



## Guide to the Maria LaCavera Papers

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## Summary Information

<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	LaCavera, Maria, 1923-1978
<b>Title:</b>	Maria LaCavera Papers
<b>ID:</b>	MS-01139
<b>Date [bulk]:</b>	1947 to 1949
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	approximately 1947 to 2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.65 Cubic Feet (1 box)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.54 Linear Feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1,045 Digital Files (1.157 GB) JPG, PDF
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Maria LaCavera Papers (1947-2017) contain the papers of professional dancer Maria LaCavera. The collection documents the career of LaCavera dancing in Las Vegas, Nevada at the Flamingo Hotel in 1947, and the Last Frontier Hotel in 1949 as one of the Ramona Girls dancing in the Danny O'Neil Varieties Act. Materials include photographs of LaCavera and other Ramona Girls, newspaper clippings, correspondence, LaCavera's American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA) employment contracts, <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazines, and hotel receipts. Other items of note include photographs of the 1949 Helldorado parade, a Frontier Hotel Ramona Room menu, and Frontier Hotel ephemera. There is also a copy of a self-published biography of LaCavera, written by her daughter-in-law Kristin Meyer entitled <i>From Bon-Air to the Last Frontier</i> . The collection also contains the digital images used to illustrate the book.

### Preferred Citation

Maria LaCavera Papers, 1947-2017. MS-01139. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1sz0w>

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## Biographical Note

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Maria LaCavera was born June 27, 1923 in Chicago, Illinois to Charles and Carmella LaCavera. As a young girl, LaCavera was enrolled in dance and violin classes, and by the age of 15 was a member of a dance pageant which performed during the 1938 Chicagoland Music Festival. LaCavera's professional career began while she was in high school, when she joined the "Belles of Bon-Air" chorus line at the Bon-Air County Club in Wheeling, Illinois. Her early career saw her work extensively with dancer and choreographer Dorothy Dorben, and she would travel throughout the United States and Canada during her years as a professional dancer. LaCavera also appeared frequently in the Boulevard Room at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, Illinois

In February 1949, Maria appeared on stage at the Last Frontier Hotel as part of the Ramona Girls (staged by Dorothy Dorben) in the Danny O'Neil Varieties. She performed in Las Vegas for about eight months and would continue dancing until spring 1950 when she retired from professional dancing. LaCavera relocated back to Chicago, where she met and married Clayton Meyer in May 1952 and together they had three children: Charles, Dean, and Christopher. Maria LaCavera died on November 26, 1978 at the age of 55.

Source:

*From Bon-Air to the Last Frontier* (2022) by Kristin Meyer.

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## Scope and Contents Note

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The Maria LaCavera Papers (1947-2017) contain the papers of professional dancer Maria LaCavera. The collection documents the career of LaCavera dancing in Las Vegas, Nevada at the Flamingo Hotel in 1947, and the Last Frontier Hotel in 1949 as one of the Ramona Girls dancing in the Danny O'Neil Varieties Act. Special guests on the Varieties show include Victor Borge, The Modernaires, Jan Hart, Cass County Boys, Ilona Massey, Eddie Peabody, Liberace, and the Philharmonic Trio. Materials include photographs of LaCavera and other Ramona Girls, newspaper clippings, correspondence, LaCavera's American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA) employment contracts, *Fabulous Las Vegas* magazines, and hotel receipts. Other items of note include photographs of the 1949 Helldorado parade, a Frontier Hotel Ramona Room menu, and Frontier Hotel ephemera. There is also a copy of a self-published biography of LaCavera, written by her daughter-in-law Kristin Meyer entitled *From Bon-Air to the Last Frontier*. The collection also contains the digital images used to illustrate the book.

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## Arrangement

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Materials are arranged chronologically.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

Collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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### Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2023 by Kristin and Christopher Meyer; accession number 2023-006.

### Appraisal

Acquired by Su Kim Chung, curator, as part of UNLV Special Collections and Archives holdings on entertainment in Las Vegas. All material that formed the original gift has been retained.

### Processing Note

In 2023, Sarah Jones rehoued the collection and created the finding aid description using information available on existing folders. Tammi Kim ingested the digital files and Sarah Jones created access copies. No additional work has been done.

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## Names and Subjects

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- photographs
- Dancers
- Entertainment -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- Helldorado Parade (Las Vegas, Nev.)

- Hotel Last Frontier
- Flamingo Hotel & Casino (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Ramona Girls
- American Guild of Variety Artists

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Containers
Flamingo Hotel: postcards, photographs, and hotel receipts, 1947 July 09 to 1949 August 16	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 2nd Edition": photographs, newspaper clippings, and LaCavera's AGVA contract, 1949 March 11 to 1949 March 24	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 3rd Edition": newspaper clippings, show line-up, and signed postcard, 1949 March 25	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 4th Edition": souvenir photographs, newspaper clippings, notes, and show line-up, 1949 April 08 to 1949 April 22	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 5th Edition": newspaper clippings, show line-up, and signed photographs, 1949 April 22 to 1949 May 05	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 6th Edition": souvenir photographs, newspaper clippings, show line-up, and <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine, 1949 May 06 to 1949 May 20	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 7th Edition": souvenir photographs, newspaper clippings, and <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine, 1949 May 20 to 1949 June 03	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 8th Edition": <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine, newspaper clippings, and LaCavera's AGVA contract, 1949 June 03 to 1949 June 17	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 9th Edition": <i>Hollywood Life</i> magazine, newspaper clipping, and show line-up, 1949 June 17 to 1949 July 01	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Danny O'Neil's Varieties 10th Edition": newspaper clippings and signed postcards, 1949 July 01 to 1949 July 15	box 01
Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel "Grandfather's Follies with Allan Cole": <i>Florentine Gardens</i> magazine and hotel receipt, 1949 July 22	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Sugar Chile Robinson": newspaper clippings, 1949 August 14 to 1949 August 22	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Rex Owen, Hctor and Byrd": LaCavera's AGVA contract and <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine, 1949 August 26 to 1949 September 09	box 01

Hotel Last Frontier "Dunninger": newspaper clippings, show line-up, Little Chapel of the West wedding photographs of a Ramona Girl, 1949 September 09 to 1949 September 23	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Liberace": <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine and signed Liberace headshot, 1949 September 23 to 1949 October 07	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier "Carl Brisson": show line-up, photographs, newspaper clippings, and <i>Fabulous Las Vegas</i> magazine, 1949 October 07 to 1949 October 21	box 01
Correspondence to Maria LaCavera while in Las Vegas, Nevada, 1949	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier ephemera: Ramona Room menu, coasters, and advertisements, 1949	box 01
Helldorado Parade: photographs, brochures, and newspaper clippings, 1949 May 12	box 01
Boulder Dam souvenir postcard set, 1949	box 01
Maria LaCavera and Ramona Girls rehearsing, performing, or at Hotel Last Frontier: photographic prints, 1949	box 01
Maria LaCavera and Ramona Girls at Lake Mead, Kyle Canyon, and the desert: photographic prints, 1949	box 01
Hotel Last Frontier key ring and Helldorado Parade pin, 1949	box 01
<i>From Bon-Air to the Last Frontier</i> illustrated biography of Maria LaCavera by Kristin Meyer, 2022	box 01
Digitized photographs and documents used to illustrate <i>From Bon-Air to the Last Frontier</i> by Kristin Meyer, approximately 2016 Physical Description: 1,045 Digital Files (1.157 GB) JPG, PDF/A	digital file 00