

located like Key West and Palm Springs in tropical climes, function the year round. Here gay residents and retirees who live there share the towns with transients. In some places the influx of gay tourists, who in their holiday mood may behave more flamboyantly than at home, causes tension with straight "townies," the regular residents; for those in business the influx of dollars is most welcome. On the East Coast, Provincetown, MA, and Fire Island near New York City are seasonal resorts, where the population shrinks to almost nothing in winter. Occupying an intermediate position with respect to seasonal use are the European islands of Ibiza and Mykonos, with their international clientele. Although Italian gay groups sponsor a summer camp each year in the south of their country, there seems as yet no homosexual equivalent of the Club Méditerranée.

*Rural Gays.* Far from American cities are small settlements, occasionally communes, but usually just farms run by one or two individuals. In some instances these establishments are owned by rural people on inherited family land; most, however, show the influence of the ecology and hippy movements and are worked by one-time urbanites who have fled the stress and pollution of the urban "rat race." Although a slight preference for the western states may be detected (possibly reflecting the mystique of the cowboy as a rugged individualist), these farms and communes are usually geographically isolated; residents communicate with other sympathetic people by mail, telephone, and computer modem. They also have a periodical, *RFD: A Country Journal for Gay Men Everywhere* (Bakersville, NC).

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## GEORGE, STEFAN (1868-1933)

German lyric poet. A student of languages, George worked widely, knew Mallarmé and Verlaine in Paris, and was profoundly influenced by Spain. His life and work have a strongly esoteric character, as despising the mass culture of the *fin-de-siècle*, he chose to live amidst a circle of admiring disciples, with and for whom he published the journal *Blätter für die Kunst* (1890-1919). Membership in the circle was conferred on an elite group of men qualified by their handsome and aristocratic bearing. Though certain themes in his work—noble youths, exalted leaders, and a "new Reich"—were interpreted by the National Socialists as akin to their cause, George spurned their advances, going into voluntary exile at the end of his life.

The homosexual aspect of George's work is difficult to define: on the surface it is invisible, at deeper levels omnipresent. By the end of the 1890s he achieved a studied elegance, a perfection of form, a regularity of rhythm and purity of rhyme that remain the hallmarks of his best poetry. His later poems have a prophetic, quasi-mystical character, inspired by his worship of a "divine" youth, Maximin, and a longing to realize in life the vision of the ideal that permeates his poetry, together with a rapturous quality of love. The homosexual strain of the text is never expressed in conventional erotic topoi; rather it is masked by various stratagems that escape the uninitiated reader: gender-neutral language, poems in the genderless second person "Du," allusions to traditionally homosocial groupings such as military or athletic formations, setting the

poem in a historical period rich in homoerotic connotations (such as the credo: "Hellas eternally our love"), even using a female persona or pretending to demean or satirize homosexual attachments. Yet in his work the passion between males is always named "love," never disguised as mere "friendship," but at the same time discretely merged with heterosexual "love," or with the asexual "love" of Christian theology. In some passages masculine and feminine signals alternate in an androgynous pattern, leaving the reader to divine what is intended.

The taboo on overt manifestation of homosexuality in late nineteenth-century Germany obliged George to devise for self-expression to a discerning minority a complicated code that utilizes masks and symbols inherited from previous literary epochs, while cherishing the dream of a "new world" of male beauty and comradeship. The very notion of the "secret" is tantamount to the forbidden, the homoerotic—as it was objectively in the culture of George's time—but it is the "secret" that perceptive critics recognize as the clue to all of George's life and work, however veiled these may be to the profane reader. George remains the outstanding representative of a literary school, forbidden to express homosexual feeling and experience openly, that conveyed its message by a complex linguistic code which united form and content with enduring aesthetic mastery.

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### GERBER, HENRY (1892–1972)

American gay rights pioneer. Born in Bavaria, Gerber arrived in the United States only in 1914, and the following year joined the U.S. Army under a provision admitting aliens. From 1920 to 1923 he

served in the American army of occupation in the Rhineland, where he discovered the German homosexual movement in full bloom. The upshot of this experience was that on his resettlement in Chicago Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights, inspired in name and purpose by the Liga für Menschenrechte. On December 10, 1924, the State of Illinois granted a charter to the society—the first documented homosexual rights organization in the United States. It saw as its task the combatting of the "almost wilful misunderstanding and ignorance on the part of the general public concerning the nature of homosexuality," and the forging of an organized, self-disciplined homosexual community. Like its German predecessors, it focused on the repeal of the laws—in this case those of Illinois—that penalized homosexual acts. It managed to issue two numbers (now lost) of a periodical named *Friendship and Freedom*, again after the German *Freundschaft und Freiheit*, before Gerber and several of his associates were arrested, and he lost his job and his savings. Although the members of the society were finally acquitted, Gerber remembered this failure with the bitterness of one who went unaided in his hour of trial.

Between 1928 and 1930 he contributed three articles to homosexual periodicals in Germany, and in 1932, under the pseudonym "Parisex," he published what was for the time a bold defense of homosexuality. In the same period he produced two mimeographed journals in which he printed several essays on homosexuality. Through an advertisement for pen-pals in one of these he began a correspondence with Manuel Boyfrank, who had ideas, impractical at the time, for a homosexual emancipation organization. Gerber conceived its structure and purposes in a manner that notably anticipated the Mattachine Society in the earliest phase of its existence. In the 1940s his activities took the form of correspondence and of translating into English several chapters