

Guide to the Alice Key Photograph Collection

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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 Photograph Collection
ID:	PH-00297
Date [inclusive]:	1930 to 1999
Physical Description:	0.55 Cubic Feet (1 hanging file, 1 shared box)
Physical Description:	0.20 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Alice Key Photograph Collection (1930s-1990s) is comprised of color and black-and-white photographic prints of activist, dancer, and journalist Alice Key with family, friends, political figures, and performers. Materials include photographs of Senator Howard Cannon, Louis Armstrong, and Bill Robinson, and signed professional head shots. Also pictured are Key's coworkers and unidentified performers.

Preferred Citation

Alice Key Photograph Collection, 1930s-1990s. PH-00297. 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 Photograph Collection (1930s-1990s) is comprised of color and black-and-white photographic prints of activist, dancer, and journalist Alice Key with family, friends, political figures, and performers. Materials include photographs of Senator Howard Cannon, Louis Armstrong, and Bill Robinson, as well as include signed professional head shots. Also pictured are Key's coworkers and unidentified performers.

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Arrangement

Materials remain as they were received.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research. This material has been digitized and is fully available online.

Publication Rights

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Reproductions and Use](#) on the UNLV Special Collections and Archives website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

Acquisition Note

Materials were donated by Alice Key in 1995; accession number 1995-047A.

Processing Note

Materials were initially processed by Special Collections staff. In 2019, as part of an archival backlog elimination project, Billy Marino wrote the finding aid and entered the data into ArchivesSpace.

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Related Materials

Related Collections

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

Alice Key Papers, 1936-1995. MS-00095. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Key, Alice. Interview, 1997 February 17. F850.N4 K49 2009. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Names and Subjects

- photographs
- Community organization -- United States
- Women -- Political activity
- Political activists
- Civil rights
- Nightclubs
- African American journalists
- African American women -- Nevada -- Clark County

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Friends and family	
Harry Mills (of the Mills Brothers), Alice Key, and Harry's wife, Ruth (identified from left to right): photographic print, approximately 1940 to 1949 (0297_0001)	folder 01
Alice Key and Louis Armstrong with the Benevolent Variety Artists, a chartered club of chorus girls to help show people in need: photographic print and negative, undated (0297_0002)	folder 01 box SH-032
Alice Key (center) with Louie Armstrong, Billy Ekstine, and Count Basie: photographic print, undated (0297_0003)	folder 01
Nevada Governor Grant Sawyer, Verlia Davis, and Alice Key (identified from left to right): photographic print, undated (0297_0004)	folder 01
Alice Key (front row, center) and unidentified individuals: photographic print, undated (0297_0005)	folder 01
Alice Key and her mother Louise Key: photographic print, approximately 1960 to 1969 (0297_0006)	folder 01
Alice Key (center) with grandson Tony and unidentified individuals: photographic print, undated (0297_0007)	folder 01
Alice Key and Nevada Senator Howard Cannon: photographic print, undated (0297_0008)	folder 01

Lena Horne and Alice Key with several unidentified women backstage in Los Angeles, California during Horne's production of "Lady and her Music": photographic print, approximately 1980 to 1989 (0297_0009)	folder 01
Alice Key sitting on a couch with several unidentified women backstage in Los Angeles, California during Horne's production of "Lady and her Music": photographic print, approximately 1980 to 1989 (0297_0010)	folder 01
Lee Bryant and Alice Key at a birthday party: photographic print, 1985 April (0297_0011)	folder 01
Alice Key at a birthday party with two unidentified women: photographic print, 1985 April (0297_0012)	folder 01
Alice Key (front), Rich Miller (left, back), and unidentified staff at an office birthday party: photographic print, 1985 April (0297_0013)	folder 01
Alice Key (front) and unidentified woman at a birthday party: photographic print, 1985 April (0297_0014)	folder 01
Fanny Jones, Johnny Jones, and Alice Key on a Caribbean cruise (identified from left to right): photographic print, approximately 1980 to 1989 (0297_0015)	folder 01
Fanny Jones and Alice Key on a Caribbean cruise (identified from left to right): photographic print, approximately 1980 to 1989 (0297_0016)	folder 01
Alice Key at Barbara Jordan's luncheon: photographic print, undated (0297_0017)	folder 01
Alice Key, Alice McAber, and Key's grandson Aaron: photographic print, undated (0297_0018)	folder 01
Alice Key: photographic print, undated (0297_0019)	folder 01
Ruth Cooper and Alice Key at Liberace's house (identified from left to right): photographic print, undated (0297_0020)	folder 01
Alice Key installing as President of Gamma Phi Delta: photographic print, undated (0297_0021)	folder 01
Alice Key and unidentified people at a dinner event: photographic print, undated (0297_0022)	folder 01
Alice Key with her grandsons, Anthony and Aaron, and their godmother, Lucille Pendleton: photographic print, undated (0297_0023)	folder 01
Bill Robinson, Mary, and Elaine Plane seated at a table with three other unidentified people (identified from left to right): photographic print, 1949 (0297_0024)	folder 01
Alice Key's grandson, Tony, graduation photograph. Back of photograph is signed, "Some people are winners in athletics, and others in academics, but you are a winner in the game of life and that's what counts. Love, Tony. Class of '80.": photographic print, 1980 (0297_0025)	folder 01
London Hale: photographic print, undated (0297_0026)	

folder
01

Alice Key's grandson, Aaron: photographic print, 1979 (0297_0027)

folder
01

Nelson Skyes: photographic print, 1985 January (0297_0028)

folder
01

Fanny Jones on her birthday: photographic print, undated (0297_0029)

folder
01

Performers

Performer standing next to a piano: photographic print, 1937 (0297_0030)

folder
01

Portrait of Louis Armstrong, an Okeh Record Artist: photographic print, 1930 August 31 (0297_0031)

folder
01

Count Basie and his orchestra with Buddy Rich on drums at Club Plantation near Watts, California: photographic print, approximately 1940 to 1949 (0297_0032)

folder
01

Little Bow and Bryon, friends of Alice Key, performing "Got Act" for Count Basie: photographic print, undated (0297_0033)

folder
01