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West Village gay bar Julius could become historic site

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Julius, a small understated gay bar in the West Village, could soon become a historic site for its important role in the gay right’s movement.

The Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office made the announcement on Wednesday saying that Julius and a list of 18 additional proposed properties, resources and districts to the State and National Registers of Historic Places represent New York’s “rich and diverse heritage.”

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Julius, which sits on the corner of West 10th Street and Waverly Place, is often described as “one of the city’s oldest bars in continuous operation.”

The proposal for historic recognition explains the bar was the site “of an important 1966 event in the early modern gay rights movement in which activists organized what became known as a ‘sip-in’ to successfully challenge New York State Liquor Authority regulations that prohibited bars from serving drinks to known or suspected gay men or lesbians.”

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The [Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation \(GVSHP\)](#) expands on the history on its website saying:

“The story goes that members of the New York City Mattachine Society, a national gay rights organization taking inspiration from the civil rights sit-ins of the South, decided to challenge the regulation that prohibited bars from serving gay clients. With reporters in tow, four activists declared they were gay and asked to be served at Julius’. While Julius’ was a historically gay

bar, they had recently been raided, which meant they were under observation. Their denial of service helped launch a court case, which declared that the New York State Liquor Authority could not stop service to gay patrons.”

The GVSHIP also includes a clip from a New York Time’s article covering the incident, which refers to three men involved as “deviates.”

Times sure have changed, haven't they?

This “sip-in” pre-dates a more well-known moment in the gay rights movement, the Stonewall Riots of 1969, named after another Greenwich village gay bar the Stonewall Inn, which happens to sit a short distance from Julius.

Matt Lee is a web producer for Metro New York. He writes about almost everything and anything. Talk to him (or yell at him) on Twitter so he doesn’t feel lonely: [@off Yellow](#).