

A SHORT HISTORY OF LGBT ACTIVISM IN THE USA

and the surrounding neighborhood sustained heavy damage. The following night demonstrators threw up another picket line, which quickly descended into new violence and damage to the restaurant. In the aftermath of the riot at Compton's, a network of transgender social, psychological, and medical support services was established, which culminated in 1968 with the creation of the National Transsexual Counseling Unit [NTCU], the first such peer-run support and advocacy organization in the world.



The **Stonewall riots** were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations against a police raid that took place, in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. The demonstrations are frequently cited, inaccurately, as the first instance in American history when people in the homosexual community fought back against a government-sponsored system that persecuted sexual minorities, but they have become the defining event that marked the start of the gay rights movement in the United States and around the world. Within a few months, activist organizations including the Gay Liberation Front, the Gay Activists Alliance, Radicalesbians, and the Street Transvestites Action were formed in New York, concentrating on confrontational tactics, and three newspapers were established to promote rights for gays and lesbians. Within a few years, new, more aggressive gay rights organizations were founded across the U.S. and the world. On June 28, 1970, the first Gay Liberation marches took place in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York commemorating the anniversary of the riots. Similar marches were soon organized in other cities, but it wasn't until the mid '70s that they began to be called Gay Pride parades.

The **National Stonewall Democrats** was founded in 1998 by Barney Frank, at that time a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts. The organization brought together LGBT Democratic clubs across the United States which had been left unaffiliated after the 1987 dissolution of the National Association of Gay and Lesbian Democratic Clubs. The National organization suspended operations in January 2013 due to financial problems. State and local chapters continue, however. Desert Stonewall Democrats is proud to bear the name of the event that sparked a revolution and strives still today to achieve what those rebellious Stonewall Inn patrons fought for then - equal treatment under the law. Desert Stonewall Democrats thrives and grows today as an active and influential voice in regional politics, pursuing its mission of equality for all people.