

Finding Aid to the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus records

(#2009-01)

Repository: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

Collection Title: San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus records

Collection Number: 2009-01

Physical Description: 34 linear feet (1 manuscript box, 28 cartons, 8 oversize boxes, 1 flat file drawer)

Creator: San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus
Tom Burtch, Chorus Historian

Date (inclusive): 1978-2022

Language of Material: English

Abstract:

The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus is the world's first openly gay men's chorus. The collection is arranged into seven series including: Administrative Records; Membership and Production Materials; Publicity and Awards; Photographs; Audiovisual Materials; Textiles and Memorabilia; and SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus records (#2009-01), The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Conditions Governing Access:

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights:

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Acquisition Information:

The collection was donated to the GLBT Historical Society by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus in December 2013 with additions in 2019, 2021, and 2022.

Processing Information:

Collection was processed by Megan Needels in 2021/2022 with funding provided by the National Historical Publications & Records Commission.

Original processing performed by current and former members of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, supporters, and friends of the Chorus in 2013-2014. Funding for processing this collection in 2013-2014 was provided by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).

This finding aid uses terminology for LGBTQ people that was in current use at the time of its creation. Descriptive language for queer identities evolves quickly and some of these terms may now be dated or even offensive. Finding aids are themselves historical documents; they reflect the moment in which they were written and often reflect the terms that subjects used for themselves. Please contact the GLBT Historical Society Archivist with questions or comments.

Biographical/Organizational History Note:

The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus is the world's first openly gay men's chorus. The Chorus sang in public for the first time on the steps of San Francisco City Hall in November 1978 at a candlelight vigil for Harvey Milk. The group was founded by Jon Reed Sims with a mission to spread social equality for LGBTQ people. In 1981, The Chorus embarked on a national tour that helped spark the creation of similar choral groups in the U.S. and overseas. They are credited with igniting the worldwide gay and lesbian choral movement and continue to tour the country today. They have also commissioned many widely performed works that address issues of concern to the LGBTQ community, including homophobia, AIDS, Don't Ask Don't Tell, and marriage equality. Since the first 115 members sang on the steps of City Hall in 1978, over 2,000 different men, cis and trans, and non-binary people have sung with the chorus.

A number of artistic directors and conductors have led The Chorus over the years including, Jon Reed Sims (Oct. 1978); Dick Kramer (Nov. 1978 – Jan. 1982); Robin Kay (guest conductor, Feb. – Mar. 1982); Robert Erickson, Dale Richard, Claude Zetty (interim conductors, 1982); Ernie Veniegas (1982–1984); Charles Baker, Dennis Coleman, Vance George (guest conductors, 1985); Gregg Tallman (Aug. 1985 – June 1989); Dr. Stan Hill (July 1989 – July 2000; Conductor Laureate July 11, 2012); Joseph Jennings (guest conductor, Sept. – Dec. 1998); Dr. Kathleen McGuire (Aug. 2000 – Dec. 2010; Conductor Laureate Jan. 3, 2011); and Dr. Timothy Seelig (January 2011 – present; also served as guest conductor, Feb. – June 2009).

Scope and Content:

This collection documents the history of the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus and its impact on the lives of members, audiences, and the LGBTQ community. The collection is arranged into seven series including: Administrative Records; Membership and Production Materials; Publicity and Awards; Photographs; Audiovisual Materials; Textiles and Memorabilia; and SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records. Administrative Records contain files relating to the administrative operations of the Chorus such as strategic planning, board of directors meeting minutes, job descriptions and resumes, marketing materials, financial records, donation records, leadership evaluations, and audience surveys. It also includes files relating to the Golden Gate Choral Foundation, which was the Chorus’ primary fundraising entity. Membership and Production Materials include membership and concert production materials such as expense records, flyers, programs, member handbooks, rosters, issues of the Chorus Notes newsletter, tour materials, GALA materials, and posters. It also includes a file on the Fifth Section of the chorus, which is comprised of members who have died, many of whom due to HIV/AIDS. Publicity and Awards includes press clippings, awards, and letters commending the chorus. Photographs contain photographic prints, negatives, and slides of performances, member retreats, formal group portraits, holiday parties, parade contingents, individual member headshots, office staff, and chorus leadership. Audiovisual Materials contain film, video, and audio recordings of live performances, studio performances, and promotional material. Textiles and Memorabilia contain t-shirts, jackets, a cap, gloves, buttons, member name tags, pins, a sash, banners, and branded material such as a mug and a CD album case. SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records contain born-digital items and scans made or collected by SFGMC members. Some of the scans in this series represent physical items contained within the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus records collection, but there may also be scans of physical items that belong to individual members or that have not otherwise been formally accessioned as part of the physical collection held at the GLBT Historical Society archives. This series is available digitally, contact the archivist for access.

Indexing Terms:

LGBTQ

San Francisco (Calif.)

Gay men

Music

Container Listing

Series I: Administrative Records, circa 1979-2010

Physical Description: 6 cartons

Scope and Content: This series contains files relating to the administrative operations of the Chorus such as strategic planning, board of directors meeting minutes, job descriptions and resumes, marketing materials, financial records, donation records, leadership evaluations, and audience surveys. It also includes files relating to the Golden Gate Choral Foundation, which was the Chorus' primary fundraising entity.

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Series II: Membership and Production Materials, 1978-2021

Physical Description: 1 box, 8 cartons, 2 oversize boxes, 1 flat file drawer

Scope and Content: This series contains files relating to membership and concert production such as expense records, flyers, programs, member handbooks, rosters, issues of the Chorus Notes newsletter, tour materials, GALA materials, and posters. It also includes a file on the Fifth Section of the chorus, which is comprised of members who have died, many of whom due to AIDS/HIV. Binders in this series primarily contain flyers, programs, and other ephemera produced by The Chorus from 1978-2014. A significant portion of this series has been digitized and is available for remote access. See SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records series or contact the archivist for more information.

Arrangement: Series is arranged in the original order of the creator.

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Carton 26, Folder 14	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 1999
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Carton 27, Folder 4	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 2005
Carton 27, Folder 5	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 2006
Carton 27, Folder 6	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 2007
Carton 27, Folder 7	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 2008
Carton 27, Folder 8	Binder – San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, 2009
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Series III: Publicity and Awards, 1978-2019

Physical Description: 2 cartons, 1 oversize box

Scope and Content: This series includes press clippings, awards, and letters commending the chorus.

Arrangement: Series is arranged in the original order of the creator.

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Carton 9, Folder 9	Press, 1986
Carton 9, Folder 10	Press, 1987
Carton 9, Folder 11	Press, 1988
Carton 9, Folder 12	Press, 1989
Carton 9, Folder 13	Press, 1990
Carton 9, Folder 14	Press, 1991
Carton 9, Folder 15	Press, 1992
Carton 9, Folder 16	Press, 1993

Carton 9, Folder 17	Press, 1994
Carton 9, Folder 18	Press, 1995
Carton 9, Folder 19	Press, 1996
Carton 9, Folder 20	Press, 1997
Carton 9, Folder 21	Press, 1998
Carton 9, Folder 22	Press, 1999
Carton 9, Folder 23	Press, 2000
Carton 9, Folder 24	Press, 2001 [1]
Carton 9, Folder 25	Press, 2001 [2]
Carton 9, Folder 26	Press, 2001 [3]
Carton 9, Folder 27	Press, 2002
Carton 9, Folder 28	Press, 2003
Carton 9, Folder 29	Press, 2004
Carton 9, Folder 30	Press, 2005
Carton 9, Folder 31	Press, 2006
Carton 9, Folder 32	Press, 2008
Carton 9, Folder 33	Press, 2010
Carton 9, Folder 34	Press, 2011
Carton 9, Folder 35	Press, 2012
Carton 9, Folder 36	Press, 2013
Carton 9, Folder 37	Press, 2014
Carton 9, Folder 38	Press, 2017
Carton 9, Folder 39	Press, 2018
Carton 9, Folder 40	Press, 2019
Carton 10, Folder 1	Awards, certificates, proclamations, 1983-2005
Carton 10, Folder 2	Letters commending chorus, circa 1982-2002
Carton 10, Folder 3	Certificate of honor, 2002
Carton 10, Folder 4	Volunteer awards, 2004
Carton 10, Item 1	Community Contribution Cable Car award, 1982
Carton 10, Item 2	Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade Cable Car award, 1982
Carton 10, Item 3	Best Concert Cable Car award, 1982
Carton 10, Item 4	Mark Calhoun Award of Merit Cable Car award, 1982
Carton 10, Item 5	Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade Cable Car award, 1984
Carton 10, Item 6	Best Concert Cable Car award, 1984
Carton 10, Item 7	Hall of Honor Cable Car award, 1985
Carton 10, Item 8	Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade Cable Car award, 1989
Carton 10, Item 9	Fundraising Cable Car award, 1989
Carton 10, Item 10	Bob Cramer Award for Excellence Cable Car award, 1992
Carton 10, Item 11	Award of Merit Cable Car award, 1994

Carton 10, Item 12	GLBT Historical Society award, 1994
Carton 10, Item 13	Sacramento AIDS Foundation award, 1997
Carton 10, Item 14	Hometown Video Festival Winner, 2001
Carton 10, Item 15	Key to the City, 1981 - DEACCESSIONED
Oversize box 8, Folder 5	Oversize awards, circa 1978-2019

Series IV: Photographs, circa 1940-2019

Physical Description: 2 cartons, 1 oversize box

Scope and Content: This series contains photographic prints, negatives, and slides of performances, member retreats, formal group portraits, holiday parties, parade contingents, individual members, office staff, and chorus leadership. Many of the individuals in these photographs have been identified by Chorus members and staff with inscriptions on the verso of prints. A significant portion of this series has been digitized and is available for remote access. See SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records series or contact an archivist for more information.

Arrangement: Series is arranged chronologically and by type.

Carton 12, Folder 1	Bill Graham photographs, circa 1940-1985
Carton 12, Folder 2	Dick Kramer photograph, circa 1978-1982
Carton 12, Folder 3	Photographs by Jim Bohannon, circa 1978-1990
Carton 12, Folder 4	35mm slides, circa 1978-2005 [1]
Carton 12, Folder 5	35mm slides, circa 1978-2005 [2]
Carton 12, Folder 6	35mm slides, circa 1978-2005 [3]
Carton 12, Folder 7	35mm slides, circa 1978-2005 [4]
Carton 12, Folder 8	Contact sheets, circa 1978-2010 [1]
Carton 12, Folder 9	Contact sheets, circa 1978-2010 [2]
Carton 12, Folder 10	Negatives, circa 1978-2010 [1]
Carton 12, Folder 11	Negatives, circa 1978-2010 [2]
Carton 12, Folder 12	Miscellaneous headshots, circa 1978-2019
Carton 12, Folder 13	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [1]
Carton 12, Folder 14	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [2]
Carton 12, Folder 15	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [3]
Carton 12, Folder 16	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [4]
Carton 12, Folder 17	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [5]
Carton 12, Folder 18	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [6]
Carton 12, Folder 19	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [7]
Carton 12, Folder 20	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [8]
Carton 12, Folder 21	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [9]

Carton 12, Folder 22	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [10]
Carton 12, Folder 23	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [11]
Carton 12, Folder 24	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [12]
Carton 12, Folder 25	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [13]
Carton 12, Folder 26	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [14]
Carton 12, Folder 27	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [15]
Carton 12, Folder 28	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [16]
Carton 12, Folder 29	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [17]
Carton 12, Folder 30	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [18]
Carton 12, Folder 31	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [19]
Carton 12, Folder 32	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [20]
Carton 12, Folder 33	Miscellaneous photographs, circa 1978-2019 [21]
Carton 12, Folder 34	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [1]
Carton 12, Folder 35	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [2]
Carton 12, Folder 36	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [3]
Carton 13, Folder 1	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [4]
Carton 13, Folder 2	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [5]
Carton 13, Folder 3	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [6]
Carton 13, Folder 4	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [7]
Carton 13, Folder 5	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [8]
Carton 13, Folder 6	Identified member headshots, circa 1978-2019 [9]
Carton 13, Folder 7	Group performance photographs, circa 1978-2019 [1]
Carton 13, Folder 8	SFGMC photographs (data disc), 1978-1983
Carton 13, Folder 9	Performance photographs, circa 1978-2019
Carton 13, Folder 10	Formal group portraits, circa 1978-2019
Carton 13, Folder 11	81' Tour photo album from Bill Graham estate, 1981
Carton 13, Folder 12	Halloween party photographs, 1981
Carton 13, Folder 13	Diane Feinstein photographs, 1981,1983
Carton 13, Folder 14	AIDS quilt panel at Moscone Center photographs, 1982
Carton 13, Folder 15	Buck Up photographs, 1982
Carton 13, Folder 16	Fall retreat (Hawaiian) photographs, 1982
Carton 13, Folder 17	Halloween photographs, 1982
Carton 13, Folder 18	Spring retreat photographs, 1983
Carton 13, Folder 19	Fall retreat photographs, 1983
Carton 13, Folder 20	Halloween party photographs, 1983
Carton 13, Folder 21	Christmas concert photographs, 1983
Carton 13, Folder 22	Catch a Rainbow photographs, 1984
Carton 13, Folder 23	Paul Mason Winery concert photographs, 1984
Carton 13, Folder 24	Halloween party photographs, 1984

Carton 13, Folder 25	Fall retreat photographs, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 26	Binder – Miscellaneous parade photographs, circa 1984-2005
Carton 13, Folder 27	49ers Fight Song recording photographs from Sonia Taylor, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 28	Picnic at Lake Temescal photographs, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 29	Spring retreat photographs, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 30	Fall retreat photographs, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 31	Christmas performance photographs, 1985
Carton 13, Folder 32	Portland Gay Pride photographs, 1986
Carton 13, Folder 33	Skywalker Ranch photographs, 1986-1998
Carton 13, Folder 34	AIDS quilt display in Washington DC photographs, 1987
Carton 13, Folder 35	Fall retreat photographs, 1987
Carton 13, Folder 36	Retreat at Walden West photographs, 1988
Carton 13, Folder 37	Retreat at Walden West photographs, 1989
Carton 13, Folder 38	Gala III – Seattle photographs, 1989
Carton 13, Folder 39	Rehearsal photographs, circa 1989-2000
Carton 13, Folder 40	Stan Hill photographs, circa 1989-2000
Carton 13, Folder 41	Ahknaten at Herbst Theatre photographs, Circa 1990 [1]
Carton 13, Folder 42	Ahknaten at Herbst Theatre photographs, Circa 1990 [2]
Carton 13, Folder 43	Fall retreat photographs, 1990
Carton 13, Folder 44	Wide format photographs, circa 1990-2005
Carton 13, Folder 45	Fall retreat photographs, 1991 [1]
Carton 13, Folder 46	Fall retreat photographs, 1991 [2]
Carton 13, Folder 47	Perestroika retreat photographs, 1991
Carton 13, Folder 48	Fall retreat photographs, 1992
Carton 13, Folder 49	Gala IV – Denver photographs, 1992
Carton 13, Folder 50	Retreat at Walker Creek Ranch photographs, 1993
Carton 13, Folder 51	Washington D.C. photographs, 1993
Carton 13, Folder 52	Back to Our Roots retreat photographs, 1994
Carton 13, Folder 53	Binder – Swelligant Elegance, 1994-1995
Carton 13, Folder 54	Group retreat photographs, circa 1994-1998
Carton 13, Folder 55	K-Gay photographs, 1995 [1]
Carton 13, Folder 56	K-Gay photographs, 1995 [2]
Carton 13, Folder 57	Photographs by Nina Winters, circa 1995-1998
Carton 13, Folder 58	Performance photographs by C. Moore Hardy, 1998
Carton 13, Folder 59	Office staff photographs, circa 1998-2010
Carton 13, Folder 60	Kathleen McGuire and Scott Mandel photographs, circa 2000-2010
Carton 13, Folder 61	Kathleen McGuire at Carnegie Hall, 2001
Carton 13, Folder 62	Holiday photographs, 2001
Carton 13, Folder 63	Oliver Button is a Star! At Mission High, 2003

Carton 13, Folder 64	Group photographs at GALA VII, 2004
Oversize box 8, Folder 3	Oversize photographs, circa 1978-2019
Oversize box 8, Folder 4	Mounted Photographs, circa 1980-2005

Series V: Audiovisual Materials, circa 1978-2010

Physical Description: 7 cartons, 5 oversize boxes

Scope and Content: This series contains film, video, and audio recordings of live performances, studio performances, and promotional material. A significant portion of this series has been digitized and is available for remote access. See SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records or contact an archivist for more information.

Arrangement: Series is arranged in the original order of the creator.

Carton 14	Audio cassettes with recordings of performances and 35mm promo trailer (35 tapes, 1 film reel), circa 1978-2010
Carton 15	Audio cassettes, Hi-8, and DA8 tapes with recordings of performances (approx. 180 tapes), circa 1978-2010
Carton 16	¼" open reel tapes with recordings of performances (19 tapes), circa 1978-1982
Carton 17	¼" open reel tapes with recordings of performances (19 tapes), circa 1980-1982
Carton 18	Cassettes, CDs, ¼" open reel tapes, and LPs containing radio PSAs, studio albums, and performance recordings (78 items), circa 1978-2010
Carton 19	VHS tapes, Betacam SP tapes, and DVDs of performances and promotional material (33 items), circa 1980-2008
Carton 20	VHS tapes and DVDs of promos and performance recordings (36 tapes, 2 DVDs), circa 1990-2000
Carton 21	S-VHS tapes of performances (25 tapes), 1993
Oversize box 1	Master tape from <i>San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus Tours America</i> , 1981 [1]
Oversize box 2	Master tape from <i>San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus Tours America</i> , 1981 [2]
Oversize box 3	Outtakes and unreleased tracks from <i>San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus Tours America</i> , 1981
Oversize box 4	Master tape from <i>ExtrABBAganza</i> recording, 1997 [1]
Oversize box 5	Master tape from <i>ExtrABBAganza</i> recording, 1997 [2]

Series VI: Textiles and Memorabilia, circa 1978-2019

Physical Description: 3 cartons

Scope and Content: Series contains textiles such as t-shirts, jackets, a cap, gloves, a sash, banners, as well as memorabilia such as a mug, buttons, member name tags, pins, and a CD album case.

Arrangement: Series is arranged in the original order of the creator.

Carton 14	T-shirts, buttons, name tags, and pins, circa 1978-2019
Carton 22	T-shirts, cap, mug; jacket, gloves, branded CD case, circa 1978-2019
Carton 23	T-shirts, sash, circa 1978-2019
Carton 24	T-shirts, banners, circa 1978-2019
Oversize box 6	Banners, circa 1981-2008

Series VII: SFGMC Scans and Electronic Records, circa 1978-2022

Scope and Content: Series contains born digital items and scans made or collected by SFGMC members including photographs, programs, posters, administrative records, and member lists. Some of the scans in this series represent physical items contained within the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus records collection, but there are also scans of physical items that belong to individual members or that have not otherwise been formally accessioned as part of the physical collection held at the GLBT Historical Society archives. This series is available digitally, contact the archivist for access.

Arrangement: Series is arranged in the original order of the creator.