



The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History

Marc Stein

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Marc Stein's *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History* is an essential collection of primary sources including newspaper articles, opinion pieces, court documents, and photos that place a central event in LGBTQ+ history in context.

The book's documents are organized into three sections, covering the five years leading up to Stonewall, the 1969 Stonewall uprising itself, and the five years afterward. The documents come primarily from LGBTQ+ sources and they focus on LGBTQ+ bars and policing, political protests, and pride marches.

Stein's introduction gives a crystal-clear overview of current thinking on what led to the Stonewall uprising, what happened there, and how it influenced later LGBTQ+ activism and policies. The book doesn't come to conclusions but instead presents evidence for various theories and argues that the primary documents can help readers make up their own minds.

The documents themselves represent an impressive range of voices that describe meetings, marches, arrests, and bar raids. Their tones range from formal and journalistic to impassioned editorializing to informal first-person narrations, many of which are moving, infuriating, funny, or all three at once.

An especially powerful piece is a newsletter article by D. L. Leitsch that explains why the police raid on Stonewall caused riots when other raids did not: Stonewall was an especially welcoming place for the young, the homeless, and groups such as "drags" and "queens" who weren't always comfortable in other gay spaces.

Some of the material repeats across multiple documents, but this allows differing perspectives and experiences to shine through. The book's comprehensive endnotes, index, and suggestions for additional reading provide inroads to further study and research.

The Stonewall Riots is an invaluable addition to LGBTQ+ history, gathering for the first time a wealth of primary documents that will deepen understanding of a pivotal, culture-changing event.

REBECCA HUSSEY (May/June 2019)

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