



# CHERRY GROVE STORIES

Fire Island's best kept secrets

**A film by Michael Fisher**

[cherrygrovestories.com](http://cherrygrovestories.com)

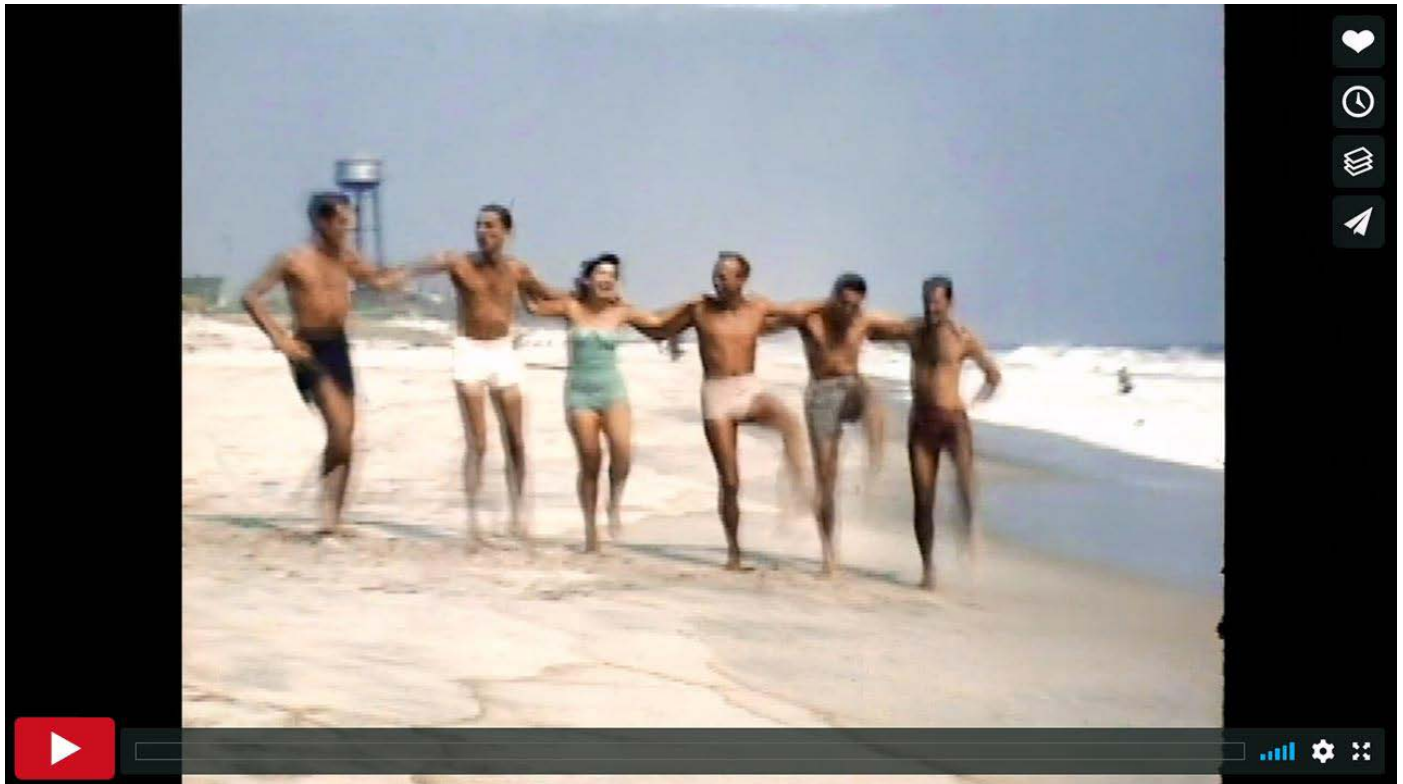
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## CHERRY GROVE STORIES CREDITS



### **Executive Producer**

Michael Fisher

### **Original Score**

Barb Morrison

### **Producer**

Gary Sacks

### **Script**

Scott Lawrie

### **Camera Work**

Robert Jakubik

Ron Noel

Michael Fisher

### **Director**

Michael Fisher

### **Editor**

George Lyter

### **Color Grade**

Irving Harvey

### **Post Supervisor**

Melissa Huffsmith-Roth

### **Additional Music**

The Blizzard Twins

### **Sound Editing and Mixing**

Jonathan Jetter

for Right Angle Productions

### **Associate Producer**

George Lyter

Gary Sacks

### **Film Transcoding**

Rafik Video

*Cherry Grove Stories* is 74 minutes; distribution rights are being handled by The Film Collaborative ([thefilmcollaborative.org](http://thefilmcollaborative.org)).

# **CHERRY GROVE STORIES CHRONICLES THE FIRE ISLAND TOWN THAT BECAME “A CELEBRATION IN THE FACE OF OPPRESSION”**

A New Documentary Traces the Evolution of the “Gay Shangri-La”

## **Synopsis**

In an era when it was illegal for two men to hold hands in public, the pristine beachfront hamlet of Cherry Grove on Fire Island, N.Y., was a safe haven for gays who were often targeted for arrest and prosecution. Through interviews with residents and new and archival footage, Michael Fisher’s oral history of the enclave uncovers long-hidden secrets and exposes little known stories that are more relevant than ever today.

Fisher, who has been going to Cherry Grove for 32 years, was inspired to make the film by long-time resident Michael Delisio. “Michael was one of the first men to go to Cherry Grove in the 1950s,” Fisher says. “He is a great storyteller, and his tales of the early days of Cherry Grove inspired me to capture the many anecdotes about the community before all the old timers are gone.”

In *Cherry Grove Stories*, residents recount the history of the hamlet, starting in the 1940s when gay men first began congregating in a place that offered a rare refuge from the pervasive homophobia of the time. They tell many funny, even outrageous tales: the first drag parties, when attendees had to hide their dresses and heels under the floorboards of their hosts’ house for fear of being arrested for wearing women’s clothes; escapades in the infamous Meat Rack, and how some escaped police raids by hiding in the bay; and the first drag flotilla on the Fourth of July in 1976, when drag queens “invaded” the nearby Pines.

Fisher believes the current anti-LGBT climate makes *Cherry Grove Stories* more important than ever. “Men were still being arrested in the Meat Rack in the 1970s, which is not that long ago, and there has been heightened harassment there today,” he points out.



## Director's Bio

Designer and creative director Michael Fisher has designed retail spaces for Apple, JCPenney, Coach and Club Monaco. A first-time filmmaker, he has a B.F.A. in painting from Temple University and has always been interested in the storytelling powers of film. He began his career in window display before segueing into store design and visual merchandising. The chief creative officer of the marketing company, MYK NYC, Fisher has been going to Cherry Grove since 1985, which sparked his interest in the community and its history. He and his husband own a house in the hamlet.



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All photos courtesy of Cherry Grove Archives Collection.



*"Cherry Grove was the best kept secret in the gay world for decades and decades."*

*"I arrived at the dock I looked down and I saw all these beautiful men in Speedos and high heels and I thought I'd gone to heaven."*

*"There was a feeling that this was our place."*

### **Interviewees**

Richard (Dicken) Acraman  
 Anthony Ardilio  
 John H. Behan  
 Travis Behnke  
 Jay Bennett  
 George Cabell  
 Angelo Cavallo  
 Dominic DeSantis  
 Charles DelOrfano  
 Jack Dowling  
 Susan Freedner

Nick Fiore  
 Thom Hansen aka Panzi  
 Audrey Hartmann  
 Robert L. Hartwig  
 Donald J. Hester  
 Gabrielle Horowitz-Prisco  
 Paul Jablonski  
 Vito LaSorella Jr  
 Patrick Lehman  
 Robert Levine  
 David H. Littleton  
 Richard Lorio

John Marino aka Johnny Pool  
 Michael J McPherson  
 Adrian Milton  
 Shirley Munnell  
 Louis Nelson  
 George O'Donnell  
 Michael Pinto  
 Juan F. Punchin  
 Joyce Rodgers  
 Robert Scherffius  
 Logan Slaughter