



Newsletter

June 2024

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2 New Events Scheduled

This month's events focused on LGBTQ+ history are generously sponsored by Jim Myers and Joe Levesque of the Bloomingdale Historic District.

Holy Ground: Queer Faith Expression in DC (Webinar)

Wednesday, June 26th, 12:00 - 1:00 PM EDT
Virtual, Zoom



Representatives of Bet Mishpachah at a Pride Event in Washington, DC. Photo courtesy of Emma Cieslik and Bet Mishpachah.

Did you know that on March 22, 1965, DC hosted one of the first discussions surrounding LGBTQ+ religious identity, belonging, and community? [Franklin E. Kameny](#) organized a meeting between members of the Mattachine Society and 11 clergymen from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities around the Capital. This pivotal conversation, held at American University, marked a critical moment in the history of LGBTQ+ religious history and the history of LGBTQ+ individuals of faith affirming communities in Washington, DC. On June 26th, join public historian Emma Cieslik online for a discussion exploring DC's queer faith histories. Beginning in the 1960s, this session will cover religious activism and ministry during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the creation of LGBTQ+-founded and led religious communities, and present forms of religious protest led by queer folx championing LGBTQ+ rights.

This program is free and open to the public. Please register online to participate.

[Register Here](#)

Community Collage Night: LGBTQ+ Sites & History

Thursday, June 27th, 5:00 - 6:30 PM EDT
In-Person
The Mark at Wonder Bread Factory, 641 S Street NW, 3rd Floor



Public materials from The Furies Collective. Image from the National Register Nomination Form.

For Pride Month, join the DC Preservation League and public historian Orilonise Yarborough for a community collage night focused on DC's LGBTQ+ history and historic sites. Learn about DCPL's new digital tour, the significance of physical sites in DC, and the community history in transient spaces that may not have been preserved, but deserve documentation. Work on a collage using archival materials, photographs, and art supplies while learning about the unique history of DC's LGBTQ+ communities.

[Register Here](#)

Landmarks Update

House of Mercy (Rosemount Center)



House of Mercy, as seen from Rosemount Avenue NW, c. 1955. Photo by George Kalec.
Photo courtesy of the Rosemount Center Archives.

On May 23, 2024, the Historic Preservation Review Board designated the former House of Mercy building, currently known as the [Rosemount Center](#) (2000 Rosemount Avenue NW), as a historic landmark. The landmark nomination was submitted earlier this year by the DC Preservation League (DCPL) and House of Mercy, the property owner.

Established in 1884 by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, House of Mercy is located on a ridge overlooking the wooded Rock Creek Valley and still retains its "sanctuary" landscape over 110 years later. Originally developed as a group home for women and children in-need, the original House of Mercy building in Foggy Bottom proved too small, prompting a move to then-rural Mount Pleasant in 1911. At the direction of principal donor Cassie Meyer James, Nathan C. Wyeth designed the new building in the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission style.

Upon opening, House of Mercy functioned as a religious maternity home for unwed mothers and their babies. At the time, most of DC's social services remained segregated and the organization exclusively served white girls and women until the Washington Diocese called for integration in 1958. In different parts of the city, there were at least two homes for Black women and children, including the [National Association for the Relief of Destitute Colored Women and Children \(later known as the Merriweather Home for Children\)](#), which was nominated by DCPL in 2022 and is now listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

House of Mercy continued to serve as a maternity center and space for impoverished girls until 1972 when the center closed. That same year, it reopened as the Rosemount Infant Day Care Center (also known as El Centro Rosemount) and started serving the influx of Spanish-speaking infants and toddlers whose parents had arrived in Mount Pleasant during the late 1960s and early '70s. Rosemount Center was the Washington area's first bilingual daycare center, and continues to serve Mount Pleasant and the surrounding neighborhoods.

You can read more about House of Mercy at the following link.

[House of Mercy](#)

The History of Latino Communities in Washington, DC Community Meeting and Presentation

Tuesday, July 9th, 6:00 - 7:30 PM EDT

In-Person | Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Library, 3160 16th Street NW
Free and Open to the Public



Left: Adams Morgan Children, 1980 (*Out My Window*, Nancy Shia's 40-year photo history of 18th Street and Columbia Road)
Middle: 1971 Latino Festival, August 1, 1971 (DC Public Library, Star Collection). Right: Latin Festival (*Out My Window*, Nancy Shia's 40-year photo history of 18th Street and Columbia Road).

The DC Preservation League has completed the first draft of *The History of Latino Communities in Washington, DC: A Context Study*. Please join for a presentation by architectural historian Heather McMahon—the consultant behind the project—who will provide an outline of that history, including associated themes and related sites. There will be opportunities for attendees to comment and ask questions.

Once completed, this context study will provide a framework for nominating historic sites to the National Register of Historic Places that memorialize Latino history in the District of Columbia

This community meeting is free and open to the public. [Register here](#) and please forward this email to interested friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Funding for this project comes from the National Park Services' Underrepresented Community Grants Fund, from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The fund supports efforts to identify historic and cultural resources related to communities that have often been overlooked in traditional planning and preservation efforts.

[Register Here](#)

DC Historic Sites Tour: DC's LGBTQ+ History



A photo of 1101 Kenyon Street NW, which used to house Nob Hill, a popular African American gay bar from 1957 to 2004.
Photo by Lisa P. Davidson. Photo courtesy of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Library of Congress.

As the seat of federal power, it is no surprise that Washington, DC, has been a major focal point in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and resistance. From protests to lift the ban on gay and lesbian federal workers to those legalizing same-sex marriage, DC has a strong history of activism and community. According to the Williams Institute, DC is currently the gayest city in America with the most LGBTQ+ identifying individuals per capita. DC's long-standing LGBTQ+ community deserves recognition for making the city a safe space.

This tour is a collection of sites located in the District that have been historically significant to the city's LGBTQ+ community. Not every site is a designated landmark, yet each location is historically significant. Additionally, some sites are designated, but the official documentation does not include LGBTQ+ history. For additional information related to this tour, [please see the *Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources*](#).

[DC Historic Sites Tour](#)

[LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement](#)

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