
Guide to the Violet Nassos Collection

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Collection number: 2009-06

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

Processed by:

Kenna Fisher

Date Completed:

March 19, 2010

Encoded by:

Kenna Fisher

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Violet Nassos collection

Dates: circa 1900-2005

Bulk Dates: circa 1940-1990

Collection number: 2009-06

Creator: Violet Nassos

Collector: René [?]

Collection Size: 0.8 linear feet² Manuscript boxes(12 1/4W x 10 1/4H x 5D)

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

Abstract: Photographs, scrapbooks, and news clippings of a friend of Ann Dee, Violet Nassos. Ann Dee was owner of Ann's 440 Club in San Francisco and Ann's 151. Ann's 440 Club was one of the first openly lesbian and bi-sexual clubs in San Francisco. It contains one scrapbook of Ann Dee materials, photos, and club activities compiled by "René [?]". The bulk of the collection consists of photographs of Violet Nassos, her family, friends and work associates

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Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.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

Violet Nassos Collection, [Accession number: 2009-06], The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Acquisition Information

This collection was purchased and then donated to the GLBT Historical Society in 2009 by the following donors: Anonymous, Bill Lipsky, Craig Scott, Daniel Bao, David Reichard, Don Romesburg, Karen Gerhart, Marjorie Bryer, Martin Meeker, Nan Alamilla Boyd, Ron Blum (Kayo Books) and Terence Kissack.

Biography / Administrative History

Violet Nassos (Aug. 27, 1926 - Sept. 29, 2008) was a friend of singer Ann Dee, owner of Ann's 440 Club in San Francisco. Ann Dee (1920-2005) was born Angela Maria De Spirito and is also known for having a role as a jazz singer in the film "Thoroughly Modern Millie." As a child Violet attended Union Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles, CA. As a young woman she worked for Gold Tone Studio, a photography studio located in Buffalo, NY. before eventually relocating back to California. She died in Joshua Tree, California.

Scope and Content of Collection

Numerous photographs (mostly black and white with some color) of a woman's life from young adulthood in the 1940's in Buffalo, NY through middle age in San Francisco, CA. Also contains a scrapbook by "René [?]" that includes photographs and ephemera from Ann Dee's personal and business life as a club owner and singing career. René is shown in numerous photographs of club interiors working as a bartender. There is also a "sister" birthday card addressed to René from "Ann." Other contents of the scrapbook include: Ann's 440 Club ephemera, autographed head-shots of club performers, and performance announcements and reviews. Most of the scrapbook materials are autographed and addressed to "Rene." Photographs of Ann Dee include publicity shots and candid photos at various clubs and social settings in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Also includes a publicity advertisement cutout for a concert performance by Johnny Mathis with a handwritten note on the back addressed to René and signed "Johnny." Some photographs show Violet and Ann performing together for a small audience.

There is one negative (positive scan photocopy include in folder) from the Nassos photographs that shows Ann Dee and Violet Nassos sitting closely together.

Other items of possible interest are photographs of Connie Park [Nakasima] a performer and model possibly associated with Charlie Low's Forbidden City. Some of the photographs of Connie Park are housed in souvenir photograph sleeves from Charlie Low's Forbidden City club and there is a calendar lithograph of her from an Asian food supplier, G.T. Sakai. Other ephemera include club act performance announcements and a matchbook cover from Ann's 440 with the slogan "it's the bi-word", and souvenir photograph enclosures from the Latin Quarter (Akron, OH), Hotel Victoria (New York, NY), and Sinaloa [Mexican Restaurant located at 1416 Powell St., San Francisco, California.] Also contains numerous circa 1900 photographs of individuals, children and infants (likely Nassos family photographs) as well as numerous other modern era photographs of Nassos' friends, family and co-workers.

The collection, while not overall specifically about Ann Dee's career and her clubs, offers an interesting photographic journey of women who were exploring the boundaries of gender identity and sexual orientation from the 1940's onward in both public and private arenas.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Bisexual people

Nightlife

Music
