

polluted. The myth is interesting as linking the forbidden sexual activity with stigmatization and outlawry of the perpetrator.

There seems to have been no term for handballing in the Greek language, though *siphniazein* (from the island of Siphnos) has been defined as to "insert a finger in the anus." This harmless practice has long been known, and it may have served as a kind of modest precedent.

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### HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Harlem is a section of northern Manhattan originally developed as housing for the white middle class. As New York's blacks were gradually excluded from residing in the southern part of the island, however, from 1915 onward it became the chief Negro center of the city—and of the nation. New York City's black community was reinforced by thousands migrating from the South in search of freedom from discrimination and lynching. In the 1920s, sometimes termed the Jazz Age, Harlem's black culture and intelligentsia enjoyed a golden age. Harlem was the center of Marcus Garvey's nationalist movement, and also an entertainment mecca for blacks and whites alike.

Probably the most important achievement of the Harlem Renaissance was the emergence of new writers whose works could appear under the imprint of major publishers. The writings of the gay poet Countee Cullen (1903–1946) were to become widely known. Cullen's marriage to Yolanda Du Bois, daughter of the famed black scholar and journalist W. E. B. Du Bois, proved a disaster, but his homosexuality was hushed up. To this day conflicting opinions are heard on the possible homosexuality of Langston Hughes (1902–1967), one of the major figures of the group. Either he was particularly successful in covering up or repressing his homo-

sexuality, or it did not exist at all—though the latter seems unlikely. There is no doubt of the orientation of the experimental writer (Richard) Bruce Nugent (1906– ), who lived into gay liberation days, when he gave informative interviews. Nugent wrote what may have been the first fictional account of American black homosexuality, the short story "Smoke, Lilies, and Jade," published in the little magazine *Fire!* (1926). The bisexual Wallace Thurman took a more sardonic view of the Harlem Renaissance, as seen in his novel *Infants of the Spring* (1932).

White enthusiasm for the achievements of black America's "talented tenth" was heavily laced with stereotypes—including the one that made the Negro the symbol of heterosexual virility. The creative contribution of blacks was still held to be circumscribed by their "more elemental" approach, in contrast to the cerebral logic attributed to the white tradition. This perception encouraged a stream of chic whites north of 110th Street, where they attended speakeasies and nightclubs. Here they could see a series of bisexual and lesbian entertainers, notably Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, "Moms" Mabley, and Gladys Bentley. Carl Van Vechten, a blond gay novelist from Iowa, became the unofficial publicity agent for this side of Harlem. Other, more ordinary gays flocked to Harlem night spots where they found a more tolerant atmosphere. It was not just a Bohemia like Greenwich Village, it was a place where the homosexual visitor could be more relaxed and uninhibited. Huge drag balls were given at the Rockland Palace and the glittering Savoy Ballroom. This side of Harlem is sensitively reflected in Blair Niles' novel *Strange Brother* (1931).

The deepening Depression of the 1930s caused all these activities to fade. Until the black cultural revival of the sixties and seventies, the Harlem Renaissance was almost forgotten. Although even today its homosexual component tends to be slighted, the trend made a real contribution to American gay life and culture.

See also **Black Gay Americans; New York City.**

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### HARTLEY, MARSDEN (1877-1943)

American painter, poet, and essayist. Born Edmund Hartley in Lewiston, Maine, he was raised there and at his father's home in Cleveland. While working as a clerk in a marble quarry, he started formal study of art at the Cleveland School of Art. A scholarship sent him to New York City to complete his training. In 1904 he began an important friendship with Horace Traubel, the biographer of Walt Whitman. After producing a number of impressionist and neoimpressionist paintings, he launched his public career as an artist under the name of Marsden Hartley (Marsden was his step-mother's maiden name). Through Alfred Stieglitz, who gave him his first one-person show at his 291 gallery, Hartley gained entrée into New York's avant-garde.

After experimenting in the style of Picasso, Hartley went to Paris (1912), where he became an intimate of Gertrude Stein. He also absorbed Central European influences, including the abstractionism of Franz Marc and Vassily Kandinsky. In 1913 he settled in Berlin, entering into a love affair with Lieutenant Karl von Freyburg. His lover was killed in battle on October 7, 1914, and Hartley created several of his finest paintings to memorialize the relationship. These works, which feature regalia of the German officer corps, did not stand him in good stead when he returned to New York in 1915. In the fall of 1916 he began to share a house in Provincetown with Charles Demuth, an artist of a similar modernist style who was well acquainted with the gay scene of New

York and environs. Hartley also was friendly with the lesbian writer Djuna Barnes.

In 1921 he returned to Europe, where his book *Twenty-Five Poems* was issued by Robert McAlmon's Contact Publishing Company in Paris. The Great Depression forced Hartley to return to the United States, though a Guggenheim Fellowship enabled him to spend 1932 in Mexico, where he became close friends with Hart Crane. After learning of Crane's suicide, Hartley painted *Eight Bells; Folly*. In the mid-thirties he supported himself in New York through participation in the Public Works of Art Project. He struck up a friendship with the Francis Mason family in Nova Scotia, and he was to live with them for much of the rest of his life.

Hartley's work is now seen to belong to a native American current of expressionism in which he was a pivotal figure. During his lifetime, however, his seeming shifts of style, combined with the relative immaturity of the American art world, prevented him from receiving full recognition. This neglect augmented a loneliness that his shyness about his homosexuality induced in him. In 1980, however, a full-scale retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York restored his reputation.

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### HELIOGABALUS (ALSO KNOWN AS ELAGABALUS; 204-222)

Roman Emperor from 218 to 222. Born at Emesa in Syria as a descendant of the royal family of King Samsigeramus, he became priest of Elagabal in that city in 217. His grandmother Julia Maesa arranged to have him declared emperor by the Tenth Gallican Legion on April 14, 218. The legions sent against him deserted and killed their commanders, and as sole ruler of the