

# Constellations: Inspirations and Limits to Mapping *A Queer New York*

Jack Giesecking  
@jgieseking

**I. What Comes Before / Approach**

II. Stories & Landscapes / Rereading Lesbian-Queer Space

III. Radical Geographical Imaginations / Seeing Constellations

IV. Public Engagement / An Everyday Queer New York

V. What Comes After / Next Steps



*What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.*

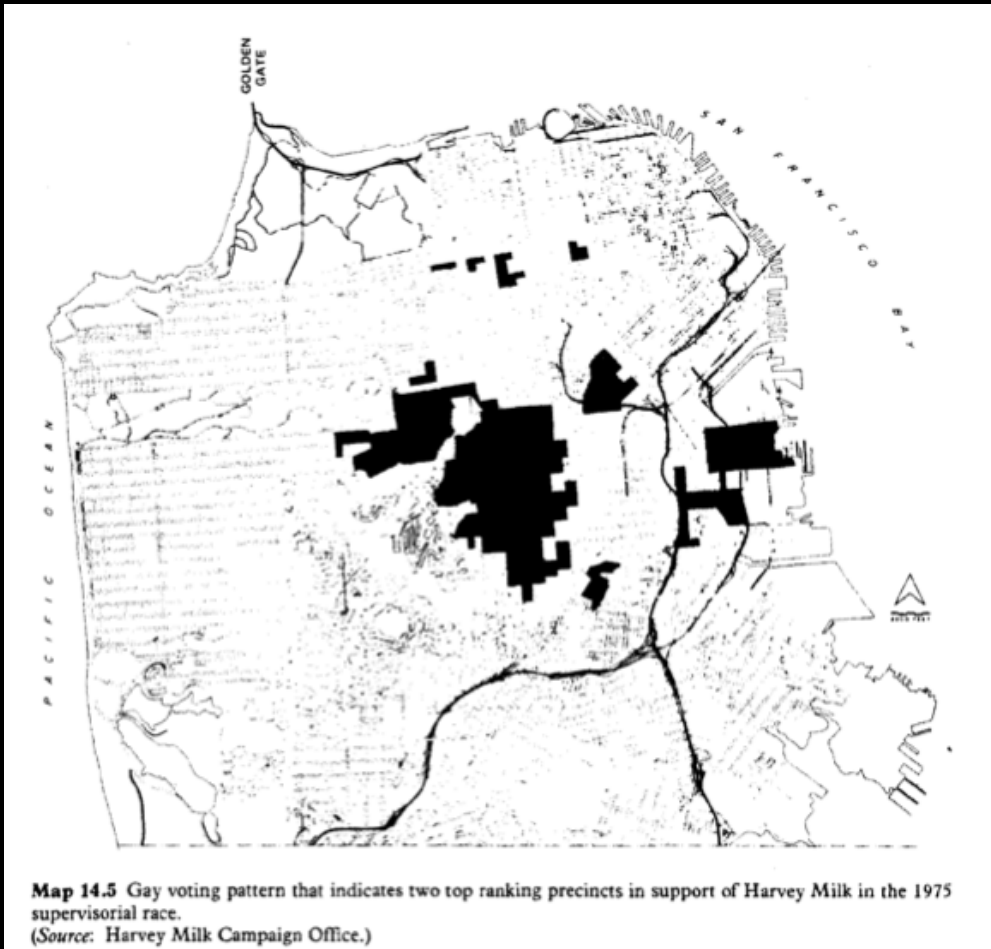
- Michel de Certeau

Yet, what if the stories of your participants  
are already "cut up"?

**What the story cuts up, the map (and the dataviz) also cuts  
across.**

# LGBTQ Production of Space

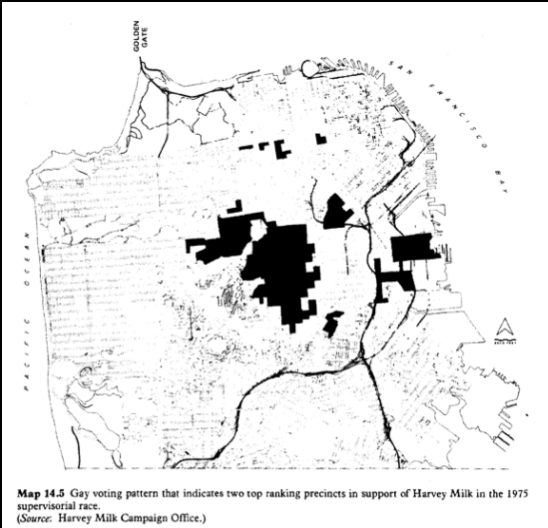
- "LGBTQ" = bars, neighborhoods, and cities
- Territoriality & publics of ethnic enclave model framed as LGBTQ liberation
- Legitimization and rights via gentrification and territory-making
- Little to no consideration of racialized gayborhoods
- Lesbians in "networks," "concentrations," "spatialized communities," etc.



Manuel Castells 1983

# LGBTQ vs Women's / \*TGNCP's Production of Space

\*TGNCP = trans and gender  
non-conforming people



Manuel Castells 1983



Dyke March 2012 c/o LesbianHerstoryArchives.org

*What happens when  
you start from the  
lives and spaces of  
women and TGNCP?*

*While accounting for  
sexuality, race, and  
class?*

*Over time?*

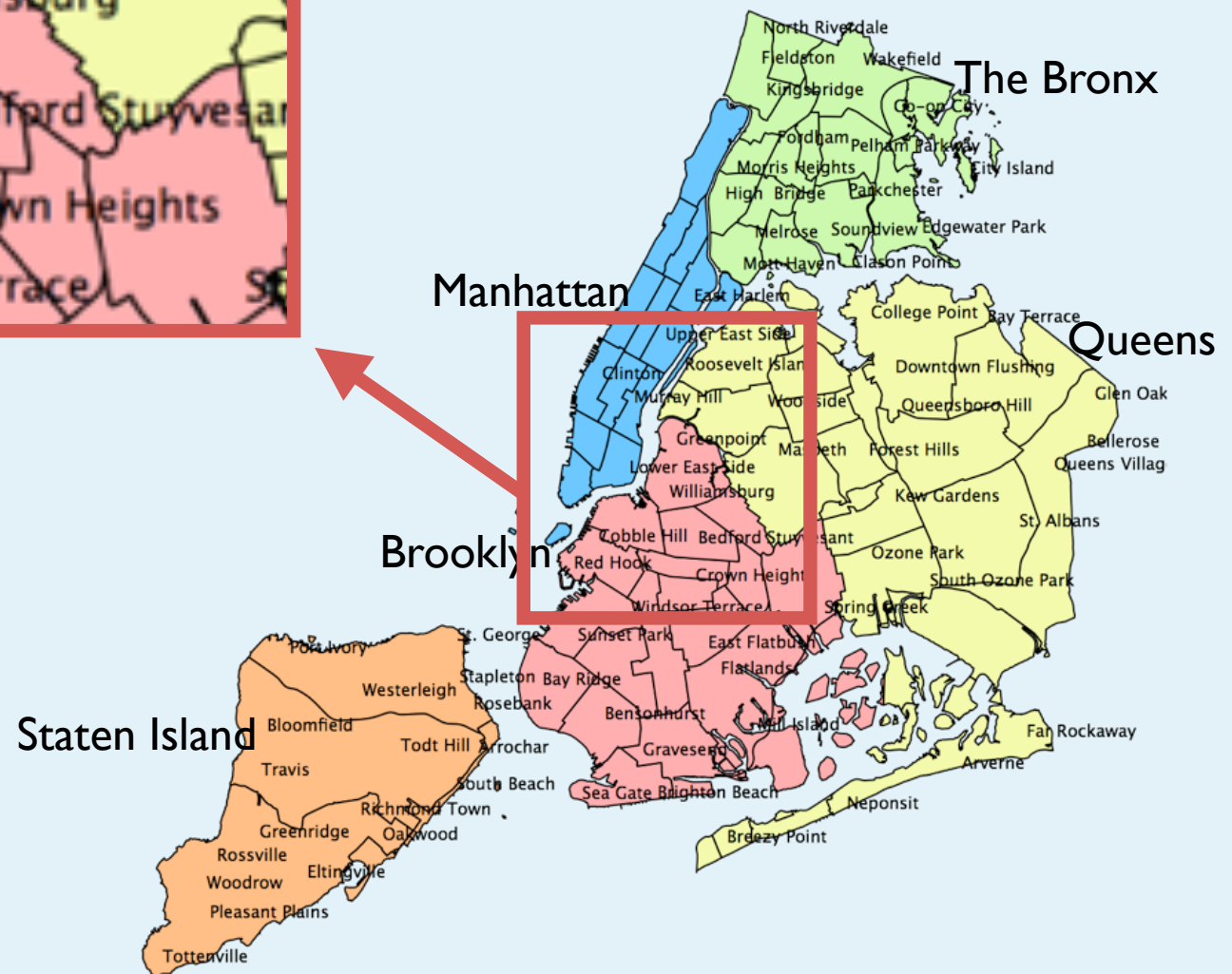
***Constellations:***

production of space that  
forefronts the multi  
scalar production of  
marginalized groups'  
places that come and go  
like stars in the sky in  
fragmented and fleeting  
patterns, rather than  
territorial models, and  
are bound by the bodies  
of individuals within  
those groups moving  
between them





# (Lesbian-Queer) New York City



How do you tell the story of those made “invisible”?

- Interviewing 47 self-identified lesbians and queers across 3 generations about their everyday lives
- Came out btw 1983-2008
- Spent most of time in NYC
- Shared mental maps & artifacts

- Archival research
- 382 organizational records
- 25 years of publications
- Participatory action online focus group to co-construct theory



1983-2008 NYC

# MORAL MAJORITY REPORT



July, 1983  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
480 East Street  
Lynchburg, VA 23804

Falwell Plans  
Campaign to Double  
Moral Majority  
See page 5

Attorney Whitehead  
Says Bob Jones  
Ruling Has  
Dangerous  
Implications  
See page 6

Florida Principal  
Censors Bible Club  
Ad From School  
Yearbook  
See page 12

\*\*\* Highlights \*\*\*

Liberal Telethon  
Prompts Calls From  
Angered Conservatives  
See page 8

Mississippi's Mike Wells  
Battles Hard Core Porn  
Kings  
See page 8

Senate Judiciary

## AIDS



Homosexual Diseases  
in Families

QUEER  
IS  
HERE



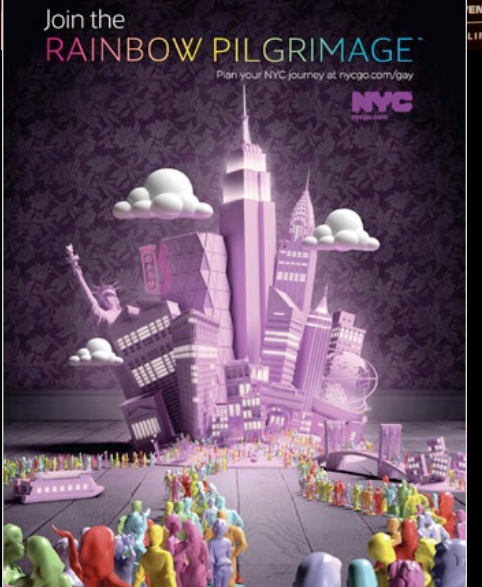
! QUEER

NATION NY

GO!  
TAKE A BOW!



AMENDMENT AFTERMATH: DAYS OF RECKONING AND HOPE / AND: GO OUT!



WE'RE NOT WAITING  
WE'LL BE  
BELIEVE IN CREATIVE ACTIVISM: LOUD, BOLD, SEXY, SILLY, FIERCE, TASTY  
AND DRAMATIC. ARREST OPTIONAL.  
THINK DEMONSTRATIONS ARE A GOOD TIME AND A GREAT PLACE TO CRUISE  
WOMEN. DON'T HAVE PATIENCE FOR POLITE POLITICS. ARE BORED WITH THE  
BOYS. BELIEVE CONFRONTATION FOSTERS GROWTH AND STRONG BONES.  
BELIEVE IN RECRUITMENT. NOT BY THE ARMY. NOT OF STRAIGHT WOMEN.  
ARE NOT CONTENT WITH GHETTOS. WE WANT YOUR HOUSE, YOUR JOB, YOUR  
FREQUENT FLYER MILES. WE'LL SELL YOUR JEWELRY TO SUBSIDIZE OUR  
MOVEMENT. WE DEMAND UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE AND HOUSING. WE  
DEMAND FOOD AND SHELTER FOR ALL HOMELESS LESBIANS. WE ARE THE  
13TH STEP. THINK GIRL GANGS ARE THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

### LESBIAN SEX

THINK SEX IS A DAILY LIBATION. GOOD ENERGY FOR ACTIONS. CRAVE,  
ENJOY, EXPLORE, SUFFER FROM NEW IDEAS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.  
SLUMBER PARTIES, POLYGAMY, PERSONAL ADS, AFFINITY GROUPS.  
USE LIVE ACTION WORDS: lick, waltz, eat, fuck, kiss, bite, give it up, hit the dirt

### LESBIAN ACTIVISM

THINK ACTIONS MUST BE LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL, GLOBAL, COSMIC.  
THINK CLOSETED LESBIANS, QUEER BOYS AND SYMPATHETIC STRAIGHTS  
SHOULD SEND US MONEY.

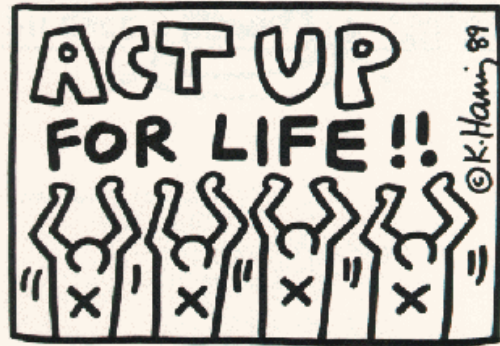
PLAN TO TARGET HOMOPHOBES OF EVERY STRIPE AND INFILTRATE THE  
CHRISTIAN RIGHT.

SCHEME AND SCREAM AND FIGHT REAL MEAN

the lesbian

AVENGERS

THE LESBIAN AVENGERS: WE RECRUIT



Images: © Moral Majority, Levine Roberts, Keith Haring, n/a,  
Queer Nation, Lesbian Avengers, GO, gonyc.gov





# ***A Queer New York***

## **Table of Contents**

Preface: Blue Star Tattoos of New York City

1. A Lesbian-Queer Geographical Imagination of the City

2. Belonging in Greenwich Village and Gay Manhattan

3. You vs. Us in Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights

4. Dyke Slope

5. Constellating a Queer Map of the Lesbian City

Epilogue: What We Cannot Not Want

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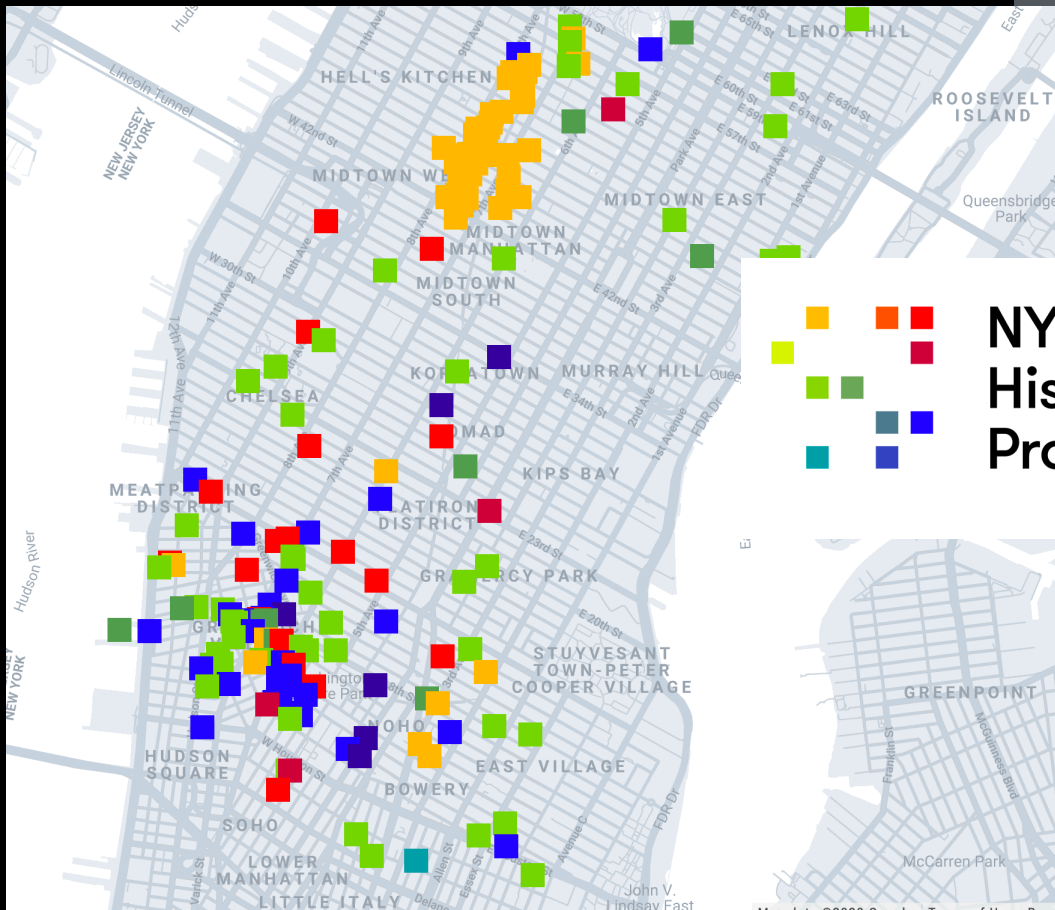
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Epilogue: What We Cannot Not Want

# Greenwich Village



## NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project





[Now, the LGBT Community Center] . . . anchors [the neighborhood] as any kind of queer space at all. [In the 1980s, the places I put on my map were] Judith's Room . . . and Identity House . . . and the Duchess. That's sort of it. I haven't covered too much ground. But it was definitely: you want to hold hands? It had to be in the Village. You couldn't do it in any of these other neighborhoods.

- Chris '86  
(white, middle-class, butch)

New York Times, December 1983





Naom

Wanda

Bailey

Wanda

Bailey

woo

want

Wanda

your

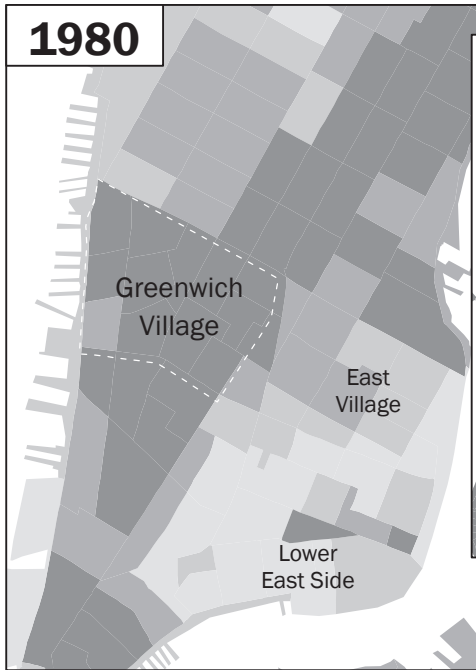
then totally cracked. And then to the big Mohawk fabulouso. It ran the gambit. Big bad Kate '03: And now the kids at the Piers, sort of the—what's the phrase? What was Giuliani's phrase?

Holly '03: *[using air quotes]* "Quality of life."

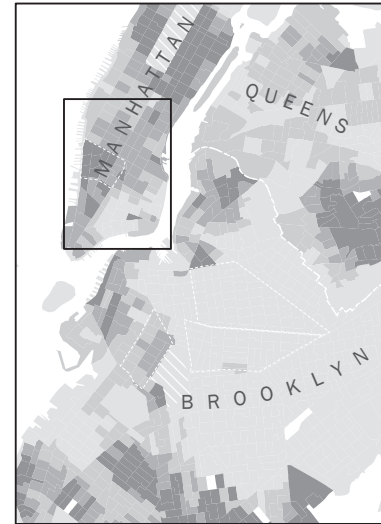
Kate: *[sarcastically]* Quality of life, ha, yeah. Like kids being harassed and arrested on the Piers . . . where are they gonna go? And whose life?

# Greenwich Village

**1980**



Percent White  
Figure



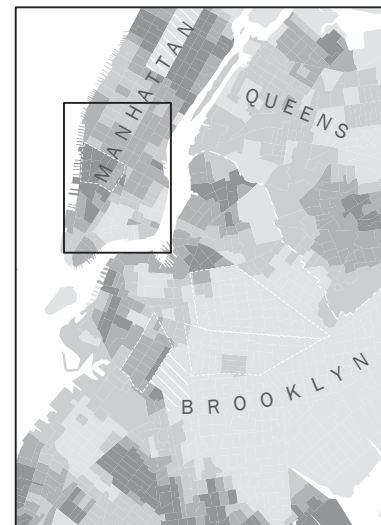
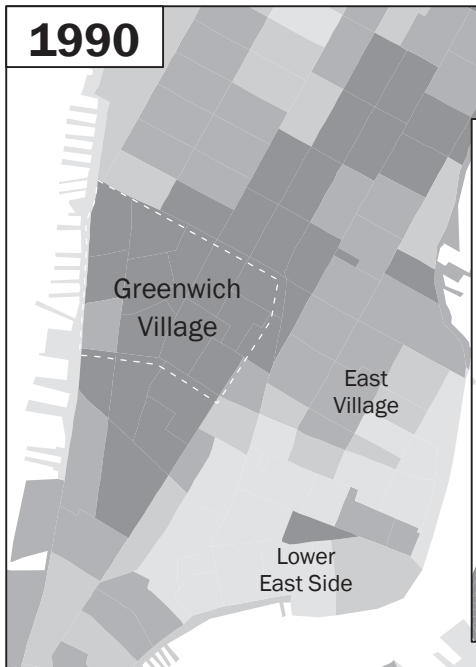
**2000**



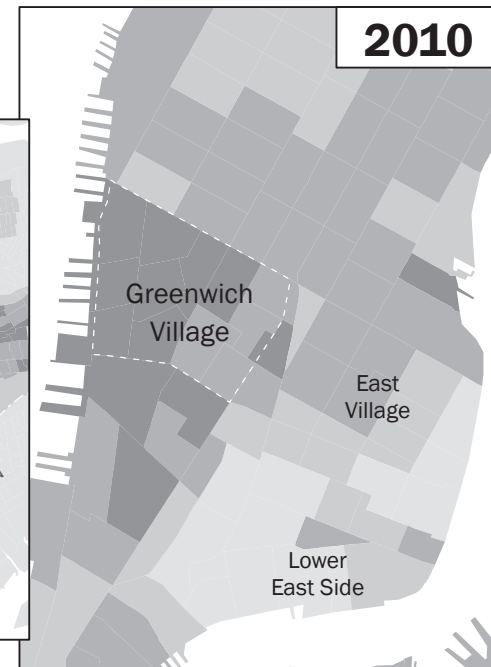
Percent White

- less than 40
- 40 - 70
- 71 - 85
- more than 85

**1990**



**2010**





# Greenwich Village

- Myth of territorial liberation tied to American Dream notions of poetry ownership
- Lesbians, queers, and TGNCP, especially PoC and poor people, mark neighborhood as visibly queer but cannot afford to stay
- An Oz that we build and we come home to, again & again, but rarely get to stay



6sqft 2019



JGleseking 2018



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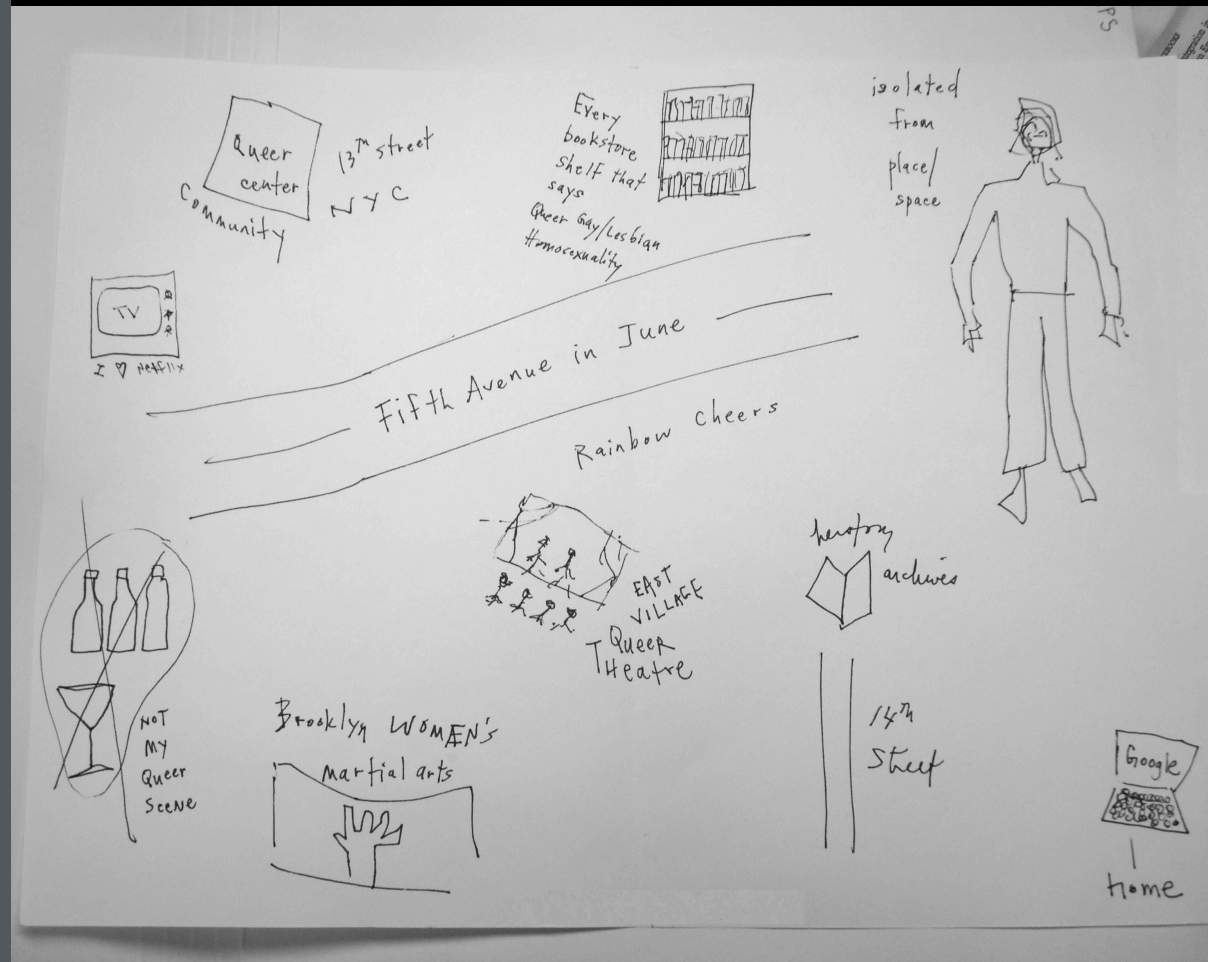
Epilogue: What We Cannot Not Want

Stars

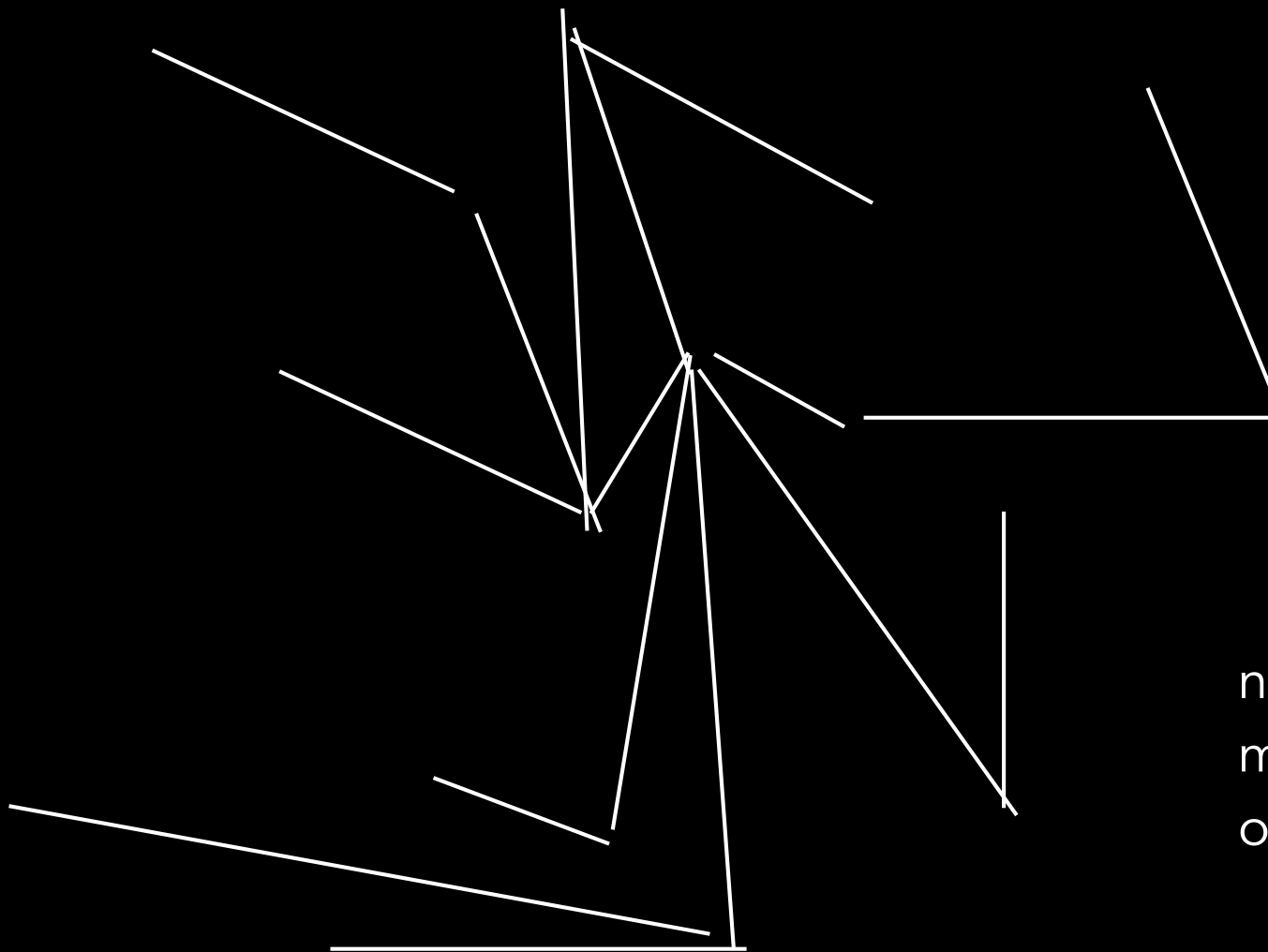
place-making  
embodiment

# Lesbian-Queer Geographical Imagination

[My lesbian spaces were] every bookstore shelf that says Queer/Gay/Lesbian/Homosexuality. The [LGBT] Center, I've gone to things there. ...I heart Netflix. Googling. Herstory Archives on 14th Street. Fifth Avenue in June, Pride, and East Village queer theater. I've seen some great lesbo plays in the East Village. ... So, that's mine. And it's always fragmented. -Eva '98 (white, middle class)



Lines

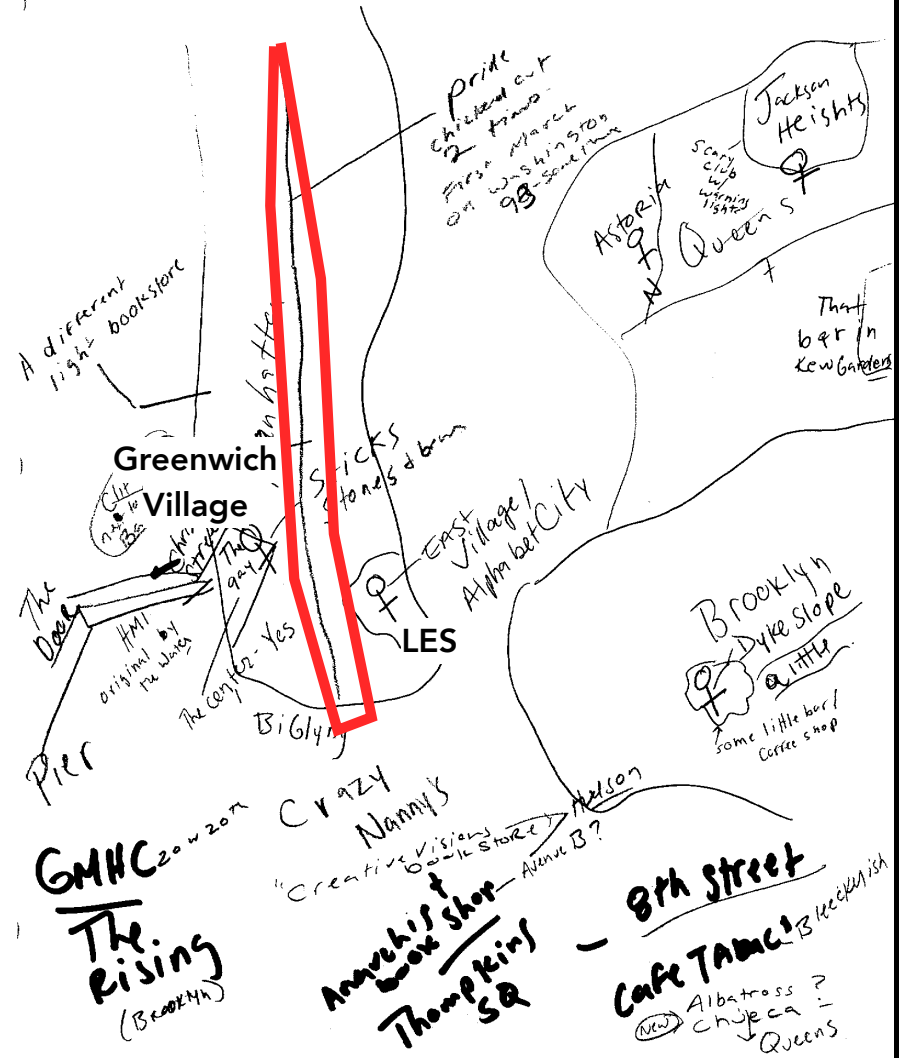


networks  
mobilities  
orientations

# Lesbian-Queer Geographical Imagination

It's something I actually do to this day...apparently there's a spot, and my girlfriend finally pointed it out, where I would drop hands... One day, she was like [pounds fist], "Why'd you do that, you're not proud of me?!" [Annabelle '97, Rachel '00, Holly '03 (white, working-, and middle-class): "Mm-hm" (nodding)] ... I didn't even realize. I had trained myself that just, if you're walking you just drop hands because... once I hit Sixth Avenue in the Village you drop hands... Then you get to the East Village and you can hold hands again. [group laughter] -Naomi '91 (Black, working-middle class)

## Naomi '91's Map

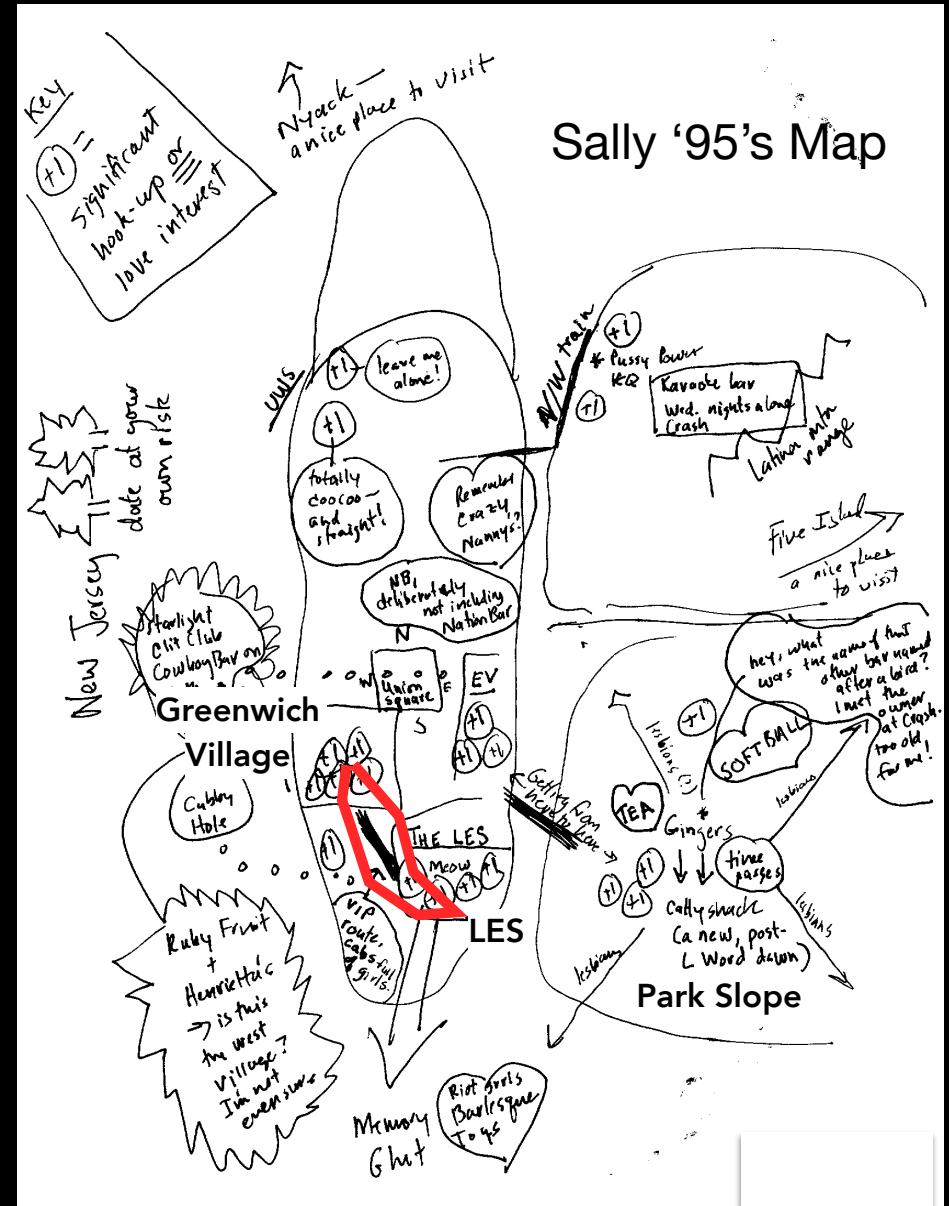




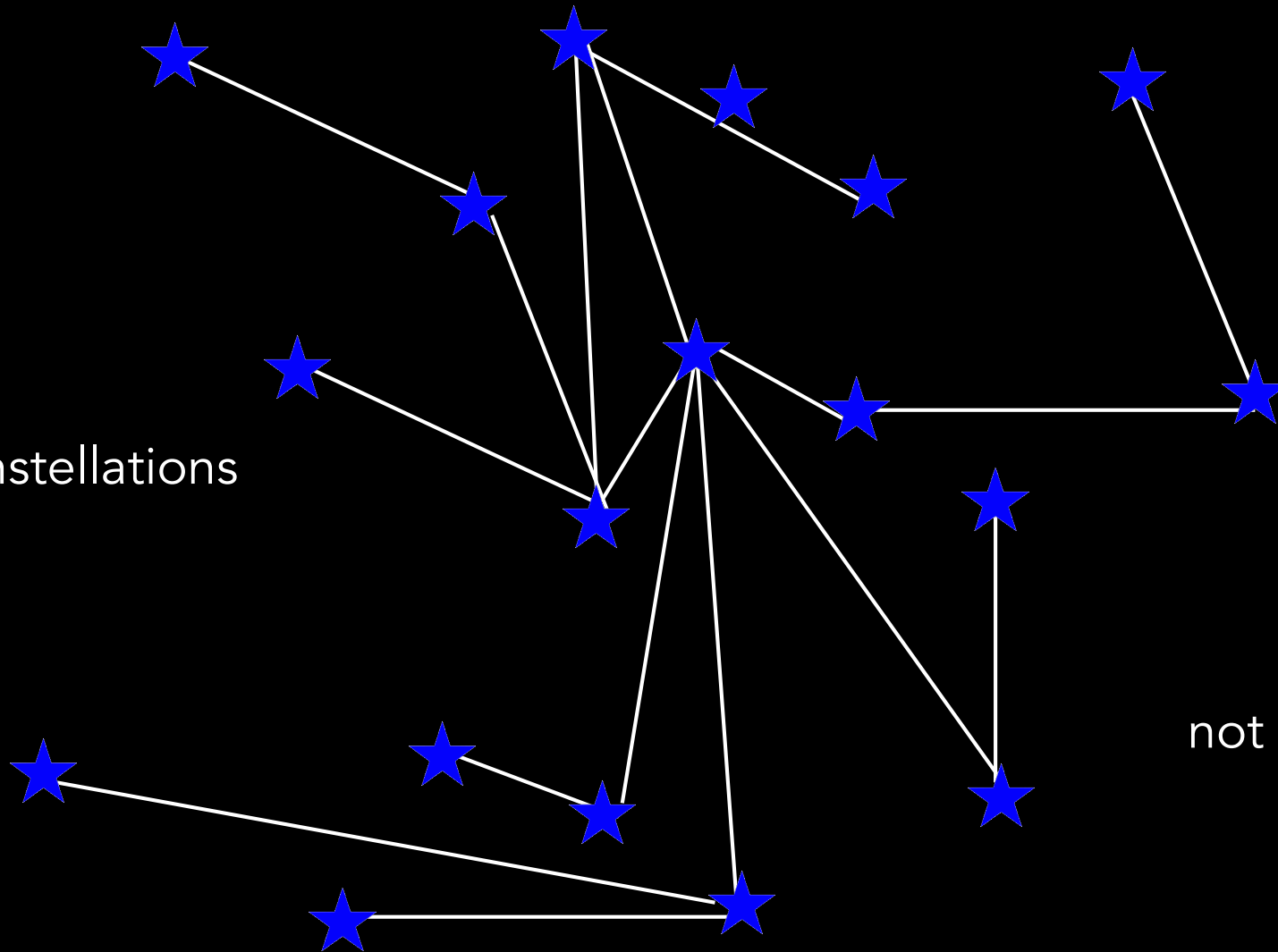
# Lesbian-Queer Geographical Imagination

I have the route from Meow Mix [on the Lower East Side] over to Henrietta's and Rubyfruit [in Greenwich Village] and that whole area. 'Cause [laughs] how we were gonna get from the Lower East Side area over there, it was always like, "Are we going to take a cab?" "We never take cabs!"

-Sally '95 (white, middle class)



Constellations



not territoriality

Nothing says  
Lesbian Love

Like

U-HAUL



luckypuppy.net

I move faster than a lesbian couple  
with a U-Haul.



your e cards  
someecards.com

SHE SAID  
YES!

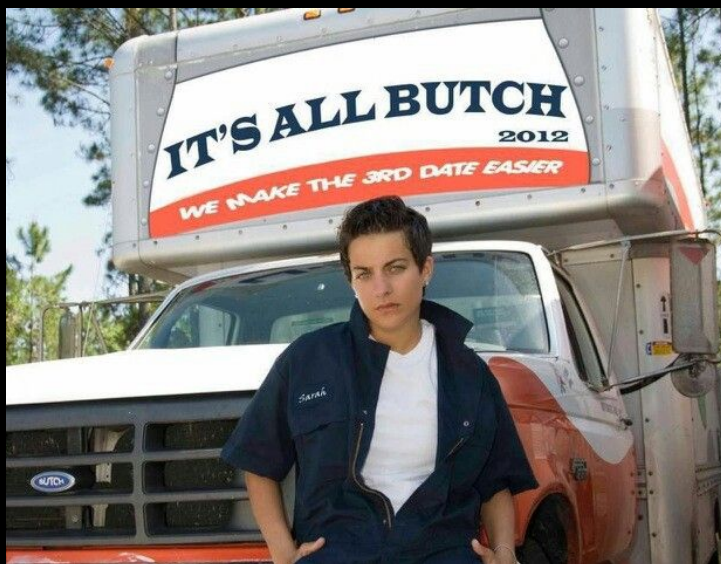


## U-Haul lesbian

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **U-Haul lesbian** or **U-Haul syndrome** is a [stereotype](#) of [lesbian relationships](#),<sup>[1]</sup> referring to the joke that lesbians tend to move in together on the second date. It suggests an extreme inclination toward [monogamy](#) or [committed relationships](#). It can be considered either complimentary or pejorative, depending on context.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

What if we took the geography of  
a lesbian stereotype seriously?



WHAT DOES A  
LESBIAN BRING  
ON A 2ND  
DATE?

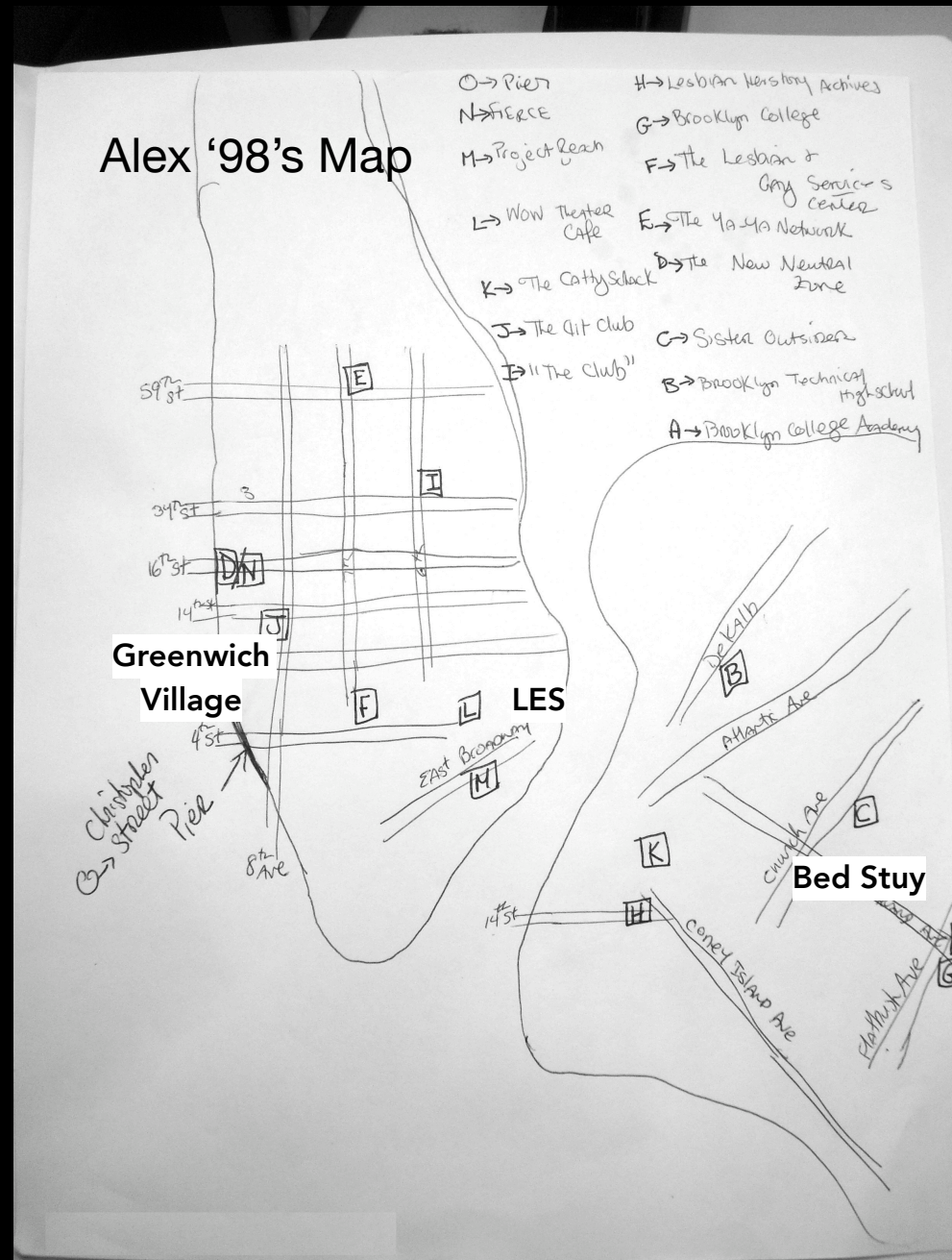


LESBIANCOUPLES.US

# Lesbian-Queer Geographical Imagination

The reason why I keep these keys is because . . . I moved out of my mother's house after I came out. She didn't kick me out but it was sort of...respectful. I didn't want to be there taking girls. ... ever since then, at seventeen, I always was living with a girlfriend. I have never not lived with a girlfriend. . . . I just moved from my last place—where these keys are [holds up one set of keys]—to my new place [holds up the other set] where these are. [laughs] And I still go back and forth to get my mail. . . . My keys say it all. And, you know [holds up a couple of keys], the keys [for the place where I volunteer], [holds up another couple of keys] and the keys [for the place where I work]. Which is why I still have these.

-Alex '98 (Black, middle class)

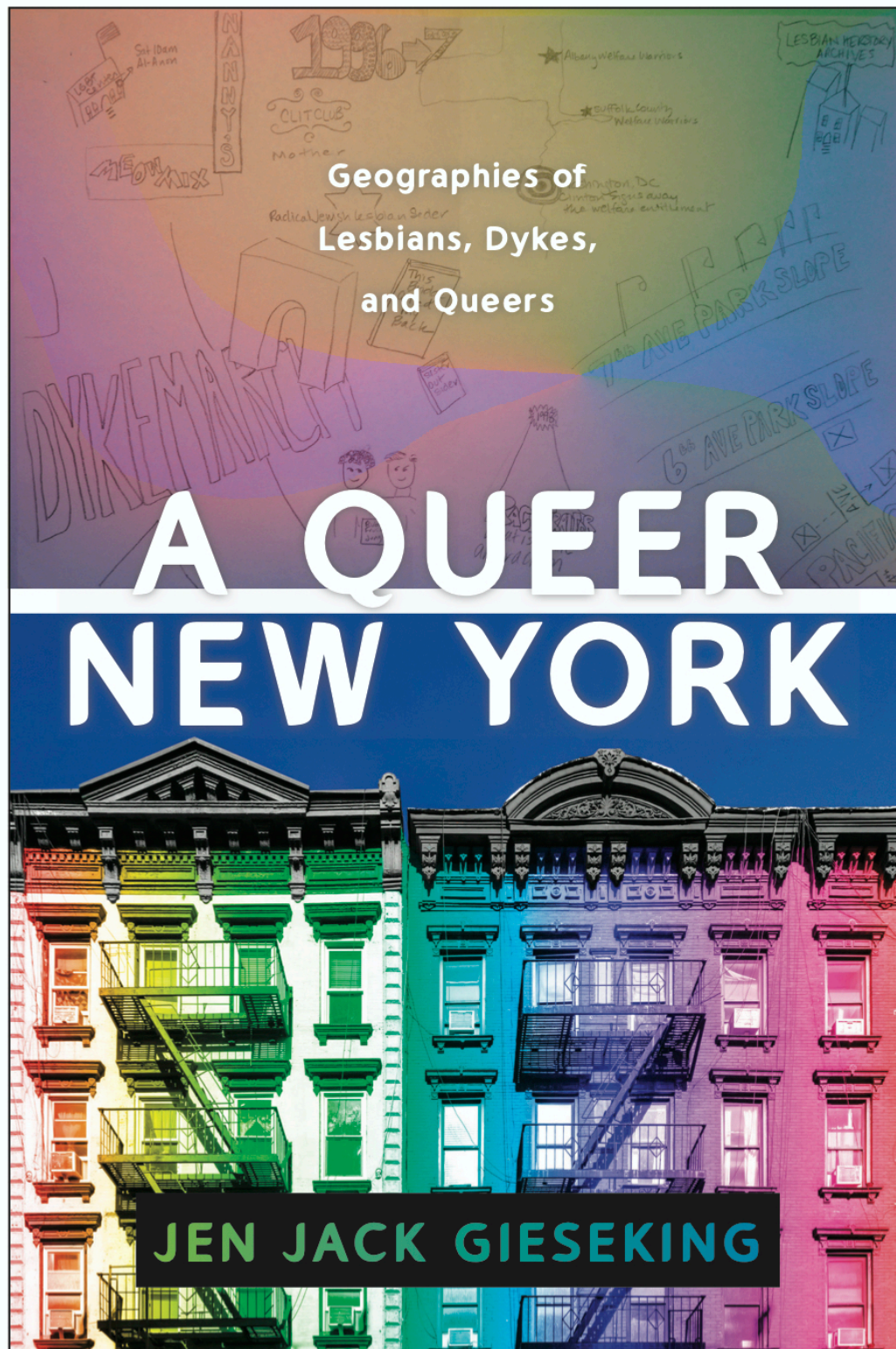




***Constellations:***

production of space that  
forefronts the multi  
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places that come and go  
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patterns, rather than  
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are bound by the bodies  
of individuals within  
those groups moving  
between them





**A Queer New York is  
the first lesbian and/or  
queer history of NYC.**

**Book OA on opensquare NYU &  
papers OA on jgieseking.org**

- Mapping Lesbian and Queer Lines of Desire: Constellations of Queer Urban Space (*Society & Space*, 2020)
- Crossing Over into Territories of the Body: Urban Territories, Borders, and Lesbian-Queer Bodies in New York City (*Area*, 2015)
- Useful Instability: the Queer Social and Spatial Production of the Lesbian Herstory Archives (*Radical History Review*, 2015)
- Urban Margins on the Move: Rethinking LGBTQ Inclusion by Queering the Place of the Gayborhood (*Berliner Blätter*, 2015)

Two book chapters (2016, 2013)

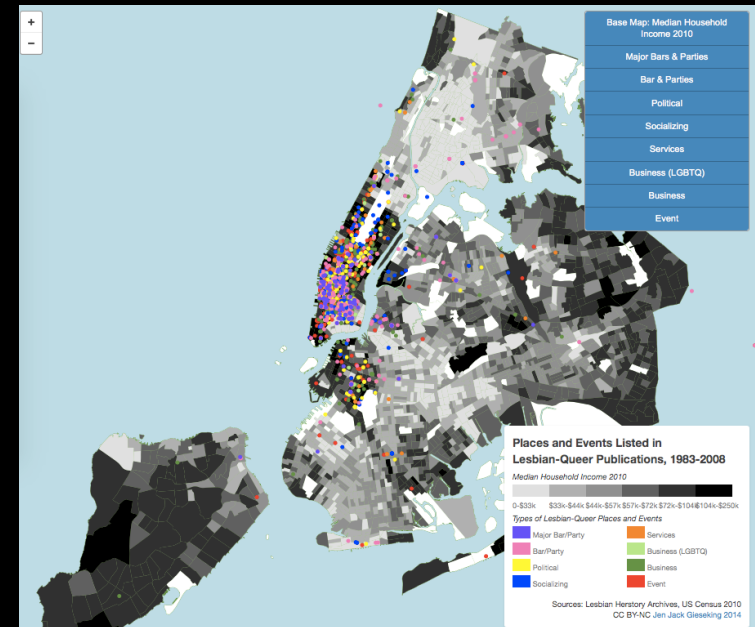
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# An Everyday Queer New York

(the website, its data, and the GIS  
within & beyond)

# An Everyday Queer New York (the website, its data, and the GIS within & beyond)

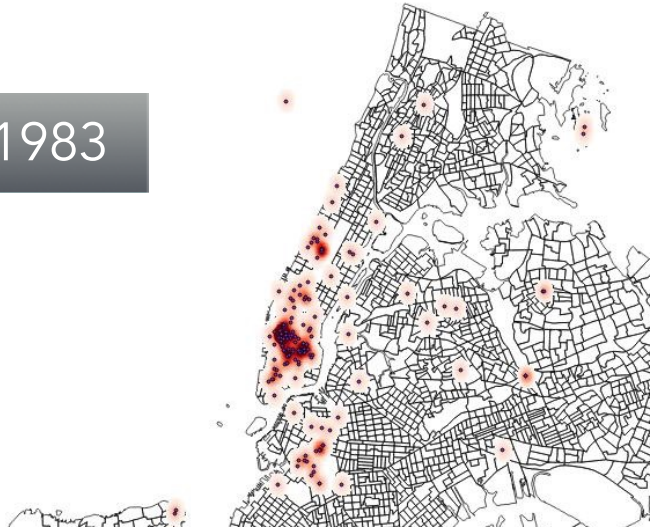


Lesbian Herstory Archives  
Est. 1974 (now in Brooklyn, NY)  
Largest lesbian archives in the world



# Heat Map: Organizations

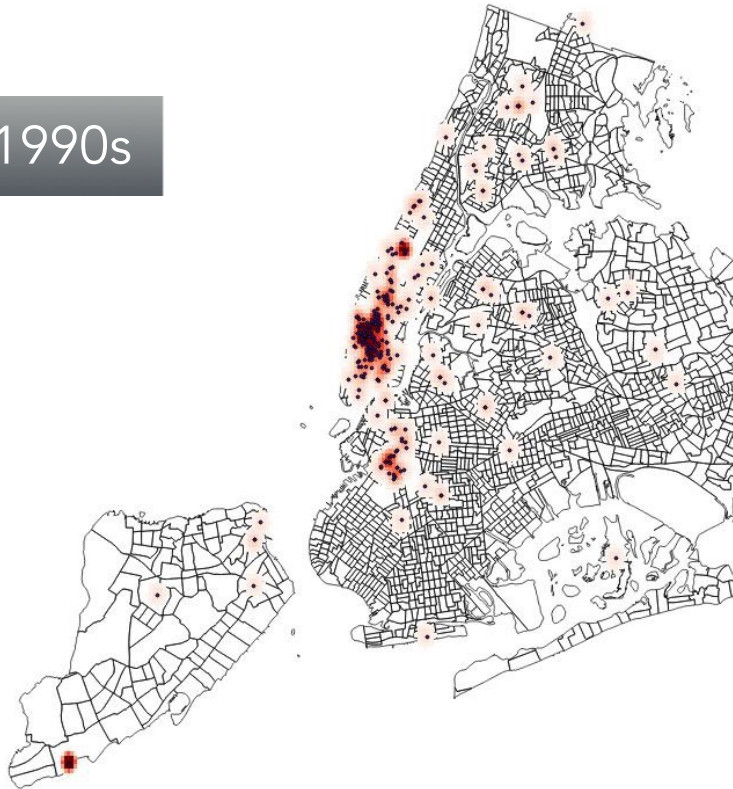
Pre-1983



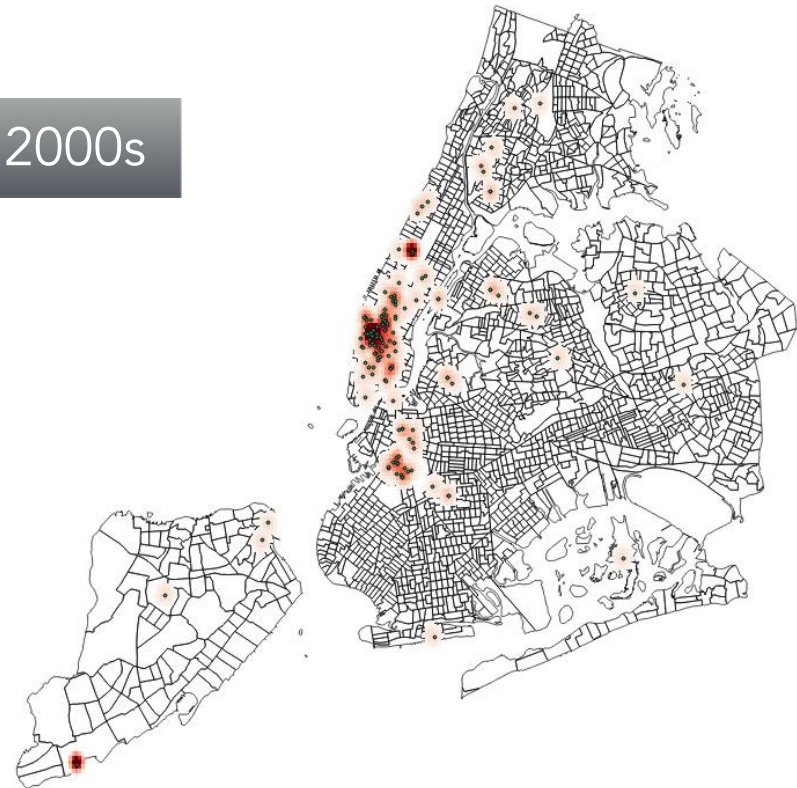
1980s



1990s



2000s



# An Everyday Queer New York

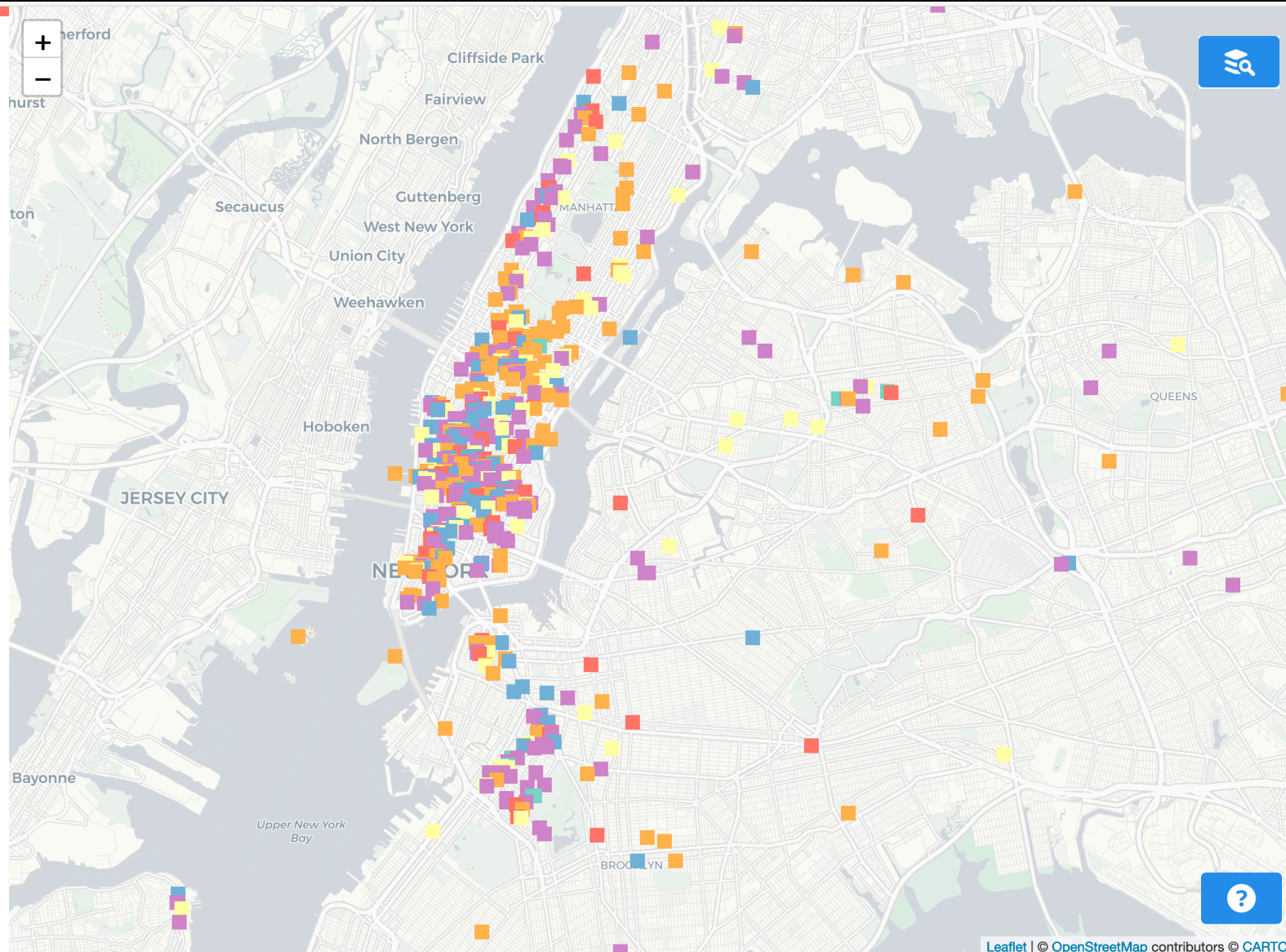
(the website)

## An Everyday Queer New York (1983-2008)

Filter LGBTQ organizations by year  
and/or category -- selecting a  
category below will show only that  
category

Select a year: 1983 – 2008

- ☐ activism (zaps / direct actions)
- ☐ age-related (youth / elderly)
- ☐ AIDS
- ☐ anti-capitalism
- ☐ anti-militarization / anti-war
- ☐ arts
- ☐ coalition
- ☐ disability
- ☐ environment
- ☐ family/marriage/adoption
- ☐ feminist concerns
- ☐ health (physical / mental)
- ☐ history
- ☐ housing/homelessness
- ☐ immigration





# An Everyday Queer New York

(the website)

## An Everyday Queer New York (1983-2008)

What are the places of lesbians and queers, including and beyond popular bars and bookstores? Compiling addresses from 25 years of lesbian publications, this in-progress map shows the complicated historical geographies of New York City lesbians, queers, and trans people assigned female at birth. [Click here](#) for more about this map and forthcoming book, *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers, 1983-2008*.

Data from the Lesbian Herstory Archives and JGieseke. Map authored by Gieseke / Funke 2019.



Leaflet | Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA, Imagery © Mapbox

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In-Progress

## Dyke Bars\*: Queer Spaces for the End Times



**On the Closing of the Last Lesbian Bar in San Francisco: What the Demise of the Lex Tells Us About Gentrification**





# *Dyke Bars\*: Queer Spaces for the End Times*

Part 1: Beyond the Queer Failure to  
the Good Enough Dyke Bar\*

Part 2: Rewriting Lesbian Bar History

Part 3: How We Make Bar Culture

Part 4: Interdependence and Other  
Queer Spaces of Survival

Part 5: Imagining Radical Futures in  
Dyke Bar Art

## **On the Closing of the Last Lesbian Bar in San Francisco: What the Demise of the Lex Tells Us About Gentrification**





*What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.*

- Michel de Certeau

What the story cuts up, the map also cuts across  
to afford other ways of telling marginalized groups' stories.

**Thank you.**

Jack Gieseeking  
@jgieseking  
[jgieseking.org](http://jgieseking.org)

Applications/software/platforms I use:

- Graphing: Excel, R, HighCharts w/ JSFiddle
- Text Analysis: Voyant, Wordle
- Mapping: QGIS, ArcGIS, CartoDB, Mapbox, OSM
- Social Network Analysis: Gephi
- Coding: Python
- Websites: Wordpress, Jekyll
- Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat
- Citation Management Software: Zotero

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