

Guide to the Alice Key Papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Key, Alice, 1911-2010
Title:	Alice Key Papers
ID:	MS-00095
Date [inclusive]:	1936 to 2004
Physical Description:	0.46 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Physical Description:	0.42 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Alice Key Papers (1936-2004) consist of documents detailing Alice Key's life and work in the African American community, historic preservation, and labor relations in Las Vegas, Nevada. Included in the collection are awards and certificates documenting Key's achievements, invitations and programs to events, political and civic correspondence, and magazine and newspaper articles both about Key and written by her. The collection also contains photographs.

Preferred Citation

Alice Key Papers, 1936-2004. MS-00095. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Alice Marie Key was born to Louise and Malcolm Key on March 18, 1911 in Henderson, Kentucky. She moved with her family to Riverside, California where she finished high school, graduating in 1928. Key then moved to Los Angeles, California where she studied journalism at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). While attending UCLA, she met Leroy Broomfield of the Cotton Club in Culver City, California and left school to pursue a career as a dancer and chorus girl. After dancing in California for five years, Duke Ellington recommended her as a dancer for the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York. Key traveled to New York City, New York and went on a six month

Cotton Club show tour through Europe, including performances at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, France and the Palladium in London, England.

In 1943, Key stopped dancing to work as a writer for the *Los Angeles Tribune*, a newspaper for Los Angeles's African-American community. Key moved to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1954 to work for the *Las Vegas Voice*, owned by her acquaintance, Dr. Charles I. West. She also started Nevada's first all-African-American television talk show, *Talk of the Town*, with actor Bob Bailey.

Throughout her life, and especially during the 1960s, Key passionately fought for civil rights through various community activities and public jobs. She worked as the public relations manager for the Nevada Committee for the Rights of Women, as the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as a member of the Clark County Economic Opportunity Board, and was appointed as Nevada's deputy labor commissioner by Governor Richard Bryan in 1983.

After retiring from public service in 1993, Key maintained her community activism through organizations such as the Barbara Jordan Democratic Women's Club, the Moulin Rouge Preservation Association, the Black Las Vegas Historical Society, Inc., and Ladies Who Danced.

Alice Key died in Las Vegas, Nevada on September 29, 2010.

Sources:

"Alice Key." *The History Makers*, September 29, 2010. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/alice-key-41>

"Alice Key: A Renaissance Woman." *Online Nevada Encyclopedia*. Accessed June 2019. <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/alice-key-renaissance-woman-0>

Martin, Michael. "Wisdom Watch: Alice Key." *Tell Me More on National Public Radio*, August 8, 2007. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12587123>

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Scope and Contents Note

The Alice Key Papers (1936-2004) consist of documents detailing Alice Key's life and work in the African American community, historic preservation, and labor relations in Las Vegas, Nevada. Included in the collection are awards and certificates documenting Key's achievements in historic preservation and public service, invitations and programs to local and national events such as United States presidential inaugurations, political and civic correspondence, and magazine and newspaper articles both about Key and written by her. The magazine and newspaper articles span eight decades, with the earliest being a cover story on Key when she was a young dancer. The collection also contains photographs of performers at the Cotton Club and Louisiana Club, which were popular nightlife establishments in the historic Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas, as well as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) events. There are two

VHS tape recordings: one of a KLAS-TV program about Black History Month featuring Key, and a recording of an award luncheon honoring her.

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Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Original accession was donated in 1995 by Alice Key; accession number 95-47. Additional accession numbers; 2008-029, 2013-025, and 2014-11.

Processing Note

Material was processed in 1995 by Joyce Marshall. In 2016, Joyce Moore edited and enhanced the collection description to bring it up to current professional standards. In 2019, Lauren Paljusaj revised the inventory and finding aid in ArchivesSpace.

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Related Materials

Separated Materials

Some of the photographs in this acquisition were removed from the collection and placed in the Alice Key Photograph Collection, 1930s-1990s. PH-00297. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:

Alice Key oral history interviews, 1997 February 17 and 1997 March 24. OH-01015. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Names and Subjects

- Political activists
- African Americans -- Las Vegas (Nev.)
- Historic preservation
- Westside (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- photographs
- Dancers
- Moulin Rouge (Hotel-Casino : Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Las Vegas Voice

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Awards, certificates, and proclamations, 1980 to 1995	box 01
Correspondence between Alice Key and the United States Senate, City of Las Vegas, and others, 1983 to 2004	box 01
Event programs and invitations, 1983 to 2004	box 01
Invitations to Presidential Inaugurations, 1965, 1993	box 01

Articles featuring the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino and Alice Key, <i>Las Vegas Review-Journal</i> , 1993 May 19	box 01
Article featuring labor commissioner Alice Key speaking about Culinary Union 226 wage disputes, <i>Nevadan, Las Vegas Review-Journal</i> , 1989 September 17	box 01
Cover story about Alice Key, <i>Nevadan, Las Vegas Review-Journal</i> , 1990 February 25	box 01
Issue of the <i>Las Vegas Voice</i> featuring articles written by Alice Key, 1966 July 21	box 01
Alice Key on the cover of <i>The Showdown</i> , April 1937; cover story on Nat King Cole in <i>The Jazz Review</i> , March 1992; and an issue of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority <i>Celebrating Our Cultural Diversity: Official Ethnic Guide 1995</i> featuring the Moulin Rouge, 1937 to 1995	box 01
<i>Nevada Black History Yesterday and Today</i> , Nevada Black History Project, 1992, 1997	box 01
Speech transcriptions from the 369th Veteran's Association Annual Convention, October 08, 1983, Las Vegas, Nevada and the 1987 Clark County School District commencement ceremony, 1983 to 1987	box 01
Newsletters and brochures about the African American community and historic preservation in Las Vegas, Nevada featuring the writing of Alice Key, 1955 to 1996	box 01
Articles from various newspapers featuring Alice Key and her contributions to historic preservation, labor relations, and the African American community, as well as "Key Notes" columns written by her, 1936 to 2004 Physical Description: 4 Files	box 01
People at NAACP events and performers at the Cotton Club and Louisiana Club in Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic prints, approximately 1950 to 1980	box 01
Video recording of Channel 8 KLAS-TV Black History Month: Alice Key, 1995 January 30 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 01
Video recording of award luncheon, 2004 March 06 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 01