risks of claiming homosexuality outweighed that of the draft, the lack of clarity and consistency in what it meant to be gay complicated this option.

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[18] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 461.

[19] Natalie Shibley, "Psychiatry and Homosexuality Draft Exemptions During the Vietnam War," *Nursing Clio* (Augest 4, 2020). Date Accessed May 19, 2022 https://nursingclio.org/2020/08/04/psychiatry-and-homosexuality-draft-exemptions-during-the-vietnam-war/

Much of what homophile organizations, like Mattachine Midwest, did during this time was advise young gay men facing the draft on their options through publishing articles and informational brochures but also through draft counseling. The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) went so far as to adopt a resolution that all young men should check "yes" because of the universal presence of homosexual tendencies in all people.[20] This instance of activism by all people would cement the hope of integration into the minds of draft inductees. No longer was having homosexual tendencies just for homosexual men, but NACHO was reinforcing the idea that sexual preference was on a spectrum and heterosexual men could still be "straight" while admitting to homosexual tendencies for the sake of protesting the war.

With that being said, the tactics used by homophile organizations were not adequate for some people. "Militant youth and their allies rebelled against the older homophile groups, who refrained from taking a public stance against the war."[21] The respectability of advice and resolutions employed by homophile groups fell short in the eyes of the younger generation who wanted action immediately. However, this youthful activism met increased tension from society, especially regarding the draft. Although the war was largely unpopular, public officials remained steadfast behind the war effort. For example, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was sympathetic to the younger generation

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[20] Natalie Shibley, "Psychiatry and Homosexuality Draft Exemptions During the Vietnam War," *Nursing Clio* (Augest 4, 2020). Date Accessed May 19, 2022 https://nursingclio.org/2020/08/04/psychiatry-and-homosexuality-draft-exemptions-during-the-vietnam-war/

[21] Justin David Suran, "Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001), pg. 453.

facing the draft but argued that "conscientious objection must be reserved only for the greatest moral issues, and Vietnam is not of this magnitude."[22] As a result, to support draft resistance was itself against the law.[23] Homophile organizations, then, were not only chided by the new militancy of the gay rights movement but also for supporting homosexual men facing the draft. The integration tactics they employed throughout the 1950s and early 1960s were becoming obsolete. Because of this, the Vietnam War served as a division point between integration and liberation approaches to gay rights activism.

The military played an important role in this division. The Department of Defense issued a memo bringing together the military's regulations on homosexuality. This 1949 memo called for no rehabilitation of gay and lesbian personnel, stating "homosexual personnel…should not be permitted to serve in any branch of the Armed Services in any capacity, and prompt separation of known homosexuals from the Armed Forces is mandatory."[24] Then in 1950, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) introduced Article 125, which prohibited sodomy defined as unnatural carnal copulation, applying to both same-sex and opposite-sex conduct.[25] The Department of Defense would continue to

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[22] Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam War: 1945-1990* (HarperPerennial: New York, 1991), pg. 240.
[23] Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam War: 1945-1990* (HarperPerennial: New York, 1991), pg. 200.
[24] Rhonda Evans, "US Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, *University of California Santa Barbara*, pg. 11. Date Accessed May 20, 2022 https://www.palmcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/evans1.pdf
[25] Rhonda Evans, "US Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, *University of California Santa Barbara*, pg. 11-12. Date Accessed May 20, 2022 https://www.palmcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/evans1.pdf

amend its policy during the Vietnam War. In 1959, Section VII.I of 1332.14 on administrative discharges listed "sexual perversion" as an indication of one's unfitness to serve. However, in 1965 it was amended to allow service members to challenge their less-than-honorable discharges and have legal counsel present, a win for homosexual service members.[26] Further, the military's changes to the homosexual policies during the Vietnam War appears to have resulted in it discharging fewer gay and lesbian service personnel. The only service with statistics on the number discharged is the Navy,

> In the three years prior to 1966, the Navy discharged between 1,600 and 1,700 sailors each year for homosexuality. From 1966 to 1967, the numbers dropped from 1,708 to 1,094. In 1968, gay discharges fell again to 798, and they dipped to 643 at the peak of the military build-up in 1969. In 1970, the Navy discharged only 461 sailors for homosexuality. This decline in the number of discharges for homosexuality occurred during a period when the Navy's membership was larger than at any other time after the Second World War (Shilts, 1993). After the cessation of the Vietnam conflict, U.S. armed forces faced new manpower shortages due to the abolition of the draft. The military therefore promoted a policy of minimizing the number of people discharged unnecessarily. During 1974, the armed forces as a whole discharged only 875 service members for homosexuality.[27]

The decreasing discharges were an important step in changing the military's policy on homosexuals as well as society's view of gays and lesbians. With the military being so central to the lives of Americans during the Cold War, its opinions on homosexuality

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[26] Rhonda Evans, "US Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, *University of California Santa Barbara*, pg. 12-13. Date Accessed May 20, 2022 https://www.palmcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/evans1.pdf

[27] Rhonda Evans, "US Military Policies Concerning Homosexuals: Development, Implementation and Outcomes," Report Prepared For: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, *University of California Santa Barbara*, pg. 24-25. Date Accessed May 20, 2022 https://www.palmcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/evans1.pdf

undoubtedly influenced the nation. That being said, society's fixation on masculinity during the early Cold War also worked its way into soldiers' lives in Vietnam. One GI explained to the *Village Voice* in 1971 that the army could induce young American males to comply with unpopular orders and even volunteer. The power the army held over these men was both by calling their manhood into question and forcing the men to join as a way to reinforce their masculinity. This linked militarism, homophobia, and masculinity together.[28] However, homophile organizations were also watching their work pay off. Homosexuals were on the way to being accepted in society. This did not mean the fight was over. The queer community also needed to change the minds of the American psychiatric community.

One homophile activist that was foundational in the fight to change the APA's classification that was well known for her role in the Daughters of Bilitis was Barbara Gittings. She became more known in the late 1960s and early 1970s for her role in campaigning against the APA to drop its categorization of homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973.[29] Some described this activism as putting her at odds with her homophile colleagues. In one article, Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, argued "The best thing for lesbian and gay people could hope for was to be left alone, and the surest way to do that was to keep quiet. Gittings risked everything

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[28] "Gay Liberation and the Antiwar Movement," pg. 3, Box 1, File "G/L Anti-war Activities," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[29] Mary Louise Munts, "Welcome to Kendal," *Kendal Reporter*, March 13, 2007, Box 1, File "About Barbara Gittings/Donation Information," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

just by speaking out."[30] However, the homophile movement was evolving, and integration required more than just keeping quiet. The Homophile Action League (HAL) in Philadelphia demonstrates this evolution well. HAL – "through action" – fought discrimination by seeking full and equal protection under the law, building self-respect by making the homosexual aware of their civil rights, and offering alternatives to inadequate gathering spaces to achieve recognition as first-class citizens and first-class human beings.[31] Homophile organizations in the Midwest likewise made this shift. Barbara Gittings' impact has been honored by her papers being present in LGBT archives.

By 1969, psychiatric views on homosexuality had begun to change to match this evolution in thought and activism. On October 10, 1969, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Task Force on Homosexuality published a favorable report on homosexuality. Two years later, *Psychiatric News* reported on the article and agreed that it was favorable, but also found no one was responding to the findings. The problem was that the report focused on sex which was not an appealing political issue. *Psychiatric News* points to President Nixon rejecting his own task force's conclusions on pornography as evidence of this marginalization of sexual issues and referenced homosexuality as a major social problem. It was a social problem, though, not because of

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[30] Christoper Lisotta, "Losing a Founding Mother," *Advocate Report*, March 27, 2007, Box 1, File "About Barbara Gittings/Donation Information," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[31] HAL Brochure, Box 1, File "Homophile Action League," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

illness but because of the injustice and suffering homosexuals suffered in the United States.[32]

Meanwhile, proponents of labeling homosexuality as a mental illness based their arguments on three themes: "homosexuality is the consequence of 'disordered sexual development,' it is a deviation from the biological norm, and that psychodynamic studies of homosexuals always reveal them to be deeply disturbed individuals."[33] Dr. Marmor, Vice President of the American Psychiatric Association, however, suggested this basis of belief was fallible and incorrect. Dr. Marmor argued that it was time for psychiatry "to give up the archaic practice of classifying the millions of men and women who accept or prefer homosexual object-choices as being by virtue of that fact alone mentally ill."[34] He suggested that psychiatry base all its diagnoses on evidence of serious ego-dystonic feelings or irrational behavior and not based on alternative lifestyles. "It is our task to be healers, not watchdogs of our social mores," said Marmor to his colleagues.[35]

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[32] "Reports in Limbo," *Psychiatric News,* September 15, 1971, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[33] Judd Marmor, "Homosexuality and Cultural Value-Systems: Should Homosexuality be Classified as a Mental Illness?" pg. 1, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[34] Judd Marmor, "Homosexuality and Cultural Value-Systems: Should Homosexuality be Classified as a Mental Illness?" pg. 2, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[35] Judd Marmor, "Homosexuality and Cultural Value-Systems: Should Homosexuality be Classified as a Mental Illness?" pg. 2, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

Activism at the annual meetings of the APA had been going on for a few years prior to Dr. Marmor's speech to his colleagues in 1973. In 1971, gay activists hijacked the meeting, stealing the spotlight from a speaker that was regarded as anti-homosexual. In a radical move, the activists maintained an integrationist stance. Their message in 1971 was that gay people can maintain happy, healthy relationships and can function as contributing members of society without psychiatric intervention.[36] The action spurred the APA to host a dialogue between homosexuals and psychiatrists at the 1972 meeting entitled "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals?"[37] These actions ultimately lead to the decision to formally remove homosexuality from the list of psychological disorders on December 15, 1973.

Evolution of Activism

The activism witnessed at the APA meetings in the early 1970s also reflects the greater change in activism following the events of Stonewall in 1969. The new radical liberation movement that arose out of Stonewall was vastly different to that of the homophile movement and the Midwest was not immune to these changes. The homophile movement was about integration and change from within existing structures. Leading up

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[36] "Staff Report: Homosexuals – To Cure, Not Convert," *Medical Dimensions – The Magazine for the Young Doctor,* Vol. 1, No. 1 March 1972, pg. 48, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[37] "Staff Report: Homosexuals – To Cure, Not Convert," *Medical Dimensions – The Magazine for the Young Doctor,* Vol. 1, No. 1 March 1972, pg. 48, Box 1, File "Psychiatry & Homosexuality," Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

to 1969, "various adult and student homophile groups had existed, but the new movement was different, for it had a radical thrust to it. The founders of GAY LIBERATION realized that the only way gay people would obtain their rights was to fight against the basic institutions and mores of society that cause the oppression; not by reformist measures inside the system."[38] After 1969, the more radical Gay Liberation groups began springing up across the Midwest, including in Chicago, Minneapolis, Madison, and St. Louis, among others.[39] These Gay Liberation groups differed from the formal structure of the homophile organizations as Gay Lib was "more of a movement than an organization."[40] The gay liberation movement in Chicago was founded at the University of Chicago consisting of twelve people: six men and six women. The tone of their actions began timidly but quickly intensified. They called for more community-based Gay Lib groups saying, "more groups, the more ideas and the more fronts that can be attacked. Right on! Gay power to the Gay people!"[41] Their activism reveals another development, as the Gay Liberation group at UChicago was using the Mattachine Midwest newsletter to spread their message. In this way, homophile organizations played a vital role in the beginnings of Gay Liberation groups. Using the size and existing reach of homophile

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[38] Art Guresch, "Gay Liberation," Box 1, File "Gay Liberation Front Chicago," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[39] "Gay Liberation group has been founded at UChicago of 12 people, 6 men and 6 women," Box 1 1947-1982, File 1 "Copy," Mattachine Midwest Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[40] "Welcome to Chicago Gay Liberation!" Box 1, File "Gay Liberation Front Chicago," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[41] "No title: Gay Liberation group has been founded at UChicago of 12 people, 6 men and 6 women," Box 1, 1947-1982, File 1 "Copy," Mattachine Midwest Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

organizations like Mattachine Midwest, Gay Liberation groups could reach their target audience quicker. Another example is in a May 1970 edition of the *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* where slogans like "Gay is Good," "Gay Power," and "Buy Gay" fill the top of the page while the rest is devoted to documenting Chicago Gay Liberation's Loop Protest and citywide "gay-in" from April.[42] Rather than being a battle ground between integration and liberation, the two opposing movements would evolve together in the Midwest during the 1970s and 1980s, focusing their combined efforts on furthering the homosexual cause instead.

Gay Liberationists also drew support from wartime activities but instead took a distinct anti-war position. One letter from the Gay Liberation Contingent on an anti-war protest flyer states, "As gays, we must unite together to stop aggression. Sexual channeling including intense fear of homosexuality, plays an important supporting role for the values of the militarists."[43] Another article finds that "Gay Liberationists have been conscious that the struggle for homosexual freedom is linked with other liberation movements against a common foe," namely the anti-war movement in this case.[44] These documents demonstrate how the anti-war movement itself became a unifying gay issue in

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[42] "Mattachine Midwest Newsletter May 1970," on loan from Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, *Closeted/OUT in the Quadrangles: A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago* Date Accessed 10/9/2022 https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/closetedout-quadrangles-history-lgbtq-life-university-chicago/gay-liberation/

[43] "Gays Against the War," Box 1, File "G/L Anti-war Activities," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[44] "Gay Liberation and the Antiwar Movement," pg. 3, Box 1, File "G/L Anti-war Activities," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

the early 1970s. However, rather than utilizing the anti-war movement to fight for social inclusion, Gay Liberation was more focused on gay power, marking a cultural shift in societal acceptance of homosexuals by instead fighting for a more separate place in society.

One form of this new age of gay power, or organized political influence of homosexuals as a coherent group, was through the formation of pride festivals celebrating and remembering homosexual life. The Midwest hosted some of the earliest pride week festivals. For instance, Chicago organized a Gay Pride Week from June 20 through June 28, 1970, to rally for the "first anniversary of gay people telling the warped, sick, maladjusted, Puritan American society that they have had enough shit."[45] During this Pride Week in Chicago, an all-women dance, "June Cruise," a rally and demonstration, and another dance were hosted. Chicago would further be the seat of the Midwest Conference which invited people from across the Midwest to participate in workshops, rap sessions, seminars, and speakers.[46] These pride weeks marked the beginning of a new generation of celebrating gay life.

Conservative Backlash

While social mores were, in general, progressing toward a future of acceptance, not all of society was as accepting of the changes in the status of homosexuals in the

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[45] "A Call to All Free People (and to those who want to be)," Box 1, File "Gay Liberation Front Chicago," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[46] "A Call to All Free People," Box 1, File "Gay Liberation Front Chicago," Chicago Gay Liberation Memorabilia Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

United States during the 1960s and 1970s. Homosexuality and the Equal Rights Amendment challenged gender roles and posed a threat to the traditional patriarchal family. The ERA became connected to the gay rights movement when it passed Congress and went to the states for ratification in the 1970s. One of the leading and most vocal opponents of these changes was Phyllis Schlafly. Schlafly was a product of her Midwestern upbringing, born in St. Louis. Her Eagle Forum organized the charge most famously against the ERA, though homosexuals also were included in her battles. Ann Coulter compares Schlafly to Margaret Thatcher, conservative former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, as Schlafly's only rival in importance among conservative women at that time in her foreword to Schlafly's book.

Whether deliberately or incidentally, Schlafly's work keeping gender roles intact impacted the experience of homosexuals, especially lesbians, in the United States. Schlafly believed, "Of all the classes of people who ever lived, the American woman is the most privileged."[47] This privilege, extended to the American woman, came from being a wife and a mother under the protection of men. She focused on respecting the traditional heterosexual family as the basic unit of society, as the institution was founded in Judeo-Christian customs. To Schlafly, homosexuals were not in line with this definition of family. In her writings, for example, she critiques the National Conference of the Commission on International Women's Year in November 1977 for passing resolutions that included the four "hot button" issues of the ratification of the ERA,

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[47] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 89.

government-funded abortion, universal federal daycare, and "lesbian privileges being recognized with the same dignity as husbands and wives."[48] Further, Schlafly found that young women were turned off by feminism because it "had come to be strongly identified with lesbianism."[49] She cites one controversy over women's studies courses at California State University at Long Beach as evidence of a problematic feminism and lesbianism attitude. She found that the women' studies program, originally started in 1970 as a benefit of all women, changed when the faculty "converted it to a program to promote radical feminist-lesbian goals and values to the exclusion of traditional women's goals and values."[50] Schlafly contributes the controversy to when "churchgoing women" enrolled in California State University women's studies courses. The women complained to officials that the course was pro-lesbian, and the texts and other readings were "inappropriate, pornographic, and pure filth."[51] Other women had also filed affidavits because they stated they were shown X-rated and pro-homosexual films in class. Reading material included such texts as *Sapphistry: The Book of Lesbian Sexuality* by Pay Califia and *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement* edited by Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch that were "so pornographic that they are not quotable in this article," according to Schlafly. Additionally, the complaint charges "that terminating the feminist-lesbian

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[48] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 30.
[49] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 4.
[50] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 103.
[51] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 103.

courses was sex discrimination in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972."[52] However, Title IX, at the time, did not extend to protect lesbians as sexual orientation was not an included protected class. Moreover, Schlafly gave a reason as to why the ERA failed for it "would put 'gay rights' into the U.S. Constitution because the word in the Amendment is 'sex,' not 'women.'" As she said, "Eminent authorities have stated that ERA would legalize the granting of marriage licenses to same-sex couples and generally implement the gay and lesbian agenda."[53] Despite working against the efforts of the homophile community, Schlafly served as an example of what was to come with resurgent power in the 1980s – conservativism.

Countering Conservatism

Perhaps one area where the two approaches – liberal and radical, integrationist and liberationist – overlap and counter this new wave of conservatism is through running for office as an openly gay person. On the one hand, running for office embodies the liberal approach to integration. It is cooperating and integrating into the established system and society. While change may follow, it is change from within. On the other hand, for an openly gay person running for office is a radical action, for doing so was completely outside of the social norm. Because of this, in the early 1970s, there was no openly gay representation in elected office across the country. Today, the fight for

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[52] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 104.
[53] Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), pg. 122.

representation continues but compared to 1970, progress shows with accomplishments like Pete Buttigieg securing a Cabinet-level position. However, this progress had to start somewhere. While many will say the first openly gay person to run for office and win was Harvey Milk in California in the San Francisco Board of Supervisors election, that was not the first instance. The Midwest had the first openly gay candidate win elected office in Ann Arbor, Michigan, three years prior to Harvey Milk's landmark 1977 election.

In April 1974, Kathleen (Kathy) Kozachenko won her Ann Arbor City Council election to become the first openly gay person to win elected office in the United States. She ran for the Human Rights Party (HRP), besting the Democratic candidate. She was not alone either as shortly before the election, two City Councilmembers Jerry DeGrieck and Nancy Wechsler, also from the HRP, simultaneously acknowledged being gay while already serving in office, becoming the first to do so.[54] They did not run as openly gay people. In contrast, Kozachenko was monumental. To run and win as a lesbian in 1974 was tremendous, but even more so for being in the Midwest when so much of the focus of gay rights and gay activism had been on the coasts. Mainstream news did not give her much credit. The *Detroit Free Press* mentioned Kozachenko in relation to DeGrieck and Wechsler stepping down. "HRP will run candidates in the April 1 election and has a narrow chance of retaining the seats being vacated by Wechsler and DeGrieck. Their best

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[54] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk

hope is the election of Kathy Kozachenko, a 21-year-old U-M senior and also a publicly professed lesbian. The real possibility exists that HRP will win no seats at all."[55]

For years, Kozachenko was not acknowledged as the first openly gay elected politician in the United States. While the article from *Detroit Free Press* acknowledges her being a lesbian, many articles at the time of her election breezed over the fact she was a lesbian and instead focused on a controversial referendum to reduce the penalty for marijuana possession to a $5 fine.[56] Kozachenko asserts this lack of acknowledgement stems from her sexual orientation never being a central aspect of her public identity. She simply "happened to be lesbian." Even so, she felt left out of a movement for gay rights. Kozachenko stated "Well, yeah, I felt left out, because I am particularly proud of the fact that it was a third party and not the Democratic Party that elected the first gay person. And, actually, they usually leave two people out. I was elected in April of 1974 and Elaine Noble was elected as an openly gay state representative in Massachusetts in November. I mean, come on! That's two women!"[57] Kozachenko's and Noble's accomplishment of being elected both as lesbians and as women is none to ignore.

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[55] Jim Neubacher, "Radical Councilmen Happy to Quit, Establishment Glad to See Them Go," *Detroit Free Press* (24 March 1974), pg. 46.
[56] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk
[57] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk

Kozachenko's win restructures the understanding of gendered politics in the Cold War era. Kozachenko exemplifies the changing attitudes on gender that began when Cold War conformity was called into question. Politics had long been the domain of cisgender white males with little room for people who did not fit that mold. However, people like Kozachenko broke this barrier in substantial ways – being gay and a woman. Living openly about one's sexuality, especially as a candidate not on a big party ticket, demonstrates that this counterculture influence was strong, even in the Midwest. Further, despite gay liberation not being a major issue of Kozachenko's campaign, she stated in a speech following her victory that "both candidates in this ward said they supported gay rights but 10 years ago, or even three years ago, lesbianism would have meant automatic defeat…Many people's attitudes about gayness are still far from healthy, but my campaign forced some people at least to re-examine their prejudices and stereotypes."[58] Kozachenko received 2,236 votes in her election.

Kozachenko, though, fell out of public life and never ran for public office after her first term. While she continued her activism through the 1970s, by the 1980s, she turned her attention to family life. She met MaryAnn Geiger in 1984 and the two fell deeply in love. Kozachenko also wanted a child of her own.[59] Kozachenko's story from

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[58] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk

[59] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk

liberal activism to family life is important to understand in the course of the development of gay rights. So much focus goes to radical activism following Stonewall in 1969. While it is important to see people on the front lines actively fighting for change, it is equally important to see queer people living ordinary lives within society. Seeing people living ordinary lives shows that everything is working and that the efforts are not in vain. One quote exemplifies the opposition to queer people living ordinary lives: "Jesse Helms does not want to see queers living real lives taking care of their children."[60] Helms and other political leaders would go on to lead the conservative pushback of the 1980s.

Other groundbreaking campaigns in the Midwest differed from Kathy Kozachenko in that being gay was a central part of running for office. For example, in 1977 Gary Nepon announced his candidacy for office. He was running as an openly gay candidate for the Illinois State Assembly from the 13th District on Chicago's northside lakefront. Nepon was the first openly gay candidate to run for office in the State of Illinois.[61] Clearly a gay campaign, launching with a benefit dinner in March 1978 stating, "the politics of hope comes to Chicago," Gary Nepon would be "leading the fight against fear, ignorance and bigotry."[62] The *Reader* quoted Nepon saying that his parents "wanted me to be the candidate who just happens to be gay and, hopefully, no one would mention

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[60] John Scagliotti, Janey Baus, and Dan Hunt, *After Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (First Run Features, 1999).
[61] "Harvey Milk in Chicago," Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL. and Marcia Froelke Coburn, "Is Gary Nepon the Great Gay Hope of Chicago? The Politics of Brotherly Love in the 13th Legislative District," *Reader: Chicago's Free Weekly* (3 March, 1978), pg. 19, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[62] Program of Events for Gary Nepon Benefit Dinner March 4, 1978, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

it."[63] However, Nepon had other plans – to run as an openly gay politician. Other candidates feared that "Gay Clout" may help him secure victory.[64] An estimated 18,900 to 30,000 potential gay votes were in play in the 13th District, though it remained unclear whether the gay population would vote as a singular bloc behind Nepon.[65] His campaign is critical, though, as it was not a "single-issue" campaign. Nepon campaigned on many issues including abortion, increased funding of public schools, and passing the Equal Rights Amendment.[66] Despite hope for a gay voting bloc, Nepon came last in a four-way race. Nepon nevertheless embodies the liberal and more homophile-like approach to domestic politics. Instead of protesting on the streets, he was advocating for beginning "the educative and legislative process to assure the full participation of Gay People in society as responsible, contributing and productive citizens." His approach was similar to the channels that homophile organizations worked through.[67]

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[63] Marcia Froelke Coburn, "Is Gary Nepon the Great Gay Hope of Chicago? The Politics of Brotherly Love in the 13th Legislative District," *Reader: Chicago's Free Weekly* (3 March, 1978), pg. 21, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[64] Marcia Froelke Coburn, "Is Gary Nepon the Great Gay Hope of Chicago? The Politics of Brotherly Love in the 13th Legislative District," *Reader: Chicago's Free Weekly* (3 March, 1978), pg. 20, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[65] Marcia Froelke Coburn, "Is Gary Nepon the Great Gay Hope of Chicago? The Politics of Brotherly Love in the 13th Legislative District," *Reader: Chicago's Free Weekly* (3 March, 1978), pg. 20, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[66] Vote Gary Nepon Brochure, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

[67] Program of Events for Gary Nepon Benefit Dinner March 4, 1978, Box 1, Gary Nepon Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

Meanwhile, homophile organizations like Mattachine Midwest continued their efforts at finding a place for homosexuals within mainstream society, by continuing the publication of their newsletters, pushing their own liberal activism, and speaking out against injustices with increasing militancy. When Charles "Chuck" Booth, a member of One of Chicago, publicly stated that the police presented no problems for homosexuals in Chicago nor were there particular problems with employment despite his dismissal of evidence to the contrary.[68] Homophile organizations, however, like Mattachine Midwest, were not convinced of Booth's report on homosexuality. They heavily criticized Booth for painting a picture that homosexuals have no legitimate complaints about homosexuality.[69] Jim Bradford, President of Mattachine Midwest, was criticized for speaking against Booth, showing there was division within the movement over the extent of their integrationist agenda. Aaron Thomas wrote to Bradford in February 1970 expressing concern that Mattachine Midwest did not represent the integrated homophile community. "There are thousands, as represented by Charles Booth, who are decent citizens, living normal lives. He said, they " do not feel the oppression and the discrimination that you do." Rather than support a movement of social change, he blamed the Mattachine president for not accommodating society. Thomas wrote, "I would suggest that you reform yourself first and then you might find the laws tolerable, and also

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[68] Steve Robertsen, "The Promised Land," pg. 1, Box 1 1947-1982, File 1 "Copy," Mattachine Midwest Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[69] Steve Robertsen, "The Promised Land," pg. 2, Box 1 1947-1982, File 1 "Copy," Mattachine Midwest Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

more readily flexible."[70] This contention shows that the place Mattachine Midwest once held in the homosexual community was changing. Although some of what Thomas and Booth were calling for can be attributed to internalized homophobia, them "passing as straight," or not wanting to have a strong homosexual community structure, they wanted homophile organizations like Mattachine Midwest to remain acceptably accommodationist.

Laws on the Book

Yet some aspects of society needed to change. Sodomy laws that were created in the nineteenth century remained in the books in many states. Richard Weinmeyer, JD, MPhil, contends in the AMA *Journal of Ethics* that sodomy laws were not created with the intent to punish homosexual sodomy. Instead, they were intended to protect public morals and decency and were to protect women, "weak men," and children against sexual assault.[71] However, even by the turn of the century, sodomy laws increasingly targeted homosexual men. During 1950s McCarthyism, oral and anal sex between adult men was entwined with child molestation, confounding fears of communism and subversion. But calls to sexual perversion also played a role during the time in targeting homosexual men. These sodomy laws were not the only events in play. For example, when Dr. Benjamin

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[70] Letter to Mr. Jim Bradford, February 2, 1970, Box 1 1947-1982, File 1 "Copy," Mattachine Midwest Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[71] Richard Weinmeyer, "The Decriminalization of Sodomy in the United States," *AMA Journal of Ethics* (November 2014). Date Accessed 10/1/2022 https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/decriminalization-sodomy-united-states/2014-11

Karpman, a student of Dr. Sigmund Freud, joined the staff of St. Elizabeths Hospital in southeast Washington, D.C. in 1920 and later became the chief psychotherapist in 1948, he advocated that criminals, including homosexuals, belonged in the care of psychiatrists, not in jails.[72] Dr. Karpman, while not advocating for the release of homosexuals or any change to their social status, altered the way society handled the criminality of homosexuality. Further, he predicted a sexual revolution following World War II. Because of this fear of Karpman's sexual revolution and supposed perversion of homosexuals, the Miller Act, named after sponsoring Republican congressman Arthur Miller from Nebraska, became Washington's first sodomy law, called a sexual psychopath law, in 1948.[73] Because of this law, homosexuals became not just criminals, but mentally ill prisoners subject to psychiatric remedies including shock therapy, castration, and lobotomies.[74] These laws became ever more present after 1948 and homosexuals in the Midwest did not escape these fears with sodomy laws increasingly narrowing convictions.

Looking at Kansas as an example, the first reported sodomy case was *State v. Hurlbert* in 1925. Wayne Hurlbert had been convicted of fellatio with an 11-year-old boy. Not all states included oral sex in their sodomy laws at the time. Hurlbert appealed

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[72] Eric Cervini, *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. the United States of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), pg. 37.
[73] Eric Cervini, *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. the United States of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), pg. 38.
[74] Eric Cervini, *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. the United States of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), pg. 38.

the case on the basis that fellatio did not meet the "crime against nature" requirement.[75] The Kansas Court held that "proof of any actual, lecherous penetration of the body of a man, woman, or beast, per os, per anum, or in any other manner contrary to nature will sustain a conviction."[76] One case the Court cited for being in support of their decision was *Kinnan v. State* (1910) out of Nebraska. However, *Kinnan v. State* ruled the opposite – fellatio did not violate the state's sodomy law.[77] *Nebraska Legal News* reported this case in November 1910, confirming that the court's decision was to hold that "Penetration per se … not to be indictable under a statute providing for the punishment of one committing 'the infamous crime against nature.'"[78] Nebraska complicated the definition of sodomy by finding that penetration alone did not equate to sodomy. Despite this, Kansas continued to uphold its fellatio conviction, and in 1935, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled in *State v. Badders* that fellatio was a violation of the state statute.[79]

Further, in 1953, Kansas passed a psychopathic offender law that found criminality in "any offense against public morals and decency, as relating to crimes pertaining to sex, in which perversion or mental aberration appears to be or is

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[75] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm
George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm
[77] "Kinnan v. State, 86 Neb. 234 (1910)," Read Caselaw Harvard Law School, August 29, 2019. https://cite.case.law/neb/86/234/.
[78] "Recent Important Decisions," *Nebraska Legal News,* (November 12, 1910), pg. 4.
[79] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm

involved."[80] This law targeted homosexuals on two grounds. The first was the perceived sexual perversion of homosexual intercourse, and the second was that the law would have grouped homosexual men under the mental aberration requirement, as homosexuality was still seen as a mental disorder in 1953. Kansas continued this against homosexuals in 1969 by revising the state's criminal code and reducing sodomy from a felony to a misdemeanor. However, in doing this, the state also made the distinction that the conduct would be criminal only between people of the same sex. Kansas thus became the first to specifically limit sodomy law to homosexuals.[81] At the same time, Kansas also introduced a new vagrancy law that prohibited loitering in public places with the intent to solicit for immoral purposes – a clear way to try to prevent gay men from engaging in sexual activity in public places like bathrooms.[82] Even though the psychopathic offender law was repealed in 1970, and a bill was introduced in the Kansas Senate in 1976 to repeal the sodomy law, it failed to be considered by the House, and Kansas retained its history of criminalizing homosexuality until 2003.[83]

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[80] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm

[81] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm

[82] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm

[83] George Painter, "The Sensibilities of Our Forefathers: The History of Sodomy Laws in the United States: Kansas," *SodomyLaws* (1991), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/sensibilities/kansas.htm

By the 1960s and 1970s, sodomy laws began to be targeted more broadly for repeal in the United States. In the Midwest, eight states repealed their sodomy laws legislatively: Illinois (1962), Ohio (1974), North Dakota (1975), South Dakota (1977), Indiana (1977), Nebraska (1978), Iowa (1978), and Wisconsin (1983).[84] Illinois was the first state in the nation to repeal its law in 1962 and Nebraska was the only state to repeal the law over a gubernatorial veto.[85] Nebraska also began questioning its law as early as 1971 when the *Lincoln Journal Star* published a review of John F. Simmons's article discussing a 1970 Texas case. Nebraska's law stated, "whoever has carnal copulation with a beast, or in an opening of the body except sexual parts with another human being, shall be guilty of sodomy."[86] While the law could apply to both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, homosexual sexual activity was especially targeted by the law's wording about "an opening of the body except sexual parts." Nebraska's law was also likely unconstitutional as it was probable the state would regulate sexual activities between unmarried persons, not just gay couples.[87] Regulating sex outside marriage raised many constitutional flags. The path to repeal was not short or easy. Wisconsin's road to repeal was also difficult. The Wisconsin Young Democrats became the first political organization to endorse the repeal of sodomy laws in 1966 and were called

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[84] "Sodomy Laws in the United States," *SodomyLaws* (November 2007), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/usa.htm
[85] "Nebraska," *SodomyLaws* (January 3, 2005), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/nebraska/nebraska.htm
[86] "Review: State Sodomy Laws Unconstitutional?," *Lincoln Journal Star* (August 12, 1971), pg. 17.
[87] "Review: State Sodomy Laws Unconstitutional?," *Lincoln Journal Star* (August 12, 1971), pg. 17.

"Homocrats" by the state's Republican governor.[88] Minnesota would eventually have its law repealed by judicial invalidation with the case *Doe, et al. v. Ventura, et al.* (2001) just shortly before the landmark Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas* found all sodomy laws unconstitutional in 2003.

The other states in the Midwest – Kansas, Missouri, and Michigan – retained their sodomy laws up until the Supreme Court decision. By then, the Kansas and Missouri laws applied strictly to homosexuals, which stated that it was a crime if "he has deviate sexual intercourse with another person of the same sex."[89] Michigan's law applied to both heterosexuals and homosexuals, and also was the first state to enact a psychopathic offender law in 1935. [90] The penalties for sodomy in these states were fifteen years imprisonment in Michigan, one year and $1,000 in Missouri, and six months and $1,000 in Kansas.

Before the *Lawrence v. Texas* case on sodomy, there was *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986). The *Bowers* case, involving two homosexual men in Georgia, did not see the case in terms of a fundamental privacy issue like the lower courts did. The Court, instead, decided this case on whether or not the Constitution bestows a right upon *homosexuals* to engage in sodomy. Even though Georgia's law criminalized the behavior of both

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[88] "Wisconsin," *SodomyLaws* (March 28, 2004), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/wisconsin/wisconsin.htm
[89] "Missouri," *SodomyLaws* (April 18, 2007), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/missouri/missouri.htm
[90] "Michigan," *SodomyLaws* (April 11, 2007), Date Accessed 10/2/2022 https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/michigan/michigan.htm

heterosexuals and homosexuals, the question was not viewed as such.[91] It zeroed in on the rights of gay men. Then, a similar event happened in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* where police found two homosexual men engaged in sexual activity in their home. Instead of framing it as a homosexual question, this time, the Supreme Court looked at the case as whether adults were free to engage in private conduct under the Due Process Clause of the fourteenth amendment. In turn, *Lawrence v. Texas* struck down the Texas sodomy law and all laws of its kind across the nation.[92] Some of these laws were in place for over a century before being repealed by *Lawrence v. Texas.*

Liberal integrationist activism remained prominent despite pressure from Gay Liberation and other actors. The Vietnam War provided an opportunity for homophile groups to remain active in their own way, and the removal of homosexuality from the DSM-II in 1973 was an important step forward for the recognition of civil rights for homosexuals. The evolution that homophile organizations underwent is especially pertinent when discussing the next decade of gay activism – the 1980s. The 1980s would see the Reagan Revolution attempt to squash social progress while the AIDS crisis

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[91] Richard Weinmeyer, "The Decriminalization of Sodomy in the United States," *AMA Journal of Ethics* (November 2014). Date Accessed 10/1/2022 https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/decriminalization-sodomy-united-states/2014-11

[92] Richard Weinmeyer, "The Decriminalization of Sodomy in the United States," *AMA Journal of Ethics* (November 2014). Date Accessed 10/1/2022 https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/decriminalization-sodomy-united-states/2014-11

shifted the focus to survival rather than civil rights.[93] Again, homophile groups and integrationist politics played a profound role for gay rights.

[93] Steve Friess, "The First Openly Gay Person to Win an Election in America Was Not Harvey Milk," *Bloomberg* (11 December 2015), Date Accessed April 24, 2022. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-12-11/the-first-openly-gay-person-to-win-an-election-in-america-was-not-harvey-milk

Chapter Three

Legacy of a Crisis: Homophile Approach to Addressing AIDS in 1980s Midwest

Coming out of the 1970s, cultural progress was bright and promising. Integrationist politics among the gay community were intertwined with liberation to create a new era of gay rights in the United States. However, with the first reports of AIDS in 1981 and the discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in 1983, a new problem confronted the gay community in terms of both medical emergencies and social progression. Yet, cultural progress moved forward despite the pushback in the 1980s, and homophile-oriented ideals were at the forefront of this charge in the Midwest.

AIDS continues to disproportionately impact the gay community so understanding the disease's patterns is important to addressing the socio-economic problems associated with it both in the 1980s and today. In the data from 2019, the Midwest had 4,740 cases, or 12.9% of total cases. Of these, 3,047 (67.7%) new cases of HIV in 2019 in the Midwest were attributed to male-to-male sexual conduct, and 245 (5.4%) new cases in 2019 in the Midwest were attributed to both male-to-male sexual contact and injection drug use.[1] The highest incidence rates among male-to-male sexual contact were in the eastern half of the Midwest including Illinois (878), Ohio (595), and Michigan (495). North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin,

[1] Centers for Disease Control, "NCHHSTP Atlas Plus," *CDC.* Date Accessed May 25, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/atlas/index.htm

and Iowa had less than 150 cases each while Missouri and Indiana had 295 and 283 cases respectively.[2]

Similar patterns emerge when examining AIDS cases from June 1981 to March 1988. In 1988, the Midwest had 7.8% of the total cases in the United States.[3] Illinois (1551), Ohio (721), and Michigan (566) had the highest number of cases, whereas Iowa (70), Nebraska (59), South Dakota (9), and North Dakota (8) had the fewest.[4] Missouri (487), Minnesota (313), Indiana (292), Wisconsin (195), and Kansas (131) fell in the middle for the number of AIDS cases in the 1980s.[5] In total, there were 4,402 cases in the Midwest from June 1981 to March 1988. However, among the top twenty areas marked as a "standard metropolitan statistical area" (SMSA) in March 1988, the only Midwestern city listed was Chicago with 1,416 reported cases by March 1988.[6] While this suggests that AIDS was not as prevalent in the Midwest as other areas in the 1980s, people still

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[2] Centers for Disease Control, "NCHHSTP Atlas Plus," *CDC.* Date Accessed May 25, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstpatlas/maps.html

[3] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 2, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[4] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 2, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[5] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 2, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[6] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 3, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

suffered, and their history needs to be remembered to learn from the mistakes of the past. Ignoring the people who suffered from AIDS in the Midwest is an injustice to them and the activism that surrounded them.

Of the total HIV/AIDS cases in the United States in the 1980s, 71% of infections amongst the total population were gay/bisexual men; 51.9% were white gay/bisexual men.[7] The disease impacted 30-39 year-olds the worst with 46% of cumulative cases being in that age bracket while 21% of cases were 20-29 and 40-49 year-olds.[8] These data suggest that the older generation that came of age in the 1950s and 1960s was harder hit by HIV/AIDS than the younger generation. This is the generation that led the homophile movement in the post-war era.

The tragedy of AIDS persisted until the end of the decade. Change in the course of AIDS occurred largely due to antiretroviral therapy (ART), drugs that were not available in the early years of the epidemic. When the first antiretroviral drug for HIV/AIDS was approved by the FDA in 1987, azidothymidine (AZT) monotherapy slowed viral replication and disease progression but added only months to life with added severe side effects; HIV rapidly became resistant to this drug, providing hope for only a

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[7] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 1, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[8] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 4, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

short time.[9] At the beginning of the epidemic in 1981 the case-fatality rate was 92%. With increased understanding of the disease and the availability of ART, the death rate fell to 14% by the beginning of 1988.[10] But the cumulative total of the first half of 1988 averaged to a 27% fatality rate.[11]

Having already killed more than the combined impact of toxic shock syndrome and Legionnaire's disease, two bacterial diseases first identified in the late 1970s, healthcare for HIV/AIDS patients became extremely important.[12] However, some healthcare projects were only open to a select group of individuals. For example, the St. Mark's AIDS Screening Project only looked for those with lymphadenopathy and certain other symptoms related to AIDS. "If your concerns are other than these," the listing states, "please do not use this special project in order to see a doctor or health worker."[13] While healthcare was available, prohibitive costs and lack of understanding left many in

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[9] Steven S. Forsythe, William McGreevey, Alan Whiteside, Maunank Shah, Joshua Cohen, Robert Hecht, Lori A. Bollinger, & Anthony Kinghorn, "Twenty Years of Antiretroviral Therapy For People Living With HIV: Global Costs, Health Achievements, Economic Benefits," *Health* Affairs, July 2019. https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05391

[10] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, March 28, 1988," pg. 4, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, March 28-April 3, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[11] "AIDS Weekly Surveillance Report – United States AIDS Program, Center for Infectious Diseases Centers for Disease Control, November 14, 1988," pg. 4, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, November 29-December 4, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[12] "Notice of Revised and Simplified AIDS Case Reporting Form" Letter December 15, 1982 from David Ostrow and Sarah V. Gross, M.P.H., Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[13] "The St. Mark's AIDS Screening Project," Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

the dark without treatment. Moreover, early on in the epidemic, there was increasing evidence and acceptance that AIDS would not just be impacting gay meccas on the coasts. Chicago's Howard Brown Memorial Clinic published a newsletter in April 1984 stating, "We unfortunately cannot anticipate a downturn in the number of cases being reported in the near future. AIDS can no longer be viewed as a bi-coastal phenomenon."[14] The AIDS crisis, therefore, was impacting the Midwest in unprecedented ways.

Subversion to Perversion

Another change that corresponded with the AIDS crisis in the 1980s was the switch in language used to identify homosexuals in the United States. By the 1950s, "fairy" and "pixie" had long been in use as code for a homosexual man in American English, and "a pixie is a close relative of a fairy," said Attorney Joseph Welch in response to homophobic remarks at the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954.[15] This language was used to discredit Roy Cohn by suggesting he partook in homosexual actions but also by calling him effeminate.[16] This attack on Cohn was just a sampling of how this language diminished homosexual men. Further, in the 1950s, homosexuals were inherently tied to being subversives by government leaders like Senator Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska. In 1950, Wherry stated that "you can't hardly separate homosexuals from

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[14] "AIDS Action Project Newsletter," Vol. 2, no. 1, April 1984, Box 6, File "AIDS Newsletters," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[15] Greta Schiller, John Scagliotti, and Robert Rosenberg, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (First Run Features, 1985).
[16] Christopher M. Elias, *Gossip Men: J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and the Politics of Insinuation* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), pg. 195.

subversives…A man of low morality is a menace to the government, whatever he is, and they are all tied up together."[17] However, this use of language was tied up with the Cold War fears of communism in the United States. While the 1950s was ripe with this attitude, successive generations of Americans were less concerned with the Communist threat. The Vietnam War eclipsed McCarthyism, and when the war ended, homosexuals were less connected by past links with communism. By the 1980s with the end of the Soviet Union coming near, homosexuality was no longer as connected to communist subversion as it once had been.

The New Right, however, took the subversive language and attached it to religion in a new way.[18] Conservatives were shocked by the sexual freeness of both the feminist movement and the gay rights movement. Attaching homosexual perversion to sin was a means of demonizing a group of people in order to gain support for anti-homosexual policies. Evangelical Christians believed that homosexuality was a crime against God. Greater social acceptance of homosexuals was viewed as the United States experiencing a moral decline. Religion served as the backdrop for many battles with the homosexual community during the 1980s and beyond.

Mainstream culture would also popularize slurs and other language to describe homosexuals. For example, the 1985 movie *Teen Wolf* included references to

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[17] Will Roscoe, "Mattachine: Radical Roots of the Gay Movement," *FoundSF,* Date Accessed 10/8/2022. https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Mattachine:_Radical_Roots_of_the_Gay_Movement

[18] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981).

homosexuality stating, “Are you gonna tell me you’re a fag? Because if you’re gonna tell me you’re a fag, I just don’t think I could handle it...”[19] As a result, these alterations in the language and slurs used against gay people during the 1980s led to changes in how homosexuals were viewed and treated by those who opposed them. Fears of HIV/AIDS and religious motivation drove the new hatred of homosexuals in the United States.

Military service, a civic duty long pursued by homophile activists as a place for homosexual acceptance, also suffered under the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The military’s HIV rules that exist today were first developed in the 1980s at the height of the AIDS crisis when little was known about the disease. The *Washington Post* reported that in October 1985, the Pentagon began a mandatory HIV-screening program. If a new recruit tested positive, they were turned away. Active-duty members who tested positive could continue officially serving but their job prospects suffered. HIV-positive service members were prosecuted for sodomy and disobedience, and some were discharged.[20] Though the focus changed to the treatment of AIDS, this policy would hinder one of the homophile movement’s goals moving forward.

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[19] Rae Alexandra, “The Other F-Word: How Homophobic Language Has Ruined ‘80s Teen Movies,” *KQED* (November 30, 2017). Date Accessed 10/8/2022 https://www.kqed.org/pop/97337/the-other-f-word-how-homophobic-language-has-ruined-80s-teen-movies

[20] Nikita Lalwani, “The Military’s HIV Policies are Discriminatory – And Decades Behind the Times,” *The Washington Post* (July 22, 2021). Date Accessed 10/8/2022 https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/the-militarys-hiv-policies-are-discriminatory--and-decades-behind-the-times/2021/07/22/616fa480-e8c0-11eb-8950-d73b3e93ff7f_story.html

Handling a New Crisis

One of the means of handling the AIDS epidemic in the Midwest is evident in Indiana where the first major AIDS bill of 1988 was signed by Governor Robert Orr on March 4. This bill required licensed physicians, hospitals, and medical labs to report diagnosed cases of AIDS and confirmed HIV infection, prohibited testing without consent except in specified circumstances like a court order, and required testing for all donated blood with the donation of infected blood to be a Class C felony (Class A felony if the virus was transmitted).[21] Similar to early COVID-19 contact tracing protocol, states, especially rural states, introduced successful contact tracing as a means to mitigate infections and receive counseling and testing funds. Though not in the Midwest, in the sample case of a rural health district in South Carolina, 137 contacts were named by seven HIV-positive people; three-quarters were identified, counseled, and tested. Each contact was educated about AIDS and negative individuals had a six-month follow-up in which there was a reported decrease in sexual partners and increased use of condoms. Several admitted to bisexual activity after stating they were strictly heterosexual at the beginning of the program. Not only does this reveal the impact of AIDS, but it also sheds light on the fear people had of being associated with a homosexual lifestyle after being diagnosed with this disease. The State AIDS Report attributes the change in reported behavior to a growing trust in public health officials and the contact notification

[21] "State AIDS Reports," edited by Mona J. Rowe & Caitlin C. Ryan, Number 2, March-April 1988, pg. 1-2, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, April 18-24, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

process.[22] However many within the queer community were highly resistant to contact tracing fearing the information would be used as means of discrimination. This need to fight discrimination led the Kansas Task Force on AIDS to recommend anti-discrimination laws that would protect HIV-infected people in education, housing, access to care, and employment. It also further called for liberalizing Medicaid rules to cover services to patients with AIDS, AIDS-related complex (ARC), or HIV.[23]

At the beginning of the AIDS crisis, however, there was no clear-cut distinction between AIDS, what was known as "pre-AIDS," and regular STD infections. One Midwest doctor, David G. Ostrow tried to address this problem. Using information from Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, the CDC AIDS Task Force, and Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation (SF), he derived a hierarchy of case definitions. He takes care to note the wide spectrum of symptoms experienced during the prodromal, or pre-AIDS, stages. Ostrow defined Classical AIDS as a "biopsy or culture proven, life-threatening neoplasm and/or opportunistic infection in an individual with no known cause for immunosuppression."[24] The category of "Possible AIDS" was defined as "cases meeting the clinical definition of AIDS, but falling outside the CDC criteria for one or more of the following reasons: (a) infection and/or neoplasm as yet unconfirmed by biopsy or

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[22] "State AIDS Reports," edited by Mona J. Rowe & Caitlin C. Ryan, Number 2, March-April 1988, pg. 5, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, April 18-24, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[23] "State AIDS Reports," edited by Mona J. Rowe & Caitlin C. Ryan, Number 2, March-April 1988, pg. 3, Box 1, Folder "AIDS Weekly Reader, April 18-24, 1988," David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[24] David G. Ostrow, "AIDS/STD Information Network: Case Definition/Reporting Form," pg. 1, Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

positive culture/serology, but patient in critical condition (b) possible cause for immunosuppression, such as steroid treatment of chronic active hepatitis, but clinical picture consistent with AIDS (c) additional risk factor, such as hemophilia, IV drug use or prostitution."[25] Meanwhile, Pre-AIDS was two or more of the following symptoms: lymphadenopathy, fever, diarrhea and/or anorexia, and severe fatigue.[26]

One group providing resources to people whether the person had AIDS or not was the AIDS Action Project of the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic in Chicago. The Project's target audience was the Chicago metropolitan and northern Indiana gay communities, local healthcare professionals, and the gay and non-gay media. The AIDS Action Project consisted of community education, a clearinghouse, clinical screening, patient support services, and research.[27] The information provided by the AIDS Action Project filled an important gap in the Midwest left by the lack of government educational materials.

By the late 1980s, homosexuals were predominately the ones still being infected with HIV and seeking treatment in the Midwest. For example, the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic maintained records of its PWA (people with AIDS) Client Population.

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[25] David G. Ostrow, "AIDS/STD Information Network: Case Definition/Reporting Form," pg. 1, Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[26] David G. Ostrow, "AIDS/STD Information Network: Case Definition/Reporting Form," pg. 1-2, Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[27] "AIDS Action Project," Box 2, File "AIDS Forms," David Ostrow Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

In June 1989, 83.5% of its client population was gay, and 62.2% were gay and white.[28] While this mirrors the larger trend in HIV infection at the time, it brings into question whether these programs targeted white gay males or if resources were not as accessible to racial minorities.

For those unable to access resources such as the AIDS Action Project, the outlook was bleak. Estimates for the cost of treatment, from being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS to death in the late 1980s, ranged from $24,000 to $147,000.[29] There was some state assistance and funding for HIV/AIDS, but the Midwest by no means broke any records on spending, especially per capita. Two of the most populated states, Illinois ($5,636,261) and Michigan ($5,239,300) were in the top ten states on state-only spending in 1989 but spent only $0.49 and $0.57 respectively per capita. Three Midwestern states – Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota – spent nothing, and the rest were all under $3,000,000. Minnesota had the highest per capita rate of spending for AIDS treatment in the Midwest with $0.70.[30] While state-only funding doubled nationwide from 1986 to 1988, most Midwestern states lagged behind.[31] The lag was likely the result of President

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[28] [28] "HBMC PWA Client Population," Box 1, File, "May 1989 (Retreat) – July 1989 (Retreat)," Howard Brown Health Center Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[29] Sharon Randall, "Paying for AIDS," *State Legislatures*, April 1990, Box 6, File "Sate Bills Martha, 1983-1984," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[30] Sharon Randall, "Paying for AIDS," *State Legislatures*, April 1990, Box 6, File "Sate Bills Martha, 1983-1984," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[31] "The AIDS Record: Complete Coverage of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome Epidemic," Vol 2, Nos. 8 and 9, April 8, 1988, Box 10, File "AIDS 101," Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

Reagan taking too long to acknowledge the crisis and a belief it was not necessary to address. When asked by a journalist in 1982 if Reagan's administration was tracking the spread of the disease, his press secretary admitted, "I don't know anything about it."[32] His lack of leadership likely impacted many Midwest states. The lack of state funding in the Midwest meant that AIDS patients were forced to rely on grassroots organizational structures for assistance at the most critical times of the epidemic.

One of these structures that directly supported the AIDS epidemic was a Safe Sex Calendar created by model, photographer, and businessman Glenn Mansfield of Chicago after being diagnosed with AIDS in 1985. Mansfield's calendar, "Safe Sex is Great Sex," countered the myth that safe sex is boring, with all proceeds from the sale of the calendars going to Howard Brown Memorial Clinic in Chicago. Not only did this provocative publication educate and entertain people, but it also served as an example of a homophile publication supporting the AIDS cause.[33]

The community that came to surround people with AIDS in the 1980s was profound because it treated AIDS as a group of people that should be catered toward, not feared, and the queer community led that initiative, especially in the early years of the epidemic. One means of coping with AIDS was yoga. Gaining popularity in the 1980s, it

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[32] Justin McCarthy, "Gallup Vault: Fear and Anxiety During the 1980s AIDS Crisis," *Gallup* (June 28, 2019). Date Accessed 10/8/2022 https://news.gallup.com/vault/259643/gallup-vault-fear-anxiety-during-1980s-aids-crisis.aspx

[33] "Hot Safe Sex," *Consumer Affairs by Gay Chicago Magazine for 1986*, Box 4, File, "Safe Sex Calendar," Howard Brown Health Center Records, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

helped increase strength and relieve stress through a total healing approach.[34] One yoga instructor said, "I had one PWA who had lesions all over his face. He felt so self-conscious that he ultimately dropped out of my class. That made me feel very bad – I think he and many other PWAs are made to feel like lepers."[35] Formally recognized in 1981 by the medical community, AIDS in the lives of homosexuals had been marked by death and anguish. However, not all felt discontent with their diagnosis. Instead, they viewed it as a mixed blessing with people coming closer together, focusing on the care of oneself, and changing lust to love.[36]

Outside the gay community, regular ploys of stereotyping AIDS were the norm. Heterosexual families of AIDS victims faced media stereotypes of AIDS as a "gay disease." In mainstream media, attention was given to heterosexual PWAs but it ignored the struggles of homosexuals suffering from the disease. A *The New York Times Magazine* article stated that, "links to homosexuality and drug abuse cause families to feel stigmatized, secretive, fearful of contamination," and that infection meant a "perceived failure to rescue the patient – from drugs, from homosexuality."[37] Many

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[34] Susan Jacobs, "Teaching Yoga to People with AIDS," *Yoga Journal: The Magazine for Conscious Living "Living with AIDS,"* July/August 1987, Box 2, David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[35] Susan Jacobs, "Teaching Yoga to People with AIDS," *Yoga Journal: The Magazine for Conscious Living "Living with AIDS,"* July/August 1987, Box 2, David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[36] Susan Jacobs, "Teaching Yoga to People with AIDS," *Yoga Journal: The Magazine for Conscious Living "Living with AIDS,"* July/August 1987, Box 2, David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[37] Lou Ann Walker, "What Comforts AIDS Families," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 21, 1987, Box 2 David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

criticized mainstream media and even AIDS researchers for their lack of appropriate knowledge of AIDS as being caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). In Illinois in February 1987, there were 790 cases of AIDS with 578 cases in Chicago. Another 439 died of the disease, raising new calls for better research for treatment. One *Chicago Tribune Magazine* article criticized researchers. Dr. Enlow asked "Do the researchers understand the gay lifestyle? No, they do not understand the lifestyle well enough to design adequate studies, let alone carry them out."[38] Between a lack of understanding and stigmatizing the disease, mainstream culture was unable to adequately address the problem of AIDS, particularly in the Midwest.

The gap left by mainstream media was not left unfilled, however, as publications within the gay community filled the space. For example, the Gay Community Health Network (GCHN) in Peoria, Illinois, published a "Safe Sex: The Basic Rules of How to Play Safe" brochure outlining rules of safe sex and facts about AIDS. It included a Gay Information Hotline (674-AIDS) and acknowledged that AIDS affects everyone but that it especially was affecting gay men. The exact date of publication is unknown, but it was between 1981 when AIDS was first reported and 1983 when the virus that causes AIDS was discovered. This information, while commonly seen in educational materials today, was not readily accessible to the gay community in the 1980s. This material in a mid-

[38] "Confronting AIDS: Blunt Facts About an Insidious Killer – and What you Need to Know to Protect Yourself," *SUNDAY: Chicago Tribune Magazine*, April 26, 1987, Box 2, David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

sized city like Peoria shows that groups were working in the Midwest to fill in the gap left by the government and mainstream media.[39]

By 1986, evidence indicates that the general population was not only willfully ignorant of the subject of AIDS and how it was affecting people, but they were actively using AIDS as a point of attack. For example, in a piece of hate mail received by the Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force in 1986, a writer wrote, "What we will wish for all you goddamn faggots is AIDS so that you would all die!" The writer continued, "We all hope you goddamn, cursed fags, die of AIDS. Two men in love with each other….it makes normal women and men sick to their stomachs. Die, die, die!" The malice in the letter was not the only instance of this attitude about a disease that damaged gay people's lives and that of heterosexuals who became infected as well. This letter also clearly demonstrates that the heterosexual population thought this disease could not affect them; that AIDS was a "gay disease sent by God" to purge the land. However, the psychological impacts of these attacks on someone living with AIDS would undoubtedly include rage but also guilt for having contracted the disease.[40] Additionally, regardless of religious affiliation, the populous, in general, still held anti-gay rights views. For instance, a person wrote to the IGLTF saying, "You disgusting sex freaks persist in calling attention to yourselves. Why? Slithering 'out of the closet' will gain you creatures

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[39] "Safe Sex: The Basic Rules of How to Play Safe," Box 8, File "Gay Community Health Network (GCHN), Peoria, IL," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[40] Hate Mail, March 21, 1986, Box 3, File "Correspondence (Supportive, Informational, Criticism, Hate Mail) 1986-1988, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

only contempt – and no more acceptance than you've had. You sickies are well advised to keep a low profile. Your types make a once charming city like San Francisco a place to avoid – much like a garbage dump. Adolf Hitler was on the right track regarding perverts. Try suicide."[41] Letters like this were why people in the Midwest – who lacked the support of large gay populations present in New York or San Francisco –needed to band together.

Faced with such hostile attacks, the homophile approach of integration was not enough to support and protect people living with AIDS alone, which is why the gay liberation movement was important to call attention to the crisis during this era. One such protest held in Chicago in the late 1980s broadcasted the slogan "Silence=Death." This protest brought attention to multiple problems both at the local and federal levels. The flyer for the event challenged Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign against drugs, instead saying her campaign meant no help, no funding, and no respect for people with AIDS. Further, the movement criticized Illinois' contact tracing laws, Cook County for failing to provide treatment at the one hospital to serve Black and Latino people with AIDS, and corporations for growing rich off dying PWAs. While right-wing groups attacked lesbians and gay men for "spreading the epidemic," this protest was organized alongside a week of community forums, demonstrations, and acts of civil disobedience by Chicago for AIDS Rights (C-FAR) to fight for both PWAs and those who suffered discrimination of the AIDS panic. These protests represent the culmination of the

[41] Hate Mail, n.d., Box 3, File "Correspondence (Supportive, Informational, Criticism, Hate Mail) 1985, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

homophile movement's collaboration with the gay liberation movement evident in the 1970s when openly gay men and women began running for office.[42]

The fight for AIDS was not without a corresponding mission against broadly based discrimination against homosexuals in the Midwest. This mission is exemplified by a series of wins and losses in the state of Illinois during the 1980s. A group, then known as the Illinois Gay Rights Task Force of the Alliance to End Repression (IGRTF), acted as the coordinating body for anti-discrimination efforts throughout the state of Illinois by continuing down the homophile path of working from within the existing political and social structure to create change. These efforts included organizing hearings on legislative bills, negotiating with police departments, educating the public, and confronting racial, sexual, and class discrimination from both within and without the gay community.[43]

In 1981, a group of five legislative bills went up for consideration in the Illinois State Legislature. The IGRTF wrote in May 1981 that no package of comparable laws had reached a legislative body elsewhere in the country.[44] Illinois was leading the charge. In a letter dated April 21, 1981, IGRTF suggests there were more than a million homosexual people living in Illinois that came out in full force to fight for these bills.

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[42] "Over 30,000 Have Died from AIDS: Haven't We Been Silent Long Enough?" Flyer, Box 10, File "Silence=Death," Jon-Henri Damski Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[43] Letter to Member, December 15, 1980, Box 7, File "Illinois Gay Rights Task Force/IGLFT, Miscellaneous 1980-1986, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[44] Letter to Gay Rights Advocate, May 1, 1981, Box 7, File "Illinois Gay Rights Task Force/IGLFT, Miscellaneous 1980-1986, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

Never before had Illinois legislators been witness to 150 activists devoted to justice for lesbians and gay men.[45] Moreover, there was no opposition testimony when the committee held hearings on these five bills. Part of the reasoning for these bills was that the courts were refusing to rule on discrimination "because of a lack of statutory clarifications." As a result, the failure of the courts to rule was a denial of due process of equality under the law.[46] Ultimately, these bills would fail to pass but went further in the legislative process than previous efforts in 1977. This was a measure of success in the 1980s.[47]

Meanwhile, efforts in the city of Chicago were proving to be even more successful in 1981. The IGRTF sent a letter on June 15 to then-mayor Jane. M. Byrne expressing the desire to meet with her personally to discuss changing the city laws. This is a demonstration of homophile activism as it was not taking a radical position to get the mayor's attention. Instead, the group wished to work alongside the existing political establishment and structure to secure gay rights.[48] After a year of deliberation, Mayor Byrne declared through an executive order dated June 18, 1982, that "no City department, agency, commission or its employees or agents shall discriminate on the basis of sexual

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[45] Letter, April 21, 1981, Box 7, File "Illinois Gay Rights Task Force/IGLFT, Miscellaneous 1980-1986, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[46] Letter to Rep. Thomas W. Ewing, May 4, 1981, Box 7, File "Illinois Gay Rights Task Force/IGLFT, Miscellaneous 1980-1986, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[47] Letter for Yes Votes, Box 7, File "Illinois Gay Rights Task Force/IGLFT, Miscellaneous 1980-1986, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[48] Letter to Mayor Byrne, June 15, 1981, Box 5, Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

orientation or affectional preference in hiring, housing, credit, contract provisions or in the provision of services."[49] Gay businessman and publisher Chuck Renslow also had a role in urging Mayor Byrne to pass this historic order during an interview with her for his *GayLife* newspaper by simply asking if she would sign an executive order.[50] Byrne would continue to be a public supporter after leaving office in 1983, attending pride parades and AIDS events even though she no longer had a strong political voice. Her commitment ended, however, "she reverted to her religion." When asked about supporting gay rights, for example, she said she would have to consult with her pastor."[51] Many considered this a betrayal of her earlier support.

Although Mayor Byrne took a conservative turn with her religion, religion was not always on the opposing side during the AIDS crisis in the Midwest. Reverend Hall Hasse, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of Peoria testified on April 9, 1985, in support of a gay rights bill. This bill from Illinois, HB 9, was drafted in 1985 to help end violence against individuals and institutions and meeting places of gay and straight people. As a pastor, Hasse had witnessed harassment that led to the vandalism of a church building in Minneapolis-St. Paul. While police were present at this attack, they did not do much besides try to keep order. He spoke of numerous other incidents that led

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[49] Executive Order, June 18, 1982, Box 5, File "City Bills, 1979-1981," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[50] Tracy Baim, "Former Chicago Mayor Byrne Dies," *Windy City Times,* November 14, 2014, https://www.windycitytimes.com/lgbt/Former-Chicago-Mayor-Byrne-dies-/49652.html
[51] Tracy Baim, "Former Chicago Mayor Byrne Dies," *Windy City Times,* November 14, 2014, https://www.windycitytimes.com/lgbt/Former-Chicago-Mayor-Byrne-dies-/49652.html

to arson. In one, thirty-two people died in a church in New Orleans and he also mentioned another "where people's homes have been vandalized and the occupants assaulted, and in one place, their pet dog was hanged over the front door.[52]

Moreover, it was not just homosexuals being attacked but non-homosexuals who were befriending gay people, too. Another clergy member, Reverend Hall, said, "We are seeing incidents of 'fag beating' in Chicago, Peoria, Springfield and other cities where a homosexual population exist; non-homosexuals are afraid of the dreaded A.I.D.S. epidemic – and rightly so, but not because they see it as a 'gay disease,' but because they too are now contracting it. It is no longer limited to the gay community." Hall was pointing out the ugly reality and fear of the disease. "We, as homosexuals, understand the dilemma and wish a cure was at hand. But gathering in groups and physically attacking gay people is not the answer, and only serves to victimize us twice."[53] Perhaps the most important and telling part of his testimony gave evidence of the homophile movement continuing in the Midwest. Hall closed his testimony with his line, "We, as homosexuals, do not consider ourselves as exclusive but rather as part of society."[54]

Another source of testimony for HB 8, a civil rights bill, and HB 9, an anti-violence bill, came from a speech given by Chris Cothran also on April 9, 1985. Cothran

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[52] Testimony by Reverend Hall Hasse Before the Human Services Committee April 9, 1985, pg. 1, File, "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Testimony for House Bill 8 & 9," Mary Mack Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[53] Testimony by Reverend Hall Hasse Before the Human Services Committee April 9, 1985, pg. 2, File, "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Testimony for House Bill 8 & 9," Mary Mack Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[54] Testimony by Reverend Hall Hasse Before the Human Services Committee April 9, 1985, pg. 2, File, "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Testimony for House Bill 8 & 9," Mary Mack Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

was a black gay businessman from Chicago who saw passage of these two bills as imperative to the continued growth and economic development of Illinois. Like Reverend Hasse, Cothran, too, was an integrationist. He found gays and lesbians to be hardworking and resourceful people who only seek fair and equitable treatment under the law and the freedom to live their private lives the way they choose. Cothran noted how in 1984, Wisconsin recognized the contribution "well-educated, well-trained and hardworking Lesbian women and Gay men provide." He understood that business runs on merit and skill, not on prejudice and discrimination. Cothran found gay men and lesbians lead double lives and questioned how the workforce could be productive when under the fear of persecution and discrimination. HB 8 would have taken away the fear of discovery – what homophiles feared – and allow one to live openly. Cothran also made clear that he was there representing not homosexuals "flaunting sexuality," but those that just want to live normal lives as a part of mainstream society.[55] However, the IGLTF knew it would take everyone – activists or not – to achieve this goal stating, "Now…is the time for ALL Gays and Lesbians to come to the aid of the community!!!" Successful passage of both HB 8 and HB 9 would need redoubled efforts of letters, phone calls, and personal visits to legislators. The group called on gay individuals as well as their families and friends to fight for these bills.[56] Now more than ever, the entire gay community needed to come

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[55] "We are Everywhere, Working to Build Illinois: A Speech Delivered by Chris Cothran to the House Human Services Committee April 9th, 1985," File, "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Testimony for House Bill 8 & 9," Mary Mack Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

[56] Call to voice opinion/vote, Box 3, File "Illinois Gay Network," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.

together to not only fight against discrimination but also for their sick brothers and sisters.

The City of Chicago also had a bill that would have been a great step forward for gay and lesbian rights. The ordinance would have added sexual orientation protections in employment, housing, and public accommodations. However, the bill failed 18-30 in July 1986. The bill's failure, though, was not a reflection of the lack of support. Hundreds of supporters filled the lower and upper levels of the Council chambers, with only about a dozen anti-rights protesters led by Reverend Hiram Crawford mixed in. Opponents like Aldermen Roman Pucinski and Aloysius Majerczyk voiced their opposition stating the ordinance would give special privileges to gays and lesbians while infringing on the rights of parents, schools, and daycare centers. However, Alderman Martin Oberman, who introduced the measure, stated it did not single out "homosexuals, lesbians, or bisexuals for special treatment," and instead did the opposite by making all citizens subject to the same non-discrimination treatment. Nor did it advocate or encourage any lifestyle or orientation. Another opponent, Alderman Burton Natarus, said gay rights was a difficult issue, "not an issue designed to bring people together. Every one of us is loyal to one's religion…but you can't mix the two…civil with theocracy." His argument is also exactly why religion should not be used as justification to limit the rights of people one does not agree with.

The United States was founded with the idea of separation of church and state including freedom of religion. Freedom of religion protects the right to not be forced to live according to another person's religious beliefs. The protection of freedom of religion

also does not give one the freedom to discriminate – in this case, discrimination against gay men and lesbians. As a result of these protections, the state cannot use a religious belief to deny protections to marginalized peoples. However, religion was and continues to be, a motivating backlash against the gay community. In 1986, Chicago Alderman Soliz accused Aldermen Gutierrez and Garcia of voting against their religious beliefs. He said they voted for the measure as a political convenience favoring Mayor Washington, and that their vote was "not a reflection of the Hispanic community," which is "100 percent" based on religion. Religious opposition to gay rights in Chicago was also led by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, the Moody Bible Institute, and some Evangelicals and Orthodox Jewish leaders. However, other religious leaders like the Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights, and more than 3,500 Roman Catholic organizations, religious orders, theologians, pastors, and individuals (over 200 from Chicago), endorsed a statement that said the sacred responsibility of all Catholic citizens is to work for a society based on justice by taking the lead in describing and defending the civil rights of gay persons.[57]

In addition to state and city legislation, homophile-oriented groups also focused on bringing about change in news media to fight discrimination. In "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Recommendations to News Media," the IGRTF suggested that the news fails to realize the true number of homosexuals, which they identified as 10% in the United States, and 15% in any large city like Chicago. Moreover, they criticized the media for tending to think of gay people only in relation to their sexuality. The IGRTF

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[57] Tracy Baim and William Burks, "We Shall Overcome: Gay/Lesbian Rights Bill Fails 18-30 in Council," *Windy City Times,* 31 July 1986, File, "Newspapers," Mary Mack Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

called upon the news media to cover gay news stories, adopt sexual-orientation non-discrimination clauses, and hire openly gay reporters. Finally, they called on reporters to see gays and lesbians non-sexually to get over society's stereotypes.[58]

The struggle for progress on AIDS also suffered from a lack of leadership from the White House. As president, Ronald Reagan did not publicly acknowledge the AIDS epidemic until 1985. Finally in 1987, Reagan created the Presidential Commission on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Epidemic. However, complaints arose that the AIDS panel was mostly conservatives that lacked medical expertise.[59] The Commission members who lacked medical experience included Penny Pullen, the assistant Illinois House Republican leader and ally of Phyllis Schlafly; Roman Catholic Cardinal John O'Connor; retired Navy Admiral James D. Watkins; Richard M. DeVos, president of Amway; and Corinna SerVaas, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*.[60] The only homosexual to serve on the Commission was Frank Lilly, a geneticist, who was appointed after Reagan was criticized for being insensitive to AIDS.[61] The report that came from the Commission was lackluster and failed to mention homosexuality despite the largest segment of PWAs being homosexual men. Under "Societal Issues," the report

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[58] "Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force Recommendations to News Media," Box 4, File "Press Advisories & Releases," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, IL.
[59] Elaine S. Povich, "House Seeks to Form 2d AIDS Panel," *Chicago Tribune* (5 August 1987), pg. 5.
[60] Elaine S. Povich, "House Seeks to Form 2d AIDS Panel," *Chicago Tribune* (5 August 1987), pg. 5.
[61] Elaine S. Povich, "House Seeks to Form 2d AIDS Panel," *Chicago Tribune* (5 August 1987), pg. 5.

talks about drug abuse, homelessness, and children but avoids homosexuality. In the Commission's report, James D. Watkins wrote:

> We saw firsthand: the frightening specter of drug abuse and its relation to the spread of the virus; an overly burdened and unnecessarily costly healthcare system; a drug development system unresponsive to the fast-changing unknowns surrounding this epidemic's absence of integrated health education and health promotion programs in our schools; an increasingly litigious and adversarial relationship between providers and consumers of health care: and a society in which some members were still too quick to reject, deny, condemn, and discriminate, resulting in a situation that neither bodes well for the individual nor the public health when dealing with this epidemic…

Watkins continued along the Commission's path of ignoring the problems facing the homosexual community, in favor of reinforcing issues like drug use and drug cost. While these were important issues at the time, Watkins failed to address the biggest problem – one even the New Right took up as a "hot topic" issue in the 1980s. As the report stated:

> It is our hope, Mr. President, that you will: use our report as your national strategy; harness the goodness that awaits your effective leadership; continue to advance the nation in conquering the virus and lead us to take advantage of waiting opportunities for more healthy and wholesome lives.[62]

Again, the problems impacting the homosexual community were ignored in light of favoritism for Reagan's "effective" leadership on the issue despite years of not addressing the problem.

Although Reagan's lack of leadership hurt the cause of AIDS research and gay rights, the conservative right did not think he did enough to thwart the gay rights movement. The "Clean Up America" movement accused Reagan of not doing enough to

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[62] Report of the Presidential Commission on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Epidemic, June 1988, Box 2, David Bell Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

stop the gay rights movement. In one pamphlet dated January 2, 1982, Jerry Falwell writes that the most important issues affecting the United States are homosexuality, pornography, and abortion-on-demand. Falwell, while criticizing Reagan and Congress for putting off these issues in order to rebuild the national defense and balance the budget, represented the attitudes of his Moral Majority organization and the New Conservative Right that Reagan was part of. "Homosexuals are getting closer and closer to becoming recognized as a legal minority. If this happens, America will have violated the principle of common decency," wrote Falwell. He also criticized recent victories for the gay community including one in Minnesota where the Minneapolis school board passed a resolution to allow teachers to invite lesbians and gay men to teach about homosexuality in class. While a step forward for gay rights and representation, criticism from Falwell shows how the conservative pushback was impacting progress on the AIDS crisis.[63] Additionally, Falwell represented a paradigm shift in the Christian faith. The separation of church and state blurred; questions of people's lives were changed into a distinctly religious-political position.

The conservative reaction to the gay liberation movements of the 1970s helped fuel a new age of conservatism in the United States. Rosalind Pollack Petchesky attributed this new conservatism to middle-class patriarchal ressentiment and an antiliberal reaction to challenges of socialists, feminists, gay rights activists, and more who sought to transform the liberal state. Petchesky argues that what gave the New Right

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[63] "Clean Up America" Pamphlet, January 2, 1982, Box 4, File "Brochures and Flyers for Other Organizations," Illinois Lesbian and Gay Task Force Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

ideological legitimacy and organizational coherence was its focus on reproductive and sexual issues in campaigns like abortion, family, and feminism.[64] While the New Right campaigned on these issues, they then tried to take on the "serious" issues of the economy and foreign policy, which may provide explanation for why Reagan failed domestically on sexual issues like AIDS but had some success in his foreign policy.[65] Prior to the 1980 election, the media was already full of religious and evangelical manifestations of the New Right, and Petchsky found that a moralistic, crusading fervor was nothing new to American right-wing movements. These "backlash" movements are set out to be "an expression of the 'preservatist' impulses of social groups who feel their 'way of life' threatened."[66] Moreover, the churches and the right-to-life movement was key to the Right's rise to power as they served as an organizational model and base. The New Right expanded its base from the right-to-life movement to absorb "groups devoted to preservation of the traditional social roles of the family, the churches, and the schools (that is, groups that were antiabortion, antibusing, anti-ERA, and antigay rights) into a single coalition organized around four main planks: 'prolife,' 'profamily,' 'promoral,' and 'pro-American,' with 'family' as the keystone."[67] The main constituency of the New Right was the fifty million "born again" Christians reached through evangelical churches

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[64] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 207.
[65] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 208.
[66] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 211.
[67] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 215.

and the broadcasting network the churches had access to. This constituency was targeted for the beliefs on abortion and sexual and family issues. The 1980 election propaganda interlaced "moral" questions (abortion, family, ERA, homosexuality, pornography, etc.) with economic and foreign policy questions and expected the Christian Right to share a common view.[68] As a result, the aim of the New Right was to respond to the ideas of the 1970s and their impact on popular consciousness and reprivatize every domain of social and public intervention that has been created by those outside of the New Right (i.e. homosexuals, women, the poor, African Americans, and working-class people).[69]

Further, the New Right's theme of protecting children also applied to the campaign against gays and lesbians. New Right offensives connected homosexuality to child molestation, often to defeat local ordinances across the country. The New Right also revived the ideology that homosexuality is pathological and perverse, going back to discourse from prior to the 1973 APA decision to remove homosexuality as a mental disorder in the DSM. The reasoning was that "Homosexuality is characterized by 'profamily' representatives as 'unnatural,' 'evil,' and psychologically 'perverse'; but male homosexuality is even more dangerous than female, in the 'profamily' view, because it signals a breakdown of 'masculinity' itself – or what one right-wing ideologue calls the 'male spirit,' or 'the male principle.'"[70] Because of this, feminism and gay

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[68] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 222.
[69] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 223.
[70] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pg. 231.

liberation served as a threat to the family system and sexual morality of the New Right, and the attack on the ideals of these groups pushed them to organize more broadly than ever before. They introduced new politics fueled by evangelical fervor.

Local leadership, especially in the bigger cities in the Midwest, was effective and inclusive of the homosexual community despite the New Rights agenda. For example, Ron Sable, M.D., was the first openly gay candidate for alderman in Chicago in 1987. While he downplayed his sexuality in his campaign, he advocated for gay issues including a gay rights ordinance and more money for AIDS research. Although he failed to win, he is significant for reaching out to the gay community as a voting constituency. He actively recruited the gay community for turnout. To do so, he emphasized his care of PWAs and his co-founding role in the clinic at Cook County. Moreover, he focused on discrimination, youth issues (suicide) and hate crimes, and inadequate healthcare.[71] In order to win, it was estimated Sable would have needed to mobilize 80% of the lesbian and gay vote.[72] Although Sable was unsuccessful in winning the alderman seat, his campaign did two things. For one, Sable's campaign forced his opponent Bernard Hansen to be more sympathetic toward gay issues and have his own liaison to the gay community, Dale Sapper, in his office.[73] When Sapper joined Hansen's staff in August

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[71] "Position Paper on Lesbian and Gay Concerns," Box 4, File, "Lesbian & Gay Committee," Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[72] "Summary of Poll Analysis which Provides Direction for the Plan," Box 4, File "Campaign Planning," Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[73] Newspaper Clipping of *Chicago Outlines*, October 29, 1987, Box 6, File "Campaign/Hansen," Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

1986, Sapper was the third gay person to serve in the Alderman's office. Sapper and Hansen then worked to reintroduce the gay rights ordinance and increase City funding for AIDS education, patient care, and other services.[74] Sable's campaign motivated the gay community in Chicago. In 1988, the community created a goal of registering 10,000-15,000 new lesbian and gay voters by October 11. In total, 17,225 new voters were registered, many of whom were homosexuals.[75] This direct enfranchisement of over 17,000 new voters during the 1988 presidential cycle resulted in high up-to-date registrations within an active lesbian and gay community. Further, although he did not mobilize the 80% of the vote needed to win, the continuance of the Lesbian/Gay Voter Impact through February 1989 meant an increased public awareness of the lesbian and gay communities as a significant force in local Chicago politics.[76]

The gay community outside of politics also had a voice and criticized the lack of government leadership at the state level. For instance, DAGMAR wrote, "The gay community has responded to the AIDS crisis with healthcare services, support for those affected, and safe sex education. The government has responded with legislation designed to isolate and scapegoat those most at risk for the disease." DAGMAR was

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[74] Letter to Mattachine Midwest, August 22, 1986, Box 1, File "Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence," Edward Fleming Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[75] "A Summary Report: Lesbian/Gay Voter Impact '88," Box 1, Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.
[76] "Lesbian/Gay Voter Impact '88-'89," Box 1, Ron Sable, M.D. Papers, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

criticizing Illinois bills on mandatory testing, quarantine, and contact tracing that ignored the need for research, public education, and healthcare.[77]

The Midwest had multiple avenues for change including through local politicians and activists fighting for rights. Despite medical and social pushback in the 1980s, the gay community persisted in fighting for change. Even when not being treated by medical professionals, PWAs had a community of support behind them. Though many attempts at securing rights were unsuccessful, the effort put into these movements changed the political landscape in cities like Chicago and throughout the Midwest. Ultimately, cultural progress moved forward despite the pushback in the 1980s and homophile-oriented ideals were at the forefront of this charge in the Midwest.

[77] Letter from DAGMAR, July 1987, Box 1, File "Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence," Edward Fleming Collection, Gerber/Hart Library and Archive, Chicago, IL.

Conclusion

Coming Together: Collective Response to Crisis

When the University of Nebraska approved a course on the condition of homosexuality and the consequences of that condition in 1970, the administration mirrored the progression of social mores but ultimately raised a firestorm of backlash. One critic wrote in the *Lincoln Star's* "Your Six Cents Worth" section that "Nebraska taxpayers, especially those who are sending their precious offspring to the university this fall, should voice their objections to the chancellor and the regents concerning the special course on homosexuality being taught under the sponsorship of the sociology, anthropology, and English departments. If an English professor is qualified to teach about homosexuality, how about a home economics teacher giving a course in prostitution?"[1] Clearly, some Nebraska taxpayers did not stand on the side of the University and were not afraid to voice their concerns.

Another concerned citizen wrote in the same column commending Regent Richard Herman for the stance he had taken against the special course. They believed the topic was not necessary because it was adequately covered in the Medical College and in the field of psychology, which emphasized the popular opinion that homosexuality was a sickness and should only be studied as such. The effort to put the course's topic in other departments was "an example of the subversive elements working to demoralize our

[1] "Your Six Cents Worth," *The Lincoln Star* (August 7, 1970), pg. 4.

youth by trying to make detestable practices acceptable. The taxes of the citizens of Nebraska should not be used to destroy their own children."[2]

Despite this backlash, the University administration stood in defense of the course. Dr. C. Peter Magrath, Dean of facilities, described the course as not one in homosexuality, but as a course about the problems and issues associated with homosexuality. The defense came under fire from State Senator Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff. Carpenter wished to introduce legislation forbidding the school to teach about homosexuality except in medical schools. Nevertheless, thirty-four students enrolled in the new course and were not being taught "by some unqualified partisans of homosexuality in some casual 'free university,'" but by academically and medically qualified professionals. Dean Magrath acknowledged the millions of homosexuals in the United States and the millions of others with homosexual tendencies and "the resulting personal and social problems as well as the organized activities of some homophile groups 'are a fact of life.'" Magrath continued stating, "Whether we personally like it or not, the problem and the issues surrounding homosexuality in America are with us, just as are the problem and the issues surrounding communism or fascism and crime or drugs. These problems must be studied academically so that we can better understand them in order that later…we can face them intelligently."[3]

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[2] "Your Six Cents Worth," *The Lincoln Star* (August 7, 1970), pg. 4.
[3] "'Should be Commended'…Homosexuality Course Defended by NU Dean," *The Lincoln Star* (November 6, 1970), pg. 24.

The work of homophile groups brought the experience of homosexuals to the public's mind and fought for integration into mainstream society. They influenced not only the United States but also in the Midwest which is historically not the focus of the study of homosexuality. Nebraska, like other more rural states in the nation, had an active and important group of homophile groups. Although World War II and the Cold War period altered public perception of what it meant to be gay, a political identity emerged for the gay community that was shaped by homophile organizations' work in outreach. In the Midwest, homophile organizations in urban centers influenced the rural setting in creating this political identity through such things as discovered minority affiliation, evolving public outreach goals, and supporting those remaining in rural areas.

Urban centers like Chicago served as a microcosm to put forth new and challenging ideas to society on homosexuality. While the first iterations of Mattachine in Chicago failed, the struggles they persisted against strengthened Mattachine Midwest and set the organization up for success. Homophile organizations knew that, in order to advance the rights of all homosexuals, they needed to act respectfully and fight for integration into society. Finding their place amongst the established structure was difficult but fruitful. Despite the efforts of men like McCarthy and Wherry to connect homosexuality with fears of communist subversion in the early days of the homophile movement, it was not enough to quench the drive of activists and non-activists throughout the Midwest in creating a better place for the homosexual community.

With the introduction of the more radical gay liberation movement in the 1970s, the homophile community was forced to respond. While the tactics of the homophile

groups in the Midwest did not stay the same, integration was not abandoned either. Instead, the motives and techniques evolved alongside gay liberation. Again, conservative backlash was present at every step of activism. One telling change was the election of Kathy Kozachenko of Michigan. Despite stepping out of public life after her term was over, she was the first openly homosexual person to run and win office in the United States. Even after she left public life, she embodied the homophile mission of integration by living her life as an ordinary citizen with her partner and child. In other elections, the mobilization of the gay vote became an important consideration for politicians.

With the discovery of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, the cultural progress of the homosexual became more complicated. A new problem confronted the homosexual community in the Midwest both in terms of medical emergencies and social progression. Despite conservative pushback and the epidemic, cultural progress moved forward. Publications continued to serve an important role during the AIDS crisis, filling the gap in education and resources. Here, the collaboration between the homophile movement and gay liberation produced a series of successes.

There is much work still to be studied about homosexuality in the Midwest. This thesis does not focus on every voice or homophile organization within the boundaries of the study. Therefore, a more in-depth examination is needed in future research of other organizations and the experiences of homosexuals in Midwestern states as well as other regions this thesis does not focus on. This thesis also concludes with the AIDS epidemic.

There is much to discuss on the topic of gay activism following the conclusion of the 1980s.

Much of this activism faced a backlash. As shown in previous chapters, this backlash was driven by religion. Without the threat of communism, religion has been and continues to be a basis for attack and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community in the United States. At each step forward, opponents of gay rights have used religion as a weapon for restricting the rights of homosexuals. In the 1990s, the issue became "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 1993, and the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. The motivation behind these bills was, in part, religion. When gay rights activists made advances in the 2000s with the anti-sodomy ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2010, and marriage equality in *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, religion again stood in opposition. These are all avenues of future research.

Understanding these topics will be imperative moving forward. Looking at the advancement of gay rights in the United States, an issue has arisen with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* with other right-to-privacy cases being threatened such as the birth control ruling *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). If Congress does not act to codify these rights into law, gay rights, as well as other individual rights, will be set back by decades. The work by gay activists throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was substantive and pushed gay rights into the purview of mainstream society. The levels of acceptance in society still have much progress to attain but much of what has been achieved exemplifies the

integrationist goal of homophile organizations since the 1950s. The activist work continues to protect these gains.

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