
Finding aid to the Harry Bartron papers, 1917-2007 Coll2008-054

Lilly Insalata

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

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Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Title: Harry Bartron papers

creator: Bartron, Harry

Identifier/Call Number: Coll2008-054

Physical Description: 4.5 Linear Feet11 boxes and 1 framed oversize item.

Date (inclusive): 1917-2007

Date (bulk): bulk

Abstract: Writings, manuscripts, publications and photographs documenting the life of pantomime artist and poet Harry Bartron from 1927 to 2006. The bulk of the collection dates from 1978 to 2005 and consists of poetry exploring in particular Bartron's Roman Catholic faith and his homosexuality. Additional materials include liturgical materials, written for the Los Angeles chapter of Dignity/USA; autobiographical reminiscences; correspondence; and materials documenting Bartron's daily activities and his career as a pantomimist and his work as an advocate for GLBT seniors. The photographs include images of Bartron in costume and in performance, as well as photographs and snapshots of family and friends.

Storage Unit: 1-11

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish materials must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives as the physical owner. Researchers must also obtain clearance from the holder(s) of any copyrights in the materials. Note that ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold the copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials directly from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation

[Box #, Folder/Item #], Harry Bartron Papers, Coll2008-054, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Harry Bartron, in several transactions, between 2003 and 2006. An additional box of material was donated by Steven Weissman on July 3, 2013, following Bartron's death in 2007.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Lilly Insalata, September 24, 2008. An additional box (1.25 linear ft.) of material was donated in 2013, following Bartron's death in 2007. The addendum was processed and the finding aid was revised in 2016.

Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Biography

Harry Ollen Bartron was born in Van Etten, New York, on December 26, 1917, the fifth and youngest child of Fernando and Margaret (Cranmer) Bartron. Shortly after Bartron's birth, his mother divorced his physically abusive father, and married a tenant farmer named Frank Whitmore, and Harry lived his childhood on several farms in the neighborhood of Troy, Pennsylvania. Bartron's mother left Whitmore when she discovered he had never divorced his first wife, and Bartron found himself on his own at age 13. He spent his high school years boarding with relatives and private families in Elmira, New York. Raised a Baptist, he joined the fundamentalist Pilgrim Holiness Church in his late teens, and completed seminary work at the Allentown Bible School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he met Inez Lee Fotner, whom he married. He joined the Navy in 1943 and converted to Roman Catholicism in boot camp; he was expelled from the Navy later that year with an "Undesirable Discharge" for making sexual advances to another sailor. He returned to his wife and son Stephen, born during his deployment, and moved Cincinnati, where he obtained work with a Catholic goods shop, joined the Third Order of St. Francis, and took classes at Xavier University. Bartron and his wife had two more children, Elizabeth (born 1945) and Carol (born 1947). In 1947, Bartron moved to Chicago to attend Loyola University. He also became very active in the Uptown Players of Chicago, both as an actor and assistant to the director; he also took private lessons in performance. His wife left him in 1948; she later married Paul Marcus Marker (1925-1997), with whom she had several children, and died in 1986. Now single, Bartron developed a one-man show, first as a monologist, then as a mime, and for the next 18 years performed over 4,200 times throughout the United States, Canada, the British Isles, and Mexico. With the success of Marcel Marceau, Bartron was billed as "the American Pantomimist".

Bartron retired from full-time performance in 1966, and returned to school, earning a BA from Mansfield State College, in Pennsylvania, in 1970. He moved to Los Angeles later that year, and in 1972 received an MA in Speech from UCLA and a Community College Instructor Credential in Language Arts and Literature. He played small roles in films such as Cutting Loose (1980), Let's Do It! (1982), and The Seventh Sign (1988) and in television shows such as Archie Bunker's Place (1981) and Mysterious Two (1982); he also appeared in several commercials.

Bartron's later years were devoted to writing, in particular poetry. His first volume of poetry, Contemporary Words in Sound, was published while he was still a student at Mansfield State University. The poems address a wide variety of subjects, but the majority explore his Roman Catholic faith and his sexuality. His accomplishments as a poet were recognized by induction into the International Poetry Hall of Fame in October 1996. Bartron also published a novel, Drummer Boy, on drummer boys in the American Civil War, published in 2004. He was also active in the Roman Catholic Church, writing liturgical material for the Los Angeles chapter of Dignity/USA, joining the Knights of Columbus in 2001, and constantly exploring the position of Catholic homosexuals through speeches, essays, and support groups. He also became involved with the LA Gay & Lesbian Center, in particular the Oral History Project; advocated for housing for GLBT seniors; and continued to perform as a member of a senior theater group. He died in Los Angeles on July 18, 2007, at the age of 89.

Source: Harry Bartron Papers, Coll2008-054, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection contains writings, manuscripts, publications and photographs documenting the life of Harry Bartron. The bulk of the collection consists of poetry, both printed and manuscript, exploring in particular Bartron's Roman Catholic faith and his homosexuality; Bartron's erotic poetry was published under the pseudonym "Henri de Boise". Additional writings include liturgical materials, written for the Los Angeles chapter of Dignity/USA, and autobiographical reminiscences in the form of emails to his daughter and transcripts of interviews given as part of the LA Gay & Lesbian Center's Oral History Project. Personal papers document Bartron's daily activities, career as a pantomimist and in film and television, his involvement with the Roman Catholic Church and Dignity/USA, his activities as an advocate for GLBT seniors, and his various social activities. The photographs include images of Bartron in costume and in performance, as well as photographs and snapshots of family and friends.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series: (1) Writings, (2) Personal, (3) Photographs and (4) Graphics.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Catholic gays -- United States
Gay men's writings
Homosexuality -- Religious aspects -- Catholic Church
Mimes -- United States
Photographs
Poetry
Poets, American -- 20th century
Bartron, Harry
Dignity/Los Angeles

Writings Series 1. 1927-2006 bulk

Physical Description: 2 Linear Feet

Series Scope and Contents

This series contains Bartron's writings, both published and unpublished. The bulk of the series consists of poems, including published volumes, manuscript compilations, and a small number of individual poems found loose. The majority of poems explore Bartron's Roman Catholic faith and his homosexuality (Bartron published his erotic poetry using the pseudonym "Henri de Boise"). The religious writings consist primarily of liturgical materials composed by Bartron for the Los Angeles chapter of Dignity/USA. The autobiographical materials include email reminiscences-the originals titled Toilet Book, the transcript titled Personal Memoir-addressed to Bartron's youngest child, Carol; transcripts of interviews Bartron gave as part of the LA Gay & Lesbian Center's Oral History Project; and (nominally fictional) short stories. Bartron attempted in the mid-1980s to sell his American Civil War novel, Drummer Boy (not published until 2004), as a film script, and the file contains an extensive synopsis used to "shop" the story to Hollywood studios. The other writings consist largely of poems sent to Bartron by other people.

Box 11, Folder 1

Agreements 1982-1983

Box 1, Folder 1

Autobiographical 1981-2004

Box 1, Folder 2

Personal Memoir 2000

Toilet Book or Oral History: An Autobiography 2000

Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. Oral History Project 2003-2004

Box 1, Folder 3

Coming of Age, Chapter 1 2003

Box 1, Folder 4

Digests 1-2 2003

Box 1, Folder 5

Digests 3-4 2003

Box 1, Folder 6

Stories to Tell 2004

Box 11,

Oral history 2000-2003

Folder 26-28

Box 1, Folder 7-8

Short Stories 1981-2000

Box 6

Drummer Boy 1985-1993

Box 1, Folder 9

Drummer Boy, book 2004

Box 11, Folder 11

Administrative records 1985-1993

Box 11, Folder 31

Administrative records and publicity material 1996-2001

Box 11, Folder 12

Annotated photocopies circa 2004

Box 11, Folder 13

Book sales and book donations circa 2005

Box 11,

Condensation and plot summary circa 2004-2006

Folder 14-18

Correspondence, royalties, and other financial records 1996-2006

Box 11, Folder 19

Library donations 2006-2007

Box 11,

Screenplay 1983, 1987

Folder 2-10

Scope and Contents

3 manuscript copies.

Box 11, Folder 20

Vantage Press, Inc. correspondence and administrative records 2003-2006

Box 2, Folder 1

Poetry 1927, 1968-2006

Index of Poems 1997-2003

Box 2, Folder 2

Published Collections 1969-1997

Box 6

Contemporary Words in Sound 1969

Poems of Protest 1970

Physical Description: 2 copies.

Box 11, Folder 22

Poems of Protest notes circa 1970

Box 2, Folder 3

Three Narrative Poems 1996

Box 2, Folder 4

Dame Nature; The Four Seasons 1997

<p>Box 2, Folder 5-8 ; 7, Folder 1-7 (Oversize) ; 8 : 1-4 (Oversize) Box 7, Folder 1-5 (Oversize)</p>	<p>Manuscript Collections 1927, 1968-2006</p> <p>Poems 1927, 1968-2003 Physical Description: 5 folders.</p>
<p>Box 7, Folder 6-7 (Oversize) ; 8, Folder 1-2 (Oversize)</p>	<p>Sacred and Devotional Poetry 1989-2004 Physical Description: 4 folders.</p>
<p>Box 8, Folder 3 (Oversize) Box 8, Folder 4 (Oversize) Box 2, Folder 5</p>	<p>Poems 1997-2002 Poems 2000-2006</p>
<p>Box 2, Folder 6 Box 2, Folder 7 Box 2, Folder 8 Box 2, Folder 9-15 Box 2, Folder 9 Box 2, Folder 10 Box 2, Folder 11 Box 2, Folder 12 Box 2, Folder 13 Box 2, Folder 14 Box 2, Folder 15 Box 2, Folder 16-17 ; 3, Folder 1 Box 2, Folder 16 Box 11, Folder 21 Box 2, Folder 17 ; 3, Folder 1</p>	<p>Collected Poems. Retrospective of Poems Published in Various Anthologies by the National Library of Poetry 1995-2005 Poems on Sexuality 1998-2003 Poems Published in the Beachwood Voice 2002-2006 Poems 1996-2004 Individual Poems 1992-2005 Black Diamond 2003-2005 My Middle Years 2000-2002 Objectively Disordered 1998-2003 Psalm of Love 2000 Reconstruction Suite 1992 Seven Last Words of Jesus 2002 What Do I See? no date Henri de Boise 1998-1996</p> <p>Octette; Eight Sexually Oriented Poems 1988 Octette, poetry book originals 2005 Quite Another Place; Erotic Homosexual Fantasies in Verse 1996 Physical Description: 4th edition.</p>
<p>Box 11, Folder 23 Box 3, Folder 1 Box 11, Folder 24 Box 2, Folder 17</p>	<p>Manuscript circa 2005 Manuscript facsimile May 1996 Master copy circa 2005 Print copy 1996</p>
<p>Box 3, Folder 2 Box 3, Folder 3 Box 3, Folder 4 Box 3, Folder 5</p>	<p>Religious Writings 1988-2003 Being Gay in My Day. Dignity Angelus 1998 Blessings no date Dignity Creed 1993 Evening Prayer & Patristic Readings for the Five Wednesdays of Lent. Dignity/Los Angeles 1992 Exultet no date Gift of the Magi--Revisited 1995 Litany of Our Lady of Dignity. Dignity/Los Angeles 2002 Marian Devotion for La Familia Guadalupena no date Meditations for the Traditional Hours of Prayer, Used for Centuries by Members of the Secular Franciscan Order no date Morning Prayer no date Noonday Prayer. Adopted for Optional use by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Ministry with lesbian & Gay Catholics (MLGC) no date Room at the Table 2003 St. Sollicita brochure circa 1988</p>
<p>Box 3, Folder 6 Box 3, Folder 7 Box 3, Folder 8 Box 3, Folder 9 Box 3, Folder 10</p>	
<p>Box 3, Folder 11 Box 3, Folder 12</p>	
<p>Box 3, Folder 13 Box 11, Folder 25</p>	

Box 3, Folder 14	St. Solicita. Brochure, Dignity Hymn, Litany, Novena 1988-1989
Box 3, Folder 15	Sonnet for the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th 2003
Box 3, Folder 16	Way of the Cross; Tradition, Catholic Devotion for Lent. Dignity/Los Angeles 1994
	Other Writings circa 1990-2005
Box 3, Folder 18	Frog & the Scorpion (fable) no date
Box 3, Folder 19	Ingenious Proposal (speech) no date
	Senior Moments 2002-2005
Box 3, Folder 20	2002
Box 3, Folder 21	2003
Box 3, Folder 22	2004
Box 3, Folder 23	2005
	Writings by Others 1968-2005
Box 3, Folder 24	Writings by Others 1968-2004
Box 4, Folder 1	Hurd, Derrick Harrison 2002-2003
Box 4, Folder 2	Vos, Wesley & Tom 2004-2005
	Personal Series 2. 1946-2005
	Physical Description: 0.75 Linear Feet
	Series Scope and Contents
	This series contains materials relating to Bartron's life outside his writings. The calendars, day minders and pocket planners document his daily activities. The files contain information on his career as a pantomimist (as well as information on other mimes); his acting roles in film and television; his involvement with the Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament, in Hollywood, Dignity/USA, and the Knights of Columbus; his activities as an advocate for housing for GLBT seniors; and his various social activities. The series also includes a small file of correspondence; diplomas, certificates and awards; several photocopies of articles on family and friends; and a folder of drawings, possibly for a children's book, by Bartron's daughter, Liz Pittenger.
Box 4, Folder 3	Acting (Film & Television) 1980-1988
Box 11, Folder 29	Beachwood Voice 2006
	Calendars, Day Minders & Pocket Planners 1978-2005
Box 5, Folder 1-4	Calendars 1990-2005
Box 6	Day Minders 2001-2005
	Physical Description: 6 items.
Box 6	Pocket Planners 1978-1989, 1997
	Physical Description: 12 items.
Box 4, Folder 4	Correspondence 1995-2004
Box 4, Folder 5	Diplomas, Certificates, Awards 1967-2006
Box 4, Folder 6	Family & Friends 2000-2004
Box 11, Folder 30	Gay and Lesbian Elder Housing postcard undated
Box 4, Folder 7	Knights of Columbus 2001-2004
Box 4, Folder 8	Pantomime 1946-2004
Box 4, Folder 9	Pittenger, Liz 1996-1997
Box 6	Prophecies of the Passion [video recording] 2005
	Physical Description: 1 DVD.
	Roman Catholic Materials 1997-2005
Box 4, Folder 10	Bartron, Harry 1999-2003
Box 4, Folder 11	Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Hollywood (Calif.) 1998-2004
Box 4, Folder 12	Dignity 1998-2005
Box 4, Folder 13	Miscellaneous 1997-2004
Box 4, Folder 14	Senior Housing 1994-2003
Box 4, Folder 15	Social Activities 1992-2004

Photographs Series 3. 1946-2005

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear Feet

Series Scope and Contents

This series contains photographs of Bartron, his family, and friends. The personal photographs consist primarily of 8 x 10-inch formal photographs of Bartron, and photographs of him dressed and performing as a mime. The photographs of family and friends include Bartron's son, Stephen, Vladimyr Golovin, and actors Sidney Feldman, Hal Holbrook and Alan Koss. Box 10 contains snapshots of Bartron, his family and friends; to help identify members of Bartron's family, a list of his descendants, prepared by ONE Archives staff, is included.

Box 9, Folder 1
Box 9, Folder 2
Box 9, Folder 3
Box 10

Personal 1946-2003

Family & Friends circa 1950-1990

Photographic negative no date

Photographs of Harry Bartron, family & friends circa 1975-2005

Graphics Series 4. circa 1988

Physical Description: 1 print.

Series Scope and Contents

This series consists of a single item, a framed color print of an icon, by Robert Lentz, of "St. Solicita", the name given by the Los Angeles chapter of Dignity/USA to the Canaanite woman referred to in Matthew 15:21-28, and "adopted" by the chapter as its patron saint.

Item 12

Icon of St. Solicita, by Robert Lentz circa 1988

Physical Description: 1 print ; 17 x 14 inches (framed) ; color.

Box 3, Folder 17

***You Can Be A Bird, But You Can't Fly.* Dignity/USA Convention 1997**