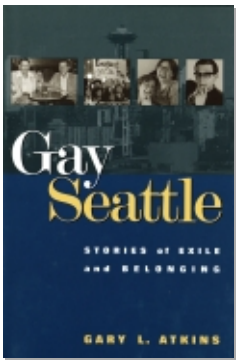
Gay Seattle

Atkins, Gary



Published by University of Washington Press

Atkins, Gary.
Gay Seattle: Stories of Exile and Belonging.
First paperback edition. ed. University of Washington Press, 2011.
Project MUSE.muse.jhu.edu/book/40703.

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On Broadway

Creating Markets and Parades

On the November evening in 1978 when Initiative Thirteen was defeated, Jan Denali, the woman who sang with LesBeFriends and worked at the Little Bread collective, walked with the other SCAT and WAT marchers weaving through the drizzle on the streets of downtown Seattle. Denali led a quiet rhythm of victory, singing "Let us be like drops of water, falling on the stone." Like many other gay liberation and lesbian feminists of the 1970s, Denali continued her political work into the 1980s. She too would become one of those lesbians who decided to create a new kind of family, linking with a gay male activist she met during the Initiative Thirteen campaign to birth and parent a child. Denali would play another critical role in 1986, when, in a small replay of the Initiative Thirteen issue, conservatives launched a referendum to overturn a decision by the King County Council to adopt a similar job-protection law for the unincorporated areas around the city. Denali joined a grassroots effort to defeat the referendum before it ever got on the ballot, becoming one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit that persuaded the court to strike the petitions because of their misleading rhetoric.

In the 1980s, Denali could still be found on the slopes of Renton Hill, but by then she had launched a new brand of gay political work, a kind of evolution from the old experiences at the women's coffeehouse, the Coffee Coven. Here's what she told a passerby one day: "My well-developed palate for coffee was important. What I particularly had to learn was how to operate the equipment. I've become an expert foam maker. You know, you have to foam up the milk."

Denali had opened an espresso cart from which she dispensed lattes, cappuccinos, and mochas—as well as a Postum latte for those avoiding caffeine. "Everyone has their very special way they want their coffee made," she told the *Seattle Gay News*. Denali named her cart "Espress Yourself," and in front of a Thriftway supermarket she joined another aspect of Seattle's gay life: an openly homosexual business entrepreneur operating in a new time and a new marketplace.[1]

In the mid-1970s, a President's Advisory Council on Minority Business Enterprises had observed that power in American society largely results from control over economic resources. Minorities, it had added, needed to claim that power.[2] While the council had in mind spreading economic power to racial and ethnic groups, the maxim also applied to the wave of gays and lesbians now choosing

public visibility in Seattle. The defeat of Initiative Thirteen had produced a climax for their political coming out. Although similar electoral battles erupted in subsequent decades—the one over the King County ordinance in the 1980s, for example, and another over a statewide initiative to overturn city civil rights laws in the 1990s—the foundation for visibly engaging in Seattle's political conversation had largely been laid by the end of the 1970s.

A separate, troublesome problem still needed to be dealt with.

While a political crisis could prompt outpourings of volunteer time and money, on a day-to-day basis the city's homosexuals formed only a nascent community with almost no visible economic infrastructure at the end of the 1970s. The business underpinnings were meagerly limited to the gay and lesbian bars and sex businesses that inhabited Pioneer Square and to a small Capitol Hill corridor, also of bars and baths, that had begun to stretch up along Pike and Pine Streets. Agencies like the counseling service, Stonewall, the Gay Community Center, and the Lesbian Resource Center depended on friendly funding from government agencies or supportive heterosexual groups, such as the YWCA. The disappearance of that funding, as a result of either bigotry or budget cutting, often spelled demise. Both the original Stonewall and, eventually, the Gay Community Center, met that fate, and the LRC and the counseling service came quite close when the federal government, under President Reagan, ended a jobs program that had provided salaries for staff members.[3] Although the feminist and radical politics of the 1970s had added a few gay-friendly bookstores and food co-ops to the business network, as a group Seattle's homosexuals were largely without any reliable network of independent wealth.

It was not that homosexuals as individuals necessarily lacked money. Compared with other more impoverished groups, gay men and women sometimes seemed a golden minority, assumed to be free of the financial burden of supporting a family. To some extent, the glitter that others saw came from the prejudice of defining homosexuality as limited to white middle-class males, conveniently ignoring working-class and poverty-stricken gays and lesbians. Yet it was true that being in the closet could protect wallets as well as identities, and that was just the problem. Even if wealth were present among individuals, the money would do little good if it stayed hidden. One academic who had studied economic development in minority communities, Ivan Light, would argue during the 1980s that those groups that fared best developed their own entrepreneurs who felt, he said, "embedded" in supporting the community. Such business owners, he argued, would actively participate in a web where they exchanged information and supported community goals. In turn, the community members would consciously "buy Korean" or "buy Japanese" or "buy gay." Together, the entrepreneurs and the consumers could promote social change through business.[4]

The challenge, then, was to become a public community of commerce as well as a community of dance, social service, and political activism.

Four developments had to occur, each a particular sort of communication. First,

there had to be more openly gay and lesbian entrepreneurs ready to engage in their own businesses or professions. That way the term "gay business" could symbolize much more than bars or bathhouses. Second, those entrepreneurs needed structures for sharing information with one another. They needed a kind of Rotary or chamber of commerce. Third, if they were going to return some of the profits to the community, they needed a way to redistribute the money through a clearinghouse that would fund worthwhile projects. Finally, there needed to be a geographic gay business center that most definitely was not tied to the nighttime red-light district. Instead, it needed to be a place where both homosexuals and heterosexuals could feel comfortable shopping either day or night.

Those four networks of communication were valuable economic resources in themselves—perhaps the most critical that a minority could gain.

In the 1980s, gays and lesbians in Seattle—Jan Denali and other activists among them—began to enter the world of commerce in a public manner as never before, either as very visible consumers or as newly out corporate executives and small-business owners. The international business magazine the *Economist* noted the rise of what it called a new "homosexual economy" by 1981. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* publicized the increasingly significant role gays and lesbians were playing in business in a small article on its business page in 1984. Three years later, the *Advocate* was trumpeting the "surprising health of gay businesses." Even the *Wall Street Journal* took note of the change by the early 1990s.[5] It was not just the allure of cash, but the appeal of creating another territory in the civic discourse where an imaginative new part of the story of being homosexual could be lived.

That seemed especially true of the small-business owners. "To be an openly gay entrepreneur is to make a political statement in this society," a spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, D.C., told the *Journal.*

Indeed, to create small shops where customers who were both straight and openly gay or lesbian mingled in the ritual of trading was a way of altering the city's social geography.

In the 1960s, Seattle's dozen or so gay bar and bath owners had formed their own loose network called the Queen City Business Guild. They traded information and gossip, but their numbers were too few and perhaps they were too much in direct competition in a narrow market for the guild to become very influential. MacIver Wells, for one, did not remember the group doing much in its early years—although after Wells left Seattle, the guild became somewhat more active. It supported the creation of the city's Imperial Court of drag queens, which in turn organized drag performances and charity fund raising drives. In the 1970s, it assisted the Gay Community Center in developing a gay campground located in the Cascade mountains and became known for its annual social picnics, one of which—in 1977—attracted an estimated 450 men and women to the Cascade land and gave the new resort, called Triangle Recreation Camp, a huge boost. A grand piano and hundreds of

gallons of beer kept the picnickers happy, if a little dazed.[6] But the event was more an extension of the bar than the creation of something new.

In spring 1981, about a dozen gay business owners gathered at a new restaurant called The City, next to Ken Decker's Brass Door Disco at Pike Street and Harvard Avenue. There they planned a new kind of association. Stan Hill, who was then opening a gay-friendly gym called the Body Nautilus just up the street from the disco, described one problem they hoped to solve: "Most gay people, when given the choice, would rather patronize a gay-owned or oriented business, but their knowledge of these businesses is limited." By June, the group had incorporated as the Greater Seattle Business Association, collected $825 in dues from thirty-three charter members, and elected a nine-person board—all men. Its first task was to produce a directory of gay businesses, which it did by the end of the year. That would get the word out to gay consumers.[7]

Although gay and lesbian businesses were spread throughout Seattle, the notion of a business territory would play an important role both in the evolution of the new infrastructure and in its visibility. There were a number of candidates for a new territory, for example the Pike-Pine corridor that had already begun to develop gay bars, the small business district at Fifteenth Avenue and John that separated the Renton and Capitol summits, or the Madison corridor as it crossed Renton Hill. There was also one other: Capitol Hill's main north-south commercial district along Broadway Avenue. What eventually determined the choice was the same clash of interests on Capitol Hill that had marked the demise of gay space on Renton Hill—the battle between urban developers and North Capitol Hill homeowners. Only this time, instead of encouraging the decline of a gay territory, the outcome opened the way for one.

The best way to understand what happened is to first envision Broadway. In 1977, the *Post-Intelligencer* described it as a "Main Street USA" with stores that looked "as though they've been transplanted from some small town."[8] Heading north from Pike Street, a pedestrian would first pass the old Broadway High School, which was being replaced by a campus for Seattle Central Community College. Beyond a car parts shop was a country-corner post office that the federal government hoped to expand into a major distribution center with parking lots and an expansive warehouse. Next came the deteriorating neighborhood movie theater, and, about midway on the walk through the commercial zone, a bowling alley, a pharmacy with an old-fashioned soda counter, and small grocery stores that sometimes delivered to the doorsteps of the neighboring homes. Between Harrison and Republican Streets was one of the monuments of the district, the block-long Broadway Market, built in 1928 as a neighborhood version of the larger Pike Place Market downtown. Farmers and artisans had once sold their wares to city dwellers there, but the market's heyday was definitely past by the 1970s and it had been taken over by the Fred Meyer discount chain. In the next block north, two chain supermarkets, Safeway and QFC, stood on opposite ends of the block, both in rather

small buildings with little parking. About three-quarters of a mile north of Pike, where Broadway intersects Roy Street, Doreen DeCaro's Elite Tavern marked the northern edge of the commercial zone. The Elite, still heterosexual at the time, was the epitome of the neighborhood pub, and its owner, Doreen, the epitome of the neighborhood tavern owner. A 1976 article about her in the *Seattle Sun* noted that she knew 98 percent of her regulars by name and that people often dropped by just to show her photographs, comment on her kitchen wallpaper, or, at an occasional wild party, dance with her on the pool table. "You're not dealing in beer," she had told the *Sun.* "You're dealing in people."[9]

Broadway had felt the impact of increased gay visibility almost as soon as Renton Hill started to turn into a public gay space in the early 1970s. A male clothing store called Peter's on Broadway operated from 1966 until 1977, advertising "beautiful clothing for beautiful people." A fashion store called the Gay Bull opened, then vanished. Broadway had also acknowledged gay liberation and feminism at least slightly. For example, an alternative bookstore named the Different Drummer, located across the street from the Broadway Market, added a small section of gay and lesbian books onto its cluttered shelves of political titles—enough to get its clerks harassed by straight teenagers in the neighborhood.

Neighborly though it was in the 1960s and 1970s, Broadway also faced trouble. Some of the small, aging businesses had begun shutting, and crime had begun to rise. The Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce blamed Broadway's lot sizes—nineteenth-century plats too small to support the kind of automobile-oriented shopping malls then stealing business from the neighborhoods. Some lots ran only ninety feet deep, half the distance between Broadway and the streets paralleling on either side. Behind many of the businesses were houses or small garden apartments, rather than the parking lots that could appease car-oriented shoppers. The answer, the developers figured, lay in expanding the commercial zone so that Broadway businesses could fill in the full two blocks on either side. That way, both Safeway and QFC could build large parking lots. The post office could expand.

The community council dominated by homeowners had other dreams, and, as had happened on Renton Hill, a clash between it and the developers in the local chamber was certain. Broadway, it argued, should remain oriented to pedestrians. Suburban stores with parking lots belonged in the suburbs. At first, the battle looked like a losing one for the homeowners. Thirty-five small businesses had already shut down in the previous two decades. But the council and other ad hoc activist groups soon launched a brisk fight that, at one point in 1970, included leaping in front of bulldozers and, later, temporarily taking over the vacant lot that Safeway wanted for parking and using it as a Berkeley-style People's Park with picnic tables and a huge sandbox.

The homeowners won some skirmishes and lost others. A decade later, in the Elite's block at the north end, most of the storefronts remained. A block south, the grocery chains won, expanding sideways and adding their parking lots. Another

block south, the storefronts returned, along with a restored Broadway Market, once again a bazaar of small stores and vending carts. The same storefront pattern continued for the next several blocks—with an occasional drive-in parking lot marking a community council defeat or compromise. But largely the homeowners won, their greatest achievement being to convince the city by the late 1970s to emphasize Broadway as a pedestrian-oriented commercial zone, exempting its businesses from a city requirement for off-street parking. Broadway instead would become what an architecture critic for the *Seattle Times* called an Italian *passeggiata*—a kind of busy public plaza stretched horizontally.[10]

The change occurred rapidly, primarily between 1977 and 1980. Two years after the *Post-Intelligencer* had described Broadway as "Main Street USA," suddenly shops were selling Cuisinart food processors, and restaurants were decorating themselves with hanging ferns. The street began to glitter—in fact, a bit too much for some in the neighborhood. "No one simply walks into the Broadway bars," writer James Thayer noted in the *Seattle Times* in 1980. "They make appearances. Men commonly pause just inside the door—and, like Clark Gable, run a finger along the mustache while scanning the room with amused skepticism. Women plunge into the crowd, heads demurely low, knowing they will be stopped before they rebound off the wall."[11] It was a heterosexual description, of course, because Broadway's first renaissance—or perhaps it would be better called a carnival—was as adamantly heterosexual as it was homosexual.

Some gay and lesbian activists resented the change. Jane Meyerding, for example, had this to say in *Out and About* in March 1978: "The rich white pricks are trying to move lesbians and other poor women and men out of Seattle. . . . Take Monkey Shines on the corner of Broadway and John, which used to be the Congo Room, a restaurant where dykes worked and ate. Since it has become Monkeys, dykes don't work there, most can't afford to eat there, and dykes don't always get seated there." Another group tossed paint at the new restaurants one night, and then left a note saying, "Good Morning Fat Cats: The paint on your establishment is a protest against your rich white intrusion into this poor, multiracial community of Capitol Hill. We are just a few of many pissed off residents who resent having expensive eating places dangled in front of our noses. Food is essential to survival and eating is a human right. By putting this out of reach of the poor and common working folks, you have turned this right into a privilege."[12]

Other gays and lesbians instead helped accelerate the changes. One of the first signs of the new movement onto Broadway by gay entrepreneurs was, perhaps appropriately, the establishment of the district's first neighborhood gay bar. In 1979, Alex Veltri bought the Elite from Doreen DeCaro. Veltri had been bartending and managing at the old gay Columbus Tavern on Washington Street just across from the old Casino. "Broadway was having a tough time," Veltri would tell the *Seattle Gay News* later. "They were thinking it was going to die and the neighborhood would become a ghetto of some kind." Quickly, the Elite began to help change

that trend by drawing the gay men who wanted to drink at a neighborhood tavern onto Broadway—and it did it so successfully that Veltri would eventually open an Elite 2 on John Street, a block off Broadway, and an Encore restaurant and bar nearby on Eleventh Avenue. In 1991, he would even receive a Mayor's Small Business Award for his efforts in neighborhood development.[13]

In 1982, Barbara Bailey became one of the first lesbian entrepreneurs on Broadway, opening a new bookstore next to the since-abandoned Different Drummer site. Like the Drummer, her store was well stocked with lesbian and gay titles; unlike the Drummer, it was well lit, modern, smartly attired, and upscale—a bookstore anybody in the neighborhood would be likely to frequent, not just its political activists.[14] Across the street, smaller gay- and lesbian-owned businesses moved into vending carts at a renovated Broadway Market; one, called the Pink Zone, specialized in buttons marked with rainbows—then emerging as the cheerful gay symbol of the 1980s, replacing the older political symbol of the 1970s, the pink triangle that had been worn by gay prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. The Pink Zone would prove so successful it would eventually claim a storefront on Broadway itself. Meanwhile, old-fashioned neighborhood cafes, like a greasy scrambled-egg house called Andy's, mutated into gay-owned urban bistros. Businesses that were not gay-owned knew enough to become gay-sensitive—when a chain bookstore, Crown, opened on the street for a few years, it quickly learned to stock its shelves with gay and lesbian books seldom seen in its suburban outlets. By the end of the 1980s, the new gay commercial zone formed a T-shape, the stores along the north-south Broadway connecting with the gay bars and discos that had relocated into the east-west corridor along Pike and Pine Streets.

Significantly, Broadway never became a Castro Street, where gay outlets seemed to dominate. What happened on Broadway was an integration of styles and sexual sensitivities, a mingling that created a mixed marketplace. Perhaps the difference was just because of numbers—the gay community in Seattle was smaller than that in San Francisco and possibly could not launch a complete takeover of a commercial district. Perhaps too it was timing. Broadway emerged as a gay public space in the 1980s, not the excited Stonewall '70s. More likely, it may just be that no one, least of all Seattle's gay and lesbian entrepreneurs, really wanted the intensity of a Castro in the Northwest. The preferred pattern in Seattle seemed to be one of interweaving.

In 1980, in an article noting the boom of gay businesses on Capitol Hill, a writer for the *Seattle Gay News* carefully noted: "All of the people I talked to made a distinct point of being certain that their business was not to be labeled an exclusively gay establishment. The common feeling was that the gay and straight community could come together . . . to enjoy whatever is available with no overriding concern of one's sexuality."[15]

While the new territory was being claimed, the gay Greater Seattle Business Association continued to grow, providing the necessary organizational commu-

nication to "embed" gay business owners in a community wherever their businesses happened to be located—Broadway or not. By the end of its second year, its membership had increased fivefold, to about 150, and it began to seek a more active role. In addition to publishing its annual directory of gay and lesbian businesses, the association assumed some of the Dorian Group's functions, sponsoring monthly luncheons with politicians and other notables and crafting new ideas, such as sponsoring a gay business institute to provide training for new entrepreneurs.

To some in the community, in fact, its visibility was becoming an irritant.

The GSBA clearly was a capitalist entry into the gay world, in a city where trade unionism and socialist feminism had powerful roots among those who were activists. In San Francisco, the Golden Gate Business Association—which had been founded in 1975 and had grown to more than five hundred members by the time Seattle's version was organized—had already become a target of such activists. While buying gay made sense, forming a business association seemed to be pandering to the existing economic order rather than working to change that order.

Could capitalist gay entrepreneurs and socialist gay activists really create a common agenda in Seattle? For a while, the answer seemed to be no.

The flash point came on March 10, 1982, about a year after the founding of the GSBA, when its president, Stan Hill, suddenly announced that the association had decided to organize that summer's gay pride march commemorating the Stonewall riot. If that happened, it would be a symbolic coup—for the association, but against the more political activists.

The public celebrations of the Stonewall anniversary had begun in Seattle in 1973, at first with a small gay music festival at the Russian Center on Renton Hill and a potluck picnic in the arboretum, sponsored by U.W. gay students. The event had grown slowly. In 1974, there had been a rally in a vacant lot next to the counseling service's home on Sixteenth Avenue. Gay socialist activist Patrick Haggerty had sung selections from his album of gay music, *Lavender Country*, and Katherine Bourne, also a socialist activist, had read poetry. That night, at Occidental Park on the mudflat, another rally had been held; socialist feminist Cindy Gipple had played drums to provide music. In 1975 the event expanded, with a gay wedding between two men at a Capitol Hill church, a lesbians-only picnic at Woodland Park, a lawn festival at Volunteer Park, a street dance at Occidental Park, and a rally at Seattle Center. In 1976, more expansion: Radical Women panels, a champagne boogie at Shelly's Leg, a picnic at Volunteer Park, another rally at Seattle Center.

Then, in 1977, the public walks down the city streets had begun, that first one moving from Occidental Park to Westlake Center in the heart of downtown. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* headline had called it a "march." One *Seattle Times* article referred to it as a "parade." That difference in terms became the center of the contest between the new gay and lesbian business owners and the political activists.[16]

For the activists, "marching" meant asserting political visibility and demand-

Small rallies in honor of the Stonewall riot began in 1974, but in 1977, lesbians and gays took to Seattle's streets, demanding more civil rights protection. Here, gay liberationists from the Washington Coalition for Sexual Minority Rights, the Union of Sexual Minorities, and Radical Women march along First Avenue from Occidental Park to Westlake. *(Doug Barnes, Freedom Socialist Party)*

ing civil rights. Those who were socialists or feminists also saw it as a way to declare support for a variety of issues, such as the right to an abortion, or to labor organizing, or to economic reforms to help racial and ethnic minorities. The siting of such a march was part of its symbolic communication. Walking downtown signaled a confrontation with the established order, demands on city hall, and visibility to the heterosexual shoppers in the city's retail core.

Other gays and lesbians were more interested in "parading"—celebrating the visibility that had already been won, entertaining, listening to music that was not political, creating floats, and including corporate sponsors such as the beer companies that sold to the gay bars.

When Stan Hill made his declaration in 1982, he seemed to be saying that the businessmen wanted to control what had become the most public of gay and lesbian symbols.

In 1980 the Dorian Group had temporarily seized the organization of the march, announced that the theme would be "Celebration," and then moved it to Broadway—sacrificing, some activists argued, all of the political symbolism that even Dorian stood for. After all, who was there to protest against on Broadway? That first foray into what would become the gay commercial center had been a

By 1980, the lesbian/gay pride "march" had begun to evolve into one of the city's largest public celebrations and "parades." It would move to Capitol Hill. *(Geoff Manasse)*

tentative one. Marchers had assembled at Pine Street and Broadway next to Seattle Central Community College, walked three blocks north—not even making it as far as the Broadway Market—and then had veered away to Twelfth Avenue, finally ending at Volunteer Park north of the commercial district. At the rally that followed, and in the gay press coverage in succeeding weeks, the divisions of opinion about what the march or parade should be surfaced with such a vengeance that the Dorian Group abandoned its organizing role the following year.[17]

For a while, it looked like there might not even be a 1981 march, but five weeks before the usual date, a loose confederation of the more radical activists formed around the name Stonewall '81. They quickly secured a city permit, returned the march downtown, and strengthened its political intent by choosing a route that ran from the federal courthouse to Pioneer Square. Pointedly, the walk that year was called the "Lesbian/Gay Freedom March." This time, the complaints went the other way. One gay man said he was shut out when he tried to carry a "Gays Against Abortion" sign, since the organizers were promoting women's right to abortion. Other gay men and women bedecked a float with American flags to disassociate themselves from the socialists marching at the front of the column. One of the flag float's organizers, Dennis O'Muhundro, was the owner of a gay tavern, Daddy's. He was also a founder of the GSBA.[18]

Hill's announcement in March 1982 was a preemptive strike by the gay business owners, including O'Muhundro. If nothing else, it served notice that the GSBA was willing to flex muscle and tell the political activists what kind of community image the business owners now wanted in the wake of Initiative Thirteen. Not only did the newly visible entrepreneurs intend to take the march away from the old-line activists, they announced a bit of revisionist history as well. The 1982 celebration, Hill said, would not be the Annual Seattle Lesbian/Gay Pride March. Instead, it would be called, "Celebration—The First Northwest Lesbian/Gay Pride Parade." And, Hill added, the parade would occur on Broadway, not in downtown Seattle. The steering committee included O'Muhundro.

Hill rationalized the intervention by saying the GSBA would pick up the tab for the parade, one of its earliest promises of money to be redistributed to the community. But for the first time, he also said, entry forms would be required for those wanting to join, and a charge would be attached—five dollars for nonprofit organizations and ten dollars for businesses.

The political activists were livid. Su Docekal, a longtime socialist feminist and member of the Stonewall Committee (formed from activists who had organized the 1981 march), told the *Seattle Gay News* that she was "appalled at the sheer arrogance of the GSBA." She called the business operators "self-appointed leaders," denounced their "gall," accused them of trying to delude gays and lesbians into thinking their political struggles were over, and urged others to create something more than a "Mardi Gras parade." It was as bitter a split as had occurred in 1978 when the Dorian Group had failed to endorse the walk because of the pending

vote on Initiative Thirteen. For a while, it seemed there might be two separate events—a parade for the business group and a march for the gay activists.

The Stonewall Committee issued a call to an organizing meeting, passing out fliers in the bars that read: "We can have more than just a mardi gras—let's celebrate with outspoken resistance to Reaganomics and the right wing. Lesbian/Gay Pride Week is the time to publicly defend our civil rights and to show solidarity with all the oppressed in our common fight for social justice." When the flier arrived at O'Muhundro's bar, he calmly replied, "It's good to see people getting together to celebrate. They're [the Stonewall Committee] using another means to get people involved who might not otherwise participate." It was a businessman's approach—all customers welcome. But, as his phrasing showed, he still intended the theme to be celebration, not protest.

Stonewall members were less generous. One told the *Seattle Gay News* that what GSBA had done "is an insult to the community. What they want is what is good for business and that can be treacherous for the gay movement."

Despite the feud, those who attended Stonewall's organizing meetings quickly decided that sponsoring a competing march would be even more harmful than agreeing to the business group's plans. The GSBA had outflanked them by moving early, and, after all, the businessmen had the money. The activists instead decided to swallow at least some of their anger and enter a political contingent in the parade. With about fifty people, it was the largest of the groups, its participants marching—not parading—behind a somewhat tongue-in-cheek banner that said, "Celebrate lesbian/gay resistance to the right wing." Even the *Seattle Gay News,* committed though it had been to forceful political activism, surrendered that year and in its headlines continually referred to the event as a "parade" rather than a "march."[19]

That year, for the first time, the parade proceeded the full length of Broadway's commercial district—an affirmation of the emerging importance of the new business zone.

The battle over parade versus march seesawed for two more years until the struggle peaked predictably. Two separate events were held in 1984—a parade on Broadway on Saturday, and a political march beginning in the Central District and moving to Volunteer Park on Sunday. That, finally, seemed to exhaust everyone.

In 1985, a blunt-talking lesbian street activist named Carol Sterling joined a member of the GSBA, Larry Lefler, to co-chair a single event named the Lesbian/Gay Parade March and Freedom Rally. It was a Denny/Maynard–style compromise, as rhetorically cumbersome as navigating the peculiarly angled streets the two original pioneers had platted and joined at the Deadline, but like that skew, worth the trouble if it meant harmony. The walk settled regularly onto Broadway, adding even more heavily to the street's new role as the center of Seattle's gay community. In 1992 the name became even more cumbersome, but more inclusive of the city's various sexual minorities, with a retitling: the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/

Transgender Pride Parade/March and Freedom Rally. Many people seemed to give up the old battles and just started calling it the Pride Parade.[20]

By then, everyone from beer companies to floral shops to the police and fire departments had entries, and mayors and politicians, rather than being the targets of the civil rights marches, would be walking in them, just a few spots back from the bare-breasted dykes on motorbikes who always led.

In 1986, the GSBA took another step to solidify the community's economic structure, establishing a new philanthropic organization called the Pride Foundation. The idea was to gather money and estates from lesbians and gays and then redistribute the wealth to the community's nonprofit organizations. One of the foundation's early presidents likened it to a "Gay United Way," saying its intent was to break "the cycle of money made, money spent, and money gone." To ensure that competition for the money would not aggravate the still-existing splits between gay men and women, the foundation decided to target one-third of its gifts to nonprofits serving lesbians, one-third to those for men, and the final third to those helping both.[21]

The idea had been tested in San Francisco, where the local gay business group had created its own philanthropic arm years earlier, but the question was whether the model could actually succeed outside that mecca in a community much smaller and presumably more limited in wealth. It was a bit like Arthur Denny's decision to help create a bank in Seattle rather than continue to rely on financiers outside the little village—even though at the time Seattle had precious little indigenous cash. Like the Dexter Horton Bank, begun more on the reputation of its owners than on the size of its cash reserves, the Pride Foundation started small, mostly by securing a board of directors whose members agreed to pledge free time and $250 a year each. It also spread its money-gathering net by forming an advisory board whose members did not have to commit as much time, but agreed to contribute $1,000 each.

Seattle's gay community had not been entirely without such philanthropy. In the early 1970s, when the first Gay Community Center had folded, some of its organizers had formed Gay Community Social Services, which initially bought land on the Olympic Peninsula for gays wanting a rural retreat. When arsonists burned the retreat, the land was sold and GCSS used the money to catalyze gay theater groups and even a national magazine for rural lesbians and gays called *RFD*. Often, GCSS served as a kind of entrepreneur, allowing other groups to grow under its nonprofit status until they were ready for independence, but GCSS had never taken as aggressive an approach to raising and investing capital as the businessmen starting the Pride Foundation. Also, GCSS had always been linked to the gay liberationists, rather than to the gay business community, which meant it had less access to effective fund-raising.

In retrospect, the Pride Foundation's first grants seem terribly small—about

three hundred dollars each to eight organizations in 1987. The Lesbian Resource Center got help to build a wheelchair ramp; the Seattle Counseling Service, money for electrical repairs and a new brochure. Another group used its grant to rent a meeting space. But it was the symbol of gays raising and then distributing money that counted. By 1988, the Pride Foundation's assets climbed dramatically. One of its organizers, Allan Tonning, was an entrepreneur successful at starting and selling a number of small businesses. When he died, he bequeathed one million dollars to the foundation he had helped start, at the time perhaps the largest sum ever left to a gay organization. The same year, the foundation received another hundred thousand dollars from a former city employee who had been largely unknown in the lesbian and gay community. In life, the man had chosen privacy; in death, he wanted to help fight back.

By 1988, the foundation had talked its way into becoming one of the charities recognized by the United Way. Gays and lesbians were now able to designate it on a payroll deduction form. And by 1990, it had contracted with a bank to issue a Pride Foundation MasterCard—the first successful attempt to do so by a lesbian/gay organization. Every credit card purchase meant a few extra pennies or dollars.

The system of tapping into the lesbian and gay community's own wealth and earning power—and then channeling it back to the gay charities that needed the money—had begun to work.

In the early 1990s, the GSBA staged an annual business fair in the Broadway Market, inviting its members to staff booths and talk to passersby about their products and services. One day, a story in the *Seattle Times* reported, a pair of middle-aged women wandered into the fair and began talking to each other. One said quietly to the other, "I didn't realize so many of these people were in business."[22]

That realization that so many publicly out gays and lesbians had become a part of the business world was yet another opening in the civic conversation about homosexual identity. A scholar on city planning, Manuel Castells, once studied the visible gay business structure in San Francisco and reached a conclusion that also applies to Seattle. In gay business districts, he wrote, "We are in a merchant world and in a world of urban freedom."

"We are almost," he added, "in the world of the Renaissance city where political freedom, economic exchange, and cultural innovation, as well as open sexuality, developed together in a self-reinforcing process on the basis of a common space won by citizens struggling for their freedom."[23]

In Seattle, Broadway had become that common space.