Marching for Pride: The Basics


Thousands of Homosexuals Hold A Protest Rally in Central Park

by LACEY FOSBURGH

Thousands of young men and Sheridan Square before marches for women homosexuals from all up the Avenue of the Amer canoe over the Northea marched from Greenwich Village to the parks described as a “gay-in” Sheep Meadow in Central Park yesterday, proclaiming: “We the organizers said a new milli new strength and pride of the fancy was developing among homosexuals.”

Gay rights activist Craig Rodwell came up with the idea for the first Pride march in 1969. He made a call for a national demonstration on that day. We propose a nationwide show of support.

• When did the first Pride marches take place?
The first Pride marches, parades, and celebrations were held in June 1970 to mark the one-year anniversary of the 1969 uprising at the Stonewall Inn gay bar in Greenwich Village. They have been held annually ever since.

• Where was the first Pride march held?
Contrary to popular belief that the first Pride march did not take place in New York City but in Chicago. The Chicago march took place on Saturday, June 27, 1970, with between 150 and 200 people marching from the city’s Washington Square Park to Daley Plaza. New York City was second on Sunday, June 28, along with Los Angeles, where 1,200 marched down Hollywood Boulevard, and San Francisco, where approximately 30 people marched down Polk Street and a “Gay-in” gathering was held in Golden Gate Park.

• Were the 1970 Pride marches the first public LGBTQ civil rights demonstrations in the United States?
No, there had been several protests, both organized and spontaneous, in the decade prior to Stonewall. These included a 1966 uprising by drag queens and trans women against the police at Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco and the Annual Reminders, a series of demonstrations held every July 4 from 1965 through 1969 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. During these pickets, a few dozen well-dressed gay and lesbian protestors carried signs with messages that were meant to remind the American people that homosexuals still lacked basic rights.

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• What did the resolution say?
The Annual Reminders, in order to be more relevant, reach a greater number of people, and encompass the ideas and ideals of the larger struggle in which we are engaged—that of our fundamental human rights—he would hold both in time and location.

• What was the route of the New York City march and how many participated?
On the morning of Sunday, June 28, 1970, hundreds of marchers assembled along Washington Place and Waverly Place between 6th and 7th Avenues, just around the corner from the Stonewall Inn where the uprising had taken place the year before.

The marchers, many carrying banners and signs, stepped off at 6th Avenue, attracting thousands of people in a line that stretched for blocks. Along the way they chanted, “Say it clear, say it loud, gay is good, gay is proud,” “Out of the closets and into the streets,” and “Gay power!”

Despite fears of anti-gay violence, the marchers were mainly greeted with signs of wonder and bewilderment from Sunday tourists and passersby. The march ended at Central Park’s Sheep Meadow at a planned “Gay-in” gathering where the two thousand marchers were joined by thousands more.

• Who marched?
In addition to the individual LGBTQ people who had traveled from across the northeastern United States to participate, more than 20 organizations were represented at the march, including the Gay Activists Alliance, the Gay Liberation Front, the Mattachine Society of New York, the Daughters of Bilitis, the Lavender Menace, the Church of the Beloved Disciple, as well as student organizations from Yale, Rutgers, New York University, and Columbia University’s Student Homophile League, which was the first gay student organization in the U.S., founded in 1966.

• How was the march documented?
The march attracted national media attention. It was recorded in numerous articles and photos, as well as in a short film by Lilli Vincenz and on an audio documentary record by Breck Ardery. Both works are titled Gay and Proud and are available online.

• How many Pride marches, parades, and other celebrations are now held each year?
Millions of LGBTQ people participate in more than 300 parades, protest marches, and celebrations to mark the anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in towns and cities in over 60 countries around the world, from New York City and Sarajevo to Mumbai and Mexico City.

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