Finding aid for the Walter B. Alsky papers 7043

Sue Luftschein
USC Libraries Special Collections
2018 August
Doheny Memorial Library 206
3550 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California 90089-0189
specol@usc.edu
URL: http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections
Title: Walter B. Alsky papers
creator: Alsky, Walter B., 1917-2010
Identifier/Call Number: 7043
Physical Description: 11.63 Linear Feet9 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1930s-1950s
Abstract: Walter B. Alsky was born on June 30, 1917 in Foxboro, Massachusetts. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941, and was assigned to the IV Fighter Command, Signal Headquarters, in Oakland, California. After his discharge in 1945, he returned to Monterey Park and married Victoria H. Sladik, from whom he was divorced by 1947. Alsky never remarried, but his obituary notes that he was survived by his domestic partner of 47 years, Cliff Bagwell, a hairstylist who operated a salon in Alhambra. Alsky worked for the US Post Office for 30 years, retiring with Bagwell to Carmel, California. He passed away in 2010. The Walter P. Alsky papers consist of more than 2000 letters, postcards and other correspondence collected and created by Alsky, 1930s-1950s. The bulk of the correspondence dates from Alsky's time in the US Army Air Corps during World War II, and include first hand accounts of the war by several enlisted men, as well as letters from Japanese-American friends interned at Manzanar. Some of the letters also provide insight into Alsky's personal life, including his failed marriage and his struggles to come to terms with his sexuality as a gay man.

Storage Unit: 1
Storage Unit: 2
Storage Unit: 3
Storage Unit: 4
Storage Unit: 5
Storage Unit: 6
Storage Unit: 7
Storage Unit: 8
Storage Unit: 9

Biographical note
Walter B. Alsky was born on June 30, 1917 in Foxboro, Massachusetts. His family moved to Monterey Park when Walter was three months old. He graduated from Alhambra High School in 1936, and worked as an under presser in his father's tailor shop before enlisting in the U.S. Army on September 25, 1941. He was assigned to the Philippine Department, whose mission was to defend the Philippine Islands and train the Philippine Army. In mid-June 1942, Alsky was assigned to the IV Fighter Command, Signal Headquarters, in Oakland, California. After his discharge in 1945, he returned to Monterey Park and married Victoria H. Sladik, from whom he was divorced by 1947. Alsky never remarried, but his obituary notes that he was survived by his domestic partner of 47 years, Cliff Bagwell, a hairstylist who operated a salon in Alhambra. Alsky worked for the US Post Office for 30 years, retiring with Bagwell to Carmel, California. He passed away in 2010. [Adapted from the bookseller's description.]

Content Description
More than 2000 letters, postcards and other correspondence collected and created by Walter B. Alsky, 1930s-1950s. Included are letters from servicemen, Japanese-American friends interned at Manzanar, and letters providing insight into Alsky's own life. The bulk of the correspondence dates from Alsky's time in the US Army Air Corps during World War II, and include first hand accounts of the war by several enlisted men (including his brother Henry who served as a ground crewman for heavy bombers in the South Pacific), as well as letters from Japanese-American friends interned at Manzanar. Some of the letters also provide insight into Alsky's personal life, including his failed marriage and his struggles to come to terms with his sexuality as a gay man. Alsky's letters from friend Toshio Yamabe, who served in the 442nd Infantry Regiment, a unit composed almost entirely of American soldiers of Japanese ancestry, provide insight into the experiences of these soldiers, and letters from Yamabe's older brother, who was interned in Manzanar, provide insight into life in the internment camps, as do letters from fellow soldier Walter E. Chandler, who served as a guard at the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Conditions Governing Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. Advance notice required for access.

Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Manuscripts Librarian. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

**Preferred Citation**

[Box/folder no. or item name], Walter B. Alsky papers, Collection no. 7043, Regional History Collection, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Purchased from Johnson Rare Books and Archives, February 9, 2017.

**Processing Information**

The collection is unprocessed.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Japanese Americans -- Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945 -- Archival resources

Soldiers -- United States -- 20th century -- Archival resources

World War, 1939-1945 -- California -- Archival resources

Letters

Alsky, Walter B., 1917-2010 -- Archives

United States. Army -- Military life -- Archival resources