

the same] sex" or "sexual activity between members of one sex." Although *unisexual/unisexual* figures sporadically in English and French texts from the first half of the twentieth century, it could not in the long run maintain itself in competition with *homosexual*, and gradually disappeared from use. To determine its exact meaning in a given work, one must analyze the context.

Thus at the outset of the homosexual emancipation movement in the 1860s, two sets of terms were proposed: Ulrichs' Greek-German coinages from classical mythology and Kertbeny's reworking of the Latin-French ones, inspired by the language of botany. Neither set, it should be noted, was of medical origin; the notion that *homosexual* is a medical term is false and unhistorical. That *homosexual* ultimately prevailed is owing, more than anything else, to the extent to which Latin words (and new coinages using Latin roots) have become part of the abstract and scientific vocabulary of the modern languages, in Germanic and Slavic as much as in Romance.

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## UNITED KINGDOM

See England; Ireland.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States is a republic of nearly 250 million people spanning the continent of North America, but with considerable cultural influence over much of the globe. The homosexual history of what is now the United States presents several distinct features, including: the transplantation and adaptation of European ideas and patterns of behavior; the life ways of the frontier; the persistence of varied Amerindian patterns; the gradual and irregular weakening, with numerous counteroffensives, of the hold of Christian norms over common public mores; the transition from Victorian taboos of silence

to mass-media exposure; and the emergence of the modern homosexual movement, followed by its spread throughout the industrialized non-Communist world.

*American Diversity.* One abiding characteristic of the United States is that it is an amalgam of very diverse ethnic heritages. Groups outside of the Protestant northern European tradition (which has dominated the educated middle class and hence the public and official discussion) have often retained more than traces of the sexual attitudes and practices prevalent in their original homelands, making generalizations risky. Aspects of the Mediterranean concept of homosexuality persist among working-class Americans whose ethnic heritage goes back to that area; blacks have retained their own distinctive cultural attitudes; Irish Catholics still display their propensity toward homophobic ambivalence; and new waves of sophisticated Asian immigrants are bringing their more relaxed perspectives along with them.

All generalizations about the United States must also be qualified not only with respect to chronology but also with respect to regional variations which were quite pronounced until very recently. From the first settlements by Europeans on the eastern seaboard of what is now the United States in the later sixteenth century to the rise to global power status in the twentieth, growth and diversification have been phenomenal. In the 1970s and 80s the number of known primary sources for the earlier history of homosexuality increased considerably, but the evidence is still so scattered that broad conclusions must be inferred from minimal evidence. In due course many of the assertions presented below will inevitably be modified; some may be completely discarded.

*The Colonial Period.* Before the arrival of Europeans (starting with the Spanish in Florida in 1565), the area which is now the United States was peopled by Indians and Eskimos, many of whose tribes had homosexual traditions of their

own: the **berdache**, for instance. These traditions, however, had little if any influence on the behavior of the European immigrants who established themselves, mostly under British rule after 1607, by displacing the Indians along the Atlantic coastline; they survive in rudimentary form only in scattered reservations.

The British colonies from Maine to Georgia were sparsely populated and largely isolated from each other and from **England**. The economy was almost entirely agricultural, and subject to devastation from crop failure and in many places to counterattack from native Americans (Indians). Education was rudimentary. In these colonies, children were of great value—useful from a very early age as agricultural workers. The colonists stressed procreational sexual behavior and family arrangements which were likely to lead to that end.

**Old Testament** and **New Testament** passages describing non-procreational sex as sinful were emphasized by religious authorities, especially in New England where rigid Calvinism was originally paramount. Because these ideas served both secular and clerical goals, they were enshrined in colonial laws. In some cases literal Biblical language entered directly into the early **sodomy** laws. Erotic conduct between males was only one of a series of non-procreative behaviors that were punished. Masturbation and sex with prostitutes received almost equal condemnation. With the possible exception of a New Haven statute of 1655, sexual relations between women do not appear in the statutes.

Generalizations about the enforcement of these laws are difficult. From 1607 to 1740, the colonies provide only nineteen recorded prosecutions (an average of about one case every seven years). There were only four certain executions during that period (with three possible others), despite the death penalty's being mandated by all the statutes. (**Capital** punishment was required for a wide range

of crimes in this period, as in England.) The situation about which there are the most data, that of Nicholas Sension of Windsor, Connecticut (tried for sodomy in 1677), reveals a lifetime of attempted homosexual seductions, but Sension was convicted only of attempted sodomy and given a sentence which was a type of probation. Unless the informal social controls (**mores**) were far more efficient than twentieth-century evidence could lead us to suspect, there was a great deal of same-sex erotic behavior which went unnoticed and certainly unpunished.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century (and earlier in the southern colonies), the legal term **buggery** began to replace the term **sodomy** in the statutes, and gradually Biblical language yielded to more precise descriptions of the prohibited behavior. Pennsylvania under the Quakers led by William Penn remains an exception unique in the Western world at that time: in its "Great Law" of 1682, it reduced the penalty on a first offense for sodomy to six months hard labor and a second offense was punished by life imprisonment. Various southern colonies eliminated the death penalty later in the colonial period.

Little evidence has come to light beyond the legal documents, but it is clear that there was no concept of the "homosexual" or of a sexual **orientation** such as we have today. Homosexual behavior was viewed as a sinful activity into which anyone might fall. Just how the participants perceived their own activities is impossible to know. Only one detailed personal document survives from this entire period plus some hints in the trial records in the legal prosecutions. While it is evident that the colonists had quite clear **gender** roles (differentiation between appropriate male and female activities) which led to considerable male bonding, there is no indication that deep affection between males overlapped with sexual activity. There is not a single known record of the profession of erotic desire

along with affection of one male for another.

Britain was not the only colonial power to establish itself in the area which eventually became the United States. The French briefly colonized the Mississippi River valley, leaving a lasting imprint on New Orleans characterized by a much more tolerant attitude toward homosexuality than that brought in by the British. The Spanish occupied Florida, Texas, California, and the Southwest, bringing with them a tradition of **macho** masculinity and the Mediterranean style of homosexuality, which has had lasting influence, though more through immigration from other areas once colonized by Spain than by direct residue from the Spanish rule of what is now continental United States territory; Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island whose Spanish-speaking inhabitants have American citizenship, is a clear exception. The Dutch and Swedes also had American colonies for a brief time, but seem to have left no trace on the sexual mores of the areas they settled (New York and Delaware, respectively).

*The Early Republic.* The American revolution (1775–83), which brought independence to the former British colonies, can be seen as part of the **Enlightenment**, but the influences of the eighteenth-century Age of Reason do not seem to extend to changes in laws about sexual behavior beyond the modification of the death penalties for sodomy which occurred earlier. Thomas Jefferson, a religious freethinker, worked on the reform of the Virginia Criminal Code in 1777–79 and suggested that sodomy along with rape and polygamy be punished by castration rather than by death. Jefferson's ringing endorsement of "liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence underscored an American ethic which would in time overthrow religious regulation in favor of individual sexual self-expression. In general, however, there is little to indicate that American independence significantly altered homosex-

ual behavior or attitudes toward it.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the area east of the Appalachian mountains was viewed as "settled," with the frontier in the areas to the west. However, the eastern seaboard was still sparsely populated, and the largest cities still had less than 50,000 persons. The economy remained agricultural so that the social need for population growth remained undiminished. But if a person had violated the social norms of city life or wanted to, there remained a vast frontier to which one could escape and in which one could be free from most social controls in an anarchist (and in the deep frontier, all-male) setting. In the states south of Pennsylvania, chattel slavery still existed. Piracy was common in coastal waters.

It has been suggested by various writers that the isolation of the frontier with its dominant population of males; the inequality of blacks who were owned as property by white masters; and the all-male environment without conventional laws on **pirate ships** were all situations in which homosexual behavior thrived. Each of these situations is based on a sound logic, but none as yet commands adequate documentation.

New England (the northern part of the country) in particular had a strong **seafaring** tradition, and surviving sea shanties from the nineteenth century document an amiable familiarity with homosexual practices among the sailors; such tolerant attitudes could not have been too radically at odds with the prevalent opinions among the uneducated New England males from whom the seamen were drawn.

A fascinating letter by Louis Dwight written in Boston in 1826 describes a two-year tour of **prisons** along the entire eastern coast in which he complains that boys in prison are forced to be the sexual partners—whom he labels prostitutes—of older convicts in almost every prison he visited. This one document indicates that males were not averse to looking for same-sex partners if females

were not available, but a prison sample is hardly the best evidence of the norms of the general population, though like the case of the New England sailors it could not have been too violently opposed to them.

Social disapprobation of homosexual behavior was strong enough to force those who engaged in it to keep their activities a deep secret. Lesbian relationships were not prosecuted and documentation about them is even scarcer than about same-sex activities among males.

*Victorian America.* By the time of the American Civil War (1861–65), the United States had expanded its borders to the Pacific coast. A large influx from Ireland in the 1840s along with general immigration from all of northern Europe fostered a distinctive American culture no longer so close to its English roots. While still tiny by present standards, the main eastern settlements were more cities than towns. The agriculture-based economy now had a significant layer of commercial and industrial admixture, especially in the North. Class distinctions were becoming clearer. While there had always been rich and poor, social mobility seems to have slowed considerably by mid-century. Religion remained a dominant force in American life, its influence felt especially in the two decades before the Civil War with moral campaigns against slavery and alcohol.

But one aspect of life in which Americans resembled their English cousins was in the place of sexuality in public society. The term Victorian applies to much of the United States as well as to England. The discussion of genital sex and bodily functioning came to be considered inappropriate for polite discourse (or for the young even in school). Proper women were supposed to blush at the slightest allusion to sexuality; references to sex in earlier literature were commonly bowdlerized. As in England, Victorianism may not have extended its reach very far into the **working class** or the earthy frontier.

Prostitution flourished from at least the Civil War onward, and between 1880 and 1924 vast waves of immigration from southern Europe inundated the country with workers to whom Victorianism was alien.

As the religious justifications for these antisexual attitudes lost strength, medical "science" leaped in to provide the basis for the idea that unconventional sexual activity was harmful.

There have been some elaborate theses that the suppression of sexuality in general, and that of homosexuality in particular, were part of the economic control of the dominant class. Such constructs have no documentary support and are inappropriate to a society in which there was still nothing representing a hereditary aristocracy and in which both vertical social mobility or lateral geographical mobility to the western frontier were still possible. Criminal records reveal minimal prosecution of homosexuality. Society seemed to regard it as a dangerous nuisance, but those who wished to practice in private should have been able to find reasonable opportunity for doing so. It is conceivable that a relationship in which sex and love were combined would have been possible in isolated rural areas, still characterizing much of the country and the entire frontier zone.

*The Coming of the Twentieth Century.* In the last decades of the nineteenth century, a slightly more focused picture begins to emerge of homosexuality in the United States. In the decades between the Civil War and the end of World War I (1918), Victorian morality was dominant in the middle class, but it gradually eroded. The exception to the general picture is the remaining frontier, the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain areas which have been glamorized as the Wild West. Here again one finds a society dominated by males with little rule of law, but unlike the similar places in the earlier periods there are slight documentary evidences of eroticized same sex behaviors

among the cowboys. By the end of the century, the frontier was in the last stages of vanishing as settlers filled the once-open spaces.

By the end of the century, criminal subcultures of various types were developing in the larger eastern cities, and there are some descriptions of homosexual meeting places. (Because sodomy and prostitution were against the law, arrests were made and descriptions of these places are found in some police or court records.)

In the background is the medical literature which began to be prominent in the 1880s. The idea of sin (and to some extent even of criminality) yielded to pathology so that sexual **inversion** came increasingly to be seen as a type of mental disorder. It is at this time that the desire for an erotic relationship with a same-sex partner (homosexuality), cross-dressing (**transvestism**), and **gender** confusion (**transsexuality**) meld into a single concept in which the desire for either contact with a same-sex partner or to cross-dress overlaps with confusion about gender. The influence of German authors who developed **homosexuality** as a concept was felt directly or indirectly in much of the American medical literature of this period, though with some time lag. The medical literature is a hodge-podge displaying varying degrees of revulsion and warped curiosity. All the doctors seemed agreed that the men should be changed if possible (although not everyone tried to do so), and the attempts range from surgical procedures such as castration to weird dietary measures. Medical writers took note of lesbianism, though confusing it with aggressiveness in women.

The first accounts of homosexually oriented individuals show how ideas from medical literature trickled into general knowledge. According to these accounts homosexual meeting places seem to have been filled with men who believed themselves to be women or who at least wanted to cross-dress. While it seems likely

that there were more traditionally masculine men who engaged in homosexual behavior, they avoided these places or identification with the men in them. One can only guess that the life of most homosexually oriented men back East was lonely and lacked fulfillment: many must have heeded Horace Greeley's widely cited advice to "go West, young man, go West."

One glimpse of American homosexuality along the East Coast in mid-century is provided by the poems and correspondence of Walt **Whitman**, who thought of himself as robust and manly and was attracted to equally virile **ephebic** youths. His short poem "A Glimpse Through an Interstice Caught" may be a rendering of a bar congenial to such relationships; other poems contain descriptions of **cruising** in the urban landscape and romantic relationships with traveling companions. Whitman, too, seems often to associate the freedom to express homoerotic sentiment with the freedom to travel west.

Toward the end of the century Whitman's writings began to achieve international recognition, having a notable catalytic effect on the English homosexual theorists Edward **Carpenter** and John Addington **Symonds**. Such American poets as Fitz-Green Halleck, George **Santayana**, and Bayard Taylor followed more cautiously. This period also saw the embryonic beginnings of the American **gay novel**, including the work of such figures as Alfred J. Cohen ("Chester Allan Dale"), E. I. Prime-Stevenson ("Xavier Mayne"), and Charles Warren Stoddard. Hampered by censorship, the **theatre** lagged behind, and the few gay and lesbian characters that managed to find their way onto the stage were generally enveloped in a haze of ambiguity, if not outright homophobia.

*The Interwar Period.* More information is available for the period following World War I (1917-18). But while the 1920s were a decade of great change in the sexual habits of heterosexuals, the changes in homosexual behavior are much less

revolutionary. This decade was the heyday of the Hollywood silent film, and there is some evidence that homosexuality was openly practiced by some of the wilder set of movie stars at this time. Kenneth Anger has noted some of the stories about Ramon Novarro and Rudolph Valentino and the lesbian affairs of Alla Nazimova. Fiction hints tantalizingly at homosexuality in some sophisticated artistic circles in the eastern United States. (American expatriates in Paris and on the Riviera included some who were mainly homosexually inclined.) But these are special circumstances and do not reflect the average American's life.

The attempt to present a frank description of lesbianism in Edouard Bourdet's *The Captive*, resulted in a highly publicized closing of the play by the New York police in 1927. Novels dealing centrally with male homosexuality were published in the interwar period, but most seem to have had a limited readership, while the works of Djuna Barnes and Gale Wilhelm about lesbianism reached near respectability.

The most important point about the broader period from the Civil War until after World War II is that the data render only sociology or social history and not history in its traditional sense. There is no political history to speak of because there was no community organizing, and there is no intellectual history such as one finds in Europe because the writing by homosexuals lacked intrinsic intellectual interest.

Only one scandal which involved homosexuality in the Navy received newspaper coverage. In the summer of 1921 a subcommittee of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee released a report about a vice squad used in 1919 at the Newport, Rhode Island, Naval Training Station to entrap "perverts." Franklin D. Roosevelt had been the Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the time and claimed that he stopped the illegal methods as soon as he was aware of them. The records of

the investigation, however, provide a vivid and lively picture of abundant homosexuality around the naval base during World War I and shortly thereafter.

Some conclusions that can be drawn from this "snapshot" are that the concept of homosexual orientation was still not widely known among working-class men, that oral sex was more popular among sailors than anal sex, that effeminate homosexuals had a well-organized private social network, that homosexual prostitution was flourishing, and that homosexuals were able to mingle with and "pick up" apparently heterosexual sailors ("trade") more or less openly in public spaces where the sailors gathered, and with little or no harassment, until a single violently homophobic Navy official succeeded in getting a lethargic bureaucracy to authorize the investigation. The investigator seems to have had no difficulty recruiting heterosexual men to entrap the homosexuals by engaging in sex with them; these agents were not embarrassed at having performed "male role" insertive sex and did not consider such behavior to be homosexual—the "Mediterranean" concept of homosexuality. One can question how representative this Newport scene was, and certainly maritime traditions regarding homosexuality had a major effect on Newport, but it remains true that the sailors were drawn from all over the country and generally were not career seamen.

Most of the history is social history, but reconstructing it from the available sources is no simple matter. There are, for instance, the letters of the literary critic F. O. Matthiessen, who had a long-term homosexual relationship with a painter lasting through the twenties (when he was a young man) and then through the thirties and forties. Not enough comparative material exists to demonstrate this to be representative, even for an upper-middle-class Eastern intellectual. It is unlikely to have been the story of the poor working-class male anywhere, or even of a

person in a similar class in the south or west. Individuals with literary aspirations, such as Gertrude Stein and Natalie Barney, tended to emigrate—though the Great Depression brought some of them back.

One begins to get more memoirs from the thirties. The best of these, such as those of Samuel Steward and Donald Vining, provide a picture of changing self-understanding in several parts of the country. A young man or woman on discovering his or her attractions to same sex partners in the twenties or thirties was probably horrified by the idea. The more educated the person the more likely she or he was to turn to the medical/psychiatric literature for help and guidance. Yet perusing that literature often led to depression or even suicide rather than comfort. If he was lucky, the person found someone of similar background with similar impulses, but achieving such a happy outcome was difficult, as everyone disguised his feelings.

A homosexual subculture flourished in some of the major cities, but it was frequented by criminal classes and those who were quite "depraved" and unconcerned by their social status—often cross-dressing or acting as if they were confused about their gender. Many were repelled by this atmosphere and declined to look for a sex partner or a friend in such places. Such relationships as did exist often reflected traditional male and female roles; both gay men and women seemed to believe that one partner had to be the male and the other the female. But almost no one lived openly in such a relationship. The partners had separate residences; they certainly would not reveal the nature of their relationship to family or employers. Probably most homosexuals entered a traditional marriage and did their best to perform with an opposite sex partner. Only a very few—obviously seen as cranks—had any idea of what we would call liberation. Henry Gerber's attempt to organize in Chicago (1924–25) is known but full documentation is unavailable. Even the

organizing during and immediately after World War II was very limited—mainly to Los Angeles and New York—and certainly clandestine.

During the interwar period, male homosexual meeting places (mainly bars) could be found in the nation's largest cities. However such establishments were illegal and operated only with the connivance of the police; they were almost always owned by organized crime. Located in hidden places, they were subject to raids and closings and relatively few gay-identified people dared to visit them. It was still relatively uncommon to socialize at private (secret) parties.

*World War II and After.* The war (1941–45) brought enormous changes in the lives of American homosexuals, and the period after 1945 is the first for which something resembling traditional history can be constructed. For many men in combat the war proved liberating. Men who fear death have less reason to follow restrictive moral codes which limit their pleasure; why worry about what the neighbors think if you and they may be dead tomorrow? Amid a general loosening of sexual codes, the military staged drag shows and soldiers crowded gay bars in nearby cities. In the early years of the war, when manpower was scarce, the armed forces made no attempt to harass homosexuals in the service, but by early 1943 the Navy (followed by the Army), acting on recommendations from psychiatrists, began to establish policies to screen out male homosexuals and lesbians from induction and to discharge those already in service; wartime needs however led to irregular enforcement of these exclusionary policies.

Geographical mobility increased enormously in the late 1940s. Adult children often moved away from their parents to their own residence—sometimes in a different town. This made them feel freer to act on their homosexual desires. Bars became more common and could be found in almost all medium- and large-

sized cities and occasional rural areas. Some **bathhouses** which provided a locale for sexual relations were allowed to remain open by the police. These semi-public places were still dangerous but marginally more acceptable.

In 1948 the American public was shocked by the publication of the first report by Alfred Kinsey and his associates, on the sexual behavior of the American male. Based on interviews with thousands of white men from all walks of life, the Kinsey Report astonished Americans with the news that more than one-third of American males had experienced a homosexual orgasm and that at least a twentieth of them were predominantly homosexual. In 1953 a companion volume on female sexuality proved similarly revealing. The Kinsey Reports occasioned the first national discussion of homosexuality as such, and proved to be the irremovable foot in the door of the Victorian taboo. Kinsey furthermore made homosexuality into a respectable subject of scientific inquiry in the United States, which had lagged behind Europe in this respect.

In 1950 the **Mattachine Society** began in Los Angeles as the first homosexual political organization, inaugurating the modern homophile movement, mainly as the brain child of Henry Hay, a Communist who was later expelled from the Party because of his homophile activism. A few years later, when Americans were beginning to be frightened by a new Red Scare, the Mattachine moved away from its left-wing and separatist origins and Hay quit the group.

Somewhat later, W. Dorr Legg began the Knights of the Clock and, with the collaboration of Don Slater and others, began to publish a monthly entitled **ONE**. In New York there was some organizing in the late 1940s including the Veteran's Benevolent Society, but records are scarce. Mattachine chapters spread to various cities in the early 1950s, including New York, and had mixed results.

Progress for homosexuals was limited in the fifties largely because of the Red Scare and its main protagonist, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. With great publicity at the opening of the television age the senator linked Communism with homosexuality, starting in February 1950, and certainly frightened homosexually-oriented men in American government. Just how great an influence his ideas had on local police enforcement is difficult to gauge, though the decade left behind a reputation for severe repression and harassment at all levels. The Federal Bureau of Investigation mounted a campaign to ferret out homosexuals in government, and the association of homosexuality with security risk remained in federal policy through the next four decades.

The 1950s were the period of ascendancy of **Freudian concepts**. American psychoanalysts believed that homosexuality was caused by dominance of the mother and that it could be "cured" by **psychoanalytic therapy**. The **medical theories** gained extraordinary currency even among homosexually-oriented men and women.

Journalistic exposés such as Laird and Mortimer's "Confidentials" and Jess Stearn's *The Sixth Man* painted a lurid picture of neurotic homosexuals doomed to a lonely, unfulfilled life. Various scandals involving homosexuals were reported in newspapers that had previously avoided even mentioning the word. The "Boys of Boise" (Idaho scandal in 1956 even became the subject of a popular book by John Gerassi (a decade later), but the exploitation had the unwanted effect of making it more ordinary to discuss "sexual deviation." In literary circles, the "**Beat Generation**" developed a much more relaxed attitude toward homoeroticism, led by gay poet Allen Ginsberg and bisexual writer Jack Kerouac.

*The Sixties*. In many areas of American social and cultural history the sixties were a time of rapid change. Restrictions on premarital sex were drasti-

cally reduced, leading to more sexual experimentation. Increasing prosperity fostered a general sense of hedonism, supplanting the dutiful ethos (the so-called "Protestant ethic") of the previous decade. Movements for civil rights for blacks and (later) for women led to similar liberationist yearnings in lesbian and gay circles by the end of the decade. Psychoanalytic ideas were challenged in various ways. The cultural curtains of silence began to be pierced with occasional references to homosexuality in fiction, drama, and film. From 1963 on, underground art forms such as those associated with Andy Warhol began to tackle the subject directly.

During the decade police tolerance of gay meeting places slowly increased; patrons were less often arrested. In the largest cities, bars began to differentiate into distinct types of clientele by age, styles of dress, social class, and (in rare cases) by sadomasochism and fetishes. Gay organizations which had been largely dormant in the 1950s started to grow again on the two coasts (especially in San Francisco, on its way to becoming the "gay capital" of the country) and expand to new areas of the country. Illinois became the first state to make sodomy legal, in 1961; others followed toward the end of the decade. The first public demonstrations, sponsored by east coast homophile groups under the leadership of Barbara Gittings and Franklin Kameny, were held in Philadelphia and Washington. In 1966 the first gay student group, the Student Homophile League, was started at Columbia University in New York City. The latter half of the decade witnessed annual meetings of a growing national (plus Canada) coalition of almost all the often-conflicting gay and lesbian groups, the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO, 1966-70). However, while the people involved were seminal thinkers and energetic strategists whose influence would reverberate through the next decade, their numbers were small and their activity received little public notice.

As a result, what they achieved is often unfairly overlooked by the uninformed who think that 1969 marked the beginning of gay political organizing.

*Stonewall and the Soaring Seventies.* In June 1969, the police attempted to arrest some patrons at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. The bar violated the then-accepted rules of conduct by allowing men to dance together. Some of the patrons, the most effeminate, resisted arrest; outside, sympathetic "street people" started a riot which lasted for several days. As a symbol of the gay rights movement in the United States (though not of its beginning, as is popularly held), the anniversary of the riots is celebrated annually across the nation by marches and other commemorative activity. A considered historical retrospective on the Stonewall event would see it as the catalyst for the gay liberation phase of that movement. The riots were followed in New York by the organization of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) with a leftist orientation paralleling that of other liberation groups of the late sixties. It was replaced in prominence by the end of the year by the single-issue Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), a militant group which remained dominant in New York for several years and, like the GLF, was copied by similar gay groups all around the United States and even in Europe.

By the middle of the seventies the burgeoning gay rights movement was achieving considerable public notice. It expanded beyond the youthful and more "radical" types who formed groups all over the country immediately after Stonewall. In New York City, Howard Brown, a leading physician who had served as a City Commissioner, publicly announced his homosexuality. A few months later, he helped found the National Gay Task Force (NGTF). By the middle of the decade two openly gay state legislators had been elected, Allan Spear in Minnesota and Elaine Noble in Massachusetts. Gay political clubs were formed in several of the

larger cities and a gay presence in the Democratic Party, one of the two major American political parties, had become regularized. Larger cities also began to sprout gay community centers, while many more specialized gay organizations began to form, including professional and occupational groups as well as a myriad of social and hobby-oriented groups. A small but vocal **bisexual** movement emerged. Nearly half the states had abolished their sodomy laws, often through court rather than legislative decision, though progress in that area slowed toward the end of the decade. Some fifty cities (and in 1982 one state, Wisconsin) passed homosexual civil rights laws protecting citizens against **discrimination** on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, jobs, and public accommodations. Gay-oriented social services agencies serving the gay **aging** population and **youth** began in the early eighties mainly in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.

An indicator of the success and acceptance of these organizations was their receipt of tax funds. Legal Defense Funds modeled on those of older civil rights groups developed on both coasts. These groups litigated test cases involving all aspects of lesbian and gay life with fervor and some notable successes. All these shifts on the political scene changed the lives of many homosexually-oriented men and women. Sexual meeting places such as bars remained open but became more acceptable places to visit—and many were more social in atmosphere. Publication of information appeared in many forms, distributed from newsstands, vending machines, and bookstores. Gay-oriented publications proliferated, and publishing houses were started to provide an ever-increasing number of books on gay themes. A few colleges offered courses about homosexuality. Gay men and women often rejected the traditional “double life” and revealed their homosexuality to families, employers, and friends.

A change in psychiatric classification (formalized by vote of the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 following a decade of work by movement activists) added to a more accepting climate for homosexuals, though the inevitable backlash developed with occasional outbursts by vehement homophobes based in the evangelical Protestant Christian movement (Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell), the Roman Catholic Church (John Cardinal O'Connor of New York), or the political right wing still frightened many. The inevitable political conflicts which resulted produced a spotty record of victories and defeats, with some major cities repealing their gay rights laws while others adopted them for the first time.

In the cultural arena, the seventies marked a full-scale breakthrough, with homosexuality becoming a common topic in nearly all the arts and major works being aimed specifically at a homosexual audience.

Gays were **coming out** in droves, clustering in social and residential gay **ghettos** where the sense of gay **identity** was continually reinforced, not least by gay businesses. **Homophobia** became unfashionable in sophisticated heterosexual circles, and police harassment had virtually disappeared. An observer at the end of the seventies could easily conclude that the complete liberation of homosexuality was, if not at hand, at least in sight and perhaps inevitable.

Sexual mores, too, loosened up in the course of the decade (extending a trend of the sixties), as **impersonal sex** became widely acceptable and the closed, exclusive lover relationship was attacked as claustrophobic and out-of-date. For much of the gay population, promiscuity was no longer a dirty word. Mass sexual activity flourished in “back-room” bars and outdoor “meat racks,” often accompanied by the use of **drugs** like marijuana, “poppers,” and cocaine. “The wages of sin are penicillin,” seemed to sum up the attitude toward venereal disease.

*The Eighties.* Progress toward homosexual acceptance as well as the solidification of the internal structures of the gay community in the early 1980s ran into an unforeseen obstacle: the outbreak of a viral infection and associated fatal disease, AIDS, which was first noticed by the press and public in the United States as a disease afflicting homosexual men. At first the media ignored the disease, but by 1983 the number of persons with AIDS constituted a major crisis, and by mid-decade it was clear that the gay male communities of major cities, especially New York and San Francisco, were being decimated. In the years before the HIV virus was identified, various theories were put forth, many of them labeling homosexual behavior as a cause. Bigots seized upon the illness as God's wrath upon homosexuals, and some right-wingers called for what amounted to concentration camps.

Even after identification of the virus and considerable efforts at public education, led by Surgeon-General of the United States Everett Koop, there was much unfocused and unwarranted fear of homosexuals in general, and the hysteria which seized many as a result of massive coverage by the media led them to distrust the government's assurances that casual association could not spread the virus. Incidents of homophobic violence and general discrimination increased markedly.

While most of the public discussion remained general and implied that any type of sexuality could spread AIDS, a small but significant part of the mass media began to discuss the differences in transmission risk between such practices as unprotected anal intercourse (high) and fellatio (low or non-existent), thereby describing specific homosexual practices to the mass public for the first time; discussion of homosexuality had to be incorporated in public school curricula.

Gay men responded to the health crisis by altering their sexual behavior; monogamy returned to favor, and condoms became *de rigueur* as a part of "safe

sex." Nevertheless, the toll was fearsome, both physically and psychically, and as the energy of gay communities was increasingly devoted to meeting the emergency, political activism unrelated to AIDS waned, and the community infrastructure itself began to atrophy, with bars and baths closing, cruising becoming rare, bisexuals considered anathema by women and going back underground, young heterosexuals stopping their experimentation, the prostitution and pornography scenes withering, gay studies programs being dropped, and countless numbers scurrying back into the closets from which they had so recently emerged, or resolutely locking themselves in and nailing the door shut.

By contrast, it also increased the determination of some homosexuals to work publicly on efforts to combat the crisis, and made many heterosexuals more aware of and sympathetic toward gay men. Though the crisis slowed political progress, it did not stop it. By the end of the decade two Massachusetts Democratic members of the federal House of Representatives (Barney Frank and Gerry Studds) had identified themselves publicly as homosexuals, and approximately fifty open homosexuals held local and state government offices across the nation, among them a few Republicans. Gay culture in the form of novels, plays, and films flourished more than before, and gay people showed that, despite the worst crisis anyone could imagine, they were here to stay as a visible and significant element of American society.

While AIDS decimated the gay male community, it left lesbians essentially unaffected. Many lesbians gave unstintingly to the efforts to meet the AIDS crisis, but one net effect of the crisis was to differentiate further the situations and interests of male and female homosexuals in America. Males operated in an atmosphere of defensive retrenchment, a return to more conservative sexual mores, fear of the future, and nostalgia for the glorious free-wheeling days of the

recent past; lesbians concentrated on developing feminist thought and practice.

Ever since the sixties, America has been an exporter of gay culture and ideas, as movements initiated in the United States rapidly spread abroad, first to Europe and then to Japan and the Third World. This process continued in the eighties, as American homosexuals pioneered in the struggle against AIDS, and other nations where the epidemic was just taking hold looked to the American experience for guidance.

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## UNNATURAL

See *Nature and the Unnatural*.

## URANIANISM

This term for homosexuality is found in some writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Though the word and its related forms are

now obsolete, their history is of considerable cultural interest.

*Origins.* The concept of *Uranismus* was introduced by the polymath Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) in the first of a series of pamphlets, *Vindex*, published in January 1864. There he wrote: "It is a fact that among human beings there are individuals with a male physique, but who feel sexual love for males and sexual horror for females—horror of physical sexual contact with women. These individuals I henceforth designate as 'Urnings,' whereas I call 'Dionings' those individuals who are usually called 'men'—those whose physique is male and who feel sexual love for females and sexual horror for males. The Urnings' love I henceforth call uranian or male love, the Dionings' I call dionian." These expressions, he added, were fashioned from the names of the Greek divinities Uranus and Dione, with reference to Plato's *Symposium* (180D), which asserts that there are two goddesses named Aphrodite: "The elder one, having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite—she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger, who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione—her we call common; and the Love who is her fellow-worker is rightly named common (*pandemos*), as the other Love is called heavenly (*uranios*)." As a classical scholar, Ulrichs naturally thought of one of his favorite Greek texts, but he gave the words a Germanic dress with the termination *-ing*, an old suffix denoting members of a clan. He maintained that contrary to popular belief, there were congenital Urnings, "a particular class of individuals in whom alongside a male physique a female sexual drive is inborn, a particular subspecies of males in whom male love is inborn."

With this doctrine—that the love of male for male is innate—went the assertion that for Urnings their own form of sexual expression was natural and that they should not be forced into the Procrustean bed meant for Dionings (whom one would now call heterosexuals). In later