
Guide to the Walter "Butterfly" Blumoff Papers and Photographs

Collection number: 1991-22

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society
San Francisco, California

Processed by:

Ellen Meyers

Date Completed:

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Encoded by:

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Walter "Butterfly" Blumoff Papers and Photographs

Dates: 1954-1991

Bulk Dates: 1968-1989

Collection number: 1991-22

Creator: Blumoff, Walter "Butterfly"

Collection Size: 8 Cubic Feet 7 boxes

Repository: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society
San Francisco, California 94105

Physical location: Stored at the Archives of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society in San Francisco, California.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

Collection open for research.

Publication Rights

Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials are shared by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, Mildred Blumhoff and Robin White.

Preferred Citation

Walter "Butterfly" Blumoff Papers and Photographs, 1991-22, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Acquisition Information

Donated to the GLBT Historical Society in September 1991 by Robin White.

Biography / Administrative History

Walter Blumoff was born in 1941 in New York City, and was adopted by Mildred and Barnett Blumoff. In 1986, when he was 45, he undertook a search for his birth mother, and found out that she was his adopted mother's sister, Vera Foepfel.

Blumoff graduated from high school in Niagra Falls, NY in 1959, and attended Purdue University for three years, but did not graduate. He had thyroid cancer when he was 21, and he was chronically sick throughout his life, with hearing problems, migraines, and bouts of depression. From 1960-1968 he lived and worked in upstate New York and New Jersey as an electronic technician, a career he continued throughout his life. In 1968, at age 27, he moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where he began taking photographs as a hobby.

In 1971 Blumoff moved to Los Angeles, where he lived until 1978. From 1972-1976 he was a freelance photographer for The Advocate, covering L.A.-area political and cultural events. From 1972-1973 he was the Director of Military Affairs at the Gay Community Services Center of L.A., a position which included counseling homosexual military recruits on how to obtain honorable or general discharges. He was a member of the California Committee for Sexual Law Reform in 1973, representing the GCSC of L.A. In 1974 he was Director of the Gay Rights Project of the ACLU of L.A.

In 1978 he moved to Monterey, CA (about 3 hours south of S.F.), and in 1980, at age 39, he moved to the Santa Cruz area, where he lived the rest of his life. Around 1980 he became active in Radical Faerie circles and attended Radical Faerie Spiritual Gatherings throughout the 1980's, taking many photographs at their gatherings. He was also involved with NOMENUS, a faerie land trust group, from 1984-1990. It was at this time he took on the name "Butterfly".

Butterfly was primarily attracted to young men and teenage boys, and photographed many of these throughout the 1970's and 1980's, including tricks, lovers and boys he happened upon at beaches and other locations. His closest companions were a group of friends he met in the early 1970's in L.A.: Leo, Pat and John. Pat (Patrick L. McVie) was a young teenage runaway Butterfly met at the Gay Community Services Center (GCSC), who lived with him for awhile. Pat died of AIDS in the 1980s. Leo and John were Butterfly's age, and were also attracted to young men and teenage boys. One young man he was involved with in the early 1970's, James C., was convicted in 1981 of molesting and murdering an 11-year-old boy.

Around 1988 Butterfly learned he was HIV+, and he progressed to AIDS in 1989. He participated in the STEPS program ("empowerment for people with AIDS"), and was a speaker for Project First Hand in Santa Cruz, a PWA speakers bureau. He died in Santa Cruz in April 1991, at age 50.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection consists of correspondence, organizational files and working notes, directories, photographs, slides, negatives, home movies, and memorabilia. Most materials relate to Blumoff's activities with the Gay Community Services Center in L.A. in the early 1970's, his involvement with the Radical Faerie Movement throughout the 1980's, and his attraction to and involvement with young men and teenage boys. The bulk of the material is from the early 1970's to the late 1980's, though some earlier photographs and memorabilia are also included. The collection is arranged in six series: Biographical Material, Correspondence, Activities and Interests, Photographs, Slides, and Movies and Audio Recordings.

The first series, Biographical Material, consists of scattered journal-type notes, memorabilia, and materials from his adoption search.

Correspondence includes letters to and from his family, friends, and lovers, from 1972 to 1991. Included are letters to and from his young lovers, and extensive correspondence between Butterfly and James C. (after his conviction for child molestation and murder), and another man present at the time of the murder. Letters from living persons are restricted.

The third series, Activities and Interests, includes organizational files, printed material, and working notes from a variety of Blumoff's activities. These include scattered materials from his gay rights work in the early 1970's, most notably his work as a draft counselor at the Gay Community Services Center in L.A. A second sub-series relates to Butterfly's sexual life. Of note here are printouts of sexually explicit Gay Bulletin Board Service logs, and his ad copy for personal ads. A third sub-series concerns his Radical Faerie activities. This includes materials from conferences and gatherings throughout the 1980's, NOMENUS minutes from 1984-1990 (NOMENUS is a faerie land trust group), and Faerie Directories from 1979-1990. Access to the directories is restricted. The final sub-series consists of material relating to Butterfly's AIDS diagnosis. Included are printed materials and his notes from his participation in the STEPS program ("empowerment for people with AIDS"), and his work with Project First Hand, a PWA speakers bureau.

Photographs include black and white (and some color) prints, contact prints (8 1/2x10 and 16x20), and negatives from 122 rolls of film, primarily from L.A. in the early 1970's. There are also some earlier and later photos. Roughly one-third of the photos and negatives are of political actions, one-third are of cultural events, and one-third of family, friends, lovers, tricks, and people in the community. Photos, contact prints, and negatives are sorted by subject. The negatives are sorted by broad subject groupings (Political Actions, Cultural Events, etc.) and are numbered sequentially within each subject. 8 1/2 x 10 contact sheets corresponding to the negatives have been assigned matching subject/location numbers. Not all negatives have contact sheets. There are also contact sheets for which no negatives could be found; these are filed separately under the same subject headings and labeled "unsorted".

The fifth series, Slides, contains 78 mylar pages holding color slides (approximately 1,500 slides), covering the early 1970's to the late 1980's. About one-fourth of the slides are of early 1970's L.A. gay political activities, cultural events, or people; about one-fourth are of Radical Faerie gatherings throughout the 1980's; and approximately half are of Butterfly's friends, lovers, tricks, and anonymous boys taken from the early 1970's through late 1980's. Many of these portraits are of young men and teenage boys. There are also many nude portraits, some showing explicit sexual activity. All slides and photographs of explicit sexual activity appear to be of adult males. There are negatives for many of the slides; these are filed following the slide pages and labeled to show which slides they correspond to. The slides are cataloged and indexed by subject, date, and location using dBase III+. Detailed instructions on how to access the slides are in the "Computer Manual for Using dBase III+ to access GLBTHS databases."

The sixth series, Home Movies and Audio Recordings, includes seven reels of short Super 8mm movies from the early 1970's, and four tape cassettes made by Butterfly when he had AIDS. The movies include gay visibility actions and the 1972 Christopher Street West parade in L.A., a young man arrested for hustling, a homemade adult porn movie, and two reels of teenage boys seen on the street, the beach, or in the park. The tape cassettes were done as part of his work with the STEP program ("empowerment for PWA").

The collection is divided into 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material
- Series 2: Correspondence
- Series 3: Activities and Interests
- Series 4: Photographs
- Series 5: Slides
- Series 6: Home Movies and Audio Recordings

Indexing Terms

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

Gay men

Gay activists

Radical Faeries (New Age movement)

Processing Information

22 cartons were donated in 1991. After processing, approximately eight cartons of material were retained by GLBTHS. Periodicals were added to the archives collection if needed, or discarded if duplicates. An organizational file for the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center from the early 1970's was sent to Jim Kepner at the IGLA Archives in Los Angeles. The rest was returned to Robin White.

The majority of the collection consisted of slides, photographs, and negatives. Approximately twenty percent of the slides were kept. Not kept were images of landscapes and still-lives. Slides of events, people, and other subjects were selectively kept, with only the better images of each subject retained in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. Approximately half of the photographs were kept. All negatives for photographs, and for those slides that have negatives, were retained. Slides, negatives, and photographs not kept were returned to Robin White. Lists of all images and other materials not retained, along with their disposition, remains in the GLBTHS Archives control file.

Box 1	Biographical Material 1971-1985
Box/ Folder 1/ 1	Personal Memorabilia
Box/ Folder 1/ 2	Resumes
Box/ Folder 1/ 3	Adoption Search-documents, notes
Box/ Folder 1/ 4	Journal Notes 1971-1985

Box 1 **Correspondence 1969-1991**

- Box/ Folder 1/ 5 **Mildred and Barnett Blumoff [mother and father] 1972-1991**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 6 **Roslyn Bartholomay 1969-1990**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 7 **Foeppels [birth mother and family] 1986-1990**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 8 **Jay Fisher 1975**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 9 **Mark Jones-letters from WB to MJ 1976**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 10 **Mark Jones-litigation notes, documents 1976**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 11 **Mark Feitl-letters, notes, memorabilia [youth] 1978**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 12 **James C.-letters from JC to WB, and WB to JC 1979-1983**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 13 **James C.-notes and documents on case**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 14 **Glen Geowatts 1979-1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 15 **Kirk Palmerton-letters from KP to WB, and WB to KP 1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 16 **Dascus Haining and Gerald Denning-letters from DH to WB, GD to WB, and WB to DH [legal-size folder]
1988-1989**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 17 **Miscellaneous correspondence 1974-1991**

Box 1, 2 **Activities and Interests 1972-1991**

- Box/ Folder 1/ 18 **Harvey Baldwin investigation-final report [suspected gay basher] 1972-1973**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 19 **Harvey Baldwin investigation-notes**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 20 **Harvey Baldwin investigation-photos**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 21 **California Committee for Sexual Law Reform-records, notes 1973**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 22 **Gay Community Services Center, Growth Group-facilitator's notes 1973**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 23 **Queen of Hearts Ball-investigation notes 1973**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 24 **Gay Rights Project, ACLU of Southern California-records and letters [legal-size folder] 1974**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 25 **Military Counseling, GCSC of Los Angeles-documents, working notes, letters 1972-1973**

Access Information

Restricted

- Box/ Folder 1/ 26 **Military Counseling-clippings 1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 27 **Military Counseling-Kirk Palmerton case 1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 28 **Military Counseling-Don Lee case 1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 29 **Military Counseling-Denzil G. Bush case 1981**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 30 **NAMBLA file-pamphlet, flyers circa 1984**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 30 **NAMBLA file-pamphlet, flyers circa 1984**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 31 **Personal Ads-notes for**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 32 **Gay Bulletin Board Service Logs [sexually explicit] 1988**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 33 **Sean William Smith [youth]-documents, photos 1981**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 33 **Sean William Smith [youth]-documents, photos 1981**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 34 **Duane Paul Mayne [youth]-documents, photos 1984**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 34 **Duane Paul Mayne [youth]-documents, photos 1984**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 35 **Spiritual Conference for Radical Faeries-printed materials 1980**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 36 **Gay Vision Circle [gay community land trust]-records 1980-1982**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 37 **Stonewater Circle Gathering of Faeries-printed materials, letters 1982**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 38 **NOMENUS-minutes 1984-1990**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 39 **Faerie, miscellaneous-publications, flyers 1979-1990**
- Box/ Folder 1/ 40 **Faerie Directories [names and addresses] 1979-1982**

Access Information

Restricted

- Box/ Folder 1/ 41 **Faerie Directories 1983-1988**

Access Information

Restricted

- Box/ Folder 1/ 42 **Faerie Directories, Santa Cruz and South Bay area 1984-1990**

Access Information

Restricted

- Box/ Folder 2/ 43 **California Men's Gathering-printed materials 1984-1987**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 44 **Monterey Bay Men's Gathering-printed materials 1991**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 45 **Re-evaluation Counseling ["co-counseling"]-print materials, notes 1985-1989**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 46 **Faerie Group, Re-evaluation Counseling-facilitator's notes 1986-1987**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 47 **Roommate Dispute with Robert Biles-notes 1985**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 48 **Roommate Dispute with Robert Biles-court documents 1985**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 49 **Roommate Dispute with Robert Lindeman-notes 1985**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 50 **Roommate Dispute with Robin, Paul, Ann, Todd, Sarah-notes 1988-1989**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 51 **STEPS Program ["empowerment for people with AIDS"]-workbook 1988**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 52 **STEPS Program-notes, printed materials**

Box/ Folder 2/ 53 **The Living Room Project-records 1989**
Box/ Folder 2/ 54 **Project First Hand [PWA Speakers Bureau] 1990**
Box/ Folder 2/ 55 **Living with AIDS, miscellaneous-notes, printed material 1989-1990**

Box 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 **Photographs 1968-1990**

- Box/ Folder 2/ 56 **Photos: Family, miscellaneous**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 57 **Photos: Walter Blumoff**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 58 **Photos: College and post-college years circa 1965-1969**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 59 **Photos: Friends (Florida) 1968-1970**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 60 **Photos: Lovers circa 1972-circa 1989**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 61 **Photos: Friends [3x5 prints] 1971-1990**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 62 **Photos: Friends [8x10 prints] 1971-1990**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 63 **Photos: Tricks [seem to be 18 years plus] (miscellaneous dates)**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 64 **Photos: Youth, Male [seem to be under 18 years] (miscellaneous dates)**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 65 **Photos: Boy lovers with boys 1981**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 66 **Photos: Faeries, Ukiah, California**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 67 **Photos: Stonewater Circle Faeries Gathering [Harry Hay] 1982**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 68 **Photos: Faeries, around a campfire**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 69 **Photos: Faeries, at swimming hole**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 70 **Photos: Faeries, miscellaneous (miscellaneous dates)**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 71 **Photos: Groovy Stud Contest, Los Angeles circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 72 **Photos: Women's Cultural Events, Los Angeles [Robin Tyler] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 73 **Photos: Gay Cultural Events, miscellaneous, Los Angeles [SPREE] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 74 **Photos: Gay Visibility action at Disneyland circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 75 **Photos: Santa Cruz, Gay Pride ["early"]**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 76 **Photos: San Francisco Gay Pride Parade circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 77 **Photos: San Francisco Gay Pride Parade circa 1973**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 78 **Photos: Gay Pride Parade [San Francisco? Los Angeles?] 1975**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 79 **Photos: Political Actions, Los Angeles [descriptions on each] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 80 **Photos: Political Actions, miscellaneous, Los Angeles [unidentified] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 81 **Photos: Men and women, [not lovers, friends, tricks] circa 1970-circa 1989**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 82 **Photos: Teen boys swimming [not gay] 1981-1983**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 83 **Photos: Location shots, Los Angeles, [GCSC, MCC, a pier] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 84 **Photos: Homoerotic art shots [male]**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 85 **Photos: Professional shoots, miscellaneous**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 86 **Contact Sheets: Friends/Lovers, Los Angeles, [matched to negatives] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 87 **Contact Sheets: Friends/Lovers, Los Angeles, [unmatched] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 88 **Contact Sheets: Cultural Events, Los Angeles, [matched to negatives] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 89 **Contact Sheets: Cultural Events, Los Angeles, [unmatched] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 90 **Contact Sheets: Political Actions, Los Angeles, [matched to negatives] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 91 **Contact Sheets: Political Actions, Los Angeles, [unmatched] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 92 **Contact Sheets: Locations, Los Angeles, [matched to negatives] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 93 **Negatives: Youth, male circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 94 **Negatives: Friends/Lovers circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 95 **Negatives: Cultural Events, Los Angeles circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 96 **Negatives: Political Actions, Los Angeles [rolls 001-039] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 97 **Negatives: Political Actions, Los Angeles [rolls 040-069] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 98 **Negatives: Locations, Los Angeles [GCSC] circa 1972**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 99 **Negatives: Stonewater Circle Faerie Gathering [for photo album 2] 1982**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 100 **Negatives: Stonewater Circle Faerie Gathering [for photo album 2] 1983**
- Box/ Folder 2/ 101 **Negatives: Blossom of Bone Faerie Gathering [for photo album 3] 1983**
- Box 3 **Contact Sheets: 102, 16 x 20 inch contact sheets of early 1970's Los Angeles gay political and cultural activities, friends, lovers, tricks, youth and locations. Contact sheets are unsorted with some descriptive information on them. Duplicate 8 x 10 inch contact sheets are sorted and matched to negatives.**
- Box 4 **Photo Album 1: Tricks, youth. Florida and California. 1968-circa 1972**
- Box 5 **Photo Album 2: Stonewater Circle Radical Faerie Spiritual Gathering, San Diego, California. August/September 1982 July 1983**
- Box 6 **Photo Album 3: Blossom of Bone Radical Faerie Spiritual Gathering, Napa, California. October 1983**

Box 7

Slides circa 1970-circa 1990

Subseries Scope and Content Summary

Slides: 78 pages of color slides, about 1500 slides in all, covering the early 1970's to the late 1980's. About one-fourth of the slides are of early 1970's Los Angeles gay political activities, cultural events, or people; about one-fourth are of Radical Faerie gatherings throughout the 1980's; and approximately half are of Butterfly's friends, lovers, and tricks, early 1970's through late 1980's. Many of these portraits are of young men and teenage boys. There are also many nude portraits, some showing explicit sexual activity. There are negatives for many of the slides; they are filed following the slide pages and they are labeled to show which slides they correspond to.

Arrangement

The slides are cataloged and indexed by subject, date, and location using the dBase III+ program.

Access Note

Access to them is through the SLIDE file, on drive C.

Use Note

Detailed instructions on how to use this program are in the "Computer Manual for Using dBase III+ to Access GLHS [GLBTHS] Databases."

- Box 7 **Home Movies and Audio Recordings circa 1970-1989**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: "Gay Day in the Park" (Los Angeles), 3" reel, about 2 minutes circa 1972**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: "Gay-In in the Park" (Los Angeles), 3" reel, about 2 minutes circa 1972**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: "Christopher Street West, 1972" [gay pride march] (Los Angeles), 3" reel, about 2 minutes 1972**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: Young man arrested for hustling (Los Angeles), 3" reel, about 2 minutes circa 1972**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: House Party [homemade porn], (possibly Buffalo, New York, or Los Angeles), 5" reel, about 10 minutes circa 1972**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: Miscellaneous shots of teenage boys and street scenes (possibly Florida), 5" reel, about 10 minutes circa 1970**
- Box 7 **Super 8mm movie: Boys, boys, boys (Fort Lauderdale, Florida), 7" reel, about 20 minutes circa 1970**
- Box 7 **Audio Cassette: "Life History, 10/31/89" 1989**
- Box 7 **Audio Cassette: "Getting to know my parts, 11/21/89" 1989**
- Box 7 **Audio Cassette: "Feeling the parts: wounded child, grandfather, higher self and symptoms"**
- Box 7 **Audio Cassette: "Recreating a perfect family, 12/12/89" 1989**