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## LGBTQ In Los Angeles: From Hate To LA The Great

Going from hate to a place so great like Los Angeles, gave many people from the LGBTQ community a sense of protection. The rights that straight people so easily had, were forbidden for the homosexuals. Society for them included abuse, embarrassment, and fear. They experienced inequality for simply being themselves. In the 1960's, many LGBTQ citizens had to hide their identity in order to avoid the "consequences" of society. Los Angeles provided citizens a harbor where the LGBTQ community could avoid discrimination, prosecution, and participate in protest movements.

Discrimination was an ongoing struggle for the LGBTQ community. Laws were placed and punishments were given if broken. According to The Observer, "between 1946 and 1967, hundreds of LGBT persons were arrested each year for sodomy or attempted sodomy, and thousands for lesser offenses like 'cruising,' propositioning an undercover policeman or woman, wearing sex-inappropriate clothing and being present in a gay or lesbian bar during a raid." Between the years 1935 and 1969, federal state and local governments went to great lengths to discover and unmask what authorities labeled "sex perverts." Many of these "sex pervert" citizens were unable to be themselves due to the harsh discrimination they faced when it came to their sexuality. In 1967, homosexuality was considered a "mental illness." The outbreak of AIDS in the U.S. took control of the struggle for gay rights. It was not until 1992, where homosexuality was removed from the International Statistical Classification of Diseases by the World Health Organization. Because sex between two men was illegal in California, lewd conduct resulted in being required to register as a sex offender. Ex-Civil servants who had lost their jobs due to being let go or suspected of being homophobic were listed as "security risk". Restrictions were put in place to keep the homophobic citizens in check. In New York, gay men and women were not able to be served alcohol in public because liquor laws considered the get together of homosexuals to be "disorderly." Additionally "in 1976 the INS announced that it would no longer deny citizenship to "practicing sexual deviates" Yet, paradoxically, the INS continued to actively refuse gays and lesbians entry at the border until 1980..."

The hate towards the LGBT community did not stop there. Los Angeles provided "Gay-Ins" in Griffith Park to protest police brutality and discrimination. Alongside discrimination, LGBTQ citizens feared prosecution; leading them to move to Los Angeles where they could find refuge. LGBTQ citizens were prosecuted for disorderly conduct, loitering, cross dressing, and private sexual behavior. For instance, Gail Bederman states that "across the nation, police began arresting visibly gay men and woman for cross dressing, disorderly conduct or 'loitering with lewd intent'". Gay men and woman needed to dress a certain way to come off as straight or acceptable. Newspapers would constantly print the names of those arrested, who would then as a result lose their job. The fear of exposure and embarrassment was placed upon the LGBTQ as a form to keep them in control. In addition, being homophobic was considered an illness. According to the History of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender Social Movement , "throughout the 1950s and 60s, gay men and lesbians continued to be at risk for psychiatric lockup as well jail, losing jobs, and/or child custody when courts and clinics defined gay love, as sick, criminal or immoral." Homosexuals were sought to be treated for their sexuality. Also, between the years 1946-1967, many LGBT citizens were arrested each year for being seen in a gay or lesbian bar during a raid. Los Angeles provided the LGBTQ the benefit to dress however

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they wanted, the liberty to be out and about at whatever time they pleased, and show off their significant other without the fear of getting arrested. In 1989, throughout the Conservative campaign for family values, more than two thousand men were prosecuted for gross indecency. In addition, the maximum penalty for any man over the age twenty one committing gross indecency with someone of the ages sixteen to twenty one, was added on from two years to five years. Arrests were common for the LGBTQ, making them live in awareness of a lifestyle not fit for them. Overall, protest movements were a way for the LGBTQ community to fight for their rights and take pride in who they were.

Unable to be themselves, the LGBTQ community found a sanctuary in LA which provided them the chance to participate in protest movements. The first and oldest LGBT Pride Parade was in Los Angeles. Protest movements were active in LA where LGBTQ citizens could come together to participate in. The Activist Harry Hay established the Mattachine Society, which was one of the earliest homosexual organizations in the US. Their main goal was to establish and advocate for homosexual rights and diminish the feelings of isolation that many gays and lesbians were experiencing. In 1970, more than about one thousand citizens marched down Hollywood Boulevard in an act of dignity and unity. According to History Extra, "Coming together in social events meant more than just having fun: it was a profound challenge to the isolation and homophobia that had characterized life for many gay men..." Protest movements provided the LGBTQ citizens a chance to form a voice as a whole and come forth and address the unfairness they had experienced. Furthermore, according to The Black Cat: Harbinger of LGBTQ Civil Rights, "The Black Cat in the Silver Lake neighborhood became the site of what was, at the time, the largest documented LGBTQ civil rights demonstration in the nation, leading many to recognize it as its birthplace of a world movement." The demonstration occurred on February eleven in 1967.

Due to a police raid at the well-known bar weeks prior, many came together outside the bars in a peaceful protest. Los Angeles was witnessing the rise of Gay Liberation Movements during the time of the Black Cat raid. These protest movements allowed for the LGBTQ citizens to come together and fight for their justice. Los Angeles was a harbor for the LGBTQ to come together and form a voice; a unity was made to speak up and take action against discrimination, prosecution, and the rise to participate in protest movements. The 1960's was a mix of highs and lows for the LGBTQ. Many gays, lesbians, bisexual, and queers lived their lives with awareness of always being watched and out to get. They were treated with an unfairness for the simple fact of their sexual preference. Discrimination gave them humiliation, prosecution gave them time to do, and protest movements in Los Angeles gave them a voice to participate in, to fight for their rights. Los Angeles was the place to be, being it was a home and harbor for the LGBTQ community to liberate.