

PRESS RELEASE

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Nicholas Redding
Executive Director
Preservation Maryland
nredding@presmd.org



Maryland's LGBTQ History Study is Second in Nation Adds Important Inclusive History in Official Historic Record

Baltimore, MD (October 27, 2020) – During National LGBTQ History Month, Preservation Maryland is proud to announce the completion and acceptance of Maryland's groundbreaking LGBTQ Historic Context Study by the Maryland Historical Trust. Maryland is only the second state to conduct such comprehensive LGBTQ history; Kentucky being the first. The 100-page document and property database of nearly 400 sites important to LGBTQ life in each of Maryland's counties is now part of the historic record – and is being abridged for a forthcoming illustrated booklet and resource guide.

The context study was funded in part by the Maryland Historical Trust's Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program as well as Preservation Maryland's Waxter Memorial Internship Program and the Heritage Fund, a cooperative effort of Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust. Upon accepting the report, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director of the Maryland Historical Trust, Elizabeth A. Hughes, stated: "*The Maryland Historical Trust has been delighted to partner with Preservation Maryland on this important project, which takes the first steps in recognizing LGBTQ heritage statewide. As the state historic preservation office, we are committed to documenting and preserving the history of all Marylanders, and this effort supports a key objective highlighted by the public and identified in our statewide preservation plan.*"

The author of the LGBTQ Historic Context Study is Dr. Susan Ferentinos, a leading expert in LGBTQ research oft associated with major national research projects. Dr. Ferentinos penned the report that illuminates Maryland LGBTQ history in rural, suburban, and urban locations, including sites associated with non-binary historical figures, leading "out" elected officials, strong community groups and popular gay bars, advocacy for AIDS treatment and marriage equality, and many other important sites. Unique Maryland themes were identified and keyed into the national framework provided by the National Park Service's 2016 LGBT Theme Study.

Meagan Baco, Director of Communications at Preservation Maryland and project manager for the initiative, stated: "*The importance of this report cannot be understated and it is just the beginning of a more expansive inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity representation in history. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people have always been a part of Maryland's life - their omission in previous research was rooted in discrimination, not a lack of importance. Any historian looking for an accurate account of Maryland life should consider this report a must-read.*"

The project team hosted five community listening sessions across the state and responded to dozens of research leads. Preservation Maryland Waxter Intern, Benjamin Egerman, now a Librarian at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, geocoded these locations and many more to an interactive online map hosted on HistoryPin with a short description, photo, and source. That map remains an open and active place to gather more locations and information.

The Context Study is a milestone in Preservation Maryland's multi-year commitment to LGBTQ heritage visibility. Inspired and made possible by the LGBTQ Historic Context Study, the Baltimore City Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and Montgomery County Planning have partnered with Preservation Maryland on a Certified Local Government grant, funded by the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund and administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, to nominate five specific LGBTQ-significant sites identified in the Context Study to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and National Register of Historic Places.

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Preservation Maryland works to preserve and promote Maryland's history and heritage. Founded in 1931, the organization is the state's first, largest, and most active advocate for public history, historic preservation, and cultural landscapes. Our website is: presmd.org.