

“I was always interested in history. History was what I did. If you can even call it history. I see it as it happened five minutes ago. History to me is the Peloponnesian war or the fall of Rome or something. But I can’t live without writing. Here’s a picture of Lisa [Lisa Davis’s partner] and me! (Laughing) Lisa always looks very cute. I look like a dumbass. But I’m wearing my favorite watch! Here’s us in Florida with our dog. Here are some pictures with Joan [Nestle]! Without Joan we’d be nothing! Just ask them down at the Lesbian Herstory Archives. This was the publishing party for *Under the Mink*! I should have published that as non-fiction but I didn’t know. It’s a historical novel in the style of Sir Walter Scott. It is based on truth. People probably think I made it up so I think it would have benefitted from being labeled as non-fiction. Who knows what they think. I have had several movie offers but to make a movie, honey, cost more money than anybody’s got.

The girls found their way to the Village in the late 1930s if not before. Well, before that even the suffragettes had found their way to the Village and most of them were a little queer so it was set up for women. The Village belonged to the girls. If somebody thought you looked interesting they would ask you if you wanted to work at... like the Howdy Club for instance. As Buddy Bubbles Kent said, ‘The mafia was very good to the gay girls.’ The customers were eager to sit with these people who looked so strange and exotic if you were coming from Jersey or somewhere and have their photograph taken by the professional photographers. Whatever happened to their treasure-trove of nightclub photography! They wanted their picture taken with some dyke or some drag-queen. The men wanted their pictures taken with the drag-queens and the women with the dykes.

What I’ve seen is the rent go up. As I tell everybody, we used to have interesting people in our building... hookers, drug dealers. And now everybody works on Wall Street. The High School of Maritime Trades on 13th Street became The Center in 1983 and that saved the Village. That reminds us every day of what was. All these rich young people wondered why there were so many apartments available! It’s ‘cause all the boys died. They did. They just died. Nobody did anything. It could be anybody you knew. Lisa knew more of them because she was in some AA groups and people just disappeared. There were grief support groups you could go to. I think they said there were close to one-hundred-thousand deaths as a result of AIDS.”

Lisa Davis, 2020