

of famous homosexuals. The story of Alger's life has been the subject of several biographies both before and after the Huber bombshell, and this is a story in itself. One early biography was a pack of lies in which Alger has relationships with various women, and other early biographies had also invented episodes here and there, and these false "facts" were repeated innocently by later biographers. Even in these early biographies, however, it was possible to read between the lines—or between the lies—to see that Alger was attracted to boys. He spent a lot of time around the Newsboys Lodging House in New York, a sort of hotel for homeless boys and a paradise for any pederast who could succeed, as Alger did, in winning the confidence of the owner and the young residents. The greatest love of Alger's life was a ten-year-old Chinese boy named Wing, who was later killed by a street-car. All of this information was reported by the early biographers, but nobody seemed to understand what it meant until Huber found the evidence.

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Stephen Wayne Foster

ALLSTON, WASHINGTON (1779–1843)

American artist. The slave-owning Allstons of South Carolina enjoyed a life of near baronial splendor. Traditionally families such as his have demonstrated their appreciation of art only through patronage, since artists, like all craftsmen, must work with their hands. Allston chose to deny his family's inculcated values when, having graduated from Harvard, he insisted on pursuing his muse.

In 1801 Allston sailed for England to study for several years at the Royal Academy with Benjamin West and Henry

Fuseli. They imbued the aspiring artist with the spirit of romantic classicism which was to become his stylistic hallmark. During his first European sojourn, Allston traveled extensively, settling by 1804 in Rome. There he first met Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Washington Irving. He insinuated himself into the circle of Rome's German colony, which centered around the Prussian consul, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the habitués of the Caffè Greco. There he got to know Wilhelm's homosexual brother, Alexander von Humboldt, and such neoclassical sculptors as Thorvaldsen and Canova, together with the artists Asmus Jakob Carstens, Gottlieb Schick, and Joseph Anton Koch. Then in 1808 he left Rome precipitously, sailing for Boston, where he married Ann Channing, a socially prominent New Englander who had been affianced to Allston for nine years.

With his new wife, Allston traveled to England again in 1811. This time he secured the patronage of the influential Sir George Beaumont. His painting of "The Dead Man Revived" won a prize of two hundred guineas at the British Institution. In the *Annals of the Fine Arts* in 1816, he was listed as one of the principal history painters in England. The illness and death of his wife, in 1815, was the one ostensibly disturbing interlude of these very successful years. But a second time, giving his friends no warning, he decamped for America in 1818.

Back in Boston, Allston fixed his attentions on a Boston Brahmin spinster, Martha Dana, whom he married in 1830, after a courtship strung out over ten years. The course of his professional life matched that of his private life in its failure to find a focus and locate a goal. Enconced in a studio in the suburb of Cambridgeport, the artist manifested behavior we would now perceive as highly neurotic. He habitually abandoned major, multifigured canvases—by his own report of 1836, five in 18 months. Over the years, he managed to disappoint the Boston Hospital, the Pennsylvania

Academy, the State of South Carolina, the United States government, and private individuals as highly placed as the Duchess of Sutherland. None of his undertakings, however, provided him with a better excuse for a dilatory performance than the never-to-be-finished "Belshazzar's Feast." After a visit to his studio in 1838, the English art critic Anna Jameson observed that his sensitivity on the subject of his unfinished "Bel" did "at last verge on insanity."

Why did Washington Allston live in a state of psychic imprisonment which paralyzed his will to create and made him guilt-ridden? To cast his dilemma into perspective, we must acknowledge that some of the most puzzling moments of his life begin to make sense only on the hypothesis that he was a closeted homosexual. During his lifetime, family and friends shielded him or pretended not to know, as evidenced in his official biography written by his reverential nephew, Jared Flagg. Scholars in this century have perpetuated the subterfuge when they failed to evaluate the documented evidence.

In chronological sequence, the first document—omitted in the modern biographies—is a letter of Allston's, quoted in the first comprehensive history of American art. Here Allston reminisced about his earliest patron, a South Carolinian named Bowman. The latter offered to the handsome scion of the Allston family an annual stipend of 100 pounds for the period of his study abroad. The stipend declined, Bowman upped the ante by volunteering to send him away with "a few tierces of rice." "His partiality was not of the everyday kind," the mature artist observed. And in truth Bowman's partiality was not, since the gift of a "few tierces of rice" was a highly negotiable commodity of great value. Not surprisingly, in Flagg's recycling of the incident, the word "partiality" was suppressed, leaving the inserted pronoun without antecedent: "it was not of the everyday kind." In context, the suppressed word would not have raised

eyebrows; but since Allston's adoring nephew removes the word, and so ineptly, we may conclude that family tradition wanted something hushed up.

Next, there is the matter of those courtships of unusual length even for the nineteenth century. Collectively, they provided a cover for a total of nineteen years. But the most telling circumstance involves the cause for Allston's second departure from England.

The period of Allston's sojourn in England followed years in which England instituted harsh penal measures against homosexuals. Nobles were exiled, members of the working class hanged. Under these conditions, **blackmail** became a common practice; and we have it from Allston himself that he was continuously importuned by beggars who were literate, since they petitioned through the mails. Accordingly, he wished his new address in America kept secret. After his return, he instructed his pupil, C. R. Leslie, to forward no more correspondence: "I know, my good fellow, you will excuse this, for you know what I have already suffered. . . . There are letters of this unpleasant kind I have had from Bristol and other places. Tell Mr. Bridgen never to take out any letter to me from the Dead-Letter Box. If any should be there let them remain; for I do not want them." Leslie would be just the person to sympathize with his teacher's predicament, since his own sexual orientation made him equally susceptible. His liaisons with some of the London actors whose portraits he painted fell short of discretion. Flagg, who was probably ignorant of Leslie's proclivities, applied to this former pupil for further information about his uncle's seemingly inexplicable decision. Leslie, in his written reply, elided the truth; and his explanation, as redacted by Flagg, reads like a fairytale: "Leslie gives as his belief that one cause for his leaving England was the result of his open-handed charity to street beggars in London"—as though Allston were a soft-hearted American, helpless to

resist out-stretched palms and needing to put an ocean between unlettered beggars and his own purse.

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Phoebe Lloyd

AMAZONIA

In addition to holding the world's largest tropical rainforest, the Amazon basin of South America has remained until recently the home of many tribal peoples scarcely touched by Western civilization.

Initiation and Joking Behavior.

As in the Melanesian cultures of the Pacific, initiation, more than marriage, is indispensable in northwest Amazonia to the transition from the asexual world of childhood to the sexual world of adults. In these customs, anthropologists have been struck by the commonness of joking sexual play among initiated but unmarried men. "Missionaries working in the Piraparaná are frequently shocked by the apparent homosexual behavior of Indian men. However, the Barasana distinguish between this playful sexual activity and serious male homosexuality. This play, rather than stemming from frustration of normal [sic] desire, is regarded as being normal behavior between brothers-in-law, and expresses their close, affectionate, and supportive relationship" (Hugh-Jones). Claude Lévi-Strauss, who had reported "reciprocal sexual services" by classificatory "brothers-in-law" among the Nambikwara in 1943, added: "It remains an open question whether the partners achieve complete satisfaction or restrict themselves to sentimental demonstrations, accompanied by caresses, similar to the

demonstrations and caresses characteristic of conjugal relationships." Although maintaining that "the brother is acting as a temporary substitute" for his sister, he admits: "On reaching adulthood, the brothers-in-law continue to express their feelings quite openly." Stephen Hugh-Jones similarly reported, "A young man will often lie in a hammock with his 'brother-in-law,' nuzzling him, fondling his penis, and talking quietly, often about sexual exploits with women." About the Yanamamo, Chagnon wrote: "Most unmarried young men having homosexual relations with each other have no stigma attached to this behavior. In fact, most of these bachelors joked about it and simulated copulation with each other in public." Alves da Silva reported public mutual masturbation by boys, although officially, homosexuality only occurs in the puberty rites for boys.

Other Aspects. Nimuendajú and Lowie noted formalized, intense, but apparently non-sexual friendships among another Ge tribe, the Ramko'kamekra. Wagley's 1939 ethnography of the Tapi-rape—a southern Amazon tribe with a Tupi-Guarani rather than Ge language, who were therefore likely pushed from the coast rather than being traditionally jungle dwellers prior to 1500—included reports of males in the past who had allowed themselves to be used in anal intercourse by other men. "They were treated as favorites by the men, who took them along on hunting trips. Kamairaho gave me the names of five men whom he had known during his lifetime or about whom his father had told him 'had holes.' Some of these men were married to women, he said, but at night in the *takana* [men's house] they allowed other men to 'eat them' (have anal intercourse). His father told him of one man who took a woman's name and did women's work. . . . Older men had said that the "man-woman" had died because she was pregnant. Her stomach was swollen but there was no womb to allow the child to be born." None of