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### Coming Together as ONE: How a Los Angeles Magazine Fostered the LGBT Community

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Coming Together as ONE: How a Los Angeles Magazine Fostered the LGBT Community

Gina Wiese

History 364: Cold War

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There is no decade that evokes such discomfort for LGBT folk than the 1950s. Those who were privileged enough to benefit during the era remember the decade fondly as the age of a tremendous economic boom and American identity transforming with the victory in both Europe and the Pacific. White heterosexual families migrated from cities to the suburbs and turned out children almost as fast as the factories were producing fridges and washing machines. But LGBT Americans were put under a sudden microscope; there was a mass culture of conformity to which those who failed to perform heteronormativity stood out sorely. LGBT folk were painted as perverts and communists, a threat to American culture and safety, and a state-encouraged distrust for gay people persisted in this era. Despite these hardships, it was in 1950 that the first gay rights organization in the United States, the Mattachine Society, was founded, and throughout this decade LGBT folk turned to each other in community building for survival.

The Cold War put new pressure on LGBT Americans, especially those working in the federal government. Under J. Edgar Hoover, the first Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, a witch hunt commenced to find and fire closeted LGBT employees from positions in the federal government because they supposedly posed a threat to national security.<sup>1</sup> With a mere anonymous tip, an employee could be brought in for questioning, pressured into outing themselves, and fired, with no due process or a chance to face their accuser. In the age of espionage, there was a fear that closeted LGBT folk could be blackmailed by the Soviets for information, and so the federal government assumed a larger scope of power to overrule the rights of citizens in the interest of national security. Hoover also launched a crusade against “perversion” which criminalized LGBT media as obscene or inappropriate to distribute.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Naoko Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (2012): p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas M. Charles, *The FBI's Obscene File: J. Edgar Hoover and the Bureau's Crusade against Smut*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012, p. 43.

Common LGBT gathering places were infiltrated by police who arrested individuals on the mere basis of their presence in a known LGBT meeting place.<sup>3</sup> The federal government's unfair targeting of LGBT people was the catalyst which instigated the formation of a more organized LGBT community. Previous means of gathering and communicating were made unsafe or unreliable, and more support and resources to navigate life in the United States safely were needed by the LGBT community.

Scholars like former CNN correspondent Edward Alwood largely concur that the 1950s was a time of hiding for most of the LGBT community; that most LGBT people were closeted and there were only a few select activists with the security or ability to be open with their sexuality.<sup>4</sup> However, Craig Loftin researched the archives of *ONE* magazine, the first pro-homosexual publication, and specifically the letters readers wrote to the magazine. He adamantly disagrees with this interpretation of LGBT life in the 1950s and early 1960s. Loftin argues there was widespread focus on improving the status of gay people as a national minority.<sup>5</sup> The failings with other scholar's interpretation, Loftin believes, is their consciousness of the later 1969 Stonewall riots and the AIDS crisis, rather than evaluating actions of the 1950s LGBT community within its own context.<sup>6</sup> Loftin beseeches others attempting to study the era, "In order to understand the postwar gay and lesbian zeitgeist, we must approach the *ONE* correspondents on their own terms, not ours."<sup>7</sup> Instead of gay people becoming vocal on a national scale, an internal conversation was being had within their private social circles. The

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<sup>3</sup> David K Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Alwood, 2015, "The Role of Public Relations in the Gay Rights Movement, 1950-1969," *Journalism History* 41, Communication & Mass Media Complete, EBSCOhost, Accessed December 3, 2016, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

LGBT community was organizing for the first time in America to discuss their shared problems and experiences. Before, LGBT folk might have formed smaller local communities, with known clubs or other safe spaces to congregate, but this era of LGBT action was the beginning of a broader organization involving a conversation about the appropriate response to national conditions. This internal organization laid the foundation for a more powerful, outward, and vocal LGBT activism in the late 1960s and 1970s. The LGBT community was still voiceless to speak openly to the nation about their plight, but they were finding their voices with each other and building the LGBT community.

Why did LGBT people risk government oppression and public condemnation in order to express their demand for civil rights during the 1940s and 1950s? How did the voiceless and disenfranchised LGBT population find and assert their voices amongst the rampant homophobia of the Lavender Scare? These questions involve the analysis of LGBT voices from this time period, which are notably hard to find because LGBT voices were systematically silenced with censorship of media and the inability to come out safely in most environments and retain employment. Independently published and distributed magazines reveal an internal community dialogue about how to handle the escalating situation in America. These magazines are valuable primary sources written by and for gay people and provide insight to the lives and concerns of gay Americans living in that era. The perspective and voices of gay folk in the 1950s are still today massively underrepresented and unheard, so listening to them and valuing them is crucial to a respectful study of LGBT folk during this era. However, these magazine's writers had limited access to knowledge on government actions and decisions, restricting their scope; The writers were everyday LGBT Americans writing based off their lived experiences, so they cannot reveal why government decisions were made, who the FBI was investigating, or how

heterosexual Americans felt. Furthermore, many of the writers remain anonymous for their own safety, as most LGBT folk were living closeted, so there are only a few predominant out LGBT figures to analyze. Considering these strengths and limitations, this paper will focus on the internal LGBT community dialogue within the magazine *ONE*, the first pro-gay publication, and what its articles reveal about LGBT goals and actions.

It is important when writing about LGBT history to be conscious of language. Certain words were used by LGBT folk to describe themselves in the 1950s which today have inappropriate and hurtful connotations; likewise, certain terms which are slurs have been reclaimed into popular usage by the LGBT community today. Language evolves to hold new meanings, but when writing about the past it is the job of the writer to be conscious of respecting both the subjects and present audience. In this paper, the words homosexual and transsexual might appear as self-identifiers used by LGBT people from the 1950s. Readers must understand that neither of those terms are appropriate to apply to modern LGBT people. Homosexual is a pathologizing term once used in but now removed from the in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, and because of the misunderstanding of same gender attraction as a mental illness, gay men and women were denied physical autonomy and mistreated and abused in mental institutions which sought to ‘cure’ their sexualities. Transsexual is now a violently transphobic term which stresses the validity or emphasis of transness on genitalia or physical transition, rather than on an innate gender. Yet, these two terms will be used for those who self-identified with them, out of respect for the autonomy of people whom are being studied. Gay and LGBT will be used interchangeably as umbrella terms for those who experience same gender attraction when speaking about general groups of people. It is also important to note that while the term LGBT is used frequently throughout this paper, the individual communities of gay men,

lesbians, bisexuals, and transfolk were not always aligned and often distinct. *ONE* magazine had a goal of building a united gay community, and did not specifically alienate any LGBT folk, although it did focus and prioritize the problems and needs of gay men. Similarly, voices from gay people of color do appear occasionally in *ONE*, but are massively underrepresented. While *ONE* was the first pro gay publication, others quickly followed which better represent the voices of those distinct communities.

*ONE* was an independently published monthly magazine in Los Angeles from 1953 to 1969, originally distributed on the streets for 25 cents. The magazine was published by the organization ONE Inc, whose Articles of Incorporation were signed by Antonio Reyes, Martin Block, and Dale Jennings on November 15 1952.<sup>8</sup> The creation of *ONE* was a response to the founders' dissatisfaction with the Mattachine Society's practice of emphatic secrecy, believing a more public outreach would be more effective in uniting the gay minority.<sup>9</sup> The name of both the organization and magazine is inspired by an aphorism of Victorian writer Thomas Carlyle: "A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one."<sup>10</sup> Based on that reference, the name suggested a purpose to create unity and heal divisions between men. That suggestion instigates the question, what divisions existed that required healing? While the first volume of *ONE* magazine is not accessible, the first issue of the second volume stated the creators' intentions for the magazine in four main points. The first and therefore prioritized goal, *ONE* was devoted to correcting the problem that homosexuals do not have equal rights, and supporting all men as equals no greater

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<sup>8</sup>Yolanda Retter, "Latina and Latino LGBTQ Organizations and Periodicals", Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered History in America, Ed. Marc Stein. Vol. 2. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004, p. 144–148, Gale Virtual Reference Library, March 16, 2013.

<sup>9</sup>Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup>David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 34.

or worse than one another.<sup>11</sup> Their second stated aim was helping the public to understand deviants, and deviants to understand themselves, as two sides brought together as one.<sup>12</sup> The third point stressed that *ONE* did not condone illegal acts and did not wish to be merely an erotic publication; and last, that *ONE* was completely unfinanced, with growth dependent on reader, and encouraging contributions.<sup>13</sup> The final line of this section proclaimed, “*ONE* is entirely yours.”<sup>14</sup> This section provides a clear stance on the magazine’s goals, and gives historians insight on what LGBT people hoped to accomplish by organizing. The divide that *ONE* was striving to unify was one between the rights of homosexuals and heterosexuals, so that homosexuality would no longer something to be ashamed of or hidden, or punished by the law. It was a goal for both social and legislative acceptance and equality. The magazine also distanced itself from erotica, a popularly distributed gay media, in an attempt to legitimize itself as nonvulgar and proper. *ONE* was aimed at a gay audience, who sought a voice validated and heard by the heterosexual public. The magazine’s final point truly was its most intimate, which established a loyalty and unity, a oneness, with the audience. “*ONE* is entirely yours,” meant it was up to the gay community of Los Angeles to make with it as it will. The phrase removed the barrier between creators and consumers, and created a space for dialogue amongst the gay community.

There was a gay community already existing in Los Angeles, just as there were all cities, except it would be more honest to call them “communities,” as they were not large singular organized groups but rather pockets of scattered social circles. In a 1962 article A. E. Smith explained that, “One of the things about the homosexual minority is that its members are not

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<sup>11</sup> *ONE*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, January 1, 1954, p. 2, Accessed October 1, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



‘raised’ in their minority. A homosexual enters it, and he or she enters it ‘cold.’ This entrance is what we call, in our homosexual parlance, ‘coming out.’”<sup>15</sup> Today ‘coming out’ typically refers to an individual’s publicizing their orientation to their straight friends and family, but that was not what Smith was referring to at all; Smith explained the significance of one’s first friendships with other gay folk and how one learns to navigate and survive their homophobic environments from each other.<sup>16</sup> Community is crucial for all minority groups as a means to find belonging and safety in a society not structured to meet one’s needs, but for gay folk that community is not immediately present but instead must be found, which in the 1950s and still to today can be a dangerous process of reading coded behaviors to ascertain who might be safe to approach. Randy Lloyd wrote in *ONE* of the devastating consequences of not having a broader community to one’s ability to have meaningful relationships and lead an emotionally fruitful life, lamenting, “Heterosexual society screams against the sexual promiscuity of homosexuals, but by their laws and anathema regarding homosexuals they drive us underground and force us to live 95% of our lives ‘passing’ as heteros with so little time left to socialize with other homosexuals that an eat-and-run sexual fling is about all that can be managed.”<sup>17</sup> LGBT people are just as needing and deserving of the emotional intimacy, family, and culture of a community as the rest of humanity, yet they were forcibly denied access to it by the need to hide. The most profound impact in *ONE* magazine’s existence was providing a visible and accessible means to community for closeted LGBT people to find resources and comradery in, based on readers’ many written responses to *ONE* magazine, including, “Thank you for your voice in the darkness,” and, “You have given me

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<sup>15</sup>A. E. Smith, "Coming Out," *ONE*, Vol. 10, Issue 6, June 1, 1962, p. 6, accessed December 2, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Randy Lloyd, “Let’s Push Homophile Marriage,” *ONE*, Vol. 11, Issue 6, June 1, 1963, p. 6-7. Accessed December 3, 2016, Independent Voices.

courage and strength over the years far more than you could know.”<sup>18</sup> *ONE* served a desperate need for LGBT folk, to have a platform to see themselves and belong to a larger cohesive community.

The LGBT folk of Los Angeles took the opportunity given to them and responded by filling *ONE* with art, poetry, and short stories, essentially building a cultural heritage. The magazine provided a space for LGBT people to discuss and define what their identity meant or was founded on. Overwhelmingly, the response was a celebratory cheer for what made LGBT folk different from society, and an encouragement to find pride in that difference rather than remorse. Randy Lloyd asserted, “Homosexuals are natural rebels. In our society, only freak conditions or cowardice or total ignorance of his own nature would permit a homosexual any alternative.”<sup>19</sup> This statement revealed that the LGBT community was distancing itself from the shame and internalized hatred enforced on them by a heteronormative society and instead establishing independent values. Gay people redefining their existence with bravery and rebellion to violent social standards empowered them to exist without self-hatred; this paradigm also shifted the existing mentality of blaming oneself for an inability to live openly to addressing the faults and inflexibilities in American culture which were unjust. An illustrated story published in *ONE*'s March issue in 1954 titled, “The Story of Gaylord Pedestrian,” recounted the tale of a man who was mocked and outcast in his town of Mimsey Downs for not knowing how to ride a bicycle; he gained contempt for the townsfolk’s arbitrary hatred and one day declared, “Let them think I’m different, I’ll show them how different I can be!” and began to walk on his hands.<sup>20</sup> The people

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<sup>18</sup>Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Lyn Pederson, “The Importance of Being Different,” *ONE*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, March 1, 1954, p. 4, Accessed December 3, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>20</sup>Dale Jennings, “The Story of Gaylord Pedestrian,” Cartoon, Illustrated by The Quinns, In *ONE* Vol. 2, Issue 3, Los Angeles, CA: *ONE*, 1954, p. 21-25.

of the town were astounded, but it was only shortly after that they all begin walking on their hands as well, which is when Gaylord Pedestrian spitefully bought himself a bicycle to which the people of Mimsey Downs said, “Now, there’s a queer one. He’s really different!”<sup>21</sup> This humorous, thinly veiled metaphor expressed frustration at the petty ostracizing of a man who displayed harmless deviance from the performed normal behavior. Gaylord Pedestrian did not give in to the pressure put on him by the townsfolk, but embraced his difference even more flamboyantly. Whether or not this story was directly encouraging *ONE*’s readers to come out, it was certainly telling them to live true to themselves. This story confronted the performativity of heterosexual culture with the authenticity of the homosexual experience.

If gay people began discussing embracing difference and outlining their own values, then they had to redefine their relationships outside of a heterosexual mold. In *ONE* magazine, there were numerous articles which discussed the hypothetical, far off possibility of same sex marriage, and whether or not marriage was an institution gay folk needed or wanted. Some LGBT folk believed that one of the strengths of homosexuality was its freedom from monogamy, or otherwise considered marriage a heterosexual institution that they should not strive to fit into. Hermann Stoessel was of this mindset when he wrote “The Decline and Fall of Marriage” for *ONE* in 1959, asking, “should we pick up the remnants of a system he is casting off?” He asserted the belief that the LGBT community was better off without borrowing anything from the heterosexual world.<sup>22</sup> Many other readers and authors of *ONE* magazine disagreed and longed for the validating and profound union of marriage with their life partners, and the magazine featured interviews with couples who declared themselves married, albeit not recognized by the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup>Hermann Stoessel, “The Decline and Fall of Marriage.” *ONE*, Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 1, 1959. p. 7, Accessed December 3, 2016, Independent Voices.

state.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of where people stood on the issue, most LGBT folk shared the hope that they were at the beginning of a transformative growth for the potential of same gendered relationships. Herbert Grant expressed this hope and dream for the future of gay relationships in a 1954 article, where he projected,

In the years of grace to follow, and by means of love and grace, individual homosexuals must discover what they are and what they can become. To a certain extent they remain “uncreated.” In 1903 the Wright Brothers built a machine that would go off the ground but they had not yet invented an airplane that would fly. By means of love, concern and self-discipline the homosexual must construct for himself a relationship that will ‘fly.’<sup>24</sup>

Grant suggested that the future for gay relationships would be unrecognizable to their time, and for good reasons, that gay folk would have opportunities only dreamed of, but only through hard work and serious thoughtful contemplation over what LGBT folk wanted and how to successfully accomplish it. Grant was not addressing plans for public activism, legislative changes, or public acceptance specifically but rather emphasizing the importance of an intercommunity consensus on identity and values. This intercommunity dialogue was exactly what *ONE* magazine was providing, which is why Grant and other LGBT folk felt like they were at the beginning of something grand.

Having a medium to communicate as a community gave the gay people of Los Angeles a means to provide resources, educate, and organize to react as a whole to the tyranny of the Lavender Scare. One of the immediate needs that *ONE* magazine met was teaching readers their legal rights to minimize the harm able to be done to them. An article, “The Law: A Discussion of Entrapment,” explained to readers what exactly was accepted as entrapment in a court of law, thus providing the tools for one to both defend themselves after having been deceived and set up

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<sup>23</sup> Dr. Blanche M. Baker, "Toward Understanding," *ONE*, Vol. 7, Issue 12, December 1, 1959, p. 23. Accessed December 3, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Grant, "The 3rd Choice," *ONE*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, April 1, 1954. p. 5, Accessed November 27, 2016. Independent Voices.

for a crime by a police officer, and also prepare them for what that situation might look like in order to be weary.<sup>25</sup> The solicitation of sexual activity by a police officer was not entrapment alone; the victim must have strong evidence of their initial reluctance to perform the act.<sup>26</sup> *ONE* also offered legal advice on how to respond to blackmailing, which was firmly that gay people had no other responsible option than to go to the police. *ONE* expressed that concerns for police discrimination and abuse were valid, and to minimize this risk it would be safe to bring along a reliable witness, preferably an attorney, and only confess what was absolutely necessary to avoid further incriminating oneself.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately though *ONE* firmly declared, “until homosexuals are willing to take risks to defend their own rights and security, they will neither have, nor much deserve, either rights or security.”<sup>28</sup> This aggressive stance was not meant to vilify gay people who were afraid to be outed by blackmailers, but it did impart responsibility to all gay folk to confront and disempower homophobic rhetoric. Regardless of what the authors of *ONE* believed, they were dedicated to providing their readership with legal counsel to make informed decisions for themselves.

*ONE* also provided resources for gay readers to be informed with rhetoric for conversations with heterosexuals so that they might defend themselves or even persuade sympathy for the LGBT struggle. Marlin Prentiss’s article, “Are Homosexuals Security Risks?” was a contemplative response to the blanket purges of homosexuals from positions in the federal government. Prentiss provided analysis of the holes in the logic justifying federal action, and explained that homosexuals were not the only individuals with secrets to hide, that heterosexual

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<sup>25</sup> "The Law: A Discussion of Entrapment," *ONE*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, April 1, 1954, p. 7-8, Accessed December 3, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Dal McIntire, "Tangents," *ONE*, Vol. 7, Issue 8, August 1, 1959, p. 10, Accessed December 4, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

perverts and adulterers, while on paper are subject to the same consequences, were not being discharged.<sup>29</sup> The article stressed that American values are supposed to protect citizens from such violations; it is an American belief that a man is presumed innocent until proven guilty, but in the case of homosexuals, a mere anonymous accusation was enough to warrant someone's loss of employment, without even a chance to defend themselves or face their accuser.<sup>30</sup> Many other articles in *ONE* magazine also elicit the constitution and strong patriotic undertones in the defense of gay rights. An article by Frank Wood, "The Right to be Free from Unreasonable Search and Seizure," thoroughly explained the history of that right and its applications in courts of law, and provided a plea for the Supreme Court to rule justly in the case of a Mr. Castinedo, a homosexual who was incriminated by evidence obtained illegally.<sup>31</sup> Wood challenged readers, "It is the duty of each citizen to fight unlawful and improper police infringements upon our liberties whenever and wherever they may arise."<sup>32</sup> What *ONE* accomplished with these constitutionally driven arguments was providing gay readers language that evoked American idealism to instigate public criticism of federal action. *ONE* was magazine with a small and silenced readership. Its very existence provided a voice to that voiceless community to speak to each other with, and it was also making efforts to teach individuals how to have a credible, heard voice that the American public would accept. Perhaps more significantly though, this access to knowledge provided readers a way to connect with their patriotism at a time where American culture was aggressively and exclusively conservative, masculine, and heterosexual. In an editorial published in 1959, Alison Hunter wrote, "*ONE* Magazine firmly believes that the

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<sup>29</sup>Marlin Prentiss, "Are Homosexuals Security Risks?" *ONE*, Vo. 3, Issue 12, December 1, 1955, 4-6, Accessed October 3, 2016, p. 4, Independent Voices.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Frank C. Wood Jr. "The Right to Be Free from Unreasonable Search and Seizure." *ONE*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, April 1, 1963, p. 9, Accessed December 5, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

homosexual must assert himself as a citizen, for only by positive action can the homosexual hope to receive the first-class citizenship to which he is entitled.”<sup>33</sup> When communist witch hunters were reaching to call any criticism of authority un-American, *ONE* magazine was encouraging readers to define their Americanism through their criticisms of injustice.

In some circumstances, *ONE* could stand as a pillar against injustice and publicly defend itself against federal abuses, which individuals would not have the power to do alone. An article titled “The Law of Mailable Material” was written by the magazine’s legal counsel in 1954 about how the magazine was being affected by federal censorship of mail prejudiced against “perverted” material.<sup>34</sup> The article was not a defense against the censorship but rather explained how to best work within its restrictions, conceding, “Whether we like or agree with the laws of this world, we must live with them.”<sup>35</sup> The article’s focus on survival and navigation suggested an unreadiness to confront unjust legislation, but also a willingness to work within even the tight restrictions of a biased law in order to be model citizens. Despite this, *ONE* still had to constantly fight to remain in print, and to ensure that its pages reached its growing readership across the United States. In 1954 Los Angeles Postmaster Otto Olesen declared the magazine obscene and therefore unmailable, which *ONE* fought in court.<sup>36</sup> The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, and in 1958 in the case *ONE v Olesen*, it was finally ruled that speech in favor of homosexuals is not inherently obscene.<sup>37</sup> While this was a landmark victory, it did not stop widespread censorship and scare tactics on behalf of the US Postal Services. In 1961 *ONE*

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<sup>33</sup>Alison Hunter, "Editorial," *ONE*, Vol. 7, Issue 5. May 1, 1959, p. 4, Accessed December 5, 2016. Independent Voices.

<sup>34</sup>*ONE's* Legal Council, "The Law of Mailable Material," *ONE*, Vol. 2, Issue 8, October 1, 1954, p. 5, Accessed December 4, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup>Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court*, New York: Basic Books, 2001.

<sup>37</sup>Chris Skelton, "ONE, INCORPORATED, v. OLESEN 355 U.S. 371 (1958)." Justia Law. 2016. Accessed December 4, 2016.

subscribers reported to *ONE* instances where their mail had been opened, or the return address of *ONE* magazine had been noted and their houses later searched and the magazines confiscated.<sup>38</sup> As the magazine became more popular across the United States, it even began acquiring foreign subscribers, who were grateful for the resource. However, the magazine faced new conflict when delivering to foreign subscribers; Canadian offices refused to deliver *ONE*, which elicited a scathing response from the magazine evoking the morals of the free world and rights of the people. Most notably at the end of the response, *ONE*'s editorial writer satisfyingly wrote, "Oh, incidentally, Canadian subscribers ARE RECEIVING their copies of *ONE* Magazine regularly, anyway. It just takes a little more doing."<sup>39</sup> This complete change in attitude when facing unjust laws is a reflection of the attitude of the LGBT community. *ONE* vowed to belong to its readers, so for *ONE* to change its tactics from passively complying with biased censorship, to adamantly navigating around rules and regulations shows a shift towards defiance. The lengths to which *ONE* was willing to go to provide access to its readership also affirms how important the magazine was to the LGBT community.

*ONE*'s presence and perseverance throughout the 1950s and early 1960s was one of the most defiant acts of existing within a violently homophobic society. Maintaining a public voice during the height of McCarthyism and the Lavender Scare, which both sought to silence and disenfranchise nonconformists and specifically non-heterosexuals, was a tremendous feat in itself for *ONE*. What the magazine accomplished for the national LGBT community was uniting hundreds of thousands of isolated people, starting initially in Los Angeles and expanding across the nation and even to Canada, and giving them the space to have a dialogue with each other.

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<sup>38</sup>Robert Gregory, "Postal Censorship: Why the Postoffice Has No Time for Your Mail," *ONE*, Vol. 9, Issue 8, August 1, 1961, p. 6, Accessed December 4, 2016, Independent Voices.

<sup>39</sup>William Lambert, "Editorial." *ONE*, Vol. 6, Issue 8, August 1, 1958, p. 5. Independent Voices. Accessed December 4, 2016.



From that dialogue the community developed a sense of unity and cohesive identity as a minority strong enough to be able to form more outward activism in the late 1960s and onwards. The LGBT community was given the opportunity to define together what their identity meant, and overwhelmingly embraced an identity of love, strength, and perseverance. *ONE*'s first editor, Martin Block, said while giving an oral history, "We weren't going to go out and say you should be gay, but we said, 'You can be proud of being gay.' You could be proud of being yourself. You could look in the mirror and say, 'I'm me, and isn't that nice?' That in itself was radical."<sup>40</sup> *ONE*, the first pro-gay magazine, helped an enormous amount of people become pro-gay themselves, and allowed them to find validation in their own existence. The involvement of *ONE*'s readership shows that the LGBT community was vibrantly active and defiant in the 1950s and early 1960s, not in the ways that the community would later publicly protest, but in developing relationships with one another, sharing resources for safety and education, and building the foundation of a united community that would be imperative to any later action. Through the hard work and communication that was put into establishing the LGBT community, gay people could finally stand as one.

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<sup>40</sup>Craig M. Loftin, *Masked Voices: Gay Men and Lesbians in Cold War America*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012, p. 20.

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