

Transcript of edited excerpts.

BERNARDIN, TOM

"My name is Tom Bernardin... and I have been here in the Village, in this building, for forty years.

Stonewall, of course, is the famous—1969. June, 1969. Judy Garland is lying in state at Campbell's Funeral Home on Madison Avenue, causing great disruption to the gay community... But there's something that happened three years and three months before that, at Julius', which I consider to be one of the opening salvos in the gay liberation movement.

There was an ordinance in the state liquor authority that it was illegal to serve homosexuals a cocktail, believe it or not. There was a group, the Mattachine Society. Harry Hay and a group of kids from California in the early '50s start this group. Very secretive. You're not in the public. You're in somebody's house, OK? They start something called the Mattachine Society. Brilliant name. The Mattachines were a theatrical troupe in medieval France, in my understanding. They're the court jesters. They could tell the truth to the king. They could make fun of his affairs, all of this kind of stuff, without getting their head chopped off. They are the truth tellers... They founded this group, the Mattachine Society, and then lo and behold chapters open up in Washington, DC, in New York City, and whatnot... These are guys in their twenties— young kids. I would never have been able to do that. I was just too frightened by the whole thing so I salute these folks. They decide they want to challenge the state liquor authority regulation. They staged what's known as the sip-in, the famous Sip-In of April 1966, three years and two months before Stonewall."

2nd Sound Clip

"The Village, at that time, with this newfound liberation, this happens I think in any movement. All of a sudden we're communicating with each other. We're getting politically active. We're starting to get some acceptance. And sex. Just sex. That had to implode on itself. It just had to. Because it was just wild. It was just crazy! The gay bars, and the trucks over on Jane Street, and the Mine Shaft, and the Anvil—and, oh god, the Dugout and the bath houses. And it was fabulous! It was terrific... I loved it. And I fully partook in it. I found it to be all very good-natured, a heck of a lot of fun—and ultimately very dangerous. It had to stop.

I was very fortunate that I did not contract HIV. There was a time here that you would have thought a concentration camp had opened up, that—it was just horrible. It was horrible. I mean how many friends did you lose? Forty? My college friends, the guys that I moved to New York to be with, I lost most of them. Terrible, terrible. The first place, the first hospital to welcome, to treat them with any sort of dignity? Saint Vincent's. And now, here we go. You know, it's down the block from me, two blocks, and going to be high-end condos."