
Finding aid of the Kevin Brew Journals

Collection number: 1993-17

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

Processed by:

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Date Completed:

January 2005

Encoded by:

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Kevin Brew papers

Dates: 1970-1992

Collection number: 1993-17

Creator: Brew, Kevin

Collection Size: 0.5 Linear Feet1 manuscript box

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

Abstract: Journals of Kevin Brew, a man who died of HIV. Brew was born in Queens, New York and moved to San Francisco in 1975. These journals detail activities of every day life, the onset of the AIDS epidemic, Brew's own course of treatment, as well as reactions to national events such as the election of President Reagan and the murder of John Lennon.

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Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Kevin Brew Papers, 1993-17, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Acquisition Information

Donated to the GLBTHS by Marie A. Grabec, sister of Kevin Brew, August 13, 1993.

Biography

Kevin Brew was born in Queens, New York, on April 7, 1950. He moved to San Francisco in August of 1975, and lived there until his death from AIDS on March 28, 1993. It is unclear why Brew moved to San Francisco, although his journals imply a search for a "simpler" life. Sunshine was also a motivation. His career/work is not specified in his writings, or in his Bay Area Reporter obituary, dated April 15, 1993. His greatest interest appears to have been doing art work, mainly collage. A skimming of his journals suggests that Kevin had turbulent relationships with his friends and family. He seemed to be an extremely intelligent and sensitive man who expressed feeling generally frustrated and unappreciated by many of the people in his life.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Kevin Brew Papers consist of 6 bound journals and a folder of loose journal pages. The full range of the writing is from January 7, 1970 to March 5, 1992. The Journals are inconsistent in detail and there are large gaps of time between entries. They appear to have been for personal use only.

Indexing Terms

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

AIDS

San Francisco (Calif.)

Persons With AIDS

Journals 1970-1992

Physical Description: 1 manuscript box

1970-1979

Scope and Content Note

The first journal ("National Diary for 1970") begins on January 7, 1970 and concludes on March 2, 1979. The entries begin with Brew in New York and follow him to San Francisco in 1975. The bulk of this journal, as with most of them, is taken up with entries of thoughts, activities, introspection, and sexual encounters. There are also many reflections on the 1960s and a longing for the hippie aesthetic. Of particular interest is the fact that most of his sexual encounters are marked by an eroticism of men's feet. Subsequent journals don't outline this interest nearly as much.

1978-1989

Scope and Content Note

The second journal (red and black cover) begins on July 29, 1978 and concludes December 26, 1989. Living in San Francisco, Brew seems to make entries mostly when upset or when there is something of significance to report. There are interesting reflections on the 1970s and observations of events of the 1980s Brew was very articulate and there appears to be a growing analysis of himself and his emotional state. Brew was diagnosed with HIV at some point in the 1980s, but there does not appear to be any specific entry around this event. There is some AIDS commentary beginning around 1984.

1985-1986

Scope and Content Note

The third journal ("Diary 1985") seems to fall randomly in the mid 1980s, beginning on January 1, 1985 and ending sometime in 1986. It's hard to tell exactly when things are occurring as Brew begins entries with the day of the week and year. These entries are mostly random and describe his daily life and emotional state.

1988-1991

Scope and Content Note

The fourth journal (with dinosaurs on the cover) begins on February 10, 1988 and concludes on May 12, 1991. This book contains more descriptions of daily activities and happenings. This journal is also different from the others as it is decorated with lots of stickers and cuttings from books, magazines, etc. There are more details of a growing HIV and AIDS culture. Brew also continues to outline problems with his friends, family, and the gay community.

1985-1988

Scope and Content Note

The fifth journal (plaid cover) begins in January 28, 1985 and is exclusively descriptive of Brew's therapy experience. He includes quotes from his therapist and included his thoughts on his therapy process.

1989-1991

Scope and Content Note

The sixth journal (floral cover) begins in February 2, 1989 and is exclusively descriptive of Brew's therapy experience. He includes quotes from his therapist and included his thoughts on his therapy process. The journal is only a quarter filled.

1982-1992

Scope and Content Note

The papers in the folder were removed from larger journals that were not completed. The first group begins on November 30, 1982 and ends December 3, 1984. The second group begins on October 28, 1991 and ends on February 17, 1992. They seem to mostly follow the style of Brew's other journals.