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History of The Wildcats Motorcycle Club

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History of The Wildcats Motorcycle Club

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History within the LGBTQ+ community continues to be uncovered within the Hampton Roads area. Students at Old Dominion University are actively researching the creation of the area's first lesbian bars, gay owned bookstores, and gay owned newspaper. In present day downtown Norfolk was The Boiler Room where the first gay motorcycle club spent most of their time; the Wildcats Motorcycle Club was formally recognized by the state of Virginia on July 30th, 1982. The researcher met with Allen Anderson, who is one of the last living members and collected information from the gay owned newspapers, *Our Own* and *The Paper*. Unlike present day motorcycle clubs, riding and owning a motorcycle was not a requirement. Founder Paul Champagne's vision for the club was to have male members who shared common affinities for leather and Levi in intimate settings with partners. For men who enjoyed the leather and Levi community, the club provided acceptance to members who did not find commonalities in other groups. The club spent time traveling across the country on weekend trips that other local motorcycle clubs would hold in their cities and hosted fundraisers for the AIDS epidemic at The Boiler Room. Ultimately in 1989 the group began to come to end as the interior brotherhood began to dismantle. However, the ongoing research of Old Dominion University students and support from the Hampton Roads community ensure that the importance and inclusion of the Wildcats continues for LGBTQ+ members.