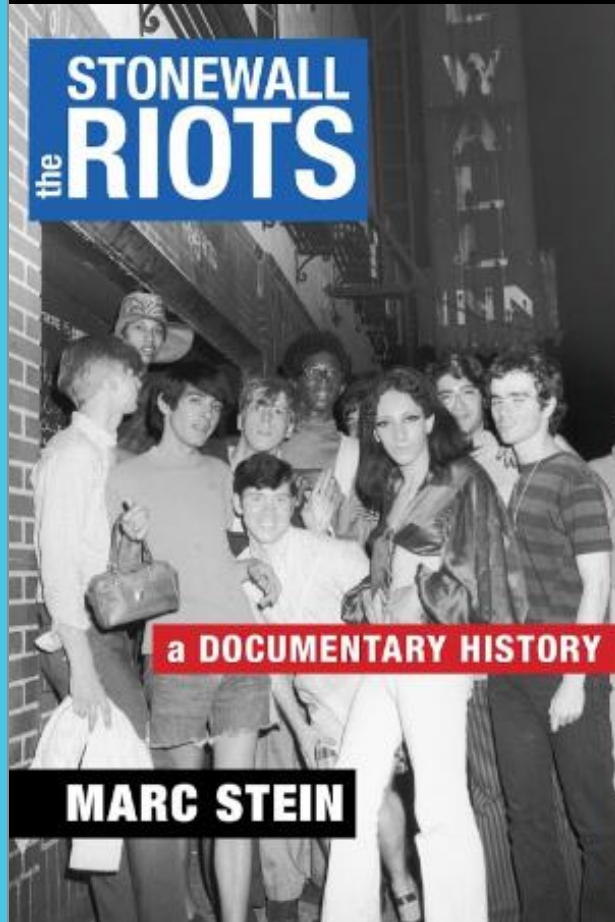


June 2019



San Francisco State
University professor
Marc Stein



Stonewall at 50: A Major Anniversary Offers Opportunity for New Historical Perspectives

by Lexi Adsit

Stonewall: For the LGBTQ community, this one word conjures up a range of emotions and beliefs. This month marks the 50th anniversary of the 1969 riots at the eponymous New York City bar, often mistakenly described as the birthplace of the modern LGBTQ movement. As we celebrate this symbolic episode, it's worth remembering that the riots are a complex and contested event, one whose legacy remains a subject of debate.

For fresh perspectives on this iconic event, *History Happens* interviewed Marc Stein, vice chair of the GLBT Historical Society Board of Directors. A professor of history at San Francisco State University, Stein is the author of the new book *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History* (NYU Press,

2019). His research places Stonewall in a broader national context that positions the riots not as a starting point, but as a turning point.

How were the Stonewall Riots viewed in California?

News didn't travel as quickly then as it does now, but many people found out via telephone conversations, friendship networks and word-of-mouth. Mainstream media didn't provide much coverage, but alternative newspapers such as the *Berkeley Barb* and *Berkeley Tribe* and LGBTQ periodicals such as *The Ladder* in San Francisco and *The Advocate* in Los Angeles did better. Their reports suggest that many Californians viewed the Stonewall rebellion through the prism of recent developments on the West Coast.

For everyone who knew about the anti-gay police killings of Howard Efland in Los Angeles (March 1969), Frank Bartley in Berkeley (April 1969), and Philip Caplan in Oakland (June 1969), the police raid on the Stonewall seemed like yet another instance of violent state repression. For everyone who knew about the radicalization of Bay Area LGBTQ activism in the spring of 1969, which began with the Committee for Homosexual Freedom's multiple demonstrations to protest the firing of gay activist Gale Whittington from States Steamship Company, it made sense to congratulate the Stonewall rioters for "joining" the "gay revolution."

While researching your new book *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History*, how did your perspective on the riots evolve?

I read thousands of media stories, court rulings, police records, bar guides, protest fliers and other materials on LGBTQ activism from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, ultimately selecting 200 documents to reprint in the book. Scholars have generally used three main frameworks to interpret the riots, which view the rebellion as the culmination of LGBTQ activism in the 1950s and 1960s; the outgrowth of bar-based resistance practices; and the result of a radicalization process inspired by other social movements.

When reading one of the earliest reports on Stonewall in *The Los Angeles Advocate*, I came across a fourth framework that substantially modified my perspective. I noticed that reporter Don Jackson invoked a popular sociological theory that argues that rebellions and revolutions are most likely when a long period of social improvement is followed by a rapid period of decline and disillusionment. I think he was onto something and my book's introduction elaborates on this way of thinking.

What led you to focus on Stonewall? And what do we need to learn or remember about its history?

For better and for worse, Stonewall is commonly regarded as the central event in LGBTQ history. Yet we haven't had good resources for teaching students and educating the public about the riots. By reprinting primary sources from the period, covering the years from 1965 to 1973, and using a national rather than a local perspective, I hope the book not only will be helpful for interpreting the riots, but also will engage readers on other

important episodes and developments in LGBTQ history.

I also wanted to provide resources that would empower readers to interpret the riots for themselves, enabling them to challenge many myths and misconceptions. I hope readers will come away with a sense of the messiness of history — there are conflicting accounts, competing stories and multiple ways to make meaning out of historical developments. To further that process, I'm producing an [online bibliographic supplement](#) with references to thousands of other sources that didn't make it into the book.

As for the “lessons of Stonewall,” there are important ones about resistance, rebellion and empowerment, but I also hope the 50th anniversary will provide opportunities for recognizing the importance of political organizing and direct action. Stonewall became “Stonewall” because millions of people participated in LGBTQ activism in the days, weeks, months and years after the riots occurred.

Lexi Adsit is finishing her MA in ethnic studies at San Francisco State University and will be moving to Minneapolis to pursue her PhD in feminist studies at the University of Minnesota this autumn.

From the Board

Staking Your Claim to a Place in Queer History



by Beth Feingold

As a fairly new member of the GLBT Historical Society's Board of Directors, I'm excited to share my thoughts with you about membership in the organization.

Some personal history is perhaps in order. I have been involved in San Francisco nonprofits and in the Castro community for many decades, in a variety of roles, from volunteer to executive director to board member and donor. Working in the LGBTQ community, and as a woman and as a Jew, I am acutely aware of the critical importance of ensuring that our history is preserved for future generations and that our stories are never forgotten.

As I witness the evolution of our current sociopolitical environment, which scorns education, science and facts, I am ever more aware of the importance of empirical historical research that relies on the precious materials housed in museums and archives.

An Unparalleled Resource

The GLBT Historical Society's museum and archives operate in the best tradition of historic preservation, curation and display. For over eight years, the museum has mounted stellar exhibitions, educating all of us

on the many facets of LGBTQ history, from our Two-Spirit community to the nightlife world of SoMa's clubs and beyond. The archives are an unparalleled resource for researchers, academics, writers, journalists and history buffs.

In my short time with the society, I have learned so much about what goes in to finding, sourcing, attributing, protecting and showcasing the rare materials in our collections. Our programs and events anchor the society and its work firmly in the Bay Area's LGBTQ community.

Membership in the GLBT Historical Society is an excellent way to support our work. To celebrate the Pride season, this month we are offering [memberships](#) at a discounted rate. Like the members of earlier generations that are documented in our collections, you are a part of queer history. Our own stories and experiences connect us and will someday become part of the historical record. We hope you'll join us.

Beth Feingold is a member of the board of directors of the GLBT Historical Society.

In the Archives

Viewing a Transgender Inmate's Self-Portraits



by Cait Mullan

In early 2019, the GLBT Historical Society's archives received a historic donation: a set of unique self-portraits created in prison by Shiloh Heavenly Quine.

A transgender woman born in 1959 and serving a life sentence, Quine made history as the first United States inmate to receive state-funded gender-confirmation surgery while incarcerated. Her transition became possible after a legal battle with the State of California, which ultimately settled in 2015. Quine's case is another important step in the difficult battle to establish legal recognition of gender identity and the treatment of gender dysphoria as valid medical necessities, not as indulgences or rewards.

Presenting a Personal Ideal

The portraits, together with a letter about the donation, were given to the society by Quine's friend Ruth Beham Leonard. Signed and dated July and August of 2011, several years before Quine's surgery, the pieces are drawn in a style reminiscent of tattoo art. Both pieces appear to be drawn in pencil, one on paper and one on canvas, and with embellishment from what look to be colored pencils.

Quine has twice drawn herself against a backdrop of colorful flowers. One image presents a youthful appearance, from the pigtails to the

small string bikini top. The other depicts a more mature, adult look — Quine depicts herself with a more intricate updo hairstyle in a tank top and necklace, seeming a little more reserved. She does not sexualize herself in either portrait; rather, she feminizes herself, presenting her personal ideal.

The pieces are a powerful reminder that transgender people who wish to physically transition usually aren't able to grow up with and into their true identities as young people. As a nonbinary transmasculine person who has recently found new levels of comfort and self-actualization following my own top surgery, I recognize and relate to the desire expressed in Shiloh Quine's artwork. That others now have the opportunity to observe and experience these pieces and what they represent is truly a unique gift.

Cait Mullan is a volunteer with the GLBT Historical Society Museum.

Special Event: June 16–18

Queer History Conference in San Francisco



The GLBT Historical Society is delighted to be cohosting a groundbreaking conference this month gathering researchers, educators, community organizers and history enthusiasts from across the United States and beyond to showcase new directions in the histories of same-sex sexuality, transgender identities and gender nonconformity.

Set for June 16–18, the 2019 [Queer History Conference](#), the first national conference of the Committee on LGBT History of the American Historical Association, will survey the LGBTQ past across more than 500 years. Sessions will focus on topics such as Trans as a (Historical) Category, Reclamation & Resistance: The Making of Grassroots QTPOC Histories, The Queer 1960s in East Asia, Radical Queer Activism in the Bay Area 1969–1999, Beyond Biomedicine: Black and Latinx Response to the AIDS Pandemic and many more! For the full list of panels, click [here](#).

The conference opens with a reception at Jolene's on Sunday, June 16. Monday and Tuesday are dedicated to daytime sessions at San Francisco State University. Receptions are planned for the evenings of Monday, June 17 at the GLBT Historical Society Museum and Tuesday, June 18 at the San Francisco Public Library's San Francisco History Center.

For full details about the conference and information on how to register, visit the conference webpage by clicking [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Exhibition Opening

Chosen Familias: Bay Area LGBTQ Latinx Stories



Friday, June 7

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | Free for members

A new [exhibition](#) at the GLBT Historical Society Museum brings together photos, ephemera and text to center biological and chosen Latinx LGBTQ families as sources of hope and

resilience. By queering the traditional family photo album, the show reframes historical documentation of mothers, daughters, fathers, children, siblings, aunts and uncles. “Chosen *Familias*” also features video interviews and footage of Bay Area LGBTQ Latinx activists and artists of the past four decades.

Curated by Tina Valentin Aguirre, chair of the society's board of directors, the exhibition expands the definition of LGBTQ family to encompass not just biological relatives, but also mentors, coalition members and the networks of people that have supported Latinx LGBTQ people in the Bay Area. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets are available online [here](#).

Walking Tour

OUT of Site: SoMa — Produced by Eye Zen Presents



Saturday, June 8: 12:00–2:00, 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 9: 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 15: 12:00–2:00, 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 16: 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Howard Langton Community Garden

10 Langton St., San Francisco

\$25 | **\$10** for students

From the original Native American inhabitants, to the tent villages of gold miners, to the SROs housing factory workers, to the formation of an LGBTQ and leather community in the 1960s, to its current tech-fueled redevelopment, San Francisco's SoMa District has been ever-changing. "OUT of Site: SoMa" is an immersive walking tour cosponsored by the GLBT Historical Society that offers a panoramic view of the transformation of this neighborhood. The walk lasts approximately two hours and covers about one mile. The tours are a project of [Eye Zen Presents](#), a San Francisco-based theater company committed to honoring the stories of queer ancestors, histories and sites through performances and community-building events. More information is available [here](#). Tickets are available online [here](#).

Book Launch

Rainbow Warrior: The Memoirs of Gilbert Baker



Tuesday, June 11
5:30–7:30 p.m.
San Francisco Main Library
Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin St., San Francisco
Free

San Francisco artist and activist Gilbert Baker (1951–2017) created the globally adopted rainbow flag as a symbol of the LGBTQ community in 1978. Baker's life and work will be explored, illuminated and celebrated in this unique event organized for the posthumous release of his memoirs, *Rainbow Warrior: My Life in Color* (Chicago Review Press, 2019). Cosponsored by the James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center at the San Francisco Public Library, the program will feature a short film about Baker's life, selected readings from the memoirs and a discussion with social justice activists. The evening will begin with a reception and end with a book signing. More information is available [here](#).

Panel Discussion

Preserving San Francisco's Queer Historic Places



Thursday, June 13
6:00–7:30 p.m.
San Francisco Main Library
Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin St., San Francisco
Free

San Francisco's queer culture is deeply intertwined in urban life, and it has not been immune to the changes in our city. Carving space in the urban landscape has been essential for queer survival, for building community and obtaining political and cultural power, and, quite simply, for finding each other. Some of those essential queer heritage institutions, sites and even whole neighborhoods now are being erased by hypergentrification. A panel including academics and community leaders will join GLBT Historical Society Executive Director Terry Beswick and senior public history advisor Gerard Koskovich to reflect on the status of San Francisco's queer historic places and living cultural heritage and to consider what may lie ahead for them. The program is cosponsored by the James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center at the San Francisco Public Library, More information is available [here](#).

Living History Discussion

Thrill Spot: The Raid on Tommy's Place



Thursday, June 13

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | Free for members

The 1954 police raid on Tommy's Place, a lesbian bar in San Francisco's North Beach, is the stuff of legend. Lurid headlines describing the seduction of teenage girls in a "vice

academy" were followed by sensational stories teeming with swaggering butches, police graft and political intrigue. Lambda Award-winning author and visual artist Katie Gilmartin shares her research about this event, as well as excerpts from the draft of the fictional account inspired by the raid that she is currently writing. She'll also offer reflections on how archives and oral histories serve as the basis for historical fiction imagining the lives of LGBTQ ancestors. The program is offered in collaboration with [Openhouse](#) and is made possible by grants from the [Queer Cultural Center](#) and the [Creative Work Fund](#). Tickets are available online [here](#).

Film Screening

Starman: Freddie Burretti, the Man Who Sewed the World



Monday, June 17

7:00 p.m.

The Roxie Theater

3117 16th St., San Francisco

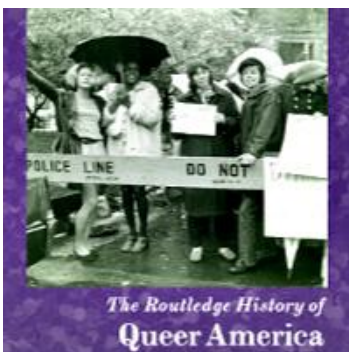
\$13

Join us at San Francisco's Roxie Theater for a special benefit screening of Lee Scriven's 2018 documentary *Starman*, which details the fascinating story of Freddie Burretti, a close

friend of David Bowie and his key Ziggy Stardust costume collaborator and stylist. By creating a sensational and inspiring onstage and offstage wardrobe, Burretti helped Bowie challenge British culture, fashion, homophobia and a skeptical rock music industry. All proceeds from the screening go to the GLBT Historical Society. Tickets are available [here](#).

Book Launch

The Routledge History of Queer America



Tuesday, June 18

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | Free for members

The Routledge History of Queer America (2018), the first comprehensive overview of the field of United States LGBTQ history, is a landmark work.

Edited by Don Romesburg, professor of women and gender studies at Sonoma State University and former cochair of the GLBT Historical Society Board of Directors, the anthology features more than 20 authors and nearly 30 chapters on essential themes in queer history from colonial times to the present. In this roundtable organized in celebration of the release of the new paperback edition, Romesburg will be joined by a panel of historians who will evaluate the state of the field of queer American history. Tickets are available [here](#).

Performance

¡Aplauso! Live Storytelling & Performances



Friday, June 21

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | Free for members

An impressive group of Latinx queer artists and performance artists will stage dances, enact theater scenes, read poetry and show short films celebrating the culture and diversity of the

queer Latinx community. Performers include transgender artist Donna Persona; artist, oral historian and activist Mason J.; drag queen Foxy Blue Orchid; performance artist Xandra Ibarra; Chicana writer Natalia M. Vigil; activist, filmmaker and dancer Dulce; and writer and historian Juliana Delgado Lopera. This event is being held in conjunction with the exhibition “[Chosen Familias: Bay Area LGBTQ Latinx Histories](#),” opening at the GLBT Historical Society Museum on June 7. Tickets are available online [here](#).

Living History Discussion

LGBTQ Art, Film, Poetry & Dance in San Francisco



Saturday, June 22

2:00–3:30 p.m.

De Young Museum

Piazzoni Murals Room

50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr., San Francisco

Free for San Francisco residents

Organized by the GLBT Historical Society in collaboration with San Francisco’s De Young Museum, a group of artists and culture makers

will engage in an intergenerational discussion on LGBTQ people in the arts in San Francisco from the 1960s to the present. The panel considers a critical question: In an era of hypergentrification, can queer culture survive in the city? Panelists will recount stories of their practice in the visual arts, film, poetry and dance and offer perspectives on the changes they have experienced in the local arts scene. Speakers also will address initiatives by the Historical Society to document and support queer culture. The event is part a Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

initiative offering free admission to San Francisco residents on Saturdays. No additional tickets are required. For more information, click [here](#).

[Frameline Festival](#)

GLBT Historical Society Copresents Two Queer Films



June 24 & June 27

Castro Theatre

429 Castro St., San Francisco

Tickets available from [Frameline](#)

The GLBT Historical Society is serving as a copresenter for two programs focused on queer history at the 43rd Frameline Festival, the world's oldest and largest LGBTQ film festival. The full festival runs from June 20 to June 30. For more

information and to buy tickets, click on the film titles below or visit the Frameline Festival [home page](#).

Circus of Books. For decades, Karen and Barry Mason were the proprietors of Circus of Books, a small but mighty gay pornography outlet in West Hollywood. Tracing their meteoric rise within the industry and the evolution of the shop from its place as a sanctuary for gay men to its recent coronation as a historic landmark, filmmaker Rachel Mason pulls back the curtain on her parents in this exuberant documentary about a traditional family that was anything but. This film includes materials from the GLBT Historical Society's archives. Screening: Friday, June 24, at 4:00 p.m.

Thanks to Hank. In this loving tribute to Hank Wilson, a lifelone activist who radically altered LGBTQ life and rights in the Bay Area — especially for queer youth in the early days of AIDS — audiences are given an impactful and informative glimpse of how Wilson's vision, energy and organizing changed Bay Area history. The film is the work of Bob Ostertag, a noted San Francisco composer, author and filmmaker. Screening: Thursday, June 27 at 4:15 p.m.

Current Exhibitions

Front Gallery

[Chosen Familias: Bay Area LGBTQ Latinx Stories](#)

Open through September 30, 2019

[More information](#)

Community Gallery

[The Mayor of Folsom Street: The Life and Legacy of Alan Selby](#)

Open through September 30, 2019

[More information](#)

Main Gallery

[Queer Past Becomes Present](#)



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CREDITS. Feature: Cover image of *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History* courtesy of NYU Press. Photo of Marc Stein courtesy Marc Stein. FROM THE BOARD: Photo of Beth Feingold courtesy Beth Feingold. IN THE ARCHIVES: Self-portrait of Shiloh Quine, collection of the GLBT Historical Society. SPECIAL EVENT: Photo of the SFSU campus, courtesy of SFSU Strategic Marketing and Communications. UPCOMING EVENTS. Exhibition Opening: A photo in the “Chosen Familias” exhibition depicting curator Tina Valentin Aguirre, second from left, with their mother and brothers, courtesy of Tina Valentin Aguirre. Walking Tour: Artwork by @designnurd, courtesy of Eye Q. Book Launch: Photo of Gilbert Baker by Mark Maxwell. Panel Discussion: Badlands bar protest on Market Street (2004), Shades of LGBTQI Collection, San Francisco Public Library. Living History Discussion: Photographer unknown; courtesy of Mary Kay Sicola, Grace Miller Papers, James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library. Film Screening: Promotional image for “Starman” courtesy of Rick Norris. Book Launch: Cover image of *The Routledge History of Queer America* courtesy of Routledge. Performance: Photo of Foxy Blue Orchid by Julián P. Ledezma (JPL Productions). Living History Discussion: Photo of the De Young museum copyright Henrik Kam, courtesy Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Frameline Festival: Logo of Frameline 43, courtesy of Frameline. DISPLAY AD: Courtesy of Juanita MORE!

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