Eric Garber papers

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2020
### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Eric Garber papers  
**Dates:** 1882-1995  
**Collection Number:** 1996-20  
**Creator/Collector:** Garber, Eric, 1954-1995  
**Extent:** 9 cartons (9 linear feet)  
**Repository:** GLBT Historical Society  
San Francisco, California 94103  

**Abstract:** The Eric Garber papers document the professional work of this activist and groundbreaking historian who wrote extensively about LGBT people in the Harlem Renaissance and alternative sexualities in science fiction, fantasy and horror literature.

**Language of Material:** English

**Access**  
Collection is open for research. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

**Publication Rights**  
Copyright has not been transferred to the GLBT Historical Society.

**Preferred Citation**  
Eric Garber papers. GLBT Historical Society

**Acquisition Information**  
Gift of Jeffrey Sunshine in April 2000. Gift of Bruce Kellner.

**Biography/Administrative History**  
Eric Steven Garber (1954-1995) was born in Pasadena, California, to Chuck and Dorothy Garber. His family moved around California during his early years because of his father’s job at Chevron Oil and relocated to Colorado when Garber was in ninth grade. They moved back to California two years later and he finished high school in Lafayette. Garber attended the University of Colorado at Boulder for two years, coming out and turning most of his attention to gay politics. He joined the Radical Gay Caucus of Boulder Gay Liberation and was an active speaker for the Boulder Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau.

After two years in Boulder, Garber moved to San Francisco, where he worked in a bath house, as a job placement counselor for the City and County of San Francisco and at the San Francisco Public Library, where he stayed for over a decade. Garber returned to school at age 30, graduating with honors from San Francisco State University. He received a Master’s in Library and Information Science from the University of California at Berkeley. Garber met the “Husband of his Heart,” Jeff Sunshine, in the summer of 1978. They maintained a bi-coastal romance for many years until Sunshine moved to San Francisco in 1991. They became Domestic Partners in San Francisco that year and were married in a group ceremony at the National Gay Rights March in Washington, D.C. in 1993. Garber’s avocation and pastime was gay and lesbian history. He was a founding member of the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian History Project in 1978 and one of the founders of the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society in 1985. He edited the newsletter and served on the board until 1994. Garber and his colleagues at the Project communicated with gay and lesbian historians around the country; many important works of queer history had their origins in the Project. Garber wrote extensively about LGBT people in the Harlem Renaissance and alternative sexualities in science fiction, fantasy and horror. Garber’s expertise in these subjects was recognized nationally.

**Scope and Content of Collection**  
The Eric Garber papers document the professional work of this activist and groundbreaking historian who wrote extensively about LGBT people in the Harlem Renaissance and alternative sexualities in science fiction, fantasy and horror literature. The collection contains materials related to his historical slide show T’Ain’t Nobody’s Bizness: Homosexuality in Harlem in the 1920s and the four books of speculative fiction that he co-edited or edited: Worlds Apart, Embracing the Dark, Swords of the Rainbow, and the seminal annotated bibliography, Uranian Worlds. Garber was a founding member of the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian History Project and the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society, and his papers contain materials related to the organization, as well as correspondence from, and writings and presentations by its members. A large portion of the collection is comprised of Garber’s research files. He collected materials that date back to 1882, but the bulk of the original material in the collection dates from 1974 to 1994. His papers also contain audiotapes, photographs and a small amount of personalia. Garber corresponded with a who’s who of writers and historians interested in LGBT life and letters and his papers document the growth of the fields of LGBT history and literary studies. Other
highlights include exchanges with Bruce Kellner and Richard Bruce Nugent about the Harlem Renaissance; correspondence with writers and fans of science fiction and fantasy; and over a decade of cards and letters from his partner, Jeffrey Sunshine. The collection has been divided into 10 Series: Correspondence; Harlem Correspondence, Writings and Subject Files; Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Writings, Correspondence and Subject Files; Other Writings by Garber; Personalia; San Francisco Lesbian & Gay History Project/San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society/Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California; Biographical Files; Subject Files; Writings by Others; and Photographic Materials and Floppy Discs. Garber was editor of, and wrote many stories for, the Historical Society's newsletter, which is housed in the Periodical Collection.

**Indexing Terms**

- Black people
- Literature
- Gay men
- Historic preservation
- Garber, Eric, 1954-1995
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society

[Container List for the Eric Garber Papers](#)