



The Haight-Ashbury: A History

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In honor of the fortieth anniversary of the legendary San Francisco scene, this comprehensive account of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury draws on personal experiences, period documents, and scores of interviews to illuminate and assess an important counterculture phenomenon. Reprint.

The Haight-Ashbury: A History Details

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From Reader Review The Haight-Ashbury: A History for online ebook

robert says

If you are as obsessive as I am you will enjoy reliving the moment through this truly obsessive chronicle. I like the new cover and the map. Good Bob Weir quote: "It's not the dream but the dreaming that's real." Or, as Oscar Wilde said, "A map without Utopia on it is not worth looking at."

Rand Rhody says

A chronological record, quite accurate, focused on the period 1965-69. Great reference resource. Much of what Perry writes I can personally vouch for.

Pre-1966 - sorry to have missed out on the foundations of it all: Owsley, Acid Tests, Trips Festival.

1966 - visited October thru December while it was still mellow, occasionally helping out the Diggers, and remember the Frame of Reference, the Psychedelic Shop, the concert posters & handbills.

1967 - was at the Central Park Easter Be-In, and St Marks Place in the Lower East Side for the entire Summer of Love. Via the Oracle and the Barb we had the ongoing news from the Haight .

1968 - moved back to Cole and Frederick. The Haight had obviously gone downhill, demonstrating you never step into the same river twice.

Richard says

One of the very best books on the 1960s counterculture in San Francisco. The details are eye-opening to say the least.

Diane Schneider says

A nice examination of what life was like in the Haight. There is some contextual analysis at the end, but the book is largely a description of events that shaped daily life. There was some mention of the dark side of the Haight (speed freaks, heroin addiction, sexual abuse of teen runaways), but I would have liked to hear more about that. The negative aspects tend to get glossed over in favor of the image of the Summer of Love.

Nick H says

A primarily first-handed account of the chronological order of events that led to this neighborhood being the

eye of the storm during the '60's youth revolution. It drags a bit at times, but is nice to not have everything sensationalized by nostalgia or notions of it's success. Here's what happened, here's why it almost worked, and here's how it ultimately failed.

Janet Lynch says

I love this book. Perry gives detailed, factual information and insightful commentary. My high school students giggle at the mention of the word "hippie," but Perry demonstrates that theirs was a serious multi-dimensional counter-culture. There were factions within the movement, and Perry examines each one. For example, Kesey, Leary, and others had diverse reasons and attitudes toward using LSD. The Haight-Ashbury movement was brief, only about two years, and though it impacted music and fashion, I don't see much evidence in the world today for its plea for love, peace, and simplicity.

Dave Thorner says

Not very enlightening.acid, acid, acid, more acid, ken kesey, acid test, acid, lsd, lsd, timothy leary, acid, grateful dead, acidjefferson airplane, acid, lsd, be in, acid test, grateful dead.you get the picture.

tim says

A good entertaining read...with some thoughtful ideas about the idealism of a specific era. The writing is also very interesting - huge stream of consciences writing, that seems to hold together. For the most part this book is just fun to read though.

Tom Lowe says

Just as I had hoped, I learned a lot about Haight-Ashbury from this very detailed history. I was only 12 during the Summer of Love, so my memories of the time, though good, were diminished by age and distance, as I was raised on the east coast. But Perry enlightened me, and made me feel like I was there, for the good, the bad, and the ugly. Perry generally provided the right vibes of that time and place. A must read for all fans of the beautiful music and culture that were such an integral part of the neighborhood. Great book.

A.O. says

The Haight-Ashbury: A History is a detailed, in-depth history of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, focusing on the late-1960s counterculture years. Perry shows how the neighborhood evolved during this time, and how the "hippie" subculture evolved with the neighborhood. The book covers every concert, every new venue that opened and closed, every "happening" on a week-by-week basis. This can make for arduous reading, but it makes the book a great starting point for more in-depth research.

Although Haight-Ashbury started as a student neighborhood, it quickly became the locus of a new artistic movement. Beginning in the mid-sixties, concerts, multimedia shows, student cafes, and other “happenings” bloomed in the neighborhood. Kids would parade around the neighborhood in outrageous costumes from the neighborhood’s many second-hand clothing shops. The remaining beatniks, now in their thirties and forties, called this new generation “hippies,” i.e. junior hipsters. The name stuck.

The police looked the other way—at first. Haight-Ashbury formed a “buffer zone” between the mostly-black Fillmore and the mostly-rich Pacific Heights. Some students want to wear costumes, put on a play, even smoke a little dope? Not a priority.

After 1967’s “Human Be-In,” though, the neighborhood attracted thousands of runaways, who in turn attracted many shady characters: dealers, pushers, pimps, hustlers, acid heads, speed freaks, junkies, crazies, and other ne’er-do-wells. Charles Manson lived in Haight-Ashbury for about six months, picking up girls who would later become part of his “family.”

I’d recommend this book to anyone interested in 1960s culture and counter-culture. Perry is a little too close to his subject matter to be objective, but it’s still an invaluable resource for anyone who wants to know what happened, and what it felt like.

Note: This review originally appeared on aomonk.com.

Mary says

The author went to a lot of work to get the who, what, where & when on the record without blaming or glorifying anybody. He left the why of it all up to somebody else, and I never sensed that the music turned him on. (Or maybe it was too late to tell, by 1984 when he wrote this book.) He covered the Berkeley connections, the influence of the Watts riots, the role of the establishment and non-establishment media. Lots of interesting angles, not all obvious. I liked being reminded of Ralph Gleason, the SF Chronicle’s jazz writer who (in 1965) “irritated his readership by speaking kindly of folk rock and actually encouraging people to see the British rock bands.” (And Gleason’s attention to the phenomenon continued, and grew.) The book is good plodding reporting, and does what it set out to do.

Tracey Madeley says

This is a must for anyone interested in the hippies and Haight Ashbury in particular. It covers the area from 1966 - 7 and gives an account of the different groups, what happened and the shops, events and people who made up the scene. it is easy to read and understand and is one of the best books I have read in a long time.

Gary Comins says

Great book to read in conjunction with our trip to SF. I really liked the majority of the book, but toward the end, the pages of “news blurbs” moved more away from the story aspect ... overall, a good read though.

Srivatsan Sridharan says

The story of the hippie counter-culture that started in America always baffled me. How is it that all of a sudden, a massive movement that embraces eastern culture and traditions, shuns war and establishments and advocates sexual freedom and the use of psychedelic drugs, rise up out of thin air? How is it that a certain chemical produced by Sandoz revolutionized this culture? How is it that a certain band from Liverpool managed to transform and sustain this revolution? This book gives a factual account of what happened in the late 60s in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco and how it became the world capital of this unique and fascinating culture. Written by Charles Perry of Rolling Stones fame, the book does a good job in bringing forth the events of that day and age. The book's more journalistic than creative, dense and full of facts. It is not a very fun read, so to speak, but it does give you a handful of interesting anecdotes, which managed to fuel my curiosity about the Haight-Ashbury district rather than quenching it.

Dennis Gardner says

Well this was a complete waste of time. Don't know if it was me or the book but whatever it was it wasn't good. Not recommended.
