



Guide to the Kim Sisters Photographs

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Contents Note	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	5
Names and Subjects	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Kim, Sook-ja, 1941-
Creator:	Kim Sisters (Musical group)
Title:	Kim Sisters Photographs
ID:	PH-00299
Date [inclusive]:	1950-1988
Physical Description:	0.1 Linear Feet (1 hanging folder)
Physical Description:	0.083 Cubic Feet (1 hanging folder)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Kim Sisters Photographs depict the Korean entertainers the Kim Sisters in Las Vegas, Nevada and South Korea from 1950 to 1988. The photographs depict the Kim Sisters performing, gambling in Las Vegas, and with their family members.

Preferred Citation

Kim Sisters Photographs, 1950-1988. PH-00299. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note

The Kim Sisters came to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1959 and began performing regularly on the Las Vegas Strip. Comprised of two sisters, Sook-ja (also known as Sue) and Ai-ja, and one cousin, Min-ja, the Kim Sisters quickly became a sensation in the United States. They performed on the *Ed Sullivan Show* numerous times and throughout the United States and Europe.

The trio formed in South Korea in 1954 and performed for American soldiers in Seoul. Sook-ja and Ai-ja's mother, Lee Nan-young, was a famous singer in Korea and their father was a symphony orchestra conductor. The Kim Sisters listened to American pop hits on records and memorized the songs. They also learned to play numerous instruments because Young believed it would make

them stand out from other sister acts. In 1959 an American manager brought the Kim Sisters to Las Vegas.

After their first contract as part of the China Doll Revue at the Thunderbird Hotel/Casino ended, the Kim Sisters started performing at the Stardust Hotel/Casino. They travelled throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Europe. The Kim Sisters made regular appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. In 1963 three of their brothers came to the United States and performed as the Kim Brothers. By the late 1960s, all three Kim Sisters were married and the group stopped performing for some years as the sisters raised families. Min-ja Kim left the group in 1970 after some tension, and Sook-ja and Ai-ja performed with their brothers.

Ai-ja Kim died in 1987. Sook-ja Kim retired from performing in 1989 and as of 2016 works as a real estate agent in Las Vegas, Nevada. Min-ja Kim moved to Hungary with her husband, Tommy Vig, in 2006.

Sources:

Kim, Sook-ja. Interview, 1996 April 06. OH-01020. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Tezar, David. "From Seoul to Las Vegas: story of the Kim Sisters." *Korea Times*, September 21, 2011. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/special/2011/09/178_95166.html.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents Note

The Kim Sisters Photographs depict the Korean entertainers the Kim Sisters in Las Vegas, Nevada and South Korea from 1950 to 1988. The photographs depict the Kim Sisters performing, gambling in Las Vegas, and with their family members.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open for research. Some collection material has been digitized and is [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 website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

Acquisition Note

Materials were donated by Sook-ja Kim.

Processing Note

Materials were processed by Special Collections staff. In 2016, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Lindsay Oden wrote the collection description in compliance with current professional standards.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

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

Kim Sisters Scrapbooks and Clippings, 1959-1966, 1983. MS-00633. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Kim, Sook-ja. Interview, 1996 April 06. OH-01020. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- photographs
- Musicians
- Women musicians

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Sook-ja "Sue" Kim, South Korea, approximately 1950-1960 (0299_0001) (view online)	folder 01
Kim Sisters, South Korea: Min-ja, Sook-ja, and Ai-ja, 1951 (0299_0002) (view online)	folder 01
Kim Sisters performing, Las Vegas, Nevada, approximately 1960-1970 (0299_0003) (view online)	folder 01
Kim family at a gaming table, Las Vegas, Nevada, approximately 1960-1970 (0299_0004) (view online)	folder 01
Kim Sisters in front of the Harrah's Club, Las Vegas, Nevada, approximately 1960-1970 (0299_0005) (view online)	folder 01
Kim Sisters, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1963 December 08 (0299_0006) (view online)	folder 01
Sook-ja "Sue" Kim and the Kim Brothers, Holiday Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1988 August 24 (0299_0007) (view online)	folder 01
Kim Hae-song, father of the Kim Sisters, South Korea, approximately 1940-1950 (0299_0008) (view online)	folder 01
Lee Nan-young, mother of the Kim Sisters, South Korea, approximately 1940-1950 (0299_0009) (view online)	folder 01