extent, the history of the particular race in which it dwells. Among nations of high development, miracles, mortality, and passion plays have taught, down to our own day, in object lessons, the sacred history in which the spectators believed. Some analogous purpose may have been held in view by the first organizers of the urine dance. In their early history, the Zunis and the other Pueblos suffered from constant warfare with savage antagonists and with each other. From the position of their villages, long sieges must of necessity have been sustained, in which sieges, famines and disease, no doubt, were the allies counted upon by the investing forces. We may have in this abominable dance a tradition of the extremity to which the Zunis of the long ago were reduced at some unknown period.

1885

INTIMACY WITHOUT ORGASM

We gay men often congratulate ourselves on the quality of our friendships. We talk about how supportive we are of each other (unlike straight males), how we’re there in time of need (“substitute family,” etc.). We also talk about our physical openness, how we’re able—again in contrast to uptight straight men—to express our affection through touching, kissing, hugging. There may well be some basis for this self-congratulation, but it isn’t firm enough to justify the chauvinistic smugness that often accompanies it. That gay friends treat each other better and are physically more affectionate than their straight counterparts has hardened into dogma. Scrutiny of that dogma is overdue.

One way to begin is to look at male friendship from a historical perspective—a suggestion, I realize, that is likely to produce instant yawns, history being for most Americans a subject devoid of charm, excitement, and relevance. But bear with me. I hope to change your minds—with a little help from a remarkable unpublished diary that I recently discovered. The diary’s most significant (for our purposes) entries date from the 1880s, and they provide some startling standards against which to measure our own presumed “enlightened” attitudes and behavior. To help set the stage, a few words about the context in which the diary was written, and about the man who wrote it: The diary, kept for some fifty years (1870s-1920s) by a minor writer named F. S. Ryman, is of enormous size, length, and potential historical importance. It consists of some forty folio volumes (each one roughly three times the size of a typical hardcover book today) and was in private hands until the early 1970s when it was acquired by the Massachusetts Histori-
cal Society (M.H.S.), one of the country's great archives for unpublished historical manuscripts.

That the Ryman diary ended up at M.H.S. was for me a piece of good luck. I'd spent many years working there on two of my early books (biographies of Charles Francis Adams and James Russell Lowell) and thus knew the staff well. It was lucky for me, too, that when I reappeared at M.H.S. in 1977, Stephen T. Riley was still its director. Riley is an uncommonly open man, and when I told him I was in search of previously unknown source materials on the history of sexuality, he gave me free run of the stacks, allowing me to peer into all those fiercely labeled boxes ("RESTRICTED! NO ACCESS!") ordinarily closed to researchers.

To call this "good luck" is an understatement—as anyone who has tried to do research in sexual history. Riley not only allowed me to browse freely, but went out of his way to bring to my attention certain special and uncataloged items I might otherwise have missed—such as the Ryman diary. I remember the mischievous twinkle in his eyes when he pointed down the shelf toward the formidable set of bound volumes. "Those ought to have some material of interest for you."

Ah, New England understatement! The early (1880–1895) Ryman diaries turned out to be filled with detailed accounts of the erotic adventures and fantasies of his lusty young author. These accounts are almost all rigorously—roisterously—heterosexual. On the face of it, that would seem to make them of limited interest to gay readers, but, as I hope to demonstrate, the opposite is true.

Apart from the evidence in the diaries of his rich libidinous life, we know surprisingly little about F. S. Ryman. For all their enormous length, the diaries record almost nothing of the ordinary details of Ryman's life. (Sex, for him, was not ordinary.) Though I've read through the entire diary, I'm still able to provide only a skeleton biography:

Ryman was born in 1858 in Pennsylvania. His father was a farmer; of his mother we know nothing. Ryman did have considerable schooling, including some college education (though he never graduated). His ambition was to be a writer, but grandiose claims far outpaced performance. He did have a few poems published in small-town papers while still in his twenties; thereafter he published and produced little. Nor does Ryman ever seem to have worked steadily at any other job; apparently he had a small inheritance and occasionally pursued "business ventures," all of which failed. From 1882 to 1884 he lived in Cortland, New York, then in Catskill-on-Hudson, finally settling in Boston, where, in his thirties, he married.

Ryman's early diaries (especially those from the 1880s) are the more historically important ones. They reveal an earthy, lively, sensuous young man of "advanced opinions" (and particularly advanced on the rights of women). Part of what makes Ryman's early diaries significant is the frequency with which they record his erotic adventures; this, and the casual tone he uses in describing them, imply that such adventures were nothing out of the ordinary—hardly the standard image we have of small-town prudery in late-nineteenth-century America. The Ryman diaries are bound to become a prime new document fueling the debate already raging among historians of the Victorian period about the country's libidinous habits. That debate, in brief, centers on whether the "prescriptive" literature of the period—official marriage manuals and the like—reflects the actual behavior of the citizenry or merely the official code of morality.

Ryman's early diaries are important for still other reasons. Amid a tidal wave of entries about heterosexual exploits, they contain a few descriptions of same-gender love and lust—few, but immensely suggestive. In both tone and content these entries throw into question conventional wisdom on a number of important topics: how "gay" men were regarded by "straight" friends; the extent to which gay men tried to conceal their orientation; whether straight men were ever themselves conscious of physical attraction to members of their own gender, and how they viewed that attraction. But perhaps my interest will be most fascinating of all those excerpts which relate to another subject: the quality and expression of male/male homosexual friendships. The diary entries describing Ryman and his friend Rob may shatter the glib assumption that we gays live in "superior" times—and in superior ways.

I have kept Ryman's punctuation and grammar intact.

Nov 15 1883
Catskill-on-the-Hudson:
Jim Asher & O.L.F—[last name—Fuller—has been blacked out] called on me today. F. [Fuller] gave me Hell for being so fierce for the women & then he went on to express his own disgust for
all things pertaining to sexual intercourse & he also talked vilely about passionate women.

... all praise & preach what their own passions demand. F. is as consistent as anyone. He told me in so many words one day that he is a "C—sucker" & that he loves & enjoys that d—d custom so revolting to every right minded person & yet he thought I suppose that he was beautifully consistent to-day in giving me the devil for my amours. Of course he only knows of my loves in a general way but he seems to never tire of slurring me as a "Byron"; a "Don Juan" etc.

No truly passionate person says aught against passion & how tired it does make one to hear the d—d passionless fools talk against the only thing that ever did or could form the basis of a great & powerful character. F— was horrified at me almost when I told him that I would be willing to sign my soul over to the devil at the end of five years to burn as long as he liked if in the interim I could have any & all women that I desired to enjoy as much as I liked. Passion is the only pleasure of life worth naming.

3 May, 1886
While walking down to Lewiston I saw one of the prettiest boys I ever saw in my life. It is next to never that beauty in my own sex attracts me but he was beautiful. He was about 13 I should say tall & trim for a boy of that age. He was very ragged. He & his little brother & sister I guess they were in the woods along the top of the bluff about 2 or 3 miles below Suspension Bridge. I think he had no shirt on but held his head & shoulders so gracefully & he was so polite that I was truly charmed with him. The children all seemed rather afraid of me when they first saw me as I had a stick in my hand & looked rough & dirty I suppose from tramping. They started off rather as if they were going to run but I called to them that I would not hurt them & then my pet as I will call him stopped & acted rather ashamed till I came up with them & asked them about the distance to Lewiston, Youngstown, etc. etc. I would like to see that boy when he is about 19. I'll bet he will be a veritable Apollo in form & face. I cannot tell why I was so attracted by him. He & Fred Squires are about the only male beings now living whose beauty I ever gave a second thought & I think the Apollo Belvedere is the only statue of a male figure that ever impressed me in the least & that did thrill me through & through ... It is said I believe that there is something feminine not effeminate about the face of every great man nearly. I think I would say face and features.

Aug. 1886
Rob [Robert M. Luke] came over to stay with me last night. I have slept with him many a night at the American Hotel [where Rob was a clerk] but last night was his first night with me. Though a man & his wife moved into the next room yesterday for a short time Rob & I had a good time talking to-gether concerning our lives loves etc. I confess I like the oriental custom of men embracing & kissing each other if they are indeed dear friends. When we went to bed Rob put his arms around me & lay his head down by my right shoulder in the most loving way & then I put my arms around his neck & thus clasped in each others arms we talked for a long time till we were ready to go to sleep & then we separated as I cannot sleep good with anyone near me. This a.m. Rob got up to go at 5 o'clock & as he was starting he came to the bed & threw his arms around my neck & we kissed each other good bye though I expect to see him again to-day. Now in all this I am certain there was no sexual sentiment on the part of either of us. We both have our mistresses whom we see with reasonable regularity & I am certain that the thought of the least demonstration of unmanly & abnormal passion would have been as revolting to him as it is & ever has been to me, & yet I do love him & I loved to hug & kiss him because of the goodness & genius I find in his mind. Christ kissed & embraced those whom he loved I believe & why shall I fear to do the same?

Sept 30, 1886
Rob Luke is one G—d d—d good fellow I think. I truly love him. He gave me his picture to-night & as I left him he took my right hand in his & quick as thought put it up to his lips & kissed it before I knew it hardly. I am truly proud to be so loved by any one & especially by one whom I can love & respect in return as I certainly do him.

Oct 7th 1886
Rob is Twenty two to-day ... Rob came up to the room with me & sat awhile. I read Byrons Dream aloud to him. I was sorry
he could not stay all night but he could not so I had to part with him.

Nov. 2, 1886

Last night about midnight Rob Luke came over to the house. I was in bed asleep but he called & I got up & went down & let him in. He threw his arms around my neck & kissed me as soon as I opened the door. By God I do love Rob no use of talking. He bunched with me & says he is doing well in Rochester. I am so glad. He is grand.

Nov. 1886

I am going to introduce Fred Squires & Rob Luke to each other by letter. How dear they both are to me. I truly love them not as ideals or instructors for I am much older than either of them [Ryman was 28; the "boy" Rob, 22] but as true noble boys worthy of the love of the best men & women.

(1891)

... received from Rob's wife (Edith) a letter stating that he was buried one week ago today [May 4] in Cold Spring Cemetery at Lockport N.Y. He was indeed very dear to me & I miss him very much but I hope & can believe that he has only added one more link to the infinite Chain of Life & that grief is indeed uncalled for & inappropriate...

Commentary

It should be said, first of all, that we have so little evidence about the history of intimacy that we can't presume anything about how representative or unique the two men's behavior was for their time, place, age, and class. Still, it takes no scholar to recognize that the excerpts from Ryman's diary raise unexpected, disquieting questions.

When was the last time any of us, like Ryman one hundred years ago, slept cuddled in the arms of a close friend—a friend, not a lover, not a trick? When was the last time we fantasized about doing so? How many of us have ever done so, or ever fantasized about it? If, like me, your answers to the above questions are "never," "never," and "rarely," my guess is you're mainstream male, gay or straight—though I'd also guess more gays than straights take for granted certain limited expressions of physical affection—touching, kissing, hugging—with their friends (with bare acquaintances, in kissy-poo Manhattan). But lying passionately clasped all night in a close friend's arms, replete with open declarations of love, an exchange of pictures, the impulsive kissing of hands? No, that's behavior we associate with lovers, either the long-term live-in variety or one-night infatuations.

The lines we draw between "friendly" and "erotic" gestures may be as blurred as they are artificial. A peck on the lips, a hug at the door, occasional handholding while walking—these are considered "suitable"—appropriate—expressions of friendship, at least within the confines of a gay subculture. But change those gestures slightly, accentuate or prolong them (a passionate kiss), and the ambience shifts from affection to lust, from generalized warmth to erotic arousal. For us, that is. Evidently not for Ryman and Rob. It would seem that comparable gestures can decisively shift their symbolic meaning in the course of one hundred years, can "signify" quite different emotions during different eras.

How "prudish," then, were the Victorians? How "liberated" are we? On the basis of the Ryman diary—and keeping in mind the danger of overgeneralizing from a single source—we are now able at least to say that some nineteenth-century men were (contrary to the traditional view) remarkably full and unself-conscious in physically expressing affection for each other. By contrast, today many gay men seem able to give freely of their loves to strangers, but are far more chary than Ryman and Rob of giving freely of their affection to friends. Perhaps what's been involved is a trade-off, not (as some glib liberationists would have it) an advance. It's possible we're "freer" than ever before sexually with members of our own gender—but more emotionally constricted. A still gloomier assessment would go further: we have lost the capacity for intimacy, physical or emotional. If so, "sexual liberation" may be a gruesome misnomer. What profieth a man if he be able to shoot off a thousand orgasms but be unable to embrace a beloved friend passionately?

I don't say I'm persuaded by this analysis. I do say its cogency begins to grow on me. I'm still not one to see sexual promiscuity and emotional commitment as necessarily at odds, but there seems
a disquieting lack of evidence that they’re mutually reinforcing. As lust roars round the land, the capacity (even the wish) for intimacy seems progressively to wither. No causal connection has been shown, but I could do with a little reassurance that the correlation is merely coincidental. Many of us feel deeply the loss of the kind of intimate male friendships we once took for granted, wonder what our own complicity may have been in their demise, and wince at the scorn with which many seem to regard such “sentimental attachments.” It isn’t only the Rymans and Robs of yesteryear they’re laughing at. It’s the Al Lowensteins, too.

Recently one of Lowenstein’s friends tried to describe in print how Al would talk about his need to be physically close to other men, to “hold them”—it was something he liked to do with men he cared about.” I was moved at the description, and I assumed most people would be. Not at all. I’ve since heard many gay men dismiss Lowenstein’s words as “pure clostetry” (those with a psychiatric vocabulary have labeled his feelings “displacement”). I knew Al as a casual acquaintance for more than thirty years. He may well have been sexually active with some men. With others, he may “merely” have wanted to cuddle for the night (Ryman and Rob would have understood). In the latter mood he wasn’t necessarily “denying” sexual desire. On different occasions he may simply have wanted different things—which is true of most of us when we allow it to be. No “denial” or “displacement” need be involved, other than the denial that we are fixed essences, forever locked into a single impulse.

The real deniers may be those among us—preeminently the sexual athletes—who have forgotten, or perhaps never knew, the pleasure and comfort to be had from nongenital physical closeness. Their numbers seem to be growing, men who equate “feeling” with getting hard—and getting it on. I myself am exceedingly fond of doing both. Yet like those “quaint Victorians” Ryman and Rob, my most satisfying memories are of lying close to someone I care about.

I 1909—1960s

"MY GAY LIFE"

Most of the initial year and a half of writing this column on the history of sexuality was fun—and easy. As each deadline approached I'd reach across the desk and pluck another manuscript from one of the piles of unpublished historical documents I had accumulated from a decade of sporadic research in archival libraries, append introductory remarks, and mail off the whole to The New York Native. My compeerance came when I reached out my hand one day to the piles of documents and—it closed on air.

If I was to continue to publish fresh materials in these columns I had only one—unappealing—recourse. I'd have to search out the materials I'd gathered during my earliest research expeditions, and which I'd long since pushed out of sight, buried in the inner recesses of file cabinets and cartons. To burrow into such musty nooks would entail real work, difficult and time-consuming. A piteous prospect, with the likely upshot being that after a dozen years of breathing the fresh air of Liberation, I'd end my days where I'd already spent too many of them: sealed away in some suffocating closet.

I bit the bullet. But six hours into my first dig I'd come up with little more than a snapshot of ex-Mayor Wagner sitting on top of—oh, never mind! It was a bitter pill. Somewhere I'd harbored the illusion that an assault on those moldy cartons filled with the fruits of my earliest research expeditions would quickly yield a succession of priceless treasures. Alas, no. I came away with armfuls of detritus instead. What had ever possessed me, I mused, to photocopy and drag home so much irredeemable trivia? The best explanation I could manage was that like all Prehistoric Hunters I'd grabbed at anything available to help fill the empty cave.

After my third closet foray, self-pity mounting, depression deepening, all came right. I suddenly hit upon some fifty or so typed manuscript pages of what seemed to be a lengthy and unpublished gay male memoir that covered much of this century. Spirits soared, self-congratulation resurfaced. The dig would after all prove worth the effort. But troubling questions soon supplanted initial euphoria. Why had I photocopied only fifty pages of what—judging from internal evidence—was a manuscript roughly six times that length? Why those fifty nonconsecutive pages? Why no title page, no record of the author's name, no note on the manuscript's provenance—where, when, and how I had located it?

The only plausible (if embarrassing) explanation I could come up with was simple negligence. My first research trips, some dozen years ago, were heady times: I uncovered more material more rapidly than I'd dreamed possible. Too exhilarated at the time to make the needed effort to sort and catalog the manuscripts in properly scholarly fashion, anxious to get back on the research trail, I simply let them accumulate, persuaded that their provenance would stay fresh in my mind until I could get around to filing and labeling. A soothing rationale at the time, but as the present condition of this memoir makes evident, a mistaken one. The truth is that exuberance eventuated in sloppy scholarship.

Lucky for me, remorse and apology aren't attitudes much in vogue these days. Besides, some portion of a significant early gay memoir has been salvaged. Though the excerpts are undeniably scattered and slight, I think taken together the autobiographical fragments are rewarding. The prose is sophisticated, the tone surprisingly "contemporary," the insights often rich, the glimpses provided into an earlier epoch of gay male life both rare and tantalizing.

... To clarify this aspect of my life I want to preface my story with a few remarks characterizing in general terms my sexual inclination, or as some would say, deviation. How I turned out to be a homosexual I am at a loss to explain. Some say a domineering mother or a spineless father, or again the reverse, turn a boy into a homosexual. But nobody knows for certain. At any rate, no such case seems to apply to me. I have never been ashamed of this leaning of mine, never felt guilt or self-disdain about it, although it has been a fact which seldom in my life I felt encouraged to
admit and mostly found advisable to hide. Nor have I ever wished
to change it, even had this been possible. For I always considered
homosexuality a natural though variant form of human sex behav-
ior and not a deviant one—deviance having usually the connotation
of sickness and excommunication.

Not once in my life have I known a woman physically. This
is a source of regret to me, for I felt eager to sample life in all
its aspects and am, of course, aware that the union of man and
woman is one of the basic experiences of life. But my aversion
to and ignorance of heterosexual contact have kept me from
seeking that experience. My aversion to physical relations with
women? Again I cannot find a reason. Women have shown me
love and I have returned it in a platonic way; some even offered
to have sex with me and I was hard put to refuse without
offending them. How different my easily aroused sensuality
where men are concerned!

Few recollections remain of my early school days [the author
was born in Germany, in 1909], but I recall the awakening of
feelings of sexual pleasure. When I was six or seven years old, my
mother and I visited some relatives in nearby Halle. There was a
handsome young cousin, about ten years older than I, who wore
shorts. After we had indulged in Kaffee und Kuchen [coffee and
cake], he showed me some of his books and we sat close together.
Our bare legs touched for a long time, and this made me feel
excited and affectionate. I would have sat with him all day. At the
same age, I sometimes played with myself under my small wooden
desk at school, which gave me pleasurable sensations. These are
my earliest recollections of erotic pleasure. ... Even in those early
days, [I held the opinion] ... that sex was a natural human func-
tion, with which I did not associate any feelings of guilt.

I believe I did not fully comprehend at that time how danger-
ously my particular inclination put me in conflict with the accepted
mores of society. Youthful sex, I held, knew no barriers, although
the furtiveness which accompanied some of my contacts should
have given me clear warnings. If it did, I chose to ignore them.

At the age of thirteen or fourteen I met an older man [B.N.]
who became both patron and friend. ... While skiing with class-
mates on a snowy slope in the Leipzig woods, I noticed being
watched by a distinguished-looking elderly gentleman in a sable-
collared fur coat. After a while he accosted me, commented on my
"nice, straight legs," and asked if I would be willing to teach him
skiing. I saw no harm in it and said yes. Thereupon he invited me
for the following Sunday to his residence at a fashionable address.
My parents had no objection, so I went to call upon him. A butler
opened the door and I entered an elegant villa, filled with oriental
art treasures, for [B.N.] had been Imperial German consul at [a
Far Eastern country] where he had ... assembled an outstanding
collection of woodcuts, screens, porcelain and armor. ...
and took him to my room. These brief encounters were usually disappointing. I prefer physical contact to be accompanied by a measure of warmth and affection. This may be too much to expect under such circumstances, but I know that it is possible. I have often found a combination of sex and affection, even in “quickies”, with Europeans, but rarely with Americans.

One year I arrived in New York on the eve of my birthday. [L.S.] ... met me at the station, then we dined luxuriously. Afterwards he led me to his apartment where I was to spend the night. As we reached his house he bade me wait a few minutes and went upstairs. I assumed that he wanted to light candles, but when I joined him in the room, my eyes were lit by another sight. Naked in a corner of the room stood a charming young sailor, a friend of [L.S.’s] with a red ribbon tied around a protruding part of his body. This was my birthday present, and I enjoyed it thoroughly in the following hours. In the war years, unlimited opportunities existed for servicemen in search of sex and extra pocket money. [L.] had heard of a unique establishment, open to males only, and took me there one night. We went to a large basement apartment in Brooklyn and, upon identification, were received with great cordiality by George, the owner and host. His living room was warm and cozy. Young servicemen were sitting on sofas and easy chairs, relaxed and friendly. Coffee and snacks were being served, light banter went back and forth. We felt as if we had entered a happy family circle, George being Dad and Mom combined. He knew the boys' problems, helped where he could, supplied shelter, food and money, and was loved with the casual affection that children show their parents. He confided to us newcomers that this was a bad night, as all the boys had to report for duty; and soon they left, kissing George goodbye. When they had gone, he asked us not to be disappointed and named a “good” night for us to return, a night when several big ships were due in harbor. He then proceeded in a businesslike fashion to inquire about our tastes in servicemen. “What color of eyes and hair do you prefer?” he asked. “Do you like them tall, medium or your own size?” All the details were jotted down in George’s notebook. “Is there any nationality you like best?”, and then he described how nationalities differ in anatomical as well as temperamental qualities. Even the branch of service was left to our choice, for George commanded an unlimited supply. When we were fully “booked” and promised unfailing delivery of the stipulated goods, we took our leave.

On the designated night we found the living room and adjoining bedrooms bustling with activity. A large friendly crowd of servicemen was present. Some were drinking coffee while waiting for a vacant bed. The waiting list was long and occupancy of a bedroom was limited to thirty minutes. I had “ordered” a tall marine, dark and blue-eyed; and indeed there he was, shy, friendly, and willing. When I asked him how old he was, he said with a grin: “old enough to know better.” But during our half hour I gained the impression that he would never know better.

George’s establishment breathed a spirit of family friendliness; it was a super-USO. I am afraid, though, that the official USO did not approve of it. When I arrived on another night, I found a crowd in the street and a policeman guarding the door to the premises. Upon inquiry, I was told that a “house of vice” had been raided and its proprietor carted off to prison. The closeness of my own escape made me shudder. Of kindly George, whom I was never to see again, I thought with sympathy and sadness.

[This gay brothel is almost certainly the one Gustav Beekman, known to habitués as “George,” ran near the Brooklyn Navy Yard and to which Senator Walsh of Massachusetts was linked in a 1942 scandal that had national repercussions.]

After these ventures I would return to [New England] ... to the life of an enthusiastic and successful teacher, a trusted counselor of students, a lover of nature and outdoor activities. One door was closed behind me, another opened in front. There was no communication between the two compartments, except in my mind. Nor was there any strain of adjustment in changing from one world to the other. In both spheres I was myself, behaved naturally, and made no effort at playing a role. Still, the separation between the two spheres was tight. People I met in one were absent from the other. Very few of my friends shared both aspects of my life. The attitudes I held, the standards I observed, even the tone of conversation changed effortlessly from one to the other. There was no overlap, and—to the best of my recollection—I never made a slip that revealed the other side.
My proclivity to separate spheres of feelings and experiences also extended to personal relationships. Some of my closest friends spoke of the “barriers” they encountered in me and of the “sense of exclusion” I conveyed to them. This saddened me and I tried to remove these obstacles to fuller communion. But hiding had become part of my nature, and almost instinctively I often kept my innermost soul apart from others.

[During the early forties, the author moved to Philadelphia, became involved for a time with the American Friends Service Committee, and halfheartedly proposed marriage to a woman friend he liked—a proposal she turned down, which at the time caused the author “no suffering” and which he later recognized had been a favor to them both (“In retrospect, the naivete... of my move toward matrimony... seems pathetic... an attempt bound to fail”). During the same period, he frequented “a number of the notorious steam baths in Philadelphia... acquired a boy friend in Trenton and even found a congenial soul, or rather body, among the Quaker work camps.”

Subsequently, as World War II was drawing to a close, the author became a member of the armed forces, and later, during the Occupation, held “the privileged position as an officer” posted in Germany.]

The life of an occupation officer had many compensations as well as temptations. Not the least among the latter was the ease with which sex was obtainable. For a Hershey bar or a pair of stockings a G.I. could find a girl to share his bed as often as he wanted. Boys were equally eager to please those who preferred them.

The number of homosexual encounters I had while stationed in Europe was legion. In war-darkened London, while the V-2 bombs were still falling, many servicemen of various nationalities on leave from the Continent found it pleasant and convenient to satisfy their sexual urges with comrades-in-arms. Soldiers and Sailors Clubs, washrooms in the underground and hotel lobbies were places where one glance would bring you a friend for the night. The same I found true six years later in Tokyo when on leave from the Korean War.

Still, the number of eager sex partners in postwar Germany was greater by an order of magnitude. Quite often the problem was not so much to find partners as to ward off undesirable ones. If sailors are reputed to have a girl in every port, I resembled them insofar as I had boy friends in most of the cities I visited on official errands. When I served in Stuttgart I discovered that, by strange coincidence, most of the other heads of departments were also “gay.” We lived in a large villa, where our young German chauffeurs or boy friends were welcome day and night. That this rather obvious arrangement remained undisturbed during my three years in Stuttgart seems almost incredible considering the attitude of the military toward homosexuality. From headquarters in Stuttgart we ventured into other parts of Europe, sometimes on business, sometimes on leave. In Paris, Brussels, Vienna and Rome we had friends and introduced them generously to one another.

Before long, however, the promiscuity of the early occupation days gave way to exclusive relationships with one person. This was encouraged by the charming tendency of the German boys to seek not only physical contact but also a sentimental tie with the American friend. No doubt, their expectancy of material benefits also played a part.

... [B.W.] my closest American friend of Stuttgart days and many years later, set the style for building close relationships with young men that went far beyond mere sex and often lasted for years. I myself found “Wolf” [a nineteen-year-old Berliner who had fled that city when the Russians approached. The author and Wolf were together for several years].

[We skip to 1950 and the author’s tour of duty in the Far East.]

On one of my visits to Tokyo I was strolling on the famous Ginza. Strangers constantly accosted me offering to serve as guides to erotic adventure. One of the suggestions I was unable to resist. My guide and I hopped a taxi and were soon deposited in an ill-lit alley of the northern suburbs. I entered a flimsy building where I was welcomed by a garishly dressed madame, whose deep voice gave the lie to her female appearance. “She” graciously asked me to sit down and sip a cup of tea with her. When my impatience began to show, she smiled and consented to introduce her boys. They were a varied lot, ranging from rather sinister looking “butch” types to willowy girlish figures. I made a selection from
the middle range, and the boy and I retired to a small cubicle. One has heard of the exacting and sophisticated training which Japanese geisha girls undergo. The boy who stayed with me must have had similar training. His language was flowing and beautiful. He looked at me long with warm intensity, and the kiss he gave me after a slow smile continued the words which his eyes had spoken. We lay together, not in frenzy but quietly absorbed in one another. His fingers and lips knew the places of my body—as perhaps only another male can know—where his touches could bestow the greatest bliss. I felt as though he wanted to show me love of passion, and for the brief spell of our being together could but love him for his gentleness. Never before or since have I derived such rapture from sex. On a later visit to Tokyo I looked for him again. But he was gone.

[The final years covered in the manuscript, 1956–1972, are sampled below in three snippets.]

I. 1956: First summer vacation on the West Coast a friend from occupation days in Germany who had become a clinical psychologist in San Francisco, joined me on a trip to the Canadian Rockies. I met a young man, a grade school teacher [S], who after some pleasant conversation was eager to accompany me to my hotel and spend the night with me . . . [S] told me that he had accepted a teaching position . . . [and in] the fall planned to move to my neighborhood. Of course, we would then see each other. And so we did.

I was then forty-seven years old. Middle age had arrived. Youthfulness, so highly prized by homosexuals, was slipping by. Often I looked enviously at passing cars in which two seemingly happy young men were riding together. The idea possessed me that I wanted to have a young man by my side too . . . [S] initially fulfilled that wish. We spent much time together on weekend trips, at concerts, in bed. He [reacted] . . . to me with affection. Perhaps he was pleased by an [older man’s] . . . interest in him, perhaps the comfortable circumstances I offered—good meals and travel in a flashy sports car—held the greater appeal. His mind was pleasure-bent, he liked me—no doubt—[but] I clung to him almost desperately, though I was fully aware of how radically we differed in tastes and interests. My feverish possessiveness could not fail but cool him off. He began to seek other contacts.

Not knowing where he spent the night would drive me into unbearable spells of jealousy. My life once more was darkened and near a breakdown.

After months of agitation, a curious chain of events opened the road to recovery. In the steamroom of the YMCA I met an attractive negro. We became good friends and he introduced me to [F.H.] a highly cultured physician of German ancestry. I saw much of [F.H.] afterwards and we shared intimate thoughts. He tried his best to pull me out of the bit of misery in which I wallowed because of [S] but nothing seemed to help. As a last resource [F.H.] introduced me to . . . [Evelyn Hooker, who in 1956 was already pioneering new, positive views about same gender love and lust]. This was the turning point. In many talks at her home I began to look at my life from a changed perspective and [began] . . . to reaffirm the values by which I must live. She taught me to get angry at my own humiliation and to insist on the rights of mutual consideration and truthfulness to which friends are entitled. She understood that it was imperative for my recovery that I no longer [cater to S’s] ways and standards and thus betray the values that had supported my own life.

II. 1960: Eager as I have been on my travels to sample mountains and historic sites, I have also not been blind to the charms of man. My erotic encounters—most of them of the "quickie" type—are far too numerous to list. But I will recount a few outlandish ones.

An American acquaintance had given me the address of a London pension that catered to special tastes. When I got there, I was first puzzled and then tickled to learn that the price of a room was either 3 pounds, solo, or 4 pounds, incl. bedfellow. Expressing my willingness to pay the higher rate, I was shown a list of availables. My chosen fellow arrived at the appointed hour and proved good company. Next morning over breakfast, I learned to my surprise that he was happily married and had a little boy. "We are short of money," he said, "so my wife is glad to have me occasionally bring in a little extra by staying out for night work."

Of still briefer duration was the encounter with an attractive young guard in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. I had noticed that he followed me from room to room as if suspecting me of scheming.
to steal Tutankhamen's treasure. When I entered a back room with him close on my heels, he suddenly gave me a big wink and beckoned me to a dim-lit recess. There he took me by the hand and led me behind a big sarcophagus containing the crumbling mummy of a pharaoh [sic]. Sure of my consent, he then went wordlessly to work. When we had parted, he murmured to me in heavily accented English: "There must be international understanding through touch of bodies."

III. 1970-1972: Summation. My own sexual partnerships were certainly not of a durable character. This used to worry me. But over the years my views on this point have changed. Why should I make durability the test of anything enjoyable coming my way? Insistence on duration is only too apt to throw a shadow on an experience that can be happy for the moment. I learned to be content with the Nunc et Hic and to take it unshadowed into my memory.

In homosexual relations youthfulness is generally at an inordinate premium. As I grew older, the availability of sex partners sharply diminished. Hand in hand with this went a reduced interest on my part in sexual acts with a mate, although my practice of self-satisfaction continued with the old frequency and enjoyment. Instead of having physical contact, I found myself satisfied by watching men, talking with them, experiencing comradely warmth, the felt touch of a hand, or some other expression of tenderness. The glow I can derive from that kind of relation has proven more intense and lasting than the momentary excitement of sex. I share the sentiment of the aging marquise de Noailles who said: "Quand a moi, je n'ai plus envie de faire l'amour, je veux faire l'amitié." [For me, now, it's friends I want to make, not love.] This may sound like a logical prescription for a man of age and nature. Yet, it has not always been easy to follow for my sexual urge has by no means withered away . . .

NOTES

1. Gregory Sprague later wrote to tell me that the original manuscript was housed in the Kinsey Institute, Bloomington, Indiana, where he, too, had found and read it.