Out of the Boxes: Historical Society Opens Archives of Pioneering Historian Allan Bérubé

Materials from the papers of Allan Bérubé were displayed at The GLBT History Museum in July 2011. At right is a news clipping with a photograph of Bérubé.

The GLBT Historical Society has opened the papers of independent scholar and MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient Allan Bérubé for use by researchers. A San Francisco resident for two decades before moving to New York in 1996, Bérubé was one of the pioneers in the field of community-based gay history that emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s. His 1990 book *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* was widely praised; he also worked on the history of gay men's urban sexual territories, the connections between social class and homosexuality, and the role of race and sexuality in labor history.

"We were honored when the Bérubé estate decided to donate his papers," says Paul Boneberg, executive director of the GLBT Historical Society. "Allan was one of our founding members, he had already given significant materials to our collection, he had even sublet office space from the society in our early years -- so we had a deep feeling that we were symbolically welcoming him home."

Housed at the society's archives in San Francisco, the Bérubé papers are now arranged and preserved, with an extensive finding aid offering an overview of the more than 150 boxes in the collection. The materials include files reflecting Bérubé's work as an author, historian, teacher and activist, along with personal papers ranging from family history to creative writing. Of particular note are Bérubé's writings and research files on the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union, the subject of an unfinished book he had set aside, then returned to writing shortly before his unexpected death in 2007.

Boneberg notes that the opening of the Bérubé archives "demonstrates our commitment to donors to keep their papers both safe and accessible." He adds that the Bérubé records also show the importance of placing queer collections in a community institution: "Even before making the materials available to researchers, we mounted a display in Allan's memory and sponsored a very well-attended event at
The GLBT History Museum to mark the posthumous publication of his book *My Desire for History*. We are always looking for those kinds of opportunities to spark meaningful dialog between our collections and the wider community.

To download the finding aid for the Bérubé papers, [click here](#). For related collections, enter "Bérubé" under "Archival Collections" and "Oral Histories" in the "Search the Collections" section of the [GLBT Historical Society website](#).

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**When Once a Month Just Isn't Enough:**

*Queer History News Via Social Media*

Supporters of the GLBT Historical Society and The GLBT History Museum get *History Happens* at the start of every month -- but when it comes to queer history news, who's willing to settle for just once a month? The society also posts a cornucopia of updates on its Facebook page: photos of exhibitions and programs, astonishing finds from the archives, links to worldwide media coverage, clips from historic queer films and videos. Nearly 9,000 people have already liked the page -- and the institution is hoping to click past 10,000 before the end of 2013.

The society's Facebook friends regularly join the online conversation -- but many who have already liked the page are missing out on the fun, notes Historical Society media consultant Gerard Koskovich. "Facebook changed the way it distributes status updates near the end of last year -- and as a result, lots of our friends aren't seeing our posts," he explains. "But there's an easy way to make sure the GLBT Historical Society shows up in your news feed: Just go to our Facebook page, click on 'Like,' then select 'Get Notifications' from the pop-up menu. You'll never miss another update, and you'll be sure to have a chance to like and comment on what we post -- and to share it with your friends, too!"

To like the GLBT Historical Society -- or to add "Get Notifications" to your like -- visit the society's [Facebook page](#).

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**Museum Programs to Feature Queer Fiction, Biography of a Gay Activist**

**Author Reading**

**GuyWriters Presents 'Novel Discussions':**

**Andrew Demcak, Vincent Meis, Rob Rosen**

**Wednesday, March 13**

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Three local gay novelists come together to present their work: Andrew Demcak (*If There is a Heaven Above*); Vincent Meis (*Tio Jorge* and *Eddie's Desert Rose*); and Rob Rosen (*Queerwolf* and *Southern Fried*). The authors will read from their latest books and take part in a discussion with the audience about the writing process, where they find the ideas behind their fiction and how they go from inspiration to words on the page. In addition, they'll answer questions about publishing and the best strategies for writers to use in getting their work out to the public. The event is presented by GuyWriters, a Bay Area community network that celebrates and supports gay men's literary creativity. Admission: $5.00; free for members.

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**A Lady and a Woman**

* tells the story of two African-American women in the 19th century who find the courage to begin a new life together in a small Southern town. A discussion with the author, Shirlene Holmes, follows the March 8 performance, and a panel with the actors and writers Jewelle Gomez and Brian Freeman follows the March 17 performance.

GLBT Historical Society supporters receive $5 off tickets (discount code: law2013).

[Buy Tickets Here](#)

**ON DISPLAY**

The GLBT History Museum displays a wealth of material from San Francisco's vast queer past.

"Legendary: African American GLBT Past Meets Present," currently on show in the Corner Gallery, includes this snapshot of Thelma Davis (standing) at a San Francisco lesbian house party from circa 1968. The exhibit runs through the end of May.

**IN THE ARCHIVES**

The GLBT Historical Society is home to one of the world's largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender archival collections.
**History Talk**
The Life & Times of Tede Matthews, Poet & Revolutionary
Thursday, April 4
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Historian Greg Youmans presents the life and times of Tede Mathews, a poet and activist who lived in San Francisco from the mid-1970s until his death from AIDS in 1993. A star of the groundbreaking 1977 documentary *Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives*, Mathews was a performer with the gender-bending theatrical troupe Angels of Light. He also was a member of the Modern Times Bookstore Collective; a founder of the queer antiwar group LAGAI; and an activist who worked in solidarity with liberation struggles in Vietnam, Chile and Nicaragua. Illustrated with video clips, the talk will explore how Mathews's biography complicates standard accounts of recent queer history. Admission: $5.00; free for members.

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**EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS**

**The GLBT History Museum**
Location: 4127 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Phone: 415-621-1107
Website: [www.glbthistorymuseum.org](http://www.glbthistorymuseum.org)

Admission: $5.00 general; $3.00 with California student ID. Free for members. Free for all visitors on the first Wednesday of each month (courtesy of the Bob Ross Foundation).

Winter Hours
Mondays & Wednesdays - Saturdays: 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Tuesdays: Closed
Sundays: Noon - 5:00 p.m.

**ARCHIVES & READING ROOM**

**GLBT Historical Society**
Location: 657 Mission St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415-777-5455, ext. 3#
Website: [www.glbthistory.org](http://www.glbthistory.org)

Research Hours (by appointment)
Members: Wednesdays - Fridays: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Nonmembers: Fridays: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
First & Third Saturdays: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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**ON THE WEB**

For in-depth information on the GLBT Historical Society and The GLBT History Museum, visit our [website](http://www.glbthistorymuseum.org).

For updates on the museum and archives, follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).

For an overview of the goals and history of the museum and archives, see our entry on [Wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org).

For an array of videos from our archives and programs, see our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com).

For a look at what we're discovering in our archival collections, read our archives blog: