

THEY WERE LEGENDS BEFORE THEY WERE HISTORY

Jack Fritscher is the founding San Francisco editor-in-chief of *Drummer* magazine and curator of the *Drummer* Archives. In essays, interviews, and photos, his masterful writing sheds new Gay Pride light on authentic leatherfolk founders, icons, and superstars too often under-reported by gatekeepers of gay-history timelines.

AIDS poet, **Thom Gunn**; race-sex-and-gender photographer, **Robert Mapplethorpe**; **Society of Janus** founder, **Cynthia Slater**; **Mineshaft** manager, **Wally Wallace**; godfather of gay writing, **Samuel Steward**; young Provincetown playwright, **Tennessee Williams**; filmmaker Wakefield Poole's art-director, **Ed Parente**; **Old Reliable Video** hustler-art photographer, **David Hurles**; leather fashion designer, **Rob of Amsterdam**; and the filmmakers of the 1975 classic *Born to Raise Hell*, **Terry LeGrand** and **Roger Earl**.

With his first gay writing (on James Dean) published in 1962, Fritscher at 83 reaches across 60 years of gay life into his journals and heart to examine our lost midcentury world.

Review Comments about the Author's Work

"Jack Fritscher is an icon and pioneer provocateur from San Francisco's sexual hey-day alongside sex idols Peter Berlin, Annie Sprinkle, David Steinberg, Rumi Missabu, and the Cockettes." — *San Francisco Magazine*

"Jack Fritscher writes wonderful books...careful writing...a world of insight." — Geoff Mains, author, *Urban Aborigines*, in *The Advocate*

"*Drummer* was a map of leather culture; Fritscher and his book are unabashed and uninhibited tour guides."

— Chuck Renslow, founder, Chicago Leather Archives & Museum and International Mr Leather (IML)

"Fritscher is intelligent, perceptive, sensitive, articulate — and a good writer." — Charles Casillo, *New York Native*

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HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK

“For six decades, Jack Fritscher has been chronicling the world of gay leather, kink, and blue-collar men. His books have captured a large part of gay sexual liberation, fetish, Golden-Age San Francisco, gay art, and photography. Researching leather and kink history is infinitely easier thanks to his meticulous work. Best of all: Fritscher has lived the history he presents, consistently bringing a world to life for the reader.

—Owen Keehnen, Chicago queer historian, author, *Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow*

“Any new book about San Francisco by Jack Fritscher is cause for celebration. I’ve followed his writing since the 1970s when I was coming out into leather and bought my first issue of *Drummer*. So I’m acquainted with his knowledge of the leather community, his muscular prose style, his wit, and his commitment to preserving gay history. Yet, familiar as I am, *Profiles* astonished me with its depth of feeling and its sincere reconstruction of that glorious, heartbreaking Golden Age before AIDS. *Profiles* may make readers who lived in the 1970s nostalgic. Younger readers may wish teleportation to those days and nights of “libidinous joys only!” *Profiles* is much more than nostalgia for our *auld lang syne*. In future, it will serve as an invaluable eyewitness resource for anyone researching gay history of the 20th century.

—Hank Trout, editor, *Drummer* magazine (1980), senior editor, *A&U: America’s AIDS Magazine* (2016-2021)

“Fritscher is epicentric to gay literature...he is first and foremost an extraordinary American writer. He deserves a broad-based audience because his powerful and original voice rings in one’s head long after the book has been completed.” —Nancy Sundstrom, *ForeWord* magazine

“Fritscher is a key player in the masculinity of homosexuality...This is ‘must reading’ for those who want to know more about their past and those who simply want to relive the days when it was fun to be gay. *Gay San Francisco* is history for GLBT people who want to know the diversity of our gay roots.”

—David Van Leer, professor, Lesbian and Gay Studies, University of California, Davis, and author of *The Queening of America*

“I stayed up most of the night reading and re-reading Fritscher’s memoir of the late Thom Gunn. It was worth every minute.”

—Kevin Killian, San Francisco poet, co-founder of the Poets Theater, Lambda Literary Award winner, *Impossible Princess*

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“Fritscher’s brutally frank memoir of his ex-lover, confidante, and colleague, drawn from the author’s personal documents, seeks to strip away the notoriety surrounding the defiant photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. In *Mapplethorpe*, Fritscher graphically portrays the masculine subculture of the homosexual community. Recommended for popular culture collections.” — Joan Levin, *Library Journal*

“Fritscher is uniquely positioned as the creator of *Drummer* content, as a practitioner of *Drummer* content, and as an observer of *Drummer* culture. With insight and eroticism, he is the sole source for *Gay San Francisco*, this thoroughly enjoyable erotic laydown of leather history.”

— Rick Storer, Executive Director, Leather Archives & Museum:

“In *Gay San Francisco*, Fritscher has basically done all the research work that most academics won’t do — thus ensuring that historians, critics, and anthropologists will cut and paste with delight in the years to come.”

— Justin Spring, author, *Secret Historian, Samuel Steward: A Biography*

“Jack Fritscher reads gloriously!” — *San Francisco Chronicle*

“...*Gay San Francisco* is a remarkable history of a remarkable time in a remarkable place, combining contemporary documents, photographs and reportage with a first-hand and first-rate memoir that brings an unforgettable era back to life...”

— Samuel Streit, Director, Special Collections, Brown University

“I found myself turning pages of Jack Fritscher’s *Larry Townsend* memoir book as quickly as I could and I smiled and wept as I read. We take a trip back in time when gay life was very different than it is today. As we explore the gay S&M leather scene through Fritscher’s wonderful prose, we read a candid memoir of lives that are now gone but should never be forgotten”

— Amos Lassen, *Reviews by Amos Lassen: Books, Movies, and Judaica*

“Jack Fritscher’s memoir-homage to Larry Townsend...makes for compelling reading... Larry Townsend’s story is a festive romp, and the word that best describes his life and work is masterful... Aside from the history and the frisson...about the rise of the leather world, Fritscher manages to throw in bits of advice which are both interesting and hilarious...A fascinating read.”

— Michael Flanagan, *The Bay Area Reporter*, San Francisco

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PROFILES IN GAY COURAGE

**LEATHERFOLK, ARTS,
and IDEAS**

A Memoir
Gay Popular Culture

Jack Fritscher, Ph.D.

Archival Edition
Jack Fritscher-Mark Henry Archives



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Jack Fritscher hereby asserts his right to be identified as the author of *Profiles in Gay Courage: Leatherfolk, Arts, and Ideas*.

For author history and for historical research www.JackFritscher.com

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Special dedication and thanks
to my stoic editor and husband Mark Henry
without whose remarkable diligence
for over forty years
this material would have been
impossible to collect, analyze, and present.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!
—William Wordsworth. *The Prelude*

Give me now libidinous joys only!
Give me the drench of my passions!
Give me life coarse and rank!
To-day, I go consort with nature's darlings — to-night too;
I am for those who believe in loose delights — I share
the midnight orgies of young men;
I dance with the dancers, and drink with the drinkers...
O you shunn'd persons! I at least do not shun you...
I come forthwith in your midst — I will be your poet...
—Walt Whitman, "Native Moments," *Leaves of Grass*

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