Epilogue

On the Hill

At the start of the summer of 1993, a century after the enactment of Washington's first sodomy law, the state governor, Mike Lowry, traveled to Seattle for what would be a historic purpose. On June 27, he became the first governor to address the annual lesbian and gay pride rally. In his speech, Lowry warned that "if one person's civil rights are being abused, then everyone's civil rights are endangered." He again called for the passage of a statewide law to protect homosexuals in their rights to jobs and housing. Somewhere between sixty thousand and seventy-five thousand people attended that pride rally, making it one of Seattle's largest public events.

What may be most remarkable—in a positive sense—is how casually the city's newspapers reported the affair. Both the *Times* and the *Post-Intelligencer* noted Lowry's speech in their routine coverage of the pride rally, but neither paid it particular heed or treated it as especially significant news. One might say that the newspapers gave the occasion almost as little attention as they had given to the passage of the sodomy law in 1893, when homosexuals were exiled from the civic conversation. Within the different city cultures of their times, neither event must have seemed particularly extraordinary to the editors. The *Post-Intelligencer* went so far as to note that Lowry's speech, along with the appearance of numerous other politicians, "underscored the fact that the gay community . . . is considered by many, including Lowry, to be part of the mainstream."[1]

The same day, a lanky, bespectacled Seattle police officer named Rob Boling chose one of the most dramatic ways he knew to come out, rolling his police car into the parade and joining the marchers. For blocks, thousands cheered him. The following year, for the first time ever, the Seattle police chief—Norm Stamper at the time—would join too.[2]

In a century, then, much had changed in Seattle's civic discourse about politics, religion, and culture—and especially about who in the conversation was a valued speaker. It seems too easily metaphoric that in one hundred years, lesbians and gays had moved the center of their public speech from the city's lowest point on the mudflat to atop Capitol Hill. Yet the fact is undeniable. From generation to generation, the specific challenges had changed, but always the urge had been

the same—to find a place to truly feel valued and at home. To a great extent, the quest had succeeded.

Individuals who had been most involved moved on, of course.

After they had helped break the police blackmail scams in the 1960s, MacIver Wells and John Chadwick sold their bars and moved to Camano Island north of Seattle for a quieter life, free of police payoffs. Chadwick died at age seventy in 1994; Mac, at age seventy-nine in 2000. They are buried on the island under a shared headstone, engraved with roses and a Canadian maple leaf.

Those who had created the Dorian Society and the Seattle Counseling Service, such as Nick Heer, Martin Gouterman, and Bob Deisher, concentrated on teaching at the University of Washington. The Reverend Mineo Katagiri, after helping to launch the Dorians, became one of the founders of Seattle's Northwest Harvest food bank, then left for a job in New York City in 1970. He eventually moved to San Francisco.

Similarly, some of those in the initial wave of Seattle's gay liberationists—Robert Sirico, Paul Barwick, William DuBay, and Bobbi Campbell—headed to California or to the East Coast. Sirico, for example, became director of the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center in July 1975, and helped that gay counseling service make the transition from grassroots activism to professional service. Others, such as David Baird, Jane Meyerding, Faygele benMiriam, Lois Thetford, Sam Deaderick, Tim Mayhew, Patrick Haggerty, and Jan Denali, stayed in the Northwest. BenMiriam fought and won a lawsuit against the federal government opposing discrimination in the civil service. He died of a brain tumor in 2001. Deaderick, who had so often challenged Charlie Brydon's middle-class approach to politics and had been the first to test Seattle's gay rights law with his Salvation Army bell-ringing, continued supporting the Freedom Socialist Party through his writings, particularly his small booklet *Gay Resistance: The Hidden History.* He died of a heart attack in 1991. Sometimes the activists gradually lowered their profile in gay politics and focused on other causes. Lois Thetford, who had gone to Cuba to cut sugarcane, promoted community health care in Seattle, helping to create the Fremont Women's Clinic and the Forty-fifth Street Clinic. In spring 2001, she received one of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*'s Jefferson Awards for citywide leadership. Her partner, Jean Rietschel, became Seattle's presiding municipal court judge; her daughter, raised by the collective of parents that included Patrick Haggerty and benMiriam, was in college at the end of the century. Meanwhile, some of the other women who helped create the first consciousness-raising groups, the lesbian newsletter *Out and About,* and the Lesbian Resource Center went on to organize lesbian and gay youth and to help preserve the city's gay history by promoting museum exhibits.

Charlie Brydon periodically vanished from the city's gay politics, only to reemerge again and again as an organizer of this or that effort to oppose yet another anti-gay initiative—always remaining the true insider working behind the scenes.

In one irony the Reverend Mark Matthews and George Cotterill would almost assuredly not have appreciated, Brydon eventually secured a gubernatorial appointment to the agency charged with overseeing the state's saloons—the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Another city hall insider, Shelly Yapp, who had co-chaired the political committee for Brydon's Citizens to Retain Fair Employment during Initiative Thirteen, became a deputy mayor in the late 1980s and then received a gubernatorial appointment to the University of Washington Board of Regents.

Socialist activist Dick Snedigar made headlines a different way in the 1980s and 1990s. Snedigar, who had directed the gay counseling service and had often clashed with Brydon's approach to gay politics, offered to help the Freedom Socialist Party find a new home when Seattle restaurateur Ivar Haglund bought the building housing Freeway Hall in 1978. Snedigar contributed $22,500 to a relocation fund, but later he demanded the money back and in a lawsuit asked for copies of the party's membership lists, contributors' names, and minutes. The case quickly became a civil rights cause célèbre over the right of a political association to keep its records private; the case lasted for eight years before the Washington State Supreme Court finally established a strong legal rule protecting the group's privacy rights. Snedigar lost.

Many key organizers during the AIDS epidemic—those who survived—dropped out of activism, exhausted. Carol Sterling stepped down from running the Chicken Soup Brigade, worn by the death of so many friends. Catlin Fullwood of POCAAN left for New York City to teach gay and lesbian youth. Larry Woelich, tired of running bathhouses, turned instead to cleaning houses and condominiums. Malcolm McKay left his education post at the Northwest AIDS Foundation to teach sexuality classes, as well as host an Internet gay radio show. Of the early organizers of the major gay AIDS agencies, only Betsy Lieberman continued working at the end of the century, still helping to find housing for people with AIDS.[3]

Steven Farmer, who had been given a seven-and-a-half-year sentence in prison, never lived long enough to serve it. He spent almost two years at the Twin Rivers Correctional Facility near Olympia, then—ill from AIDS—received conditional clemency in 1994 from Governor Mike Lowry so he could live in a Tacoma hospice rather than die in jail. But the scapegoating was not over. Although Farmer was too sick to solicit anyone, the Tacoma police still issued a warning that a sexual predator was in the neighborhood and made his address public, leading to an outcry that forced state corrections secretary Charles Riveland to defend Farmer's release. "The mystery of AIDS," Riveland said, "it frightens people." Although Riveland pointed out that Farmer had never committed any subsequent offenses after his initial arrest and never fit the state's legal definition of a sexual predator, the *Tacoma News-Tribune,* in particular, continued to refer to him as such. And Rebecca Roe, the King County prosecutor who had fought Farmer, still adamantly insisted he should die in jail, not in a hospice. In September 1995, Farmer did finally

die, at age thirty-nine. The family kept his funeral secret to avoid another media circus. Farmer's was perhaps the only local AIDS death in which no accomplishments were noted. The headline on the *Seattle Times* obituary said: "Sex Offender's Death Linked to AIDS."[4]

As some lesbian and gay leaders moved on, others moved in, replacing the earlier activists and newsmakers. Cal Anderson's old mantle as the only openly gay representative in the state legislature passed to his friend Ed Murray. Two lesbians, Sherry Harris and Tina Podlodowski, were elected to the Seattle City Council, but in what perhaps was a sign of the enormous changes in visibility that had occurred, the city news media only seldom noted that either Harris or Podlodowski was homosexual. By the time Podlodowski joined the city council in the mid-1990s, for example, the media more often referred to her as a retired Microsoft millionaire than as a lesbian, and neither ever emerged as the symbolic political leader of the Seattle lesbian and gay community in the way that Cal Anderson had.[5]

Within each major segment of the civic conversation and civic landscape—be it the theater of life, the politics of governance, the economic network, the life of worship represented in the churches, or the compassion hoped for in illness—the presence of lesbians and gays in the city continued to deepen throughout the end of the century.

In the world of dance and theater, for example, Rick Rankin, working as a waiter and a singer, created a gay and lesbian theater festival in 1984 at a small venue on Capitol Hill, then parlayed the success into his own company, Alice B. Theatre. The idea was to produce stories that reflected the lives of gays and lesbians, stories that mainstream theater in Seattle was still overlooking. The focus was not a limit, Rankin would say; it was a way to understand the fullness of human experiences through a different set of eyes. He wanted an audience that would be one-third lesbian, one-third gay, and one-third straight, and he not only thought he achieved it, but he doubled its size every year. By the 1990s, Alice B. drew major arts funding from the state, from the national business community's Corporate Council for the Arts, and from the National Endowment for the Arts. Alice B. Theatre would survive for a decade until Rankin decided to pursue his own writing.[6]

Gays and lesbians also launched choruses that crossed the arts divide, drawing audiences both heterosexual and homosexual as well as funding from established corporate sources. The Seattle Men's Chorus, begun in 1979, achieved the most success. At first it tried to avoid being publicized as a "gay" chorus, its executive director explaining that the chorus wanted to avoid any "adverse effect" and first prove to the city that its gay citizens "can do well along any line." It was just a matter of timing, he said—one reason, apparently, that "gay" had been left out of the name. Gradually, through the 1980s and 1990s, the chorus began risking produc-

tions sung by members dressed in drag and then also used songs to introduce straight audiences to the emotions that gay men felt when they lost their lovers to AIDS. From a first sold-out concert at a small theater in the city's Museum of History and Industry, the chorus attracted a total of more than thirty thousand subscribers by the end of the century, taped programs for television, and commissioned its own works by major composers. The director of the chorus, Dennis Coleman, actively worked in the late 1990s with the Seattle Symphony to help design the city's new Benaroya Hall, making sure it would be suitable for its two major occupants: the symphony and the gay men's chorus.[7]

In politics, new issues moved to the fore as gays became accustomed to the ritual of fighting, usually successfully, the initiatives and referendums designed to reverse gains made through the insider route of executive orders, city councils, and the legislature. After repulsing the assault by the Oregon Citizens' Alliance in the mid-1990s, lesbian and gay leaders of the Hands Off Washington group even tried to use the moralists' weapon themselves, launching a statewide initiative to outlaw job discrimination based on sexual orientation. Some would say it was a drastic mistake, undermining the activists' own previous argument that the civil rights of any minority should never be subject to a popular vote. Even Cal Anderson had passionately opposed the idea when it had first surfaced in 1994. And he turned out to be right. HOW's Initiative 677 gathered the necessary 230,000 signatures to make the November 1997 ballot, but then crashed in a 60 percent landslide defeat—despite polls that had indicated most voters in the state thought job discrimination against gays and lesbians should be outlawed. The defeats on both sides created at least a temporary détente in the use of initiatives that neither seemed able to win.[8]

Sometimes the victories in politics aimed to fill small gaps and went almost unnoticed, such as that to convince the Seattle City Council to strengthen the job antidiscrimination law that had been the target of Initiative Thirteen. The original law had only allowed for complaints, investigations, and reinstatements to be handled administratively through city offices. In 1999, the city council changed that to allow direct lawsuits in the courts by those who believed they had been discriminated against. Few noticed.[9]

Other times, political battles over the recognition of lesbian and gay families became pitched, with debates about whether gays and lesbians should be allowed to adopt, to be given the same employment benefits as heterosexuals, or to marry. The University of Washington, for example, came under attack from eighteen Republican state representatives in 1997 after it okayed health and housing benefits for the partners of lesbian and gay students. They accused the university of codifying "amorality," but the university stuck to its policy. Similarly, by the late 1990s Seattle had strengthened its own domestic partnership ordinance to require any companies undertaking significant contract work for the city to include same-sex relationships in their own benefit programs. That provoked grumbles,

but no successful repeal attempt. Conservatives were more successful at the state level when it came to banning any attempts to recognize lesbian or gay relationships as marriages. Although some other states—notably Hawaii and Vermont—inched in that direction by the turn of the century, in 1998 Washington's legislators passed a bill banning gay marriages. Governor Gary Locke vetoed it, but was almost immediately overridden.[10]

With Puget Sound the site of numerous military bases, and Seattle a comfortable fortress of gay visibility, battles over homosexual inclusion in the military services became routine by the end of the 1990s, as navy sailors and army soldiers sued and sometimes won. Most prominent were the fights of army sergeant Perry Watkins, discharged after years of honorable service even though he had always been honest about his homosexuality, and Margarethe Cammermeyer, the chief nurse of the Washington Army National Guard and the highest-ranking officer to be discharged because of her sexual orientation. Cammermeyer's quest even became the subject of a 1995 television movie, "Serving in Silence," which was funded by Barbra Streisand and starred Glenn Close as the lesbian heroine. Both Watkins and Cammermeyer eventually won their lawsuits before retiring from the military.[11]

In Seattle's religious conversation, gays and lesbians steadily transformed the dialogue about pastoral ministry—the practical and local application of dogma—even if the struggle against church doctrines always proved more difficult. At the University Friends Meeting, for example, Quakers struggled for years about whether to recognize homosexual relationships. At first, respecting traditional doctrines but also wanting to accommodate new discernments, they settled on the term "celebration of commitment" to recognize gay and lesbian couples. But after more years of continued argument, they reconciled the rhetoric by allowing couples themselves to choose whatever term they wished. Not too far away from the Friends' meeting house, the Woodland Park United Methodist Church struggled with its hierarchy over the role of two lesbian and gay pastors when first the Reverend Karen Dammann, a lesbian, applied in early 2001 for a position, and then the Reverend Mark Williams, already hired, also came out. The local congregation stood behind the pastors, but the denomination's hierarchy insisted on upholding a ban against homosexual ministers who were not celibate. In mid-2002, however, investigative committees of the Methodists' Pacific Northwest conference decided they had no way of proving that the ministers were sexually active without prying into their private lives in an unseemly way.[12]

Seattle's Catholics, meanwhile, continued to agonize, unable to find a suitable accommodation between the Vatican's interpretation of dogma and the insights arising from the local ministry in the city. Archbishop Thomas Murphy, who had retreated from supporting gay civil rights legislation, would die prematurely, to be replaced in late 1997 by yet another bishop from Montana, Alexander Brunett, who was known as one of the pope's delegates to international ecumenical con-

ferences. Brunett refused to characterize himself as either a conservative or a liberal, but by March 2001, the *Seattle Times* would be reporting that many other church leaders and city politicians considered him both more conservative than either Murphy or Hunthausen and far more confrontational. On gay issues, he would at first be offhand, commenting at his initial news conference in October 1997 that he supported the gay-launched statewide initiative to ban job discrimination and adding that if same-sex marriage were proposed, he would "have to see the legislation" to decide a stance. But when the press misinterpreted his marriage comment as a possible softening of the Catholic dogmatic stance, Brunett quickly backed away from the implication.[13]

The Sunday evening Mass at St. Joseph's continued to be aimed at gays and lesbians, but because the issue of sponsorship grew into so deep a wound once Murphy retreated from the civil rights law, the language had to change again. A Denny-Maynard style compromise—accept the sudden jolt in the streets and don't talk about it—finally seemed the only answer. As one priest who participated in the archdiocese's ministry said, "We started off saying 'This Mass is sponsored by God'. . . . We [also] coined a new phrase, that the Mass is sponsored by the gay and lesbian community to which we all belong."

"We're all trying to use language to keep it going," the priest had said in 1994.[14]

For years, Dignity members continued to help, just not as officially—patiently waiting for some sort of change. Then, in September 2001, the chapter members gave up. They voted to start their own prayer service at a United Methodist Church, completely disassociating themselves from the archdiocesan gay/lesbian ministry. The compromise created by Cardinal Bernardin and Archbishop Hunthausen seemed to have finally collapsed, at least at St. Joseph's Church. A Dignity spokesman, Leo Egashira, told the *Seattle Gay News,* "It is hypocritical and demeaning that the Archdiocese of Seattle can, on the one hand, claim to have an effective ministry to [gays and lesbians], while on the other hand, refuse to support laws giving us equal rights to jobs and housing. How can the church possibly minister to gays and lesbians in a credible and effective manner when it refuses to support our basic human rights?"[15]

As for Bishop George, the conservative Yakima prelate who seemed to represent the views of Rome more than Hunthausen or Bernardin had, the pope would eventually give him the cardinal's red hat in Chicago that had been worn by Bernardin. Although it had taken years, the other shoe that had been expected to fall after Hunthausen's settlement with the Vatican had indeed seemed to land.

The city's Episcopalians, on the other hand, opened the new century by selecting Robert Taylor as an openly gay dean to lead St. Mark's, their major cathedral on Capitol Hill. Taylor, who was from South Africa, drew the internationally famous bishop Desmond Tutu to Seattle for his installation. Compared to what was happening in other Christian denominations, his ascendance seemed smooth and charmed.

In the city's health care conversation, concerns about AIDS continued to dominate, at least among gay men. Between 1982 and the start of 2000, more than fifty-seven hundred cases of AIDS had been diagnosed in Seattle and surrounding King County; more than thirty-four hundred of those individuals had died, and more than three-quarters were men who had contracted the virus from having sex with other men. But as the dual approaches of activist and scientist began to succeed after 1993, AIDS began to fade from the intensity it had once commanded. Multiple combinations of drugs made living with the virus more routine; obituaries in the *Seattle Gay News,* which had sometimes filled two pages each week, became occasional oddities again. After 1993, the new cases found each year in King County dropped from the peak of 647 to fewer than 100 per year at the turn of the century. AIDS looked manageable—so much so that AIDS organizations had to scramble for money from donors. In September 1999, the annual AIDS walk drew only half as many people as it had in 1995, and raised a third less money.[16] Partly because of financial concerns, the Northwest AIDS Foundation and Chicken Soup Brigade would be forced to merge into a single organization, newly named the Lifelong AIDS Alliance.

AIDS activists worried that gay men would turn smug and give up condoms, so the education strategy again shifted as a third model absorbed the previous two. After 1995, the information model and the erotic model were packaged into an attempt to build gay men's friendships with one another, with activists arguing that low self-esteem and lack of friendships often caused men to risk unsafe sex. In Seattle, a former health department employee named John Leonard pioneered the model by forming a new organization called Gay City and sponsoring a variety of social activities, such as gay town meetings laced with sexy come-ons and talk-show formats, summer retreats at mountain campgrounds, book reading groups, and game days at Volunteer Park. As in past events, free condoms were omnipresent, but now they were part of a new gay social scene rather than intrusions into the old one. By 2000, Gay City claimed to have more than five thousand men participating in its programs each year.

The cautionary signs that AIDS might re-attack still disturbed, though. In March 2001, Bob Wood and other city health officials warned that gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia among Seattle's gay men had all rebounded, in some cases back to the rates that existed in 1982. Gay men caught the other infections the same way as AIDS; the other diseases simply showed themselves faster. Jim Holm, who had headed the Dorian Group in the 1980s and had left to work as an AIDS activist in Washington, D.C., returned to Seattle and to the news, this time as a chair of the Seattle HIV/AIDS Council, a coordinating group, and promised to try to "craft new messages." Derick Myricks-Harris, a manager at the People of Color Against AIDS Network, added, "People have started to believe that there's no need to protect themselves."[17]

In June 2001, exactly twenty years after the first reports of the virus, the Centers

for Disease Control reported that nationwide the rates of infection were once again rising among young gay men. Seattle was one of the cities studied; the rate of new cases had risen for the first time since 1992.

The pause in combating the epidemic seemed to be ending.

And finally, what of the city's social geography—in particular, the location where the city's homosexuals had first learned to meet and to publicly speak? By the turn of the century, one of the last remaining gay establishments on the mudflat, the South End Steam Baths on First Avenue, finally closed. Its landmark sign over the underground space was saved by volunteers and eventually taken to the city's Museum of History and Industry.

At the corner at Washington Street and Second Avenue, however, the Double Header persisted, still claiming the title of being the city's oldest continuously operating gay bar. The staircase leading into the underground was still there too. Although the Casino itself had long since closed and been abandoned, its marquee remained. Madame Peabody's children had found glittering new dance floors, but the underground was now under new management, operating as the Catwalk Club. On a web page, the Catwalk advertised itself as a place to listen to raucous industrial or gloomier gothic music. An ad showed a profile of a kneeling, highly bosomed woman, nude but for a leather collar and corset, her hands bound to a rope behind her. The web page advised that on Saturday nights, patrons should "dress impressively"—which the *Seattle Times* at one point said meant "to lose the baseball cap and leave the jeans at home." Sometimes, the bar scheduled all-women's nights or "boyz 4 boyz" nights. In 1996, the state liquor control board had temporarily suspended its liquor license because of reports of lewd conduct, including accusations that a man had masturbated or pretended to do so on stage, while a woman had gone "crying and protesting" to a back space known as the "spanking room." The bar owners blamed the problem on a personality conflict with a liquor board investigator, who had apparently suggested the Casino be turned into an ordinary sports bar. Eventually, the Catwalk got its license back—without turning to more customary sports.[18]

It all sounded like a comfortable old tale. John Considine's theater of the people still challenged Seattle's stories of sex and respectability.

To return to Martin Heidegger's philosophical question: What does it mean to dwell, to construct a sense of belonging out of images of exile?

Is it possible for gays and lesbians, for example, so long in hiding and so diverse in race, class, and politics, to really construct a sense that they belong within a heterosexual landscape such as Seattle's?

It seems that an answer could justifiably be yes, simply based on the increasing tolerance among heterosexuals that the city's gays and lesbians have experienced. Over the course of a few decades, they became able to win elections, to

influence policies, and to participate in all the important fragments of the civic conversation.

But dwelling also requires more than just tolerance constructed from insisted-upon conversations. Dwelling is also about the ability to construct and tell one's own stories, regardless of acceptance by others—and in that, Seattle's homosexuals also succeeded. Through oral history projects, newspapers, and simple conversations among friends, they had found ways to talk from generation to generation, be it by Robert's Rules of Order or in consciousness-raising groups. Dwelling, after all, is the ability to pass a stairway leading down into the underground or up to an old box house or into a cathedral overlooking a mudflat, and to know more stories about those stairways than you could ever tell in a single book like this—however long.

And to keep adding new ones.