THE LGBTQ+ MOVEMENT IN BROOKLYN PRIMAR Y SOURCE PACKET

Student Name
INTRODUCTORY READING

Accounts of people with varying sexualities and genders date back to the earliest historical records. In pre-colonial North America, native cultures acknowledged some people as having qualities representing both the female and male genders. They called them Two-Spirit and believed these individuals possessed a deeper connection between the spiritual and physical worlds. They believed gender non-conforming people had special insights that those who identified themselves as strictly male or female, did not.

When European settlers arrived in the 1600s, they were appalled by these cultural practices and imposed their own laws to prohibit such behavior. Homosexuality became illegal and punishable by death or dismemberment in states such as New York and Connecticut. “Sodomy”—a broad term for non-procreative sexual relations, which can apply to couples of any gender dynamic—remained a criminal offense in the United States into the 21st century. In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled against thirteen states that still had anti-sodomy laws on the books.

Despite harsh laws against homosexuality and cross-dressing in the United States, communities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people began to take root in port cities like San Francisco and New York City in the mid-1800s. The migration of large numbers of young, single people (mostly men) seeking economic opportunity in the California Gold Rush or Brooklyn’s Navy Yard enabled these communities to flourish. It was around this time that the poet Walt Whitman penned poems, such as “Calamus,” “Native Moments,” and “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” about his romantic and sexual encounters with men around the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Brooklyn Heights.

By the 1920s, LGBT people began to surface publicly as performers. In New York City, The Harlem Renaissance highlighted bisexual and lesbian black women such as Bessie Smith, the cross-dressing Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, and Josephine Baker. Many LGBT performers created public heterosexual identities for themselves, since attitudes towards homosexuality, bisexuality, and cross-dressing remained extremely negative.

In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) institutionalized these homophobic attitudes into medical practice. Publishing its first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the APA listed homosexuality as an “anti-social behavior,” declaring that homosexuality and cross-dressing were mental illnesses which could be treated through electric shock therapy and willful behavior changes. Famously, Allen Ginsberg, a gay poet who lived in New York City during the beatnik era of the late 1950s, dedicated the poem “Howl” to his friend Carl Solomon who received shock
treatments for his same-sex desires at the nearby Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in New Jersey.

Subsequently, in 1954, the biologist and sex researcher Alfred Kinsey published a study called *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* that challenged conventional attitudes about sexuality. A bisexual man himself, Kinsey found that 37% of men at that time had enjoyed a same-sex sexual encounter at least once. His subsequent studies on human sexuality brought controversy as well, since they sought to legitimize the existence of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as healthy and normal. He also developed the Kinsey scale, which illustrated sexuality as a continuum along seven points from homosexual to heterosexual with bisexuality in the middle. These studies, along with the work of German sexologist Magnus Herschfeld, supported emerging resistance by sexual minorities to repressive public attitudes and laws.

Two riots in the late 1960s – one on the West Coast in Compton, CA and one on the East Coast in New York City – inspired LGBT political activism and gave the movement visibility on a global scale. Both the Compton Cafeteria (California) and Stonewall (NYC) riots were direct responses to police brutality and a lack of legal, safe public spaces for the LGBT community. For the most part, the riots and protests that followed were initiated by poor, homeless transgender youth of color—the most frequent victims of abuse and harassment in the LGBT community.

Pre-existing gay rights organizations capitalized on the new burst of energy and confidence that followed in the wake of the riots. An age of gay liberation began with the formation of many groups self-identifying as “lesbian,” “gay,” and “queer” instead of “homosexual.” Activists formed new organizations, such as RadicaLesbians, Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance with more politically and socially radical approaches than before. The first Gay Pride march was held in New York City in 1970 on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

In the 1980s, when the HIV/AIDS crisis began—which disproportionately affected the LGBT community—it became another rallying point to criticize the lack of government response, which resulted in many LGBT and heterosexual-identified people’s deaths due to lack of medical treatments available. Activists formed groups, such as the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, to help LGBT people gain access to healthcare. Civil disobedience became a tactic commonly employed by ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and has inspired similar tactics among LGBT groups since then.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual people exist in every race, class, political movement, religion, and nation in the world. Therefore, the movement’s demands are diverse, often intersecting with demands for racial equality, gender equality, and workers’ rights. In the 21st century, gay rights or LGBT rights have focused on the fight for marriage equality. But there continue to be a variety of issues crucial to the health and survival of LGBT people, such as homelessness, mental illness
and suicide, violence and street harassment, and HIV/AIDS that drive the movement forward.

THE TAILOR MADE GIRL.

something About the Young Woman Who Started the Mode.

It is not generally known that Miss Johnstone Bennett, the young woman who has met with such success in the farcical sketch, “Jane,” is the original of the “tailor made girl.” It was no passing whim that impelled her to adopt the cut-away coat, the mannish hat and vest, the high collar and four in hand tie, for in speaking to a reporter of the causes that led up to the striking change in her apparel she said:

“I never could get a woman’s flummery of ribbons and laces to look well about my neck and shoulders, so I sought relief in a man’s high collar and four in hand tie. To me there was a dressiness in men’s wear that feminine bow knots and what nots could not approach. I am credited with being the first woman to start the fad, but I was not conscious how far I had gone..."
1. According to the headline and first sentence of Document 1, what is the nickname that Miss Johnstone Bennett is known by?

2. Read the rest of Document 1. What kind of clothing does Miss Johnstone Bennett like to wear?

3. According to the second paragraph, why does Miss Johnstone Bennett like to dress this way?

4. Look at the year of Document 1. Do you think it was normal for women to dress like Miss Johnstone Bennett in that time period? Why do you think there was a newspaper article about this?
1. Read the first paragraph of Document 2. Why was Miss Elizabeth Trondle arrested?

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2. Document 2 is from 1913. Why do you think women were arrested for this reason, at that time period?

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3. Miss Elizabeth Trondle wrote a letter to the President. What reasons did she give him for wanting to dress however she wanted?

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4. At the time Document 2 was created, clothing was seen as an important indicator of gender and sexuality. Do we still view clothing the same way? Explain your answer.

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Rooney Asserts Other Agencies Are Infested

Washington, March 25 (U.P) — The State Department has fired 126 homosexuals since Jan. 1, 1951, it was disclosed today.

Carlisle H. Humelsine, Deputy Undersecretary for Administration, gave the report during recent testimony before a House Appropriations Subcommittee.

"There is no doubt in our minds," he said on behalf of the department, "that homosexuals are security risks... we have resolved that we are going to clean them up."

He said 119 persons were discharged from the department and foreign service in 1951 for homosexuality and that seven more have been fired so far this year.

"I hope that next year will show that we have broken the back of this particular problem," he said.

Chairman John J. Rooney (D., Brooklyn) said he would like to make the "gratuitous observation" that homosexuals are not confined to the State Department.

Transcript

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Chairman John J. Rooney (D., Brooklyn) said he would like to make the “gratuitous observation” that homosexuals are not confined to the State Department.

Noting that “somebody is really working” at the State Department, Rooney said that “We probably could do the same thing in all of the departments of the Government, including Interior, Post Office, Treasury and everywhere else.”

“This has been extensively advertised as a problem which is solely the State Department’s, but the facts do not bear that out . . . After this committee questioned such possible conditions in the Department of Commerce, it was only a very short time until they had 53, and they are still weeding them out.”

Assistant FBI Director D. Milton Ladd told Senate investigators in December, 1950, that Russia had ordered its spies to seek out sex perverts among U.S. officials in hope of taking advantage of their “weakness.”

A report by a Senate subcommittee warned that homosexuals, lesbians and other perverts are poor security risks and easy marks for blackmail.
1. According to Document 3, how many people did the State Department fire in 1951 for being gay? How do you imagine they were identified as being gay?

2. According to Document 3, what reason was given for firing homosexuals?

3. What further action did Chairman John J. Rooney suggest be taken?

4. How do you think an LGBT person living in Brooklyn at this time might have felt upon reading this article?

The Daughters of Bilitis formed in 1953 “for the purpose of promoting the integration of the homosexual [woman] into society.” The founding document listed for goals: “Education of the variant...to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society...”; Education of the public [as to its]...erroneous taboos and prejudices”; participation in research projects ...towards further knowledge of the homosexual”; Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, [and the] proposal of changes....”

Martha Shelley, president of the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis in 1967, recalled her experience as a lesbian then, a term strikingly absent from the organizations’ founding document. Shelley, 25 years old at the time, grew up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

I started going to DOB in 1967. I remember walking into the place for the first time. There was this woman—she used the name Joan Kent—who was signing people up. I was going to use my real name, but she insisted that I not do that. She had been hounded by the FBI and insisted that the FBI might get a hold of the mailing list. I thought it was silly, but I chose a pseudonym, wrote it down, and then underneath put “care of” my real name.

My pseudonym was Martha Shelley. Later I made it my real name. It’s now on my driver’s license. My given name is Martha Altman. It just got to be too much of a hassle to have both names going at the same time. I figured that if the FBI wanted to find us, they were going to find us. And, of course, as it turned out later, they were looking. They were keeping an eye on us all the time.

DOB was located in an industrial loft in Manhattan on Twenty-Ninth Street or Thirtieth Street, somewhere around Seventh Avenue, I think. It was dark and dingy, but it was better than the bars. Everybody smoked, but it wasn’t like being in a smoke-filled bar, with so much noise that you couldn’t hear each other talk and where you were being hustled for drinks. We were there to talk to each other and to get to know each other as people.
In DOB, I was really able to feel good about myself for the first time as a lesbian because people who felt successful in the bars were those who were really cute according to standard definitions of cuteness in the society: blond, blue eyed, or whatever. I’m Jewish and I look it. At DOB I was able to meet people who would relate to me in terms of my personality rather than, “Here is a cute thing standing by a bar.”

The women who went to DOB meetings were different ages, different sizes. I think on average there were about ten people at a meeting. Sometimes there were more. If you had a speaker or some really interesting meeting, twenty people might show. Sometimes they would come in couples—there were couples for whom this was their social life. But for the most part, people came looking for someone, and when they got involved in a couple relationship, they would drop out.

I went to DOB to meet women. I wasn’t thinking about changing the world. I didn’t think it was possible—until later. Now, by 1967 there already was a women’s movement. I was relating to that, and it gave me a certain amount of ideology to buttress my feelings about not liking roles. By then I had read The Feminine Mystique. There wasn’t a whole lot else out there. I’d read Simone de Beauvoir. I was starting to read whatever I could find on feminism, even if it was published half a century ago. Ideologically, I had already moved in that direction, toward a society in which your behavior isn’t determined by your sex.

I had my point of view and I was pretty articulate. I didn’t say it in terms of feminism, but I remember being against butch-femme roles. And I was against marriage, too. I didn’t see why we should replicate the heterosexual society and try to re-create the relationships that I felt we had rebelled against. I didn’t realize that we hadn’t rebelled against them. I had. I was only really speaking for myself. Most of the women disagreed with me. Most of them wanted the house with the white picket fence. That wasn’t my ideal. I was in my early twenties, and the idea of settling down with anybody was appalling to me. I still wanted to get out and run around.
1. Using evidence from Document 4, explain why Martha Shelley was advised not to use her real name when signing into her first DOB meeting.

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2. Compare and contrast “the bars” Shelley describes versus the DOB meeting space.

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3. What does Shelley mean when she says she was “against butch-femme roles”?

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4. Describe Shelley’s views on marriage. Do you agree or disagree with her?

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DOCUMENT 5A: “A Community in Crisis.” Mattachine Society, Brooklyn Heights Chapter. 1966. NOTE: The Mattachine Society was founded in 1950 and was one of the first organizations to promote gay rights in the country. At the time, they did not use this language to describe themselves. Instead, the movement was identified as the homophile movement. This carried the connotation that members were not homosexual themselves, but simply advocates against discrimination towards such people.
Transcription:

The boiling point of my temper having exceeded the usual 212 degrees, the time to dispatch another letter to the B.H.P. and its readers has once again arrived. This time I shall not confine myself to one subject, but shall hold forth on a number of prickly items.

ITEM 2 “The Heights Peace Corps” – Homosexuals
LETTERS TO EDITOR

Omnibus

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ITEM 2 "The Heights Peace Corps" - Homosexuals.

The heights has reached new heights (and that ain't a funny); heights of degradation! I never thought I'd see the day when I would have to take a young lady with me whenever I wanted to take a PEACEFUL stroll on the Promenade for an evening's air. Not that I object to the young lady's company mind you, but it's about the only way I can have a little protection (or protect them from me) from the "Princes of the Promenade". Well enough is enough. Law or no law, when I go walking on a cold night - alone - and one of those misbegotten pusses starts to try and find out if I am a foot warmer, I'm going to belt him, or her, or it, right in the chops!

Document 5C: "Homosexuals are 'Scapegoats'.”
Brooklyn Heights Press. 18 October 1962.
1. According to Document 5A, which neighborhood is a “Community in Crisis”?

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2. Document 5B gives some evidence of this “crisis”. What problem is the author of this letter to the editor complaining about?

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3. Document 5C is a response to the previous letter. Does the author agree with Document 5B? What reasons do they give?

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4. Look back at Document 5A. What solution does this document suggest as the only way that truth can “triumph”? What organizations do they want to meet with?

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**DOCUMENT 6:** “Gay People at Brooklyn & Comunitas present Varsity Drag.” No Date. Brooklyn Archival Files, Brooklyn Collection Brooklyn Public Library.
GAY PEOPLE AT BROOKLYN & COMUNITAS

PRESENT

VARSITY DRAG

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 8PM-2AM

DANCING + FILMS

CABARET & BUFFET

bus
"41" Flatbush Ave to
Glenwood Rd. "6" Bay
Pkyy- Rockwy Pkwy to
Glenwood. "44" Nost-
rand to Flat. Junct.

$2

i.r.t
All trains to Franklin
Ave. Change for Flat-
bush train "3" or "4"
Last Stop - Flatbush

From City: B,N,RR to
DeKalb, change to D
train, change at At-
lantic Ave for IRT
b.m.t

From Coney Isl. - D
train to Ave. J Take
"6" Bus to Amersfort
and E. 27th.
b.m.t

The LGBTQ+ Movement In Brooklyn Primary Source Packet
1. Document 6 advertises an event. Where is it located? What kinds of things will happen at the event?

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2. Document 6 has no date, but it is likely from the 1960s or 1970s. What does the occurrence of this event tell you about LGBT rights in that time period?

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3. Why do you think it was important during this time period for the LGBT community to organize their own social events? Do you think it is still important for the LGBT community to organize their own social events? Why or why not?

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Can You Live Or Work Anywhere? GAYS CAN'T!

Good Day Brothers and Sisters of The New Democratic Coalition:

Our contingent represents the HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITY of Brooklyn specifically, and, more generally the interests of Gay, beautiful people everywhere. Our goals, all of ours here today, homosexuals, heterossexuals, oppressed people, everyone—our goals—are all the same. We are all looking to heal the wounds of America with someone who will be responsive to the people—ALL THE PEOPLE. Black is beautiful—GAY IS GOOD—all phrases that should never have been necessary in the promised land of America tell us of the work that must be done. Beautiful Gay people everywhere are uniting. And to those here this afternoon who have been oppressed to the point of self denial, we say COME OUT—SUPPORT THE PEOPLE WHO WILL SUPPORT OUR FIGHT—YOUR FIGHT FOR YOUR HUMANITY—COME OUT INTO THE SUNSHINE.

LET'S ALL BE FREE

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE HERE TODAY IS EDUCATIONAL. GAYS HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN ON THE OUTSIDE OF POLITICS. WE ARE HERE TO INFORM THE LIBERAL AND REFORM DEMOCRATS OF NEW YORK STATE AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AS A WHOLE THAT WE EXIST, NOT ONLY IN THE GAY GHETTOS OF THE INNER CITY, BUT WE EXIST IN SUCH PLACES AS FLATBUSH, SYRACUSE, ALBANY, BUFFALO; THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY!

AND WE EXIST WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY!

Did you know...

- WE CANNOT SEEK GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT ON ANY LEVEL IF WE ARE OPEN ABOUT OUR HOMOSEXUALITY OR WHO WE ARE. THE HYPOCRISY IS THAT MANY HOMOSEXUALS ARE EMPLOYED IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE . . . BUT AS HIDDEN HOMOSEXUALS.
- WE HAVE NO LEGAL RECOURSE IF REFUSED EMPLOYMENT OR FIRED BECAUSE OF OUR SEXUAL PREFERENCE.
- WE HAVE NO LEGAL RECOURSE IF REFUSED HOUSING BECAUSE OF OUR HOMOSEXUALITY.
- IN REALITY WE HAVE NO CIVIL RIGHTS.

PAINFULLY THE GAY COMMUNITY IS LEARNING TO VOTE AS A Bloc. This past November in San Francisco the GAY Community elected RICHARD HONGisto as Sheriff of San Francisco County on a platform of non harassment of HOMOSEXUALS. The unsuccessful campaigns of FRANK KAMENY in Washington, D.C. for Congress and RICHARD ALATORRE for State Assemblyman in Los Angeles were waged with much voluntary and financial commitment from the GAY Community. New Party candidate ALAN ROCKAWAY ran for City Commissioner of Miami this past November as an open Homosexual. PETER MALONEY sought a seat in the Canadian Parliament from Toronto this past November. Throughout our country thousands of Homosexuals are organizing in campus and political groups.

WE URGE ALL DELEGATES TO THIS CONVENTION TO RETURN TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CLUBS AND COMMUNITIES—AWARE OF OUR NEEDS—AND AWARE OF THE GAY COMMUNITY AS A VIABLE POLITICAL FORCE!

WALT WHITMAN NEW DEMOCRATS
C/O Dorrington, 1504 Flatbush Ave, Bklyn 11210
1. What group does Document 7 represent? To who is it addressed?

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2. What does the flyer urge people to do?

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3. What are three facts Document 7 gives on the state of gay rights?

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4. What types of policies or people vote for as a “bloc” to assure more protections for the gay community?

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The City Council voted yesterday to ban discrimination against homosexuals, passing the gay rights bill by a margin that surprised even the measure’s supporters.

The 21-to-14 vote, which came after more than three hours of passionate debate, ended a 15-year struggle over the proposal.

Passage had been expected by a narrow margin, but two Council members who began the day undecided—Wendell Foster (D-Bronx) and Joseph Lisa (D-Queens)—voted in favor.

But at 8 p.m., more than two hours after the vote, Lisa reversed himself.

He popped into the City Hall pressroom and said he had sent a telegram to the city clerk seeking to change his vote from yes to no.

“I think that legally speaking what I must do is initiate legislation that will ban discrimination against victims of AIDS,” he said. “Emotionally and intellectually I made a mistake.”

But City Council Majority Leader Peter Vallone (D-Queens) said Lisa’s reversal would not count.

“The vote stays the same,” Vallone said.

Lisa, who is chairman of the Council subcommittee on AIDS, had said when he voted yes that he did so “in order to be able to justify my ability to represent the Council in the (AIDS) epidemic.”

Foster, a black minister, said he was caught between his evangelical Christian belief that homosexuality is sinful and his first-hand knowledge of discrimination.

**Ed calls it victory**

In the end, he said, he concluded that “in the spirit of Christ I must love my homosexual brothers and sisters even though I don’t understand them, they frighten me.”

Mayor Koch, a long-time supporter of the measure, called the vote a victory for “simple basic civil rights.”

“It passed by a majority vote larger than anyone expected,” Koch said. “We
1. Document 8 tells us about an important law (or “bill”) being passed. What year was it passed?

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2. What rights did the bill mentioned in Document 8 guarantee?

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3. Document 8 shows us how each City Council member voted on this bill. How many City Councilors from Brooklyn voted “yes”? How many voted “no”?

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4. According to Document 8, what reasons did City Councilors give for voting yes or no?

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The opening of the Audre Lorde Project is perhaps as important for what it is not as for what it is. It is the city’s only gay and lesbian center devoted to minority New Yorkers. It is not in Chelsea or Greenwich Village. It is housed atop a 130-year-old Presbyterian church in Fort Greene.

In some ways, it is not surprising that such a center could sprout amid a forest of brownstones in Brooklyn’s black cultural mecca. “So many lesbian and gay services are concentrated in Chelsea and the Village,” said the center’s administrator, Joo-Hyun Kang, of East Flatbush, “and that’s not where most queer people of color live.”

Minority and white gay people, Ms. Kang said, do not always have identical concerns. “There is a void in the current services being provided by mainstream institutions,” she said.

Named after the late poet and writer, the Audre Lorde Project opened on Lafayette Avenue last month to serve the particular needs of black, Asian, Hispanic and American Indian people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. The center, in collaboration with an immigrant rights organization, has been conducting workshops for gay and lesbian immigrants. It is also helping train teenage peer counselors, in partnership with a youth group. Over the next few months, the center plans to create a gay and lesbian archive and collect the old pamphlets, books and photos that record the history of gay and lesbian people from minority groups.

The center will also share its services with residents in the surrounding neighborhood, regardless of sexual orientation. “While I can be an African-American lesbian, I’m also African-American and I identify with my African-American brothers and sisters who identify as straight,” said Cathy Cohen, a Yale University political science professor who is a board member of the center. “I want this center to serve them also.”

Over the last decade, two other such centers opened in Manhattan, but according to Lidell Jackson, who was active in both of the short-lived groups, neither had proper business plans and quickly ran out of resources. “They were pipe dreams,” said Mr. Jackson, now an adviser to the Audre Lorde Project’s board.

Ben Stilp, spokesman for the New York City Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center in Greenwich Village, said he hoped the project would advance gay causes outside Manhattan. “We need more visibility in different parts of the city,” he said.

SOMINI SENGUPTA

Joo-Hyun Kang, center director.
1. Read the first paragraph of Document 9. Where is the Audre Lorde Project located?

2. According to the second paragraph of Document 9, what is a good reason for the Audre Lorde Project to not be located in Chelsea or the Village?

3. Read the fourth paragraph of Document 9. What people does the Audre Lorde Project hope to serve, and what kinds of workshops does it offer?

4. Do you think it is still important today to have organizations like the Audre Lorde Project? Why or why not?
No sleep ’til Brooklyn

BY BILL ROUNDY

For urban dwellers who can’t be quite as urban as they want, Brooklyn has long been the second choice—not quite the fun stuff on the other side of the river.

“I always thought going to Brooklyn meant that you were a flop—that you’d failed. But it’s not true anymore,” observes DJ and promoter Larry Tee, from his loft in Williamsburg. “I love it out here. It’s really got a neighborhood vibe. The East Village used to have that, but it just kind of evaporated.”

That different vibe is the primary appeal in Brooklyn—and locals can be fiercely partisan about the merits of their borough. Those high-strung Manhattan types always have an agenda, they’ll tell you, while in Brooklyn people are more relaxed, less obsessed with their careers, and even better-looking.

“The scene is so over in Manhattan, especially for women,” laments Alina Wilczynski, nursing a beer at barbelow, a Carroll Gardens bar that hosts a monthly gay night. “In Brooklyn, people are more laid back and more real.”

“People talk to each other here. In Manhattan I don’t feel they do,” says Gregg Guinta, host of the Brooklyn party “Star Gossip.” “I feel like it’s more friendly—maybe it’s just Brooklyn.”

Hand-in-hand with that laid-back attitude is an acceptance of different body types. Those who don’t go to the gym on a regular basis (or ever) can feel distinctly unwelcome walking into the Big Apple in Chelsea. That’s not a worry in Brooklyn.

“THERE’S not much attitude,” says Tee. “The Brooklyn crowd doesn’t seem to have the body politics. Not as well-oiled, worked out. We have a couple more ectomorphs—the skinny guys.”

But the most striking difference between Brooklyn and Manhattan gay bars is that gay men and lesbians in the outer borough easily share the same space.

continued on page 11
1. According to Document 10, what kind of people are moving to Brooklyn?

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2. Look at the image in Document 10. According to the caption (the text under the image), what is this gathering?

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3. What reasons do people provide in Document 10 for moving to Brooklyn?

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4. What year is Document 10 from? Do you think Brooklyn is the same today as it was then?

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The Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn became the home of a thriving LGBT community when people began spreading out from Manhattan due to the gentrification of the West Village and other traditional “gayborhoods” in the 1980s. In July 2014, organizers of the annual Bushwick Pride festival discussed a new wave of gentrification by white LGBT people that is making affordable housing more difficult to find for LGBT people of color. The following document reflects the movement’s heightened awareness to the diverse forms of gender and sexuality in its membership, adding a “Q” for “Queer” to the LGBT acronym, along with class and race divisions that have persisted within the movement.

Gentrification and transgender rights will be causes célèbre for the local LGBTQ community of color during Bushwick Pride this Saturday. Photo: Make the Road
For Julián Padilla, an organizer of Bushwick Pride, the line that divides the North Brooklyn neighborhood’s LGBTQ community is clearly defined.

“On the one hand, you have a lot of black and Latino LGBTQ people who created communities that were thriving, despite racism, capitalism, homophobia and transphobia, and now there are a lot of people who are LGBTQ but are white and/or are coming from higher economic incomes, who are claiming that they have begun sort of like a newer, friendlier gay Bushwick,” he says. “But it’s only newer and friendlier for those people who are moving in and not being pushed out.”

In short, gentrification is further marginalizing members of an already marginalized minority. “There’s a lot of tension there,” Padilla says. The fact that people are trying to position the neighborhood as ‘now’ having a LGBTQ community when in actuality, one has existed there for decades is going over about as well as it would with any established population set upon by self-proclaimed pioneers.

Given the nature of the divide, it would be naïve to think that Bushwick’s two LGBTQ communities could become cohesive in a day, but Saturday’s Bushwick Pride march and celebration will perhaps serve as a chance to unify the two factions behind a common cause—better health care for trans individuals through the repeal of a bill passed by the New York State Legislature in 1998 that removed transgender-related health care from Medicaid coverage. The theme of this year’s gathering is “Trans Healthcare Now!,” with trans being an umbrella term encompassing transgender, gender queer, gender non-conforming, two-spirit and third-gender individuals.

This schism largely stems from a socio-economic issue the average Brooklynite can relate all too well to—irregardless of sexual orientation or gender identity—an affordable-housing shortage.

“We know that LGBTQ people living in the neighborhood are not just affected by homophobia and transphobia, they are affected, in some ways first, by a lack of housing, and we’re seeking to protect the housing that people do have right now, as we’re also fighting to protect people’s abilities to access health care and walk down the street without fear of harassment or death,” says Padilla, who is also a community organizer for Make the Road New York, a Bushwick-based nonprofit that advocates for expanded civil rights, social justice, housing and health-care reform, public school safety and youth empowerment on behalf of the local LGBTQ community.

Today’s newer LGBTQ community, as well as an onslaught of artists and young adults, is descending on the neighborhood for much the same reasons Bushwick’s already established LGBTQ community did a generation or two ago—the promise of cheaper rents and a close proximity to Manhattan.
The biggest difference between then and now, though, is that Bushwick, traditionally a neighborhood of predominantly Hispanic and black populations, was nowhere near as desirable a place to live in the ‘80s as it is today. Anyone willing to relocate to the area overwrought as it was with crack and crime, could essentially have their pick of vacant apartments without pushing anyone out. Population density increases and unprecedentedly high apartment values have made such occurrences all but obsolete in the current real estate climate.

Transgender issues though, may be a particularly potent, of the moment rallying cry for the community to rally around. Bushwick Pride’s theme this year highlights a greater phenomenon permeating pop culture at present—positive and negative media attention on transgender individuals and rights over the past year has brought this particular segment of the LGBTQ community into the spotlight.

“I think especially black trans women have been at the forefront of pushing for visibility for a long, long time, and, finally, their voices are being heard in ways we haven’t seen before, and people are speaking for themselves a lot more,” Padilla says. “One of the things I’ve discussed with other people is how exciting it is that a lot of these trans women of color, and specifically black trans women, when speaking to the press and when building these movements, are refusing to leave anyone behind.”

Parties and protest have always made likely bedfellows within the LGBTQ community Padilla says, and Saturday’s ninth annual Bushwick Pride promises to have plenty of both—with the emphasis being on protest, then party. The corporatization of NYC Pride Month, which occurred in June, is a prickly point for the organizers of Bushwick Pride. Padilla says all that glitters is not necessarily gold during the city’s other demonstrations, as the party element of Pride is starting to overshadow the activism it was formed around in the first place.

“Even the idea of Pride as a celebration is a little contentious as something that’s been sort of up for debate,” Padilla says. “When we trace the history of why, for example, we have all these celebrations in June, people make direct links to the riots of Stonewall Inn. So, many people take that time to point out that all of these celebrations, all of these parties and marches and parades, began when people were fighting police brutality at the intersection of homophobia and transphobia.”

Padilla says hosting Bushwick Pride the month after the city’s other major events is about avoiding a scheduling conflict, not making a political statement, though, it does inadvertently allow the neighborhood’s demonstration to stand out on its own, giving people another opportunity to be loud and proud every summer.

“Bushwick Pride we contextualize as being part of that more radical social justice-based framework. We are definitely about celebrating—we have a lot to celebrate—and, it’s actually, I feel, like a tradition of LGBTQ people to bring celebration even into protests.”
1. What tensions within the LGBTQ community does Document 11 highlight?

2. How has the population of Bushwick changed in recent years? Why?

3. Why are transgender issues such a potent “rallying cry” in 2014 for the LGBTQ community?

4. Is Bushwick Pride more political or more celebratory? Explain using evidence from Document 11.
GLOSSARY

**Asexual**: a person who does not experience romantic and/or sexual attractions.

**Beatnik**: a counterculture in the 1950s and early 1960s associated with jazz, poetry, drugs, and political and artistic rebellion.

**Bisexual**: a person who is attracted to two or more genders.

**Bloc**: (in regards to voting) a group of voters that are strongly motivated by a specific concern, causing them to vote together in elections.

**Butch-femme roles**: a relationship dynamic between two women in which one partner presents herself in a typically masculine way, while the other presents herself in a typically feminine way.

**Cross-dress**: to dress as another gender.

**Gay**: a person who is attracted to people of the same gender that they identify as.

**Gayborhood**: a neighborhood characterized by a prominent LGBT community and/or clientele.

**Heterosexual**: a person who is attracted to people of a different gender than the one they identify as.

**Homosexual**: another word for “gay.” *(Note: this term is sometimes seen as outdated, since it was used as a medical term for so long in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.)

**Homophile**: a term used before the Gay Liberation movements of the 1960s, which denoted a person who accepted and advocated for homosexual rights.

**Intersex**: a person who is born with and/or naturally develops sexual characteristics which are both female and male.

**LGBT**: an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; sometimes also written as LGBTQ or LGBTQIA to include queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual people.

**Lesbian**: a person who identifies as female and who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to females.

**Sexual minority**: a broad term which encompasses all spectrums of gender and sexuality that do not follow the “male-female” binary or are not heterosexual in practice and/or identity.

**Sodomy**: non-procreative sexual relations.

**Straight**: describing a heterosexual person.

**Transgender**: a person who identifies differently than the gender they were assigned at birth. *(Note: not all transgender people “transition” from one gender to another. This is an umbrella term that refers more generally to people who are gender-nonconforming.)

**Transsexual**: a largely outdated term for a person who identifies differently than the gender they were assigned at birth and seeks to change their physical appearance to correspond with their true gender through hormonal treatments and sometimes surgery.

**Transvestite**: an outdated term for a cross-dressing or transgender person.

**Two-Spirit**: a modern, pan-Indian, umbrella term used by some Indigenous North Americans to describe Native people in their communities who fulfill a traditional third-gender (or other gender-variant) ceremonial and social role in their cultures.
**Queer**: used as an umbrella term to refer to a range of sexualities, or as a way of defining sexuality that is not constrained to the gender binary

**Zine**: an informal magazine, usually crafted by hand, to express a strong interest in a particular topic.