

in order to use a room. Despite strong disapproval on the part of the management, some surreptitious drug dealing took place among patrons; consumption of mind-altering drugs, often taken just before arriving, was certainly common. As a rule, alcohol was not served, but could be brought in. Stereotypically, sexual encounters in the baths were completely anonymous; however, a few clients report having begun love affairs or friendships as a result of meetings there. A curious dynamic is that during off-hours, when few people were present, contacts could generally be made quickly, while when the building was crowded patrons could become quite choosy, in hopes that the continuing intake would produce more desirable individuals. Some patrons would have ten or more contacts, but the majority seem to have restricted themselves to two or three, or even one.

In the 1980s, with the unfolding of the AIDS crisis in the United States, the bathhouses came under attack because the promiscuous sexual encounters that took place there were held to promote the spread of the disease. Although this charge was denied, and many bathhouses began to distribute safe sex information and condoms as a positive contribution, it was clear that their days of glory were over. Many bathhouses in smaller localities were forced to close for lack of business. The owners of some establishments tried to change them into health clubs, but with mixed success. In San Francisco, as a result of pressure from public officials, the last bathhouse closed its doors in 1987. In Europe, however, bathhouses—usually termed saunas there—continue to flourish, and new ones even open from time to time.

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Wayne R. Dynes

BEACH, SYLVIA (NANCY) (1887-1962)

American expatriate bookseller, publisher, and intellectual. The daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Princeton, NJ, Beach settled in France during World War I. In 1919 she established Shakespeare and Company, an English-language bookstore and lending library in Paris that was to become one of the chief gathering places of the international avant-garde. Beach's companion, Adrienne Monnier, whose own bookshop was located only a short distance away, played a similar role in French letters. A kind of arbiter and confidant of the whole "Lost Generation," Beach was associated with such figures as Djuna Barnes, Natalie Barney, Bryher (Winifred Ellerman), Ernest Hemingway, Robert McAlmon, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein. Her greatest accomplishment was her two decades as publisher for her close friend, the mercurial James Joyce.

A member of the influential lesbian colony in Paris in the years between the wars, Beach nonetheless led a discrete, almost closeted life, supported by her "marriage" with Monnier. Electing to stay on during the German occupation of Paris, where she saved her books from confiscation, she emerged triumphantly after the war as a senior figure in the world of letters.

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BEACHES

Most North American (and many European) cities located near water have a gay (male) beach. If geography permits, it is typically more remote or difficult to reach than the beach serving heterosexuals. Only those "in the know" will go the extra distance, or negotiate the natural barriers, to get there.

Where there are no natural barriers, one portion of a large public beach may become known among homosexuals as