

The Stonewall Riots

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We have acknowledged awareness months during the 2021-22 school year to ensure all students are welcome and appreciated and hope this article will help you understand why June is recognized as Pride Month.

The LGBTQ+ rights movement has taken a long time to 'come out of the closet' and truly be noticed. People of the movement want to be included and feel safe. Recently there has been even more acceptance than ever and more stories are being shared. You may be asking, when did this movement really start?



In 2016 President Obama declared the Stonewall Inn a National Monument. The Stonewall Inn is the location of one of the most important events in gay rights history, working to put the rights issue on the map, and giving encouragement to the movement.

To set the scene, it was June 28th, 1969 and the Stonewall Inn is one of the most popular gay bars in the area and it's packed. It allowed same-sex Public Displays of Affection (PDA) and dressing in drag, things that were illegal at the time. A group of criminals who saw potential in exploiting these kinds of men and women were running the business. When there were

police raids, the staff were normally warned. This time, no one tipped them off and the police arrested all of the employees because they were illegally selling alcohol. Patrons were arrested for showing PDA, or for not wearing three or more articles of clothing that were for their assigned gender.

Usually, patrons would run from the police, but on that night they did not run or hide, they fought back. When the police tried to put people in their vans, others from the bar tried throwing a number of things at them. The police soon had to barricade themselves inside the bar and someone even tried to set it on fire. Luckily reinforcements arrived in time to put it out. The riots continued for 5 days. Many people joined the fight and marched up and down the street protesting for gay rights. During this time not one news crew showed up and the event never had any coverage or mention until years later.

This major event helped kick off the gay rights movement and it gained momentum from there. To celebrate this great change there is Pride month every



June with annual parades in the spot where the riots took place. In the next month, there will be people all over the country celebrating, even in Raleigh and Apex this year!

Most importantly I know that as an LGBTQ+ youth I am happy that I don't have to hide and would like to say thank you to those men, women and non-binary heroes for their bravery to finally start the change that was needed for many to be happy. I also know that we still have a lot of work to do before all LGBTQ+ people feel safe, but if we work hard to help the Movement then we can start to make the world safe and inclusive for everyone.

Sources:

Britannica Encyclopedia

History.com