

gay beach on apparent errands (trips to the washroom, water fountain, and so on).

**Police**—mounted on horse, or more recently in all-terrain vehicles—often attempt to discourage or harass gay beachers, or to surprise or entrap those using “the bushes.” Heterosexual resentment of gay male impersonal sex opportunities may lead to political decisions to eliminate gay beaches (e.g., by constructing a promenade, or supervised swimming pool). But an experienced gay man who knows how to search is likely to discover some portion of beach frequented by gays, even in foreign lands.

*See also Geography, Social; Resorts; Tourism.*

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## BEAT GENERATION

The origins of this trend in American culture can be traced to the friendship of three key figures in New York City at the beginning of the 1940s. Allen Ginsberg (1926– ) and Jack Kerouac (1922–1969) met as students at Columbia University, where both were working at becoming writers. In 1944 Ginsberg encountered the somewhat older William Burroughs (1914– ), who was not connected with the University, but whose acquaintance with avant-garde literature supplied an essential intellectual complement to college study. Both Ginsberg and Burroughs were homosexual; Kerouac bisexual. At first the ideas and accomplishments of the three were known only to a small circle. But toward the end of the 1950s, as their works began to be published and widely read, large numbers of young people, “beatniks” and “hippies,” took up elements of their lifestyle.

The beat writers and their friends were only sporadically resident in San Francisco, but the media played up this connection, especially during the “flower-

child” era in the mid-1960s. This reputation is not without relation to the Bay City’s emerging status as a gay capital. To be sure the beat writers placed little stress on developing a fixed abode—their pads were never photographed for *House Beautiful*. Seminomadic, they traveled extensively not only in the United States, but in Latin America, Europe, North Africa, and Asia. Significantly, one of the most widely read beat texts was Jack Kerouac’s novel *On the Road* (1957).

The word beat was sometimes traced to “beatific,” and sometimes to “beat out” and similar expressions, suggesting a pleasant exhaustion that derives from intensity of experience. Its appeal also reflects the beat and improvisation of jazz music, one of the principal influences on the trend. Some beat poets tried to match their writings with jazz in barroom recitals, prefiguring the more effective melding of words and music in folk and rock. The ideal of spontaneity was one of the essential elements of the beat aesthetic. These writers sought to capture the immediacy of speech and lived experience, which were, if possible, to be transcribed directly as they occurred. This and related ideals reflect a new version of American folk pragmatism, preferring life to theory, immediacy to reflection, and feeling to reason. Contrary to what one might expect, however, the beat generation was not anti-intellectual, but chose to seek new sources of inspiration in neglected aspects of the European avant-garde and in Eastern thought and religion.

In the view of many, the archetypal figure of the group is William Burroughs. Born into a wealthy business family in St. Louis, Burroughs drifted from one situation to another during his twenties and thirties; only after meeting the younger writers did he find his own voice. First published in Paris in 1959, his novel *Naked Lunch* became available in the United States only after a series of landmark obscenity decisions. With its phantasmagoric and sometimes sexually explicit sub-

ject matter, together with its quasi-surrealist techniques of narrative and syntactic disjunction, this novel presented a striking new vision. This novel was followed by *The Soft Machine* and *The Ticket That Exploded* to form a trilogy. *Nova Express* (1964) makes extensive use of the "cut-up" techniques, which Burroughs had developed with his friend Brion Gysin.

A keen observer of contemporary reality in several countries, Burroughs has sought to present a kind of "world upside down" in order to sharpen the reader's consciousness. One of his major themes has been his anarchist-based protest against what he sees as increasingly repressive social control through such institutions as medicine and the police. Involved with drugs for some years, he managed to kick the habit, but there is no doubt that such experiences shaped his viewpoint. His works have been compared to pop art in painting and science fiction in literature. Sometimes taxed for misogyny, his world tends to be a masculine one, sometimes exploiting fantasies of regression to a hedonistic world of juvenile freedom. Burroughs's hedonism is acerbic and ironic, and his mixture of qualities yields a distorting mirror of reality which some have found, because perhaps of the many contradictions of later twentieth-century civilization itself, to be a compelling representation.

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### BEATS AND HIPPIES

This social trend in mid-twentieth-century American life was constituted by groups of alienated youths and younger

adults, recognizable by their counterculture enthusiasms and defiance of then accepted norms of dress, deportment, and relation to the work ethic. Beat is the older term and it came into use to designate a self-marginalized social group of the late 1950s and early 60s that was influenced by existentialism and especially by the writers of the **Beat Generation**. The journalistic word "beatnik" is a pseudo-Slavic coinage of a type popular in the 1960s, the core element deriving from "beat" (generation), the suffix *-nik* being the formative of the noun of agent in Slavic languages. The term "hippie" was originally a slightly pejorative diminutive of the beat "hipster," which in turn seems to derive from 1940s jivetaalk adjective "hep," meaning "with it, in step with current fashions." The original hippies were a younger group with more spending money and more flamboyant dress. Their music was rock instead of the jazz of the beats. Despite differences that seemed important at the time, beats and hippies are probably best regarded as successive phases of a single phenomenon.

Although the media, which incessantly sensationalized the beats and hippies, did a great deal to foster recruitment, the phenomenon has older roots, stemming not only from its immediate prefiguration in the small circle of beat writers and their friends, but also from the established Bohemian lifestyle of Western Europe and North America. **Bohemianism** is typically the product of the confluence of outcast groups in inner cities. Yet beats and hippies, as part of the whole **Counterculture** trend, had also a rural contingent, manifested in the establishment of farms run communally. Here a striking forerunner is the English utopian socialist Edward **Carpenter** (1844–1929), a bearded, sandal-wearing man who lived with his male lover and other associates working a market garden and practicing various arts and crafts. Significantly, Carpenter, who had been almost forgotten, was revived during this period by homosexuals attracted to