

Bruce Rodgers papers

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GLBT Historical Society

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2021

Descriptive Summary

Title: Bruce Rodgers papers

Dates: 1942-2009

Collection Number: 2010-03

Creator/Collector: Rodgers, Bruce

Extent: 9 cartons (9 linear feet)

Repository: GLBT Historical Society

San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: The collection contains materials from Bruce G. Rodgers, author of *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), the first serious dictionary of gay slang and the definitive gay American jargon resource. The collection contains materials related to the publication of the book as well as other research materials on Romani, Hebrew, Polari, and other languages and slang. Included are personal and professional correspondence, notes, contracts, photographs, artifacts, poems, illustrations, ephemera and personal belongings.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).

Preferred Citation

Bruce Rodgers papers. GLBT Historical Society

Acquisition Information

Gift of Deborah Millett in April 2010

Biography/Administrative History

Bruce G. Rodgers was the author of *The Queens' Vernacular: a Gay Lexicon*, a dictionary of gay slang. He was born October 15, 1942 in Wisconsin, moved to San Francisco in 1966 and died August 10, 2009. He is buried at the Santa Clara Mission Cemetery. Rodgers graduated from Wausau Senior High School in Wausau, Wisconsin in 1959. He attended Barstow Jr. College, 1960-1961 and University of Southern Nevada, 1961-1963. During the 1960s he worked as a teletype operator and supervisor for *Review Journal Daily* in Las Vegas and as a teletype operator at the *Wall Street Journal* in San Francisco. In the 1970s he worked in order fulfillment at Western Tape in Mountain View, California, then in the 1980s at Albert L. Shultz Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto. He retired in 1996. On his resume (circa 1982), Rodgers describes his personal interests: "I have an overriding interest in linguistics and languages. I (sic) am reading fluent in Spanish, French, Judeo-Spanish, and Hebrew, and am knowledgeable of Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Italian, German, and Turkish. I am constantly interested in slang expressions in all languages." His partner from 1966 to 1989 was Joe Jenkins (1935-1989) who had an interest in George Washington memorabilia. Jenkins' collection of George Washington memorabilia was donated by Rodgers to the San José Historical Museum (currently History San José) in 1994.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection contains materials from Bruce G. Rodgers, author of *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972). The book was later republished as *Gay Talk: A (Sometimes Outrageous) Dictionary of Gay Slang* (New York: Paragon Books, 1979). The book was the first serious dictionary of gay slang and the definitive gay American jargon resource. The collection contains materials related to the publication of the book as well as other research materials on Romani, Hebrew, Polari, and other languages and slang. Included are notes, contracts, photographs, artifacts, poems, illustrations, ephemera and personal belongings. In addition, there is extensive professional and personal correspondence reflecting Rodgers' affection for language and gay slang. GSSO linked terms:

http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/GSSO_000374; <http://purl.bioontology.org/ontology/MESH/D008091>

Indexing Terms

Gay men

Literature

[Container List for the Bruce Rodgers papers](#)
