

NEW YORK POST

WEEKEND at the movies . . . with ARCHER WINSTEN

Inside yesteryear's closets

JUST 16 years ago, June 27, 1969, a police raid on a Greenwich Village gay bar led to three days of rioting. Now this film, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community*, at the Waverly Theater, re-searches those closeted years of the '20s through the '60s.

The recollections of moderns like Allen Ginsberg, plus archival footage of such as Gladys Bentley tuxedoed in her Harlem Clamhouse, claim it was a difficult time.

General Eisenhower,

having heard that a WAC battalion contained some of those lesbians, demanded their ouster. But when he was told the vast extent of the problem, he replied, "Forget it." So the story goes.

San Francisco, of course, was in the forefront.

Greenwich Village paved another route.

Joe McCarthy mixed his search for Communists with an attempt to rout out homosexuals from the government. The climate of public opinion and media distrust is

painted in lurid colors.

Actually, remembering as one who lived through all those years with a fair attention to social mores, it seems that these controversialists are the ones who sought and found trouble.

Director Greta Schiller, co-director Robert Rosenberg and executive producer John Scagliotti have collected an impressive array of gay and lesbian defenses set against the prejudices of the period. Compared with today's attitudes, the past does seem much more foolish than it actually was.