Stonewall Riot, June 27, 1969

(http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/case1.html)

A campaign had been established in the early 1960s to rid New York City of gay bars. The city revoked the liquor license of bars who served gay men, and police worked undercover to entrap as many gay men as possible. On June 27, 1969, the police raided a popular Greenwich Village gay bar, The Stonewall Inn. Police raids were not uncommon in this era, however on this night; those subjected to the raid were pushed over the edge. The streets erupted into violent protests as the crowds in the bar fought back. The riot lasted several nights. This event is marked as the beginning of the modern gay rights movement. The following primary sources are newspaper clippings about the riot. There are also pictures of the riot in the accompanying powerpoint.



Melee Near Sheridan Square Follows Action at Bar

Hundreds of young men went for a rampage in Greenwich Village shortly after 3 A.M. yesterday after a force of plain-clothes men raided a bar that the police said was wellknown for its homosexual clientele. Thirteen persons were arrested and four policemen injured.

The young men threw bricks, bottles, garbage, pennies and a parking meter at the policemen, who had a search warrant authorizing them in investigate reports that liquor was sold illegally at the bar, the Stonewall Inn, 53 Christopher Street, just off Sheridan Square.

Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine said that a large crowd formed in the square after being evicted from the bar. Police reinforcements were sent to the area to hold off the crowd. Plainclothes men and detectives confiscated cases of liquofrom the bar, which Inspector Pine said was operating without a liquor license.

The police estimated that 200 young men had been expelled from the bar. The crowd grew to close to 400 during the melee, which lasted about 45 minutes, they said.

Arrested in the melee, was Dave Van Ronk, 33 years old, of 15 Sheridan Square, a well-known folk singer. He was accused of having thrown a heavy object at a pairolman and later paroled in his own recognizance.

The raid was one of three held on Village bars in the last two weeks, Inspector Pine said.

Charges against the 13 who were arrested ranged from har assment and resisting arrest to disorderly conduct. A patrolman suffered a broken wrist the police said.

Throngs of young men congregated outside the inn last night, reading aloud condemnations of the police.

A sign on the door said, "This

A sign on the door said, "This is a private club. Members only." Only soft drinks were being served.

POLICE AGAIN ROUT 'YILLAGE' YOUTHS

Outbreak by 400 Follows a Near-Riot Over Raid

Heavy police reinforcements cleared the Sheridan Square area of Greenwich Village again yesterday morning when large crowds of young men, angered by a police raid on an inn fre-quented by homosexuals, swept through the area.

ractical Patrol Force units assigned to the East Village poured into the area about 2:15 A.M. after units from the Charles Street station house were unable to control a crowd of about 400 youths, some of whom were throwing bottles and lighting small fires. Their arms linked, a row of helmeted policemen stretching across the width of the street made several sweeps up and down Christopher Street between the Avenue of the Americas and Seventh Avenue South.

South.
The crowd retreated before

them, but many groups fled into the numerous small side streets and re-formed behind the police line. The police were not withdrawn until 4 A.M.

A number of people who did not retreat fast enough were pushed and showed along, and at least two men were clubbed to the ground.

Stones and bottles were thrown at the police lines, and the police twice broke ranks and charged into the crowd.

Three persons were arrested on charges of hardument and disorderly conduct.

The crowd had gathered in the evening across the street.

assorderly conduct.

The crowd had gathered in the evening across the street from the Stonewall Inn at 53 Christopher Street, where the police staged a raid early Saturday. The police were denounced by last night's crowd for allegedly harasing homosexuals. Graffiti on the boarded-up windows of the inn included: "Support gay power" and "Legalize gay bars."

Saturday's raid took place when about 200 people were in the bar. Plainfothes men, with a warrant authorizing a search for lilegal sales of alcohol, confiscated cases of liquor and beer.

A melec involving about 400 youths ensued, a partial riot receiving the search for the same partial riot receiving the search of the same partial riot receiving the search of the same partial riot receiving the same partial riot received the same par

A melec involving about 400 youths ensued, a partial riot mobilization was ordered by Police Headquarters, and 13 persons were arrested on a number of charges. Four policemen were injured, one suffering a broken wrist. Among those arrested was Dave Van Ronk, a folk singer.

Chant sung "Rockette style" by a "chorus line of mocking queens."

"We are the Stonewall girls

We wear our hair in curls

We wear no underwear

We show our pubic hair...

We wear our dungarees

Above our nelly knees!

At the beginning of the riots, the crowds sang "We Shall Overcome", a song that was originally a civil rights theme song.

1. We shall overcome We shall overcome We shall overcome some day

CHORUS: Oh, deep in my heart

I do believe

We shall overcome some day

2. We'll walk hand in hand We'll walk hand in hand We'll walk hand in hand some day

CHORUS

3. We shall all be free

We shall all be free

We shall all be free some day

CHORUS

4. We are not afraid

We are not afraid

We are not afraid some day

CHORUS

5. We are not alone

We are not alone

We are not alone some day

CHORUS

6. The whole wide world around

The whole wide world around

The whole wide world around some day

CHORUS

7. We shall overcome

We shall overcome

We shall overcome some day

CHORUS