"Astonishing. informative, engaging, and ever surprising."
—*Buffalo News*

"Chauncey's book breathes a *largess* of political spirit, a willingness to put treasured truisms to the test of evidence and to evaluate sympathetically the past's claims for itself. It sustains some of the highest virtues of Ameri-can social history: assiduous archival work, intricate stories, a democratic view of historical agency, a strong overarching interpretation.

Chauncey's meticulous and beautifully accomplished recreation of the city's sexual map emerges from his painstaking research in police and trial records. But while Chauncey never suggests that the 1910s and '20s were a golden era of tolerance, he implies that the vitality of the subculture outstripped the forces of regulation."
—CHRISTINE STANSELL, *The New Republic*

"A fascinating inventory of a world so long forgotten that it is almost universally believed to have never existed."
—*The New Yorker*

"Chauncey's work is not only an affirmation of a resilient, century-old gay culture but an assertion of its central place within the development of modern urban American society."
—*Washington Blade*

"*Gay New York* is one of the most important gay history texts ever written, giving a revealing and entertaining account of an utterly forgotten facet of gay history. An insightful, eloquent, and ground-breaking work."
—*Chicago Outlines*

"A revealing look at urban gay pride and the bars, baths, and immense drag balls that flourished in New York pre-Stonewall and before the closet defined gay life."
—*U.S. News & World Report*

"Well and clearly written, based on extensive research and chock-full of riveting incidents and wonderful illustrations, this indispensable book deserves a place in every gay library."
—*Genre*

"Compellingly readable. electrifying essential reading."
—*Lambda Book Report*

Gay NEW YORK

Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940

GEORGE CHAUNCEY

(1994)

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Figure 9.1. This 1932 cartoon plays on Greenwich Village's reputation as a center of lesbian and gay life by showing a bored male being ignored by the women at a club. A close look reveals that almost all of the couples depicted are same-sex, usually including one woman in a suit. (*From* Broadway Brevities, *June 6, 1932.*)

Chapter 9

BUILDING GAY NEIGHBORHOOD ENCLAVES: THE VILLAGE AND HARLEM

THE GAY WORLD EVOLVED THROUGHOUT THE CITY, BUT IT TOOK ITS MOST developed and visible form in just a few neighborhoods. The Bowery had been a center of fairy life at the turn of the century; by the 1910s and 1920s, two other neighborhoods had become gay centers, attracting disproportionate numbers of gay residents and commercial establishments where gay men and lesbians set the tone. In the 1920s, Greenwich Village hosted the best-known gay enclave in both the city and the nation—and the first to take shape in a predominantly middle-class (albeit bohemian) milieu. By the late 1910s, a Village song included the line "Fairyland's not far from Washington Square," and by the early 1930s, the Village's gay reputation was so firmly established that a New York tabloid could quip that while a doctor had learned how to "switch the sex of animals, turning males into females, they beat the scientist to it in Greenwich Village!"[1] Gay men and women had to fight for space even in the Village, but its reputation for flouting bourgeois convention made it seem an inviting place and did in fact let them create a haven for homosexuals.

If the Village was considered the city's most infamous gay neighborhood by outsiders, many gay men themselves regarded Harlem as the most exciting center of gay life. In a segregated city, it was the *only* place where black gay men could congregate in commercial establishments, and they were centrally involved in many of the currents of Harlem culture, from the creative literary circles that constituted the Harlem Renaissance to the blues clubs and basement speakeasies where the poorest of Harlem's residents gathered. African-Americans organized the largest annual communal event of New York's gay society, the Hamilton

Lodge Ball, which attracted thousands of white as well as black participants and spectators. Nonetheless, the men and women who built Harlem's gay world confronted the same challenges their white counterparts did elsewhere. While the "faggots" who were highly visible in the neighborhood's streets and nightspots might earn a degree of grudging respect from others, they had no hope of respectability. Most middle-class gay Harlemites struggled to keep news of their homosexuality from spreading, lest it cause their social downfall.

New York's first substantial lesbian enclaves developed in the Village and Harlem at the same time gay male enclaves did. Although lesbians and gay men continued to move in largely separate social worlds, they both gathered at some of the same speakeasies, including several particularly prominent ones run by lesbians or featuring lesbian performers, and lesbians attended some of the drag balls organized by gay men. The limited convergence of lesbian and gay life in the 1920s, particularly through the appearance of commercial establishments attracting both men and women on the basis of their shared participation in the gay life, marked an important stage in the emergence of the social category of the homosexual.

Neither the Village nor Harlem could be said to have been a gay neighborhood in the 1920s, for in neither did homosexuals set the tone. But each neighborhood, for different reasons, allowed a gay enclave to take shape, and the differences between those enclaves highlight the degree to which particular gay subcultures were shaped by the dominant neighborhood (or parent) cultures in which they developed.

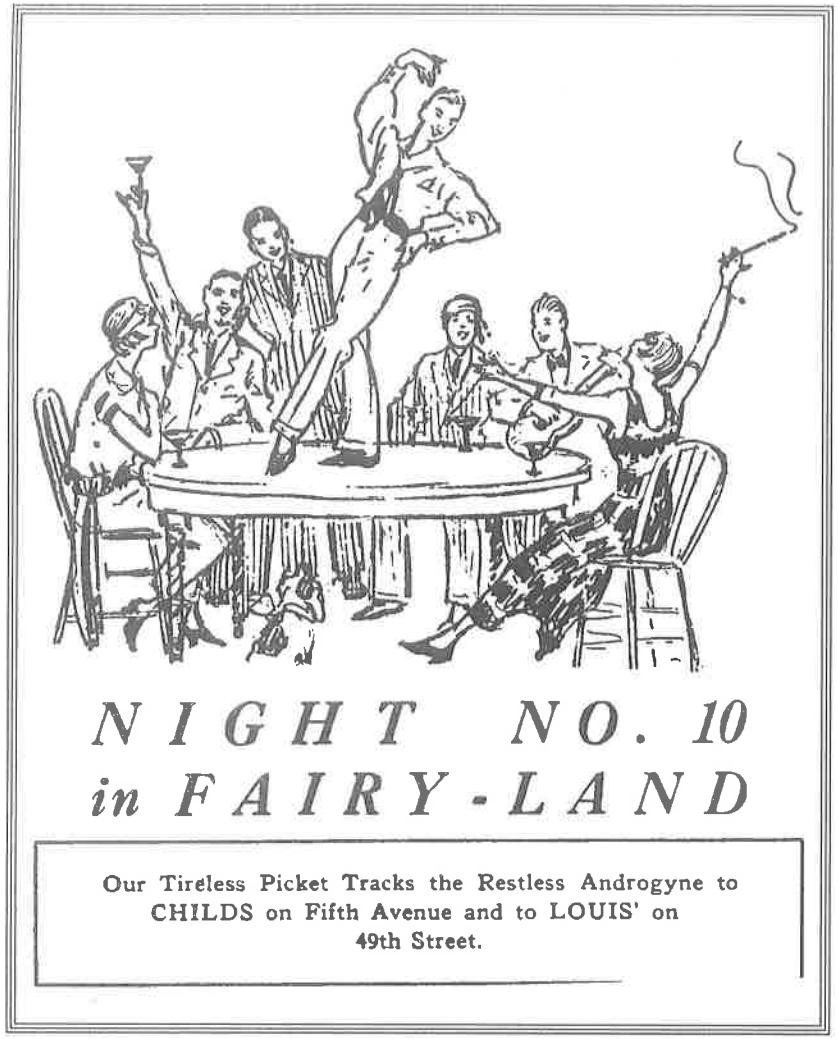

Figure 6.1. Gay men and lesbians made numerous cafeterias and restaurants their meeting places. This sketch of a supposed gay drinking party appeared in *Broadway Brevities* in 1924. *(Collection of Leonard Finger.)*

"In the Life" in Harlem

Although Greenwich Village's gay enclave was the most famous in the city, even most white gay men thought gay life was livelier and more open in Harlem than in the Village—"Oh, much more! Much more!" the artist Edouard Roditi declared.[50] "Harlem was wide open," a white female impersonator recalled. The clubs would "be open all night long. Some of them didn't *open* until midnight."[51] It was easier for white interlopers to be openly gay during their brief visits to Harlem than for the black men who lived there round the clock. But black gay men nonetheless turned Harlem into a homosexual mecca. Denied access to most of the segregated restaurants and speakeasies white gay men patronized elsewhere in New York, they built an extensive gay world in their own community, which in many respects surpassed the Village's in scope, visibility, and boldness. The Village's most flamboyant homosexuals wore long hair; Harlem's wore long dresses. The Village had cafés where poets read their verse and drag queens performed; Harlem had speakeasies where men danced together and drag queens were regular customers. The Village's Liberal Club ball was attended by scores of drag queens

and hundreds of spectators; Harlem's Hamilton Lodge ball drew *hundreds* of drag queens and *thousands* of spectators. Among outsiders, Greenwich Village's reputation as a gay mecca eclipsed Harlem's only because it was a white, middle-class world—and because Harlem's singular reputation as a black metropolis took precedence over everything else.

Harlem had become Manhattan's major black neighborhood in the 1900s and 1910s. Most of the community's rowhouses had been built by speculative builders in the last years of the nineteenth century. A collapse in the area's real estate market around 1904—and the aggressive tactics of a handful of realtors—made those houses available to blacks just as they were being forced out of their old neighborhood in the West Thirties by the construction of Pennsylvania Station. By the mid-teens, more than 80 percent of Manhattan's African-Americans lived there, and by the early 1920s, Harlem was home to most of the city's major black churches and social organizations.[52]

Harlem consolidated its status as New York's leading black neighborhood just as World War I led tens of thousands of Southern blacks to migrate to New York and other Northern cities. The Great Migration, as historians have called it, was precipitated by the sudden availability of thousands of well-paying jobs in Northern industry due to the military mobilization of white workers and the cutoff of European immigration. Many blacks also viewed moving North as an act of political self-determination, tied to the elevation of the race as well as to individual improvement. To many southern migrants, the North seemed a land of freedom, where they could escape the grinding poverty, political powerlessness, and daily indignities to which they seemed forever condemned in the Jim Crow South. African-American newspapers, published in Northern cities and smuggled by Pullman car porters to blacks in Southern towns where the papers were banned by white officials, trumpeted the good wages and free life to be found outside the secessionist states. Some barbershop proprietors, small shopkeepers, churchwomen, and other local leaders organized the move North of whole communities, which re-created themselves on the blocks of Harlem and Chicago's South Side. The ferment of the Great Migration, the heated debate among blacks about whether they should support a racist government's war to "preserve democracy," and the bitter disappointment that resulted when scores of anti-black race riots broke out in the year following the war produced an unprecedented level of militancy in the immense new black neighborhoods spread across the North.[53]

The largest and most significant of these neighborhoods was Harlem. In the 1920s, Harlem became to black America what Greenwich Village

became to bohemian white America: the symbolic—and in many respects, practical—center of a vast cultural experiment. A huge black metropolis unlike anything America had seen before, it was home to soaring black cathedrals, thriving businesses, a wide array of social clubs, and Marcus Garvey's militant black nationalist movement, to dozens of elegant nightclubs and hundreds of basement jazz clubs and speakeasies, and to the poets, artists, and novelists whose work produced the Harlem Renaissance. Above all, it was home to what African-Americans themselves called the New Negro, self-assured and determined to control his or her own destiny. Seventh Avenue from 110th to 148th Streets was "the crossroad of the Negro world," one Harlemite wrote in the 1930s, "where Black people from Africa, our own southern states, the West Indies, South America, parts of Asia and many of the half forgotten Islands of the East Indies meet."[54]

Harlem's elegant and lively nightlife also made it the Paris of New York, one of the city's most popular entertainment districts.[55] "Harlem was really jumpin'" in the 1920s, the singer Bricktop recalled. It "was the 'in' place to go for music and booze, and it seemed like every other building on or near Seventh Avenue from 130th Street to 140th was a club or a speakeasy. . . . Every night the limousines pulled up . . . and the rich whites would get out, all dolled up in their furs and jewels."[56] Pointing to its "sizzling cafes, 'speaks,' night clubs and spiritual seances," *Variety* declared in 1929 that Harlem's "night life now surpasses that of Broadway itself."[57]

The liquor and the sensational floor shows available at Harlem's clubs attracted white visitors. But so, too, did their growing curiosity about the vibrant African-American society taking shape in Harlem. The production of several musicals featuring black performers, especially *Shuffle Along*, which opened on Broadway in 1921, helped further the new interest in black culture. The publication in 1926 of *Nigger Heaven* by Carl Van Vechten provoked a storm of outrage among black intellectuals, who criticized its depiction of Harlem life as well as its title, but its very caricature of black lasciviousness only whetted white New Yorkers' interest in the neighborhood and reinforced their sexualized—and condescending—attitude toward the neighborhood's people.

Some whites went "slumming" to cabarets and small after-hours clubs in Harlem where blacks predominated. But most slummers felt safer visiting the enormous white-owned clubs that excluded blacks from the audience. There they could experience a highly contrived version of black culture by listening to jazz bands and watching elaborate (but "primitive" and sometimes salacious) floor shows. "One of the New York evening pastimes," a typical New York guidebook noted in 1925, "is to observe the antics of members of its enormous negro population, many of whom show great ability in song, dance and comedy performance. . . . Their unfailing sense of rhythm, their vocal quality, something primitive, animal-like and graceful in their movements," the guide explained in a stunning summary of the era's racist construction of blacks as primitive other, "combine to make their performances interesting to all who can put racial prejudice out of their minds." As the guide pointed out, "Most of these shows . . . try to establish a Southern illusion"; the Cotton Club, the Everglades, and other clubs adopted Southern names and motifs to evoke the history of black subordination and to emphasize the subordination of the African-American performers. The clubs thus played on their customers' desire to feel they were transgressing the conventional boundaries of race while resolutely confirming them.[58]

The ascendancy of Harlem's nightlife—particularly its speakeasies and brothels—also owed much to the willingness of city authorities to look the other way as a largely white-controlled "vice industry" took shape in a poor black neighborhood. Even the Committee of Fourteen devoted less effort to the moral regulation of Harlem than of white neighborhoods.[59] Although it advocated the eradication rather than the segregation of vice, it effectively colluded in the concentration of "vice" in Harlem by virtually ignoring the neighborhood. Only in 1928, at the height of the white invasion of Harlem, did the Committee temporarily hire an African-American investigator to study prostitution there. But after publishing a report indicting the district as a den of immorality, it turned its attention back to neighborhoods it cared about more.[60]

As the historian Eric Garber has shown, an extensive gay and lesbian social world developed in this complex cultural context.[61] Among the thousands of young men and women who flocked to the land of freedom were people who hoped Harlem would liberate them from the conformity imposed in small Southern communities. Although some evidence suggests that gay men were more accepted in rural black communities than in comparable white communities, moving to the city made it possible for them to participate in a gay world organized on a scale unimaginable in a Southern town. In 1930 three times as many African-American men aged thirty-five to forty-four were unmarried in Harlem as in South Carolina, one of the major sources of Harlem's migrants, and almost twice as many as in the nation as a whole.[62]

Harlem's gay world was perhaps the most complex in the city because segregation forced such a wide range of people to live side by side: successful professionals and wealthy businesspeople occupied the immaculate townhouses and apartment buildings of Sugar Hill and the elegant Italianate brownstones of Striver's Row (138th and 139th Streets), while the poorest of new migrants crowded into tenements

and subdivided rowhouses nearby. Gay life suffused the district, but the class and stylistic conflicts that divided the white gay world elsewhere in the city took on special force in Harlem, simply because so many people from such varied backgrounds were gathered together. Black gay life was also complicated by the number of white gay men visiting Harlem, who enjoyed a kind of freedom unavailable to their black hosts. Like the straight white slummers who made Harlem's jazz clubs and speakeasies their playground, gay white men visiting Harlem were leaving behind the communities and families who enforced the social imperatives that normally constrained their behavior. But unlike the white visitors, black gay men and lesbians had to negotiate their presence in the shops and churches of Harlem as well as its clubs.

Figure 11.1. Gay life became extraordinarily visible in the late 1920s and early 1930s, as these 1931–32 banner headlines from the front page of *Broadway Brevities* indicate. Possibly written by a gay man (using various sexually tinged pseudonyms), the headlines display a remarkable familiarity with gay slang. *(From* Broadway Brevities, *various dates, 1931–32.)*

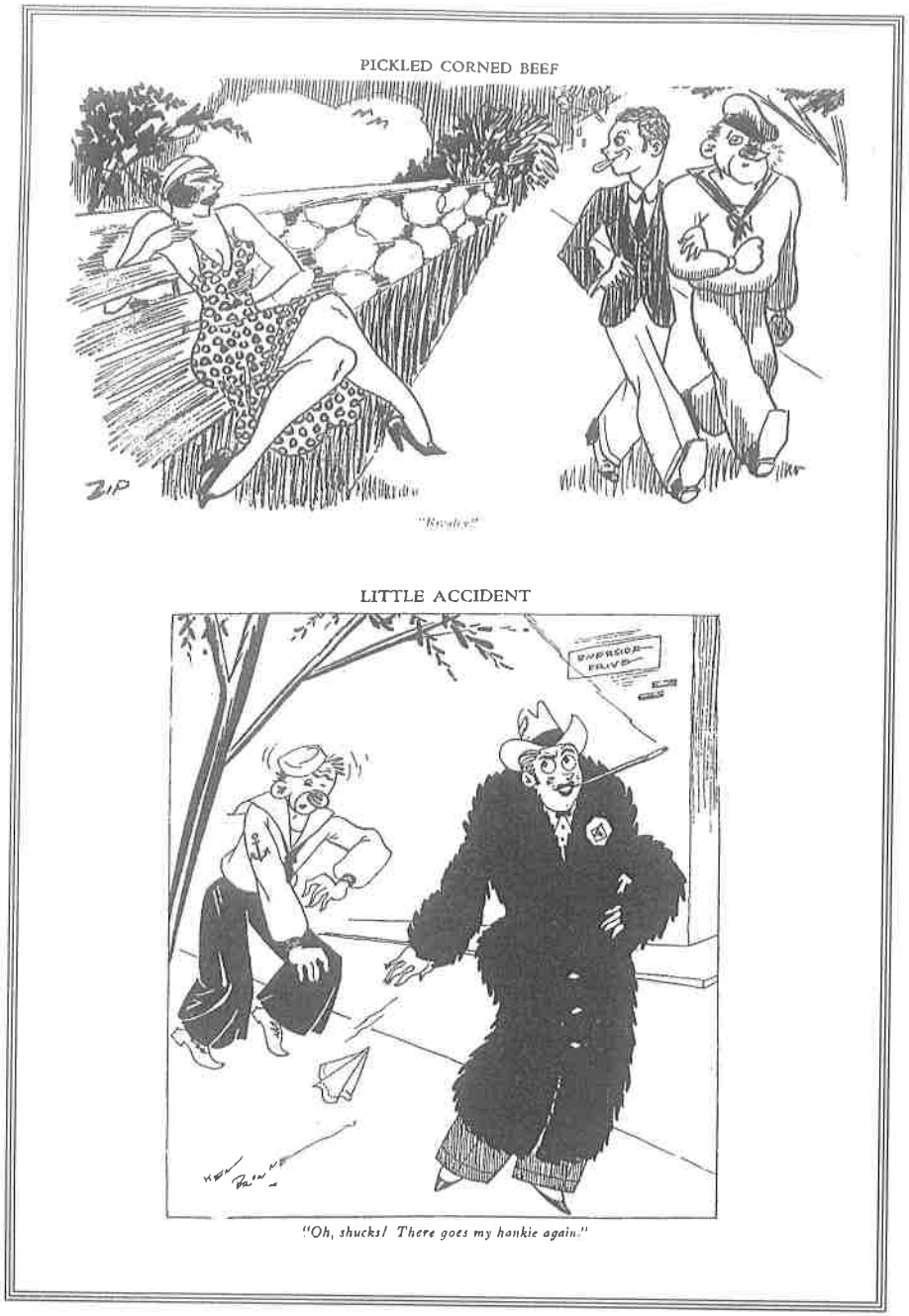

Figure 7.1. One fairy gets his man at the expense of his rival, a prostitute, while another tries to get the attention of a sailor. As these cartoons suggest, Riverside Drive was a well-known cruising avenue for gay men, prostitutes, and sailors. *(From* Broadway Brevities*: "Little Accident," March 7, 1932; "Pickled Corned Beef," October 19, 1933.)*

The Hamilton Lodge Ball

Nothing reveals the complexity—and ambivalence—of the attitudes of the black press and Harlem as a whole toward gay men and lesbians more than the Hamilton Lodge ball, the largest annual gathering of lesbians and gay men in Harlem—and the city. (A more thorough discussion of the internal organization and cultural significance of the city's drag balls appears in chapter 10.) The organizers of the ball, Hamilton Lodge No. 710 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, officially called it the Masquerade and Civic Ball, but by the late 1920s everyone in Harlem knew it as the Faggots Ball. Precisely when it acquired that name is not certain. Some observers writing in the late 1930s, when its reputation was well established, thought the ball, held annually since 1869, had always been a female impersonators' event. Somewhat more reliable sources, however, suggest the gay element became prominent only in the 1920s, perhaps after a new group of organizers within the lodge took charge of the ball in 1923. Although some drag queens had almost certainly attended the ball before 1926, a newspaper report that year was the first to note the presence of a sizable number of "fairies"—about half of all those present. "Many people who attend dances generally declare that the . . ball was the most unusual spectacle they ever witnessed," the paper noted with some understatement.[89] A decade later, one observer summarized the common wisdom when he explained matter-of-factly that the ball drew together "effeminate men, sissies, 'wolves,' 'ferries' [sic], 'faggots,' the third sex, 'ladies of the night,' and male prostitutes . for a grand jamboree of dancing, love making, display, rivalry, drinking and advertisement."[90]

Although whites attended the ball as both dancers and spectators, most of the guests were black. Lesbian "male impersonators" and straight masqueraders attended as well as gay men, but the latter constituted the vast majority of dancers and the focal point of attention. Although some upper-middle-class men showed up in drag, most of the drag queens—like the majority of "flaming faggots"—were young workingmen. The seventeen men arrested for homosexual solicitation at the 1938 ball included two laborers, two unemployed men, a dishwasher, a domestic servant, an elevator operator, a counterman, a handyman, an attendant, a clerk, and a nurse, along with a musician, an artist, and an entertainer. More than half were under thirty, and only one was over forty years old.[91]

The ball's popularity grew steadily in the late 1920s and peaked in the early 1930s, when a "pansy craze" (discussed in chapter 11) seized

the city. About eight hundred guests attended the 1925 ball and fifteen hundred in 1926. But as the event became known as the Faggots Ball, growing numbers of spectators attended not to dance but just to gawk at "Harlem's yearly extravaganza—'The Dance of the Fairies.'" "Four thousand citizens, numbering some of Harlem's best, elbowed and shoved each other aside and squirmed and stepped on one another's toes and snapped at each other to obtain a better eyeful," the *Amsterdam News* reported in 1934.[92] Three thousand spectators gathered to watch two thousand "fairies" dance in 1929, and during the following three years, at the height of the ball's popularity, up to seven thousand dancers and spectators attended. Attendance hovered around four thousand for the rest of the decade, but leapt to eight thousand in 1937.[93]

Harlemites turning out to see the balls included celebrities, avant-garde writers, society matrons, prostitutes, and whole families who sometimes brought their suppers.[94] At the beginning of her career, the singer Ethel Waters not only attended the balls but boasted about the prizes won by drag queens (fans from a local club) to whom she had loaned her gowns. The singer Taylor Gordon "call[ed] up everyone I thought hadn't been to one" to urge them to attend a ball where he would serve as a judge. "That night the hall was packed with people from bootblacks to New York's rarest bluebloods," he recalled.[95] In February 1930 the young white writer Max Ewing attended the ball, where "all the men who danced . . . were dressed as women, wearing plumes and jewels and decorations of every kind." He observed several wealthy spectators, black as well as white, who had taken boxes to view the display, and watched the dancers do "special exhibition dances" in front of the boxes of the two most prominent black women present, the heiress A'Leila Walker and the singer Nora Holt.[96] Two years later an alderman served as a judge at the costume contest.[97]

Those who did not attend the Hamilton Lodge ball could read about it every year from the mid-1920s until the end of the 1930s in Harlem's largest paper, the *Amsterdam News*, and often in the *New York Age*, Baltimore's *Afro-American*, and the *Inter-State Tattler* In the 1930s the black press paid more attention to the Hamilton Lodge ball than to any other ball held in Harlem, regularly publishing photographs or drawings of the winning contestants, interviewing them and describing their costumes, and listing the dozens of society people in attendance—almost all in the news section on the first or second page, not buried in the society pages where the balls thrown by other social clubs got briefer notices. Its coverage reflected the growing interest of straight Harlemites in these affairs in the late 1920s and 1930s—and the ambivalence with which they viewed them.

In the 1920s the papers were likely to deride the dancers as "subnormal, or, in the language of the street, 'fairies.'"[98] By the early 1930s, though, as the number of society people and ordinary Harlemites attending the ball approached seven thousand, most papers adopted the more positive (or at least bemused) attitude of those spectators. Some accounts delighted in parodying the camp tone of the dancers. "GRACIOUS ME! DEAR, 'TWAS TO-OO DIVINE," ran the 1936 *Amsterdam News* headline, in imitation of the dancers' arch chatter; the following year its headline reported familiarly: "PANSIES CAVORT IN MOST DELOVELY MANNER AT THAT ANNUAL HAMILTON LODGE 'BAWL.'" All the reporters expressed genuine admiration for—and astonishment at—the extravagance and creativity of the costumes. Even the sneering 1929 reference to subnormal fairies appeared under a headline citing the "GORGEOUS COSTUMES."

Even the relatively conservative *New York Age* changed its tune as the ball's popularity grew. "Clubs would do well to ask this body for the secret of their success," its 1932 account began.

> To one of the largest gatherings that has ever graced this hall [Rockland Palace] came the all-conquering Hamilton Lodge, resplendent in all the panoply of pomp and splendor, to give to Harlemites who stood in wide-eyed astonishment at this lavish display a treat that shall never be forgotten. The usual grand march eclipsed in splendor all heretofore given by them, and women screamed full-throated ovation as the bizarre and the seeming impossible paraded for their approval. . [We] say 'All Hail, Hamilton.'"[99]

Another column reporting on the weekend's social events reluctantly admitted that "All those who were missing from Friday night's club affairs were located . . up at the Rockland Palace at the 'Fairies' ball. Oh, yeah!," it added. "We will never understand that."[100] But where their readers went, the papers followed.

The complex spectacle of the drag balls allowed observers to position themselves in a variety of ways. They were all careful, though, to distinguish themselves from the queers who organized and participated in the affairs, often by casting aspersions on the Hamilton Lodge itself. "Say, Jack, in case you didn't know, this function was given by the Odd Fellows," a 1936 account reminded its readers in the most common and most obvious pun. A 1933 account made it even more obvious by referring to "The Grand United Order of (Very) Odd Fellows," and in 1937, an unusually mean-spirited promotional piece for the ball called the lodge a "society of strange fellows," a "wigged fraternity," and a "famed, effete and ubiquitous society of . . Odd Fellows."[101]

While many black middle-class men—like white middle-class men—found the drag queen a disquieting figure, he also served as a foil whose utter effeminacy confirmed the manliness of other black men. Male columnists sometimes used jocular, man-to-man terms to describe the affairs. "Jack, the chicks were ready at the Hamilton Lodge toe-warming ball at Rockland Palace last Friday night," one columnist reported in 1936. He described the drag queens in the same dismissive terms he might have used for other "chicks": "The 'girls' proved to be a temperamental lot. They fussed and squabbled all over the joint. . . . When one of the 'girls' had her train stepped on she promptly cussed out the other 'girl' . . and accused the 'low-down huzzy' of trying to steal the show." But he also evinced a remarkable degree of manly interest in the "girls": "Some of the contestants were luscious looking wenches. . . Others were gloriously clad. . . Many pranced like thoroughbred women. . . . Every one of them was notoriously effeminate."[102] A typical 1929 account used the "notorious effeminacy" of the female impersonators—their near-perfect rendition of stereotypical feminine demeanor—to ridicule women who did not perform the role of women as successfully. "One could learn a great deal (meaning the female of the species) on how to deport one's self when on parade" by observing the impersonators, it advised.[103]

The interracial character of the ball provoked varying responses. In the 1920s some black observers openly expressed hostility toward the whites who attended and virtually blamed the presence of homosexuals and female impersonators in Harlem on bohemian whites from Greenwich Village. The issue exploded in April 1926 when the well-known party impresario James Harris organized a benefit for the Fort Valley Industrial School, a school in Georgia that often received the support of respectable black charitable organizations. Advertised as a "Benefit Costume Ball . . [where] The Village and Harlem . . . Will Meet," it drew attention from the black press around the country when dozens of female and male impersonators showed up. The *Chicago Defender* described it as "one of the gayest affairs that the night life of New York has yet been able to furnish . . . weirdly and grotesquely dressed men and women of both races revelled till the wee hours of morn."[104] But another paper denounced the "disgraceful antics of the male women and female men who are said to have attended the benefit by the scores" for sullying the name of the "splendid" school, which "stood for the making of manly men and womenly women, for thrift, industry and christian [sic] character among the colored people." Homosexual whites were the last people to whom blacks seeking respectability should turn, it argued, warning: "The discarded froth of Caucasian society cannot lift them or their race in the respect and confidence of the Caucasian world."[105] In 1929 the *Amsterdam News*'s report on the Hamilton Lodge ball still took umbrage at the presence of "some of the most notoriously degenerate white men in the city" who "seized the opportunity of a masquerade to get off some of their abnormality in public." The *New York Age* seems to have found the dancers' willingness to cross racial lines in their coupling at the 1926 ball no less disquieting than their cross-dressing.[106]

Many Harlemites found the participation of whites to be intriguing rather than disturbing, however, and the press began to reflect this perspective in the 1930s. The presence of white drag queens at the balls reversed the racial dynamic usually at work in interracial encounters in Harlem, presenting whites as an object of spectacle for blacks. An *Amsterdam News* cartoonist drew attention to this reversal in his 1936 depiction of black men in the audience watching a white drag queen on stage (see figure 9.2). Some spectators also took delight in watching the transgression of racial boundaries that seemed to accompany the transgression of gender and sexual boundaries—and in watching white gay men forced to transgress them by their entry into a space controlled by black gay men. As one bemused Harlem observer, Abram Will, noted of the Hamilton Lodge ball:

> There were corn fed "pansies" from the deep South breaking traditional folds by mixing irrespective of race. There were the sophisticated "things" from Park Avenue and Broadway. There were the big black strapping "darlings" from the heart of Harlem. The Continent, Africa and even Asia had their due share of "ambassadors." The ball was a melting pot, different, exotic and unorthodox, but acceptable.[107]

For a moment, moreover, the *racial* differences between black and white spectators, although hardly forgotten, were overshadowed by their common positioning as "normal" bystanders who were different from the queer folk on the ballroom floor. In a city where racial boundaries were inscribed in the segregation of most public accommodations (integrated buses notwithstanding), the difference between normal spectators and abnormal dancers was inscribed in the differentiation of the balcony and other viewing areas from the dance floor. Each zone was racially integrated, but marked as sexually different from the other.

Racial divisions were hardly erased at the balls, however. Drag queens mixed across racial lines but never forgot them, as Abram Will's careful delineation of European- , African- , and Asian-American participants made clear. Moreover, racial iconography was central to many of

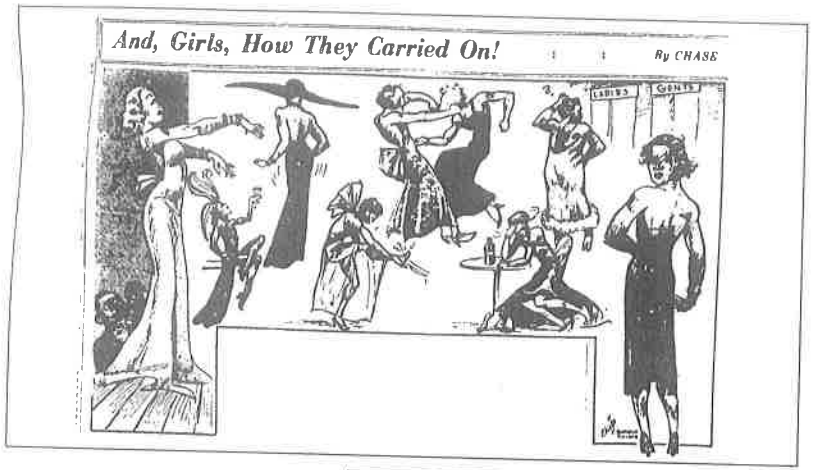

Figure 9.2 Harlem's leading newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*, regularly carried pictures of the winning contestants in the costume competition at the Hamilton Lodge ball, New York's biggest drag ball. In 1932, the paper's illustrator pictured the "girls," and in 1936 he poked gentle fun at the rivalry, glamour, drunkenness, and gender ambiguity of the annual affair. He also poked fun at straight Harlem's response: note the expressions of desire and confusion on the faces of the two black men looking at the white drag queen. (*From the* Amsterdam News: *"The Artist Pictures the 'Girls,'" March 2, 1932; "And, Girls, How They Carried On!" March 7, 1936.)*

the dancers' costumes. "Among the outstanding costumes" at the 1932 ball, according to the *Inter-State Tattler*,

> were a pair of Flora Dora girls in sweeping Empire gowns of red velvet trimmed in black velvet . . . an African chieftain, his tribal marks in gold, the sacred bull's horn on his head and ropes of wooden beads around his neck; an oriental dancer with long hair; a belle of the gay '90's—parasol and all; . . a bare foot east Indian in colorful flowing robes; a black and red be-ruffled Spanish senorita; [and] no end of . . Colonial dames."[108]

The balls became a site for the projection and inversion of racial as well as gender identities. Significantly, though, white drag queens were not prepared to reverse their racial identity. Many accounts refer to African-American queens appearing as white celebrities, but none refer to whites appearing as well-known black women. As one black observer noted, "The vogue was to develop a 'personality' like some outstanding woman," but the only women he listed, Jean Harlow, Gloria Swanson, Mae West, and Greta Garbo, were white.[109]

The pageantry of the balls sometimes exacerbated the racial divisions in the gay world. The costume competition became a highly charged affair, with all sides watching to see whether a black or white queen would be crowned. The Harlem press took considerable interest in the racial aspect of the competition, taking special note in 1931 when a black contestant, Bonnie Clark, was awarded the grand prize for the first time.[110] He won again in 1932, but after losing in 1933 he denounced the racial injustice of the city's drag competitions. "There is a conspiracy afoot," he told the black press. "I participated in seven of these masquerades last year and except for the one here [sponsored by the Hamilton Lodge], they are always arranged for the white girls to win. They never had no Negro judges."[111] "Considerable rivalry exists between the ofay chicks and the Mose broods," a columnist for the *Amsterdam News* declared after attending the ball in 1936. "Last year an ofay won the costume prize. This year a Mose 'girl,' Jean La Mart, won the $50."[112] While much of the black press used a mocking tone to distance itself from both the black and white contestants, it nonetheless often took the side of black contestants, regarding them as Harlem's representatives in the competition and thus granting them a place in black society.

Chapter 9. Building Gay Neighborhood Enclaves: The Village and Harlem

1. Stephen Graham, *New York Nights* (New York: Doran, 1927), 114; *Broadway Brevities,* Apr. 11, 1932, 5.

2. Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (1934; New York: Viking, 1956), 48; Caroline F. Ware, *Greenwich Village, 1920–1930: A Comment on American Civilization in the Post-War Years* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), 18–22; Allen Churchill, *The Improper Bohemians* (New York: Dutton, 1959), 22. See also the interesting discussion of the multiple (and often simultaneous) rises and falls of bohemia (and of the Village in particular) in Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), ch. 2.

3. The sociologist Caroline Ware emphasized the extent to which becoming an artist or writer, particularly a poor one who rejected the genteel tradition, made one a deviant in early-twentieth-century middle-class society; see Ware, *Greenwich Village,* 239.

4. *Greenwich Village: A Local Review,* April 1929, n.p.

5. Ellen Kay Trimberger, "Feminism, Men, and Modern Love: Greenwich Village, 1900–1925," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality,* ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 131–52; Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of The Masses, 1911–1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

6. Cowley, *Exile's Return,* 52.

7 Curiously, Dell described the encounter with Sumner but did not mention the raid in his memoirs, *Homecoming* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1933), 278. Case 68, Aug. 31, 1916, vol. 4, 350–51, SSV The September 1916 issue of *The Masses* carried a display ad for the Forel book on p. 43, as had several previous issues. Sumner also prosecuted the book's publisher, or possibly distributor, and, the following May, a Brooklyn bookshop selling the book. The latter case was dismissed; the first two cases were sent to the Court of Special Sessions, with unrecorded results, except that the two defendants were "paroled"; case 67, Aug. 30, 1916, vol. 4, 350–51, and case 40, May 23, 1917, vol. 4, 364–65, SSV The cartoon satirizing Comstock appeared in *The Masses,* September 1915, 19, and is reproduced in Rebecca Zurier, *Art for* The Masses: *A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 97 On Dell's theory that homosexuality was a "patriarchal institution," representing "a permanent state of emotional childishness," see *Love in the Machine Age* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1930), especially 23ff.

8. *The Masses,* November 1916, 11.

9. Judith Schwartz, *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village, 1912–1940* (Lebanon, N.H. New Victoria Publishers, 1982).

10. Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright* (London: J. M. Dent, 1969), 352–53; idem, *O'Neill, Son and Artist* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 242.

11. Ware, *Greenwich Village,* 16–22.

12. Ibid., 15–17, 56–58. See also the comments on the passing of the old Greenwich Village in the memoirs of Floyd Dell, *Love in Greenwich Village* (New York: Doran, 1926), 16–17, 320–31; and Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return,* 66.

13. Churchill, *The Improper Bohemians,* 270–76. Julius' became a gay bar thirty years later, but did not attract a noticeable gay clientele in the twenties.

14. Ware's critique of the "pseudo-Bohemians" of the twenties suffuses her chapter on their social world, revealingly titled "Art and Sex as Avenues of Escape," and is made sharpest on pp. 238–40.

15. On New York's image as the nation's Sodom and Gomorrah and on the role generally of the rural–urban cleavage in American politics and rhetoric during the twenties, see David Burner, *The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party in Transition, 1918–1932* (1967; New York: Norton, 1975), especially 76ff.

16. He added, though, that there was much he disapproved of in Village gay society—"they use entirely too much powder and perfume, and I don't think I ever could like people that paint their cheeks and eyelids"—and he was sometimes "sorry I ever became one myself," although he had met one man he "like[d] immensely . . [and] thought we would make a wonderful match," if only he could get his attention (letter to the editor, dated Nov. 15, 1924, published in *Broadway Brevities,* December 1924, 16).

17 *Evening-Graphic,* Aug. 28, 1931, 6.

18. "In the Village they dance together unashamed to a murmurous chorus of 'fairies, fairies'" (Graham, *New York Nights,* 114).

19. *Evening-Graphic,* Aug. 25, 1931, 3.

20. Bruce Rogers, "Degenerates of Greenwich Village," *Current Psychology and Psychoanalysis,* December 1936, 29ff.

21. This description of the film is based on Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 42–43, which also reproduces a still from the scene in the gay club.

22. Ware, *Greenwich Village,* 96, 238.

23. Ibid., 253. Lillian Faderman uncritically accepts Ware's analysis in her own analysis of "lesbian chic" in the 1920s Village, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), ch. 3.

24. *Greenwich Village Quill,* August 1926, 44.

25. Dell, *Love in Greenwich Village,* 299. See also Cowley, *Exile's Return,* 49–50.

26. "The dance was purely a money making affair as are most of those being given now by the so-called Villagers. . They are all stimulated by the great financial success of the Liberal Club's annual dance," J. A. S., Report on the Saraband of Apes Dance at Webster Hall, Mar. 23, 1917, box 31, COF.

27 J. A. S., Summary Report, "Greenwich Village Affairs," n.d. [1917–18], box 31, COF.

28. Ibid. He also noted the presence of "the usual crowd of homosexualists some dressed in female attire, others in more or less oriental costumes," at the Saraband of Apes Dance (see note 26).

29. J. A. S., Report on the Greenwich Village Carnival [organized] by Glenn Coleman, Webster Hall, Apr. 6, 1917, box 31, COF. The balls were not the only places in the Village slummers went in order to see homosexuals. Frank Ortloff (interviewed), a Quaker lawyer who would begin representing men arrested on homosexual charges in the 1940s, recalled visiting with his fiancée the Village clubs where gay men gathered in the 1930s; he did it just for the fun of it, and because his friends did so.

30. J. A. S., Report of Investigation, The Liberal Club Ball, Feb. 11, 1917, box 31, COF.

31. *Greenwich Village Quill,* May 1922, 23.

32. In 1917 the Committee of Fourteen, apparently responding to such a reputation, sent an investigator to gather information about the "men perverts" said to be gathering in the tea shops around Washington Square, particularly along West Fourth Street (investigator's report, Dec. 11, 1917, box 31, COF). Thus Allen Churchill was incorrect when he suggested that lesbians and homosexuals began

congregating in the MacDougal Street nightclubs opposite the Provincetown Theater only after the end of Prohibition; they had actually made that strip their own at least a decade earlier (Churchill, *The Improper Bohemians,* 321).

33. Report on the Golden Eagle, June 18, 1919, box 34, COF (emphasis added).

34. "Village 'Joints' Out or Tame," *Variety,* May 6, 1925, 19 (I thank Lewis Erenberg for this reference); "Sapphic Sisters Scram!" *Broadway Brevities,* Nov. 16, 1931, 1, 10.

35. H. Kahan's report on The Jungle, 11 Cornelia St., July 4, 1922, box 34, COF.

36. "Village 'Joints' Out or Tame"; "Sapphic Sisters Scram!"

37. Ware, *Greenwich Village,* 252–55; on Polly's, see Bernardine Kielty Scherman, *Girl from Fitchburg* (New York: Random House, 1964), 64–67, and Churchill, *The Improper Bohemians,* 33.

38. Ware, *Greenwich Village,* 18–19, 237

39. The Committee of Fourteen's agents reported in 1926 that it was "a well known hang out for fairies and lady lovers." Reports on the Greenwich Village Mill, Sept. 10 and 17, 1918, box 31, COF; Report on Paul and Joe's, 62 W. 9th St., n.d. [1919], box 34, COF; Report re Padlock List, [October–November?] 1926, box 35, COF. See also *Broadway Brevities,* October 1924, 50; December 1924, 16; Nov. 16, 1931, 1, 10; *Greenwich Village Quill,* July 1924, 34; April 1925, 33; Samuel Kahn, *Mentality and Homosexuality* (Boston: Meador, 1937), 183, 127

40. The account of Eve's Place in this and the following two paragraphs is based on the following sources: "'Eve's Tea Room' Boss Ran Into Policewoman: Result, Arrest on Two Charges—Had Immoral Book Called 'Lesbian Love,'" *Variety,* June 23, 1926, 35; "Evelyn Addams, 1 Yr. and Deportation: Boss of Eve's in Village Sold 'Dirty' Book—Man-Hater Besides," ibid., July 7, 1926, 33; "Eve Addams' Ring of Rich Cultists," ibid., July 28, 1926, 37; *Greenwich Village Weekly News,* Oct. 10, 1931, 8; *Broadway Brevities,* Nov. 16, 1931, 1, 10; Edwards's comments appeared in the *Greenwich Village Quill,* June 1926, 28; July 1926, 8, 46, 60; August 1926, 44; September 1926, 57 The Society for the Suppression of Vice took note of the case (Society for the Suppression of Vice record books, vol. 5, 50–51, Kotchever case, June 17, 1926, SSV), thus supplying me with the date of the raid, but gave it no case number, instead marking it a "police case," which suggests that the SSV played no role in the raid but had simply been advised of it because of the twelve "objectionable" books and manuscripts possessed by Kotchever at the time of her arrest, which the police confiscated and the Society inventoried.

41. "Queer Show Quits Before Cops Cop It," *Variety,* Feb. 6, 1929, 1.

42. *Greenwich Village Weekly News,* Oct. 17, 1931, 8; *Broadway Brevities,* Nov. 16, 1931, 10.

43. *New York Evening-Graphic,* Aug. 25, 1931. The original announcement cards for the Left Bank and Fullhouse Restaurant are included in an unidentified scrapbook, apparently kept by a lesbian in New York in the early 1930s, now held by the KIL.

44. *Greenwich Village: A Local Review,* April 1929, n.p.

45. See, for example, the ad for *The Psychology of Homosexuality* by Doctor A. Hesnard in the July 1, 1933, issue, 4; and homosexual references in the issues of Aug. 1, 1–3; Aug. 15, 2; Dec. 1, 1933, 3; February 1934, 14; and, possibly, July 15, 1934, 1.

46. *Greenwich Village Weekly News,* Oct. 17, 1931, 1; ibid., Oct. 10, 1931, 8.

47 Ibid., Oct. 28, 1931, 10; see also Oct. 17, 1931, 8.

48. Ibid., Nov. 21, 1931, 4.

49. See, for example, Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); and Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

50. Edouard Roditi, interviewed.

51. Robert Brennan, interviewed by Gregory Sprague, Jan. 28, 1984, Gregory Sprague papers, Chicago Historical Society.

52. On the development of Harlem as a black neighborhood, see Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890–1930* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

53. On the Great Migration, see James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Joe W Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Trotter, ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

54. Simon Williamson, "Sports and Amusements of Negro New York, Part II, Amusements," Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, 1936–1941, sports section, reel 5, SCRBC. (I thank Eric Garber for drawing my attention to the significance of the FWP papers.) On Harlem's cultural life in the 1920s, see David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (1981; New York: Vintage, 1982); Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); and Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem: A Cultural Portrait, 1900–1950* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1982). On Harlem in the 1930s, see Cheryl Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?" Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), and Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

55. Abram Hill, "Ed Smalls," Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, SCRBC.

56. Bricktop, with James Haskins, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 75.

57 *Variety,* Oct. 16, 1929, as reprinted in *Amsterdam News,* Oct. 23, 1929, in *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968,* ed. Allon Schoener (New York: Random House, 1968), 80.

58. George Chappell, *The Restaurants of New York* (New York: Greenberg, 1925), 119–20. For further analysis of the interest in African-American culture, see Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue;* Anderson, *This Was Harlem;* Lewis A. Erenberg, "Impresarios of Broadway Nightlife," in *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World,* ed. William R. Taylor (New York: Russell Sage, 1991), 158–77

59. Although this lack of external moral regulation reduced some of the obstacles to the development of a gay world in Harlem, it also, ironically, meant a less extensive record of gay life was preserved for Harlem than for the Village.

60. Committee of Fourteen, *Annual Report for 1928* (New York: Committee

of Fourteen, 1929). This assessment is based primarily on a review of the investigators' reports submitted to the Committee and its other internal documentation. For the decision to launch a special investigation of Harlem, see bulletins 1977 [Jan. 26, 1928] and 1994 [Jan. 24, 1929], box 89, COF.

61. Eric Garber, "A Spectacle in Color: The Lesbian and Gay Subculture of Jazz Age Harlem," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past,* ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 318–33.

62. Twenty-two percent of Negro men in Manhattan aged thirty-five to forty-four were single in 1930, compared to 6.8 percent in South Carolina, 9.4 percent in North Carolina, 14.1 percent in Virginia, and 13 percent in the United States as a whole: *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population, vol. 2, General Report, Statistics by Subjects* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), 962, 891, 890, 888, 843. More work needs to be done on the social organization and acceptability of homosexual relations in rural black and white communities alike. The reflections of the black feminist theorist bell hooks on the relative tolerance afforded gay men (though not lesbians) in her hometown offers a thoughtful starting point. See "Homophobia in Black Communities," in her *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End, 1989), 120–26.

63. "Negro Amusements," Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, 21, SCRBC.

64. Report on speakeasy, 109 W 136th St., basement, May 27, 1928, 1 to 1:30 A.M., box 36, COF.

65. Report on Blue Ribbon Chile Parlor, 72 W 131st St., 1:35 to 2:35 A.M., box 36, COF.

66. "On Seventh Avenue," *Baltimore Afro-American,* Dec. 27, 1930, 9.

67 *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 15, 1928, 1.

68. "Two Eagle-Eyed Detectives Spot 'Pansies on Parade,'" *Inter-State Tattler,* Mar. 10, 1932, 2.

69. "'She' Turns Out to Be a 'He' in Court: Fur-Coated 'Woman' Gives Cop Liveliest Chase of His Life," *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 8, 1928, 16.

70. "Fear of Arrest May Claim Life," *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 23, 1932, 3. For other accounts of female impersonators arrested on the streets, see "Bass Voiced 'Girl Friends' Sentenced—Alas! and Only Because 'She' Turned Out to Be He," ibid., Aug. 28, 1929, 2; "Male 'Lady' Jailed," ibid., June 4, 1930, 19.

71. Interview with Ruby Smith by Chris Albertson, 1971, as quoted by Garber, "Spectacle," 323.

72. Eric Garber, "Gladys Bentley: The Bulldagger Who Sang the Blues," *Outlook* (Spring 1988): 52–61; see also Hazel V Carby, "'It Jus Be's Dat Way Sometime': The Sexual Politics of Women's Blues," *Radical America* (1986): 9–22; Chris Albertson, *Bessie* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972).

73. Songs are quoted in Garber, "Spectacle," 320. For further analysis of the songs, see Faderman, *Odd Girls,* 76–79.

74. Bruce Nugent, "Gloria Swanson" study, Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes in New York, reel 1, biographies section, SCRBC.

75. Ibid.

76. Garber, "Spectacle," 324; idem, "Gladys Bentley"; "On Seventh Avenue," *Baltimore Afro-American,* Dec. 27, 1930, 9; "Is This Really Harlem?," *Amsterdam News,* Oct. 23, 1929, in Schoener, ed., *Harlem on My Mind,* 79–81.

77 I rely heavily here on Garber's article "Gladys Bentley," the best study of the singer. See also Gladys Bentley, "I Am a Woman Again," *Ebony,* August 1952,

92–98; Wilbur Young, "Gladys Bentley," Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, reel 1, biographies section, SCRBC; and Faderman, *Odd Girls,* 72.

78. Hazel V Carby, "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context," *Critical Inquiry* (1992): 738–55. Lillian Faderman's assertion of "the manifest accept[ability] of bisexuality among the upper classes in Harlem" is based on the heiress A'Leila Walker's acceptance of it (*Odd Girls,* 75–76). Walker did have many gay and lesbian friends who attended her parties, but she was never accepted by Harlem's social elite and her attitudes cannot be taken as evidence of the elite's. On Walker's exclusion from Harlem's elite, see Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue,* 165–69, and Bruce Nugent, "A'Leila Walker," Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, reel 1, biographies section, SCRBC. Several historians have recently offered subtle analyses of the construction of class divisions within Northern black communities: Grossman, *Land of Hope;* Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape;* Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way;* and Trotter, *Black Milwaukee.*

79. Hazel V Carby, "'On the Threshold of Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in *"Race," Writing, and Difference,* ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 301–16; Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

80. Adam Clayton Powell, *Against the Tide: An Autobiography* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1938), 57–59.

81. "Dr. A. C. Powell Scores Pulpit Evils: Abyssinian Pastor Fires a Broadside into Ranks of Fellow Ministers, Churches Denounces Sex Degeneracy and Sex-Perverts," *New York Age,* Nov. 16, 1929, 1.

82. Powell, *Against the Tide,* 216.

83. "Dr. Powell's Crusade Against Abnormal Vice Is Approved: Pastors and Laity Endorse Dr. Powell's Denunciation of Degeneracy in the Pulpit: Chorus of Commendation Is Heard as Eminent Men Express Approval and Give Promises of Their Support," *New York Age,* Nov. 23, 1929. The *Amsterdam News* did not cover Powell's sermon, but a month later it published a supportive column by Kelly Miller, "Corruption in the Pulpit" (Dec. 11, 1929, 20). See also Powell's account of the crusade, *Against the Tide,* 209–20.

84. Powell, *Against the Tide,* 216.

85. Several historians have insightfully analyzed the role of newspapers in the acculturation of Southern migrants to Northern cities, including Grossman, *Land of Hope,* and William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (1970; New York: Atheneum, 1985).

86. *Inter-State Tattler,* May 24, 1929, 10.

87 Howard Raymond, interviewed.

88. Billy Rowe, "Week-End Affairs," *Inter-State Tattler,* Jan. 28, 1932, 11. See also the Feb. 22, 1929, issue, p. 10.

89. Abram Hill, "The Hamilton Lodge Ball," Aug. 30, 1939, Federal Writers Project New York, Negroes of New York, 1936–41, reel 4, "New York City and Its People," SCRBC; *Broadway Brevities,* Mar. 14, 1932, 12; "Hamilton Lodge Ball an Unusual Spectacle," *New York Age,* Mar. 6, 1926, 3.

90. Hill, "Hamilton Lodge Ball."

91. "17 'Odd Fellows' Wind Up Before Tough Judge," *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 5, 1938, 1.

92. "Snow and Ice Cover Streets as Pansies Blossom Out at Hamilton Lodge's Dance," *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 28, 1934, 1.

93. The number of guests is impossible to ascertain with precision, since estimates varied widely from paper to paper (three papers put the attendance at the 1932 ball, for instance, at variously 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 people). My estimates of the size of the gatherings and the relative ratios of gay men, lesbians, and straight people attending in costume are based on a review of the coverage of the balls each year in the *Amsterdam News, New York Age,* and *Inter-State Tattler.*

94. Sydney H., quoted in Henry, *Sex Variants,* 56; Report on tenement, 2612 Broadway, Apt. 4-S, Feb. 25, 1928, box 36, COF.

95. Ethel Waters, *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* (New York: Bantam, 1959), 149–50; Taylor Gordon, *Born to Be* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1929), 228. Gordon may not have been describing the Hamilton Lodge Ball, since he remembered the drag being held at the Savoy rather than the Rockland Palace; his account still suggests the popularity of Harlem's drag balls. For another account of Harlem's fascination with the balls, see Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea: An Autobiography* (1940; New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1986), 273–74.

96. Max Ewing to his parents, Feb. 17, 1930, Ewing papers, Yale.

97 *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 2, 1932, 2.

98. "Masquerade Ball Draws 5,000 People: As Usual, Feministic Males Turn Out in Gorgeous Costumes," *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 20, 1929, 2. Other headlines took a similar approach: "Mere Male Blossoms Out in Garb of Milady at Big Hamilton Lodge Ball: Coy Imitators Simper Sweetly at Affair Attended by 7,000," *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 19, 1930, 3.

99. "The Social Club World" column, "Hamilton Lodge, No. 710" report, *New York Age,* Mar. 5, 1932, 9.

100. "The Gang Says" column, ibid.

101. The three references appeared in the *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 7, 1936; Mar. 1, 1933, 2; Feb. 27, 1937, 1.

102. Roi Ottley, "Hectic Harlem" column, *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 7, 1936.

103. *Inter-State Tattler,* Feb. 22, 1929, 7

104. "The Village Meets Harlem," *Chicago Defender,* Apr. 16, 1927, clipping in Carl Van Vechten scrapbook, Yale. The advertising flyer for the ball is also in the scrapbook.

105. "The Fort Valley Spectacle," unidentified newspaper editorial in the Van Vechten scrapbook. Presumbably referring to Van Vechten's novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926), it added: "The venomous attack made by a recent and perverted writer upon the morals of Harlem society in his salacious novel would be justified if the Fort Valley Industrial Benefit at the Renaissance should be taken as a criterion."

106. *Amsterdam News,* Feb. 20, 1929, 2. The 1926 report noted that "many Bohemians from the Greenwich Village section took the occasion to mask as women for this affair. . . . Although Hamilton Lodge is a colored organization, there were many white people present and they danced with and among the colored people" (*New York Age,* Mar. 6, 1926, 3).

107 Hill, "Hamilton Lodge Ball."

108. "Hamilton Lodge Costume Ball Marks Gayest Night of Season: Thousands Storm Rockland for Midnight Jamboree," *Inter-State Tattler,* Mar. 3, 1932, 5. Note that *gay* does not denote homosexual in this headline, although the headline writer may have been aware of its homosexual connotation.

109. Hill, "Hamilton Lodge Ball"; Roi Ottley, "Hectic Harlem" column, *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 7, 1936.

110. "Hamilton Lodge Clears $5,000 From Its Annual Ball," *New York Age,* Mar. 7, 1931, 6.

111. "3,000 Attend Ball of Hamilton Lodge: Bonnie Clark, Last Year's Prize Winner, Disgruntled as Another 'Sweet Young Thing' Is Chosen for First Place," *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 1, 1933, 2.

112. Ottley, "Hectic Harlem" column.

113. Du Bois's personal response is difficult to discern, in part because he wrote an editorial disguising the reason for the editor's departure and wishing him a fond farewell: "Augustus Dill," *The Crisis,* March 1928, 36.

114. On the writers, see Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue;* Garber, "Spectacle," 326–28; Amitai F. Avi-Ram, "The Unreadable Black Body: 'Conventional' Poetic Form in the Harlem Renaissance," *Genders* 7 (1990): 32–45; Alden Reimonenq, "Countee Cullen's Uranian 'Soul Windows,'" *Journal of Homosexuality* 26 (1993): 143–65; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "The Black Man's Burden," in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory,* ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 230–38; Roditi, interviewed. Arnold Rampersad disputes assertions that Hughes was gay in *The Life of Langston Hughes,* Vol. I: *1902–1941: I, Too, Sing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). On Walker, see Garber, "Spectacle," 322; Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue,* 165–69, and Nugent, "A'Leila Walker." On Van Vechten, see Lewis; Garber; and Bruce Kellner, *Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent Decades* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

115. Avi-Ram, "The Unreadable Black Body"; Reimonenq, "'Soul Windows.'"

116. Richard Bruce [Nugent], "Smoke, Lillies and Jade, A Novel, Part I," *Fire!!: A Quarterly Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists* 1 (1926): 33–39. On Nugent, see Charles Michael Smith, "Bruce Nugent: Bohemian of the Harlem Renaissance," in *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology,* ed. Joseph Beam (Boston: Alyson, 1986), 209–20; Garber, "Spectacle," 327, 330; idem, "Richard Bruce Nugent," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 51 (Detroit: Gale, 1986), 213–21; and my interview with Nugent.

117 Reimonenq, "'Soul Windows.'"

118. Thurman to William Rapp, May 7, 1929, box 1, folder 7, Wallace Thurman papers, James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection, Yale. See also Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue,* 278–79.

119. See, for instance, "'Pansies'—Men in Women's Gowns Dance for N.Y. Society," *Baltimore Afro-American,* Mar. 7, 1931, 1, 7; "Men Step Out in Gorgeous Finery of Other Sex to Vie for Beauty Prizes," *Amsterdam News,* Mar. 2, 1932, 2.

120. Howard Raymond, interviewed.

121. Robert D., interviewed.

Chapter 10. The Double Life, Camp Culture, and the Making of a Collective Identity

1. Gene Harwood, interviewed; George Sardi, interviewed.

2. On the role of chain migration in the formation of migrant communities, see John S. and Leatrice D. MacDonald, "Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation, and Social Networks," *Milbank Memoral Fund Quarterly* 17 (1964): 82–97, and John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 57–71. In an important essay, Stephen O. Murray argued that the institutional infrastructure of Toronto's gay community in the 1970s was so well developed that it should be considered a quasi-ethnic community: "The Institutional Elaboration of a Quasi-Ethnic Community," *International Review of Modern Sociology* 9 (1979): 165–77

3. Samuel Kahn, *Mentality and Homosexuality* (Boston: Meador, 1937), 135–36, 65. Kahn's study was researched and written in the early 1920s.