

in 1968. In January 1955 the San Francisco branch began a somewhat more scholarly journal, *Mattachine Review*, which lasted for ten years.

Helped by these periodicals, which reached many previously isolated individuals, Mattachine became better known nationally. Chapters functioned in a number of American cities through the 1960s, when they were also able to derive some strength from the halo effect of the civil rights movement. As service organizations they could counsel individuals who were in legal difficulties, needed psychotherapy, or asked for confidential referral to professionals in appropriate fields. However, they failed to adapt to the militant radicalism of the post-Stonewall years after 1969, and they gradually went under. The organization retains, together with its lesbian counterpart, the Daughters of Bilitis, its historical renown as the legendary symbol of the "homophile" phase of the American gay movement.

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Warren Johansson

MATTHIESSEN, F[RANCIS] O[TTO] (1902-1950)

American scholar and literary critic. Having completed his undergraduate work at Yale, Matthiessen set out for European study on the ocean liner *Paris* in the summer of 1924. On the ship he met the American painter Russell Cheney, twenty years his senior. After an initial separation, they were to remain together as lovers for most of the ensuing years until Cheney's death in 1945.

Matthiessen's teaching career was spent chiefly at Harvard University, where he quickly became known as an energetic and devoted tutor and lecturer. He also found time to write a number of books, including monographs on Theodore Dreier,

T. S. Eliot, and Henry James. However, his massive *American Renaissance* (1941) ranks as his most important achievement. Concentrating on major writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman from the years 1850-55, Matthiessen showed that these works reflect social reality—the reform trends of the 1840s—while standing on their own as works of art. This dual approach, external and internal, left an enduring impress on the field of American studies. For much of his life Matthiessen was involved in leftist political causes, and it is thought that political disappointments, together with the loneliness that Cheney's death caused, contributed to his decision to take his own life on April 1, 1950.

During periods when they were apart Matthiessen and Cheney wrote to each other almost daily. The selection of their 3000 surviving letters that has been edited and published by Louis Hyde allows one to observe two men who first begin to understand their homosexuality and then find increasing strength in their bond. Unfortunately all was not roses: Matthiessen had a nervous breakdown in 1938, and Cheney suffered from a chronic drinking problem. Significantly, Cheney seemed able to bring his alcoholism under control when far away from his lover, as at his sister's ranch in Texas, but when he returned to live with Matthiessen in New England it would recur. This pattern suggests that the drinking was grounded in guilt. Matthiessen, for his part, was closeted in his relations with most of his Harvard colleagues, going so far as to express disapproval when the homosexuality of someone else came up. In the *American Renaissance* he did not venture even to hint at homophile aspects in the work of Melville and Whitman. Yet Cheney and Matthiessen were figures of their time and this representative character, together with their unusual articulateness, makes the record of their relationship virtually *sui generis*.

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Wayne R. Dynes

MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET (1874–1965)

English novelist, short story writer, playwright, and essayist. A descendant of English barristers, W. Somerset Maugham was born in the British embassy in Paris. French was his mother tongue; he began to master English only when he was orphaned at the age of ten and sent to live with his uncle, Henry Maugham, a clergyman in the Church of England. Maugham had his first homosexual experience in 1890 with the aesthete John Ellingham Brooks, during a stay in Germany. But Maugham was and remained an Edwardian, who insisted on keeping up appearances. He refused to admit his homosexuality until the end of his life, and then only to a trusted few. Attempts to discuss the subject in any favorable way were sure to bring instant and permanent ostracism.

Not daring to tell his uncle that he had decided to become a writer, Maugham enrolled in medical school and produced his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*. He passed the next ten years in some desperation. He witnessed, with dismay, the trial of Oscar Wilde: like the Great Depression, the Wilde trial left its mark on an entire generation.

Maugham was contemplating a return to medicine when success struck. On October 26, 1907, Maugham's comedy "Lady Frederick" opened in London. The play was a smash hit; he soon had four plays running simultaneously, and began to grow rich. He abandoned the novel for the theatre, and spent the next two decades churning out product for this market.

During World War I Maugham served as a British spy in Russia—an experience which he used for his "Ashenden" stories. Just before his (unsuccessful) mis-

sion to Russia, Maugham had met and fallen in love with Gerald Haxton, a San Francisco youth of twenty-two who was serving in the same ambulance unit. It was an attraction of opposites: Haxton was a gregarious, extroverted, dashing scoundrel, while Maugham was shy and closeted. Maugham also had a daughter during the war, by Mrs. Syrie Wellcome, whom he married after she was divorced.

The marriage was not a success: Maugham spent most of his time abroad, traveling in exotic locales with Haxton, who not only supplied local boys for Maugham, but much of the raw material for his short stories. Maugham finally fled to his new villa, the famous "Mauresque," on the French Riviera, to take up life with Haxton. Mr. and Mrs. Maugham were divorced in 1928.

Maugham had returned to the novel in 1918 with *Of Human Bondage*. Others followed in succeeding years, as well as several collections of short stories. He had the knack of creating "properties" and was able to sell his work several times over—the short story could be turned into a play, which was then filmed and filmed again. The money flowed in and Maugham entertained the titled, the famous, and the intelligent at the Mauresque—as well as handsome young men, frequently procured for him by Haxton, who was rapidly slipping into alcoholism.

Between the wars, Maugham continued to turn out short stories, many of them about his travels in the Far East. He antagonized the entire British population of Malaya by staying as their honored guest, absorbing all the local gossip, and writing up the nastiest bits in flimsy disguise when he returned to Europe.

He spent much of World War II as a guest of the Doubledays in South Carolina. An estrangement between Maugham and Haxton was suddenly ended by Haxton's death in New York in 1944. For a moment, Maugham's treasured façade disappeared; he wept openly and bitterly at the funeral.