
Finding aid of the Dennice DuRay and Gladys L. Ragan Letters Received

Collection number: Coll2008-067

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives
Los Angeles, California

Processed by:

Misha Karbelnig

Date Completed:

November 21, 2008

Encoded by:

Michael P. Palmer

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Dennice DuRay and Gladys L. Ragan letters received

Dates: 1951-1958

Collection number: Coll2008-067

Creator: DuRay, Dennice L.

Creator: Ragan, Gladys L.

Collection Size: 1 archive carton.0.4 linear feet.

Repository: ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Los Angeles, California 90007

Abstract: Letters received by Dennice DuRay, 1951, and Gladys L. Ragan, 1955-1958, both of Downey, CA, from male correspondents. The correspondences appear to have been initiated by DuRay and Ragan in response to advertisements placed in the personals sections of Los Angeles newspapers. Information, both in the letters and circumstantial, suggests that DuRay and Ragan may have been impostors, possibly even the same individual. The letters contain substantial discussion of sex, including homosexual acts, although the orientation of the men was predominantly heterosexual.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions to the letters from "Louie", Kenneth M. Simons and Gordon L. Pearce; for access to the letters from Fred. H. Ottesen, Harry A. Siitonen and Howard M. Parker, please consult the ONE National Gay & Lesbian

Archives staff.

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Preferred Citation

Dennice DuRay and Gladys L. Ragan letters received, Coll2008-067, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Acquisition Information

Date and manner of acquisition unknown.

Processing Information

Formerly part of box 103-352. Collection processed by Misha Karbelnig, November 21, 2008.

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Biography

No independently verifiable information is presently available on either Dennice DuRay or Gladys L. Ragan. What information is available was gleaned from the letters addressed to them by a series of male correspondents, none of whom met either DuRay or Ragan in person. This information is inconsistent, and suggests that DuRay and Ragan were less than truthful to their correspondents. Indeed, the contradictory nature of some information suggests that DuRay and Ragan may have been impostors, possibly even the same individual.

The information on DuRay comes from the letters, dated 1951, from her sole correspondent, Fred Ottesen. According to these letters, DuRay was an ex-model, dimensions 36-24-35, with a large wardrobe. She had been married previously, but her husband had died years ago, possibly in San Francisco in 1944; she currently lived with her aunt, and dated many men. She lived at 8336 East 2nd Street, Downey, CA, c/o "A. Spire".

The information on Ragan comes from letters addressed to her between February 1955 and October 1958 by 4 separate correspondents. According to letters dated from February 1955 to February 1956 from Gordon Pearce, Ragan had been married previously and had a child. She kept her married name. She lived with her aunt and uncle at 8336 East 2nd Street, Downey. Although in a letter of April 15, Pearce writes that Ragan had no boyfriends, in a letter of May 8, he writes that she had married again, to a man named Bill, whose last name she refused to give; in a later letter Pearce writes that Bill was in the ministry. From April 1955 onwards, Pearce's letters make frequent reference to one or more surgical operations on Ragan's reproductive system that had left her unable to have vaginal sex or bear children. Letters dated from August 1956 to May 1957 from Kenneth Simons indicate that Ragan worked in the clothing trade, keeping the hose of "old bags" straight; there are also frequent references to a September 1956 operation on Ragan's reproductive system. Simons addressed his letters to Ragan at 10727 1/2 Western, Downey; his last letter, postmarked May 2, 1957, was returned, readdressed to 8336 East 2nd Street, and re-mailed. A letter of February 1958 from Harry A. Siitonen, addressed to Ragan at 10831 1/4 Brookshire, Downey, states that Ragan worked in "the Garment Jungle" and that she came from Chicago. A letter of August 1958 from Howard M. Parker, also addressed to Ragan at 10831 1/4 Brookshire, gives her measurements as 42-24-36.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection consists of letters from a single male correspondent to Dennice DuRay, c/o A. Spire, 8336 East 2nd Street, Downey, CA, in late 1951; and from five male correspondents to Gladys L. Ragan, 8336 E. 2nd Street (1956: 10727 1/2 Western, Downey, and 1958: 10831 1/4 Brookshire, Downey), from early 1955 to late 1958, by five male correspondents. The correspondences appear to have been initiated by DuRay and Ragan in response to advertisements placed in the personals sections of Los Angeles newspapers, including the Mirror. Information in the letters and the fact that both women lived at the same address and never met their correspondents face-to-face, suggests that DuRay and Ragan were less than truthful to their correspondents, and may have been impostors, possibly even the same individual. The letters contain substantial discussion of sex, including homosexual acts, although the orientation of the men was predominantly heterosexual. The collection includes summary notes on each letter made by the processing archivist.

Indexing Terms

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

DuRay, Dennice

Impostors and impostures

Letters

Ragan, Gladys L.

Box 1 : 1 **Summary notes on the letters November 24, 2008**

Scope and Content Note

By Misha Karbelnig

Box 1 : 2 **Dennice DuRay, letters from Fred H. Ottesen (born 1925), Huntington Park / Long Beach October 10-December 21, 1951**

Access Information

Access restricted.

Box 1 : 3-10 **Gladys L. Ragan February 12, 1955-October 6, 1958**

Physical Description: 8 folders.

Box 1 : 3-5 **Letters from PFC Gordon L. Pearce (1924-1991) February 12, 1955-February 6, 1956**

Physical Description: 3 folders.

Box 1 : 6 **Letter from Louie _____ March 15, 1955**

Box 1 : 7-8 **Letters from Kenneth Simons (1917-2001), Los Angeles August 27, 1956-May 1957**

Physical Description: 2 folders.

Box 1 : 9 **Letters from Harry A. Siitonen (born 1926), Los Angeles February 11-14, 1958**

Access Information

Access restricted.

Box 1 : 10 **Letters from Howard M. Parker (born 1928), Denver August 2-October 6, 1958**

Access Information

Access restricted.