

GLBT Historical Society

Finding Aid to the Claude R. Schwob papers (#2003-12)

Dates: 1926-1998

Extent:

1 carton, 7 boxes, 1 rolled item (in oversize box), 1 oversize folder (5 Linear Feet)

Access:

Collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], [Name of Series], Claude R. Schwob papers, 2003-12, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

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Processed by:

Willie Walker, October 2003; finding aid revised by Marjorie Bryer, December 2011. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Creator:

Schwob, Claude R.

Biographical Information

Claude Schwob (June 16, 1910-July 24, 2000) was born in New York and grew up in France. He received his B.S. M.S. and doctorate in Chemistry from Fordham University in 1931, and taught at the University's St. Peter's College. He enlisted in the U.S. Army during WWII. He volunteered for the Chemical Warfare Service (soon renamed the Chemical Corps) and worked on the Manhattan Project at the University of Chicago and Los Alamos, New Mexico. He taught at Chicago's Carnegie Institute of Technology until 1947. In 1948, he applied for a position at the U S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab in San Francisco, where he spent the remainder of his professional life. He became one of the nation's foremost experts on radiation and the focus of his work was safe ways of detecting, preventing, and responding to radiation exposure. According to his obituary in the *B.A.R.*, Schwob loved San Gregorio beach, the Russian River, the pool at the Oasis, beautiful men and photography. He supported programs for homeless gay youth, such as Hospitality House. During much of his adult life, Schwob collected or took photographs of nude men and accumulated a large number of these prints. According to the donor of his papers (who owned a used magazine store), Schwob continued to

be sexually active until close to his death at age 90.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Claude Schwob papers document the scientist's professional, personal and erotic life. Schwob (1910-2000) was a research nuclear chemist who worked on the Manhattan Project. After his time in New Mexico, he relocated to San Francisco and worked at the U.S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab. He was one of the nation's leading experts on radiation. For the rest of his professional life, he identified and taught about safety issues related to radiation. On the personal side, Schwob befriended, took nude photographs of, and mentored many men. About half of the collection consists of prints of these photographs. The erotic photographs are unusual in that most of were shot by Schwob, most depict male nudes without erections, and most were taken in Schwob's own apartments. The collection also contains correspondence, materials about his scientific career, erotic and professional writings and paper ephemera and artifacts, such as matches and engineering tools. It is divided into five series: Correspondence; Personal Papers; Professional Papers; Photographic Materials; and Artifacts. Unfortunately, there are relatively few surviving letters and other documents within Schwob's personal papers. Nothing is known of his early life, nor is much known about his friends or his personal interests and activities. His homes are undocumented before he moved to San Francisco in the early 1950s. Of the Professional Papers, the files on the Manhattan Project, and other papers related to the US. Naval Radiological Defense Lab are probably the most interesting. Included in the large folder accompanying this collection are front pages of two issues of the "Santa Fe New Mexican" following the drop of the first bomb on Hiroshima.

Related Material at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society:

There are no collections at the GLBTHS that relate directly to any of Schwob's Papers, other than his erotic photographs. Numerous collections hold homoerotic images collected during the same period by gay or bisexual men, including:

1992-15	Anononymous scrapbooks, 1960s
1993-22	Gene Weber papers and photographs
1995-11	Bill Bigelow collection of Black male erotica
1996-18	Tim Wood papers
1996-45	Sylvester Magill papers
1999-85	Michael Burnside photo negatives
2000-06	Jack Lasner papers
2000-55	Reed Messengill photographs
2000-27	Jiro Onuma papers
2000-33	Romeo L'Heureux papers
2002-01	The Willie Walker Erotica Collection

Container List

Series 1. Correspondence, 1928-2000, 21 Folders

This series includes both outgoing correspondence (copies of letters sent by Schwob) and incoming correspondence (letters written to Schwob). In a few cases, folders related to specific subjects include correspondence integral to that subject.

- 1/1 to Marie, 1991-1992
- 1/2 to Bob M, 1992-1997
- 1/3 to Others, 1991-1998
- 1/4 from Elise, 1928
- 1/5 from Fordham University, 1933-1936
- 1/6 to and from St Peter's College (regarding salary), 1941
- 1/7 from Carlo (Carl Greene), 1945
- 1/8 from Mary Klinkenberg to Carlo (Carl Greene), 1945
- 1/9 enclosures from Carlo: two piece map of activities of 29th Infantry, June 1944-November 1945
- 1/10 enclosures from Carlo: commendation, newsletters, and ephemera, 1945
- 1/11 from Ray Cabrera, 1954-1955
- 1/12 Letters From, Articles and Obits About: Mike Kurtz and Mike Williams, 1975-1991
- 1/13 from Samuel Stewart, 1977
- 1/14 from Marie (Charlotte M. Vogel), 1988-1992
- 1/15 from Bob Mauth, 1988-1992
- 1/16 from Various Professional Associates, 1942-1947
- 1/17 from Various Professional Associates, 1949-1966
- 1/18 from Various Personal Associates, 1970-2000
- 1/19 Date and Source Unknown, undated

Series 2. Personal Papers, 1955-1990, 19 Folders

This series includes papers related to Schwob's homes, erotica, and papers about the Central City Hospitality House, from 1967.

- 1/20 I.D. and Membership Cards, 197?-199?
- 1/21 Schwob Homes, 1955-1969
- 1/22 Schwob's Home at 30 Capp, 1973-1974
- 1/23 Writing by C. Schwob, Including Erotic Writing, undated
- 1/24 Typed and Mimeographed Erotic Stories Mid 20th Century, undated
- 1/25 Erotic Film Catalogs From 1970s and 1980s, undated
- 1/26 Articles, Clippings, and Memo About "Youth Against Narcotics," circa 1967

- 1/27 Gay Films, Film makers, and Venues, 1963-1990
- 6/1 Central City Hospitality House; Bylaws & Newsletters, 1967 (Legal Size)
- 1/28 Articles and letters about Bobby Reynolds
- 1/29 Model Releases (3), 1968
- 1/30 Articles and Clippings (nudes) from After Dark, 1972-1977
- 1/31 Article on WWII from July-August 1975 Issue of "QQ," 1975
- 1/32 Articles and Erotic Photos of Gavin Dillard, 1977-1988
- 1/33 Survey of Sex Role Stereotypes, SFSU, 197?
- 1/34 "The Flame of Desire; A Study of Recorded Sexual Assaults in San Francisco County Jails," Michael Kurtz et al, 1977
- 2/1 "Video World," Proposal for a TV Series, by Michael Kurtz, Marliiss Clair, and Wayne A. Schotten, 1979
- 2/2 "Day of St. Anthony's Fire" and "AIDS; Chaste Proposal" by Michael Kurtz, undated and 1983
- 2/3 Papers Related to Problems with Schwob's Newly Purchased VCR, 1988

Series 3. Professional Papers, 1926-1998, 20 Folders

This series includes a wide variety of papers about Schwob's schooling, various jobs and professional activities, particularly his growing expertise on the effects of radiation on humans and safety issues related to radiation. It was this work that originally brought him to San Francisco after WW II. Of particular note are the papers that document his work on the Manhattan Project helping to develop the first nuclear bombs. While the fact that he was involved in this work is interesting, there is scant information in the file suggesting the exact nature of his work or on personal relationships he must have had while stationed at Los Alamos.

- 2/4 Small Listing in Sigma Xi Membership Directory, 1998
- 2/5 Undergraduate Grades From Fordham University, 1926-1930
- 2/6 Papers Related to Teaching at Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1943-1946
- 2/7 Papers Related to the Manhattan Project, 1944-1945
- 2/8 Papers on Schwob's Expert Testimony in Suit Against Watson Standard Co., 1947
- 2/9 Job Application to U.S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab, 1948-1953
- 2/10-11 Papers Related to the U.S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab, 1950-1959
- 2/12 Papers Related to Schwob's Presentation on Radiologic Exposure Given to Teachers at Conference of the American College of Radiology in Chicago, 1951
- 2/13 Booklet: Graduate School of Industrial Administration, Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1951-1952
- 2/14 Chemistry Alumni Association, Fordham University, 1954
- 2/15 Awards to Schwob, 1946-1981

- 6/2 Awards to Schwob, 1946-1981 (Legal Size-Box 6)
- 2/16 Humorous Awards to Schwob, 1943-1956
- 6/3 Schwob's Patent File, 1958-1963 (patent for a method Schwob had developed for detecting radiation in complex buildings) (Legal Size-Box 6)
- 2/17 Printed Monographs Authored or Co-authored by Claude Schwob, 1936-1958
- 2/18 Typed or Mimeographed Papers by Claude Schwob, 1948-1960
- 2/19 Handwritten Outline of a Lecture by Schwob, undated
- 2/20 Monographs by Others, 1933-195?
- 2/21 "Enigma of Human Aging" Chemistry and Engineering, 1962

Oversize Folder:

Sent by Carlos to Schwob along with Letters and Other Documents

Stars and Stripes, March 8 and March 14, 1945 -- Two Stories Describing 1st Infantry's Race to and over the Rhine

29 Let's Go, March 15, 1945--Article on 29th Division Being Awarded the First Medal of Honor

Related to Schwob's Scientific Career

Santa Fe New Mexican, July 16, 1945—"First Man-Made Atomic Explosion"

Santa Fe New Mexican, August 6, 1945 "Atomic Bomb Drops on Japan, "Truman Reveals Secret of Los Alamos"

Pittsburg Press, April 29, 1946 and April 30, 1946—"Carnegie Tech: Test Tube of Triumph" -- Two-part Story about Carnegie Institute of Technology Scientists Who Worked on the Manhattan Project

San Francisco News, January 17, 1951 --"Danger-Radioactive!"--Story on Scientists at U. S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab. Includes a Photo of Schwob and Two Other Scientists at the Lab

San Francisco News, February 13, 1957, "H-Shelter Developed Here"--Another Story on Work Done by Scientists at U. S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab

Series 4. Photographic Materials. Personal and Professional: 20 Folders

Erotic: 2-1/3 Boxes, 54 Folders

This series contains two sets of photographs, those that portray Schwob and his associates, and those that feature erotic photos of men. Of the latter, all but a few were taken by Schwob himself, mostly in his own home. While a few of these erotic prints feature erections or sex, he seemed to be most interested in simple nude shots. The majority of these feature young men, first seen in clothes, then stripping off clothes, and then a wide variety of poses by the models. Some sets include many prints of the same model, probably taken during repeated visits to Schwob's home. This, along with his trip with Ray Cabrera and a handful of letters from former models, suggest he had ongoing relationships with a number of these men. The series also

includes slides and a small amount of 8mm film. Schwob labeled some but these have not been sorted.

Photographic Images [Personal and Professional Contacts and Activities] B&W

- 3/1 Claude Schwob, 194?-1971
- 3/2 Youth and a Friend in Unidentified Courtyard, 193?
- 3/3 From Carlos (Carl Greene), 1944-1945
- 3/4 Carlos, 1944-1945
- 3/5 Colleagues and Scenes from Los Alamos (Manhattan Project)?, 1944-1945
- 3/6 Ray Cabrera, 1955
- 3/7 Claude and Ray Cabrera's Trip to Vancouver, 1955
- 3/8 Photos taken by Mike Kurtz, 1971-198?
- 3/9 Negatives: Subjects are John, Bruce, and Ramon, 1962
- 3/10 Unidentified People and Scenes, 194?-196?

Photographic Images [Personal and Professional Contacts and Activities] Color

- 3/11 Friends (and Family?), 194?-71
- 3/12 Mark, 1975-1976
- 3/13 Gunther, Billy, Cal by Beach, Pool, Summer 1979
- 3/14 Rod Trelean (sp?), Gordon, and Flowers, May 1981
- 3/15 Dan, Jim, Others at Pool side, July 1981
- 3/16 NO FOLDER 3/16
- 3/17 Unidentified People Nude Sunbathing, March 1982
- 3/18 Castro Street Fair, date unknown
- 3/19 Jim, April 1983
- 3/20 Bobby Reynolds with Friends and Family, 198?
- 3/21 Unidentified Men at Pool Side, undated

Photographic Images [Erotic] B&W

- 3/22 Men Swimming (probably German nudist movement), 192?
- 3/23 Model A, Probably NYC, 193?, 194?
- 3/24 Model B, 193?, 194?
- 3/25 Model C, 193?, 194?
- 3/26 Model D, a uniformed G.I., Strips and Poses, 194?-195?
- 3/27 Model E in a Bathhouse, 194?, 1951
- 3/28 Model F, 1941, 195?
- 3/29 Model G, 1947, 1957
- 3/30 Pre-1950s Single Prints, Shot Outdoors
- 3/31 Pre-1950s Single Prints, Shot Indoors
- 3/32 Photos of Erotic Art
- 4/1 2 Boxes of Glass Plates, Erotic and non-Erotic Images, undated

- 4/2 Large Glass Plates, undated
- 4/3 Prints from Glass Plates, undated
- 4/4 Prints by Bob Mizer of Athletic Model Guild (AMG), 1947-1957
- 4/5 Prints by Kris Studio, 195?-196?
- 4/6 Nude Photos of "B. M.," 195?
- 4/7 Nude Photos of Ray Cabrera, 195?
- 4/8 Nude Photos of Blaine H. (Probably Blaine Hill), 195?, 1950-1951
- 4/9 Nude Man in a Pool Side Change Room, 194?, 195?
- 4/10 Nude Photos of Mike S., 1951
- 4/11 Nude Photos of Man in Dark Sweater (Model H), 195?
- 4/12 Nude Photos of Man in Khaki Pants (Model I), 195?
- 4/13 Nude Photos of Model J, 195?
- 4/14 Nude Photos of Model K, 195?
- 4/15 Nude Photos of Model L, 195?
- 4/16 Nude Photos of Model M, 195?
- 4/17 Nude Photos of Model N, 195?
- 5/1 Model O, 195?
- 5/2 Model P, 195?
- 5/3 Model Q, 195?
- 5/4 Model R (Sailor), 195?
- 5/5 Model S, 1951
- 5/6 Model T, 195?
- 5/7 Model U, 1951
- 5/8 2 Models Joined by 3rd
- 5/9 4-11 Images of 23 Different Models, 194?-195?
- 5/10 1-3 Images of Different Models, Set Outdoors, 195?
- 5/11 1-3 Images of Different Models, Set Indoors, 195?
- 5/12 Larger Prints by Schwob (5x7, 8x10), 195?-196?
- 5/13 1 or 2 Models Engaged in Sexual Activity, 195?-1967
- 5/14 Negatives and Contact Prints, 1957-196?

Photographic Images [Erotic] Color

- 5/15 Prints by Champion Studio, 196?-197?
- 5/16 Bai, Mark, 1975-1976
- 5/17 Jim Grimes at the Russian River, July 1976
- 5/18 Unidentified Man (Model V), 1981
- 5/19 Paul Schulze, 1981
- 5/20 Sean Thompson, 1981
- 5/21 Terry and Bob, 1983
- 5/22 Mike Kurtz and Wayne (1), 1983
- 5/23 Polaroid Images, various subjects, 1971-1981

5/24 Miscellaneous Color Prints, 1971-1981
5/25 Negatives of Scott (1) and (1), 1981
5/26 Duplicate Prints (Claude Schwob, Ray Cabrera)

Carton 1

Slides

Bill, A.J. Brian Model, and J. Brian at San Gregorio Beach
San Gregorio Beach Outtakes
Doug Anderson, Ray Riley
Various models, circa 1962-1970s
Claude Schwob and Comarades, Hawaii, 1948
Ollie and Friends
Gay Film Frames

Film

8 mm Film, includes Larry and Sammy, 1966-1969, undated

Series 5. Artifacts: 1 Box

This series is composed of a small number of wood, metal, plastic, cloth, and paper artifacts that relate to Schwob's personal and professional lives.

Box 7: Artifacts

Slide Rules (3)
Unused Address Book
Unused Photo Booklet
Paperweight Inscribed "U. S. Naval Radiological Defense Lab, San Francisco"
Six Metal Commemorative Pins
2 Recordings on Floppy Green Plastic Disks
Cloth Penis Holder (Joke)
Unexamined 8mm Movie Film in 4" x 4" Cardboard Box, Probably Porn Loop
26 Matchbooks from San Francisco and Elsewhere, 1941-1961
Envelopes and Other Paper Artifacts