



HARRY BARTRON PAPERS

Coll2008-054

Contact Information

One National Gay & Lesbian Archives
909 West Adams Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90007
Phone: (213) 741-0094
Fax: (213) 741-0220
E-mail: askone@onearchives.org

Processed by

Lilly Insalata

Date Completed

September 24, 2008

Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary	p. 2
Administrative Information	p. 3
Biography	p. 4
Scope and Content Note and Container List	p. 5
Series 1. Writings	p. 5
Series 2. Personal	p. 7
Series 3. Photographs	p. 8
Series 4. Graphics	p. 8

Descriptive Summary

Title

Harry Bartron Papers

Creator

Bartron, Harry Ollen, 1917-2007

Extent

Number of containers: 6 archive cartons + 3 archive half-cartons + 1 clamshell box
album + 1 framed print

Linear feet: 3 linear feet

Date

1917-2006 (bulk 1978-2005)

Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

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.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner of the material. Note that permission to publish does not constitute copyright clearance. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Harry Bartron Papers, Coll2008-054, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

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

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Harry Bartron, in several transactions, between 2003 and 2006

Processing Information

Collection processed by Lilly Insalata, September 24, 2008.

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.

Scope and Content and Container List

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.

Series 1. Writings.

Date: 1927-2006

Extent: 2 linear feet

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 Folder

Autobiographical		
1	1	<i>Personal Memoir</i> , 2000
1	2	<i>Toilet Book or Oral History: An Autobiography</i> , 2000 Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center. Oral History Project. 2003
1	3	<i>Coming of Age, Chapter 1</i> , 2003
1	4	Digests 1-2, 2003
1	5	Digests 3-4, 2003
1	6	<i>Stories to Tell</i> , 2004
1	7-8	Short Stories (autobiographical), 1981-2000

		Book
1	9	<i>Drummer Boy</i> , Papers, 1985-1993.
		Poetry
2	1	Index of Poems, 1997-2003
		Published Collections
2	2	<i>Contemporary Words in Sound</i> , 1969
6		<i>Poems of Protest</i> (2 copies), 1970
2	3	<i>Three Narrative Poems</i> , 1996
2	4	<i>Dame Nature; The Four Seasons</i> , 1997
		Manuscript Collections
7	1-5	Poems (5 folders), 1927, 1968-2003
7	6-7	
8	1-2	<i>Sacred and Devotional Poetry</i> (4 folders), 1989-2004 (Oversize)
8	3	Poems, 1997-2002 (Oversize)
8	4	Poems, 2000-2006 (Oversize)
2	5	<i>Collected Poems. Retrospective of Poems Published in Various Anthologies by the National Library of Poetry</i> , 1995-2005
2	6	<i>Poems on Sexuality</i> , 1998-2003
2	7	Poems Published in the <i>Beachwood Voice</i> , 2002-2006
2	8	Poems, 1996-2004
		Individual Poems
2	9	<i>Black Diamond</i> , 2003-2005
2	10	<i>My Middle Years</i> , 2000-2002
2	11	<i>Objectively Disordered</i> , 1998-2003
2	12	<i>Psalm of Love</i> , 2000
2	13	<i>Reconstruction Suite</i> , 1992
2	14	<i>Seven Last Words of Jesus</i> , 2002
2	15	<i>What Do I See?</i> no date
		Henri de Boise
2	16	<i>Octette; Eight Sexually Oriented Poems</i> , 1988
2	17	<i>Quite Another Place; Erotic Homosexual Fantasies in Verse</i> . 4th edition, 1996
3	1	<i>Quite Another Place; Erotic Homosexual Fantasies in Verse</i> . 4th edition. Manuscript facsimile, May 1996
		Religious Writings
3	2	<i>Being Gay in My Day</i> . Dignity Angelus, 1998
3	3	<i>Blessings</i> , no date
3	4	<i>Dignity Creed</i> , 1993
3	5	<i>Evening Prayer & Patristic Readings for the Five Wednesdays of Lent</i> . Dignity/Los Angeles, 1992
3	6	<i>Exultet</i> , no date
3	7	<i>Gift of the Magi – Revisited</i> , 1995
3	8	<i>Litany of Our Lady of Dignity</i> . Dignity/Los Angeles, 2002
3	9	<i>Marian Devotion for La Familia Guadalupena</i> , no date
3	10	<i>Meditations for the Traditional Hours of Prayer, Used for Centuries by Members of the Secular Franciscan Order</i> , no date

- 3 11 *Morning Prayer*, no date
- 3 12 *Noonday Prayer. Adopted for Optional use by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Ministry with lesbian & Gay Catholics (MLGC)*, no date
- 3 13 *Room at the Table*, 2003
- 3 14 St. Solicita. Brochure, Dignity Hymn, Litany, Novena, 1988-1989
- 3 15 *Sonnet for the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th*, 2003
- 3 16 *Way of the Cross; Tradition, Catholic Devotion for Lent*. Dignity/Los Angeles, 1994
- 3 17 *You Can Be A Bird, But You Can't Fly*. Dignity/USA Convention, 1997

Other Writings

- 3 18 *Frog & the Scorpion* (fable), no date
- 3 19 *Ingenious Proposal* (speech), no date
- 3 20 *Senior Moments*, 2002
- 3 21 *Senior Moments*, 2003
- 3 22 *Senior Moments*, 2004
- 3 23 *Senior Moments*, 2005

Writings by Others

- 3 24 Writings by Others, 1968-2004
- 4 1 Hurd, Derrick Harrison, 2002-2003
- 4 2 Vos, Wesley & Tom, 2004-2005

Series 2. Personal.

Date: 1946-2005

Extent: 0.75 linear foot

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 Folder

- 4 3 Acting (Film & Television), 1980-1988
Calendars, Day Minders & Pocket Planners, 1978-2005
- 5 1-4 Calendars, 1990-2005
- 6 Day Minders (6 items), 2001-2005
- 6 Pocket Planners (12 items), 1978-1989, 1997
- 4 4 Correspondence, 1995-2004
- 4 5 Diplomas, Certificates, Awards, 1967-2004
- 4 6 Family & Friends, 2000-2004

4	7	Knights of Columbus, 2001-2004
4	8	Pantomime, 1946-2004
4	9	Pittenger, Liz, 1996-1997 Roman Catholic Materials
4	10	Bartron, Harry, 1999-2003
4	11	Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Hollywood (Calif.), 1998-2004
4	12	Dignity, 1998-2005
4	13	Miscellaneous, 1997-2004
4	14	Senior Housing, 1994-2003
4	15	Social Activities, 1992-2004

Series 3. Photographs.

Date: 1946-2005

Extent: 0.25 linear foot

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 Folder

9	1	Personal, 1946-2003
9	2	Family & Friends, circa 1950-1990
9	3	Photographic negative, no date
10		Photographs of Harry Bartron, family & friends, circa 1975-2005

Series 4. Graphics.

Date: circa 1988

Extent: 1 print ; 17 x 14 inches ; color

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

11	Icon of St. Solicita, by Robert Lentz, circa 1988
----	---