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## Finding aid of the Harry Bartron Papers

### Collection number: Coll2008-054

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives  
Los Angeles, California

Processed by:

Lilly Insalata

Date Completed:

September 24, 2008

Encoded by:

Michael P. Palmer

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



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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Harry Bartron papers

**Dates:** 1917-2006.

**Bulk Dates:** Bulk 1978-2005.

**Collection number:** Coll2008-054

**Creator:** Bartron, Harry, 1917-2007

**Collection Size:** 6 archive cartons + 3 archive half-cartons + 1 clamshell box album + 1 framed print.3 linear feet.

**Repository:** ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Los Angeles, California 90007

**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.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### 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

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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.

### **Processing Information**

Collection processed by Lilly Insalata, September 24, 2008.

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 4 series: (1) Writings, (2) Personal, (3) Photographs and (4) Graphics.

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**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

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

Box 1 : 1-9 ; 2 : 1-5  
 ; 3 : 1-24 ; 4 : 1-2 ; 6  
 (Oversize) ; 8 : 1-4  
 (Oversize)

## Series 1. Writings 1927-2006 Bulk 1969-2003

**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 1 : 1-8 **Autobiographical 1981-2004**

Box 1 : 1 **Personal Memoir 2000**

Box 1 : 2 **Toilet Book or Oral History: An Autobiography 2000**

Box 1 : 3-6 **Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. Oral History Project 2003-2004**

Box 1 : 3 **Coming of Age, Chapter 1 2003**

Box 1 : 4 **Digests 1-2 2003**

Box 1 : 5 **Digests 3-4 2003**

Box 1 : 6 **Stories to Tell 2004**

Box 1 : 7-8 **Short Stories 1981-2000**

Box 1 : 9 **Book 1985-1993**

Box 1 : 9 **Drummer Boy. Papers 1985-1993**

Box 2 : 1-7 ; 3 : 1 ; 6 ; **Poetry 1927, 1968-2006**

7 : 1-7 (Oversize) ; 8

: 1-4 (Oversize)

Box 2 : 1 **Index of Poems 1997-2003**

Box 2 : 2-4 : 6 **Published Collections 1969-1997**

Box 2 : 2 **Contemporary Words in Sound 1969**

Box 6 **Poems of Protest 1970**

**Physical Description:** 2 copies.

Box 2 : 3 **Three Narrative Poems 1996**

Box 2 : 4 **Dame Nature; The Four Seasons 1997**

Box 2 : 5-8 ; 7 : 1-7 **Manuscript Collections 1927, 1968-2006**

(Oversize) ; 8 : 1-4

(Oversize)

Box 7 : 1-5 **Poems 1927, 1968-2003**

(Oversize)

**Physical Description:** 5 folders.

Box 7 : 6-7 **Sacred and Devotional Poetry 1989-2004**

(Oversize) ; 8 : 1-2

(Oversize)

**Physical Description:** 4 folders.

Box 8 : 3 (Oversize) **Poems 1997-2002**

Box 8 : 4 (Oversize) **Poems 2000-2006**

Box 2 : 5 **Collected Poems. Retrospective of Poems Published in Various Anthologies by the National Library of Poetry 1995-2005**

Box 2 : 6 **Poems on Sexuality 1998-2003**

Box 2 : 7 **Poems Published in the Beachwood Voice 2002-2006**

Box 2 : 8 **Poems 1996-2004**

Box 2 : 9-15 **Individual Poems 1992-2005**

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- Box 2 : 9                    ***Black Diamond* 2003-2005**
  - Box 2 : 10                  ***My Middle Years* 2000-2002**
  - Box 2 : 11                  ***Objectively Disordered* 1998-2003**
  - Box 2 : 12                  ***Psalm of Love* 2000**
  - Box 2 : 13                  ***Reconstruction Suite* 1992**
  - Box 2 : 14                  ***Seven Last Words of Jesus* 2002**
  - Box 2 : 15                  ***What Do I See?* no date**
  - Box 2 : 16-17 ; 3 : 1      **Henri de Boise 1998-1996**
  - Box 2 : 16                  ***Octette; Eight Sexually Oriented Poems* 1988**
  - Box 2 : 17 ; 3 : 1         ***Quite Another Place; Erotic Homosexual Fantasies in Verse* 1996**
  
  - Physical Description: 4th edition.**
  
  - Box 2 : 17                    **Print copy 1996**
  - Box 3 : 1                    **Manuscript facsimile May 1996**
  - Box 3 : 2-17                **Religious Writings 1988-2003**
  - Box 3 : 2                    ***Being Gay in My Day*. Dignity Angelus 1998**
  - Box 3 : 3                    ***Blessings* no date**
  - Box 3 : 4                    ***Dignity Creed* 1993**
  - Box 3 : 5                    ***Evening Prayer & Patristic Readings for the Five Wednesdays of Lent* . Dignity/Los Angeles 1992**
  - Box 3 : 6                    ***Exultet* no date**
  - Box 3 : 7                    ***Gift of the Magi--Revisited* 1995**
  - Box 3 : 8                    ***Litany of Our Lady of Dignity*. Dignity/Los Angeles 2002**
  - Box 3 : 9                    ***Marian Devotion for La Familia Guadalupena* no date**
  - Box 3 : 10                  ***Meditations for the Traditional Hours of Prayer, Used for Centuries by Members of the Secular Franciscan Order* no date**
  
  - Box 3 : 11                  ***Morning Prayer* no date**
  - Box 3 : 12                  ***Noonday Prayer. Adopted for Optional use by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Ministry with lesbian & Gay Catholics (MLGC)* no date**
  
  - Box 3 : 13                  ***Room at the Table* 2003**
  - Box 3 : 14                  **St. Solicita. Brochure, Dignity Hymn, Litany, Novena 1988-1989**
  - Box 3 : 15                  ***Sonnet for the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th* 2003**
  - Box 3 : 16                  ***Way of the Cross; Tradition, Catholic Devotion for Lent* . Dignity/Los Angeles 1994**
  - Box 3 : 17                  ***You Can Be A Bird, But You Can't Fly* . Dignity/USA Convention 1997**
  - Box 3 : 18-23               **Other Writings circa 1990-2005**
  - Box 3 : 18                  ***Frog & the Scorpion* (fable) no date**
  - Box 3 : 19                  ***Ingenious Proposal* (speech) no date**
  - Box 3 : 20-23               ***Senior Moments* 2002-2005**
  - Box 3 : 20                    **2002**
  - Box 3 : 21                    **2003**
  - Box 3 : 22                    **2004**
  - Box 3 : 23                    **2005**
  - Box 3 : 24 ; 4 : 1-2      **Writings by Others 1968-2005**
  - Box 3 : 24                  **Writings by Others 1968-2004**
  - Box 4 : 1                    **Hurd, Derrick Harrison 2002-2003**
  - Box 4 : 2                    **Vos, Wesley & Tom 2004-2005**

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Box 4 : 3-15 ; 5 : Series 2. Personal 1946-2005

; 6 (Oversize)

**Physical Description:** 0.75 linear foot.

**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 : 3

**Acting (Film & Television) 1980-1988**

Box 5-6

**Calendars, Day Minders & Pocket Planners 1978-2005**

Box 5 : 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 : 4

**Correspondence 1995-2004**

Box 4 : 5

**Diplomas, Certificates, Awards 1967-2004**

Box 4 : 6

**Family & Friends 2000-2004**

Box 4 : 7

**Knights of Columbus 2001-2004**

Box 4 : 8

**Pantomime 1946-2004**

Box 4 : 9

**Pittenger, Liz 1996-1997**

Box 4 : 10-13

**Roman Catholic Materials 1997-2005**

Box 4 : 10

**Bartron, Harry 1999-2003**

Box 4 : 11

**Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Hollywood (Calif.) 1998-2004**

Box 4 : 12

**Dignity 1998-2005**

Box 4 : 13

**Miscellaneous 1997-2004**

Box 4 : 14

**Senior Housing 1994-2003**

Box 4 : 15

**Social Activities 1992-2004**

Box 9 : 1-3 ; 10 Series 3. **Photographs 1946-2005**

**Physical Description:** 0.25 linear foot.

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

Item 11

Series 4. **Graphics 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 11

**Icon of St. Solicita, by Robert Lentz circa 1988**

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