



Gay American Novels 1870 1970 is a scholarly labor of love examining various novels and shorter pieces of literature that depict the gay experience for the hundred year period between 1870 and 1970. No lesbian fiction has been included although some of the authors of the books that Gunn examines are females writing about the gay male experience something that was welcome to see. 133 different pieces of literature were chosen by Gunn for examination and for each one he provides an in depth analysis presenting a bit of the plot and a look at the piece's significance as gay literature. Others are obscure works or ones that might intrigue someone into thinking: That's gay literature? Really? Many of Gunn's choices fall into this latter category and serious students of gay literature are going to seek out some of the lesser known titles for a read. Likewise instead of beginning the work with a list of titles of the books reviewed within one must go to the index at the end to find a title with a corresponding entry number. Gay American Novels 1870-1970: A Readers Guide Examining the development of gay American fiction and providing an essential reading list this literary survey covers 257 works novels novellas a graphic story cycle and a narrative poem in which gay and bisexual male characters play a major role. Iconic works such as James Baldwin's *Giovannis Room* and Christopher Isherwood's *A Single Man* are included along with titles not given attention by earlier surveys such as Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring* Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* Julian Greens *Each in His Darkness* Ursula Zilinskys *Middle Ground* and David Plantes *The Ghost of Henry James*. Drewey Wayne Gunn has selected books he feels show how gay male fiction developed over that time period. Some of the selections are predictable: works by John Rechy Christopher Isherwood Gore Vidal and Gordon Merrick. Other selections suggest books that many may have already read but will want to re read for a closer examination: Overall Gunn's work is a very good compilation of books combined with thoughtful analysis. Although the book is subtitled *A Reader's Guide* the reader may be frustrated for authors are not listed alphabetically in the front only by entry number: A list of book titles by page number would have been helpful. But with the exception of these missing pieces of organization the rest of the book serves its purpose: It will find a home on the shelf of any teacher student or serious reader of gay literature: Chronological entries discuss each works plot significance for gay identity and publication history along with a brief biography of the author. *Gay American Novels 1870-1970: A Readers Guide*.