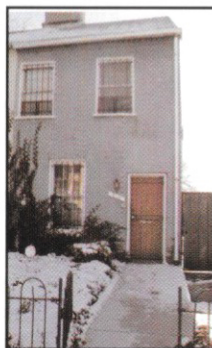


African-American gay bars in the country. It reportedly operated as a private club from 1953 until 1957, when it opened to the public. The owners have included James E. Jones, Leonard Kelly, Wayne Hill, Riley Campbell, and Robert Jones. The club was known for its African-American drag shows, the 'stump bunch' of veteran customers, and Sunday night gospel. The club has been a major supporter of the annual Black Gay Pride celebrations.

[23] The Palm Ballroom, 4211 Georgia Ave NW — In the 1960s and 1970s, the Palm Ballroom was an important site for events sponsored by African-American social clubs, among them The Group and the Best of Washington. It was also one of the few venues in the 1960s that would rent space for drag pageants and shows.

[24] Republic Gardens & Cafeteria, 1355 U St NW — The club was at 1350 U St from 1929 to 1932. It was gay-friendly and interracial in the 20s and 30s. "The Republic Gardens was a large restaurant-bar with a completely gay backroom, which you reached by walking up some steps... If a policeman walked in the door, the vocalist would let us know by Singing 'Alice Blue Gown' from the Broadway musical *Irene*."—Ladd Forrester.

[25] Us Helping Us, 819 L St SE — Incorporated in 1988 as a response to growing numbers of HIV + and AIDS cases among African-Americans, Us Helping Us focused on holistic treatments and education in the community. Owners and managers of the Clubhouse noticed in 1985 that many members were dying or disappearing from events as they became ill and decided a community response was necessary. This address at 819 L St SE was the first location



used by Us Helping Us to reach out to the community.

[26] Zodiac/Third World/Sugar Kane Palace, 221 Riggs Rd NE — (demolished 2003) Started by the Metropolitan Capitollites African-American social group, the Zodiac Den became one of the few remaining club options following the loss of many clubs in the fires of April 1968. The original owners were Aundrea Scott, John Reddy, and Morrell Chasten. What started as a house party at 4011 14th St NW, moved to the basement at 221 Riggs Road under Ben's Hideaway (a straight biker bar) Aundrea Scott recalled, "We needed more space so we found this little, honky-tonk, country and western club at Riggs Road and South Dakota Ave. We moved into the basement apartment and operated off the owner's liquor license." When the MCs took over the whole building a year later, they renamed it The Third World.



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Washington's social scene still shows the effects of decades of segregation (official and commercially-inspired). In many ways, Washington, DC is still separate in its racial and ethnic social circles.

Segregation, both legal and informal, made Washington, DC a city of house parties and social clubs, especially for African-Americans. These traditional social outlets have in turn spawned community organizations, political groupings, and commercial clubs. Even after official segregation had ended, informal segregation was enforced by private clubs' carding policies: demanding multiple picture IDs from the African-Americans, women, Latinos, and drag queens they didn't want to admit.

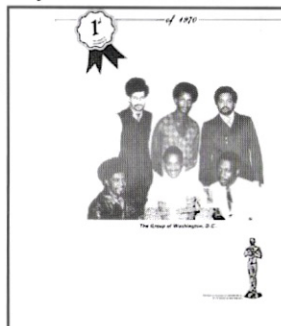
Washington has long been known for its house parties. In the days when races socialized separately and public same-sex dancing wasn't allowed, house parties answered the community's need to socialize. Stories still circulate of weekend-long and week-long parties. House parties at 4011 14th St. outgrew the Metropolitan Capitollites' space, so they opened the Zodiac at 221 Riggs Rd. NE.

Even earlier, in the mid-20s, Jean Toomer inspired Georgia Douglas Johnson to open her S Street home for *Saturday Nighters* for a circle of writers and artists, many of them gay, lesbian, or bisexual, who fueled Harlem's renaissance later in the decade. *Saturday Nighters* at 1461 S St. NW drew Langston Hughes, Richard Bruce Nugent, Angelina Weld Grimke, Alain Locke and others.

Those who couldn't party at home started social clubs like The Group (1968) which held events at the Palm Ballroom and other spots around town. In the 1960s, social clubs that took the house party to a more organized level. The first local social clubs, The Group, the Pinochle Club, and the Metropolitan Capitollites, spawned dozens of social clubs for gays, lesbians, and mixed groups over the next two decades. Social clubs provided a basis for later social and political organization in DC, and for reacting to the AIDS crisis of the 1980s.

Two of the best known early clubs, dating to the 1920s and 1930s, are the Republic Gardens and the Crystal (later 'Bohemian') Caverns on U St NW. The Metropolitan Capitollites (MCs) club at 221 Riggs Rd NE metamorphosed into the nationally known Clubhouse. A private group of men organized Nob Hill. Originally a straight restaurant, the city's oldest longest running gay club and one of the nation's oldest and most enduring black gay clubs, opened to the public in 1957.

A number of gay-friendly clubs emerged in upper Northwest. Bob-Inn, across from the Tivoli on upper 14th St NW, featured shows hosted by female impersonators Peaches and Avis Pend'avis (a graduate of Dunbar HS who later founded the drag House of Pend'avis in New York City). Near the Howard Theatre, just off Georgia Avenue, were Cecelia's, a

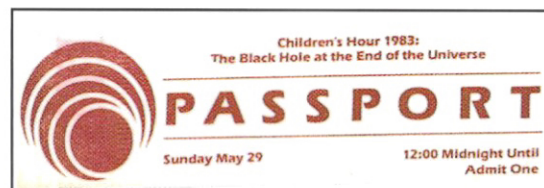


great place to see and meet theater performers, and the Cozy Corner, a favorite hangout of Howard University's gay male students.

The Seventies saw an acceleration in the opening of clubs and social spaces for the African American GLBT community. At the same time that George Dotson opened Mr. P's, Dupont's first real gay club, the Delta Elite opened in the Brookland section of NE as a venue for black gay men.

The loss of uptown clubs in 1968 seems to have spurred the popularity of LaZambra and the Brass Rail clubs in the Franklin Square area. On Capitol Hill, the Bachelor's Mill became a major dance and show spot after 1978.

But for many years, the top club in town was the ClubHouse, the MCs' third club, at 1296



Upshur Street NW. From 1975 to 1990 years, the ClubHouse reigned as *the* location for dancing on the weekend. The ClubHouse's Children's Hour celebration helped establish Memorial Day weekend as black gay party weekend in DC. The annual event drew African-American gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered from around the country.

DC's first enduring African-American gay political organization, the DC Coalition of Black Gays (established in 1978) helped create the ENIKAlley Coffeehouse at 816 I St NE. The Coffeehouse was a crucial performance for gay and lesbian poets, writers, and musicians that generated a second African-American gay renaissance in the city, sixty years after Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Saturday Nighters*. At the Coffeehouse, and later at dc space, Essex Hemphill, Michelle Parkerson, Garth Tate, Gideon Ferebee, Wayson Jones and others created new styles, media, and themes in GLBT music and literature.

The DC Coalition convened the first communi-

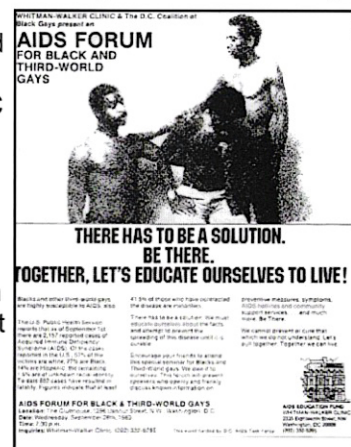
ty forum on racism in the GLBT community, pressed for an end to carding, and screened candidates for local offices. The DC Coalition and the National Coalition of Black Gays staged the Third World Conference in October 1979 at the Harambee House Hotel (now the site of Howard University bookstore). The conference was an important first opportunity for gays and lesbians of color to discuss experiences, tactics, and goals for representing themselves within the larger GLBT community.

As the AIDS epidemic gained ground in Washington, DC in the Eighties, the Clubhouse sponsored the first African-American community forum on AIDS in 1983. It became the base on which Us Helping Us, an important

holistic approach to HIV, was founded.

The demise of the Clubhouse in 1990 (and of the Children's Hour celebrations) was followed a year later by creation of a Black Pride celebration, also on Memorial Day weekend, to raise funds for people with AIDS. DC's Black Gay Pride soon spawned similar celebrations in other cities and led to a national association of Black Prides.

[1] Bachelor's Mill, 500 & 1104 8th St SE — In December 1978, BB Gatch's women's club, Club Madame, became a male-oriented club called The Bachelor's Mill. For more than 25 years, the club has been one of the main African-American dance clubs and drag venues. In 1984, the club moved to its current address at 1104 8th St SE. Local drag promoter Marc King managed The Mill in the early 1980s.



[2] **Backdoor Pub**, 500 and 1104 8th St SE — An African American bar, noteworthy for its huge windows overlooking the intersection of 8th St and E St SE. It had a pool table and continual bid whist games going on. African-American and white patrons entered from a door on the E St. side. The club moved to 1104 8th St. SE, to the second floor above the Bachelor's Mill.



[3] **Banneker Field**, Georgia Avenue — This field, across from Howard University Hospital, is a field of memories and dreams for DC's African-American GLBT community. It was here in 1991 that Welmore Cooke, Ernest Hopkins, and Theodore Kirkland created DC Black Gay Pride as a

fundraising project for AIDS education and support work. Within a few years, the nation's first black gay pride in Washington, DC inspired the creation of similar events around the nation.

[4] **Black Nugget**, 2504 14th St NW (& Chapin NW) — (destroyed 1968) Officially known as Rosetta's Golden Nugget, the street name of the club was the 'Black Nugget'. It was reputedly sometimes a rough place, but was one of the few places not only to welcome gays but to welcome female impersonators and the transgendered. It was lost in the fires of April 1968.

[5] **Black Renaissance in DC** — Many of the later celebrities of the Harlem Renaissance lived in Washington, DC in the 1920s before moving to New York City and many of them were bisexual, gay, or lesbian. Most of them lived south of U St NW..

Alain Locke, gay 'godfather' to the Harlem and Washington Black Renaissances, professor at Howard University, lived at 1326 R St NW from 1918 until his death in 1954. As editor of *The New Negro* he played an influential role in identifying, supporting and publishing the works of young black artists. **Richard Bruce Nugent** an 'out' writer, published the first black same-sex story "Smoke, Lilies and Jade" in the ground-breaking journal *Fire!!* in 1926. As a young adult, Nugent lived with his aunt and his grandmother at 1231 T St. NW until moving to New York City with Langston Hughes in 1926. **Langston Hughes** lived at 1749 S St NW and at the 12th St YMCA (1816 12th St) between 1924 and 1926. **Angelina Weld Grimke**, noted poet and contemporary of the Harlem Renaissance group, wrote some of her most memorable poetry for both male and female lovers at 1415 Corcoran NW in the 1920s. Grimke taught Nugent at Dunbar HS.

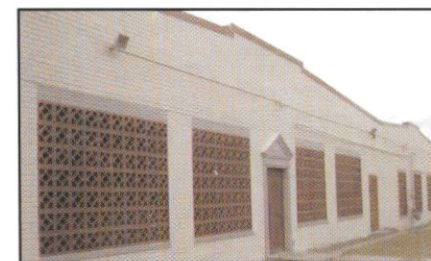
[6] **Blacklight and Lambda Student Alliance**, 640 Lamont St NW — This was both the production site for its first year of *Blacklight*, the nation's first magazine for African-American gays and lesbians, and the first meeting place of Howard University's Lambda Student Alliance.

[7] **Bloomingdale** area — bounded by Florida, Rhode Island, North Capitol, and 3rd St NW, the Bloomingdale area was home to gays and bisexuals and literati of Howard University. Paul Lawrence Dunbar's home was just west of Bloomingdale on U St. NW.

[8] **Bob's Inn**, 3316 14th St NW (& Park Rd. NW) — (burnt down, 1968) Bob's Inn, a popular nightclub from 1954 to 1968, just across 14th St from the Tivoli, featured "rock and roll nightly" and was the first performance home for noted drag mother and impresario, Avis Pendavis. Drag shows here were hosted by Avis and Peaches.

[9] **The Brass Rail**, 813 13th St. NW — **THE BRASS RAIL** (demolished 1985) The Brass Rail's first address was 809 13th St., a basement entrance, but it moved upstairs to 811 13th St NW in 1973. It was one of the main African-American drag bars. The Railettes were a popular in-house drag entertainment group at the club. Local female impersonator Barbra MacNair performed her popular Moms Mabley routines here. In the mid-1980s the club moved to 476 K St NW.

[10] **Cairo Hotel**, 1615 Q St NW — An after-hours nightclub for both white and black gays and lesbians, the Cairo was known in the 60s for late night parties and dances organized by female impersonator Black Pearl (Ken White). In the 60s and 70s, it was a popular drag venue.



[11] **The ClubHouse**, 1296 Upshur NW — The third venture

of the Metropolitan Capitollites, this club became one of the central foci of gay African-American clubbers in the 1970s and 1980s. The ClubHouse grew out of the Zodiac Den and Third World clubs. A disco without a regular liquor license, the ClubHouse was known for its 'acid punch'. As a membership club it avoided some of the restrictions on public bars and restaurants. Fundraisers and community support helped keep it going in late 80s, including support by the Best of Washington and the Associates social clubs. The ClubHouse was known nationwide among African-American gays and lesbians for its Children's Hour celebration on

Memorial Day Weekend. In September 1983, the club hosted the first AIDS forum for the African-American community. Owners included Aundrea Scott, John Eddy, and Chasten Morrell. The club was managed by Rainey Cheeks. A drop in members in 1985 spurred creation of Us Helping Us, one of the first African-American responses to AIDS in the community.

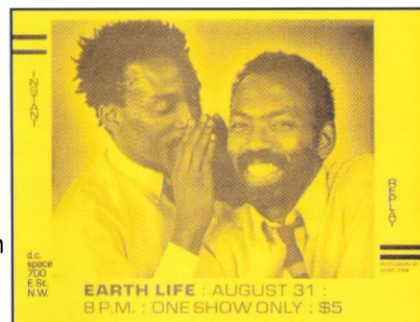
[12] **The ENIKAlley Coffeehouse/Essie's**, 816 I St NE — The Coffeehouse was an arts and literature meeting and performance space in a two story carriage house behind the home of Gary Walker and Ray Melrose at 816 I St NE. The DC Coalition of Black Gays & Ray Melrose founded the Coffeehouse. The name ENIKAlley refers to its location in the alley between Eighth and Ninth and I and K streets. With an open loft overlooking the main floor, a fireplace and a warm atmosphere, the place was unique among gay and lesbian spaces in DC. The coffeehouse was a crucible for African-American artists, writers, musicians, and performance artists. When Melrose became manager of **dc space**, many of the performers at the Coffeehouse joined him there. The Coffeehouse provided meeting space for the Sapphire Sapphos, one of the first black lesbian organizations in the community. The Sapphire Sapphos, a lesbian group, took over the Coffeehouse in November 1984 and briefly operated a coffeehouse called Essie's.

[13] **Cozy Corner**, 708 Florida Ave NW — (demolished). In the 60s, the second floor lounge at the Cozy Corner was a hangout for gay Howard University students. The ground floor reputedly was straight. After 1968, Howard students met more often at the Nob Hill.

[14] **Crystal Caverns**, 2001 11th St NW — Now the Bohemian Caverns, the site was originally a gay friendly show space in the late

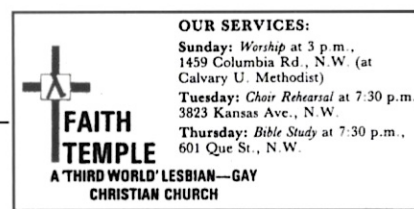
1930s and early 1940s. Around 2000, the club hosted Sunday night tea dances and later a drag show hosted by Sophia Yamaguchi Karrington.

[15] **dc space**, 700 E St. NW — Ray Melrose, founder of the Coffeehouse in NE DC, moved here in the mid-80s and brought many of the performers from the Coffeehouse with him. **dc space** became first a companion and then a successor performance space for the artists of DC's second black gay renaissance.



[16] **Delta Elite**, 3734 10th St NE — Contemporaneous with Dupont's first club, Mr. P's, the Delta Elite has been a weekend dance and club space for young African-American gays since 1976.

[17] **Faith Temple**, 1313 New York Avenue NW — Dr James S Tinney founded Faith



Temple in 1982 after being driven from his Pentecostal church because of his sexual orientation. Faith Temple is an evangelical church welcoming all worshipers. Faith Temple first met at Calvary Methodist on Columbia Rd.

[18] **Fiftieth and C Streets SE** — This intersection has an unfortunate history as the site where transgendered Tyra Hunter was denied medical attention by EMS after a car accident in August 1995 and where in August 2002 transgendered youths Stephanie Thomas and Ukea Davis were

murdered in Thomas' car.

[19] **Georgia Douglas Johnson's home**, 1461 S St. NW — A poet and playwright in her own right, Johnson convened the *Saturday Nighters*, a remarkable literary and artistic salon in the 1920s and 1930s, which brought together many of the artists and performers who would later achieve fame in the Harlem Renaissance.

[20] **Gil Gerald Home**, 601 Q St NW — In the 1970s, Gerald's home was at the epicenter of local gay African-American organizing and politics. Gerald was one of the early and longest serving leaders of the National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG), a national political organization. Between 1977 and 1985, the home functioned as a meeting center for the DC Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians, NCBG, and related organizations. Meetings and social events drew most of the leaders of the African-American gay and lesbian community.



[21] **La Zambra Club**, 1406 14th St NW — (demolished) From 1970 until the mid-1980s, LaZambra was known as one of the great weekend dance spots. The club was known informally as "Lucy's", after the manager, who reputedly would walk the bar to the delight of her customers. La Zambra provided meeting space to the Sapphire Sapphos in their early years.

[22] **Nob Hill**, 1101 Kenyon NW — From 1957 to 2004, the Nob Hill was the oldest continuously operating gay bar in the city, and one of the oldest

