

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

HENRY GERBER HOUSE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Henry Gerber House

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1710 North Crilly Court

Not for publication:

City/Town: Chicago

Vicinity:

State: IL

County: Cook

Code: 031

Zip Code: 60614

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Residence

Current: Domestic

Sub: Residence

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late Victorian: Queen Anne

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Brick

Walls: Brick and Stone

Roof: Synthetic

Other: N/A

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Summary

The Henry Gerber House is nationally significant for its association with the founding of the first chartered organization in the United States dedicated to advocating for the rights of homosexuals. Henry Gerber lived in the house at 1710 North Crilly Court from 1924 until 1925 as a tenant when he founded the Society for Human Rights (SHR), an organization advocating for the civil rights of homosexuals, and the first gay rights society in the United States. It is in this building that Gerber, as the secretary, wrote the organization's mission statement and filed for its incorporation. The address listed on the charter as the organization's business office was 1710 North Crilly Court, Gerber's residence at the time. In 1962, Gerber recalled that following his arrest in 1925, police raided his room at 1710 North Crilly Court and seized, among other items, the typewriter on which he wrote documents for the Society for Human Rights.¹ It is therefore likely that Gerber wrote the society's correspondence and newsletters at this house. The establishment of the Society for Human Rights in 1924 marks a turning point in the history of homosexuality in the United States.

Describe Present and Historical Appearance**Location and Context**

1710 North Crilly Court is located on the North Side of Chicago, Illinois, in the Old Town neighborhood. The property is located about three miles north of downtown Chicago.

The Gerber House is located between West Saint Paul Avenue and West Eugenie Street in the Chicago district known as Old Town. Its immediate surroundings are residential and are architecturally preserved from the time of their construction in the late 1800s. The house is on Chicago's North Side, within the boundaries of the Old Town Triangle Historic District, whose geography zigzags from block to block, but which is generally bounded by North Avenue on the south, Wells and Clark Streets on the east, and on the west by the former Ogden right-of-way: a street that no longer exists. The Old Town district was designated a Chicago Landmark District in 1977 for its architectural significance and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Henry Gerber House is listed as a contributing resource to the district.² The house itself was designated a Chicago Landmark for its association with Henry Gerber in 2001.³

The house was constructed in 1885 by real estate developer Daniel Francis Crilly.⁴ The property was used as single-family dwelling until World War I, when it became a rooming house.⁵ The neighborhood from the onset of World War I through the 1930s had a reputation for being seedy, with brothels flanking the north and south ends of the 1700 block of Crilly Court.⁶ From the 1930s onward, however, Crilly Court became known as an "art and society colony" and home to many well-known Chicago celebrities and personalities.⁷

¹ Henry Gerber, "The Society for Human Rights—1925," *ONE Magazine*, September 1962, 7.

² "Old Town Triangle Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1984), 12, 62.

³ Chicago History Museum, "Preliminary Summary of Information, Henry Gerber House" submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, December 2000, 7-9.

⁴ John Drury, "Chicago's Little Streets," *Chicago Daily News*, March 12, 1943.

⁵ Shirley Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town* (Chicago, IL: Old Town Triangle Association, 2005), 106.

⁶ Baugher, Shirley, e-mail message to Michelle McClellan, March 11, 2014.

⁷ Drury, "Chicago's Little Streets."

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Today, the largely unaltered facades of the houses on the 1700 block of Crilly Court have earned a reputation in Chicago for their Old-World appearance.⁸ The neighborhood surrounding Crilly Court is an upscale residential area. Crilly Court and Eugenie Street to its south, Saint Paul Avenue to its north, and Park Avenue to its west are all residential streets, while Wells Street to the east of Crilly Court is a mix of residential properties, retail stores, and restaurants. In general, the Old Town district is residential, while its surrounding areas have been developed into bustling storefronts and business property. The immediate neighbors of 1710 North Crilly Court are both two-story single-family residential row houses, identical in size to 1710 North Crilly Court and built in the same style.

Exterior Description

The property consists of one single-family residential row house built by Daniel Francis Crilly in 1885. It is a Late Victorian, Queen Anne style house made out of brick and masonry. It is bounded by wrought iron fences and includes a small front garden area. Two small trees flank the left and right sides of the house.

The two-story house has a high foundation made of brick.⁹ The front of the house faces east and features a stone facade. Built as a row house, the north wall faces 1712 North Crilly Court, while the south wall is attached to 1708 North Crilly Court. The front section of the house is 63.05-feet deep, after which the north wall of the house narrows to 28.05-feet wide and has a brick exterior. Despite the narrowing of the north wall, the house retains its rectangular shape. A wooden deck 16'1" wide by 9'9" deep was added to the rear exterior before the current owners purchased the house in 1985. The current owners do not know exactly when this deck was added. Similar decks have been added to the rear of every house on this block of Crilly Court.

The attached row house was built in the Queen Anne style, the dominant style of domestic building at the time. The Queen Anne style used wall surfaces as primary decorative elements. At 1710 North Crilly Court this was accomplished by avoiding plain flat walls through the use of wall projections and differing textures of wall materials. While the individual row house is distinguishable, its asymmetrical façade is part of a larger façade design. On the upper right section of the individual façade is a shaped parapeted gable with gable ornament and decorative panels that pairs with the parapeted gable of its neighbor. A finial separates the grouped parapeted gables and denotes the individual row houses. Behind the grouped parapeted gables is a flat roof with a white membrane and mechanical equipment. The upper left of the façade features a decorative metal frieze with recessed panels and dentils.

To the right of the entry door is a large window consisting of a single large pane surrounded by smaller rectangular panes and topped with a rusticated stone lintel. Above this window and below the parapeted gable is a round-arched window consisting of two large panes with additional small curved rectangular panes outlining the top pane. The row house is situated atop a high foundation with stairs and an entry porch leading to the main entrance. A round-arched transom window above the front door is topped by a round-arched stone lintel consisting of rusticated voisoirs and a keystone. A similar arched and rusticated stone lintel is above the upper level round-arched window. Bands of rusticated masonry can be found on the top third of the lower level and halfway up on the upper level, offering a contrast to the otherwise smooth masonry wall exterior. A masonry stringcourse separates the ground level from the first floor and also the first floor from the second, further compartmentalizing the wall surface. The exterior of the row house has remained virtually unchanged since its construction.

⁸ Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town*, 107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

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Interior Description

The interior of the building is divided into nine rooms. The footprint of the interior has remained unchanged since the construction of the house.

Visitors are led to the main entryway by the house's original exterior staircase, door, and interior floor tiles. The main door is a panel door with a brass knocker. The house's address, 1710, is painted in gold inside the transom window above the entryway door. Inside the main door is a small entryway which has retained the same tiles since the house's construction. A transom window flanks the top of an open doorway that separates the entryway from the main living room. The entryway empties into the main living room, which features one large rectangular window flanked by smaller rectangular windows on the top and sides. These windows look out toward Crilly Court. Between the living room and the dining room an arched opening now stands in the place of what was originally a rectangular opening of the same size.¹⁰ There is a fireplace on the north wall of the living room.

Moving deeper into the house, the next room is the dining room, which was used as a parlor or sitting room prior to the current owners' purchase of the home. There was a very small dining room adjoining the sitting room which was used by the owners to enlarge the kitchen.¹¹ The previous owners cut an alcove into the south dining room wall underneath a staircase.¹² There is a fireplace on the north wall of the dining room, directly behind the living room fireplace. Both fireplaces share one chimney. The next room back is the kitchen, which was a dining room and butler's pantry prior to the current owners' renovations.¹³ A small sitting area that borders the back deck is behind the present-day kitchen; this sitting area was the kitchen prior to renovations by the owners.¹⁴ Two sliding glass doors behind the sitting area lead to the back deck. All of the rooms on the main level have a new wooden floor, which the current owners used to replace the house's original wooden floor. The original floors were so badly worn they were unsalvageable.¹⁵

A staircase to the upper level is located in the dining room, and a staircase to the lower level is located between the dining room and kitchen. Both staircases are original to the house; only their handrails have been replaced.¹⁶

The lower level features two exterior doors: one facing east toward Crilly Court, and one facing west toward the rear of the house, as they would have at the time of the house's construction. The current owners have added drywall to the east wall covering the original brick. Drywall has also been added to enclose a bathroom on the north wall of the basement and to conceal large overhead pipes just below the ceiling. The remaining basement walls are the original brick laid in running bond, painted white in some areas. The basement has been updated by the current owners and is now used as a sitting area, a bedroom, a bathroom, and a storage area. It is speculated that the unfinished basement served as a gathering place for Gerber and the Society for Human Rights in 1924.¹⁷ Out of the way, the basement would not have attracted onlookers, nor would it have been visible from exterior windows. The basement's two exterior doors would have facilitated easy and secretive entry and exit for visitors who wanted to remain unseen.

¹⁰ Baugher, e-mail.

¹¹ Ibid.; Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town*, 109.

¹² Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town*, 107.

¹³ Baugher, e-mail; Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town*, 111.

¹⁴ Baugher, e-mail; Baugher, *At Home in Our Old Town*, 111.

¹⁵ Baugher, e-mail.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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The upper staircase empties into the center of the upper level of the house. A skylight was added over the upper level staircase before the current owners purchased the house. The upper floor is divided into three bedrooms and two bathrooms. A hallway that runs from east to west provides access to the three bedrooms and one of the bathrooms. A bedroom on the west end of the house between the north and south walls is now used as an office, but no structural changes have taken place. A bedroom along the north wall of the house, just east of the west-most bedroom, has retained its role as a bedroom and allows just enough room for a full-size bed, a dresser and a side table. Between this small bedroom and the master bedroom, located on the east of the building, is a small bathroom original to the house. The master bedroom is the largest bedroom and features a large window that looks over Crilly Court. There is a bathroom to the west of the master bedroom, accessible only through the bedroom. It is thought that this bathroom was a bedroom during the time Henry Gerber lived in the house.¹⁸ The current owners removed the entrance to the room from the hallway and added an entrance to the room from the master bedroom, resulting in a private bathroom. The master bedroom still retains the original wood floors from the time of the house's construction, which were at an unknown time protected from wear by carpeting.¹⁹ There is a fireplace on the north wall of the master bedroom.

It is impossible to know which bedroom Henry Gerber rented out, but the current owners suspect that given his financial circumstances he would have lived in one of the smaller rooms, either the one that still functions as a bedroom or the one that is currently a bathroom.²⁰ In addition to his bedroom and the speculated activity in the basement of the house, Gerber would also have been active in the dining area of the house, and perhaps the salon or living room areas.

Integrity

The house has had three owners between 1963, when the Crilly family sold it, and 1978 when the current owners purchased it. During this time, it sustained some alteration, but the footprint remains the same as it was when the house was built. The exterior of the house retains high integrity. The added deck at the rear of the house was not attached to the house at the time Gerber lived there in 1924. Aside from the deck, the exterior has not changed since the house's construction in 1885, and certainly not since Gerber lived there in 1924. Henry Gerber would, without a doubt, recognize the house when approaching it from Crilly Court.

The interior of the house also retains integrity. The only known interior alterations to the house since 1885 are the addition of a bathroom in the basement, a skylight to the upper roof, and the re-routing of an upstairs bathroom entryway from the hallway to the master bedroom. The fenestration has remained intact; some of the panes have been replaced, however.

It is worth noting that a sizeable number of new residents have moved into the neighborhood in the past decade, gutting their homes' interiors in favor of a more modern and open design concept.²¹ Given the often hidden and erased nature of gay and lesbian history, and the frequent difficulty of finding even basic documents pertaining to such history, it is doubly fortunate that this house has remained so well preserved.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally: __

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C __ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A __ B __ C __ D __ E __ F __ G

NHL Criteria: 1 and 2

NHL Criteria Exceptions:

NHL Theme(s): II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
 2. Reform movements

Areas of Significance: Social/Humanitarian

Period(s) of Significance: 1924-1925

Significant Dates: December 10, 1924; July, 1925

Significant Person(s): Henry Gerber

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Daniel Francis Crilly

Historic Contexts: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Summary**

The Henry Gerber House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 for its strong association with the formation of the Society for Human Rights, the first chartered organization in the United States dedicated to advocating for the rights of homosexuals. The establishment of the Society for Human Rights in 1924 marked a turning point in the history of homosexuality in the United States. As the site of the Society's headquarters, where Gerber managed the organization and produced *Friendship and Freedom*, and as the site of his unjustified arrest and confiscation of property, 1710 North Crilly Court witnessed both the earliest documented efforts towards homosexual emancipation in America and the pervasive trend of discrimination against, and persecution of, homosexuals in the twentieth century. As the property is directly associated with Henry Gerber, a nationally significant advocate for civil rights for homosexuals during the first half of the twentieth century, it is also significant under NHL Criterion 2.

The period of significance for this property begins in 1924 and ends in 1925, spanning the year in which the Society for Human Rights was created and active. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most Americans defined homosexuality as a series of discrete acts rather than a separate identity. The time that Gerber spent in Coblenz, Germany, from 1920 to 1923, however, exposed him to the German movement for homosexual emancipation and led him to see both the political importance and political implications of declaring a homosexual identity. When Gerber returned to the United States, he tried to recreate the homosexual organization he had found in Germany while living in this boarding house located at 1710 North Crilly Court. The organization that he founded—the Society for Human Rights—is often called the “first gay rights organization” in the United States.²² The organization was officially incorporated in and by the State of Illinois. The boarding house served as the organization's address on its charter and as a meeting place. It is likely that the organization's newsletter—the first known publication of a homosexual organization in the U.S.—was also created here on a typewriter that was later confiscated when Gerber was arrested in his room.

The organization's significance lies as much in its failure as it does in its initial founding. The police harassment that Gerber experienced as a result of his decision to create a civil rights organization for homosexuals was part of a larger attempt in the early twentieth century to protect white, middle class virtue and to establish and maintain rigid boundaries of sexuality. Like thousands of other gay men in this time period, Gerber was himself subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. In spite of his devastating experiences in Chicago, Gerber remained active in the major homosexual and homophile movements well into the 1960s. His continued involvement in these movements provides a thread connecting the emancipatory efforts of the early twentieth century to the concerted effort for gay rights that emerged after Stonewall, and possibly inspired the founding of the Mattachine Society, the first sustained gay rights organization in the United States. Although the periodic fragmentation of these movements meant that he was relatively outside of a small but politically-active group of homosexuals, gay rights activists in the 1970s recognized him as an important figure in LGBTQ history in the United States.

²² For example, see “Henry Gerber,” *Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame*, last modified April 2, 2014, http://www.glhallloffame.org/index.pl?item=18&todo=view_item.

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Gerber's Life before Founding the Society for Human Rights

Details about Henry Gerber's early life are sparse. Gerber was born Josef Heinrich Dittmar in Passau, a town in lower Bavaria on June 29, 1892. According to Jonathan Katz, Gerber did not identify as a homosexual when he immigrated to the United States at the age of twenty-one. Like many German immigrants, he enlisted in the United States Army before the outbreak of World War I.²³ Just four months after his enlistment, the United States declared war on Germany. Gerber declared himself a conscientious objector and did not ultimately serve in the war. Instead, he was sent to an internment camp. His later allusion to needing three meals a day suggests that his early life in the United States was marked by poverty. Whatever the precise circumstances of this episode, he then moved to Chicago where he was briefly employed at the Montgomery Ward Company.

It is likely that Gerber began to identify as a homosexual sometime during this time period. Some sources suggest that Gerber may have been committed to a mental institution in 1917 for his homosexuality.²⁴ Although it is difficult to identify a specific moment in which Gerber began to reevaluate his sexual identity, his later writings suggest that he saw the post-war period as foundational to how he understood homosexuality and in his later activism.²⁵ In 1919, he reenlisted in the army and was stationed in Coblenz, Germany, as part of the American occupying forces. Gerber later cited his time in Germany as being foundational for his understanding of homosexuality and later activism. In 1919, he reenlisted in the army and was stationed in Coblenz, Germany, as part of the American occupying forces. In Coblenz, he worked as writer and editor for the army newspaper *Amaroc*.²⁶ He subscribed to several German homosexual magazines and made trips to Berlin, where homosexuality was relatively accepted and where a thriving and relatively open homosexual culture existed.²⁷ The political activism, medical discourse, and urban subcultures of German homosexuals impressed him deeply and informed his later vision for homosexuality in the United States and the goals of the Society for Human Rights. Because the German homosexual emancipation movement shaped Gerber's later political aims, Gerber's activism must be understood within the context of the German movement.

International Influence on Domestic Homosexual Rights Movement

Homosexuals began organizing politically in Germany in the 1890s.²⁸ Their most important goal was abolishing §175, the law that made male homosexuality throughout Germany illegal. By the 1920s, a diverse political movement representing different strategies to make homosexuality legal, increase social acceptance of homosexuals, and build homosexual communities existed in Germany. Sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld was one of the most important figures in these efforts, and his ideas about homosexuality were highly influential in

²³ "U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital image, *Ancestry.com*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed February 1, 2014, Cook County, Illinois, Chicago, Draft Board 58, Joseph Henry Dittmar [Henry Gerber] entry, dated June 5, 1917; Karen C. Sendziak, "Henry Gerber," in *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*, ed. Marc Stein, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004); Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All: Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), 17-20, 47-48, 57-58.

²⁴ Jim Kepner and Stephen O. Murray, "Henry Gerber (1895-1972): Grandfather of the American Gay Movement," in *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context*, ed. Vern L. Bullough (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 2002)

²⁵ In this nomination, we have tried to be attentive to the terms used to denote same-sex attraction and the individuals and organizations involved in this narrative. For the most part, the terms in use during the period under discussion have been adopted, and those used by the individuals or organizations in question, whether "homosexual," "homophile," or "gay." Change in terminology over time is significant, reflecting underlying concepts about human sexuality and its social, medical, and legal meanings.

²⁶ Donald McLeod, "Gerber, Heinrich," in *Mann für Mann: biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte von Freundschaft und mann-männlicher Sexualität im deutschen Sprachraum*, ed. Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, vol. 1 (Berlin, Germany: Münster Lit, 2010), 394-6.

²⁷ Henry Gerber, "The Society for Human Rights - 1925," *ONE Magazine*, September 1962, 5-6.

²⁸ James D. Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 21-23.

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shaping medical and scientific attitudes in Europe, and eventually in the United States. Hirschfeld established the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, whose motto, "Justice through Knowledge," reflected the belief that the dissemination of scientific information would bring social change. Accordingly, the Committee produced research on the frequency of homosexuality among the general population and printed an educational brochure about homosexuality directed at the general public.²⁹ A petition the Committee submitted to the German Parliament to abolish §175 bore the signatures of thousands of highly educated and nationally-respected opinion makers from the medical, academic, and judicial establishments.³⁰

Other homosexual organizations in Germany adopted slightly different approaches. For example, the Community of the Special looked back to ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy as models for homosexual communities. While they, too, sought legal reform, they were wary of the many doctors supporting the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee because they rejected the view that homosexuals were sick.³¹ For its part, the German Friendship Association emphasized community building by holding weekly meetings and sponsoring dances. In its wake, friendship leagues were formed in cities throughout Germany, connecting homosexuals with one another through social activities. In 1923, the German Friendship Association changed its name to League for Human Rights (*Bund für Menschenrecht*), after which Gerber named his Society for Human Rights.³² Many homosexual organizations published their own periodicals, with thirty different publications in circulation during the Weimar Republic, many freely available at newsstands.³³

During his trips to Berlin, Henry Gerber may have visited Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science, the world's first sexological institute. It served not only as a place of medical and anthropological research, but also as a museum, archive, library, and a counseling clinic for all sexual matters, including marriage problems.³⁴ Gerber probably participated in the city's rich sexual subculture, evident in scores of homosexual cafes and bars, social groups, and cruising areas. Whatever his actual experience in Germany, the professionally-organized movement for homosexual emancipation that he witnessed there impressed him deeply and served as the direct model for his activism in the U.S. His years in Coblenz coincided with the German movement's peak, built on a quarter century of sustained political and educational work that had been characterized by close collaboration between sexual science and legal reformers. When the US Army left Coblenz in 1923, Gerber returned to Chicago and found employment in the United States Postal Service. He also found a room in a boarding house located at 1710 North Crilly Court.

Homosexuality and Urban Chicago

The United States had its own homosexual subculture in the early twentieth century, often concentrated in vibrant urban settings.³⁵ The spatial and economic conditions of many American cities, including Chicago, meant that sexual behavior could not easily be separated from ideas about social class, racial and ethnic identity, and vice. In this context, Gerber, like other homosexuals, sought to build a community of sympathetic

²⁹ Ibid., 30-33.

³⁰ Ibid., 85. When the abolition of §175 was finally in sight in October 1929, the stock market crash and the ensuing economic and political crisis meant the end of Weimar democracy and of all efforts to legalize homosexuality.

³¹ Ibid., 42-48.

³² Ibid., 74-78.

³³ Ibid., 78-82.

³⁴ Volkmar Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), 346.

³⁵ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 52.

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individuals while avoiding harassment and discrimination. He found that the American scene lacked the respectability, political awareness, and scientific sophistication he had appreciated in Germany.³⁶

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans increasingly turned their attention toward cities as a source of fascination and as a series of problems to be solved. For example, white, middle-class men and women engaged in tours of working-class and ethnic neighborhoods. Called “slumming,” these trips combined tours of Italian, Irish, and Chinese neighborhoods with visits to slums, houses of prostitution, and other places known for sexual vice.³⁷ The common tendency to conflate poverty, race, and sexual vice troubled Gerber who later lamented that the only people his society was able to attract was a few disreputable men—“John, a preacher who earned his room and board by preaching brotherly love to small groups of Negroes; Al, an indigent laundry queen; and Ralph whose job with the railroad was in jeopardy when his nature became known.”³⁸

Gerber distanced himself from the homosexual world he found in the United States, which he saw as dissolute and lacking in political awareness. At the same time, its geographic and social marginality offered him some protection from police harassment and prosecution. Like many unmarried men, he “boarded,” renting a single room in someone else’s home. Gerber decided to make his home at 1710 North Crilly Court. Fast-growing cities like Chicago often lacked sufficient housing for the population, and boarding became a common strategy. This practice provided a source of income for the homeowner and a cheap and efficient arrangement for the boarder. Women generally took responsibility for boarders, tending to the additional cooking, laundry, and other necessary housekeeping tasks. Since it seemed an extension of women’s domestic role, boarding was an acceptable way for widows and other women without a reliable male wage earner to support themselves and maintain their property. Boarders usually ate with the family and shared common spaces such as the dining room or parlor. Immigrants were more likely than native-born residents to board in early twentieth-century Chicago, often seeking lodging where the proprietor or other tenants spoke the same language.³⁹

The neighborhood in which he chose to live would have afforded him additional anonymity. Crilly Court was not considered a full-fledged vice district which would have been notorious for gambling, prostitution, and police corruption, but neighborhood histories indicate that two brothels operated on the street.⁴⁰ Joanne Meyerwitz, who has studied in detail similar neighborhoods in the near north side of Chicago, suggests that a number of factors that were unique to such neighborhoods—their predominance of unmarried lodgers, the transient populations, commercialized recreation, and the proximity of prostitution—attracted those with “unconventional life-styles, sexual preferences, or political leanings.”⁴¹ Crilly Court would have offered Gerber a community that was relatively accepting of his lifestyle, even as it alienated him with its poverty and disrepute.⁴²

³⁶ Henry Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights – 1925,” *ONE Magazine*, September 1962, 5-6.

³⁷ Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in the American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

³⁸ Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights,” 7.

³⁹ Douglas Knox, *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, s.v. “boardinghouses” (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 2005), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/152.html>, accessed February 28, 2014.

⁴⁰ Shirley Baugher, *Hidden History of Old Town* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011), 77.

⁴¹ Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 108-115, quote on 113.

⁴² While we cannot trace Gerber’s movements in the city specifically, his residence at Crilly Court was also near “Towertown,” where white homosexuals lived. Moreover, public sex institutions such as bathhouses and toilets were “located on the predominantly white North Side,” according to Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 78.

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The boarding house at 1710 North Crilly Court offered Gerber other advantages as well. In addition to being near a large population of German immigrants, it was near his job at the post office. The layout may have also appealed to him. The increase in population density in Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s meant that many residences had been converted to multi-unit dwellings.⁴³ While Gerber likely stayed in one of the smaller rooms on the second floor, the relatively secluded basement may have served as the site for the meetings of his society.⁴⁴ Out of the way, the basement would not have attracted onlookers, nor would it have been as visible through exterior windows as the large front room on the main floor. The basement's two exterior doors would have facilitated easy and secretive entry and exit for visitors who wanted to remain unseen. While women who lived alone during this period in Chicago often faced scrutiny and suspicion, men generally did not and so Gerber likely enjoyed considerable autonomy as a boarder in this setting.⁴⁵

Although Gerber rejected the flamboyant homosexual world that he encountered in the United States, it enabled him to find other individuals who shared his sexual preferences and may have engaged in sexual relationships with him. Yet the urban geography that had offered relative anonymity to Gerber simultaneously attracted the attention of reformers, who focused their attention on real and perceived political corruption, public health hazards, and an increasingly commercialized "vice complex," which included saloons, speakeasies, and prostitution.⁴⁶ This increasing attention brought heightened risks of exposure, discrimination, even harassment and violence. Gerber's experiences in Germany meant that he was unwilling to participate in a society that ultimately allowed him to fulfill his sexual urges but insisted on their criminalization and marginalization. The shifting urban setting of Chicago and his experience in Germany led him to form a society that advocated for the sexual rights of homosexuals, and civil rights in general.

American Understandings of Homosexuality

In recent years, scholars have emphasized the importance of understanding that definitions of "homosexuality" have changed over time.⁴⁷ In fact, "homosexuality" is a historically contingent category or label, encompassing a constellation of ideas related to sexual behavior, the organization of social roles, and what we now call gender expression (that is, traits, gestures, clothing and other variables that have social meaning as "masculine" or "feminine"). When Henry Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights in 1924, American ideas about homosexuality were undergoing an important transition, one influenced by medical and scientific theorists and researchers but not entirely defined by them.

At the beginning of the twentieth century – and until the beginning of the twenty-first century – male same-sex intimacy was regulated by law. Sodomy laws that went back to colonial times imposed draconian punishments for homosexual acts. These laws prohibited sodomy, which was defined as anal intercourse between two men or a man and a woman. Though most US states mitigated the imposed punishment in the half-century after American independence, it is worth noting that these acts originally carried the death penalty. Sodomy remained a felony in all but two states until the mid-twentieth century, placing it in the same category as murder, kidnapping, and rape. Furthermore, the definition of sodomy was broadened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to cover not only anal but also oral sex.⁴⁸ Homosexual acts could also be prosecuted

⁴³ John C. Hudson, *Chicago: A Geography of the City and Its Region* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 126.

⁴⁴ Shirley Baugher, e-mail message to Michelle McClellan, March 11, 2014.

⁴⁵ Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 27.

⁴⁶ John Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

⁴⁷ David M. Halperin, "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 87-123.

⁴⁸ John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*

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under statutes prohibiting lewd behavior, a “crime against nature,” or “sexual perversion.”⁴⁹ While these laws often did not specify the gender of the persons involved in the act, they were almost exclusively used against men.

Despite the severe penalties imposed on sexual acts, middle-class Americans during the late nineteenth century romanticized, even idealized, same-sex friendships. Letters between female friends often included references to physical intimacy phrased in erotic terms.⁵⁰ Yet the unwillingness of the white, middle class to take female passion, especially for each other, seriously allowed women who preferred the embraces of other women to go unnoticed. Although male same-sex eroticism was less accepted than that of women, men also formed deep friendships with each other in the nineteenth century. These friendships could be valorized because they represented a kind of equality that could not be found within heterosexual relationships.⁵¹ Individuals from other social groups who engaged in same-sex erotic contact might face more scrutiny or suspicion, but even so, the behavior could be understood as a discrete act that resulted from a particular situation, such as living for a long time in a single-sex environment. In other words, homosexual behavior might be what one did, but it did not define who one was.

By the early twentieth century, however, understandings of homosexuality had begun to shift, as scientists and other commentators began to conceive of homosexuals as a particular type of person.⁵² These experts often conflated sexual behavior with gender roles, articulating the idea of a “third sex” or “invert” as someone who adopted the sexual and perhaps even social role associated with the other sex.⁵³ Men who took the so-called “passive” or subordinate position faced particular scrutiny and criticism, as they seemed to exemplify a general unraveling of American masculinity.⁵⁴ The closing of the American frontier, the sickly bodies of men working in factories, and the lack of exercise among boys seemed to threaten a future in which the white, American male would no longer be physically and morally superior.⁵⁵ At the same time that vibrant homosexual communities were being created in urban spaces in the United States, Americans were becoming increasingly suspicious of sexual deviance.⁵⁶ The male homosexual was seen as the counterpoint to the ideal citizen, and surveillance, police harassment, legal discrimination, social ostracism, and even violence, was often directed toward homosexuals.

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 14-15; Darren Rosenblum, “Sodomy, Buggery, Crimes Against Nature, Disorderly Conduct, and Lewd and Lascivious Law and Policy,” in *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History in America*, ed. Marc Stein, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004).

⁴⁹ D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 14.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Carol Smith Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1, no. 1 (1975): 1-29; Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); and Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵¹ Halperin, “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality,” 100-101. See also D. Michael Quinn, *Same Sex Dynamics Among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 93.

⁵² Chad Heap suggests that the ability of middle-class observers to map the geographic distribution of “sexual deviants” in segregated urban spaces contributed to this view of homosexuals as a separate category of people. See his *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters*.

⁵³ Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), especially 68-70, 79.

⁵⁴ This is a central argument of Halperin, “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality.”

⁵⁵ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See also Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). The so-called “New Woman,” who seemed to reject traditional domesticity, and the declining birth rate among native-born white Americans, which led to fears of “race suicide,” reflected complementary anxiety about women and femininity.

⁵⁶ Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 32 – 33.

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The Society for Human Rights

It was in this context that Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights. As suggested above, Gerber's time in Coblenz and exposure to the German homophile movement inspired him to begin similar efforts toward legitimizing homosexuality in his adoptive country. He saw the United States as being "in a condition of chaos and misunderstanding concerning its sex laws." Moreover, "no one was trying to unravel the tangle and bring relief to the abused."⁵⁷ On December 10, 1924, Gerber obtained a charter for a non-profit corporation called the Society for Human Rights – a literal translation of the German group *Bund für Menschenrecht*. Its stated objective, carefully worded so as not to arouse the suspicions of bureaucrats, was:

to promote and to protect the interests of people who by reasons of mental and physical abnormalities are abused and hindered in the legal pursuit of happiness which is guaranteed them by the Declaration of Independence, and to combat the public prejudices against them by dissemination of facts according to modern science among intellectuals of mature age. The Society stands only for law and order; it is in harmony with any and all general laws insofar as they protect the rights of others, and does in no manner recommend any acts in violation of present laws nor advocate any matter inimical to the public welfare.⁵⁸

While in many ways he sought to emulate the German homosexual movement, Gerber also very much drew on American traditions—citing the Declaration of Independence—in framing the organization's objectives. Much later, in 1962, Gerber wrote more specifically about the Society's activist goals. Recruiting homosexuals to their cause, the Society's members held lectures on homosexuality and society, published a newsletter called *Friendship and Freedom*, and worked to change the minds of legal and political authorities in order to combat the criminalization of homosexual acts.⁵⁹ The Society for Human Rights thus became the first chartered organization specifically formed to advocate for homosexual rights in the United States. According to Gerber's vision, it would challenge, through educational programs and community outreach, the contemporary discourse that vilified homosexuals. Its headquarters as listed on the charter, was Gerber's boarding house at 1710 North Crilly Court. As secretary of the Society, Gerber sought unsuccessfully to win the support of – in his words – "men of good reputation" and particularly medical professionals.⁶⁰

Gerber's organization did not include any women. Although he did address some issues related to lesbianism later (writing about the reception of Radclyffe Hall's lesbian novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, in the late 1920s, for example), the male-only roster of the SHR reflected the different legal situations, medical evaluations, and cultural practices of male and female homosexuals at the time.

Continuing to build on his transnational connections, Gerber kept in touch with homosexual organizations in Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Britain, and may have corresponded specifically with members of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology.⁶¹ There is evidence that one of the members of the Society for Human Rights wrote to the British Society seeking official affiliation with the group. Working out of his room at the boarding house, he also wrote the majority of the material published in the newsletter. His later writing

⁵⁷ Gerber, "The Society for Human Rights," 5-6.

⁵⁸ Certificate number 8018, State of Illinois, Office of the Secretary of State, Commercial Department, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵⁹ Gerber, "The Society for Human Rights," 6.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ McLeod, "Gerber, Heinrich," 394-96; James T. Sears, *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine: The Hal Call Chronicles and the Early Movement for Homosexual Emancipation* (New York: Harrington Press Park, 2006), 44.

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highlights the frustration he felt as he tried to keep the Society afloat. Most of the financial and written work fell to him. While six other members are listed on the charter (including Henry Teacutter who also lived at 1710 North Crilly Court), Gerber lamented their social status. He felt that he was only able to recruit poor, illiterate men to the cause.⁶² Unfortunately, no further information about these men has been found other than that concerning the later arrest of the first two along with Gerber in 1925. After founding the organization, the members initially decided to focus their efforts on laws against sodomy in Illinois.⁶³

The newsletter they published, *Friendship and Freedom*, remains the earliest-documented homosexual periodical in the United States. Distributed from the boarding house at 1710 North Crilly Court, only two issues were ever produced and no copies are known to survive today. It is pictured, however, alongside several German and French homosexual magazines in a photo first published by Magnus Hirschfeld in Germany in 1927.⁶⁴ The French journal *L'Amitié* also reviewed the first issue in April 1925, noting some of the front-page contents: an article on “self-control,” a poem by Walt Whitman, and an essay titled “Green Carnations” about Oscar Wilde. According to the reviewer, the Society for Human Rights intended to use subscription fees to establish a general assistance fund for homosexuals.⁶⁵ Gerber and his allies, however, did not find many readers willing to subscribe. He later noted, “Most [homosexuals] feel that as long as some homosexual sex acts are against the law, they should not let their names be on any homosexual organization’s mailing list any more than notorious bandits would join a thieves’ union.”⁶⁶ The early troubles of the Society and the difficulty in finding subscribers for its newsletter were clearly linked in Gerber’s mind to the culture of fear and shame fostered in this period by social stigma and criminalization. Although the newsletter’s attested presence in Germany and France in the 1920s suggests a certain amount of success in “keep[ing] the homophile world in touch with the progress of our efforts,”⁶⁷ the newsletter’s failure to find an audience in the United States points to important international differences in the social and political climate of America as compared to Europe.

Indeed, the oppressive social and political climate for homosexuals in 1920s Chicago led to the swift dissolution of the Society for Human Rights in 1925 when police arrested Gerber and several other members. Few criminal records from that time period remain, leaving historians with only two conflicting accounts of these events: Gerber’s own version published in 1962 in *ONE Magazine*, and a rather sensationalist article in the *Chicago American* dated July 13, 1925. According to *ONE Magazine*’s article by Gerber, one Sunday morning after 2:00 a.m., a city detective and a newspaper reporter knocked on the door to his room at 1710 North Crilly Court. The detective was under orders to bring him down to the police station. Although no warrant was produced, he was taken into custody and his belongings were confiscated. These included his typewriter, notary public diploma, Society literature, personal diaries, and account books. No charges were immediately made. He was transferred to another station where he saw his Society colleagues, John and Al, along with a “boy” that was found in Al’s room at the time of his arrest. They were shown a copy of a newspaper article about a “strange sex cult” apparently operating out of Meininger’s home and witnessed by his wife and children. This article was probably that published in the *Chicago American*, which bears the title “Girl Reveals Strange Cult

⁶² Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights,” 7.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Magnus Hirschfeld, “Die Homosexualität,” in *Sittengeschichte des Lasters*, ed. Leo Schidrowitz (Vienna: Verlag für Kulturforschung, 1927), 301. The photo is also reprinted in Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany*, opposite 78, and in Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976), 390.

⁶⁵ Patrick Cardon, ed., *Inversions 1924-1925 L'Amitié 1925: Deux revues homosexuelles françaises* (Lille: GayKitschCamp, 2006), 228-29. The review has been translated by Bruce Kamsler in St. Sukie de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago Before Stonewall* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 78-79.

⁶⁶ Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights,” 7.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.

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Run by Dad.”⁶⁸ According to this piece, Al Meininger’s twelve-year-old daughter complained to police about meetings in their home “attended by men and devoted to séances at which strange rites were performed[.]” A raid of the flat allegedly turned up Al, John the preacher, and Henry Gerber, who was identified as the “publisher of the cult paper, Friendship and Freedom” and who was listed with his address at 1710 North Crilly Court. Finally, the article reported that police were considering the possibility of charging the trio with distributing the newsletter, presumably in violation of the Comstock Act, a Federal law prohibiting the sending of obscene material by mail. According to Gerber, there was nothing indecent in *Friendship and Freedom*. In the popular imagination, however, homosexual literature was obscene by definition.

In his 1962 article in *ONE Magazine*, Gerber denied the newspaper account, maintaining that he was arrested in his room and had no idea that Al Meininger was even married. He described their experiences in court, where they went through three separate trials, two lawyers, and two judges, the second of whom finally dismissed the case because they had been arrested without a warrant. Vigorously prosecuted at first, then suddenly dismissed, the case illustrates the capriciousness of legal actions against homosexuals in the 1920s. Moreover, although they were ultimately released, the trials took both an emotional and a financial toll on Gerber and his colleagues. Al Meininger “broke out crying and felt deeply crushed” while in the jail cell. Gerber was freed on a bail of \$1000. It is unclear if Meininger and John, for whom bail was also set at \$1000, were able to afford the same. Since Gerber would eventually pay the \$10 fee incurred by Meininger for pleading guilty to disorderly conduct, if the latter was bailed out it is likely that Gerber paid for it. In addition, their lawyers charged \$200 per trial.⁶⁹ This was a significant financial burden for Gerber, who had already been at pains to fund the Society and its newsletter.

Gerber felt that the court’s prejudice was clear; the only evidence presented against him was a powder puff supposedly found in his room and a diary entry, “I love Karl,” read out of context. The accused were subjected to the threats and taunts of those in attendance. A postal inspector, present at the second trial because of the possible Comstock violation, reportedly “promised that he would see to it that we got heavy prison sentences for infecting God’s own country.” The detective who had made the arrest asked “What was the idea of the Society for Human Rights anyway? Was it to give you birds the legal right to rape every boy on the street?” If Gerber’s account is accurate, his conclusion is a testament to the legal struggles of homosexuals in the period: “We were guilty just by being homosexual. This was the court’s conception of our ‘strange cult.’” The fact that a powder puff might be considered evidence of criminal homosexual activity and that “I love Karl” could be a damning statement in a court of law reveals how even the barest pretense justified the prosecution of homosexuals. The experience convinced Gerber “that we were up against a solid wall of ignorance, hypocrisy, meanness and corruption.”⁷⁰

The fallout from these legal troubles brought about the demise of the Society. The second judge eventually ordered Gerber’s property be returned to him, but it seems he only retrieved his typewriter. His diaries and other documents disappeared after they were turned over to postal inspectors.⁷¹ Although cleared of any criminal activity, Gerber was suspended from his position at the post office during the trials in July.⁷² Within a month, the Postmaster received a letter ordering his permanent removal from the service, effective August 13,

⁶⁸ *Chicago American*, July 13, 1925, 1. In 1962, Gerber remembered it as the *Chicago Examiner*, with some differences in the details. However, the *Examiner* ceased publication in 1918 and became the *Chicago Herald-Examiner*; de la Croix, *Chicago Whispers*, 82. No other newspaper article covering the incident has been found.

⁶⁹ Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights,” 9-10.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² A telegraph sent on July 17, 1925, to the Chicago Postmaster reads, “SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY CLERK HENRY GERBER AUTHORIZED PENDING FINAL ACTION,” box 25, fol. 4, Gregory Sprague Papers, Chicago History Museum, Illinois.

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for “conduct unbecoming a postal employee.”⁷³ According to Gerber, this “definitely meant the end of the Society for Human Rights,” and he left Chicago for New York.⁷⁴

Although Gerber would continue to write articles and editorials on homosexuality for various publications, his experiences in 1924 and 1925 left him pessimistic about homosexual organizations. He later corresponded with and advised members of such groups, but would never again take a leadership role. The Society for Human Rights, although short-lived, represented a direct challenge to popular prejudice and to the criminalization of homosexuality in the United States in the early twentieth century. Its chartered status and newsletter were unprecedented in the history of homosexuality in the U.S., such that Gerber has rightly been called the “Grandfather of the American Gay Movement.”⁷⁵ The Society’s failure, sparked by the warrantless arrests of Gerber and other members, illustrates how police harassment and institutionalized prejudice formed substantial, even insurmountable obstacles in the struggle for the rights of homosexuals at this early date. As the site of the Society’s headquarters, where Gerber managed the organization and produced *Friendship and Freedom*, and as the site of his unjustified arrest and confiscation of property, 1710 North Crilly Court witnessed both the earliest documented efforts towards homosexual emancipation in America and the pervasive trend of discrimination against, and persecution of, homosexuals in the twentieth century.

Gerber’s Later Life and Connections with the Homophile Movement

Despite his crushing experience in Chicago, Gerber continued thinking and writing about the legal, social, and psychological position of homosexuals. He also continued to build networks among homosexuals throughout the rest of his life, if in a more private, quiet manner. This change in strategy may be understood as what John D’Emilio, in an overview of the gay and lesbian movement in the United States, has called “creeping:” periods of incremental, barely visible change.⁷⁶ According to D’Emilio, these “creeping” periods are as important as “leaping” eras, times of more dramatic change, as they allow the movement to advance and build community.⁷⁷ D’Emilio’s account begins in the 1940s, following the common narrative of the emergence of a homosexual community in the U.S. in the wake of the Second World War. But Gerber’s work for homosexual emancipation fits this same framework, suggesting that the Society for Human Rights was not a brief episode without consequences but rather the most dramatic phase of a continued activism that lasted from Gerber’s 1920s army stay in Germany to his contacts with the Mattachine in the 1960s.⁷⁸ Although these later efforts were not as ambitious as those associated with the founding of the Society for Human Rights, they are equally important to his life and legacy. Gerber’s activism after the Society’s dissolution included publishing, writing letters to the editors of numerous newspapers and magazines, running pen pal clubs that offered homosexuals a relatively safe way to make contacts, and corresponding with others interested in homosexual activism.

After leaving Chicago, Gerber’s involvement with other homosexual men interested in political activism initially took place through channels opened to him by the army. He rejoined the army in 1927 and worked as a

⁷³ Ibid. The letter, dated August 10, 1925, was signed by First Assistant Postmaster General John H. Bartlett.

⁷⁴ Gerber, “The Society for Human Rights,” 10-11.

⁷⁵ Jim Kepner and Stephen O. Murray, “Henry Gerber (1895-1972): Grandfather of the American Gay Movement,” in *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context*, ed. Vern L. Bullough (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 2002), 24-34.

⁷⁶ John D’Emilio, “Cycles of Change, Questions of Strategy: The Gay and Lesbian Movement After Fifty Years” in *The Politics of Gay Rights*, ed. Craig A. Rimmerman, Kenneth D. Wald, and Clyde Wilcox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 31-53, 42.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁸ Mattachine is the best-known homophile organization. It was founded in California in the early 1950s and persisted into the 1970s. Martin Meeker, “Mattachine Society,” in *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered History in America*, ed. Marc Stein, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004).

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proofreader on Governor's Island, New York.⁷⁹ During this time, he wrote a few short pieces for German homosexual publications, maintaining his transatlantic ties and interest in European activism. In these articles he discussed censorship of Radcliffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness* and the ten-year incarceration of a G.I. he claimed had been blackmailed by another male soldier after they had sex.⁸⁰ This latter article played upon a common fear of German and American homosexuals who saw blackmail as a constant threat to their existence. The German editor remarked that the report "shows us that in prudish America, prostitution is being protected and homosexuality is severely punished."⁸¹ At the same time that Gerber was occasionally submitting articles to German magazines, he sought to create a community of homosexuals through his management of the Contacts pen pal club.⁸² The pen pal club, which Gerber was in charge of from 1930 to 1939, was not directed exclusively to homosexuals. In fact, its primary audience was heterosexual men and women. The club, however, provided a safe platform where gay men could contact each other. Manuel Boyfrank, a gay man who would later be active in the Mattachine Society, responded to a personal ad that Gerber placed for a correspondent in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The two corresponded frequently over the next decade. Boyfrank later wrote that "the enterprise was immensely beneficial to the homosexual cause and to enlightenment in general."⁸³

The pen pal club was not the only activity in which Gerber engaged in this time period. During the 1930s and 1940s, he published numerous articles in *American Mercury*, *The Modern Thinker*, *The Freethinker*, *Chanticleer*, and in Washington D.C. newspapers on topics ranging from *Theism and Atheism* to *Hitlerism and Homosexuality*.⁸⁴ He wrote the most for *Chanticleer*. In 1934, he worked as a writer and assistant editor for the magazine which was dedicated to modernism. His work for them was reflective of his wider sense of himself as belonging to an intellectual vanguard that would work to transform American society. As a movement, modernism sought to reject traditional forms of religious faith, art, sexuality, and politics.⁸⁵ Its followers believed in the importance of experimentation and the creation of new kinds of being. *Chanticleer* was a low budget affair. Written on a typewriter and then mimeographed, it had a limited distribution and today exists in just four libraries. Its very existence was ephemeral; after just a year, its editors decided to cease production believing that the magazine had failed to find its audience.

In spite of its low circulation, *Chanticleer* provided Gerber with connections to a larger intellectual and literary world and gave him a platform upon which he could further explain his ideas about atheism and homosexuality. In the journal's first issue, he published a jocular article that sought to reconcile theism and atheism. He suggested that the Ten Commandments could be reduced to simple maxims like "the night was made for love" and "the Sun is the Lord of Life."⁸⁶ In another article, he criticized the propensity of police in a Christian nation to periodically raid theaters to ensure "that the 'gals' wear clothes of sufficient length" so as to

⁷⁹ McLeod, "Gerber, Heinrich," 394–6.

⁸⁰ *Blätter für Menschenrecht* 6, no. 15 (October 1928); Henry Gerber, "Zwei Dollars oder fünfzehn Jahre Zuchthaus," *Das Freundschaftsblatt* 8, no. 41 (October 9, 1930).

⁸¹ Gerber, "Zwei Dollars," *Das Freundschaftsblatt*.

⁸² McLeod, "Gerber, Heinrich," 394–96.

⁸³ *National Gay Archives Bulletin*. "The Boyfrank Papers: a collection of letters among gay friends span experiences of both world wars, and reveal their efforts and desires to start a movement," 1983, 14-15, preserved in Chicago History Museum, Gregory Sprague Papers, Box 25, Folder 4. Boyfrank changed his name several times, sometimes varying which letters were capitalized (e.g. boyFrank). In this nomination, "Boyfrank" is used except when citing publications that use an alternative.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ For introductions to modernism, see Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Leigh Wilson, *Modernism* (New York: Continuum, 2008); and Christopher Butler, *Modernism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Henry Gerber, "Theism and Atheism Reconciled," *Chanticleer* 1, no. 1 (January 1934): 4.

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“not endanger the morals of the sex-starved morons who go to see such burlesques.”⁸⁷ At this period in Gerber’s life, he still believed in the possibility of a general societal transformation and argued for the importance of changing the world’s opinions of sexuality. By the time that he began corresponding with Manuel Boyfrank and Frank McCourt, however, he had become more uncertain about the possibilities for change.

The change in his tone can be seen in the letters that he wrote to Boyfrank. Gerber discussed current sexological theories as well as strategies for a renewed homosexual activism in great detail. He recounted being put in front of a Section VIII board in the army in 1942 but not identified as homosexual because of the investigator’s limited understanding of homosexuality: “But when I told the president of the board that I only practiced mutual masturbation with men over 21, the psychiatrist in the board told me – You are not a homosexual. I nearly fell over the chair. Imagine me fighting all my life for our cause and then be told I was not a homosexual.”⁸⁸ The quote suggests that Gerber continued to see himself as working for the civil rights of homosexuals. The rest of the letter, however, implies how his tactics had changed. He argued for the following policies for any movement dedicated to the rights of homosexuals:

“1) only an occasional letter to people who attack homosexuality (two samples of such letters enclosed.) 2) further our own personal cycle, get all we can and spread the good tidings. 3) formal associations or clubs impracticable. 4) Church of St Francis in Brooklyn is the ideal center for the bible students. membership by invitation only.”⁸⁹

The suggestions are full of code words; “bible students,” “the Church of St. Francis,” and “good tidings” are used to refer to homosexuality rather than something more overt. Gerber was also less willing to distribute copies of his writings freely. Admission was to be “by invitation only,” and the society would not publish a newsletter. Instead, it would send “only an occasional letter to people who attack homosexuality.” Gerber’s experiences in Chicago had taught him to keep a low profile, to network, to stay away from public organizing, and to use code language to protect himself and his friends from the authorities. Gerber’s reluctance to create a visible organization did not represent a retreat from activism. Instead, Gerber saw his attempts to create “connections with the orthodox” as laying “the groundwork” so that they could “send our gospel to all.”⁹⁰

In 1945, Gerber received an honorary discharge from the army as a staff sergeant. He spent the rest of his life at the U.S. Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home in Washington, D.C., continuing to network with other gay men in the U.S. and in Canada.⁹¹ In 1951, he corresponded at length with Canadian gay rights pioneer Jim Egan.⁹² He remained interested and engaged in public discussion of sexuality and the law. His continued public activism may have inspired the founding of the Mattachine Society. In 1948, a nineteen-year-old soldier named Fred Frisbie slept with one of Gerber’s friends. At breakfast the next morning, the young man enthusiastically participated in a conversation about the need to start an organization that would advocate for the rights of homosexuals. Frisbie was an early member of the Mattachine Society, and his descriptions of the Society for Human Rights likely influenced its formation. Gerber entered into correspondence with dozens of politically-minded homosexuals, and influenced key figures in the early homophile movement, including Harry Hay, Jim

⁸⁷ Henry Gerber, “Moral Warfare,” *Chanticleer* 1, no. 10 (October 1934): 7.

⁸⁸ Gerber to Boyfrank, April 14, 1944, box 25, folder 3, Gregory Sprague Papers, Chicago History Museum, IL.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* The church of St. Francis is likely Gerber’s friend Frank McCourt’s Brooklyn apartment.

⁹⁰ Gerber to Boyfrank, April 25, 1944, box 25, folder 3, Gregory Sprague Papers, Chicago History Museum, IL.

⁹¹ McLeod, “Gerber, Heinrich,” 394-96.

⁹² Donald W. McLeod, *Jim Egan, Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence: My Life As a Canadian Gay Activist* (Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 1998), 58.

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Kepner, Tony Segura, and Donna Smith.⁹³ When Kepner was asked to write about an important figure within the early homophile movement, he chose to write about Gerber. This choice suggests how important Gerber's early activism was to the formation of later organizations.

Gerber was more than just a figure of inspiration in this time period; in spite of his age, he remained involved in political activism. When the Mattachine Society created a chapter in Washington, D.C., in 1961, he became a member.⁹⁴ A year later, Gerber wrote about the Society for Human Rights in *ONE Magazine*. Gerber also published a partial translation of Magnus Hirschfeld's *The Homosexuality of Man and Woman*, a late continuation of his transatlantic activism.⁹⁵ When the Stonewall Riots signaled the beginning of a new, more radical gay activism in 1969, Henry Gerber was still alive, but we do not know if he remained active in the movement, and how he reacted to the changes. He died at age eighty of pneumonia and was buried at the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery.⁹⁶ Although his later activism was not as dramatic as the founding for the Society for Human Rights, it was instrumental in maintaining connections between politically-active homosexual men before the founding of the Mattachine Society in 1950.

Impact and Importance

In spite of Gerber's continued activism throughout the first half of the twentieth century, he was relatively unknown outside of the leadership of the Mattachine Society. The homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s manifested no discernible attempts at history-making and engaged in a more covert activism. James T. Sears has described the 1950s as a moment when homophile activism was fragmented and dispersed.⁹⁷ In the years after Stonewall, however, the diverse efforts to empower gay men and lesbian women included a focus on recovering a gay history that would allow homosexuals to see themselves in their nation's past. One of the first histories to be published was Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (1976). It marked a turning point by asserting there *was* such a thing as gay American history and that its story deserved a readership.⁹⁸

Gerber was an important part of this rediscovery. Jim Kepner of the Mattachine Society had originally collected his papers in the 1940s and 1950s.⁹⁹ The documents were later stored with the *Manuel boyFrank Papers, 1916-1984* at the ONE National Archives, which are now part of the University of Southern California Libraries.¹⁰⁰ Katz's book, however, was the first to bring the public's attention to Henry Gerber, showing again the importance of community-based LGBT history.¹⁰¹ The Katz compendium included an image of the Society for Human Rights charter, along with the complete text of Gerber's 1962 *ONE Magazine* article.¹⁰² He was also responsible for unearthing Gerber's writings in the *Chanticleer* literary magazine and his essay, "In Defense of Homosexuality," from a 1932 edition of *The Modern Thinker*.¹⁰³ The active and organized gay rights

⁹³ Jim Kepner and Stephen O. Murray, "Henry Gerber (1895 – 1972): Grandfather of the American Gay Movement," *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context* ed. Vern L. Bullough (New York: Routledge, 2008), 33.

⁹⁴ McLeod, "Gerber, Heinrich," 394-96.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Sears, *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine*.

⁹⁸ Katz, *Gay American History*.

⁹⁹ See unnumbered note in Kepner and Murray, "Henry Gerber (1895–1972)," 24.

¹⁰⁰ ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, *Finding Aid to the Manuel boyFrank Papers, 1916-1984, Coll2013.028* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 2013).

¹⁰¹ Jim Kepner shared the correspondence with Katz prior to the archiving of the Boyfrank Papers. See unnumbered note in Kepner and Murray. "Henry Gerber (1895–1972)," 24.

¹⁰² Katz, *Gay American History*, 385-96.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 4-5, 393-397. Katz explains that Gerber's "In Defense of Homosexuality" was written under a pen name, "Parisex."

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movements of the 1970s made it possible for Katz to frame Henry Gerber as the first of many gay rights activists, a predecessor in a long line of fighters.

Katz has not been the only one to recognize Gerber's importance within the history of homosexuality in the United States or to memorialize him. In 1981, the Gerber/Hart Library and Archives was founded, named in memory of Henry Gerber and Pearl Hart. The institution still exists in Chicago as "a depository for the records of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) individuals and organizations, and for other resources bearing upon their lives and experiences in American society."¹⁰⁴ Eleven years later, Gerber was posthumously inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as the "founder of the first gay rights organization in the United States."¹⁰⁵ The house is named as the "'starting point' of the gay and lesbian civil-rights movement in the United States" and the home of the first gay civil-rights organization in the country.¹⁰⁶

The nomination of the Henry Gerber House as a Chicago landmark helped to bring Gerber back into the city's consciousness. Gerber has been included in several publications about Chicago's gay history, including Tracy Baim's 2008 *Out and Proud in Chicago* and St. Sukie de la Croix's 2012 *Chicago Whispers*. In addition to these works, Gerber has been discussed in several newspaper articles. Designating the Henry Gerber House as a National Historic Landmark would help bring Gerber into the national consciousness. Legal discrimination and police harassment of gay men and lesbians throughout much of the twentieth century meant that homosexuality was often lived under the radar. Despite the hidden nature of gay lives, however, LGBTQ activists and amateur historians began collecting traces of homosexual lives and researching the history of LGBTQ individuals, subcultures, and movements, even while such research was still regarded as inappropriate in academic history departments. More recently, LGBTQ students, faculty, and their allies have created a space for these histories within the academy, though its position within most departments is still a marginal one. The framing of Gerber as a gay ancestor is symbolic of a continued effort on the part of historians, preservationists, community activists, and others invested in LGBTQ rights to chronicle the movement's heritage in the United States.

Physical heritage sites have the power to confirm the identities of persons who share heritage with the figure or movement represented at the site. It has been noted, however, that gay heritage sites have repeatedly encountered "glaring omissions, deafening silences, misleading euphemisms, and outright lies" in the United States, where they even exist at all.¹⁰⁷ Gerber's story illuminates the historical struggles of gay visibility, and the Henry Gerber House is the crux of the story: the site where police seized Gerber's documents and his very means of communication. These documents, which were never returned, leave a hole that continues to silence Gerber to this day. Even in his later life, Gerber's communications about homosexual rights organizing were coded in cryptic language. While audiences today are without many details of Gerber's early life, the place where he founded the Society for Human Rights and served as its secretary still stands.

¹⁰⁴ Tracy Baim, "The Legacy of Gerber and Hart," in *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community*, ed. Baim (Chicago: Agate, 2008), 41.

¹⁰⁵ "Henry Gerber," *Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame*, last modified April 2, 2014, http://www.glhalloffame.org/index.pl?item=18&todo=view_item.

¹⁰⁶ "Preliminary Summary of Information, Henry Gerber House" submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, December 2000, 8, Chicago History Museum.

¹⁰⁷ Gail Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags," in *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, ed. Gail Dubrow and Jennifer Goodman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 282. See also Kenneth Turino and Susan Ferentinos, "Entering the Mainstream: Interpreting GLBT History," *History News* 67, no. 4 (2012): 21-25.

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Comparable properties for Henry Gerber House

The challenge of identifying comparable properties for the Henry Gerber House illustrates the extent to which LGBTQ histories are often hidden, making the places associated with them that much more difficult to identify. In fact, such associations can sometimes be hidden in plain sight. For example, some properties already designated National Historic Landmarks for other reasons have a connection with LGBTQ history, such as Philip Johnson's Glass House or the home of Frances Willard, longtime director of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.¹⁰⁸

The Henry Gerber House is unique in that it possesses a strong association with the first documented formal political organization on behalf of homosexuals, preceding better-known efforts by more than two decades. Henry Gerber filed the charter for the Society for Human Rights from 1710 North Crilly Court, listing that address on the official paperwork he submitted to the State of Illinois. Since he lived here during the period that the organization existed and the SHR had no office or other facility, it is more than probable that he managed the affairs of the organization and wrote and distributed the newsletter *Friendship and Freedom* from this address. This property is, in fact, the only known place associated with his activism during the mid-1920s.

Gerber is also connected with Governors Island, where he served in the U.S. Army from the latter 1920s into the 1940s. During these years, he continued his writing and correspondence on behalf of homosexual emancipation.¹⁰⁹ However, Gerber's main contribution is the creation of the pioneering Society for Human Rights, and so his significance is best understood in relation to his time in Chicago and 1710 North Crilly Court.

Properties Associated with Gay and Lesbian Social Life

Historians have demonstrated that homosexuals began to create a dynamic culture during the late nineteenth century in America's industrializing cities, transforming particular places and spaces into a gay urban geography; these spaces were especially for men as they generally had more social and economic autonomy than women. For instance, bathhouses, YMCAs, and certain public parks became associated with gay men's sexual practices.¹¹⁰ Such locations would not be formally designated as such, however; rather, men would communicate this knowledge through informal networks, and activity could shift to different locales depending on police harassment or other local factors.

Some sites associated with commercialized leisure and socializing during the early twentieth century have been identified in New York, Seattle, and other cities.

The Double Header Tavern, Seattle, Washington. Reputedly the oldest continuously operating gay bar in the U.S., the Double Header Tavern is located in the Pioneer Square Historic District.¹¹¹

Tea Room, Greenwich Village. According to Jennifer Terry in her book *An American Obsession*, a lesbian named Eve Addams (Kotchever) operated a tea room catering to lesbians in Greenwich Village, New York City, during the 1920s. She was arrested and deported in 1926.¹¹² This establishment was contemporary with Gerber, but little is known about it and it was probably short lived given the deportation of the proprietor.

¹⁰⁸ Dubrow, "Blazing Trails," 287, 289-291.

¹⁰⁹ "Henry Gerber," National Park Service, last modified April 8, 2014, <http://www.nps.gov/gois/historyculture/henry-gerber.htm>.

¹¹⁰ Dubrow, "Blazing Trails," 291.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 291, 293. Spelling varies; the bar is sometimes referred to as "Doubleheader."

¹¹² Terry, *American Obsession*, 269-70.

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Paresis Hall, New York City. According to his 1922 autobiographical narrative, a man called Earl Lind (also known as Jennie June) belonged to a group called the Cercle Hermaphroditos that met in Paresis Hall, in the Bowery section of New York. Although Paresis Hall was known as a “sex resort” for effeminate homosexuals, historians disagree as to whether the group Lind referred to ever existed in a formal way since no other documentary evidence has been found and Lind’s reliability is not certain.¹¹³

Although some of these establishments operated during the same period that Henry Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights, and they were undoubtedly important in creating a sense of community among gay men and lesbians, none fostered the kind of formal political organizing in which Gerber engaged. Patrons at the **Stonewall Inn** did generate political activism in response to police harassment at a gay bar, but that was more than forty years after Gerber founded the SHR. The Stonewall Inn was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2000.

Properties Associated with Later Gay Activism and Activists

Jan Gay (Goldberg). Gay/Goldberg was a lesbian journalist born in 1902 (in Germany to American parents, moving later to the United States). Like Gerber, she was very influenced by Magnus Hirschfeld. She contributed to social science studies of homosexuals during the 1930s and 1940s, including the influential Committee for the Study of Sex Variants. She was a closer contemporary to Gerber than activists of the post-World War II era, but no property has been identified that is closely associated with her contributions.¹¹⁴

Harry Hay. Hay was the founder of the Mattachine Society, which is generally considered the first sustained gay rights organization in the United States. The **Margaret and Harry Hay House** in Los Angeles is a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument recognizing both its historic significance as the home of Harry Hay and the location for early Mattachine Society meetings, and for its architectural significance (it was designed by Gregory Ain, an influential modernist architect). Hay founded the Mattachine Society in 1950, twenty-five years after Gerber established the Society for Human Rights.¹¹⁵ At this time, the owners of the Hay House have declined to pursue NHL designation.

Daughters of Bilitis. Considered the first national lesbian group, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was founded by Dell Martin and Phyllis Lyon in San Francisco in 1955. They also published a magazine called *The Ladder*. The group started as a social club and later shifted to education and politics. The national organization folded in 1970, although some local chapters continued.¹¹⁶ Like the Mattachines, the DOB represents a different era in LGBTQ history than the SHR. If an appropriate site could be identified for its association with the DOB (perhaps the home of the founders) it would be a fitting complement to the Henry Gerber House. At this time, the owners of the property with the strongest association with the DOB, the Dill Martin and Phyllis Lyon House in San Francisco, have declined to pursue NHL designation.

¹¹³ Terrence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2008), 2-3; Jay Hatheway, *The Gilded Age Construction of American Homophobia* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 55-56, 166-67.

¹¹⁴ Terry, *American Obsession*, 183-85.

¹¹⁵ “Los Angeles Department of City Planning Recommendation Report for the Cultural Heritage Commission,” November 19, 2009, <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/StaffRpt/CHC/1-21-10/CHC-2009-3555.pdf>. Also, Gayle Dubrow notes that a pre-application had been filed with the California State Historical Resources Commission at the time her essay was published. Dubrow, “Blazing Trails,” 290.

¹¹⁶ Marcia M. Gallo, “Winds of Change: The Daughters of Bilitis and Lesbian Organizing,” *Gerber/Hart Library and Archives*, 2005, <http://www.gerberhart.org/dob.html>.

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Barbara Gittings. An influential and versatile lesbian activist, Barbara Gittings took part in protests with Frank Kameny regarding discrimination in federal hiring. She also worked with the American Library Association on cataloging practices regarding homosexuality and contributed to the American Psychiatric Association's decision to take the diagnosis of homosexuality out of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. Gittings established the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and edited *The Ladder*.¹¹⁷ For much of her life, Gittings lived in Philadelphia, and a section of Locust Street was named "Barbara Gittings Way" in 2012.¹¹⁸ Gittings also represents a later era than Henry Gerber.

Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence, Washington, D.C. Kameny was instrumental in the gay rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, making particular contributions in reducing discrimination in federal government hiring and in lobbying the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. Kameny's home served as his office and as the headquarters of the local chapter of the Mattachine Society. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.¹¹⁹ At this time, the owners of the Frank Kameny House have declined to pursue NHL designation.

Conclusion

Although there are sites related to LGBTQ history from the early twentieth century, none exist that are associated with the same kind of overt political advocacy as Henry Gerber. Identifying the Henry Gerber House as a National Historic Landmark would recognize the existence of LGBTQ advocacy before Stonewall and to extend its history to include the early twentieth century. The comparable properties for the Henry Gerber House are important to American history and efforts should be taken to preserve them, but they do not offer the same opportunity to change the way that we think about early LGBTQ history and the advocacy for LGBTQ rights.

¹¹⁷ Margalit Fox, "Barbara Gittings, 74, Prominent Gay Rights Activist Since '50s, Dies," *New York Times*, March 15, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/15/obituaries/15gittings.html?_r=0.

¹¹⁸ "'Barbara Gittings Way' Dedication: Mother of LGBT Civil Rights Movement," *Equality Forum*, accessed April 21, 2014, <http://www.equalityforum.com/%E2%80%9Cbarbara-gittings-way%E2%80%9D-dedication-mother-lgbt-civil-rights-movement>.

¹¹⁹ Mark Meinke, "Dr. Franklin E. Kameny Residence," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2011), accessed April 21, 2014, http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/weekly_features/2011/KamenyResidence.pdf.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Listed in the National Register. Old Town Historic District, NR # 84000347

Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

Designated a National Historic Landmark.

Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	16	447255	4640365

Verbal Boundary Description: The property located at 1710 North Crilly Court is located in area 14, block 418, and parcel 008 as recorded in the Cook County (Illinois) Property Tax Portal. The nominated property is also indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map titled "Verbal Boundary Description (1910)."

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the building and acreage historically associated with Henry Gerber, and which retains a high level of historic integrity.

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NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
December 12, 2014

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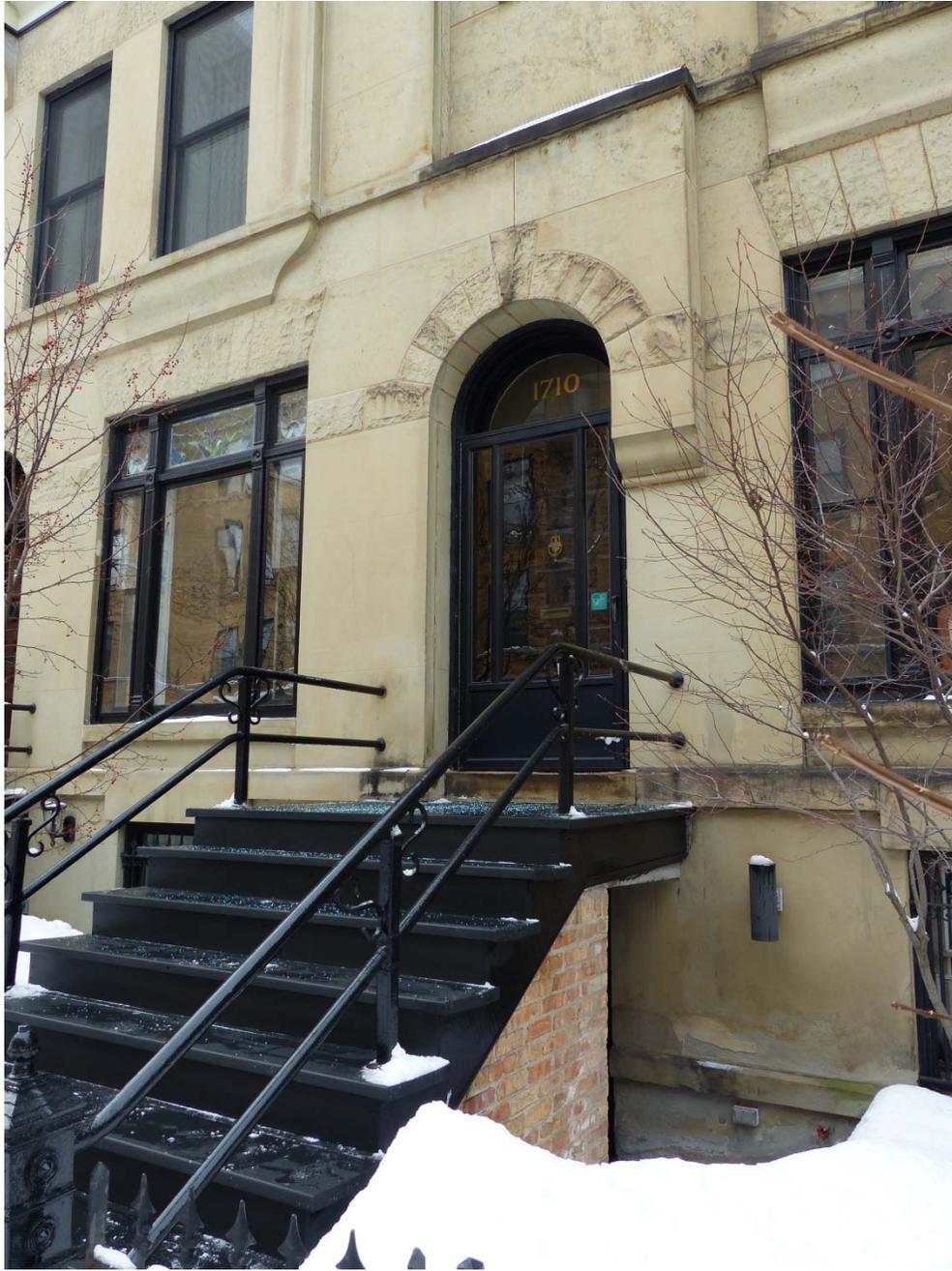
Front façade and entrance, camera facing west.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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Entrance to house (center) and doorway to basement entrance under staircase, camera facing southwest.

Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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Dining area (foreground) and parlor with window to street (background), camera facing northeast.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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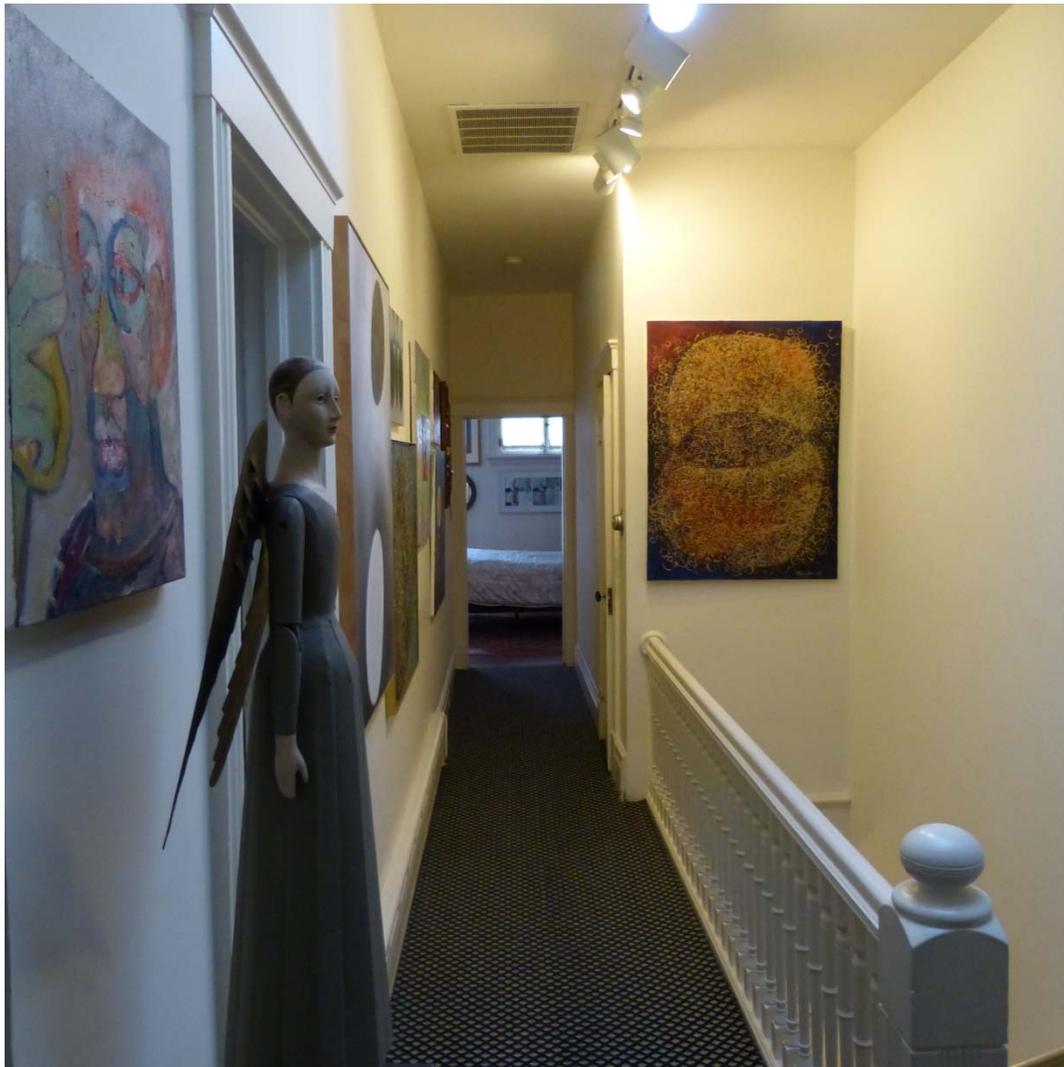
Front parlor with window to street, camera facing east.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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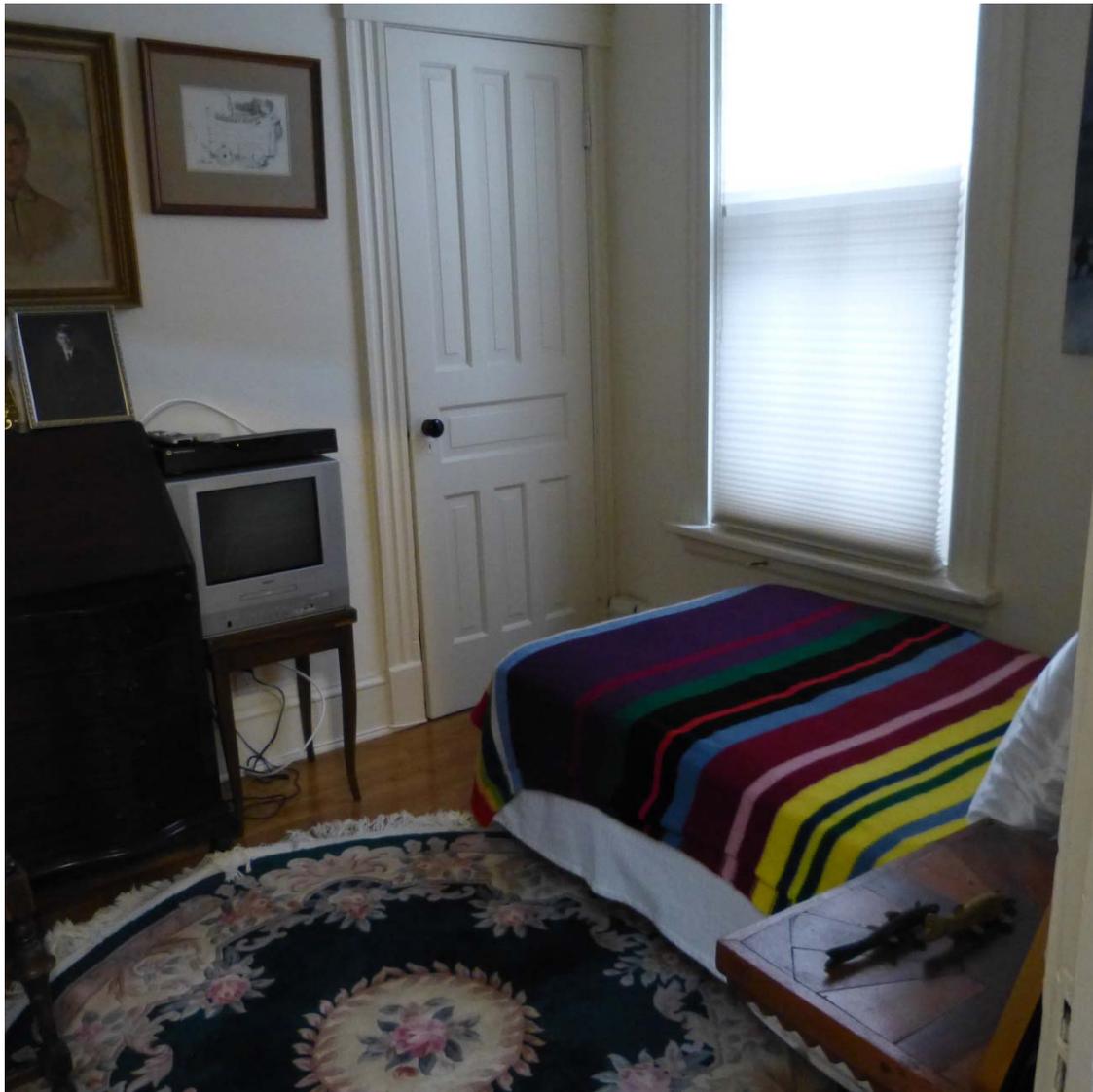
Second story hallway (center) and staircase banister (right), camera facing east.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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Small second-story bedroom with window to alley, camera facing northwest.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

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Small second-story bedroom with door to hallway and staircase, camera facing southeast.
Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014

HENRY GERBER HOUSE

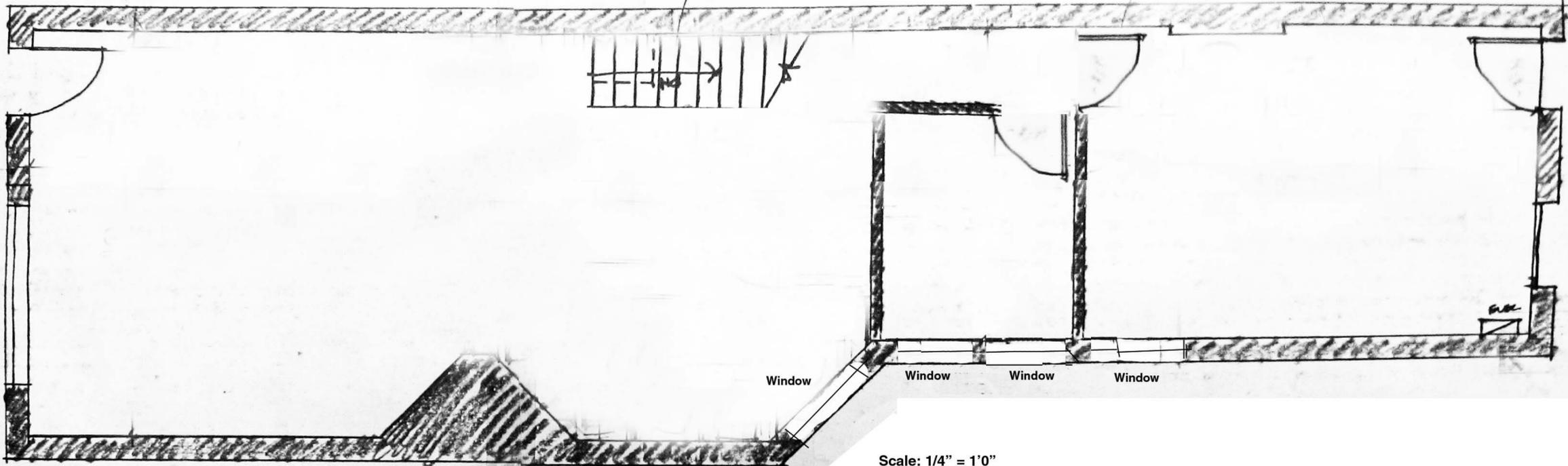
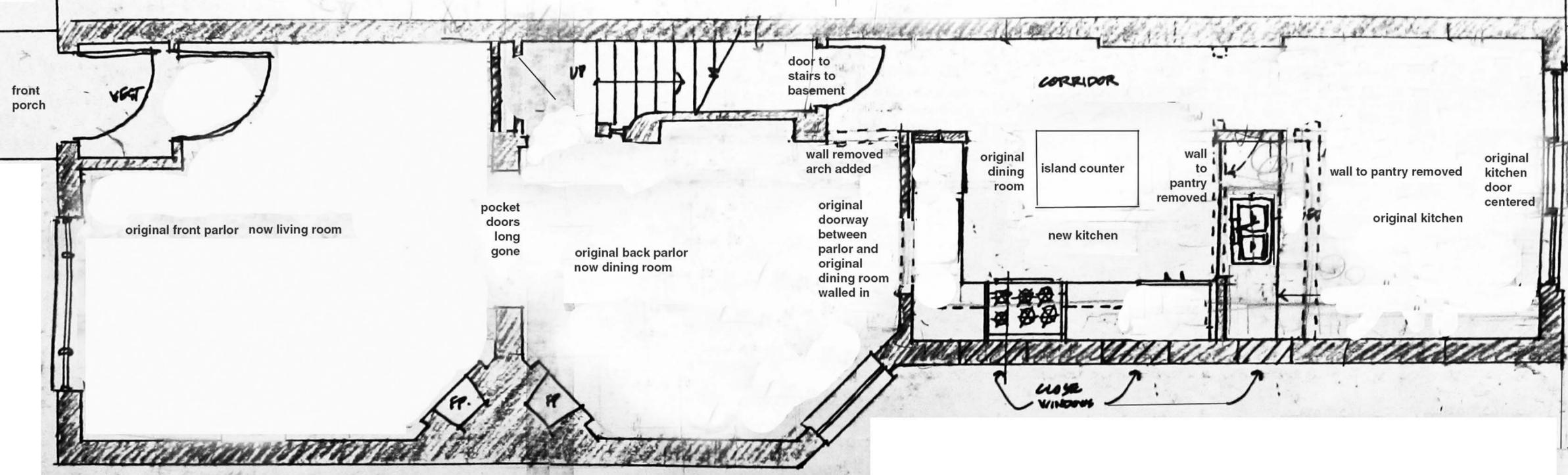
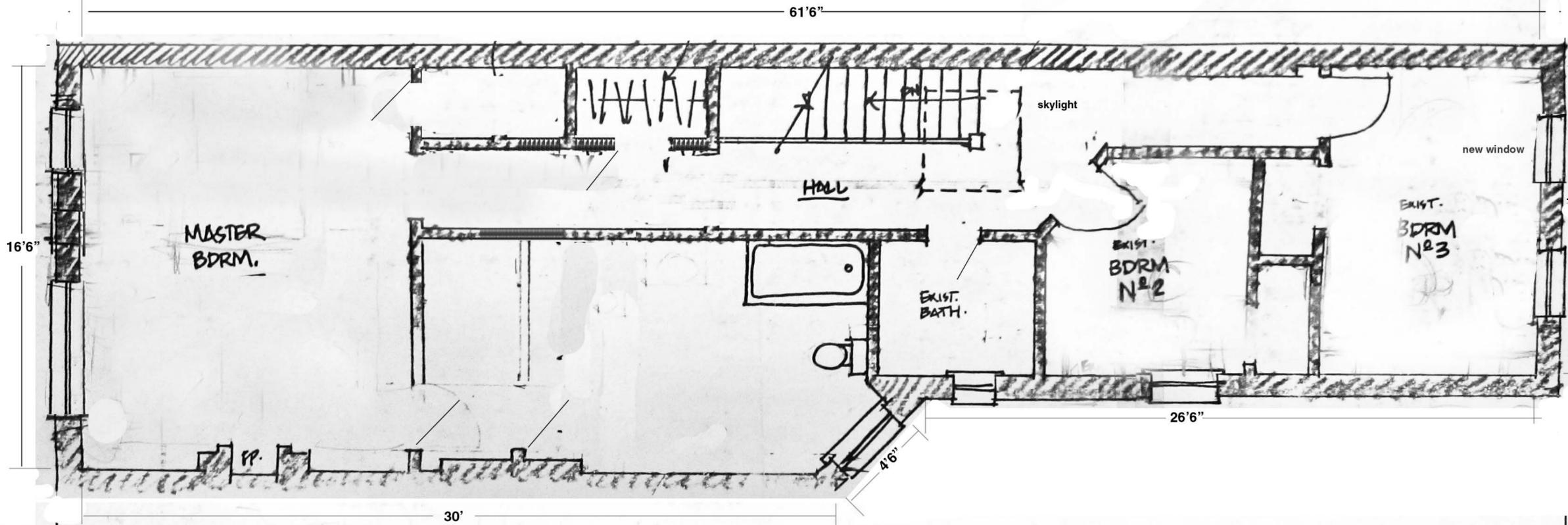
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Second-story master bedroom with original wood flooring and window facing street, camera facing northeast. Photograph by April Slabosheski, January 2014



Scale: 1/4" = 1'0"

HENRY GERBER HOUSE

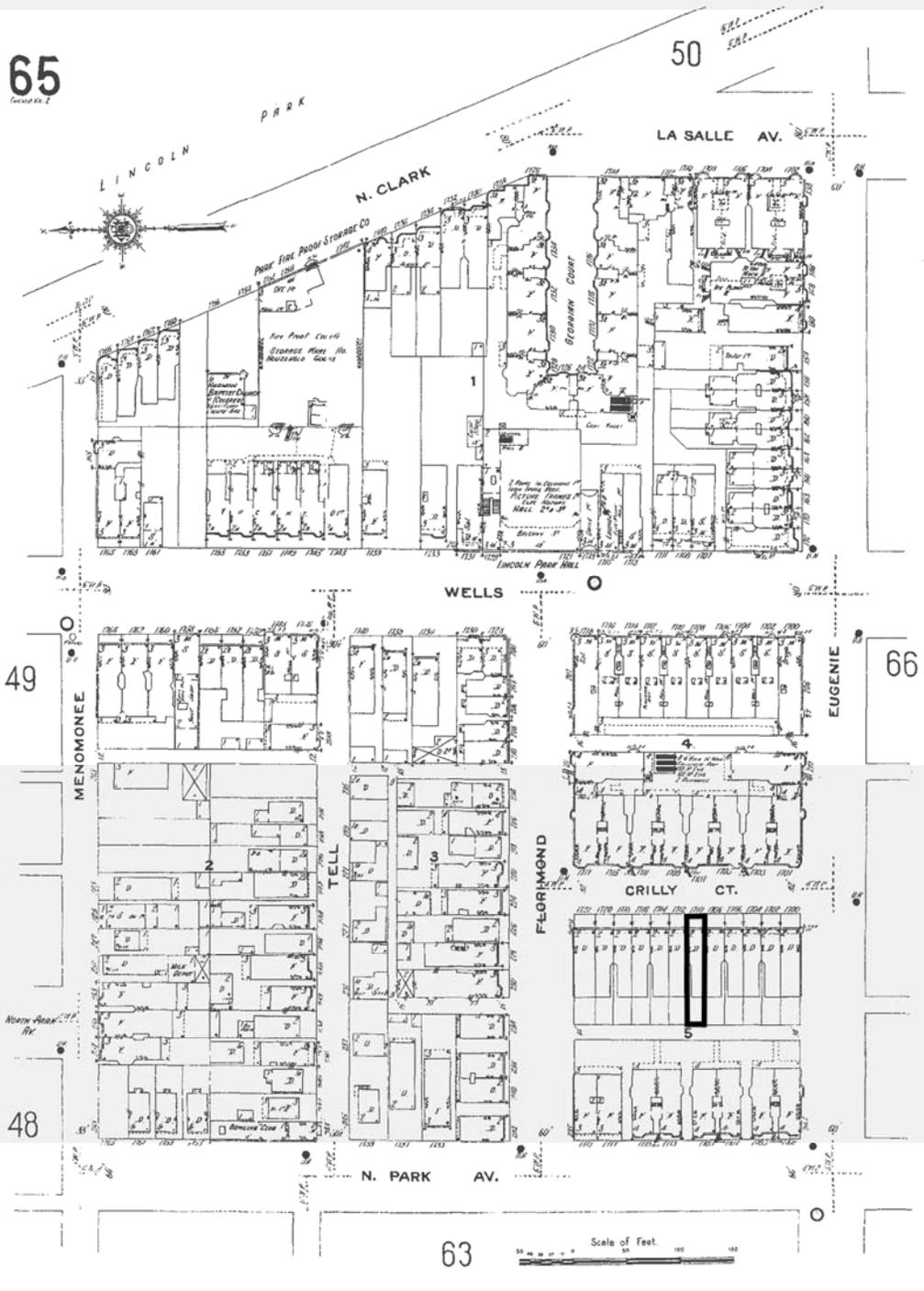
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Maps

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Verbal Boundary Description

1910



HENRY GERBER HOUSE

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Maps

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Source: United States Geological Survey, 7.5 and 15 Minute Series Map, Chicago Loop Quadrangle



Chicago, Illinois

UTM Points:

Zone	Easting	Northing
16	447255	4640365